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# Evaluation Report

## Federation Capacity Building and Social Mobilization Project

**November/December 2006**

**Deepak Tamang**  
International Consultant

**Bhabatosh Nath**  
National Consultant



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We are confident that the genuine sincerity, commitment and dedication of the Federation Capacity Building and Social Mobilization (FCBSM) Project's primary stakeholders in the form of primary, affiliated and federated groups; together with the enormous efforts of the Project staff are and will in future be the key factors responsible for the success of the Project Goals. Their candid, frank and open sharing of information, thoughts and analysis together with their support and co-operation has enabled us to complete this evaluation.

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Deepak Tamang  
International Consultant

Bhabatosh Nath  
National Consultant

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<b>Table of Contents</b>		<b>Pages</b>
Glossary of Terms		
<b>Part I</b>		
Executive Summary		
Map		
<b>Part II</b>		
1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of FCBSM Project	1
1.2	Background of DCA Consortium	1
1.3	Background of RDRS	2
2.0	Objective of Evaluation	2
2.1	Evaluation Activities	2
2.2	Evaluation Outputs	2
3.0	Evaluation Methodology	4
3.1	Other Information	4
3.2	TOR (Deliverables)	4
3.3	Limitations of the Evaluation	5
4.0	Study Framework	5
4.1	Study Flow Diagram	6
4.2	Performance Indicators	7
4.3	Areas of Enquiry	7
4.4	Performance Standards and Ratings	7
4.5.1	Means and Inputs	7
<b>Part III</b>		
5.0	Project Plan and Major Components	8
5.1	Objectives (judgments)	8
5.2	Results of six specific objectives	13
5.3	Major Activities	20
6.0	Advocacy & Networking	25
7.0	Major Findings	26
7.1	Relevance	26
7.2	Efficiency	27
7.3	Effectiveness	27
7.4	Impact	28
7.5	Sustainability	29
8.0	Lessons Identified (Learned)	30
9.0	Best Practices within Federations	31
10.0	Summary of Findings and Conclusions	31
11.0	Recommendations	34
<b>Appendixes</b>		
Case Studies		Appendix I
List of Persons Met		Appendix II
Work Schedule		Appendix III
Logical Framework Analysis (LFA)		Appendix IV

## Glossary of Terms

<b>ACNABIN</b>	= A reputed registered Audit Firm in Bangladesh
<b>ASK</b>	= Ain O' Shalish Kendra (one of the NGOs working in Bangladesh on legal issues)
<b>BRAC</b>	= Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (One of the bigger NGOs in Bangladesh)
<b>CBO</b>	= Community Based Organization
<b>CoS</b>	= Church of Sweden
<b>DCA</b>	= Dan Church Aid
<b>EC</b>	= European Commission
<b>FCA</b>	= Finn Church Aid
<b>FCBSM</b>	= Federation Capacity Building and Social Mobilization
<b>FGD</b>	= Focus Group Discussion
<b>GC</b>	= General Committee
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	= Human Immune Deficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>IEC</b>	= Information, Education and Communication
<b>Khash Land</b>	= Government owned land. Normally remain abandoned, and the poor and landless are encouraged to take lease for more productive use of those lands in improving their livelihood.
<b>NCA</b>	= Norwegian Church Aid
<b>NGO</b>	= Nongovernmental Organization
<b>RDRS</b>	= Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services, a national NGO working in Northwest Bangladesh since 1972.
<b>SO</b>	= Social Organization
<b>Shalish</b>	= Village level local court /Mediation
<b>ToR</b>	= Terms of Reference
<b>TOT</b>	= Training of Trainer
<b>TV</b>	= Television
<b>UF</b>	= Union Federation
<b>UNO</b>	= Upazila Nirbahi Officer (Sub-district Executive Officer)
<b>UP</b>	= Union Parishad
<b>UZ</b>	= Upazila (Sub-district)
<b>UzFCC</b>	= Upazila Federation Coordination Committee
<b>VGD</b>	= Vulnerable Group Development
<b>VIC</b>	= Voter Identity Card

## I. Executive Summary

The Federation Capacity Building and Social Mobilization (CBSM) Project has been successful in achieving the objectives that it set out to undertake at the beginning of the implementation phase. In fact, the Project has managed to enthuse and energize the dormant Federation movement within RDRS as a result of the contributions made through the Project effort. The six objectives were related to strengthening and capacitating the Federation in order to ensure good governance including adequate representation and active participation of women. The project aims to build the capacity of the Federations as democratic and effective community-based organizations and also promote Federations as effective social change agents.

- Reviewing the results and achievement of the Project in the past three and half years, it can be said that Federations are following a set of policies and rules laid down in the Federation byelaws. There is adequate internal democracy, participation and representation of women. This has led to rural poor women being much more confident and active in social and civic engagement in the villages. Memberships have increased and so have the primary groups under 260 Federations, implying more rural poor are being reached through the Federations. Besides, women's contributions have been significant and more than two fifths women now comprise as leaders in the Federation's executive committees. It raises and promotes their choice, voice, governance, grievances and status.
- RDRS had set out to protect the legal status and security of Federation's identity by registering them with relevant government agency. It had set a target of 200 Federations obtaining registration by the end of the Project period. Currently, 140 are registered and another 60 have submitted their application for registration with the Department of Social Welfare. A majority will be legally registered once the government gets its act together. Registration has raised the profile, confidence, visibility and funding possibilities for the Federation as local CBOs.
- Due to extensive capacity development and counseling of the Federations through Project staff and volunteers, Federations have been strengthened in managing their organizations. Management performances such as routine meetings, decisions and follow ups are now a regular feature. Record keeping is satisfactory, although, a few technical details can be improved further. The annual audit and finances are also recorded and kept up to date.
- The Federations have physical facilities which are impressive. Altogether, over 221 Federations have well managed centers, land and compounds, grain storage and boundary with tree lined space. Through these centers and where there are none through the primary groups centers; the Federations are able to provide much need social services including awareness creation; IGAs, modest economic activities and seed or grain storage. Social services are provided for social occasions such as marriage, feasts or even death rites. Federations do have pots, pans, water containers, first aid kits etc. when services are demand.
- The folk songs and theater groups in each of the 29 Upazillas are a great source of entertainment, creativity and cultural *renaissance* in the face of prepackaged popular TV *soap operas* and other television entertainment programs. These folk media also helps to preserve a rich rural cultural heritage of songs, dances and music. The educative and

awareness creation including spill over effects to RDRS theme based programs such as *Shalish*, HIV and AIDs, Health or Disaster Preparedness are truly remarkable.

- The Federation leaders are expected to use the mobiles for building network within Federations and contact different officials at local and national levels, these mobiles can also be used very much in gathering information on market prices of different products as well as contacting friends, family members and relatives by the members and community people on payment.
- Mass social mobilization and awareness creation have been achieved in pertinent but diverse themes such as voter power; women and human rights; environment; HIV and AIDS; human trafficking; tree plantation; primary health care; illegal divorce; marriage registration; birth registration; acid throwing etc. Altogether, 70 para legal volunteers and 260 Federation volunteers are constantly raising awareness and providing the members of the Federation and training their executive committee members on relevant issues including dissemination of information related to other RDRS activities. Besides, the folk songs and theater groups in each Upazilla are also cross fertilizing new and important development, social and civic activism and engagement related themes and ideas to the Federation and its members.
- The Federations have been successful in ensuring civic activism at the Union Parishad level - which is the most notable and lowest political-administrative unit in Bangladesh. Voter educations are a routine feature of the Federation activities for both local and national elections. Many voters comprising the rural poor take part enthusiastically both during education sessions and during actual elections. Many women voters also take part enthusiastically and cast their ballot to choose their political candidates and representatives.

As alluded to in Chapter 5.0 of the main report 576 Federation leaders contested for the UP members during the last local elections. Altogether, 222 were elected to the local government and three were elected chairpersons. Around 44 percent were women and 56 percent men. This is quite a remarkable achievement. It helps to bring improved governance and improved responsiveness towards the rural poor in the Union Parishad.

Once elected these officials together with other Union Parishad or Council members are trained and sensitized on their roles and responsibilities. More than two thirds of the Council members are also trained on conflict resolution and mediation methods. All these impetuses and efforts have proved to be fruitful; as a majority of the Federations are reporting that they have made serious efforts and are receiving support and funding from the local Union Council or are undertaking joint social, economic and civic activities.

In conclusion and summarizing these achievements, one must record that the Project has been substantially successful in implementing and achieving what it set to accomplish in the plan. This is not to say that there are no areas for improvements. Certainly, there are many areas where the Project can plug its loopholes. One area which is glaringly important is a policy related issue which RDRS can attempt in future.

- (a) This is in relation to the symbiotic and mutual partnership between RDRS and the Federations, which currently is at 260 but which it proposes to increase to 353 by the end of the strategic period 2010. RDRS can clarify and it will help the Federations further, if a mutually beneficial and rewarding relationship can be established such that these



Federations become the local level partners of RDRS, in a genuine sense beyond the implementation arm of its varied program activities.

- (b) It will also benefit the network of Federations if RDRS attempted to ensure performance monitoring based on participative principles and tools. It can complement the current staff based project monitoring tools and indicators which are dominantly physical and “counting beans” in nature. The monitoring system does give RDRS a fair picture but it is still a blurred and grainy one. RDRS can attempt to obtain an overall picture which is clearer and *a higher resolution picture* by ensuring that it’s monitoring system combines project activities with performance indicators that are related to Federations as a civic movement. RDRS’ role together with the Project staff then becomes one of a support function which strengthens Federations as CBOs. In this dispensation, RDRS through the Project provides further impetuses to civic movement of the rural poor thereby strengthening the civic society sector as a whole. The focus on Federation capacity building and the capacity building of its leaders become much sharper in this perspective. Since this will now assume a role of strengthening Federations as organizations of the rural poor in north-west Bangladesh.
- (c) RDRS can also recruit, orient, place and capacitate its entire staff and volunteer's cadre, relevant to the Project, *to become even more competent* in monitoring, facilitating and nurturing Federations so that it becomes sustained organization of the rural poor.
- (d) RDRS may wish to design and plan Federation strengthening initiatives, taking into consideration eventual autonomy of the federation and its network. In accomplishing this task, RDRS has to be mindful to ensure not only the project management aspect, social activism and civic activism, which it has done well and is notably successful, but also economic autonomy and empowerment of the Federations. This will fulfill and strengthen the Federation’s twin element of institutional and financial sustainability as well.
- (e) RDRS may also consider, for greater benefit of the Federation strengthening, improved set of performance indicators which reflects good services and products, optimum utilization and immediate but sustained benefits at the Objectives and Results level the more challenging outcome indicators. The current indicators are set at a lower level where it meets only physical or quantitative targets; reflecting mostly major activities completed rather than its quality and performance as sustained development.
- (f) RDRS may also consider and design steps to respond to the high demand and need from the Federations and Primary Groups members to fulfill measures related to income generation and employment creation. In this respect, program coordination and creation of positive synergy across RDRS departments and units such as livelihood; micro enterprise and micro finance departments with the Federation Capacity Building Unit and Social Empowerment Department is very important. Currently, such interdepartmental intermediations and coordination at all levels in RDRS are surprisingly low and there is ample room for improvement in the future!!!
- (g) The capacity strengthening, grading and monitoring of over 8,000 primary groups directly under the 260 Federations and encompassing of another over 20,000 groups (either non-federated, affiliated or even self-emerged due to demonstration effect) is equally important. It will help create a greater critical mass of rural poor who can reduce poverty. At the same time, it will ensure better quality of primary grassroots groups,

hitherto, now under supervision of Federations but without much strict quality and performance indicators. The performance indicators set for Federations can be modified to strengthen the capacity of the primary and other non-federated groups or affiliated groups in future. This may even be attempted through the Federations acting as catalyst for that change and transformation rather than direct involvement of RDRS staff.

- (h) RDRS may be overwhelmed by request to continue to fund physical and program activities of coordination units of the Federations such as the 29 Upazilla Coordination Committees; further 6-8 District Coordination Committees and even Zonal or Divisional Committees of the Federation in future. Such aspirations are perfectly legitimate and valid and can be stretched to national coordination committee. Be aware that the Federations acts as **organizations that are** in the forefront of poverty reduction; social activism; civic activism and economic empowerment and are, therefore, the fundamental units of the organizations of the rural poor. Their active roles in implementation are fundamentally different than the roles of Coordination Committees, who should not repeat an **Organizational** role but should support them in the form of **Networks**. A mismatch, disconnect and duplication of implementation cum organizational roles of 260 federations with the advocacy and networking roles of the Upazilla and District level committees will not only be waste of resources and duplication of roles but will spell impending conflict of interest within the Federation movement. RDRS must be aware of this potential conflict and conflict of interest among the Federation leadership. **Its policy towards the federation capacity and building capacity of the networks must, therefore, be guided by such foresighted policies and procedures. It will provide healthy development of the federations and its networks avoiding potential conflict and undue high expectations in the future.**

## **Part II**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### *1.1 Background of FCBSM Project*

“Federations capacity building and social mobilization in Northwest Bangladesh”, a three and half years’ Project of RDRS, started in January 2003. The cardinal objective of the Project is to increase the institutional capacity of the 260 Union Federations (UFs) as community-based development organizations (CB)s), which means improving the management and technical efficiency of the Federations in terms of leadership, record keeping, good governance, resource mobilization and advocacy.

The Project will lead to an expanded social role for Federations (among their membership and in the wider community). The Federations, as capable and representative community based organizations will facilitate not only social development services, social mobilization and grassroots advocacy for the member groups/households and local wider community, but will also act as a collective presence in the community.

There are three major components of the Project:

1. Federations Institutional Capacity Building.
2. Social Awareness (Promoting Social Mobilization and Awareness Raising By Federations).
3. Civic Engagement (Improved Interaction by Federations with and Access to Political/Local Government Process and Resources).

The overall objective of the Project was to promote positive social change among the rural poor and their wider communities enabling them to improve their status and livelihood through fostering emergence of representative, effective and sustainable community-based organizations of the rural poor.

Altogether, RDRS through this Project has developed capacity of 260 Union Federations as democratic and effective community based organizations to support their disadvantaged groups and wider community members. The Project promotes institutional development through strengthening the Federations. It also promotes Federations as effective local change agents by facilitating development awareness initiatives such as social mobilization, women leadership, rights of the rural poor, advocacy, legal and disaster preparedness etc.

#### *1.2 Background of DCA consortium*

1.2.1 DCA was founded in 1922 and started its activities the same year. The chief emphasis of DCA's work builds upon the principle of mobilization of the poor for their won development. The long-term development work of DCA is summarized in two objectives, i.e. (a) sustainable peace and justice through strong civil societies; and (b) sustainable livelihoods for marginalised groups. DCA believes that without this approach real and sustainable development benefiting the poorest is unlikely to take place. DCA's international work is defined according to two main criteria, i.e. (i) a rights based approach, and (ii) a geographical focus to work in 11 focus countries with a fully fledged development intervention and complete country Program. DCA has been joined by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA); Finn Church Aid (FCA) and Church of Sweden (CoS) as Consortium partners to support this Project. They have been core funding partners of RDRS for a long time.

### **1.3 Background of RDRS**

RDRS Bangladesh is a well established development NGO working to empower the rural poor in northern Bangladesh - the most neglected region in the country. Despite laudable efforts by RDRS supported by its funding partners and by the government, it is still the most underdeveloped region in the country with highest concentration of the rural poor and an endemic food insecure area. RDRS is consistently working in that area for over a period of 34 years. Its major endeavors include a range of social change including change in people's livelihood, especially of the women, improving lives on the Char<sup>1</sup> areas; raising community awareness on human rights and social issues, promoting savings, credit and skills training for improving livelihood of the poor and the emergence of Union Federations (self-managed people's organizations). RDRS works primarily with the landless, marginal farmers, and destitute women and children of its Project districts.

The process of formation and strengthening of Federations is one of the key components in RDRS strategy, which aims to building self-reliant people's democratic organizations representing the interests of the landless and near landless people<sup>2</sup>. The organization has increasingly put emphasis on developing the institutional capacity of Union Federations to enable them to become effective key development agents for their member groups as well as the wider local community.

### **2.0 Objective of Evaluation**

- to provide stakeholders within the European Commission, RDRS and the consortium members (DCA, FCA, CoS with NCA as contributors) with sufficient information to make an informed judgement about the performance of the Project over the 4 years of implementation,
- to document major lessons learned, and
- to provide practical recommendations for follow-up action (for RDRS, Federations and the Consortium) including RDRS Strategies and policies for supporting and strengthening Federations in future.

### **2.1 Evaluation Activities**

The evaluation should particularly stress Program performance and give scope for Program improvement. Therefore the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of Project interventions will be the primary focus. Since the recent Benini survey and national consultant preparatory study have recently studied Federations-related issues, the consultant should also endeavour to identify key issues/questions raised in that report.

### **2.2 Evaluation Outputs**

- a. Relevance:** the analysis of relevance should focus on the extent to which the design appropriately:
1. assessed institutional capacity issues and effectively promoted local ownership.
  2. clearly and accurately identified real problems.
  3. provided a clear analysis of strategy options and justified the recommended implementation strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Char: Sandbar, surrounded by rivers.

<sup>2</sup> Collective effervescence is an important method for raising awareness of all the people in one area where the 'Federations' under mobilization is a prime action for pursuing the same in that line. That makes collective exaltation of all the people of an area living in a common misery.

4. established a clear and logically coherent set of Project objectives and a set of indicative activities for delivering each Project result.
5. developed a clear and useful log frame matrix with supporting activity and resource/cost schedules.

**b. Efficiency**

The analysis of efficiency will answer to what extent the activities transformed the available resources into the desired results as stated in approved Project (ONG-PVD/2002/020-446).

Special focus should be placed on:

1. management of the budget
2. cost and value for the money
3. management of personnel, information and property
4. match between existing staffing profiles and qualifications and Project objectives.
5. management of risk (e.g. responsiveness to change) and the adequacy of existing monitoring systems,
6. relations/co-ordination with local authorities, institutions, media, beneficiaries and donors.

**c. Effectiveness**

The analysis of effectiveness will deal with how far the results contributed to fulfil the specific objectives parting from the Logical framework using the presented indicators.

Key issues are addressed:

1. whether the planned benefits have been delivered and received as perceived by all key stakeholders (including women and men).
2. how well management responded to foreseen and unforeseen risks and events and how other key stakeholders responded to this.
3. influence of unexpected events on results.

**d. Sustainability**

Sustainability for Federations is part of the overall objective of the Project. To what extent have this been achieved. Key issues to be studied:

1. ownership of objectives and achievements among stakeholders
2. donor support and policies, have they influenced and how
3. budget adequacy
4. influence of other actors
5. other outstanding issues identified in the Benini report.
6. capacity of the Federations to continue development activities independently.
7. extent to which the Project contributed to interaction between Federations' and local government, including any contribution to enhancing local government accountability
8. extent to which Federations may gained capacity to generate/mobilize resources and explore external funding?

