

Opportunities for Posterity (OfP)

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An example of how an investment of only US\$ 25,000 and willingness can bring significant positive change to the people of a famine region of a poverty stricken country just within a year.



Opportunities for Posterity (OfP)

*An organization that exploring opportunities for harnessing self-reliance for impoverished communities towards prosperous generations next.
Registration under Social Welfare Act as a non-profit organization is in the Process*

Mission

Undertaking endeavors and supporting the same with logistics to transform Communities in Nilphamari District into a self-reliant one, and with time, communities throughout Bangladesh through comprehensive transformation.

Operational Objectives

The Opportunities for Posterity (OfP) aims to explore opportunities for the generations next for sustainable alleviation of poverty through undertaking alternative development approaches that include:

- Creating and supporting technical and general educational infrastructure development as well creating platforms for tangible and intangible contribution to allow communities' access to modern education to achieve the national average literacy rate, and reduce rate of drop-out from schools and colleges.*
- Creating a platform to outdo with seasonal and non-seasonal food & nutritional insecurity of the impoverished communities.*
- Creating and supporting infrastructural development for intangible contribution to ensure access to good health education and services*
- Undertaking agro-based project(s) to motivate agro-based farming that will increase food production for the cause of food security and promote income generation.*
- Make market updates available to the farmers so that they get appropriate prices of their commodities.*
- Creating platform for access to financial facilities by communities needed to support development logistics.*
- Creating a platform for the benevolent and development sponsors/donors/partners at home and abroad so as to support community development logistics.*
- Merging international ideas with local needs for sustainable development*
- Disseminating development knowledge and experiences among communities, NGOs and government through meetings, seminars, workshops and publications.*
- Pursuing other logistics for overall development, primarily of the communities in the Nilphamari district and progressively other communities of Bangladesh.*

- *Undertaking and implementing other development programs and projects as appropriate.*

The OfP aims to transform the traditional idea of continuous donation-intensive social work to create social benefit through small enterprise. The transformations are being implemented through realization of project phases and exploring other appropriate avenues.

Project Location and Background

This project is based in the area known as Balagram, which is part of Greater Rangpur. Rangpur, which is divided into five districts, is the 'monga' (famine) region of Bangladesh as identified by the Government of Bangladesh and other local and international development organizations. Nilphamari is one of the five districts which is about 44 kilometers away from central Rangpur and Jaldhaka is one of the six sub-districts of Nilphamari. Balagram is a small village of Jaldhaka Sub-District. Balagram is a small union of about 5 sq km having a total population of around 20,000 (51% male and 49% female) of mixed cultures.

Poverty

Bangladesh is a low income country of South Asia having a small land mass and as large as 156.0 million populations (UNDP 2011) at a density of 990/sq km (MoF 2009-10). According to UNDP Human Development Report 2009, Bangladesh is the 13th country in the world based on human-poverty rate. Here, the rate of acute poverty is 14% and 28% in the rural and urban areas respectively while 43.8% and 28.4% of the population live below the upper poverty line respectively in rural and urban areas (MoF 2010). The population living below the upper poverty line and above the lower poverty line is again very much vulnerable to acute poverty due to population pressure, seasonal food insecurity, scarcity of natural resources and frequent extreme events. The national average of poverty varies from place to place with extreme poverty in the famine regions, such as the area this project focuses on where rate of poverty is as high as 60% (UNDP Poverty Map-2005). In this famine region seasonal hunger lasts for about 6-7 months while communities struggle to meet daily needs. The main occupations in Balagram are traditional farming (47%), agricultural day labor (35%) but agriculture is highly vulnerable to extreme events.

