

Director of SW Multimedia, Dhaka tried to transfer know-how of taking good pictures for the bulletins. After the lectures, all the participants were brought to Pichutia Gram Committee Meeting at Bangra union, where OJT was conducted to collect news, interview villagers, write up articles, and to take good pictures. Again at Kalihati office, the two experienced instructors gave follow-up lectures including correction of the articles written by the trainees and suggestions on better camera works. At the end, Mr. Goro Nishimoto, PRDP-2 Project Coordinator, encouraged the participants to show their up-graded skills in the coming bulletins. (Abdul Hamid, Research Associate, Kalihati, Tangail)

Supplementary UDOs/Os Recruited



Prospective UDOs/Os are attending examination held at BRDB headquarters last May.

In May 2007 four UDOs and five Organizers were recruited through written and interview examination organized by respective committees. Successful recruits for UDO are from Tangail (3) and Netrokona (1); and for Organizers from Tangail (3), Kushtia (1) and Ponchagar (1). Two of the UDOs were those promoted from incumbent Organizers. We wish their prospective careers.

The above vacancies were created in the past one and a half year as UDOs/Os from remote districts left the project one by one. Working in unfamiliar regions with not-so-high remuneration might have been tough. Recognizing this fact, despite nation-wide recruitment, we gave priority to local applicants by so mentioning in newspaper ads. It is nice for development facilitators like UDO/Os to serve their own regions. After going through intensive training at LMTC, they will be posted in respective unions in the three project upazilas as on 1 July 2007.

New Project Coordinator: Self Introduction



Ms. Chieko Yasuda, JICA Expert and incoming Project Coordinator, joined PRDP-2 last May.

My name is Chieko Yasuda. I'm a new Project Coordinator of PRDP as a replacement of Mr. Goro Nishimoto who left Bangladesh on 30 May 2007. In the previous phase of PRDP, I worked as a JICA Expert in the field of Gender and Community Development from 2000 until the end of the first phase. It is my great pleasure that I can work again in PRDP so that Link Model will be firmly rooted in Bangladesh.

After leaving Bangladesh in 2004, I worked in Laos for two years in the field of rural development and returned back to this country in May 2007. During my stay in Laos, I frequently recalled back what I have learned and experienced through working for Link Model. I also realized its uniqueness and innovative approach for rural development in the context of rural Bangladesh.

People in this country have great potential and capacity for own development. However, there is a lack of system which encourages people's participation, secures proper utilization of limited resources and enhances coordination. Link Model creates such kind of "Platform" or "Open Forum" where all the concerned people living and working in one Union can get together and share/exchange ideas and thoughts for development of the areas. Since Union has been focused more and more these days as a center of rural development, I believe that Link Model's unique approach can be incorporated in national strategy of local development near future. Let's make Link Model more concrete and attractive! (Chieko Yasuda, JICA Expert, Project Coordinator)

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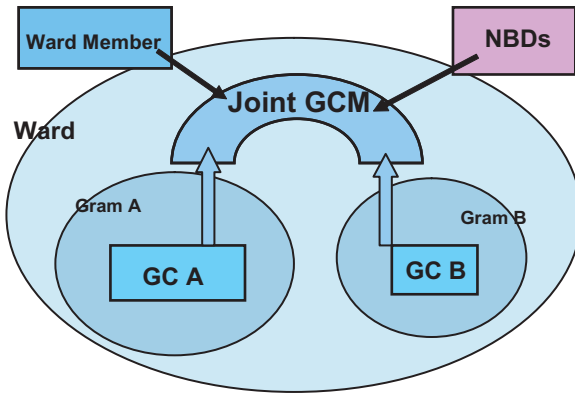


Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB)

Palli Bhaban (5th Floor), 5 Kawran Bazar
Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh
Phone & Fax: 880-2-8131037, 880-2-8124113
E-mail: secretary@prdp2.org
URL: // www.prdp2.org/

Three Gram Committees Under an Umbrella

Challenge 1: Organize Joint GC.



