



QUARTERLY REPORT

Bangladesh - CLP
Q2 2009 - 10 Report

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Team Leader's Overview of the Quarter.....	1
1.2	Deputy Team Leader's Overview.....	1
1.2.1	Political Situation.....	1
1.2.1	Economic Situation.....	1
1.2.2	District Coordination Sub-Committee (DCS) Meeting.....	2
2	Operations Division.....	2
2.1	General.....	2
2.2	Infrastructure.....	2
2.3	Health.....	3
2.4	Education.....	4
2.5	Village Savings and Loan Associations.....	4
2.6	Social Development.....	4
2.7	Livelihoods.....	4
2.8	Enterprise.....	5
3	Innovation, Monitoring and Learning Division.....	6
3.1	ML Overview.....	6
3.2	Improved Visibility of the CLP.....	6
3.3	Monthly Verification of CLP Outputs.....	6
3.4	Household Level Surveys.....	6
4	Finance Division.....	7
5	Short Term Consultancies.....	7
6	Next Quarter's Activities.....	8

1 Introduction

This document reports on progress in the Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) in Bangladesh – a programme funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). The report covers the period October to December 2009.

1.1 Team Leader's Overview of the Quarter

The visit of the International Development Committee (IDC) was the highlight of the quarter. The IDC, led by the Hon. Malcolm Bruce (MP for Gordon), came to Bangladesh to review the different activities of DFID. As part of their review, several members of the party visited char villages in Sirajganj and met with some of the CLP core beneficiaries. The IDC was accompanied by Chris Austin, Head of DFID-Bangladesh.

The other highly important event during the quarter was the completion of the design of CLP-2 by a team of experts fielded by Maxwell Stamp PLC. The design team submitted sector reviews, proposals of future activities and a proposed logframe that the CLP team has worked on so as to ensure a comprehensive and attainable design for the future programme.

Progress in the CLP over the last quarter continues to be good and is on track to complete the majority of the annual work plan and budget. However, a few targets will not be achieved in the area of infrastructure, and especially the raising of some household plinths (the Director of Operations explains why in his section). Finance and Procurement have continued to provide the operational activities with sterling support ensuring contracts are developed rapidly and that funding flows are maintained. IML goes from strength to strength despite changes in personnel. The team eagerly awaits the CLP film that was shot during the quarter and will be issued for comments during the Jan-Mar 2010 period.

The IML team has seen some changes in structure. The stand-in Director of IML (Frank Kiel) left and was replaced by Stuart Kenward who joins us from a livelihoods programme in South Africa. There was also a turnover among Young Professionals with Laura Gisby joining the team while Lucy Cooper (end-September) and Hannah Matthews (end-December.) left us.

1.2 Deputy Team Leader's Overview

1.2.1 Political Situation

The Awami league, led by Sheikh Hasina completed its first year in office by the end of the reporting period. At present the political situation in the country is relatively peaceful. There have been a few strikes called by the opposition and some disagreement with certain government policies. The opposition has, however, announced political agitation in the future if their demands are not met.

1.2.1 Economic Situation

The economy of Bangladesh is improving with signs of enhanced domestic demand and positive trends in imports, remittances and growth in gross domestic product. The foreign exchange reserve has crossed \$ 10 billion due to buoyant remittances and moderate exports. An endeavour to increase the flow of money for agriculture and for small and medium enterprises is visible while inflation is being reduced. The Government is making efforts to overcome the impact of the global recession by providing an additional one thousand crore taka stimulus package. In addition the ready made garment sector will receive incentives for three years. Rice production in the country has hit a record at more than three crore tonnes during 2009 and prices of paddy are rebounding. The GoB's forty days' employment generation programme aimed at the poorest in rural areas helped to reduce the impact of *monga* during September – December.

1.2.2 District Coordination Sub-Committee (DCS) Meeting

The quarterly DCS meetings of Jamalpur, Gaibandha and Kurigram districts were held during the reporting period.

