



Training Report on Community Organization and Cooperatives

Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB)
Blue Gold Program



Training Course
on

Community Organization and Cooperatives

(Participants: Community Organizers & Zonal Socio-Economists)

25 - 30 August 2013

BARD, Kotbari, Comilla.

Dhaka, September 2013

BLUE GOLD PROGRAM
REPORT ON TRAINING OF ZONAL SOCIO-ECONOMISTS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS
(August 25-30, 2013)

A. Highlights of the Training

The Training on Community Organization and Cooperatives was conducted from August 25-30, 2013 at BARD-Comilla. The training participants are the Community Organizers-COs (30) and Zonal Socio-Economists-ZSEs (4). The objectives of the training are the following:

At the end of the training program, the participants will be able to:

1. Discuss clearly the goals and objectives of the Blue Gold Program and its components;
2. Define what Community Organization is, its concepts and principles and discuss the process involved in Community Organizing;
3. Apply the basic concepts, principles and process of Community Organizing in Blue Gold WMO formation, strengthening and sustenance;
4. Mainstream gender concerns and issues in community organization and mobilization activities;
5. Gain insights on how cooperative works and identify factors contributing to success/failure of cooperatives;
6. Pinpoint roles and qualities of a community organizer; and
7. Pinpoint M&E requirements and work plan of ZSEs and COs.

The following is a brief description of the highlights of the training:

- The first day started with course introduction, introductions (BG team, BWDB team, and participants). The Team Leader, Project Coordinating Director with his 3 staff, and the Deputy Team Leader opened the training program. Please see the attachment-03 & 04.
- Orientation on the Blue Gold Program objectives and components was done by the Team Leader and Deputy Component Leaders and this was followed by the topic on Community Organizing concepts, principles and process (attachment- 05 & 06)
- For the next 2 days, topics on the application of the Community Organizing basic concepts, principles, and process to Blue Gold WMO formation, strengthening and sustenance were discussed as follows: community immersion and social investigation; groundwork; needs/problem identification and plan formulation in the 6 steps approach; WMO functionality assessment, WMO formation and sustenance; Gender concerns and targets; and qualities, roles and tasks of the Community Organizer. A film on IPSWAM planning

process was also shown. Group and plenary discussions and role play were the main methods used.

- On Day 4 and Day 5, the discussion and activities were focused on Cooperatives. A resource person from the Department of Cooperatives at the Comilla District level discussed the rules and regulations on cooperative formation, registration, and auditing. This was followed by actual visit to 2 Cooperative Societies and sharing by the cooperative officials. The participants, after the visit, shared their insights and lessons learned through group and plenary discussions. The 5th day session was extended to discuss briefly M&E requirements and the work plan of ZSEs and COs.
- The last day was spent on course review, post test, course evaluation and closing ceremony and awarding of training certificates. The Team Leader closed the training program.
- Group dynamics exercise on team building was also conducted including daily review on previous day's sessions. Please see the details agenda (attachment-01)

B. Observations and Recommendations

Based on the course evaluation and practical observations, following recommendations were given:

1. The participants had difficulty assimilating the information presented during the orientation session on Blue Gold program objectives and components. It is recommended that for future training on Community Organization and Cooperatives, one day should be given for Blue Gold Program orientation but the presentation should be brief but concise and method should be more interactive/participatory.
2. The session on Rules and Regulations for Cooperatives and the site visit to 2 Cooperative Societies were very relevant and enlightening. The 2 cooperative societies visited were: Raicho and Deedar Village Development Cooperative Societies. The concept and strategy on comprehensive village development that Comilla BARD adopted in guiding the cooperative societies is quite similar to the concept and approach of Blue Gold. It is recommended that in future training, more time should be allocated for the site visit to allow interactions with some of the cooperative members and see some of the actual cooperative activities being undertaken. Exposure visits to these successful cooperatives is proposed for Executive Committee members of WMGs so that they get first-hand knowledge and experience about the functions and management of successful cooperatives as well as the reasons behind their success. Also, inviting the cooperative officials of these societies during WMG and WMA training is also recommended.

3. All topics were relevant but duration of future training should be at least 8 days to allow enough time for the participants to digest and internalize the lessons, allow good transition from one topic to the next, and allow more time for the cooperatives' exposure visit.
4. Summing-up of each course/topic discussed was quite weak and should be strengthened in future training.
5. Some of the handouts were difficult to understand due to some translation problem. In future training, assistance from Communication Specialist will be sought in terms of reviewing the handout and determining if it is easily understood or not.
6. English terms like mobilization, cross cutting issues, value chain and others have to be defined carefully because these terms are not easily translated in the Bengali language. It is recommended that we come up with a standard definition of these in Bangla for better understanding.

