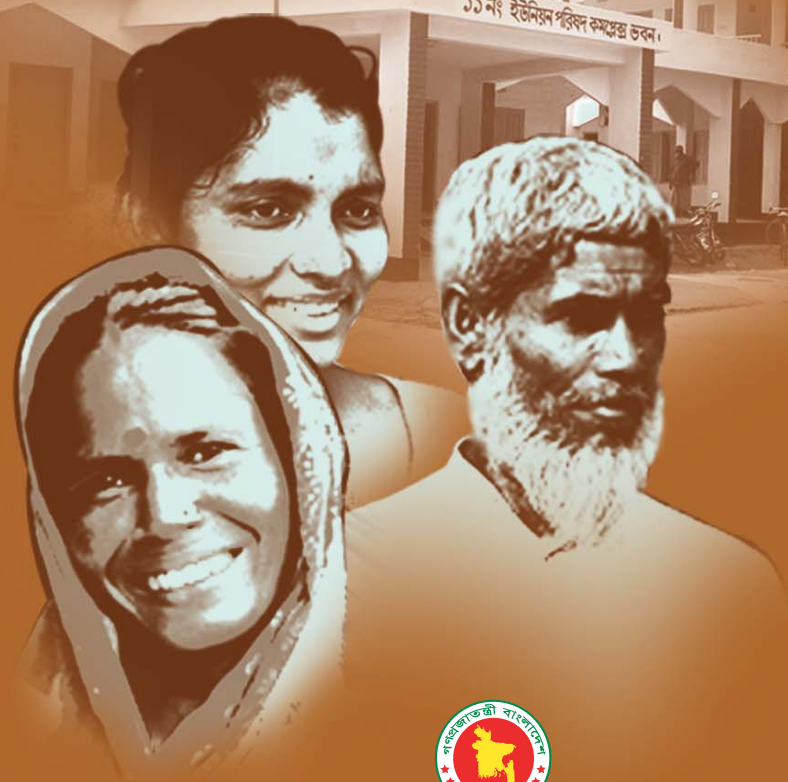


Journey to
facilitate justice
for the poor

The newsletter of AVCB Project

Smile

1st Volume
September 2011



Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project

Local Government Division

Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives



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Content

Project Brief	4
At a glance of AVCB Project	5
Awareness Workshop	7
VC IEC materials & Knowledge Products	8
PSC Meetings	9
National Consultation on the 'Village Courts Act, 2006: Challenges and Way Forward'	10
Workshop on "Role of Media in activating Village Courts"	12
Project Implementation Committee (PIC) Meetings	13
Training on 'Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Village Courts'	14
Reflection Workshop	16
ToT on VC	17
Study on review of social barriers and limitations of village court	20
Feasibility and perception testing workshop	20
Case Story	22

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Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project

Local Government Division
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives

Editorial

The interest of community people has been increasing gradually over the village courts as it serves the trial process within less time without making any hazards so far. The project has also attained the attention from other key stakeholders i.e. GoB officials, local government representatives, donors, NGOs, judiciary, police, lawyers, media and others. It's noted that the ownership of the government has been boosted remarkably in line with implementing the project activities at both central and local level.

With keeping continuous endeavors to strengthening the justice system through activating Village Courts in 500 selected Union Parishads (UP) in the country, the Project BGD/07/007-'Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh' (AVCB) moves forward having thematic comprehensive activities. Under the purview of Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C), the Local Government Division (LGD) is implementing the project with the partnership of UNDP Bangladesh and European Commission. The project intends to develop capacity of the Village Courts (VC)

members, elected representatives and other relevant officials in a bid to run the VCs smoothly. It also carries out comprehensive advocacy activities to involve the community and other key stakeholders actively in efforts to activating the Village Courts through enhancing their awareness on legal rights and overall justice system.

The project already grabbed profound success in stepping forward to activate the village courts at piloting areas. The interest of community people has been increasing gradually over the village courts as it serves the trial process within less time without making any hazards so far. The project has also attained the attention from other key stakeholders i.e. GoB officials, local government representatives, donors, NGOs, judiciary, police, lawyers, media and others. It's noted that the ownership of the government has been boosted remarkably in line with implementing the project activities at both central and local level. Regards to enhancing capacity development of VC officials including the chairman, members, secretaries along with the other pertinent GoB officials and stakeholders, the project has been conducting series of programs at national and local level from the inception of its activities.

The newsletter bears out the glimpses of the notable progresses and activities of the project so far (from inception to September 2010) though it couldn't contain many other activities due to space limitations. Hope, this publication can meet the thirst of the keen readers to get known about the village courts as well as the project.

Project BGD/07/007-

Activating Village Courts Project in Bangladesh

Project Brief

Background

In line with ensuring good governance, efficient and stable justice sector is indeed inevitable. In this context, Bangladesh is under tremendous pressure with much workload and inadequate number of officials and staff to dispose the cases. Consequently, the case backlogs add up to the existing pending cases and at present it stands on about two million cases. It creates a negative impact for the rural poor and vulnerable group of people who cannot afford the expenses of cases and do not have clear understanding of how to get access to justice in the upper courts on some issues that could be easily resolved at the local level. In this backdrop, Local Government Division (LGD), Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoGRDC) has initiated a project BGD/07/007 'Activating Village Courts Project in Bangladesh' with the partnership of UNDP and European Commission (EC) Bangladesh.

The project will support in strengthening the justice system through activating Village Courts in 500 selected Union Parishads (UP) in the country. It also intends to develop capacity of the Village Courts (VC) members, elected representatives and other relevant officials in a bid to run the VCs smoothly. It will also carry out comprehensive advocacy activities to involve the community and other key stakeholders actively in efforts to activating the Village Courts through enhancing their awareness on legal rights and overall justice system.

Objectives

(i) Overall

The project aims at strengthening a system of alternative dispute resolution in 500 Union Parishads (UP) through the establishment of village courts. It intends to improve access to justice for disadvantaged and marginalized groups and enhance human rights systems and processes in Bangladesh.

(ii) Specific

- To empower women, the poor and disadvantaged groups to seek remedies for injustices, and to enable justice institutions to be responsive to claims
- To promote and protect human rights security through a human rights-based approach to development in programming and delivery
- To empower citizens to resolve their disputes at the local level in an expeditious, transparent and affordable manner
- To strengthen local government institutions to be responsive to local needs and offer approach legal service through well functioning Village Courts

Project Activities

Review of Legal Framework:

The project reviews the existing legal framework of Village Courts in depth and submits the analytical and pragmatic recommendations to government for ensuring functional and effective village courts.

Capacity Development:

It supports to enhance the capacity of the local representatives (especially UPs), village police and staff of village courts, judges through training, workshops, etc at national and international level.

Advocacy & Communication:

It conducts a comprehensive awareness program in community at local and national level on legal rights i.e. services of village courts with rights based approach. Using all the potential communication tools, the advocacy and communication activities are

being carried out to sensitize all the actors in a bid to activating the Village Courts for ensuring the justice for the marginalized.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

In strengthening monitoring process and activities in emanating best practices of local government institutions especially UP in perspectives of running Village Courts effectively, the project supports to LGD, MoLGRD&C through initiating comprehensive interventions.

