

Mid-Term Review of Shonglap Education Project Bangladesh - Operation Day's Work (ODW)



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Abbreviations

APIT	Advancing Public Interest Trust
BDS	Business Development Services
BISR	Bangladesh Institute of Social Research
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CODEC	Community Development Centre
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
IGA	Income Generating Activities
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MIDAS	Micro Industries Development Assistance and Services
MIS	Management Information System
Mn	Million
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ODW	Operations Days Work
POPI	People's Oriented Program Implementation
RMB	Result Based Monitoring
RDRS	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services
SF	Strømme Foundation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SST	Shonglap Support Team
Tk	Bangladeshi Taka
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar

Table of Contents

1. Summary	5
2. Introduction and Background	9
2.1. Programme Background	10
2.2. Review Methodology	10
2.3. The Programme: Key Elements	11
3. Context	12
4. Achievements	14
5. Impact	16
5.1. Study Design	16
5.2. Basic health care and human rights issues	17
5.3. Social Empowerment: Self-Esteem, Decision-Making and Mobility	19
5.4. Livelihoods: Occupational Skills and Economic Empowerment	20
5.5. Visibility and cohesion within the community	21
6. Effectiveness: Methodology and Practice	23
6.1. Design of Shonglap Programme	23
6.2. The Life Skills and Education	24
6.3. IGA and Training	28
6.4. Follow-Up Efforts	32
6.5. Is Shonglap Effective?	33
7. Efficiency: Structure and Organisation	34
7.1. Overall Structure and Partners	34
7.2. Monitoring and Evaluation	38
7.3. Costs	41
7.4. Other Issues - and Cost Efficiency	42
8. What Happens After: Sustainability and Strategy	45
8.1. Girls and the Communities	45
8.2. A Strategic Clarification: Keeping focus	46
ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference	48
ANNEX 2: Field Program and Meeting Schedule	53
ANNEX 3: Tools Used for Field Investigation	55
ANNEX 4: Impact Tables and Results	62

1. Summary

Shonglap was planned jointly by SF and its partners in Bangladesh in 2006. ODW became the main financier of Shonglap from 2009. The project aimed at reaching approximately 100,000 girls at a cost of NOK 25 mn over 5 years. This MTR of Shonglap follows standard review methodology, consisting of document reviews, interviews with stakeholders, and a visit to 4 NGOs. The Team believes this methodology gives reasonable confidence with regard to findings.

Key Findings

- ***Deep rooted pervasive gender discrimination*** remains at large in Bangladesh. The country's rates of child marriage and adolescent motherhood are among the highest in the world. The discrimination has severe consequences for the individual as well as for society as a whole. Shonglap is a very justified program.
- Shonglap got off to a slow start, as SF did not get approval from the NGO Affairs Bureau until 10 months into the project. The Programme is now gaining pace and had as of June 2011 enrolled more than 37000 girls. While it is too early to assess achievements in terms of LFA objectives, progress so far is ***considered as satisfactory and broadly in line with the plans set.***

Impact

- Girls have benefitted ***substantially due to the knowledge and practice they gain in basic health care, hygiene and sanitation, and knowledge on gender equity.*** A prominent finding is awareness of legal rights, where girls outside of Shonglap have hardly any, while 92% of Shonglap girls explained 'legal rights of women as equal rights of male and female'.
- A second important impact is the ***increased financial role that Shonglap girls play.*** Significant numbers now make financial contributions to the family (97% compared to the 17.25% in the baseline.) Currently, 84% of the Shonglap Girls are involved in IGA, compared to 10% at the beginning of the program. This is vital for increasing the girls status and power within the family.
- There are visible ***impacts also at family level,*** with positive but different behavioural changes among mothers and fathers. While mothers are more receptive towards changes in household management such as hygiene and basic sanitation, father's showed more support in delaying the girl's marriage and protecting children from abuse and violence. At the community level, animators play a key role as they take the lead in social actions, such as protesting against child marriage and dowry payment.

Effectiveness

- ***Shonglap is mostly an effective life skill educational service provider.*** As seen from the analysis on impact, the methodology is able to deliver results. However,

there could usefully be a more distinct literacy component, and there is potential for improvements in the curriculum. More work is also required in developing functional teaching materials that are properly adapted to the methodology. Further, training and educating animators are crucial to the effectiveness.

- ***The IGA training is effective in assisting girls in increasing their economic activity level.*** Most girls benefit from training in typical family activities in Bangladesh, like embroidery, poultry, cow and goat rearing, vegetable gardening, etc. This has involved the girls productively in the family economy. Some girls have also succeeded as small scale entrepreneurs. Training effectiveness could likely be increased with greater standardization of courses, and more stringent monitoring of training performance.
- About ***4000 loans have been given for IGA*** in 2009 and 2010. Partner NGOs are restrictive in their lending practices, and this is supported by the MTR. As a principle, one should be careful of giving loans to children.
- Several of the NGO partners ***have established follow-up groups for Shonglap graduates.*** The content of these vary, depending on the NGO and its capacity. The MTR considers these to be important for safeguarding the lessons and skills learnt, and thus for effectiveness.
- In sum, ***the Shonglap is considered quite effective in attaining the objectives it intends to achieve.*** Girls are mostly equipped with a solid amount of life skills, and the IGA training has increased economic participation among the girls. Of the many factors explaining effectiveness, the MTR would stress two of particular importance: ***Animators and Shonglap Support Teams.*** Any effort to improve effectiveness would be wise to start with these two.

Efficiency

- There are ***obvious benefits*** to the NGO implementation structure that SF has chosen. It is normally a more cost efficient method than implementing projects through one's own set-up. However, it is also a system that is ***subject to operational risk***, as it may introduce inefficiencies in the system when performance of these partner NGO changes for the worse.
- Reporting from the NGOs reveal that some of the ***partners have faced serious challenges***, and there are indications of substantial differences in performance between them. To ensure Shonglap efficiency, SF would benefit from more stringent relationships with their implementing partners. If Strømme is truly RBM oriented, they should perhaps introduce more business like performance contracts with their cooperating partners.
- The current system does not always seem to be able to detect and manage NGO partner issues with sufficient speed and determination when they arise. To some extent this is due to shortage of resources at the Strømme office in Dhaka.

Analyzing monitoring reports properly is time consuming. As seen from the field, there is a **challenge for SF in balancing ambitions with resources**.

- SF has designed an **extensive and ambitious monitoring structure** based on RBM principles. It is hard not to be impressed by the extent and the detail of results that SF tries to monitor. However, it is also resource demanding exercises for all levels involved, and the validity of some of the data can be questioned. Some of the information is perhaps also more "nice to know", than "need to know". In short, the M&E system needs further pruning.
- Increases in unit cost per girl imply that Shonglap will have to reduce the overall outreach targets. Tentative calculations estimate an average cost per Shonglap girl of roughly NOK 355 over the full period. This still compares favourably with for instance analysis from UNDP that calculates the costs of sending one pupil to secondary school in Bangladesh, at approximately NOK 660. **Combined with findings on impact and effectiveness above, Shonglap is considered "value for money"**.

Sustainability and Strategy

- Some of the life skills learnt in Shonglap will be continued to be practiced also after Shonglap is finished. This in particular include **practical skills** for instance related to hygiene, health and sanitation, and to practiced IGA. More **abstract "life skills behavior" subjects** like human rights, women and child rights, will require continued updating to be sustainable. Knowledge of legal rights is sustainable, but requires the acquiescence of guardians to be effective.
- International experience on "empowerment" indicates that individual change is difficult if the daily environment is not conducive. **Family, friends and the community are crucial to sustainable transformation**. If these three are supportive the likelihood for individual development are significantly better. In Shonglap, the SSTs play a key role not only for effective knowledge delivery, but also to the sustainability of the Shonglap knowledge. Finally, sustainability of knowledge will be improved by follow-up activities.
- The **"girl empowerment" angle of Shonglap is very, very important**. The discrimination against girls is so blatant and so damaging in many places of Bangladesh, that the theme clearly deserves special attention.
- It is a sign of the success of the Shonglap programme that many of the **most debated issues now concern extensions and additions** to the initial programme. However, the stated focus of the programme is initial awareness raising and empowerment of the adolescent girls, and not that Shonglap should support them in all facets of life. One of the key strengths is precisely the clearly defined target group as well as programme intention.
- To facilitate the strategic thinking, it might thus be useful to split Shonglap in two components - **core programme and add-ons**. Strømme will have the

responsibility for running an excellent core programme, while the partners have the responsibility for initiating and operating functional and effective add-ons.

Recommendations

Effectiveness

- The Shonglap Program should improve the functional literacy building component within the design.
- National level advocacy and networking should be an ingrained component of Shonglap Program, for instance with regard to readmission to school.
- Education materials used in Shonglap program should be reviewed to develop better design materials, and to create synergy in literacy building and life skill education.
- Flash Cards, IEC and audiovisual materials can be developed to address the difficulties the animators face in practicing REFLECT approach.
- Supplementary reading materials for the animators throughout the program and for graduated girls during the follow-up program should be available.
- Sequential training programs can be developed to properly train animators considering all aspects of Shonglap programs, improved teaching methods, better classroom management and detailed understanding of the lessons imparted.
- Shonglap should focus IGA training on typical family activities, as those are relevant interventions that benefit most of the girls. MIDAS training should continue for promising candidates.
- The training should be better standardized, across the NGOs. A minimum standard for traditional occupational skill development should be developed.
- Shonglap should be very restrictive with regard to engaging in any other IGA support activity than the general training it delivers today.
- Establishment of follow-up forums should be included in the basic methodology.
- Any effort to sustain and improve effectiveness of Shonglap should start with animators and Shonglap Support Teams. Spending resources to improve the two is likely to yield good benefits in terms of effectiveness.

Efficiency

- Establish a result based contract with partners, that includes indicators of desired performance, possibly based on the LFA.
- In the considered opinion of the MTR, more resources are necessary to effectively administer the many programmes of Strømme in Bangladesh, including Shonglap.
- Outsource and/or introduce quality checks on either the annual or the mid-year reporting exercise, ensuring unbiased selection of FDG. SF may want to consider outsourcing the qualitative part of this report to an independent research organization.
- SF should continue their efforts to streamline and slim the M&E system. It needs adaptation to realities in the field, meaning real staff capacity as opposed to theoretical.

- SF should update their outreach and spending forecast for the ODW programme, and adjust numbers where necessary in accordance with cost realities.
- SF should assess the use of CBOs anew, and introduce a clearer set of operational routines to manage their inclusion in Shonglap.

Sustainability and Strategy

Sustainability will be enhanced by:

- Already functioning in good centers, establishing solid SST's is important. This increases the chance of girls practicing their new knowledge.
- Establish some type of Shonglap graduation centers, to provide some support and facilitation to those girls that wish to continue to meet.
- Less a recommendation than an endorsement of current practices: Focus clearly on girls and women rights, and equip animators to do this in a realistic and effective fashion.
- SF should "split" Shonglap in two components - core programme and add-ons. SF's key responsibility is running an excellent core programme, while the partners will have main responsibility for the add-ons

2. Introduction and Background

Strømme Foundation (SF) has been active in Bangladesh for many years. The focus areas are now - as they have been for a long time - education and microfinance. The two are twinned according to SF's basic thinking, in that access to knowledge and finance are prerequisites for most individuals that want to grow out of poverty.

The operational approach is based on supporting a network of local NGO and CBO partners that implement SF funded programmes. SF does not operate projects directly themselves, but through local intermediaries. Capacity building is a core concept in the strategy, to assist partners into becoming professional service suppliers to poor people.

In Bangladesh, many of the partners have been with SF for a long time. All of them have until now operated both microfinance and education programmes. Currently, there are three other education programmes operating in addition to the Shonglap, plus a microfinance component in all NGOs, except VARD, which is no longer operating MF. These long term relationships between SF and their partners are fundamental to understanding SF's modus operandi - there are substantial long term investments in trust and loyalty.

Shonglap is a true product of this strategic partnership. Both SF and the NGOs were concerned about adolescent girls, their blatant discrimination, and how they seemingly fell outside more conventional aid programmes. What could be done? As a result of what was apparently an open-ended and joint dialogue, Shonglap was designed. In this Shonglap was a "textbook design", trying to ensure commitment by implementers by involving them directly in planning and creation.

2.1. Programme Background

After the design workshops took place in mid 2006, SF funded a 1 year pilot from August 2006 that involved all the NGO partners at that time. An end review¹ from December 2007 done by Bangladesh Institute of Social Research (BISR) gave Shonglap excellent marks, and recommended larger scale implementation. At this stage, Strømme Foundation had entered into a partnership with Geneva Global for support to education in Bangladesh. Shonglap was one of three focus programmes under this agreement.

In 2007 and 2008, altogether about 25000 girls went through the Shonglap programme, funded by Geneva Global and Strømme Foundation. Favorable internal monitoring reports and general impressions from the NGOs and the field, encouraged Strømme to seek additional funds for Shonglap.

Thus, SF sent an application in 2007 to Operations Days Work (ODW) for support to the training of 100,000 adolescent girls in Shonglap in the period 2009 - 2013. The application was successful, and ODW funds amounting to NOK 25 mn that were collected in 2008, were granted for Shonglap. The targeted outreach was later revised to 80,400 adolescent girls, plus a pilot exercise aiming at 5,000 adolescent boys, for a total of 85,400.

One additional element was included from 2008, namely interest free loans to Shonglap girls for Income Generating Activities (IGA). The funds came from the Mosvold family in Norway, that donated NOK 700,000 in memory of Mr. Jan Erik Hosslemo, nicknamed "Goddi", called "Goddi Fund". This fund also supports more comprehensive skills training for a smaller selection of particularly talented and able girls.

The ODW funded part of the Shonglap programme has now run for about 2,5 year, and a Mid Term Review is called for. The ToR (ref annex 1) emphasises that the purpose of the MTR is *"To assess the strengths and weaknesses, and provide recommendations to adjust the current operation and future programming of the Shonglap programme in Bangladesh. This is primarily a formative evaluation and it shall contribute to learning."*

The Team appointed to perform the MTR included Erlend Sigvaldsen from Nordic Consulting Group, and Maliha Shahjahan from APIT. The Team started field work in mid October 2011, and delivered a draft report the 1st of December. We wish to take this opportunity to thank all of those that have been involved in the review – in particular the Strømme staff in Dhaka - for their assistance, friendly and unrelenting enthusiasm.

2.2. Review Methodology

To address the questions posed in the Terms of Reference, a wide-ranging methodology has been applied consisting of three main elements:

¹ "Review of the Shonglap Program", Dr. Khurshed Alam, BISR, December 2007

- *Review of relevant documents*, including full sets of progress reports, background analysis, monitoring data and external reviews and reports. The Shonglap methodology and principles are quite well documented.
- *Interviews with key stakeholders*, including staff at Strømme Dhaka & Kristiansand, management of 6 of the partner NGOs, external experts, MIDAS management and the Norwegian Embassy. This included a wrap-up meeting with the full staff of SF Dhaka, discussing preliminary observations and findings.
- *A structured field visit to 4 NGOs*, that in each location included individual interviews with about 20 girls, additional Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with 2-3 groups of girls, and FDGs with stakeholders, Shonglap Support Teams and community groups. Animators and Supervisors were interviewed separately. The Team was also able to do FDGs with girls that have not participated in Shonglap. The individual interviews were done based on a questionnaire, which data could later be compared to the Baseline study to identify real changes.

While we believe this methodology gives reasonable confidence with regard to findings, a few caveats are necessary:

- As with most Programmes that aim at behavioural changes, attributability can be difficult to determine, and outcomes hard to measure. External factors clearly play a role, and these may impact the girls in different ways.
- Attributability is even more of a problem in the case IGAs. There are literally a thousand factors than impacts a business and a market, of which the IGA training done by Shonglap only plays a moderate part.
- The short timing of the Mid-Term did not allow the Team to fully select which NGOs and what groups should be visited during the field visit. While our impression is that we covered a large palette of girls and groups, we cannot vouch for complete randomness. Strømme did their utmost to arrange sound field visits, but squaring the logistics with the timing was not an easy exercise.