**e. Impact**

The analysis of impact will explore

1. To what extent have intended social changes been achieved and how far that was directly due to the Project?

2. Have this social change emerged from improved institutional capabilities? Has this included a wider community and not only the Federations membership?
3. Have the status of the Federations membership and their wider communities been improved in the period evaluated?
4. Were there any unplanned impacts?

**f. Advice for future programming**

In order to ensure lessons are applied, specific recommendations are invited to guide future RDRS programming in supporting, accompanying and strengthening the development of Federations. In particular this requires:

1. Specific points and issues to be considered by RDRS in strengthening its future strategy and policies in working with Federations.
2. Specific recommendations on how RDRS can effectively support the diversity of Federations (strong and weak) in future given very limited resource availability – this requires suggesting the main elements of a Federations development policy for RDRS.

**3.0 Evaluation Methodology**

**3.1 Other Information**

The evaluation was carried out during a four-week period in Bangladesh. The consultants (an international and a national) prepared and presented an evaluation plan in consultation with RDRS. The field work spanned from 30 October until 2 December 2006. It was mostly undertaken in RDRS working districts in the North West Bangladesh supplemented by meetings, validation, information collection, analysis etc in Rangpur and Dhaka. The Consultants prepared a short summary presentation of findings at the RDRS Partner Consultation during 21-22 November 2006 in Dhaka.

The Final Draft Report was submitted to RDRS for comments on 24 December 2006. The Draft Final Report was revised according to the comments received from RDRS on 10 January 2007. This report was then circulated to the Consortium Partners consisting of DCA, NCA, FCA and CoS on 19 January 2007. Their feedback was helpful in finally completing the Evaluation Report by mid march 2007.

The consultant relied on both quantitative and qualitative data and information available with RDRS. The evaluation was carried out through analyses of various sources of information including desk analysis of existing documentation such as Project application, previous studies (the aforementioned Benini study and Bhabatsosh report), monitoring reports and other reports, interviews with, RDRS Project staff, beneficiaries, partner agencies, donor representatives. The Evaluation Methodology encompassed *inter alia*:

- Literature Reviews,
- Meetings and Interviews,
- Specific Reports on Projects,
- Validation of Project Design Matrix indicators (OVIs),
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Federations and Group Members,
- East and West Zonal and Rangpur level collective consultations,
- East and West Zonal and Rangpur level collective validation,
- Ocular Observations and physical assessments during Field Visits,
- Post field visits analysis,
- Case Studies (examinations of 16 case studies 8 in each zone),

- Audio-visual documentary reviews,
- Assessment of Folk Songs and Peoples Theatre Group's work,
- Media/News Paper Reports,
- Meetings with Key Informant Persons (KIP)/social/political leaders,
- Local Government Officials,
- Line Agency and Government Officers,
- Meetings with Journalists,
- Meetings with NGOs/CBOs/Human Rights Activists/CSWs,
- Meetings with Mediation Committees; DMCs; WRAC; HIV and AIDS,
- Students; youths; adolescents, school and college students.

### **3.2 TOR (Deliverables)**

The report should include apart from an executive summary, main text with an analysis, also conclusions and recommendations. The report should also include a brief contextual analysis of the Project (i.e., local, international, donor relationships etc). The annexes should include the methodology for the evaluation, a list of persons consulted and a list of literature and documentation consulted. The findings should be illustrated through case studies. Realistic recommendations for future RDRS policy and practice in dealing with Federations should receive adequate attention.

### **3.3 Limitations of the Evaluation**

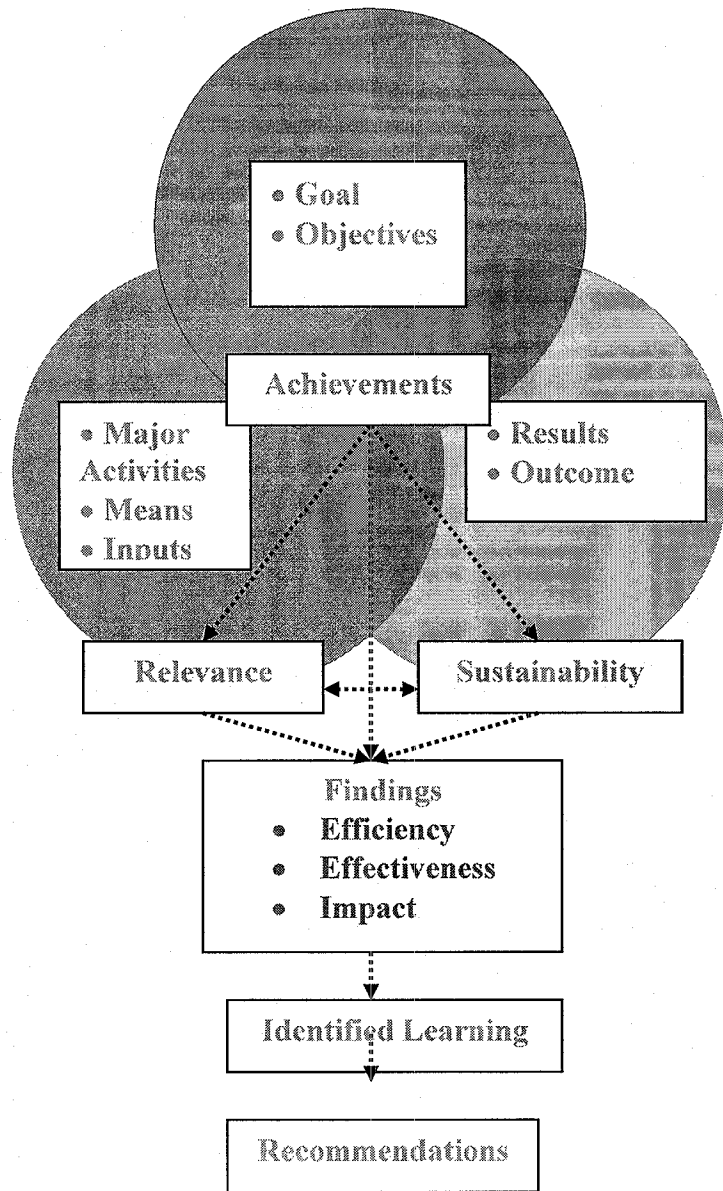
Adequate time and resources was a major problem. Besides the political turmoil in Bangladesh meant that the evaluation team had to spent 10 more days going back and forth in the field. Due to resource constraints the consultants had to ensure that field work and report writing was undertaken for 25 working days when in reality twice as much amount of time and efforts had to be devoted to the Evaluation.

## **4.0 Study Framework**

### **4.1 Study Flow Diagram**

The following diagram visually represents the flow of study and synergetic approach that the evaluators undertook to derive findings (incorporating relevance and sustainability), identified learning and recommendations during the evaluation process. The major activities, means and inputs of the Project were examined in relation to achieving their goals, objectives and results keeping in mind the emphasis at performance indicators at the outcome or effects level.

**Diagram 1: Study Flow Framework Diagram**





#### 4.2 *Performance Indicators*

The evaluation examined the performance of the Project at outcome level. In this respect, the objectives and results were examined carefully. These two elements are the major achievements the Project is accountable and the efforts can be correlated, attributed and credit given to the Project. To assist the evaluation, a Log Frame Analysis Evaluation Matrix (LFAe) was developed based on the Project. This matrix, extracted from the Project LFA, serves the purpose of logically summarizing the expected performance at goal, objectives, results and major activity levels and displays the relevant indicators and source of verification upon which the Projects should be evaluated. Additionally, issues surrounding the relevance and sustainability of the processes are discussed; as well as taking into consideration the factors related to the Project management which should be fully functional (*Please refer to Appendix (IV) for detailed Project LFA*).

#### 4.3 *Areas of Enquiry*

The evaluation concentrated on the 6 Objectives of the Project compared against the performance indicators set in the Project design. It also considered 20 results of the Project compared against the performance indicators. Often there were repetitions and overlaps between the objectives and results which the study noted for future improvements. The quality of 29 major activities carried out by the Project in order to achieve the objectives and results were also examined.

#### 4.4 *Performance Standards and Ratings*

The evaluation adopted the performance indicators using the operational definition that results should lead not only to physical infrastructure or service but such physical outputs and services should lead to improved outputs and services; improved utilization and tangible benefits on the immediate short run. In other words, our measurements of change and improvements must consider beyond mere completed activities or services provided or input given and validate immediate outcomes.

#### 4.5 *Means and Inputs*

- 89 Project Staff
- 70 Para Legal Volunteers
- 260 Union Federations Volunteers
- RDRS Rangpur HQs Support Services
- Computers, Vehicles and Motorcycles
- Financial support from EC and Donor Consortium (DCA, NCA, FCA, CoS) amounting to Euro 2.5 million

## 5.0 Project Plan and Major Components

### 5.1 Objectives (judgments)

A total of six objectives were categorized under three broad development intervention logics. Performance Indicators under these objectives were also articulated specifically in the LFA.

#### Intervention Logic- A: Federation's Institutional capacity building

**Objective 1: Increase in Union Federations (UFs) accepting and adhering to an agreed constitution and democratic practice includes the active involvement of women.**

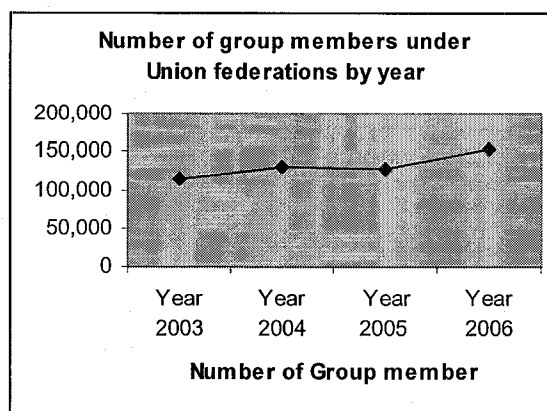
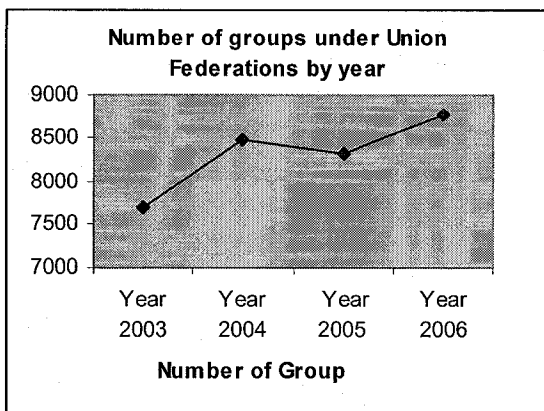
*Indicator 1: 75% of UFs will have increased active membership, regular elections and practice good governance.*

*Indicator 2: Overall, women comprise 40% of UF Executive Committees*

**Finding 1:** Out of a total 260 Federations (East Zone 120 and West Zone 140), membership had increased in 210 (81%) Federations over the last three and a half years Project period. In 2003, the numbers of groups were 7,697 with 114,761 members. In 2004, this number increased by (10%) and the group members increased by (12%). In 2005, the number of groups decreased by (2%) compared to the previous year, whereas the number of members remained almost the same. The increase in group members was significantly more again in the year 2006 compared to the year 2005. It registered (21%) increase to 26,390 new members. This meant an average increase of 126 new members in each Federation. However, in the same period, the number of groups increased by only (5%) or only 454 groups. It averaged 2 new groups in each Federation. The bottom line is - compared to the increase in new members (35%) across all groups; the corresponding increase of groups in each federation was appreciably less (14%) in the Project period. Nevertheless, these two trends can be considered positive in terms of coverage of the rural poor by the Project.

**Table 1: Groups and Group Members under Union Federations**

RDRS working Zone	Number of Groups and Group Members by Year							
	Year 2003		Year 2004		Year 2005		Year 2006	
	Group	Group Member	Group	Group Member	Group	Group Member	Group	Group Member
East	3,584	51,252	3,761	55,448	3,736	56,318	3,915	66,679
West	4,113	63,509	4,703	73,190	4,578	71,743	4,853	87,772
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,697</b>	<b>114,761</b>	<b>8,464</b>	<b>128,638</b>	<b>8,314</b>	<b>128,061</b>	<b>8,768</b>	<b>154,451</b>



Regular elections were held in 181 Federations, which indicated (70%) Union Federations were covered within this Project period. More elections are to be held in December 2006 if the political situation allows such activities. Executive Committee members were provided training on good governance. After successful completion of training course, EC members became more conscious on transparency and accountability in running Federations management smoothly. It was found that most of the Federations (75%) leaders did their best to uphold the important aspects of good governance.

***Finding 2:***

Executive Committee of a Federation comprises of 9 members in which Vice Chairperson's post and additional two other posts for general members in the Executive Committee are reserved for women. The total number of EC members in 260 Federations stands at 2,340. Among them 1,100 (47%) are women and 1,240 (53%) are men. The FCBSM Project has made an appreciable improvement on the good governance, accountability, transparency and overall empowerment, representation and participation of women in group and Federation management.

**Objective 2: Improved protection of UFs legal status through registration of UFs.**

*Indicator - 1: Up to 200 UFs will have obtained legal registration that is respected by the authorities.*

***Finding 1:***

A total of 140 Federations are registered with the Social Welfare Department, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, under respective Upazillas. The plan was to register 200 UFs and the actual registration was (70%) of this target. In fact, many more Federations applied for registration to the government authority. However, due to government's limited capacity and its policy of temporary halt to registration of new CBOs, more could not be registered. It will, therefore, take some more time to have all the 260 UFs registered eventually. Generally, UF members feel confident and proud to be recognized legally through registration. A few Federations have begun to receive funds from government's social welfare department, RDRS and from the NGO foundation.

**Objective 3: Improved organizational management and record-keeping by UFs.**

*Indicator 1: Seventy five percent (75%) of UFs will maintain management performance, record and book keeping to a satisfactory standard.*

*Indicator 2: Seventy five percent (75%) of UFs will undergo annual audit*

***Finding 1:***

The Evaluation notes that each Federation conducts monthly General Committee (GC) and Executive Committee (EC) meeting regularly. According to the audit report as well as the Project monitoring findings report keeping and documentations is fairly satisfactory. A total of 185 Federations or seventy one percent (71%) maintained their records properly. Each of these Federations kept those records updated in a regular manner.

In the rest of twenty nine percent (29%) Federations there are some management and documentation areas which needs improvements in the future. These are maintaining the minute book properly to show the chronological record of meetings; the decisions taken during meetings and who is suppose to undertake remedial actions; the reinforcement of follow up actions and remainder of the decisions of the immediate past meetings; validation of these meetings decisions by not only the EC members but also the members participating in the meeting by ensuring that they sign the minute book after each monthly meeting. These follow up issues and review of the previous decisions were not recorded properly or followed up diligently.

***Finding 2:***

All 260 (100%) Federations carried out financial audit by an external reputed audit firm (ACNABIN). During the last four years (beginning from July 2002), financial audits were conducted in each Federations regularly without any gap. Currently the Financial Audit is facilitated dominantly by RDRS. Internalization and integration of management letter and audit recommendation needs to be enforced in the future by the UF themselves.

**Objective 4: Enhanced community facilities operated under UF management.**

*Indicator- 1: 15% of UFs will establish community centers.*

*Indicator-2: 45% of UFs will establish and operate community libraries-cum-folksong centers.*

**Finding 1:** A total of 61 UFs had established their community centers. This was equivalent to (23%) of the total UFs, i.e., (8%) more than it was targeted. The Community Centers (CCs) were well constructed, had good space, and airy rooms and good lightings. The (CCs) also has good compounds and trees around it. A majority of the (CCs) also had grain storage facilities. A few also had IGA activities such as sewing; carpet weaving or local handicraft production. The land was normally purchased by the community and the building superstructure supported by RDRS. The building construction cost was approximately in the region of Taka 500,000.

**Finding 2:** There are altogether “64 community library-cum-folksong centre” serving 64 Federations. Another, 145 Federations have only community library. This means that 209 Federations have one or the other facility out of the total 260 Federations. This means that 51 Federations have neither library nor folksong and theatre group or folk song and theatre center currently.

The Project’s experience is that the challenge to establishing a folksong center is the availability of skilled and interested performers. The Project has been successful in providing physical instruments. These were supplied to a total of 95 cultural groups as needed.

It was easier to establish a library than either a folksong center or a theatre center in Federations. Out of the target of 117 Federations (45%) only 95 Federations currently have either folk songs or theatre centers. Disaggregating this achievement, it was found that a total of 62 people's theatre groups and 33 folksong groups were formed under 95 Federations. On the other hand, 209 Federations have library facilities surpassing the set target. What is noticeable is the fact that the Project fell short of its rather ambiguous target of setting 117 folksongs and theater groups simultaneously in (45%) of the Federations. The utilization of libraries is rising, although more needs to be done to popularize it and make it even more creative and interesting.

The folk songs and theatre groups are rendering great service to the people in awareness creation; entertainment and cultural heritage preservation and promotion. This is one of the most inspiring and successful accomplishment of the Project and RDRS must be commended for developing such creative social mobilization medium through popular folk songs and theaters. It has good educative, entertainment and critical awareness values.

#### **Intervention Logic- B: Social Awareness**

##### **Objective 5: Enhanced awareness of relevant social and related issues, especially women's rights.**

*Indicator 1: Popular theatre/music groups will be attached to 25% of UFs (at least one per Upazilla).*

*Indicator 2: UF Volunteers and Paralegals trained in Social issue dissemination.*

*Indicator 3: Mass social mobilization/events held in 90% of Unions with at least 400 participants.*

**Finding 1:** In total 209 Federations had library; 62 Federations had theatre groups and 33 Federations had folksong groups. This means that since 2003, around (37%) Federations had folksong groups and theater groups combined. This figure when combined was (12%) more than 65 Federations which were targeted; based on the rationale that each Upazilla will have at least one such facility.

Each of the 29 Upazillas was supposed to have one folksong and two people's theatre groups. This has been achieved in the RDRS working area as two popular theatre groups and one folksong group do exist in each Upazilla. People's theatre and folksong are treated as the most effective media to create awareness among the masses in rural areas. People from all sectors appreciate this approach and UFs are being recognized as socio-cultural resource centres. They effectively arrange such social and entertainment events heightening a greater sense of increased awareness on relevant social, civic and economic issues and motivate the rural poor to actively participate in these issues. The Folksongs and Theatre Groups are so popular and effective in awareness creation, RDRS can even attempt to have them in all 260 UFs in future.

**Finding 2:** A total of 260 Volunteers were trained and engaged in assisting UFs. Among them sixty percent (60%) were male volunteers and forty percent (40%) were female volunteers. One Volunteer is responsible for one UF in order to accomplish day-to-day

official work of the respective UF. Federations Volunteers were trained on Federations management, book-keeping and accounts, library management and other office management. They were not provided training on leadership, capacity building, and orientation on strengthening people's organization adequately. Hence, they lacked vital skills on these important issues. It appears that Federations Volunteers are very much task-oriented. However, they accomplish their tasks in time and are hard working and sincere staff.

Together with Federation Volunteers seventy (70) Paralegal Volunteers were also trained on TOT, leadership, planning, management and legal issues. All of them are women. Some of them are very young that sometimes it becomes difficult to deal with the elderly UF leaders, members and other community members. Due to their relative youth, inexperience and also lack of confidence in practical matters; some Federations Volunteers and Paralegal Volunteers were unable to adequately command confidence of matured group members and leaders.