Food & Nutritional Insecurity

According to the World Food Summit 1996, “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” while rice is the staple food of Bangladesh. But mere production of paddy hardly meet the demand of high density people causing shortage requiring imports thousands of tons every year. Bangladesh heavily depends on imports of almost all food items to meet demand of the growing populations and annual import of rice remain stagnant at around 0.5 million tonnes (Hossain et al 2009) and in the fiscal 2009-10, Bangladesh spent USD33 million for importing only rice (MoF 2010). In many places high yielding paddy is cultivated & harvested but still cannot meet the increasing demand. Since there is no alternative, almost all the peoples of rural Bangladesh live on rice. This also contributes to shortage and high demand requiring import. On the other hand, 15-20 days prior to harvesting while people are in serious need of foods and money in the famine regions (I call off seasons), the retail purchasers who are the intermediaries in purchasing, purchases the paddy at very low price and thus most of the paddy goes to main purchaser/businessmen right after harvesting. This causes food migrations to nearby small and big cities. The purchasers then process the paddy into rice, stores and sale the same to city people at high price and again export the remaining to rural areas during off seasons wherefrom the same were collected. In every stage starting from purchasing by the intermediaries to export of processed rice to the same place add up costs and contribute to increased price during off seasons at the rate around 50%. The processed rice come along imported rice during the off season which is again contribute to high price. Some businessmen also take advantage of this situation by creating artificial shortage of food items for satisfying their ulterior motives of high profit. As a result the farmers are deprived of real price that demotivate production of agricultural commodities on one hand and on the other prices of rice go up by more than 50% during the off seasons making the same inaccessible to real producers and other rural peoples of little income leading to vulnerability to food insecurity (though an OfP estimate shows that farmers of this community produce more than the food amount they require for year round).

The casual framework for malnutrition of WHO and UNICEF classifies causes for malnutrition into basic, underlying and immediate causes where basic causes includes nature, technology and people, women’s status, children’s rights, quantity and quality of actual resources, knowledge and attitudes, underlying causes includes household food security,

maternal and childcare and access to health services, and immediate causes includes inadequate dietary intake and diseases that altogether lead to child and maternal underweight and premature death. All the basic, immediate and underlying causes are prevalent in Bangladesh society. For around 95% of the rural peoples of Bangladesh for whom source of income, food and nutrition is agriculture are the victims of seasonal insecurity of balance diets and therefore are the victims of malnutrition. According to FAO and WFP, more than 40% of the populations of Bangladesh lives below the food consumption-based poverty line, lacking sufficient resources to afford diet of 2,122 kilocalories (kcal) per person per day, along with other basic necessities (2008).

In one hand prices of the essentials increase by more than 50% during the off seasons (non-harvesting period, heavy rains, drought and other extreme events) and on the other, rural peoples loss their daily works leading to low daily income resulting in low affordability to balanced food intake. All together seriously create impediments in access to foods and result in serious nutritional insecurity in rural Bangladesh and that in Balagram – being located in a famine region.

Health Services

Hunger, lingering poverty, nutritional insecurity and extreme events cause human insecurity by further leading to food borne diseases during extreme events and diseases caused by malnutrition (diarrhea, marasmus, Kwashiorkor, cachexia, anemia, beriberi, scurvy) resulting in high demand for health services. Among these diseases diarrhea is most prevalent in Bangladesh. As against high demand for health services, there is only one hospital seat available for per 3,508 persons and only one doctor for per 2,773 persons (MoF 2010) – being the national average. The only health complex for Balagram is attended by just one female field health officer. In the entire Zaldhaka Upazila (sub-district) there are only 3 satellite clinics. Therefore residents have poor access to health services with most of the members of this impoverished community relying on these government programs.

Education

Education of Bangladesh is divided into primary (samaponi), secondary, higher secondary, tertiary and higher education at private and public sectors. Primary education is upto grade 5, secondary upto grade 10, higher secondary upto grade 12-13, tertiary upto grade 12-16 and

higher education upto grade 18. Some institutes also offers 2-3 years diploma in technical education after completion of higher secondary or tertiary level.

