



Final Report of Final Evaluation
For
**Efficient and Accountable Local Governance
(EALG) Project**

Date of Submission: December, 2022



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Project Information

Project/outcome title	Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG)	
Atlas ID	00106748	
Corporate outcome and output	CPD OUTCOME 2: Develop and implement improved social policies and programs that focus on good governance, reduction of structural inequalities and advancement of vulnerable individuals and groups CPD OUTPUT 3.2: Public institutions and other quasi-formal institutions and normative and policy frameworks have enhanced capacities and frameworks to ensure accountable and gender-responsive governance according to the rule of law.	
Country	Bangladesh	
Region	Regional Bureau of Asia Pacific	
Date project document signed	As per ProDoc: 2 July 2017; As per TAPP: 9 April 2019	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	July 2018	June 2021 (Extended up to December 2022)
Project Budget	USD 7.77 Million	
Funding source	Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Switzerland and UNDP	
Implementing party	Local Government Division. Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperative (MoLGRD& C)	
Project Area:	9 districts of 8 administrative divisions of Bangladesh.	
Beneficiaries to be covered:	Citizens of 18 Upazilas, 251 Union Parishads under them.	
Key Stakeholders:	The elected leaders both at UPs and UZPs, the local administration at Upazila level, DDLGs at district level, elected women leaders of the UPs and UZPs and nominated leaders at UZPs.	

Evaluation Information

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List of Acronyms

AVCB	Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh
BBG	Basic Block Grant
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCA	Climate Change Adaption
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DDCC	District Development and Coordination Committee
DDLG	Deputy Director of Local Government
DDM	Department of Disaster Management
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EALG	Efficient and Accountable Local Governance
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HLP	Horizontal Learning Programme
IAUZP	Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LGI	Local Government Institution
LGRD&C	Ministry of the Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
LGSP	Local Governance Support Programme
LGSP-LIC	Local Governance Support Programme – Learning and Innovation Component
FE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
NAPD	National Academy for Planning and Development
NBD	Nation Building Department
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NID	National Identity Card
NILG	National Institute of Local Governance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSR	Own Source Revenue
PAPI	Pen and paper interview
PBG	Performance-Based Grant
PELG	Policy for Effective Local Governance
PMID	Participatory Management Initiative for Development
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
RBM	Result Based Monitoring
SC	Standing Committee
SCA	Structured Contribution Analysis
SD	Standard Deviation
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDUP	Sustainable and Democratic Union
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSC	Scheme Supervision Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
UGDP	Upazila Governance and Development Project
UICDP	Upazila Integrated Capacity Development Project
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNO	UpazilaNirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UZC	Upazila Committee
UZGP	Upazila Governance Project
UZP	Upazila Parishad
WDF	Women Development Forum
WHO	World Health Organization

Working Definitions of Key Terms

Downward Accountability	Downward accountability entails the process by which an authority is answerable to its stakeholders. In the case of the UPs, the functionaries are held accountable to the citizens for their service delivery commitments.
Effective Participation	Effective participation ensures the participants' voice in a meeting. In terms of the meetings arranged by UPs and UZPs, effective participation means active participation of people of all walks of life who place their demands.
Ethnic Minorities	Ethnic minorities are those who have their own cultural traditions and, frequently, languages than the other majority people in a given country. With different in origins Bangladesh has a number of ethnic minority groups and most of these groups are often disadvantaged compared to Bangla speaking majority groups. They ethnic groups primarily live in the hilly regions in Bangladesh, with some small groups in the plain land as well. Here in this evaluation ethnic minorities are the ethnic groups living in the study areas.
Female-Headed Households	The households, which are headed by women, are in the oldest generation present in the household and who do not have a spouse in the household. Nearly 15.8 per cent of households in the rural setting in Bangladesh are headed by women (World Bank, 2018 estimate).
Horizontal Coordination	Horizontal coordination refers to coordination at the same level for mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities. In local government, it reflects in the UZP level as the coordination between elected bodies and transferred departments, and the same implies to the UP level as well.
Marginalized Groups	Marginalized groups are usually considered as socially excluded, deprived of their rights, facing inequality in social sphere and eventually become vulnerable which led this group to a lower social standing and likely being treated unfairly due their distance the power structure and limited access to resources. As a result they have little influence over decision-making that affects their lives and livelihoods, have weak capacities to claim rights, as their voices remain unheard.
Open Budget Session of UP	UPs are supposed to publish an annual budget from the recommendations of Ward Shava at least 60 days before starting the new fiscal year. Then UPshaveto organize open budget sessions in the presence of the interested citizens of the UPs concerned. UP functionaries (including UP Chairman and Members) have to clarify the priorities in the open budget meeting. After that, a copy of the finalized budget by the U council would be sent to UNO for approval.
Participation	Participation includes a mass gathering for a specific purpose where the interest of all is a concern. In the local government context, the term infers the participation of all classes of people in the relevant meetings organized by Local Government Institutions (LGIs).
Performance Based Grant	Union Parishad having improved service delivery mechanisms are rewarded by a grant named Performance Based Grant (PBG).
Poor	According to World Bank, earning less than USD 1.96 per person per day will be considered as poor.
Public Hearing	A public hearing is a social accountability tool that helps UPs to know people's problems and their comments and opinions about the potential solutions. To ensure the transparency and accountability of the UP functionaries, the UP Chairman calls for a mass gathering where public representatives, government officials, community people, and local civil society representatives participate, raise local issues, and discuss the solution. Senior officials from District and Upazila also take part in the Public hearing as an observer.
Socially Excluded People	Underprivileged class of people who are fully or partially deprived of various rights, opportunities, and benefits and are not living in the mainstream society
UP Standing Committee	A UP must form thirteen Standing Committees to perform its functions effectively, each committee conducting a meeting every two months. More meetings can be held in case of emergency. There should be 5-7 members in each of the committees. There might be one or more co-opted member, who has expertise in relevant topics, with no voting power. Elected members of UP would be the president of each committee except for law and order, where the UP Chairman will be the president.

Upward Accountability	Upward accountability encompasses a lower to a higher level of an accountability process to ensure the satisfaction of the end stakeholders. It is observed in the UP to UZP level and simultaneously to the ZP for reporting their work updates in each tier of the local government institutions
UZP Budget	A yearly budget of UZP for the subsequent year is supposed to be prepared 60 days prior to each fiscal year finishes. A copy of the budget is to be placed/ published at the UZP notice board/ or in any visible location for the convenience of the UZP citizen for 15 days. UZPs may or may not consider the comments from the citizen for final inclusion in the budget.
UZP Committee	For smooth functioning of UZP activities, UZP Vice-Chairman or member or female member in coordination are supposed to form seventeen committees having two years and six months duration, holding one meeting per two months for each committee.
Vulnerable Groups	Vulnerable groups are those who do not have adequate income source or earning member in the family, always experience negative aspects in life with no protection available. Here in this study, by vulnerable group we mean generally the elderly people, destitute women, differently able persons, children etc.
Ward Shava	Ward Shava is a public engagement activity that is to be held twice a year in each ward of the UPs in Bangladesh. Community mass people from all sectors must attend the meeting. The UP functionaries should publish the date of Ward Shava publicly at least 7 days in advance. UP Chairman should ensure that the Ward Shava is taking place regularly. A Ward Member will preside over the meeting. All the issues of the Ward, as well as development planning, are discussed in the Ward Shava by the citizen as well as elected bodies
Women Development Forum	UNDP, under its Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) and Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP), established Women Development Forum (WDF) to empower women politically, which is further supported by EALG, resulting in WDF women members' improved access to participate in development debate in UZP activities and development scheme implementation under their leadership

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Under the joint partnership of the Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Bangladesh, and UNDP Bangladesh and funded by the Embassy of Denmark, the Embassy of Switzerland, and UNDP, a project titled ‘Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG)’ was implemented. The objective of the project was to strengthen the capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development and service delivery for achieving the SDGs (especially achieving the goals and targets of 1,1.3, 4,5,6,11-b,15, and 16.7). EALG project has worked through three components- (i)Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad (IAUZP); (ii)Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP); (iii)Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG). The project was implemented in 9 districts covering all 8 administrative divisions, 18 Upazila taking two each from the project working districts, and 251 Union Praishads. The project also took a unique initiative to respond to the global COVID-19 pandemic to build up the confidence of the stakeholders to manage the impact of the pandemic by keeping them safe from infection and keeping them away from the killer pandemic.

The purpose of the Final Evaluation (FE) of the EALG project, conducted during August-November, 2022, was to measure and evaluate the progress towards achieving the project results and assess the project relevance, efficiencies, effectiveness, impact, coherence, and sustainability. The FE also draws lessons learned and recommendations for replicating and sustaining the project results. Specific objectives of this FE include: (i) To assess the performance of the EALG project along with its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, and coherence drawn from its design and implementation; (ii) To assess the level of satisfaction of various category of beneficiaries and stakeholders with the service provided by the Union Parishad(UP) and Upazila Parishad (UZP) to the citizen; (iii) To assess the extent to which the application of the rights-based approach and gender-mainstreaming are sought; and (iv) To draw lessons learned and good practices for replication and/or scaling-up and provide forward-looking recommendations for the next programming phase or for the new local governance project in the near future.

Methodology

The FE was conducted by administering a mixed-method research approach that combines the elements of quantitative and qualitative research techniques to accomplish the assignment objectives. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data include citizen perception survey, institutional survey, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and case studies. Sources of secondary data are government publications, websites, books, journal articles, and internal records. To compare the results of the project outcome, data was collected from the control areas too. The control area was taken from the distant districts and Upazilas along with the Unions so that there was no spillover effect of the project activities in the control areas. The evaluation process covers 18 Districts, 42 UZPs, and 72 UPs. A total of 3868 statistically reliable samples were drawn to conduct the citizen survey, 2592 from intervention areas and 1276 from control areas. Besides, 194 KIIs and 36 FGDs were conducted with different levels of project stakeholders, and also the institutional survey was conducted with the UPs and UZPs in sampled areas.

Project Results

Component-wise project results have been presented in the following segments.

Component 1: Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishads (IAUZP)

The goal of this component was to strengthen the governance framework to enable the UZPs to plan and provide services in a way that was more efficient, inclusive, and accountable. EALG proposed ToR for 17 UZP committees' was accepted under this component and added to the UZP regulatory framework. In order to encourage participation in UZP committee activity, EALG recommended the introduction of allowances. The Local Government Division (LGD) later adopted this proposal as a circular, and 75.9% UZPs rather than the target of 40% was met. Similar to this, 100% of the UZP created participatory budgets and plans; and, ran their program with participation, and issued plan books

and yearly reports, which was achieved, whereas the target was 40%. Similarly, all of the UZP (100%) developed participatory plans and budgets, managed schemes in a participatory manner, and published plan books and annual reports. In all Upazilas in the project area, the open budget and participatory planning mechanisms in UP Act were piloted, adapted, and replicated in the UZP Act. Moreover, a good percentage of citizens (76.8%) in the selected UZPs are aware of UZP activities and key priorities in the annual budget. It should also be worth mentioning that a total of 500 youth and women received skill training and input on entrepreneurship at Cox's Bazar.

However, because implementing an integrated planning system for LGIs would require significant policy reform and system change, the project shifted its emphasis from integrated planning to a coordinated planning among LGIs.

Component 2: Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP)

Due to the EALG project intervention, 96.2% of UPs formed standing committees (SCs) and made them functional, 98.1% of UPs held open budget sessions, and all the UPs (100%) ensured the participation of poor and marginalized citizens at Ward Shava and open budget sessions. In terms of increasing climate resilience, 92.96% of the UPs have developed local climate resilience plans, 60.56% of the UPs have mainstreamed local resilience plans into the five-year development plans, and 69.08% of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk management (DRM) schemes have been implemented.

Component 3: Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG)

Through the project support, LGD has been able to circulate 13 policies, which are related to, (i) UZP fund utilization, (ii) TOR for UZP committees, (iii) Annual planning guidelines for the UZP, (iv) Annual planning guidelines for the UP, (v) Operational guidelines for the Women Development Forum, (vi) Open Budget Session guidelines for the UZP, (vii) Allocation of revenue for annual report publication, (viii) 3% ADP allocation for the Women Development Forum (WDF) by the UZP, (ix) Public hearings at the UPs, (x) Public hearings at the UZP, (xi) UP website update; (xii) UZP website update; (xiii) Facebook live streaming of UP, and UZP organized public events.

Although it was a target of the project to introduce the functional responsibility of the LGIs, the project has not been successful in these particular activities as they require bigger reforms that are actually beyond the purview of the project. In fact, for almost two years, the project had to run rather slowly with its regular activities and was busy responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Snapshots of Key Findings

The first set of findings are that the capacity-building training, organized under the EALG, has increased the extent to which UP and UZP Members and UP secretaries understand the detailed affairs and governance of UP and UZP. For example, Standing Committees have been formed in almost all the UPs (100%) in the project area and are functioning along with holding regular meetings. Likewise, the UZPs in the intervention areas did the same in forming UZP committees and demonstrated maintaining documentation of the committees, including the name of the members. The data revealed that almost all the UPs (98.1%) formed the Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC), and in the same way, all the UZPs also (100%) Upazila Disaster Management Committees (UZDMCs). Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) localization is a national agenda, the UZPs from treatment areas contributed more (88.9%) than the control areas (71.4%) in this regard. In addition, the capacity-building interventions have brought a positive change in the mind-set of the UP and UZP representatives resulting in an improvement in the performance of LGIs in all respects.

However, the activism and effectiveness of UPs and UZPs cannot be enhanced by increasing their capacity alone without the active participation of the citizens. The data revealed that almost 80.9% of the treatment areas respondents were satisfied (29.3% very satisfied, 51.6% satisfied) with the available UP services. For the respondents of the control areas, it was just over 29%. Furthermore, 34.1% of respondents from the treatment areas mentioned that the services were women-friendly, while from the control group, it was only 10.4%. However, 16.6% from treatment areas were very satisfied with UDC service, 56% were satisfied, and the number for the same range for the control group was 1% and 32.6%, respectively.

More accountable LGIs, in turn, are leading to wonderful success in achieving SDGs. EALG project has worked with the local government to localize SDGs, build the capacity of UPs and UZPs and provide policy support to the government for establishing effective local government systems, leaving no one behind. As a result, regarding the UP activities, respondents mostly attended Ward Shava (82.5% for treatment areas and 43.1% for control areas), Public hearing (49.6% for treatment areas and 23.6% for control areas); Open budget meetings (47.4% for treatment areas and 28% for control areas). Similarly, the respondents from both camps (79.8% from treatment areas and 79.7% from control areas) visited the UZPs for necessary services. In the treatment areas, 60% of respondents had seen or heard of the citizen charter of their respective UZPs, while only 23.8% of the respondents from control areas did the same. The respondents from treatment areas (36.6%) were more aware of the UZP open budget sessions than the control areas (6%). The satisfaction level regarding UZP services of the aggregate very satisfied and satisfied categories together stands at 57.9% for the treatment areas, while it was only 27% for the control areas. This suggests that UZPs are gradually becoming a necessary point of service delivery to the citizens.

Respondents were asked to what extent they think services from UP are gender-responsive, and 34.1% of respondents from the treatment group mentioned that the services were women-friendly, while from the control group, it was only 10.4%. In addition, 32.5% of respondents from the treatment group said that the services were somewhat women-friendly, and from the control group, 24.6% said the services were somewhat women-friendly. Due to the project intervention, the WDF was more functional. Through this process, the women could explore and analyze the relationship between men and women and the inequalities of those relationships in terms of the relevance of gender roles and power dynamics in the local government context. Women and other marginalized sections of society were given priority in all events organized by the UPs, so they understood the agenda for action and acted accordingly, ultimately making it inclusive.

However, On average, almost 60% of the respondents from different sections of the citizens participated in the UZP-organized events, other than the ethnic minorities (42.5%), but those who did participate in those events significantly contributed by raising their concerns (more than 95% in general other than the ethnic minorities 76% only). Similarly, though all 17 Upazila Committees were formed in all UZPs, only Law and Order committee was found to hold meetings regularly and be able to make and implement decisions as well. The scenario for the UZP committees in the control areas was even worse.

The project conducted seven policy research studies done by leading scholars/experts, which contributed significantly to leading the policy advocacy agenda. During the COVID-19 response, the project distributed preventive materials to some 37269 people, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to 8771 project stakeholders, 251000 people reached through awareness-raising programs, 125500 people got access to hand washing facilities, and 251 UPs had improved capacity to manage COVID-19 like a pandemic in the rural areas.

OECD-DAC Criteria

Relevance

The project was highly relevant considering that the lack of awareness, capacity, and necessary skills of both LGIs and citizens are regarded as barriers to the demand and supply of effective local

governance in rural Bangladesh. The EALG project is directly linked to the decentralization efforts of Bangladesh and has attained goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project followed the *Rights Based Approach*, e.g., it capacitated LGIs significantly to provide democratic, transparent, accountable, responsive, and pro-poor services, which in turn increased the knowledge of rights of the relevant rights holders. EALG project has worked with the local government for the last five years to localize SDGs and build the capacity of LGIs.

Efficiency

Undoubtedly the EALG project was efficient in achieving its intended results. This validation notes that the efficiency of resource use was demonstrated by the (a) provision of training and orientation to a large number of elected representatives of UPs and UZPs and (b) undertaking studies and reviews and preparing guidelines and policy documents. More specifically, the EALG project was efficient as the project has already demonstrated that LGI representatives are now taking local development initiatives based on community demands. Moreover, LGIs engage citizens to proactively ensure fair and transparent resource-service allocations and local development initiatives.

Effectiveness

The EALG project has achieved good results in implementing the planned activities and substantive achievements on outputs. During the interaction with the community and the LGIs levels, almost with a unanimous voice, emphasized the high effectiveness of EALG in the four broad areas: (a) capacity building of LGIs, (b) participatory planning, and (c) social mobilization, (d) policy reformation.

Impact

The project has capacitated local government, specifically the elected representatives, to improve service delivery and create participatory local development. Two-thirds (59.1%) of the community people opined that due to the EALG project, participation and presentation of opinions of females, marginalized/poor, ethnic minorities, and specially-able populations of the society in the open budget meeting has increased. Furthermore, due to the EALG project, almost all the UP members (96.2%) surveyed in the intervention areas noted that the UPs formed standing committees. Regarding accountability, 88.9% of UZP representatives mentioned that the UZP organizes consultation meetings to verify the SSNP beneficiaries list submitted by UPs.

Sustainability

The EALG project has created good social networks in all the project sites, which have the potential to continue supporting the interventions. In fact, the accompaniment of the EALG project has brought-in numerous benefits, including strengthening the institutional capacity of UP and UZPs to improve their planning and budgeting process with citizen engagement. In addition, the project interventions linked the CSOs/CBOs and different groups to line departments at the Upazila level and Union Parishad. These links will likely be continued since the group members have experienced their benefits and know how to keep the linkages functioning. Nevertheless, the 13 policies and the capacity-building support to the UP Secretaries and UZP officials will have a long-lasting effect on institutional strengthening and service delivery. Ward meetings, open budget meetings, and public hearings have become very popular with the UP and UZP, and these have taken place in their habit. In addition, the UP and UZP have learned how to prepare and publish annual reports and five-year plans. With these notes, this can be confidently said that the project interventions have become highly sustainable.

Coherence

The modus operandi of the EALG project is different from the other projects. The EALG project provided emergency technical and financial support to the COVID-19 pandemic preparedness to UPs and UZPs. The EALG project has engaged the wider stakeholders for partnership and synergy building. UP and UZP representatives have been found interested in ensuring people's access to UP information, having been inspired by the activities of the EALG project.

Key Lesson Learnt

- The public hearing has been found to be an effective tool for receiving people's feedback on the UP and UZP services and solving the local problem, even solving some problems instantly.
- Periodic coordination meeting as a coordination tool has been found to be very effective for coordinated service delivery by the UP and UZP.

- UP and UZP are willing to publish an Annual report and five-year plan if they get technical guidance from the Local Government Division.
- Proper tax assessment engaging local youth can increase the tax revenue to a UP.
- Bi-monthly meeting of the WDF has been found to be an effective means of keeping the WDF functional and performing towards its mandates.
- The five-year plan development process can bring the SDG issues into the discussion, which can be the entry point for UP and UZP localization.