Intended Outputs

- 500 selected UPs are strengthened for activating village courts;
- Village courts legal framework reviewed;
- Capacity of UP Chairman, UP staff and village police on village courts developed;
- Awareness on village courts raised and involvement of community people and other key stakeholders in activating village courts enhanced;
- Monitoring and supervision function within MoLGRD&C enhanced;

At a glance Progresses Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project

- All selected 500 UP Chairmen are aware and oriented about the VC project and VC functions; Supports are extended to 350 UPs for setting up village courts and making community aware of seeking local justice services at their doorsteps; In addition, 12 UPs (model VCs) started delivering justice services to the rural poor;
- In total 34920 CBOs are formed (12-15 members/each CBO) with 33% women member; 110161 participants attended in CBO meetings (42% women); 9598 courtyard meetings held covering 54991 participants (33% women); This promotes the demand side of justice delivery mechanism at the community level; (Data Should till the publication preiod)
- Published Baseline Survey Report which attracted mass attention about the village courts status in Bangladesh and the project itself;
- M & E Framework is finalized which includes measurable indicators, monitoring tools, techniques and reporting guidelines;
- Project Log Frame is revised and it's helping the target-specific implementation process;
- Village Courts Training Manual is approved and endorsed by the GOB;
- On the spot orientation to VC officials in 64 UPs have enhanced their confidence to run VC and resolve local disputes methodically while in total 105 UPs are visited by the Project;
- Various GOB trainings institutions are adequately sensitized about VCs and institutional partnership to be established with BPATC, Police Academy, NILG and BCS Admin Academy in order to incorporate VC functions, roles and responsibilities of field level officials to activate VC into the training course curricula;
- Partnership established with the Ministry of Law; the Judiciary obtained the High Court's concurrence to obtain series of orientation on VC functions;
- Project's Communication and Visibility Plan is approved by EU and being followed while developing various IEC materials and communication interventions; It puts due importance to ensure the necessary visibility of GOB, European Union and UNDP in project intervention;
- Detailed Project Communication and Advocacy Strategy drafted aligning with the UNDP-EC
- Increased awareness enabled peoples to have access to local justice services through wider Dissemination of various IEC materials (brochures, stickers, posters, festoons, flip charts, etc.);
- Illiterate/low literate peoples are brought under access to local justice supports of UP through using flip charts in ward-level courtyard meetings;
- Interactive and informative website pulled huge curiosity among various stakeholders including media and development partners about VC functions and its judicial process;
- After installation of 500 signboards with the name of 'Village Courts' peoples now easily can locate it at their doorstep for seeking justice services;
- Installation of 17 billboards at district level and

56 at Upzila level are helping peoples to learn about the jurisdiction of VCs while they very often unknowingly approach to district courts;

- Around 1,039 participants are reached through 2 divisional, 5 district and 5 upazila level sensitization workshops for raising mass awareness where 298 were women;
- The IEC materials prepared through organizing feasibility sharing meetings with the experts on village courts to bring out the best outputs;
- The short video documentary on village courts grabbed much attentions and paved enhancing knowledge among the stakeholders through disseminating the docu in different events;
- Project prepared a TV spot on village courts along with a jingle portrayed with the popular artists and singer of the country
- The comprehensive communication advocacy initiatives availed to get huge media coverage along with enhanced the interest among journalists and sensitized the partners, donors, policy makers, civil society and other stakeholders in activating village courts through national level events;
- Docu drama on village courts is being prepared to boost the mass awareness on village courts;
- People's access to justice services are further facilitated through sensitizing judicial officers about village courts; VC triable cases are now referred back to VC from formal courts;
- Necessary documentation supports (i.e. 11 prescribed forms as per the Village Courts Rules 1976, 13 additional non-prescribed forms) are ensuring quality case management, proper data collection, better adjudication in the VC as well as strengthening performance monitoring of VCs;
- Set of compiled recommendations for necessary reforms in the VC Act 2006 is drafted for framing updated VC Rules and necessary amendment in the Act; Around 164 judicial officers are consulted in 5 districts;
- Peoples confidence and knowledge level is further heightened through the VC booklet titled "Gram Adalate Bichar: Sangslisto Ain O Bidhimala";
- Review of social barriers and limitations of Village Courts explored the socio-anthropo-legal aspect of village courts and its potentials;
- Survey to determine UP capacity to use IT for enhancing quality of justice delivery is done for introducing ICT based reporting and quality assurance;
- Published "Shahaj Gram Adalat Ain", a booklet which narrates the Village Courts Act 2006;



Guests are seen at Divisional Workshop in Sylhet.

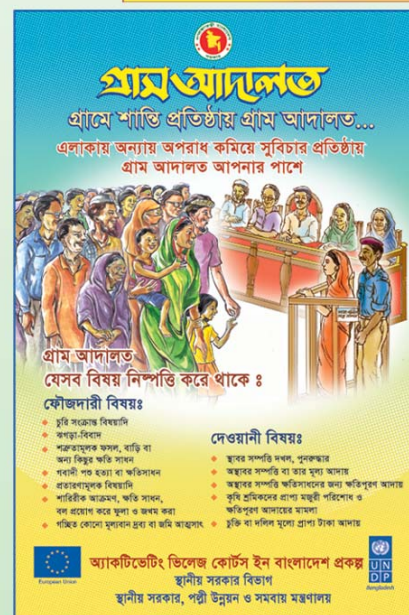
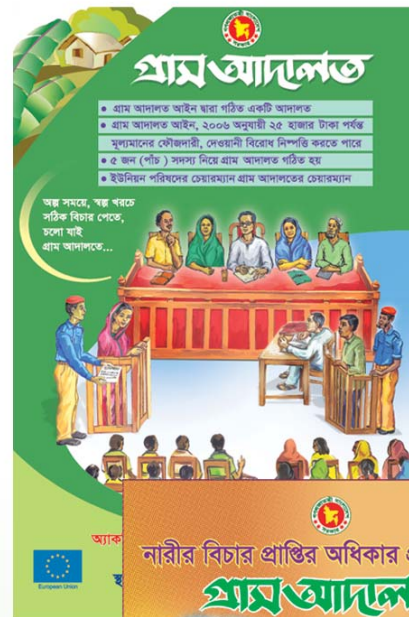