C. Conclusions

1. In general, the training objectives were met and that the participants especially the new Cos and Zonal Socio-Economists gained basic understanding of what they are expected to do in Blue Gold which will help them initiate the activities in their respective polders/duty stations more confidently.
2. The integration among members of the different components has developed to a certain degree during the training; this will help in the implementation of the program at field level more efficiently.
3. The experience of the site visits to the 2 cooperative societies will help the Cos in inspiring and motivating the WMO members to participate/accelerate cooperative activities specifically in the 9 IPSWAM polders where many of the WMGs have yet to expand their cooperative undertakings. The visit also made the participants learn how poor people can improve their socio-economic conditions with thrift savings; the Cos can inspire WMG members by narrating this experience.
4. There was also active participation of the Sub-Divisional Engineer from the BWDB Planning Team specifically in the sessions and site visit relating to Cooperatives. At the end of training a certificate was distributed among the participants (attachment-7).

Prepared by: Victoria Pineda, John Marandy, Shorab Hossain, and Showkat

Blue Gold Program

TRAINING ON COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND COOPERATIVES for Community Organizers & Zonal Socio-Economists

Training Schedule

Date: August 25-30, 2013

Venue: BARD, Comilla

Date/ Time	Topic	Elements	Methodology	Resource Person
Day 0 August 24	Arrival of Participants and Core Resource Persons			
Day 1, August 25				
08.30-09.15	Registration and Pre-test	Registration and pretest	Seatwork	Kashem, Shorab
09.15-09.30	Course Introduction	Opening program Objectives of the workshop Schedule of activities	Lecture Discussion,	PD, Dirk, Alamgir, Kashem
09.30-10.00	Unfreezing Exercise: "Who Am I?" (Introduction of Participants) and Expectations Levelling	Getting to know each other Participants' expectations from the training	Group Dynamics Exercise	John/ Kashem
10.00-10.15	Refreshment			
10.15-13.00	Overview of Blue Gold Program	Goals and Objectives Components including Training and Cross-cutting issues and key activities	Lecture & Plenary Discussion. PPP	TL, DTL, CL/DCL, Kashem and Showkat
13.00-14.00	Lunch and Prayer Break			
14.00-16.00	Community Organization	Definition of Community Organization Basic Concepts and Principles Community Organization Process	VIPP, Interactive Discussion, Group Work	John/Vicki
Days 2 August 26				

Date/Time	Topic	Elements	Methodology	Resource Person
09.00-09.30	Review of Day 1 Topics	Insights and lessons learned	'Hot Potato' (Group Dynamics Exercise)	Showkat/ Kashem
09.30-13.00	Application of CO Process in WMO Formation and Strengthening Community Immersion Social Investigation, data collection and mapping WMO Functionality Assessment	Definition and importance Steps and process People Involved Timing and sequence Potential issues/constraints	Interactive discussion Group Discussions Plenary discussions	Showkat/ Shorab/John/Vicki
13.00-14.00	Lunch and Prayer Break			
14.00-16.00	Continue with Application of CO Process... Groundworking Needs/Problems Identification WMO Formation	Definition and importance Steps and process People Involved Timing and sequence Potential issues/constraints	Interactive discussion Group Discussions Role Playing Plenary discussions	Showkat/ Alamgir/ Shorab/Vicki
Day 3 August 27				
09.00-09.30	Review of Day 2 Topics	Insights and lessons learned	Colloquial Discussion/ Discourse	Kashem/ Showkat
09.30-13.00	Continue with Application of CO Process... Plan Formulation Sustenance and Sustainability Issues	Definition and importance Steps and process in VAP and PDP formulation People Involved Timing and sequence Potential issues/constraints	Interactive discussion Group Discussions VDO & Plenary discussions	Alamgir/John and Shorab
13.00-14.00	Lunch and Prayer Break			
14.00-15.00	GD Exercise and Processing	"Team Building" Exercise	Group Dynamics Exercise	Kashem/Vicki
15.00-16.30	Gender Concerns and Targets	Definition of terms Goal and Objectives of Gender in Blue Gold Gender Activities Gender Targets	Interactive discussion	Showkat
Day 4 August 28				
09.00-09.30	Review of Days 3 Topics	Insights and lessons learned	Hot Potato (Group Dynamics Exercise)	Showkat/ Kashem
09.30-11.00	The Community Organizer	Roles	Interactive	Showkat/ Vicki

