

**Final Project Evaluation of**  
**“Empowerment of LAs and NSAs in Responding to Economic Development Opportunities and Climate Change and Disaster Vulnerabilities (PRODUCE) Project”**




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## **List of Acronyms**

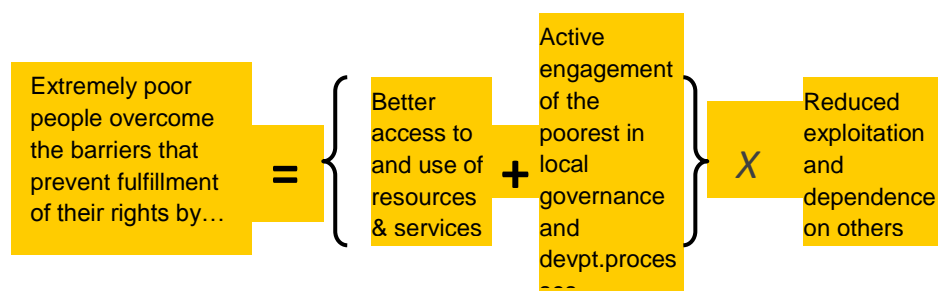
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
NL:	Natural Leader
NLO:	Natural Leaders Organization
CHP:	Classical Handmade Products
CBO:	Community Based Organization
CVCA:	Community Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
EKATA:	Empowering Knowledge And Transformative Action groups (from SHOUHARDO I and II)
ER:	Expected Result
ESDO:	Eco-Social Development Organization (partner organisation)
EU:	European Union
LA:	Local actor
MDG:	Millennium Development Goal
MMC:	Market Management Committee
MP:	Member of Parliament
MPG:	Milk producing and marketing group
MTR:	Mid-Term Review
NLO:	Natural Leaders Organisation
OECD-DAC:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PUC:	Para Unnayan Committee (from SETU)
RDRS:	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services. An NGO based in Rangpur, commonly known today only by its acronym
SALT:	Social Action and Learning Team
SDVC:	CARE's Smallholder Dairy Value Chain project
SETU:	CARE's Social and Economic Transformation of the Ultra poor project
SHOUHARDO:	
SKS:	SKS Foundation (partner organisation)
SMC:	School Management Committee
UP:	Union Parishad
VGF:	Vulnerable Group Feeding
VGD:	Vulnerable Group Development

## 1. Introduction

The PRODUCE project, funded by the European Union, the Austrian Development Cooperation and CARE, operated from February 2010 to April 2013. It has been promoting processes of participatory poverty planning, community mobilization and capacity building to provide a foundation for local economic development and disaster risk reduction and adaptation. It has been operating in the Rangpur, Kurigram and Nilphamari Districts in the northwest of Bangladesh, and has been building on CARE's participatory poverty analysis, value chain analysis and earlier impact studies conducted by CARE in these areas.

Since PRODUCE is part of the portfolio contributing towards CARE Bangladesh's overall program that seeks to lift the extreme poor out of poverty, our aim in this evaluation is to consider the operations of PRODUCE within this framework. As per the impact statement for this program, shown below, it has elements focusing on the economic, social and political empowerment of this impact group.

**Fig 1: Theory of Change for CARE Bangladesh's Program to address Extreme Rural Poverty**



As part of this overall program, CARE has also been attempting to develop a governance model that seeks to address 'generational poverty' through multi-level engagement. 'The uniqueness of the model is that it has been able to demonstrate the link between improvement of governance and improvement in poverty eradication. This evidence is vital to advocate for a more decentralized participatory approach by empowering local government.'<sup>1</sup>

Several of CARE's projects have been contributing to the development of this model. PRODUCE's more specific contribution is on leveraging the gains in the social and political empowerment of the extreme poor that have been leveraged through this governance work, to advance their economic empowerment, and thus to develop more sustainable livelihoods. This requires addressing both value chain and climate change issues as well. In addressing these issues, the project also has a focus on the advancement of gender equality.

This evaluation report will therefore incorporate a look at the progress CARE Bangladesh has made in advancing the improved capacity of local governance structures to support the economic empowerment of extremely poor men and women.

<sup>1</sup> Outline of BLI Governance Model, CARE Bangladesh, June 2012.

## 2. Purpose and Objectives

The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the project's progress and achievements towards the objectives and results. The evaluation aims to provide a clear picture on PRODUCE's **effectiveness** and **impacts as well as of their sustainability and their wider implications**. Project management, strategies and approaches are reviewed, and gaps or issues identified, as well as recommendations provided to assist future project development. A particular focus of the evaluation is on assessing the impact of the project on the lives of the extremely poor women and men, who are the main impact group.

This evaluation also refers to the five evaluation criteria endorsed by the OECD-DAC: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

With respect to PRODUCE itself, its overall objectives and expected results are as follows.

**Overall Objective:** To contribute to promotion of participatory inclusive governance to broaden the scope of economic opportunities for the poor and marginalized in rural communities (MDG1)

**Specific Objective:** To improve conditions for cooperation between Union Parishads (UPs), local actors and communities (men and women) to address collectively economic and climate vulnerabilities in 29 Unions under five Upazila (sub-district) in the Northwest of Bangladesh (District of Kurigram, Rangpur and Nilphamari).

### **Expected Results (ERs):**

ER1: Improved capacities of 29 UPs and LAs to accelerate their pro-poor and gender sensitive delivery mechanisms. Poor and marginalized communities, especially women, are empowered to negotiate their interests and take responsibilities in accessing services.

ER2: Networking and collaboration mechanisms established among different actors and participatory planning and collective action undertaken to promote effectively pro poor, gender sensitive economic activities.

ER3: Participatory learning and action mechanisms established to empower communities (extreme poor men & women) to engage actively in policy reform and implementation processes.

## 3. Methodology

The evaluation methodology for PRODUCE was not ideal in that we had a constrained budget and implementation schedule that allowed only one week of intensive fieldwork. This limited the range of methods that could be used, although with the involvement of two members from CARE Bangladesh's Social Action and Learning Team (SALT) and a M&E staff person from SETU, it did prove possible to visit five UPs across three districts during this

week. We were fortunate to find a week with no *hartals*, since both the weeks before and after were disrupted by these country wide strikes.

### ***Sampling Framework***

PRODUCE was implemented in 29 UPs in five upazilas across Rangpur, Kurigram and Nilphamari Districts in the northwest of Bangladesh. All UPs were categorized into high, medium and low performing by PRODUCE management, and for each of Rangpur and Nilphamari Districts we selected one high performing and one low performing union. For our final day of fieldwork we selected one high performing union from Kurigram district.

We aimed to ensure in this selection that there was adequate variance in the areas covered by the project in terms of types of geography, as well as the range of CBO ‘platform’ groups that PRODUCE had built upon. The use of platform groups was critical to PRODUCE’s *modus operandi*.

By this approach, PRODUCE worked with a number of groups established earlier as platforms through other CARE projects - Village Development Committees (VDC), EKATA (Empowering Knowledge And Transformative Action), Para Unnayan Committees (PUC), Milk Producer and Milk Marketing groups, in SHOUHARDO, SETU and SDVC respectively. This meant that PRODUCE was working with groups that had already gone through a capacity building process.

### ***Specific Methods***

In selecting five UPs to conduct the fieldwork, the principle aim was to understand the ‘story’ of what has been achieved through the project through the different perspectives of diverse stakeholders. This meant only being able to spend a day in each UP, which sacrificed with respect to the depth of the analysis that was feasible, but enhanced our ability to compare and triangulate information across the sites. It helped that we were able to work with different platform groups across the sites, as is discussed later in this section.

*Inception.* The inception phase included a documentation review and a refining of some of the issues to be examined (see Annex 1) as well as meetings in Dhaka with senior project staff, the latter in order to finalise and agree the work plan. After this the review team travelled to Rangpur and began the work by meeting with the project staff and partners based there, ESDO (operating in Kurigram and Nilphamari) and SKS in Rangpur. The specific site selection was finalized ahead of this meeting, during which were sought participants views on the main contributions and achievements of PRODUCE, as well as some of the challenges faced and areas where they themselves would like to see improvement. Our intent was to utilize a critical, appreciative inquiry methodology as far as possible, whereby we solicited from participants and staff their views on the changes that have occurred through the project’s contributions, as well as the challenges experienced, and then to examine these claims as rigorously as possible, through the forms of triangulation described below.

*Community level methods.* At community level, FGDs were carried out with the platform groups with which PRODUCE had been working in each UP. Timelines were conducted with all the groups, to understand their histories and the key activities they had been involved

whilst being supported by PRODUCE. Subsequent exercises looked at the changes that have occurred as a result, and some of the principal challenges that have been faced. Since PRODUCE has been part of a process of longer term change that CARE has been facilitating for a while in the north-west, our aim through these methods was to explore the particular contribution made by the project during the longer lifespan of the groups. How factors affecting livelihoods, including with respect to climate change, had been addressed, were examined as part of this.

At the end of each FGD, a short questionnaire format of key indicators was used with each participant, designed to understand key changes that had occurred in their own lives. This included gaining a sense of shifts in the well being status of each participant. All the groups had undertaken well being categorisations earlier and so were able to provide us the set of categories they had used. These were common across the groups. Altogether information on 112 respondents was obtained this way, all of whom had had direct involvement in activities supported by PRODUCE. This information also acted as a form of triangulation with the key changes identified earlier, since it allowed us to understand how each respondent in had participated in and benefited from the changes.

*UP level methods.* A second level of investigation took place at the UP level, where FGDs were also carried out with relevant UP staff and councillors. In two of the UPs separate meetings were held with the UP chairmen. Women UP members were also met with separately in all five UPs, since we found they were dominated otherwise.

In the UPs, what we sought to understand was both what change has taken place in the way the UP operates and why and how this has happened. This refers both to processes for acquiring and allocating the resources that pass through UPs, as well as to shifts in the role the UP perceives itself as playing in the economic, social and political empowerment of the poor. We also sought to understand how participation of the poor and extreme poor, and particularly women, in the decision making of the UP around priorities and resource allocations, has been enhanced. This included examining the nature of the UP budgeting and resource acquisition process, including the role played by open budget meetings.

One further group we met with at the UP level was the market management committee (MMC), one committee that has been directly established by PRODUCE. We examined their role especially with regard to their promotion of women friendly markets.

### **PRODUCE's Platform Group Methodology**

A fundamental building block of PRODUCE's overall methodology was its use of platform groups. This was key to the project's effectiveness and its ability to deliver on an ambitious strategy within a three year period. This would not have been feasible if the project had not been able to take advantage of the CBO capacity building that other projects and organisations had already undertaken.

The full list of platform groups taken on by PRODUCE is show below.

