

shiree Quarterly Report



April – June 2010

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Overview

This report covers the period from 1st April to the 30th of June 2010 marking the beginning of the third year of the Implementation Phase of the Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (EEP)/shiree programme. Progress and activities undertaken against each of the four outputs are reported. The report also provides updates and progress in three further sections; Management Information Systems, Management and Finance.

A new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr. Colin Risner, took up his post on 16th May. Since joining Colin has made visits to field offices and operations, as well as Dhaka HQ offices, of all Scale Fund and a number of Innovation Fund partners. The new CEO, as an initial priority, has commenced an ongoing review, identifying strategic issues related to programme structure, monitoring and evaluation, advocacy and research. All of the shiree team have been involved, including Project Director, John Woolner, who visited to induct the new CEO.

A welcoming event was held on May 20th allowing the CEO to be introduced to representatives of partner NGOs, donors, consortium members and other stakeholders.

An internal Output to Purpose (OPR) review of all six Scale Fund NGOs was completed this quarter with findings fed back to the partners. Furthermore, each Scale Fund NGO signed a Lessons Learning contract amendment in addition to finalising budgets and signing overall second year contracts. During the quarter most NGO partners completed preparatory exercises and commenced asset transfer and other economic empowerment measures. These projects are now starting to show real field level impacts with thousands of beneficiaries.

This quarter saw the launch of Innovation Fund round 3 – *The Marginalised Group Round*. Shiree received over 300 applications of which 46 were invited to prepare a Project Concept Note. The application process will continue into the next quarter. An innovation within the innovation round has been the launch of the *Ideas Entrepreneur* concept.

A number of audits have been conducted this quarter, of shiree and partner NGOs, both internally as well as by DFID.

Other activities, in addition to normal management agency functions, undertaken this quarter include:

- ➔ Completion of annual nutrition survey;
- ➔ Launching of a new shiree website;
- ➔ NETZ hosted programme learning workshop (all Scale Fund NGOs);
- ➔ Visit to NETZ working area by Joint Secretary and Senior Assistant Chief of Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development;
- ➔ Enhanced sharing activities across DFID Extreme Poverty projects; and participation in an experience sharing workshop with other DFID supported challenge funds
- ➔ Knowledge managers withdrawn from Scale Fund NGOs preparatory to a new partnership model being adopted



1. Progress against output

1.1 Output 1 – proven approaches to improving the livelihoods of the extreme poor taken to scale

The six Scale Fund NGOs have collectively selected more than 50% of their total targeted BHH - 45,902 out of 82,850. The breakdown of the numbers is as follows: CARE – 13,269; DSK – 3,419; NETZ – 3,127; Practical Action Bangladesh – 9,627; Save the Children Federation – 7,535; and Uttaran – 8,925.

Substantial implementation activities have commenced of both a preparatory nature (e.g baseline profiling, group formation, initial training) and, depending on the model adopted by individual NGOs, productive activities have commenced with assets transferred, micro businesses established and ongoing monitoring and support being undertaken by NGO field staff, with backup by the shiree team.

1.1.1 Completion of internal Output to Purpose Review of Scale Fund NGOs

The internal Output to Purpose Review conducted of all Scale Fund projects came to a conclusion in April. The OPR team was led by external consultant, Dr. Khursed Alam, also comprising Mr. Md. Shahid Ullah (shiree Project Director) and Ms. Riffat Jahan (shiree contracts manager). The review provided an in-depth understanding of the various projects, their successes and the challenges faced. The findings from these reports were fed back to the individual projects for their own consideration.

1.1.2 Socio-economic and anthropometric survey

The beginning of April saw the conclusion of shiree's annual socio-economic and anthropometric survey. The data was subsequently reviewed by Professor Nick Mascie-Taylor, University of Cambridge, with results being published in the report "Socio-Economic and Nutrition Baseline survey March/April 2010" and shared with DFID and shiree staff in a presentation on 22nd April.

