CUTS CRC, with the support of West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL) is working on a pilot project entitled, ‘Consumer Assistance Cell at Grassroots’ (CONASC). Under the project, CUTS will open a number of assistance cells for electricity consumers in nine districts of West Bengal, viz., North Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Purulia, West Midnapore, Howrah, North 24 Parganas and Nadia. In each of the districts, five group electricity supply areas were selected where such assistance cells would be formed.

The main objective of the project is to form CONASC at the grassroots level to improve and supplement the service delivery at the grassroots, with focus on improving the grievance redressal system of the utility service provider. The assistance cells will help consumers with their queries on new and temporary connections, billing and metering, complaint redressal, etc. Domestic and agricultural consumers in the rural and sub-urban areas constitute the principal target group for the project.

Under the project, nine CSOs in the nine districts were selected who are now operating the CONASC cells in their respective locality wherein they meet consumers on specific days of a week to listen to consumer complaints and guide them on how to go about a particular problem. In the next step, these CSOs will organise a number of dissemination and capacity building workshops with electricity consumers.

www.cuts-international.org/CRC/CONASC/index.htm

Grahoker Mukho-Mukhi

Consumer Camps are being organised by the Centre in partnership with local clubs and associations in and around Kolkata. The activity being undertaken with support from Calcutta Electric Supply Company (CESC) Ltd aims to raise awareness and assist consumers with basic queries about electricity supply and services, safety issues, energy conservation, etc.; provide consumers a platform to get their grievances redressed; and function as a two-way communication platform between consumers and the utility. In total, 50 camps are planned under this initiative. Till March 2011, 13 camps were organised reaching out to 240 consumers.

Awareness Generation Workshops

Awareness generation workshops were organised in each of the selected CCCOs to generate awareness and interest about the CONASCs. The first Awareness Generation Workshop was organised at Chanchal, Malda district on October 30, 2010. Subsequently 44 workshops in total were organised, one in each of the CCCO areas selected for the project, reaching out to around 3500 consumers in eight districts.
• Keya Ghosh attended the third meeting of the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Central Advisory Committee in New Delhi, on February 22, 2011.