**Table 1: Types of Platform Groups used within PRODUCE**

Type of	Full Name	# of	District	Founding
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Platform Group		Platform Groups		Organisation
RDS		4	Rangpur	?
PUC	Para Unnayan Committees	8	Rangpur	SETU
PUC	Para Unnayan Committees	11	Nilphamari	SETU
Savings Group		8	Rangpur	
MPG	Milk Producer and Marketing Group	34	Rangpur	SDVC
MPG	Milk Producer and Marketing Group	33	Kurigram	SDVC
EKATA	Empowering Knowledge And Transformative Action Group	5	Kurigram	SHOUHARDO I
EKATA	Empowering Knowledge And Transformative Action Group	5	Nilphamari	SHOUHARDO I
VDC	Village Development Committee	25	Kurigram	SHOUHARDO I
Savab Neta		3	Nilphamari	?
Women Development		4	Nilphamari	?
NLO	Natural Leaders Organisation	1	Nilphamari	SETU
Federation	Union Federation	1	Nilphamari	RDRS
Cooperative		3	Nilphamari	

During the evaluation exercise we met with four of these different types of platform groups, as illustrated below. There were significant differences between the groups, as is discussed subsequently.

**Table 2: 'Platform' Groups involved in the Evaluation**

District	Union	CBO	History
Rangpur	Vangnee	MPG	Formed by SDVC in 2008, PRODUCE started 2010
Rangpur	Balarhat	MPG	Formed by SDVC in 2008, PRODUCE started in 2010
Nilphamari	Chaurabaragacha	PUC	Savings group formed in 2010 and PUC later same year, both by SETU. PRODUCE also started working with group in 2010
Nilphamari	Ramnagar	EKATA	Savings group formed by SETU in 2009, PRODUCE started working with group in 2010
Kurigram	Jatrapur	VDC	SHOUHARDO 1 first met with villagers in 2005, formed VDC in 2006, PRODUCE started 2010

## 4. Results Analysis

In this first part of the analysis, the three result areas of PRODUCE are evaluated in terms of the evidence collected. Summary statements are also provided with respect to the specific and overall objectives.

**ER1:** *Improved capacities of 29 UPs and LAs to accelerate their pro-poor and gender sensitive delivery mechanisms. Poor and marginalized communities, especially women, are empowered to negotiate their interests and take responsibilities in accessing services.*

This first result area is focused at the Union Parishad level. The comparative table below summarises information obtained from FGDs and interviews at each of the five UPs that were part of the evaluation, using categories defined by the evaluation team, based on the dynamics of the interactions we observed and some of the issues arising. There are a few elements focused on in the table. One is the attitude of the UP Chairman, and the style of his relationship with other councillors. Because of the patriarchal and ‘big man’ nature of decision making in Bangladesh, the Chairman’s role in change is critical. As several chairmen told us – both Vangnee and Chobaragacha were examples, their fathers had been chairmen before them – so there is a sense in which the position has stayed within certain families.

The second, connected issue is the nature of the UP’s decision making process around their budget. Although the 2009 Union Parishad Act requires the open budgeting sessions to take place at ward level, as all the councils confirmed, the initial allocation of funds they receive from the Upazila to support the initial set of priorities received from the wards is not nearly sufficient. This means that the Chairman, in particular, has to work other connections to supplement these resources, the MP being one, with the large amount of development resources the current government has seen fit to channel through them. This table aims to compare these and other issues related to the result, that in particular relate to the greater participation of the poor and women in UP budgetary decision making, and consequently the level of transparency and accountability around this process.

**Table 3: Changes Noted in UP Pro-Poor and Gender Sensitive Practices**

Union Parishad	Vangnee	Balarhat	Chaobaragacha	Ramnagar	Jatrapur
<b>Attitude of UP Chairman</b>	Unusually amongst the chairmen, he did not dominate the meeting and showed good listening skills, encouraging others to talk first	Chairman was extremely controlling (perhaps a legacy of his 20 years as a business man); he however provided us with much insight into the UP budgeting process. We interviewed him	Dominated discussion with other councillors; women members were totally silent until met with separately	Is a low ego chairman and has supported a pro-poor and pro-women agenda. Male councillors talked confidently in the meeting, and the open budget system has been embraced.	We were unable to meet with the chairman, though together with Vangnee and Ramnagar, this came across as one of the three relatively democratic UPs.



		separately to keep him out of the meeting even with male councillors.			
<b>Attitude of Male Councillors</b>	Councillors were very positive and talked in detail about the changes that have taken place.	Male councillors provided a lot of information on activities and talked of improved relations with communities, but did not like the UP Chairman's style and distrusted his financial dealings.	The Chairman dominated the discussion, talking first, and providing little scope for other voices. However members do talk about greater participation of people in UP activities, and therefore greater transparency and accountability.	Report that participation, communication and accountability with villagers has increased. Have a natural leaders forum at UP level, helps with coordination and representation.	Positive about increased participation and accountability; complained about ruling party influence on allocation of cards and other entitlements at community/ward level (20% of allocations are appointed by local party officials).
<b>Participation of Women Change Agents in UP Activities</b>	An extremely confident group of women councillors was met with separately, who provided more detail than any other women's group on the UP activities. They were clearly fully involved in everything, including decision making	We met with only one female change agent at the UP level. Level of women's participation within the UP appeared low.	3 female members report difficult relationship with the Chairman and difficulty in attending meetings regularly; they do not wish to be re-elected	Only one female change agent was met with; she carries our specific information tasks at village level.	Positive about women's participation having increased and more pro-poor and pro-women activities
<b>Style of UP Decision Making</b>	Open – Chairman encourages others to talk and listens	Dominated by the chairman.	Dominated by the chairman	Councillors participate openly	Councillors all participate
<b>Operation of Standing Committees</b>	All are operational	SCs exist but there was no sense they are playing an active role.	Meet, but effectiveness is questionable. Women members do not know which SCs they belong to	All 13 SCs operate, each has an extreme poor member	Only 5 SCs have been operationalised but they meet regularly and involve women
<b>Pro-Poor Initiatives</b>	120 VGF cards and VGD, 40 days work and food for work,	More participation in card distribution;	VGD and VGF cards targeted more clearly at EP. Tube wells	Major market development – has increased from 60 to 200	Widows allowance and VGF/VGD are distributed

	tube wells and sanitation, widows and maternity allowances, funding for small scale economic activities	collective projects undertaken – the market, tube wells and sanitation, IGA creation for women, blanket distribution in winter.	and 40 days work, list of widows prepared. Resources also provided through the (non-CARE) LGSP 2 project.	permanent shops; participatory VGD/VGF card distribution; investment in women's education and pro-poor economic activities	amongst poor women. Increase in IGAs for women and fair wages.
<b>Nature of Budgeting Process beyond Ward Open Budget Sessions</b>	Budgeting process – 'they get to know the issues from the wards, and then prepare a budget. Implementation is then checked by the various SCs.' Any additional money sourced, eg from the MP, goes through the UP. The MP mainly supports with food (rice). The two main ministries providing support are Social Welfare and Agriculture. Some funds received from Upazila for infrastructure	UP Secretary: Within the open budget sessions we have all these needs from the people which we bring back and prepare an overall budget, usually reducing the overall amount by about 20%. We then get about 50-60% of the reduced budget from different sources	Little information obtained, but they rely on LGSP 2 for additional funds.	Transparent: 'If the issues identified in the open budget are not implemented, people ask the members why they were not done.'	UP budget is insufficient to cover all open budget priorities so these are ranked.
<b>Overall Budgeting Transparency</b>	Transparent: UP Chairman is very clear on using the council for all decisions. They have a four person monitoring team from outside the council.	Not transparent; male councillors dissatisfied and questioned the chairman's probity.	Participation, accountability and transparency have increased.	Transparent; Satisfaction expressed	Transparent and final budget figures available.

For all five UPs, therefore the result has been achieved in that the UPs have accelerated their pro-poor and gender sensitive delivery mechanisms. At UP level itself, there is also greater representation of the poor and extreme poor in especially the standing committees,

as was discussed and witnessed, but the role of these members in most UPs remains marginal and far from clear.

A key part of the budget decision making process really depends on what happens after the open budget sessions. The Vangnee UP Chairman explained in detail some of the dealings he has to do, including with the local MP, who clearly has a much more political agenda. However, he always tries to bring the decision making around the resources back to the Council. In contrast, the Balarhat Chairman, whilst acknowledging his role in procuring resources, is clearly not transparent, with male UP councillors essentially accusing him of misappropriating resources, and not feeling they have the authority to hold him accountable.

The budgets that UPs present are normally those that show the priorities from the open budget meetings. But if less than half the resources come through the formal Upazila budget, then the real level of transparency and participation depends on what happens subsequently. Since this part of the process remains dependent on personal relationships, it is not necessarily well understood beyond the UP Chairman (and Secretary), and thus is very dependent on the Chairman's inclinations.

Nevertheless, the open budgets and the greater information available to UP members, especially women, about the entitlements of the extreme poor, and groups like widows, around for instance the issuing of VGD/VGF cards and certain allowances, has increased participation in and transparency around these allocation processes. This was reported in all five unions. However, in all the UP meetings there was also acknowledgement that not ALL these resources are allocated transparently and to those who qualify the most, because of the interference in particular of local cadres of the ruling party who appropriate a certain percentage for their own distribution. This means that to the extent that budgeting and service delivery processes in UPs are more transparent within the UPs, it is despite the ruling party, which undermines the process both through the resources allocated through the MPs, and by the actions of their local cadres. In this sense, the activities of PRODUCE, backed by the country wide LGSP 2 initiative,<sup>2</sup> which also supplements resources to UPs, have clearly aided the spread of participation and transparency, as legislated through the 2009 UP Act. Further information on specific indicators is provided in Annex 2.

The second part of this result, about, *'Poor and marginalized communities, especially women, are empowered to negotiate their interests and take responsibilities in accessing services'*, is examined further under the following two results that looks at the activities of the platform groups.

**ER2:** *Networking and collaboration mechanisms established among different actors and participatory planning and collective action undertaken to promote effectively pro poor, gender sensitive economic activities.*

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<sup>2</sup> Local Government Support Program, now in its second phase, principally funded by the World Bank, but supported also by UNDP.

Considering the short three year lifespan of the PRODUCE activity, our view was that the project deserves credit for the effectiveness of the efforts made to promote economic activities that in particular have benefited women. This was carried out largely in two ways:

- a) by increasing the focus of UPs on supporting pro-poor economic activities, and
- b) by directly supporting platform groups including more poor and extreme poor women in IGAs.

Some of the activities under (a) were covered under ER1 above. With regard to ER2, there were two main ways in which the platform groups had been effective. These are discussed after the following table (Table 4), which provides first more information on the platform groups with whom we actually met.

