

# End of Project Evaluation Report of CSCF 474 – EMCOR, India

## **Table of Contents:**

I. Executive Summary	3
II. Main Part of the Report	6
1. Impact and Results	6
2. Empowered Target Groups	12
3. Value for Money	13
i) Effectiveness	13
ii) Efficiency	15
iii) Economy	15
4. Innovation	16
5. Sustainability	16
6. Additionality	18
7. Realisation of Risks	18
8. Climate and Environment	19
9. Contribution to CSCF Objectives	20
10. Contribution to MDGs	21
11. Lesson Learning	22
12. Recommendations	3
Annex A Annotated Achievements Rating Scale	
Annex B Original Logframe	35
Annex C Final Logframe	
Annex D Evaluator TOR, Details, etc.	37
Annex E People met and Documents consulted	
Annex F Baseline & End of Project Survey	48

**Project Title:** EMCOR - (Empowering Marginalised Communities for their Rights & Poverty Reduction through Community Radio in KBK Region, Odisha, India)

**CSCF Number:** CSCF 474

**UK Partner:** Integrated Village Development Trust (IVDT) (Charity No.1013316), 39 St. John Street, Oxford, OX1 2LH, United Kingdom

**Local Partner:** CHALE CHALO, S-3/60, Niladri Vihar, PO: Sailashree Vihar, Bhubaneswar-751021, Orissa, India

**Project Office:** EMCOR PROJECT, c/o CHALE CHALO, At - Shanti Nagar, PO - Khariar, Dist - Nuapada, Pin Code No: 766107, Odisha, India

**Project Start & End Dates:**       **Start:** 01.07.2009                   **End:** 31.03.2014

**Total Project Budget:** £182,883

**End-Term Evaluator:** Gabriel Grouas, 47 Brome Place, Barton, OXFORD OX3 9LR UK

**CHALE CHALO staff Involved in the End-Term Evaluation:**

- 1) Ranjit Swain, Director, CHALE CHALO
- 2) Basanta Malik, Project Manager, EMCOR
- 3) Gitanjali Mohapatra, Community Radio Reporter, EMCOR
- 4) Ritwik Basu, Technical Manager, EMCOR
- 5) Rudra Madhab Barik. Chair of trustees

**Beneficiary representatives involved in the End-Term Evaluation:**

- 1) Sabita Nayak, MHGS Leader & ASHA, Chandel, Dist - Nuapada
- 2) Jema Satnami, MHGS Leader, Botapali, Dist- Nuapada
- 3) Bijayani Nanda, MHGS Leader, Badapara, Dist – Bolangir
- 4) Sahadev Majhi, MHGS Leader, Betrajali, Dist- Kalahandi

**CSO representatives involved in the End-Term Evaluation:**

- 1) Mr. Pradeep Pradhan, RTI Activist and Secretary, The Humanity, Patnagarh – Bolangir
- 2) Mr. Khuturam Sunani, Freelance Journalist, Khariar – Nuapada

**IV DT representative involved in project review and assessment:**

Helena Nightingale, Chair, IVDT

**TIME SCALE of End-term Evaluation**

Period of evaluation: 03.11.2013 - 31.12.2013

Draft Report submitted to CHALE CHALO for discussion with staff and beneficiaries: 01.01. 2014

Draft Report submitted to IVDT for comments and feedback: 01.01.2014

Final Report submitted to Chale Chalo: 31.01.2014

End-Term Project reviewed by project team and stakeholders: March 2014

Achievement Rating Scale updated and report finalised by evaluator, project team, Chale Chalo functionaries and stakeholder representatives: March - May 2014

Report Submitted by Chale Chalo to IVDT and distributed to local stakeholders: June 2014

## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

APL	Above the Poverty Line
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
BPL	Below the Poverty Line
CHC	Community Health Centre
CR	Community Radio
CRR	Community Radio Reporter
EMCOR	Empowering Marginalised Communities for Rights and Poverty Reduction
FLR	Forest Land Rights
GKS	Gaon Kalyan Samiti
GP	Gram Panchayat (Rural Local Self Government)
GS	Gram Sabha (GP level Meeting of voters for planning and review)
IAY	Indira Awas Yojana (provision of housing to the poor)
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme;
JSY	Janani Surakshya Yojana (Save the Mother Program)
KBK	Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput Districts (undivided) in Odisha, India
LOP	Left over poor (i.e. missed from the BPL list)
MDM	Mid-day Meal (for children up to age 12)
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MHGS	Mor Haq Gaon Sangathan (My Rights Village Committee, same as Village Forum)
MY	Mamanta Yojana
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NREGS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Product
PDS	Public Distribution System (providing food security to the poor)
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PS	Palli Sabha (Meeting of Villagers under PRI system of Odisha)
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
RTE	Right to Education
RTF	Right to Food
RTI	Right to Information
SHG	Self-help Group
SNP	Supplementary Nutrition Programme
VF	Village Forum - the same as MHGS
WSHG	Women's Self-help Group

## **I. Executive Summary**

The report is based on thorough examination of the project paperwork (see Annex E) and an extensive stay on the project where it was possible to meet the staff involved, CHALE CHALO trustees, and a large number of primary and secondary stakeholders, individually and as groups. Opportunity was taken to visit speak to villagers who had not been actively involved as MHGS or SHG members, and two non-project villages were visited in order to provide a comparison. In addition meetings were held with a wide range of local duty-bearers, community leaders and representatives. The visit coincided with a monitoring visit with a representative of IVDT, and her input was additionally useful. The aim of the evaluation was to assess how far the Project Outcome had been achieved, to understand the impact of the project, and to see what lessons might be learnt. .

The project area is centred at Khariar in Nuapadha District, Western Odisha, India, but also operates in the neighbouring Districts of Kalahandi and Bolangir. It is an area with a long history of neglect and deep-rooted poverty, with large sections of the community especially disadvantaged. Though many agencies (including DfID) had funded projects in the area, none had seriously addressed the issues of rights and entitlements or made a substantial difference to the levels of poverty. The Baseline Survey carried out at the beginning of the project established the major gaps in provision and awareness, and demonstrated which issues should be prioritised. The purpose of the project was to use Community Radio as an instrument to empower villagers to claim their rights and entitlements and thus to reduce poverty. It focussed primarily on the poorest, marginalised and most disadvantaged sector of the community with the aim of providing them with the tools to address the most serious issues which they faced.

The project has made steady progress to the point where it is difficult for villagers to remember quite how difficult their circumstances were only some five years ago. Speaking to villagers and duty-bearers there emerged three main elements to the work: information, organisation, action. In each village a MHGS was initiated by a project worker, providing a forum within which villagers could list their problems and prioritise them. With support and guidance from a local project worker, and with well-designed and appropriate capacity-building, members of the MHGSs and other villagers were able to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to address their issues, engaging with local duty-bearers, and achieving the rights and entitlements which they are due.

This has had a range of positive consequences. Villagers are now accessing their rights, often for the first time in their lives. Each success brings greater confidence and many of them now feel able to address their issues on their own (and in fact do). Accessing their rights and entitlements has brought a massive reduction in poverty, reduced migration, gained Forest Land Rights for many, increased quality of schooling and school attendance, improved access to health services, especially for pregnant women and children, to name but a few examples. This is a massive turn-around for communities which only five years ago were suffering serious food insecurity for four to six months of each year. The results are given in more detail in Section 1 of the Main Report and in Annex F.

The wide use of NREGA to provide employment has increased family incomes, but at the same time has contributed massively to developing local infrastructure. Most of the project villages are now connected to the outside by adequate all-weather roads which means they are no longer isolated, women can reach hospital for delivery, farmers can reach markets, children can reach school and college. Improvements to farm land, the digging of ponds, the development of water-harvesting structures, all under NREGS, means that farming is less precarious than it was five years ago, and farmers are now very aware of the importance of such measures. Electrification

means that many households now have television. The value of this might be questioned by some, but it opens up the world to previously very isolated communities, a world to which they have as much right as everyone else.

The project has also worked with duty-bearers, providing information, awareness-raising and training. It has also encouraged government officers and representatives to engage with villagers and this has paid real dividends. While, on the whole, they are still not very proactive, duty-bearers are generally far more willing to listen to villagers, visit the villages, and provide the services which are due to them. Corruption is reduced to a point where it is truly exceptional, and the quality of representation in local government has improved, largely because the electorate is no longer willing to accept representatives who do not do their job properly.

The change of attitude and confidence in the villages is astonishing, and is perhaps more remarkable than anything else. It is difficult to measure this objectively, but results bear witness in part to this change. To have achieved this within five years is impressive. It is particularly noticeable by comparison with the non-project villages that were visited.

