

Monitoring Significant Changes in People's Lives

A publication of CCDB Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) section.

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MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN CCDB-PPRDP AND SPECIAL PROGRAM AREAS

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FOREWORD

This report on "Monitoring the Most Significant Changes" is the fourth such compiling the most significant stories of change collected by the different project and program offices of CCDB. The study is done in CCDB's PPRDP, ECDP, WSLO and TBA project areas.

Since its introduction as a monitoring system in 1994 many changes have been made to improve it. This system has proved of great help to CCDB and its staff in improving the organization's performance and creating conditions for the realization of the potential of the people we work with.

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Director, CCDB.

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Introduction

The system "Monitoring the Most Significant Changes" has been in use since 1995 as a part of regular monitoring system of CCDB. It is designed for identification and analysis of qualitative changes taking place in CCDB's working areas under both PPRDP and special programs (ECDP, WSLO and TBA). This monitoring system was originally developed by Rick Davies, Center for Development Studies, Swansea, UK.

At present there are different mechanisms included in the framework of monitoring like participatory management, monitoring studies and monthly reports by Functional Analysts and reporting desks.

This system has proved a very useful tool to monitor the programs because the stories collected in this system gives a lot of insight into the dynamics at work at the reference people's level. To get an even better picture, it was decided to follow up some of the chosen stories/changes by one of the central office staff. This report is a summary of the stories selected by senior project and Dhaka office staff as most significant ones and further investigated by the responsible staff member of the Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation section.

The present document includes 16 stories translated into English from Bengali. Of these stories two are from PPRDP-Shivalaya project, one is from Pabna, one is from Ishurdi, three are from Mohonpur, one is from Manda; one is from ECDP-Dinajpur, four are from Banderban; two are from WSLO-Jessore and one is from TBA-Jhenaidah project area.

Objectives of the system

- To improve CCDB's understanding of developments taking place in the lives of the reference people.
- To improve the assistance CCDB is providing to Reference People.
- To develop the analytical skills of the staff.
- To monitor "leading edge " changes that might not be apparent from purely quantitative analysis.

Methodology

In PPRDP project areas, Forum Executive Committee members themselves collect information on changes, both positive and negative, in reference people's lives and report those to the PPRDP's Forum organizers in the monthly Forum meeting. The Forum Organizer take notes and after three months, selects three most significant stories of changes from her/his own point of view and then visits the person or groups in whose lives the changes have occurred, for more information. Finally she/he writes the stories and submits them to the senior staff of the same Project.

In special program areas (ECDP, WSLO and TBA), the Organizers or other staff directly involved with the reference people collect stories of change every month when they meet the people for some purpose. After three months she/he writes the stories and submits them to the senior Project staff. At the end of the period, the senior members of the project staff critically discuss the changes. Then they select three most significant changes in the five domains for reporting them to the central office in Dhaka. After analyzing all stories regarding changes, the central office sends a feedback to the project for discussing them with the people.

The basis of the monitoring system is a simple two-part question put to the respondents. The first part is descriptive: what happened, who was involved, where it happened, etc. The second part is explanatory; the respondents are to explain why they think that the changes were the most significant of all the changes that took place during three months.

During the reporting year, as before, five different types of change were collected: People's economic changes, Changes in people's lives, Changes in people's participation, Changes in peoples health and food habit and Gender Issue. There was also an option for the people to report any other change that does not come under any of these five domains.

To get an even better picture, one of the Assistant Researcher of CCDB's Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation section visited the projects.

Objectives of follow-up

- To check the changes that actually happened.
- To see if the changes have been sustained or have disappeared.
- To identify negative features of changes (in case of positive changes).
- To identify positive features of changes (in case of negative changes).
- Senior members of the project staff or Dhaka office staff are supported by facts at the reference people level for understanding the explanations by the field staff.

Rationale for follow-up

- To learn from the people.
- To know more about the successes and failures in the lives of our reference people.
- To inspire those who are trying to improve their conditions.
- To find out the role of CCDB and people themselves in bringing those changes.
- To find out how the reference people view the changes.
- To know how these changes are recognized by the people.
- To strengthen the relationship between the reference people and the CCDB staff.
- To bring the changes to the surface.
- To give the reference people an opportunity to evaluate the changes.

Effectiveness of the system (identified by the project staff)

- The stories of change are regularly published in the Roddur (a fortnightly magazine of CCDB that serves as a follow-up material for neo-literates).
- Project staff have to attend meetings with government every month and they are requested to report the improvement in the reference people's lives. In the meeting they show the changes as evidence.
- Some projects are displaying the changes on their display boards so that visitors can see what changes have taken place.
- Those among the CCDB staff (both central and project level) who are not closely involved in the field, can easily know about the changes in people's life.
- Project Managers are informed of the areas where things are improving and where not. So they can make decisions accordingly.

The following stories were selected for the following reasons-

- The changes received the highest score by the reporters, senior members of the project staff and as well as the senior staff of CCDB, Dhaka.
- The changes corresponded to most of the indicators in "*how to live well*" discussed by CCDB.
- The changes revealed the nature of problems people faced in their daily life and how they overcame these.

