Key results through programme interventions

The primary programme interventions designed to achieve these outcomes are:

1. Improvement of capacity of relevant stakeholders at national and local level

With the leadership of the Deputy Director Local Government (DGLD) and Upendra Man Shah (UNO) at local level for improving capacity of the 1,085 case study villages (UF) under 128 districts, the project provides all required trainings for village leaders, shrestha (account books), Village Council Assistants (VCAs) and others. Since the inception of AVCB II Project District Trainings (DTPs) consisting of government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been providing the key village councils across UF. Chairman, panel, chairman, UP and DED Secretary, Village police and others following a cuts-edge training manual. The project also provides support to several national training institutions for integrating village council issues in their regular training curricula.

2. Review Legal and Policy Framework for effective village courts

AVCB II Project engages in advocacy and sensitization activities in parallel to legal and policy framework building as well as increasing case referrals from District Courts to Village Courts. Hence, the project continues to lobby with:

The Supreme Court to issue a Practice Direction for transferring appropriate cases from district courts to village courts as well as standardizing clear procedures for transferring and creating an early warning mechanism.

The Ministry of Home Affairs for a directive requiring referrals by the police to village courts, and encouraging referrals by the community police units.

The project will draft a proposal on amnesties of the Village Court Act based on consultation with relevant stakeholders and will play a crucial role towards policy direction among relevant justice actors.

3. Strengthen Government’s monitoring towards village courts performance

The project provides capacity building supports to Local Government Division (LGD) particularly the Monitoring, Inspection and Evaluation (MIE) Wing and local administration to monitor, report and quality assurance aspect of village courts. Apart from this, the project works with Village Courts Management Committees (VCMCs) at upazila and district level for making them more functional and other relevant committees to have village council as a standing agenda e.g. Law and Order Committees, Legal Aid Committees etc. For well-functioning performance monitoring the project is continuing advocacy for a functional monitoring system following the updated Village Courts Rules.

4. Enable beneficiaries to access their services from village courts

For increasing awareness and service seeking behavior, AVCB II understanding community mobilization interventions at local level. The project also utilizes social and media platforms along with developing and circulating various communications and behavior change materials among beneficiaries and stakeholders. Apart from this, the project takes numerous interventions such as:

Maximizing awareness and awareness beyond the project’s initiatives; it implements strategic interventions with all the involved local actors in terms of increasing the legitimacy and relevant government departments for disseminating messages among programme beneficiaries as well as ensuring referrals towards village courts.

Continue strategic interventions with elected welfare representatives for facilitating greater access to services among rural women as well as encouraging their representation as panel members in the village court decision-making process.

5. Evidence-base and knowledge management

The project will institutionalize knowledge building during both what and why and working the evidence. Their precision and lessons learned are being captured regularly for advocacy with the government as well as with Southern countries. For these reasons, the project will undertake various studies and surveys e.g. Impact study (baseline, med-mix final), study on village courts and women empowerment study on institutional monitoring system, lesson learned study, etc. Also, the project will organize national and international events.

These interventions will create an appropriate environment for more than two crore rural women and men within the project area by facilitating easy access to local dispute resolution services through various functional village courts.

Key Achievements

- Village Courts Rules ceased in February 2016
- Village courts in 1,085 (94% started offering dispute-resolution services by 10.00 am, 40% have been handling cases on both men and women) between 02/02/2017 involved, received 3,800 cases and 6,900 cases implemented
- Village Courts Training Manual and Flipchart, revised by the learned and experienced by National Institute of Local Government (NILG).
- 25 District Training Pool (DTPs) provided capacity building training to 5,976 service providers.
- Judicial (district-level) being officially authorized, one case was filed in the village court on 21/10/2016. District Training Pool (DTPs) with the necessary guidance of the local government.
- 27 districts and 12 upazilas Village Courts Management Committees (VCMCs) have been formed and functionalizing.