2.3. The Programme: Key Elements

The Team assumes that readers in general are familiar with the content of Shonglap², and the actual design will only be described in general terms:

- ***The target group*** is girls between 12 and 19 years of age that have dropped out of school. There are adaptations to this, and for instance a "few" boys are also included to pilot their participation. In very excluded tribal communities, girls that go to school may also be allowed to join.
- It is ***a 12 month programme***, that basically includes 9 months with literacy, basic education and life skills training, and then 3 months of training in IGAs. It was an

² See for instance: <http://www.strommestiftelsen.no/sjef-i-eget-liv>

expressed aim that Shonglap should be holistic, addressing several issues at the same time. The occupational training was considered important to motivate and attract girls/parents to Shonglap, plus that it is known to be one of the best measures available to obstruct early marriage.

- The key inspiration is *the so-called REFLECT methodology*, where the teaching is based on intensive interaction with participants, aimed at self awareness and confidence building as well as transfer of knowledge.
- An *interest free loan* of about tk between 2000 - 4000 is made available from the Goddi fund to those girls that can handle and repay a loan, for a chosen activity.
- *More extensive training* organized by a specialist organisation - MIDAS - is offered 2 girls (out of 25) in every group. This is a much more comprehensive - and expensive - training funded by the same Goddi Fund.
- *Each group is led by an animator* - normally a girl from the same village with a good educational background and interest in community work. They receive extensive training before being asked to teach a Shonglap group. The typical animators in many places are students in the 20 - 25 age range.
- *A Shonglap Support Team* is organized for each group, consisting of village leaders, guardians and other external stakeholders that can provide oversight and support to the Shonglap group. This is a key factor for involving the community, and in creating a positive environment for Shonglap.
- *NGOs and CBOs implement* the programme - SF "only" train, give support and monitor. The normal set up in each NGO consists of a Shonglap coordinator, a monitoring officer, one supervisor for every 10 groups, and animators. As all NGOs also run other education programs funded by SF, Shonglap may not be the only activity for some staff. There is normally also an Education and an IGA Manager in all NGOs that supervise all SF programs. Most of these positions are funded by SF.

An interesting aspect of the Shonglap is that it has a standardized set-up that in theory can be applied "everywhere". It is explained in minute detail in a set of three operational guides, and is structured as a "hands-off" intervention by Strømme itself. The system appears as administratively lean and with scope for reaching a large number of girls.

3. Context

Practices of deep rooted pervasive gender discrimination remain at large in Bangladesh where every year thousands of girl children and female adolescents undergo systemic oppression. Females born into most families are still regarded as financial burdens and as a result receive lesser investment in their health care and education.

The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative has expressed concern over the *“large disparities in the upper levels of secondary schooling and in tertiary education, indicating lower expectations and limited opportunities for girls. Although the enrollment rate is relatively high, the completion rate is much lower. High drop-out rates and poor quality continue to be major challenges for the primary education system. Further, a World Bank review of studies on the quality of primary education in Bangladesh asserted that they “generally point to low levels of learning achievement, poor literacy and numeracy skills acquired during the primary school cycle as well as to a gender gap in test scores in favor of boys.”*³

Puberty characterises the difference in treatment that girls and boys receive from their immediate and extended families and the external surroundings.. Adolescence⁴ signifies a denial of girls' access to many entities of the outside world including access to livelihood, learning and recreational and social activities. Widespread practice of early marriage and exposure to violence and sexual abuse is another manifestation of gender inequality within the family and society.

The practice of child marriage has decreased in Bangladesh over the last 30 years, but still the country's rates of child marriage and adolescent motherhood are among the highest in the world. In spite of the legal age of marriage being 18 for girls, three-quarters of women aged 20-49 were married before age 18⁵.

The nutritional status, knowledge and practices among adolescent girls living in rural Bangladesh is daunting. One-third of women of reproductive age are very underweight.⁶ Adolescent girls are of poor nutritional status; 9% are severely thin and 16% are moderately thin. Adolescent girls in the highest asset quintile (a proxy for economic condition) are 54% more likely to have fish or meat and 91% more likely to have egg or milk in the preceding week than those in the lowest asset quintile.⁷ Inadequate intake of food and poor diet are the primary causes of malnutrition. Malnutrition is a significant contributor to complicated pregnancies and high maternal and infant mortality rates.

Early female marriage is associated with a number of social and physical outcomes for young women and their offspring. On average, girls who marry as adolescents attain lower schooling levels, have lower social status in their husbands' families, report less reproductive control and suffer higher rates of maternal mortality and domestic violence. More than half of every married women aged 15-49 reported that they had experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence from their husbands. Additionally, more than one-third of both men and women believe that men are justified in beating their wives in specific circumstances, such as arguing. The practice of dowry, a lower age at

3 World Bank, Education for all in Bangladesh: Where Does Bangladesh Stand in Achieving the EFA Goals by 2015?, Human Development Unit South Asia Region, The World Bank, April 2008.

4 Adolescence is defined by World Health Organisation (WHO) as the period between 10 and 19 years.

5 UNICEF and BBS, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006, Bangladesh 2007

6 National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2007, March 2009.

7 ICDDR, Nutritional status, knowledge and practices of unmarried adolescent girls in rural Bangladesh, Health and Science Bulletin article, Issue of September 2006 available at <https://centre.icddr.org/pub/publication.jsp?classificationID=56&pubID=7410>

marriage, and poverty are all associated with women's higher likelihood of experiencing and condoning violence⁸.

In sum, discrimination of women and girls in Bangladesh is real and a fact that cannot be hidden or forgotten. It has severe consequences for the individual as well as for society as a whole. In this context, *Shonglap is a very justified program*.

4. Achievements

The Programme plan for the Shonglap states: "*The main objective of the project is that the participating youths become aware of their rights, critically conscious of their role and economically productive*".⁹ The specific objectives of the five-year Shonglap Program are listed to be :

- Targeted adolescent groups gain access to life education and occupational skills
- Women and marginalized youths gain a level of self dignity entitled to their legitimate rights and being able to enjoy these within a safe environment
- Adolescent youths improve their livelihoods with life skills and occupational training and engaging in income generation activities with a regular income

Starting with the Evaluation from the pilot project in 2007, most project reports tend to give favorable accounts of Shonglap achievements.¹⁰ External research also agree that Shonglap has produced tangible and visible outcomes in line with the objectives.¹¹

The difficulty in projects that targets social and behavioural change is to quantify real outcomes. One thing is for a researcher to observe a girl washing her hands during a visit to her house, it is much more difficult to assess whether she has more clout now in for instance family discussions, than she had before.

SF should be commended for trying to tackle this methodological challenge, and for showing real concern regarding the measure of outcomes. This is expressed in the very detailed and comprehensive LFA that is made for the project. The basic LFA-table has been updated several times, lastly in June 2011. To assess general achievements against targets, the MTR finds this LFA to be the most relevant yardstick.

Performance and Targets

The Logical Framework for the ODW Shonglap is the result of an extensive consultation process between Strømme and the NGO partners. The indicators chosen to measure achievements at different levels of the LFA hierarchy were based on real experiences.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ "SF Long Term Plan Shonglap 2009 - 2013", Strømme Foundation, 2008.

¹⁰ Annual Reports to ODW, 2008, 2009 and 2010.

¹¹ "Shonglap: An innovation to break conservativeness and agent of change in rural Bangladesh", M.M. Rashid, International NGO Journal Vol. 6 (3), March 2011.

Getting reliable numbers on the many indicators is a complex task however, particularly at the goal and the objective level of the LFA. We will return to this issue in the section on M&E, but there is a balance to be struck between the need for reporting, and resources spent on tracking the different indicators. The latest results as recorded by Strømme on the targets in the LFA for the objective and outcome level are shown in table 1 below.

After a somewhat slow start, Shonglap is gaining pace and had as of June 2011 enrolled more than 37000 girls. The main deviation in outputs is in how many girls received financial support, as partners have been strict in lending funds to the girls.

Shonglap is behind the initial schedule, mainly due to being seriously delayed in 2009. To start a project like Shonglap, SF had to get approval from the NGO Affairs Bureau of its 5-year plan (2009-2013). This process took an exceptionally long time and the final approval was received only in October 2009, seriously affecting the implementation in 2009. Shonglap centres that were planned to start in the first quarter of the year were mostly started in the last quarter.

Table 1: Expected Outputs and Planned Objectives 2013 - Status as at June 2011

	2009	2010	6 mnths 2011	Total
Expected Outputs 2013				
Girls enrolled (100,000)	10,340	10,750	16,275	37,365
4000 Shonglap centres for adolescent girls established	420	430	656	1506
4000 Shonglap Support Team (SST) functioned	420	430	656	1506
80,000 participants trained on farm and off-farm trades		10750		?
40,000 girls received financial support		1873		?
Objectives 2013				
<i>50 000 Adolescent girls protect rights at family level</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% participants are practicing on 10 issues and life skills 	50%	60%	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% girls' capacity of analytical skills to face life challenges increased 	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% participants provide their opinion in decision making in the family 	N/A	50%	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% graduated girls get support from mobilized SST 	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>40000 Participants are self reliant</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40,000 participants borne part of own expenses 	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% particip. create employment for other girls 	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6% of save at least tk. 300 per month 	N/A	5%	7%	N/A

Regarding objectives, the targets are shown in the table mostly to illustrate what Shonglap is aiming at - and by which indicators they intend to prove it. The partners report on preliminary results in the annual reports on some of these objectives, like the level of practicing the 10 life skills, but these should be considered as tentative as there are challenges in the current measuring methodology.

In sum, when taking the late start into consideration, the achievements so far are considered as satisfactory and broadly in line with the plans set.

5. Impact

The MTR did their own survey of impact of Shonglap. This in general confirms most of the findings coming out of SF normal reporting. In the following, only some of the information is presented. The full set of table are found in Annex 4.

5.1. Study Design

A baseline survey, conducted in 2009 prior to the start of the ODW programme, provided a basic set of pre-intervention data. This facilitated a comparative analysis, where current data could be related to the pre-ODW baseline.

The focus of the quantitative analysis was to review the change in comparison with the baseline data using similar indicators. The four non-governmental organization partners selected for the research were RDRS, COAST, CODEC and VARD. Data was collected through a structured survey questionnaire. The sample comprised alumnae girls who had attended the program from 2009- 2011.

Our study included the collection of both quantitative and qualitative information from project participants, their parents/families, and key stakeholders in the project /communities. We also managed to interview adolescent girls in control groups in villages without SCs. The table below summarises the study methodology.

Table 2: Summary of Impact Study Methodology

Institutions/ Groups	Review tool	Type and number of Respondents					Total
			Name of PNGO				
			VARD	CODEC	Coast	RDRS	
Shonglap Centers	Interview	Shonglap Graduates	14	15	18	15	62
	FGDs	Shonglap Graduates/Girls	24	25	23	18	90
	FGDs	SST Members	8	6	6	3	23
Community level	FGDs	Parents/Guardians of Shonglap Girl	5	6	25	13	49
	FGDs	Non Shonglap Girls	13	21	12	5	51
	Interviews	Opinion Leaders, representatives from other local NGOs, relevant	1	-	-	4	5

		Government Official					
Project Management Level	Interview	Representative of the leadership of PNGO	2	1	-	2	5
	Consultation	Mid-level & Field level management/personnel extensively involved with project of PNGO	14	20	16	14	64

For qualitative analysis FGDs were conducted with both Shonglap Graduate Girls (SGG) and a control group of adolescent girls living in comparable areas untouched by the program. The sampling frame comprised unmarried young adolescent girls (age group of 11-19 years) including a control cohort of a similar size and matched on ethnic group. There was no significant difference between SGGs and Non-Shonglap girls in age, marital status, residential setting, or religion.

Constraints and Limitations

Between 2009 and 2011, the Shonglap Program is estimated to have trained more than 20,000 adolescent girls. With such a massive number, it has been extremely arduous to keep records of the girls' movements as many married and moved away from the villages. Researchers for the programme found difficulty in locating married alumni's and their spouse families. The survey participants may thus not be completely random.

Further, the baseline apparently mostly relates to households who participated in the pilot phase of the program (2006-2008). That set of data are thus not fully reliable as data for comparison of pre- and post-intervention attitudes and behaviour. While the data can be used to track the development of benchmark indicators in the programme, it is likely not representative of the full group of non-school adolescent girls in Bangladesh.

5.2. Basic health care and human rights issues

There are significant impacts in this area, which are backed by both qualitative and quantitative findings. Knowledge on the seven killer diseases- Tuberculosis (TB), Polio, Tetanus, Pneumonia, Whooping cough, Hepatitis B and Measles, and related immunization saw a significant rise among the Shonglap Girls. Although only 8% of the Shonglap Girls could name all the seven diseases (see table 7 in Annex 4), a significant number could name more than three and or at least two names (48% and 40%).

Table 3: Knowledge on Vaccines

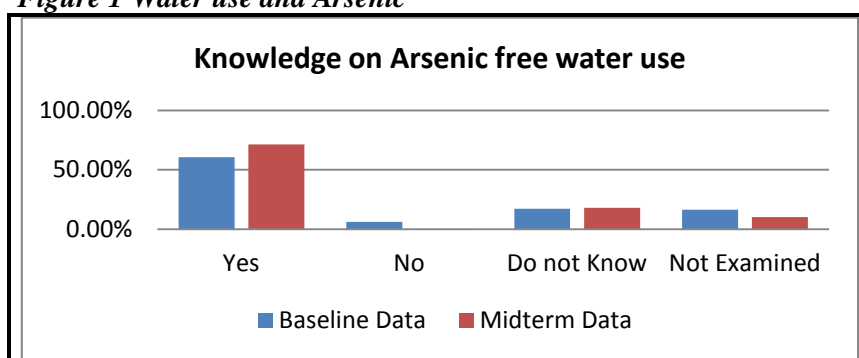
	<i>Baseline Data</i>	<i>Midterm Data</i>
Call Tell all	5.36%	64%
Can tell for 2 and more	28.57%	12%
Can tell 1	26.79%	14%
Cant specify any	39.29%	10%

More than half (64%) of the Shonglap Girls named all the vaccines to preventable diseases. An increase of knowledge among the Non-Shonglap Girls was also found compared to the level of prevailing knowledge level on seven diseases and vaccinations during the baseline.

Practice of using safe water and sanitation.

All the Shonglap Girls confirmed the use of safe drinking water at household level from tube well (ANNEX-4, Table-1). However, only 48% of the Shonglap girls have shown their conscious attitude of using arsenic free water, which is below the baseline information (60.63%). Another 18% acknowledged their ignorance on the matter and 10% have never examined their water source. In terms of sanitation, all the Shonglap Girls confirmed the use of Ring - Slab latrine proving an improvement in the sanitation condition (ANNEX-4, Table-2).

Figure 1 Water use and Arsenic



Knowledge on Gender Equality

The knowledge on the rights of women has seen notable improvement among Shonglap Girls compared to the beginning of the program. All Shonglap Girls have an understanding about the legal rights of women. Most of the girls (92%) explained ‘legal rights of women as equal rights of male and female’, 88% identified ‘family law’, 84% stated women and child protection law and 80% named ‘inheritance right of woman’. There is a marked difference in what the Shonglap girls know, and the level of knowledge in the baseline and among NGS. This is a highly important finding. While the concept of human rights may be difficult to fully grasp, the Shonglap girls have at least a basic understanding of their legal rights

Table 4: Knowledge on Specific Gender Rights

	Baseline Data		Midterm Data	
			SG	NGS
Equal rights for males and females	70%		92%	50%
Family Law	16%		88%	7%
Inheritance rights of women	46%		80%	5%
Women and Child protection law	10%		84%	1%

Awareness of HIV/AIDS

There has been a major increase in the general understanding of HIV/AIDs among Shonglap Graduate Girls. In comparison to the baseline (27%), almost all the consulted Shonglap Girls confirmed having heard about HIV/AIDs and identified at least two modes of transmission. (Table 8 in Annex 4). In stark contrast to these girls, non-Shonglap Girls (50%) remained uninformed about the matter, which is higher than the baseline information (39.81%).