Guests are seen at District Awareness Workshop in Narail

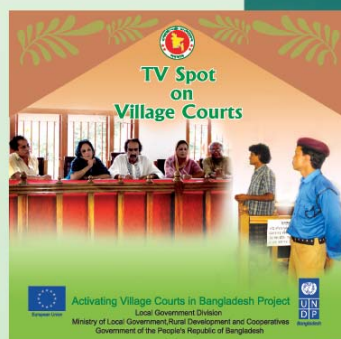
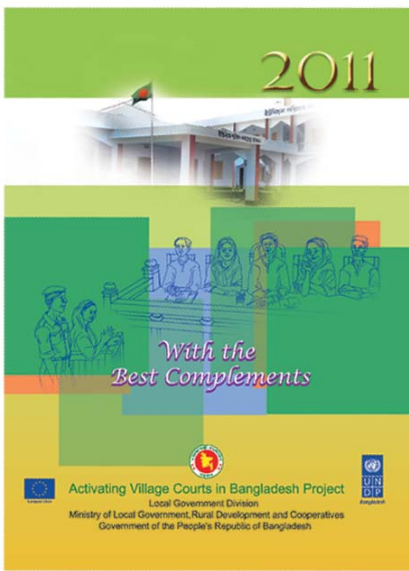
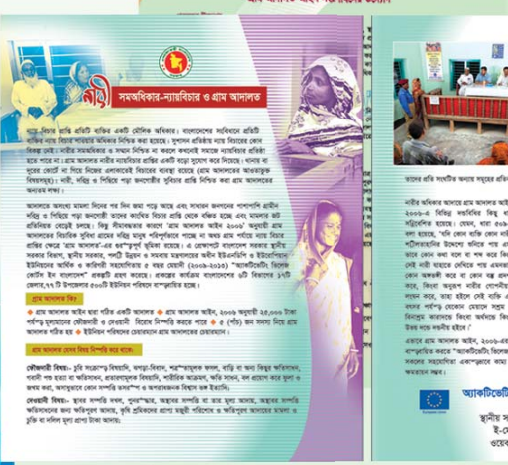
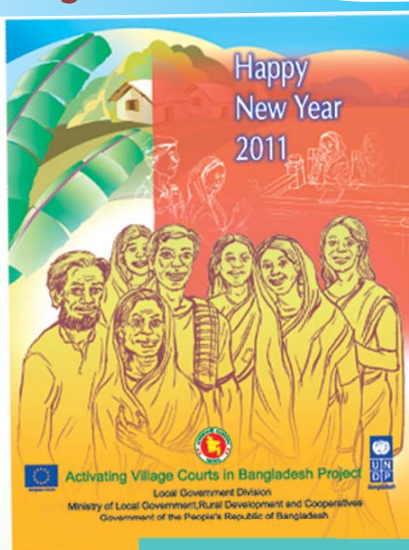
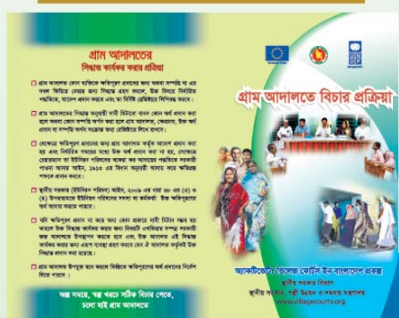
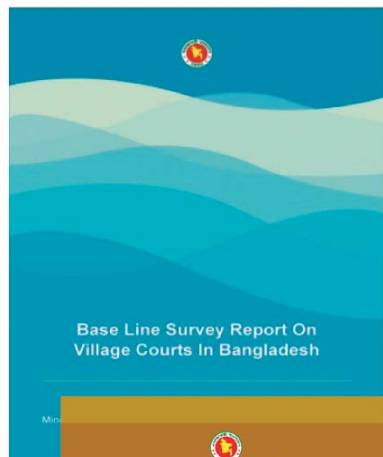
- Easy and Quick Reference Guide on the village courts are drafted for easy understanding of community people
- The Government selected 12 unions for ensuing village courts piloting in a bid to establish these village courts as a laboratory for the rest unions to bring out the best outputs from the VCs. The Project has selected the areas of Pilot VCs in Sylhet and Barisal i.e. 7 in Bhandaria (under Barisal division) and 5 in South Surma (Sylhet division). Various activities are being carried out at these areas to activate the village courts i.e. upazila level workshops, formation of CBOs, CBO workshop, on the job training, street drama, rallies etc.

Awareness Workshops on activating Village Courts

The Project organized several awareness workshops titled "Strengthening sensitization and involvement of the stakeholders in activating Village Courts" at national, divisional, district, upazila and union level. The project arranged these workshops aiming to involve the policy makers, government officials, CBOs, NGOs, lawyers, civil society, police, community and other stakeholders with the process of implementing the project activities through sensitizing them about the potentials in activating the village courts. The policy makers, government high officials, representatives from UN and donor agencies, elected local government representatives i.e. UP Chairmen from various unions, judicial officials, leading civil society members, NGOs, media etc. attended these workshops.



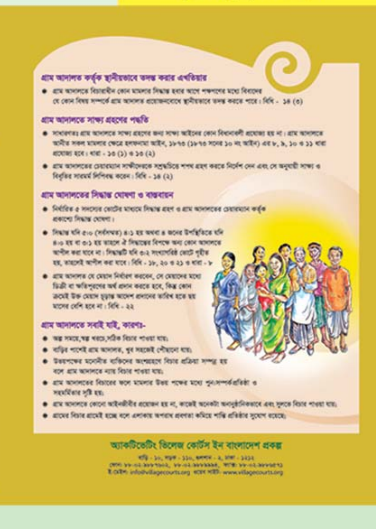
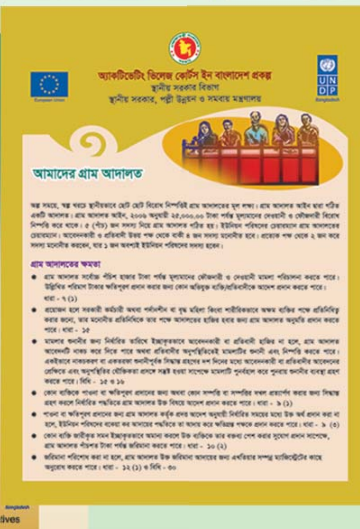
IEC Materials & Knowledge Products



National Consultation on The Village Courts Act 2006: Challenges and Way Forward

July 30, 2011

Officers' Club, Bally Road, Dhaka



M&E framework developed for VC Project

In the light of revised logical framework, Project Monitoring and Evaluation framework including tools and technique has been developed and being functionalized. Following the M&E plan, project monitoring activities are being carried out. Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative techniques including interviews, FGD, Key informant interviews, document review, observation, and case studies conducted to capture detail information along with regular field visit. At the end of each visit, monitoring findings are being shared with NGOs through a debriefing session.

VC IEC materials & Knowledge Products

The project brought out village courts booklet, project brochure, 10 types of sticker, posters, village court location map, VC process pocket book, festoons, Baseline Survey Report on Village Courts in Bangladesh, flip charts project pad, file, folders, scrap book, project pen, desk calendar, new year greetings card, yearly planner, pocket book, leaflets, booklet, VC



PSC Meeting is going on

process card etc. It also prepared the billboards & signboards with the messages of VCs and installed at 500 selected unions and billboards at 17 districts and 56 upazilas of six divisions (Dhaka, Rangpur, Khulna, Chittagong, Sylhet, Barisal). The project is also preparing mini-citizen charter board, information board for all project UPs for having wider dissemination of information regarding village courts.



