

Replication of Self-Help Groups at Surrounding Neighbourhood



Inspired by the success of the Self-Help Groups (SHG) formed under EEG programme, another 8 SHGs have been formed in the neighboring community of Rajarhat. All of these groups are community driven, women centric, participatory and inclusive. EEP project facilitated their formation through selection of 200 households. The democratically selected SHG-leaders lead the entire process - managing necessary group documentation, collecting savings, depositing to the bank, issuing loans to members, facilitating meetings, discussing social, health, hygiene, rights and protection issues. The project has been providing various capacity building supports to all these 8 SHGs such as leadership development, financial management, resources mobilisation, documentation and various rights and entitlement issues.

Distributed Climate-friendly Fruit Saplings & Vegetable Seeds



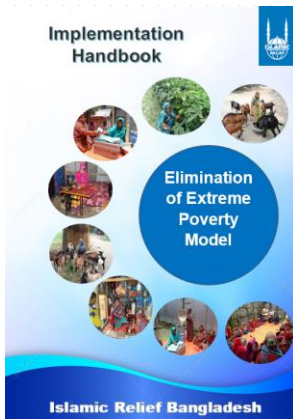
200 Mango and lemon saplings distributed to 200 replicated beneficiaries to help on climate change adaptation. Every household received two saplings and this would provide them nutrition. Beneficiaries are advised to nourish the saplings by the project. All the 200 beneficiaries have received vegetable seeds as well.

Group-led Savings Accelerated to BDT 1.7 Million



All 40 SHGs formed under EEP project in Kurigram are fully operational and the group members are introduced with group-led savings as well. Group members regularly deposit small amount of money depending on their financial strength. SHG leaders deposit weekly collected amount to bank, manage banking transactions, keep records, pass books and register books. Project office oversees the overall performance and guide the groups. At the end of January 2022, the total savings amount of these 40 SHGs have been accumulated to BDT 16,68,217.

Implementation Strategy of EEP Model



An implementation strategy of the EEP model has also been developed along with the training module. The implementation strategy will be helpful for the trainees as a guideline to implement the EEP model in their respective fields after completion of the ToT course.

Access to Interest Free Loan using Revolving Fund



All the 40 SHGs disburse interest free loans to the group members from their savings. These loans help members to initiate small income generating activities, install latrines, emergency medical treatment etc. Till January 2022 total 1580 small interest free loans of BDT 18,16,155 were disbursed among members.

Subsistence Allowance for Most Vulnerable and People With Disabilities



The project has been working with extreme poor households, and many of the project participants are disabled (PWD) and elderly. Most of the female participants are widow, abandoned and divorced. It is very challenging for them to protect productive assets for livelihood development apart from managing their family expenses. Hence, they got selected as project participant for their vulnerability and financial constraints. Subsistence allowances were provided to 200 most vulnerable & PWD families for maintaining their family expenses. It was also ensured to protect their productive assets. Gradually it would help them to scale up their assets. Each beneficiary received a monthly financial allowance of BDT500 for one year. Total 200 families have received the one-year financial allowance.

Livestock Health Camp

The project has organised 22 livestock health camps at community level with the coordination with livestock office to protect livestock from various types of diseases.



Community Awareness

Up to January 2022, Project has organised a total of 104 community-based awareness sessions and discussed various social and health issues such as hygiene practices, sanitary latrine, safe water etc.



Exposure Visits for Apex Body Leaders



The project organised exposure visit on 16 February 2022 at Mithapukur and Pargachha for apex body leaders and had provided linkage support as well. This exposure visit enabled the leaders to learn from each other and opened up space for discussion on various aspects of apex body such as record keeping, register maintenance, business plan, operational process, role of apex body, reporting system, banking, liaison & linkage, learning & challenges, Scope, AGM, support of UCO and market demand, etc.

Facilitation and Communication Skill Development Training

EPP project organised facilitation and communication skill development on 17 and 18 January 2022 in SKS Inn, Gaibandha. Total 35 participants participated in the training. The Training equipped the knowledge of the participants on what is facilitation, importance of facilitation, relationships with development workers and facilitation, communication, types of communication, 7C of Communication, Non-verbal communication, linkage, networking and conflict and resolution of conflict.



Begum Rokeya Day Observation

In collaboration with Upazila administration and Local Women Affairs Department, the project participated in the Begum Rokeya Day observance event held on 09 December 2021. The day was marked with rally and discussion session. A team of SHG leaders participated in the rally and discussion session. Upazila Chairman was the chief guest and Upazila Nirbahi Officer was presented as the Chairperson along with other special guests in that event. The community people were made aware of women's rights, gender discrimination, violence against women, etc. through the day observance events.



Waste Management Support



Most of the beneficiaries who have available space in home-yards have prepared waste management plants for themselves. The objective of the activity is to protect the environment from pollution as well as keeping household neat and tidy. Maintaining a clean and healthy environment is important for better living. It helps to rid off germs and diseases. By composting kitchen wastes fertilizers is being produced and which is eventually an important element of good crop production. A total of 734 households have established garbage management plants and each project participants has received BDT 300 for this activity.