**Table 4: Platform Group Characteristics**

Platform Group	Location	Composition	Well-Being Categories	Major Focus
MPG	Karimpur Village, Vangnee UP, Rangpur	Women only	Mostly middle and poor, extreme poor non members included have become poor <sup>3</sup>	Improving dairy production, IGA development
MPG	Poshchim Para, Shongrapur Balarhat UP, Rangpur	Women only	Middle, poor and extreme poor	Improving dairy production, IGA development
PUC	Moddho Kachari Para, Chaorabaragacha UP, Rangpur	Mixed, majority women	Poor and extreme poor women	Savings and IGA development, disaster preparedness and response, community advocacy
EKATA	Mokamkazipara Village, Ramnagar UP, Nilphamari	Women only	Mainly poor and extreme poor women	Savings and IGA development, disaster preparedness
VDC	Char Ghonoshampur, Jatrapur UP, Kurigram	Mixed	Mixed, majority poor and extreme poor	Community development, IGAs, disaster preparedness and management

The platform groups that we met with were mixed in terms of their own social economic composition. However, regardless of this composition their activities were all pro-poor in nature, and it could be argued that the three most effective groups were those whose direct

<sup>3</sup> The platform groups had all conducted well being ranking exercises earlier. Their definition of 'Extreme poor' referred to those with no assets and who were food insecure (2 meals or less per day), whilst 'Poor', indicated those that had some assets (e.g. livestock, or a small business), and had improved incomes and food security.

composition was the least pro-poor. The reason for this was that they were better organised and secure in their own economic activities.

This was especially clear with the two milk producing and marketing groups that we met with in Rangpur. Most of their original membership was not poor, and the areas they were located in were often better off areas, a result of the fact that their original members had all owned cows. However, since the advent of PRODUCE in 2010, two activities have increased the benefits to poor and extreme poor women. The first is the use of savings funds generated by the group to provide loans to poor women. And the second is the practice of loaning cows (or goats) to those that don't have them, to look after. Some of these animals loaned were also purchased originally with savings funds.

This practice of loaning cows out to others to raise, which took place particularly in Vangnee, operates on the basis that the first calf the cow gives birth to is kept by the loanee, and then once the cow has a second calf, then the cow and second calf are returned to the owner, since by this time the first calf will be a cow. Milk produced by the cow whilst it is being looked after may be kept by the loanee or split with the owner.

In Balarhat, the MPG there was less involved in directly supporting poor and extreme poor non-members, but instead had selected 30 extreme poor women in 2011 to participate in a small business project making various craft products for Classical Handmade Products (CHP), a Dhaka based company. This was an excellent example of the extra care that PRODUCE has taken in promoting IGAs by seeking to link up village producers with responsible companies marketing their products. In the case of CHP, this means that they are supplying women with the raw materials required for the craft products, and then have agents who collect the finished products. In Balarhat, 30 women were trained, and have subsequently been joined by another 15 women, who can make between Tk 2-3,000 a month.

A further IG activity of this nature we encountered was in Chouraborgacha where women were engaged in *karchupi*, the embroidery decorations sewn onto wedding saris. These women, who worked as a group, also claimed they could make upwards of Tk 3,000 per month, depending on how much time they put in. In this instance too, the buyer was providing the decorations to the women and then buying directly from them, approximately once a month.

These examples all bear out the achievement of the result in 'networking and collaboration mechanisms' being established, and participatory planning and collective action undertaken. In establishing these relations, PRODUCE also wisely drew upon the skills and connections of CARE Bangladesh's Economic Development Unit. Some grants were provided too from PRODUCE to the UPs to support IGA activities, but the allocation process had to occur through central government and disbursement was delayed until the beginning of 2013. In Vangnee, for example, these funds helped 30 women receive cows or small business loans, but the delays meant there was little time to provide follow up support.

One further area of success of PRODUCE however, was that it also built on earlier work by projects like the SDVC to connect with and improve the quality of government provided agricultural and livestock services. In this respect by improving the information available to

and connections with the platform groups, these are now in a better position to maintain the services, and have the ability to draw upon the UPs if they so need.

The work described so far was mainly that with the platform groups. At the UP level, a substantial and successful focus of the project was on the revival of the Market Management Committees (MMCs). As shown in Table 5 below, all the MMCs have been effective in making the markets a great deal more women friendly, and have increased women's access to the main market in each UP, both as buyers and sellers.

**Table 5: Market Management Committee Women Focused Activities**

MMC Activities	Vangnee, Rangpur	Songrampur, Rangpur	Choub, Nilphamari	Ramnagar, Nilphamari	Jatrapur, Kurigram
Additional women selling at market				30	60 <i>hat</i> day 20-25 regularly
Additional women with market stalls	?	?	27 (33 in total)	8	
Increase in #s of women (and girls) buying in the market	√	√	√	√	√
Separate latrines for men and women	√	√	√	√	√
Improved security	√	√	√	√	√
Addressing negative attitudes towards women	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring market cleanliness	√	√	√	√	√
Regular market tax collection (poor women exempt)	√	√	√	√	√

Additional information on logframe specific indicators is provided in Annex 2.

**ER3:** *Participatory learning and action mechanisms established to empower communities (extreme poor men & women) to engage actively in policy reform and implementation processes.*

Evidence for this result is less apparent than with respect to the first two. We asked all the platform groups to list the events or activities they had undertaken since their formation, as well as the changes that had occurred as a result of these activities. This allowed us to understand the history of the groups both pre- and post-PRODUCE. The focus of these listings and discussions with the groups was on their own activities and then communications with the UP and government agencies responsible for the direct provision of mainly extension services. There was no mention of the groups of broader advocacy activities, although the groups did make frequent reference to the fact that having more information about their entitlements and acts like the 2009 UP Act had increased their confidence in interacting with the UP and government agencies. In most instances, since it is the most accessible institution, platform groups and community members will use the UP as a vehicle to contact other agencies.

**Specific Objective:** *To improve conditions for cooperation between UPs, local actors and communities (men and women) to address collectively economic and climate vulnerabilities in 29 Unions under five Upazila (sub-district) in the Northwest of Bangladesh (District of Kurigram, Rangpur and Nilphamari).*

PRODUCE has also a specific objective related to climate change adaptation. For this purpose all the platform groups have conducted Community Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment's (CVCA's), and then used these as a basis for implementing an array of activities.

In itself the CVCA provides a mapping of the community's vulnerability to environmental hazards, and then assesses some of their existing coping mechanisms. Activities to address the hazards that we witnessed included the growing of earlier maturing rice varieties, as well as some more susceptible to flooding. In Kurigram, on the banks of the Tista river in the Char area, the village we visited was perched on a sandbank that will eventually collapse into the river. Some cucurbits were being grown on wooden platforms as a mitigation activity and have contributed to improved nutrition, and a few trees planted on the edge of the river – but not in sufficient quantity or in a manner that is going to delay significantly the inevitable erosion.

The project sees a lot of the IG activities as adaptation activities, and in this sense the diversification of the incomes of the poor and extreme poor away from agricultural wage labour in particular, is probably the most important mitigation activity for them. As shown later in Table \*, which summarises the information collected after the platform FGDs on indicators, in a village like Songrampur (Balarhat UP), the handcraft activities linked to CHP, has helped women move away from day labour, whilst in Vangnee, were 19 (of 32) interviewed still work as day labourers, the fact that these women now have access to at least 1 cow each, also provides a basis for diversification.

**Overall Objective:** *To contribute to promotion of participatory inclusive governance to broaden the scope of economic opportunities for the poor and marginalized in rural communities (MDG1)*

The overall objective of PRODUCE is geared to improving participatory and inclusive governance, in order to improve the economic status of the poor and extreme poor. In this regard there is a great deal that PRODUCE has done that has been effective, since they have been successful at working at both the demand and supply sides of governance activities. On the demand side, improving the economic and informational status of the poor and extreme poor in the communities in which PRODUCE has engaged, has helped change the status and capabilities of these participants.

With regard to the supply side, the work with the Union Parishads will necessarily need to be ongoing. Although CARE may not continue to work with these particular UPs – it will depend on whether there continues to be any further project funding in these areas – CARE will nevertheless continue to invest in local governance work. There are lessons from PRODUCE that will be discussed in the final section, but on the success side, there is much to commend the model that PRODUCE deployed – working on the one hand on improving the economic

status, and the collaborative capacities of platform groups, and on the other to advance the transparency and accountability of the UP budgeting activities. There is more to be done regards the latter, and this is what will be discussed.

As is also noted in the section below, PRODUCE has undoubtedly played a role in contributing to poverty reduction most clearly amongst the members of the platform groups to which it has been providing direct support (see Table 7 below). In addition, there are wider benefits experienced through at least the following mechanisms:

- a) Other community members where platform groups are located have benefited through the improved economic efficiencies achieved, e.g. through being able to participate in milk marketing activities, benefit from livestock 'loans', join craft making activities (where buyers exist), benefit from improved extension advice (including e.g through paravets), being able to utilise climate change adaptation technologies.
- b) Utilisation of the improved market facilities, benefiting women (and men) buying and selling goods, improving prices, but reducing middle man exploitation (through sellers being able to sell directly and through better information on prices).
- c) Fairer distribution of social welfare cards and other benefits (eg widow allowances) through the UPs.

## 5. Analysis by OECD-DAC Criteria

The next part of the analysis focuses on the set of OECD-DAC criteria on which we were also asked to comment.

### 5.1 Impact

Key questions from TOR:

- a) *What has happened as a result of the project?*
- b) *What real difference has the project made to the beneficiaries, especially to the extremely poor and to the most marginalized women?*

With regard to these two questions, the following table summarises the key changes (with no particular ranking) noted by the platform group FGD participants since the beginning of PRODUCE.

**Table 6: Key Changes Noted in FGDs**

	MPG, Vangnee	MPG, Balarhat	PUC, Chou	EKATA, Ramnagar	VDC, Jatrapur
Improved incomes/ IGA opportunities	√	√	√	√	
Increased skills in vegetable production		√		√	√
Improved milk/ livestock production	√	√			
Women's wages increased			√	√	
Increased savings	√	√			√



Now have 3 meals a day	√	√		√	
Children going to school	√		√	√	√
Reduced early marriage	√		√	√	√
Reduced VAW			√	√	√
Reduced polygamy					√
Increased latrine use (and health and sanitation)			√	√	√
Women's mobility has increased	√	√	√	√	√
Women's status has increased	√	√	√		√
Women from para can participate in UP meetings	√	√	√		√
Women can talk with UP Chairman/ Improved UP links	√	√		√	√
Women can participate in salish	√		√		√
Men and women (of different classes) can discuss together	√	√	√		√
Linkages with governmental and NGO service providers	√	√		√	√
Reduced dependency on husband	√	√			
Housing has improved	√			√	
Extreme poor have improved social protection access				√	

This table, together with Table 7 below, which shows the self-ranked changes in well-being category status of FGD participants, show that PRODUCE has made a significant difference in the lives of direct project participants.

**Table 7: Changes in Well-Being Status**

Well Being Category <sup>4</sup>	Vangnee, Rangpur		Songrampur, Rangpur		Choub, Nilphamari		Ramnagar, Nilphamari		Jatrapur, Kurigram	
	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013
Extreme Poor	22	3	12	5	22	15	19	6	13	9
Poor	10	24	5	11	0	7	2	15	5	7
Middle	0	5	0	1	1	1			0	2
Rich					1	1				

Whilst the figures in Table 6 may not be wholly accurate, they still show that substantial changes in well being status have taken place. The indicators viewed as most important by participants were those relating to occupational activities and income, food security (number of meals), housing, mobility, and social status.