**Finding 3:** Mass social mobilization events were held in each of the 260 UFs. Major events were: National and International Days observations, social awareness building through arranging people's theatre and folksong, arranging topical workshops, as well as campaigns on various relevant social issues. On an average more than 500 people participated in each event and enjoyed it wholeheartedly.

The day observations, demonstration, rallies and campaigns were normally earlier confined to urban centers in Bangladesh. However, due to RDRS and UF efforts, such mass gatherings especially observation of national and international days and events are now taking place in remote rural areas. These events have improved solidarity, awareness creation, confidence and empowerment of the poor people.

### **Intervention Logic C: Civic Engagement**

#### **Objective 6: Enhanced issue-specific local activism and engagement of UFs in their wider communities.**

*Indicator 1: Voter education campaigns and election monitoring conducted for local government Elections.*

*Indicator 2: Significant number of UF member elected to Union Parishad or local union councils.*

*Indicator 3: Thirty percent (30%) of Union Council members trained and sensitized on their roles and responsibilities.*

*Indicator 4: Seventy five percent (75%) of Federations leaders trained in conflict resolution and mediation skills.*

*Indicator 5: Fifty percent (50%) of UFs are successfully accessing local Government resources.*

**Finding 1:** In the year 2003, voter education campaigns were held in 257 Union Parishads. After that there has been no elections were held so far. The UF leaders in assistance with volunteers, paralegals and Manager (Social Empowerment) of RDRS facilitated the mass

campaign activities with community members, especially with the voters. The UFs have a plan to hold campaigns in December 2006, before the next parliamentary elections if it indeed takes place in time?

Elections monitoring were conducted by the UF leaders informally, as they had no legal sanctity in doing so formally /officially, for the local government elections. However, this process also built confidence among the voters in the area to participate in free, fair and peaceful elections. It has a powerful moral force and mandate as people's power.

**Finding 2:** Altogether 576 UF leaders contested as candidates for UP members or Chairpersons. Among them, 219 (38%) were elected as UP members and 3 elected as UP Chairpersons; in the last UP elections in 2003. Out of a total of 222 elected members or Chairpersons, 97 (44%) were women and 125(56%) were men. The Evaluation notes that UF members have developed their confidence on their leadership capacity as to participate in the local government elections. Participation of women from the poor families was also remarkable in this respect. These positive developments can be ascribed to the efforts of the Project.

**Finding 3:** In each of the 260 UPs, there are 13 members and a Chairperson. In total there were 3,380 members and Chairpersons. Among them, a total of 1,030 (30%) were provided 2 days' training on development concept, roles and responsibilities of the public representatives. After the UP elections in 2003, respective Federations arranged reception for the newly elected UP Chairperson and members. These receptions were organized by the Upazilla Federation Coordination Committee (UzFCC) and held centrally at Upazilla level for the Chairperson and members of all UPs under that respective Upazilla. On this occasion, UNO and other local government level officers attended and appreciated this promising step taken by UFs /UzFCC. Selected community members at Union /Upazilla level were also invited on this occasion. This was done in order to enhance grassroots level public representatives' awareness and confidence. They also become more familiar about their public roles and responsibilities which a Chairperson or a Member is responsible. In this manner, the UF played a vital role to ensure civic engagement of the community members as a whole. When the Evaluation discussed these issues with the respective Chairperson or members, it was clear that they cherished it wholeheartedly and wished further to cooperate with UFs in all respect in order to develop socio-economic status of the rural poor, especially the women involved with the Federations.

**Finding 4:** Out of a total of 2,340 Executive Committee members (leaders) under 260 UFs, 1,680 (72%) were provided 3 days training on legal issues, conflict resolution techniques, civic rights, and important and at times sensitive issues in the Constitution of the country etc. This training was conducted by 'ASK' (Ain o' *Shalish* Kendra), a reputed national NGO involved in implementing legal education, handling violence cases especially of women and extending legal support to the victims. The training sessions were fruitful and appreciated by the UF leaders and RDRS. Yet we observed that there were no refresher courses was arranged through ASK which could have further developed the skills of the leaders particularly of the *Shalish* committee members during the life of the current Project.

**Finding 5:** The Evaluation notes that the UF leaders and other members were still unclear on the term "local government resources:?" Their simple understanding of what the local government resources meant was some of the physical and financial facilities available to the UP Chairpersons and Members. In this respect, many UFs managed to allocate VGD cards,

old-age allowance, and widow allowance for the poor women and men. Besides, some UFs received hygienic latrine sets at subsidy rates from UPs. Some UFs also managed to “lease out or own” government “*Khaslands*”, and water bodies or ponds in the name of landless group members. Approximately around sixty percent (60%) UFs mobilized these types of local resources successfully. According to the UF leaders, such resources mobilization depends on the advocacy, networking and public relations the UP representatives. A good strong leadership quality of the UF leaders and Executive Committee members and regular coordination and follow up with the UPs brings about substantial success in local resources.

## 5.2 Results of six specific Objectives

It is of note to mention here that the Results appearing in log frame are almost the same as the Objectives described earlier. The evaluators examined them chronologically in this report and although some Results may appear repetitious yet we dealt with them in detail. In future, the logframe can be preopared carefully in order to make improvement to this planning tool. The Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) do contain measurable quantitative indicators and we validated them against the means indicated in the planning document. The evaluators have cross-checked these data at Union Federations, RDRS Unit office and at the Project office in Rangpur level and found it satisfactory and accurate. After validating these achievements with various stakeholders individually and in groups, the evaluators have come to some conclusion and stated them against each indicator under the respective Result.

### **Result 1.1: Increase in Union Federations with active membership**

*Indicator: A minimum of 200 UFs increase their active membership*

**Finding:** Membership increased in 210 Union Federations since 2003. The number of active members increased by twelve percent (12%) in 2004 compared to year 2003. In 2005, number of members decreased slightly than the previous year. In the year 2006, number of members increased by almost twenty one (21%) than the year 2005. New members are regular in paying subscriptions and all of them are regular members under the respective groups at the village level.

### **Result 1.2: Increase in Union Federations conducting regular fair elections**

*Indicator: A minimum of 200 UFs are holding successful elections*

**Findings:** Elections were held in time in 182 UFs, which was nine percent (9%) less than it was targeted. Election of Union Federations was held fairly and neutrally. General members under Union Federations were made well aware (civic educated) on voting system, rules and regulations etc. Election Commissioners (EC) were appointed from outside. In most cases Upazilla level government officers (even the UNO) acted as EC. Each general member was given a “Voter Identity Card (VIC)” from the respective Union Federation, which included her/his recent photograph, address, membership serial number and voter ID number. This has treated as an important step to establish civic rights of the people in general. In Bangladesh, no eligible voter has (VIC) currently. Union Federations under RDRS supervision have stepped forward proactively in this area and done a commendable job. This work is appreciated by the government officials at local, Upazilla and district level. The voters are also happy with their now found voter power and identity.



**Result-1.3: Increase in UFs convening regular General and Executive Committee meetings**

*Indicator: A minimum of 200 UFs convene regular General and Executive Committee Meetings*

**Findings:** General Committee (GC) and Executive Committee (EC) meetings are held separately once in each month, at each UF level. The evaluation notes that all 260 UFs organize GC and EC meetings regularly on fixed dates of the month. In GC meeting there are on average seventy five to eighty percent (75% - 80%) general members who attend regularly. A majority of the GC members in the UF 30 years of age. In EC meetings all 9 members attended the event regularly.

According to the structure and design of FCBSM Project, one volunteer is looking after day-to-day activities of a Federation in a regular way. Besides, there are Managers (Social Organization) and Field Promoters who visit UFs regularly. They all are engaged in accomplishing UF based activities according to their plan of action. In the GC and EC meetings they also play the role as facilitators. Therefore, the meetings at UF level are held regularly in all 260 UFs. When asked, UF leaders and respective Project staff expressed their opinion saying that the leaders in many UFs conducted meeting on their own. Nevertheless, the evaluators feel that it important to transfer the much needed skills of the respective staff to the UF leaders in order for them in order to run their own organization independently.

**Result 1.4: Increase women's leadership of UFs**

*Indicator: In a minimum of 150 UFs, 40% of the Executive Committee positions are filled by women.*

**Findings:** From the very beginning of the Project, RDRS management emphasized the development of women leadership at grassroots level people's organizations. At UF Executive Committee level out of 9 members' posts, 3 are reserved for women candidate including the post of Vice Chairperson. In that respect Executive Committee in each UF consists of 1 woman Vice Chairperson, 2 women members and 6 men/women members. In order to form the 9 member EC committee through elections, a woman general member has her right to compete with a man for Chairpersonship or for membership besides the 3 reserved posts exclusively for women members. The evaluations further notes that in some UFs Executive Committees are headed by woman (as Chairperson), and in some UFs all the Executive Committee members are women.

According to the Project plan, in a minimum 150 UFs, i.e. forty percent (40%) of the Executive Committee positions were to be filled up by women. But in reality more than this was achieved since a total of 132 UFs demonstrated that they actually had eighty eight (88%) women members. In reality, among the total 2,340 Executive Committee members; 1,100 or forty seven percent (47%) were women in the 260 UFs.

**Result 2.1: Increase in number of UFs having obtained legal registration**

*Indicator: Up to 200 UFs have obtained legal registration (77%).*

**Findings:** Until the end of 2006, a total of 140, i.e. fifty four percent (54%) UFs had obtained legal registration from Social Welfare department under the Government of Bangladesh. Furthermore, another 66 UFs had submitted applications but had not yet

succeeded in getting registration. The Government had temporarily suspended registering more CBOs. However, it is hoped that registration of new organizations will again start from the beginning of 2007.

**Result 3.1. Enhanced leadership and management of UF records and accounts**

*Indicator: A minimum of 150 UFs (58%) are assessed as performing according to a minimum agreed standard of management performance*

**Findings:** The UF has developed own byelaws and constitution with the help of RDRS. The UFs followed these byelaws to run the Federations. All the 260 UFs have been assessed by the relevant Managers (SO) and Field Promoters. Altogether 140 Registered UFs had their constitution approved by the government's social welfare department. They had to follow the laws in the Federation constitution to carry out both operational and policy issues. The evaluation notes that to a large extent the General and Executive Committee meetings are held regularly and the guiding principles enforced and complied. However, there are some management elements such as documenting decisions of each monthly meeting and ensuring tasks are assigned to relevant individual office bearers or groups to carry them out. This must also be reviewed in the following months meeting. The evaluation also notes that minute books were signed by either the Chairperson or the Executive Committee members. The participants could all sign the record books to ensure probity and participation. Besides, regular and meticulous record keeping of UFs needs more attention.

**Result 3.2: Proper maintenance of UF finance**

*Indicator: A minimum of 150 UFs (57%) are assessed as maintaining records/accounts up to a minimum agreed standard*

**Findings:** Till the end of 2006, a total of 185 UFs (71%) were assessed jointly by the monitoring units of RDRS and the Project. The evaluation notes that this was done in time and in a routine manner. It would have been even better if these monitoring processes shed light on the quality of maintaining good financial records. Therefore, in future, it is important to ensure what is the "minimum agreed standard" and report against them as either fulfilled or not and in case of exceptions and non-compliance why did it happen? The financial assessment would improve qualitatively and substantially if the performance of UFs were assessed by relevant staff in this manner.

**Result 3.3: Enhanced transparency and accountability of UF finances**

*Indicator: A minimum of 200 UFs undergo an annual audit*

**Findings:** All 260 UFs were audited by an audit firm each year which began in 2003. Audit reports were prepared both in Bangla and English. The UFs maintained their audit reports properly. Besides audit, General Committee meeting also raised the issues on financial transactions, any discrimination of expenditures etc. The EC members and the responsible leaders had to answer these questions satisfactorily. In this manner, the UF management is transparent and accountable to the general members. In future, the Audit report should have a management letter recommending what should or should not be done by the UF. These recommendations could then be followed by the UF.

**Result 3.4: Enhanced Networking and Sharing Of Lessons Learnt**

*Indicator: In a minimum of out of 29 sub-districts; 20 Upazilla/Districts Liaison Committees are convening regularly*

**Findings:** At the end of this Project period a total of 29 Upazilla Federations Coordination Committee (UzFCC) was formed in 29 Upazillas under 5 districts. These are as follows:

**Table 2: Formation of Upazilla Federations Coordination Committee**

<b>Number of UzFCC in Upazillas under RDRS East and West Zone of RDRS Project Area</b>			
<b>East Zone</b>		<b>West Zone</b>	
<b>District /Sub-unit</b>	<b># of UzFCC</b>	<b>Upazilla</b>	<b># of UzFCC</b>
Lalmonirhat	5	Panchagarh	5
Kurigram	3	Thakurgaon	3
Nageswari (Sub-unit)	3	Pirgonj (Sub-unit)	3
CDP (Sub-unit)	3	Nilphamari	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>15</b>

Formation of UzFCC encouraged the village level primary group members to join UFs enthusiastically; as they felt it was important to be part of a wider and bigger people's organization. The Executive Committee members of all UFs in a Upazilla formed 9 members UzFCC Executive Committee. Every month, representatives (2 leaders from each UF) from respective UFs under a Upazilla attend UzFCC meeting and share their experiences, solve problems and take necessary management actions. One UzFCC has normally on an average 10 UFs. The UF Leaders under UzFCC are experienced and competent in conducting meeting, analyzing management challenges and accomplishing major activities. These UF leaders need to give more effort to get acquainted on how to strengthen the UzFCC; since it is a networking and policy advocacy body. They also need to work closely to sustain and consolidate these networks such that they become institutionalized on the long run. At the same time the role of the UzFCC and the office bearers should be predominantly focused towards policy advocacy and advocacy for the works of federated and primary groups at the grassroots level.

Currently, the District Liaison Committees has not been formed. Nevertheless, it appears that RDRS management and UzFCC members are looking forward to form such committee at district level in the future. The Evaluators recommends and strongly feels that the UzFCC must become first fully functional. Once they have become a legal entity and once the leaders of UzFCCs are proficient on networking, advocacy, counseling; only then the formation the district level committees can be more effective. The district level committees should also focus their efforts towards policy advocacy and advocacy for the works of federated and primary groups at the grassroots level. The District Liaison Committees can act as an effective capacity developer of the civic society sector in respective districts. They can work together with the state and the market sector as an effective countervailing entity in economic, social, civic and political activism.

**Result 4.1: Increase in number of Community centers under UF management**

*Indicator: 40 UF Community centers constructed and handed over to UFs*

**Findings:** A total of 61 Community centers were constructed during Project period. All these centers were handed over to the respective UF management within this time according to the Project policy. As noted above these centers were constructed well. They had good layout, space, lighting, roofs, adequate compound etc. Some of them even had grain storage or facility for IGAs such as sewing or weaving or processing agro-food items.

**Result 4.2: Enhanced availability and access to Community Library and Cultural Facilities under UF management**

*Indicator: Altogether, 120 UF community libraries-cum-folksong centers selected/established, equipped and handed over to UF.*

**Findings:** At the UF level, library was established separately. There was no such arrangement as to set up folksong centers along with library. Out of 260 UFs, library was established in 209 UFs bringing the coverage to eighty percent (80%). Establishment of libraries in remote rural areas under UF's management was highly appreciated by the community members, especially by students, teachers, youths and adolescents. The effective utilization of the libraries is increasing. However, more needs to be done to popularize it and make it even more resourceful and attractive.

There have been remarkable improvements in popularization of folksong and people's theatre groups in some UFs. Currently there are 33 folksong and 62 people's theatre groups. According to plan it was supposed to have 2 folksong and one theatre group - at least in each of 29 Upazillas. But in reality there are more folksong and people's theatre groups in those Upazillas. The folksong and theatre groups are rendering great service to the people in awareness creation; entertainment and cultural heritage preservation and promotion.

**Result 5.1: Increase in number of people aware of relevant social issues, especially women's rights**

*Indicator 1: 265 other social mobilization events organized.*

*Indicator 2: 5 different types of training organized for UF leaders/volunteers.*

*Indicator 3: A minimum of 300 rural dwellers, on average, attending each mass social gathering.*

*Indicator 4: A total of 42 radio programs are in place.*

*Indicator 5: A total of 264 Rural Cinema performances are screened.*

**Findings 1:** Social mobilization events comprised mainly of various national and international "Day Observations"; organizing "folksong"; "people's theatres"; "mass gathering" and "rally". Due to Project; RDRS and UF efforts such events are now taking place in rural areas. It improves solidarity; cohesion; responsiveness and empowerment of rural poor. During the Project period, a total of 742 folksongs and popular theatre events (2003 =150 events; 2004 = 150; 2005 = 292; 2006 = 150) were organized in all 29 Upazillas combined. This indicated that the achievement in this case was nearly 3 times than what was planned.

**Findings 2:** In order to build capacity, a total of 8 types of training were provided to the UF Leaders. Training courses were on Federations management; Leadership and planning; Good governance; Record keeping; Gender; Arbitration and Mediation; Advocacy and Library management. According to the UF leaders, these training courses were designed appropriately to meet their needs and were useful to them and helped developed their capacity in a concrete way. However, they raised the issue of organizing refresher courses in

a regular manner such that they could improve and retain their skills and learning. Meanwhile, the Volunteers received three different types of training courses. These were TOT, Leadership and planning plus legal issues. The Volunteers also emphasized on receiving regular refreshers course.

**Findings 3:** On aggregate, 500 to 600 villagers attend each mass social gathering at Union level. Village people in general participate enthusiastically and join such event with excitement and good motivation.

**Findings 4:** During the Project period, a total of 46 radio programs were broadcasted. It was generally not possible to inform the UF and other community members prior to the date(s) of broadcasting events. Some of them at the village level enjoyed the program sporadically. Nevertheless, the evaluators were told that the rural masses throughout the country came to know about Union Federations and RDRS's more through these radio programs.

**Findings 5:** A total of 384 rural cinema shows were organized in different spots of 29 Upazillas. People from all segments of the society irrespective of age, religion or sex enjoyed the shows very much. These Cinema shows have proved to be an effective media to change the attitude of the people to a large greater extent.

#### **Result 5.2: Reducing the effects of natural disasters**

*Indicator: A minimum of 1,040 disaster preparedness campaigns will be organized*

**Findings:** During the Project period a total of 1,040 disaster preparedness campaigns were organized in 260 UFs. Each year there was one campaign in each UF. The Community members as a whole became familiar with this issue and joined the rally spontaneously. Local government officials were also invited to join in these campaigns. This resulted in the general people coming closer to these officials and interacted with them as well. This eventually helped the people to avail government resources at the time of their needs.

#### **Result- 5.3: Access to legal aid**

*Indicator: Legal Aid Fund established (up to 40,000 Taka per case)*

**Findings:** Legal aid fund established up to maximum taka 10,000 for one case. In this way a total of 15 cases were handled by 15 UFs during this Project period. This amount was spent for paying lawyer's fee, court fee, transportation cost for the victims etc. Victims from the poor family and even from outside the groups were also provided such support. Extending such legal support, the Union Federations gained more trust among the distressed people in the villages.