The project was not without weaknesses, but they were few, and the management and staff have tried hard to address them. Overall, the project is an example of how much can be achieved for a relatively small investment of money, provided the right approach is used and the whole community is engaged. The commitment of the staff is remarkable and it is largely due to their unceasing efforts that the project has been able to deliver results and keep within the budget. They have the high respect of villagers and all those with whom they come into contact. They should feel very proud of what they have achieved, as should the villagers themselves.

It was felt that the project had been a success and that its work was reaching a natural conclusion. However, there is still much that remains to be done in the villages beyond the project area, and in the Recommendations, some suggestions for future development have been listed.

# **END-TERM EVALUATION REPORT**

## **1. Impact and results:**

**1.1** *What was the project's overall impact in relation to its **outcome/purpose** and how did this compare with what was expected? What were the key results against the **outputs** and how did this compare with the targets set in the original logical framework?*

It is worth mentioning that it is possible to very accurately measure the achievements of the project because of the meticulous record-keeping that has been carried out at every level. A large number of documents were examined, and these are listed in Annex E. The project has generally achieved its targets, and in some areas exceeded them. The specific and detailed results against the outcomes and outputs are included in the Achievement Rating Scale (Annex A). The following gives brief comment on the results and highlights the main achievements.

**Purpose:** *Empowerment through community radio of the voiceless marginalised communities to articulate their problems, demand their rights & entitlements and to engage the community & local governing structures to deal with their issues in 60 Villages in KBK region of Orissa, India.*

Visiting villages which have been involved in the project for five years there can be no doubt that their people have been empowered. This strikes the visitor especially forcibly when compared with the non-project villages. Time and again villagers reported on the way in which they had come together to discuss their problems, to become aware of their rights and entitlements and to move forward to claim them, usually with success. Each community had stories to tell of their achievements, and many were astounded at their ability to bring about such change within only five years. The sense of confidence was palpable, and most communities felt that they were now able to deal with these issues on their own, issues which five years ago they had barely realised existed because they were so concerned with "the everyday need to find food for today, this week, this month, this year." There were a few concerns, however, that without the radio programmes and without their supporting project workers they might have difficulty gaining information about new developments in government programmes and rights because, even though government officials were cooperative, they were still not proactive about providing information and implementing policies.

## **1.2 Key Outputs:**

**1)** *Social capital augmented by 60 strong self-sustained & self-led village forums of marginalised communities linked with panchayats, SHGs & LCs, and their increased engagement in raising their issues and participation in local governance (1. 60 village forums of poor families (base – 0) capacitated & linked with 15 Panchayats, 240 SHGs & 240 Listeners' Clubs (base – 0) by end of 2<sup>nd</sup> yr, continuously managed their own affairs and engaged in claiming rights collectively from 3<sup>rd</sup> yr 2. 15 panchayats (local councils) sensitised, capacitated and made pro-active by 2<sup>nd</sup> yr to assist the poor in accessing NREGS, RTI, Forest Land, Education & health rights etc. (base – 0))*

The project records detail the development of the village forums (MHGSs), their activities and relationships with other bodies. However, visits to villages, interviews with villagers (some members of village forums, and some not), and village discussions, bore witness to the vitality of these groups (for list of those met, see Annex E). The MHGSs have now been functioning for five years and are well established, having dealt successfully with a wide range of issues which have made a real difference to the lives of the villagers. There were occasions when action had been undertaken by SHGs, but almost universally it was thanks to the activities of the MHGSs that so many substantial results had been achieved. Even when action was undertaken by SHGs, the MHGS had been a unifying factor, bringing the different groups together, usually for the first time. The MHGSs have successfully included women, and have been instrumental in improving their skills, confidence and status, encouraging others to come forward. The Listener Clubs have also

played an important role. Many villagers are unable to hear the radio broadcasts, either because they have no radio, or because they are working. Using narrowcasting the LCs share the experience of a programme and are able to discuss what they hear and the issues raised which reinforces the impact of the information.

Considerable investment has made in the local panchayats and the PRI representatives. They have been provided with training on rights and entitlements issues, and with information and material to ensure they are aware of their duties. After the last elections in 2012, the project carried out induction training for new representatives to ensure that they understood this important element of their work. These efforts have borne fruit. Indeed in many cases Ward Members also belong to their local MHGS and play a valuable part in ensuring that village action leads to results.

**2) Human Capital enriched through pool of 10 skilled radio reporters and 240 radio activists and continuous support for community forums to use community radio for demanding rights & entitlements in 60 villages (1. 10 skilled Community Radio Reporters trained & engaged by 1<sup>st</sup> yr and continue to engage the target groups for their rights from 2<sup>nd</sup> yr (base – 0) 2. 240 Radio Activists trained & engaged in supporting 60 community forums in claiming rights and entitlements from 2<sup>nd</sup> yr (base - 0) 3. The CR Reporters and Activists supported community forums in radio programs on their issues, engaged in their organisation and capacity-building and rights-claiming with local authorities 4. Increased participation of women in Capacity Building and Radio Programme to 50% Children to 30%, Elderly to 30%, Disabled to 30%, HIV/AIDS affected / prone persons to 30% by 2014)**

The help, training, support and guidance that has been provided by the Community Radio Reporters to the villagers is universally acknowledged throughout the project area. They have become part of the communities with which they have worked and there were numerous tributes to their hard work, commitment and the contributions they had made to change in the lives of villagers.

While very many other villagers have participated in the whole process, from discussion to decision-making and then to action, the Community Radio Activists have been at the heart of the process. Their training, capacity-building and experience have given them confidence and they have gone from strength to strength. Many of them lead Listener Clubs, and they are vigorous members of their MHGSs. These people will be future PRI representatives and sarpanches of their communities, and it is good to see that they include women in their number, and other previously disadvantaged groups. When asked to prioritise the value of their achievements over the past five years, many male members specifically listed “the empowerment of women”. Though some actions have been initiated and taken solely by SHGs, it is through these forums (the MHGSs) that women have been able to achieve the confidence to participate as equals in the public arena.

**3) Increased community awareness on civil society and governance problems (1. At least 50% of marginalised raised rights/ entitlements, poverty, governance and civil society problems by 4<sup>th</sup> Yr with Media, PRIs, Government, CSOs 2. 30% Media, 50% PRIs Reps, 50% Government Officials and 60% NGOs/CBOs made sensitised and pro-active on marginalised communities rights issues in 60 villages by 2013 3. Sustained networks among the marginalised people in addressing rights, poverty, governance and civil society issues by 2013 4.50% marginalised people used information generated through this project to understand, analyse and articulate their problems and demand their rights.)**

“We did not know that we did not know. How could we have known there were all these rights?” Communities were astonished as their awareness grew, not only of their own problems, but that by accessing government schemes and programmes, and claiming their rights and entitlements, they

had within their reach the means of addressing those problems to a large extent. Looking back now, it is hard for them to realise quite how little they knew. CHALE CHALO provided a wide range of information in a number of ways which captured the interest of the villagers, helping them understand their entitlements and how to claim them. For most of them, this was a revelatory starting point. This awareness has been achieved through the Community Radio Programmes to which most people listen regularly, through follow-up discussion and work within their communities, facilitated by the local Radio Reporter and Radio Activists, through publications (leaflets, booklets and handbooks), and through workshop sessions. The awareness has been consolidated and transformed into action through their village forums where all members of the community are able to participate in addressing their problems.

The project has worked closely with representatives, government officials and other duty-bearers, and with the media, providing information, awareness-raising and training, and positively and creatively encouraging them to participate in the process. It has helped duty-bearers develop a proper working knowledge of their duties and a sense of responsibility and has encouraged government officers and representatives to engage with villagers. This has paid real dividends. While, on the whole, they are still not very proactive, duty-bearers are generally far more willing to listen to villagers, visit the villages, and provide the services which are due to them. The payment of bribes has been substantially reduced, as has the existence of touts and middlemen, and when offences are reported, the money has to be repaid immediately. Corruption is reduced to a point where it is truly exceptional, and the quality of representation in local government has improved, largely because the electorate is no longer willing to accept representatives who do not do their job properly. Community Radio has been a powerful tool in this regard too, with these groups relishing their inclusion in such a public medium, but also aware of the power that such a popular medium holds – it is a useful way of addressing a large audience, but a space where one can also be held to account in a very public manner!