5.3. Social Empowerment: Self-Esteem, Decision-Making and Mobility

Socio-emotional empowerment has taken a progressive turn in the lives of Shonglap girls characterized by a transition in girls' role within the family. Very significant differences emerged in the areas indicating socio-emotional empowerment among Shonglap Girls. In comparison to the past where girls submitted to their traditional roles as caregivers in the family, there has been a strong transition in particularly one aspect: A significant number of SGGs are successfully making financial contributions to the family (97% compared to the 17.25% drawn from the baseline information). This is key in increasing their "value" in the family and in limiting for instance early marriage.

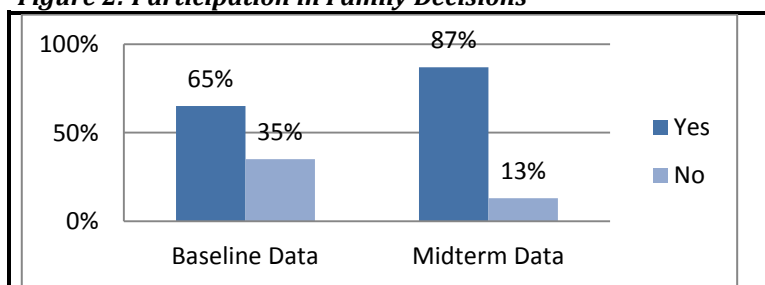
There is not that much difference in indicators like acknowledging the necessity in helping out with family activities (95% compared to the baseline's 96%). Another 76% (compared to the baseline's 44%) claimed to take care of the family members, thus making themselves more useful.

Table 5: Status in the Family

	Baseline Data	Mid Term Data
Helping Family level activities	96%	95%
Taking care of family member	44%	76%
Take role in family conflicts	10.5%	10%
Help earning family income	17.25%	97%
Help younger to study	17%	16%
Inactive and unnecessary member of the family	1%	0%

A significantly higher proportion of girls (87% compared to the 65% of baseline information) were empowered to assert their decisions at family level or participate in family decisions in matters of continuing education, matrimonial issues, movement and increasing mobility in the outside world, participation in social festivals and even in controlling family expenses (ANNEX-4 Table 3).

Figure 2: Participation in Family Decisions



Another indicator of empowerment for girls in Bangladesh is mobility as it is markedly restricted especially after puberty. The mobility of SGGs is also significantly higher (98% compared to baseline's 65%). Most of the girls regularly visit Shonglap Centres along with their peers. The Shonglap Girls are also more likely to access public service and centres like - school (32% versus 21%), markets (28% versus 53%) and 65% of the girls are more likely to go alone (ANNEX-4 Table 4)

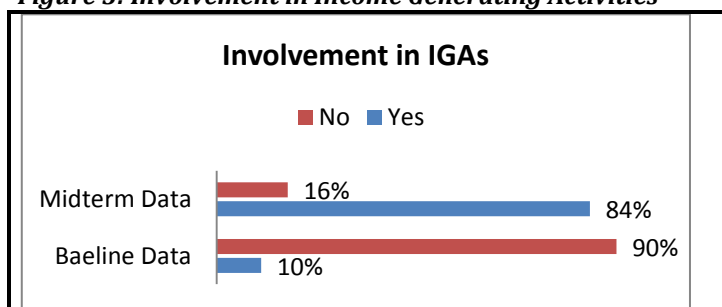
Regarding mobility of girls, fewer girls needed parents' permission to go out, but still 23% of the girls don't feel comfortable leaving the house alone instead of considering it to be a social disgrace(ANNEX-4 Table 5). Although the indicator portrays a significant increase in SGG mobility, its sustainability remains unexplored, especially in circumstances where the social standing of the girl changes. (See Story of Khurshida in Annex 4).

5.4. Livelihoods: Occupational Skills and Economic Empowerment

By official standards, all girls under the Shonglap program have learned one or more occupational skills. The majority has learned tailoring, embroidery, poultry farming, cattle farming and homestead gardening. A few Shonglap Graduates received advanced training on trade like – mobile phone servicing, embroidery, tailoring, beauty etc, which were organized by MIDAS.

With regard to economic empowerment, Shonglap Graduate Girls showed massive progress including current gainful employment – holding a savings account, and having autonomy on how to spend money one earned. The most common occupations being “own business/self employed” and “in service,”

Figure 3: Involvement in Income Generating Activities



Currently Shonglap Girls are 84% more involved in IGA in comparison to the poor 10% at the beginning of the program. Half of the SG girls are engaged in more than one IGA. Girls and their families often prefer to engage in trades that fit their traditional roles in the family such as tailoring, embroidery etc. homestead gardening, poultry rearing, cattle rearing etc (ANNEX-4, Table -6).

The long term benefits that girls and families have noticed can be traced back to economic solvency where girls engaged in IGA contribute to the family by bearing costs associated with their own education, clothing and cosmetics, food expenses etc. Some also contribute to the larger family expenses like - treatment for illness, payment for family loans etc. As a whole, the spending pattern among the SSGs hasn't changed much compared to the baseline data. The Shonglap Girls were more likely to decide on their own or with other family members on how to spend their income. The contribution to family loan payments are a clear sign that they actively participate in the family economy.

Table 6: Type of Contribution to The Family Economy

	<i>Baseline Data</i>	<i>Mid Term Data</i>
Their own study	5.63%	46%
Family food expenses	81.69%	67%
Study expenses of Siblings	15.49%	2%
Own clothing	47.89%	56%
Treatment	7.04%	6%
Savings for marriage	4.23%	4%
Payment of family debts	7.04%	38%

The Shonglap girls (74%) exhibited good saving practices where individual savings ranged from a minimum 100BDT to maximum 500BDT in amount. Some of the SGGs formed ‘savings groups’ with a number of girls and accumulated amounts big enough to use it as seed capital to establish small businesses. As a contrast, the extent of savings was identified in only 3% of adolescent girls during the baseline (Figure 2 in Annex 4).

Economic empowerment is further indicated by the fact that during field investigation, data exemplified the self employed status of SGGs. In some cases, girls are running businesses with the support of the elderly from the family or a former Shonglap Graduate of the respective community.

5.5. Visibility and cohesion within the community

The animators play a vital role in the Shonglap villages. In most of the Shonglap centers Animators are young women from the respective community. Many of them delayed their marriage because of their employment status and the interest to continue education. These women played an iconic role in producing an optimistic image of women empowerment within their family and the community and have been accepted as respected members within the community for the very first time.

These animators are both educators for the Shonglap girls and social mobilisers within the community. The Shonglap program aims to build self-esteem, confidence, knowledge and skill which have profound influence on the animators individual life. Such qualities encourage many educators like to intervene in socio-economic and political structures, take control of decision-making processes within and outside the family and community, enter domains conventionally seen as exclusively male, and finally, access available natural, financial and intellectual resources.

Animators also convey social messages to the girls, the family and the community. They hold sessions with family members where social issues such as hygiene, puberty, reproductive health, child marriage, birth registration, dowry etc and the critical factors associated with these social challenges affecting adolescents are discussed.

“Marriage means bearing children. So girls should be married only after 18 since by this age her body is mature physically and mentally.... Bearing children before 18 years of age is harmful to both mother and child.” - Mothers, Sunamgong Sadar

“It is difficult now to delay our daughters marriage, sometimes we become worried and concerned whether our daughters will find a suitable groom or not. But if the whole neighborhood and the society starts delaying their daughters marriage, then there will be no child marriage.” - Mothers, Moheshkhali

Field investigation portrayed positive but different behavioural changes among mothers and fathers. While mothers were more receptive towards changes in household management such as - personal hygiene, basic sanitation etc., father’s showed more support in delaying the girl’s marriage and protecting children from abuse and violence. This is an area where more research would be highly interesting.

Shonglap Support Team (SST) played a critical role to bring synergy between the community and the Shonglap center. The members of SST have prime responsibilities of selecting the location of the Shonglap center, ensuring the regular presence of the girl and maintaining the smooth operation of the Shonglap center. In some partner areas, the chairperson of the SST contributed the space for the SC. Some SST members were more proactive and create a greater mobilization to support these Shonglap Girls.

In response to the social and behavioral changes contributed from the enhanced interaction between adolescents and their parents, animators with the support of the SST initiated several measures. These animators take the lead in actions such as protesting against child marriage, dowry payment and enhance the confidence of adolescent girls and their visibility in their respective communities. In some areas these sporadic actions become a means of social change within the community. One of the Partners, CODEC, provided some information to explain the extent of these social actions in the community. Shonglap Graduates of Bagerhat District in the first six months of the year 2011 took the following actions:

		Number
1.	Prevention of child marriage	164
2.	Road repair	1 kilometer
3.	Installation of sanitary latrine	565
4.	Ensure use of arsenic free water	604 families
5.	Registered birth	665
6.	Literacy for parents	59
7.	Vaccination	1125
8.	Prevention of second marriage	18
9.	Domestic dispute resolution and avoid divorce	4
10.	Prevention of dowry	28
11.	Create hygiene consciousness	2200 families
12.	Learned to prepare oral saline	2200 girls
13.	Tree plantation	55
14.	Organizing agricultural training	5
15.	Marriage registration	25
16.	Prevention of child trafficking	1
17.	Issue based drama presentation	12

Conclusions

The Shonglap program has had a positive impact on a large number of adolescent girls, and met the initial objectives to a large degree. In addition to gaining life skills education, the program increased the girls' confidence, empowered them to communicate more effectively and contribute to their family and community, change their role within the power structure of the family, express their aspirations and needs and demand equal rights in the family and community.

Sustainable change in behaviour and practice related to basic health care, personal hygiene and family care is quite likely among Shonglap Girls and their family. For sustainable social and economic empowerment, alteration of the conventional perception of women in the social power structure is required. This is not within the sole scope of Shonglap. Thus, even though SGs have attained significant empowerment effects both socially and economically, it is difficult to conclude that those changes will perpetuate without external supports like Shonglap. But clearly, a foundation has been laid.

6. Effectiveness: Methodology and Practice

The basic question is if the Shonglap is effective in addressing the challenges that it sets out to tackle. The discussion below is split in three key themes, namely the education, IGA, and follow-up.

6.1. Design of Shonglap Programme

The Shonglap Program is basically a one year long program, divided in two segments. The year is designed to provide basic literacy, life skill education and occupational skills and is in turn divided into three phases. The first phase is curriculum focused and seeks to develop generic life skills¹² of the girls' by fostering awareness in the adolescent girls on basic health care, reproductive health, rights, environment and legal issues. The second phase, consisting of three months, provides literacy to the drop out girls. The third phase provides the girls opportunities to develop occupational skills. Shonglap now also offers a voluntary second year follow-up program, where girls can continue to meet regularly.

The fundamental program design follows an integrated approach of providing basic literacy, developing psycho-social skills, creating awareness on major daily issues and instilling some income generating skills among the girls. Each aspect of the Education Program design reinforces the other facet. But in practice, none of the Shonglap program of eight partners has executed the basic literacy component. The rationale was apparently that most of the Shonglap girls are literate to some extent. However, such absence may exclude out-of-school adolescent girls who still don't have the minimum level of literacy.

¹² The term life skills referred by World Health Organization (WHO) as particular psycho-social skills; i.e., skills that can be learned and practiced, such as self-awareness, problem-solving, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills. Life skills are comprised of a large number of specific abilities that have been grouped under three overarching categories. These three interrelated categories are cognitive skills, coping and self-management skills, and social or interpersonal skills.

6.2. The Life Skills and Education

The Life Skill based Education in the first nine months comprises a selection of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes relevant and valued to develop generic life skills of the girls by fostering awareness of the adolescent girls on basic health care, reproductive health, rights, environment and legal issues. The content is divided into eleven main themes. All these themes have been explained through thirty topics. The curriculum stipulates all areas of course content in terms of hours to be taught. We assess these according to several criteria as shown in the table below. Each subject is graded either as Satisfactory, or as "Need Improvement".

Table 7: Scope of Improvement in the Life Skill based Curriculum

<i>Title of the topic</i>	Content Appropriateness	Level of Information	Clarity of concept	Mode of content delivery	Detail (Based on the feedback of the animators and project managers)
Main theme-1. Primary health-Care					
Concept-1.1. Personal Hygiene	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept-1.2. Preventive measures for different diseases	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -1.3. Food and nutrition	N I	N I	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	More information is required on contain of nutrient and calories in different food, ways of cooking to keep nutrient etc
Concept -1.4. Safe water	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -1.5. Hygienic Sanitary facilities	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -1.6.Vaccination for different diseases	N I	N I	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	More information is required on demerits of not taking vaccinations
Main theme – 2. Adolescence					
Concept-2.1. Concept of adolescence and the changes	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept-2.2. Monthly menstruation	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept-2.3. Carefulness & activities during adolescence period	N I	N I	N I	Satisfact.	More information is required and concept needs to be described in more simple manner
Main theme – 3. Reproductive health					
Concept-3.1. Pregnancy-care and Safe maternity	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept-3.2. Sex Diseases	N I	N I	N I	Satisfact.	More information is required and concept needs to be described in more simple manner
Concept-3.3. Female diseases	N I	N I	N I	Satisfact.	More information is required and concept needs to be described more simple manner
Main theme – 4. HIV/AIDS					

Concept- 4.1. Concept of AIDS and the preventive measures	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Main theme – 5. Rights: Women and Child Rights					
Concept-5.1. Rights	N I	N I	N I	Satisfact.	More information is required and concept needs to be described in a simple manner
Concept-5.2. Women and Child Rights	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept-5.3. Sexual abuse/rape	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept-5.4. Women and child trafficking	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Main theme – 6. Gender Equality					
	N I	Satisfact.	N I	N I	Abstract concept needs to be described based on practical facts or lessons in an interactive manner rather than theoretical explanation.
Main theme – 7. Family Laws					
Concept-7.1. Child Marriage	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -7.2. Polygamy	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -7.3. Dowry	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -7.4. Divorce	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -7.5. Marriage Registration	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -7.6. Birth Registration	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -7.7. Family Court	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	-
Concept -7.8. Arbitration	N I	N I	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	More information on the existing law practiced in Bangladesh
Main theme-8. Environment and Disaster	Satisfact.	Satisfact	Satisfact	Satisfact	-
Main theme -9. Income-Generating activities	N I	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	N I	Content should be elaborated step by step starting from how to initiate an IGA
Main theme-10. Local Government & Non-Government service providing institution	N I	N I	Satisfact.	Satisfact.	More information on roles and responsibilities of individual Institutions. Discussions on Nation Building Departments should be included in content.
Main theme -11. Adolescent's Life-skills	N I	N I	N I	N I	Need to be described based on practical facts or lessons in an interactive manner rather than theoretical explanation.
Note - N. I. means Need Improvement					

As a programme for out-of-school girls, an objective should be to get some of these girls back into school. This will require working at the national level, with advocacy and networking. Flexibility is required in the national criteria of readmission, as for many of the Shonglap Girls the recent introduction of Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Primary School Certificate (PSC) public examinations can create barriers for these girls.

Defining Information/Content Areas

A combination of Life skills and informational education is likely to instigate behavioral change. An appropriate curriculum content provides the knowledge base for learning skills based on a normative content, and creating scope for the adolescent to apply skills

to specific behaviors. Sustainability can be produced by encouraging adolescents to apply their learned skills to “specific, relevant social tasks” – something that the Shonglap program currently lacks. In some cases, the conceptual information provided in the curriculum remains vague which may make it harder to comprehend.