Mr. Stefan Priesner, Country Director, UNDP Bangladesh delivering speech at National Roundtable Discussion on Baseline Survey on Village Courts at Dhaka

Project website developed

The project developed its own website which is being regularly updated with the progresses of the project activities. It contains the necessary information on projects and on going activities, which already attained much attention of the stakeholders and other concerns. (website: www.villagecourts.org)

Two PSC Meetings

The Project Steering Committee (PSC), the highest body of the project, headed by the Secretary of MoLGRD&C, provides broad-based oversight, policy guidelines and direction for the project, had its 1st and 2nd meeting in March 8, 2010 and January 23, 2011 respectively. The Steering Committee members were updated about the progress of the Project by the National Project Director at both meetings. The Committee members raised some issues which were explained by the NPD. Representatives from EU and UNDP were also present in the meetings and placed some specific suggestions to the project. The meetings were also attended by the concerned ministry's representatives and Project Manager, AVCB.

Dissemination workshop and launching ceremony of BLS report at national level

The project organized a 'National Roundtable Discussion on Baseline Survey Report (BLS) on Village Courts' at a hotel in Dhaka on 16 May 2010 to share the findings of the comprehensive baseline survey with the experts and other key stakeholders.

The survey reveals, the rural poor have very limited access to the justice system and most of them still depend on the informal shalish or conciliation process regulated by local Matbar (opinion leader) or community leaders which fails to provide fair justice



Guests are seen at National Consultation on the 'Village Courts Act, 2006: Challenges and Way Forward' at Dhaka

due to corruption, biasness and fotwa. About 92 percent of the respondents opined, village courts are needed, of which 24 percent know partly about the village courts.

Speaking as the chief guest, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Mr. Jahangir Kabir Nanak mentioned, the village courts can play an instrumental role in making the local justice system effective and sustainable and at the same time it is accessible to the poor. UNDP Resident Representative a.i. Mr. Stefan Priesner termed the village courts project a “powerful government vehicle” to strengthen and bring justice services to the people’s doorstep.

Local Government Division (LGD) Secretary Mr. Monzur Hossain and National Project Director of Village Court Project Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan were also present at the discussion.

National Consultation on the ‘Village Courts Act, 2006: Challenges and Way Forward’

The project organized a national consultation on ‘The Village Courts Act, 2006: Challenges and Way Forward’ on July 30, 2011 at Officers’ Club, Baily Road, Dhaka. Mr. Shawkat Ali, MP, Honb’le Deputy Speaker, Bangladesh Parliament graced the consultation as Chief Guest while Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Honb’le State Minister of Women & Children Affairs, Government of Bangladesh and Mr. Stefan Priesner, Country Director, UNDP Bangladesh were present as Special Guests. Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, Additional Secretary, LGD, MoLGRD&C and

National Project Director, Activating Village Courts Project presided over the event.

The Deputy Speaker stressed the need for strengthening and expanding village court across the country in order to help establishing good governance and justice to the poor and underprivileged. Mr. Aftab Uddin Ahmad, former Additional Secretary, Mr. Justice Emdadul Huque, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Prof Dr. Sumaiya Khair, Chair, Department of Law, University of Dhaka dissected the keynote paper as panel discussants. Mr. Sarder M Asaduzzaman, PM, AVCB project made the welcome remarks while Mr. Md. Mahboob Mrushed, Legal Expert, AVCB presented the key note paper. The discussants made useful recommendations to improve the draft Bill in amending the Village Courts Act, 2006, making the law more efficient in activating village courts for ensuring justice for the poor and disadvantages people at rural level.

Interactive Workshop with Cabinet Division Officers

The project organized an Interactive Workshop with Cabinet Division Officers on Village Courts at Cabinet Division Conference Room on June 30, 2011. The project initiated the event aiming to highlight the potentials of village courts i.e. functions, progresses and implementation of the project to induce in-depth knowledge, conceptual precision for the Cabinet Division Officers about VCs and boosting their active involvement in advancing the project. The workshop was chaired by Mr. M.A.N Siddique, Additional Secretary of Cabinet Division while Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, National Project Director, AVCB Project & Additional Secretary, LGD, MoLGRD&C facilitated the workshop along with Ms. Shamima Nargis, Deputy Secretary, LGD.

IEC Materials & Knowledge Products



Workshop on "Role of Media in activating Village Courts"

As a part of the continuous efforts to strengthen the local justice services at rural level for the marginalized including destitute women, the project organized six Media Workshops titled "Role of Media in activating Village Courts" held at Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari Rangpur at Rangpur Division and Gopalganj, Rajbari and Faridpur at Dhaka division.

The workshops availed the local media (print and electronic) got informed about the activity of the implementing process of the project and sensitized

the journalists on focusing Village Courts. The workshop influenced the journalists in focusing VCs through their respective media in strives of activating village courts at UP level. At Rangpur division, the workshops held on April 24, 26 and 28, 2011 at Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Rangpur. Mr. Md. Mokhechar Rahman Sarcar, Deputy Commissioner, Lalmonirhat, Mr. B M Enamul Haque, Deputy Commissioner, Rangpur and Mr. Md. Abdul Mannan, Additional Deputy Commissioner graced the respective workshops as Chief Guests.

On the other hand, at Dhaka Division, the workshops held on May 15, 19 and June 12, 2011 at Gopalganj, Rajbari and Faridpur. Mr. Sheikh Yusuf Harun,



Media Workshop at Rangpur

Deputy Commissioner, Gopalganj, Ms. Syeda Shahana Bari, Deputy Commissioner and Mr. Helaluddin Ahmed graced the respective workshops as Chief Guests. Among others, Mr. Abdul Kuddus Amin, SP, Mr. Md. Moniruzzaman, ADC General, Md. Rashedul Islam, ADM attended at Gopalganj workshop, Mr. Moha. Aminul Islam, ADC General, Mr. AKM Shamimul Haque Siddique, ADM of Rajbari and Mr. Md. Yusub Ali Mollah, ADC General, Mr. Shafiqur Reza Biswas, Deputy Secretary & ADM attended at Faridpur workshop.

Besides these, senior and mid-level government officials, UNOs, ADCs, DDLG, NDC, DD of Islamic Foundation, President & Secretary of district BAR association, NGOs, lawyers, women representatives, etc. attended at the workshops.

Terming the Media Workshops as very timely and crucial event, the Deputy Commissioners strongly opined that this is indeed commendable initiative from the project to come up with the grassroots level

interactions, of which will really escalate the pace of the progress in line with activating Village Courts.

They also assured all necessary cooperation in implementing the project activities. They also said that the local journalists will immensely contribute in advancing village courts being equipped with the knowledge on VCs through these media workshops.

Mr. Md. Aktar Uddin, Communication Officer, AVCB,



Media Workshop at Lalmonirhat

UNDP delivered the key technical presentation at all the workshops.

The workshops highlighted the issues of village courts in country perspectives, needs and potential of VCs and how media can have effective role in advancing VCs at union level. The journalists also took part in group discussions and presented their suggestions on the ways of advancing VCs from the efforts of media.

In total 294 journalists of national and local media from the mentioned districts attended at these three respective workshops.

The journalists termed the workshop as innovative initiative in advancing development journalism as they received such workshop first time at local level. However, the workshops got huge media coverage including in national TV channels.