2 Operations Division

2.1 General

Programme implementation during the reporting period continued largely as planned. Plinth raising has been challenging due to not having fresh household entrants to raise, and an extension of the *monga* season plinth raising was granted into January 2010 to ensure that the most eligible households could be raised. Given budget and time constraints there will be some shortfall in latrines installed in Bogra, Sirajganj and Jamalpur by the end of the Programme. The remaining monthly household stipends will be paid in full by the end of February 2010 to phase four beneficiaries.

2.2 Infrastructure

Infrastructure and Employment Programme (IEP)

The Infrastructure and Employment Programme (IEP) operated during the quarter under review. Without a large new cohort of core beneficiary households to be raised on plinths, coupled with a late start due to the timing of the Eid vacations, anticipated targets were not met. Remaining households from previous cohorts of ATP were isolated, relatively far from village clusters, or surrounded by land under cultivation (which would not be ceded for earthwork). Therefore from an original target of 9,000 homestead plinths to be raised, 5,574 were completed by the end of December. To mitigate this CLP agreed to continue IEP under standard conditions until the end of January 2010 in the three southern districts while IMOs in Kurigram and Gaibandha will begin planned dry season plinth raising activities.

Grant agreements for IEP during the *monga* period (September to December) were issued to all IMOs aiming at a total of 920,000 person days of employment for 30,000 poor households on *monga*-affected island chars. As of 31st December, IMOs had raised plinths for 5,574 households under IEP in all five districts. Plinths for another 1,000 households are expected to be raised in the southern three districts in the extended month of January 2010.

Dry Season Plinth Raising

Proposals were invited and grant agreements have been issued to 9 IMOs in the districts of Kurigram and Gaibandha for homestead plinth raising in the dry season (January – March 2010) under CLP-1 funding. The IMOs will start the work immediately after completing IEP work.

Latrines

Grant agreements were signed with all 18 IMOs for the construction of 7,500 low-cost slab latrines (5 rings, one slab with super structure and water seal) in the July – December 2009 period. As a result, 7,398 latrines were installed on raised plinths for CLP core beneficiaries.

Tube Wells and Water

A report documenting the results of water quality testing of 300 shallow tube wells (TW) during the previous monsoon was finalised during the reporting period. The results confirm the effectiveness of platforms around raised tube wells in reducing bacterial contamination.

These test results are adding to the growing body of data on TWs across the CLP working area and assist the programme to understand the causal factors of TW contamination; enabling CLP to

respond appropriately. CLP subsequently returned to 10% of the tube wells tested by the Environment and Population Research Centre (EPRC) with exceptionally high contamination levels. Its observations confirmed that the principle contributors leading to contamination in tube wells with platforms are poor siting i.e. near latrines and other faecal sources (cow sheds), and cracked and broken platforms, pipe joints, walls and spillways. CLP will reinforce the installation guidelines and promote user repair, and delay the installation of platforms until new plinths have settled following the first monsoon rains. This will reduce breakages.

Arsenic survey testing and follow-up continued during the reporting period. Water from 488 was tested. In areas where high levels of arsenic have been found, test bores at varying depths were drilled and the water periodically tested. Overall it appears that water from depths of more than 120 feet has lower arsenic levels than water from shallower bores. Drilling to this depth is now a standard response to arsenic discovery, coupled with regular testing thereafter and awareness raising in the arsenic areas. Generally it is the mainland around the Jamuna and its tributaries that demonstrate arsenic contamination. Results were presented to the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Director of Ground Water in Dhaka.

GPS Mapping

Recording the GPS coordinates of infrastructure and other CLP works continued during the quarter. Georeferencing of all CLP static physical inputs will be completed by the end of March 2010. So far 75,862 GPS coordinates have been recorded. These coordinates are marked on Google Earth maps and are being used to inform management on a variety of issues.