Key Challenges Faced by the Project

- Frequent transfer of UP secretaries sometimes delays implementations in the UPs.
- The lack of a full-time Deputy Director, Local Government in some districts hindered project implementation.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down project implementation. However, if it hasn't come, the project could achieve some more results.

Key Recommendations

- While the capacity of government officials remains unchanged, the election of new representatives in local government bodies creates a void. As a result, capacity-building assistance must be extended.
- The EALG did excellent work by piloting holding tax assessments through local volunteers that showed huge potential. This low-cost assessment model should be institutionalized for the UPs and include business tax.
- The LGD should make the MIS system, developed last year and supported by EALG, fully functional for wider transparency and accountability of the LGIs.
- The LGD should take the necessary initiative to monitor the implementation status of the thirteen policies circulated by the LGD.
- If LGD or UNDP designs any next-generation project, the project should focus on
 - Digitalization and Digital governance of the targeted LGIs;
 - The deepening Women Development Forum at the Union Level is now based at the Upazila level.
 - Climate governance and allocation of ADP based on climate vulnerability;
 - Resource mobilization of the LGIs;
 - Public-private partnership;
 - Social audit, including public hearings, citizen report card survey, etc.;
 - Strengthening financial management and auditing of the targeted LGIs;
- Replicate good practices of EALG project working with LGIs in other areas of the country.

Chapter 1 : Background and Context

1.1 Introduction, Background and Rationale

Good Governance is now being popularly used to replace the term **Government**. Governance here denotes the change of the role of government from just a provider of public services to an enabler or facilitator of public services. The logical outcome of the situation is a transformation from state ownership into ownership of the people. The key emphasis here is on improving good governance and performance or improving the quality of public services.

Therefore, towards establishing good governance, the Government of Bangladesh and the development partners have placed high importance on improving local governance and undertook and implemented several local governance improvement initiatives over the years through the Local Government Division. As a matter of fact the development partners are nowadays looking to emphasize good governance as a condition for their investment in development projects. This puts huge challenge on the local government bodies, especially in a country like Bangladesh. Though governance is highlighted in all government documents, it is not easy to make it happen at the local government level unless and until the local government bodies are committed to improving their governance capacity (Endralin, 1997). Thus, building capacity of the local government bodies is imperative to have good governance in place. The lack of capacity is evident that the UZPs in Bangladesh cannot integrate their annual plans with that of Five Year Plans and does not hold open budget sessions to solicit citizen's feedback on the budget document (Monem, 2016). This means UZPs cannot do its planning and budgeting properly and it would be too much to expect from them to integrate UPs plans and coordinate development process properly.

However, Nizam and other (2014) underscored the potential of the UZPs in delivering services, they lack control over the human and financial resources to deliver them. Again that is lack of coordination prevailing in the UZPs actually deter the potential of this local body.

For local governments, managerial and planning skills are part of the "technology" by which they provide public goods and respond to needs of the people they serve. Aragon & Kasas (2008) observed that these capacities are relatively fixed in the short term, because local governments need time to learn, acquire experience or recruit skilled personnel. The author emphasized that to build true capacity in local governments, a long-term investment is needed; thus, there is no quick fix to build local government capacity.

Aminuzzaman (2017) observed that capacity deficit is one of the concerns of local governments. There is also a marked deficit of the supply side of training.

Local governance as defined by Anwar Shah in his seminal book (Shah, 2006), is a broader concept and is defined as the formulation and execution of collective action at the local level. It encompasses the direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal norms, networks, community organizations, and neighborhood associations in pursuing collective action by defining the

framework for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making, and delivery of local public services.

Given the above context, initiative to build capacity of the local government bodies in Bangladesh needs no description. This capacity support would ultimately contribute to establishing good governance in the long run.

UNDP has been extending its technical and financial assistance to the government in implementing several projects on local governance. The Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) is one of such initiatives being implemented by LGD with technical assistance from UNDP Bangladesh. The aim of EALG is to bring in new values among the rural local bodies so that they deliver better services to citizen and become accountable to the clients as service providers. This service delivery focus was meant to prepare the rural local government bodies to contribute their part in achieving SDG goals. In this initiative, the Embassy of Denmark and the Embassy of Switzerland extended their hand with financial support.

Rationale of the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project

UNDP had earlier implemented two projects simultaneously, namely Upazila Parishad Governance Project (UZGP) and Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP). The purpose of the UZGP was to build Upazilas as active and vibrant local government units, bringing all service providers at Upazila level under the accountability framework of the UZPs and creating mechanism of participatory, democratic and accountable body corporate as envisioned in the governing law of the UZPs (the Local Government (UZP) Act. The UPGP however, piloted innovations to improve i) functional and institutional capacity, ii) democratic accountability of the UPs, and iii) to increase citizen involvement in order to achieve effective, efficient and accountable delivery of pro-poor infrastructures and services. The final evaluation of both the project highlighted strong success and recommended extension, but the projects did not go for the second phase. However, the innovative approaches to good governance and the tested tools towards achieving good governance remain there.

To keep the progress made by these two projects alive, the LGD and UNDP implemented a new project combining the best features into one basket. This new initiative was the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project.

Objectives of the Project:

Strengthen the capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development service delivery for the SDGs (especially achieving the goals and targets of 1.1.3; 4.5.6; 11-b, 15; and 16.7). The EALG expects to achieve that objective by working with three components as follows:

1. Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad (IAUZIP)
2. Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP)
3. Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG)

Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad (IAUZIP)

The inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad (IAUZP) component puts emphasis on strengthening the Capacities of Upazila Parishad to Improve Service Delivery. It enables the strengthening governance framework of Upazila Parishad for inclusive, effective, and accountable planning and improved service delivery. Moreover, it also works to improve the financial management process of Upazila Parishad for improved funding absorption capacity and accountability; strengthen downward accountability of the UZP Committees through effective and inclusive public engagement mechanisms and practices; and strengthen the ability of Women Upazila Parishad Members to fulfil their role and duties in council work.

Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP)

The sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP) component focuses on enhancing the Capacities of Union Parishad for Participatory Local Development. It attempts to: i) strengthens the capacity of the Union Parishads to provide pro-poor, effective, and accountable services; ii) make the Union Parishads (UP) more climate resilient through prioritizing resilience measures in the UP development plan; and iii) empower and institutionalize the space for the poor and marginalized citizens, especially women, to get engaged in the decision-making process of UP.

Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG)

This component provides policy support to the Government of Bangladesh for establishing effective local government irrespective of tiers.

Various sorts of stakeholders have been involved in the EALG project's implementation.

At the national level, the role of LGD, the Ministry of Finance, and the Cabinet Division at the national level is critical, as these agencies have the potential to speed up project completion. LGD is the main ministry in charge of implementing project operations on the ground in order to promote local governance.

At the implementation level, key stakeholders include the District and Upazila Administration, which includes the Deputy Commissioner, DDLG, UNO, Upazila Parishads (UZP) Representatives, and Union Parishads (UPs) Representatives, Steering Committee Members, Ward Committee Members, Secretaries, and Gram Police of the UPs. Furthermore, community engagement is a core component of the project, since it focuses on enhancing community participation in the UP and UZP decision-making processes, particularly in the formulation of local development plans and budgets. As a result, community members are vital stakeholders in the success of the project.

Project Outcome: Local Government Institutions are able to more effectively carry out their mandates, including delivery of public services, in a more accountable, transparent, and inclusive manner

The project will contribute to UNDAF Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 and CPD outcome 2

CPD Outcome: Develop and implement improved social policies and programs that focus on good governance, reduction of structural inequalities and advancement of vulnerable individuals and groups.

Indicative Output 3.2: Public institutions and other quasi-formal institutions and normative and policy frameworks have enhanced capacities and frameworks to ensure accountable and gender-responsive governance according to the rule of law.

Outcome indicators:

- Percentage of citizens (disaggregated by men/women, poor/non-poor) satisfied with the services of Upazila Parishads.
- Number of UZP that received and monitored local plans and budgets by at least three transferred departments (transparency of local bureaucracy)
- % of Upazila Parishads who adopt public engagement strategies in their planning and service monitoring
- % of women councilors in selected Upazila Parishads who report they can participate effectively in debates and are able to influence council decision making
- % of Upazila Parishads who have improved expenditure against the budget (credibility of budget)

1.2 Project Information

The project information has been inserted just after the cover page.

1.3 Objectives and Outcomes of the Project

The overall objective of the final evaluation is to assess the results of the EALG project compared to its baseline and targets defined in the results framework. The evaluation will also evaluate and document the project's relevance, efficiencies, effectiveness, impact, coherence and sustainability and to what extent the project has achieved its planned goal and objectives.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- ✓ To assess the performance of EALG project along with its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, and coherence drawn from its design and implementation.
- ✓ To assess the level of satisfaction of various category of beneficiaries and stakeholders with the service provided by the UP and UZP to the citizen.
- ✓ To assess the extent to which the application of the rights-based approach and gender-mainstreaming are sought.
- ✓ To draw lessons learned and good practices for replication and/or up-scaling and provide forward- looking recommendations for the next programming phase or for the new local governance project.

This objective will be achieved through the following three outcomes:

Outcome 1: Upazila Parishads plan and deliver services in a more effective, inclusive and accountable way through a strengthened governance framework.

Outcome indicators:

- ✓ Percentage of citizens (disaggregated by men/women, poor/non-poor) satisfied with the services of Upazila Parishads

- ✓ Number of UZPs that received and monitored local plans and budgets by at least three transferred departments (transparency of local bureaucracy)
- ✓ % of Upazila Parishads who adopt public engagement strategies in their planning and service monitoring
- ✓ % of women councilors in selected Upazila Parishads who report they can participate effectively in debates and are able to influence council decision making
- ✓ % of Upazila Parishads who have improved expenditure against the budget (credibility of budget)

Outcome 2: Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP)

- ✓ % of the poor, vulnerable, and socially excluded citizens of all the UPs under the targeted eight districts have access to the decision making process.
- ✓ % of the UPs under eight districts have institutionalized transparent and accountable service delivery
- ✓ % of UPs implemented activities related to Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) as stipulated in their development plans

Outcome 3: Policy dialogue addresses functional assignments and division of responsibilities among tiers of LGIs, including the coordination with line ministry officers and public engagement strategies.

- ✓ A clarification of functional assignments between LGI tiers is established
- ✓ Circulars for an integrated planning system for the UP/UZP/ZP are issued.
- ✓ Circulars are issued in order to overcome challenges of female's participation in the activities of local governance

1.4 Project Management and Partnerships

The EALG project is being implemented by the Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD&C). There are three different committees for policy making, supervising and guiding the implementation of the project-

- 1) Project Advisory Group (PAG) Meeting
- 2) Project Steering Committee Meeting
- 3) Project Implementation Committee Meeting

These committees are comprised of high level ministry officials, representatives from other ministries and UNDP Officials, and representatives from the finance partners.

The project is led by the National Project Director (NPD), who is an Additional Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh; below him, there are two Deputy National Project Directors in the rank of Deputy Secretary as well who provides operational support. The project Coordinator, supported by the Capacity Building Specialist, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, and Knowledge Management Specialist along with other administrative staff, is responsible for implementing the project and is accountable to the Project Implementation Committee.

Besides, UNDP, the Embassy of Denmark and the Embassy of Switzerland are the financial support partner of the Project.

Chapter 2 : Methodology

This evaluation was a mixed method endeavor where both qualitative and quantitative data and information were required to deliver the final evaluation report. The nature of the assignment required data and information from both primary and secondary sources. The quantitative survey included Structured Questionnaires, while the qualitative surveys were administered through Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant Interviews (KII), observations, and case studies/success stories. The secondary data sources include technical reports, e.g., baseline survey reports, MTR, Quarterly and Annual Reports, PIP, COM, training manual, etc.

2.1 Quantitative Survey

Study Population: The EALG project was implemented in all eight administrative divisions of Bangladesh, covering nine districts, 18 Upazilas, and 251 Unions. Thus, the citizen in the project areas, along with the elected leaders, and government officials, complete the study population for this evaluation.

Sampling technique: A multi-stage sampling scheme was adopted, and the sample size was drawn based on the standard statistical method.

Determination of Project Area (treatment) Sample size

One of the goals of this project is to assess the level of satisfaction among the beneficiary households. Therefore, it was logical to determine a representative sample size for the beneficiaries under the EALG project, and another for the control groups neither received any support from the above-mentioned project nor had any chance of having a spill over effect of the project activities by any means.

The standard confidence interval approach to sample size determination corrected for finite population (Cochran, 1997) to find the total sample as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

where,

p=proportion of beneficiary households that are expected to benefit from the EALG intervention.

z= Standard Normal value associated with a confidence level (e.g., 95%)

e= desired precision, i.e., maximum permissible difference between the sample statistics and population parameter

D= design effect for adjusting sample size relative to simple random sampling.

N= size of the sample

Administering the above-mentioned formula, we have a sample of 2305. Though low due to the existing Covid-19 pandemic, we set the possible non-response rate to a reasonably high value of 10% to ensure maximum possible coverage. This inflated the required sample size to 2561 and it was rounded up to 2565 households. However, for the field convenience the enumerators were given a little higher target and finally, 2592 respondents were reached through the citizen survey.

Determination of Control Area Sample Size

The size of the sample for the Control areas had been decided to be approximately one-half (1/2) of the total treatment sample, which appeared to be 1280 households. However, considering the convenience of equal distribution of the sample across the districts and selected UZPs and UPs, the final control sample size was adjusted to 1260 households. However, the final number of respondents reached in the control area was 1276.

Sample Selection

For selecting sample for this evaluation, three basic conditions were considered including - i) covering the EALG intervention UZPs and UPs under the same UZP; ii) covering the EALG intervention UZPs where there was no intervention in the UP concerned, and iii) the EALG non-intervention UZPs with corresponding UPs. Thus, a cluster sampling of three types (named as Sub-Group 1, Sub-Group 2 and Sub-Group 3) was chosen in all UZPs under intervention of the EALG.

Sub-Group 1: 14 out of 18 intervention Upazilas were chosen and corresponding UPs, two each from the UZPs. These included- Haimchar from Chandpur district, Teknaf and Ukhiya from Cox'sBazar district, Bhanga and Madhukhali from Faridpur district, Dacop from Khulna district, Kolapara and Rangabali from Patuakhali district, Baghmara from Rajshahi district, Mithapukur and Kaunia from Rangpur district, Tahirpur and Dakshin Sunamganj from Sunamganj district, and Kalmakanda from Netrokona district respectively. It should be noted here that data and information for this evaluation were collected from both UZPs and UPs under Sub-Group 1.

Table 2.1: Sample Upazilas- Treatment

Treatment Group				
Divisions	Districts	Upazilas		
		Sub-Group 1 (Intervention UZP)	Sub-Group 2 (Intervention UZP)	Sub-Group 3 (No Intervention UZP)
Chattagram	1. Chandpur	1. Haimchar	1. Faridganj	1. Chandpur Sadar 2. Matlab North
	2. Cox'sBazar	2. Teknaf 3. Ukhiya		3. Kachua (Chandpur)
Dhaka	3. Faridpur	4. Bhanga 5. Madhukhali		4. Saltha 5. Boalmari
Khulna	4. Khulna	6. Dacop	2. Rupsha	6. Dumuria 7. Koyra
Barishal	5. Patuakhali	7. Kolapara 8. Rangabali		8. Dashmina 9. Dumki
Rajshahi	6. Rajshahi	9. Baghmara	3. Mohonpur	10. Godagari
Rangpur	7. Rangpur	10. Mithapukur 11. Kaunia		11. Gangachara
Sylhet	8. Sunamganj	12. Tahirpur 13. Dakshin Sunamganj		12. Chatak

Mymensingh	9. Netrokona	14. Kalmakanda	4. Khaliajuri	13. Netrokona Sadar 14. Durgapur
	9	14	4	14

Sub-Group2: In Sub-Group2, there were four intervention UZPs taken. These include Faridganj from Chandpur district, Rupsha from Khulna district, Mohonpur from Rajshahi district, and Khaliajuri from Netrokona district. Here two non-intervention UPs from the corresponding UZPs were taken as well.

Sub-Group3: In Sub-Group3, intervention UPs were undertaken where there was no intervention in the UZPs. These non-intervention UZPs included Chandpur Sadar, Matlab North and Kachua from Chandpur district, Saltha and Boalmari from Faridpur district, Dumuria and Koyra from Khulna district, Dashmina and Dumki from Patuakhali district, Godagari from Rajshahi district, Gangachara from Rangpur district, Chhatak from Sunamganj district and Netrokona and Durgapur from Netrokona district respectively. In Sub-Group3, where two UZPs were taken, one each corresponding UP was taken and where one UZP were chosen two each UPs were taken from that UZP for data collection. However, from these non-intervention UZPs only institutional survey was conducted as there had been no project activity there.

Table 2.2: Sample Unions- Treatment

Divisions	Districts	Treatment Group		
		Unions		
		Sub-Group 1 (Intervention UP)	Sub-Group 2 (No intervention UP)	Sub-Group3 (Intervention UP)
Chattagram	1. Chandpur	1. Algidurgapur 2. Gazipur	-	
			-	1. Bagadi 2. Islamabad
			1. Dakshin Gobindapur 2. PurbaGupti	
	2. Cox's Bazar	1. Hnilla 2. Sabrang	-	
		1. Haldia Palong 2. Raja Palong	-	
			-	1. Sahadebpur East 2. Kadla
Dhaka	3. Faridpur	1. Nasirabad 2. Tujapur	-	
		1. Gajna 2. Bagat		
			-	1. Gotti 2. Dadpur
Khulna	4. Khulna	1. Laudobe. 2. Dacop		
				1. Raghunathpur 2. Amadee(Koyra)
			1. Aichgati 2. Srifaltala	
Barishal	5. Patuakhali	1. Tiakhali 2. Lala	-	

		1. BoroBaishdia 2. Chalitabunia		
			-	1. Bohrompur 2. Srirampur
Rajshahi	6. Rajshahi	1. Goalkandi 2. Naradahs		
				1. Godagari 2. Mohonpur
			1. Mougachhi 2. Gashigram	
Rangpur	7. Rangpur	1. Moyanpur 2. Khoragach	-	
		1. Kursha 2. Sarai		
			-	1. Laxmiteri 2. Kholeya
Sylhet	8. Sunamganj	1. Badhaghat Uttar 2. TahirpurSadar	-	
		1. Shimulbak 2. Pathariya		
			-	1. Jawabazar 2. Kalaruka
Mymensingh	9. Netrokona	1. Pogla 2. Kharnai	-	
				1. Madanpur 2. Kullagara
			1. Chakua 2. Mendipur	

Sub-Group 4: The Sub-group 4 was called as Control Group in this evaluation. Here, intervention UZPs and UPSs were undertaken where there was no intervention from the EALG. Ideally UZPs and UPs were taken from a distant district to avoid proximity to the EALG intervention areas so that there was no chance even of having a spillover effect of the project in those UZPs or UPs. These control UZPs included Chouddagram of Cumilla district, Anwara of Chattagram district, Kashiani of Gopalganj district, Sharsha of Jashore district, Amtoli of Barguna district, Bagatipara of Natore district, Sundarganj of Gaibandha district, Balaganj of Sylhet district, and Trishal of Mymensingh district. Two each UPs were taken for collecting data and information for this evaluation from the above mentioned UZPs. Needless to say, all eight divisions are covered during selection of samples for control group as well.