Five Project Implementation Committee (PIC) Meetings

The Project Implementation Committee (PIC) headed by the National Project Director of AVCB Project and Additional Secretary of LGD to monitor and evaluate the project progress and suggesting directives for smooth functioning of the project held five meetings. At these meetings, the members were oriented about the project, briefly updated about the progress of the Project by the Project Manager. Representatives from



PIC Meeting is going on

UNDP and other ministries were also present in the meetings and placed valued specific suggestions to the project. The PIC generally guides the entire activities of the project including policy decisions.

ToT on Village Courts

As a part of a series of TOT programs on Village Courts, Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project together with National Institute of Local Government (NILG) organized five different slots of ToT on Village Courts (each slot continues for 12 day) at NILG training centre since 2010.

The trainings covered the different important topics on general TOT and VC i.e. about general TOT like basic concept of training, Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC), Training Need Assessment (TNA), monitoring and evaluation etc and about VC like social justice system, good governance, human rights, women empowerment & gender, village courts Act 2006, responsibility of UP representative and CBO members, documentation of Village Court (forms & formats), simulation of Village Courts etc.

A total of 114 participants from Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA), Eco-Social Development Organization (ESDO), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and WAVE Foundation, (PNGOs of AVCB Project) attended at the sessions.



Media Workshop at South Surma Upazila, Sylhet



Participants are taking part in a session at ToT program on Village Courts

The inaugural of the TOTs was graced by Secretary of LGD, MLGRD&C as Chief Guest while Syed Mahboob Hassan, Additional Secretary of LGD, MLGRD&C & National Project Director of AVCB Project, Ms. W. Young Hang, Assistant Country Director, UNDP, Bangladesh were Special Guests. Mr. Kabir M. Ashraf, Additional Secretary and DG, NILG and Mr. Akram Hossain, Director (Training) NILG also attended the inauguration session as Course Adviser and Course Director. Mr. Sarder M Ashaduzzaman, Project Manager of AVCB project also attended the session.

The TOT programs enhanced knowledge of the participants on basic training methods and procedures, relevant preliminary concepts of VCs i.e. good governance, judicial values, social justice, law and rules of VCs; attaining retention rate on the practical skills on conducting village courts and documentation process.

Training on 'Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Village Courts'

The Project organized 2 four-day long residential trainings on Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework of Village Courts for the Field Team Members in May and September, 2011 in Rangpur and Chittagong respectively. The project arranged this training aiming to ensure the quality of the field level activities and improve the records keeping of village court proceedings and others procedural documents

through effective implementation of M&E system of AVCB Project.

First training carried out from 24-26 May 2011 in Rangpur where a total of 25 field team members of two NGOs working in Dhaka (Madaripur Legal Aid Association-MLAA) and Rangpur (Eco-Social Development Organization-ESDO) divisions participated. The second training carried out from September 18 to 21, 2011 in Chittagong where a total of 24 participants (from partner NGOs of Chittagong and Khulna Division) attended. Inaugural session was organized in both trainings where the high officials of the division and district were present. Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, National Project Director, Activating Village Courts Project & Additional Secretary, LGD, MoLGRD&C inaugurated both the training programs while the respective Divisional Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners attended at events. Mr. Sarder M Asaduzzaman, PM, AVCB Project also attended at the training programs.



Guests are seen at Training on Monitoring & Evaluation Framework of AVCB

Comprehensive training manual of VC endorsed by GoB

The Village Courts Training Manual has been approved and endorsed by the GOB. This is another milestone of the project in enhancing the endeavors of institutionalizing the village courts.

EC-ROM mission visits twice the VC Project

The EC-ROM mission visited the VC Project activities twice since the inception of the project. The 1st ROM mission visit took place in 2009 while the second one from October 10 to 14, 2010 and found impressive progresses in the efforts to activating village courts. In the 2nd visit, Mrs. Ferdous Jahan, representative of



The ROM Representative is participating at the workshop with Judiciary on Village Courts

EC-ROM mission visited several project intervened unions of Sylhet, Rajbari and Faridpur and observed the different activities of the project. The mission also met with concerned judicial officials, local administration and other stakeholders. She also met with UNDP and project officials and discussed with several issues of project activities. The mission also shared the findings of the visit in a debriefing meeting and pointed out the salient progresses of the project along with some specific issues and recommendations. She termed the project communication and training materials as excellent tools to attune the stakeholders and community for enhancing their involvement and capacity in activating village courts.

Workshop with Judicial Officers on Potentials and Reforms of VC

The Project organized 12 different workshops with judicial officers on potentials and reforms of village



A section of the participants is seen at workshop with Judiciary on Village Courts

court and restorative justice issues. The workshops were organized to facilitate the legal review process, review of the social barriers and limitations of VCs and developing and printing reference guide book for VCs. It also intended to aware the judges about the nature of restorative justice prevailing under the legal framework of village courts with having valuable opinions of the judicial officers on enhancement the scopes of restorative justice in dispensing justice under the VC modality.

Out of 12 workshops, 2 were held at divisional level, 8 at districts (project areas) and the rest at upazila.

The workshops were mostly attended by the National Project Director, Activating Village Courts Project & Additional Secretary, LGD, MoLGRD&C, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Asst judge, Judicial Magistrates, lawyers, academia, project officials, district administration officials, i.e. cross section of people.

The participants made their valuable contributions on legal reform, effective enforcement of the decision of VC, judicial and administrative monitoring of VC and developing VC quick reference guide book and VC booklet. The participants termed the workshops very useful and timely as they got oriented about the potentials of VCs having necessary information.

Survey to determine UP capacity to use IT including mapping the existing physical infrastructure opportunity for VCs

The project conducted the survey with external firm for determining the UP capacity of using IT facilities for improving its local justice service delivery mechanism and found very necessary findings to address the said purposes.

Workshop on Institutional Monitoring and Evaluation of Village Courts

The Project organized a workshop on Institutional Monitoring and Evaluation of Village Court on 28 December 2010 at BCS Admin Academy Auditorium, Dhaka. The Secretary of LGD, MoLGRD&C Mr. Abu Alam Md. Shahid Khan graced the workshop as Chief Guest while the National Project Director of VC project Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, Additional Secretary, LGD, MoLGRD&C presided the event. Mr. Fazle Kabir, DG, BCSAA and Mr. Sarder M Asaduzzaman, PM, AVCB, UNDP were present as



Guests are seen at workshop on Institutional Monitoring and Evaluation of Village Courts

special guests. Mr. Swapan Kumar Sarkar, DG, MIE presented the keynote paper.

The workshop suggested the salient and potential frameworks to develop a strong and sustainable monitoring system of MIE, LGD, MoLGRD&C in advancing village courts at union level. The DDLGs (11), UNOs (12) from the project areas along with the representatives of MIE wing, government counterparts attended at the workshop.

NGO implements field activity at four divisions

The LGD recruited four NGOs i.e. MLAA, ESDO (Dhaka, Rajshahi) and Wave Foundation, BLAST

(Khulna, Chittagong) to implement the field activities of VC project. They already started their activities in the efforts to activate the village courts.

