Community-Based Adaptation
FAST FACTS

Grantee: Research and Development Organization for the People (RDOP)

Type of organization: NGO

Number of participants: 1,230

Location: The seven villages of Garamara, Balujhuri, Ramkhjhura, Digalakona, Hatiberkona, Sangnampara, Ghoragril, Dhanua Kamalpur Union, Bakshiganj Upazila, Jamalpur District

Project Partners: CNRS, Balujhuri Adibashi (Garo) Shonchoy O Rin Dan Bahumukhi Shomobay Shomiti Ltd

CBA Contribution: $47,808

Co-financing: Community BDT $7,973; Balujhuri Adibashi (Garo) Shonchoy O Rin Dan Bahumukhi Shomobay Shomiti Ltd BDT $8,108

Project Dates: July 2011 –December 2012

BANGLADESH

Promoting diversified agro-based activities for improving household livelihood security of vulnerable Adibashi community in hilly areas of Bakshiganj Upazila in Jamalpur District

BACKGROUND

The Community-Based Adaptation Programme (CBA) is a five-year UNDP global initiative, largely funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) along with other donors. Delivering through the GEF-Small Grants Programme (SGP) and UNDP Country Office, the goal of the Project is to strengthen the resiliency of communities addressing climate change impacts. UNDP partners with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme to enhance community mobilization, recognize volunteers' contributions and ensure inclusive participation around the project, as well as to facilitate capacity building of partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). Testing the Vulnerability Assessment Reduction (VRA) and other community-engagement tools, the Project is generating invaluable knowledge and lessons for replication and upscaling. The Government of Japan, the Government of Switzerland, and AusAID provide additional funding.

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This CBA project aims to improve traditional ways of supporting livelihoods and to reduce vulnerability to climate related risks. The seven project villages are located in Dhanua Kamalpur Union and are comprised of traditional ethnic Garo families. The area is surrounded by hilly terrain that leads to plain lands surrounded by forest. It is prone to flash foods, soil erosion, landslides, moisture stress, and soil nutrient loss. Agricultural activities are the primary source of income for most community members. Many cultivate small plots or work as day labourers on neighbouring land, supplementing their income with fuel wood collection, livestock rearing, bamboo cane crafts and homestead fruits and vegetable production. Heavily dependent on natural resources, the viability of these activities is in jeopardy due to a deteriorating resource base from over exploitation and climate impacts. The traditional *jhum* (a local name for slash and burn agriculture on the slopes of hills in thickly forested landscapes practiced by the tribal groups) cultivation method gradually weakens the hilly environment with heavy soil erosion and nutrient deficiencies. Changing water patterns accelerate this process and reduce the amount of cultivatable land in the foothills thus restricting livelihoods. Due to the lack of arable land and vitamin-rich diets, malnutrition is common especially among women, young children and the elderly. To support households and maintain subsistence levels, both men and women seek work outside of the community and often migrate seasonally to find jobs. Without alternatives to livelihood practices, community members will likely become increasingly unable to support their households and maintain their way of life.

Hill Slope Soil Erosion due to Unsustainable Agriculture

CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS

Climate change projections for Bangladesh predict an increase in temperatures, reduced and erratic rainfall, and more frequent rainstorms. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report, Asian countries are likely to see an increase in average temperature (3.3°C) in the next century. In the hilly region of the project area, very hot summers and very cold winters delineate the seasons and are likely to reach extreme levels. Flash floods are especially common

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from April-May and September-November when heavy rainfall is common and exacerbated by heavy rainfall in the neighbouring hills of India. More frequent droughts are predicted, which would delay planting seasons and damage crops. Increased incidence of drought also loosens topsoil, and when combined with heavy rainfall, it causes severe flash floods, soil erosion and landslides that further deteriorate the environment and crop production systems. Damage to homes and displacement of people is also likely as flash floods increase in intensity. At the same time, drought and moisture stress also restrict the cultivation of other crops. The changing climate will negatively affect soil quality and quantity making it progressively difficult for the Garo to maintain their livelihoods. As weather conditions become more extreme, their lives and livelihoods are at risk.

ADAPTATION MEASURES

By using natural resources sustainably and protecting the resource base from gradual damage and degradation, the project will support the continuation of traditional livelihoods. The project consists of the following components:

Livestock as Household Resource Generating Activities

- Increasing cropping intensity for higher production using alternatives to *jhum* cultivation such as mulching, terracing, and using organic fertilizers;
- Introducing short duration, risk prone and suitable high value crop varieties and improved seed preservation;
- Cultivating rice and rearing fish together in one land unit area by improving methods of green cultivation (e.g. organic fertilizer, integrated pest management, etc.);
- Increasing household consumption of mineral rich vegetables for better health and nutrition;
- Creating employment opportunities and income generation activities;
- Building skill development facilities and alternative income-generating opportunities; and
- Conducting capacity-building workshops, discussions, and other activities that will improve the community's understanding of the risk of climate change impacts as well as their ability to cope with those impacts.

The community will benefit from increased capacity to cope with adverse climate risks. Utilizing community participation to build on local knowledge, the project will focus on traditional methods and ways to develop the most appropriate adaptation strategies.

FOCUS ON

Global environmental benefit

Reducing soil and land degradation minimizes disruptions to the existing ecosystem allowing for the regeneration of plant ground cover and the rejuvenation of habitats. Protecting the land from further degradation will not only provide sustainable livelihood resources, but will also allow biodiversity to blossom and protect the land against future damage from climate hazards.

Community participation and sustainability

Building on traditional shared decision-making processes, both male and female community members are active in the planning and implementation of the project. In traditional Garo communities, females are the head of the family and inherit the ownership of the family's land. Thus, women's participation in agricultural initiatives will be extremely important. Project implementation committees (PIC) will be formed with community members in each village to assist in mobilization, skill development, and monitoring. The PICs will also receive additional training in order to provide long-term support to adaptation activities.

Policy Influence

Successful activities and lessons learned will be integrated into subsequent community-based adaptation projects in neighbouring areas. Members from PICs will also provide additional technical support to newer projects and promote community-based adaptations as sustainable coping strategies to climate change.

For more information about CBA or CBA projects visit: www.undp-adaptation.org/project/cba

Further information, lessons learned, and experiences gathered from climate change adaptation activities globally can be found at the Adaptation Learning Mechanism: ***www.adaptationlearning.net***

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