2.3 Health

During the quarter under review the 10 IMO's involved in the health programme operated a total of 2,349 satellite clinics out of a target of 2,400. Fifty satellite teams and 392 Char Shasthya Karmis (CSKs, or local health workers) together provided services to 112,203 persons. During the quarter, the CSKs conducted 4,594 health and nutrition education sessions where 109,787 persons (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) attended.

Training on Safe Delivery for fifteen Paramedics took place at the LAMB hospital at Parbatipur, Dinajpur during the quarter bringing the total to twenty Paramedics receiving training as planned for this year. A reporting mechanism on their performance (delivery cases attended by trained Paramedics) is underway. CLP will be able to report on this from January 2010. All 392 CSKs received a five-day refresher training in October and November 2009. A two-day training programme was organised for sixty Rural Medical Practitioners (RMPs) in 3 batches using the training materials jointly developed by GoB and UNICEF. The main objective of the training is to help reduce the harmful practices of RMPs and to engage them as referral agents/advocates for CLP's health project.

CLP health management met with JICA, Marie Stopes and LAMB officials during the quarter and also visited different health programmes in Bangladesh and developed a comparison of the services they provided.

The quarter also witnessed the visit of DFID Health Advisers (Ms. Fran McConville and Dr. Shehline Ahmed). Dr. Abu Jamil Faisal of EngenderHealth accompanied the advisers during the field visits; the output of which was field notes that will guide future CLP health projects.

2.4 Education

During the quarter the purchase and distribution of school uniforms and bags for students was completed.

CLP facilitated a series of training/exchange visits during the quarter:

- Subject-based training for all 24 Centre Supervisors on Grade-III books and learning materials;
- Subject-based teachers' training for Grade-II books and teaching techniques of 18 second shift learning centres;
- Exchange visits for Centre Management Committee members (CMC) began. A total of 121 CMC members visited education-related activities of other NGOs.
- A successful meeting was held with GoB to obtain free books for classes III and IV. The CLP will receive 10,000 sets of books in January 2010.

2.5 Village Savings and Loan Associations

During the reporting period 364 of the 628 VSLAs finished their annual distribution of savings among the 8,127 members. The average amount received per member was Tk 1,182 while the savings average was Tk 75 per member per month. Thus members made an average profit of 32%. Out of 364 associations, 345 with 7,984 members have started their second cycle with a total of Tk 2,668,249 as seed capital. The remaining 264 groups with 5,920 members are continuing their first cycle.

2.6 Social Development

Group Meetings

The Social Development group meetings for ATP-3 beneficiaries of most of the eighteen IMO's have been completed resulting in a reduction in staff numbers. However, the contracts of some Social Development staff of the IMO's have been extended to assist with the extended period of IEP work, dry season infrastructure work and IML's Nutritional Status Surveys. CDOs have tried to encourage the various communities to continue with the Community Safety Net concept even when there are no regular group meetings.

IEP Safety Net

The budget for IEP Safety Nets was calculated on the basis that 2,000 eligible beneficiaries would receive the grant of Tk 200 per week for ten weeks. In reality, IEP in most areas lasted for significantly less time as identified household groups were smaller and more isolated. CLP decided that all eligible safety net households should receive a minimum of four weeks of the grant. Despite the shorter qualifying period, a total of 3,609 beneficiaries have received this social protection grant.

Erosion Grants

Since July 2009 there has been less river erosion than expected, and so against an estimated 4,000 erosion grants of Tk. 2,000 per beneficiary household, only 2,235 grants have been provided.

2.7 Livelihoods

Home Gardening and Compost Production Training

During the period 14,535 beneficiaries received refresher training in homestead gardening against a target of 14,000 while 10,016 beneficiaries received refresher training in compost production against a target of 15,000. Fewer beneficiaries received compost production training as IMO staff were involved in establishing winter home gardens. The remaining training will be completed by the

end of the next quarter.

