

# Livelihoods Impact-Reaching the Poor



The Primary Sources of lessons in this document are projects within DFID's Rural Livelihoods Programme (RLP). The evidences for these lessons mainly come from evaluations of the projects carried out by the Rural Livelihoods Evaluation Partnership (RLEP). The evidences in this document are included as key findings. The Thematic Lessons Paper (TLP) series documents are available in many formats based on stakeholder demand for product style identified through a communications needs assessment survey. This document is the 'Master' or full version of TLP, which includes more detailed lessons clustered under key issues and their evidences recorded as key findings. The TLP series also has available a two page policy brief or 'Summary Sheet' both in English and Bengali. All the documents produced under TLP series are accessible at [www.lcgbangladesh.org/rlep](http://www.lcgbangladesh.org/rlep).

Thematic Lessons Papers (TLP) are intended for stakeholders who are involved in policy/programme design and influencing, in order to assist them in making informed decisions in the future.

The TLPs draw together experiences of livelihoods programme in a particular thematic context. This paper focuses on the Livelihoods Impact-Reaching the Poor theme. The lessons in this document are grouped under the following key issues:

- Project Design
- Poverty Targeting and Entry Points
- Political Economy
- Participation
- Monitoring and Impact Assessment
- Rights and Demand Creation

**8 PROJECTS  
WITHIN  
DFID'S  
RURAL  
LIVELIHOODS  
PROGRAMME  
(RLP)**

1. Fisheries Training and Extension Project- II (FTEP II)
2. Agricultural Services Innovation Reform Project (ASIRP)
3. Research and Extension in Farm Power Issues (REFPI)
4. Poverty Elimination Through Rice Research Assistance (PETRRA)
5. Support For University Fisheries Education and Research (SUFER)
6. Fourth Fisheries Project (FFP)
7. CARE Rural Livelihoods Programme (CARE RLP)
8. Community Based Fisheries Management (CBFM2)

## KEY LESSONS SUMMARY

1. Poverty and equity objectives must be agreed by stakeholders and clearly expressed in project design, indicators, and expected outputs. Also the process of equity and rights analysis should become central to project design and poverty criteria clearly articulated.
2. Projects need to include a capacity for social analysis to improve their poverty targeting and understanding of the poor (traditionally omitted from natural resource technical projects).
3. More time and human resources need to be allocated to project design and overall duration to deal with elites and the local political economy. Capacity to handle conflict management and understanding of local power structures should become a priority project activity.
4. There are positive examples of services that reach the poor and excluded groups, some evidence of tangible gains for certain groups of poorer people, and some anecdotal evidence of livelihood changes. Most change has been in extension approaches where elite capture is not such an issue, and several extension models have reached poor people proved their effectiveness in reaching poor people.
5. Risk assessment that considers the risks for poor participants or target groups should be mandatory before project inception.
6. Building social capital and knowledge increases demand from the poor for their rights and at the same time improves accountability of the public sector to the poor people. Strengthening social capital for the poor should come before providing resource inputs.
7. Poverty analyses needs to capture broader concepts of well-being and an understanding of social empowerment and not just focus on incomes and physical assets. Changes in social or gender empowerment need to be documented and reflected in monitoring and evaluation.
8. Projects tended to overlook the quality of participation and wider livelihoods impacts, placing more emphasis on quantitative achievements.
9. Regular monitoring systems need to capture differential benefits how different categories of stakeholder are impacted, particularly different categories of poorer households, and differences between categories of people women and men, children and elderly, etc. Poverty is fundamentally an issue of power and entitlements to resources which projects may not be ready to address because few people are skilled in political economy analysis and projects with limited life-spans may be unable to afford the necessary time, attention and resources.
10. Before project inception, projects need to translate the process of how inputs should lead to expected benefits to the beneficiaries. Process monitoring should be encouraged with M&E becoming more empowering rather than traditionally extractive.
11. Few projects have captured evidence of livelihood or attitudinal changes among their poor target groups, and there is no shared analysis of wider poverty concepts among projects or with partners and communities.
12. Making the government more accountable for its service provisions, requires a programme approach working on both 'push' and 'pull' factors simultaneously.
13. Experiences suggest a poor record of collaborative working, particularly NGOs working with government. However, projects have demonstrated that a combination of private sector and small NGOs can take on greater roles in service provision to provide alternatives to government agencies that may be more locally responsive.

