

A Model for Rural Development

Participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP-2)

- Link Model of BRDB

Background:

Administration system of Bangladesh consists of Central, District, Upazila and Union. From Central to Upazila level, the administrative system is well established. Upazila, with average population of 250,000, is a key local government institution which provides extension services to rural population such as agriculture, health, education and others. Nation Building Departments (NBDs) at Upazila level have extension workers who deliver services by direct visit to beneficiaries. But the service delivery mechanism below the Upazila level is still weak. Union is the frontline local government organization closest to rural people. Union is managed by one Union Parishad Chairman, twelve Union Parishad Members who are elected by direct voting of villagers, and one Union Parishad Secretary appointed by the Local Government Division. Mechanism on planning, implementing and monitoring the development activities of Union is very poor and its financial resources is very limited.

Under such circumstances, the Participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP Phase 1) was implemented in 4 Unions in Kalihati Upazila from 2000 to 2004 to establish Link Model, which is a frame work to incorporate the needs of rural population in the process of development by linking villagers and government institutions concerning rural development. The Participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP Phase 2), is the follow up project aiming at the establishment of Link Model in an entire Upazila, Kalihati, and expanding it into wider areas of Bangladesh.

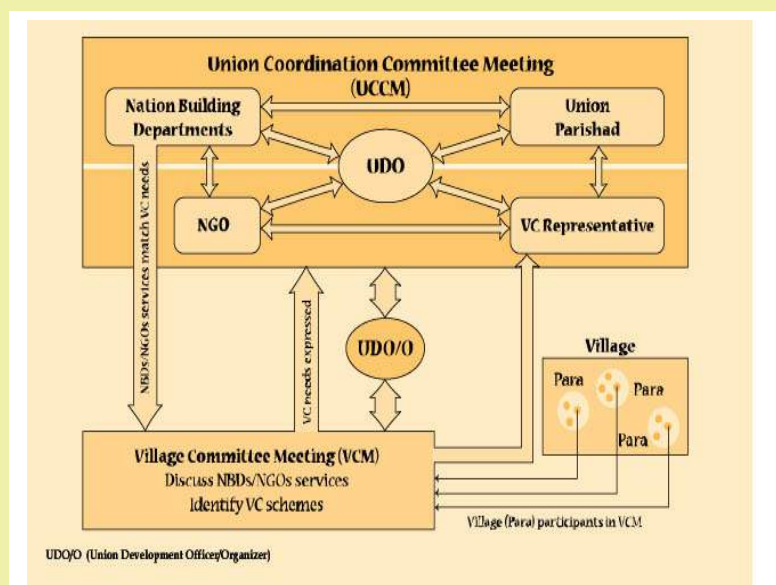
Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have developed a *model* of effective institutional mechanism for coordinating the activities of all concerned, working in the field of rural development and poverty reduction by strengthening the local governance at the union and village levels. This institutional mechanism developed by PRDP is termed as **"Link Model"** which ensures transparency, accountability and people's participation at all levels in the process of rural development.

Concept:

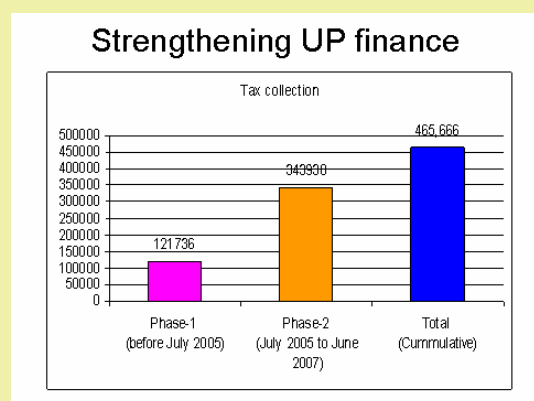
The Link Model promotes close coordination and cohesion among administrative services, and link administrative services to villagers. Villagers' initiative is most valued in establishing these horizontal and vertical links with a very strong sense of ownership/belongings.

Operation Areas :

The Link Model covering all the 12 unions in Kalihati Upazila in Tangail District, two outreach unions in Titash Upazila in Comilla District and two more outreach union in Meherpur



Sadar Upazila in Meherpur District in order to verify the efficacy of the Link Model at the Upazila level and under different regional characteristics.