Date/Time	Topic	Elements	Methodology	Resource Person
		Qualities Do's and Don'ts Roles and Tasks of CO in Blue Gold	discussion Group Discussions Plenary Discussion	
11.00-11.15	Refreshment			
11.15-13.00	Cooperative Development	Concept and Definition of Cooperative Benefits/Advantages Types of Cooperatives Registration Requirements/ preconditions	PPP and Plenary Discussion	Mr. Mahbubur Rahman Bhuian
13.00-14.00	Lunch and Prayer Break			
14.00-15.00	Continue with Cooperatives topic			
15.00-15.45	GD Exercise and Processing	Communication and Problem Solving Exercise	Group Dynamics	Kashem/ Vicki
15.45-16.30	Instructions on Fieldwork	Briefing on Cooperatives to visit Schedule/timing of Activities		Jasim & Matior/John
Days 5 August 29				
09.00-10.45	Field visit Visit Raichow Cooperative Society	Observe Raichow Cooperative activities (IGAs)		Jasim, Matior & Shorab
10.45-11.15	Refreshment at BARD			
11.15-13.00	Visit Didar Cooperative Society	Observe Didar Cooperative activities (IGAs)		Jasim, Matior & Shorab
13.00-14.00	Lunch and Prayer Break			
14.00-15.30	Experience Sharing on Cooperative Visit	Review and sharing experiences Factors which make cooperative successful or not successful	Group discussion and presentation	Kashem & resource persons from successful cooperatives , and participants
15.30-15.45	Refreshment			

Date/ Time	Topic	Elements	Methodology	Resource Person
15.45-16.30	Lessons learned from the field visit and application to Blue Gold.	Lessons learned from the field visit Application to Blue Gold	Large Group Discussion	John, Shorab
Day 6 August 30				
09.00-10.30	Monitoring and Evaluation	Monthly Reporting Work Plan Formulation Supervision	Lecture and group discussion	John and Shorab
10.30-10.45	Refreshment			
10.45-11.30	Preparation of course review	Distribution of Group Assignment Preparation of Questions	Open Discussion Small Group Work	Kashem & Showkat
11.30-12.45	Course Review	Rules and regulations of Quiz session Competition	Quiz	Kashem & Shorab
12.45-14.30	Lunch and Prayer Break			
14.30-17.00	Post Training Evaluation Administrative Concerns Closing Program Awarding of Certificates Closing Remarks	Post Test Questionnaire Training Evaluation	Seatwork Plenary discussion	Kashem & Showkat

Blue Gold Program

PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRAINING ON COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND COOPERATIVES

August 25-30, 2013

Name of the Participants	Designation	Posting Place	Remarks
Already Deployed			
1. Nazrul Islam (Jewel), Chandpur	CO	Polder 43/2F	
2. Md. Alamin, Shariatpur	CO	Do	
3. Yasmin Akter Fatema, Barisal	CO	Do	
4. Anisur Rahnan, Barguna	CO	Polder 43/2D	
5. Humayun Kabir, Satkhira	CO	Do	
6. Gostha Bihari Mondal, Khulna	CO	Do	
7. Milon Rani Datta, Barguna	CO	Do	
8. Azizur Rahman (Babul), Jessore	CO	Polder 30	
9. Basudev Roy, Khulna	CO	Do	
10. Rukshana Parvin, Khulna	CO	Do	
11. Marjina Sultana (Lipi), Khulna	CO	Do	
12. Kumaresh Chandra Dam, Narail	CO	Polder 22	
13. Rabita Mondal, Khulna	CO	Do	
Newly recruited		To be deployed	
14. Chandan Sarkar - Khulna	CO		
15. Jhorna Begum - Magura	CO		
16. Akidul islam - Jhenaidah	CO		
17. Abu Japor - Rajshahi	CO		
18. Jannat Ara Ferdouz - Magura	CO		
19. Sharmin Jhan - Patuakhali	CO		
20. Rashida Akter (Moyna)- Khulna	CO		
21. Serajul Islam - Madaripur	CO		
22. Rezaul Karim - Magura	CO		
23. Champa Akter - Patuakhali	CO		
24. Mos. Mahamuda Begum - Patuakhali	CO		
25. Mina Rani Biswas – Faridpur/ Patuakhali	CO		
26. Jyotsna Kathun - Khulna	CO		
27. Md. Shahjahan Miah - Shariatpur	CO		
28. Ehsanul Huq Mahmood - Patuakhali	CO		
29. Parvati Roy - Khulna	CO		
30. Farzana Khan - Khulna	CO		
Zonal Socio-Economist			
31. Matiur Rahman – Patuakhali	SE	Patuakhali	
32. Tahmina Akter - Patuakhali	SE	Patuakhali	
33. Jashim Uddin - Khulna	SE	Khulna	
34. Umme Asma Khanam - Khulna	SE	Khulna	
35. Samsad Najnin-Khulna	GE	Khulna	
BWDB officials			

