



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

# **SERVING THE EXTREME POOR LIVING IN THE CHARS**

**CDRC**  
Chars Development Research Centre



Chars Development Research Centre



Rural Development Academy [RDA] Bogra Bangladesh  
Rural Development & Cooperative Division, Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives

Poverty alleviation constituted the basic theme of all five year development plans of Bangladesh since its independence and considerable efforts have been made to alleviate poverty. But the incidence of poverty remains high in Bangladesh. Analysis of national data shows that the incidence of poverty is not evenly distributed across the region. High concentration exists in specific areas, such as along the major rivers (chars lands). It has been found that the riverine chars are amongst the poorest areas in Bangladesh. Chars areas are characterized by a set of specific features that set them apart from other parts of Bangladesh and that justify different approach.

In physical terms, riverine chars are nearly accreted from the rivers and are consequently low lying. This makes chars dwellers vulnerable to frequent flood and erosions. Individual and household displacement is common in chars areas. A fragile physical environment, limited assets, reduced income opportunities, remoteness and absence of main land institutions and services together make char dwellers' livelihoods particularly vulnerable to extreme poverty and destitutions (CLP, 2003). Government of Bangladesh also designated chars as pockets of extreme poverty. Over 5% of the total population of the country lives in these chars.

This situation captured government attention for better integration of the regions into wider socio-economic development. Keeping this in view, Rural Development and Cooperative Division (RD CD), M/O LGRD and Cooperatives in Collaboration with DFID and AUSAID initiated the Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP-1) in 2004 and run for seven years. Further, RD CD has initiated Making Markets Work for the Jamuna, Padma and Teesta Chars (M4C) in May, 2013 in collaboration with SDC. RDA is the implementing partner for both CLP and M4C programme. The CLP-1 successfully lifted 2.5 million people out of poverty and made substantial contribution making good impact on overall well being of the chars dwellers.

Reveling the success of RDA initiated several development initiatives in chars, the concept of setting the Chars Development Research Centre (CDRC) has been evolved and finally established after having policy support and approval of the Board of Governors (BOG) of RDA in its 41st regular meeting in 2012 to cater and host chars related research and development programmes and sustain the positive impacts of previous out comes. The centre is being operated under the administrative umbrella of RDA on self-financed basis.

### **CDRC Strategic Goal**

CDRC works to accelerate progress in improving income and livelihoods of the extreme poor chars dwellers by exploiting and enhancing their potentials.

## **CDRC Strategic Objectives**

CDRC strategic objectives across the different components are:

1. Generate knowledge and technologies to improve the livelihoods of chars dwellers.
2. Develop methods and tools for making effective intervention in the chars.
3. Bring good practices in chars.
4. Empower and mainstream the existing efforts of chars dwellers.
5. Establish national and international linkage for development partnership.
6. Undertake cutting-edge research including gender, education, health, financial and social issues to meet emerging challenges.
7. Facilitate better market access; improve business services in selected market systems relevant for the isolated chars dwellers.
8. Main stream women and DRR.

## **CDRC Competencies**

CDRC inherited unique competency within the areas of poverty reduction, livelihoods improvement, green technology generation and overall rural development from RDA, which has been serving the rural development sector of the country for the last 4 decades as a national centre.

Innovation, HRD, action research, diagnostic survey, digital documentation and effective communication are other important key competencies of CDRC. With all these strong background CDRC has already proven its competency by receiving national and international recognitions as leading centre for chars development in Bangladesh.

## **CDRC Management**

The governance and management of CDRC follow the guidelines set out in the 41st BOG meeting of RDA outcome. CDRC is considered as the lead centre for chars related development activities in Bangladesh and will have overall fiduciary and operational responsibility. RDA will play a strong supporting role, providing the chair of advisory committee to the Director General.

The planning and management committee headed by the Director CDRC will oversee planning, management, implantation, monitoring and evaluation of CDRC activities. RDA faculty members with relevant expertise will always have opportunities to participate and lead CDRC programmes.

## **CDRC Chars Programmes @ RDA**

Current programmes include:

- Action Research and Study on Chars Agriculture and Livelihoods
- Chars Livelihoods Programme [CLP-2]
- Making Markets Work for the Chars [M4C]
- Women in Seed Entrepreneurship [WiSE]
- Trichodarma Enhanced Composting [TEC]

## **CDRC Action Research and Study**

The following action research and studies are being under implementation to develop useful ideas and technologies relevant for the chars.

Maize variety screening [Sponsor: RDA-M4C]

Chili seed treatment [Sponsor: RDA-M4C]

Maize stover silage production [Sponsor: RDA-M4C]

Modern rice technology transfer [Sponsor: RDA-M4C]

Improvement of char's transportation [Sponsor: RDA-M4C]

Impact of asset transfer in chars [Sponsor: RDA-CLP]

Migration behavior of chars dwellers [Sponsor: RDA-CLP]

Chronology of char's agriculture [Sponsor: RDA-CLP]

Household food grain and seed storage [Sponsor: RDA]

**More...**



## CHARS LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMME



In support of GoB's efforts to fight poverty, DFID initiated the Chars Livelihoods Programme [CLP] in 2004 with the goal to help extreme poor people on the chars graduate out of poverty, while health and education were important components of the program in Phase 1. The core package delivered to each beneficiary household included assets (e.g. livestock, rickshaw, sewing machine), an earthen plinth raised above recent high flood levels, a latrine and access to water supply. Additionally, selected households received a monthly stipend for 18 months, training and inputs to develop homestead garden and a series of social awareness support measures. CLP-1 targetted 55,000 of the poorest households. First phase of CLP ended up in March, 2010.