Table 2.3: Sample Upazilas and Union Parishads, Treatment and Control

Divisions	Districts	Treatment Group						Control Group			
		Upazilas			Unions			Districts	Upazila	Unions	
		Sub-Group 1 (Intervention UZP)	Sub-Group 2 (Intervention UZP)	Sub-Group 3 (No Intervention UZP)	Sub-Group 1 (Intervention UP)	Sub-Group 2 (No intervention UP)	Sub-Group 3 (Intervention UP)	(No EALG Interventions either in UZPs or UPs)			
Chattagram	1. Chandpur	1. Haimchar			1. Algidurgapur 2. Gazipur	-		1. Cumilla	1. Chauddagram	1. Chaora 2. Gunabati	
			1. Faridganj			1. Dakshin Gobindapur 2. PurbaGupti					
				1. Chandpur Sadar 2. Matlab North			1. Bagadi 2. Islamabad (Matlab North)				
	2. Cox's Bazar	2. Teknaf			1. Hnilla 2. Sabrang	-		2. Chattagram	2. Anwara	3. Bairag 4. Battali	
		3. Ukhiya			1. Haldia Palong 2. Raja Palong	-					
				3. Kachua (Chandpur)			1. Sahadebpur East 2. Kadla				
Dhaka	3. Faridpur	4. Bhanga			1. Nasirabad 2. Tujapur	-		3. Gopalganj	3. Kashiani	5. Maheshpur	
		5. Madhukhali			1. Gajna 2. Bagat					6. Ratail	
			4. Saltha			-	1. Gotti				
			5. Boalmari				2. Dadpur				
Khulna	4. Khulna	6. Dacop			1. Dacop 2. Laudobe			4. Jashore	4. Sarsha	7. Banapool 8. Putkhali	
			2. Rupsha			1. Aichgati 2. Srifaltala					
				6. Dumuria			1. Raghunathpur				
				7. Koyra			2. Amadee				
Barisal	5. Pabna	7. Kolapara			1. Tiakhali 2. Lalua	-		5. Borguna	5. Amtoli	9. AmtoliSadar	

		8.Rangabali			1. BoroBaishdia 2. Chalitabunia					10. Sonakata
				8. Dashmina 9. Dumki		-	1. Bohrompur 3. Srirampur			
Rajshahi	6. Rajshahi	9. Baghmara			1.Goalkandi 2. Naradahs			6. Natore	6. Bagatipara	11. Jamnagar 12. Dayarampur
			3. Mohonpur				3. Mougachhi 4. Gashigram			
				10. Godagari				1. Godagari 2. Mohonpur		
Rangpur	7. Rangpur	10. Mithapukur			1.Moyanpur 2. Khoragach	-		7. Ghaibandha	7. Sundarganj	13. Bamandanga 14. Chandipur
		11. Kaunia			1. Kursha 2. Sarai					
				11. Gangachara				1. Laxmiteri 2. Kholeya		
Sylhet	8. Sunamganj	12. Tahirpur			1. Badhaghat Uttar 2. TahirpurSadar	-		8. Sylhet	8. Balaganj	15. Goala Bazar 16. Doyamir
		13. Dakshin Sunamganj			1. Shimulbak 2. Pathariya					
				12. Chatak				1. Jawabazar 2. Kalaruka		
Mymensingh	9. Netrokona	14. Kalmakanda			1. Pogla 2. Kharnai			9. Mymensingh	9. Trishal	17. Dhanikhola 18. Harirampur
			4. Khaliajuri				10. Chakua 11. Mendipur			
				13. NetrokonaSadar 14. Durgapur				1. Madanpur 2.Kullagara		
8	9	14	4	14	28	8	18	9	9	18

Kobo Toolbox was used to collect the quantitative data from the respective households online. The highest level of data security was ensured while collected data was stored in a database. The method allowed collecting information from a large number of people in a structured way according to specific questions, and it allowed both structured and sets of closed questions (yes/no or multiple choice questions).

2.2 Qualitative methods

Table 2.4: Qualitative Methods & Respondents

Key Informant Interview (KII)			
Sl.	Level	Number	Respondents
	National Level	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned Representative of Local Government Division (LGD)- • Embassy of Switzerland-1 • Concerned Representative of Embassy of Denmark-1 • Concerned Representative of Embassy of Switzerland-1 • Democratic governance Cluster- • Concerned Representative of NILG- • National Project Director of EALG project- • Deputy National Project Director of EALG project- • Key staff of PMU-4 • Representative of UGDP-1 • Representative of LGSP-1
	District Level	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic –Local Governance Expert 1 (from DU) • Supervisors of the Research Fellows-2 • Media Fellow-3
	Upazila Level	50	<p>Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upazila Chairman-12 • Upazila Vice Chairmen (Female)-12 • Upazila Vice Chairmen (Male)-12 • UpazilaNirbahi Officer (UNO)-12 • Implementing partners (NGOs- national level)- Available Personnel (Uttaran and ACLAB in Cox’sBazar)-2
		35	<p>Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upazila Chairman-8 • Upazila Vice Chairmen (Female)-9 • Upazila Vice Chairmen (Male)-9 • UpazilaNirbahi Officer (UNO)-9
	Union Level	44	<p>Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Parishad Chairman-22 • Union Parishad Secretery-22
		36	<p>Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Parishad Chairman-18 • Union Parishad Secretery-18
	Total	194	

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Consultative Discussions

A total of 58 FGDs were conducted including consultative discussions at UZP level, with a group comprising of 10 to 12 respondents each. The duration of the FGD was a minimum of 2-3 hours, and participants were informed beforehand. Each team consisted of one moderator and two rapporteurs, who were responsible for conducting the FGDs in the field. The prescribed guideline was used to conduct FGDs. The details of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) are shown below in Table. Institutional Survey was conducted by five field supervisors. At the UZPs there was a consultative discussion, each as an alternative to FGDs, with the NBD Officials.

Table 2.5: EALG Final Evaluation, Qualitative

	Total	Intervention	Control
UZPs	41	32	9
UPs	72	54	18
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)			
National Level	15	-	-
District Level	9	-	-
UZP Level	84	48	36
UP Level	80	44	36
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Consultative Discussion			
UZP Level	27	12	9
UP Level	21	10	5

Table 2.6: Number of Focus Group Discussion at Upazila and Union Level

Sl.	Method	Number	Respondents
1.	Upazila Level Consultative Discussion	18	Treatment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nation Building Officials (NBD) officials and standing committee
		09	Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nation Building Officials (NBD) officials and standing committee
2.	Union Level Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	21	Treatment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Civil Society-5 Local Women Group -5 Marginalized Community 5 Community Group -5 Ethnic Community -1
		10	Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Civil Society-2 Local Women Group -3 Marginalized Community 3 Community Group -2

2.3 Data quality control

Since the quality of the survey data is of utmost importance, sufficient care was taken to ensure the quality of data collection at different stages of the survey, such as the development of

questionnaire/tools, recruitment of field data enumerators and supervisors, and training of the field force, field management, supervision and monitoring, and data processing. After developing the instruments by the core consultant team, those were shared with the EALG team, field-tested, and finalized. Qualified and experienced enumerators and supervisory staffs were recruited to conduct this assignment. They were provided with extensive training before engaging them in data collection. Besides, quality control in data collection was ensured, including collection of online data through Kobo Toolbox, efficient field management, supervision, and real time monitoring. Necessary precautions were also taken in the data management activities. The data management specialist provided instant feedback to the data enumerators on any discrepancies shown on the Dash Board. Using a WhatsApp group allowed quicker solutions to the technical and other administrative issues that emerged during data collection.

2.4 Data analysis

The data base Specialist remained in-charge of data management for this assignment. Proper care was taken at every stage of the data management process. Categorization of responses and allocation of codes was done under the supervision of the Data Manager. A data capture package in accordance with the questionnaire with self-edit facilities for response code range, and skip instruction (as mentioned in the questionnaire) was developed. Data were transformed to SPSS and all analysis was done using SPSS program. Inconsistencies and out-of-range errors were checked before analysis of data. A thematic analysis was done for qualitative data collected for this evaluation. The purpose of the data analysis was to answer the research objectives and associated evaluation questions. The analysis plan for the proposed study was planned to address the objectives set in the RFP clearly. Mostly univariate and bivariate analysis was performed using descriptive statistics. The findings were presented in tables and graphs, as appropriate. Household Data of treatment and control groups & all qualitative data (FGD, KII, and case studies) were processed through triangulation. This evaluation emphasized on triangulations of key findings gathered from document review and qualitative and quantitative surveys.

Chapter 3 : Findings of the Final Evaluation

The findings of the study is organized according to the OECD-DAC criteria i.e., relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence. Under each criterion, in general, we arranged the findings according to the three major components of the project, followed by further sub-division of each by the issues under consideration. As mentioned in the methodology part, the findings were illustrated from different angles using statistics—both descriptive and inferential— and qualitative findings. Before we move, it should be borne in mind that the project so far has been confronted by different unavoidable obstacles. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the activities of the project were not functioning, which can be attributed to not only the project management, but also to the lockdown that the Government of Bangladesh immediately imposed to reduce the impact of the pandemic. Moreover, although the project started in 2018, due to various reasons, the main activities started late, thus the project could intervene, roughly, more than a year. The Upazila Parishad election in Bangladesh held in 2019 also hampered the intervention of the EALG project. Yet the project achieved some significant achievements and there are scopes to perform better in other cases.

3.1 Major Findings of the Project

3.1.1 Policy Reform Initiatives of the EALG

One of the three components of the EALG project was the Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG), where the project reviewed the existing legislation and recommended important policy changes to the Local Government Division for revision, amendment and necessary changes needed to make the UPs and UZPs more functional, efficient and accountable. The recommendations of the EALG were first presented in front of the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meeting, where these were thoroughly reviewed, analyzed and forwarded to the LGD for approval. Once these were approved, the LGD undertook necessary action to finalize them according to government procedure and disseminated to all concerned government departments, offices and local bodies for implementation. It is however needs to be mentioned that the EALG used to provide secretarial service to the PAG, which in turn has become beneficial for the project in terms of policy change initiatives. As a matter of fact, working with the government was one of the strength of the EALG, which actually produced exemplary success for the project in this regard. In the following table, a list of policies changed through the EALG initiatives is presented.

Table 3.1: List of Policy recommendation approved and implemented by the LGD

POLICY ISSUES	
Guidelines/ Terms of Reference (ToRs)	
1	Revised Upazila Parishad Revenue Fund Utilization Guidelines, 2020
2	Terms of Reference (ToR) for 17 UZP Committees
3	Annual Reporting Guideline for UPs
4	Annual Reporting Guideline for UZPs

5	Operational Guideline for Women Development Forum (WDF)
6	Guideline on organizing Open Budget session at UZP level
Circulars/ Office Orders	
7	Circular for using UP revenue for the preparation and publication of their Annual Reports.
8	Revision of WDF Circular 2021 that amended the provision of allocating 3% of the ADP fund for WDF which in earlier circular was up to 3%.
9	Circular on organizing Public Hearing at UP level.
10	Circular on organizing Public Hearing at UZP level
11	Office Order for updating UP's website with relevant information time to time.
12	Office Order for updating UZP's website with relevant information time to time.
13	Circular for live streaming of UP and UZP's public events to ensure transparency and accountability at local level

Of these 13 policies newly adopted the Local Government Division though important in terms of improving local governance, the following ones would likely to impact more in local government affairs. .

- **Revised Upazila Parishad Revenue Fund Utilization Guidelines, 2020**

Based on the recommendation of the Policy Advisory Group, the Upazila Revenue Fund Utilization Guidelines was revised by the Local Government Division (LGD) on February 16, 2020. This has opened up a new horizon for the UZPs to hold different meetings and publication for their annual report and annual financial statement. The salient features of the revision are mentioned below:

- **Meeting and entertainment allowance for UZPs:** There had been no specific provision in the UZP legislation to allocate resources to hold meetings and associated cost for those meetings. Through this revision, UZPs are supposed to receive a maximum of BDT 30,000 (thirty thousand) per month to hold UZP council meetings. If this provision comes into force, the UZPs (495 in numbers) in Bangladesh will be able to allocate, from its own source revenue, a total of BDT 178,200,000 (more than one hundred and seventy eight million) per year. This would certainly reduce the complaints on part of UZPs to not holding meetings regularly.
- **Meeting allowance for Upazila Committees:** The Upazila Committees, earlier known as UZP Standing Committees, are supposed to hold their meeting bi-monthly. On numerous occasions the non-availability of funds was mentioned as one of the reasons for not holding Upazila Committee meetings regularly. The revised Upazila Revenue Fund Utilization Guideline 2020, created provision for allocating resources for Upazila Committees. According to this provision the UZPs may allocate BDT 8,000 per month as cost of Upazila Committee meetings so that these committees can hold their regular meetings and emergency ones as well. Thus it can be said that the UZPs together may allocate BDT 47,520,000 (more than 47 million in BDT) every year to hold Upazila Committee meetings regularly and contribute significantly to make the UZP service delivery more efficient and accountable.

- **Publication of Annual Reports by UZPs:** A new provision has made the publication and dissemination of the Annual report and Annual Financial Statement to ensure transparency and accountability of the UZPs to citizens. To make this happen the UZPs may allocate BDT 100,000 from their own source revenues. As a matter of fact earlier there was no such provision to spend money for publication and dissemination of the UZP documents. This provision actually is an important step towards transparency and accountability of the UZPs in Bangladesh.

- **Circular for using UP revenue for the preparation and publication of their Annual Reports**

UPs are obliged to produce and publish Annual Reports of their activities and disseminate the same to the citizens. However, due to lack of fund, in most cases, they cannot do it. Keeping this into consideration the Local Government Division issues a Circular that facilitate printed publication of the UP Annual Report from the own source revenue generated by the UPs. There was no such provision earlier in any of the UP legislation to use own source money to print annual reports. Thus circular enabled the UPs to spend up to BDT 100,000 for this purpose. Through the EALG initiative and subsequent issuance of the circular by the LGD, all 4571 UPs in Bangladesh can avail this opportunity to print their own annual report. Thus the yearly sum would stand at BDT 457.1 million. While the provision was made, the UPs had to keep in mind that they would be able to use the sum only if they could generate enough own revenue to fund this activity.

- **Revision of the circular regarding allocation of 3 percent of Women Development Forum**

One of the significant steps towards empowering elected representatives of the local government bodies was to create provision for allocating 3% of the Annual development Program fund for the respective rural local government bodies. Another circular earlier mentioned that the up to 3% of the development fund could be allocated for implementing development projects by women representatives. Almost all cases, 3% was not allocated for the women representatives and many used to describe that 3% of the total fund was not guaranteed and it could mean 1% or even less. Thus from the field experience of the WDF leaders, the EALG project took initiative to revise that circular mentioning 3% of the development fund replacing up to 3% of the development fund. As the money is available to the women leaders of the local government bodies including UZPs and UPs, it was observed that the 18 WDF, where the EALG had been in operation, won the battle to get 3% and more of the development fund to implement womenfriendly development schemes. The WDFs have been offering different services to the citizens including information on available services, awareness building on women rights, resolved conflicts, shared information about employment opportunities for women, information about new training and skill development opportunities for women, and undertaking initiatives to reduce violence against women etc. As a result, almost 52% of the respondents could mention the presence of the WDFs in the treatment areas, which was almost negligible before the project intervention.

Besides, circulars on holding Public Hearing, guidelines for preparing annual report for UPs, and UZPs had some positive outcomes. There are evidences in the field that public hearing

solved many of the longstanding problems, of which some of them were solved instantly during the meeting. Moreover, all 18 UZPs and 84% of the UPs have published their annual reports in printed form, and hold open budget sessions as well. All these certainly have positive impacts towards bringing efficiency in service delivery on the one hand and ensuring accountability of the elected representatives on the other as found in the EALG intervention areas.

Of the 6 circulars, not discussed earlier in this section are also important for the UPs and UZPs. Without the Terms of Reference, the UZP committees nearly directionless, and it's time for the UPZ Committee to show the real intent and authority to monitor service delivery by the national building departments.

The annual report guidelines for the UPs and UZPs have allowed these two bodies to develop their annual report in a unified format that makes it possible for the readers to compare among them, which was not possible earlier as the reports were submitted the way they could.

In line with the vision of establishing digital Bangladesh, the UPs and UZPs were asked to develop their own website to share information with citizen using online platforms. As the local bodied are new to this business these websites were rarely updated and the citizens and other stakeholders did not get updated information. This new Office Orders reemphasized the importance of regularly updating information. Live streaming of the public events like Open Budget meeting, public hearing and Ward Shava helped people to observe the event from their home and work places who were interested to attend but could not manage time. So this actually facilitated more citizen engagement with the local bodies

3.1.2 SDG Localization

Localizing refers to the process of adapting, implementing and monitoring the SDGs at the local level. It is thus a process of taking into account sub-national contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The EALG took initiative to make the local government bodies including the UPs and UZPs to build awareness among those institutions so that they understand the importance of the issues and took into cognizance and follow it up by actions. Since 2018, the EALG project started working on building awareness of the UPs and UZPs on SDG localization.

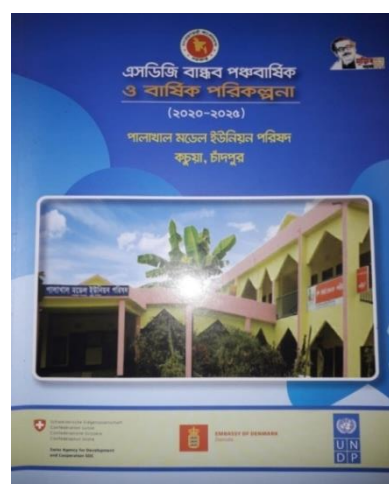


Table 3.2:SDG Goals and Targets directly related to the Local Government Bodies

SDG Goals and Targets	Descriptions
Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere Goal 1 is to end extreme poverty in all forms and dimensions by 2030. This involves targeting the most vulnerable, increasing access to basic resources and public services, and supporting communities affected by conflict, natural and climate-related disasters.
Target 1.3	Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable ³⁴
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Target 11.b	By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and holistic disaster risk management at all levels
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Target 16.7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

The responsibilities assigned to the Union Parishads suggest that all of the SDGs targets are directly or indirectly related to the local government body in Bangladesh. Thus the UPs need to understand the SDGs in designing its activities as the closest body to the people in general. The EALG project extended its effort to raise awareness of the UPs and UZPs on SDGs, and through them amongst the population with necessary knowledge, skills and tools so that they can contribute to this process in their territories. The project considered that the first and foremost work would be to make those local governments aware who have to subsequently bear the task to take the SDGs into account in their daily work and, in turn, raise awareness of the population they serve. Towards this end, the project held two Training of Trainers (TOT) sessions for the government officials who were closely related and working with these two local government bodies including the DDLGs, UNOs and officers of the line ministries at the Upazila level. More than

An orientation session on SDG localization



130 participants received



this ToT from the EALG, who later transferred their knowledge to the local government bodies to make SDG issues easier through training. In these training sessions, emphasis was given on making SDG friendly planning for the local government bodies.

The project also made billboards on SDGs and placed those in visible sites of the respective local government bodies. These billboards were in Bangla and in a very simple language so that any person with reading ability could read and learn things. There was an appeal to the people through these billboards to come forward to implement SDGs and it was observed that enthusiastic people reading these billboards.

It was however observed that the training provided to the UP and UZP functionaries was not enough to prepare SDG friendly plans for the local government bodies and thus the EALG produced a SDG Toolkit. Using this Toolkit the functionaries of the UPs and UZPs could make SDG friendly Five Year plans for their respective local bodies. As a result 18 UZPs and 109 UPs prepared and published their SDG friendly Five Year plans.