Tax Collection Status of Two Unions,



General Meeting of Kurighoria

Organizational Set-up :

The Link Model consists of Village Committee(VC) , Union Coordination Committee(UCC) and National Building Departments(NBDs). **Village Committee (VC)** is an informal body, comprising of 15-30 members selected on the basis of consensus among the majority of a village community. Most of the members will be representing their social unit called *para* in a village.

The village people initiate planning of small and micro project/scheme and implement them by bearing 22% of the project cost in cash or by labour as matching contribution.

The Union Coordination Committee(UCC) consists of Union Parishad (UP) Chairman as the chairman of the committee, members of the UP , one each representative of the Village Committee, all concerned NBD functionaries and representatives of some selected NGOs operating in the union. **Union Development Officer(UDO)** is the member secretary of the UCC and acts as a link-pin between the service providers and the recipients.

Implementation Strategy :

The important feature of this model is that the Village Committee (VC) initiate plan and implement projects/schemes according to their need. The cost of the VC scheme is shared among three main stakeholders : villagers, the Union ADP block fund , and the Project. Villagers' contribution is set at 20% for road repairs and may be up to 30% for sanitation scheme. The project assistance would be disbursed only after union tax will be cleared including both current and arrear. The mode of implementing the VC scheme is designed as follows:

- 1) The project will announce the number of projects to support for each union each year.
- 2) VCs will propose their project plans to the UCC.
- 3) UCCM will make an annual plan of implementation with priority order.
- 4) A Project Implementation Committee (PIC) will be formulated for each project . A woman must be included as a member in this



Para Road, Tebi, Birbashinda

committee.

- 5) The VC collects union taxes and the 20-30% matching contribution from the villagers.
- 6) The PIC starts implementing the VC scheme for the portion to be contributed by the villagers by mobilizing their own labour and/or hiring labourers, and subsequently continues the work with the fund disbursed by the project following due process.
- 7) The PIC is vested responsibilities including cost estimation, labour management, general monitoring, auditing and finally reporting to UCC.
- 8) The overall coordination of the VC scheme implementation will be made by the UCCM.

Types of projects/schemes implemented by VC :

- a) Construction of *para* roads, small culverts and ring culverts
- b) Improvement of derelict tanks for fish cultivation
- c) Repair and provision of furniture of village primary schools
- d) Village-wide sanitation
- e) Other need-based micro-infrastructures.



Life Improvement Training in Biarumarua, Durgapur

Principles :

Link Model is a combination of a vertical linkage of "Village-Union-Upazila" and a horizontal linkage among stakeholders at union level through UCC. The activities are implemented based on the following principles :

1. **Participation of local people** : Establishing a mechanism for enhancing participation of all villagers through utilizing natural village boundary i.e. Para, instead of targeting particular social cluster in a village.
2. **Bottom-up planning** : Enhancing peoples' participation in planning, decision making and implementation of development activities. Promoting needs-based development planning with maximum utilization of existing resources
3. **Community approach** : Focusing on entire village development and improvement of living condition of the people rather than individual economic development, such as income generation.
4. **Self-help and Ownership** : Nurturing the self-help spirit of villagers and ownership of stakeholders on development activities by introducing systems, such as local contributions and payment of local taxes.
5. **Transparency and accountability** : Disseminating and sharing information on development activities by holding a regular meeting among all stakeholders in rural development. Maximizing an access to the information of general public by introducing Notice Board and other means. Through these measures, transparency and accountability on development activities by

Evaluation Reports on PRDP (Link Model) :

1. Award from JICA : Awarded JICA award & recognized our outstanding efficacy in two ways:-
 - a) PRDP ensures empowerment of poor and developing HR, Society & economy in Bangladesh context.
 - b) Enhance friendly relation & mutual understanding between Bangladesh & Japan
2. Mid-term Evaluation : PRDP resumes certification through its functions and functionaries that regards "Link Model" had been established.
3. Performance Audit Report : A hauler of hopeful successes that emerged as a unique model for strengthening both LGD & RDC
4. JCC Report : JCC exposed appreciation through different development allies & decided to replicate Link Model over the country even after the project.