## INTRODUCTION

A “livelihood” refers to the capabilities, assets and strategies that people use to make a living to achieve food and financial security through a variety of productive economic activities.

Livelihood structures are complex, usually revolving around the incomes, skills and services of all members of the family in an effort to reduce the risks associated with living near subsistence.

In Bangladesh nearly half of its population of 135 million still lives below the poverty lines measured by income, consumption, and ability to meet basic human needs.

Poor people in Bangladesh have a low level of education and limited access to land and hold low-paying and physically demanding occupations of low social status such as wage labour.

Hunger and poverty are the result of various factors that limit the ability of individuals, families and communities to meet their most basic needs. Efforts to improve livelihoods and food security among the poor are premised on: understanding the root causes of their poverty and hunger; enhancing their capabilities, assets, and activities; and contributing to transformation of the structural factors that constrain realisation of sustainable livelihoods.



Photo Credit: PETTRA / IRRI

## THEMATIC LESSONS

### Key Issue 1 Project Design

Project and programme design needs to look at what factors will motivate actors at all levels to bring change. As projects still tend to be inflexible in design, greater importance and improved clarity must be given to aspects of social issues and livelihoods impact at the outset and clearly stated in all project documentation, including GoB project guidance document- Technical Assistance Project-Proforma (TAPP).

### Key lesson for 'better practice'

Donors need to be confident that partner organizations already have, or will be able to introduce, the necessary incentives and checks to ensure that agreed poverty and equity objectives are not diluted and that their poverty targeting is clear.

### Lessons Learnt

- **Common goals.** Common goals and expectations need to be clarified from the outset so as to achieve the desired developmental objectives of programmes/projects. All stakeholders - DFID, GoB and Ministry, implementing NGOs, contractors and researchers - need to agree and commit to poverty and equity objectives. Social and political concerns need to move much higher up the programme agenda, with those responsible for social analysis given sufficient power and resources in project implementation.
- **Clear poverty targeting and outcomes.** Vagueness about intended beneficiaries very often results in poor targeting. Specific criteria need to be developed to identify the poor and their particular needs; including disparities due to ethnicity, religion or disability. In general, weak poverty criteria have been used in project design; and in particular, the poorest have not been separated from the moderately poor. If target groups are well defined, it becomes easier to ensure focus. An analysis of who the poor are, and what a more inclusive approach implies, needs to be clearly understood at the outset in order for development benefits to flow equitably to the poor.
- **Equity and social change.** Equity and rights should be a starting point, not simply an add-on to technological interventions. Social and gender equity objectives and change need to be articulated in project design, reflected in Objective Verifiable Indicators. Then, management commitment and incentives are needed to make sure these objectives are translated into practical action.
- **Staffing.** Sufficient expertise and human resources need to be built into project design for social analysis and for managing conflict at the local level: understanding the political economy has to become a starting point before resource inputs, and risk assessments need to become mandatory prior to project inception. Staff must be held more accountable.

### Key Findings

- The experience of FFP illustrates the consequences of not acknowledging conflicting objectives early enough. The Department of Fisheries aimed to increase fisheries production, while the project aimed to address poverty through increased production.
- None of the project designs included any analyses of which groups were more vulnerable, or who was excluded. Rural Livelihoods Programme (RLP) project goal level statements are often vague e.g. “contribute to poverty reduction in Bangladesh” which leaves the door open for inequities in the flow of benefits.
- Principles of gender equity are usually recognised in project design, but rarely translated to interventions. Staff from the CARE RLP, for example, could not clearly describe what the project's approach was to assisting female headed households, or whether they were systematically targeted or excluded.
- SUFER and PETRRA both point to the difficulties of poverty targeting. Tighter definitions are needed at the outset, reflecting broader livelihoods, identifying disparities due to ethnicity, religion or disability and using qualitative, proxy indicators gained through well-being analysis.