#### **Result 5.4: Increased capacity of UFs to mediate in social tensions and conflict**

*Indicator 1: At least 520 UF leaders trained in conflict resolution & arbitration/mediation*

*Indicator 2: A minimum of 150 UFs active in local mediation/arbitration.*

**Findings 1:** A total of 1,680 leaders from 260 UFs were provided training on conflict resolution and arbitration /mediation, which was almost 3 times more than it was targeted. It was a three days training course. Each course averaged 20 – 25 leaders who participated successfully and completed the course.

**Findings 2:** All 260 UFs were involved in conflict resolution through organizing 'Shalish' (village/ Union level local court). During the Project period, each UF implemented (4- 6) cases on an average in each quarter. Major cases were related to family conflicts among couples; quarrel among husband and wife and in-laws; illegal divorce /separation; physical torture on women and dowry related issues. The UF *Shalish* Committee involved Union Parishad (UP) members /Chairperson in order to legitimize the verdict. In many circumstances, the UP Chairperson transferred cases to UF *Shalish* Committee to solve them. This made the UF credible in the eyes of the public representatives and other local government bodies. It was a generally held belief that the UFs were a shelter under which the rural poor found justice effectively and on time.

**Result 5.5: Increased capacity of people's theatre/cultural groups to spread effective Social messages**

*Indicator 1: Altogether 42 training events organized for popular theatre.*

*Indicator 2: A minimum of 730 popular theatre/social mobilization gatherings undertaken.*

*Indicator 3: A minimum of 90 people's theatre and folksong groups linked to UFs trained, equipped and performing regularly.*

**Findings 1:** During the Project period, a total of 42 training events were organized. A six-day' training course was designed and organized by RDRS trainer, in order to develop skills of the artists/role players. Both women and men attended the training courses regularly, on their own. All of them are now involved in performing their roles skillfully.

**Findings 2:** A total of 774 popular theatre/social mobilization gatherings were accomplished under the 260 Union Federations over last three years.

**Findings 3:** Up until July 2006, a total of 95 people's theatre and folksong groups were formed and regularly linked with 95 UFs. Out of the 95 groups, 62 are popular theatre and 33 are folksong groups. In each of these UFs there is either a folksong or popular theatre group to be found. These groups perform their cultural activities all over Project area, where needed. All these groups have become very familiar and popular among the people in general. They are rendering great service to the people.

**Result 6.1: Increased involvement of UF members in local elected government and other community bodies.**

*Indicator: A minimum of 100 members of UFs are elected to Union Parishads (Councils)*

**Findings:** A total of 222 UF members were elected as UP members including 3 Chairpersons. Among them 125 were men and 97 were women. Out of 222 elected public representatives, 3 were elected as UP Chairperson. This was during the Project period within last three years.

**Result 6.2: Enhanced access to public resources of UF and their members**

*Indicator: A minimum of 150 UFs gain access to local government resources*

**Findings:** Almost sixty six percent (60%) of the UFs (152) managed to allocate VGD cards, old-age allowance, and widow allowance for the poor women and men from the UFs. Besides, some UFs received hygienic latrine sets at subsidy rates from the UFs. Some UFs also managed to "lease out" or own government *khaslands* or water bodies in the name of

landless group members. According to the UF leaders, such resource mobilization depends on the development of good relations with the UP representatives. Good leadership quality of the UF leaders, people skills and regular coordination with the UPs enhances access to local government resources.

**Result 6.3: Stronger practice of local democratic processes and decision making**

*Indicator 1: 260 voter education campaigns conducted*

*Indicator 2: 1,040 newly-elected Union Council representatives trained on roles and responsibilities*

*Indicator 3: 640 UP/Government Officials oriented on Federation's roles and responsibilities*

**Findings 1:** Voter education campaigns were held in 257 Union Parishads during 2003 Union Parishad elections. The Union Federations and RDRS carried out mass campaigns in civic education even during non-election years. The UFs planned and carried out mass civic education before each local or general elections. Election monitoring was also conducted by UF leaders informally as citizens groups. This helped in building confidence of the people to take part in elections ensuring non-violent, free and fair elections.

**Findings 2:** A total of 1,030 newly elected Union Parishad members and Chairpersons were trained on roles and responsibilities of public representatives. Training Programs were organized jointly by UFs and RDRS management.

**Findings 3:** During the Project period a total of 689 orientation sessions were organized at the UF level. These events were participated by government officials, public representatives and other rural elites in one-day orientation session. Major objectives of providing such orientation are: i) to make the participants well aware on UF activities and its role in community development; ii) to develop good relations/liaison with the officials in respective fields in order to mobilize local resources and to avail other available support services from them; and iii) to explore new avenues to work jointly with the government departments and CBOs. The evaluators discussed these issues with the government officials and the UF leaders and they were of the opinion that after joining such sessions, the participants were well orientated and were motivated and felt responsible to work together for local development. Despite this initial success, the evaluators observed that there was no specific policy to follow-up to effect changes required after completion of orientation sessions. This element of the federation capacity building project can be strengthened in the future.

**Result - 6.4: Awareness/advocacy events and materials**

*Indicator-1: 1,040 UF leaders/members trained.*

*Indicator-2: Quarterly News Letter published.*

*Indicator-3: Posters and leaflets produced and distributed.*

**Findings 1:** A total of 1,105 leaders and general members participated in the training sessions in order to sharpen their knowledge on advocacy. Among them 599 were women and 506 were men. The evaluation observed during discussion sessions that the leaders were adequately aware of the term *advocacy*. In many UFs, leaders stepped forward to ensure that relevant officials in UPs, government offices and other CBOs; understood the felt needs of the poor community. They also ensured that the rural poor obtained the support needed from these agencies.

**Findings 2:** Newsletters were basically designed and published by RDRS staff under the FCBSM Project. As of September 2006, a total of 13 Newsletters were published. These Newsletters were written in *Bangla* language targeting mainly the *Banlga* readers. Major topics of the Newsletters consisted of UF activities, legal issues, day observations, case histories etc. Newsletters with *Bangla* version are available at the UF office.

**Findings 3:** Issue based attractive posters highlighting different national and international days were developed and distributed in the locality, at UP and other local government offices. However, some posters with long messages appeared to be less attractive for illiterate or ordinary people. Short messages with attractive sketches, diagrams, art pictures and photographs depicting real life situations were more effective and useful to disseminate information to the common masses.

### 5.3 Major Activities

The major activities corresponding to the objectives and results are examined below. Because of the lack of coherence in the logical framework analysis matrix, the evaluators observed mismatch between objectives, results and activities fairly often. There is also a fair bit of repetition of what appears in these three levels of intervention strategies. It can be improved in future Project planning matrix. Nevertheless, they do support one another and the major activities are examined below. Respective Project staffs have been always attentive to fulfill the targets as part of their job. This chapter describes involvement of the Project stakeholders and achievements accomplished so far in the Project areas, especially at UF level.

#### *Activities under Objective 1:*

1. Promote good governance including adherence to and compliance with the agreed constitution, norms and minimum standards.
2. Promote tri-annual elections to Federations leadership, including strict election procedures, Voter education and election monitoring.
3. Facilitate convening regular General and Executive meetings of the UFs.
4. Training of UF leaders including women leaders and volunteers on gender.
5. Developing Women UF leaders and volunteers.
6. Post-election orientation to new leadership after election.

**Findings 1:** This is a continuous process in each UF. As mentioned earlier, during the Project period, the UF management has adhered to and complied with the rules and regulations under the Federations Constitution which is standardized for all 260 UFs. The Project staffs were also followed up keenly and facilitate the management norms in order to develop UF's capacity.

**Findings 2:** Elections were held in time in 182 UFs. In the rest the 78 UFs, elections will be held in due time this year and there are plans to hold more elections next year as well. The evaluation notes that in each Federation, elections were held in free and fair manner according to the set procedures. Before the elections, Voter education sessions were conducted by the Project staff and other resource persons according to the set module.

**Findings 3:** General and Executive meetings are held in each UF on regular monthly basis. Federations volunteers and respective RDRS staff (Manager- Social organization) ensures that meetings are held on time. In case of general meetings, out of 30 members (average), 22 - 24 attend the meetings. All 9 members are regular in attending the Executive Committee meetings.



**Findings 4:** A total of 1,112 leaders and volunteers participated in gender trainings. Out of them 701 were women (63%) and 411 were men (37%). Gender is a cross-cutting theme under the overall development Program of RDRS. Thus at UF level, efforts were made to develop awareness of the UF leaders and volunteers on Gender sensitive planning and social mobilization including implementing Projects. Project staffs were provided gender training at the beginning of the Project. They facilitated the process to ensure participation of the leaders and volunteers in training sessions.

**Findings 5:** Development of women's leadership at UF level has been a consistent effort throughout the Project period. In this regard forty seven percent (47%) of UF office bearers are now represented by potential women leaders. The evaluation notes that the attitude of the male UF leaders have changed positively in enhancing women's capacity. This has enabled women to become "effective leaders" of the people's organization side by side with men. In accomplishing this, the role of Project staffs has been very important throughout the time of Project implementation.

**Findings 6:** Post election orientation sessions were held in 181 UFs. A two-day orientation session for the elected Executive Committee members was organized in each UF. Manager (SO) conducted the session and the Field Promoters assisted them as co-facilitators. Major topics for discussions were on the UF constitution, roles and responsibilities of the members, good governance and UF activities. According to the opinion of the Executive Committee members, this was a vital input just after the elections so that they could participate actively in the sessions in order to develop their skills in managing the UFs.

#### **Activities under Objective 2:**

1. Assist UFs in the process of legal registration.

**Findings 1:** The Project management has been enthusiastic to obtain legal registration of the UFs and obtain legal recognition from the government. During the Project period respective Managers (SO) took it as a challenge to register UFs. In this respect they assisted UF leaders even in challenging circumstances to fulfill the government's official requirements. Overcoming a number of hurdles, a total of 140 UFs managed to obtain registration. Another 66 UFs have submitted their applications to the government. The UF leaders and Project staff visits the government department and monitors the situation on a regular basis. As time passes and UFs mature, the idea is to register all 260 UF so that they can feel legally secure and psychologically empowered.

#### **Activities under Objective 3:**

1. Training given to relevant office-bearers on organization management including participatory planning and leadership development.
2. Design of simplified management and administrative systems.
3. Guidance and coaching of Executive Committee members on the use of simplified management and administrative systems.
4. Organize regular annual audit for all UFs.
5. Local volunteers selected and developed as outreach/extension workers.

**Findings 1:** Examining the 260 UFs, out of a total 2,340 office-bearers, a total of 1,037 (388 women and 649 men) were provided training on organizational management and participatory planning. Selected leaders were asked to participate in the training course.

Training sessions were conducted by experienced trainers of RDRS while the Manager (SO) and Field Promoter attended the session as co-facilitators.

**Findings 2:** Considering the level of education of UF leaders, simplified management and administrative systems were primarily designed by the management personnel of RDRS and external auditors. Field Promoters and Managers (SO) participated in designing the process and finalized it after field tests.

**Findings 3:** A three member team comprising of Field Promoter, Manager (SO) and an External Auditor played the role as coaches to the UF Executive Committee members in order to guide them to run the simplified management and administrative system smoothly. Spot checks were in place, at the UF office level as to correct any discrepancies and thus to develop the skills of UF leaders.

**Findings 4:** Annual audit was organized regularly in each UF. A total of 4 audit reports for the last four consecutive years are available at UF management level. Respective Managers (SO) and Field Promoters played a vital role in conducting audit work in each and every UF in scheduled time under her/his jurisdiction.

**Findings 5:** The 260 Federations volunteers and 70 paralegal volunteers were selected locally. All of them were provided training (modular course) in their respective field of activities. One volunteer in each UF was assigned work while a paralegal volunteer looked after 4 Union Federations on average. They are supervised by the manager (SO) at the UF office and at field as well.

#### **Activities under Objective 4:**

1. Arrange construction of low-cost multipurpose UF Community Resource Centers.
2. Develop Federations Library-cum-cultural centers.
3. Promotion of Low-cost Social-event Support Services.

**Findings 1:** A total of 61 UF community resource centers were constructed during this Project period. Construction works were accomplished by engaging skilled and competent local labour contractors where the materials were procured and supplied by RDRS. Construction firm was selected through inviting tenders. After successful participation in bidding system, RDRS management approved work order for the selected construction firm. During construction work, respective RDRS engineer followed-up the day-to-day activities. Manager (SO) also monitored the work closely. Construction of centers was examined finally by a team of construction experts. All these centers were handed over to the respective UFs after confirming to full satisfaction of UF management and other general members under the respective UFs.

**Findings 2:** There are "64 community library-cum-folksong centre" serving 64 Federations. Another, 145 Federations have only community library. This means that 209 Federations have one or the other facility out of the total 260 Federations. Also it means that 51 Federations have neither library nor folksong and theatre group or folk song and theatre center. Altogether, 95 Federations currently have either folk songs or theatre centers. Disaggregating this achievement, it was found that a total 32 are folksongs and 63 are people's theatre groups.

**Findings 3:** At present 240 UFs have low-cost social event service materials. Federations have become a resource centre through extending low-cost social event support services from where the community members avail opportunities at their doorsteps to meet their needs during any social occasions. This also leads the Federations to earn income as to generate a common fund through renting out materials/demanding service charge. UFs in many cases extend this support service to the poor families during any social occasion with subsidized rate or even without charging any rent. This type of arrangement has been appreciated by the poor and other community members.

**Activities under Objective - 5:**

1. Paralegal volunteers selected and trained as rights workers.
2. Enhancing Awareness of Rights/Gender.
3. Legal Aid Support for establishing justice.
4. Enhancing Federation's Role as Social Arbitrator/Mediator.
5. Organize, equip, train and provide ongoing guidance to popular theatre and folksong groups.
6. Organize program of Social awareness mass events in collaboration with UF.
7. Public information on burning issues through information, materials production and dissemination and media coverage.
8. Seasonal Disaster Preparedness mobilization.

**Findings 1:** A total of 70 paralegal volunteers were selected and trained. All of them were women. On an average, a volunteer has to look after 4 Union Federations. They are basically responsible to orient the Federations members on different legal issues and possible measures. It has been found that the volunteers are doing work at field as per their work schedule and are regular in accomplishing their tasks. Some volunteers are so young that sometimes it is difficult for them to facilitate the session with the mature and elderly community members. A good number also lacks in-depth idea on matters related to practical and daily legal issues encountered. They need further training and, they need to read more books and documents on legal issues in order to prepare themselves as effective facilitators.

**Findings 2:** This has been an on-going activity in each UF. Project staff, especially respective Manager (SO) arranges meeting, orientation session for UF leaders and other general members. The Project management treats it as a continuous process.

**Findings 3:** Legal aid supports are generally extended to the victims in running court cases. UF leaders along with RDRS staff employ lawyers to handle case in the court in favour of a victim to establish justice. Victims get monetary support from the Project fund. During the Project period, legal aid fund established up to maximum taka 10,000 for one case. In this way a total of 15 cases were handled by 15 UFs during this Project period. This amount was spent for paying lawyer's fee, court fee, transportation cost for the victim. Extending such legal support, Union Federations became more trustworthy among the distressed people in the villages.

**Findings 4:** In all 260 UFs there are Mediation Cell known as '*Shalish Committee*'. A *Shalish* typically consists of 5 Committee members comprise of UF leaders, other community opinion leaders and UP members. All these members were trained on arbitration and mediation issues. Each UF handled 5 cases on an average in each quarter. Major cases were of family conflict among the couples, quarrel among husband-wife and in-laws, illegal divorce /separation, physical torture on women and dowry.

**Findings 5:** Various events were organized in different spots of RDRS working areas. A total of 95 folk songs and theater groups were formed in 95 UFs. Out of those 33 were folksong groups and 62 were people's theatre groups. Members of the cultural groups were selected circumspcctly through UF leaders and other general members. A six days' training course was designed and organized separately for the folksong group members and people's theatre group members. Necessary musical instruments and theatre materials were supplied from this Project. All these instruments/ materials are in possession by the respective UFs, under the Executive Committee's custody. Numbers of events were organized in different spots under various activities under 260 Unions by the respective Union Federations. Besides, other organizations (like BRAC) also hired cultural groups in their own areas. In this manner the performers developed their career in a pragmatic way.

**Findings 6:** During the Project period various social awareness program were organized by RDRS in association with UFs. Day observation, orientation session, community mass gathering, workshops etc. were in place. Community members as a whole participated in these events enthusiastically. UF's role was appreciated by the people in general.

**Findings 7:** IEC materials (posters, leaflets, banners, billboards, folders, newsletters etc.) were developed and distributed to the UFs, UPs, public places to disseminate social, legal, civic and other human rights based issues to the masses of people. Two documentary films on Federations activities and people's participation were developed to be broadcasted in the private TV Channel (Channel- i). One is for 12 minutes and another for 26 minutes duration. During three years of Project period a total of 46 radio programs were broadcasted.

**Findings 8:** Disaster preparedness campaigns were organized in all 260 UFs. Each year there was one campaign in each UF. During the Project period a total of 1,040 Community members as a whole became familiar with this issue and joined the rally voluntarily.

**...Activities under Objective - 6:**

1. Training and advice to UF leaders/members in local politics and governance.
2. Training to newly elected UP members in roles and responsibilities.
3. Develop Advocacy materials and organize events.
4. Radio/TV/Print Media Facilitation.
5. Organize /conduct rural issues workshops at community level.
6. Organize /conduct voter education.

**Findings 1:** From 260 UFs, a total of 1,180 leaders (551 women and 629 men) were provided two days' training on civic rights, state affairs and governance. Respective Managers (SO) facilitated the training sessions. Participation of the leaders was promising and appreciable. However, capacity of managers needs to be further enhanced in order to conceptualize the learning topics.

**Findings 2:** Newly elected Union Parishad members and Chairperson were trained on their roles and responsibilities in order for them to fulfil their roles effectively as public representatives. In 260 Unions, a total of 1,030 members and Chairperson participated in a one-day orientation session organized jointly by UF and RDRS.

**Findings 3:** Advocacy materials like Birth Registration, Sanitation, Natural Disaster, Primary Education, Child Labour, HIV/AIDS, Women Empowerment, Women and Child Trafficking,

Advocacy (in Bangla- 'Adhiporamorsha') were developed and events on these topics were organized in 260 UFs. Advocacy materials were distributed among government offices, UPs, educational institutions, CBOs and other NGOs.

**Findings 4:** It was targeted to organize facilitation workshop with the Radio/TV/Print media workers in each year. However, during 2003-2004, six workshops were organized in six districts. Through these workshops, Radio/TV/Print media workers /personnel came to know about the development initiatives taken so far by UFs /RDRS in these six districts. Workshop participants appreciated the strategy to make them familiar with the development issues, problems, opportunities with which they would be able to extend their support services through disseminating information in a wider field.