During FGDs Animators and Project Managers also identified content such as alcohol, tobacco and other substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health, ethnicity and marginalization, eve teasing etc. to make the curriculum comprehensive.

Defining Effective Teaching Methods

Introducing the innovative approach “REFLECT”¹³ in the teaching methodology is a critical aspect of Shonglap program. As Reflect is an awareness of power dynamics and relationships, the approach requires a transformation of traditional classroom roles, placing learners at the centre of their own learning process. In contrary to the teacher being the pivotal voice in the room, role transition into everyone having a voice by facilitating, sharing, enabling and catalysing, as well as learning and reflecting themselves is a unique aspect.

The participants therefore set their own agenda, identify their own issues, prepare their own learning materials and act on their analysis. The approach is underpinned by a huge range of participatory tools and techniques among which the visualization tools are prominent. The graphic construction involves discussion on a key issue in the learners’ lives, generating vocabulary that is relevant and practical.

The impracticality lies in girls’ inability to correctly or effectively produce graphic tools as this in itself is a skill and requires years of training to master. As a result, the confidence of the animator is reduced making the teaching process complicated and ineffective. As the visualisation approaches are of particular importance and can provide a structure for the process, it is necessary to provide supportive learning tools like- flash card with pictures, diagrams, maps, etc. Moreover, although many other participatory methods and processes such as theatre, role-play, song, dance, video or photography are used in REFLECT, Shonglap has been unable to make proper use of these as they lack resources in association to the capacity of animators being restricted.

Diversity in the aptitude level of the target stakeholder

The Shonglap program is designed generically for girls between the ages of 11-19 who are currently out of school. But the aptitude of girls belonging to the same age group is different along with their ability to acquire knowledge. A generic formula for expected skills parallel to age is shown below:

¹³ REFLECT (**R**egenerated **F**reirean **L**iteracy through **E**mpowering **C**ommunity **T**echniques) is an innovative approach widely used over the last 15 years to adult learning and social change that fuses the theories of Paulo Freire with participatory methodologies developed for Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Freire was a Brazilian educator who radicalised a generation of literacy workers in the 1960s and 1970s by linking literacy to social change. He promoted ‘conscientisation’ – the process of learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and take action by deconstructing contradictions and negotiating more equal conditions. PRA is used in the development field to engage with communities in a participatory way and learn from them in terms of their realities.

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Age limit (in years)</i>	<i>Expected Skills</i>
Early Adolescence	10-12	Literacy, numeracy, critical thinking skills, basic health knowledge, knowledge about their communities and the world
Middle Adolescence	13-15	Reading and writing fluency for lifelong learning, critical thinking skills, fluency in computers, proficiency in math/science, health and reproductive knowledge, financial literacy, skills for social and civic participation, knowledge about social systems and local & global issues
Late Adolescence	16-19	Marketable skills, information-gathering skills and habits for lifelong learning, financial knowledge and skills. Moreover, accommodating different aged group, the Shonglap Program has also target Girls from different ethnicity and with different education attainment level, like – school going girls.

Organizing a Shonglap group to cater for all these different needs at the same time is challenging. While the basic methodology is the same, participants are highly diverse being from 11 to 19 years old and coming from different environments. While good animators would try to tailor the training to specific sub-groups, all may not do so and this can reduce the effectiveness for all participants. It is acknowledged that this is a question of resources, and that one cannot afford to have several teachers for each center. Still, it is worth considering whether more age related adaptation within the center is possible. One option that SF considers is to try to send dropout girls of up to 12 years back into school or NFPE centers, and thus focus more on the 13 to 19 age group.

Program Providers and Training

Educators within the life skills education program require a blend of professional and personal qualities which is not common. Thus, to get sound educators, adequate training is the only solution. The Shonglap program has a ten-day long basic training program which is divided into three parts:

- First Part: Practicing of Shonglap Process;
- Second Part: Freirean Code and PRA Practicing, Conducting PRA; and
- Third Part: How to conduct Shonglap; for all staffs of Shonglap.

The training program appears weak in its ability to deliver on content, being focused more on the technicalities and process of Shonglap. Though the basic training program is very detailed, it is mostly concentrated on the technicalities and the processes of Shonglap, rather than the content itself. But life skills-based education is new and none of the animators or project staff have experienced skills-based learning/education themselves. It is also not surprising that the most enthusiastic supporters of life skills are those who have undergone personal life skills development, as a part of their life skills training-of-trainers courses. This indicates the importance of both internalizing life skills before teaching them, and allowing for enough time in such training-of-trainer for internalization.

Recommendations

- *The Shonglap Program should have a literacy building component within the design. For groups with school going girls alternative activities should be defined.*

- *National level advocacy and networking should be an ingrained component of Shonglap Program, for instance with regard to readmission to school.*
- *Education materials used in Shonglap program should be reviewed to develop better design materials, and to create synergy in literacy building and life skill education.*
- *Flash Cards, IEC and audiovisual materials can be developed to address the difficulties the animators face in practicing REFLECT approach.*
- *Supplementary reading materials for the animators throughout the program and for SGs during the follow-up program should be available.*
- *Sequential training programs can be developed to properly train animators considering all aspects of Shonglap programs, improved teaching methods, better classroom management and detailed understanding of the lessons imparted.*

6.3. IGA and Training

For many Shonglap girls, the occupational training is the real attraction when they start the course. Contributing to the family economy is for many the best possible safeguard against being married away at an early age. Further, it is for parents a key reason for letting their girls join the groups.

At the start of Shonglap, the IGA focused on the typical household activities in rural Bangladesh, i.e. poultry, cow rearing, vegetables, tailoring, handicrafts etc. However, courses were not the same in all Shonglap villages, as markets and activities differed depending on location, and also on the partner NGO capability to offer training within each subject.

As Shonglap developed, the question of markets became more pressing. Selling the products was an obstacle for many girls. Thus, to structure the IGA component, SF engaged MIDAS - a well reputed entrepreneurship developer in Bangladesh - to do an in-depth survey of markets and possibilities, ending up with recommendations for what types of activities should be offered where.

The table below summarises training in 2009 and 2010, split on the main types of activities. Unfortunately, the numbers do not show the total number of girls trained. Some girls are trained in several activities during their 3 IGA months, and these are counted twice - or even thrice - in the table. The table also shows the number of girls having been given an interest free loan.

The most popular activity is tailoring and embroidery, followed by poultry, cow and goat rearing. The key characteristic of these are that they are typical family activities in Bangladesh, that "everybody" can do. Indeed, tailoring can for girls in Bangladesh almost be seen as a life skill. Few of the activities require extensive external marketing, with the possible exception of handicrafts and beauty parlour. They are thus mostly well adapted to village realities, and can be easily integrated in a family economy.

Table 8: IGA training

Name of Trade/IGA	2009		2010		Total	
	IGA Training Recipient	IGA Fund Recipient	IGA Training Recipient	IGA fund Recipient	IGA Training Recipient	IGA fund Recipient
Tailoring & Embroidery	8,019	561	8,189	718	16,208	1,279
Poultry rearing	4,090	23	4,091	223	8,181	246
Cow rearing	3,489	235	4,098	304	7,587	539
Goat rearing	3,473	587	3,650	389	7,123	976
Handicrafts	1,865	137	4,378	186	6,243	323
Food processing	1,543	62		16	1,543	78
Beauty Parlour	56	6	273	8	329	14
Fish Culture	36	41	103	8	139	49
Other	157	452	290	21	447	473
Total	22,728	2,104	25,072	1,873	47,800	3,977

With this age group, and with the wide range of capacities, training would have to be general and basic. There still appear to be some differences between how the training component is implemented in each NGO. It depends on the training resources available in the locality, on the village markets and on what are accepted activities in each community. Further, some NGOs appear more systematic in their IGA training programmes than others. Some have fixed curriculums that the girls are to follow, others are more ad-hoc, leaving the content of the training to the discretion of the trainer being hired. A higher level of standardisation within each subject is recommended.

Regarding the results of the IGA training, there are a number of cases showing spectacular successes of girls doing very well, selling their products on the regional market. However, in general, the achievements are more muted in terms of independent entrepreneurship development. There are numerous barriers for the girls. However, as seen in chapter 5 on Impact, most girls draw benefits from the general training in typical family activities, and thus do benefit from what they have learnt.

Table 9: Impact of Shonglap IGA training - MIDAS study

Sl.	Impact	Very Good		Good		Moderate		Bad		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Business	37	25%	64	43%	46	31%	2	1%	149	100%
2	Employment	47	30%	61	39%	46	30%	1	1%	155	100%
3	Improvement of family condition	24	15%	90	57%	45	28%	0	0%	159	100%
4	Financial security	7	5%	84	63%	43	32%	0	0%	134	100%
5	Express opinion in own family	22	13%	104	62%	41	24%	1	1%	168	100%
6	Financial assistance to family	15	11%	75	56%	43	32%	0	0%	133	100%
7	Personal health and family consciousness	113	62%	61	34%	8	4%	0	0%	182	100%
8	Business plan preparation	5	8%	14	23%	40	66%	2	3%	61	100%
9	Trainers behaviour to trainee	93	54%	74	43%	6	3%	0	0%	173	100%

Source: "Study on Training Need Assessment of Shonglap Beneficiaries of Stromme Foundation", March 2010, MIDAS.

The view that most girls get some benefit out of the IGA training is supported by the above mentioned MIDAS survey. In it, MIDAS asked the girls about the impact that

thought the training had on them, in different areas. Table 9 above summarises the answers, where each girl was asked to rate impact as either "very good", "good", "moderate", or "bad". Interestingly, very few rate impact as bad, and most rate it as either very good or good

The IGA Loan

Financial resources are required not only for meeting working capital requirements, but also for mobilizing 'start up' capital. With their experience from microfinance, SF understood the problems associated with lack of capital, and introduced the interest free loan. In practice, this is handled by each NGO, that assesses loan applications from the girls and that administers the loans according to their normal microfinance practices.

The typical loan amount is between tk 2000 - 4000, with a repayment period of 1 year. Generally repayment appears satisfactory. As of June 2011, there is about tk 26000 overdue out of a total outstanding of tk 517000, i.e. about 5%. The number of loans given in 2009 and 2010 is about 4000. This seems like a low figure, and the Goddi fund could support a higher volume. The two key reasons are likely to be:

- NGOs are restrictive in their lending practices, and need to be thoroughly convinced that the individual can handle the loan. Thus, a decent business has to be established before a loan is given, and this has - as indicated above - been a challenge for many girls.
- NGOs have limited incentives for this type of loan operation. As it is interest free, there is no income involved, and being very small amounts, some NGOs may feel it is too much work as compared to the likely benefits.

With the existing model, Strømme cannot force NGOs to "dish out" more loans. Neither should they. The MTR would defend a restrictive practice with regard to giving loans to this age group. As a principle, one should be very careful of giving loans to children, and remember that the other word for loan is "debt".

A number of girls fund their activities outside of Shonglap, with funds from family and friends. As activities like goat and poultry rearing are really family based, raising funds within the "production unit" is for many of the adolescents a safer way than taking on external loans. In fact, the families of the girls are often clients of microfinance outside of Shonglap. The MIDAS study found that 65% of the families have microfinance loans. There are thus capital available for family businesses.

Some girls start a more independent business. These are evidently very important as entrepreneurs and role models, and they often require some investments. The current practice of giving very small interest free loans is thus possibly a reasonable solution as a start-up incentive.

The MIDAS Courses

Some of the girls have obvious entrepreneurial talent. Thus, SF - from their own funds - decided to support 2 girls in every group (6%) for an extended training course, organised

by MIDAS within a chosen occupation. The first phase and second phase has been completed (2010 and 2011), with a total of 447 girls trained. These courses include entrepreneurship development training as well as skill development

These MIDAS courses appears as a useful "outlet" for the most enterprising girls. An internal SF review of the courses give good marks, and conclude that there is an immense demand among the girls. For some, it has been a great success, and there are very useful demonstration effects for other girls. Those that have struggled have mostly been fighting with establishing market linkages. Other issues include difficulties in managing raw materials, and ensuring sufficient quality of the product. Competition in markets outside the village is tough, It takes great determination, skill - and some luck - to succeed.

In sum, the MIDAS training is assessed as a useful test of advanced training for particularly enterprising girls. However, it is expensive, and it should be regularly analyzed whether it is worth the cost.

The cry for more assistance

In most reports and analysis of the IGA - like the MIDAS report - there is a constant cry for more assistance in all types of areas. Shonglap should establish market outlets, give more loans, assist in raw material purchasing, give more training, organize workshops, seminars and publicity campaigns, administer product innovation, etc.

All of these challenges are very real for the girls, and the temptation for an NGO - and possibly also SF - is that they as external players try to fix all the perceived problems for the girls. However, this may not necessarily benefit the long term sustainability of that particular activity, rather making it dependent on outsiders that will not be there forever.

Further, Shonglap is a transitional program for adolescents who may later move and change both occupation and interests. Putting a lot of work into establishing elaborate support structures for instance in marketing should thus be very carefully considered before they are implemented. Indeed, taking on business risk on their own account - as Shonglap would do if it started operating market outlets for girls - could well threaten the financial basis for the whole programme.

The costs of making the IGA more effective must thus be compared to the likely benefits - and the real strategic objective of the Shonglap. We will return to this theme below, but it is suggested that Shonglap clearly determines its strategic boundaries.

Recommendations

- *Shonglap should focus on the general activities that all can benefit from.* Basic training in typical family activities like livestock, poultry, vegetables, basic sewing/tailoring are highly relevant intervention that appears to benefit most of the girls.
- *The training should be better standardized, across the NGOs.* A minimum standard for traditional occupational skill development should be developed with guidelines specifying the expected level of skill attainment and profile of the

trainers. Simple business development training might be included to give participants basic knowledge about pricing, costing and selling.

- *Shonglap should be very restrictive with regard to engaging in any other IGA support activity than the general training it delivers today.*

6.4. Follow-Up Efforts

The question of what happens after Shonglap was raised as soon as the first girls graduated. The basic Shonglap did not include any particular programme component after the 12 months course.

Many girls wanted to continue to meet, and NGOs maintained that some follow up was necessary to safeguard the achievements. If subjects like women and human rights were not continuously discussed, the initial awareness might be lost. Besides, the groups constituted a wonderful meeting arena where the girls could be young - children or adolescents - in an environment that otherwise did not allow them that luxury.

Several of the NGOs had at their own initiative thus began organising follow-up groups. In some of these, the learning process was tried continued. But for meaningful learning continuation, resources are required. SF agreed that a small financial and organizational support would be given for such purposes.

RDRS is one of the NGOs that has established such groups - forums called Kishori Bagan - and can serve as an example for how this can be done. The Forums meet every fortnight, and has developed a monthly and annual work plan. Leadership rotates among the members. The girls discuss the issues they learned in Shonglap, and check how each still practice those. According to RDRS, well functioning forums act like change agents in their village and community. Being a large NGO with several types of programmes, within for instance health, education, microfinance and rural development, RDRS can also potentially link the forums with these other programmes.

The MTR believes these follow-up efforts have been important for increasing effectiveness of Shonglap.

However, the model should perhaps be flexible, leaving substantial freedom to each partner how they want to do it in each locality. The forums would have to adapt to local circumstances, and it will be difficult to manage these forums in detail. In some case, a meeting forum may be the only realistic option, in others, it might involve links to other projects, extended IGA training, guardian involvement, grooming for microfinance, etc. The more advanced NGOs might even extend the scope in the follow-up phase in such a manner that learners can transit to for instance vocational technical institutions.

Recommendation

- *Establishment of follow-up forums should be included in the basic Shonglap methodology.*

The MTR supports SF preliminary thoughts in this area, with SF restricting themselves to assist partners in mobilization of the forums, guiding them in forum modality and leadership, assisting them with making periodic plans, and providing ideas of follow-up activities to make the forums vibrant. Minor financial support will be provided in the mobilization period and thereafter the forums would be independent.

