



Rapid Blanket Distributions to Tackle the Winter Cold (January 2011)

Background

The severe cold wave of weather which swept through Bangladesh in January 2011 hit the most vulnerable such as the elderly and young children the hardest. Temperatures dropped below the norm to just 2 – 5 degrees Celsius, causing many cold-related diseases like pneumonia. The highest cold-related death rates were reported in the chars districts in North West Bangladesh¹. In response, the CLP distributed 13,580 blankets to first and second tier core participant households (CPHHs) of Phase 2 (CLP 2.2) and the vulnerable char dwellers who receive community safety net and infrastructure and employment (IEP) safety net support in five of the CLP-2 working districts².

The rapid response

The CLP "Emergency Grant Fund" was used to finance the 13,580 blankets, which cost an average of Tk 260 each (including transportation costs), totaling Tk 3,530,800 (approximately GBP 30,700.00). 13 Implementing Organisations (IMOs) working in these areas sourced, purchased and distributed the blankets. Most of the blankets were distributed within the first 7 days following the decision (12th January) and blanket distribution was complete 12 days later, on the 24th January. CLP's rapid response to the emergency situation demonstrated the efficiency of the IMOs. There was no other widespread distribution of blankets in these areas organised by either the government or NGOs.

Table 1: Blanket distribution January 2011: key facts

FACTS	
# blankets distributed	13,580
# districts covered	5
Average cost per blanket	Tk 260
Dates of distribution	12 th – 24 th January
# of suppliers used	6

The IMOs used a range of suppliers and RSDA, Solidarity, RDRS-Rangpur and GUK-Gaibandha sourced the best quality blankets which came from Koly Enterprise (Dhaka), H.S. Alam Bostraloy, Zia

Garments (Rangpur) and Winner Fashion (Dhaka) respectively³.

This was the second year that CLP has distributed blankets. In January 2010, CLP distributed 7,148, however 2010 involved a more lengthy process which sought CLP official suppliers to acquire the blankets. One of the lessons learnt from the 2010 experience was that the non-availability of 'Special Guests' (mainly Government of Bangladesh officials) who were requested to 'officially present' the blankets to the recipients had delayed distribution. Immediate distribution in 2011 avoided this problem.

Problems faced in 2011

Several minor problems were encountered during the purchasing and distribution of the blankets:

- RDRS bought blankets from two different suppliers, which resulted in a significant variation in the price and quality (size, weight and material) of the blankets distributed in two districts (Kurigram and Rangpur);
- ZIBIKA initially purchased very cheap and low quality blankets, however a second batch were purchased shortly after and a second blanket was delivered to the households;
- Some IMOs were uncertain about whether they should provide blankets to households who also received a blanket from CLP in the previous year's distribution.

Lessons learned

The key lesson that can be drawn is that despite budget constraints good quality blankets can be purchased and distributed rapidly, however:

- the quality of blankets should be assessed by the IMO before purchasing in bulk;
- CLP must ensure that the IMOs have a clear understanding of the available budget and the number of recipients that they must serve before purchasing the blankets.

Prepared by IML
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¹ See <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MCOI-8D6DZA?OpenDocument> for further details.

² Current CLP-2 working districts are Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Rangpur. CLP will start working in Tangail and Pabna in late 2011.

³ Full list of suppliers: H.S. Alam Bostraloy (Kurigram), Winner Fashion (Dhaka), Maa Garments and Abir Panjabi (Dhaka), Zia Garments (Rangpur), Rakib Enterprise (Dhaka) and M/S. Koly Enterprise (Dhaka).