1.1.3 Review and adjustment of Uttaran programme

As a result of the internal OPR findings, a major initiative has been taken to strengthen the process of economic support by Uttaran to its beneficiaries. Shiree engaged external consultants to provide assistance to develop livelihood promotion models with the aim of increasing the amount and speed in which Income Generating Activities (IGA) could be adopted, while keeping *khas* land transfer at the core of the programme.

As a result, the following developments/changes have been made: (i) an IGA analysis instrument has been created, (ii) work planning including a revised action plan for the remainder of the project; (iii) introduction of concepts such as cost saving and least cost activities, chain investment and value chain analysis; (iv) introduction of a management and monitoring tool to track the IGA for each BHH and; (v) assets transfer guidelines.

1.1.4 Finalisation of second year approved budgets

During the period, the shiree Finance team reviewed the Six Scale Fund budgets which were then forwarded to the shiree management for contract signing. This process, involving intense engagement with NGO staff, has been completed.

1.1.5 Contract signed based on Second year Budget Approval

All six scale fund NGOs signed contracts based on 2nd year approved budgets during the months of April and May 2010. This includes the amendment of Logframe and technical proposal for DSK, Uttaran and PAB. The signing process took place at NGO Dhaka HQ offices allowing the new CEO (together with PMTC Bangladesh Director and Shiree contract officer) to visit NGOs "at home" and to discuss broader programme issues¹.

1.1.6 Feedback workshop with Scale Fund partners

While mainly reported under Output 3, the workshop held in Rajshahi during May 29th – 31st was also used to receive collective feedback and share experience of Scale Fund programme implementation. Key operational issues discussed included the experience of targeting and M & E modalities.

1.2 Output 2 – Innovative approaches to improve the livelihoods of the extreme poor, tested evaluated and successes ready for scaling up.

The 12 Innovation Fund NGOs (rounds 1 and 2) have selected roughly 70% of total targeted households - 8,938 out of 12,910. The breakdown of this number is: Aid Comilla 751; CNRS 726; Green Hill 200; HKI 450; Intercooperation (R1) 1,089; Shushilan 1,000; Action Aid 1,200; Intercooperation(R2) 460; MJSKS 635; NDP 1060; PUAMDO 350; and SKS 1017.

Most Innovation Fund NGOs have also started engaging beneficiary households in productive economic empowerment activities. Monitoring and backup support by the shiree operations team is continuing.

1.2.1 Innovation Fund round 3

This quarter saw the launch of the third round of shiree's Innovation Fund; the *Marginalised Group round*. Advertisements for Expressions of Interest (Eoi) were published on 20th May in the Daily Star and Prothomalo newspapers.

The Innovation team also launched the Idea Entrepreneur campaign to assist Bangladeshi NGOs to develop innovative poverty reduction interventions. This campaign created a platform for a new generation of development practitioners to work with grass-roots NGOs for a fresh perspective on tackling poverty. As a result 35 innovative ideas were submitted to shiree to address extreme poverty, of which 18 were broadcast.

At the deadline, June 20th, shiree had received 309 Eoi submissions for forwarding to the Independent Assessment Panel (IAP). The IAP selected 46 to progress to the second round (Project Concept Note) stage of the application process. Of these 46 qualifiers, three NGOs are attached to Idea Entrepreneurs.

1.2.2 Change Monitoring System pilot

This quarter shiree's Management Interns created a Change Monitoring System (CMS) which was piloted with 200 beneficiaries of Innovation Fund partner, Green Hill, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. CMS will provide a participatory method of tracking changes within households over the project period and beyond. The CMS will allow direct relationships between project inputs and household changes to be isolated and understood. Carried out at the NGO-level, this process will:

- Feed into shiree lesson learning and advocacy efforts;

¹ Except CARE for which signing took place in the Shiree office

- Inform decisions concerning scaling up of Innovation Fund projects;
- Provide advice and recommendations to partner NGOs.

Another pilot of CMS is due to be conducted next quarter, with a view to evaluating and enhancing the system and potentially rolling it out to all Innovation Fund NGOs by the end of 2010.

1.3 Output 3 – Increasing consistency in the understanding, sharing and application of approaches to addressing extreme poverty.