Bamboo Bridge in Shahadebpur,
Kalihati improvement
Training in Narandia

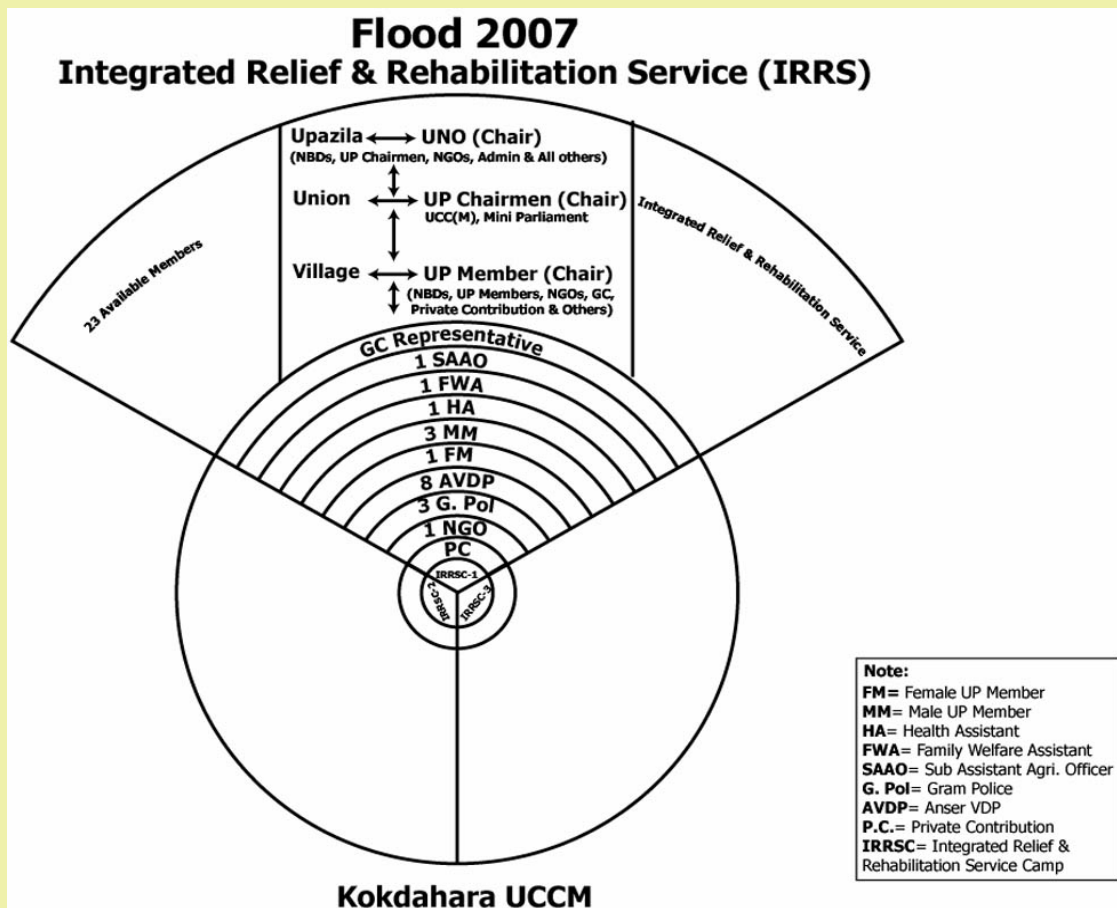


Post Training Status of Life



UCCM Kutubpur, Meherpur Sadar

Mechanism for Facing any National Emergency Situation



Most of us are much more dependent on State & Donors during disaster. But during flood of 2007, PRDP(LM) was closely involved with Kokdahara Union of Kalihati adopted a technique through UCCM that can be imitated by each union of the country. Kokdahara UCCM found that 1 female member's boundary area of UP remains 23 existing manpower, who can easily assist of that respective population and if everyone accumulate their resources to provide necessary relief & rehabilitation. Thus one union remain 69 existing manpower within 3 female members area. So proper integration of existing resources & utilization process would be enough for our self sufficiency during any disaster. UNO Kalihati Mr. Saifullahil Azam adopted this policy to reduce all types of misuses discrimination regarding relief & rehabilitation throughout the whole Upazila. Kalihati Upazila successfully integrated flood/07 without any toll of man & money.

Conclusion :

Lack of good governance is the biggest bottleneck in rural development in Bangladesh. Due to weak intervention, ineffective measurement system at the local government and improper outreach , the recipients of public services remain passive and thus the interventions yields poor development impact. Broader participation of the people is the key instrument for ensuring good governance , enhanced accountability , transparency and sustainability of public services in rural areas. In order to bridge such gaps, the PRDP is designed as a unique model that deals with the challenge of participatory rural development and good local governance simultaneously. If the Link Model successfully overcomes it's pilot phase project, it would be implemented in all unions of Bangladesh. This model could also be used in other local government system in Bangladesh.