Net enrolment in primary education is 93.52% but the dropout rate is as high as 45.1% while only 44.69% (boys 57.69%, girls 35.07%) completes secondary education and the rate of dropout at secondary education is as high as 55.31% (boys 42.15% and girls 64.93%) (BANBEIS 2010). Achievement of higher rate of girls in completion of secondary education is assumed to be due to provision of stipends for girl upto grade 10. Rate of enrolment in higher secondary is girls 44.69% and boys 55.31% (BANBEIS 2010). According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics, only 7% get access to higher education. The country has serious accommodation problems both at tertiary and higher education.

The average literacy rate of 19% (Banglapedia) in Balagram is much lower than the national average of 54.8% (2009) (MoF-2010). While in poverty, people strive for foods and hardly dream to finance education of their children. In Balagram, there are several primary schools, three high schools and one agricultural college (the college has been established in 2007). Though enrolment in the school has dramatically increased due to government stipend for primary school students and for females up to class ten, there is hardly any way to measure the quality of education and actual output of the education system. It has been observed that many primary school students come to the school only once to receive the stipend; the other days they work with their family. Thus both poverty and ineffectiveness of stipends lead to the high rate of drop-out both at primary and secondary school levels.

In Balagram, none of the primary and secondary schools has any computers or other technological tools, while the college has only one computer for administration. There are hardly any lab facilities in the schools and college. Thus the community is far away from the modern teaching and learning process. This leads to a major gap between this and other unions of Bangladesh in the areas of technical education, training, teaching & learning, modern farming techniques and communication – all of which needs to be bridges. Local farmers are often leaders of the committees that run these schools and college, yet they themselves are not well educated. In addition, they may not be able to give much time out of their farming activities. Therefore, their input to the administration of the schools and college, in academic term, is weak. As a result committee influences affects appointment of quality teachers at both the schools and the college.

Agriculture

Engaging 48.4% of the total labor force in this sector, around 80% of the population directly and indirectly depends on agriculture and in 2009-10 contribution of agriculture to national GDP was 20.16% (MoF 2010) much lower than the previous years. Still the sector is not capable of producing required food grain to meet the national needs due to backdated cultivation system, damages caused by frequent extreme events and poor post harvesting management. Due to poor disaster management awareness, only in 2007-2008, extreme events like cyclone, hailstorm, tornado, tidal, sidre, flood, excessive rainfall and flash flood damaged production of 94164 and 230681 metric tonnes Aus and Aman paddy respectively and at the same time caused damage to production of thousands of metric tonnes of vegetables (BBS 2009). Poor distribution of lands, non-application of technology and deprivation of producers from fair price are also the contributing factor for low production of agricultural commodities. Apart from the national scenario, in Balagram agriculture is the main occupation for 82% of the populations with the breakdown of farming 47% and laborer 35% (Banglapedia) and around 90% people directly and indirectly depend on agriculture and agricultural products. For many, agriculture is the only source for income, food and nutrition. The day laborers earn 2-2.5 dollars a day for 2-3 months a year with an annual average for a day is not more than US\$1 a day on whose income other members of the family also depend.