1.3.1 Simultaneous Impact Learning and Process Audit 1.5

The fifth Simultaneous Impact Learning and Process Audit (SILPA) was undertaken by external consultant Kate Conroy. SILPA 1.5 reviewed the progress and lessons learnt from the first round of the Innovation Fund over the initial six to eight months of operations. The audit highlighted several key issues for consideration by the MA and partners, including, considerable delays of project activities; the need for longer term programme planning; an urgent need to develop a monitoring framework to capture innovation and lessons learned; and the consideration of the role of the shiree MA.

1.3.2 Launch of the new www.shiree.org

On June 17th 2010, shiree launched a new and improved website. The site was developed by the shiree communications department along with support from the MIS department and web-design contractors, BD com.

The new website hosts a wide range of information on extreme poverty relating to shiree, its partners and beyond. The new site has been designed to be managed in-house, allowing trouble free additions and amendments of content. Two members of the MIS team have undergone extensive web management training to facilitate this. It is hoped this new system will allow www.shiree.org to remain up-to-date and relevant to external audiences.

Over the last quarter shiree has received over 7,600 visits to its webpage from all corners of the world. This number is a large increase from the previous quarter, attributal to the launch of the third round of the Innovation Fund in combination with the Idea Entrepreneur campaign.

1.3.3 Lessons Learning Contract Amendment for Scale Fund NGOs

A Lesson Learning budget was approved and contract amendments, incorporating technical proposals for lesson learning, were signed for all Scale Fund NGOs. In each case the contract amendment has two elements: (a) a budget to support the implementation of an advocacy and lesson learning action plan, including the recruitment of a research officer and an enumerator, (b) an element of "common good" resources that will be used to support advocacy and research activities that cut across the programme such as the socio-economic and nutrition surveys. The contract amendments are the culmination of several months of consultations between shiree and the NGOs and will underpin an approach which stresses joint or collaborative activities as part of a partnership mode of working. This change is strongly consistent with the recommendations of the 2009 shiree OPR.

1.3.4 NETZ Programme Learning Workshop

In May 2010 NETZ and shiree organised a programme learning workshop, bringing together all Scale-Fund NGOs (and some of their implementing partners), to learn about the activities of NETZ and share experience from their own implementing areas. This horizontal learning platform was arranged over three days which included a briefing on the NETZ AMADER project, field visits across the region, and presentations by participants on their observations, learning and issues for consideration.

1.3.5 Sharing session across DFID Extreme-Poverty Programmes

The DFID extreme poverty portfolio includes 4 projects; EEP/shiree, the Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP), the Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR) programme and the Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Programme (UPPR), collectively accounting for over £300m of UKAid assistance over the project cycle. While there has been prior contact between these programmes, this quarter saw the start of a structured process of sharing and exchange. An initial meeting included an agreement to undertake bi-monthly team leader meetings. The programmes differ across several dimensions including geographical focus, implementation method and their stage of implementation. Additionally EEP/shiree is the only challenge fund amongst the four. This diversity should however provide considerable scope for future lesson learning and exchange.

1.4 Output 4 – Policy and practice at local and national levels shows increasing recognition of the needs of the extreme poor.

1.4.1 Advocacy and communications workshop

The communications team organised a workshop to discuss the future of shiree's advocacy campaign in light of the Lessons Learning contract amendment with the Scale Fund NGOs.

While the meeting compiled a list of issues for advocacy from shiree staff, it was decided that the Management Agency (MA) needs to compile and collate information on the advocacy issues and campaigns of each of its partner NGOs. This information will help to inform a meeting next quarter with the Scale Fund NGOs for the development of a common advocacy strategy.

A set of principles to drive future shiree advocacy has been developed in-house and will be discussed with external partners next quarter. These principles include a focus on "advocacy for impact" - issue based advocacy that can be traced through to real impact on the lives of the extreme poor.