## Key Issue 2 Poverty Targeting and Entry Points

Projects need to be clear about exactly who and how they are reaching intended beneficiaries such that the entry point used, and that the methods adopted, do address the needs of the poor through a process of participatory engagement involving a committed multi-agency partnership. Within the RLP there are positive examples of services that reach the poor and excluded groups, some evidence of tangible gains for certain groups of poorer people, and some anecdotal evidence of livelihood changes. Most change has been in extension where elite capture is not such an issue, and several extension models have reached poor people proved their effectiveness in reaching poor people.

### Key lesson for 'better practice'

NGOs are usually chosen to work with the poor, but their approach must meet the needs of the poor by avoiding risks and using participatory approaches. Special attention needs to be taken in designing support to the extreme poor

### Lessons Learnt

- **Entry points.** Very often, the poorest and vulnerable are not being reached or are dropping out because their needs and their limited capacity for risk and investment are not addressed. Specific measures are needed to ensure that the resource poor benefit. Exclusion of the poor is more likely if the intervention is high risk and requires investment from participants. Projects involving use of common property resources or providing free or subsidised inputs or services are more likely to attract elite capture. Even NGOs with a strong track record of poverty-focused work may not ensure benefits reach the poor.
- **Participatory approaches.** Participatory tools such as well-being analysis, which should enable projects to understand communities' own ranking and select participants, have not always been used effectively in poverty targeting and identifying entry points.
- **Group membership.** Vulnerable groups are less likely to be selected, and are less likely to sustain their involvement and reap benefits from their participation. The very poor tend not to belong to groups, and self-exclude because their labour productivity is low and the opportunity cost of their time high.
- **Social analyses & Risk assessments.** Potential impacts on the poor should be identified through economic, social and political analyses in project inception, and competitive grant scheme proposals in order to be able to target the appropriate categories of the poor. Baseline data and systems to collect poverty data need improvements in timing, appropriateness and methodology.
- **Partnership.** Many government departments and technical research institutes do not have the necessary knowledge, skills or resources to analyse social difference. Channelling research through NGOs, which tend to be more aware of the needs of the poor, is one way of ensuring better analysis. However, NGOs are not always inclusive in their targeting and service delivery, nor are they automatically capable of providing extension services to the hard-core poor. NGOs tend to work with their pre-selected groups which may not work beyond their immediate membership or with the poorest. The key message from project reviews is to limit expectations on government or institutions, to work in partnerships with NGOs and the private sector, but to be aware of the limitations of all. Time should be allowed to develop NGO capacity before project activities begin. Projects should identify different partners' skills in social analysis and qualitative data collection for monitoring, and bring in expertise where necessary.

## Key Findings

- The ASIRP, Upazila Agricultural Extension Coordination Council (UAECC) strengthening model had a positive impact on local planning extension though it is too early to say whether this led to better services. The 'resource centre' model also had a positive impact on farmer contact. Spill-over effects where non-targeted poorer farmers groups replicate knowledge and engage in new livelihood opportunities have also been documented. In PETTRA, some poorer groups increased their sharecropping activities with benefits for richer as well as worse off farmers.
- The FTEP end of project review for example, acknowledged that the impact was “limited amongst poorer sections of the community who were pre-occupied with greater social and economic concerns such as dowry, food insecurity, arsenic poisoning, lack of work and poor education ... those without access to ponds may only benefit as wage earners”.
- In FFP, open water fishery management has high resource requirements from the beneficiaries which act as barriers to the very poor. Also, the existing leasing system by tender is not poor-friendly and can thus exclude poor fishers favouring wealthy individuals often with political connections.
- Where PETTRA worked with HEED - a large NGO with 85% female clients - only 25% of project participants were women; programme design was not responsive to their needs. This was largely because poverty targeting was not well understood by partners or by those monitoring the project. More generally in the project, “it appeared that in several instances the partner NGOs had no previous recent experience of working with PETTRA's target group.”
- SUFER was relatively successful in encouraging researchers to utilise pro-poor tools and to analyse pro-poor livelihoods based research. Target groups were selected during poverty training sessions and criteria for NGO selection well defined.
- CARE-RLP Farmer Field Schools (FFS) which evolved into more multi-functional Self-Help Groups (SHGs) demonstrated that effective participation is possible, given dedicated time, effort and resources. These groups managed savings schemes, accessed cheap loans, lobbied local service providers, acquired Khas land for poor community members and dealt with societal well-being issues (e.g. dowry, early marriage, domestic violence).
- The ASIRP evaluation found that funds such as the Partner Initiative Fund (PIF) tended to not work with marginal or landless farmers. Pre-supported groups tended to be the main beneficiaries, and since these are generally micro credit groups, the hardcore poor were largely excluded.
- The beneficiary impact monitoring report of FFP concluded that fishers experienced significant losses in access and income, and that equality effects varied between 'no project impact' to 'clearly negative effects', a consequence of the existing leasing system and NGO and Department of Fisheries (DoF) extension workers having little or no experience in social mobilisation, community management and conflict resolution. SUFER, however, has commissioned NGOs or specific research to carry out risk assessments of potential negative impacts on the poor before research award implementation.
- FFP and CBFM2, struggled to provide adequate social science capacity alongside technology or extension transfer.