Reflection Workshop on Village Courts Project

The project organized a two-day Project Reflection Workshop at BIAM Auditorium on 11th – 12th May, 2011 with an agenda to ensure stronger coordination, devise follow up plan of monitoring visit findings, develop a common understanding on the quality and implementation modality and inter-component coordination the as well as promoting GOB involvement within the project. Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, National Project Director and Additional Secretary, Local Government Division, MoLGRD&C attended the Workshop as Chief Guest while Mr. Swapan Kumar Sarker, Director General, Monitoring, Inspection and Evaluation (MIE) wing of LGD, Ms. Shamima Nargis, Deputy Secretary-UP, LGD and Ms. Nandita Dutta, Programme Analyst, UNDP were present as Special Guests. Representatives from



Reflection Workshop of Village Courts Project in Dhaka

NGOs engaged in helping LGD for grassroots level capacity building, social mobilization in 4 divisions and the project management team took part in the workshop and shared their knowledge on ways to rebuild people's confidence in village courts.

Annual Planning Workshop and Retreat 2010 of Village Courts

The project organized an annual planning workshop and retreat 2010 at Jamuna Resort, Tangail from December 2 to 4, 2010. The retreat was scheduled with several programs i.e. presentation of component wise work plan for the Year 2011, multi year budget and analyzed lessons learned, challenges & way forward of current year.



A reflection of "Annual Planning Workshop & Retreat of 2010" of AVCB at Jamuna Resort

Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, National Project Director, Activating Village Courts Project & Additional Secretary, LGD, MoLGRD&C inaugurated the event. Ms. Won Young Hong, Assistant Country Director, UNDP, Ms. Nandita Dutta, Program Analyst spoke at the event while Mr. Sarder Asaduzzaman, PM, AVCB presented the compiled AWP 2011 in the annual planning workshop. The retreat ended with a stunning and colorful cultural night and fun games

Training of Trainers on VC for NILG faculty members

AVCB project in association with NILG organized and conducted a three days long TOT course for NILG faculty members from 11-13 April 2011 at NILG training center. The overall objective of the TOT was to develop capacity of NILG faculty members on VC issues so that NILG can carry out TOT and other training programme on VC and local justice system independently.

A total of 21 faculty members of NILG (Directors, Joint Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors,



Guests are seen at ToT Program on Village Courts at NILG, Dhaka

Research Officer and Assistant Research Officers and other relevant staffs) took part in the training course. Mr. Kabir M Ashraf Alam, Additional Secretary and Director General, NILG presided over the opening session of the TOT while Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, Additional Secretary, LGD and NPD, Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project was Chief Guest. Mr. Sarder M Asaduzzaman, Project Manager, AVCB project conferred his speech welcoming the participants and describing various aspects and significance of local justice, social justice and restorative justice.

Consultation Workshop with Judicial Administration Training Institute

AVCB project organized a consultation workshop with Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) on integration of VC issues in the curricula of Govt. training institutes on 15 September 2011. The major objective of the consultation workshop was to enhance knowledge and skills of the government officials and judges as well on VC and local justice issues to facilitate the process of establishing a



Guests are seen at Workshop with Judiciary

sustainable and responsive village court system in the project intervention area through integrating VC issues in the curricula of respective government training institutes. Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, National Project Director, AVCB project and Additional Secretary, LGD, MoLGRD&C, Mr. Farid Ahmed, Secretary, Judicial Service Commission and Sarder M Asaduzzaman, Project Manager, AVCB Project were also attended in the opening session. Mr. Mahboob Murshed, Legal Expert, AVCB Project and Mr. Hamidul Haque Khan, Training Manager, AVCB project presented 'Implications of Village Court Laws in the Judicial System of Bangladesh' in the academic session.

Training Workshop on Gender, Human Rights and Village Courts

AVCB project organized day long seven training workshops on gender, human rights and village courts. The first training workshop was held at Suoth Surma Upazila, Sylhet on 13 December 2010. The second and third trainings were held at Kishoregonj and Coxbazar district on 30 March and 30 April 2011. Recently AVCB project consecutively organized another four trainings at Rangpur, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Narail on 22, 26, 28 September and 04 October 2011. Respective Deputy Commissioners and Superintendent of Polices participated in the opening session of the trainings as chief guest and special guest. The total number of the participants were 419 where female 204 and male 215.

Consultation on Integration of VC Issues in the curricula of BCSAA held

The project organized a consultation workshop on



A reflection of the participants at Gender Workshop

integrating Village Court issues in their training curricula on September 6, 2011 at BCSAA in Dhaka. Mr. Fazle Kabir, DG, BCSAA and Secretary, GoB chaired the Consultation while Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, National Project Director, Village Courts Project & Additional Secretary, LGD, MoLGRD&C moderated the event. Mr. Kabir M Ashraf Alam, DG, NILG and Additional Secretary discussed on the significance and modalities of integration at the event. The consultation identified three regular training courses of BCSAA for integration of VC issues. These courses are 'Law and administration training course for the Assistant Commissioners and Executive Magistrates (five months)', 'Orientation course for fit listed Upazilla Nirbahi Officers (02 weeks)' and 'Upazilla administration and development course for Upazilla Nirbahi Officers (02 weeks)'.

Project Communication and Advocacy Strategy developed

The Advocacy and Communication component of the project prepared a detailed project Communication and Advocacy Strategy to lead the communication/advocacy activities of the project in a bid to meet the objectives substantially. It helps enhancing the understanding of government officials, NGOs, civil society and community regarding the efforts of activating VCs and initiates the best practices in having active participation of the stakeholders etc.

Divisional Workshop on strengthening sensitization and involvement of the stakeholders on Village Courts

The Project organized a divisional workshop on strengthening sensitization and involvement of the stakeholders on Village Courts held on May 22, 2010 at Circuit House Conference Room, Sylhet.

Mr. Monzur Hossain, Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives graced the workshop as Chief Guest while Md. Golam Rabbani, Divisional Commissioner, Sylhet Division chaired the workshop. Mr. Mohammad Aminul Islam, Additional IGP (Training) attended the workshop as Special Guest. Mr. Syed Mahboob Hasan, National Project Director, Activating Village Courts Project & Additional Secretary, LGD, MoLGRD&C presented the key

Paper Clips

National Roundtable Discussion on Baseline Survey Report on Village Courts
May 16, 2016, Hotel Sheraton, Oahu

The Daily Star

onal Roundtable Discussion on Baseline Survey Report on Village Courts
May 16, 2010, Hotel Sheraton, Dhaka

ঢাকা, সোমবার, ১৭ মে ২০১০
১৪১৭, ২ জমাদিনিস সানি ১৪৩১
উএ ১৮৮০; বর্ষ ১২, সংখ্যা ১৮৮

প্রথম আলো

Need for reactivating village court underscored

[illegible]

৫০০ ইউনিয়নে গ্রাম আদালত
কার্যকর হচ্ছে

নিম্ন প্রতিবেদক :