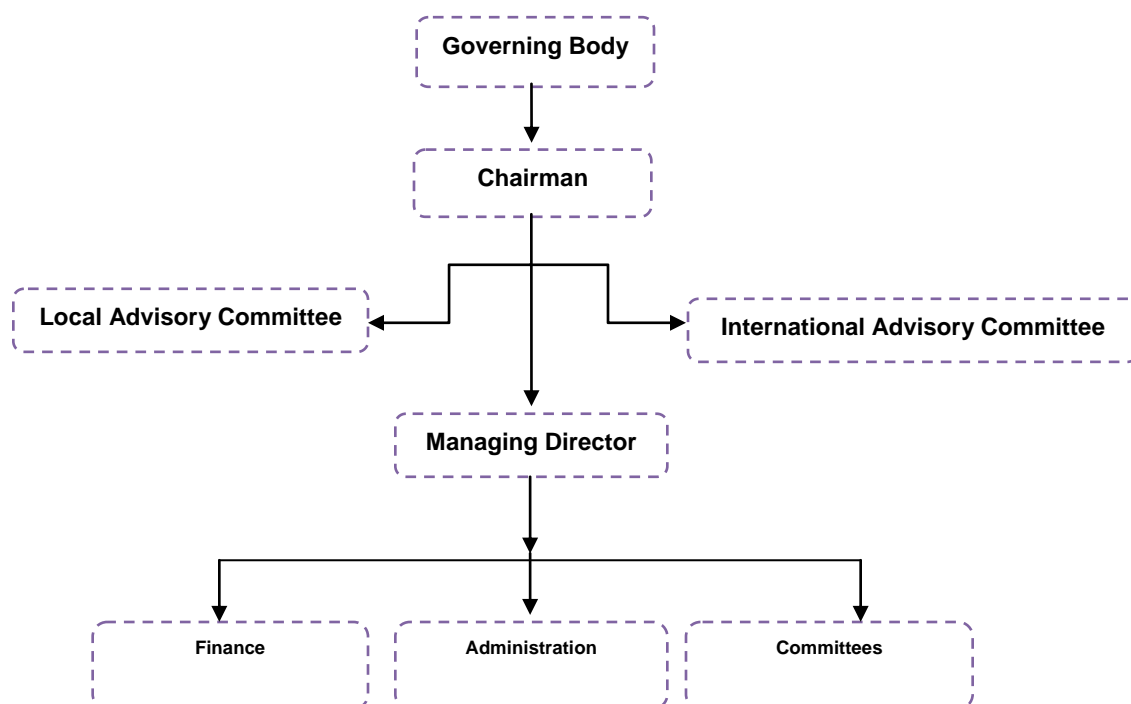
Sanitation

According to WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) 2008, a total of 36% of the populations had access to improved sanitation facilities with the breakdown of urban 48% and rural 32% in the year 2006 while the MDG target based on JMP 1990 estimates is to cover 63% by the year 2015. While estimating, JMP stressed on use of (1) flush or pour-flush to piped sewer system, septic tank, pit latrine, (2) Ventilated improved pit latrine (VIP), pit latrine with slab. At national level a good progress has been reported i.e. 87% of the populations has access to sanitary latrine in both rural and urban areas. As in the case of Balagram, a very few household have sanitary latrine and a good number of household has pit latrine with slab with bamboo fence, some household uses shared latrines and even some household do not have any latrine and are used to open defecation. If surveyed, the percentage of household used to open defecation would be as high as 20%. This poor access to improved sanitation is a main cause for high rate of diarrheal diseases in rural Bangladesh.

Technology & HRD

If we take education and agriculture as the routes for poverty eradication and capacity building, these sectors must be equipped with technological tools and techniques. But application of technology both in education and agriculture would best demonstrate the scenario. As already been stated, there are some primary schools, 3 high schools and only one agricultural college in Balagram but none of the schools have any computer and laboratory and the college that has been established in 2007 has only one computer for administrative works. Out of 100 people none has access to internet. Farmers use hybrid seeds but rarely cultivate in a scientific approach and due to dearth of knowledge uses extensive insecticide that destroy biodiversity and contribute to long term low production. This rare access to technology and traditional education systems greatly impede human resources development, women empowerment, agro-based production and upto date teaching learning process.

Organogram*



* Yet to be approved by the registration authority

Governing Body



**Mr. Md. Rabiul
Islam**
Chairman



Ms Selina Nargis
Secretary General
& Treasurer



**Mr Md Moksedur
Rahman**
Member



Mr Md. Nur Alam
Member



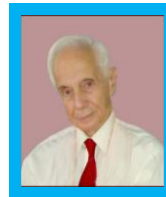
**Mr Md. Hafizur
Rahman**
Member



**Mr Md. Abu
Bakar Siddik**
Member

International Advisory Body

*Prof Hans Eric Frank,
formerly of the University of
Bath, England, UK*



*Prof Alex Berland
University of British
Columbia, Canada*



*Prof Dr John Richards,
Simon Fraser University,
Canada*



*Mr Vaughn Spenser
Richards, Vancouver,
Canada*



*Mr Rick Dowdall, Victoria,
BC, Canada*



Local Advisory Body

*Mr Md. Abdul Hai
Chairman, Local Government
(Balagram Union Parishad)*



*Mr Tohidul Islam
Former Chairman, Local
Government (Balagram Union
Parishad)*



*Prof Sree Dhaneshur Roy,
Professor, Jaldhaka Women
College*



*Prof Mahmud Alam, Principal,
Alhaz Mizanur Rahman
Agriculture College, Balagram*



