

Economic Rehabilitation of Households in Transition

Inception Report

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Save the Children®
USA

JOBS
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

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1 Background

On November 15, 2007 Cyclone Sidr hit the southern coast of Bangladesh, impacting approximately 5 million people and killing over 3000 people across 30 districts. Although the death and injury toll was less than during previous disasters (owing largely to the government's early warning and disaster preparedness program implemented in partnership with NGOs, including Save the Children) the cyclone's impact on children and their families short and medium term well-being was substantial. Alerted to the coming cyclone the majority of affected families quickly fled their homes, leaving behind economic assets and household items. The storm and resulting floods destroyed homes, household belongings, food stocks, water sources and sanitation facilities in what were already very poor communities, overwhelming indigenous coping mechanisms. Most food stores have been severely damaged or completely destroyed, both at the household-level and local market-level. The strong winds and tidal surge with water levels varying from 5 to 12 feet in some areas damaged more than 1.6 million acres of cropland, 1.2 million houses, sanitation facilities and contaminated water sources with saline and debris. Rural roads and many of the embankments were extensively damaged. According to the UN Rapid Assessment Mission, deployed from November 16-19, 2007, the cyclone severely affected 9 districts and over 4.7 million people.

Save the Children US is working with the cyclone affected population to assist in their recovery. A critical component of this work involves "families in transition", those households which lost a family member, especially a breadwinner, in the cyclone. JOBS Trust, popularly known as JOBS, is working with Save the Children to economically rehabilitate this target population in the remote southern areas of Patuakhali District, one of the most remote, vulnerable, and neediest of the Sidr affected areas. Based on a preliminary assessment carried out by JOBS in late September 2008, Char Mumtaz was identified as the target area for a pilot project to assist in the economic rehabilitation of households in transition from Cyclone Sidr. Fisheries and related industries represent one of the main livelihoods on the island of Char Mumtaz. JOBS will work with this target population to introduce new technology and practices in the traditional fish drying process.

The introduction of these new technologies, including solar driers, and practices is important because the traditional drying process is done outside in the open and involves the use of pesticides such as DDT to prevent spoilage due to insects. The use of these pesticides has serious negative health consequences for consumers. Despite the use of pesticides, demand for dried fish in Bangladesh and abroad remains significant. The introduction of hygienic pesticide free dried fish will allow the target population to increase the nutritional status of their households through smoothing consumption over time, as well as to access higher value markets.

2 Overview of Project Activities

The JOBS team traveled to the island of Char Mumtaz on 11 October 2008 to begin the activities associated with engaging the target population in hygienically drying fish. A key activity during this first phase was to undertake field visits to selected communities and landing sites in the target area, and a field team comprising local and international staff visited selected artisanal fishing communities and landing sites, including a traditional fish drying operation in Khaparabhanga to better understand the traditional processes and identify methods and technologies in need of upgrading to gain first hand information on the fishery and resource users. This assisted in determining the accuracy and reliability of information collected earlier and assisted with the design of the project.

Upon reaching Char Mumtaz, JOBS spent the first few days touring the area and surrounding islands including Char Anda and Sonar Char in order to identify the specific working area, and

selected a community of beneficiaries Char Anda in which to launch the project. The project team carried out reconnaissance of the target area to define the scope of work, identification of community leaders and sensitisation of the communities. Meetings were held with the community members, and other local leaders in which the purpose of the project and the need for community participation were discussed at length. It was agreed that the communities shall support the project in whatever form possible and several community members helped to identify the beneficiaries.

2.1 Project Office – Setting Up

JOBS met with the staff of South Asia Partnership (SAP), the only NGO actively working in the target area and a partner of Save the Children. As per the original plan, a fully functional project office was to be set up independently by the project team, however due to the lack of resources and in consultation with the SAP, the project office was established by making some adjustments and renovations within the premises of the SAP Sub Office in Char Mumtaz. Currently, JOBS is renting space in SAP's offices, and is in the process of setting up residential quarters for the project team based on Char Mumtaz.