<sup>4</sup> The definition of 'Extreme poor' referred to those with no assets and who were food insecure (2 meals or less per day), whilst 'Poor', indicated those that had some assets (eg livestock, or a small business), and had improved incomes and food security. 'Middle' meant secure food security, and a higher level of assets and status within the community. Those classified as 'rich' would be large landowners (and not likely to participate in platform group meetings).

By changing budgetary practices within the UP, and in particular by making mechanisms such as the distribution of VGD and VGF cards more participatory and transparent, PRODUCE has also contributed indirectly to improvement in the lives of a widening group of poor and extreme poor women and men.

- c) What real difference has the project made to promote inclusion of the extremely poor women and men in governance process and economic development?*
- d) What was PRODUCEs impact on the wider social environment with respect to gender equality?*

The starting, and most critical difference, PRODUCE has made to promote the inclusion of extremely poor and poor women, is their inclusion within economic activities. Platform members made it clear that all other improvements in social and political status derive from households being able to secure access to more reliable income streams. Improved incomes fuels women's mobility (eg for marketing, although for products like milk, this is still mainly done by men), their social status, and improves household relationships with men. Men too have benefited when they can access assets that allows them more control over their labour eg to become a van puller rather than day labourer, even if the work is still physically exhausting. To have sufficient food to afford three meals a day was clearly seen as a core indicator of well being; whether all those reporting they now had three meals a day actually were could not be tested, but even the reporting indicates improved well being in the community.

These economic gains then provide platform leaders and members the confidence and freedom from daily worry to participate more widely in the local governance sphere. PRODUCE, with support from the LGSP 2 project, has contributed to the implementation of the 2009 Union Parishad Act in its areas of operation. This has resulted in the initiation of the legislated ward level open budget meetings, and resulted in more transparent and participatory budgetary practices within the UPs. More women and members of the extreme poor are being represented especially on UP standing committees. These processes mean not only are ward level priorities being provided to the UP, but community representatives are able to continue to hold most of the UPs accountable.

This introduction of more democratic practices at rural local authority is a huge transition for Bangladesh, flying in the face of its dominating centralised and patriarchal political culture. Resources have commonly been allocated at local level on a patronage basis, and still are by local party political groups, to the extent that they can still commandeer resources. Thus the true importance of this work lies in the new political culture it is helping to introduce and legitimise. It still sits at odds with the enveloping governmental culture, which means that the next level of the local government struggle will be to improve the transparency of the resource allocation process to UP level.

## **5.2 Sustainability**

Sustainability questions are as follows:

- a. To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to continue after donor funding ceased?*

Many of the benefits will continue. Platform groups, especially in so far as they are engaged in economic activities, will continue these, and this will result in the continuation of their other social functions. The market improvements, managed through the MMCs, form a tremendously improved asset for the UPs, and improved governance practices are likely to continue in the UPs, fuelled in particular by the open budgeting process, as well as by the continued support of other initiatives, like LGSP2, with which CARE has been working.

*b. What are likely the major factors which influence the achievement or non-achievements of sustainability of the project?*

There are two sets of factors, and they relate to the above. The first set relate to the reliability of the economic improvements occurring at community and household level. Here the linkage to external stakeholders, for marketing and for advice and support is vital. The value chain efficiencies achieved make it much more likely the gains will persist. With regard to the markets, the fact that robust infrastructural improvements have taken place, and that there are managing committees now starting to generate resources to cover ongoing market maintenance, means that these improvements also have a good chance of being sustained.

Second, the fact that the governance work is interconnected with wider initiatives of CARE Bangladesh (the spread of the BLI governance model, discussed later), and of the government and other donors (like the LGSP2 project, and the accompanying Horizontal Learning initiative), mean that this is also much likely to remain supported, and the UP bodies will not feel that the support provided to them has just disappeared.

*c. What is the likelihood of PRODUCE's achievements in gender equality being sustained after the donor funding has ended?*

The achievements at community level, via the platform groups, are the most durable at this point in time. This is because these gains are being consolidated socially as well as economically, with women's improved economic status changing the way they are seen in villages, and increasing their social status and voice. At the union level, the achievements have further to go to be sustained. Women will still have to fight more to have their voices heard adequately within the UPs, and this will require stronger women's fora at the union level.

*d. How have the results of the CVCA analysis been taken into account for UP planning, and community action plans in UP budgeting?*

This work is still at a relatively early stage and will still need further support if it is to yield sustainable change.

*e. How has the project contributed to ensuring good governance in the Market Management Committee (MMC) following the objectives of the Project?*

Two factors appear to have aided these groups. The first is the mix of members, including representatives of women traders. The second is the relative transparency with which the groups appear to be operating. This will be tested though, once their sole income comes from market levies, and open meetings with traders and stall holders, with published accounts, will be necessary for the ongoing good governance of these committees.

- f. How the Project could successfully develop effective collaboration with NGOs involved with adaptation activities?*

PRODUCE has developed effective relationships with organisations like Practical Action and DanChurch Aid.

- g. How has the project developed linkages with the leading national, local, CC and Governance networks and how effectively are the beneficiaries linked and obtaining results?*

One relationship developed by the project is with the network for Action Research for Community Based Adaptation in Bangladesh, but more broadly, this type of network relationship, particularly in the area of local governance work, is being sustained by CARE Bangladesh's wider extreme rural poor program. Here for instance linkages with the World Bank's Horizontal Learning Initiative, which is bringing donor and civil society actors together, in dialogue with Union Parishad leaders themselves, is a promising vehicle to ensure that CARE's experiences, and the unions it is working with, continue to be part of a growing focus on the local governance arena in Bangladesh.

To sum up, the most pertinent point to note on the sustainability questions, is that given it was only a three year project with extremely ambitious intent, PRODUCE has done as well as could be expected. This is primarily for three reasons:

- i) The use of platform groups by the project. This has achieved two functions. First, by working with pre-existing groups and thus leveraging the capacity building they had already received, PRODUCE's start up process was extremely rapid. Second, by further building the capacity of these groups and improving the incomes of members, they can be more expected to continue to function in the future.
- ii) Linking the platform groups to service providers and the UPs. These links are likely to continue since the group members have experienced their benefits and know how to keep the linkages functioning. They know also that by maintaining relations with the UPs they are likely to be able to access further, future support, if so required.
- iii) The economic and social empowerment of members. It is of huge importance that platform group members believe that the economic activities in which they have been supported by PRODUCE have potential longer term viability. To the extent they do, this is because of the value chain improvements that have taken place, as well as the improved appropriateness of types of technologies (e.g improved seeds). This includes activities such as the increase in women benefiting from: dairy and livestock activities, market stalls, specialised crafts activities linked to buyers, niche vegetable/ spice production.

As shown in Table 8 below, there is a range of key activities that the platform groups state they will continue. All these activities are not dependent on their receipt of further project support, and relate primarily to communication and meetings with others, and the continuation of their own economic activities initiated through PRODUCE or the original project that led to the establishment of the platform group. It is important to note that the groups were not particularly worried about the fact that PRODUCE was ending; they did not

feel dependent upon the project. From an economic perspective, Jatrapur, the char community is probably the most fragile of the groups, and certainly the most vulnerable to climate change that we met with, and thus the one group that probably requires a greater level of support than it has received so far.

**Table 8: Activities Platform Groups State they will Continue**

Activities to Continue	Vangnee	Balarhat	Choura	Ramnagar	Jatrapur
Monthly meeting of platform group	√	√		√	√
UP coordination meeting	√	√	√	√	√
Business activities (in the market)	√	√		√	
Meeting of market management committee	√	√	√	√	√
Savings group and their meetings	√			√	√
Linkages with government institutions	√	√	√	√	√
Livestock/ vegetable/ tree/ spice cultivation	√	√	√	√	√
Raising house plinths (flood mitigation)					√

At the UP level, sustainability is likely to require a longer process, in the sense that it is likely that the UP's will continue the activities they have been undertaking, since they also have instructions from the local government ministry to conform with the 2009 UP Act. However the deeper changes that are needed to address the patronage and patriarchal basis of political and resource relationships, in order to ensure that women and the poor have real voice, will require longer term effort.

### 5.3 Relevance

- Were PRODUCE objectives identified with respect to gender equality appropriate for the context in which the project operated?*
- Was the treatment of gender equality issues throughout PRODUCE logical and coherent?*
- Were adjustment made to reflect any changes occurring in gender roles and relationships because of factors external to PRODUCE?*

With respect to the above three questions, PRODUCE's treatment of gender equality issues has been generally effective, if not perfect. It's approach has been most effective in the economic development activities, both within the platform groups, and with the MMCs and the markets. The strategy has been less effective at the UP level, in respect of women's participation there, although gains have been made from an extremely low starting point. Here, therefore, what is important is that the key lessons for future programming are learned.

- To what extent are the specific and overall objectives still valid?*

- e. Are the activities and outputs consistent with the specific and overall objectives?*
- f. Are the activities and outputs consistent with the intended impact?*

The projects overall objectives remain valid. Perhaps the component that has been the most challenging is the special objective focused on climate change. The work in this area has represented a learning curve for CARE and is still in its infancy. The CVCA methodology has proved valuable and is being utilised too by other CARE projects (eg SHOUHARDO). The project has resulted in promising starts towards the introduction of appropriate and effective, adaptation technologies. This work needs to continue.

- g. Are the project's activities coherent with CARE Bangladesh's ongoing approach and programmatic initiatives?*

This is an area for which PRODUCE should be commended, since the project has been extremely programmatic in most of the ways it has functioned, starting with its platform group methodology. PRODUCE has achieved a great deal, and it is fair to say that this is in large part because it has operated programmatically, building on previous work and approaches, and using the expertise and connections of other teams in and outside of CARE.

- h. How has the issue of weak local governance, limited participation of women and service delivery for the poor and the extreme poorest improved at the level of the Union Parishad?*

Activities have been relevant for these aims; women's participation at UP level still needs to be improved further, but building on the lessons of PRODUCE this is achievable.

- i. How has the project implementation responded to the unexpected changes such as the delay in the UP elections, which took place during the project timeframe?*

PRODUCE has suffered from a tight timetable, especially with respect to the disbursement of some of the matching grant funds through central government and the UPs. Nevertheless the project appears to have adapted generally well to constraints. Here the project's consistent and thoughtful management (discussed below) has clearly been important.

More broadly, PRODUCE's community level activities, especially the way they worked with platform groups, was both relevant and effective (the criterion below). In addition, so was the support provided to the establishment of market management committees, and to the construction of market infrastructure. The markets now have an increased number of market stalls and latrine blocks, and improved lighting and security, measures that have increased substantially the numbers of women using the markets, both to sell and buy produce.

If there is any question about the relevance of PRODUCE's activities, it would be at UP level, for instance in respect of issues such as how best to increase the participation of women in UP decision making, since this is still limited. Since the project has been so brief, the question here is really around the learning mechanisms that existed during the project, and

in CARE and in cooperation with other stakeholders subsequently, so that lessons can be absorbed and future strategies helped to be more effective.