Homestead Gardens

A total of 11,433 beneficiaries established homestead gardens with their own resources against a target of 12,078 during the quarter. The target is short due to migration of some beneficiaries and the constraint of identifying suitable land. All beneficiaries did however establish pit crops on their homesteads. It was observed during field visits that most of the beneficiaries are retaining seeds for future use.

Vaccination and De-worming and Artificial Insemination

In this quarter vaccination, de-worming and artificial insemination services have been provided to ATP cattle through vouchers, following new guidelines. Livelihoods and Enterprise units jointly organised meetings with Livestock Service Providers (LSPs), Livestock Service Officer (LSOs), CLP district staff and staffs of IMOs in different places during the first week of November 2009. The main purpose of the meeting was to ensure a clear understanding of the new voucher guidelines and expedite the smooth implementation of veterinary services. A total of 14,814 cattle were vaccinated against a target of 7,500 while 15,689 doses of deworming drugs were administered to ATP cattle against a target of 7,500. To increase the productivity of the next generation of cattle, an artificial insemination programme is being implemented. A total of 394 cows were inseminated against a target of 600 while 276 cows gave birth following Artificial Insemination (AI).

Livestock Training

All 13 IMOs completed the fifth round of livestock training which was due in the last financial year. A total of 29,542 person days' refreshers training on livestock rearing were provided against a target 28,500.

Stipend Distribution

One IMO has completed stipend distribution for ATP-4 beneficiaries. The remaining IMOs except RDRS will complete the distribution of stipends during the next quarter. RDRS will complete distribution by June 2010.

2.8 Enterprise

Fodder Production

During the quarter, 7,500 participants cultivated fodder on approximately 1,500 acres of land. Seed distribution points were established by seed importers. There were no fodder sales as it was the seed sowing season.

Local Poultry Rearing

Livestock Service Providers (Paravets) continued to train participants in the local poultry rearing programme using improved rearing techniques. Vaccination against diseases such as Ranikhet continued while 1,605 model houses were built and 1,561 are in use. 648 houses were built without CLP subsidy, i.e. more than 69% of the supported model houses. 15,747 poultry participants were involved in selling birds and eggs earning on average Tk 304 per month.

Milk Marketing

During the quarter, 9,880 households sold milk to 249 milk collectors. 89% of these collectors then sold to local buyers such as sweet and tea shops while the remaining 11% was sold to commercial processors such as Milk Vita and BRAC Dairy. Households selling to the milk collectors earned on average Tk 1,254 per month.

Livestock Services Programme

Seven Livestock Service Officers (LSOs) were recruited by CLP to support less experienced Livestock Service Providers (LSPs) to develop diagnostic and primary treatment skills and link them to public and private supplies for vaccines and medicines. Scheduled vaccinations are on-going as per availability of quality vaccines from Department of Livestock Services. Two additional solar fridges were installed in CLP working areas to support the cool chain of livestock and poultry vaccines – the current total is 35 solar fridges. 268 LSPs are earning on average more than Tk. 3,000 per month from the services they offer.

3 Innovation, Monitoring and Learning Division

3.1 IML Overview

The composition of the IML team changed during the reporting period. Stuart Kenward replaced Frank Kiel, the interim Director, towards the end of November while two of the Young Professionals left the Programme (Lucy Cooper and Hannah Matthews). Both have moved to new jobs with other organisations in Bangladesh.

Considerable progress was made in preparing a short film of the CLP by Panorama Creators that will be finalised during the first quarter of 2010. It is to be a twenty-two minute film documenting life on the chars, CLP interventions and achievements to-date.

Two substantial pieces of work were completed during the reporting period covering an analysis of income and expenditure data as well as asset status data that had been collected through monthly and annual surveys. The analysis and report writing were carried out by ex-YP Lucy Scott and her findings will be disseminated in the next quarter.

3.2 Improved Visibility of the CLP

The redesigned CLP website (www.clp-bangladesh.org) is operational and updated on a regular basis. During the reporting period a Bangla version of the site also went 'live'.