2.1 Recruitment of Project Staff

In addition to its regular staff working on the project, JOBS has recruited two new staff members to work out of its new project office in Char Mumtaz. Abul Khayer will be coordinating project activities, and is responsible for regularly reporting progress to the home office in Dhaka. Oilul Islam is a respected member of the local community and has extensive experience in traditional fish drying techniques. He will be local staff responsible for supporting training activities for the beneficiaries on how to utilize the new technologies and methods to hygienically dry fish.

Additionally local carpenters have been engaged to construct solar driers. The construction of solar driers locally has several advantages in addition to lower costs. Local knowledge on how to construct and repair solar driers will enhance the sustainability of the initiative, because the expertise to repair damaged driers will be available locally. Furthermore, some of the carpenters engaged are members of the target population of "households in transition", increasing the economic impact that the project has on the target population. Training activities were organised by the JOBS for the project team where in the newly staff members, the local carpenters and beneficiaries were exposed to solar dried methods of fish drying and preservation. They were given theoretical as well as on-site training.



JOBS engage local carpenters to build solar driers to hygienically process dried fish

2.3 Procurement

After engaging the local carpenters, JOBS purchased wood, plastic, nets, and tin locally in order to begin constructing of a pilot solar drier. The JOBS team worked closely with the carpenters to ensure the solar drier was properly constructed. It took the carpenters two days of working with the JOBS team to finish the solar drier. The project team prepared detailed in-house specifications of the design of the solar driers and the resultant savings in the budget were used for procurement of inputs for the Topi making pilot project. Future training activities shall continue to focus on capacity building at this level.

2.4 Establishment of Production groups

During JOBS' initial visit to Char Anda, JOBS identified a community in which a large number of beneficiaries, identified by Save the Children as "households in transition", lived as the specific target area in which to launch the project. However, many inhabitants of Char Anda not living in the target community were frustrated in not being included in the project activities. JOBS explained that the work done will benefit the entire island through developing new markets for its fish.

Upon meeting with the beneficiaries JOBS explained the objective of the project, to introduce new technologies and methods to ensure the hygienic drying of fish. JOBS explained the concept of solar driers to the beneficiaries, which include fish dryers, fishermen, and fish wholesalers. The beneficiaries were eager to participate in the project, which they saw as having real potential to increase their income through gaining access to higher value markets for their production. Even those households not selected by Save the Children as beneficiaries were eager to have the project start because of the potential economic impact it could have on the entire community.

After meeting with the beneficiaries, JOBS selected one household to start the project with. The family consists of three brothers around the age of thirty which lost five members during Cyclone Sidr, including their mother, father, and the pregnant wife and two sons of one of the brothers. The brothers were overwhelmed and excited to be chosen as the start-up household.

2.5 Delivery of Solar Drier & Training of Project Beneficiaries



JOBS transported the solar drier to the selected "household in transition" on Char Anda

Upon the completion of the solar drier on Char Mumtaz, JOBS transported it to the start-up household on Char Anda. JOBS worked closely with the family to train them how to use the solar drier. Walli trained the three brothers in how to clean and prepare the fish for drying. For the initial test of the drier, JOBS purchased two different types of fish in the local market, as well as locally reared shrimp. After hygienically cleaning and preparing the fish in the traditional manner, JOBS demonstrated to the household how to place the fish and shrimp into the solar drier.

After the initial training, JOBS visited the household regularly over the next few days. The drying process took only two days to complete, as opposed to three days the traditionally drying process takes. All of the community members were very impressed with the efficiency of the solar drier, and were similarly impressed that the drying could be done hygienically without the use of pesticides.