## Key Issue 3 Political Economy

One of the greatest challenges faced by projects working towards equitable common property management is understanding the political economy, issues of social mobilization, conflict resolution and in many instances the elite capture of higher value resources.

### Key lesson for 'better practice'

If partners are given much more time and resources to build up their capacity and expertise they will be better equipped to deal with elite capture and conflict. And, this needs to be built into project inception.

## Lessons Learnt

- **Socio-political analysis.** Socio-political changes and the need to address potential conflicts are rarely analysed in projects, even though securing access to land or water-based rights involves shifts in power at the local level. Understanding the political economy and issues of elite capture in particular, underlines the importance of clarifying what is meant by equity - if a project wants to get beyond equity of inputs, then entry points may be different e.g. staff training on understanding elites and conflict resolution, research into roles and impacts of elites and engagement by influential government officers.

- **Building social capital.** Social capital assists poor people to counteract elite influence, and to influence local administration and service providers. Risks of elite capture can be reduced if projects develop support mechanisms to improve social capital of the poor.

Having more homogenous members in a CBO can enable more equitable relations within the membership. In FFP, *“Fisheries Management Committees (FMC) mostly have diverse types of members, more homogenous fisher-based management tends to be more equitable.”*

Where technology opens access to common property resources for the poor, there is the danger of the poor losing control of groups unless other support is provided to build up their social and organisational strength to withstand outside pressures and elite capture.

- **Understanding and involving elites.** Elites are part of the reality of poverty in Bangladesh, and their role needs to be understood and addressed in strengthening social capital and enhance responsiveness of local governance.

The review of elites can play a positive and constructive role if they are engaged in the process in an advisory or support capacity; they can increase the 'bridging' social capital of poor group members, enable them to deal with more powerful stakeholders - government, NGOs and the wider community.

When elite interests threaten to dominate, however, strategic links with government can help ensure that project objectives are not derailed.

Providing support for alternative income generating activities and savings can help break down patron client relations and help groups to be less reliant on elites

- **Capacity of NGO and GoB service providers.** The capacity of service providers (NGOs and GoB agencies) to support communities in managing conflict or in building effective social capital is limited; most staff are not experienced in brokering power struggles over common property resources. If NGOs receive strong backing from government there is more chance of success.

## Key Findings

- PETTRA, SUFER and REFPI illustrate how competitive grant schemes screen applicants to ensure they are able to demonstrate an understanding of social, economic, and environmental factors which condition livelihoods.
- CBFM2 illustrates project called for the need for research to investigate the underlying motivations and incentives - social, political, and financial - for elites, in order to assess whether these could be met without resource capture.
- 'Advisory groups' have been successfully used in CBFM2 by some women's groups to engage influential men or 'kua owners' interests in the fishery. This is a good example of a move from building bonding social capital (between peers) to building bridging social capital (from less powerful to more powerful groups).
- Similarly, 'Advisory Committees' and the incorporation of local champions (respected, neutral, non-political community members) are good examples of support mechanisms to provide advice, and social capital to overcome problems and resolve conflicts.