*Mr Md. Fazlur Rahman
(Retired Head Master)*



*Mr Md. Moshiur Rahman
Secretary, Balagram Brather's
Club*



Other Committee Members

*Ms Selina Nargis,
Treasurer, OfP – Secretary, FC*



*Mr Md. Nurul Amin
Secretary, DNAC, DPIC, FC*



*Mr Md Shah Jalal
Member, DNAC*



*Mr Md. Maznur Rahman
Member, DPIC*



*Mr Md. Abdus Sattar
Member, DPIC*



Mr Md. Abdul Khaleque
Member, DPIC



Project Activities

For the cause of achieving the aims on sustainable basis by creating social benefit through small enterprise, the **OfP** has undertaken model endeavors as pilot projects of multiple phases as follows:

Phase I: (Year 1)

- Establish rice mill with a warehouse for storing rice to be sold to community members in the off-season at a lower than the market price.
- Establish a cattle fattening farm, initially with 32 cattle
- Create a fish farm, initially in a pond of about 0.25 acre of land

Phase 2 (continuing with Phase I): (Year 2-3)

- Utilize 50% of the profits from Phase 1 for
 - Financing development need assessments, primarily of the Balagram Union Community
 - Financing logistics for implementation of development project(s) undertaken based on the development need assessment in the areas of food security, education, sanitation and health services
- Utilize 50% of the profit for operational modalities and supporting logistics for expansion of the project itself

Phase 3 (continuing with Phases 1 and 2): (Year 3 - Continuous)

- Establish a computer literacy centre for computer schooling for the impoverished community learners for building bridges through technology driven education
- Transform the community into a challenge-absorbent knowledge-based society by creating quality education, facilitating practical projects in the computer literacy centre, nursing home, rice mill, cattle fattening farms and fish farms

- *Improve unhealthy living conditions and weak health service delivery through facilitating better physical facilities*
- *Ensuring better living of the community people by availing rice at lower than the market price during the off-season*
- *Establish a nursing home with appropriate permission under the prevailing rules to bridge the gaps in health services*

Achievements

Phase-I Food Security Project

With due consideration to the seasonal food insecurity, the OfP has undertaken a Staple Food Security Project. Under this project, to ensure security for staple food for the Balagram community and progressively for the impoverished communities in Nilphamari District, the OfP is establishing a rice mill with a storage capacity of 10,000 mound of rice to be sold among the community at a lower than the market price during the off-seasons. It is analyzed that even after selling rice at a lower than the market price surplus is possible after meeting operational costs to facilitate other development projects.

For the purpose of constructing a rice mill, earth has been filled-in and as of June 2011 construction work of machine room has been completed and being a small project construction of warehouse, drying field and ancillary facilities for storing rice for selling in off season, has been postponed to avoid damages being caused by seasonal rain. Permission for electric connection from the District Office of Rural Electrification Board has been secured for the rice mill with condition of solar panel and clearance from the Department of Environment (Bogra). The Department of Environment has confirmed that the clearance will be given within August 2011. Solar panel is being installed for the rice-mill. Since electricity connection is confirmed the plan to operate the mill with oil-run machine has been discarded. Motor has been ordered for the mill and the producer will take 2-3 months to deliver the motor to be aligned to be the same workable with single phase electric connection. A 1.5 horse power water pump has been purchased for water supply to the rice mill.