**4) Marginalised community-led and determined production, broadcasting & narrowcasting of 260 radio episodes & participatory learning relating their problems, rights & entitlements in 60 villages (1. Fully Functional Community Radio Studio in 1<sup>st</sup> Yr 2. 244 community radio programs aired through 2 Radio Stations and 1500 narrowcast events covering done in 60 project villages by 2014 3. Expertise and Resources of Chale Chalo and Community created through this project used for further fund raising from Yr 3 for strengthening the initiative and replication in the area by 2014)**

**Two hundred and sixty** episodes of community radio programmes have been produced, broadcast and made available for narrow-casting. The starting point for the programmes lies in discussions that are held within villages. The programmes deal with a theme and comprise a drama, interviews, discussion, song, palla (traditional musical story-telling form), interviews, feedback and reports of success stories. Much of the recording is done in the field and includes local villagers who delight in participating and then hearing their voices broadcast. The programmes are heard across sixteen Districts and are listened to by up to a million people. Feedback comes from far away, with accounts of how the programmes have proved useful and/or enjoyable. When asked what aspects of the programmes they liked best, villagers generally felt that they liked the whole package, but most said it was the information that they really valued. As one man said, “If someone doesn’t understand the information in the interview, maybe they will understand it from the drama. And if not in the drama, then maybe in the song.”

But the programmes are only a part of the process. As was demonstrated by discussion in the non-project villages which had heard the radio programmes, without the follow-up discussion and input by the project staff, then the probability is that little would have been achieved. Awareness of



one's rights is not enough. It is also awareness of how to claim those rights, and this where the follow-up work made its real contribution.

The technical skills that have been developed by the team are already being used for other community radio work (see \*\*\*). There had been the hope of providing an income from the sale of tapes and CDs of the programmes, and some small amount of money had been thus raised. However, technology has moved on, and most people are now able to access episodes free of charge on their mobiles, so this small potential revenue source has been pulled out from under their feet by technological progress. It is hard to imagine that such popular programmes will merely end, and efforts are taking place to find ways in which they can continue. Plans are afoot to establish a Community Radio Station which seems the obvious step forward, and this is now possible under Indian Government legislation. However obtaining a license is a long, slow process, especially since this is a Naxalite-affected area, and it is likely to take three years before such a license is granted.

**5) Increased engagement of government & other stakeholders & sustained marginalised community-led advocacy & networking for their rights & entitlements and participatory governance for poverty reduction. (1. Easy access and Increased utilisation of rights/ entitlements among marginalised people: a. RTI – from 0.46% to 30%; b. MGNREGS Job Cards – from 40.75% to 100%; c. MGNREGS average days of works- from 27 to 70 days; d. MGNREGS complete 100 days works- from 1% to 35%; e. MGNREGS women labourers – from 42 to 50%; f. MGNREGS all worksite provisions – 1% to 50% worksites; g. Access to food security schemes – 52% to 95%; h. supplementary nutrition to poor children from 55% to 95%; i. to poor pregnancy women – 61 to 95%; j. to old/destitute – 47% to 95%; k, old age pensions – 72% to 95%; l. widows pensions from 60% to 95%; m. disables pensions 36% to 90%; n. Forest Land Rights- 0% to 80%; o. RTE-School Enrolment - 94% to 99%; p. school retention at elementary level – 65% to 85%; q. NRHM-JSY- utilisation without bribe 10% to 90%; r. NRHM -Immunisation – 67% to 95%; s. free health service utilisation by poor at PHC/CHC Level- from 12% to 50%; t. sanitation – 1% to 5%; u. All-weather roads – 60% to 90%; v. marginalised people's participation in Palli Sabha- 8% to 50% & in Gram Sabha- 5% to 30%; w. Women's participation in Palli Sabha- 12% to 40% and Gram Sabha- 6% to 33% by 2014)**

### SHORTFALLS

There were areas where the project did not meet its targets, and the main one was 'Sanitation'. The aim had been to increase access of latrines for families from 1% to 5%, which was extremely unambitious, and even this target was not reached. This has been a concern of IVDT through the project. The project team said that it was not a very high priority for villagers compared to matters such as food security and increasing income, but they felt that now circumstances had so much improved villagers were now looking at sanitation as one of the next issues to be addressed. This was borne out in our discussions in villages, where it was mentioned several times by women as a future target.

### **1.3 How effective was the project's overall strategy?**

The combination of Community Radio with rights/entitlements activity (awareness-raising, capacity-building and empowerment) at ground level has proved to be particularly effective. Using Community Radio has provided a non-confrontational, creative, adaptable, and interesting means of reaching a wide range of people, drawing them together on issues that are widely shared. It creates a positive energy, and has provided scope for collaboration and cooperation between duty-bearers and the general public, making duty-bearers more accountable and ready to take into account the issues of the poor.

The topics chosen for the programmes are wide ranging and arise from discussion with villagers through the MHGSs. Each programme addresses a theme (which may be covered by more than one programme), and typically this will include a drama, interviews with people affected by the situation, interviews with an 'expert' or official who can provide detailed information or be held to account, and songs and music, finishing with feedback from listeners. The programmes are listened to by almost all of the villagers within the project area, and can be heard by about one million listeners over 16 Districts. The comments that we heard from the villagers were universally approving. Again and again people mentioned that it was the only programme broadcast in their own language, Kosali, and that they enjoyed the mix of entertainment with serious content. It was especially appreciated that it spoke to the villagers about their own lives and their own interests and problems.

The programmes are a most effective way of passing information to a large number of people, many of whom have little or no education. They have generally improved access to information about a wide range of government programmes and services, information that is often provided by the relevant officials themselves. They also provide information about how individuals and groups can go about achieving their due rights and entitlements. In addition, hearing some of the success stories encourages other people to address their issues. Many local people have participated in the production of the programmes and have taken especial pleasure in their involvement, especially in hearing their voices broadcast.

Despite all it can achieve, Community Radio would not have been as effective on its own. What really makes the difference is the combination of that with the grassroots engagement in which serious issues are raised giving rise to the programmes, and then the follow-up activity in the villages. This reinforces the awareness that was triggered by the radio programmes, and makes the empowerment of local people a reality. Through the guidance and support of the project staff, local villagers have gained the courage and strength to make their voices heard, breaking a deeply entrenched culture of silence. They have come together to form forums (MHGSs) which receive training and support, and provide the chance for developing leadership skills. These forums are intentionally inclusive, giving everyone the chance to participate. They identify their problems, work out how best to deal with them, and then work together to achieve their rights and entitlements. There was a high level of acceptability of the team by the villagers because they were so inclusive, were seen to deal with real issues, and because villagers were able to participate and contribute in meetings. There have been many individual and community successes. It has been a slow and gradual process, but developing leadership from within marginalised groups has been encouraged, and women and others are now stepping forward to take on leadership roles.

The capacity of the staff has been built up, and the skills and capacity have been passed on to the local people. The staff spoke with real feeling about how much they had learnt during their time on the project and about how much they had grown as people. In every village that we visited, people spoke of the increase in their confidence and ability. In addition the skills and experience of the staff will continue to exist and be used in one way or another.

There are few other bodies in the area addressing rights/entitlement issues, but PRI representatives and government officials are taking more interest and approaching EMCOR for advice and information. The material and training which EMCOR has provided to officials and representatives has been invaluable and is widely used. EMCOR has brought many NGOs

together and established a successful local network which brings many benefits. It means they can pool information, skills and resources to the advantage of all.

It is the combination of these interacting approaches that has made the project so effective. CHALE CHALO is a relatively new player in the area, and yet, when the Collector selected five NGOs to work with, CC was offered two Blocks out of five. They only accepted one (Boden) because of shortage of manpower, but it is a reflection of the wide respect that they have gained in the area that they were offered two.

The project staff and beneficiaries are very pleased with all they have achieved, but realise there is still much to do in the area. Their achievements were brought home to them in a very tangible way when the baseline study for a new project in Sundargarh showed almost total ignorance of rights and entitlements which is a marked contrast with the current situation in the EMCOR project area. It brought home the reality of how things used to be in Khariar. It was also apparent when, during the evaluation visit, non-project villages were visited. In one of these villages there was a complete and utter sense of helplessness and lack of awareness. A small handful of young men who had been educated up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard had attempted to press for electricity, for example, but had failed because of lack of support, focus, understanding of how to deal with claims and officials. In another village people were far more aware of their rights and were being better served. Thanks to the efforts of a small local NGO working in the panchayats, they were receiving PDS, and didn't have to pay JSY bribes. There were SHGs operating in a limited way, but, though this village was more aware of its rights than the other non-project village, and was generally better served, the village had no organisation and seemed unable to do more than articulate a long list of the serious problems that they faced. It brought home to the evaluators and CHALE CHALO staff the importance of helping villagers to organise themselves and work together, and the value of what they had achieved in their project villages.