- Of FFP sites, 20% are judged successful because of strong partnerships between local stakeholders and the DoF and NGOs which together overcame elite pressures; CBFM2 also found that role of the DoF and local administration were vital: *“Communities involved in CBFM expect and require the support of the Upazila Fisheries Officer (UFO) and his staff in solving problems that constrain the success of their Community Based Organisations (CBOs)”*. These represent good examples of moves to make government departments and local administration more accountable (since they have certain responsibilities for resource management and arbitration).
- In FFP, 'real' fishers were not selected as lead participants in many committees, and the review recommended support to improve the capacity of practicing fishers to take a lead in decision making.
- CBFM2, FFP and SUFER all demonstrate how greater benefits to the poor might have accrued if adequate support had been given to groups to ensure their sustainability, and more emphasis placed on empowerment. Adequate training to support forming and maintaining groups need to be built into project design.
- In FFP, there is some evidence that sanctuaries and habitat restoration are effective in increasing production and are easier for community based FMCs to operate, whereas subsidized stocking of water bodies attracted elite involvement. The complexity of Community Based Fisheries Management in FFP created hierarchies opening the way for domination by a few wealthier players. Reviews concluded that this could be offset by more homogenous fisher-based management, simpler organisational forms, and alternative income generating activities and savings in order to break down patron client relations.
- FFP for example, found that neither NGO nor DOF are capable of handling conflicts; NGOs need a year to develop their internal capacity, and a further year to develop successful and strong community based fisheries management organisations.

#### Key Issue 4 Participation

Participation is more than just the application of participatory tools and techniques. People's motivations, and the benefits and costs of participation are central. Participation is central to public sector accountability, and to rights based programming: the rights of all citizens to have a voice in policy making, to hold government and service providers to account.

#### Key lesson for 'better practice'

Participation in research projects should ensure that user influences design and assessment, but long term activities are needed if participation is to bring direct and social benefits together.

#### Lessons Learnt

- **Appropriate inputs.** Participatory approaches in needs assessments and monitoring help to ensure that research is carried out, that technology is developed and that it responds to client needs. Good participatory research and analysis requires skills and longer timeframes; and this again underlines the need for partnerships with organizations more experienced in participatory approaches.
- **Social change.** Participation is strongly linked with empowerment and social change. If the difference between participation for material incentives and interactive participation is clearly understood then projects with a strong rights focus can demonstrate participation for social empowerment, and not just material gain.
- **Institutional barriers.** Whilst the use of participatory methods and even the concept of participation is “alien” to many government institutions, the involvement of NGOs is still not enough to ensure effective participation of poor women and men. There may be commitment and rhetoric from the top for participatory methods, but these do not match with realities at the community level. In demand-led research, stakeholder participation requires considerable capacity building in participatory appraisal techniques at different levels; and this needs to be budgeted for.
- **Benefits to the poor.** Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) should not just be carried out for PRA's sake: projects need to understand what the incentives are for different social groups to participate. The poorer a person, the less time they can afford to spend on participation without a tangible result they need to 'see' immediate returns on their time invested.



## Key Findings

- Some inroads were made in the three research projects (PETRRA, REFPI and SUFER) where participatory methods were introduced at an early stage. In REFPI, for example, participatory approaches helped to clarify research needs at farmer/community level and enable farmers and communities to understand potential benefits, and increase the likely sustainability of interventions. However, in many cases PRA was often carried out in a mechanistic way and the data generated were not used effectively. For example, PETRRA's well being analysis was poorly applied and resulted in inadequate poverty targeting. The reviews highlight the need to focus on information generated, rather than the PRA tools themselves and for partnerships with organizations experienced in participatory approaches.
- Even the RLP review found that “some PNGOs have a limited understanding of the concept of empowerment. They tend to think in terms of their communities or their farmer groups, and operate in a manner that could create dependencies.” The review called for a genuinely participatory monitoring and evaluation system focused on helping the poor to control processes themselves, rather than on following a set of guidelines.
- RLP's review suggested that commitment and demand from the top for participatory methods do not always match with community realities and field worker priorities.

## Key Issue 5 Monitoring and Impact Assessment

Multidimensional poverty analyses which get beyond a description of economic or income based poverty, to capture well-being, livelihood and attitudinal change, will enable projects to better distinguish between different categories of the poor and to monitor how effectively excluded groups are being reached.

## Key lesson for 'better practice'

All projects need to better understand and document the nature of exclusions, the qualitative nature of social change and the political economy. To achieve this, human resource skills and reward mechanisms, need to focus on facilitation rather than delivery, and inputs that seek empowerment rather than behavioural change.