#### **5.4 Effectiveness**

- *To what extent were the objectives achieved/ are likely to be achieved?*
- *What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?*
- *The capacity building of selected UP and if and how this capacity has led to pro-poor development processes (assessing some tangible outcomes of the UP pro-poor development processes)?*
- *How flexibly management has adapted to ensure that the results would still achieve the purpose; and how well has it been supported in this by key stakeholders including Government, Commission?*
- *How did the expected results (gender disaggregation of beneficiaries) contribute to PRODUCE goals?*
- *How did the project benefit men and women?*

With respect to these questions, detailed statements on the relative achievement of PRODUCE's expected results and objectives have already been provided in the Expected Results section. Given the limited time period and ambitious aims of the project, it has been extremely effective. It is important that the learning from the project is incorporated into future CARE Bangladesh programming to consolidate and build on the lessons that have been learned.

The project has also been well supported by stakeholders at local government level, within government ministries, as well as the UPs.

#### **5.5 Efficiency**

- *Were results for men and women achieved at reasonable costs and where costs and benefits equitably allocated and received?*
  - *Were activities cost-efficient?*
  - *Were results achieved on time?*
  - *Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative?*

PRODUCE was implemented in a cost-efficient manner, owing to its building onto the platforms and approaches established by previous and existing projects within CARE Bangladesh. More was achieved within the timeframe of the project than could otherwise have been expected. The attention paid to value chain linkages in the economic activities supported at village level means that these also have a good chance of being sustainable and leveraging positive returns for the resources invested into them.

Similarly, capacity investments at the UP level have generally been positive. PRODUCE has done well in its cooperation with a range of other donor and civil society actors, and thus also in complementing their own resource investments. An initiative like LGSP2, which is

providing a large amount of resources to local government broadly, is a good example. PRODUCE has focused on the cohesive use of resources, and in that sense sought to maximise the effectiveness of all resources the UPs are receiving.

Some of the ER learning activities remain uncompleted, especially for instance, empowering local citizens to engage in policy reforms. This type of objective probably requires a longer time frame, however, and it is notable that CARE Bangladesh is now beginning to tackle this objective through, for example, the Horizontal Learning Initiative.

Comments on the quality of the project's management are provided below.

## **5.6 Management Factors**

*The quality of day-to-day management, for example in:*

- a) operational work planning and implementation (input delivery, activity management and delivery of outputs), and management of the budget (including cost control and whether an inadequate budget was a factor);*
- b) whether management of risk has been adequate, i.e. whether flexibility has been demonstrated in response to changes in circumstances;*
- c) relations/coordination with local authorities, institutions, beneficiaries, other donors;*
- d) the quality of information management and reporting, and the extent to which key stakeholders have been kept adequately informed of project activities (including beneficiaries/target groups)*

PRODUCE was a well managed project that experienced thoughtful and consistent leadership throughout the three years. For instance at the outset, the project's team leader explained that he spent three months working with the project's staff and partners to understand PRODUCE's design and concepts. 'Good practice areas', such as Botlagari, site of CARE's governance model, were visited by the entire project team to observe what can be achieved through process facilitation.<sup>5</sup> This was done deliberately by the team leader to help shift the mind set of staff and partners from a delivery to facilitation mode.

A further area PRODUCE appears to have been effective is in regard to its partnership relations. Apart from its two operational partners, SKS and ESDO, the project also worked with the Department of Agriculture Extension, Department of Livestock, UPs, NGOs working in the same areas, networks (eg. Action Research for Community Based Adaptation in Bangladesh), RDRS, DanChurch Aid, Practical Action, and existing projects of CARE. In the way it operated, PRODUCE was more program like than are yet many projects. Thus, in unions where no platform group established by CARE Bangladesh existed, PRODUCE worked instead with groups like the RDRS federations. In the value chain work, staff drew on the expertise of CARE's private sector enterprise team, and in the climate change work, they likewise worked with Practical Action, who has expertise in this area, in particular with respect to the technology of sand bar crop cultivation, for which they provided training and support. DanChurch Aid supported PRODUCE through introducing flood tolerant paddy

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<sup>5</sup> Laila Khondkar interview with PRODUCE Team Leader, 30 May 2013



cultivation technology. The project then worked also with companies like Classical Handmade Products, once they had been identified.

As noted by the PRODUCE team leader, this partnership work with diverse organisations built on a set of principles that included:

- Learning from the partner and utilising their strengths
- Emphasising mutual benefits
- Developing ownership by partners of their areas of involvement
- Joint planning and implementation
- Taking support from core project staff members of partner organizations
- Capacity building of partner NGO staff members where relevant
- Intellectual collaboration with some partners (eg DanChurch Aid and Practical Action).<sup>6</sup>

Altogether the team leader used terminology to us such as being flexible and process oriented, encouraging imagination and initiative, seeking team building and to learn, being open to others. From all the groups and individuals that we met with, we received no negative attitudes towards PRODUCE. It was an extremely well managed, and within its time and resource constraints, effective project.

## **6. Summary Contributions to Change**

In this section a summary of the information collected on indicators is provided. These indicators were primarily selected by participants as areas of change of significance to them, though some we added based on earlier surveys of this type in the region. Given the limited resources available for this evaluation, and the single week available for field visits (in the midst of hartals), it was not possible to collect information against the baseline. This would also have required specific information from the baseline for the 5 UPs visited, which was not available. The Mid-Term Review, in contrast to the baseline does provide information for all indicators within the project logframe, in a single annex. This annex is reproduced here (also as an annex), with updating of the mid-term conclusions, where relevant, and bearing in mind the limited sample for this evaluation. What this means is that the indicators used in our survey and illustrated below, served as a proxy to examine the effects of PRODUCE on the lives of participants. It has allowed us to show the changes and improvements in well being that have taken place in the lives of participants since PRODUCE commenced, and are thus changes to which the project has contributed.

This information was collected from participants in the platform group FGDs, at the end of each session. Participants were interviewed separately, and asked questions on the set of indicators listed in Table 9 below. In addition, the participants were asked to self-rank their well being status in 2008 (a time when many of the platform groups were first set up), and then again in 2013. They were also asked to highlight indicator areas where their status had

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<sup>6</sup> Laila Khondkar interview with PRODUCE Team Leader, 30 May 2013

significantly improved; this provided us with an idea of what they regarded as the key changes that had occurred in their personal lives, as a result of PRODUCE's contributions.

In the table below, ↑ marks that this indicator is an area of significant positive change.

**Table 9: Key Indicators**

Indicators	Vangnee, Rangpur	Songrampur, Rangpur	Choub, Nilphamari	Ramnagar, Nilphamari	Jatrapur, Kurigram
# Interviewed	<b>32</b> (3 widows)	<b>17</b> (1 divorced)	<b>24</b> (4 widows)	<b>21</b> (2 widows)	<b>18</b> (3 widows)
<b>Economic Empowerment</b>					
E1. Type of house	19 ↑	8 ↑	8 ↑	12 ↑	4 ↑
E2. Works as labourer/ Has own land	19 women still work in day labour	2 ↑, 6 engaged basket making 5 cow rearing 1 day labourer	1 ↑, 22 maid servants or day labourers	5 ↑, 5 day labourers, 6 maids, 3 both	7 ↑, 6 day labourers, 1 maid, 3 sewing blankets/ making baskets
E2b. Husband's employment	1 ↑, 16 men day labourers/ rickshaw pullers	2 ↑, 9 day labour/ van puller, 6 small business	17 day labourers, 1 rickshaw puller	10 ↑, 4 rickshaw/ van puller, 9 day labour, 2 fishing	10 selling labour/ fishing
E3. HH's with Increased Income	15 ↑	12 ↑	2 ↑	4 ↑	5 ↑
E4. Increased # of Children in school	1 ↑		5 ↑		4 ↑
E5. # of meals a day	22 ↑ (3 meals/day)	9 ↑ (3 meals/ day)	11 ↑ (9, 2 meals; 3, 2-3 meals)	17 ↑ (1, 2 meals; 2, 2-3 meals; 18 3 meals)	3 ↑ (5, 1-2 meals; 1, 2 meals; 7, 2- 3 meals; 5, 3 meals)
E6. Land tenure - Home	1 purchased own land	2 purchased own land	1 purchased own land		All lease land (the whole village site belongs to 1 landowner)
E7. Land tenure - Cultivation	2 ↑ leasing, 1 ↑ sharecropping	2 ↑ sharecropping	2 leasing, 1 sharecrops, 1 own land	2 ↑, 1 share cropping, 1 own land	1 ↑ took lease; 1 other share crops
E8. Livestock	31 with cows, 23 ↑, 15 goats	13 ↑ (15 have cows)	6 ↑ (2 have cows; 2 looking after cows/ 6 goats)	9 ↑ (9 sharing goats, 3 own goats, 1 own cow)	3 ↑ (4 own cows; 2 looking after cows)
E9. Poultry	23 have	6 ↑ (15 have chickens/ ducks)	2 ↑ (15 have chickens; incl 3 looking after)	3 ↑ (12 have chickens, 3 ducks)	3 ↑ (6 have chickens/ ducks)

E10. Loan practices	N/A	4 loans, none from money lenders	N/A	10 with loans, 3 stopped using money lenders	5 have new loans, 1 incl from money lender
<b>Social Empowerment</b>					
S1. Mobility	13 ↑	3 ↑	6 ↑	14 ↑	4 ↑
S2. Social Status	12 ↑	1 ↑	4 ↑ (2 men)	2 ↑	3 ↑
S3. Decision making in household	1 ↑, 29 involved (8 take decisions together, 21 her views are considered)	16 involved (3 take decisions together, 12 her views are considered)	22 involved (5 shared decision making, 13 her views are considered)	3 ↑, 18 involved (6 shared decision making, 8 views considered)	1 ↑, 13 involved (5 shared, 6 her views are considered)
S4. Membership/ Leadership position in CBO/ group	15 ↑ (in leadership/ membership)	7 new members, 12 savings group	14 ↑, 17 in groups	6 ↑, 9 in groups	6 ↑, 9 in groups
S5. Labour wage rates					
S6. VAW	2 ↓	1 ↓	2 ↓	4 ↓	No change indicated
<b>Political Empowerment</b>					
P1. Councillor/ Member of UP Standing Committee	6 new SC members (10 total)	2 SC members	3 SC members	1 SC member	1 male and 1 female SC member
P2. Other representative role	2 ↑	1 other member			

The information in the table provides an idea of how people's lives have changed. Most of the information was collected from women, but as some of the platform groups have men too, they were also involved where present.

There are trends shown by the information, which bears out the discussion, but there are some additional insights too. For example, with respect to social empowerment, women stressed often how their involvement in the platform groups, and increased economic activity, has improved their mobility and their social status. However, with respect to their participation in household decision making, the results are more ambivalent. The statement made by many married women was their voice is 'now considered' in HH decision making, but suggesting that men still make the decisions. Far fewer said they were equally involved in making decisions, and not many indicated this as an area of significant change. Gender violence as indicated as having reduced in some HHs, but many women also said this was not an issue, and so the accuracy of the information can be questioned. This is an area that would normally require a separate discussion.