1.4.2 Idea Entrepreneur campaign

For round 3 of the Innovation Fund, shiree launched the Idea Entrepreneur campaign as outlined in section 1.2.1. To facilitate this, shiree reached out to universities across Bangladesh, approaching students directly through a series of presentations. The Innovation team disseminated information about extreme poverty, the activities of shiree and how students could become involved in the effort to lift one million people out of extreme poverty by 2015. In total, the team visited nine universities, consulted with 42 teachers and members of staff and presented to over 330 students.

The team also contacted over 40 universities in the UK and USA, as well as placing advertisements and links on highly accessed development related websites such as, Idealist, Relief Web, DevNet and social networking sites and blogs. Within a few days, these links were being re-published, finding their way into other media outlets, both online and in-print.

The Idea Entrepreneur campaign disseminated the message and importance of extreme poverty in Bangladesh to a wide audience; in the last quarter the shiree website was visited by individuals from over 90 countries, compared with just over 20 in the previous quarter.

1.4.3 Visit by Joint Secretary and Senior Assistant Chief of Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to NETZ working area

As part of overseeing programme implementation, the Joint Secretary (development) and the Senior Assistant Chief, Rural Development and Cooperatives Division, of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Cooperatives, along with the shiree Chief Financial Officer, visited the NETZ, AMADER project. The team visited Sultanpur and Belghoria villages under Patnitola union observing beneficiary groups that had recently received income generating assets.

In the closing session of this visit the senior government officials expressed their concern with the poor land tenure situation and condition of housing of these BHH and requested that shiree provide an estimate the amount of money and land required for their settlement. In addition, the officials expressed their worry over the status of mother and child nutrition, suggesting linking these individuals with government nutrition programmes.

1.4.4 Progress on APPG and PET programme

Further discussions were held during the quarter with the Peoples Empowerment Trust (PET) with a view to following up the Extreme Poverty Day announcement of the creation of an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on extreme poverty, as well as orientation training conducted with upwards of 150 MPs. While the quarter did not see the formal constitution of the APPG by the Honourable Speaker, PET have assured shiree that this is imminent and have presented a workplan for continuing support to the APPG.

2. Management Information System (MIS)

This quarter, as part of the overall MIS development process, the shiree MIS unit organised an orientation on MIS database application for all Innovation Fund NGOs. MIS team members provided support on completing BHH profile data collection, collecting photographs and geo-referencing.

In addition, MIS introduced an internal SharePoint service to provide a systematic method of electronic file management through the use of the intranet. This platform allows users to share documents, make announcements and schedule meetings.

Since the new CEO has joined shiree, the MIS team have been working closely with him to review core MIS activity supporting monitoring and effective decision making at the levels of programme management, NGO contract monitoring, intervention monitoring and research activities. A new intervention monitoring process (for Scale and Innovation Funds) will be developed, reviewed with NGO partners, piloted and rolled out during the next 2 quarters.

2.1 MIS database updates on BHH records

- A total of **54,840 BHHs** (Scale Fund : 45,902 Innovation Round 1 : 4,216 and Round 2 : 4,722) selections have been finalized till 30 June 2010 including **12,034** during the reporting quarter
- NGOs have collected a total of **35,829** BHH profile information including **21,465** during the reporting quarter.
- As part of visual baseline process photographs and geo reference data have been taken from **7,983 BHHs** during the reporting quarter.
- **12,841 BHHs** received direct asset or cash transfer support during the reporting quarter.
- **13,020 BHHs** received training and capacity building support during the reporting quarter.

3. Management

3.1 EEP staff and management

The new Chief Executive Officer, Colin Risner, joined shiree on May 16th 2010. Colin subsequently visited all Scale Fund and a number of Innovation Fund NGOs. The CEO has been engaged in an ongoing review process of shiree identifying strategic issues related to programme structure, monitoring and evaluation, advocacy and the research agenda. The conclusions of this review will be presented to all MA staff next quarter.

The decision was taken to change the model of the Young Professional Programme offered by shiree from one to two years. This change will facilitate further learning of the Young Professionals as well as gaining increased benefits to the programme as a whole.