**1.4** *In what ways did the project raise awareness amongst civil society and service deliverers about rights? Provide examples.*

The whole project was predicated upon raising awareness, and this was achieved in a number of ways: through the Community Radio Programmes, at MHGS meetings, at workshops for volunteers and community activists, by publishing leaflets and handbooks to rights, even by going from door to door and talking to families in their homes. As an **example**, the project wrote and published an extremely clear handbook on the administration of NREGS which is widely used by communities, but also by government officials and praised for its clarity. It has directly led to the better implementation of NREGS in the area. Officials now clearly understand their responsibilities, and individuals and communities understand their rights, are able to demand them and hold officials to account if they fail to carry out their duties. This is not an isolated case, and CHALE CHALO is regarded as the key local source of rights and entitlements information by beneficiaries and duty-bearers alike. In our interviews with PRI representatives, they cited CHALE CHALO publications as one of their most important sources of information about rights and entitlements issues.

Perhaps more important than the information is the sense of responsibility that gradually comes when officers and others are held to account, an increased awareness of their duties and a preparedness to be proactively supportive regarding rights and entitlements. It is notable that the incidence of bribe demanding has reduced. Where it occurs and is reported, it is dealt with promptly, the money repaid, and on occasions the offender transferred or sacked. The use of radio is a real asset in such cases, because publicity is a powerful weapon in the hands of those demanding justice. An **example** of this is given in **10. Lesson Learning, Area 2** (p.24).

The Community Radio broadcasts are heard by up to a million people over 16 Districts. There is regular feedback from distant listeners who have valued the information they contain. As an **example**, the Director of CHALE CHALO recounted how, when he attended a conference on RTE in Bhubaneswar, he was approached by a couple of people from another area who had heard an EMCOR programme on the subject of RTE and had used the information from the programme in their own work, so the benefits of the project have reached far beyond the initial direct beneficiaries.

**1.5** *In what ways did the project **improve practice** by providing greater access to quality services for disadvantaged groups? Provide examples.*

The project has acted as a concerted campaign on service provision, engaging local communities to demand improvements and regularisation. An example is given above of the way in which information and training provided by EMCOR improved the implementation of NREGS to the benefit of thousands of people in the area, one of the main contributions to the increase there has been in income in the past five years. This is by no means a solitary example. By empowering people to claim their rights and entitlements and continuously holding authorities to account, improved provision all round has been assured. There has been a substantial reduction in demands for bribes which in itself has increased access to services, especially for the poorest, and corruption is now the exception rather than the norm.

There have been many **examples** of the way in which access to services has been increased, and the following are fairly typical of the stories that were related to us:

In Jayantpur, the dealer who ran the PDS (which allows BPL families to buy each month 25 kilos of rice @ Rs.1 instead of Rs.20, 3 litres of kerosene @ Rs.21 instead of Rs.30 and 1.5 kilos of sugar @ Rs.14 instead of Rs.30) would supply the rice for one month and then not for two. He regularly did not let people have kerosene or sugar, saying that there wasn't any, whereas in fact he was pocketing the money. Complaints by members of the MHGS to the panchayats meant that the situation had now been regularised and villagers were getting their full entitlement. The ward members had not really been aware of their responsibilities, but once they were informed properly by the EMCOR team, they have made sure that the situation is not repeated. Similar accounts were heard in almost every village visited, often where PDS had not functioned at all. In Kampapur the dealer would not even provide the rice, sometimes for three or four months at a time. For many villages this was the first issue that they dealt with, and was resolved fairly easily, making a real difference to their food security while giving them the confidence that they could successfully deal with some of their problems.

Parmila Jal in Chamura described how she had heard a Community Radio programme dealing with a woman's rights in pregnancy. This was a subject which especially interested her and she went to an EMCOR training workshop on the theme. When she got back to the village she distributed leaflets on the subject (provided by the CHALE CHALO team) and held a meeting to let everyone know all about the various schemes for the care of pregnant women. One of their main concerns was that when women went to hospital to give birth, the treatment should be free and they should be entitled to the JSY (Rs.1,400). In order to receive this they need a certificate signed by their doctor, but most of the doctors were demanding payments before they issued the certificate. Usually this would be for Rs.500, but it could even be up to Rs.2,000, more than they would receive under JSY. The women would pay because they were anxious it might otherwise affect their future treatment. At the meeting organised by Parmila it was decided that the MHGS would take up the issue. They visited the hospital to speak to the doctors. It took three visits of persuasive talking, but eventually they were successful, and demands for payment ceased.

Thanks to a concerted campaign, not just in Chamura, but throughout the project area, maladministration of JSY is now almost unheard of, a thing of the past.

The project has carried out a continuous campaign on service provision in many areas. Examples could easily have been given of improvements to electricity supply, road provision, MDM, ICDS Centres, and so on. Villagers are now very vigilant and protective of the rights that they have so recently gained. There has been improvement in dialogue with officials who had previously discouraged people from making demands. Now, when they are approached by delegations from the villages, they are almost always courteous and give them a proper hearing. While action is not always prompt, that is becoming more normal, and there are far fewer complaints about officials.

## **2. Empowered target groups:**

*Who were the direct beneficiaries? Is there evidence that the project reached the intended target group(s) and specify the numbers actually covered? **Provide examples.***

The aim has always been to improve circumstances for the targeted 6,000 families (30,000 people) belonging to disadvantaged groups (tribal, dalit, women, children, disabled, destitute, widowed and old) and this has been achieved. 30,590 had been reached by the end of Year 5. Detailed project records give information about the background of all those affected in each case raised, so it is possible to calculate very precisely who has benefitted. In addition, a note is made as to whether the benefits gained can be attributed to the project or otherwise, which means that the impact of the project on target beneficiaries is very clear.

The benefits have spilled far wider than the targeted groups. When NREGS work is achieved in a village it is not just the targeted families but the whole village which benefits from the increase in wage labour and incomes. This has led to a substantial decrease in migration from the villages, less borrowing of money at inflated rates, greater investment in farms, increased business for local traders, and a general all-round increase in prosperity. When asked about how the situation has changed over the past five years, one of the startling memories was of hunger and food poverty which, with increased incomes and greater access to PDS and other food security measures, is now almost unknown. One ASHA mentioned how pregnant women now receive proper food, are healthier and give birth to larger babies, which is significant for the future health of these communities. Several people interviewed in the villages mentioned how they were now able to buy proper clothes, which is a real contribution to a person's dignity. They laughed about how they used to go to the fields "dressed in rags".

*Is there evidence that the project made a difference to the target group(s), particularly in relation to their participation in local and/or national decision-making processes? Include quotes from direct and indirect target beneficiaries and label them accordingly.*

As one member of a MHGS said, "Previously people were completely unaware of their political rights and so they took absolutely no interest in local or national decision-making processes. It was nothing to do with them." EMCOR made them aware, especially of the function and potential usefulness of the Palli Sabha, useful because all infrastructure programmes are based on Palli Sabha decisions, and these decisions can have a major impact one way or the other on the lives of ordinary people. When asked about the action they have taken on issues, villagers regularly mentioned that "We have taken it to the Palli Sabha, and then . . .", usually, in the end, with a positive result. When it becomes clear that there are benefits then they participate, but it has sometimes been hard to get people motivated if there are no obvious benefits to them individually. People often don't see the wider interest, and that that might serve their interests too. However, when asked whether they and their villages are better off than they were five years ago, there is a

resounding response of “Haa, bahut!” (Yes, lots.) And when asked who is responsible for those changes, the replies are usually “The MHGS” or “We have done this ourselves. Nobody has ever heard of the government coming to give us anything. The river will not come to the thirsty man. We have learnt that if we want something we have to demand it.”

Those who have traditionally taken leadership roles in the past (especially the men) had tended to dominate and make it difficult for women to take leading roles. Previously men tended to visit the offices rather than the women, but, due to the project, that has substantially changed. One activist said “Having women involved is better than having men. When they have to go to an office, they all turn up and they are properly organised. The men are never organised.” Women have gained experience and confidence in participation in decision-making and in leadership roles within their smaller groups (SHGs and MHGCs) and are now involved in many other bodies as well, participating in Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha, Forest Protection Committees, School Management Committees and so on. There are many cases where delegations to Block or other Offices have been initiated and led by women, with great success, and this success encourages others to emulate them.

It is a gradual process, with some more confident than others, but the changes are very apparent. The project has given the opportunity for intelligent and vigorous villagers with a social concern to develop their leadership talents and play a much greater role in society.