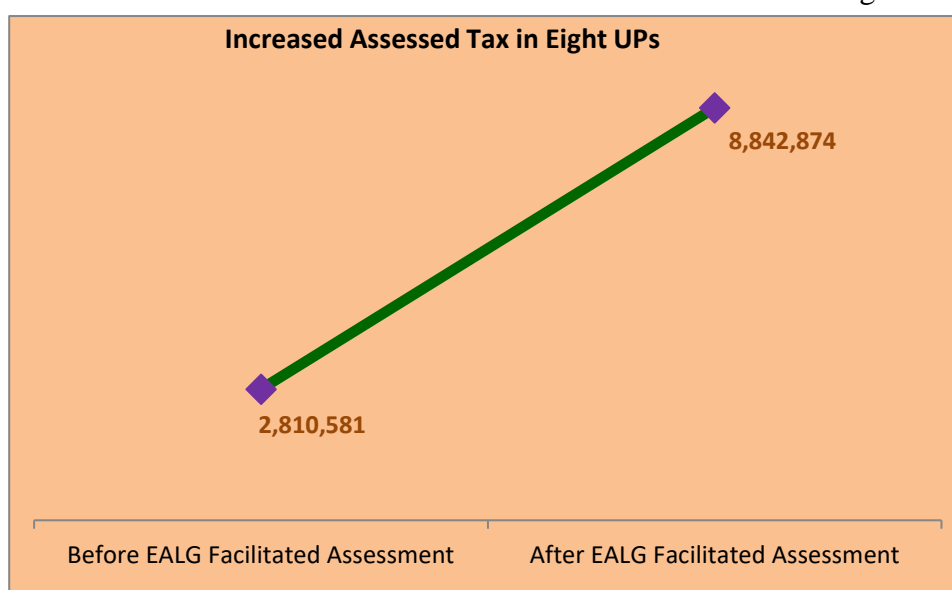
3.1.3 Local Resources Mobilization Initiative

Traditionally the local government bodies are known to be resource poor institutions in Bangladesh. There had been legal options for mobilizing local resources but over the years the local government bodies

especially the rural ones slowly lost control over some of the important sources for different reasons. As of now the collection of Holding Tax from inhabitants in the respective local government territories for UPs among the rural local bodies and other urban local bodies, is one of the prime sources of own revenue. The EALG has provided technical assistance to UPs under intervention to assess Holding Tax through mobilizing local volunteers.



One of the biggest challenges of Union Parishad (UP) in terms of its efficiency is, still the UPs are not self-reliant. They have lack of internal resources/money to perform day to day business and to undertake development and operational expenses. As a result, they need to look at the funding from the central government by the development projects. However, if the UPs can mobilize their resources internally/ locally, they can utilize their full potential for local development. On the other hand, the local youth is a huge human capital for the UPs and by engaging them on a volunteer basis, the UP's can minimize its shortage of manpower for implementing development activities. To improve the resource mobilization of the UPs by engaging local youth as volunteers, the EALG project has facilitated eight UPs to conduct the tax assessment and later tax collection based on that tax assessment. Each of the eight UPs, were taken from the eight administrative divisions in Bangladesh. In this connection the project designed a guideline that included training to the local youths, conduction of household



survey, conduction of tax assessment and support tax collection. It is encouraging to see that through the assessment, all the facilitated UPs have been able to increase their assessed tax by 3.15 times more on average (before assessment BDT 2,810,581 and after assessment BDT 8,842,874) where the lowest increase was 1.42 times more in Patuakhali, and the highest increase was 8 times more in Chandpur.

UPs where the Project conducted Tax Assessment Piloting

	Division	District	Upazila	UPs
1	Dhaka	Faridpur	Sadar	Aliabad
2	Khulna	Khulna	Dumuria	Bhandarpara
3	Barishal	Patuakhali	Patuakhali Sadar	Joinokathi
4	Rajshahi	Rajshahi	Bagha	Bajubagha
5	Sylhet	Sunamganj	Chatak	Jawabazar
6	Chattagong	Chandpur	Kachua	Gohait (North)
7	Mymensingh	Netrokona	Kalmakanda	Kharnai
8	Rangpur	Rangpur	Rangpur Sadar	Chandanpat
	Total	8	8	8

Table 3.3: UPs participated in the Holding Tax Assessment piloting

The Result of Piloting

In the following chart the change in the status of tax assessment among the eight UPs under piloting is being shown. The chart reveals that after proper assessment following the Model

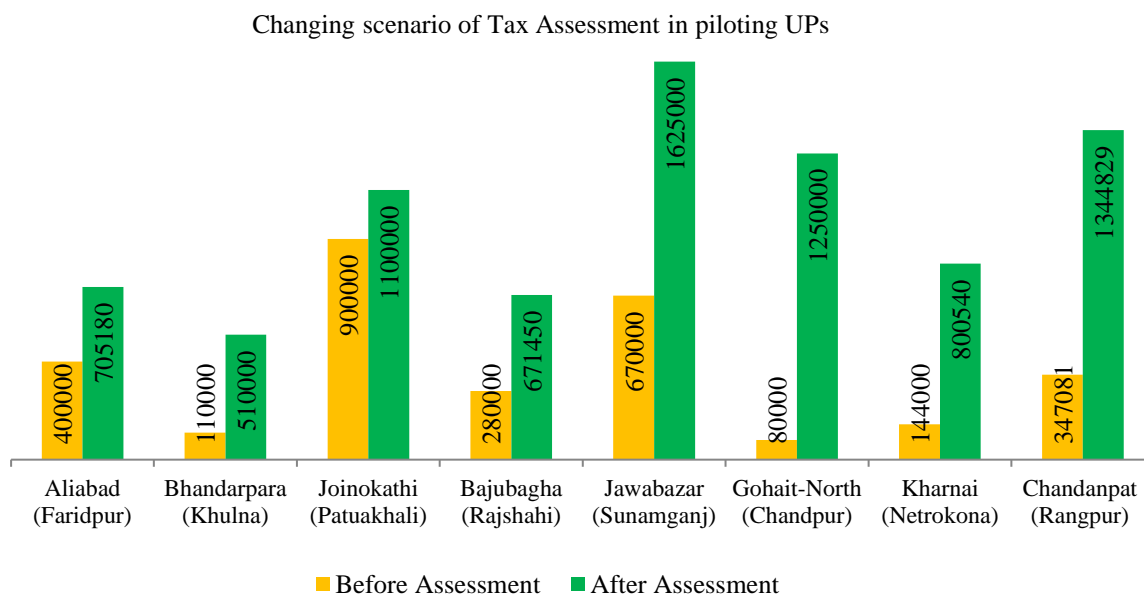
আদর্শ কর ধার্য রেজিস্টার	
শ্রীমান্দাছপুর ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ	
উপজেলা : বেঙ্গলবাড়ী, জেলা : ককিলাপুর	
ওয়ার্ড নং - ১, ২, ৩, ৪, ৫, ৬, ৭, ৮, ৯	
ধার্যকৃত সর্বমোট বার্ষিক করের পরিমাণ	= ৫,৪৫,১৫৫/- টাকা
সর্বমোট খানার পরিমাণ	= ৫৫১৩ টি
সর্বমোট জনসংখ্যা	= ২৫৮২৬ জন
পুরুষ সংখ্যা	= ১৩৪০৮ জন
মহিলা সংখ্যা	= ১২৪১৮ জন
ভোটার সংখ্যা	= ১৪৮৯৭ জন

Tax Schedule of 2013, a UP would earn additional revenue of minimum of BDT 200,000 to a maximum of BDT 1,170,000, if they can realize the 100% of the assessed taxes.. With this sum a UP can easily manage its revenue

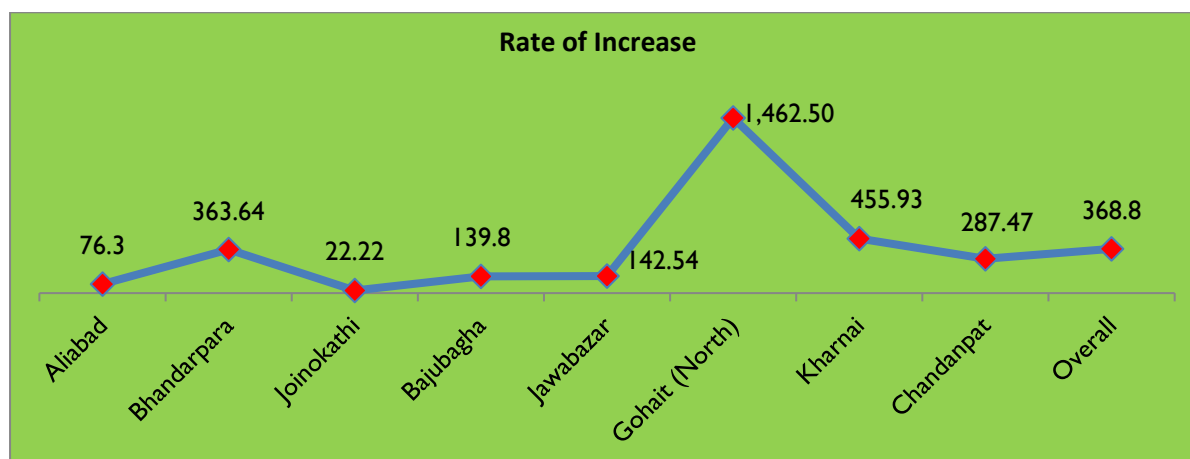
expenditure and would no longer rely on national government transfer to pay salary of the employees and honorarium of the elected representatives. However, earning revenue from this source i.e. holding tax largely depends on the size and shape of the houses owned by the tax payer and this is also guided by the very socio-economic conditions in a given area and thus the variation of the assessment scenario was not unexpected. Historically, the UPs in Bangladesh rarely followed the model tax schedule for tax assessment or assessed at all scientifically rather a lump sum 5% increase from the previous year had been a norm for decades, yet if so pushed from the higher authorities. As the EALG project aimed at improving the local governance, tax assessment was one of the attempt on part of the project to demonstrate how a little effort could make huge change in the UP scenario in terms of mobilizing own source revenue. The UP functionalities need to understand that generating revenue from own source is not only strengthening their hands in delivering services to their electorate, it will also contribute to lessening dependence on the national government. They should understand the reality that paying tax is an obligation as a citizen but transparent assessment and collection of the same and spending the money accountably is the responsibility of the UP functionalities.

If we look at the rate of increase of the potential for own source revenue from holding tax, it revealed that the increase recorded a minimum of 22.22% to 1462.50% as shown in the following chart. This is an encouraging result which may be considered as eye opener for the UPs in Bangladesh. However much depends on the efforts on part of the respective UPs to realize those assessed amount as a proper assessment is only a half of the battle.

Chart 3.1 : Difference of assessed tax amount in 8 UPs under EALG



To make the UPs conduct tax assessment was not an easy inroad for the EALG. Once they realize the benefits, they acted in accordance with the project recommendations to assess the tax. Before the tax assessment piloting the EALG conducted a study on Mobilization of Local Resources by Rural Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in Bangladesh by Dr. Nasiruddin Ahmed of North South University and former Chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR). Later based on the study report the EALG produced a Policy Brief on local resources mobilization and shared the same among the UPs in the project intervention areas, which was found to be very useful and liked by the respective local government bodies. In addition, the EALG also provided a simplified version of the Model Tax Schedule of 2013, like a tax assessment made easy for the UPs. In this document, a flow chart was designed with the necessary steps in assessing holding tax for easy understanding of the process. All these efforts were aimed at encouraging the UPs to assess holding tax, realize them and prosper the UPs as a financially strong local government body.



From the tax assessment piloting, it has been observed that –

- i) There is a huge potential for generation own source revenue for the UPs
- ii) The assessment should be done properly following the Model Tax Schedule
- iii) The UPs in absence of proper human resource to conduct the assessment, may use the youths in the UP to help them as volunteers
- iv) The tax assessment should be a routine exercise at regular intervals to keep pace with the market
- v) It is assumed that the UP may follow the same assessment practice for business tax to ensure proper assessment and likely produce the same result as holding taxes
- vi) The UPs may use the local youths as tax collectors in place of traditional commission based tax collectors for better collection and maintaining transparency.

3.1.4 Research Fellowship

The EALG project introduced a research fellowship to encourage young and upcoming researchers to work on local governance issues. The fellowship program was implemented through four partner organizations- two institute affiliated with public universities (i) Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS), Rajshahi University and (ii) Center for Governance Studies (CGS), Jahangirnagar University and two national level public research and training institutes (iii) the national Institute of Local Government (NILG) and (iv) the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD). The fellowship partners were responsible for providing orientation on research methodology and providing intense guidance and mentoring during the course of fellowship.



Photo: Four Books published by partners contributed by the Research Fellows of the EALG Project

The fellows (38 male and 14 female) from diverse background mostly Social Science, were pursuing their post graduate studies, PhD, M Phil after graduation, some were still completing their master degree while some other were in their early research career in different capacities.

	Institute	Publication Title	No. of Articles	ISBN
1	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD)	Local Governance in Bangladesh: Grassroots Realities, Challenges and Potentialities	8	978-984-35-3115-5
2	National Institute of Local Government (NILG)	Local Governance in Union Parishad - Progress, Opportunity, Challenges and Way Forward	6	978-984-35-1213-0
3	Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS), University of Rajshahi	Bangladesh Local Governance: Practicalities Participation and Priorities	9	978-984-34-9849-6
4	Center for Governance Studies (CGS), Jahangirnagar University	Union Parishad in Local Governance - Progress, Challenges and Way Forward	9	978-984-35-0972-7

All the research fellows did receive a general orientation on the EALG project provided by the EALG project team, and subsequent training on Research Methodology, Data Management and Processing by researcher partners. These allowed the fellows to conduct their research work in a better prepared way and to produce quality outputs. This was a unique initiative undertaken by the EALG to encourage the young and upcoming development professionals and got them engaged in research on local governance issues. Dissemination of these papers through regional seminars in presence of policy makers, academics, and experts could have been better and more productive.

3.1.5 Media Fellowship

The EALG also sponsored a number of Media Fellowship to promote publication of local governance issues in the national media to generate discussion and debate on the local governance issues among the interested parties. Usually the EALG activities and events in the field were well-covered in the respective local media, but those rarely got noticed by the interested people at the national level. Thus the project in partnership with the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) decided awarded Media Fellowship to young and promising journalist nominated by the PIB. The EALG project in collaboration with the PIB, organized an orientation for the media fellows focusing on the project activities along with the contemporary local governance pertinent to the local government bodies in Bangladesh. After selection of reporting issues, the media fellows visited the EALG working areas independently and did the needful to corroborate their findings, before making report and publishing or airing in their respective media. In year 2021, a total of eight young media professionals were awarded with the EALG Media Fellowship, including two each from Bangla (The daily Prothom Alo, the Daily Samakal) and English (The Dhaka Tribune, The Bangladesh Observer) dailies, three from electronic media (Channel 24, ATN Bangla and Nagorik TV), and one from online (The Bangla Tribune) media. All the media fellows had produced three reports on local governance issues, and thus a total of 24 media reports were produced through the Media Fellowship. These reports were found to be creative enough to generate the readers and viewers interest on local governance issues, especially on the need for transparency and accountability in service delivery.

3.1.6 IGA training in Cox'sbazar

The project provided Income Generating Activities (IGA) training especially to the young men and women in Cox'sBazar District. Since the Rohingya influx the young people in the district, particularly from Ukhiya and Teknaf, were the target audience for this IGA training. The EALG earlier conducted a study to identify the need for such training and potential trades to offer such training. Among the interested youths from the target areas, a total of 500 young people (285 female and 215 male) from six unions of Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazila of Cox'sBazar got different skills training. The trades include Poultry Rearing, Dry Fish Processing and Packaging, Street Food Production and Service, Small Business, Tiles Fitting, Plumbing, Electrical House Wiring & Solar System, Electronic & Mobile Phone Servicing etc. Among those who received training from the EALG project 151 had started their own enterprises, i.e. became self-employed, while 129 more is under wage employment. Thus it looks the IGA training delivered by the EALG was so relevant and effective that 92% of the trainees who were looking for some skill training for years became assets to the families and societies they belong. *One of them shared her experience with the evaluation team..... 'I was searching for options to help my family, but it was few and far between in this area'. When I hear about this training, to be honest, I was little reluctant. Eventually I attended this training program and chosen my preferred trade- dry fish processing and packaging. Soon after completion of my training, I got they kept my on trail for a month and checked if I can do things. Now I am on their pay role, and I am no longer frustrated because, I can support myself and my family.* This is a very timely and relevant effort on part of the EALG and certainly more such training would benefit the youth in some other UPs in the district as well. The EALG project engaged Uttaran¹, as partner to provide IGA training to the local youths in Cox'sBazar.

Description	Total
UP Coverage	6
Number of Participants	500 (295 female, 215 male)
Become Self-employed	151
Hired as skilled worker	129

¹Uttaran is a Bangladeshi non-governmental organization (NGO) with good track record having presence in Cox'sBazar.

3.1.7 Right Based Approach (RBA)

Since inception, the EALG project has been sincerely promoting rights based approach (RBA) while implementing its activities in the field. As RBA focuses on process and outcomes and emphasizes on realizing rights, the EALG recognizes individual and community rights to be claimed from legal and moral duty bearers. Recognizing that individuals and communities are entitled to assistance, the EALG made sincere efforts to

Right to education of a Girl assured

Public Hearing is one of the activities of the local bodies that the EALG project supported to get them to practice it. The early panic by the elected representatives to hold such public hearing was soon evaporated as the project supported the facilitation of public hearing preparing citizens to ask questions what affecting them as a community not a personal one. Public Hearing actually is such a forum to raise citizen voice and cordially heard by their elected representatives they have chosen. It was evident from the field observation that many of the community issues were resolved instantly in the meeting what was earlier labeled as an impossible proposition. One such public hearing granted support to continue education of girl from a very low income family. She won a seat in through the admission test in Rajshahi University but her family could not support her to pay the admission fee. The issue was discussed in the Public Hearing at the Ward she belonged. Later the citizen present in the hearing contributed straight away the sum she needed and also promised her the necessary support to keep her higher education going.

empower the individuals and communities to claim their rights. Keeping this end in view, the project focused on the structural causes and their manifestation and tried to overcome those through different interventions where the communities can participate and claim their rights. There had been some provisions in place that facilitate citizen participation but those had rarely been practiced by the local government bodies, the project dealt with. The project understood that the rights holders are entitled to those rights and were entitled to claim those as well. By claiming those rights the communities as citizens could hold the duty bearers accountable in the process. As a matter of fact, the EALG project implanted the motto of the SDG in its Right Based Approach to implementing the field activities and its policy advocacy works. The project did make sincere efforts on its part to create access for the marginalized section of the community including the poor, women, the minority groups in general and the ethnic ones in particular, the differently able groups etc. so that they no longer remain excluded in the local governance decision making that affects their lives and livelihoods in one way or another.

The EALG provided training to the elected representatives towards achieving SDG goals, especially targeting female members of the UPs. The table below shows that the elected representatives in the treatment areas did receive more training than those of the control areas. The training which increased their knowledge on rights of the citizens including gender analysis, SDG localization at planning process, dowry, sexual harassment/ violence against women etc. and contributed significantly to protect the rights of the women and children in the EALG intervention areas, which was severely absent in the control areas.

Table: EALG provided training to achieve SDG goals ensuring rights of the citizens

Name of the Training received	Treatment	Control
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	UP Chair	UP Member	Female Member	UP Chair	UP Member	Female Member
Financial and office management	48.0	62.5	58.3	16.7	50.0	50.0
Gender analysis	72.0	50.0	54.2	16.7	16.7	16.7
Child marriage	52.0	58.3	33.3	16.7	33.3	33.3
Budget and planning	68.0	75.0	58.3	33.3	50.0	33.3
SDG localization at UP and UZP planning process	68.0	58.3	54.2	50.0	16.7	33.3
Dowry	56.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	16.7	50.0
Sexual harassment/violence against women and children	72.0	66.7	75.0	50.0	50.0	33.3
Health and education	64.0	58.3	41.7	33.3	33.3	50.0
Public Procurement Rules (PPR)	56.0	20.8	41.7	33.3	83.3	50.0

In its effort, the EALG facilitated the process, where amendment of rules and procedure was needed, to create an enabling environment and encouraged the local bodies and extend supports to promote citizen participation in the events, meetings organized. It was observed that the EALG training and orientation for the elected representative and physical demonstration as well could break the pathological cynicism and created an atmosphere in the project intervention areas where the said marginalized groups attended events like Ward Shavas, Open Budget Meetings, Public Hearings etc. In these events, it was observed that they attended and slowly became engaged as they raised their concerns and interests which could not be ignored in the end. This way the rights of the citizens and especially the marginalized ones were protected and they made the duty bearers accountable which in turn made the local government bodies efficient and accountable.