**Findings 5:** Every year one issue based workshop was organized in each of 29 Upazillas under the Project area. From the year 2003, a total of 116 workshops were held in these Upazillas. Upazilla Federations Coordination Committee played a vital role in organizing workshops. RDRS facilitated the workshops and ensured participation of the of the Project stakeholders. Upazilla level government officials, public representatives, UF representatives, NGO workers, other professionals and opinion leaders attended the workshops. The number of participants in each workshop was (25 – 30) on average

**Findings 6:** Voter education sessions were held in 257 UFs. All these sessions were held in 2003. After that no elections were held so far. UFs have a plan to organize campaigns in December 2006, before the next parliamentary elections

## **6.0 Advocacy & Networking**

An inbuilt Advocacy and Networking component is an important element to realize the aims of promoting social, economic and civic activism of the rural poor. The Project as noted above have demonstrated ample advocacy works through various means. The most notables among them being the observations of nearly a score of national and international days for various issues such as HIV and AIDS; Environment; Women; Children; Labour; Tree Plantation and so forth. Notable advocacy is also taking place through the *Shalish* which are directed against violence against women; dowry; illegal divorce; trafficking; acid throwing; child labour; violence against women and so forth. Notable advocacy is also taking place through voter and civic education. The rural poor, as noted earlier, are having an improved voice, choice and governance by electing women and men to the seats presented by the local government at the Union Parishad levels. In this manner, not only are the organizations of the rural poor and its constituent members having a voice and accountability mechanisms with their elected local leaders, but they are also accessing local resources and participating in local governance and decision making.

Together with advocacy; networking is also an important function. This is taking place at the primary group level; Union Federations level; and the UpaZilla level. Besides, the Federations are also networking with the Union Parishads in various joint Programs. In future, networking with local NGOs; CBOs and even bigger NGOs such as Grameen Bank; BRAC or ASA may be attempted based on issues that RDRS and the Federations are pursuing.

Inbuilt Advocacy and Networking is important to upscale and have wider dispersion effect of what RDRS is while strengthening the capacity of Federations and improving the live situations of its members. Advocacy and networking go hand in hand to ensure a number of

desired results such as influencing public policies and Programs in favour of the rural poor; to ensure accountability from the local government towards the rural poor for their basic needs and rights; in order to mobilize local resources; to inform macro level policies based on evidences from the grassroots level and to ensure public institutions are responsive and maintains public integrity towards the people including financial probity. In this respect currently the RDRS staff are handholding the Federations leaders substantially. In future, advocacy has to become more self reliant. It may benefit the Federations. if RDRS can ensure capacity building of the Federations to ensure that advocacy and networking happens proactively and spontaneously. It may be useful to keep a monitoring framework in mind such that advocacy is built into the Programs of the Federations using the framework below.

<i>No advocacy</i>	-----	<i>Low capacity (No Capacity)</i>
<i>Advocacy for</i>	-----	<i>Improved capacity</i>
<i>Advocacy with</i>	-----	<i>Advanced capacity</i>
<i>Advocacy by</i>	-----	<i>Graduated and Empowered Capacity.</i>

Such efforts in advocacy and networking will further strengthen the Program sustainability of the Federations on the long run.

## **7. Major Findings**

### **7.1 Relevance**

The objectives, results and major activities of the Project are relevant to the needs of the Federations. In future, the Project design could consider not too many Objectives but say 2-3 major Objectives. They could be the social, civic and economic empowerment and activism of the Federations; or the ability of the Federations to own and carry them out on the long run by themselves. An inbuilt advocacy and networking can also be part of these Objectives. The other major elements can be broken down into well defined 8-10 Results. The rest can be subsumed under major activities.

The current indicators can also be refined to encompass a more challenging performance standard. The indicators are mostly related to completed tasks and activities. The evaluation suggests that future indicators be set to encompass quality inputs and activities; quality results and quality outcome which reflect the notion of service, benefit and utilization of each result. In that manner the performance indicators can truly reflect good outcome and sustained development.

The project is well designed in most aspect except where economic activities and financial sustainability are concerned. Organizations of the poor do need adequate economic activities to respond to income and employment needs of its members. It also needs to make greater efforts to demonstrate that it is attempting its best to meet its institutional sustainability by generating adequate income. This is a weak point in the design of the Project.

Besides, the Project can also advocate and intermediate more robustly with other relevant RDRS programs and sectors to optimize the benefits and activities in favour of the Federations.

In terms of ownership of the objectives set out in the Project, the Federations have internalized and integrated that mentally and often are able to verbalize in discussions. However, the Project because of its short term nature has supported the Federations in many activities. It remains to be seen how much of those activities are carried out by the

Federations in future when RDRS is not holding their hand as intensely as currently. It will be particularly pertinent that RDRS carry out the Community Action Plan very meticulously and thoroughly with each Federation annually. This will help the Federations in participation, empowerment, self-reliance and sustainability.

## **7.2 Efficiency**

The Project had a financial allocation of Euro 2.5 million from a grant from European Commission (EC) as well as contributions from core funding partners such as DCA, NCA, FCA and CoS. It was utilized properly according to the fiscal policy and auditing requirements of the funding partners. A non-cost extension for 6 months to last until 31 December 2006 was undertaken to ensure that all budget lines were exhausted. It means the project was implemented for a period of 4 years (including no-cost extension period of 6 months) instead of 3 years and 6 months as approved in original project document.

The Project structure was able and functioned at Rangpur; Zonal; District; UpaZilla and Federations level. Intermediation and working across RDRS sectoral lines was not always optimal. This aspect can be improved in the future at all levels and the upper level working relationships have direct bearings on lower level field implementation. Management of staff, flow of information and reporting, implementation and monitoring and property were efficient.

The Project could have benefit more from a genuine participatory monitoring system; information procession and improved staff qualities that could interpret, discuss and reprocess back to the rural poor - what was happening in the Federations as a civic society sector movement and development of organizations of the poor – which pushed the frontiers of discussions beyond the project implementation mode towards an ideology and philosophy of societal development. Currently, the monitoring indicators are dominant at physical levels of counting completed activities. Quality staff with proper training and orientation can bring more benefit to the rural poor, facilitated by the Project, in line with the above performance standards in the future.

The relationships, reporting, coordination with funding partners, local authorities, UPs, NGOs, media and rural poor through Federations were adequate and satisfactory good.

## **7.3 Effectiveness**

On the whole the Project has fulfilled the 6 Objectives and 12 Results foreseen in the Project Plan. Except for the registration of 200 UF until the end of the Project period only 140 UF were registered and other 60 UFs did not get the registration because of unwritten restriction imposed by the concerned Ministry of the Government in registering CBOs. Otherwise, all targets have been met. The governance and functioning of UF were satisfactory. Women's participation and representation is improving; the *Shalish* was functioning well. The awareness rising through folk songs and theatre groups were noteworthy. As a result of the awareness creation women are reporting diminishing cases of violence against women such as wife beating; cases of dowry; illegal divorce; acid throwing or sexual harassment.

The noteworthy effect is in the sector of mediation where Federations are reporting at least 2 cases being brought for mediation and settlement each month. Women also report that they are able to bring cases on violence against women. The women are also participating much more freely and in equal terms with men in the Federations meetings.

The Federations are also taking active part in social mobilization and awareness creation leading to improved and increased activism in various events such as national and international days and events.

The civic activism is further characterized by people taking active part in local elections as voters carrying their voter cards. Besides over 900 Federations members have taken part in the local elections as candidates. Many have been women. In the last UP elections 222 members were elected in various UPs. Three of them have been elected as Chairperson of the UPs.

In terms of advocacy and networking the Federations are also doing satisfactory works by working closely with local government agencies to get funding, support and joint activities. Some of the Federations have managed to get notable funding and help from local government and funding partner. Besides, the steps and process taken to become self-reliant as well as the realization that they must become economically and institutionally independent – are important realization by the Federations.

#### **7.4 Impact**

The Project has made an appreciable improvement in good governance of the Federations; transparency, accountability and organizational management; participation of women and improvement in their status through decrease in violence and empowerment through their active participation, representation and voices in Federations and Union Parishads. The Project's Major Activities and Results have been accomplished and the qualities of inputs and activities have been satisfactory to the UFs.

- Altogether, 260 UFs have been strengthened and they have made significant steps in meeting the goal of the Project which aims to reduce poverty; bring social awareness and changes; increase women's empowerment and strengthen citizen's movement based on democratic practices and good governance.
- Institutional strengthening of UFs: management, programs; registration; infrastructure including networks such as UzFCCs. (Although the 200 UF registered falls short by 60 UFs due to government's temporary suspension of further registration of NGOs).
- Memberships of the primary groups and group members have also increased appreciably during the Project period. This demonstrates that the Federations and primary groups are active in reaching new members and are, therefore, able to reach more rural poor.
- Social Activism and Empowerment such as awareness creation through folk songs and theatre groups; women's empowerment through legal awareness which has reportedly led to decrease in social aberrations such as violence against women; domestic violence; greater voice, choice, representation and participation in local governance/UF governance; decrease in dowry exploitation; decrease in early marriage and increase in access to education for girls, resources and skills from public domain/public services including from RDRS and other NGOs.
- The Federations theme song recited by Federations; Primary Groups and UpaZilla before each function is noteworthy. Coined, written and accompanied by music through RDRS support; the lyric sums of the Vision; Mission and Objectives of what the Federations and its constituent members wishes to achieve in society. It is a



powerful tool to propel the Federations forward and together with folk songs and street theaters, such efforts and means, are creating appreciable awareness creation leading to strengthened social, economic and civic activism.

- Civic Activism such as mass mobilization which raises issue based advocacy for the UF members; mediation and conflict resolution; gradual but steady access to public services and institutions such as local and line government agencies; civic education; voter power and political participation. Confidence of the poor, women, youths and the UF themselves have also increased.

These short term impacts are due to the results of the Project efforts. The rural poor members of the Federations cite examples of their improved life situation before and after the Project - in terms of self-confidence; empowerment; improved in the status of women related to violence and illegal divorce; ability to send girl child to school together with boys; better health; better housing; improved nutrition and food security. They also cite examples of women able to take part in meetings without fear of favour and the positive change of attitude from men towards women take part in both Federations works and IGAs.

### **7.5 Sustainability**

The grading system of the Project rates (30%) of the Federations as A grade; (63%) as B grade and (7%) as C grade. Our appraisal showed that this is utilized by the Project as a monitoring tool. At some time such grading can be better used to improve the capacity of the weaker Federations. The tool is useful, since, the Project goal is to move a greater number of Federations towards Grade A ensuring better sustainability. A majority of the Federations are aware that they should be upwardly mobile and move towards Grade A. There is plenty of room still to sensitize the Federations and its constituent members on the concept of the grading system and the elements within the grades.

The efforts made by the Project though 29 major activities in civic and social activism were impressive. It has made the Federations stronger; besides strengthening the network at Upazilla level. There is room to improve the primary groups within each Federations better such that their institutional and programmatic sustainability including financial sustainability is strengthened.

The Federations have received generous support from RDRS through the help of the EC and the donor partners in the Project period. The budget allocation was adequate and if one were to break it down into per capita terms, it would mean nearly three quarters of a million Takka of inputs to each Federations, albeit, through different means - which were mainly capacity growth training and support inputs.

Federations are autonomous entity by nature of the organization. The project aimed to build the capacity of the Federations as democratic and effective Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and also promote Federations as effective social change agents. Currently, their institutional and programmatic activities demonstrate that the Federations have been fairly successful in bringing about these developments within their institutions and in society. RDRS' efforts should be to continue support this impetus that the Federations has demonstrated for another Project cycle such as the current one. The evaluation believes that both RDRS and funding donor partners are moving in this direction for another phase.

What is lacking, perhaps, is the financial and economic sustainability as there are neither financial allocations such as economic endowments nor economic activities to support the development of the Federations. The demand from the members and leaders of UF for economic activities, employment and income generation is fairly pronounced. The continued absence of this component makes the Federations vulnerable to financial and economic independence and sustainability. What we observed and is reinforced by other studies such as the Benini Report, 2006, is the fact that a notable effort towards self-reliance, by planting nearly 5 million trees along roadside, is missing from the balance sheet of each Federations. The trees are a major source of economic endowment for the Federations. Although, it has many vagaries of nature, bureaucratic hurdles, reduced enthusiasms for renewed tree plantation and local polemics, yet it is a source of financial asset as well. Verbally Federations puts this asset between a low of Taka 7,00,000 to a high of Taka 12,00,000.

The Federations capacity to carry out development activities or at least interlink with future RDRS Programs; Programs of other NGOs; local government, national government projects and funding partners in the North-West Bangladesh is fairly developed. It may not be able to generate its entire annual plans and budget quite yet. However, a fair group of Federations representing Grade A and upper crusts of Grade B, will be able to latch on to other development programs and position themselves as peoples' institutions who can carry out development activities.

Gradually but surely the Federations are able to mobilize or access local resources of the Union Parishads. Given the reality that such resources are also limited to half a million Taka annually as grant from the central government. Federations are also obtaining grants from other sources such as the NGO Bureau some allocations. Some Federations cited Taka 200,000 grant from the NGO Bureau and though it seems to be small it is nevertheless, significant in terms of the process and confidence of the Federations that they could obtain this support. There are a few examples of Federations able to mobilize sizeable funds from outside but by an large their balance sheet demonstrates an income statement of Taka 50,000 per annum. Hence, the financial sustainability aspect has room for further improvements in the future. External funding to the Federations is limited currently. However, since the Federations are rapidly registered themselves as legal entities, it is possible that direct external funding support may be viable in the future.

What we observed is the fact that the Federations are very much a *vassal state like extension* of the RDRS at the centre and the Federations at the periphery. RDRS, currently cushions major shocks and fulfils major institutional, Program, and financial sustainability and activities for the Federations. In future, the Federations themselves must become adequately empowered to fulfil their institutional, programmatic, process oriented and financial sustainability. A great majority of the Federations still needs RDRS support, in the medium term, before they can become truly autonomous organizations of the rural poor.

#### **8.0 Lessons Identified (Learned)**

- Generally, RDRS staffs, UP leaders; Federations Leaders and Key Informants, cite the example of a bird. They say it needs a pair of wings to fly. Those wings are social wing combined with economic wing.
- The Federations is considered the flagship Program of RDRS at national and funding partners level. However, this notion is not owned by all departments and unit within

RDRS, nor is it internalized and integrated as an overarching organizational strategy in the absence of full ownership by all staff of RDRS.

- Together with social and civic activism, rural poor clamour most for income and employment as their over riding priority and coping strategy to meet daily needs.
- Staff turnovers are fairly frequent. Good staff members are poached regularly by other higher remunerative INGOs. Training and capacitating the staff pool within the Project is a constant challenge and a pressing need to meet Project Goals and Objectives.
- Rural poor can be motivated to participate through creative songs, folk media and folk theaters. They turn up in thousands enthusiastically, once they are convinced and own the theme of their social and civic activism.
- In order to sustain the Federations, (a) one has to ensure sustainability of the relevant activities that they are undertaking now such that they can continue with the relevant ones in the future or add new ones. (b) The Federations have to follow certain policies such as the bye laws and the participatory procedures and processes written in them. (c) They have to earn money and finances. (d) They have to interlink with local, national and international resources within their constituency areas. (e) The Federations also have to provision for needs of the Executive Committee who may not continue to provide free service forever. (f) The Federations have also realized that they need a critical minimum paid staff and volunteer to run the Organization smoothly.
- One can consolidate and promote an idea whose time is ripe for implementation and can be successful such as participation of women; *Shalish*; lessening of violence against women; acid attack; lessening of dowry, or illegal divorce *hilla*; value for education; or democratic pluralism.
- In the continuum of Federation's capacity development, one has to improve the organizational management of Federations and moved beyond such that these management practices and Programs become routine habits. Hence, institutionalizing Federation's capacity beyond organizational management is the goal.

#### **9.0 Best Practices within Federations**

- The Federations Song epitomizing Ethos; Vision; Mission and Values help Federations move forward.
- The Federations that are united in Purpose and are Homogenous in character both socially and in terms of civic aspirations move forward better.
- Good leadership, good governance; inclusion and corruption free space propels the Federations forward.

#### **10.0 Summary of Findings and Conclusions**

The Project has been successful in achieving the objectives that it set out to undertake at the beginning of the implementation phase. In fact, the Project has managed to enthuse and energize the dormant Federations movement within RDRS as a result of the contributions made through the Project effort. The six objectives were related to strengthening and

capacitating the Federations in order to ensure good governance including adequate representation and active participation of women.

- Reviewing the results and achievement of the Project in the past three and half years, it can be said that Federations are following a set of policies and rules laid down in the Federations byelaws. There is adequate internal democracy, participation, representation of women. This has led to rural poor women being much more confident and active in social and civic sphere in the villages. Memberships have increased and so have the primary groups under 260 Federations, implying more rural poor are being reached through the Federations. Besides, women's contributions have been significant and more than two fifths women now comprise as leaders in the Federations's Executive Committees. It raises and promotes their choice, voice, governance, grievances and status.
- RDRS had set out to protect the legal status and security of Federations's identity by registering them with relevant government agency. It had set a task of 200 Federations obtaining registration by the end of the Project period. Currently, 140 are registered and another 60 have tendered their registration request to the government. A majority will be legally registered once the government gets its act together. Registration has raised the profile, confidence, visibility and funding possibilities for the Federations as local CBOs.
- Due to extensive capacity development, coaching, nurturing and counseling of the Federations through Project staff and volunteers, Federations have been strengthened in managing their organizations. Management performances such as routine meetings, decisions and follow ups are now a regular feature. Record keeping is satisfactory although a few technical details can be improved further. The annual audit and finances are also recorded and kept up to date.
- The Federations have physical facilities which are impressive. Altogether, over 221 Federations have well managed centers, land and compounds, grain storage and boundary with tree lined space. Through these centers and where there are none through the primary groups centers; the Federations are able to provide much need social services including awareness creation; IGAs, modest economic activities and seed or grain storage. Social services are provided for social occasions such as marriage, feasts or even death rites. Federations do have pots, pans, water containers, first aid kits etc. when services are demand.
- The folk songs and theater groups in each of the 29 Upazillas are a great source of entertainment, creativity and cultural renaissance in the face of prepackaged soaps and television Programs. These folk media also helps to preserve a rich rural cultural heritage of songs, dances and music. The educative and awareness creation including and spill-over effects to RDRS theme based Programs such as *Shalish*, HIV and AIDs, Health or Disaster Preparedness are truly remarkable.
- The Federations leaders are also provided with mobile cellular phone which helps to keep the Federations connected with the internal and external world. They are able to undertake more efficient and effective communication, networking and social mobilization through these means of modern technology. Private use of the mobile

phone services by clients and members are documented and charged which leads to modest income for the Federations.

- Mass social mobilization and awareness creation have been achieved in pertinent but diverse themes such as voter power; women and human rights; environment; HIV and AIDS; human trafficking; tree plantation; primary health care; illegal divorce; marriage registration; birth registration; acid throwing etc. Altogether, 70 para legal volunteers and 260 Federations volunteers are constantly raising awareness and providing the members of the Federations and training their Executive Committee members on relevant issues including dissemination of information related to other RDRS activities. Besides, the folk songs and theater groups in each Upazilla are also cross fertilizing new and important development, social and civic activism related themes and ideas to the Federations and its members.
- The Federations have been successful in ensuring civic activism at the Union Parishad level - which is the most notable and lowest political-administrative unit in Bangladesh. Voter educations are a routine feature of the Federations activities for both local and national elections. Many voters comprising the rural poor take part enthusiastically both during education sessions and during actual elections. Many women voters also take part enthusiastically and cast their ballot to choose their political candidates and representatives.