6.5. Is Shonglap Effective?

In sum, the Shonglap methodology is considered as "good" with regard to how effective it is in attaining the objectives it intends to achieve. Girls are mostly equipped with a solid amount of life skills, and the IGA training has increased economic participation. Of the factors explaining effectiveness, the MTR would stress two of particular importance:

- *Quality of animator.* The animators play a critical role in delivering Shonglap effectively. It is mostly left to the partner NGOs to identify, train, supervise and support animators, and there appears to be substantial differences between the NGOs in how good they are in equipping and supporting their animators. There are many issues involved, and it is hard for the NGOs to identify sufficiently qualified animators in many locations. However, if Strømme is to re-focus their attention on only one area, it should be ***how to further improve animator skills and performance***. Salary levels should also be looked at.
- *Dedication and commitment of Shonglap Support Teams.* Almost every monitoring report on any subject in Shonglap emphasize the importance of the SST. Where there are active and committed SSTs, not only does the Shonglap groups work well, the whole village often benefits from the Shonglap experience. Social challenges like early marriage, dowry and girl mobility is much easier to address in villages where guardians buy into Shonglap. A second theme for future emphasis - in addition to animators - is thus how to engage and organise good SSTs. We believe there by now is considerable skill among the partner NGOs that could be shared and more actively used in building cross-partner capacity.

One last element of effectiveness is how the programme can become even better at getting the girls back to school. Particularly for the smaller children, that should be a key objective. Shonglap cannot substitute normal schooling, and an important objective for any social exclusion programme should be to mainstream the participants. It is acknowledged that this is a complex challenge as there are normally many reasons why girls drop out,

Recommendation

- *Any effort to sustain and improve effectiveness of Shonglap would be wise to start with two particular players in the current system, namely animators and Shonglap Support Teams.* Spending resources to improve the two is likely to yield good benefits in terms of effectiveness.

7. Efficiency: Structure and Organisation

According to OECD DAC, efficiency "*measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which is used to assess the extent to which aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results.*" This requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. Is the intervention giving desired results at a price that compares favourably with what other interventions do?

There is to our knowledge no project or programme that can be easily compared with Shonglap, where we could find for instance benchmarks for costs per girl. Several social programmes have elements that are similar, but few try such an holistic approach with this particular target group, adolescent girls. Thus, the following efficiency analysis will be mostly a qualitative assessment.

As noted above, we find that Shonglap is assessed as generally an effective methodology. What are then the key elements to assess with regard to efficiency? The MTR would focus on two issues. Firstly, the overall structure itself, with a small SF secretariat in Dhaka, that assists/supports a number of NGOs that implement. The second is the management and monitoring of this structure, and how well the system can adjust and address challenges.

7.1. Overall Structure and Partners

SF's overall strategy is to identify a number of local cooperating partners - all NGOs - that implement projects and programmes. Strømme provides funds, capacity building and supervision, plus more general support in times of need to the organisations. These partnerships are intended to be more than mere cooperation on single projects, as SF sees the building of local institutions as a key to the sustainability question in development. The partners will be capacitated to deliver good services to poor people. In theory, with such a partner network, SF can "easily" and quickly turn external capital into desired local services, without having to start from scratch for any new programme they may want to implement.

All of SF's partners are supposed to implement all of SFs programmes. Shonglap is only one element in a larger cooperation portfolio - there is typically a microfinance component, and as at end of 2011, at least three other education programmes.

There are *obvious benefits* to this type of structure, in particular closeness to each partner that in most cases would facilitate communication and the building of trust. Also, it is normally a much more cost efficient method than implementing projects through one's own set-up. This typically implies a very short "product-to-market" period. Being keen to minimise administrative costs, SF has tried to design a system from Kristiansand down to the local office in Dhaka that is as lean as possible.

However, it is also a system that is *subject to operational risk*, as it may introduce inefficiencies in the system when performance of these partners change for the worse. Effective Shonglap requires partners with sufficient capacity to implement the many elements. With the comparatively thinly staffed Strømme office in Dhaka, the program is critically based on the ability of the partners.

For efficient implementation of any given project, institutions are as important as the methodology itself. One may have the best theoretical model in the world, but it is of little use if the institutional structure is not performing.

As the Annual Reports to ODW regarding Shonglap testify, several of the partners have faced serious challenges. For instance, in the report for 2010, the following remarks are made:

- *VARD suffered serious problem with staff turnover and lack of technical support and monitoring of field program and finally had to stop its microfinance operation. It has several times changed education program leader and staff as well (p. 11).*
- *COAST has been a long partner of Stromme. But in the recent time the leader has become very engaged in national and international levels advocating for climate change and other issues concerning Bangladesh. The project has suffered because of the lack of attention to the project from the top leader. Also there has been a huge staff turnover (p. 20).*
- *The Shonglap program with BURO started well in the new area of Kurigram district. But a serious leadership battle has crippled the organization. Situation with the Shonglap program became more difficult after the resignation of the Project Manager (p. 22).*
- *SF project with POPI suffered set-back due to staff turnover at field and management level as well. Therefore the project remained in a stagnant situation for the past few years. Now the organization has placed new staff and the work is progressing well (p.24)*

This seem to indicate that 4 out of 8 organisations have suffered serious management and staff problems. One initial partner - Mother and Child Integral Welfare Organization (MCIWO) - was also dropped in 2009 as a cooperating partner after prolonged difficulties with precisely management.

Management and governance is unfortunately the Achilles heel of many NGOs in Bangladesh. Being started by an individual founder and his/her supporters - and with ineffective, mostly decorative Boards - it often does not take much before an NGO becomes embroiled in serious management disputes. Even organisations like Grameen Bank have shown that they are not immune.

The second challenge that is often related to the first, is staff turn-over. A recurrent problem is that an NGO trains staff - often with donor money - and then staff quit to join

another NGO, or even the government, after training is finished. All NGOs in the Shonglap programme have been touched by this phenomena to some extent. However, it is a fact of life and something that the NGOs will have to live and deal with.

There are several indications of substantial differences in performance between the partnering NGOs, as seen for instance from the latest half year-reports (June 2011) from the NGOs to SF. According to current reporting routines, the partners shall report on several "objective level" indicators at the half year mark. According to the Shonglap manual, the NGOs shall at that time do a selected survey among Shonglap participants.

Table 10: Reporting on Shonglap Targets June 2011

Indicator	Target%	RDRS	VARD	CODEC	SUS	COAST	BURO	POPI
<i>Life skills</i>								
Perc. aware on 10 issues of life skills	60%	65%	62%	79%	77%	70%	42%	46%
Perc. practicing the learning issues in their daily life.	60%	65%	68%	NA	46%	63%	23%	50%
Perc. involved in family decision making	50%	63%	52%	76%	60%	64%	37%	42%
<i>IGA</i>								
Perc. engaged in income generation activities.	30%	NA	28%	45%	60%	14%	NA	18%
Perc. girls can save at least tk. 300 per month	6%	NA	6%	7%	11%	9%	NA	2%
Percent participants control own income	10%	6%	NA	40%	NA	11%	5%	5%
Girls in Shonglap 2011		800	1400	2000	2555	1000	1675	1500

Source: June 2011 reports from all NGOs

The figures do not necessarily represent 6 months results for the individual Shonglap groups, as the start-up of these is often spread around the year. A few general observations from the table:

- The differences between the NGOs are significant, for instance with regard to knowledge of life skills, that range from 79% in CODEC, to 42% in BURO.
- One may suspect that all do not report according to the same methodology. On life skills, some apparently measure the percentage based on how many manage 6 of the 10 life skills, others on 7, while some use the full 10.
- A similar example is the IGA figures from SUS, that say 60% is engaged in IGA. According to the SUS, "a total of 24.75% graduate girls have involved with IGA by SUS support and 34.65% involved with IGA's by their own initiatives". Firstly, they apparently measure graduates, not girls in training, and secondly, they include all types of supported IGAs.

- As this is self-reporting from the NGOs, there may be bias built into the reported numbers. The NGO is supposed to interview a random sample of girls, but there are currently no quality checks to ensure this.
- There is little documentations available regarding analysis/reaction to the above reporting, within SF itself. There has surely been telephone calls etc, for instance in the case of BURO, that scores markedly lower than the others on many indicators. However, one would have preferred to see stronger formal quality assurance processes in response to the monitoring. There is little use of having sophisticated monitoring routines, if the information is not used.

While these observations primarily indicate that the reporting has some validity challenges, the underlying issue is one of NGO performance. There are indications from various sources that not all partners perform as well as planned - and more worrying - the current system may not be able to detect and manage these issues with sufficient speed and determination when they arise.

It is *important to stress that is not the fault of the staff at SF in Dhaka*. They work very hard indeed, with 10 professionals managing a large microfinance programme in addition to 4 different education programs. Two of these staff are earmarked for Shonglap. However, their days are spent in constant fire-fighting, arranging a long list of training sessions for the partners, plus the handling of a substantial external relations programme.

For SF at large, and as seen from the field, there is a challenge for the organization in balancing ambitions with resources. One issue is the extent of total Strømme programming - fortunately that is outside this MTR. However, operational routines are another matter, and while for instance Result Based Management (RBM) is all the rage in development aid these days, these system cannot function unless there are human resources to manage - and understand - them. If everybody - including ODW - want to know how many girls now actually practice their life skills, one must allocate sufficient resources to that monitoring process for it to be effective.

For ensuring Shonglap efficiency, we believe SF would benefit from more stringent relationships with their implementing partners. If Strømme is truly RBM oriented, they should perhaps introduce more business like performance contracts with their cooperating partners. The policy of "eternal" capacity building may not always work, and may even spoil non-performing NGOs. Getting incentives right is crucial in all types of development work.

As quality of partners is key to effective implementation, any new partner should be subject to an in-depth due diligence and tough performance requirements. Taking in partners that need substantial strengthening should only happen if there is no other alternative.

Recommendations

- *Establish a result based contract with partners, that includes indicators of desired performance, possibly based on the LFA*

- *In our considered opinion, more resources are necessary to effectively administer the many programmes of Strømme in Bangladesh, including Shonglap.*

Just keeping track of reporting is a substantial exercise, and properly analyzing the data is a luxury that one may not always be able to afford. This impression is reinforced by several partners that say they desire more support and assistance, on many levels including the handling of animators.

7.2. Monitoring and Evaluation

As the review of different reports in the preceding chapter indicated, SF and Shonglap have a few issues to consider with regard to the current monitoring and evaluation regime. In general, SF has designed an extensive and ambitious monitoring structure, in line with recent trends in international development activities, with a distinct move towards so-called Result Based Monitoring (RBM).

This is clearly reflected in the monitoring and reporting set-up for Shonglap. Substantial effort has gone into structuring a suitable LFA, and to identify meaningful RBM indicators that can verify impact and demonstrate performance. These indicators are built into a comprehensive pyramid of monitoring and reporting routines at several levels, down to the individual Shonglap centres.

At each level, Strømme and their partners have developed tools to assist staff in data collection and in determining the value of indicators. For instance, there is a specific checklist for field staff to use to assess whether a girl has control over her money. (One of the LFA targets is that 10% of the girls control their own income). The set up is theoretically similar across all NGO partners to ensure consistent reporting.

There are two linked, but slightly different reporting streams, namely

- *regular performance reporting* (in LFA terms this is at the output level) that happens monthly from supervisors to the NGO, and quarterly from each partner to Strømme. The core monitoring vehicle is the monthly input from supervisors and animators.
- *LFA reporting at the objective and goal level* each six months. The Annual exercise is somewhat different from the half yearly, as it is to be done according to a specific NORAD template. The numbers are mostly impact related, plus that each partner is supposed to tell case stories.

The first is the operative monitoring, where the NGO managers for instance check group attendance, number of SST meetings, and any deviation from planned schedules. As practiced, this system appears adequate for its purpose, even though there may be scope to streamline the reporting formats from animators upwards. One possible action to enhance efficiency is to computerise collection of data at the NGO level. This can over time be developed into a more pointed MIS system.

The second reporting stream, namely the outcome and objective monitoring, is to be done as separate exercises, where the NGO organises staff teams that do FDGs with a selected number for Shonglap groups, covering between 6 - 10% of girls involved. The key issue there has already been mentioned, namely that the system depends on the ability of the partners to do a neutral exercise with random FDGs. While we have no concrete proof that this has happened, there may be a temptation to bias the selection. The MTR recommends that SF introduces quality checks to ensure validity of truly random data.

Extent of monitoring

In general, it is hard not to be impressed by the extent and the detail of actual results that Shonglap tries to monitor and record. This is especially the case for the life skill elements of the programme, where the somewhat vague term "empowerment" is tried given a concrete meaning. Many projects unfortunately pay only lip service to measuring social change objectives like empowerment, as it tends to be complex to interpret practically.

In the case of Shonglap, systems and routines are established to concretely monitor every one of the 10 life skills that the programme aims at improving. While some of the monitoring is necessarily qualitative, most of it is quantitative - "counting change". The field visit reinforced the impression of Shonglap being an advanced RBM practitioner.

However, it requires skilled partners to implement efficiently, and is one area where there is obvious differences in capacity - as can be seen from the reports sent to Strømme. For some it is a major exercise that may take substantial resources from operations. It is also an area that takes a lot of time for SF staff, as the RBM generates many questions from the partners. As the staff turn-over is high for the NGOs, and as new employees have to be taught the RBM, SF has to repeatedly arrange training sessions.

There are many advantages from this type of RBM monitoring, of which two operational benefits in particular appear important:

- Organisations become much more aware of performance, and what works and what does not. Focus changes from just the counting of activities, to whether that activity actually led to something.
- It is a good motivator for staff, that increases their understanding of why they do what they do. It brings them closer to the purpose of the programme, and improves their ownership of what they are doing.

These effects are visible all through the programme chain, up to the SF head-office in Kristiansand. It is also important for proving to stakeholders and funders that money is well spent. ***In principle, an RBM system is thus considered good for efficiency.***

However, this extensive monitoring plan is not without challenges:

- It is a very time consuming and resource demanding exercise for all levels involved. It takes resources from something else.

- Because it is a complex system, data inputs are subject to potential misunderstandings. The validity of some of the information can be questioned.
- Some of the information is perhaps more "nice to know", than "need to know". If this is to be a research project on general social change in Bangladesh, it should be allocated specific resources for that purpose. Otherwise, the sheer extent of the data clutters the analytical screen for those with operational responsibilities.

There is thus a balance to be struck between the ambitions of the RBM, and the resources required to operate that same RBM system. The issue is recognised and appreciated by Strømme. SF has only recently developed the M&E Plan and its tools, and will need time to review with partners what would be most useful to use and follow. Further, SF management makes it clear that SF should not collect information/data/report that it cannot review. This process is very much supported by the MTR, and is considered an important driver for increasing efficiency further.

The use of LFA

The Shonglap LFA hierarchy is part of a larger LFA hierarchy comprising all of Strømme's activities in Bangladesh - 3 other education programs and the full microfinance component. To the casual observer, this does appear as a somewhat dense and quite complicated planning framework.

One of the justifications for LFA as methodology is to clarify the logic of a development project - if you do this, it will lead to that, which again will contribute to something bigger. Too complex LFAs with many indicators may blur that logic, and indeed the overall rationale for the intervention. A log frame is not intended to show every detail of a project, nor to limit the scope of the project. It is rather supposed to be a convenient, logical summary of the key factors of the project.

In the process of streamlining the M&E, SF might also want to revisit the LFA and put it on the same diet that it will apply to its general monitoring system.

Recommendations

- *Outsource and/or introduce quality checks on either the annual or the mid-year reporting exercise, ensuring unbiased selection of FDG.*

Strømme may want to consider outsourcing the qualitative part of this report to an independent research organization. There are two reasons: One is to save time for the involved partners, the other is to increase reliability of the reported results.