3.1.8 Climate Change Issues

The project made some sincere efforts to make awareness on climate change issues though it was not a primary focus. As Bangladesh is one of the climate vulnerable countries, all the development interventions attempt to cover this issue in one way or the other. Through different training and other motivational activities the project made the local bodies, the UPs and UZPs aware of the climate effects on lives and livelihoods and encouraged them to make their plans climate sensitive. Especially when they undertake any development schemes, they discuss the climate issues with the people to be benefited of that scheme, and make them aware not to implement any project that affect environmental balance. This way, the local bodies make the people aware of the climate change consequences and keep their development endeavors climate sensitive. The efforts on part of the project and the concerned local bodies in particular were visible in the project intervention areas. The survey respondents in the intervention areas mentioned that their UPs undertook awareness program on climate change issues (69.5%) while the same for control UPs were only 30.5%.

The respondents were asked if they could mention some of the activities undertaken by their

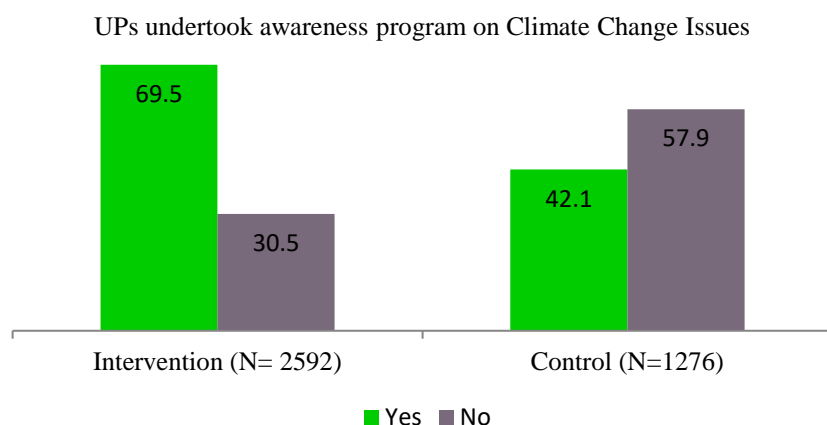


Chart 3.3: Climate change awareness initiated by the LG bodies

respective UPs both in the intervention and control areas. The following table represents the responses and it revealed that in both cases there are climate change awareness activities but the UPs in intervention areas were well ahead because of the EALG activities there as shown in the following table.

Besides, most of the UPs in the EALG intervention areas published their annual plans and five year plans where climate change issues as well as SDG issues were considered and plans were implemented accordingly, which suggest their better understanding and commitment to climate change issues.

Table 3.4: UP actions towards awareness raising on Climate Change Issues (multiple responses)

Activities	Intervention	Control
Awareness Raising Campaign	60.4	46.7
Yard meeting	20.5	9.5
Ward Shava	29.8	13.8
Public Announcement / miking	82.4	80.6
Billboard/leaflet	23.4	33.9
Tree plantation	16.3	7.8
Awareness through Facebook page	14.2	6.1
Building shelter home	33.0	22.9
Adopting climate resilient production technology	12.5	8.4
Relief Distribution	45.1	21.0
Other	.4	-

The situation was almost similar at the UZPs both in intervention and control areas though in a little lower scale as citizens had less scope to participate directly on such activities of the UZPs. The respondents were however, asked to rate their satisfaction on the climate change activities. The results indicated that respondents in the treatment group were more satisfied (40.9%) compared to their counterparts (14.5%) in the control areas, with the UZP actions

relating to disaster management and climate change issues. It was interesting that most of the respondents, 44.5% in the intervention areas and 61.3% in the control areas took the middle path, i.e. tried to be neutral in making their observations. Notably, the respondent who were very dissatisfied with climate change activities of the UZPs, were very identical, 8.8% for the intervention areas and 8.7% for the control areas.

Table 3.5: Citizen Satisfaction on UZP activities on climate change issues

Responses	Treatment group	Control group
Very Satisfied	9.6	1.3
Satisfied	31.3	13.2
Neutral	44.5	61.3
Dissatisfied	5.9	15.5
Very Dissatisfied	8.8	8.7

Participation of Young people in UP activities

The citizen survey conducted for the EALG final evaluation found that young people in the treatment areas had more participation in the UP activities than that of the control areas. The data revealed that almost 52% of the young people in the treatment areas had participated in the UP activities while the percentage for the control areas was only 28. A huge percentage of respondents from the control areas did not answer to this question meaning that they were not at all aware of the UP activities in their localities. The non-response from the treatment areas was close to 27% for the treatment areas as well. It seems a lot more work have to be done in the UPs to make it as truly citizen-centered institutions, considering the growing youth population in Bangladesh.

Chart 3.4 :Young people's participation in UP activities

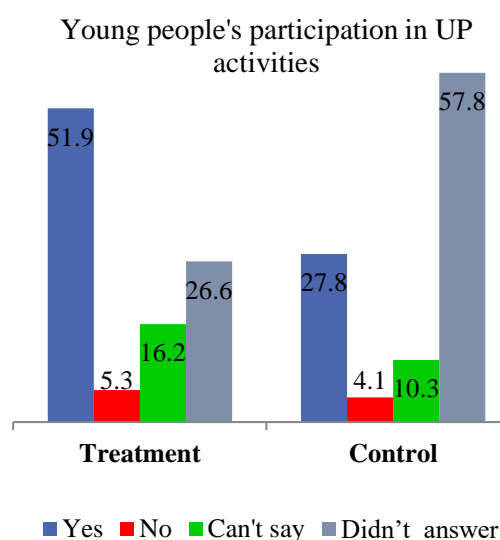
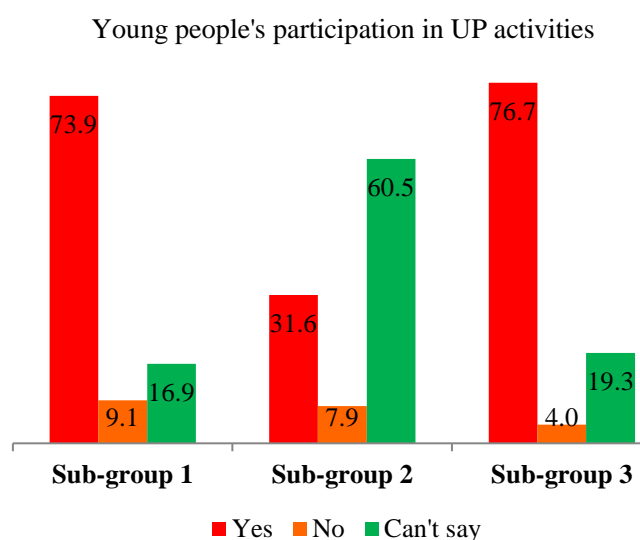


Chart 3.5: Young people's participation in UP activities (Sub-group wise)



Regarding the youth involvement in the UP activities, both sub-group 1 and sub-group 3 had outperformed the UPs considering the sub-group 2 in the study areas, as revealed from the collected data. The causes of this consequence can be as in sub-group 2, EALG project has intervention at UZP level but no intervention at UP level.

3.2 DAC Criteria

One of the steps of this evaluation is to validate the findings according to the OECD-DAC criteria i.e., relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence. Unlike covering the whole findings under DAC criteria, a separate section is being presented here.

3.2.1 Relevance

The project was highly relevant considering that the lack of awareness, capacity, and necessary skills of both LGIs and citizens which are regarded as the barriers to the demand and supply of effective local governance in rural Bangladesh. In addition, socially excluded people, especially women, have less access to the entrance and participate in local development procedures and are deprived of their entitlement and government services. Moreover, implementing the different Acts, Rules, and Manuals regulating the different tiers of the local government was weak, resulting in poor function of local-level institutions. For example, it has been observed that the LGI Act-2009 is not properly functioning with transparency and accountability. Against this backdrop, the project has contributed to the capacity building of the LGI representatives to deliver the services as per the demand of the public. Interestingly, the intervention matched very well with the priorities of the government.

Alignment with government development agenda

The project is directly linked to the decentralization efforts of Bangladesh, which the government has pursued in the last four decades to ensure nation-building, poverty reduction, and the integration of the general people into decision-making processes. In fact, the government of Bangladesh has embarked on various democratic and public sector reforms to improve public service delivery, reduce poverty levels, fight corruption and promote inclusive and sustainable development. Keeping the current state of governance in consideration, it can be said that the government has demonstrated its commitment for reforms that will transform the lives of people, empower the citizens, and promote sustainable development, in line with its national laws and policies and international commitments. Most importantly, the Constitution of Bangladesh reflects a strong mandate of establishing an effective local government system from the time of its commencement.

The project is consistent with the Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041 (Vision-2041), which is a continuation of Vision 2021, pledged to carry the development journey and to drive Bangladesh over the boundary of a middle-income country and enter the realms of first-world nations in 2041, riding on the fast-turning wheels of peace, democracy, development, and progress. The third pillar of Vision 2041 is decentralization, and one of its pledges is to develop a legal framework that will provide clear guidelines for the local government machinery about

its function, jurisdiction, taxation, finance, the budget account, electoral process, and central-local and local-local relationship. The government recognizes that the successful implementation of development strategies depends on good governance in public and private institutions. This is why the 8th Five-Year Plan emphasizes on good governance to pursue the best possible processes for making policy decisions through consultative practices, accountability, service quality, good working relationships, and coordination.

The project activities, e.g., public hearing, guidelines on Ward Shava, open budget session, training on standing committees, and the orientation of UP and UZP activities, have matched to public institutions, local government and other quasi formal institutions and normative and policy frameworks are more gender-responsive, accountable, and governed by the rule of law (UNSDCF output 4.2) along with focusing CPD output 3.2 which also implies that public institutions and other quasi-formal institutions and normative and policy frameworks have enhanced capacities and frameworks to ensure accountable and gender-responsive governance according to the rule of law.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The EALG project has attained goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which implies the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels as the project focuses on improving the capacity, accountability, transparency, and efficiency of the local government in Bangladesh in a way that helps the country to achieve the SDGs. The EALG project aimed explicitly to achieve Target 16.6 of SDGs, which focuses on developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels. Moreover, the citizen's satisfaction regarding public services is another component of the project that directly aligns with 16.3. The project also aligns with ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels (16.7).

Translating the SDGs into practice at the local level remains a significant challenge for many countries. However, the government of Bangladesh has adopted the '*whole of society*' approach to ensure '*no one left behind*' and to materialize its commitment to successful SDG implementation. The project committed to supporting UZPs in the localization of SDGs through planning and awareness-raising programs. The study found that 82.8% of the UZP representative mentioned Upazila Parishads undertook initiatives on localizing SDGs including awareness raising meetings, SDG friendly five year plan preparation, undertaking development schemes of reducing poverty, ensuring clean drinking water etc..

Table: SDG localization initiative by UZPs

SDG localization Initiative	Treatment	Control
Yes	88.9	71.4
No	11.1	28.6

Right-Based Approach

The EALG project was based on *Rights Based Approach*. The EALG project capacitated UPs and UZPs significantly to provide democratic, transparent, accountable, responsive, and pro-poor services, which in turn made the rights holders know their rights affecting their lives and claim their rights. The project promoted non-discrimination, evidenced by the inclusion of different categories of rights holders, e.g., poor and marginalized citizens, including women, to make decisions on local development and political participation. The project has empowered the right holders with the right information to demand their rights, transparency, and accountability of local government affairs from duty bearers. The EALG project worked closely with the UP's to organize the public hearing sessions to openly discuss the services of the Union Parishad and line departments with local people. It serves to clarify the needs, demands, and grievances of the people. The citizen survey revealed that 90.4% of the respondents mentioned that a number of public hearing sessions were held in their area within the last year. During FGD sessions, one of the participants mentioned: *EALG's technical assistance in introducing public hearings to the UPs helped to resolve many local issues, e.g., child marriage, Dowry, violence against women-related issues, etc.*

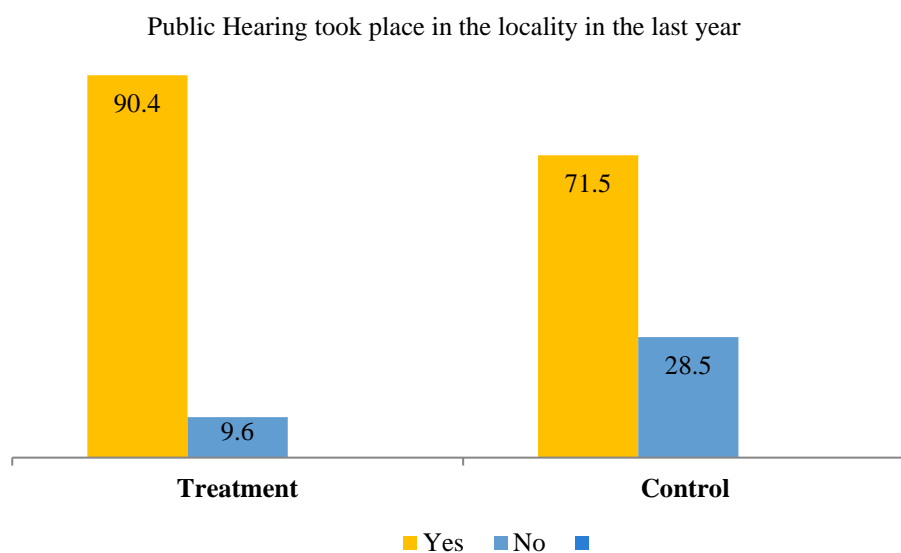


Chart: Public hearing held in the locality during last year

Skill empowerment for effective service delivery

EALG project has worked with the local government for the last five years to localize SDGs, build the capacity of UPs and UZPs, and provide policy support to the government for establishing effective local government systems, leaving no one behind. LGI representatives confirmed in the interview sessions that the project improved their skills and knowledge about the affairs of local government institutions. It is revealed from the KII that the EALG project has developed a pool of master trainers of the senior government officials who had provided training at the relevant functionaries of selected UPs and UZPs. Most of the elected representatives of UZPs and UPs and secretaries had been provided training and orientation on relevant issues, e.g., SDGs, gender awareness and analysis, leadership, and rules and regulations of local government institutions. It is revealed that the training on localizing the

SDGs was designed to meet the needs of local government, which include localizing, planning, implementing, and reviewing the SDGs. However, despite the challenges of conducting this training, the project followed one example of spearheading SDG localization: the *Natore Model*. It should be noted here that the *Natore Model* is developed for the district level, and a framework is finalized for localizing SDGs at the sub-district level, making the SDG aspirations real to communities, households, and individuals, particularly to those who are at risk of falling behind. In addition, the project provided information on budgeting, local resource mobilization, knowledge of climate change, disaster management, and human rights, especially the right to development, and good governance that promotes transparency and accountability in local government institutions and participation of right holders in decision-making and community development.

As a result, citizen and LGI representatives demonstrated a high appreciation for the project, which addressed the lack of capacity of local government systems. The general views are that the project activities were well designed and facilitated the increased capacity of the local government representatives to provide better services to the citizen. LGI representatives, including the elected representatives of Upazila and Union Parishad and secretaries, expressed satisfaction that the project activities helped increase their awareness of the prudent use of public resources and improved their capacity to discharge duties effectively. Furthermore, the project has repurposed its budget to fight COVID-19 by raising mass awareness, providing PPE, hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, and soaps, and setting up hand washing facilities.

3.2.2 Efficiency

Undoubtedly the EALG project is efficient. This validation notes that the efficiency of resource use was demonstrated by the (a) provision of training and orientation to a large number of elected representatives of UPs and UZPs and (b) undertaking studies and reviews and preparing guidelines and policy documents. More specifically, the EALG project was efficient as the project has already demonstrated that LGI representatives are now taking local development initiatives based on community demands. Moreover, LGIs engage citizens to proactively ensure fair and transparent resource-service allocations and local development initiatives.

The study team found that the project fits well with all characteristics in terms of efficiency. Moreover, the study revealed that the targeted project activities were performed successfully by analyzing the data and information through quantitative survey and qualitative tools (e.g., FGD, Interviews) and incorporating the relevant project reports.

In addition, the key informants strongly agreed with the efficiency of the project staff and their activities in the field. Undoubtedly, the EALG project was implemented in a cost-efficient manner, owing to its building onto the platforms and approaches established by previous and existing projects within UNDP Bangladesh. As a result, more was achieved within the timeframe of the project than could otherwise have been expected.

EALG supported activities were every important to the citizens

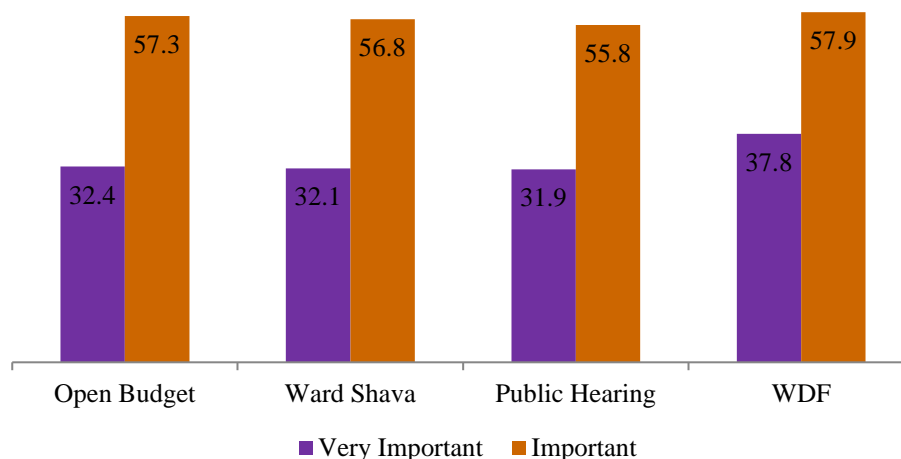


Chart: Citizens valued EALG activities

Project visibility

The project has prepared a comprehensive communication and visibility plan in all aspects of project implementation, including documentation, communication, publications, publicity, and promotional activities and reporting. In addition, the project developed different types of visibility materials to ensure project visibility.

Project accountability

Accountability is a major concern issue in all the projects of UNDP Bangladesh. The EALG project has also ensured accountability in all aspects as a part of this mechanism. The project also demonstrated high accountability and transparency because it disclosed the implementation period and the amount of resources committed to it. In addition, the regular reports of the project, financial management, ensuring the authenticity in selecting the beneficiaries and providing services to them, etc., have reflected the accountability of the project.

Project monitoring

The EALG project has a well-developed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and systematic and participatory monitoring and evaluation system in place throughout the project period to monitor and evaluate the achievement of this action involving relevant stakeholders. During the project designing phase, the especially logical framework was developed with indicators that helped assess the project properly. In addition, necessary monitoring tools based on the log frame and baseline indicators, including project objectives, resources, financial support delivery, IGA, and other inputs and outputs, were developed and used throughout the EALG project period. The data collected seemed to be accurate and adequate. Moreover, necessary monitoring reports were produced regarding the progress of EALG, input delivery, and outputs to inform the project management at different levels at regular intervals.

A baseline survey was conducted, and the report was produced. This was very useful for benchmark development of the log frame indicators, among others, which was very useful for subsequent monitoring, progress reporting, and evaluation of the project. The Mid-term review was conducted to track the progress, which was found satisfactory and tracked the activities, impact, result, and achievement accordingly. The training methodologies were sound and delivered by qualified resource persons. External expertise for providing training was sought wherever this was necessary. Training reports were compiled, and modules were developed and documented. The trainees of these training were reasonably satisfied with the relevancy, quality, and adequacy of training materials. The training imparted helped change the behavior, attitude, and knowledge of the participants, which was evident in the FGDs and KIIs.

Income generating activities

EALG supported Income Generating Activities (IGA) for the local youth and women in Cox's Bazar, a much-needed initiative for the host communities who suffered from the Rohingya influx. In this regard, The EALG hired a national NGO with similar experience in providing skill development training to deliver training on some trades that are locally relevant i.e. motor driving with basic maintenance, dry fish processing, and handicraft training considering the local needs. The trainees after completion of the training got job in other entities, some others started their own enterprises, Some others, however though willing could not start their own enterprise due to lack of finance.