### **3. Value for money (VfM)**

*Evaluate whether the project is implemented according to VfM principles providing supporting evidence or highlighting gaps in relation to the questions below, where relevant.*

#### **i) Effectiveness**

*Did the project purpose/outcome remain relevant throughout its duration given changes in context?*

This doesn't really apply. The context remained pretty much the same. The problems were long-term and deep-rooted, and while it is possible to make significant changes to people's circumstances, the changes to the context are much slower and largely beyond the control of the project. The aim of the project was to empower people to deal with the context.

There were, however, some changes in legislation some of which contributed to the project's achievements or which demanded additional input and guidance from the project team: RTE 2010, RTF 2013 (rules still not complete but will soon be implemented), PSG Act Orissa 2013, Mamanta Yojana 2010, MGNREGS payments going direct to people's accounts; increased scope of MGNREGS; Increase in Old Age Pensions; after 80 – Rs.500, 60+ 300, National Family Welfare Scheme – BPL widows – Rs.20,000 one-off payment plus pension, non-BPL only get pension; Chief Minister Relief Fund (100,000 kidney failure people). Many of the issues that have been raised right from the beginning of the project are now being addressed by government legislation partly as a result of the campaigning pressure of organisations like CHALE CHALO, but also because of initiatives from within government itself.

There has been an ongoing problem with changing staff at the Block Office (there have been five BDOs alone during the project period), and the 2012 election for PRIs lead to a whole tranche of new representatives. There has been little that the project staff can do about this, except to begin again building good relationships with new officers and representatives. However, induction training has been developed and used, and this has helped considerably to raise awareness amongst people who are new to serving local communities in their various capacities.

Another unexpected change is that the development of technology and its take-up in rural areas was quite unexpected. The fact that electricity has reached many of the villages, means that radio is on the decline in favour of television, so batteries are not replaced or transistors are not repaired when they break. There is no longer much call for tape-recorders for narrowcasting because most people now own a mobile phone on which they are able to listen to programmes. This has increased the listenership. The programmes continue to be as popular as ever in spite of these changes. Sadly, however, the possibility of selling CDs to produce an income is now entirely out-of-date.

In spite of these small changes to the context, the project purpose/outcome remained the same because the fundamental problems remained the same.

*If the final project purpose/outcome was not achieved or more remains to be done, will activities continue and if so, who will fund them?*

In most respects the project purpose has been achieved, especially regarding empowerment, access to rights and entitlements, and reduction in poverty. Some things have taken more time than was hoped, but there are indications that even in these areas there is accelerating progress as the project reaches its maturity. The team feels that the work of the project will continue, even once the project itself has been completed. Through the process many individuals have taken ownership of their issues through all sorts of organisations and in different capacities. They have already been carrying out work and activities and have gained a considerable amount of knowledge, skill and confidence in dealing with the problems that they face, especially in claiming those rights and entitlements which they are due. The gap between the public and officials has been substantially narrowed, with some officials proactively providing information and facilitating access to rights. A sense of duty and interest in serving the community has grown in the area amongst a wide range of people. The project team believes that most of those who have been involved with the project now have the capacity to continue addressing their problems and working towards the full achievement of the project purpose/outcome.

During the evaluation process particular attention was paid to the question of sustainability of the achievements of the project. Most communities asserted that they were now able to pursue their issues themselves, that they had gained the experience and confidence to demand their rights in a way which is most likely to produce results. There were individuals in each community, usually members of the MHGS or an SHG who had particular ability in this regard. However, many villagers were worried at the prospect of managing entirely without the help of the project staff to guide, support and encourage them. Many activists felt that they could manage, but would value being able to call on the Khariar office of CHALE CHALO for up-to-date information and advice, and even though working knowledge of existing schemes and programmes was fairly sound, it was uncertain how they would learn about any new developments in the future without someone to provide that information. We would not be confident that officials would generally be that proactive!

*Calculate the project's inputs/results ratio (i.e., total project budget from DFID and other sources divided by the number of direct beneficiaries).*

The total cost of the project was £182,883, and the number of direct beneficiaries was 30,000, which means that an average of £6.09 was spent per beneficiary. By the end of Year 4, a total of £150,763 had been spent on this project (including UK expenditure), and a rough calculation of the increase in income, or savings made, due to project activities produced a very conservative figure of £1,975,991, which means that there has been a more than thirteen-fold return on the investment in the area. This figure does not include items such as Mid-Day Meals for children at schools, increased building of houses under IAY, and other similar benefits. Nor does it take into account



the much wider benefit which reaches the community in spill-over effects (as mentioned above), nor the long-term total – because this figure will continue to grow.

*How did project partners deliver value for money?*

Because the aim of the project was not to provide direct services, which is generally a very expensive way of bringing change, but rather to raise awareness and empower people to claim the many and increasing rights and entitlements they have under Indian law, the project has been able to bring about substantial and lasting change for remarkably little cost.

*What percentage of CSCF funding was spent by the partner(s) and what was the added value?*  
Of the total budget 92.7% was spent by the Indian partner. \*\*\*

## **ii) Efficiency**

*To what extent were spending decisions guided by VfM principles?*

Right from the beginning the project was low-cost, and there were serious underestimates in the original budget. Three quotes were sought for each purchase to source the lowest price and/or the best value, and checks were made on the internet to see if local prices tally with state or national levels. Accounts were thoroughly checked regularly by IVDT and other organisations. The Indian government is very critical of NGOs and keeps a close eye on them. There has been a difficulty obtaining and keeping quality staff because the amounts allowed for salaries was too low, and other organisations offer more. This is a common problem amongst smaller NGOs and a valuable lesson to both the Indian partner and IVDT. They have both learnt that best value does not necessarily mean the cheapest. Without the commitment and dedication of project staff and volunteers, often for no pay, it would not have been possible to deliver the results that were achieved, but this is unsustainable in the long-term. They should both learn from it.

*Consider if the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives.*

The project has achieved so much because of its multi-pronged approach, and because it has engaged MHGS members, SHGs, volunteers, all the stakeholders, representatives at all levels, and other NGOs, in the process, making sure that the changes are driven from the community and brought about by the community itself. The combination of approaches (awareness-raising, capacity-building, organisation, advocacy, and direct action, using legal frameworks and policies and concentrating on implementation) has ensured a great deal has been delivered which would have been much less efficient if it had been delivered by each of these means separately. The fact that these activities came under the 'umbrella' of Community Radio, significantly increased their efficacy. For example, many of the volunteers were initially drawn to the project because of this; it was the main source of information, and stimulus for discussion and action; and it was a very positive way of using success stories to encourage others. It is hard to imagine how else it would have been possible to achieve so much for so little.

## **iii) Economy**

*Please explain how your unit costs have increased or decreased during implementation?*

There have been a number of problems over the project period caused by increased costs, and especially by a fluctuating rate of exchange. At one point the value of the rupee fell so that the partner only received 63 to the pound instead of the 74 at the time of writing the budget. It was necessary to really tighten the purse strings and this caused serious problems and great anxiety. In fact IVDT had to step in to help on a couple of occasions. Inflation was also higher than had been projected, but towards the end of the project this was counter-balanced by the fact that the exchange rate had swung the other way, and the project was getting more rupees for every pound than had been projected.



The main area that has been impacted was staff salaries which were already fairly low. When the national minimum wage was increased substantially, IVDT had to provide additional funds to ensure that the project staff were paid salaries in accordance with the law.

*Was the project completed within budget/expected costs? (please detail cost under/over spends)*  
The project was completed within the budget.

*What have you done to improve your own procurement capacity and capability?*

It was felt that the procurement capacity and capability was pretty good simply because of necessity, but regular checks were made by both CHALE CHALO and IVDT (and also accountants from other funding organisations) to ensure that all expenditure was giving value for money.

#### **4 Innovation**

*Are there any innovative aspects of the project identified during the evaluation, if so please describe.*

The combination of approaches, especially putting the marginalised at the centre, is innovative, certainly in this area. The use of Community Radio, broadcasting in the local language (the only programme to do so), drawing on the experiences of local people and responding to their needs, using local artists and traditional forms, making programmes on location, encouraging villagers to participate, and using officials and 'experts' to give information about rights and entitlements, has made the programmes a winner in the popularity stakes. It is the one programme which almost everyone listens to, and until electricity connection brought television, it was the main form of entertainment, raising awareness as it engaged wide audiences.

But, as mentioned before, the programmes on their own would only have achieved results slowly. It is the combination of the programmes with the other work in the communities which has been so effective. It ensures that everyone has the opportunity to hear the programmes through both broad- and narrowcasting (and now mobiles), and has the chance to discuss the issues, see how the information applies to their circumstances, and to work together to take action. It is this that has truly broken new ground in the area.