Capitalizing on its success during Phase 1 and based on a remaining high demand for further poverty reduction on the Chars, the Government of Bangladesh and DFID decided to implement CLP-2 with a duration from July, 2011 to December, 2016 funded by DFID and GoB with an additional fund by AUSAID. The major share destined for the delivery of the core package to lift another 76,000 households out of extreme poverty.

Partners:



Contact

**MA Matin, PD, CLP**

Tel : +8805161703; Cell : +8801711875715  
e-mail : [matin@rda.gov.bd](mailto:matin@rda.gov.bd), [dg@rda.gov.bd](mailto:dg@rda.gov.bd)



## MAKING MARKETS WORK FOR THE CHARS



Making Markets Work for the Jamuna, Padma and Teesta Chars [M4C] project aims to unlock the potential of the chars by facilitating the growth of sectors relevant for the poor char households in terms of productivity, profitability and employment generation. The project partners with a range of private and public sector organizations to facilitate local market systems ensuring sustainable and pro-poor impact on the chars. During its five year period, the project intend to work in selected chars of ten N-W districts. M4C's current portfolio includes product sectors such as maize, chili, jute and cross-cutting sector such as chars transport. During the project period, new sectors will be added based on further assessments and learning from the field.

M4C is funded by the GoB and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation [SDC]. The project is being jointly implemented by the Rural Development Academy [RDA], Bogra on behalf of Rural Development and Cooperative Division of the Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives and Swisscontact.

Partners:



Contact

**Ferdous Hossain Khan, DPD, M4C**

Tel : +8805161703; Cell : +8801833320300, +8801712683550  
e-mail : [ferdous@rda.gov.bd](mailto:ferdous@rda.gov.bd), [ferdousddrda@yahoo.com](mailto:ferdousddrda@yahoo.com)



## WOMEN IN SEED ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Women in Seed Entrepreneurship (WiSE) is a RDA developed rural business model that works to accelerate the progress in supply of quality seed by exploiting and enhancing the synergies among rural women's contribution, seed technology and community centered seed enterprise development. WiSE highlights the historical role of rural women in seed resource management make their roles visible to the formal sector stakeholders, empower women with improved seed technology skills and main stream them in seed sector as micro-entrepreneurs.

Primarily WiSE was operated in plain land but to address the climate change vulnerability WiSE focus has gradually shifted towards improvised poverty stricken areas specially in chars where impact of climate change putting huge pressure on agricultural productivity mainly because of extensive use of poor quality seed.



## TRICHODARMA ENHANCED COMPOSTING



*Trichoderma* activator a soil borne fungus enhances the decomposition of organic material. It also accelerates the decomposition process to complete within 4-5 weeks, whereas the traditional method takes 4-5 months. The trichocompost significantly increases soil fertility and gives better crop yield. It also acts as biopesticide.

RDA has established *Trichoderma* Laboratory in collaboration with Katalyst & technical support from BAU. RDA trained local service providers established demonstration plots and organized field days in mainland and chars of the northern districts of Bangladesh.

Farmers are enjoying 20% higher production using trichocompost which they can make by themselves. Farmers' can reduce 30% cost of chemical fertilizer, supplementing by the trichocompost. Moreover, trichoderma helps a lot in controlling different soil borne diseases gives poison free food to the consumer- a great support to the health sector of Bangladesh suffering a lot for over use of chemical pesticides & fertilizers.

Partners:



Contact

Rebeka Sultana, Assistant Director, RDA

Tel.: +8805161703; cell: +880172491725

e-mail: rebeka@rda.gov.bd, rebekasultana\_hstu@yahoo.com

Partners:



Contact

Suvagata Bagchi, Assistant Director, RDA

Tel.: +8805161703; cell: +8801920333684

e-mail: suvagata@rda.gov.bd, suvagata\_b@yahoo.com

## **CDRC Contact**

### **M A Matin**

Director General  
Rural Development Academy [RDA], Bogra.  
Tel: +8805161703; Cell: +8801711875715  
e-mail: [matin@rda.gov.bd](mailto:matin@rda.gov.bd), [dg@rda.gov.bd](mailto:dg@rda.gov.bd)

### **AKM Zakaria**

Director, Agricultural Sciences Division, RDA  
Director, Chars Development Research Centre [CDRC]  
Project Director, Making Markets Work for the Chars [M4C]  
Rural Development Academy [RDA], Bogra.  
Tel: +8805161703; Cell: +8801711876111  
e-mail: [zakaria@rda.gov.bd](mailto:zakaria@rda.gov.bd), [zakaria.rda@gmail.com](mailto:zakaria.rda@gmail.com)

### **Published by**

Director General  
Rural Development Academy [RDA], Bogra.

January 01, 2014

### **Printed at**

Bimurto, Bogra

## **CDRC Vision**

CDRC is a rural development centre particularly dedicated to improve the livelihoods of the extreme poor chars dwellers. The Government of Bangladesh which has 4 major strategic target, reducing poverty, improving livelihoods and food security, empowering women and reducing climate change vulnerability, while CDRC contributes to the achievements of all those targets, its primary focus is energizing and empowering people-women, men and children living in the isolated chars.

## **CDRC Websites**

[www.rdc.gov.bd](http://www.rdc.gov.bd)  
[www.rda.gov.bd](http://www.rda.gov.bd)  
[www.clp-bangladesh.org](http://www.clp-bangladesh.org)  
[www.swisscontact.org.bd](http://www.swisscontact.org.bd)  
e-mail: [info@rda.gov.bd](mailto:info@rda.gov.bd)