36. Md. Masud Ahmed, PEng	Director	Planning III, BWDB Dhaka	PD will inaugurate training course
37. Md. Abul Kausar	EE	Planning-3, BWDB, Dhaka	Participate as observer
38. Mr. Shafiqul Islam	AC (Sociology)	Planning-III, BWDB, Dhaka	Participate as observer
39. Mr. Kamruzzaman Khan	SDE	Planning III, BWDB	Participate as observer

Blue Gold Program

Dirk Smits
August 25, 2013

Inaugural Session:

- Words on the background of Blue Gold (requirements of Blue Gold Program to change the life of Polder People)
- Words on the roles of Community Organizers and Socio Economists (organizing community people, develop community organization and cooperatives; develop self-awareness of the community people etc).
- Emphasized on their importance to make the project success,
- Emphasized that this is challenging tasks so encourage them to ask any question come to their mind during the training even after the training
- Identified the salient points of 6 days training course and how this course will improve participants' knowledge and clear understanding on the "community organizing and cooperative issues" and make them confident to do their job in the practical field.
- Given thanks

Hints for Introduction of Blue Gold Program:

- Overall objectives of Blue Gold Program
 - Specific Objectives
 - Overall approaches
 - Development of WMOs
 - Blue Gold Components
 - Blue Gold Partners
 - 6 step approach
 - Given thanks and invite component RP to present their components.
- } Emphasis on why this is challenging what is the roles Blue Gold Colleagues

Blue Gold Program

Project Coordinating Director, Blue Gold, BWDB, Dhaka
August 25, 2013

Hints for Inaugural Session:

- Welcome the participants
- Few words on the background of Blue Gold (IPSWAM impact on the polder, why Blue Gold type program is required to change the life of the Polder People)
- Few words on the roles of Community Organizers and Socio Economists (organizing motivating community people, social mobilization and develop self-awareness of the community people, organization development and cooperative issues etc).
- Emphasis that this is a challenging tasks so encourage them to ask any question come to their mind during the training
- Hope this 6 days training course will improve participants' knowledge and clear understanding on the "community organizing and cooperative issues" and make them confident to do their job in the practical field.
- This course included the topics: Community Organization, Application of Community Organizing Process in WMO Formation, Cooperative Development, Roles and Functions of Community Organizer etc which will help CO to play the effective role in the field.
- Give thanks to the training team who design and organized this training course.
- Hope this training will be success through active participation of each participant's
- Inaugurated training course.
- Conveyed thanks.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING IN BLUE GOLD

Introduction

The objective of this topic is to discuss the definition, basic principles, and process of community organizing.

Community Organizing (CO) is a strategy towards sound community development which focuses on organizing/reorganizing the different stakeholder groups giving special attention to the marginalized sector of the society i.e the landless and destitute people. It is an effective strategy of building people's capability towards self-determination and self-reliance. It entails participatory development wherein the majority of the people are active participants in the development process by planning and managing their own affairs. And ultimately sharing the benefits derive from development efforts they themselves have worked for.

- CO is used as an approach to development because of the following:
- CO recognizes that individuals and small groups with varying interests compose a community;
- CO acknowledges the importance of leadership but emphasizes the participation of the membership;
- CO is genuine bottom-up strategy; and
- CO attempts to rectify the passivity of the poor and powerless

Definition of Community Organizing

Community Organizing is a process of assisting a group of people or a community to:

- identify its objectives or needs and prioritizes these;
- develop the confidence and the will to work on these objectives or needs;
- find the resources (internal or external) to deal with these needs or objectives;
- take action in respect to them, and in so doing develops cooperation and collaborative attitudes and practices within the group/community.

This process involves consciousness raising through experiential learning. It is also participatory and mass-based and with democratic leadership. This definition when applied to the context of the organizing work to be done with the people in the polder areas, it will be a process of assisting them to:

- identify their needs/problems and prioritize these;
- come-up with a consensus on the requirements and preconditions to facilitate planning, design and implementation of FCD fine tuning/rehabilitation works i.e WMO formation/strengthening;
- formulate an action plan to address needs/problems and preconditions for FCD fine tuning/rehabilitation works;
- develop their confidence and willingness to participate actively in the actual implementation of the FCD fine tuning/rehabilitation works; and
- develop their capacity and willingness to operate, manage and maintain the FCD facilities and implement action plan formulated and in the process develop cooperation and collaborative attitudes and practices.

