Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project
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 half a 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 (MoLGRDC) 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
With the Best Compliments 2011

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 submit 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;

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At a glance of 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 224 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 2,220 CBOs are formed (12-15 members/each CBO) with 41% women member; 15,413 participants attended in CBO meetings (36% women); 2,771 courtyard meetings held covering 73,370 participants (58% women); This promotes the demand side of justice delivery mechanism at the community level;
- Baseline Survey Report Published and M & E Framework is prepared;
- VC training manual is endorsed by the GOB and ToT provided to the partner NGOs;
- Two NGOs (MLAA and ESDO) hired for Dhaka and Rangpur divisions;
- 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 BPTAC, 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;
- Communication and visibility plan is adopted and being followed while developing various IEC materials and communication interventions;
- Detailed Project Communication and Advocacy Strategy drafted aligning with the UNDP-EC Communication and visibility plan for the project;
- 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;
- VC project website launched containing with necessary VC news and 500 VC signboards installed at union parishad along with 17 billboards at project intervened districts;
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- VC project website launched containing with necessary VC news and 500 VC signboards installed at union parishad along with 17 billboards at project intervened districts;
- Around 1,039 participants are reached through 2 divisional, 5 district and 6 upazilla level sensitization workshops for raising mass awareness;
- The short video documentary on village courts developed and media workshops organized with the journalists;
- 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 under way for introducing ICT based reporting and quality assurance;
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Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project

激活乡村法庭在孟加拉国项目
Eid-e-Miladunnabi, 16 February, Wednesday

Shaheed Dibash (IMLD), 21 February, Monday
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- May Day, 1 May, Sunday
- **Buddha Purnima**

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**Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project**

- Janmashtami, 22 August
- National Mourning Day, 15 August, Monday
- Jumat-Ul-Bida, 26 August, Friday
- Shab-E-Qadar, 28 August, Sunday
- Eid-Ul-Fitr, 31 Aug - 02 Sept, Wed-Friday
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**Eid-Ul-Azha, 6-8 November, Sunday-Tuesday**
Muharram (Ashura)
7 December, Wednesday

Victory Day,
16 December, Friday

X-Mas Day
25 December, Sunday

Subjects to Appearance of the moon.
গ্ৰাম আদালতে বিচার প্রক্রিয়া

মাসিক পত্রিকাভাষা প্রকাশনায় আচরণ করা আবশ্যক করা হয়। আচরণের উপাধিবিষয়ক পন্থা সাধারণ প্রকাশনায় বিচার পরিকল্পনা করা হয়। বিচার- ৪, ৫, ৬, ৭, ২০০৬ সালে আদালত আইনে।

নীতিনির্দেশনা মাস মাস রুটি টাইমের মাধ্যমে হাজার হাজার আচরণের সংখ্যা হয় এবং বিচারের জন্য প্রথম সংখ্যায় আচরণ করা হয়।

আচরণের জন্য মাস মাস রুটি টাইমের মাধ্যমে আচরণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়। উপাধি সাধারণ প্রকাশনায় বিচার পরিকল্পনা করা হয়।

নীতিনির্দেশনা মাস মাস রুটি টাইমের মাধ্যমে আচরণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়।

আচরণের জন্য মাস মাস রুটি টাইমের মাধ্যমে আচরণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়।

নীতিনির্দেশনা মাস মাস রুটি টাইমের মাধ্যমে আচরণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়।

আচরণের জন্য মাস মাস রুটি টাইমের মাধ্যমে আচরণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়।

নীতিনির্দেশনা মাস মাস রুটি টাইমের মাধ্যমে আচরণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়।

আচরণের জন্য মাস মাস রুটি টাইমের মাধ্যমে আচরণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়।

নীতিনির্দেশনা মাস মাস রুটি টাইমের মাধ্যমে আচরণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়।

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