## Lessons Learnt

- **Monitoring poverty impacts.** More attention is needed to ensure that poverty criteria, livelihood changes and less tangible and secondary impacts are reflected in project baselines and monitoring systems from inception. Currently, Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) do not usually require indicators of social change, data has not been collected, and social analysis not systematically built into impact assessments.
- **Disaggregating outcomes.** If project monitoring systems captured differential impacts the managers would improve their understanding of how different social groups and strata in heterogeneous communities benefit differently from project interventions.
- **Monitoring wider changes.** Changes in social or gender empowerment need to be documented and reflected in monitoring and evaluation. The increase in social status within the family and the community is often equally significant but rarely documented but these changes were not sufficiently captured through normal processes. Future programmes should invest in training and systems for structured social observations and analysis to ensure a more comprehensive analysis of impact.
- **Multidimensional analyses.** Analyses which go beyond income poverty and capture wider well-being help projects to distinguish between different categories of the poor and to monitor how effectively excluded groups are being reached. Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) and case studies of qualitative change can help to assess social change and shifts in the political economy.

## Key Findings

- Currently, indicators, data and impact assessment do not reflect social changes. PETRRA, REFPI and SUFER reviews for example, have all called for more emphasis to be placed in understanding wider livelihoods impacts, particularly to understand social impacts on women. Projects have tended to overlook the quality of participation and its wider impact on women and men's lives.
- The CARE RLP review found that “differential benefits according to the well being status of participants. It appears that the wealthier FFS participants are improving their livelihoods and benefiting to a greater extent than the poorer participants”. Poorer Farmer Field School (FFS) participants did not benefit as much as wealthier: have enough land to produce vegetables for sale; job security for sharecroppers had increased, but wage rates had not. As such, landowners gained in both quantity and quality without paying for it”.
- The sale of vegetables, saplings and seedlings in CARE RLP produced knock-on improvements in other areas such as marketing; wealthier women participants for example, claimed they had gained greater decision-making power by contributing to household income. FTEP2 also demonstrated how money is only one benefit for women. Projects tend to miss opportunities to measure these wider benefits.
- Few projects have captured livelihood or attitudinal changes, and there is no shared analysis of wider poverty concepts. The CBFM2 review argued that the poverty criteria in the mid-term impact study mainly land and income dependence on fishing were too rigid and excluded important issues of empowerment, opportunity and security.

## Key Issue 6 Rights and Demand Creation

In response to the limitations found with typical projects, there is a growing emphasis on strengthening the demands of users on service providers, and recognition that can be addressed not only by government projects but also by private sector and NGOs.

### Key lesson for 'better practice'

Long term programmes and partnership are needed if the entitlements of the poor are to be changed and general services made accountable. Demand led services may develop faster through a combination of private sector and government support.

## Lessons Learnt

- **Demand creation and responsiveness.** A rights focus, emphasising obligation and entitlements, requires long-term involvement and commitment on the part of all stakeholders; and a programme rather than project approach that engages with both sides of the demand-supply equation.
- **Accountability requires long term change.** 'Projectised' donor support to government departments has led to a focus on short-term goals. Better understanding of government commitment and incentives is needed if effective engagement of poor people in large government programmes is to become a reality.
- **Role for private sector and NGOs.** A combination of private sector and small NGOs taking on roles of service provision for agriculture, fisheries and livestock services does work but the right formula for 'pull' and 'push' needs to be in place and depends on a number of win-win conditions and ideally but not essential, local government service providers should be actively involved.

## Key Findings

- RLP has begun to demonstrate the creation of effective demand for services by the poor. FFS groups can potentially produce their own 'inventory' of service providers, demand better services for example, vaccination - from local government, and can seek advice beyond the community. The RLP review highlighted the need for more efforts to help people claim their rights. Complementary work to improve the 'supply' side is also needed.
- The ASIRP end of project review questions “whether there has been an increase in the accountability or responsiveness of the institution as a whole. The concept that a government department exists, at least in part, to provide help to disadvantaged groups as well as to meet its production targets remains alien.”
- The FTEP EPR proposed that “DoF should consider the roles of the various existing and potential service providers. It could be that the private sector should be the main front line service provider at the commercial end of the aquaculture industry and that small NGOs should fulfil the same function at the 'subsistence' end” reflecting to some extent what is already happening on the ground.