B. Principles in Community Organizing

CO adheres to the following basic principles:

1. People move on the basis of self-interest.

Experience has proven that one cannot compel any group or individual to take action if he/she is not directly or indirectly affected by the issue raised. In working with the people, start with their needs and capabilities. As an organizer, respond to their current needs and interests, and from there you can expect them to act collectively. At the start, they will generally act only to gain something for themselves and later on as they are involved collectively in various project activities, people will also start acting on the basis of principles.

2. People move from simple, concrete and short term issues to more complex, abstract, and long term issues overtime.

The organizer should start with what the people know. Start with the resources and capabilities that the people have in order to develop sense of ownership of any project and develop confidence on their part to carry-out this project. Gradually, the organizer will build on these existing resources and capacity of the people moving them towards taking action on more complex issues.

This principle as applied to Blue Gold would mean that the polder people should tackle first issues concerning the planning and design of the FCD before moving to more complex issues such as solving issues/conflicts relating to the actual construction of FCD facilities, then operation, management and maintenance aspects of the whole water management system, and performing other functions beyond water management such as productive and economic functions.

3. Let the people make their own decisions

This is both a question of principle and practicality. In most cases, people's creativity is bottled up by layers of dependence, passivity, and historical/cultural obstacles. The organizer must lessen these restrictions but the ultimate aim is to tap the people's own decision-making ability. Throughout the project implementation, the organizer should encourage collective decision-making and action so that the people can identify with the activity. The organizer plays a crucial role in this process-- agitating, arguing,

suggesting, challenging, analyzing, planning and so on. *What he/she should not do is to take over the decision making from the people.*

4. The goal of organizing is to develop a self-sustaining organization rather than resolve specific temporary issues

The goal in CO is empowerment of the people wherein people become self-reliant and can stand on their own and manage their own affairs. This should be the goal of an organizer and she/he can only be considered successful when the people will no longer need his/her presence in the community.

C. Steps/ Process and Methods in Community Organizing

This section deals with the **how** of organizing. It should be stressed here that it is the people and their local conditions that determine the shape, pace and the course of organizing work. How issues are defined and people organized cannot be described in any set predictable and chronological fashion. Demands are always changing and situations ever fluid. What may be feasible and effective in one situation cannot be transplanted per se in another area with a different socio-political cultural strain.

The following are the steps and methods in CO which may be adopted in the project:

1. Community Entry and Immersion

The first and basic step in community organizing is immersion or becoming one with the people in the community. The organizer immerses himself/herself in the community to get to know the culture, economy, leaders, history and lifestyle of the community. She/He visits the people, engages in small talks, and participates in people's activities/work. Immersion is a process of establishing rapport with the people to gain their trust and respect and treat the organizer as one of them. This is a continuous process throughout the organizing work.

2. Social Investigation (SI)

Social investigation is the process of undertaking a thorough social analysis of the conditions and priority problems in the community, local resources and capabilities of the people with the objective of increasing his/her understanding of the situation. The organizer also helps the people understand and analyze their situation and problems, raising their level of consciousness which would motivate them to act collectively on their problems. The success of social analysis lies on the effectiveness of the community immersion.

During the social investigation, the organizer also identifies users who should be mobilized to participate in the project. She/he should also identify the potential leaders who can be of great help in the organizing process. In spotting leadership potential in a person, it may be of help to consider the following basic qualities of a leader:

- preferably belonging to the low income sector of the community and thus, represents the majority
- need not have higher education or a degree
- credible and respected in the community
- has capacity for critical thinking and leadership
- has good communication and interpersonal skills
- willing to exert effort for the good of the community/group

The following data that should be gathered and analyzed during SI.