- *SF should continue their efforts to streamline and slim the M&E system. It needs adaptation to realities in the field, meaning real staff capacity as opposed to theoretical.*

7.3. Costs

The basis for costing of Shonglap is a calculation of actual costs to run one "typical" center with 25 girls. In SF budgets, this is divided by 25 to find a cost per participant. Budgets are then allocated for each year and for each partner on the basis of the number of girls that are planned included.

The initial unit cost was calculated to NOK 205 per girl, and includes all direct costs that a partner would have in running Shonglap. However, as SF also funds other programmes in each NGO, some NGO staff might work with Shonglap, but be paid by another budget line. In 2010, Geneva Global stopped funding education activities with SF, and as GG had paid for some such staff earlier, these expenses now had to be incorporated into the Shonglap costing directly. As a consequence, unit cost increased by about 45% (in NOK) in 2010, to NOK 300. This was increased by another 11% in 2011, mainly due to increased honorariums and salaries to animators. Getting a good animator is key to effectiveness, and there is tough competition for such skilled girls in several locations.

Table 11: Shonglap Unit Costs (Direct)

	2009	2010	2011
Cost per participant Taka	2568	3685	4055
Cost per participant NOK	205	300	332

Source: Annual Plans 2009,2010 and 2011

There are three additional elements in Shonglap costs. Firstly, general programme costs like training and common equipment. Then there are advisory costs and administration costs for SF, that are calculated as standard percentages of the programme costs, 8% and 5% respectively. Costs of the MIDAS training and the loan funds are covered by a separate allocation, namely from the Geneva Global Fund and the Goddi fund.

The financial routines in the programme appear to be relatively simple. Each partner is provided with funds in accordance with the budget for the year - that is calculated on the basis of number of girls that each NGO say they will enrol in Shonglap. If an NGO for some reason was not able to do as many Shonglap groups as planned, this is adjusted towards the budget allocation for next year. The key variable to control for Strømme is thus actual number of Shonglap girls, which is done through the comprehensive M&E system described above. Given that each animator has to provide monthly reports on performance in the group, it is for instance difficult for an NGO to enrol "ghost girls".

However, because groups start and end all throughout the year, it is complicated to make accurate cost accounts on an annual basis. Estimating what has been used, and what remains to be used of the total budget of NOK 25 mn is thus a tentative exercise. Combining real numbers of girls as reported by SF to ODW for 2009 and 2010, with the unit cost for those years, provides a draft estimate. To this, 2011 can be added according to the Annual Plan 2011. Further, it is possible to estimate 2012 and 2013 based on the current unit cost and the planned number of outreach for those years (in the 2009 - 2013 long term plan.)

Table 12: Shonglap Cost estimate 2009 - 2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Unit Cost (NOK)	205	300	332	332	332	
Girls	10,488	19,349	17,300	23,500	23,100	93,737
Cost Estimate ('000 NOK)						
Direct Costs	2,150	5,805	5,744	7,802	7,669	29,170
Programme cost	496	208	140	105	103	1,052
Advisory support 8%	212	481	471	633	622	2,418
Administration 5%	132	301	294	395	389	1,511
Total	2,990	6,794	6,648	8,935	8,783	34,150

Sources: Annual Plans 2009 - 2013, 2010, 2011, and Annual reports 2009, 2010 and 2011

These are not the same numbers as those that are found in the audited Accounts sent from Strømme to ODW. The main reason is that the accounts do not link costs with girls, i.e. with outreach. This again is due to the fact that the Shonglap education of each girl is spread across years, making it very difficult to identify precisely how many girls have received a full - or partial - Shonglap education at precisely what annual cost.

In the above table, the point is rather to assess costs over the lifetime of the project to reach an estimate of likely total outreach within the allocated budget. It is speculative, but should still give a reasonable indication.

According to the above estimate, reaching 94000 girls would cost about NOK 34 mn. To stay within the NOK 25 mn limit, the number of girls in 2012 and 2013 would have to be reduced from the currently planned 46,600 to roughly half, i.e. 23,000 girls. The total outreach numbers for the whole project would then summarise **to about 70,000 girls** - still a massive number. On the whole, and including all costs (direct and indirect), this implies an average cost per Shonglap girl of roughly NOK 355. This still appears as a reasonable cost for one year of schooling.

Recommendations

- *SF should update their outreach and spending forecast for the ODW programme, and adjust numbers were necessary in accordance with cost realities.*

7.4. Other Issues - and Cost Efficiency

Geographic coverage

One issue is the question about geographic coverage and expansion. There are two dimensions:

- For the programme as such, being represented all over Bangladesh.
- For each NGO, that must move to new villages every year to establish new groups.

Regarding the first, the challenge is connected primarily to the costs and resources of having to monitor, advise and train NGOs in all corners of Bangladesh. Some of the activities are in areas that are very hard to reach, with tribal or other minority groups. The logistics can be complicated, and SF staff spend substantial time on the road. From an efficiency perspective, SF should perhaps concentrate and cluster their partners more than what they have today.

The complicating factor is that this is not only a Shonglap question, but one for the whole SF operation in the country as such. In the future, SF might consider a more adapted strategy, where not all partners implement all programmes. A training and monitoring intensive programme like Shonglap should then possibly be focussed in particular areas and regions of Bangladesh.

The second issue is more complex. Most of the NGOs that started with Shonglap back in 2006 probably went to the "easiest" and the best known villages first. However, after a year, a completely new batch of Shonglap girls had to be found, and it seems that in most cases Shonglap had to move to a new village to find another 25 girls that had dropped out of school.

This means that every year, the NGO starts in new places, hiring new animators and supervisors, establishing trust with new SSTs, hiring new places for the group to stay, etc. After 4 to 5 years of this, the NGOs progressively move into - for them - uncharted territory, thus often bringing them farther from their core areas and offices. This increases their logistical costs, and may strain their operational procedures.

Given the targets for outreach, such relocation is unavoidable. It is also likely cheaper to get existing partner NGOs to move to new places, than taking in new NGOs to cover such places. For the time being, there appears to be few alternatives to the current strategy. However, any idea for how to reduce the transaction costs of moving from one Shonglap group to the next every year, should be welcomed. Possibly the NGOs can dedicate particular "mobile units" to Shonglap that can more easily shift operations, or perhaps one should look for places where it is possible to run Shonglap for two years without moving.

The Inclusion of Community Based Organisations

One strategy partly to address the challenge of outreach, has been for the NGOs themselves to hire so called Community Based Organisations (CBO) to implement Shonglap. The two NGOs that have linked up with CBOs are VARD (5 CBOs) and CODEC (14 CBOs). Some these are quite substantial organisations, while others are small and focussed on very particular areas.

VARD and CODEC are supposed to manage the CBOs, monitor and provide necessary support for them to function. In reality, however, it is difficult to know how well this management is done. There is no particular reporting from the NGOs on the CBOs to SF, and no figures given for their performance. The MTR interviewed one CBO, that complained about lack of support from the NGO, and the absence of capacity building. The CBO did not have a formal agreement to relate to, and they were - in their own words - evaluating themselves.

Irrespective of whether this is a representative case, SF ought to formalise the relation to the CBOs to a much higher degree. While using CBOs can be an efficient strategy in some cases, it clearly increases the operational risk. If SF has trouble effectively supervising the NGOs, it has even greater difficulties in monitoring organisations that are one step further removed.

A second concern is that some of these NGOs are so small that they may have limited capacity to internalise the Shonglap methodology. This would also make them highly vulnerable to any changes in personnel, and indeed to the loss of management focus. The MTR will thus recommend that the use of CBOs should be assessed anew, and that a clearer set of processes and routines are introduced in managing them.

Overall Efficiency: Value for money?

There are few interventions that can be directly compared to Shonglap, and thus there are great difficulties in finding benchmarks that can be fairly used for comparisons. In chapter 7.3, the average cost per girl is estimated at about NOK 355 for a full year.

The alternative cost - or the cost to send each of the Shonglap girls to school for a year - could be an approximate marker of the reasonability of costs. One source for per pupil unit costs in Bangladesh is the UNDP publication "*Millennium Development Goals: Needs Assessment and Costing 2009 - 2015 Bangladesh*." In this, UNDP has tried to calculate how much it would cost to reach the MDG targets, like "Universal Primary Education". The MTR cannot vouch for these calculations, but they do provide an interesting set of cost data for social sectors like education. For the year 2010, UNDP estimates that one pupil in secondary school costs BDT 13,324 (page 107). In NOK, at an exchange rate of 12.20 BDT/NOK, this would translate into approximately NOK 660.

Does this imply that Bangladesh should rather do Shonglap than send their citizens to secondary schools? Of course not, as a schools have a wider curriculum that offer a more complete education than what Shonglap purports to do. Further, schools are the place where children are "mainstreamed" and where they get the formal qualifications to move further up the education ladder.

With all necessary caveats, what the numbers do indicate is that the cost of a year of Shonglap does not appear outrageously high compared to the alternative. ***Thus, and combined with findings on impact and effectiveness above, a tentative conclusion is that Shonglap is "value for money".***

Recommendations

- *SF should assess the use of CBOs anew, and introduce a clearer set of operational routines to manage their inclusion in Shonglap.*

8. What Happens After: Sustainability and Strategy

Analysis of sustainability tend to be qualitative affairs, as there are few certainties with regard to the future. Indeed, sustainability is not only a question about having reached a certain "sustainability" level, but also of the ability to react to changes that challenges that position. Sustainability is thus a dynamic as much as a static term.

8.1. Girls and the Communities

Girls learn new knowledge and skills through Shonglap, some of which also translates into changed behavior. What happens with this pool of new learning, after Shonglap? Observations in this regard by the MTR include:

- Some of the life skills they learn in Shonglap are probably very sustainable - in that they will continue to practice those also after finishing Shonglap. This in particular include *practical skills* related to hygiene, health and sanitation. Basic IGA skills in animal husbandry, tailoring and gardening are also likely to stay. Some skills like sewing will need to be put in practice, however, and applied to be effective.
- In more *abstract "life skills behavior" subjects* like human rights, women and child rights, sustainability of that knowledge is less likely unless the subjects are continuously brought to mind. Visible effects for the majority of the girls will probably require more elaborate follow up, plus inclusion of other stakeholders like boys and guardians.
- The negatives of for instance *early marriage and of giving dowry* will be familiar to the girls, but requires the understanding and acquiescence also of parents and guardians to be "sustainable knowledge". When the girls are in the groups, there are numerous stories about stopping early marriages. That joint solidarity is vulnerable when the groups are split up. However, all the girls will know that it is unlawful to be married before the age of 18, and the confidence they have gained will hopefully support them if the theme is ever raised in their own families.

The "girl empowerment" angle of Shonglap is very, very important. The discrimination against girls is so blatant and so damaging in many places of Bangladesh, that the theme deserves special attention. SF plans to increase the specific focus on discrimination issues like dowry, marriage registration, divorce, family court, early marriage, polygamy, gender equality etc. Animators will be equipped to provide relevant lessons and materials on these more abstract issues, and be trained to focus on issues like child rights and women rights. This is very much supported by the MTR.

Dynamics of change

International experience shows that behavioral change activities can be very effective when they become dynamic, where one step reinforces another. Building "momentum for change" is key, and by the holistic approach, Shonglap tries to do exactly that. At the base there are some core practical skills, that is further developed by confidence building

measures, then enhanced through concept development (like women rights), ending up with economic skills to strengthen the new-found "power".

It is too early to confidently conclude whether this - in the long term - is a successful strategy or not. However, it is fair to say that from the MTR analysis, results so far are encouraging.

International experience brings another lesson too. Namely that individual change is very difficult if the daily environment is not conducive to that change. Family, friends and the community are crucial to sustainable transformation. If these three are supportive - or at least not obstructive - the likelihood for individual development are significantly better.

The Shonglap methodology includes the community through primarily the SSTs, and as mentioned above, where these function well, groups function well also. They are probably crucial to not only the quality of Shonglap when it is delivered, but also to the sustainability of the Shonglap knowledge. There are a number of stories where a Shonglap group together with interested and committed guardians impact community behavior. The MTR do not know the full extent of such community change, but the methodology at least has the potential to make an impact outside of the project itself.

Finally, sustainability of knowledge will be improved by follow-up activities. Not everybody will have the opportunity to participate in graduation groups, but those that do, will clearly have a better chance of keeping their awareness/knowledge and developing it further. It is thus considered important that Shonglap includes a vision and a strategy for the girls also after the 12 months.

Recommendations

Sustainability will be enhanced by:

- *Establishing a solid SST during the Shonglap period. This increases the chance of girls practicing their new knowledge under, as well as after, the 12 month course.*
- *Establish some type of Shonglap graduation centers, to provide some support and facilitation to those girls that wish to continue to meet.*
- *Less a recommendation than an endorsement of current practices: Focus clearly on girls and women rights, and equip animators to do this in a realistic and effective fashion.*

8.2. A Strategic Clarification: Keeping focus

It is a sign of the success of the Shonglap programme that many of most debated issues now concern extensions and additions to the initial programme. More effective IGA, and attached follow-up services are two examples. However, one should keep in mind that the stated focus of the programme is initial awareness raising and empowerment of the

adolescent girls, and not that Shonglap should support them in all facets of life all through their adolescent - and even grown-up - period. At some stage one will have to let go.

When and how to exit, is an important strategic consideration. Based on long experience, the MTR would advise against a too encompassing and too dispersed programme. One of the key strengths so far is precisely the clearly defined target group as well as programme intention.

To facilitate the strategic thinking, it might thus be useful to split Shonglap in two components - core programme and add-ons. The core programme consists of the current 12 month course - 9 months awareness/life skills/literacy and 3 months IGA. In addition, the core programme should include establishing a follow-up forum, with some very basic facilities and plans.

Add-on's: Flexibility and adaptation in practice

To the core programme, each NGO partner is then encouraged to add-on extra services, projects, links, etc. This might vary from locality to locality, and in extent and comprehensiveness - but might include extra IGA training, market linking, elaborate discussion forums including parents and other stakeholders, health services, other social activities - in fact, whatever a Shonglap group and the implementing partner can come up with. During our work we have come across numerous ideas how to enhance the Shonglap experience, and the only thing that is certain is that all of these ideas cannot be included in a core programme. There is neither overall resources nor capacity in every partner to be able to implement all the inventions. At the same time, one would very much like to see many of these ideas tried.

It is important to fit ambitions with programme structure. Such a split in core and add-ons is quite possible to square with the current operational modus operandi, i.e. Strømme working through a set of highly diverse NGOs in terms of capacity, environment, vision and indeed challenges. In the future, everybody will be expected to do the core programme well, while the add-ons will differ from place to place. Of course, one can hope for significant replication and exchange of ideas between the NGOs.

Further, it is considered key for effectiveness that Strømme clearly delineates the area of responsibility in connection to Shonglap, and the main focus should be to administer an excellent core programme. Add-ons might also be supported, but in a more general and facilitating role. Thus, ***partners have the responsibility for initiating, establishing and operating functional and effective add-ons - not Strømme.***

Recommendation

- *SF should "split" Shonglap in two components - core programme and add-ons. SF's key responsibility is running an excellent core programme, while the partners will have main responsibility for the add-ons.*

ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference Mid-Term Evaluation, Operation Days Work 2008 Shonglap Education Programme, Strømme Foundation Bangladesh

Background

In the 2008 Operation Days Work (ODW) Campaign, Norwegian students' one day of solidarity work raised approximately 28 million NOK. The decision making forums for the Norwegian schools had decided that the 2008 campaign should be earmarked to empower adolescent girls in Bangladesh through Strømme Foundations' Shonglap programme.

Bangladesh is the most densely populated country on the globe (981.5 persons per sq. km) with a population of 150 million living in a small land-mass of 144,500 km. 23% of the population are adolescents and more than half of them (18 million) are girls. 57% of the total adolescent girls do not go to primary school and about 30% drop out before completing high school study. In the rural areas of Bangladesh the adolescent girls are normally given in early marriage. Parents consider them to be a "burden" as they do not make any cash contribution to the family economy. Unaware of the facts of life these adolescent girls become mothers at an early age and are deprived of their legitimate rights. Frustration among unemployed adolescent boys is one of the reasons attributed to the recent significant increase in the sexual harassment of young girls, and this is a heavy burden for the girls.