On the economic side, many indicated that they had been able to improve their homes, and the most significant increase and change indicated across the groups was on an increased number of meals per day and improved food quality. With regards to economic activities,

many men and women were still often employed as labourers, either in agriculture, or for women as maids, and men, as rickshaw or van pullers. Two things had changed though. One was that there was also some diversification in the HH income activities, with one person engaging for instance in a small business activity. Men sometimes had acquired a van (a bicycle pulled flat trailer), through the project and from which they could earn more. Second, the HH now had more assets, especially with respect to livestock, but sometimes also with regards to homestead vegetable or other crops. For wage labourers, their wage rates had mostly increased, though we were not able to ascertain the percentage; what we did find was that women still received lower wages than men.

The final area we looked at was that of political empowerment. Here the starting point was people's participation in the platform groups, since this was the vehicle for all to then become involved in wider representative activities. In Vangnee, 6 members were now involved in UP standing committees, and in every UP, at least one or two members were.

A final note here is with respect to the set of impact indicators that were defined for CARE Bangladesh's extreme poor program in order to assess levels of economic, social and political empowerment. If this list in Table 10 below is looked at, we have information related to several though not all indicators. On the economic side, incomes have diversified and increased, as have assets. Improvements in numbers of meals eaten was a significant marker noted in our survey. On the distress sale of assets, we did not track this but there was only one HH (of 112) across the whole 5 village sample which had experienced a decline in their well being status. This was in Jatrapur, the poorest community. In this case, the husband had been ill, losing his income from fishing, and his wife stated that her own income from basket making had been taken by the NGO supposedly playing the intermediary marketing role.

For the social empowerment indicators, women mentioned mobility and changes in their social status a great deal. Although we did not specifically probe it, little was said about advanced labour sale, and for the three groups we did ask about loans, fewer were taking them from money lenders. In most cases children were now attending school too. At community level, many of the platform group members are now much more confident, and they all interact now with the UP and government agencies, which did not happen at all earlier. Of huge importance here has been their being provided more information as to what their rights and entitlements are under provisions such as the UP Act. There is more to do regards gender equity, and women's ability to raise their voice more broadly beyond the village level. In a UP like Vangnee, their role in decision making at the UP level has increased; in many of the other UPs, at this point, they have representation, but turning this into real power has yet to occur. That should be one of the next ambitions of projects like PRODUCE and CARE's extreme poor program.

**Table 10: Extreme Poor Program Impact Statement Core Indicators**

<b>Program Impact Indicators</b>	<b>Economic empowerment</b>	<b>Social empowerment</b>	<b>Political empowerment</b>
	(a) Increased income measured through increased household	(a) Reduced exploitative practices advance	(a) Increased participation & influence in local

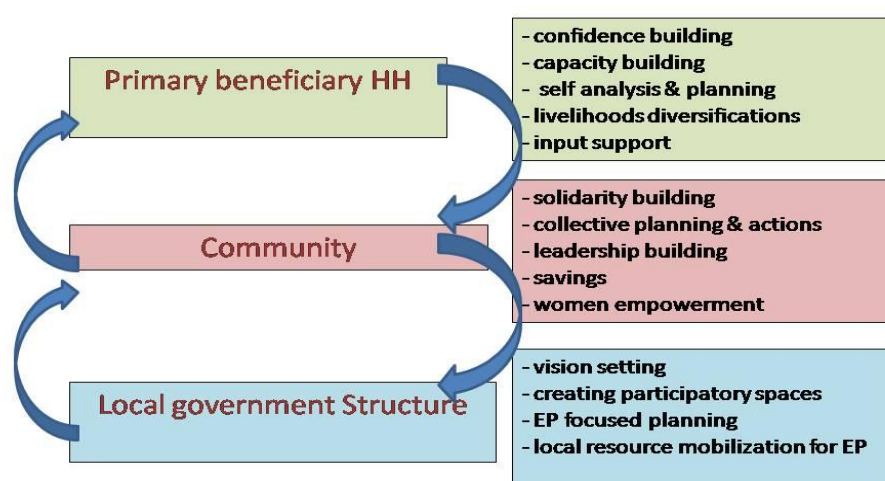
	expenditure and assets (b) Reduced distress sale of assets (c) Control over land and other productive assets	labour sale (b) Reduced taking of unsustainable loans from moneylender (c) Reduced sending children for work	governance and development process (b) Participation in UP/MMC/village level salish etc.
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## 7. CARE Bangladesh's Governance Model

CARE Bangladesh has been seeking to develop an inclusive governance model that through active citizenship of the poorest, will lead to a more equitable distribution of public resources. The hypothesis is that 'inclusive governance can ensure local actors are better

**Fig 2: Multi-Level Engagement Requirements**

### Addressing Generational Poverty Needs Multi-level Engagement



able to deal with shocks when they happen, and promote more diverse and equitable livelihood options thus reducing the likelihood and impact of shocks".<sup>7</sup> 'Decentralized and accountable local government can create the enabling environment for

sustainable social and economic development. The core of CARE's programming also recognizes that strategies need to be in place at multiple levels to address "generational cycle of poverty".<sup>8</sup>

This need for a multi-level engagement model is likely undisputed. The real issue for CARE Bangladesh is the levels that need to be included. Intrinsic to CARE Bangladesh's BLI governance model, developed from its work in Botlagari, Saidpur, Nilphamari District, is that it aims to build power and voice upwards from community level. Botlagari shows success in 'mobilising marginalized communities to claim their rights for adequate local government service provision and budget allocations'.<sup>9</sup>

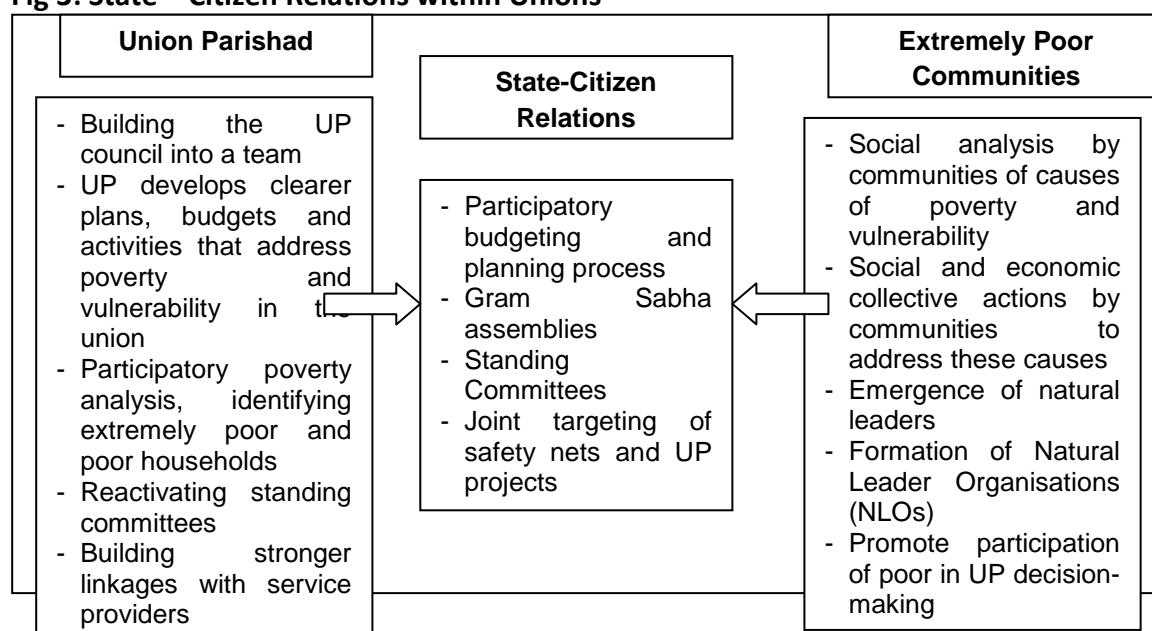
<sup>7</sup>Roopa Hinton, 2010, 'Promoting inclusive governance in Bangladesh: empowering the extreme poor', CARE International UK.

<sup>8</sup> CARE Bangladesh, 2012, 'BLI Governance Model', draft.

<sup>9</sup> CARE Bangladesh, 2012, 'BLI Governance Model', draft.

As shown in Figure 3 below, the current version of the model is very union focused. It conceives a set of supply and demand relations that are mutually supportive, and are constructed through generating energy from both directions. Thus community members become more knowledgeable and better organised and the Union Parishad structures become professional and accountable.

**Fig 3: State – Citizen Relations within Unions**



This model has much going for it, and in the way it has been currently implemented has done much to improve the social contract between local authority and citizens. It has provided a solid basis for implementing the requirements of the 2009 Union Parishad Act, by undoubtedly providing a basis for starting to empower citizens, and by beginning to turn the UP into an effective and accountable body. Building the capacity of organisations like the Natural Leaders Forums (NLOs), has been critical in bridging the divide between the poor and extreme poor and the previously very removed leadership within the UPs. This has started to result in cases like Botlagari in a much more dynamic citizen participation and exchange with elected councillors.

As currently constituted, there are however two chief drawbacks to the model. The first is that the model is seen rather as a closed system and its upside boundaries are too tightly defined. The UPs themselves are the recipients of only limited resources, and the processes whereby they have to seek more are often political. This makes the role of the Union Parishad chairman and the extent to which he (always a he) has a network of contacts, critical. Once the open budgeting sessions have been carried out at ward level, the resultant budget will only be partially funded through the resources directly received from the Upazila level, usually less than 50%. This means that a lot of the negotiation happens subsequently, as the chairman interacts with the MP, with government ministries, other projects, and any further potential sources of revenue. In some cases, such as Vangnee, the chairman brings the resultant resources back into a transparent budgeting process within the UP; in Balarhat this did not happen.

What will help is for CARE to begin to reach upwards, which through recent engagement with the World Bank and Ministry of Local Government supported Horizontal Learning Network, it has begun to do. Whilst a more democratic and participatory process can be initiated within unions by a genuine process of economic, social and political empowerment of citizenry, this cannot be an isolated process when the current 'political settlement' is constructed in such a top down, 'competitive clientelistic' manner.<sup>10</sup> This was witnessed during the evaluation on a number of occasions, in the behaviour of MPs and that of local party political cadres, both of whom frequently subvert the democratic process through their patronage based actions. To challenge this whole system requires the upward building of democratic voice and the seeking of a more evolutionary process of political change than has taken place more recently in the Middle East.

At UP level, this clientelistic, and often rent seeking, behaviour undermines the idea of building a team approach, as contained in the BLI model. These means the second additional requirement of the model is to address the deficiencies of Bangladesh's patriarchal culture and gender inequity more directly. The natural leaders model has had successes in this sphere, but a more explicit mechanism for building women's voice, especially at union level is necessary. In the way they currently participate within the UPs, much of women's representation remains tokenistic, as they remain well outside the sphere of masculine, political decision making.