As eluded to in Chapter 5.0 of the main report 576 Federations leaders contested for the UP members during the last local elections. Altogether, 222 were elected to the local government and three were elected chairpersons. Around 44 percent were women and 56 percent men. This is quite a remarkable achievement. It helps to bring improved governance and improved responsive towards the rural poor in the Union Parishad.

Once elected these officials together with other Union Parishad or Council members are trained and sensitized on their roles and responsibilities. More than two thirds of the Council members are also trained on conflict resolution and mediation methods. All these impetuses and efforts have proved to be fruitful as a majority of the Federations are reporting that they have made serious efforts and are receiving support and funding from the local Union Council or are undertaking joint social, economic and civic activities.

The visibility of RDRS brand name was ubiquitous in the 260 Federations through pictures, posters, banners and signboards. At the same time the visibility of the EC and the funding partners such as DCA, NCA, FCA and CoS were also ensured side by side. The folk songs and theatre groups further heightened the visibility through their songs, dramas and the logos they displayed.

In conclusion and summarizing these achievements, one must record that the Project has been substantially successful in implementing and achieving what it set to accomplish in the plan. This is not to say that there are no areas for improvements. Certainly, there are many areas where the Project can plug its loopholes. One area which is glaringly important is a policy related issue which RDRS can attempt in future.

- (a) This is in relation to the symbiotic and mutual partnership between RDRS and the Federations, which currently is at 260 but which it proposes to increase to 395 by the end of the strategic period 2010. RDRS can clarify and it will help the Federations

further, if a mutually beneficial and rewarding relationship can be established such that these Federations become the local level partners of RDRS, in a genuine sense beyond the implementation arm of its varied Program activities.

- (b) It will also benefit the network of Federations if RDRS attempted to ensure performance monitoring based on participative principles and tools together with the current staff based project monitoring tools and indicators which are dominantly physical and “counting beans” in nature. The monitoring system does give RDRS a fair picture but it is still a blurred and grainy one. RDRS can attempt to obtain *a higher resolution picture* by ensuring that its monitoring system combines project activities with performance indicators that are related to Federations as a civic movement and RDRS’ roles as a support NGO strengthening that movement and the civic society sector. The focus on Federations capacity building and the capacity building of its leaders become much sharper in this perspective. Since this will now assume a role of strengthening Federations as organizations of the rural poor in north-west Bangladesh.
- (c) RDRS can also recruit, orient, place and capacitate its entire staff and volunteers cadre, relevant to the Project, *to become even more competent* in monitoring, facilitating and nurturing Federations so that it becomes sustained organization of the rural poor.
- (d) RDRS may wish to design and plan Federations strengthening initiatives, taking into consideration eventual autonomy of the Federations and its network. In accomplishing this task, RDRS has to be mindful to ensure not only the project management aspect, social activism and civic activism, which it has been remarkably successful, but also economic autonomy and empowerment of the Federations. This will fulfill and strengthen the Federation’s twin element of institutional and financial sustainability as well.
- (e) RDRS may also consider for greater benefit of the Federations strengthening, improved set of performance indicators which reflects good services and products, optimum utilization and immediate but sustained benefits at the Objectives and Results level. The current indicators are set at a level where it meets only physical or quantitative targets reflecting mostly major activities completed rather than its quality and performance as sustained development.
- (f) RDRS may also consider and design steps to respond to the high demand and need from the Federations and Primary Groups members to fulfill measures related to income generation and employment creation. In this respect, Program coordination across RDRS departments and units such as livelihood; micro enterprise and micro finance departments with the Federations Capacity Building Unit and Social Empowerment Department is very important.
- (g) The capacity strengthening, grading and monitoring of over 8,000 primary groups directly under the 260 Federations and encompassing of another over 20,000 groups (either non –federated, affiliated or even self-emerged due to demonstration effect) is equally important. It will help create a greater critical mass of rural poor who can reduce poverty. At the same time it will ensure better quality of primary grassroots groups, hitherto, now under supervision of Federations but without much strict quality

and performance indicators. The performance indicators set for Federations can be modified to strengthen the capacity of the primary and other non-federated groups or affiliated groups in future. This may even be attempted through the Federations acting as catalyst for that change and transformation rather than direct involvement of RDRS staff.

- (h) RDRS may be overwhelmed by request to continue to fund physical and Program activities of coordination units of the Federations such as the 29 Upazilla Coordination Committees; further 6-8 District Coordination Committees and even Zonal or Divisional Committees of the Federations. Such aspirations are perfectly legitimate and valid and can be stretched to national coordination committee. Be aware that the Federations as *organizations* which are in forefront of poverty reduction; social activism; civic activism and economic empowerment are fundamental units of the organizations of the rural poor. Their active roles in implementation are fundamentally different than the roles of Coordination Committees, who should not repeat an **Organizational** role but should support them in the form of **Networks**. A mismatch and duplication of implementation cum and organizational roles of 260 Federations with the advocacy and networking roles of the UpaZilla and District level committees will not only be waste of resources and duplication of roles but will spell impending conflict of interest within the Federations movement. RDRS must be aware of this potential conflict and conflict of interest among the Federations leadership.

These measures may benefit the Federations and transform a good Program of RDRS. i.e. Federations Capacity Strengthening to become even better and stronger!

## 11.0 Recommendations

### *Strategic Recommendations*

**Recommendation 1:** Where ever feasible and desirable, RDRS may wish to involve Federations as local grassroots partners in implementation of its Programs in the future. This can be done in a partnership approach rather than direct implementation; in order to strengthening the sustainable monitoring capacity of the Federations with a view to make the Federations effective and transparent organizations of the rural poor.

**Recommendation 2:** Plan and implement economic autonomy and empowerment of the Federations. This will fulfill and strengthen the Federation's twin element of institutional and financial sustainability as well. Where resources exist within RDRS coordinate efforts to ensure that such resources are cross-fertilized to strengthened the Federations economic empowerment. Respond to the income and employment demand of the Federations constituent members.

**Recommendation 3:** When following up on the capacity strengthening through formal and informal training and capacity building put focus on the C Grade and lower end of B Grade such that they can move up the ladder of capacity continuum towards A Grade. Share these concepts and ideas with the Federations regularly and monitor to see how improvements are taking place.

**Recommendation 4:** Be aware that Federations have a dominantly implementation and organizational role and Coordination Committees at Upazilla and District level have

advocacy and networking roles. Do not mix these two roles up. Develop them accordingly to avoid potential conflict of interests and confusion.

**Recommendation 5:** Federations are autonomous entity by nature of their organization. The project aims to build the capacity of the Federations as democratic and effective community-based organizations (CBOs) and also promote Federations as effective social change agents. Hence, the future holds two challenges: (a) the Federations must sustain as democratic CBOs to support their disadvantaged members and the wider community, and (b) in order to be effective in this endeavour, they must sustain themselves institutionally. Hence, strike a balance between the institutional, Program, process and financial sustainability.

### ***Operational Recommendations***

**Recommendation 1:** RDRS may develop participatory monitoring principles and tools together with the Federations in order to strengthen the sustainable monitoring capacity of the Federations with a view to make the Federations effective and transparent organizations of the rural poor. The current Project implementation dominant staff based monitoring system can complement the programmatic performance based monitoring system which can be evolved gradually encompassing the social, economic, civic and institutional activism of the Federations and the Coordination Committees.

**Recommendation 2:** Plan, recruit, orient and place Project staff that are competent and can be moulded and trained so that the staff are motivated and can play an active and crucial role with enhanced capacity and skills for strengthening the capacity of the Federations as grassroots entity of civic society movement rather than giving time and emphasis mostly on Project Implementation.

**Recommendation 3:** Ensure performance standards and grading of the primary groups within Federations as well. In future such measurements of quality and performance can be extended to larger non-federated or what is called the affiliated groups as well.



# Appendices

- Appendix I. Case Studies**
- Appendix II. List of Persons Met**

## Case Studies

**Case 1: Organizational Capacity of Federations in ensuring hygienic sanitation and other social actions**

*'In case of marriage to a daughter or a son, now-a-days guardians ask about existing facilities on hygienic latrine and safe water in the respective families'*. Ms. Maleka, Vice Chairperson of Ramna Union Federations of Ulipur Upazilla under Kurigram district expressed her opinion in this way. Two years back, only 20% households under this Union had hygienic latrine. But at present more than 70% households have this facility. As per community members's views, this had been possible as a consequence of awareness building Program organized by Ramna Federations. A series of workshops (27-workshops) was held at different spots and made the people understand on this fundamental issue. Besides, this Federation organized 'Sanitation Fair' in the Union. Union Parishad Chairperson and members participated in this fair and extended their support to supply latrine sets with subsidized rate. Union Federation and the Union Parishad thus worked together in order to ensure hygienic latrines for the poor households, in a promising way. Federations already developed a plan to cover 100% households in this Union with hygienic latrine by the year 2007.

Ramna Federations is situated near the bank of the river Brahmaputra. Most of the households under this area are actually victims of river erosion. Their survival is precarious and livelihood difficult. Even then, they feel proud to be associated with their Federation through which they are able to raise their voice against social injustice; gain solidarity and empowerment; come forward to widen their knowledge on maintaining good health, developing leadership quality and mobilizing local resources in order to run a better life. A total of 1,191 rural poor from different village groups are members of this Federations among which 714 (60%) are women. Ramna Federation leaders and the members are proactive in establishing women's human rights, reducing social violence and upholding civic engagement through institutional strengthening. In the meantime birth registrations of all children under the group member's family have been completed. Marriage registration and maintenance of registration certificate, especially in case of couples under group member's family have been also ensured by the Federations in cooperation with UP Chairmen/members. The present Federation Chairperson is also an elected member of Ramna UP. Once due to sudden death of Ramna UP Chairperson, community members urged the Federations Chairperson to act as UP Chairperson. Federations Chairperson took the responsibility and worked as UP Chairperson (selected) for a period of six months until a new Chairperson was elected through an election process. *"I become so confident on myself, and become popular in this areadue to my active involvement with Federation activities. I am proud of our Federation.* - said the Chairperson encouragingly.

In order to protect early marriage, illegal divorce */hilla* in the area, Ramna Federation communicated with Imams and influential religious leaders and made them convince rural people on evils of early marriage, dowry, illegal divorce, *hilla* etc., during prayers in the mosque. The mosque committee members and the Imam agreed on these vital issues and the Imam advocated these issues with the devotees during prayers regularly. This has proved to be an effective method to make the community members more aware on social issues.

### **Case 2: One Afternoon in the Community Library of Khongao Union Federations**

A retired school teacher Mr. Hridoy Nath felt awfully lonely after his retirement. Wandering between home and nearby market and gossiping with the acquaintances became boring to him. Then he found his best companies in the community library of Khongao Union Federations. Now he passes his best hours in the library and quenches his thirst for knowledge.

Pieu, a student of class 3, accompanied by her elder sister, comes to the library regularly. She loves reading stories about giants and demons. The pictures of the imaginary characters amuse her much.

Last year (2005), Narayan Chandra studying in class 6 took part in the art contest on Begum Rokeya Day and stood first. His prize was glass, plate and small bowl made of *Sharif Melamine*. This year he stood third in recitation contest on International Disaster Preparedness Day. He reads poetry in the community library. His Favourite poet is Kazi Nazrul Islam.

A class 9 student, Shajib, was fond of sports in the afternoon. But now-a-days library work has become his only fascination. His favorite writer is Humayun Ahmed.

Papya is a college student. She is reading *Naree (women)* written by Humayun Azad though the book is a little difficult for her to comprehend.

Taslima's father is a farmer but Taslima aims to be a teacher. She is reading Rabindranath Tagor's short fictions. She has been moved by the stories of *Postmaster, Kabuliwala and Chhuti*.

Rahatun wants to make herself look attractive. So she closely reads the books of Beauticians. This afternoon she has brought an exercise book to copy some *henna designs*.

Zikrul is in 11<sup>th</sup> class. His father rears cows. Zikrul has learnt many things about cow fattening by reading books in the library. He told his father all about it. His father did not hesitate to follow the son's advice. Zikrul's father is having more profit after starting cow-fattening.

The library of Khongao Union Federations is a favourite place also to the elderly villagers like Nedem Chandra, Abul Hossain, Mantu Mian and so on. They like to turn over the pages of different books. They are patient readers. It's interesting that Panir and Majid, two class 9 students, became close friends through their day-after-day pair discussions on various books. They love biographies of the great personalities. Like them Shahin is very happy to have the opportunity of reading favourite books in the community library at their Union.

The evening advances silently. It's time for the readers to leave the library for home. The Chairperson of Khongao Union Federations Ramesh Chandra Roy will be the last person to leave. Before leaving he will check whether all the books are at the right places in the shelves. Ramesh said, 'There are 305 books given by Federations Capacity Building project of RDRS. Moreover, we have obtained 20 books as donation from local people. The Federation has planned to keep a Daily newspaper soon.'

The community library of Khongao Federation of Pirganj Upazella under Thakurgaon district has become a popular place for social gathering for the book fans of nearby villages. The 325 books available in this small library are enlightening the book lovers of Khongao Union. The

readers think that this library is keeping positive impact on their family and social life. The community library has made the rural people dream of a better life standard.

### **Case 3: My way of thinking could not go so far...**

#### **Towards women's empowerment ~ Active participation of women in arbitration/mediation movement**

*" Though the women would stand behind fence to listen to arbitration and mediation discussion, the men shouted – 'what do you women understand? Don't stand here... go inside the house" - said Delwara Begum, the present Chairperson of Mohammadpur Samaj Kallyan Sanstha in Thakurgaon district. Now Delwara has crossed the limit of that fence. She does not have to try to listen to arbitration and mediation; rather she leads such arbitration and mediation committee. She expresses her opinion strongly and she leads mediation sessions to minimize common social and family conflicts in her Union. Delwara said, "People got tired of seeking justice from the Union Parishad. But we Federation people never harass anyone. We don't like to elongate the processes of mediation. This is why people rely upon us. Many victims are not getting proper justice at Union Parishad, so they instead come to us. Most of the victims directly apply to us for justice".*

Delwara now is popular with various groups of people. The inhabitants of her village, her Union and all the 9 Unions of Thakurgaon district know her by name. Chairmen and members of the Union Parishad, government officials at Upazella (sub-district) and District level know her. In the National Workshop on 'Legal Education and Gender Aware Leadership Project' in 2006 at Dhaka, Delwara was honoured and given a chair to sit on the stage together with the then minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary affairs and other prominent guests from home and abroad who were present on the occasion. Delwara delivered a speech there. She expressed her views saying, *"Laws are supposed to ensure welfare of the people but perhaps there are some weaknesses in our established law that make the trial procedures prolonged"*. Hearing this from a poor rural woman the law minister was surprised and impressed and he personally talked to Delwara and thanked her for her boldness. The minister and other distinguished guests were happy to know how Delwara leads arbitration and mediation at her Federation.

Delwara often looks back to her near past when she was unknown to her own villagers. She had been confined to only household chores. The support of the Union Federation changed her life. She is grateful to RDRS that organized the small groups and inspired them to get together to form Union Federations.

Delwara disclosed with confidence that she would always remain with the deprived people. She is continuing advocacy for birth registration, marriage registration, conflict resolution, tree plantation, safe water, hygienic sanitation, and other activities related to social development.

Delwara believes, *"There is nothing impossible to human beings. Making an endeavor is essential"*. Delwara has become knowledgeable on all aspect of Mohammadpur Union. She expressed her views saying, *"The whole Union is like a transparent glass to me. But without a platform like Union Federation organized by RDRS my way of thinking could not go so far"*.

#### **Case 4: Empowering the people to reach their goals through leadership enhancement**

##### **Saptibari Union Federations**

*“The black stain on my shoulder caused by carrying iron rod (carrying heavy weight) is still not removed. But I am taking part in the meetings with UNO (Upazilla Nirbahi Officer), LGED, District Council and Union Parishad. The Union Parishad Chairperson seeks my suggestion before taking any significant decision. The local inhabitants honour me. I have never thought of reaching such a position. But Union Federation has made me a leader”,* said Kanteswar Barman sitting at his Federation office. The Chairperson of Saptibari Union Parishad Mr. Ananto Kumar Roy was also sitting beside him. He agreed with Kanteswar, *“Now Kanto is more popular than me. People respect him and love him. His Federation works a lot to develop the life standard of Saptibari Union, especially of the poor”*.

Kanteswar is popularly known as 'Chairperson' in his area. People ask for his help to solve their problems. Public representatives of the region including the Parliament member know him well. He is invited as guest in different local programs. He plays a vital role in taking any important social decision. Coming from humble origins of a landless farm family, Kanteswar has become a popular leader of the poor people. Participating in various training sessions arranged by RDRS, he has developed significant knowledge on social issues and he is sincere to make other people conscious. It is interesting that on the occasion of 'Raash Mela' (a popular religious festival of Hindu community) he made the sculptures of 'Krishna' and 'Radha' in the form of modern god and goddess who preach the importance of using sanitary latrine, having birth and marriage registration etc. Though people at first opposed him, he was successful to make them understand that god is always kind to help people in their problematic situation. He expressed his views saying, *“If the God Krishna came to earth in this time, he would suggest people to do these things. We know that God will not appear as a human rescuer in this time; so, we ourselves as human-beings should know that God wants us do good things for our greater welfare. The almighty is of course against dowry and He wants children in good health”*.

At present the Arbitration and Mediation Committee of Saptibari Union Federations mitigates various types of social and family conflicts. Union Parishad often refers conflict cases to the Union Federations. By this time, this Federation assisted 14 landless farmers to have their ownership on *Khash* land. It also works for ensuring relief cards namely VGD and VGF from UP to real ultra poor of the Union.

The strong leadership of Kanteswar Barman is an inspiration for every member. The members are hardly absent from General Committee Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting. One of the Federations members Giribala said, *“Federation now is not only an organization, but also a strong movement of the poor people under the leadership of UF Chairperson”*.

#### **Case 5: Gaining united force through Federations and raising voices in establishing poor people's right**

- Local Resource Mobilization by Ghorial Danga Federation

*“We the poor people have right on Khash land (the unused land owned by the government), the homeless people like us should be rehabilitated there. But why do rich people grab those?”* said Bina Rani, a Federations member. She came from one of the families stricken with river erosion. Her family became landless and homeless. They took it as a 'game of fate'. One day a workshop on citizen rights arranged by Ghorialdanga Federations changed

her thinking. She and other members in the workshop have become concerned about establishing their rights on local resources. They came to know where to go and to whom to talk to for establishing their rights on *khash* lands. The Federation members together grew strong movement and went to Land office of the Upazilla, raised their voice and demanded their rights on *khash* land. The poor people who are not Federation members also accompanied them. Some of the helpless poor got verbal permission to set habitat on *khash* land. However, at first they did not get legal ownership of those lands. Local administration informally permitted some of the landless poor to use some pieces of *khash* lands. The Federation leaders participation in various workshops and trainings arranged by RDRS made them bold enough to speak out about their rights on government resources and the trained leaders worked with the community members increasing their awareness in social gatherings and even personal or group conversations. Realizing the importance, the community members followed the suggestions of the Federation leaders.