Key aspects/issues to investigate during SI

- Population and demographic data such as: land area and number of villagers (segregate data by gender and ethnic/clan grouping); number of villages (including 'para and bari) covered with population data;
- Conduct data collection on: basic socio-economic and gender data, hydrological aspects, status of the environment and primary production (agriculture, fisheries, livestock and others), earlier training programs (e.g. FFS) that were implemented
- Preparation of village and polder maps: delineation of WMG and WMA boundaries. In the case of IPSWAM polders, data will be updated on existing WMGs and WMAs and additional information will be gathered pertaining to production related and food security issues;
- Data on leadership pattern (traditional and political power structure)
- Institutional Data: , existing WMOs/CBOs, NGOs/private organizations, government agencies and programs present in the area;
- Issues/problems (social issues like factionalism, water management issues, dormant /inactive members; political interventions, influential people)
- Identify potential leaders

3. Groundwork

Groundwork means to go around and motivate people on a one-to-one basis to participate actively. It is a system of communication where the organizer engages as many persons as possible in individual conversation. This is also called agitation and/or consciousness raising

As the organizer goes around, he/she should also talk about the project, its objectives, approach and components. She/he should discuss in detail the steps and key activities in the various components of Blue Gold and the specific involvement of the villagers in each step. The organizer should also talk about the need to organize a general meeting to which more people can come for further discussion and planning.

4. Meeting

After enough individual groundworking/agitation, the organizer through the leaders can call for a meeting wherein people can discuss together about the project--- policies, requirements, process, activities and

their involvement Since meetings cannot be convened spontaneously by the leaders, there must be preparations done between the organizer and the leaders before the actual meeting.

At the general meeting, the people should be informed clearly about the project and they should be assisted in planning the activities they need to conduct. In the meeting, they learn to work as a group and determine which tasks are to be done by specific people. The action to be done should be worked out in detail.

5. Mobilization or Action

Mobilization is the actual action after the plans and preparations have been finalized. If the planning and groundwork were good and everything goes as expected, the organizer's role is more of an observer.

The mobilization or action is the actual experience of the people in undertaking certain activities and handling issues and problems. This is the stage where people develop new insights and learn new skills.

6. Evaluation and Reflection

After every action/mobilization, the people should sit down and review and analyze what happened. Good or bad, success or failure.

Reflection is the time to look at the positive values being built within the group/community e.g. sacrifice, community building, the role of leaders and authority and others.

It is also the analysis of individual feelings to the action/mobilization undertaken. It is the time for recounting the individual feelings before, during and after the particular action.

During the evaluation and reflection, the group reviews and analyzes the significance, good points and failures of past actions. It points out the learnings, strengths and weaknesses of each individual and of the group as a whole. Through evaluation and reflection, improvements of the plan as well as recommendations for change are implemented much more quickly.

7. Organization

The people's organization is the result of long and painstaking organizing process and actions of the people. It is an expression of unity of the people in the community. The need to formalize the organization must be felt by the people themselves. The organization must be able to embody the members' interest and welfare in the form of Constitution and By-laws/Rules and Procedures.

THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

Introduction

The objective of this topic is to give the participants a clear understanding of **who** the Community Organizer is. It describes the role, knowledge, skills and qualities of a Community Organizer. It also explains the specific roles and activities of community organizers in Blue Gold.

The Community Organizer helps the community or a group of people identify its own problems, establish its goals and develop the procedures for realising these goals. He/she is essential not only to start and build the organization but also to keep it going until the people and their leaders have developed certain degree of knowledge and capacity to be able to manage their own affairs. When such time as the people's potentials have been fully maximised, the Community Organizer pulls out of the community.

The work of an organizer requires her/him to perform several roles. It also requires certain knowledge, skills and qualities for him to be effective and successful. But as we know, the education and training for a community organizer is not only confined within the walls of an institute or classroom. The effective way for a person to learn organising is to engage in organising itself. Fielded into a particular area where he/she confronts the actual situation and problems of the people, the organizer sharpens her/his skills and develops and hones her/his innate traits and qualities.

A. The Role of Community Organizers

The organizer's role is multi-faceted. The role of a Community Organizer can be culled-out from the following Chinese proverb: ***"Give a man a fish and he will live for a day; Teach him how to fish and he will live for a lifetime"***. This proverb describes the role of an organizer as a *catalyst for change*. The Community Organizer should strive to make people actors in their own development and not just treat them as passive receivers of goods. This role is very relevant in the context of the Bangladesh rural communities where many development initiatives and projects are being implemented in a dole-out manner which promotes passivity and dependence among beneficiaries of these projects.

The following describes the role that should be performed by the Community Organizer in undertaking his work:

1. As Facilitator

In this role, the organizer motivates and guides the people in identifying their problems and needs and in planning on how these can be solved and attained. Furthermore, she/he closely monitors and assists the people in implementing their plans of action as well as guides them in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses, lessons and insights gained by the people in the process to enable them to correct failures and promote strengths.