The IML Division had a stand during Extreme Poverty Eradication Day (18th October) organised by the DFID-funded EEP/Shiree Programme.

3.3 Monthly Verification of CLP Outputs

Data Management Aid (DMA) continued to provide quality and timely feedback on the quantity and quality of outputs delivered through CLP's Operations Division. CLP will retender this Verification contract during March 2010 for the whole of CLP-2.

3.4 Household Level Surveys

Monthly income and expenditure monitoring continued on a representative sample of core beneficiary households from all four asset transfer cohorts. The income and expenditure data, along with data from an asset status survey conducted earlier in the year, were used by Lucy Scott in two reports to be published early in 2010.

A follow-up survey to look at the impact of micronutrient treatment and deworming of IEP workers and their families was conducted during the quarter. The data are being analysed by Professor Nick Mascie-Taylor of Cambridge University and initial analysis shows excellent impacts. The detailed report will be published during the first quarter of 2010.

The fourth round of the nutritional status survey (NSS) was conducted during the quarter with data from core beneficiary households from all four ATP cohorts being collected by CDOs. Prof. Mascie-Taylor assisted in the training, had oversight and is preparing a report during the first quarter of 2010.

The re-analysis of data collected by Helen Keller International during the 2007 munga period has now been written up as a scientific paper and will soon be published in the WHO Journal. Authors are Mascie-Taylor, Marks & Re.

4 Finance Division

During the quarter CLP's Finance Division worked closely with other Divisions and partners to plan the transition between CLP 1 and 2. Procedures and amendments were drafted so as to bring potential operational activities in line with the closing date for CLP 1 of 31st March 2010.

CLP Finance can report a cumulative expenditure of 32% against the annual programme budget for 2009-10 as at end of second quarter.

Some of the key activities during the quarter included:

- A reconciliation exercise to ascertain the level of funding required by the Operations Division and partner IMOs;
- The fine tuning of a draft Chart of Accounts along with potential cost centers. This document will be updated with inputs from other stakeholders;
- An accounting and reconciliation exercise of historic financial transactions between CLP and its partners. This exercise found there was an unspent amount of GBP 350,000 within IMO partners' accounts which was eventually recovered and charged back to DFID through negative journal lines against live expenditures;
- Investigations into alleged cases of corruption. For example, the team audited and spotted that one of its partners, GKS was involved in misallocating funds amounting to fifteen lacs taka. This sum was reported and eventually recovered by CLP's internal audit team;
- Issuing numerous contracts and amendments to existing contracts;
- The preparation of a CLP inventory list as per DFID's format; and
- As per normal procedure, the Division continued to audit systems and conduct capacity building exercises for CLP partners.

Earlier in the year, the Finance Division lost three people due to internal restructuring and inter-divisional transfers. There is now a clear strategy to recruit and train professionals in order to bridge any gaps that are currently prevailing.

Finally in this quarter, the Division managed to undertake and successfully complete an external audit of IMO/ Partners. Subsequent management reports with clear recommendations have been sent to relevant staff within the partner organisations.

5 Short Term Consultancies

The CLP received two consultants during the period:

- Prof. Mascie-Taylor conducted 10 days training for CLP and EEP/Shiree staff on the use of SPSS software to analyse nutritional data; and
- Lucy Scott, an ex-YP, completed two substantial pieces of work (an analysis of income and expenditure as well as asset status data.)

6 Next Quarter's Activities

The focus of the next quarter will be on completing the remaining activities under CLP 1 and initiating the planning for CLP 2.

The remaining activities under CLP 1 include the payment of remaining monthly stipends, training, raising as many households on plinths as is possible to reach and supporting Livestock Service Providers (Paravets) to help them sustain their businesses. Planning for CLP2 will include locating offices in the new Districts and Programme planning and design across all foreseen activities.

A new Young Professional will join CLP as a replacement to Hannah Mathews. The recruitment of new staff for Unit Manager positions will also be completed.