2.9 Establishment of Monitoring Systems

The JOBS team has instituted a monitoring system, which will involve regular trips from Char Mumtaz to Char Anda to gauge the progress of the intervention. Areas requiring monitoring include:

- Regular attendance active participation by all project stakeholders
- Interaction among partner organizations working together on project activities

With the planned regular meetings of the project team, partners and beneficiaries, any emerging problem will be addressed immediately to ensure that interest and momentum is maintained. Furthermore, to ensure the continuous assessment of the project and its context with regard to the outputs, activities and timely delivery, a work plan has been developed and is regularly updated to reflect changes. Also, the project has developed a suitable contract agreement between Save the Children and JOBS for the financial, management and procurement and reporting systems.

2.10 Marketing of Finished Product

The key to the long-term sustainability of this initiative lies in the marketing of the product. JOBS has already been in contact with a number of buyers of dried fish throughout the country. Meena Bazaar, a grocery store chain based in Dhaka, has agreed in principle to purchase dried fish from the beneficiaries beginning in mid-to-late December. Once the project is in full swing, and all fifty solar driers are operational, JOBS estimates that the beneficiaries will be producing about 250 kg of dried fish per week. JOBS is working closely with Meena Bazaar to develop a brand for the dried fish, and will secure assistance in packaging and logistics from Meena Bazaar. JOBS plans to take a representative of Meena Bazaar's procurement team to Char Anda to visit the project site.

2.11 Launching of Full Scale Implementation

Following the successful completion of the initial solar drier and its use in drying fish, JOBS has begun the full scale implementation of the project. JOBS will be utilizing the local carpenters to construct a total of fifty solar driers. These driers will be shared among two households, allowing a total of one hundred households to participate in the project. JOBS will be providing training to the beneficiaries in how to prepare fish and utilize the solar drier to produce hygienic dried fish. Once all fifty solar driers are in place, JOBS will work with the beneficiaries to link them to Meena Bazaar who will provide logistical and monitoring support.



JOBS is in the process of launching full scale implementation of the fish drying project on Char Anda

3 Establishment of Tupi Making IGA

Due to the conservative nature of the communities in Char Mumtaz and the surrounding islands including Char Anda, women are only marginally involved in the traditional fish drying process. JOBS is working to involve women in the processing of the hygienically dried fish; however, there is some resistance on the part of beneficiaries to having women engaged in this task. During the JOBS team's visit JOBS noticed the very fine quality of needle work done by many of the women. As a way to ensure that a significant number of women and female-headed "households in transition" are involved in alternative income generating activities, JOBS decided to invest cost savings and organizational resources in starting a small-scale tupi making project in the target area.

JOBS is working with an export-oriented buyer based in Feni to secure a market for high-quality tupis. The buyer exports high-quality hand stitched tupis to the Middle East. JOBS has secured a trainer to teach the women how to make tupis. JOBS will assist the women in establishing connections with the buyer in Feni.

4 Issues Affecting Project Implementation

4.1 Communication Gaps Related to Lack of Equipment

The project field operations on Char Mumtaz are located in areas isolated from the mainland. The project budget does not have any provisions for communication equipment such as satellite phones, or full time generators to charge laptops. Alternatively, the project team has to travel to Galachipa to communicate electronically, however we are in the process of considering a viable option in the longer terms because of the recurring transport costs.

5 Revised Work Plan

Work Plan for Hygienic Fish Drying and Needle Point in Char Mumtaz													
Activity	Status	Person Responsible	Resources Required	October	November	December	January	February	March				
Dried Fish													
Pre-Implementation Assessment	Complete			█									
Meeting with Civil Society	Complete			█									
Beneficiary Selection	Complete			█									
Created Sample Solar Drier w/ local Carpenters	Complete				█								
Dried first batch of fish for Mena Bazaar sample	Complete				█								
Inception Report		Naashom				█							
Wood Purchased	Complete				█	█							
1-20 of 50 Solar Drier Construction and Distribution					█	█	█						
20-50 or 50 solar driers constructed and distributed						█	█	█	█				
Money Distribution for Credit Program to Purchase Fish						█	█	█	█				
Progress Report		Naashom							█				
Distribution of Packaging Material							█	█	█	█	█	█	█