Project management

The project management system was found as dynamic and efficient to ensure transparency of resources management-both physical and financial. The ratio of project staff and the workload was reasonably adequate. Management of the physical resources of the EALG project was done according to the procedures set by UNDP with proper documentation. Financial resource disbursements, procurement, etc., were also done following UNDP guidelines and the project budget. Relevant rules and guidelines were strictly adhered to for the above and were subjected to auditing. Thus, physical resources and financial management were reasonably transparent, and value for money in respect of operating costs was considered in financial management.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems, and the world of work. Similarly, COVID-19 outbreaks impeded the smooth implementation of planned activities of the EALG project. Due to the COVID-19 situation holding off Ward Shava and open budget sessions, some meetings and training had to be dropped. In fact, EALG received funding through a separate window to support UP and UZP functionaries and the community in their COVID-19 response. Thus, the EALG successfully accommodated the local bodies and worked concertedly towards this end. The aim of coordinated effort on local governance actually demonstrated during COVID 19 responses in the project intervention areas.

3.2.3 Effectiveness

The overall goal of the EALG project was to strengthen the capacities of local government institutions and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development service delivery

for the SDGs. The project has three components: (a). Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad-IAUZP; (b). Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad-SDUP; (c). Policy for Effective Local Governance-PELG. It is revealed that all outputs in the original project scope were delivered, and the project has achieved good results in implementing the planned activities and substantive achievements on outputs. During the interaction with the evaluation team, all stakeholders across the board, almost with a unanimous voice, emphasized the high effectiveness of EALG in the following three broad areas: (a). capacity building of LGIs, (b). participatory planning, and (c). social mobilization.

Capacity building of LGIs

The EALG project has worked to provide capacity building and technical support to the UPs and UZPs; as well as monitor and follow up on the relevant activities and provide policy support. Especially appreciated are the publication of the UP and UZP Five-Year Plan Book and Annual Report, SDG-Responsive Billboard Installation, training on the UP and UZP Website, the institutionalization of participatory planning procedures, and systematization of accounting and record-keeping practices.

In the following table, names of some training programs listed which were provided for the elected representative in part of the capacity building efforts. The elected representatives irrespective of their status in the councils, participated in those training programs; especially female members were encouraged to participate in training programs so that they become conscious and responsive to the issues concerned.

Table: The elected representative received the following training from the EALG

Name of the Training received	Treatment			Control		
	UP Chair	UP Member	Female Member	UP Chair	UP Member	Female Member
Upazila Acts, Rules and Regulations	96.0	91.7	87.5	83.3	83.3	83.3
Training on Standing Committee	80.0	83.3	50.0	100.0	66.7	33.3
Financial and office management	48.0	62.5	58.3	16.7	50.0	50.0
Upazila manual of LGD	76.0	58.3	70.8	83.3	16.7	33.3
Gender analysis training	72.0	50.0	54.2	16.7	16.7	16.7
Child marriage	52.0	58.3	33.3	16.7	33.3	33.3
Budget and planning	68.0	75.0	58.3	33.3	50.0	33.3
SDG localization at UP and UZP planning process	68.0	58.3	54.2	50.0	16.7	33.3
Dowry	56.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	16.7	50.0
Sexual harassment/violence against women and children	72.0	66.7	75.0	50.0	50.0	33.3
Health and education	64.0	58.3	41.7	33.3	33.3	50.0
Public Procurement Rules (PPR)	56.0	20.8	41.7	33.3	83.3	50.0
Scheme designing and monitoring	56.0	29.2	62.5	16.7	66.7	66.7

The following table demonstrates a long list of training programs; those were organized for the UZP committee members in the project treatment areas. A critical observation of the names of

the training programs it reveal that almost all the training programs were designed keeping the role and function of their respective UZP Committee. These training programs were welcomed by the participants as no other entity offered such training for them, as mentioned by one of the UP members during interview. Though there were complaints about the short duration of the project, the elected representatives tried to utilize their time to learn things. It's so common that once the participants like the training program, its content, the effect will be long lasting.

Table: Training organized for UZP Committees by the EALG

Name of the training	Responses
Law and order	92.9
Communication and infrastructure	85.7
Agriculture and irrigation	78.6
Secondary and madrasa education	82.1
Primary and mass education	75.0
Health and family welfare	89.3
Youth and sports development	60.7
Women and children welfare	85.7
Social welfare	71.4
Freedom fighter	57.1
Fisheries and livestock	71.4
Rural development and cooperatives	64.3
Cultural activities	57.1
Environment and forest	53.6
Monitoring and controlling market price	71.4
Finance, budget, planning and mobilization of local resources	71.4
Public health, sanitation and safe drinking water	78.6

The elected representative of UP and UZP levels have become knowledgeable about UP and UZP governance issues due to the capacity development initiatives of the project. It is also encouraging to note that almost all the surveyed chairmen and members in the intervention areas now understand the relevant Acts of the local government. For example, the increasing understanding of the UP members has positively impacted the Ward Shava and open budget meetings. 54.2% and 68.4% of the community people, including women and marginalized groups, surveyed in the treatment areas have been aware of the annual budget and open budget meetings and Ward Shava of UP, respectively. Another vital facet of the capacity-building activities is to bring change in the mindset of the elected people's representatives and ensure people-centered development, gender equality, good governance, human rights, and climate resilience aimed at attaining SDGs. Thus, capacity-building interventions are not only considered as an avenue of learning but also create a change in mindset and feeling that makes an urge to do something. In the long run, this will lead to the development of quality leadership, whether there is external support available through a project or not.

Participatory planning approach

The second most effective contribution of the EALG project that is appreciated across the board is the participatory planning approach that it and its predecessors Union Parishad Governance

Project and Upazila Parishad Governance Project, facilitated at the UP and UZP levels aimed at investing their internal resources and the funds received from the central government. The evaluation team confirmed that the participatory planning process had been institutionalized at both the UP and UPZ levels, and this achievement can be attributed mainly to EALG. The charm of this approach is that it allows assessment and prioritization of real needs, selection of relevant schemes, and targeting of the benefits to the weaker sections within the community by the community organizations themselves rather than by external agencies. The project has strengthened participatory governance and fostered community-based initiatives throughout the intervention areas of operation. EALG has mainly mobilized people's representatives to engage community people to plan and carry out different activities of the UP and UZP jointly that positively impacted the living conditions of people in rural areas. In this regard, respondents were asked whether they or their family members ever participated in any UP meeting. More than half of the respondents (52.5%) answered positively. Respondents were also asked whether they or their family members have access to the decision-making process of any UP meeting. Interestingly 84% answered this question positively. More importantly, 73.6% of the community-level respondents mentioned that they placed their opinion, suggestions, and recommendation in the meetings.

In the following table it revealed that the citizens participate in different events organized by the UPs. From the table it is observed that the highest percentage (82.5%) of respondents attended the Ward Shava which is the main forum where the citizen and the local body meet and discuss. In the ward shavas, the development schemes are being selected after discussion and debate in the ward shavas. This is followed by the attendance in the Public Hearing (49.6%), where again people ask question in presence of the line ministry officials and decisions are being made and implemented accordingly. The citizens also attend in the Open Budget meeting (33.8%), Planning Meeting (23.8%) suggest that participatory process in planning and development got a momentum and both the elected representatives and the citizens had started to work together, what makes participatory planning a reality.

Table: Participatory Process at UPs

Participatory Process at UPs	Responses
Ward Shava	82.5
Standing Committee meeting	33.8
Open Budget meeting	47.4
Planning meeting	23.8
Meeting of the Women Development Forum	32.4
Public hearing	49.6
Others	.6

Social mobilization

The EALG project had supported activating the *Ward Shava* (a public engagement activity held twice a year in each ward), where citizens and elected bodies discuss all the issues i.e. the needs

of the community, schemes need to be undertaken, etc. and development planning. Ward Shava is both a forum and a process of collecting information from citizens and presenting it in the UP meetings. It is revealed that all the UPs in the treatment areas make regular efforts to ensure people's participation at the Ward Shavas, and 82.5% of the surveyed community people informed that they participated in Ward Shava. In addition, women and vulnerable community members were found to be increasingly active in raising their voices. Their vibrant presence made the Ward Shavas an interactive platform for participatory decision-making processes. Furthermore, the project played an important role in identifying and solving local social problems by holding public hearings in Union Parishads and Upazila Parishads. It has not only helped the local government institutions to learn about public opinion on its services but also to find immediate solutions or plans.

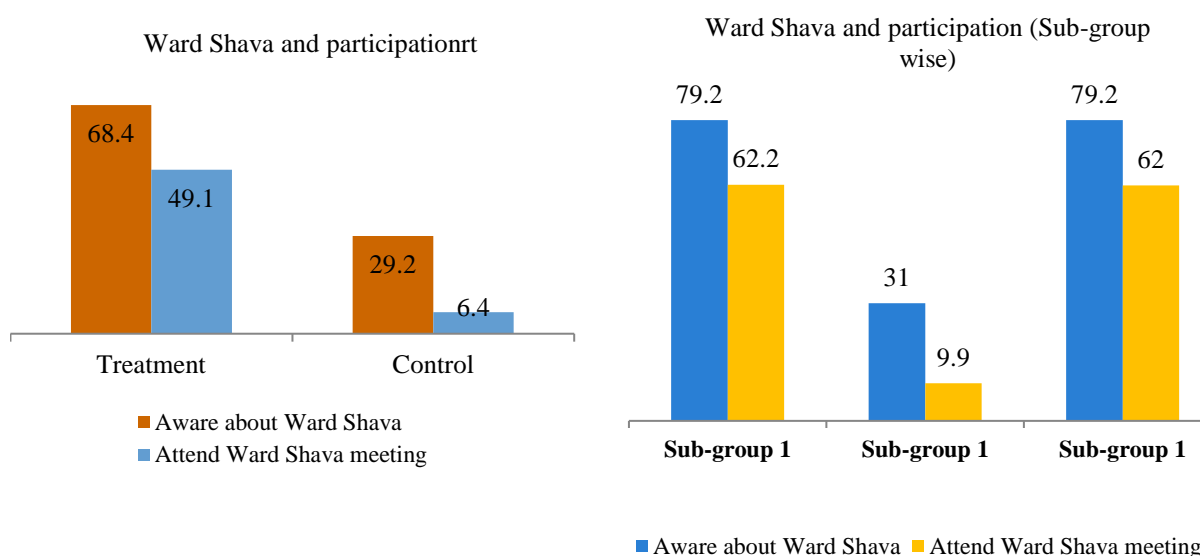


Chart: Ward Shava and participation in Wards Shava

The above charts suggest that the respondents from Treatment areas were found to be more aware of the Ward Shava and attending more than the respondents of the control areas. Again, among the sub-groups, the respondents from Sub-group 2 were way too far behind the other two sub-groups.

The EALG also supports the Women Development Forum (WDF) in integrating gender issues into its institutional (UZP and UP) planning process. WDF also aims to increase the participation of women in LGIs' decision-making processes, e.g., Ward Shava, Open Budget Sessions, and Public Hearings. A good percentage (31.6%) of respondents or their family members received service from WDF within the last two years, and most of them were either very satisfied (28%) or satisfied (54.9%) with the WDF services.

The table below suggests that citizens can get different kinds of services including information for specific service (49%), about women rights issues (70%), employment information (42.4%), Violence against women (46%) etc. Thus it can be said that WDF is slowly but steadily becoming a favored forum for citizens.

Table: Services received by citizens from WDF

Services from WDF	Treatment	Control
Information about specific services	49.0	17.9
Information about women rights	70.9	41.0
Resolve any conflict	27.8	69.2
Information about employment opportunity	42.4	17.9
Information about training	39.8	20.5
Violence Against women related issues	46.0	12.8
Providing equipment	11.5	-

3.2.4 Impact

Improved execution skills

The functionaries of UPs and UZPs have had positive views on the EALG project, for helping them to execute their mandate better. During the conversational interview, the study team posed specific queries to UP and UZP functionaries on the gains they accrued from the EALG project. In their responses, the UP and UZP Chairman and members mentioned that the project capacitated them to handle better the responsibilities associated with their position in the UP and UZP. The project guided in framing the vision of the UP and UZP and enabled people's cooperation toward developing a realistic five-year plan for the Union. The project emphasizes regularly conducting the Ward Shava and Open Budget sessions through which the identification and prioritization of people's needs have ensured. For example, roughly two-thirds (59.1%) of the community people opined that due to EALG project participation and presentation of opinions of females, marginalized/poor, ethnic minorities, and specially-able population of the society in the open budget meeting has increased. More importantly, the project has contributed to improving the management of Union Parishad record, including minutes of Ward Shava and Standing Committees and has enabled the UP functionaries to respond to the audit requirements easily.

The capacity-building initiatives have successfully changed the mindset of the elected UP and UZP members. For example, 96% of UP representatives in the treatment area mentioned that EALG provided guidelines and other technical assistance to facilitate holding effective on Ward Shavas. Similarly, 66.7% of UZP representatives said that UZP officials received training on budgeting guidelines and a two-thirds mentioned the training sessions were very effective (50%) and effective (16.7%) for the committee member.

As a matter of fact, 96.6% of the respondents mentioned that there were guidelines for UZP committees on their specific roles, responsibilities and how things needed to be done. The project then organized training to make all those guidelines so that the UZP committees perform better and deliver the best services possible to the citizens.

Table: Guidelines for UZP Committees and training

Guidelines for UZP Committee	Trainingon guidelines
96.6	96.4

Thus the change in the mindset is reflected in the increasing level of participation of citizens, including the poor and marginalized, physically challenged, and ethnic minorities, in the meetings of Ward Shava, open budget, and Standing Committees. Most importantly, the participation of people has been viewed positively by the UP and UZP members. While commenting on the issue of transforming the mindset of elected peoples representatives, one of the UP Chairman said: *“After receiving training on capacity building, we have started to think positively about all matters related to the UP governance process and have taken necessary action to ensure equal participation of both males and females at all levels. In fact, we realized that we should acknowledge the importance of the participation of both men and women in the governing process of the UP. Nothing remains impossible if both men and women work together”*.

Improved awareness, transparency, and accountability

In response to the project objective to contribute to improved and sustained quality service delivery and transparency and accountability to the people in the respective areas, the project has enhanced the accountability of the UPs and UZPs to the right holders. As a result, UPs and UZPs, as the duty bearers, are now responsive to the demands of the right holders. The project has opened up the LGI representatives as duty bearers who are now promoting the right holders to demand transparency and accountability of the LGI operations. Actually, LGI representatives tended only to engage community members that belong to their parties in championing community developments. As a result, they lacked inclusiveness in community development and did not allow to be held accountable. However, due to the EALG project, almost all the UP members (98.1%) surveyed in the intervention areas noted that the UPs formed standing committees. While committees formed, citizens were at least aware of the functions of such committees, both at treatment and control areas, as revealed from the following table.

Table: Citizens awareness on the functions of the UP standing committees

	Treatment			Control	
		Sub-group1	Sub-group2	Sub-group3	
Yes	92.0	90.3	90.9	94.3	88.2
No	8.0	9.7	9.1	5.7	11.8

It has also been found in the FGDs that poor women and men are now actively engaged in the Union Parishad Standing Committees and various other committees, viz. Ward Committee, Scheme Supervision Committees, Project Implementation Committees, and Union Development Coordination Committees; and one-third of these committee membership positions are held by people from poor and marginalized households. Furthermore, a number of UP representatives opined that with the effective and inclusive engagement of citizens, the

functioning of UP committees has become more visible and effective, and the quality of scheme implementation and service delivery is much better now, owing to the participation and supervision of all concerned stakeholders. Regarding accountability, 88.9% of UZP representatives mentioned that the UZP organizes consultation meetings to verify the SSNP beneficiaries list submitted by UPs.

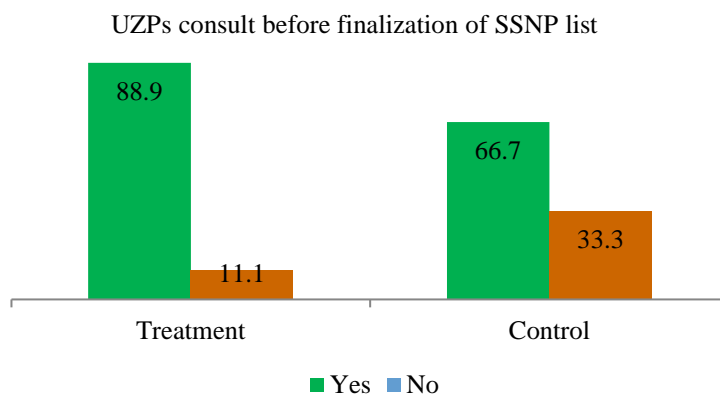


Chart: UZPs hold consultation meeting for finalization of UP submitted beneficiary list

Increased engagement and responsiveness of duty bearers

The project has capacitated local government, specifically the elected representatives, to improve service delivery and create participatory local development. This was achieved through interface meetings with various line departments. These engagements created strong social networks that helped build collective action, mutual trust, and inclusiveness in utilizing public resources and distributing government handouts to the marginalized section of society. For example, one of the UP Chairmen mentioned: *“I tended not to engage with the grassroots because I had no resources to meet their demands. Actually, most of the development initiatives and distribution of the social safety nets were led by Upazila-level government officials but were bypassing me. But now, with the social network we have created, I am more responsive to the citizens, and as a team, we plan and execute development projects together”*.

On a different note, after attending capacity building training and other orientations, and attending different meetings and workshops, the elected representatives of both UPs and UZPs were of the opinion that they did not want to lag behind when the country was moving ahead with the slogan "Digital Bangladesh." Elected officials of both local government bodies echoed the same view and wished to see digital governance in place at their respective levels. Thus, digitalization of the UPs and UZPs is even more important to achieving the target of a digital Bangladesh.

Self-reliant Union Parishad

A New Era

“Sustained long-term progress will only be possible with self-reliant and decentralized local governance. As the existing financial resources of the UPs are minimal, we need to explore the possibility of increasing revenue from different sources,” said Mr. Rabiul Islam, Chairman of Gorgori Union Parishad, Bagha, Rajshahi.

According to the Local government (Union Parishad) Act 2009, the UP-Model Tax Schedule 2013, and the UP (Tax) Rule 1960, UP is authorized to have income from taxes, rates, tolls, fees, lease money from the local market, ferry ghat etc., revenue share, and land development tax. But the majority of HH do not pay the holding tax due to novice tax processing (assessing, collecting, and using) staff, unmotivated municipal officials, and a lack of information about local taxes, tolls, and fees. The UNDP's Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project assisted in building the capacity of the Union Parishad to ensure the accountability of local government members to make the Union Parishad more successful and to ensure the involvement of the local people at all levels.

Mr. Rabiul, UP Chairman, Gorgori Union Parishad, took steps to identify various income sources. Hence, he seeks support from the EALG project and devised plans and tactics to increase the revenue without imposing any new burden on the taxpayers. Given the context, EALG provided tax collection training to 15 young volunteers and Gram Polices to ensure long-term and comprehensive tax collection. Following the training, the assessors went door to door, conducting HH surveys and collecting data of 5,103 HHs of Gorgori Union. At the end of the assessment process, the Union Parishad held a public hearing to validate the allotted tax. During the public hearing session, the owner of 11 HH claimed to reduce their tax, and the community supported his appeal. Earlier, the estimated annual holding tax for that Union was only BDT 150,000, but after the assessment, it has increased to BDT 546,450. It is estimated that, at the end of collecting the remaining 585 HH's due tax, the holding tax is expected to reach BDT 7,00,000.

Mr. Rabiul expressed his gratitude to the EALG project for offering various training and financial assistance to carry out the assessment. Besides, he intends to develop an automated tax collection system to ensure maximum collection.

Source: Mr. Rabiul Islam, Chairman, Gorgori Union Parishad, Bagha, Rajshahi.

One of the main aims of the EALG project was to increase the representation of the poor and marginalized citizens in UP and UZP affairs, e.g., Project Implementation Committees, Ward Committees, and Scheme Supervision Committees, public hearings, and so on. The project activities created an opportunity for the poor citizens to articulate their voices on collective local requirements and affect the decision process and its successful functioning significantly mitigate the information asymmetries between citizens and the LGI functionaries concerning the contours of development allocation and various types of service provisions. In this regard, one of the UP members mentioned: *“We now identify and take development initiatives and consult with the general public at the Ward Shava, open budget sessions, or Standing Committee meetings. In addition, we are discharging our assigned duties and responsibilities following the provision of the Act of 2009, apart from delivering different SSNPs benefits to the actual beneficiaries. To be honest, we did not consider these issues before in the way, as we think now”*.