Cattle Fattening Project

The OfP aims at motivating agro-based farming for the cause of productivity, profitability and food and nutritional security. The Cattle fattening project of OfP is geared to enhance capacity of rural farmers in cattle production and management so as to benefit them by motivating income generation activities. In one hand this project will help ensure food & nutrition security and in another cattle fattening is most profitable agro-based business that promises around 40% profitability per year meaning a highly potential area of farming for income generation for the farmers. The OfP expects that this projects will motivate farmers, ensure nutrition and food security and help the farmers come out from the poverty cycle. As an added advantage OfP plans to use profits from this demonstration farm for financing technical & general education and health service of the communities of Bangladesh specially communities in the Nilphamari District.

Construction and facility development activities including ancillary facilities have been completed for housing around 42 cattle for in-house fattening and 30 cattle have already been purchased. To feed the cattle dry fodder has been purchased to feed 32 cattle for 9 months and green fodder was planted in 0.3 acres of land. Two persons have been recruited to look after the cattle @ 3,000/- a month per person. Operationalization of OfP rice-mill will supplement cattle fodder.

Through this project, the OfP expects enhanced food and nutrition security, increased income, assets accumulation, increased knowledge and influence (education) and healthy livestock farming in the community. At the same time earnings from this demonstration farm will support technical education and enhanced health services.

Fish Farming Project

The OfP has also undertaken fish farming project at the aims of income generation, nutrition security as well for motivating fish farming for community development. To this effect, a demonstration farm pond has been dug, besides, OfP has an old pond and 110 KGs of fingerlings have been released in the two ponds on an experimental basis. The OfP plans to use the cow-dung from the cattle fattening farm and leftover from the rice-mill as fish feeds to reduce feeding cost. Profits from these demonstration farms is planned to be used for supporting logistics for programs & projects to be undertaken on socio-economic & living

standard development, social security, welfare services as well training and skill development activities.

Phase II

In the first meeting of the Development Need Assessment Committee, skill development project gets priority. The meeting opined that computer education to unemployed educated community would open up windows of new opportunities in the job market. While considering those who could secure little education but meet requirement for driving in Bangladesh, a project on Establishing a Driving School was also proposed. Some sanitation issues also got considerations.

Phase III

Skill Development Projects Computer Education Project

Based on the recommendations of the Development Need Assessment Committee, repairing works for a Office-com-Computer Literacy centre has been completed. 4 computers have been installed and equipped the same with 2 internet modem purchased from mobile companies. The centre has started giving access to the children of secondary school and is going to open the same for all aged people for information purposes. As soon as the classes of training season starts, more computers will be added based on requirements and affordability and the centre will start charging to cover operational costs. The centre is also considering membership for access to computer and internet for meet up operational costs. Furnishing for office is continuing. The trainer is undergoing a training program of computer applications to bring knowledge to the centre.

Challenges Faced

The OfP faced enormous challenges in materializing its activities upto date and most of the challenges were faced when activities depended on government's decision i.e. permission for electric connection, clearance from the environment department, registration of the cattle fattening farm and trade license for the rice mill registration. High inflation rate also offered a lot of challenges in terms of aligning the budgets. However, most of the challenges have been overcome and challenges ahead are the registration of land in the name of the OfP in terms of time requirement and challenges in terms of securing registration of the organization as not

for profit organization under the Social Welfare Act of Bangladesh. For replication of such project may also offer challenges in terms of donation of land which OfP did not face.