In the above context Strømme Foundation with its Partner Organizations and in collaboration with the community has developed the education programme called Shonglap to empower adolescent girls and help them address these huge challenges. Shonglap means "dialogue" in the Bangla language and this education programme is inspired by Freire's participatory approach. Shonglap is a one year education programme targeted for unmarried adolescent girls. A Shonglap group consists of 25 girls, and is lead by an animator. The first six months of the training is on life skills, empowerment, rights, health and other important issues for the everyday life of the girls. The next three months is literacy training, and the last part of the education is training in different Income Generating Activities, where the girls can choose between different courses. Finally, after graduation from Shonglap, the girls are offered a small interest free loan (not funded by ODW).

Objectives of the Shonglap programme:

Development objective: Through the Shonglap Program adolescent girls and boys who have dropped out of school are empowered and become resourceful citizens, endowed with their dignity and their rights through the education and occupational skills they have acquired from the Shonglap programme.

Programme objectives: The main objective of the programme is that the participating youths become aware of their rights, critically conscious of their role in the family and the local community, and economically productive. *Following could be identified as the specific objectives of the five-year Shonglap Program:*

- Targeted adolescent groups gain access to life education and occupational skills

- Women and marginalized youths gain a level of self dignity, are made aware of their legitimate rights and are able to enjoy these within a safe environment
- Adolescent youths improve their livelihoods with life skills and occupational training and engage in income generating activities with a regular income

Purpose of the evaluation

The importance of the Shonglap programme is to equip the adolescent girls and boys with the necessary life and income generating skills that will empower them to recognize their rights and take control of their lives, and to become resourceful citizens and therefore role models in the empowerment of girls and the fight against poverty in their respective communities. Keeping in view of this objective, the purpose of this mid-term evaluation is:

To assess the strengths and weaknesses, and provide recommendations to adjust the current operation and future programming of the Shonglap programme in Bangladesh.

This is primarily a formative evaluation and it shall contribute to learning. It can also possibly include suggestions of re designing components of the project and its management/governance mechanisms.

The dual purpose of the evaluation implies two levels – the adolescent girl recipient of the Shonglap programme and their respective communities.

Evaluation questions:

Two main questions posed in this mid-term evaluation are:

1. *What has been the impact on the girls? To what extent has the ability of girls to make their own decisions been increased?*
2. *What has been the socio-political impact on the villages where Shonglap has been implemented?*

Scope of the mid-term evaluation

The data in the baseline and the existing indicators will be used as a starting point for this evaluation. There should be an emphasis on differences between the partners – challenges as well as best practices, and how the mid-term evaluation can contribute to further improvement in implementation and coordination, with a special focus on sustainability.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation shall make use of the following four criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation will assess:

*1. The **relevance** of the Shonglap programme plans/activities and operations with respect to the needs to achieve empowerment of adolescent girls, their individual sustainable development and that of their respective communities. Where possible it will assess to what extent activities have mainstream cross-cutting issues such as environment, good governance, gender equality etc.*

2. The **effectiveness** of the Shonglap programme activities in terms of the current and perceived results with respect to the achievement of the Shonglap objectives. Both intended and unintended results should be identified as far as possible with a view to assessing if and how the adaptations in the program's design or implementing is required to reach its intended objectives and outcomes.

3. To what extent the Shonglap programme is **efficient**, i.e. to what extent the shonglap programme is converting the available ODW resources into intended results. Are the resources utilized in the best possible way or is there a need for adjustments?

4. The **sustainability** of the achievements of Shonglap; in other words assess the extent to which results will be preserved over time in the absence of the ODW funding. Of particular importance is an assessment of the contribution of Shonglap to empowering and strengthening the awareness and ability of the adolescent girls to fight for their rights and safeguard their security and economic empowerment in the family and local community. In cases where capacity is lacking, the evaluation should identify how Shonglap operations can be supplemented by specific provisions for developing and strengthening capacity of the adolescent girls. We also want to explore the financial and institutional sustainability of Shonglap. This includes the partners and its capacity and ability to convert policies into services of value for their target groups, over time. Financial sustainability includes an assessment of direct further funding opportunities as well as the institutional context.

Assignment questions

These are the key questions for the assessment:

Relevance:

1. What are the main synergies between the three elements in the Shonglap education? How can the synergy be attained to a further extent?
2. To what degree is IGA training and follow up groups helping the girls to attain social inclusion and economic independence also on a long-term basis?

Effectiveness and efficiency:

- i. Is the training and follow up of animators and supervisors relevant and sufficient?
- ii. Are the Shonglap Support Teams given the necessary follow up by partners and are the right persons chosen for the Shonglap Support Teams?
- iii. Is IGA training organised and conducted in a way that effectively provides the girls with opportunities to earn a significant income?
- iv. Are Strømme Foundation and partners fulfilling the potential of improvements by coordination, knowledge and experience sharing?

Sustainability:

1. To what extent and in which ways has the Shonglap programme changed the role of the participants in family and village life – also after graduation?

2. What changes do we see in Shonglap villages in matters like early marriage, girls' opportunities to education and work, and girl/women's role in decision-making processes?
3. To what extent are the girls able/given the opportunity to empower one another after graduating Shonglap?
4. *What is the impact of the follow-up groups implemented by some partners? Does this lead to more sustainable results on individual and village level? Can we identify best practices for organisational learning and further development of the Shonglap programme?*
5. *What are the community, partner and local government's perceptions of what has been done and achieved by the Shonglap programme?*

Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted with a combination of methodological approaches to ensure an assessment where the target group – the Shonglap girls - are main subjects of the research. This will include:

- Review of relevant project documents and data bases, including baseline studies
- Interviews with adolescent girls in Bangladesh
 - a. Girls attending Shonglap
 - b. Girls who graduated from Shonglap during the first year of the ODW programme period (girls who are attending follow-up groups as well as girls not attending these groups must be represented)
 - c. Possibly girls in control groups in villages without Shonglap centers
- Interviews with partners – at management level, project coordinators, Shonglap supervisors, animators and members of Shonglap Support Teams
- Interviews with relevant stakeholders in communities with Shonglap centers (parents, adolescent boys/potential spouses, local authorities, religious leaders etc)

Evaluation team

The evaluation should be carried out by a highly experienced team, with two to three members. At least one of the members should have thorough experience with evaluation of education projects from various countries and one of the members should be specialist in the Bangladeshi context. One or more of the team members should be a woman.

Required skills of the consultants:

- Experience and ability in project evaluation (social projects, project effectiveness and impact)
- Experience in participatory methods and processes
- Experience and knowledge in gender issues
- Knowledge and experience from work with rural youth and youth empowerment
- Experience related to entrepreneurship, and vocational training will be considered an asset
- Higher education (university degree in social sciences, psychology, education)
- Good analytical skills
- Fluent English
- At least one of the members must speak fluent Bangla

Timeline

The mid-term-evaluation should be carried out in seven weeks:

Week 1: Preparation and desk study. Revision of relevant documents and other available information.

Week 2-3: Fieldwork

Week 4-5: Analysis and completion of first draft of the report, feedback to and communication with SF on the findings and conclusions, feedback to beneficiaries and partners.

Week 6-7 Revision of comments from SF and completion of final report, draft submitted ODW.

After the fieldwork, the international consultant will lead a one day workshop with staff in Dhaka. After finalizing the report, based on the findings and conclusions, the consultants together plan and prepare a two day workshop in Dhaka with SF staff and representatives from all implementing partners present. This workshop is lead by the Bangladeshi consultant.

The duration of the mid-term evaluation is expected to be 7 weeks. In addition, it is expected that the team will share the findings of the evaluation with partners and beneficiaries after the evaluation is concluded.

Expected products

- Evaluation report the following structure:
 - Executive summary of no more than 3 pages that includes the principal findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Executive summary also in Bangla.
 - Background: Brief description of the project and local context
 - Methodology
 - Analysis of results and findings of areas covered by the evaluation (assessment questions)
 - A general assessment of the project and a comparative analysis
 - Recommendations
 - Appendices (questionnaires, list of interviews etc)
 - The report should not exceed 40 pages (including executive summary and appendixes)

ANNEX 2: Field Program and Meeting Schedule

PROGRAM FOR SHONGLAP MID-TERM EVALUATION

01 OCTOBER TO 30 November 2011

**MR. ERLEND SIGVALDSEN, NCG,
TEAM LEADER
MS. MALIHA SHAHJAHAN, LOCAL
CONSULTANT**

Day	Date	Time	Program for Ms. Maliha Shahjahan	Program for Mr. Erlend Sigvaldsen
Saturday to Monday	01- Oct to 10- Oct		Preparatory Work: Literature review Operation Plan Tools Development	
Tuesday	11- Oct	11:20 AM PM 4:00 PM	Travel to Sylhet for visiting VARD with EH and SLF Travel to Moulavibazar by car Meeting with Prochesta and VARD staff	
Wednes- day Thursda- y Friday Saturday	12- Oct 13- Oct 14- Oct 15- Oct	12:25 PM	Review Procheshta program (CBO/NGO project of VARD) Review Procheshta program Review Prochesta program Return Dhaka	Mr. Erelend Sigvaldsen arrives Dhaka
Sunday Monday	16- Oct 17- Oct	Full day AM	Meeting with SFBD Staff Meeting with SFBD Staff	Meeting with SFBD Staff Meeting with SFBD Staff
Tuesday Wednes- day Thursda- y Friday	18- Oct 19- Oct 20- Oct 21- Oct	5:20 PM 9:00 - 12:00 PM	Travel to CODEC Bagerhat by air with EH and RA Review CODEC Bagerhat program Review CODEC Bagerhat program Review CODEC Bagerhat program Meeting w ith CODEC and Network partners management and staff Return Dhaka	Meeting with SUS Management at 9:30 AM Meeging with CODEC and Network Partners Return Dhaka
Saturday	22- Oct	??	Travel to COAST in Cox's bazar with EH and RA	Free time
Sunday	23- Oct		Review COAST Program	Meeting with POPI management 10:00 AM Meeting with Norwegian Ambassador at 1:00 PM Meeting with ActionAid at 4:00 PM Mr. Zakir Hossain Sarker, Manager, REFLECT

Monday	24-Oct		Review COAST Program	Meeting with BISR at 9:30 AM Dr. Khorshed Alam, Executive Director Meeting with Shonglap Advisory Team at 3:30 PM Ms. Anna Minj, Director, Social Development Program, BRAC Ms Farzana Shahnaz Majid, Gender Specialist, Human Resources, ICDDR,B Ms Rowshan Jahan Parvin, Deputy Director, Ain o Salish Kendra
Tuesday	25-Oct	??	Return Dhaka	Meeting with RDRS 10 AM Mr. Tapan Kumar Karmaker, Director(MF), RDRS (Acting Executive Director) Meeting with VARD at 3 pm Mr. Amranul H. Kamal, Executive Director
Wednesday	26-Oct	9:30 AM	Meeting with MIDAS	Meeting with MIDAS (9:30 AM) Mr. A.S.M. Mashi-ur-Rahman, General Manager, MIDAS
Thursday	27-Oct	Full day	Debriefing with SFBD Staff	Debriefing with SFBD Staff
Friday	28-Oct		Free time	Depart Dhaka
Saturday	29-Oct		Free time	
??		2:50 PM 4:50 PM	Travel to RDRS in Thakurgaon by air with EH and RA Review RDRS Review RDRS Review RDRS Return Dhaka	

ANNEX 3: Tools Used for Field Investigation

Observation Checklist for Shonglap Center/ PNGO education program

1. Location of the CS, in terms of its distance
2. Year / month of establishment
3. Type of services available
4. Work–environment of the SC considering timing, sitting arrangement, uninterrupted usage
5. Uses of the centre
6. Role of centre in creating improved information access to basic life skill education, literacy building and occupational skill development, creating employment, job search to the community
7. Role and mechanism of centre in providing ancillary services like education service and credit facilities
8. Role of the center or center management to continue follow up for a Shonglap graduate

Course Curriculum for IGA TrainingList of total IGA training,

1. Content used for each training
2. Duration of each course

IGA Trainers

1. Number of trainers
2. Academic qualification and expertise of trainers
3. Ration of trainees and trainer

Course Curriculum for Literacy Building

1. Content used for literacy building
2. Duration of each course/ class

Animarator/ Trainers

1. Total number of staff and no of turn over two and half years
2. Academic qualification and expertise of each staff

Profile of Shonglap Girls'

1. Total Number of Shonlap girls'
2. Number of Girls' enrolled in school again
3. Number of girls without any education
4. Number of girls receiving IGA training, for each trade
5. Number of girls receiving MIDAS training and their updates (still engaged in earning, continuous earning or occasional earning)
6. Total Girls employment or self employed, type of employment, duration of employment and average earning per month

Questionnaire for Individual Shonglap Girls

1. What is your status in the Family?
 - Helping family level activities
 - Taking care of family members
 - Take roles in family conflicts
 - Help earning family income
 - Help younger to study
 - inactive and unnecessary member of the family

2. Do you participate in family decisions?
Yes No

3. If 'yes', in what aspects or decisions
 - Continuing education
 - Matrimonial Issues
 - Movement and going outside
 - Participation in social festivals
 - Participation in social movement
 - Participation in controlling family expenses

4. Do you have your own savings account?
Yes No

5. If yes, how much do you save per month on average-----

6. Do you move outside your home?

Yes No

7. If 'yes', what are the places you go

School/ Clinic/medical centre/Market/ Amusement centres /Cinema halls etc./ Religious centre/ UP Office/
Govt. office/ Bank / Insurance Company/ NGO (This NGO ~ PNGO)/ Other NGOs/ Community Centres/
Club /Other CBOs/ Relative's House/ = Friends' House
8. If you can't go to outside your house alone, why (or what are the reasons)?

Not permitted by parents/ Eve teasing by boys /man on the street/ I don't like personally to go outside the
house (except Shonglap Centre)/ Community people do not like/ Social bondage/ Like to go, but ashamed
of doing so/ Others (specify)
9. Are you involved with any IGA?
Yes No

10. If 'yes', what type of IGA are you involved in?

Homestead Gardening/ Small business/hawking/ Grocery/ Poultry rearing/ Cattle rearing/ Handicrafts/
Tailoring/ Embroidery/ = Others (specify)

11. Do you help /contribute your family by from the income of your IGA?
Yes No

12. If 'Yes', what types of help you do?

Own study / Family Food expenses/ Study of brothers and sisters/ Own clothes and cosmetics/ Treatment/
Savings for marriage/ Payment of family debts/ Others

Checklist for the FGD with non Shonglap Girls

Knowledge and Practices of basic Health Care

1. Knowledge about seven dangerous diseases(Tuberculosis, Polio, Tetanus, Hoofing cough, Hepatitis B and Measles)
2. Knowledge about the doses of immunization/ vaccination (BCG=1 dose, DPT=3 doses, OPV=4 doses, Measles=1 dose, Hepatitis B= 3 doses)
3. Use of vaccination among the Household
4. Frequency of diseases among the household and usually used health care service/center (Name of Diseases- Common cold and cough, Fever, anaemic , Phenomena/dyspnoea, ENT problem, TB, High blood pressure, Stroke, Hit, Tetanus, Jaundice, Gastric ulcer, Diabetes, Eye disease, Skin disease, Stomach ache/disease, diarrhea, Dysentery, Severe head ache, Asthma)
(Name of Health Centers- Primary Health Care Centre, Upazila Heath Complex, Maternity Centre, NGO HC/ Mission Hospital, Private Clinic, Dist Gov Hospital , Qualified Doctor, Village Doctor, Pharmacy (drug shop), Village Health worker, Traditional Healer etc)
5. Main Source of drinking Water and water for other domestic purposes, Knowledge about arsenic contamination in the water used
(Tube Well, Shallow/Deep Well, Rain Water, Piped Water, Pond/River/canal/stream)
6. Type of latrine used (Ring Slab latrine, Katcha/ditch latrine, Hanging Latrine, Open space, Sanitary Latrine)
7. Understanding about HIV/AIDS
RISKS AND SPREAD- Transfusion of infected blood, Transmission from mother to child, Any type of illegal sex, Unprotected sex with an HIV/AIDS affected person, Sex with more than one person, Injecting drugs and sharing of contaminated needles, Use of razor/blade used by others etc)
PREVENTIVE MEASURES- Abide by religious rules and regulations, Limiting sexual contact between husband and wife only, Using condom, Avoiding contaminated syringe/ needles used by others, Avoiding homosexuality, No blood transfusion without examination, Avoiding the use of used blades and razors

Knowledge and Practice of gender Equality and Human Rights

1. How do they Define Women rights specially legal rights?
Equal rights for man and woman, Abide by family law, Women's ownership of family assets, Women an children repression act
2. Was she discriminated in the family? How?
3. Was she discriminated during her marriage? How? (Dowry, early marriage, express opinion)
4. State of her mobility.
5. What is the girls' status in the family, how far they can participate in the decision making process?
6. Do they have saving practices? How much? How does she maintain her control over it?
7. Is she involve with any IGA? What is the type? Does she contribute to the family from her income? How? How much control does she the over the income, in terms of loan management, sales etc?