2. As Trainer

The Community Organizer imparts knowledge to the people and enhances their hidden potentials and skills in order to attain their goals. In this role, the organizer consciously develops the skills and capacity of the people in the process of guiding them in planning, decision-making and implementation of their plans. This role is closely linked with the facilitator role since both aim to develop the organizational capacity of the people.

In performing this role, the organizer undertakes these tasks:

- assesses training needs of the people;
- helps plan and conduct educational programs to strengthen individual and group capabilities;
- assist key leaders in training others; and
- engages in continuous dialogues with people

3. As a Catalyst/Advocate/Agitator

In this role, the organizer initiates meaningful discussions regarding critical problems pertaining to the planning, design and construction, and maintenance of the flood control and drainage (FCD) infrastructures, food security/productivity and others. He/she helps analyze and articulate critical issues with the people and provokes them to take actions on these.

The organizer also monitors and nurtures the growth of individuals in the group in the process of performing this role specifically those he/she has identified as potential leaders.

4. As Planner

The organizer helps the community establish and find means to achieve its goals. In this role, she/he undertakes the following:

- conducts initial analysis of area resources and potentials e.g. present level of knowledge and skills of the people on planning, construction and O&M of the FCD infrastructure;

- assists the people in planning including appropriate strategies and alternative actions with regard to issues/problems; and
- helps systematize group actions to attain desired goals.

5. As Link Between Agency and the People

In this role, the organizer serves as a channel of communication between the people and the government department staff (e.g. BWDB, DAE) and other partner organizations (e.g. Max Foundation, BRAC, Solidaridad). However, she/he should strive as soon as possible to establish open communication between the people and the agency/organization by establishing coordination mechanisms among the parties involved.

6. As Documenter

The Community Organizer records his/her day-to-day activities all throughout the organizing process. This aims primarily to assist the organizer in assessing activities and processes undertaken and enable him to plan realistically with the people next activities. Moreover, the organizer records highlights of decisions made and actions taken by the people as tool later on for evaluation and reflection.

B. Qualities of a Community Organizer

There are certain basic qualities fundamental to an organizer. He should have the right attitude for organizing work and basic organizing skills. These may not be fully developed at the start but these can be acquired through training and experience. The following are the essential qualities and characteristics important in the organizing work:

1. Irreverence

An organizer becomes irreverent when she/he questions traditions, values or laws as totally sacred when it works against the people's interest as a whole. Another way is when he/she questions authority or institution when it denies service to the people. The organizers personal value systems also undergo constant re-evaluation in the process of working with the people. It should not only be the organizers who possess this quality but the people as well.

2. Creativity

There is no limit to what can be used as an organizing material. But it requires creative imagination to see the possibilities. One way to develop creativity and imagination is to listen to stories of previous organizing tactics and methods. So long as the organizer does not repeat them mechanically, past experiences can help widen his/her choices. Often, they may even trigger

improved variations. Creativity does not come from a vacuum but has greater chances of developing when the organizer accumulates a rich store of experiences, observations and tactics. Similarly, there are no cut-and-dried tactics in dealing with a particular situation/issue. As people develop to solving complex problems, the more creativity is called for.

3. Tenacity

This has been considered the most important quality of an organizer. While organizing has its excitement and dramatic moments, it is a tedious process. Since the organizer must keep at his/her tasks day-in and day-out, many are tempted to give-up. Others are tempted to give-up trying to improve their organizing methods. But if an organizer is tenacious, even if she/he is not very talented, she/he will learn & improve with time and will not give-up.

4. Flexibility

Conditions change in a short time and no two conditions are exactly alike. The organizer must be sensitive to changes in the situation and must adjust his/her plans and strategies accordingly. Flexibility means adapting to conditions to reach one's basic goal. It is partly the fruit of detailed discussion and exchanges with other organizers and the CO Supervisor. The organizer learns that there are other approaches to the solution even of the same issue under seemingly similar conditions. She/he also learns that there are different ways of mobilizing and convincing the people according to situation. Sometimes she/he has to challenge and even argue, at other times a gentle patient approach works best.

5. A Genuine Love for the People

An organizer should have this quality that would make him/her truly committed in helping people shape their own development. However, love for the people does not mean sheltering them from hardships. This kind of love will make them dependent and powerless. The organizer should never shield the people from hardship necessary for real people's capacity for change and their ability to determine their future. The organizer may sometimes be tempted to make easy certain things for the people such as making the agenda for the meeting or drafting a resolution. He must realize that to do so is to take away from the people the chance to develop their capability.