Ghorialdanga Union Federations has proved itself as a good friend of the local community just as Union Parishad. UP Chairperson and members often take suggestion of the Federation leaders and take important decision. In case of receiving legal paper from the government department to own/lease *khas* land by the landless poor families, UF in collaboration with UP played a strong role to establish their rights. Ultimately they got the legal documents and rehabilitated 15 families on the *khas* land.

Bina Rani expressed her satisfaction in this way- *"In the beginning we knew nothing about the rights of poor but now we have gained knowledge, made ourselves confident, and in many cases we have succeeded to establish our rights. 'United' force and awareness building initiatives made us courageous to raise our voice and fulfill our demand."*

#### **Case 6: Preventing Children and Women Trafficking**

Joymonirhat Union Federations is situated at the border area of Bhurungamari Upazilla in Kurigram district. Few years back Joymonirhat region was a safe route for women and children trafficking. Some of the anti-social elements allured the poor women and children to go to India promising that they would be provided with good jobs and enjoy better livelihood. But after entering India these poor women and children never came back to their motherland. The Federation leaders felt it was important to make the general public aware on this issue and make the better informed on the evils of children and women trafficking. They arranged several workshops in the Union, organized folksongs and people's theatre. People from all corners enjoyed these social events and came to know more about the routes through which they are trafficked and the evil effect and threats posed by the human traffickers.

In accordance with the recommendations of the participants in the workshops, a committee at each border village of Joymonirhat Union was formed to collect all information about women and children, different routes and about the traffickers in order to discourage this practice. Each of the committee was led by a Federation member living in the respective village. The committee visited every family to make all the people of the Union conscious about it. They suggested that women and children must be careful of any unknown or partially known person. The committee members were successful to make people understand about this matter. The committee members themselves started to play the role as 'watchdogs' by rotation. They started keeping watchful eyes on buses and trucks plying along the highways and roads across the villages of Joymonirhat Union. Result of all these activities was excellent. The Federations became successful in lessening and preventing women and children being trafficked to India. Of course the Bangladesh Rifle (BDR) and Police force enthusiastically came forward to play their role duly to make the initiatives of Joymonirhat

Union Federations a success. In this way the Union Federations, BDR, and the Police forces have come together in engaging themselves in social works successfully, and in particular, the Union Federations established its credibility.

**Case 7: Bringing together: RDRS Development Unit and UF- *destined for empowering women***

Ketkibari Union Federations under Domar Upazilla consists of 546 members from 19 women groups and 8 men groups. One of the best successes of this Federation is to carry out tailoring training course for women, successfully. With the assistance of Livelihood development Unit of RDRS Bangladesh, this training course took place in 2005 in the hall room of the Federations. Altogether, 17 destitute women took part in a twenty-day' training course. Utilizing the training knowledge some of the trainees made significant changes in their lives.

Ranu, one of the trainees of this course managed to buy a sewing machine on installment. Her poor husband works in a garment factory at Gazipur. He purchased some rejected cloths from the factory at cheaper rate and sent those to his wife. Ranu made dresses for children and women of her village. People liked Ranu's dress and within short time demands from the neighboring houses increased remarkably. Ranu made a good profit from her tailoring business. She was able to repay all loan installments for her sewing machine. Then she started to think of expanding the market of her business. In addition to dress-making, she started to make bedcovers and pillow covers. Her husband helped her to sell the products in the markets at Dhaka and Gazipur. Now Ranu herself delivers her products to Dhaka and Gazipur. Besides sewing dresses, Ranu makes attractive designs on the clothes. Ranu feels it important to develop innovative designs in relation to changed situation and customer's demand in order to attract new markets.

Ranu not only has developed her own business in a limited way, but she also has provided training to 7 neighboring poor women who are now helping Ranu as workers in her gradually expanding business centre. In this way Ranu has ensured employment for the women through generating regular income.

The success story of Ranu was published in the daily news paper "*Prothom Alo*". Ranu hopes that demand of her products will increase more and more in future, and she will be able to provide employment to more women of her village in the same business.

Ketkibari Union Federations has arranged another six months' advanced tailoring training course for 12 women. After successful completion of training course, each of the trainees will get a sewing machine. Machine will be provided to the women from UF fund. Federations leaders are planning to establish a mini garments factory within their Federations compound.

According to the opinion of the UF leaders, it is possible to build capacity and skills of the poor women and thus to empower them through integrating need-based Programs among the development units of RDRS and UFs.

**Case 8: UNESCO funded Education project implementation through Haribhasha Union Federations**

***Capacity enhancement of Union Federations***

Haribhasha Union Federations under Panchagar Unit has been selected by UNESCO to implement Education project titled "Strengthening existing CLC with ICT facilities and

establishing new CLCs in the un-served areas". This is an activity contributing to EFA (Education for All) within the year 2015 corresponding to the national plan of meeting the Millennium Development Goal. This initiative will work to improve Capacity Building through action for literacy and livelihood skills training. The project will continue from December 2006 to June 2008. It will establish one Community Resource Center and seven Community Learning Center in Haribhasha Union area under Panchghar district. The Community Resource Center established at Haribhasha Union Federations Complex would have to be equipped with ICT facilities as per the approved list of items attached with TOR. A total of 511 women and adolescents will be trained according to the target. The training will include various IGAs, gender, computer literacy, livestock improvement, facilitation skills, shallow machine repairing, food processing, enterprise promotion training, and reproductive health. The project aims at development of fundamental and human rights situation in its working area. There will be arts and cultural competition for school and college level students as well as for the program participants to develop their mental faculties. The day observation programs under this project will make both the participants and the local dwellers aware on various significant development issues.

The CLC committees and the CRC Management Committee consisting of local elites and Federations members will look after the project activities under the leadership of Federation leaders included in the management committee. The committees will maintain strong network with government and non government sectors, UP, teachers and other relevant actors, look for local assets, choose place for CLC, survey and identify participants, look after the program activities and so on. For proper implementation of the project Harivasha Federations is going to receive a budget worth Taka 2,010,000 (Twenty Lac and Ten Thousand).

EFA Capacity Building Project 2006 - 2008 is in fact a pilot program of RDRS with the partnership of UNESCO. The program success will be stimulus to undertake similar programs in more and more Union areas which together with various Union Federations. This is why RDRS has gone through very formal procedure to select a Federations having competence of making EFA Capacity Building Project a success. To select a proficient Federation, RDRS formed a committee consisting of three expert officials from different sectors within the organization. According to the decision, the pilot project would commence on in the west zone of RDRS working area, the committee members sought proposal the names of the possible Federations from the Managers (Social Organization) working in the Upazillas of Thakurgaon, Panchagar and Nilphamari districts. Then, following the proposal of the Managers, the selection committee surveyed 6 Union Federations considering all necessary strengths (leadership, fund position, previous experience, network etc.); the committee members selected Harivasha Union Federations to be the most efficient and potential candidate to implement the EFA Capacity Building Project 2006 - 2008. RDRS hopes that most of the Union Federations will soon appear as individual project implementing partner organizations of RDRS and also with other development organizations.

This is a genuine example of partnership with the Federations and a good example of capacity enhancement of Union Federations to become a potential social organization (like a local NGO). RDRS is looking forward to develop such type of organizations selected from among the UFs to start future "partnership" program with such competent UFs.



## List of Persons Met

1) Mr. Kamaluddin Akbar	Executive Director, RDRS
2) Dr Nurul Alam	Director, Administration
3) Dr. Syed Samsuzzaman	Director, Livelihoods
4) Mr. I K Muniruzzaman	Director, Social Empowerment
5) Mr. Tapan K Karmakar	Director, Finance
6) Dr. Salima Rahman	Director, Community Health
7) Mr. Azizul Karim	Coordinator, Social Organization
8) Ms Monjusree Saha	Coordinator, Women's Rights
9) Mr. Jasim U Ferdous	Coordinator, North Bengal Institute
10) Mr. Abu Azam Noor	Coordinator, Internal Audit
11) Ms Sabrina Shamsad	Coordinator, Human Resources
12) Mr. Zillur Rahman	Coordinator, Finance & Accounts
13) Mr. Peter P Das	Coordinator, General Service
14) Ms Sufia Nurani, Coordinator	Coordinator, Project Development
15) Ms Dilrose Hossain	Coordinator, Project Development
16) Mr. Anthony D'Cruze	Coordinator, Project Development
17) Ms Dolly Khan	Program Manger, Administration
18) Mr. Sujit Baroi	Program Manager, Administration
19) Mr. Nazrul Ghani	Program Coordinator, Char Livelihoods
20) Mr. Ahmed Hossain	Program Manager, Social Empowerment
21) Mr. Korban Ali	Program Manager, Social Empowerment
22) Mr. Liakat Ali Khan	Program Manager, Social Empowerment
23) Mr. Mahbub-ul-Alam	Program Manager, Social Empowerment
24) Ms Wahida Helen	Program Manager, Social Empowerment
25) Ms Rasheda K Choudhury	Chairperson, RDRS Board of Trustee
26) Mr. Zahin Ahmed	Treasurer, RDRS Board of Trustee

**FGD with Upazilla Federations Coordination Committee members**

Venue: Ulipur Somaj Kalyan Songstha office, lipur, Kurigram

Date: 17.11.06

<b>Sl. NO</b>	<b>Name of participant</b>	<b>Name of Federations</b>
1	Md. Abdur Rashhid	Thetrie Union Somaj kalyan Songstha
2	Ms Jahanara Begum	Thetrai Union Somaj kalyan Songstha
3	Ms Smrimoti Tolo Rani	Ulipur Pouro Somaj kalyan Songstha
4	Md. Abdul Hai	Ulipur pouro Somaj kalyan Songstha
5	Ms Chandana Sarker	Ulipur pouro Somaj kalyan Songstha
6	Md. Alam Badsha	Durgapur Somaj kalyan Songstha
7	Md. Zahurul Haque	Durgapur Somaj kalyan Songstha
8	Md. Nazrul Islam	Daldolia Somaj kalyan Songstha
9	Md. Babar Ali	Hatia Rojonigonda Somaj kalyan Songstha
10	Ms Minu Begum	Hatia Rojonigonda Somaj kalyan Songstha
11	Md. Abdul Aziz	Pandol Union Federations
12	Ms Nazmunnaher	Pandol Union Federations
13	Md. Abdul Mazid	Dharonibari Somaj kalyan Songstha
14	Ms Aleya Begum	Dharonibari Somaj kalyan Songstha
15	Md. Khorsed Alam	Dhamsreni Somaj kalyan Songstha
16	Ms Amena Begum	Dhamsreni Somaj kalyan Songstha
17	Md. Ahsan Habib	Tabokpur Unnayan Somaj kalyan Songstha
18	Ms Maleka Begum	Tabokpur Unnayan Somaj kalyan Songstha
19	Mr. Ruhidas Chandra Bramman	Ulipur pourao Somaj kalyan Songstha
20	Md. Muminul Islam	Tabokpur Unnayan Somaj kalyan Songstha
21	Md. Delder Hossain	Bozra Unnayan Somaj kalyan Songstha
22	Md. Abu Taher	Buraburi Somaj kalyan Songstha
23	Md. Tofael Ahmed	Buraburi Somaj kalyan Songstha
24	Ms Umma Begum	Buraburi Somaj kalyan Songstha
25	Ms Nasima Banu	Bozra Unnayan Somaj kalyan Songstha

**FGD with the Community members (Professional group)**

Date: 17-11-06

Venue: Ulipur Somaj Kalyan Songstha office, Ulipur, Kurigram

Sl. NO	Name of participant	Profession
1	Haider Ali	Municipality Chairperson
2	Azgar Ali	Commissioner
3	Nur Sarker	Farmer
4	Kamini Kantha Sarker	Ex. UP Member
5	Md. Wahidul Islam	Teacher
6	Soleman	Farmer
7	Kaisar Ali Khan	Businessman
8	Lal Mia	Businessman
9	Md. Rafiqul Islam	Businessman
10	Alhaj Abdul Hamid Sarker	Farmer
11	Md. Chan Mia	Businessman

**FGD with the Community members (Professional group)**

Date: 18-11-06

Venue: Borovita Samajik Seba Sangstha Office, Fulbari, Nageswari

Sl. No	Name of participant	Profession
1.	Md. Abdul Bari	President (Fulbari Press Club )
2.	Md. Abdul Hamid	UP Member
3.	Md. Hosen Ali	UP Member
4.	Ms Shaheba Begum	UP Member
5.	Md. Mizanur Rahman	Teacher
6.	Md. Riazul Alam	Teacher
7.	Mr. Sri Khithish Chandra Roy	Teacher
8.	Md. Abdul Mozid Mia	Opinion Community Leader
9.	Md. Asaduzzaman (Asad)	PO (BRAC)
10	Md. Akbar Ali	Upazilla Liaizon Committee member
11	Md. Rafiqul Islam	Teacher

**Validation meeting with FCBSM project staff : East Zone**

Date: 27-11-06

Venue: Kurigram Training Centre, Kurigram

Sl. No	Name of participant	Designation
1	Azizul Karim	SO Coordinator
2	Md. Nazrual Islam	A V O
3	Hosne Shamin	Snr. Manager (SO)
4	Sunil kumar Roy	Manager (S O)
5	Pradip Kumar Barmen	Manager (S O)
6	Sumitra Rani	Manager (S O)
7	Anzumanara	Manager (S O)

8	Bela Roy	Manager (S O)
9	Khokon Kumar Kundo	Field Promoter
10	Ahsanul Alam	Manager (S O)
11	MD Matiur Rahman	Snr. Manager (S O)
12	Rashedul Arejeem	Snr. Manager (S O)
13	Nzural Islam	Snr. Manager (S O)
14	Hzera Begum	Snr. Manager (S O)
15	Ayub Ali	Manager (S O)
16	Shahzadi	Manager (S O)
17	Abul kalam Azad	Field Promoter
18	Nadira Begum	Manager (S O)
19	Suhelena Amin	Trainer (GD)
20	Ahmed Hossain	Program Manager (SE)
21	Korvan Ali	Program Manager (SE)
22	MD Moniruzzaman	Monitoring Officer
23	MD Nazural Goni	Program Coordinator, CDP

**Validation meeting with Upazilla Federations Coordination Committee members  
Panchagarh Sadar**

Date: 28.11.'06

Venue: Panchagarh Union Somaj kalyan Federations Office, Panchagarh

Sl. No	Name of participant	Name of Federations	Position in Upazilla Coordination Committee
1	Md. Rahmat Ullah	Panchagarh Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Chairperson
2	Ms Anowar Begum-	Dhakkamara Union Federations	Vice- Chairperson
3	Md. Abu Taher	Hafizabad Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Cashier
4	Md. Solaiman	Haribhasha Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Secretary
5	Ms Gulzan	Hafizabad Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Member
6	Md. Saidul Islam	Dhakkamara Union Federations	Member
7	Md. Abdul Quddus Pramanik	Chaiklahat Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Member
8	Md. Abdul Motaleb	Maqura Union Federations	Member
9	Ms Monowara Begum	Magura Union Federations	Member
10	Md. Saiful Islam	Gorinabari Union Federations	Member
11	Ms Mahmuda begum	Gorinabari Union Federations	Member
12	Md. Gias Uddin	Amorkhana Union Federations	Member
13	Ms Azima Khatun	Amorkhana Union Federations	Member
14	Md. Azizar Rahman	Kamat Kajal Dighi Union Federations	Member
15	Ms Sakina begum	Kamat Kajal Dighi Union	Member

		Federations	
16	Ms Selina Begum	Panchagarh Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Member
17	Ms Olima Begum	Haribhasha Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Member
18	Ms Shahida Begum	Chatklahat Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Member
19	Md. Mojibor Rahman	Satmera Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Member
20	Ms Rumi Akhter	Satmera Union Somaj kalyan Federations	Member

**Validation meeting with FCBSM project staff : West Zone**

Date: 29-11-06

Venue: Thakurgaon Training Centre, Thakurgaon

Sl. No	Name of participant	Designation
1	Md. Shafiqul Islam	Field Promoter
2	Md. Moshir Rahman	Manager (SO)
3	Md. Aktaruzzaman	Field Promoter
4	Md. Sholel Rana	Manager (SO)
5	Ms Dilruba Begum	Manager (SO)
6	Md. Arifur Rahman	Field Promoter
7	Ms. China Rani Datta	Manager (SO)
8	Md. Kaiser Alam	Manager (SO)
9	Mr. Tapan Kumar	Manager (SO)
10	Md. Aminur Rahman	Manager (SO)
11	Ms Jaheda Khaton	Manager (SO)
12	Md Nasiruddin	Snr. Manager (SO)
13	Md. Abdul Batan	Manager (SO)
14	Md. Zulfikar Ali	Manager (SO)
15	Md. Abu Zayed	Snr. Manager (SO)
16	Mr. Mukul Dey	Manager (SO)
17	Md. Akhtaruzzaman	Snr. Manager (SO)
18	Mr. Bankim Roy	Manager (SO)
19	Md. Kamrul Hasan	Field Promoter
20	Md. Liaquat Ali Khan	Senior Education Coordinator
21	Md. Mahbulul Alam	Program Manager (SO)
22	Ms Wahida	Program Manager (SO)
23	Md. Nazrul Islam	AVO

**Concluding meeting at field with Management Personnel of RDRS at Rangpur**

Date: 30-11-06

Venue: Rangpur RDRS Office

Sl. No	Name of participant	Designation
1	Mr. Imrul Kayes Moniruzzaman	Director (Social Organization Development)
2	Dr. Shamsuzzaman	Director (Livelihood)

3	Ms Monjusree	Coordinator, Women's Right and Legal project
4	Mr. Neogi	Coordinator (livelihood)
5	Mr. Azizul Karim	Coordinator (SO)

**Locally selected Case history collectors:**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Area (Units)</i>
1. Jilufa Sultana	: Thakurgan , Pirgonj
2. A.K.M. Rakibul Hassan	: Lalmonirhat , CDP
3. Fuad Khan	: Kurigram, Nageswri
4. Moudud Ahmed	: Panchegarh , Nilphmari

## Logical Framework Analysis (LFA)

Project: Federation Capacity Building and Social Mobilization Project (FCBSMP)

Period: (June 2003- December 2006)

Project Amount: 2.5 million Euros

Implementing Partner: RDRS

Funding Partner: European Union (EC)