Perception About IGA training and Shonglap

1. Is she going to any type of IGA traning? Detail.
2. Does she know about Shonglap Centers? How does she perceive it compare to other center (if she knows any)?

Checklist for the FGD with Shonglap Girls

Knowledge and Practices of basic Health Care

8. Knowledge about seven dangerous diseases(Tuberculosis, Polio, Tetanus, Hoofing cough, Hepatitis B and Measles)
9. Knowledge about the doses of immunization/ vaccination (BCG=1 dose, DPT=3 doses, OPV=4 doses, Measles=1 dose, Hepatitis B= 3 doses)

10. Use of vaccination among the Household
11. Frequency of diseases among the household and usually used health care service/center
(Name of Diseases- Common cold and cough, Fever, anaemic , Phenomena/dyspnoea, ENT problem, TB, High blood pressure, Stroke, Hit, Tetanus, Jaundice, Gastric ulcer, Diabetes, Eye disease, Skin disease, Stomach ache/disease, diarrhea, Dysentery, Severe head ache, Asthma)
(Name of Health Centers- Primary Health Care Centre, Upazila Health Complex, Maternity Centre, NGO HC/ Mission Hospital, Private Clinic, Dist Gov Hospital , Qualified Doctor, Village Doctor, Pharmacy (drug shop), Village Health worker, Traditional Healer etc)
12. Main Source of drinking Water and water for other domestic purposes, Knowledge about arsenic contamination in the water used
(Tube Well, Shallow/Deep Well, Rain Water, Piped Water, Pond/River/canal/stream)
13. Type of latrine used (Ring Slab latrine, Katcha/ditch latrine, Hanging Latrine, Open space, Sanitary Latrine)
14. Understanding about HIV/AIDS
RISKS AND SPREAD- Transfusion of infected blood, Transmission from mother to child, Any type of illegal sex, Unprotected sex with an HIV/AIDS affected person, Sex with more than one person, Injecting drugs and sharing of contaminated needles, Use of razor/blade used by others etc)
PREVENTIVE MEASURES- Abide by religious rules and regulations, Limiting sexual contact between husband and wife only, Using condom, Avoiding contaminated syringe/ needles used by others, Avoiding homosexuality, No blood transfusion without examination, Avoiding the use of used blades and razors

Knowledge and Practice of gender Equality and Human Rights

8. How do they Define Women rights specially legal rights?
Equal rights for man and woman, Abide by family law, Women's ownership of family assets, Women an children repression act
9. Was she discriminated in the family? How?
10. Was she discriminated during her marriage? How? (Dowry, early marriage, express opinion)
11. State of her mobility.
12. What is the girls' status in the family, how far they can participate in the decision making process?
13. Do they have saving practices? How much? How does she maintain her control over it?
14. Is she involve with any IGA? What is the type? Does she contribute to the family from her income? How? How much control does she the over the income, in terms of loan management, sales etc?

Questions related to the courses:

1. Briefly discuss on the course the Girls are offered (number of module, duration, phases etc.)
2. Briefly discuss about learning environment (Distance, timing, sitting arrangement, uninterrupted usage) and utilities (Mentioning both opportunities and barriers)
3. Which trade they usually prefer to pursue? Why?

Questions on Level of Satisfaction

1. Are the girls satisfied with work environment (Distance, timing, sitting arrangement etc) of the SC?
2. Are the girls satisfied with Medium of instruction, Timings, Duration of training?
3. Are the girls satisfied with course content ? Girls satisfied with the performance of animarator/trainers?
4. Are the girls satisfied with the resource materials and logistics provided?

Problems/Challenges Encountered

1. What were the problems faced in the arena of Accessibility?

2. What were the barriers faced during persuasion of the course?
3. What specific challenges they had to face at family and community level to bring themselves here?
4. What are the challenges, they faced during job search/development of entrepreneurship?

Personal evaluation of the course attended

1. How do the girls evaluate the certificate earned? How the existing market structure recognizes her certificate?
2. Do they think that course offered by SC is better than the courses offered by government and other private institutions in terms of quality, work environment, recognition and usefulness? If yes, then why/how?

Support by SC in Job placement/entrepreneurship Development (ONLY FOR Shonglap Graduate)

1. How many are employed?
2. What is the current profession? How long she is involved with the initiative?
3. How she got involved in this profession? What were the advantages and challenges in pursuing such a career?
4. What are the contributions of SC/host organization in job placement or entrepreneurship development?

Impact on Users' socio-economic status-

1. What are the outstanding achievements of pursuing training in the arena of
 - a. financial benefit/income/living standard
 - b. social status,
 - c. self-confidence,
 - d. empowerment,
2. Participation in decision-making process/advice at family, peer and community level
3. What is the contribution/impact of her achievement on her family, local community and society?
4. State of Education of the girls before coming to Shonglap Program and after completing shonglap program

Relevance of lifeskill/IGA Training

- How long Training Module/training materials are applicable?
- How long literacy/learning is responsive to development a sustainable career/improve quality of life?
- Whether the learning is responsive to community needs and demand?
- What are the scopes of regular up-gradation or improvements of learning earned from the program?
- What additional content / services are required from SCs?

Recommendation to overcome the challenges

What are the recommendations in the arena of

- Course up gradation
- Efficiency of centre management
- Cost effectiveness of the program
- Usefulness of the course
- Scope of further learning
- Support in job placement/ self employment

**Checklist: Consultation with Shonglap center / Program Management/ Staff/
Executive Director of the Partner Organization**

Level of satisfaction of Animators/ Trainers about IGA Training

1. What is the level of satisfaction among the Animators/trainers?
2. What support the center further need for capacity building of trainers?
3. Comments on the quality of the current curriculum content and training materials?
4. Did the center carry out any baseline survey to contextualize the IGA training before launching the program?
5. What are the features that make the services distinct from other public and development agencies?

HR and management of the of centers/ PO

1. Governance, monitoring and management mechanism
2. Coordination between host organization and SC, host organization and Stromme
3. Integration of Shonglap with other projects and programs of Partner Organization
4. What are the supports they further require from Stromme?
5. What are the supports they further require from PNGO? (For PO only)
6. What are the supports they further require from community?
7. What are the supports they further require from public agencies?

Relevance and impact of Education Program

1. What type of change does the education program entail in improvising quality of life and level of awareness about women rights and equality? Is any improvement required or the curriculum for life skill education is enough?
2. How far the basic literacy program is contributing?
3. What are the initiative to re-admit drop out girls? Does it need any further attention?
4. Do they think that the existing curriculum is enough to meet the demand of competitive market? If not, what are the arenas for further improvement?
5. Whether the program is responsive to community needs and demand
6. What additional services they find necessary to provide?
7. What is the impact of such program on individual girls in the arena of
 - a. financial benefit/income/living standard
 - b. social status,
 - c. self-confidence,
 - d. empowerment,
 - e. participation in family or social decision making process
8. What is the contribution/impact of such program on local community and society?
9. What are the fields, the girls are mostly employed/ trainees go for entrepreneurship?
10. What is the role of the organization in girls' job placement/development of entrepreneurship?

Problems Encountered specifically

- a. At community level
- b. Governance, monitoring and management
- c. Infrastructure
- d. Resource
- e. Job placement of the girls

Sustainability and community ownership of the SC

1. Is the SCs sustainable or not, in absence of Stromme? If not, how long before SC is expected to become sustainable?
2. List the strengths that can help the centre to be sustainable
3. Whether community has a say or ownership in managing the SC? If yes, what are the influencing factors?

4. Whether community is contributing resources to the SC (financial, in-kind, volunteers etc)
5. Network building with GO, NGO and Private entities /forums working at local level

Checklist: Multi-stakeholders' Community Consultation

1. What is the perception about SC? How they find such an initiative in their community?
2. How often do you visit this center? Why or why not?
3. Whether the program is responsive to community demand? How?
4. What is the tangible impact of the project on life and livelihood of individual girls in the arena of
 - a. financial benefit/income/living standard
 - b. social status,
 - c. self-confidence,
 - d. empowerment,
 - e. participation in family or social decision making process
5. What is the tangible impact of the project on community and society in terms of employment generation, quality change in life and livelihood, (through reducing poverty/improving the standard of living of the people)?
6. What is the socio-cultural impact of the project on local community and society?
7. What is the role of community in facilitating and ensuring the sustainability of the centre?
8. Whether community has a say or ownership in managing the CS? If yes, what are the influencing factors?
9. Whether community contributes resources to the CS (financial, in-kind, volunteers etc)
10. What are the further needs, the center can provide to community people?
11. What are the challenges, community people encounter to avail the services provided by the center?
12. What are the major recommendations for better performance (better management, better service, wider promotional campaign, effective role in job placement of girls, etc) of the centre?
13. What are the major recommendations for ensuring community ownership?
14. What are the major recommendations for sustainability of the centre?

ANNEX 4: Impact Tables and Results

Table-1 Source of Drinking water	Baseline Data	Midterm Data
Tube-well/STW/DTW	94.50%	83.33%
Rain Water	0.25%	0
Tap/ piped	0.13%	16.66%
Pond River/Ditch/ Canla	1.63%	0

Table-2 Type of Latrine	Baseline Data	Midterm Data
Ring- Slab Latrine	65.25%	66.66667
Pit/ Kancha	17.75%	25
Hanging	3.38%	0
Open	8.50%	8.333333
Septic Tank	5.13%	0

Table-3 Aspects of Decisions	Baseline Data	Mid Term Data
Continuing Education	35%	55%
Matrimonial Issues	16%	74%
Movement and going outside	30%	87%
Participation in social festivals	4%	57%
Participation in controlling family expenses	13%	65%

Table-4 Frequently Visited Places	Baseline Data	Mid Term Data
School	20.89%	61%
Clinic/medical centre	19.22%	13%
Market	27.73%	56%
Amusement centres /cinema halls etc.	9.43%	8%
Religious centre	26.43%	11%
UP Office	3.33%	-
Govt. office	0.18%	-
Bank / Insurance Company	0.74%	-
NGO (This NGO ~ PNGO)	1.66%	92%
Other NGOs	1.66%	89%
Community Centres	0.74%	-
Club /Other CBOs	0.37%	-
Relative's House	90.2%	97%
Friend's house	62.48%	94%

Table -5 Reasons for not Going outside alone	Baseline Data	Mid Term Data
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Not permitted by parents	78.57%	2%
Eve teasing by boys /man on the street	2.78%	0%
Don't like personally to go outside the house	5.95%	2%
Community people do not like	6.35%	0%
Social bondage	0.79%	6%
Like to go, but ashamed of doing so	7.54%	18%

Table -6 Preferred Types of IGA

	Baseline Data	Mid Term Data
Homestead gardening	1.35%	10%
Small business/hawking	0%	0%
Poultry Rearing	28.38%	50%
Cattle Rearing	8.11%	35%
Handicrafts	45.95%	12%
Tailoring	8.11%	23%
Embroidery	1.35%	29%
Others (specify)	18.92%	4%

Table 7: Knowledge on seven killer diseases

	Baseline Data	Midterm Data
Can say all	1.23%	8.3%
can say more than 3	16.79%	48%
Can say 2-3	39.75%	41%
Can say only 1	25.93%	2.6%
Can not specify any	15.31%	0

Table 8: Knowledge HIV/AIDS transmission

Identified modes of HIV/AIDS transmission	Baseline Data	Midterm Data	
		SG	NGS
Transfusion of infected blood	25.46%	72%	50%
Mother to child infection	8.8%	4%	-
Pre and/or extra-marital sex	33.33%	7%	-
Unprotected sex with HIV/AIDS infected person	12.04%	16%	1%
Multiple sexual partners	21.3%	36%	2%
Sharing of needles by drug users	25%	68%	17%
Razor/blades used by others	10.65%	60%	8%
Do not know	39.81%	-	27%
Others	0	-	-

Figure 1: Mobility of Shonglap Girls

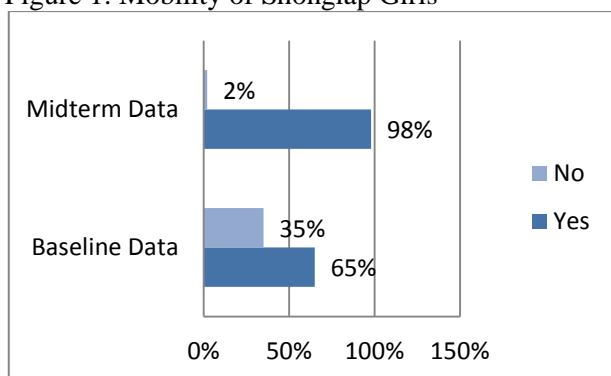
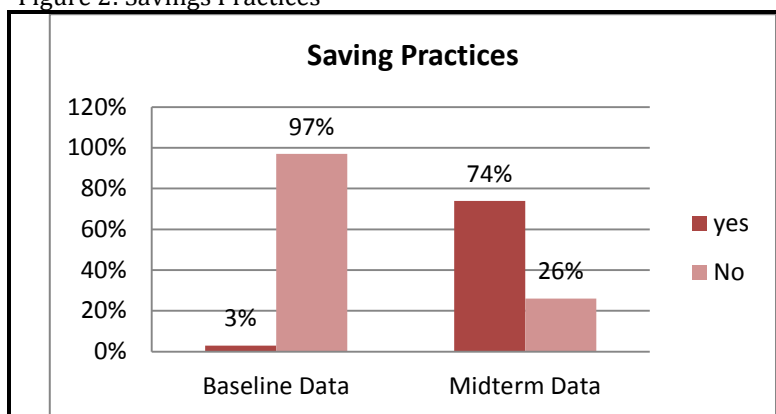


Figure 2: Savings Practices



Story of Khurshida

After Marriage Shonglap Graduate Khurshida

Khurshida Akhter is twenty two years old and has been married to a fisherman for the past eleven months. She is pregnant. She wears a traditional black veil from head to foot that is common in a Bangladeshi rural conservative part of the society.

Being a Shonglap Graduate enabled her to become engaged in various types of income generating activities (IGA) before her marriage, such as tailoring, poultry, cattle rearing etc. These skills enabled her to find a suitable groom and she got married without having to pay a dowry; on the contrary, her husband paid a bride price for her.

She is currently rearing cattle which she hopes to sell during Eid for a good price and is vocal about her dreams for her family.

Being a new mother, Khurshida tried to hide behind her veils. For a while she couldn't talk. As reason she said *"It's been long seems I talked with strangers"*. Now she doesn't go out frequently. When we asked her about the last time when she visited the doctor, she informed it has been six months.