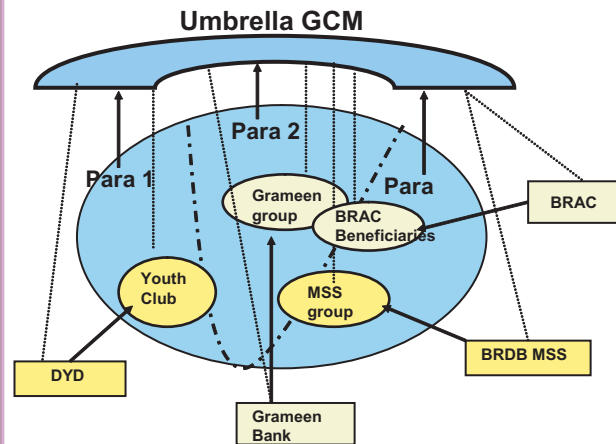
Bonobari Gram Committee (Chairman Md. Abdul Jalil) of Birbashinda Union arranged a joint GCM with two more GCs, viz., Thabi and Setolpur in the same Ward, for the first time on 14 May 2007, mainly to facilitate for manpower-poor NBDs to attend the gathering. The attending NBDs were Fishery, DPHE, Women Affairs and Marriage Registrar. Birbashinda UP chairman was also present. While waiting for the quorum reached, a TV drama *Sako*, produced by JICA Bangladesh to featuring the Link Model of PRDP-2 was shown on a big screen.

Md. Abdul Jalil, Chairman of Bonobari GC in chair, such agenda as NBD services, problems of the villages and others were discussed. Moulana Md. Ali, Marriage Registrar, spoke about problems of early marriage. Begum Jamila Khatun, Upazilla Women Affairs Officer discussed about women empowerment and education, women tormenting, VGD program, widow ration program, etc. Md Safiqul Alam Siddique, DPHE Mechanic, oriented attendants in safe drinking water, arsenic-free water, and sanitary latrines. GCs discussed about their own issues individually. Bonobari GC came up with deciding on a *para* road for a GC Scheme. Thabi and Setolpur GCs decided to try out joint pond fish cultivation. Though somewhat heavily oriented to NBD sessions, all the participants in this first Joint GCM were satisfied with substantial discussions and decision taken on this occasion. We plan to organize the similar meetings occasionally, say quarterly in the coming year. (Md. Abdur Rahim Khan, UDO, Birbasinda, Kalihati, Tangail)

A Great Dreamer

Ruhul Amin is a great dreamer. He is the Chairman of Kutubpur Halsonapara Gram Committee (GC) of Kutubpur Union, Meherpur Sadar. He wants to make his gram a model gram through activated GC activities. He has been trying to involve not only leaders of the gram but also all the NGO activists operating in this area in his GC. He has been persuading NBDs to come to his GCM on regular basis. Actually, he is the man who has proposed an "umbrella GC" in the last Joint Coordination Committee held last month. Monthly GCMs are being held without fail to discuss a wide range of agenda. He is hopeful of making the GC and GCM transparent, dependable and faithful. He claims there is no early marriage, nor dowry in his gram any more. His dream goes to build *para* roads, repair schools, establish a gram library on the GC Schemes and make this village on the Indian border much more active and developed. (Tanzina Akther, RS, Meherpur Sadar)

Challenge 2: Create an Umbrella GC.



A Brief Look at a GC in Titas

Kanainagar Gram Committee (GC) held its 14th GCM at 4 pm on 20 May 2007. Out of 18 GC members there were 13 present. The day's agenda was desirable NBD services, next GC Scheme plan, next work plan and general issues of the gram. After deliberate discussions on GC Scheme, the meeting agreed that an arsenic-free deep tube well and a



Md. Amdad Hossain Akhand, Ziarkandi UP Chairman, is addressing the GCM at Kanainagar gram, Ziarkandi union, Titas.

gram library are essential for them. Responding to a query regarding clues to activate the GC which was asked by the chairperson of the meeting, members proposed a few good ideas; to have various trainings, to have exchange programs with neighboring active GCs, to have open-air meeting rather than in-door, and to increase women members to join GCM. (Sabina Yesmin, RA, Titas, Comilla)

Bulletin Workshop



An OJT scene of the Bulletin Workshop at Pichutia GCM, Bangra union, Kalihati.

On 5 May 2007 a day-long "bulletin workshop" was held at PRDP-2 Kalihati office. The objective of the workshop was to improve the quality of our bulletins; this English Monthly Bulletin from LMC and three Bengali "*Link Model Barta*" published by the three field offices of PRDP-2. One popular journalist Mr. Hasan of Arab Times taught the participants, mainly ROs, RSs, RAs and JOCVs, clues of news article writing. Mr. AFM Shamsuzzaman, Managing