Consortium Partners: DCA Consortium

Country: Bangladesh

	<b>Intervention logic</b>	<b>Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement</b>	<b>Sources and means of verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Overall objective	<i>To promote positive social change among the rural poor and their wider communities enabling them to improve their status and livelihood through fostering the emergence of representative, effective and sustainable community-based organisations by and for the rural poor themselves (Union Federations).</i>	Reduction in numbers living below the poverty line in the project area	Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics	
	<b>A. FEDERATION INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY -BUILDING</b>			
Specific objectives	1. <i>Increase in Union Federations (UFs) accepting and adhering to an agreed constitution and democratic practice including the active involvement of women</i>	1.1 <i>75% of UFs will have increased active membership, regular elections and practise good governance</i>	. Federation records and resolution book  . RDRS Federation Monitoring System  . Project Monitoring Reports	. No serious internal conflict or disruption affecting the majority of UFs  . No significant external political destabilisation or interference in federation governance and operation
		1.2 <i>Overall, women comprise 40% of UF Executive Committees</i>		
	2. <i>Improved protection of UFs legal status through registration of UFs</i>	2.1 <i>Up to 200 of UFs will have obtained legal registration that is respected by the authorities</i>	. Federation membership fees	. No major natural disasters  . Responsible leadership elected to UFs
		3. <i>Improved organisational management</i>		

<i>and record-keeping by UFs</i>	<i>management performance, record</i>	<i>Reports</i>	<i>. Relatively free and fair local government elections</i>
	<i>and book keeping to a satisfactory standard</i>		
	<i>3.2 75% of UFs will undergo annual audit</i>	<i>report</i>	
<i>4. Enhanced community facilities operated under UF management</i>	<i>4.1 15% of UFs will construct community centres</i>	<i>. Federation Gradation</i>	<i>. No communal strife</i>
	<i>4.2 45% of UFs will establish and operate community libraries-cum-folksonG centres</i>		



	<b>Intervention logic</b>	<b>Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement</b>	<b>Sources and means of verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Specific objectives (cont.)	<b>B. SOCIAL AWARENESS</b>			
	5. Enhanced awareness of relevant social and related issues, especially women's rights	5.1 Popular theatre/music groups will be attached to 25% of VFs (at least one per Upazila)	* Federation records and resolution book	* No serious internal conflict or disruption affecting the majority of UFs
		5.2 UF Volunteers and Paralegals trained in social issue dissemination	* RDRS Federation Monitoring System	* No significant external political destabilisation or interference in federation governance and operation
5.3 Mass social mobilisation events held in 90% of Unions with at least 400 participants		* Project Monitoring Reports  * Federation membership fees  * Programme Audit or Evaluation Reports  * RDRS quarterly monitoring report  * Federation Gradation	* No major natural disasters  * Responsible leadership elected to UFs  * Relatively free and fair local government elections  * No destabilisation of the NGOs mode of operation  * No communal strife	
	<b>C. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT</b>			
	6. Enhanced issue-specific local activism and engagement of UFs in their wider communities	6.1 Voter education campaigns and election monitoring conducted for local Government elections	* UF records and resolution book  * RORS UF Monitoring System	* No serious internal conflict or disruption affecting the majority of UFs  * No significant external political destabilisation or interference in federation governance and operation
		6.2 Significant election of UF members to local councils	* Project Monitoring Reports	

	<p>6.330% of Union Council members trained, sensitized on roles and responsibilities</p>		<p>* UF Membership Testimonials</p> <p>* Programme Audit or Evaluation</p>	<p>* No major natural disasters</p>
	<p>6.4 75% of Federation leaders trained in conflict resolution and mediation</p>		<p>Reports</p> <p>* RDRS quarterly monitoring</p>	<p>* Responsible leadership elected to UFs</p> <p>* Relatively free and fair local government elections</p>
	<p>6.550% of UFs successfully access local Government resources</p>		<p>report</p> <p>* UF gradation exercise</p>	<p>* No destabilisation of the NGOs mode of operation</p> <p>* No communal strife</p>

	<b>Intervention logic</b>	<b>Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement</b>	<b>Sources and means of verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Expected results	1.1 Increase in UFs with active membership	"A minimum of 200 UFs increase their active membership	'UF records and resolution book	'UFs avoid serious conflict and unforeseen disruption
	1.2 Increase in UFs conducting regular fair elections	'A minimum of 200 UFs successful elections	, RDRS UF Monitoring System " Project Monitoring Reports	" UF membership adequately mobilised
	1.3 Increase in UFs convening regular General and Ex. Committee meetings	' A minimum of 200 UFs convene regular General and Executive Committee Meetings	, UF membership fees	' UF leadership is interested and enthusiastic
	1.4 Increase in women's leadership of UFs	'In a minimum of 150 UFs, 40% of the Executive Committee positions are filled by women	'Programme Audit or Evaluation Reports	
	2.1 Increase in number of UFs having obtained legal registration	, Up to 200 UFs have obtained legal registration	' RDRS quarterly monitoring report	
	3.1 Enhanced leadership and management of UF records and accounts	"A minimum of 150 UFs are assessed as performing according to a minimum agreed standard of management performance	'UF gradation	
	3.2 Proper maintenance of UF finances	'A minimum of 150 UFs are assessed as maintaining records/accounts up to a minimum agreed standard		
	3.3 Enhanced transparency and accountability of UF finances	"A minimum of 200 UFs undergo an annual audit		
	3.4 Enhanced Networking and sharing lessons learnt	"In a minimum of 20 Upazila/Districts Liaison Committees are convening regularly		
	4.1 Increase in number of community centres under UF management	, 40 UF community centres constructed and handed over to		

	UFs		
<p>4.2 Enhanced availability and access to community library and cultural facilities under UF management</p>	<p>120 UF community libraries-cum-folksong centres selected/established, equipped and handed over to UF</p>		

	<b>Intervention logic</b>	<b>Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement</b>	<b>Sources and means of verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Expected results (cont.)	5.1 Increase in number of people aware of relevant social issues, especially women's rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. 265 other social mobilisation events organised</li> <li>. 5 different types of training organised for UF leaders/volunteers</li> <li>. A minimum of 300 rural dwellers, on average, attending each mass social gathering</li> <li>. 42 radio programmes</li> <li>. 264 Rural Cinema performances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. UF records and resolution book</li> <li>.. RDRS UF Monitoring System</li> <li>. Project Monitoring Reports</li> <li>. UF membership fees</li> <li>. Programme Audit or Evaluation Reports</li> <li>. RDRS quarterly monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. UFs avoid serious conflict and unforeseen disruption</li> <li>. UF membership adequately mobilised</li> <li>. UF leadership is interested and enthusiastic</li> </ul>
	5.2 Reducing the effects of natural disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. A minimum of 1,040 disaster preparedness campaigns will be organised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>report</li> <li>. UF gradation</li> </ul>	
	5.3 Access to legal aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Legal Aid Fund established (up to 40,000 Taka per case)</li> </ul>		
	5.4 Increased capacity of UFs to mediate in local social tensions/conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. At least 520 UF leaders trained in conflict resolution &amp; arbitration/mediation</li> <li>. A minimum of 150 UFs active in local mediation/arbitration</li> </ul>		
	5.5 Increased capacity of people's theatre/cultural groups to spread effective social messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. 42 training events organised for popular theatre</li> <li>. A minimum of 730 popular theatre/social mobilisation gatherings organised by UFs</li> <li>. A minimum of 90 people's</li> </ul>		

		<i>theatre and folksong groups /inked to UFs trained, equipped and performing regularly</i>	
	<i>6.1 Increased involvement of UF members in local elected government and other community bodies</i>	<i>. A minimum of 100 members of UFs are elected to Union Parishads/Councils</i>	
	<i>6.2 Enhanced access to public resources by UF and their members</i>	<i>. A minimum of 150 UFs gain access to local government resources</i>	

	<b>Intervention logic</b>	<b>Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement</b>	<b>Sources and means of verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Expected results (cont.)	6.3 Stronger practice of local democratic processes and decision making	* 260 voter education campaigns conducted * 1040 newly-elected Union Council representatives trained on roles and responsibilities *640 UP/Gov(. Officials oriented on Federation role and responsibilities		
	6.4 Awareness/advocacy events and materials	* 1,040 UF leaders/members trained * Quarterly News Letter published * Posters and leaflets produced and distributed		
Activities	1.1 Promote good governance including adherence to and compliance with the agreed constitution, norms and minimum standards	MEANS (HEADINGS FROM BUDGET)  Human Resources	COSTS (FROM BUDGET)  681,111	* Extension and Training staff capable of establishing & maintaining a meaningful working relationship with UFs
	1.2 Promote tri-annual elections to Federation leadership, including strict election procedures. Voter education and election monitoring	Travel  Equipment, materials  Local Office/Project  Investment	1,809  220,633  85,303  413,530	* UF Volunteers, PLA's and Drama/Song Groups are sufficiently motivated and knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities
	1.3 Facilitate convening regular General, and Executive meetings of the UFs	Other Costs/Service  Other	73,784  800,528	
	1.4 Training of UF leaders including	Contingency	16,880	* The capability of Extension/Training staff are sufficient to engage in capacity building

women leaders and volunteers in gender	Administrative Costs	206,422	of UFs
1.5 Developing Women UF Leaders and Volunteers	Total Costs	2,500,000	
1.6 Post-election orientation to new leadership after election			* Extension/Training services continue to meet and serve the changing needs of the UFs
2.1 Assist UFs in the process of legal registration			
3.1 Training to relevant office-bearers on organisational management including participatory planning and leadership development			
3.2 Design of simplified management and administrative systems			
3.3 Guidance and coaching of Executive Committee members on the use of simplified management and administrative systems			
3.4 Organise regular annual audit for all UFs			
3.5 UF Networking at Upazifai District level			



	<b>Intervention logic</b>	<b>Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement</b>	<b>Sources and means of verification</b>	<b>Assumpti ons</b>
Activities  (cont.)	3.6 <i>Local volunteers selected and developed as outreach/extension workers</i>			<p><i>. Extension and Training staff capable of establishing &amp; maintaining a meaningful working relationship with UFs</i></p> <p><i>. UF Volunteers, PLA's and Drama/Song Groups are sufficiently motivated and knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>. The capability of Extension/Training staff are sufficient to engage in capacity building of UFs</i></p> <p><i>. Extension/Training services continue to meet and serve the changing needs of the UFs</i></p>
	4.1 <i>Arrange construction of low-cost multi-purpose UF Community Resource Centres</i>			
	4.2 <i>Develop Federation Library-cultural centres</i>			
	4.3 <i>Promotion of Low-cost Social-event Suddort Services</i>			
	5. 1 <i>Paralegal volunteers selected and trained as rights workers</i>			
	5.2 <i>Enhancing Awareness of Rights/Gender.</i>			
	5.3 <i>Legal Aid Support for establishing justice</i>			
	5.4 <i>Enhancing Federation's Role as Social Arbitrator/Mediator</i>			
	5.5 <i>Organise. equip, train and provide ongoing guidance to popular theatre and folksonG or OUDS</i>			
	5.6 <i>Organise programme of social awareness mass events in collaboration with UF</i>			
	5.7 <i>Public information on</i>			

<i>burning issues through information, materials production and dissemination and media coverage</i>		
<i>5.8 Seasonal Disaster Preparedness mobilisation</i>		
<i>6.1 Training and advice to UF leaders/members in local politics and co-ordination</i>		
<i>6.2 Training to newly elected UP members in roles and responsibilities</i>		
<i>6.3 Advocacy materials and events</i>		
<i>6.4 Radio/TV/Print Media Facilitation</i>		
<i>6.5 Rural issues workshops at community level</i>		
<i>6.6 Voter education</i>	Pre-conditions	1. Government Approval of project granted 2. Necessary resources mobilised

*Terms of Reference*

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**EVALUATION OF THE  
FEDERATION CAPACITY-BUILDING AND SOCIAL MOBILISATION PROJECT  
IN NORTHWEST BANGLADESH**

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**1. Background**

The 'Federation Capacity-Building and Social Mobilisation in Northwest Bangladesh' project aims to develop the capacity of 260 Union Federations (self-managed grassroots associations of the rural landless and near-landless in northwest Bangladesh) as democratic and effective community-based organisations to support the development of their disadvantaged member groups and their wider community. The project promotes institutional development through organisation strengthening, improved governance and accountability measures, developing facilities and training. The project also promotes Federations as effective local change agents by facilitating development awareness initiatives (grassroots' democracy, community health, women leadership). This is achieved by strengthening their skills and capacity and by mobilising community activism, field-based extension, training, people's theatre, information and media initiatives. ( Project summary p. 2 ONG-PVD/2002/020-446)

The project receives a total of € 2,500 000 from the EC and the RDRS Consortium partners. The project runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 (this includes a no-cost extension of 6 months has recently been approved for the final 6 months in 2006). The funding application was developed and presented by a consortium of agencies comprising DanChurch Aid (DCA), Finchurchaid (FCA), and Church of Sweden Aid (CoS). Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) also participates through a financial contribution. DCA has functioned as the lead agency and signatories of the agreement with the EC.

In 1997, an in-depth study was conducted on Federations and in May 2006 a re-study was published to revisit the long-term viability of the Federations<sup>1</sup>. The present evaluation will complement this existing work and utilise a recent associated evaluation by a national consultant. Its main scope will look at project design and performance and should be seen as a complement to the in-depth impact study recently conducted. The Evaluation will also fulfill the Consortium's contractual obligations with the EC.

**2. Evaluation objectives**

- to provide stakeholders within the European Commission, RDRS and the consortia members (DCA, FCA, CoS with NCA as a contributor) with sufficient information to make an informed judgement about the performance of the project over the 4 years of implementation,
- to document major lessons learned, and
- to provide practical recommendations for follow-up action (for RDRS, Federations and the Consortium) including RDRS Strategies and policies for supporting and strengthening Federations in future.

**3. Evaluation criteria and scope**

As indicated above, the evaluation should particularly stress programme performance and give scope for programme improvement. Therefore the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of project interventions will be the primary focus. Since the recent Benini survey and national consultant preparatory study have recently studied Federation-related issues, the consultant should also endeavour to identify key issues/questions raised in that report.

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<sup>1</sup> Benini, Aldo A. (2006). *A Shelter for the Poor. The long-term viability of NGO-supported local associations [Draft May 2006]. Rangpur and Washington DC, RDRS Bangladesh [Field research support by Bhabatosh Nath and Ayesha Siddika, Responsive to Integrated Development (RIDS), Dhaka].*

In framing and conducting the evaluation, the Consultant should be guided by the following points:

**a. Relevance:** the analysis of relevance should focus on the extent to which the design appropriately:

1. assessed institutional capacity issues and effectively promoted local ownership.
2. clearly and accurately identified real problems
3. provided a clear analysis of strategy options and justified the recommended implementation strategy.
4. established a clear and logically coherent set of project objectives and a set of indicative activities for delivering each project result.
5. developed a clear and useful logframe matrix with supporting activity and resource/cost schedules.

**b. Efficiency**

The analysis of efficiency will answer to what extent the activities transformed the available resources into the desired results as stated in approved project (ONG-PVD/2002/020-446).

Special focus should be placed on:

1. management of the budget
2. cost and value for the money
3. management of personnel, information and property
4. match between existing staffing profiles and qualifications and project objectives.
5. management of risk (e.g. responsiveness to change) and the adequacy of existing monitoring systems,
6. relations/co-ordination with local authorities, institutions, media, beneficiaries and donors.

**c. Effectiveness**

The analysis of effectiveness will deal with how far the results contributed to fulfil the specific objectives parting from the Logical framework using the presented indicators. Key issues be addressed:

1. whether the planned benefits have been delivered and received as perceived by all key stakeholders (including women and men).
2. how well management responded to foreseen and unforeseen risks and events and how other key stakeholders responded to this.
3. influence of unexpected events on results.

**d. Sustainability**

Sustainability for Federations is part of the overall objective of the project. To what extent have this been achieved. Key issues to be studied:

1. ownership of objectives and achievements among stakeholders
2. donor support and policies, have they influenced and how
3. budget adequacy
4. influence of other actors
5. other outstanding issues identified in the Benini report.
6. capacity of the Federation to continue development activities independently.
7. extent to which the project contributed to interaction between federation's and local government, including any contribution to enhancing local government accountability
8. extent to which Federations may gained capacity to generate/mobilize resources and explore external funding?

**e. Impact**

The analysis of impact will explore

1. To what extent have intended social changes been achieved and how far that was directly due to the project?
2. Have this social change emerged from improved institutional capabilities? Has this included a wider community and not only the Federation membership?
3. Have the status of the Federation membership and their wider communities been improved in the period evaluated?
4. Were there any unplanned impacts?

#### **f. Advice for future programming**

In order to ensure lessons are applied, specific recommendations are invited to guide future RDRS programming in supporting, accompanying and strengthening the development of Federations. In particular this requires

1. Specific points and issues to be considered by RDRS in strengthening its future strategy and policies in working with Federations
2. Specific recommendations on how RDRS can effectively support the diversity of Federations (strong and weak) in future given very limited resource availability – this requires suggesting the main elements of a Federation development policy for RDRS.

#### **4. Methodology**

The evaluation will be carried out during a four-week period in Bangladesh. The consultant will prepare and present an evaluation plan in consultation with RDRS. It is anticipated that the field work will take between 15-18 days with the remainder devoted to report writing. The Consultant may also be requested to prepare a short summary presentation of findings at the RDRS Partner Consultation. The consultant may choose both quantitative and qualitative ways of data collection. The evaluation will be carried out through analyses of various sources of information including desk analysis of existing documentation such as project application, previous studies (the aforementioned Benini study), monitoring reports and other reports, interviews with, RDRS project staff, beneficiaries, partner agencies, donor representatives. Since there are significant time and resource constraints existing documentation will play an important role in the analysis. While maintaining independence, the evaluation will be carried out based on participatory approaches, which seek the views and assessments of all parties. The consultant should also present how the data will be analysed and recorded.

#### **5. Expertise required**

The consultant assigned to carry out the evaluation should have qualifications, knowledge and experience appropriate to the purpose and scope of the evaluation and have knowledge about the local context. This calls for particular expertise in development for social change, organisational capacity building, knowledge of the Bangladesh context and gender.

#### **6. Reporting requirements**

The report should include apart from an executive summary, main text with an analysis, also conclusions and recommendations. The report should also include a brief contextual analysis of the project (i.e., local, international, donor relationships etc). The annexes should include the methodology for the evaluation, a list of persons consulted and a list of literature and documentation consulted. The findings should be illustrated through case studies. Realistic recommendations for future RDRS policy and practice in dealing with Federations should receive adequate attention.

The draft report will be presented to the Consortium and to RDRS for feedback and comments prior to being finalised. Depending on the timing of the exercise, any feedback from discussion at the partner consultation should also be included. in the final draft

The final report will be circulated to the EC delegation in Dhaka, all Consortium members and RDRS. Depending on the timing of the evaluation, evaluation findings should be presented at the forthcoming 10th RDRS Partners' Consultation during 22-23 November 2006.

#### **7. Workplan and timetable**

The time needed for the assignment for the Lead Consultant 25 working days including travel, field visit and report writing.

#### **8. Provisional Budget**

**For international consultant (Budget for national consultant shown separately)**

Consultant Fees (\$250 per day x 25 days)	6,250
Travel (Kath'u, Dhak-> Rangpur)	400
Transport in the field	100
Accommodation and meals (20 days x \$25)	500
Miscellaneous	300

7,550

KA : dk 26 August 2006