The extreme poor governance framework, outlined in the introductory section has been demonstrated to be appropriate in the sense that to achieve political empowerment of the poor, their economic and social empowerment is also required. The Local Governance project that was evaluated in parallel to PRODUCE shows the deficiencies of an approach where efforts are made to empower the extreme poor and poor politically, before their most urgent economic exigencies have been addressed. It was an undoubted strength of PRODUCE that it addressed these economic needs more appropriately, at least with respect to the direct participants with whom we met.

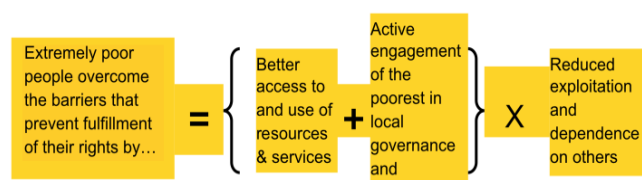
Our recommendation, therefore, is that the social and political empowerment domains of change within the rural extreme poor theory of change need switching; it is the active engagement domain that is the real multiplier. But for this political empowerment to be a multiplier, at local level the patriarchal issues that prevent women's equal participation and prolong the inefficiencies and injustices of the 'clientelistic' system need to be challenged more robustly.

#### **Fig 4: Rethinking the Domains of Change of the Rural Extreme Poor TOC**

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<sup>10</sup> Mirza M Hassan and Sohela Nazneen, 2013, 'Assessing the political determinants of incentives of Union Parishad Leaders in creating and strengthening inclusive, participatory, and pro-poor governance', BRAC University.

## Broader Reflection: EP TOC



Domains of Change should be switched:

$$\text{Extreme poor empowerment} = \{EE + SE\} \times PE$$

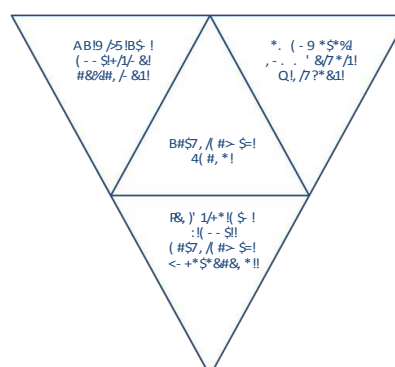
EE = Economic Empowerment; SE = Social Empowerment; PE = Political Empowerment



CARE Bangladesh's overall governance framework, illustrated here, has the notion of

'participatory space' at its centre. What kind of spaces this is and requires and how they can be constructed and reconstructed in multiple ways at multiple levels, remains the challenge to be addressed by the country office. PRODUCE demonstrates that good progress is being made.

**Fig. 5: CARE Bangladesh Governance Framework**



## 8. Conclusion and Recommendations: The Enlargement of Scale

PRODUCE has been a successful project, and has done many things well. Its design was ambitious but coherent, and its management has been imaginative, consistent and effective. The challenge now for CARE Bangladesh is whether it can continue to build on these successes and address the lessons learned, most notably with respect to enlarging the field of intervention. Although the challenge of seeking to reform Bangladesh's macro level political culture may seem a daunting over reach, additional building blocks of this process are within the CO's reach. Already gaining the World Bank's support for a social accountability framework that builds on the Botlagari model, and participating in the



Horizontal Learning Network, are promising starting points. The World Bank too has challenged CARE to move out of its relative comfort zone within the confines of the union. Whilst ongoing learning around the BLI inclusive governance model is still required, there is now a solid enough basis within this union level model, for the CO to look now more seriously at how it enlarges scale.

This, in conclusion, leads to the following **recommendations** for some of PRODUCE's key stakeholders.

#### *CARE Bangladesh*

PRODUCE has shown unequivocally the value of using 'platform' groups, both in terms of building on the capacity building that others have already undertaken, as well as tapping into and shoring up the energy and motivation the groups already have. The continuity achieved means the groups do not feel abandoned (as one project has ended), and are now more likely to achieve longer sustainability, since they have developed more confidence that they can continue to manage. In addition most of the platform group members have now built up income assets and links to relevant external organisations connected to their value chains.

For CARE Bangladesh – and CARE more widely – this demonstrates some of the added value of working programmatically, and the types of synergies that can be created. A further astute component of PRODUCE was its drawing upon the skills and networks of other groups in CARE, especially the Economic Development Unit, as well as other agencies, like Practical Action, for some of the climate change adaptation work. It is important that the CO continue to utilise and develop further these types of synergies and relationships, as well as taking on board some of the wider lessons learned – for instance that for women's voice to start to compete with men more equally at UP level, they need their own representative forum at this level.

#### *Local Governance*

The 2009 Union Parishad Act is highly significant in that it is the first governance act in Bangladesh that truly lays the foundations for a more democratic, transparent and accountable form of governance. It remains notable, however, that the act exists, and donor and civil society actors have been able to support its implementation because it lies below the levels of focus of the chief political parties. The ruling party undermined the act almost from the outset by providing MPs their own slush funds to control. As noted in the report, local cadres of the ruling party still feel they are beyond the law and this act, as it were, and can demand patronage resources from the government regardless. Nevertheless, implementation of the UP Act provides a huge leap forward in the possibility of building a tradition of local, participatory governance, and as such provides an antidote to the often despairing nature of national politics that needs to be nurtured. Organisations like the World Bank appear to have recognized this, in their encouragement of CARE to take risks.<sup>11</sup>

What is critical is that in this work, CARE partners with others, and thus the type of partnerships that were established in PRODUCE need to be taken up more broadly, as in the

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<sup>11</sup> In their expanded implementation of the BLI governance model, as a social accountability practice (conversation with Anowarul Haq).

case of the Horizontal Learning Initiative. CARE should be able to become a champion of good local governance in Bangladesh; the skill is to find ways of doing it, that gradually place pressure on higher levels of government to become more transparent too, but at the same time stay politically onside. The best way of doing this is to ensure that the benefits to the country's development and improved well being of especially the poor and extreme poor, are well documented.

To this end, it is also necessary for CARE to continue to work to improve the governance model it has been developing. Addressing issues of patriarchal and patronage based power at the UP level remains important. This remains a block both to women's participation, and to the spread of more transparent and accountable practices. The existence of open budgeting provides a wedge for change, but it is not the whole of the budgeting process. Beyond the preparation of UP budgets following these meetings, there is the whole process whereby resources are negotiated from those that control them – MPs, the Upazila, government ministries, other projects. How much these processes and their outcomes are transparent remains highly variable. Encouraging a stronger women's voice at UP level, not just through their representatives, but through a women's forum (like the natural leaders forums CARE has already encouraged in some areas), that can provide a strong backing to women representatives, is one potential mechanism of achieving this, and of engaging those male leaders more resistant to change.

There has been much promising about PRODUCE. We would urge CARE to continue to build on some of the key practices and lessons learned.

## **Annex 1: Additional Issues Identified at Inception Stage**

The following issues were identified through documents review and meeting with CARE staff in Dhaka, to be explored as feasible during the field work:

- “...despite plenty of work and integrity of the frontline NGO actors, the rate of success can be limited in Union Parishads after a certain level of achievement. However, the project unleashed an array of new concepts and ideas at the grassroots.” This was observed by MTR, which needs further examination.
- Income generating activities were initiated for women (few men were also supported). What was the scale? How effective were those? Has there been any negative impact on their lives? What about violence against women? Do women feel overburdened with economic and household responsibilities?
- Women’s increased participation in the market is one of the highlights of the project. Has that affected their family and social lives in any way?
- MTR observed “Platform members are determined to continue their group activity with the help of their savings when there is no more aid assistance.” It is important to explore if this is really happening.
- Open budget meetings were initiated. But there are issues about the level of understanding of the citizens regarding budgets and their participation in the process. Has it contributed to improving accountability?
- Chairman seems to be the major decision maker in the UP. Has there been any change in this regard due to all the activities of empowering citizens and capacity development of UP?
- Many NGOs are working with UPs. How PRODUCE has addressed any possible overlap. MTR recommended decreasing the number of trainings for UP officials. Has that been considered?
- “Poor’s lack of ownership over their participation” has been observed by MTR. This needs to be explored further.
- CVCA: How gender-sensitive was the process?

## Annex 2: Progress against Logframe Indicators

Note: As the evaluation budget was limited and no quantitative survey was conducted across all the participating UPs, this information holds only for the 5 UPs visited. The information therefore talks to the quality of the project's achievements more than the overall scope.

**Specific Objective:** Improved conditions for cooperation between UPs, local actors and communities (men and women) to collectively address economic and climatic vulnerabilities in 29 Unions in the Northwest of Bangladesh (Districts of Kurigram, Rangpur and Nilphamari)

OVis	Evaluation	Comments
29 UPs engaged in local level participatory planning towards improving market systems and service mechanism taking into consideration natural disaster and climate change effects	Market facilities had been improved at all 5 markets visited, and 25-30 more women were using each market regularly, and more on market days	All UPs were engaged in participatory planning – even the two where the UP Chairman were clearly control oriented. The three UPs that were fully embracing of the concept were enthusiastic about the potential and all five had improved their service delivery, with improved targeting.
80,000 poor people get better access to commodities and fair prices for their products and market system and infrastructure of at-least 29 markets in the targeted Unions developed	In the UPs we visited, the UP markets were functioning more efficiently and small business activities (milk selling, baskets and crafts, karchupi) were being marketed profitably	The MMCs have clearly been successful in expanding the usage and efficiency of market places. It will be interesting to see if they can continue to bring about greater efficiencies in value chains, through both the timely provision of appropriate information, and the attraction of new market players.
870 poor men and women found employment and income opportunities as traders and laborers, in small business and rural transportation.	64/112 people interviewed in 5 UPs engaged in small business activities (mainly related to agriculture, livestock, fishing and rural transportation), of which 38/112 reported an improvement in their wealth category	The thoughtful way in which these opportunities were created and expanded heightens the likelihood of them resulting in sustainable improvements in people's livelihoods.
Relationship developed with at-least 3 private sector partners and those who are extending business in rural communities engaging poor women	Progress here has exceeded the targets. In the 5 unions we visited, two partnerships with private sector partners were active and effective, and in two other unions successful milk marketing was taking place.	The value chain improvement activities we witnessed were a marked improvement on many IGA promotion activities, because of the secured relations with private sector partners (supplying inputs and buying produce), or through increasing awareness of and efficiencies in the value chain (eg milk production)
29 UPs are taking into account the climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies in their development plans	All UP were taking these into account, scale of activities varied	Activities such as introducing flood tolerant rice varieties, and diversifying incomes to reduce reliance on agriculture (especially as labourers) had had beneficial

		effects
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### Progress in Favour of Expected Result-1

**Expected Result 1:** Improved capacities of 29 UPs and LAs accelerate their pro poor and gender sensitive service delivery mechanisms and poor and marginalized communities, especially women, are empowered to negotiate their interests and to take responsibilities in accessing services.