## WAY FORWARD?

- Programme design needs to reflect the importance of improving the responsiveness of government institutions, so that extension services, local administration and local government bodies respond to the needs and interests of the poor.
- Donors need to be confident that partner organizations already have, or will be able to introduce, the necessary incentives and checks to ensure that common poverty and equity objectives are not diluted. Programme design needs to look at what factors will motivate actors at all levels to bring change.
- To bring about significant attitudinal change among the actors a system of proper incentives and other motivational activities such as arranging exchange visits for them and allowing them to participate in workshops etc. should be planned.
- The process for proper accountability of all stakeholders should be generated. Cross monitoring system for activities and finance would be agreed and determined through participatory method.
- There may be a greater understanding of social and political realities (elite capture, local drivers of change, political capture of government departments) and exclusion and disparity, but the fact that building social capital takes time ought to be recognised and taken care of.
- Furthermore, improving livelihoods requires fully integrated approaches (such as the BRAC programme on Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty).
- A number of the projects have shown how, given sufficient resources, it is feasible to make a significant improvement in the livelihoods of small numbers of people, particularly through extension activities. Future uptake of this should address several issues:
  - Department of Agricultural Extension and Department of Fisheries need to use knowledge and experiences of the past projects they must institutionalise organisational learning.
  - Ways to incorporate lessons from pilots into future programmes need to be found. Scale up of the project on the basis of pilot project experience needed to be done with care and with local resources. Project exit strategies do not address scale-up/out adequately.
  - Government departments must try to sustain such improvements through participation of the local stakeholders and paying more attention to the local knowledge and needs.
  - Projects may create false expectations among users and providers. But by being used to higher standards from projects, target groups may keep up pressure and demand more from government.

- The reviews underlined the importance of improved coordination between government providers, NGOs and private organisations; and better interagency coordination, to reflect the multidimensional nature of poverty and to enable rights based work that addresses the push and pull sides. To do so
  - Better collaboration and link, particularly between NGOs and government have to be developed. NGOs are funding dependent and GoB project driven better incentives are needed for collaborative work and policy influencing. Both GO and NGO need to coordinate more effectively on the same issues.
  - Institutions should be liberal and maintain coordination and cooperate with different service providers.
  - The private sector is profit driven. Government should have an influencing policy and identify incentives for the private sector to reach out to the ultra poor; or to address social concerns.
- Experiential learning, if properly facilitated, can be effective in developing analytical thinking, problem-solving skills, and experimental behaviour. But it may be difficult to scale up and requires a change in government attitudes and practice.

## FURTHER READING

**Appleyard, S. (2002):** 'A Rights-Based Approach to Development: What the policy documents of the UN, development cooperation and NGO agencies say.' OHCHR, Asia Pacific.

**Bartlett, A. (2002):** Entry Points for Empowerment. CARE Bangladesh, June 2004. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**Bennet, L. (2002):** Using Empowerment and Social Inclusion for Pro-Poor Growth: A Theory of Social Change. Background Paper for the Social Development Sector Strategy Paper, World Bank.

**Chambers, R. (1993):** 'Challenging the Professions: Frontiers for Rural Development', ITDG.

**Gibson, S., Mahmud, S., Toufique, K., Turton, C. (2004):** Breaking New Ground: Livelihood Choices, Opportunities and Tradeoffs for Women and Girls in Rural Bangladesh. The IDL group June 2004. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**Narayan, D. (2002):** 'Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook', World Bank, Washington.

**Oakley [Eds. (2001)]:** Changing Organisations for Sustainable Livelihoods: a map to guide change. Lessons for changing Policy and Organisations. No. 1. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

**RLEP (2003-2004):** End of Project Reports of FTEP II, ASIRP, REFPI and Output to Purpose Reports of CBFM2, PETRA, SUFER, CARE RLP and Aide Memoir of FFP. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**Toufique, K. A. and Turton, C. (2003):** Hands Not Land: How Livelihoods are Changing in Rural Bangladesh, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, September, 2002, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

More information on these themes and issues can be found in Project Output to Purpose and End of Project Review documents accessible at [www.lcgbangladesh.org/rlep](http://www.lcgbangladesh.org/rlep).