Apex Body Formation



On 7 September 2021, an Apex body formed at Rajarhat, Kurigram through the initiative of “Promoting the Model for the Elimination of Extreme Poverty in Bangladesh (EEP)” project. All 40 leaders pertaining to these 40 Self Help Groups attended in the formation meeting. Upazila Cooperative Officer graced the meeting as the Chairperson and Upazila Nirbahi Officer was invited as the chief guest. Finally, an apex body of 12 members was selected through a democratic way. The name of the cooperative was chosen as most of the members voted for the name of “Dipto Mahila Shomobay Shomity Ltd.”. This association will act as an umbrella for 40 SHGs of the EEP project to continue project’s activities for its longer existence.

National Cooperative Network Formation



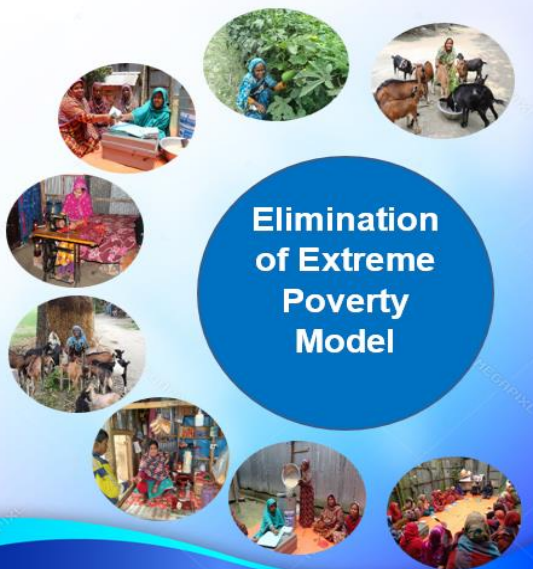
A National Cooperative Network was formed by the initiative of “Promoting the Model for the Elimination of Extreme Poverty in Bangladesh (EEP)” project at Rajarhat, Kurigram. The ‘National Cooperative Network’ (NCN) has been formed to act as an umbrella body for other registered ‘Apex bodies’ implementing the EEP model. National Cooperative Network’ (NCN) facilitates leadership development and external linkages to different service providers.

Group dynamic, Leadership and Financial Management Training



A total of 160 SHG leaders have received leadership development and financial management training. The trainings have increased their knowledge on leadership development, financial management, conflict resolution, record keeping, financial transaction, accounting, banking transaction, participatory decision-making process for proper implementation of group activities for managing Self-Help Groups.

Training Module



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Developed Training Module

An elaborate training module on EEP model has been developed. This training module will be used for organising ToT to develop master trainers on EEP model. Internal and external trainees will be attending in the training course.

Building a Livelihood and Self-reliance

Sheuly was married at a very early age. After 7 years of marriage, her husband left her and remarried, leaving her to raise her 2 children alone in Kurigram, Bangladesh. Sheuly was forced to live with her mother who already struggled to afford the costs of everyday life. “I was completely shattered when my husband left me. I was clueless about how to earn a living to support my family”, says Sheuly.

Without any income Sheuly struggled to feed her children, but was determined to create a better life for herself and her family. She began by filing a court case to receive financial support from her ex-husband, which, despite resistance from his family, was successful. She also began tutoring children in her neighbourhood and eventually secured a job working for a local charity. However, her position was temporary as the charity did not have the funding to keep her on. Sheuly once again fell into poverty. Looking for help, she came across Islamic Relief’s project which is supporting women local to earn sustainable livelihoods.

Islamic Relief staff trained Sheuly in goat rearing and gave her a cash grant to help her buy 3 goats. She now earns a living from selling the produce from her animals. The project also brings women together in groups, where they can support each other and help save money. The group offers members a small, interest-free loan, which Sheuly used to purchase chickens and ducks. She sells their eggs, increasing her income still further. “Sheuly is a real example of woman’s empowerment. She is a great help to her group as she calculates our accounts”, says Nazmin, president of the women’s group, describing Sheuly’s contribution as treasurer.

Sheuly was then appointed as treasurer of a larger committee consisting of representatives of women’s groups in the area. Eventually, she worked up to becoming the Secretary of the National Cooperative Network, which facilitates leadership development for women’s cooperatives groups.

Sheuly now has a platform to advocate for social and human rights issues, particularly gender-based violence.

“With the support of Islamic Relief’s project, I have changed my fortune”, says Sheuly. “I started with 3 goats and now I have 6 goats. I plan to sell half of them to buy a cow.” “If I had not received the awareness training from Islamic Relief, I would have not known about my rights and that I can be independent. My fellow group members have deep confidence in me and they always seek my guidance. “The support has also elevated my place in the community as a respected and capable person. It has helped me to change my financial position and work for a better future.”



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