3.2.5 Sustainability

Through this project, it is observed that the sustainability of project becomes apparent when all relevant sectors/actors have accepted the intervention and are involved at every stage of implementation. Further, this project has created good social networks in all the project sites, which have the potential to continue supporting the interventions. Furthermore, by

demonstrating transparency and accountability, the project improved the development plan and budgeting system of UP and UZP, aimed to contribute to achieving SDGs. Other key thematic areas, such as committee activation and community engagement, are also supported by EALG and are trusted by the community to promote participation and inclusive development and demonstrate the spirit of “*it begins with you,*” which helped improve the relationship with the community.

However, this evaluation investigated sustainability issues intensively, and the questions related to sustaining project outcomes were raised in all the KIIs and FGDs. In addition, specific queries were posed to the respondents to seek their intent (and motivation) of sustaining salient activities and outcomes of EALG even after the project. It is encouraging to note that there was near unanimity from all stakeholders on the need to take forward the accomplishments of the project. From the standpoint of poor citizens, the project provided the voice to articulate their aspiration for local development as pathways of economic and social mobility by empowering them to participate equitably in the decision making process of UPs and UZPs. It will therefore be their individual and collective endeavor to ensure that these transformational processes are continued. However, it will be interesting to observe how far these are continued in absence of the push-factor, the project.

Strengthening institutional capacity

From the perspective of UP and UZP functionaries, the accompaniment of the EALG project has brought-in numerous benefits, including contributed in strengthening the institutional capacity of UP and UZPs to improve their planning and budgeting process with citizen engagement; wider disclosure of information and shifting their attitude to address citizen’s views thereby improved transparency and accountability. For example, the survey data revealed that 82.4% of UP representatives mentioned that Union Parishad received EALG’s fund and technical support for preparing annual report.

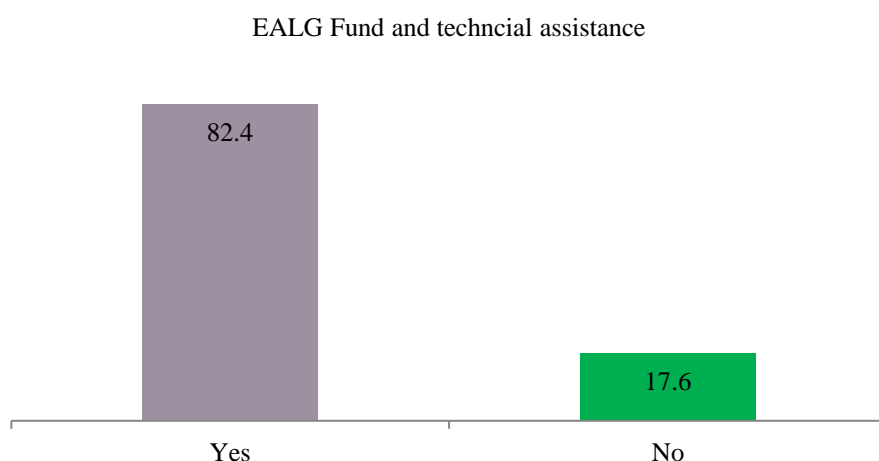


Chart: Availability EALG fund and technical assistance for publishing UP annual reports

Similarly, more than two-thirds (71.4%) of UZP members mentioned that UZP and line agency officials/staff coordinated with at least three transferred departments about their activities at

District Development and Coordination Committee. In addition, improved management of the UPs and UZPs record has allowed the functionaries to respond to audit and performance assessment requirements easily, and enhanced trust owing to constructive engagements on multiple aspects has resulted in more nuanced appreciation by citizens concerning the challenges faced by the UPs and UZPs. The UPs and UZPs functionaries, therefore, do have obvious individual incentives to sustain the gains of the EALG project and take them forward. One of the DDLGs mentioned: *“The capacity building and mentoring support of the project were very useful for the Chairman and members of the UPs and UZPs to better handle the responsibilities associated with their positions”*.

Enhanced awareness of both duty-bearers and right holders

The most important achievement of the project, as universally acknowledged by all the stakeholders the evaluation team had interviewed or discussions with, is that the EALG project has been able to trigger the most important awareness among the elected representatives of the UPs and UZPs that strengthen the capacity of the local government is imperative for inclusive, effective, and accountable planning and improved service delivery ultimately ensure the sustainable development of the country. It will be naïve to say the project would not be sustainable in the long run, but lot depends on the sincerity of eh LGBs to harness own source revenue. More importantly, it’s like the war is over, but the training skills remains with there and that will likely to be assets for years to come. Some of the elected representatives of the UPs and UZPs expressed their willingness to continue to provide pro-poor, effective services and institutionalize the space for the poor and marginalized section of the society to be more actively engaged in the decision-making process of UP. To quote one of the UP Chairman whose commitment to conduct the public hearing to enhance accountability and public engagement even after the project ends is reflected as she says, *“the EALG project has shown us the way, and now we will go ahead.”*

The EALG project also conducted training for CSO and CBO members on local governance so that they could be aware of the role and functions of LGIs. This training helped to increase the interest and participation of civil society in local government activities and thus increased the transparency and accountability of LGIs. The project interventions link the CSOs/CBOs and different groups to line departments at the Upazila level and Union Parishad. These links will likely continue since the group members have experienced their benefits and know how to keep the linkages functioning. They also know that by maintaining relations with the line departments at the Upazila level and Union Parishads, they are likely to be able to access future support if required. One of the participants perceives sustainability in this way: *“The project has been able to create a big jolt in raising community awareness and recognition about the rights of the unheard voices.”*

Strong foundation of social networks

The project has created robust social networks in the project areas, which are fundamental in propelling the success stories beyond the current areas of implementation. The networks have mutual trust and are able to work together for a common purpose collectively. The elected representatives of the UPs and UZPs, and transferred line departments at the Upazila level,

who are key duty bearers, are responsive and willing to work more with the right holders. Collective action is important in the implementation of advocacy and lobbying intervention. The awareness and capacity building of the elected representatives of the UPs and UZPs resulted in communities being actively involved in community development because they were given space to understand their roles and responsibilities.

Step towards resilient climate communities

A climate resilience plan is one of the major focuses of the EALG project. Therefore, the project emphasized that the climate resilience plan should be incorporated into the five-year plan of the UP and providing interventions accordingly. The effort of the project team made the UP functionaries understand the necessity of climate-resilient strategies for inclusion. As a result, the institutional survey revealed that almost all the UP (98.1%) formed the Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC). On the other hand, all the surveyed Upazilas formed Upazila Disaster Management Committee. Respondents were asked to rate the performance of UDMC, and a significant number rated it as good (56.3%) and very good (14.6%). The study revealed that in more than half of the UPs in the treatment areas, the UPs prepared a five-year plan incorporating the climate resilience plan. The project has undertaken a number of measures related to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in disaster-prone UPs in the treatment area, including awareness campaigns, warning systems, yard meetings, road construction, disaster shelter construction, and shifting people in a crisis moment, relief distribution, tree plantation, etc. In addition, UPs have engaged CSOs in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in the treatment areas. These CBOs and CSOs contributed to the climate change adaptation plan through mud road construction and offering financial assistance to vulnerable people. In some cases, they collect relief and funds from different state and non-state actors and take responsibility for disseminating those to vulnerable people. This learning obviously brings a sustainable change in the community.

3.2.6 Coherence

Coherence is a relatively new addition to DAC evaluation criteria which answers: *how well does the intervention fit?* In other words, coherence deals with the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions or the extent to which other interventions support or undermine the intervention and vice versa. For this evaluation, coherence is measured through correspondence between the objectives of the intervention and those of other interventions of different projects to avoid duplicity and explore collaboration.

Rina Akhter: Story of a COVID19 Frontliner

Being a Primary School Teacher and Member of the Union Coronavirus Committee of Gazirtek Union, Charbhadrasan of Faridpur, I feel more confident performing my duties by wearing PPE. I am currently instructing students and neighbors via mobile and Facebook to wash their hands, keep a social distance, wear a mask when going outside the home, eat healthy foods, exercise, stay safe, and stay at home.

My school was closed when the global corona epidemic broke out. However, the UP appointed me as a member of the Union Coronavirus Prevention Committee. The Committee is always on the front

lines of any Covid-related situation. However, because I lacked personal protection equipment, I was constantly concerned about my family members' safety. However, I have to leave the house every day to conduct public awareness campaigns against the coronavirus among the villagers.

Meanwhile, the UNDP EALG project, funded by SDC and DANIDA, distributed PPE and preventive materials (hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, soaps) to members of the Union Corona Committee. I was overjoyed when I received them and began to believe that, as long as I am wearing PPE, I will conduct public awareness activities against the Corona Virus. Hence, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude.

Source: Ms. Rina Akhter

Member of Union Corona Committee & Govt. Primary School teacher
Gazirtek Union, Charvadrason, Faridpur

Uniqueness of EALG

The GOB and development partners have implemented many initiatives aiming at capacity development and governance improvement of UP and UZP. For example, JICA recently completed the Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP) (2016-2021) to enhance the capacity of Upazilas Parishad to deliver more effective and responsive public services to citizens through providing additional development funds and capacity development opportunities. On the other hand, JICA is currently running a project titled Upazila Integrated Capacity Development Project (UICDP) (2017-2022) to establish the framework to improve the “comprehensive coordination capacity of Upazila Parishad”. Local Governance Support Project- Phase 3 (LGSP-3) (2017-2021), funded by the World Bank, aimed to strengthen inclusive and accountable institutions of local governance by empowering communities to make choices on their development priorities and basic local service needs and empowering local governments to respond to community priorities. The Sharique Phase 4 (2017-2020) supported by SDC contributed to the empowerment of local citizens to make and implement inclusive, gender-sensitive, and pro-poor collective choices about their lives and livelihoods through more democratic, transparent, inclusive, and effective local government systems. Against this background, the EALG Project aims to strengthen the capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development service delivery for the SDGs. The project has assisted 18 underperforming Upazilas in improving their development plan and budgeting system and aiming to contribute to achieving SDGs. Development planning and financial management are key components of the strategy. Besides, other key thematic areas, such as standing committee activation and community engagement, are also supported by EALG. Thus, EALG has contributed significantly to achieving the vision of the strategy.

The *modus operandi* of the EALG project is different from the other projects. The UGDP provides technical support and schemes implementation fund for the UZPs. In the case of the UICDP project, it not only intervenes in UPs and UZPs but also in Pourashava, which is beyond the EALG project. Regarding area coverage, the two projects have different intervention areas except for Cox's Bazar. LGSP-3 also has been designed for all UPs and a few selected Paurashavas in Bangladesh. The project development objective of LGSP was to institutionalize the formula-based UP fiscal transfer system and introduce Expanded Block Grants (EBG) to

Pourashavas on a pilot basis. In contrast, the EALG project aimed to improve the awareness of the elected representatives of the UPs and UZPs about the participatory process in their mandated matters to create a culture of ‘citizen ownership’ in the local governance affairs. Most importantly, the Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG) component of the EALG project already provided policy support to the GoB to establish an effective local government, irrespective of tiers, making the EALG project unique.

Stakeholder engagement

The EALG project has engaged the wider stakeholders for partnership and synergy building. At the national level, the project engaged stakeholders like the LGD, Ministry of Finance, and Cabinet Division. The LGD was the key government organization that took the steering role of the project. In addition, the importance of the Ministry of Finance was immense, as this ministry approved matters relating to financial issues. On the other hand, the engagement of the Cabinet Division was required to deal with issues at the inter-ministerial level, more specifically, to ensure that 17-line ministries and their departments cooperate in the overall functioning of the UZP. However, this remains a big challenge to have established inter-ministerial coordination. The EALG project also engaged young researchers as well as supervisors to conduct studies on local government issues. At the implementation level, the project mainly involved local government institutions (i.e., UZP and UP) and Upazila-level government service providers. Besides, the project also engages the community, community leaders, CBO leaders, and local civil society. The resultant outcome of these initiatives is the beginning of an era of citizen engagement in the local government affairs. How it works in the long run is remains to be observed.

Systemic changes of the UP and UZP operation with governance

(a). UP and UZP representatives have been found interested in ensuring people’s access to UP information, having been inspired by the activities of the EALG project. The data suggests that, with active support from the EALG, all UPs and UZPs in the intervention areas have prepared Citizens’ Charters and published it on the UP and UZP premises. This is a step to enhance accountability and transparency of the governance system of UP and UZP. In addition, the CBO/CSO leaders who got training from the EALG project have also been educating the community about different types of services delivered from the UP and UZP and the process of getting those services. This has contributed to changes in the service-receiving scenario in the UP and UZP. As a result, the respondents have confirmed that they have contacted the UP and UZP functionaries to get services as contained in the citizen charter, and most of them have received services without harassment.

(b). SDGs cannot be attained unless and until it is possible to ensure good governance. Among other requirements, accountability acts as a facilitator to establish good governance. Standing Committee (SC) is one of the mechanisms through which accountability of UP activities is ensured. According to the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009, each UP is required to establish 13 Standing Committees that consist of UP members as well as citizens from different *strata* of the society. As part of EALG activities, workshops with SC members were organized. Follow-up meetings have also been organized under EALG to keep SC members

active and aware of their duties and responsibilities. Support provided through workshops and meetings under the EALG project for strengthening SCs has made them accountable for ensuring pro-poor local development by monitoring development work in their meetings. The UP representatives have also been found active in strengthening SCs to ensure accountability for what the UP does.

(c). It is revealed from FGDs that the community people have participated in Ward Shava in identifying their priorities, and many of the FGD participants acknowledge that the UP members were responsive to the people's priorities when making decisions in *Ward Shava*. The UP members are now taking initiatives to ensure the inclusion of common people in the decision-making process. As a result 44.1% of the respondents think that they or their family members have access to decision making of the UPs. While commenting on the participation of community people in the Ward Shava, one UP member frankly said, "*Ward Shava was not formally organized before. We used to write the proceedings of the Ward Shava for official formality, which were then sent to the required number of people for their signature. However, the situation changed after the intervention of the EALG project. Now, we are holding a Ward Shava meeting regularly, ensuring the participation of both males and females*".

(d). Union Digital Centers (UDC) in the treatment area provide a number of services to people, including land mutation and registration, passports, birth registration, mobile financing, and many more. The majority of the respondents were either satisfied (54.3%) or very satisfied (16.8%) with the services received from UDC. Similarly, regarding the importance of WDF, 57.9% mentioned important, and 37.8% mentioned WDF is very important for rural women empowerment.

Table: Satisfaction on UDC services and importance of WDF

Satisfaction on UDC Services			Women Development for Women Empowerment		
	Treatment	Control		Treatment	Control
Very Satisfied	16.8	1.4	Very important	37.8	20.4
Satisfied	54.3	34.0	Important	57.9	64.1

(e). It is commonly perceived that malpractices and nepotism pervade all government services distributed through the UP and UZP. Therefore, services are not delivered to the right people as well as in the right way. However, in the project areas, it is expected that the intensity of malpractice and nepotism has started to reduce, due to increased citizen participation and practice of different accountability measures.

3.3 Quantitative Findings

Demographic Profile of the respondents

This section presents respondent's profile, household composition, and having access to ICT etc. Among 3868 households selected randomly for the household and citizen perception survey, the field team ensured that all household heads were actively participating with their time and responded the questions after having a good understanding of each of them.

Table 3.6: Demographic profile of the respondents

	Intervention (N=2592)	Control (N=1276)	Overall (N=3868)
Respondent by Sex			
Male	49.2	55.6	57.91
Female	50.7	44.3	42
Third Gender	.1	.1	0.09
Total	100.0	100.0	
Respondent by Age Group			
16 – 29	19.1	20.2	19.44
30 – 39	27.7	30.5	28.59
40 – 49	26.4	27.7	26.84
50 -59	15.7	15.0	15.49
60 above	11.1	6.6	9.64
Respondents by level of Education			
No Institutional education	19.4	19.6	19.47
Primary (Classes 1-5)	35.8	39.3	36.97
Secondary (Classes 6-10)	24.5	23.9	24.28
SSC or equivalent	7.9	7.4	7.73
HSC or equivalent	6.3	4.8	5.82
Graduation or equivalent	4.2	3.2	3.85
Post Graduate/ Equivalent/ Phd	1.6	1.7	1.65
Religious education	.3	.1	0.23
Average Monthly Income of the Respondents			
Average Monthly Income (BDT)	19,055	17,707	
Average Monthly (Expenditure) (BDT)	14,114	13,067	

Occupation of the respondent

The occupational identities of the respondents in both treatment and control group are almost similar in both areas, dominated by private service and non-agricultural labor. Little more than 9% from treatment group and little over 4% in the control group did not want to mention any occupation. The reasons may be their occupation was not in the list or just simply hesitant to share their occupational identity.

Table 3.7: Primary Occupation of the respondents

	Intervention (N=2592)	Control (N=1276)	Overall (N=3868)
Agriculture	24.8	17.4	22.39
Business/Small Business	25.7	28.7	26.68
Private Service	7.8	12.3	9.31
Government Service	2.7	1.9	2.43
Day Laborer (Agriculture)	7.2	6.0	6.80
Day Laborer (Non-Agriculture)	13.3	17.1	14.53
Homemaker	3.0	3.4	3.15
Rickshaw/Van/Bus Driver	6.3	9.1	7.21
Didn't mention	9.2	4.1	7.50

Land ownership among the respondents

Of the respondents, 83.45% household own land in treatment areas and 88.87% had their own land in control areas. It thus can be said that the respondents from the control areas were little better off than that of the treatment areas.

Table 3.8: Land ownership among the respondents

	Intervention (N=2592)	Control (N=1276)	Overall (N=3868)
Family owns land	83.45	88.87	85.24

Types of SSN benefit received by the respondents

Among the survey respondents 45.72% from the treatment areas, and 31.43% from the control areas receive social safety net benefits and overall 41% respondents receive SSNP. More than 28% of the respondents in both groups have been receiving Old Age Allowance, followed by VGD and VGF. In control areas 22.69% were receiving maternity allowance while the same for treatment area was 1% only; this is not somewhat a common feature. The reason for this could be reluctance on part of the UPs or allocation of maternity allowance cards were less in these UPs.

Table 3.9: Types of SSN benefit received by the respondents

	Intervention (N=2592)	Control (N=1276)	Overall (N=3868)
<i>SSN Benefits</i>			
Old age allowance	28.4	28.18	11.61
Widow allowance	11.7	12.97	4.94
EGPP	1.2	2.00	0.57
VGD	19.9	14.71	7.63
VGF	22.7	26.18	9.67
TR	1.9	0.50	0.65
GR	.7	5.99	0.83
Disability Allowance	8.1	1.00	2.59
Freedom fighter allowance	.9	1.25	0.41
Fishermen allowance	7.4	0.75	2.35
Maternity allowance	1.0	22.69	2.66
Other	17.9	116.21	17.53

Five- year plan and coordination of different units of local governments

Table 3.10: Five- year plan and coordination of different units of local governments

<i>Five Year Plan prepared by UZPs</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	92.9
	<i>Control</i>	71.4
<i>Coordination with DDCC by Line Department Officials</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	78.3
	<i>Control</i>	71.4

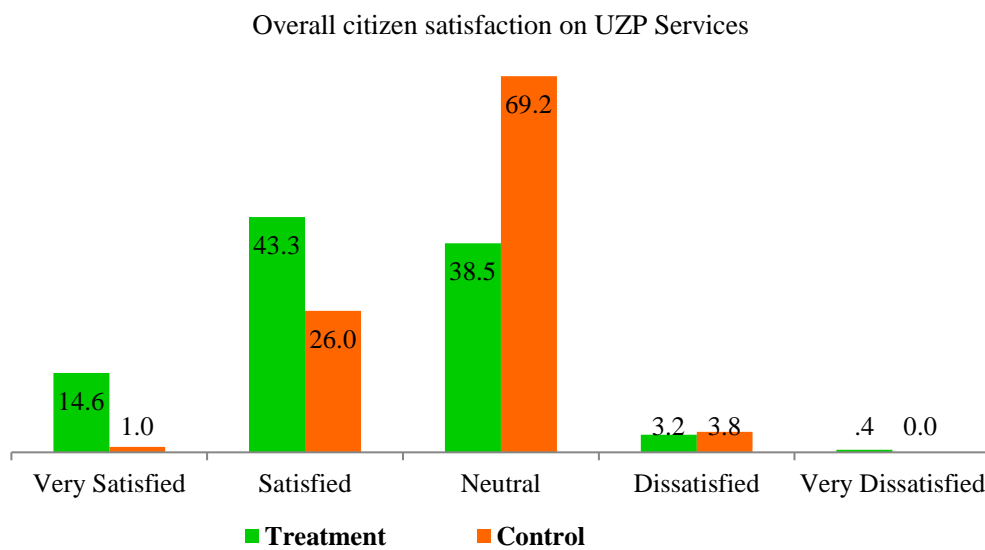
It is evident from the data that 92.9% UZPs from the control group have prepared their five-year plan, and the same for control group was 71.4%. The better scores for the treatment areas are due to the support received from the project in strengthening system. Coordination among different units of local government as well as the coordination mechanism called District Development Coordination(DDC) is functional and the line departments demonstrated coordination. Again the respondents claimed very highly about coordination from both camps, which is in fact far from reality. If the DDC could ensure 70-80% coordination, things would have much different in the field administration and the development coordination scenario would look different as well. In practice, there is hardly any meaningful coordination between the Zila Parishad and the UZPs and the UPs.