প্রস্তুতি বিচারকদের দ্বারা শীঘ্রোচিত কারণে গ্রামের সাধারণ মানুষের বিচারপ্রার্থিও সীমিত হয়ে পড়েছে। গ্রাম আদালতের মাধ্যমে সাধারণ মানুষের বিচারপ্রার্থি বাড়না সত্ত্বেও, কিন্তু গ্রাম আদালত সম্পর্কে সাধারণ মানুষের অজ্ঞতা, বিচারকদের প্রশিক্ষণের অভাব ও আইনি দুলভতার কারণে গ্রাম আদালত কার্যকর হচ্ছে না। দেশের ৫০০ ইউনিয়নে গ্রাম আদালত কার্যকর করা হবে।

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इन्डियाक

গ্রাম আদালত কার্যকরীকরণে
ভান্ডারিয়ায় সচেতনতামূলক
কর্মশালা

১৩ জাতিগত সংহতি
পেপের প্রথম সিকিভিট ইউনিয়ন
পরিষদের গঠন আদ্যতম কার্যক্রম
প্রকল্প গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। কম সময়ে
অর্থ ব্যয় করে ছোট ছোট সেবাগুলি
যেমনগুলি বিদেশি স্থানীয়দের নিশ্চি
করার জন্য হালী সরকার, শ্রমী উন্নয়ন
ও সম্ভাব্য সম্ভাব্যদের হালী সরকার
বিশ্ব জাতিসংঘ উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচী
ইউনিয়ন ইউনিয়ন যৌথভাবে
প্রশস্তি বাক্যসমূহ করবে। এই অং
নিম্নের গঠন আদ্যতম কার্যক্রম

**Village courts
may reduce
burden of cases:
roundtable**

The Financial Express

DA-1589 INTERNET : <http://www.fe-bd.com>

Govt to provide all out support to activate village courts: Nanak

session of the
roundtable on
dispute, violence to women
robbery, dowry and other

State Minister for Rural Development, Government and Cooperatives, Jaganath Kabir Nankh has said that the government will not support the

বরিশাল প্রতিদিন-
শনিবার ২৫ সেপ্টেম্বর-২০১০

ভাতিয়া গ্রাম আদালত কার্যকরী করণ
সচেতনতামূলক কর্মশালা

[illegible]

শিক্ষণালী হচ্ছে

[illegible]

■ দেশ, শনি ইউপি নির্বাচনের পর

[illegible]

ইউপি নির্বাচন বর্ষার পর

১০ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ১১ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ১২ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ১৩ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ১৪ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ১৫ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ১৬ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
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 ১৯ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ২০ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ২১ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ২২ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ২৩ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ২৪ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
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 ২৬ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ২৭ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ২৮ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ২৯ ইনস্ট্রাকশন
 ৩০ ইনস্ট্রাকশন

ইউপি নির্বাচন বর্ষার পর — ১৮ শেখ পূর্বাচর পর হলে। এর ফলে গ্রামের নিম্নবর্ণের লোকজনের জীবন উন্নত হবে না।

শিল্প প্রতিবেদন

আমেরীকী শিল্পী গ্রেগোরি শার্ট ইন্ডিয়ান শিল্পকে বিবিসিমে ব্যক্তিগত করে। শতাব্দিক শিল্পের প্রাচীনতায় একটি তরঙ্গের আয়তন। গ্রন্থে আলাপনালিগের 'ওয়েস্ট' স্ট্রীট হিউস্টন-এর বিখ্যাত স্টেশন। শিল্পী জর্জিও শোয়ার্টজের 'পেইন্ট' শব্দে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে এ কথা আলাপন শিল্পী শিল্পের প্রাচীনতায়। জর্জিও শিল্পী

শোয়ার্টজের আলাপনালিগ শব্দকে বিবিসিমে বিবিসিমে জর্জিও শিল্পী শিল্পের প্রাচীনতায় প্রকাশিত হয়েছে, গ্রন্থে আলাপন শিল্পের প্রাচীনতায়

১০ পৃষ্ঠা ১০ ৫

findings of the Baseline Survey on the Village Courts while Mr. Masud Karim, Program Officer, UNDP discussed the legal aspects of village courts.

Among others Mr. Gautam Kumar Ghosh, Additional Commissioner, Sylhet Division, Md. Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, DIG, Sylhet range, Aftab Uddin Ahmed, Commissioner, SMP, F. Karim Chowdhury, Director, LGD, Sajjadul Hassan, DC, Sylhet, Md. Mostafizur Rahman, DC, Moulvibazar attended the event.

The participants termed the workshops very useful and timely as they got oriented about the potentials of VCs having necessary information. In total 120 participants (including 34 female) attended the workshop. Meanwhile, the workshop got attained notable media coverage in both print and electronic media in local and national level.

Study on review of social barriers and limitations of village court

The project conducted a study on 'review of social barriers and limitations of village court' aiming to explore people's perceptions and normative barriers in accessing justice in Village Courts. The study revealed that people don't have sufficient knowledge on VC and multiple social factors are looming in paving non-functionality stature of village courts though it has immense potentials at rural level in advancing local justice system.

Workshop on institutional monitoring of Village Courts at local level

The project organized two upazila level training workshops on pilot basis at Dashmina and Patuakhali Sadar under Patuakhali district on 28th and 29th April, 2010 respectively. The workshop sensitized about the justice delivery system and existing monitoring and evaluation process of the Village Courts as per the Village Courts Act 2006. A set of training tools, methodologies and processes were resorted for team building and making the training and learning an interesting and fun experience for the participants. All the methods and processes turned out effectively as participants were found enthusiastic throughout the training and their retention rate was found excellent.



Guests are seen at Workshop on Monitoring on Village Courts at Patuakhali

Feasibility and perception testing workshop on IEC materials focusing Village Courts

The Project organized a 'feasibility and perception testing on Communication & Advocacy Strategy and field testing on flip charts and other IEC materials with the local stakeholders' on August 25, 2010 at Upazila Conference Room, Alamdanga, Chuadanga. The project organized the feasibility and perception testing workshop on IEC materials focusing Village Courts to have the necessary feedback from the stakeholders and verify the applicability to get the best outputs. Mr. Bhola Nath Dey, Deputy Commissioner, Chuadanga district graced the workshop as Chief Guest while Mr. Md. Mollik Sayeed Mahbub, Additional District Magistrate and Mr. Md. Mozibur Rahman, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) of the same district attended as Special Guests. Mr. Md. Muhammad Abdus Salam, UNO, Alamdanga delivered the welcome speech at the event. Mr. Aktar Uddin, Communication Officer, AVCP, UNDP presented the different IEC materials focusing the potentials and effective ways of involvement of the stakeholders with regard to activating village courts at UP level.

Focus Group Discussions with the VC officials and local stakeholders

Aiming to boost the awareness of the filed level key stakeholders and actively involve them with the process of activating the village courts at Union Perished, the project organized several Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) with Village Courts officials, community, local representatives, local administration and judiciary in six Union Parishads at Chuadanga, Rangpur and Moulvibazar districts during March 26 to 31, 2010. The project team comprising Mr. Md. Mahboob Murshed, Legal Expert, Mr. Md. Aktar Uddin, Communication Officer and Mr. Hamidul Haque Khan, Training Manager facilitated these FGDs.