Expected Outputs for Result-1	Mid-Term Review	Evaluation
29 UPs have developed inclusive pro-poor and gender sensitive development visions and outlined long-term action plans for value chain based market promotion, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation during the project period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dialogue with local elected bodies, relevant LAs and the private sector has been initiated and guided throughout the project.</li> <li>A total of 29 gender sensitive local development plans have been made through participatory poverty analysis exercises at UP level.</li> <li>UPs have allocated budget according to the gender sensitive development plans and Community Action Plans (CAP). Budget allocated for CCA, DDR and local economic development has been increased by 300% as compared to the last financial year.</li> <li>The Private Sector has been engaged through a series of workshops on "Value chain based market promotion, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All UPs visited did have these plans, and they were being implemented, even if the quality and degree to which UPs have embraced these ideals varies.</li> <li>UPs were seeking additional resources to further women's economic activities and for climate change adaptation</li> <li>The final annual report notes that local economic development has increased by 338% over the base financial year; this is certainly credible.</li> </ul>
Local market actors identified across 29 UPs and strategy for collective market and business promotion developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local market actors have already been identified across 29 Ups.</li> <li>All 29 MMCs have developed their action plan.</li> <li>Till the reporting time 29 MMCs have completed eight sessions out of 10.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MMCs have been effective in their implementation of their action plans.</li> </ul>
29 UPs designed and implemented pro-poor and gender-sensitive economic development and innovative climate change adaptation projects with the use of match grants provided to them by the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>29 unions have developed their action plan through CVCA analysis.</li> <li>UPs have already started to prepare plan of action in order to develop infrastructure in the market using match grant by the project.</li> <li>18 UPs have started implementation of infrastructure measures in the market following the plan of MMC and contributing fund as match grant with CARE PRODUCE. UP could be convinced to provide significant match funds to the market infrastructure measures (67%).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market infrastructure had been improved in all 5 markets visited, making them more women friendly and secure.</li> </ul>

<p>Poor people's platforms (EKATA, VDC, PUC, etc.) have improved organizational capacity to represent the interests of women and the poorest people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building training on “improved economic development and climate change adaptation” has been conducted by the project.</li> <li>• EKATA, VDC, PUC are conducting monthly meeting on a regular basis and reviewing their progress following Community Action Plan developed by the Platform and the Community. All the platforms have submitted their plan in the UP.</li> <li>• A total of 235 numbers of platform representatives (including 65 CAs) have already been included in different standing committees of UPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The success of this component has been because of the use of pre-existing platform groups. PRODUCE has done an excellent job of sharpening the pro-poor focus of these groups, with e.g, the milk producing groups facilitating the spread of livestock ownership to a much wider group of poor women.</li> <li>• Open budgeting has also improved representation of the interests of the poor and extreme poor on a ward scale.</li> </ul>
<p>Around 29 market committees have improved capacities to negotiate for land, resources and services to create more inclusive and functional markets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity Building training has been conducted for 29 MMCs on “Strategies of advocacy and negotiation with LAs”</li> <li>• Eight sessions to improve capacities of 29 MMCs to negotiate for land, resources and services to create more inclusive and functional markets have been facilitated by the project.</li> <li>• A total of 338 MMC coordination meetings were held out of 348. This is 97% of the target.</li> <li>• 18 markets have ensured reception of match grant from UP to construct infrastructure in order to create more inclusive and functional markets.</li> <li>• Five MMCs are formally approved by the Upazila Nirbahi Officers.</li> <li>• 29 members from MMC (one from each market) participated in UP capacity building training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All five MMCs visited were fully operational and had been extremely effective in establishing women friendly markets and expanding business and trading opportunities for women.</li> <li>• All five markets had increased in area, had sanitation facilities added, including for women, had improved security and increased permanent and temporary stalls.</li> </ul>
<p>870 extreme poor men and women running profitable businesses in the agricultural value chain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of 870 participants have been selected which is 100% of the target. Among them 568 are involved with IGAs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 180 participants involved with Karchupi with assistance from Monzur Silk Industries (MSI)</li> <li>• 120 participants engaged in sandbar cropping with assistance from PAB</li> <li>• 120 participants engaged in basket</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants witnessed were profitably engaged in karchupi, basket making, milk and poultry production, flood tolerant paddy cultivation, small groceries, selling bamboo and fish.</li> <li>• Incomes for selected activities (karchupi and basket making) were Tk 900-3.000 per month, and even with widespread hartals were</li> </ul>

	<p>making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 participants involved in sheep rearing</li> <li>• 8 participants involved with grocery business</li> <li>• 10 participants involved in mini garments</li> <li>• 10 participants involved with flood tolerant paddy cultivation and</li> <li>• 30 involved with Satarangi (carpet) making training.</li> </ul>	<p>holding up, though had dipped 20-30%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is significant that because of the focus on addressing value chain issues and creating links to private sector buyers, activities were clearly profitable; this was not the case in a parallel project we evaluated.</li> </ul>
Local input suppliers and private sector institutions increased awareness on climate change impacts, disaster risk reduction and gender-sensitive economic development and more effectively engage with the extreme poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal dialogue with local Chamber of Commerce and major private sector players has been arranged.</li> <li>• Four Sensitization Workshops with Local input suppliers and private sector institutions have been completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input suppliers were working in better organized ways with the poor and extreme poor.</li> </ul>

### Progress in Favour of Expected Result-2

**Expected Result 2:** Networking and collaboration mechanisms established among different actors and participatory planning and collective actions undertaken to effectively promote pro poor, gender sensitive economic activities

Expected Outputs for Result-2	Mid-Term Review	Evaluation
29 UPs established mechanisms of coordination and collaboration for civic engagement for participatory planning among all local governance actors during the project period	LAs, NSAs, UPs and Platform members have collectively prepared plan & budget for the UP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All UPs are conducting ward open budget sessions where citizen priorities are collected. Some UPs take this further to ensure whole budgeting process is transparent, others less so (since UP Chairman have to negotiate for resources)</li> </ul>
29 UPs established platforms, systems and processes for engagement and dialogue with communities during the project period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29 UPs and 135 platforms have reviewed their CAP through a participatory process.</li> <li>• 135 reviewed CAP have been shared with UPs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All 5 UPs visited had done this, 3 were much more obviously genuinely committed to dialogue processes because of character of UP Chairman.</li> </ul>
87 Change Agents (40% women) from the extreme poor participated in political processes (such as standing committees) and dialogue spaces and better advocate for improved service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 87 Change Agents (47% women) have been recruited.</li> <li>• A Four day long foundation training has been conducted for the CAs.</li> <li>• As of reporting period all the Change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women change agents are being recruited to SCs; even though it is not easy for them to have much voice, they carry information on schemes etc to constituents and help ensure</li> </ul>

during the project period	<p>Agents (87) have received refresher training and they are participating in UP coordination and MMC meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>65 (about 75%) Change Agents out of 87 have already been included in different standing and special committees of UPs</li> </ul>	<p>transparency of safety net cards and allocations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More support for these change agents at UP level is still needed.</li> </ul>
The local market committees and LAs and NSAs are better able to provide market oriented services to the poor and extreme poor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18 UPs have started to implement infrastructure activities jointly with the MMCs.</li> <li>Monthly meetings of MMC and coordination meetings among UP, LAs, NSAs are continuing</li> <li>MMCs have established market based information centers. Beneficiaries are obtaining information on their product and rate of commodities with the help of available LAs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All MMCs visited were operational and had completed market improvement activities, increasing numbers of fixed stalls, improving drainage, lighting, security, latrines (especially for women). Market levies are being collected, pricing information is available.</li> </ul>
Local paravets, collectors and middlemen have improved work plans to foster improved businesses and avoid conflicts of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>819 paravets, collectors and middlemen have received capacity building training from the project.</li> <li>29 forums of paravets, collectors and middlemen have demonstrated their better commercial performance and service delivery through arranging vaccination camps, collecting pumpkin and other vegetable from the door step of the poorest producers and ensured fair price.</li> <li>Forums have conducted 348 coordination meetings and analyzed their success and failure and revised their plan following the lesson.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus has been on improving linkages with Agricultural and Livestock departments, the latter having done some training of paravets.</li> </ul>
The poor people's platforms (EKATA, VDC, PUC) and change agents developed sustainable working relationships with markets, private sector and UPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>145 platforms have incorporated their agenda in the UP plan and budget and 87 CAs have participated in the UP coordination meeting and the monthly meeting of MMC in order to develop sustainable working relationships with markets, private sector and UPs.</li> <li>UPs have ensured employment through safety net programs, and construction of earthen road,, latrine and plantation of timber and fruit trees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MMCs are operating effectively, with representation of market women critical.</li> <li>Greater transparency and much improved targeting of safety net schemes is taking place, main constraint is when political party interference occurs.</li> <li>Expansion of UP led safety net employment schemes has occurred.</li> </ul>
Forums created and strengthened with evidence of greater and more regular interactions between local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAs are providing consultancy support to the community creating information centre in the market.</li> <li>Department of livestock have been</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ward open budget meetings achieve this in particular,</li> </ul>



authorities and community groups	<p>providing support for vaccination to poultry and cattle through the community platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants for social safety net programs have been selected by the poor platform members.</li> </ul>	
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### Progress in Favour of Expected Result-3

**Expected Result 3:** Participatory learning and action mechanisms established to empower communities (extreme poor men and women) to actively engage in policy reform and implementation processes

Expected Outputs for Result-3	Mid-Term Review	Evaluation
29 UPs established systems for joint learning at various levels and corresponding Upazila and district levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non affiliated UPs have learned from the best practices of the PRODUCE affiliated UPs and from the best practices of CARE</li> <li>UP members are sharing their success and seeking support from the UPZ officials in the UPZ coordination meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRODUCE was attempting to build on the lessons learned from CARE's Botlagari Learning initiative governance model.</li> </ul>
Field experiences, lessons learned and good practices are documented and disseminated among different stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best practices are documented through lessons learned workshop arranged by the project.</li> <li>CVCA process has been documented by the project and it is reviewed by a renowned climate scientist of Bangladesh. Bengali version of this document has already been finalized by him</li> <li>A workshop on joint promotion of documentation and sharing of field experiences, lessons learned and good practices was organized at Cox's Bazar on 7-9 January 2012.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRODUCE's strength has been its building on the 'platform' groups and experiences of other projects e.g. in the value chain work and setting up relationships with private companies.</li> <li>What PRODUCE has done less well is document and share the project's own experience.</li> </ul>
58 UP level annual seminars organized for participatory planning of local development processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>29 (twenty nine) annual seminars on UP budget preparation and dissemination have been organized. 800-1100 community people and local elites including Upazila Chairman participated in each session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These meetings have aided the participatory planning and budgeting process.</li> </ul>
6 advocacy events organized at Upazila, district and national level for promotion of market and value chain based service mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One advocacy workshop cum mela (fair) on "Service delivery mechanism &amp; community adaptation initiatives" by UP and LAs was held at Mithapukur on 23 August 2011.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It would be worth CARE conducting more advocacy on this issue based on its experience with PRODUCE.</li> </ul>
1-3 briefing papers produced packaging results from case studies, final evaluation and lessons learned of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project team has developed two briefing papers presenting three case studies and key information of the Project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further documentation has taken place, particularly on the CVCA work.</li> </ul>

proposed project for technical networks and advocacy arenas at European level.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This should be extended to lessons learned on the local governance work.</li> </ul>
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