Future Plans

- 1. Get the donated lands registered for OfP Permanent Office and get OfP registered by early 2012 by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh under the Not-for-Profit Social Welfare Act.*
- 2. To materialize the first goal of ensuring access to modern education, OfP plans to establish a Kindergarten School to impart modern education with an English curriculum for upto grade 5. This is a project of initial investment of Bangladesh Tk. 3500,000 (equivalent to Pound Sterling GBP 30,000 or U\$45,000). OfP's estimated surplus from the cattle fattening farm in the coming year will be Tk. 250,000/- (around GBP 2,300) and has received pledge of Tk. 200,000 (around GBP 2,000) for investment in this project. Provided further fund can be mobilized, the project will start from early 2013 or prior.*
- 3. Start educational scholarship by the name of initial donors for secondary school students on a perpetual basis to commemorate their contribution for institution building and institutionalization of OfP by 2015 (with due permission).*
- 4. There are hundreds of unemployed young who have little education in their credit but they meet the educational requirement for driving in Bangladesh. The OfP aspires to establish a Driving School to offer driving license to such young groups by late 2013 under skill development project.*
- 5. The OfP plans to establish some biogas plant for the community to alleviate environmental degradation under a project on environment.*
- 6. In the Balagram community, there are little households who have sanitary latrines. Under a sanitation project, the OfP plans to construct some sanitary latrines in the community.*
- 7. Along the existing Computer Literacy Centre, the OfP aspires to establish mechanical, electrical, electronics and other engineering training centers one after another and integrate all the training centers to give a shape of polytechnic institute within the next 10-15 years with due approval of the Bangladesh Technical Education Board. So far, in Bangladesh there is no polytechnic university and through further development of the planned polytechnic institute, the OfP aspires to establish a polytechnic university in cooperation with other universities at home and abroad within next 20-25 years (depending on affordability) with due approval of the appropriate authorities of the Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh.*

Expected Projects Outcomes

Successful implementation of all the phase of this model and pilot project is expected to achieve the following results:

- Building self-reliant community, primarily in Balagram Union and transforming the same ideas into other communities of Bangladesh*
- The community will be improved at least to the national average in terms of health, education and general & technical capacity.*
- General and technical primary, tertiary & higher education will be accessible.*
- Initially there will be direct and indirect jobs for about 50 wage-earners*
- This model project will demonstrate better practices and encourage better use of technology in farming to strengthen food security.*
- Through better marketing and community enterprises, marginalized farmers will get reasonable prices for their products.*
- The local economy will be diversified through small-scale industrialization, so that crop failures will have less impact on the community*
- The community's prosperity will be improved overall.*

Rationale for the Projects

The project is congruent with the government's commitment to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) such as eradicating poverty, attaining universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health through ensuring health service delivery, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing global partnerships for development. Further the government has recently declared one-household-one-farm policy for ensuring income generation of the rural communities. Thus the project is an appropriate vehicle for investment because it is supported by national commitments. The activities have been designed to be fairly easily implementable and when completed, will create conditions for sustainable livelihood for the target groups.

Expenditure (May 31, 2011)

As of May 31, 2011 total expenditure stands around Tk. 21,60,000/- (twenty one hundred and sixty thousand) equivalent to around GBP 20.000 (twenty thousand) which is much more than the budgeted amount (the budget was prepared around two years before the start up of the project) and detail on expenditures with breakdown will be made available very soon. Therefore, it is estimated that replication of such project, including cost for land will require around Tk. 40,00,000/- (equivalent to around GBP 37.000) still this may vary from place to place based on the price of land. Again if volunteer for management activities cannot be secured the cost will be higher than this.

Call for Support

With supports and contributions from development friends at home and abroad, the fish farming, cattle fattening, rice-farm and computer literacy centers are almost implemented under the Staple Food Security, Skill Development and Food and Nutritional Security Projects undertaken by the OfP. Towards realization of the goals of establishing a Kindergarten School and establishing and turning the training centres into polytechnic institute and then into a polytechnic university, tangible and intangible supports are hereby requested from the benevolent at home and abroad. Supports are also requested from development friends who aspire to help development projects in developing counties in the areas of skill development, sanitation and environment. OfP believes that planed projects on education, skill development, sanitation and environment can be realized before the planned time period with participation of development friends at home and abroad and therefore is the call for kind assistance. Please contact Mr. Md. Rabiul Islam, Chairman and Managing Director, Opportunities for Posterity (OfP) over cell: 8801731131164 or through e-mail: rabiul@ofp-bd.org or by post mail to:

*Mr Md. Rabiul Islam
Chairman
Opportunities for Posterity (OfP)
West Balagram, Post: Balagram
PS: Jaldhaka, District: Nilphamari
BANGLADESH*

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