Jufry Abdul Jabbar and Masud Alam attended a two month course of "Webpage Design and Application Development" at the Information Access Centre at the Bangladesh University of

Engineering and Technology. This course will help them to build and develop a dynamic database-driven website using PHP and MySQL – allowing the new shiree website to be supported internally.

The quarter also saw the departure of the long standing Project Director, Mohammad Shahidullah. Since this time, Kaishallya Ram Bagchi, Joint Secretary (Admin) from RDCD has been acting project director; however, a longer term replacement has yet to be appointed. In addition, two members of the shiree team (Roni Mazed, Young Professional and Arshia Aziz, Communications Officer) announced their decision to leave shiree as of next quarter.

During the quarter shiree restructured to eliminate the knowledge manager (KM) positions, previously embedded in Scale Fund NGOs, with the resulting termination of all KM contracts. This is the first stage of a progressive review and restructuring intended to change the balance of the shiree relationship with NGOs into one that follows a partnership model for all levels of programme activity.

4. Finance

4.1 Fund disbursement

The finance team has disbursed a total amount of **GBP 1,601,315** and **254,753** to six Scale Fund and 12 Innovation Fund NGOs respectively between April to June 2010. During this period the MA costs and reimbursables are **GBP 290,703**, with expenditure under Lessons Learning and Advocacy at **GBP 93,844**.

In addition, the monthly accounts of shiree were checked and prepared by the Finance team and final versions were forwarded to Harewelle International Ltd. Monthly retirements and adjustments for all six Scale Fund and 12 Innovation Fund NGOs were also conducted.

4.2 Internal Audit

During this reporting period an internal audit was conducted of three Innovation Fund NGOs; Shushilan, Intercooperation and ActionAid. In addition an interim internal audit was carried out for Aid Comilla during the month of May 2010. Furthermore, the CFO made field visits to oversee the financial operations of NETZ and PAB from the Scale Fund and Aid Comilla, Intercooperation and Green Hill from the Innovation Fund.

4.3 Procurement

During this quarter the Finance team coordinated the procurement for geo-tagging cameras from Crown Agents, with requests also being made for desktop computers, printers, projectors and motorcycles. Work orders were also provided for the procurement of computers, printers and multimedia for CARE, DSK, Uttaran and NETZ.

4.4 shiree Scale Fund external audit

Shiree developed a Terms of Reference for the external audit of six Scale Fund NGOs. Shiree subsequently selected five independent audit firms to carry out this process, starting in May being finalised in June 2010. The shiree Finance and Contracts team monitored and assisted these audit firms in relation to documents and information regarding partner NGOs. A table of the audit firms and NGOs audited is provided below:

Audit firm	Scale Fund NGO
ACNABIN, Chartered Accountants	Save the Children UK
ACNABIN, Chartered Accountants	CARE
S.F. Ahmed & Co, Chartered Accountants	Uttaran
Hoda Vasi Chowdhury & Co, Chartered Accountant	DSK
M.J. Abedin & Co, Chartered Accountant	Practical Action Bangladesh
NUFHAS, Chartered Accountants	NETZ

4.5 DFID external Audit

An external audit of shiree was conducted by a DFID selected audit firm, S.F.Ahmed & Co., from the 18th to the 30th of April 2010. Upon the release of the findings from the audit, both the Finance and Contracts teams sat with the audit firm to take necessary actions to respond to their requirements, with a final exit meeting held on 1st May.

4.6 DFID Global Audit (Finance and Programme Audit)

DFID conducted a global finance and programme audit, which included examining shiree and partners. The audit was conducted by Ms. Linda Sloan – Team Leader, International Audit Department (IAD). Ms. Sloan visited the shiree office, meeting with Project Management, in addition to visiting Scale Fund NGO, DSK, where she held meetings with management as well as travelling to DSK project area, Karail Slum, Mohakhali.

4.7 Revision on Fund Management Manual

Simon Mills from the British Council, Manchester visited EEP/shiree from 16th – 26th May to review and update the Fund Management Manual, especially the inclusion of Risk Management Strategy and Audit review of Grant Funds.