6. Critical Awareness

The organizer must be constructively critical of the different social, political, and economic structures in the community as these may impede people's potential for development. The organizer is critical when he questions structures which work against the interest of the people. These can be institutions or values which deny service to the people. In this sense, the organizer's critical attitude is really rooted in his/her respect for the people's interest. He/she sees that the

project is for the people and not the people for the project. This critical awareness in an organizer develops as her/his own values undergo constant evaluation in the course of the organizing process with the people as they encounter different problems and issues. This kind of critical attitude is passed on to the people as they begin to realize and act on their realization that nothing could be achieved unless it is shared and service-oriented. However, on the part of the organizer, this attitude must be tempered with control and perspective in order to prevent it from distorting reality and becoming self-righteous and dogmatic.

C. Do's and Don'ts in Community Organizing

The organizer does not only have to learn to develop some qualities but also **unlearn** some. The following describe some characteristics and actions that an organizer should promote and those which should not be done:

DO's

1. Be one and be familiar with the people you are working with. Know the people; their socio-economic, political and cultural situation and problems before starting any program or action. During integration, the organizer should be able to establish this.
2. Have respect for and faith in the power of people you are working with. Have trust in their capacity to change for the better the condition that they are in now.
3. Always promote people's participation, democratic procedures and scientific methods.
4. Go to the people as learners, not as teachers; listen more than talk; facilitate more than lead.
5. Have the capacity to and humility to withdraw as soon as people are ready to manage their own affairs; aim at becoming dispensable.
6. Be simple and austere in lifestyle.

DON'Ts

1. Don't Romanticize and Act as Redeemer/Messiah

Avoid glorifying the ability of the rural folks to cope within the miserable condition they are in but instead dig deeper with them why they are suffering from such condition. Moreover, don't have the messianic or redeemer complex --- the belief that it is your burden to change the situation of the people. Instead, make the people realize that they are their own redeemers.

2. Don't Be Dogmatic/Theoretical

In the process of learning to organize, many organizers fall into the trap of organizing strictly "by the book". They become uneasy and apprehensive that they have not done the right thing just because the rules and principles say otherwise. There is a tendency to apply the base rules and principles rigidly to all situations even though no two situations are exactly alike. General principles have to be modified to suit particular cases. Principles serve as guide for actions but it is really the people and their situations that determine and shape the course of organizing work.

D. Skills and Knowledge Required as a Community Organizer

Aside from having the essential qualities and attitude required by the organizing work, an organizer must also try to possess the following basic skills and knowledge to help him in his work:

- Identifying issues
- Spotting and developing potential leaders
- Identifying and tapping resources
- Problem-solving process
- Groundworking
- Mobilizing
- Facilitating meetings
- Conducting evaluation and reflection sessions
- Interaction techniques
- Data gathering and analysis
- Documenting

E. Roles and Activities of Community Organizers in Blue Gold

- Help in disseminating Blue Gold objectives, components and the range of activities under the program
- Collect information from primary stakeholders, as and when required and assist villagers in mapping activities
- Assist local people to identify problems and issues to be addressed under the Blue Gold Program
- Facilitate formation of Water Management Groups (WMGs) and Water Management Associations (WMAs) [in polders where there are no WMOs]
- Assess functionality of WMOs [where there are such organizations]

- Attend in the meetings of WMOs (monthly meeting, special meeting, annual general meeting) and assist them to make the meetings effective and ensure that the secretary records/maintains minutes of meeting
- Encourage women to participate actively in meetings and other activities of WMOs/society
- Advise and assist WMOs to keep all records in proper order, including accounts
- Encourage membership in WMOs (both of men and women)
- Advise and assist WMOs to formulate village development plans and polder development plans
- Facilitate the conduct of participatory monitoring of the progress of WMO plans and activities
- Advise and assist WMOs to develop good linkages with service providers (BWDB, Union Parishad, government departments at Upazila, local NGOs and partner organizations of the Blue Gold)
- Encourage villagers to participate in economic activities (crop, fish & livestock production; business development) initiated by the program
- Assist WMOs in the process of getting Cooperative registration and in preparing for annual audits
- Encourage people to do regular savings and to take up IGAs
- Assist in training sessions organized for WMO members
- Encourage/motivate people to participate in O&M activities
- Encourage WMOs to mobilize resources for organizational and O&M activities
- Assist in formation and training of Landless Contracting Society (LCS)
- Assist WMA in monitoring progress of work done by LCS
- Guide WMA in assisting LCS to measure the volume of work, in preparing bills and in getting the bills from Regional Accounts Centre (RAC)
- Coordinate closely with FFS Facilitators and with Zonal Planning Team
- Submit monthly accomplishment report and work plan