CHALE CHALO has used the Rapid Impact Tracking Tool (RIT), and MHGSSs have adopted a Rights-oriented Community Monitoring and Evaluation System (ROCMES), both of which have helped to involve local communities in the process of tracking impacts, identifying problems and finding solutions. This is felt to be particularly important because it increases community ownership of the project and a sense of responsibility for its success as well as developing skills and monitoring progress regularly.

#### **5 Sustainability**

*What aspects of the project will continue once funding ends?*

The community radio studio which was set up by the EMCOR Project is already being used for other applications of local community radio, funded by Indian organisations. One example is the CRY-funded child rights programmes and supported work which operates in 28 villages (separate from the EMCOR project villages). There is also funding from CYSO for producing programmes on budget monitoring for local people. Both of these represent a natural extension of the EMCOR project, and will use the technical and creative skills that have been developed by project staff and volunteers.

Project staff and volunteers have had a considerable amount of training and developed really valuable skill and experience in empowering communities and helping them organise. Whether these people find work on other projects or within their own communities, their skill will remain as a resource for the future. The organisations that have been established during the project (MHGSs, SHGs, etc.) are largely able to stand on their own feet from now on, and will continue to function for their communities, though it is possible that their role will gradually change to meet changing needs and circumstances. The material which has been produced by the project will continue to be of use to local communities, village forums, and duty bearers, though it will gradually grow out of date. The relationships which have been built up between service providers and duty-bearers and the general public will continue as communities and individuals have gained sufficient confidence to address their issues independently. An example of the way in which the project has built for the future, is the fact that visits of school children, women, etc., were organised to offices such as the BDO, so that they could learn about the work that is carried out there and meet the staff involved. This has benefitted everyone, and will continue to bear fruit. The networks that have been set up drawing together CBOs, CSOs, and NGOs in the area will continue, because they are of benefit to all their members.

One of the greatest and surprise achievements of the project has been the extent to which communities have held their representatives to account. If a Ward Member or Sarpanch has not performed properly, then quite simply they are not voted in again. The project process has inspired villagers to take part in the democratic process and to use their votes for the benefit of the community. In fact the experience and confidence gained from the project process has encouraged participants to stand for election themselves. This has meant that across the board in the project areas, the whole atmosphere has changed. Representatives have improved in quality and truly see their main role as serving their communities.

*How will these aspects be funded and by whom (e.g., national/local government or other organisation)?*

As mentioned above, some aspects of the community radio work will continue to receive funding (from CRY in partnership with the Hindustan Petroleum Co., and CYSD). There will be no additional funding from DfID, and none is earmarked from IVDT for any future work in this area, though CHALE CHALO will continue to run an office in Khariar. For some aspects of the work, government money will be available. For example, the School and Mass Education Programme has a budget to build the capacity of School Management Committees, and other departments are developing similar initiatives. Attempts will be made by IVDT to find funds which can support work which it feels still remains to be done in nearby areas which have not previously been covered by the project.

*What aspects of the project will stop and what impact will this have?*

It will not be possible to continue paying the salaries of most of the staff, so, even though many will continue to give some time voluntarily, this is likely to diminish as time goes on. Similarly there will be no budget to support any project-related activities. A real concern is that as new laws are introduced providing potential benefits to many of the poorest, without an agency such as CHALE CHALO, then it is hard to see how the information can reach the potential beneficiaries. Generally the government is not proactive in this respect.

*What aspects of the project are replicable elsewhere?*

The whole project has the potential for replication, because there is no doubt that similar needs still exist around the project area and beyond, and a project such as this could bring positive change to

a far wider area. This, however, would depend entirely on having sufficient funds available because it would not be possible to implement the project as a whole otherwise. CHALE CHALO does feel, though, that it is replicable in part within its own organisation, and other NGOs are interested, as might be the corporate sector. Using community radio to address other issues (Child Rights and Budget Literacy) has already been successfully applied as outlined earlier in \*\*\*. CHALE CHALO feels that the real strength of this project has been in the combination of approaches that was used, and this idea in itself is widely replicable. Many agencies, especially government bodies have a tendency to think in terms of simple one-track solutions, whereas what often works best is a multi-pronged approach to issues. This is a lesson that can be applied almost anywhere.

*What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?*

There is no doubt that the key factor in influencing the achievement of sustainability of the project is the empowerment of beneficiaries. Once people have discovered their voice, it is very hard for that to be silenced again. With the skills, knowledge and confidence they have gained through the project, they will continue to claim their rights and entitlements, and organise for the benefit of their communities. As Nairutya Sunani of Chamura said: "The first important thing that we have learnt is that change belongs to the people and it is in our hands to make it happen."

## **6. Additionality**

*What might have happened without DFID funding?*

This kind of experiment would not have been possible without significant funding and it is hard to know where the money would otherwise have come from. Funding is normally for very specific issues (e.g. child nutrition/education), and would not allow for this broader rights-based approach. Though some of the larger NGOs at a state and national level have provided training on rights and entitlements, and produce guides in Hindi or Oriya as new legislation is brought in, very little work was being done in the local area on rights/entitlements issues. The material provided by these organisations has, in the past, filtered through to people on the ground in a piecemeal and unpredictable fashion. If it had been left to the natural process then change in the project area would have been very slow. This was clearly illustrated in visits to the non-project villages. The people would have taken much longer to organise themselves, and probably not at all. And the attitudes of officials would not have changed. Services would have remained poor, with irregular implementation of rights and entitlements. It is worth mentioning that the fact that DfID funded the work gave it kudos and automatic respect. It meant that officials were more willing to listen, and raised the profile of CHALE CHALO, locally, and at state level.

## **7. Realisation of Risks**

*Did the risks identified in the original proposal and annual reports materialise? If so, how did the project deal with risk to minimise negative impact on project results?*

At the beginning of the project there was concern about the rate of progress in liberalising the granting of CR licences. It has been slow, but it seemed as though establishing a Community Radio Station could proceed. However, the prospect of gaining a licence for the future remains precarious with a waiting time of perhaps three years. This has been because of use of Nepal Radio stations by Maoists and concerns of similar action in India. It meant that steps could not be taken to set up a Community Radio Station as had been hoped.

It had been thought that corrupt officials would refuse to cooperate with the demands of local communities. Corruption remains an issue, but the project has developed strategies for dealing with it, and has strengthened individuals and communities to expose and resist corruption wherever it occurs. Regular reporting of offenders and demands for repayment of money has borne fruit, and cases are increasingly rare. Previously demands for bribes in return for approval of JSY payments was habitual and is now almost unknown, even beyond the project area, simply because those concerned know that they can no longer get away with it. The approach that the project has taken is to use the power of legislation and channels of justice to great effect, and with the strength of this behind them officials have largely obliged and carried out their duties in a proper manner.

It had been feared that the high levels of migration could have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the project's work. This was especially an issue because those most likely to migrate for work are those who could potentially have had the most to gain from the project. Engaging migrants was certainly an issue at the early stages of the project, but strenuous efforts were made to ensure that they were included in project activities as fully as possible. As the project progressed and migration reduced drastically due to the increase of NREGS work, this became much less of a problem. In addition, the project included broadcasts and produced information on the theme of migration so that those who chose or needed to migrate were fully aware of their rights and less likely to be exploited or abused.

*If the risks did not materialise, was this as a result of measures put into place by the project? If yes, please explain.*

Yes. The project was addressing issues that potentially could have caused the risks, and because of its success those risks were minimised and did not materialise or were addressed as planned so the impact was minimised. This was particularly noticeable in the two cases outlined above: corruption and migration.

## **8. Climate and Environment**

*What was the impact of the project (positive and/or negative) on the environment?*

It was not the intention of the project to address climate and environment issues. However, they are issues which inevitably already impact on the people of the area in a range of ways. It is areas like this which will feel the early impacts of climate change, something which many feel is already happening. In addition, widespread deforestation in the area has led to a falling water table, erosion and impoverishment of the soil, reducing fertility and causing long-term water problems.

Environmental issues were addressed in radio programmes (e.g. protection of forest and prevention of forest fires – using forest officers in radio programmes). People have been encouraged to plant trees, and the change in NREGS rules means that work can now be provided to carry out plantation programmes. Protection of forests is an important element of the programme, not least because the forests provide such rich potential for increasing villagers' income. Villagers are encouraged to press for water harvesting measures to be carried out under NREGS, and that is gradually beginning to happen. A combination of these factors with improved financial circumstances, and education is likely to be the best defence of local people against the possible impacts of climate change.