Snap Shots ▶



Case Story**Chobi Rani got Justice through Village Courts**

Ms Chobi Rani Ray resides Orakandi union parishad of Kashiani Upazila in Gopalganj. Her husband Felu Ray is a farmer. They have very little land which is just scant to ensure the daily breads. Chobi also works with her husband at the field. She grows crops in 1.50 decimal land near to her house. But her distant relative Mr. Topon Ray frequently let his cow to invade Chobi's land and damages the paddy seeds and other ones lying in the land. While objected to this cattle trespassing, Topon Ray made outraged and started shouting, threatening and at one point, bashed Chobi's house with an axe. After that Chobi rushed to the community but didn't get justice and then she went to the Union Parishad after being advised by Village Courts Project's CBO Member Mr. Shunil Bhokto. Then as per procedures of village courts, she lodged a case (no. 3/11) against the respondent Topon on 29 January, 2011 and the.

Accordingly, the UP Chairman served notice to both parties on 1st February, 2011 for nominating the duly representatives and be present at Village Court on 2nd February, 2011. The hearing of the case held on 5th February, 2011 and the both parties attended there. The full panel members of the village courts vetted the hearings along with the evidences and found the complaint justified. The panel gave the decision as 5:0 in accord of the petitioner. The court fined Tk. 300 (2.49€) as the compensation of damaged crops and rebuked not to do such misdeeds. Accordingly, the respondent paid the fine to the Village Courts and sought excuse to the petitioner.

After receiving compensation from VC, Chobi expressed her deep satisfaction to get justice from village courts within very short time. She also opined that henceforth the mischievous people can't dare to make the poor women humiliated or abused as VC is working as an effective local justice service institution.

**Liakot Ali compensated with Tk. 9,352 (77.94€) taka through Village Courts**

Mr. Liakot Ali (55), father deceased Mr. Yakub Ali, lives in Koikuri Union of Pirgacha Upazila under Rangpur district. He earns his family (wife and two children) living as a farmer through cultivating other people's land.

Since last couple of years, Liakot sells his crops to local small businessman Mr. Shohidul Islam Chowdhury. As a regular practice, Shohidul purchased 21 mounds of rice on 29 August 2010 in presence of Alauddin Boshunia, Abdul Mannan and Shah Alam of Moksud Kha village. The market value of the purchased crops was Tk. 17,253 (143.77€) but he paid only Tk. 9,950 (82.91€) cash to Liakot and promised to pay the rest soon after. However, just after the following day, Shohidul went to Liakot and sought for loan of Tk. 2,050 (17.08€) for some urgency and firmly committed to repay the money soonest along with the rest owed money. The naïve Liakot responded and lent the money instantly.



Subsequently as per verbal agreement, Liakot asked for the money back from Shahidul but he started to show lame excuses one after another. After being refused repeatedly by Shahidul, Liakot rushed to village court as he was just passing arduous hardship to pay the school fees of his children. Meanwhile, he learnt about village court through attending at a court yard meeting of Village Courts project.

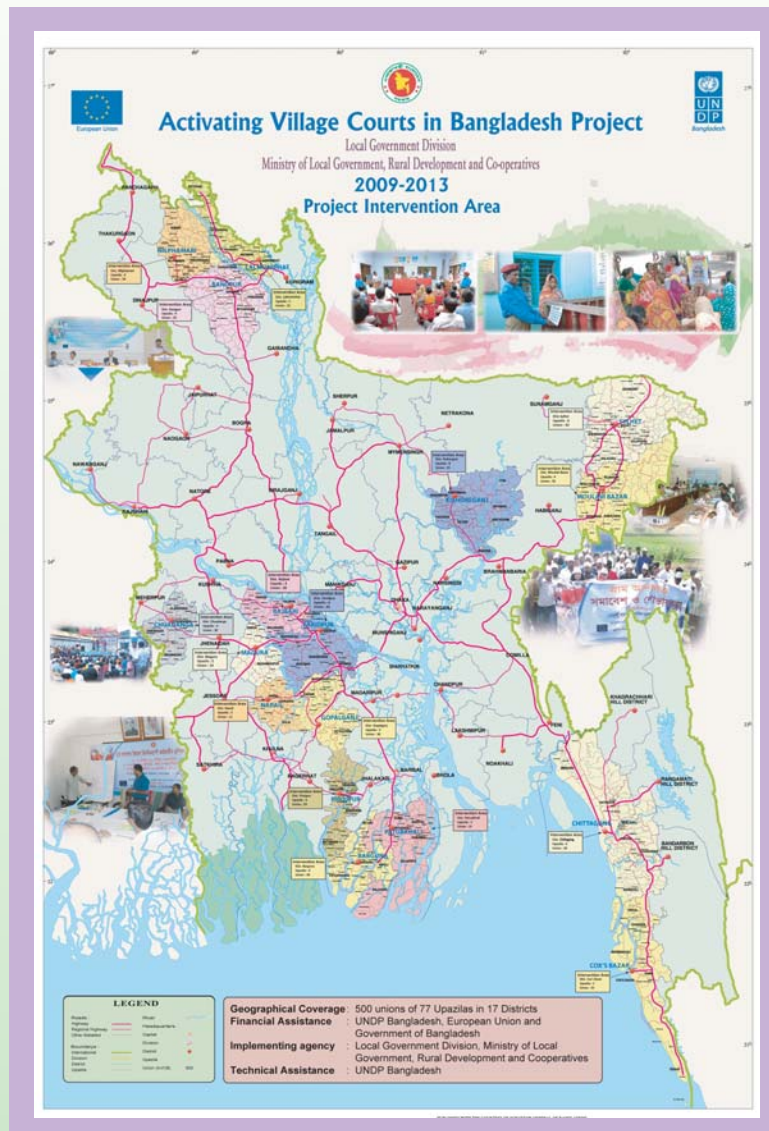
He then filed a case against Shahidul on 3 February 2011 by paying the duly village court fee Tk. 4 (0.03€). As per VC procedures, Liakot nominated two representatives Mr. Aminul Ehsan Lebu from Ward No-4 and local elite Mr. Sheikh Nurul Islam. On the contrary, the respondent, Shahidul nominated the female member of ward no 1, 2 & 3 Ms. Jelekha Chowdhury and local elite Mr. Shah Alam. The hearing of the case held on 20 February 2011 and both the parties attended there. The full panel members of the village court vetted the hearings along with the evidences and found the complaint justified. The panel gave the decision to pay back Tk. 9,352 (77.94€) to the petitioner by 15 March 2011 in two installments. Accordingly, the respondent paid the fine to the Village Court in due time through installments.

After receiving compensation from village courts, Liakot expressed his satisfaction receiving justice from village courts within very short time and commented that village court is really working as the local savior institution to establish the rights of the marginalized peoples.

Intervention Areas of Village Courts Project

Name of District	Number of Upazila	Number of unions
Chuadanga	04	30
Rangpur	04	33
Nilphamary	04	30
Lalmonirhat	05	25
Chittagong	06	30
Cox's Bazar	05	25
Kishorganj	08	35
Rajbari	04	30
Gopalganj	03	30
Faridpur	06	41
Narail	03	15
Magura	02	14
Pirojpur	01	07
Sylhet	01	05

(Current project implementing areas)





Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project

Local Government Division

Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives