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## Biophysical improvements - Char mangrove afforestation prompts natural regeneration



Mangrove afforestation initiated last year with support by CREL on Parshemari, Gabura Island (adjacent to the Sundarbans) is now showing visible biophysical improvements. Last year CREL supported the community to plant twenty five thousand mangrove saplings of different species covering an area of ten hectares in Gabura, which was severely affected by the cyclonic Aila in 2009. The mangrove afforestation effort has resulted in a four-fold increase in the population of trees due to enhanced natural regeneration, which now nears one hundred thousand trees. Drifting seeds that wash in with the tide get trapped in the roots of these trees enhancing natural regeneration. CREL further supported the community effort by means of protective fencing. The dense tree wall has made the area impenetrable to both human and domestic animals, protecting it from human encroachment and animal grazing.

Monitoring the biophysical condition of the area by the CREL team documented that the newly afforested area has become a safe habitat and a breeding ground for various aquatic species including crab, shrimp, eel, giant gourami (kholsha) and other species.

At the same time, this mangrove is working to protect the area from the natural erosion of the Kopotakkho River that flows past the island. This green wall also acts as natural protection against tropical storms and cyclones providing increased resilience and protection to the population living on the island.

## CREL beneficiaries win prestigious Standard Chartered Bank Agro Award 2015

In a program supported by the Standard Chartered Bank, Shoroma Rani Mondal and her group of the Mothurapur Village Conservation Forum (VCF), Munshiganj Site, Sathkhira received Taka 500,000 prize for their outstanding efforts in integrated farming. Motiur Rahman and his group of Borshonkhola VCF, Dudhpukuria site, was awarded a 50,000 Taka prize for his efforts in vermicomposting as honorary mention under the category of "Subsistence Market Farmers". This category is designed to acknowledge the efforts of the small farmers who are in the transition from subsistence farmers to commercial farmers and who are currently highly dependent on natural resources extraction. The winners were selected from 300+ nominations from different organizations and individuals. A bench of 12 renowned persons from the agriculture sector were asked to select the winner and honourable mentions. Honourable Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Begum Matia Chowdhury MP, Dr. Atiur Rahman, Governor, Bangladesh Bank distributed the crest and prize money among the farmers.



## Community Patrol Groups (CPG)s remarkable voluntary activity

10 CPG members of Kolatoli Community took part in rescue activities along with police and Border Guards of Bangladesh when heavy rain caused a land slide in Cox's Bazar. The land slide killed five people and injured others.

CPGs are an important part of protected area co-management organizations, who are entrusted with the responsibilities of guarding the forests and protecting them in collaboration with the Forest Department of Bangladesh. Besides forest protection, CPG members help Forest Department and Upazila Administration with various activities including evicting illegal encroacher, raising awareness and others social activities.

## CREL links Community with Private Sector

The Dhopachari, Chittagong Co-Management Committee (CMC) signed an MoU for the conservation of natural resources and sustainable livelihoods for the underprivileged people in the area with PNL Holdings Ltd (Pedrollo), a leading private company in Bangladesh with businesses in electric water pump production. This is part of CREL's efforts to engage the private sector in activities that contribute to the conservation of natural resources.

As a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts, Pedrollo provided 1 power tiller, 1 Rice Howler, 1 Power Tracer and 80,000 Taka in support for vermicompost production to the Dhopachari CMC. 65-75% of the households of Dhopachari are involved in paddy and vegetable cultivation. The power tiller will increase the opportunity of expand modern farming technologies in this area by means of renting the tiller to area farmers. The Dhopachari CMC hopes to earn Tk. 45,000 – 50,000 per month from the tiller enterprise. With the 80,000 Taka seed money for vermicompost production, 10 natural resource extractors and extremely poor women CREL participants will receive start-up investment for establishing their own vermicompost production enterprises. This will help to ensure sustainable income allowing them to be less dependent upon the extraction of natural resources from protected forest areas. By means of vermicomposting, organic fertilizer production will increase by 50% in the area resulting in additional income for these women in the next year.



## CREL demonstration pond operators receiving awards in Fish Week 2015

Amin Uddin, Rupon Miah, Nuruddin, Momin Miah, Sabuj Mia, Madhu Mia received awards on the occasion of National Fish Week-2015 for their remarkable achievements in carp/carp-tilapia poly culture in Upazillas in northeast Bangladesh. Another demo pond farmer in the Dacope-Koyra site also received an award on the same occasion for his outstanding performance in pond aquaculture.

Every year the Government of Bangladesh awards successful fish farmers for their achievement in an effort to motivate more people to get involved in aquaculture. These farmers were trained by USAID's Climate- Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project. The farmers were provided with training in 2014 and after completion of training they started carp and carp-tilapia poly culture following the technical packages recommended by CREL. Major differences in between local practices and recommended technologies were in species combination, stocking density, fingerling size, feeding, time of harvesting and restocking. All farmers followed the project guidelines on pre stocking, stocking and post stocking management of pond ensuring better production with increased income.

## CREL Demo Farmer wins first prize with Ideal Homestead Garden demonstration



Avindro Chondro Nath (35), a share cropper from Bahadurpur village of Moulovibazar in northeast Bangladesh won the first prize in the Upazila Fruit Tree Fair-2015. His demonstration of an 'Ideal Homestead Garden' that he presented in the fair won him the prize. CREL encouraged him to enter the fair context where he presented a model showing how to use every inch of land around the homestead to generate income and produce food.

As a CREL participant, Avindro received training and information on how to develop and maintain quality soil, the importance of quality seeds, matching crops with soil type, vegetable bed preparation, pest control using sex pheromone technology, preparation and uses of organic fertilizer, the importance of diversified vegetable cultivation and proper use of crop a calendar to make decisions. Avindro successfully grasped these new concepts and through his innovative thinking, converted his knowledge into an 'Ideal Homestead Garden' concept.

The objective of an 'Ideal Homestead Garden' is to better optimize the use of homestead land irrespective of the land quality. He demonstrated that if the land was receiving adequate sunlight, seasonal vegetables could be successfully grown there. If the homestead land was humid and lacked sunlight then the spices like ginger, turmeric and taro could be grown. He successfully demonstrated that the produce from a homestead garden can easily fulfil the nutritional needs of the family as well as bring additional income for the family.