Workshops were held for staff and volunteers on the issue of climate change to coincide with the Copenhagen Conference (2009) and the Project was a core organiser of a National Seminar on

*What did the project do to mitigate against negative climate and environment impact?*

As far as having a negative impact on the environment is concerned, the project team has planned its work to keep travelling to a minimum. There are three motorbikes for the team, and ten bicycles. Meetings are planned so that distances are kept to a minimum for the majority of people. Power consumption and water are kept to a minimum. It has been difficult to reduce the vast amount of paper that is consumed on the project because it is the only way of reporting properly at field level where more energy-efficient means might otherwise have been used.

*What steps did the project take to maximise positive impact? Please detail any potential steps taken to build resilience within the target groups*

As mentioned above, climate and the environment were not the prime concerns of the project. However, they are issues which the project took seriously at a personal and organisational level, and efforts were made to ensure that these values were reflected in all the project work so that it was a positive example and role model. As mentioned above, it was felt that education and improving peoples' financial circumstances, especially by developing sustainable agriculture and plantation, is likely to be the best defence of local people against the possible impacts of climate change.

## 9. Contribution to CSCF Objectives

. Table completed in separate form

Building capacity of Southern civil society to engage in local decision-making processes

## 10. Contribution to the Millennium Development Goals

Only list an MDG if it was the focus of the project outcome/purpose.

### MDG

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Achieve universal primary education

Promote gender equality and empower women

Reduce child mortality

Improve Maternal Health

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Ensure environmental sustainability

Develop a global partnership for development

None of the above

(Table completed in separate form)

## 11. Lesson Learning

*There are four lesson learning areas outlined below. Outline the project's important lessons. Note you do not have to provide lessons under each area.*

### **Area 1: Approaches to Empowerment and Advocacy**

*What lessons are identified in relation to empowering individuals and/or communities to negotiate and advocate for better outcomes with decision-makers and service providers? For example: Tell us about improvements made as a result of advocacy to: service delivery (quality and access), political participation, economic participation and household decision-making. If something has worked particularly well, why and how has this learning been applied in the project?*

This aspect of the work has been a fundamental part of the project, at its very heart. It has made a substantial difference. "Nothing happens – you have to make it happen." And the project has empowered people to make it happen. The following are three accounts which demonstrate how empowering local communities can make it possible for them to effect change.

1. Betrapali Village in Mahaling Panchayat, Kalahandi. When the Baseline Study was done it was clear that the lack of electricity in the village was a major problem. The staff organised a meeting with the intention of setting up a MHGS, and the first issue that was prioritised by the villagers was their demand for electricity. A programme was made about the issue and widely broad- and narrow-cast, followed by debate throughout the village. After a month a meeting was held and the village was united in demanding that they be connected. A resolution was passed for three members of the Committee to visit the officials with a signed demand and application connection, and the other committee members accompanied them to the Block and Electricity offices. The BDO assured them that it would be dealt with, but after one month there had been no action so the three members went to the offices and, in addition, met the local Member of Parliament and told him about the issue. There was still no action and it took another two visits before, eventually, after seven or eight months, the village was connected, and now 65 households now have electricity which has made a tremendous difference to their lives.

2. Rangipur village, Khariar Block, Nuapadha. There was a severe level of fluorosis in the village, and, in addition, widespread chronic kidney disease which had led to 17 deaths. One of the six tube wells was condemned and put out of action because it was so contaminated. However, the people were reluctant to drink water from any of the tube wells any longer, and instead took water from a private dug well. This was fine for part of the year, but in the summer the well did not have enough water for the whole village, so the owner would not let them use it. With the support of the CRR, Laxmi, the MHGS discussed the issue. They decided not to ask for another tube well, for obvious reasons, but instead asked if an old dug well in the village could be cleaned and reinstated because they felt it would be less contaminated. The MHGS took the decision and responsibility, but as a strategy it was decided that the WSHGs should take up the issue with the authorities. So 40 women visited the BDO and demanded the renovation of the well. He gave them an assurance that it would be done, but didn't take any action. So they made a Community Radio episode on the issue which was broadcast and widely narrowcast, and in this way they made the officials listen to the voice of the people. Thirty women then made a visit to the BDO, and said they would not budge until they were convinced that the officer would do something. The officer came to the village that very day, and a Junior Engineer arrived the next day to take measurements and make an estimate, and a decision to go ahead was made within twenty-four hours. Within two months the well had been drained, cleaned, repaired and reinstated. This story received coverage, not just on CR, but in the local media as well, and it gave courage to everyone, especially the women, to take up their issues.

3. Kalipada Village, Sinapali Block, Nuapadha. Though most of the families are really poor, 54 faced a particular problem. They found that when it was time to renew their BPL cards in 2011, they were no longer BPL but APL which meant that they no longer had access to all the various benefits to which they should have been entitled. What had happened was this: the sarpanch and Executive Officer of the panchayats had not been giving out the PDS as they should, so they made these families APL to cover themselves. A few of the family members went to the sarpanch to complain, but he merely said, "This is the order of the government, and only if you have a BPL card will you get rice." They discussed this in the village and contacted Barun (the CRR). The MHGS met and prepared an application to the BDO asking why this had happened. They said they were going to make a radio programme about the issue, and in the application mentioned that they would go to the media if it was not resolved. Then a delegation of a male and female member of each of the 54 families went to the BDO who was very embarrassed. They showed their cards and explained the situation. He called the sarpanch and Executive Officer to the office and told them that they would lose their jobs unless they corrected the cards there and then, in his presence. Which of course they did. And since then these families have received all their benefits.

These three examples are a few of very many similar stories. It has been a pleasure to see how villages organise themselves, once they have the information, approach various offices with applications for their entitlements, and manage to get solutions to their many and varied problems. People are now taking their own initiative for change. For example, one village did not get MDM ration for a month, and they managed to resolve this themselves.

## **Area 2: Equity**

*What lessons have you learned regarding strategies to engage marginalised and excluded groups in project activities or benefits?*

One of the main lessons that the staff, the CRRs and CRAs learnt in the early stages of the project was that it was very important for them to be aware of the problems that disadvantaged people might face in participating fully in project activities, and to develop appropriate ways of engaging and enabling them. At the beginning the village meetings were predominantly male, and it needed continuous support for other groups before they gradually began to engage. Working with them in small groups allowed the marginalised to find a voice. This was especially the case with women, many of whom never previously used to go out of their houses, and certainly not their villages. Their voices were rarely listened to even in their homes, but now, said one young woman, "When I go out even the men give me 'namaskar'." Out of the 12 field staff seven are women, and as Saraswati said, "Women have an advantage because they can work with both men and women in a way which would be more difficult for a man." However, it should be said that the male staff also worked with Women's Groups and achieved real success too. Though women were active at the ground level, we did feel that the role that women played in the management of CHALE CHALO and the project was insufficient. There are serious issues finding and keeping suitably qualified female staff in difficult areas, and in the future strenuous efforts should be made to address the issue because these women act as powerful role models.

*What has worked particularly well and why?*

When women find their strength, then it is extraordinary the change that takes place, not just in their view of themselves, but also in the way they are seen by other members of the community. This story exemplifies the approach used on the project, and how effective it is:

When Barun started working in one of the hamlets of Mundaura village he had real difficulty getting the women to come along to the MHGS meetings. The reason for this was because it was too far for them to go to meetings, something that they weren't accustomed to. Over a long period he and

Saraswati worked in the hamlet with small groups of women, and gradually they became more confident of participating and taking action. There was one particular issue which affected them: in 2008 45 people (22 of them women) had carried out NREGS work. They had only received half of their pay, and that had been much delayed. It was now two years on and the balance had still not been paid. The men in the community didn't want to do anything, but the women decided to take up the issue. An episode on NREGS payments was broadcast in which they heard that payment was supposed made within fifteen days, and they went to see the sarpanch to demand their payment. Nothing happened, but the women were fired up and determined to get their money. It was discussed at the MHGS and the women decided to hire a vehicle to take them all to the Block Office. This was the first time ever that the women had visited any office beyond the panchayat. They told the BDO what they wanted and said that if he didn't sort it out, they would do another programme on the issue saying that he hadn't done his job, and warned him that they would use RTI. The BDO said that he would deal with it and called in the Gram Sathi (Note: Gram Sathi = Friend of the Village, and is the man who is responsible for implementing the NREGS work). The enquiry was held in an informal manner. The BDO discovered that the Gram Sathi had siphoned off the money and made him pay it back which he did. He gave him a good talking to, saying that in future he must do his job properly, and this is precisely what happened. The Gram Sathi is now truly a friend of the village. The women have been enormously encouraged by their success and have been very vigorous activists, successfully taking up a number of other issues such as drinking water. And the wife of the Gram Sathi is now one of their most active members!

