



The **Methodist** Church



Anglicans in
World Mission



Bangladesh Bits

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Dear Friends

It was great to see and catch up with so many of you during our time in the UK from October to February and it was really nice to spend my first Christmas in Britain for 7 years (while for Dipty Linda it was her first British Christmas; for her the Christmas dinners, plays/pantomimes, lights/decorations in various towns/cities and the snow were highlights, although the excitement of the latter wore off quite fast as she got cold!). We have now been back 3 months & have just about settled back into the Bangladesh pace of life. It was encouraging to return and find out that the Multi-Lingual Education was still running nicely (previously work we have been involved with has stopped while we have been away) reflecting increasing ownership of it being taken by our CBSDP colleagues. The same can be said of other aspects of our work such as climate change adaptation and even the CBSDP reorganisation (albeit slower than hoped for). Although we haven't had time to get our teeth into much since we have been back yet, there has been one major highlight for me – I have now had a book published: *'What is Climate Change, its Impacts and possible Community Based Responses in Bangladesh'* and in the Bengali language too!!

The story starts back in 2006 when I first began to look at how climate change may affect the work of the Church of Bangladesh Social Development Programme: The first thing I realised was that the issue was quite complex and there were wildly differing, sometimes even conflicting statements circulating on how and when Bangladesh would be impacted, especially in the newspapers. Even I was rather

confused so I decided as I had done for the subject of *Arsenic Mitigation* that I would try to summarise the most accurate and up-to-date information available into a report that I could share with my CBSDP colleagues. Later when I shared my idea with Christian Aid, Bangladesh they were very interested so invited me to form part of their group that would be attending the 2nd *International Conference on Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change* held in Dhaka, findings from which I also agreed to include in the summary.

For the general scenario, information was easily available on the internet, such as in the Stern Report and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s 4th Assessment Report, even if it did require going through thousands of pages that was pretty tedious. While for the Bangladesh information reports were hard to find and I had to become like a detective and stalk through all sort of offices to find various people and to collect their reports on a pen-drive/memory stick. Whenever I had a free day I would work on the report in between other CBSDP commitments so after 2 years and hundreds of reports or articles referred to it was finally complete.

Many reports when written just stay on a shelf and while I hoped the summary in simple English would be useful to Bangladeshi CBSDP colleagues and staff of Christian Aid partners I didn't expect much more.

However, replying to a random email on climate change from Action of Churches Together (ACT), Geneva the relief arm of the World Council of Churches, I sent the first couple of chapters of the report as an attachment to my reply and they liked it so much they forwarded to their partners and I got letters of thanks from places as far away as Burundi in Africa. Norwegian Church Aid were particularly interested in it, published it on their website and presented it to the Government of Norway (Ministry of the Environment & NORAD); Church of Scotland also put it on their website and sent a copy to a joint parliamentary enquiry (Bangladesh & UK MPs) on 'Climate Change and Bangladesh', as well as presenting a summary to Prime Minister David Cameron; while I presented copies to people that included the Director of the Climate Change Cell of Government of Bangladesh, former UK Shadow Energy & Climate Change spokesman Greg Clark MP and to the Government of Papua New Guinea Climate Change Minister. It is also on the University of Sussex run *Eldis* website, stimulating much interest worldwide.

However, I wasn't really satisfied with that; as my intention was to provide the information in a form that was easy to understand, giving local development workers in Bangladesh the information they really needed to know regarding future climate change predictions and actions they could take to adapt to these changes. But of course most of these people aren't even comfortable with easy to read English! So last year I updated my report and it was translated into the



Bengali/Bangla language with Norwegian Church Aid funds and this year just after I arrived back, 500 copies had been printed in an attractive book format! Quite appropriately they were just in time for me to distribute at the 5th *International Conference on Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change* in Dhaka a follow-up to the conference that started things off, where 175 copies were quickly snapped up!

Even to the writer a book/report can get boring, but those 4 years of work were all worth it to see the thrilled faces of people able to have comprehensive information on climate change in their own language for the first time. Even I was surprised to see the excitement generated by a book! Dennis a Regional Director responsible for a CARITAS (Catholic development agency) research project on climate change adaptation was so pleased he wanted to pay me for the copies I gave him, but my biggest fans (I don't have many mind) were the 8 *Climate Champions*; young people who were chosen through a British Council programme to raise awareness of the issue at home and abroad: They wanted their books signed (oops I forgot to date it as they corrected me- hey I'm new to this), photos with me and the day after the conference two of them, Tariqul and Progga even brought me a little present (little clay models & a small Bangladesh flag). This definitely made all the hard work worth it!



Website...

- Read to English version of James' Report/book on: http://bit.ly/James_Pender
- Read a recent article James has written on 'Minorities & Climate': <http://www.tiempocyberclimate.org/newswatch/comment110107.htm>

Thank God...

- That Dipti Linda is pregnant
- For managing to get my book on climate change & Bangladesh published in Bengali
- That MLE teaching in CBSDP-Rajshahi's schools is continuing to go well
- That Dipti's brother found a better job.

Please pray...

- For Dipti Linda that her pregnancy would continue to go well, she would have peace about it and that she would give birth easily and normally to a healthy baby.
- Pray that James' book/report would continue to circulate widely & to assist people respond to the effects of climate change in Bangladesh
- God would guide Linda and the 2 newly recruited School Supervisors as they develop materials, curriculum and other MLE resources, this year for 4 and 5 year olds.
- Pray for God to continue to bless & guide James' ministry in climate change adaptation
- For wisdom for James & David Hall as they help to guide the implementation of recommendations from the CBSDP External Evaluation Report for CBSDP reorganisation.
- Please pray for the complete recovery of my Father's sight after a recent stroke, as since the wedding it has deteriorated a little

- Pray that the Lord would keep watch on Linda's mum who is quite frail in good health and that Linda has God's peace.
- That God would protect Linda's father and neighbours (who are vulnerable being tribal & Christian minorities) from criminals
- Also, pray for our colleagues in the CBSDP and friends in the Church of Bangladesh, that God would supply his wisdom and blessing to their life and work.
- That the love of God would really touch the hearts of the men, women & children we are working with and that we would be effective in our activities to uplift them.

James & Linda