



NEWS Bulletin

Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets (REOPA)

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Workshop on Finalising Training Curriculum

Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets (REOPA) organised a workshop for Finalising Curriculum Outline and Materials for Training of PMC & Upazila REOPA Committee on the 24th July, 2008 at the LGED Seminar Room. About fifty participants participated in the workshop.



Participants included the Deputy Directors Local Government (DDLGs), Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs), Union Parishad (UP) Chairmen, Project Management Committee (PMC) Members and REOPA Project Team Members. Mr. Shaikh Khurshid Alam, Secretary, Local Government Division of GoB and Mr. Jean-Claude Rogivue, UNDP Resident Representative (a.i.) attended the workshop as Chief and Special Guests respectively.

The REOPA Project aims not only to employ the poor women, but also groom them as human resources, said Local Government Division (LGD) Secretary Shaikh Khurshid Alam in the inaugural workshop session. "The project is contributing towards food security for poor household in rural areas, saving children from malnutrition and limiting rural-urban migration," said Mr. Alam, expressing satisfaction over the ongoing

pace of implementation of the REOPA Project.

Emphasizing the need for capacity strengthening, Mr. Jean-Claude Rogivue, UNDP Resident Representative a.i., said that capacity development and institutional strengthening of the different stakeholders is one of the key areas of this project and a Capacity Strengthening Team has been formed to assist the Project Task Force. He added that the mandate of this team is to strengthen the capacity of essential local government bodies as well as NGOs in designing, implementing and monitoring a pro-poor project so that efforts made by REOPA would sustain.

Stressing the need for capacity development, Director General of National Institute of Local Government (NILG), Mr. Kabir M Ashraf Alam, said that the planned training would help the targeted destitute women and the poor to have a better future through the project.

During the plenary session, all the working groups of the workshop endorsed the training materials by and large. However, the groups put forward some recommendations on the basis of their experience. The recommendations which do not have any implications on the Operational Manual and Financing Agreement have been incorporated during finalization of flip-charts and training handouts.

EC Ambassador visits REOPA Project

The Ambassador & Head of Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh, Dr. Stefan Frowein, and the EC Counsellor Dr. Klaus-Dieter Gautsch visited REOPA Project in Satkhira District on 21 May 2008 to observe the road maintenance component in Noapara and Parulia Unions. Those roads are being maintained by 30 rural destitute women in each UP. They also visited Parulia Union Parishad office and held cordial discussions on various local governance issues with the UP officials.

During the visit the Delegation of EC exchanged their views with the project officials both from UNDP and Government and also with the women crew members from the road maintenance, UP officials and Upzilla Nirbhai Officer of Debhata Upzilla on issues like wage rate, wage payment system, group management by women crew members, monitoring & supervision mechanism of UP etc. Women crew members expressed their deep satisfaction for obtaining these employment opportunities, but also shared some of their current difficulties, which they faced in maintaining expenditure from their daily wage rate (Taka 70). They also requested the EC Delegation to raise the existing wage rate up to Taka 100 in light of soaring prices.



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The Project Director, Mr. Akmal Hussain & Programme Officer, Mr. Mobarak Ali from Project Task Force, International Team Leader Mr. Göran Jonsson, International Operations Manager Mr. Ali Tahsin Jumah, Capacity Strengthening Advisor Mr. Mayen Uddin Tazim, District Officer Mr. Rabiul Islam from REOPA-CST Project and Ms. Majeda Haq from UNDP Local Poverty Reduction Cluster participated in this visit.

Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets (REOPA)

UNDP Resident Representative (a.i.) Visits REOPA

The Resident Representative a.i. of UNDP Bangladesh, Mr. Jean-Claude Rogivue, visited REOPA Project in Narsingdi District on 2 August, 2008 and met with local leaders and government officials



and also observed REOPA Project activities. The visiting team also comprised Mr. Akmal Hussain, Project Director of REOPA, Mr. Abu Sayeed Sk. & M. Mobarak Ali, Programme Coordinator and Programme Officer of REOPA respectively, Ms Majeda Haq, UNDP Local Poverty Reduction Cluster, Mr. Göran Jonsson, International Team Leader REOPA-CST and Mr. Ali Tahsin Jumah, International Operations Manager REOPA-CST.

Initially the team visited Meherpara Union Parishad under Sadar Upazila to see at first hand road maintenance activities where Women Crew Group (WCG) members are working.

The local project authority informed the team about the whole implementation process of road maintenance activities, such as the process of identification of WCG members, how they selected roads for maintenance, how they convince the local community to manage soil for road maintenance and how they monitor WCG activities and ensure their wages. Mr. Rogivue checked the daily attendance register and enquired whether the WCG members know their daily wage and the amount of money they have saved with the bank.

Following the visit to Meherpara, the team visited Jossor UP of Shibpur Upazila and Mirzapur UP of

Raipura Upazila. The team discussed with community people and WCG members. The community people thanked the team for taking this kind of project initiative helping the poor. Mr. Rogivue especially wanted to know whether the WCG members were getting their wages. The WCGs informed the team that they are getting their wages timely, but they requested an increase of their wages from Tk. 70 to 100 to cope with the steep price hike and their hardship.

At Mirzapur UP, visitors expressed their satisfaction to see a signboard on REOPA activities, which clearly mentioned the starting and ending points of road maintenance activities. The signboard gave the message *“REOPA’s road maintenance work is going on, please help WCGs by providing soil.”* The UP Chairman informed that the signboard had been made by own initiatives.



At the end of the visit, Mr. Rogivue exchanged his views on the visit with Union Parishad Representatives, Project Management Committee members and Community representatives. He also had discussions with the Deputy Director, Local Government of Narsingdi district and the Upazila Nirbahi Officers about the REOPA project activities and expressed his satisfaction with the quality of work and the discipline maintained by the WCGs. He also thanked the Local Government of Narsingdi for successful implementation of REOPA Project in the district.

Engagement of WCG Members in Community

In order to create employment opportunities and maintain public assets for the benefit of rural communities, the REOPA



Project has deployed 30 destitute women for each Union Parishad in 388 UPs. Women Crew Groups (WCGs) have been performing road maintenance activities by repairing potholes, wheel cuts, small cuts, bridge/culvert approach fillings and earth filling, etc. The WCGs are not only contributing their valuable labour to road maintenance, but they also contribute to improve public assets for the benefit of rural communities.

Valuka Chandpur is a village under Dhullihor Union Parishad in Satkhira District. The village has a school named “Valuka Chandpur Model High School”. The school is a two-storied building with a big playground, but the ground was bumpy and logging water during rainy season. Students, teachers and community people have been unable to use the school ground during monsoon. However, the school committee did not have adequate funds to raise it and they requested the UP Chairman to raise the ground.

During days of heavy rain much of the road maintenance work comes to a halt. In order to utilize the labour of WCG members properly, the UP Chairman took the initiative to repair one of the selected earthen roads beside the school, and at the same time the school playground was also raised. Now students can play on the ground, the school committee is able to arrange different functions and community people can use it for social festivals.

Students, teachers, school committee and community expressed their satisfaction and thanked UP and REOPA for taking this kind of good initiative.