Another example of where a previously excluded person was able to be helped is the case of Sishupal Bahra in Bankipur village, where the personal attention of the CRR and the efforts of the MHGS brought major change to a disabled person. Sishupal had been blind since birth. Through an operation had gained a small part of his sight though not enough to be able to do any work in the village. He was married with two children, living in dire poverty with the small amount his wife was able to earn as a casual labourer. The project held an information fair in Bankipur and Sishupal went along. He met Kunal (the local CRR) who told him about all the benefits that might be available to him. They had a follow-up discussion and Kunal took him to see the President of the Disabled People's Association at the Block. The matter was discussed by the MHGS and they helped the man fill out the application forms. With two members of the committee, Sishupal went to the BDO and within two months he was receiving his pension. However, the Rs.200 was not enough to live on in spite of all the other help he received (PDS, etc.). Kunal and the MHGS helped him work out a plan with the president of the DPA. It was decided he should apply for a loan to set up a grocery business with his wife. The BDO recommended this to the State Bank of India. He received the Rs.50,000 and now runs a successful village shop. He then decided that he should have a new house under IAY and raised it with the MHGS. Unfortunately the quota was full, but because of his disability status they managed to help him under the MK scheme, so he now has a proper house as well. Needless to say, he holds Kunal and the MHGS in high regard and is a regular participant in meetings.

*If something has not worked well, why was this? How has this learning been applied in your project?*

One of the problems that the CRRs faced at the beginning of the project was that If you have a large meeting then the established and traditional leaders take the leadership and control proceedings, prioritising their own needs. It was extremely difficult to change this, and the issue was discussed at the regular Monthly Planning Meetings. In Chamura village which is predominantly OBC, the SC community was given no chance to participate in the community affairs, so they didn't even bother to turn up to village meetings. It wasn't the only village where this was happening, so the staff decided that they would make a programme on discrimination and



on the inclusion of women, dalits, and tribals within the community. Barun started to work in Chamura, focussing on small groups of the dalit women and tribal women. He helped them activate their SHGs, and through this they gradually gained the confidence to join in the bigger, mixed, community meetings. One of the concerns of these women was that they had no control over the household income, and the men were spending most of the money on liquor at an illegal liquor shop. They raised this issue at a MHGS meeting, and gained the support of the community. Two of the women (Kanti Bandichhor and Pramila Jal) from the SC and ST community organised all the SHGs in a campaign to close all the liquor shops in the panchayats and they were successful. These SC and ST SHGs have gone from strength to strength taking out loans (in spite of being told that the officials “would not welcome being approached by people like them”) and setting up businesses doing fish culture, rice processing, vegetable growing, and so on. They have earned the respect not just of the other women in the OBC community, but of the men too, and now play a full part in the MHGS meetings and actions. In their wake, the men of their community have followed.

Barun reported back to the Monthly Project Meetings, sharing his experience, and speaking of how he had managed what was a very difficult situation, and the lessons he had learnt were taken on board by the whole team.

### **Area 3: Capacity building**

*Which approaches to building the capacity of local partners and community groups have achieved results?*

The results now being achieved by communities and their forums bear witness to the strength of capacity-building which has taken place. All those who have shown particular interest in an issue or in taking on a leadership role have been able to attend workshops and participate in capacity-building programmes to develop the necessary skills. There has been constant input by staff at the ground level, and the work has not been confined to the programme only, but to nurturing and supporting people to manage their issues and campaigns. This continuous engagement and practical hand-holding support has proved very successful.

The project has used officials and representatives (including MLAs) in the capacity-building process, to the benefit of both sides, and helping to improve access to the various government departments. A particular success has been the exposure visits on which some of the activists visited projects elsewhere in Odisha and Chattisgarh. Not only did the participants learn a great deal, but they felt bound together by a common purpose, which has given them strength in some of their later campaigns when they have come together to take united action on a general issue.

*Did the project have a successful capacity building approach that helped women take a leadership role?*

As has been described in some of the earlier examples, while the women were offered the chance to participate in the project's capacity-building programme, many of them took longer to feel comfortable enough to take part. However, the project staff continued to work with these women, in small groups, within their communities, helping them develop their skills until they were confident enough to join and play an active part in the village forums. Patient support and long-term input bore dividends.

*If an approach has not worked well, why was this, and how has this learning been applied in the project?*

The team generally felt happy with their achievements in this respect. Most of them had had plenty of previous experience. The capacity-building was action-oriented rather than theoretical, and totally relevant to the needs and experience of the participants. Feedback from participants was positive, and many of those met in the field during the evaluation process spontaneously attributed their confidence and lesson-learning to the capacity-building on the project and the personal guidance and support of project staff. The really heartening thing was to hear how some of these people were now passing on their skills to people within their own communities and beyond.

### **Area 4: Monitoring & Evaluation**

*What tools and methods have been most useful and practical in measuring and demonstrating evidence of results, including the disaggregation of data? If something has not worked well, why was this? How has this learning been applied in your project?*

The record-keeping on the project is impressive. Through RIT and ROCMES it is possible to track almost all the action that has been taken in any of the project villages since the very beginning, and to establish achievements in individual cases and across the board. Records of the MHGS meetings, and Monthly Staff Meetings (which include beneficiary representatives) show decisions, progress, problems, and planning. Case studies are meticulously recorded. Sample surveys are carried out about the radio programmes, finding what audiences like to listen to and why, what they find most useful. This is fed back into the planning of future programmes so that the team can make sure they do the best possible job. The Technical and Project Manager visit the field every 15-20 days, providing support to CRRs and CRAs, and getting their feedback. The CHALE

CHALO Director visits the project for 4-5 days for quarterly meetings and often in between as well. At least one trustee of IVDT visits every year, for at least a week. These visits are not just an inspection but an opportunity for the management team, CHALE CHALO and IVDT to learn the successes and problems of the project and to make any necessary changes to approach.

The logical framework has actually been extremely useful because it has helped keep the project “on track and reminds us what we are meant to be doing,” as the Project Manager said. Because of the very many serious issues which arose during the work, it would have been easy to be distracted and diverted from the main aim of the project diluting its impact. Having the Baseline Survey with regular updates has helped to make sure that the work is on target, and if not, to try and understand the reasons why, and sort them.

## **12 Recommendations**

**1. Future work in the area** – During the Evaluation process the reality of what the project team had achieved became very clear, not just to the Evaluators and IVDT, but to the project team and villagers as well. However everyone was shocked and concerned to see the contrast when visiting the non-project villages. A conversation with Nairutya Sunani of Chamura village led to the possibility of a solution. This man, a SC in a predominantly OBC village, had had his life transformed by the project, not so much economically, but in terms of his outlook. From being right at the margins of his community, he now plays a very active role as a key member of the MHGS. He told us how he even passed information on to people in other towns and villages, encouraging them to organise and claim their rights. People like this are invaluable, and it is suggested that CHALE CHALO consider seeking funding to support this kind of work, enabling those who have gained so much skill, knowledge and experience to share it with those who still badly need it. In discussion with them, the idea developed that existing project villages could be twinned with non-project villages which could then gradually be brought into the fold. The Community Radio could then continue on a smaller scale to support this work, using broadcasting and extensive narrowcasting to address problems and issues as they arise. This would also help to maintain the current audience till such a time as the Community Radio Station (see below) is able to go ahead. IVDT has agreed to look for ways of financially supporting such work over the next two years.

**2. Community Radio Station** – The original hope had been to set up a self-sustaining Community Radio Station at the end of the project, but government legislation has been slow in coming through. Now that it is possible, because of the project being located in a designated Naxalite-prone area, the process of obtaining a license is likely to take two to three years. We highly recommend that CHALE CHALO applies for a license as soon as possible, and that it seek funding to set up the radio station which has proved to be so popular and valuable during in the project. There is some concern, however, that with better access to electricity television is supplanting radio, and CHALE CHALO should seek advice from those active in this field to assess whether radio broadcasting will continue to be a viable proposition before investing too much time, money and energy into the idea. It might be worthwhile considering the possibility of developing the idea of making community television programmes to be broadcast on the same basis that has been used for radio on the project, since this will have a greater secure long-term audience. However, the funding implications of this would be challenging.

**3. Women staff** – CHALE CHALO has made extraordinary advances in bringing change to the lives of women, and it has made efforts in ensure that at least fifty percent of the project staff are female. However, at the top level the organisation is overwhelmingly male. There are difficulties to be faced in finding and keeping women staff who have the necessary skills and experience and who are prepared to work in what are often very difficult areas away from their families for long

periods. It should be possible, however, with careful thought and planning, to ensure that the organisation is more woman-friendly. It would be good for the long-term development of CHALE CHALO, and would present a more egalitarian face to beneficiaries and potential funders.