Time and Place

The chosen changes were collected during the last year (July '99 to June 2000). The follow-up to some stories took place in the months of January to June 2000. The changes took place in different months of the year in CCDB- PPRDP and Special Program (ECDP, WSLO and TBA) areas.

Key-Indicators

Listed below are the indicators which were taken into consideration by the parties concerned (reporters, senior project staff and Dhaka staff) in the selection of stories showing the most significant changes during the year (July '99 to June 2000). Most of the explanations given by the three parties for choosing the stories differed, except for indicators like "bought land" and collective action of the Forum. The explanation of the reporters and the project staff had often a lot of similarities. The Dhaka office staff explanations tend to be more abstract but more in line with the objectives of the CCDB. The reasons for choosing the success stories seem to be in line with the vision of CCDB in relation to the five domains. However, very few negative changes have been mentioned by the field staff and they did not select those as most significant. More negative trends should be brought to notice so that CCDB can improve its actions and strategies. We also tried to identify some of these negative elements during the follow-up (see the main findings of the follow-up).

Key indicators of 'Changes in people's lives'

- They are rearing poultry and ducks, cows and goats.
- Using loan properly.
- Have bought some cultivable land.
- Sending their children to school.
- Keeping their homesteads and themselves clean.
- Have learnt some skills e.g. in sewing, poultry farming, fish culture, etc.
- Subscribing to Roddur (fortnightly magazine for neo-literates, published by CCDB) for maintaining reading habits.
- Growing vegetables in their homesteads.
- Have built tin-roofed houses.

Key indicators of 'Changes in people's economic conditions'

- Have generated capital for running businesses.
- Have bought land/homestead.
- Have bought cows/goats.
- Doing fish culture.
- Planning poultry farms.
- Doing nursery, vegetable and food cultivation.
- Using credit money properly.
- Have started groceries to improve their economic conditions, and so on.

Key indicators of 'Changes in people's participation'

- Forum members are solving their problems collectively.
- They have jointly started income generating activities like fish cultivation, poultry farming and nursery with cooperation of their spouses.

- They are protesting against social exploitation and injustice.
- They are collectively participating in decision making process.
- They are voluntarily participating in maintaining their Forum houses.
- They come forward to solve one another's problems.
- Forum members are striving for having their social rights established.
- Forum members are getting opportunities to participate in government level activities.

Key indicators of 'Changes in gender issue'

- Marriages being arranged without dowry.
- Protesting against torture of women, like beating, illegal Fatoa, divorce, rape, acid throwing, women trafficking, polygamy, etc.
- Struggling to establish women's rights and justice.
- Economic independence especially for the women.
- Women's participation in decision making.
- Woman leadership and so on.

Key indicators of 'Changes in health, nutrition and food'

- Using slab latrines, drinking tube-well water and taking balance food.
- Aware of Immunization.
- Growing vegetables in homestead.
- Increasing nutritional awareness among the people.
- Taking medical treatment from Thana health care center instead of going quack doctor.
- Taking pre and postnatal care from trained TBA.
- Going to trained TBAs and clinics for delivery of babies.

Results

Positive findings during the reporting year

- Forums (Peoples Institutions) have started People Managed Credit program.
- People are doing various kinds of business utilizing loans taken from the Forum.
- They are making decisions and preparing their own development plan and budget through PSP process.
- They are implementing programs according to their plans.
- Forums are revolving more than Tk 5,00,000 on average.
- Forum executive committees are organizing and conducting need-based training with cooperation of CCDB.
- They are monitoring their programs taking assistance from the Forum Organizer.
- They are trying to keep all kinds of accounts taking some assistance from CCDB staff.
- Forum executive committee members are maintaining liaison with local government.
- They are receiving government facilities.
- Forums are participating in voluntary work like road reconstruction, bamboo bridge construction, helping needy persons by giving labor and financial support.
- A good number of group members have bought land, cows, goats, cycle-rickshaws, etc. and built tin-roofed houses.
- Some of the Forum members have started small scale enterprises.
- Most of the Forum members have sunk tube-wells and sat up sanitary latrines in their homes.
- Forum members are found to protest against social injustice, dowry, etc.
- They are trying to practice gender equality as a value.
- Now they are more aware about health, nutrition and family planning.
- They are growing vegetables and fruits in their courtyards and rearing poultry, ducks, goats and cows. They are taking balance food.
- They are taking pre and post natal care from trained TBAs.
- Most of the people are going to trained TBAs and clinics for delivery of babies.
- Ethnic minority community people are becoming more aware of their rights, traditions and culture. They are sending their children to school and keeping themselves neat and clean.
- Many of the members have improved their economic conditions.

Negative findings

- Some Forum members took loan from 2 or 3 organizations simultaneously and they could not repay the installments in time.
- Some Forums still depend on CCDB staff for keeping their accounts.
- Majority of the Forum members and ethnic minority community people cannot read and write well.
- Forums are revolving credit money but they have no income generating activities for running the Forums well.
- Some Forum members and ethnic minority community people are not making proper using of sanitary latrines.
- Some Forum members have drooped out.
- Still some ethnic minority community people are losing money and land by drinking local made wine.
- Ethnic minority community people have a tendency to get relief.