Satisfaction of UZP Services received by citizens

As part of the citizen survey, the citizens were asked to make their opinion on their overall satisfaction of the services delivered by the UZPs. The data clearly revealed that the participants from the treatment areas are much more satisfied with the services they received from the Upazilas than those of the control areas. If we aggregate very satisfied and satisfied

categories together it stands at 57.9% for the treatment areas while only 27% for the control areas. This is another example of the benefits; the EALG project has delivered to the participating UZPs in the treatment areas, which in other words is a testament of the success of the EALG over the project period. However, the 14.6% of very satisfied respondents suggested that more work is needed to make them even more, the job is not finished, and hence the job is not finished yet for the EALG. The EALG may put forward some pragmatic suggestion along with technical assistance service so that the UZPs can satisfy their citizens more.

Chart 3.6: Overall citizen satisfaction on the UZP services



The below table depicts a series of features that are considered as services to citizens from the UZPs. During the citizen survey, the respondents were asked to record their level of satisfaction on services they received from the UZPs. From the data it is evident that law and order and infrastructure facilities could not satisfy the respondents that much. However, they were to some extent happy with sports and cultural activities and services given to the freedom fighter. Health is also another service that could not please the respondents. As a matter of fact, the UZPs have to go a long way to have favorable rating from the citizens. They have to improve efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in service delivery what the EALG has been striving for. Actually, UZPs need to have more services in their basket, but even more important is to deliver them efficiently and accountably. The responses are very supportive towards the LG bodies, but they are yet to be regarded as efficient service delivery institutions.

Table 3.11: Satisfaction of UZP Services received by citizens (Treatment Group=2592)

Services	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Law and order	20.4	34.0	35.2	3.8	6.6
Communication and infrastructure development	17.2	35.4	33.8	6.1	7.5
Secondary and madrasa education	17.2	34.8	35.5	5.6	6.8
Primary and mass education	17.8	31.1	38.4	6.1	6.6
Health and family welfare	13.9	37.3	36.3	5.2	7.2
Youth and sports	7.1	28.0	48.0	8.8	8.1
Women and children development	13.3	33.3	38.8	7.3	7.3
Social welfare	7.8	31.7	45.5	7.3	7.7
Freedom fighter	7.7	32.8	46.1	6.8	6.7
Fisheries and livestock	9.4	30.4	43.9	8.5	7.8
Rural development and cooperative	9.6	32.7	42.1	7.9	7.8
Cultural activities	6.5	27.9	48.3	9.4	8.0
Forest and environment	7.7	29.3	44.5	9.6	9.0
Observation, monitoring and controlling of market price	8.3	23.7	38.1	13.3	16.7
Finance, budget, planning and mobilization of local resources	8.4	27.9	43.4	8.3	12.0
WASH Services	11.3	32.7	42.5	5.7	7.9
Land related services	6.6	32.6	44.8	8.3	7.7
Others (specify)	5.1	26.8	50.5	5.8	11.9

Case story 1: Knowledge transferred through Capacity Building Training

The fight against a corrupt elected representative

"We were hostage by the Union Parishad (UP) Chairman and compelled to accept all forms of injustice. Since we learned about the no-confidence motion from the training arranged by the EALG project of UNDP, we decided to protest the corruption of the UP Chairman," Mr. Abu Saeed Hawlader, the panel Chairman of Yogipal UP of DighaliaUpazila, Khulna, said after the no-confidence vote.

Members of Zogipal Union Parishad, DighaliaUpazila of Khulna District, moved a no-confidence motion against Union Parishad Chairman Mr. Anisur Rahman. The complaint alleges arbitrariness in the management of the council, corruption in the distribution of VGD VGF, taking money from the ordinary person in the program of providing houses to the Honorable Prime Minister, opacity in collecting the Union Council's own income, etc. As the investigation proved the partial veracity of the allegation, Zogipal Union Parishad received the letter of complaint as per Union Parishad Act 2009. After 3 hours of discussion, a vote of no confidence was taken and passed by 10/2 votes in the presence of all the members.

In December 2020, the Ministry of Local Government approved the no-confidence motion and declared the Chairmanship of the Union Parishad vacant. In the 150-year history of local

government, this is the first time a chairmanship has been deemed vacant due to a no-confidence motion.

The EALG project has been conducting awareness and capacity-building activities in the Khulna district since 2018 to increase the capacity of the Union Parishad on Right to Information, Anti-Corruption Act, Union Parishad Act 2009, Union Parishad Standing Committee Regulations, etc. Awareness and capacity-building activities of the EALG project successfully set a precedent for establishing good governance in the Zogipal UP of Khulna through a no-confidence motion. The Khulna Union Administration will always encourage and co-operate in such activities to raise awareness and capacity building to establish good governance of the EALG project.

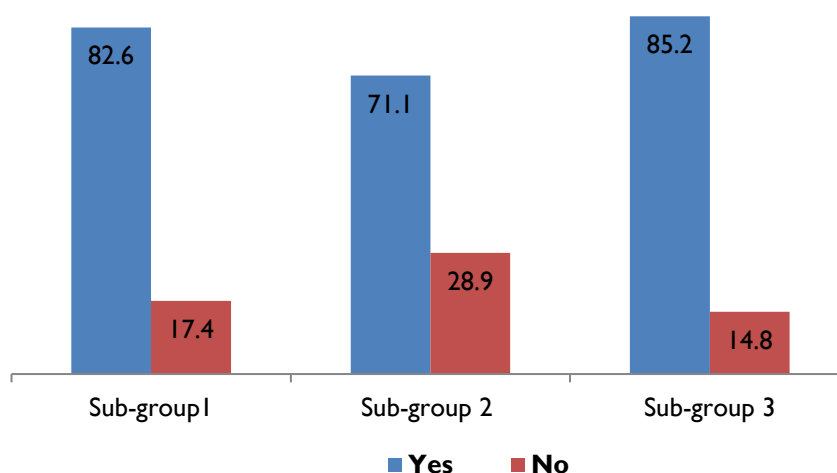
**Source: Mr. Abu Saeed Hawlader, Panel Chairman, Yogipal Union Parishad
Dighalia Upazila, Khulna**

Table 3.12: Whether the respondents visited UP Office (within last one year)

	Treatment Group	Control group
Yes	81.8	65.3
No	18.2	34.7
Total	100.0	100.0

The result of this table shows significant difference between treatment group and control group regarding visiting UP office to get any service. About 81.8% of the respondents from treatment group said they or their family members have visited UP offices to receive any service within last one year while in control group it was about 65.3%.

The scenario is almost similar for the respondents in sub-group categories and surprisingly the respondents from sub-group 2 where there was no intervention from the project to UPs, were lagging behind from the other areas in terms of receiving services from the UPs as revealed. Perhaps, the UP functionaries in these UPs are not aware enough to deliver services, whatever they have, to the citizen. And that's may be the reason the citizen visit them less often compared to other two areas.



WDF in Action

Saving a Vulnerable Family from the Eviction threat

Mr. Kalam Mollik, along with his landless low-income family, lived in a demesne land by the side of Shibbaria river of Mohipur Union Parishad under KalaparaUpazila of Patuakhali for 20 years. Suddenly, one of the influential people from the same area threatened Mr. Kalam and his family to evict him from his living land. Even the influential person beat Mr. Kalam and his family. Hence, Mr. Kalam informed the local administration and elected representatives and requested them to protect him from eviction.

Ms. ShahinaPervinShima, the Vice-Chair of Kalapara UZP and President of the Women Development Forum (WDF), came to know about the incident and visited the land with other WDF members and officials. They discussed and resolved the issue with both parties and restored the ownership of the land where it belongs, i.e. to the helpless family.

"We stood beside the vulnerable family and mediated the issue so that they could live in peace", said WDF President Ms. Shahina while Mr. Kalam thanked her for saving his family from eviction.

Source: Mr. Kalam Mollik, Mohipur Union Parishad, KalaparaUpazila, Patuakhali

Gender Sensitivity in UP Services

Respondents were asked to what extent they think services from UP are gender responsive, 34.1% respondents from treatment areas and 10.4% from the control areas mentioned that the services were women friendly. On the other hand, 32.5% respondents from treatment areas and 24.6% from control areas said that the services were somewhat women friendly. A huge percentage of the respondents however remained lip tight as almost 30% from the treatment area and 54% of the control area respondents took a neutral position. In the sub-continent culture neutral means they have a say but not willing to make it public. There might be two reasons for this, One, generally they feel shy to say anything bad about somebody and two, because of their life experiences of being vocal against any odds.

Gender sensitivity in UP Services

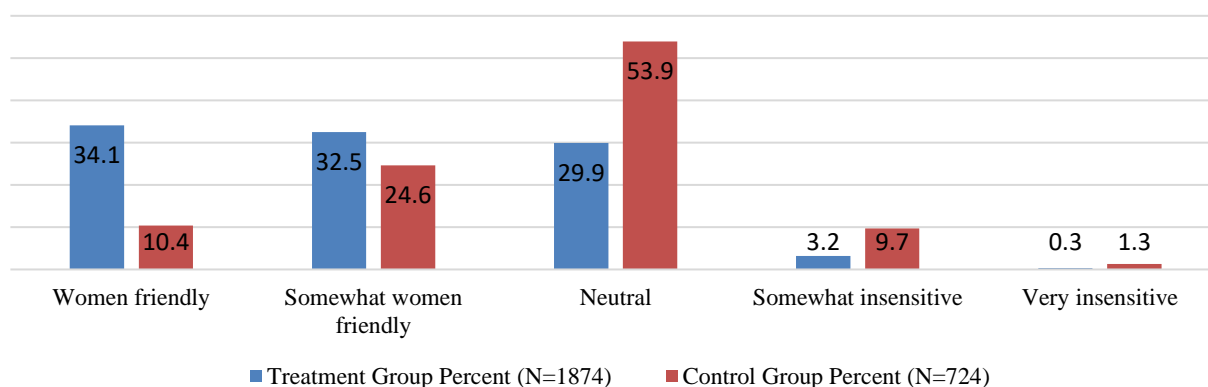


Chart 3.8: Citizen Perception on Gender sensitivity in UP services
PMID

Participation in UP activities

About 52.5% of the respondents or their family members from treatment group participated in UP meeting. However, only 13.6% of the respondents or their family members from control group have ever participated in UP meetings. The gap between these two camps is huge. Actually the participation is not spontaneous but facilitated. As the citizens have long been kept away from the local government affairs, only with facilitation they get back to participate in the fold and given the assurance that their voice will be heard.

Respondents or family members participate in UP activities

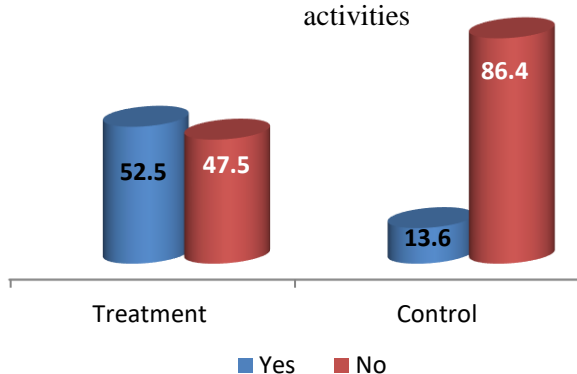


Table 3.14: Citizens' participation in UP activities (sub-group wise)

	Subgroup 1	Subgroup 2	Subgroup 3
Yes	54.2	15.4	66.3
No	45.8	84.6	33.7

Chart 3.9: Citizens' participation in UP activities

The types of meeting the respondents or their family members participated are presented in this table. Findings show that there is huge difference between treatment group and control group. Multiple responses were acceptable for this question. Among the treatment group 82.5% participated in ward shava, 33.8% participated in standing committee meeting, 47.4% participated in open budget meeting, 66% participated in village court, 49.6% participated in public hearing, and 32.4% participated in women development forum meeting, 23.8% in planning meeting. On the other hand, in control the percentage is very low compared to the treatment group. Table 3.15 suggests that ward shavas are most popular among the citizens as it held near them and the Ward Committees are sincere about holding them, so as open budget meetings and public hearing. The very basic human instinct is that they want dignity. The local government bodies, the UPs in particular, extend invite the citizens to attend these events and they are given enough room for sharing their opinions and thus these become successful.

Table 3.15: Citizen Participation in different LG events

UP events	Treatment Group (N=1360)	Control group (N=174)
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Ward Shava	82.5	43.1
Standing Committee meeting	33.8	10.3
Open Budget meeting	47.4	28.7
Planning meeting	23.8	2.9
Meeting of the Women Development Forum	32.4	4.0
Public hearing	49.6	23.6
Village Court	66.0	51.7
Others	.6	.6

Services received by the respondents from the UPs

Types of services people usually receive from UP office are presented in this table. Common services received by both treatment group and control group are death certificate, character certificate, receiving social safety net benefits, registering complaints, birth certificate and nationality certificate etc. In both treatment and control group death certificate is the most frequent service they receive. The scenario is almost identical in sub-group categories as well.

Table 3.13: Respondents visited UPs for (multiple response)

	Treatment	Control
Birth Certificate	9.1	3.2
Death Certificate	77.5	80.6
Nationality Certificate	6.8	6.0
Character certificate	22.4	15.7
Receiving Social Safety Net benefits	19.5	12.5
Registering complaints	25.3	17.6
Conflict Resolution	9.4	7.6
Trade license	4.9	4.3
Others	2.2	1.3

Table 3.14: Respondents visited UPs for (multiple response), sub-group wise

	Subgroup 1	Subgroup 2	Subgroup 3
Birth Certificate	10.4	4.4	3.8
Death Certificate	78.6	78.4	5.4
Nationality Certificate	7.7	3.3	3.9
Character certificate	25.0	11.7	12.4
Receiving Social Safety Net benefits	21.7	11.0	9.3
Registering complaints	27.8	17.6	14.3
Conflict Resolution	11.2	3.7	3.8
Trade license	6.6	1.8	1.5

Overall satisfaction on UP Services

Union Parishad, the lowest tier of the local government system in Bangladesh is increasingly becoming one of the important sources of citizen services. As a matter of fact, this local government body, has evolved as a unique point of delivering services to citizens over the years. There are hopes against hope, lot more expectations that the UPs would deliver more. With its inherent limitation, the UPs remain there in the rural areas accepting all pains, complaints and so on, For the citizen survey of the EALG final evaluation, the respondents were asked if they could mention their overall satisfaction of whatever services they had been receiving over the years.

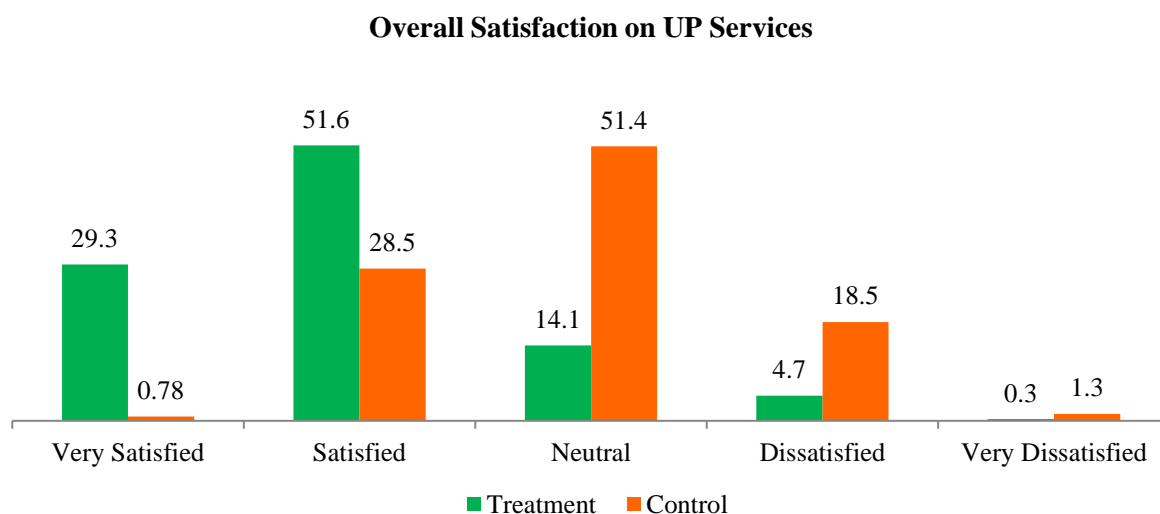


Chart 3.10: Overall citizen satisfaction on UP Services

The data revealed that almost 80.9% of the respondents from the treatment areas were satisfied (2.3% very satisfied, 51.6% satisfied) with the available UP services. For the respondents of the control areas it was just over 29%. This is a huge difference of the two areas where the EALG project worked and did not work. Keeping the nature of the EALG project in consideration, it can be said that the soft skill support like capacity building and system strengthening have really worked as such the UPs in the treatment area delivered the services that made their citizens satisfied. It seems that participation in different event organized by the UPs keep the citizens satisfied more and due to frequent interaction through these public events, and mistrust is slowly evaporating among the citizens about the UP functionaries.

Satisfaction on UDC services

Table 3.15: Citizen Satisfaction of services received from UDC

Satisfaction level with the service received from UDC	Treatment Group (N=1874)	Control Group (N=724)
Very Satisfied	16.6	1.0
Satisfied	56.3	32.6
Neutral	22.8	56.1
Dissatisfied	4.0	10.2
Very Dissatisfied	.3	.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Union Digital Center (UDC) of late has become very popular to the people living in villages. For different needs people visit the UDC to get their job done. The respondents in the survey were asked if they ever visited UDC and so on. Later they were asked if they were happy with the services from UDC whatever the service may be. Collected data revealed that 16.6% of the treatment group respondents were very satisfied with the services they received from UDC, whereas the same for Control group recorded 1% only. It is interesting that 56.3% respondent said they were satisfied with the UDC services, and the same for control group was 32.6%. Overall, almost 73% of the treatment area respondents were found to be satisfied with the UDC services which indicate that the respondents were very much aware of the services available from the UDC and more often they availed those services.

Satisfaction on Climate Change Issues

Respondents were asked if they were happy with the role of UPs in addressing climate change issues. From the data it revealed that only 9.6% respondents of the treatment group were very satisfied, and the same for control group is 1.3%. However, 31.3% in the treatment group and 13.2% in the control group were found as satisfied about climate change actions of the UPs. Overall, the respondents from the control group were not happy with the climate actions of their respective UPs, as these UPs severely lack motivation, technical assistance, and constant monitoring, what the EALG delivered for the UPs in the treatment areas.

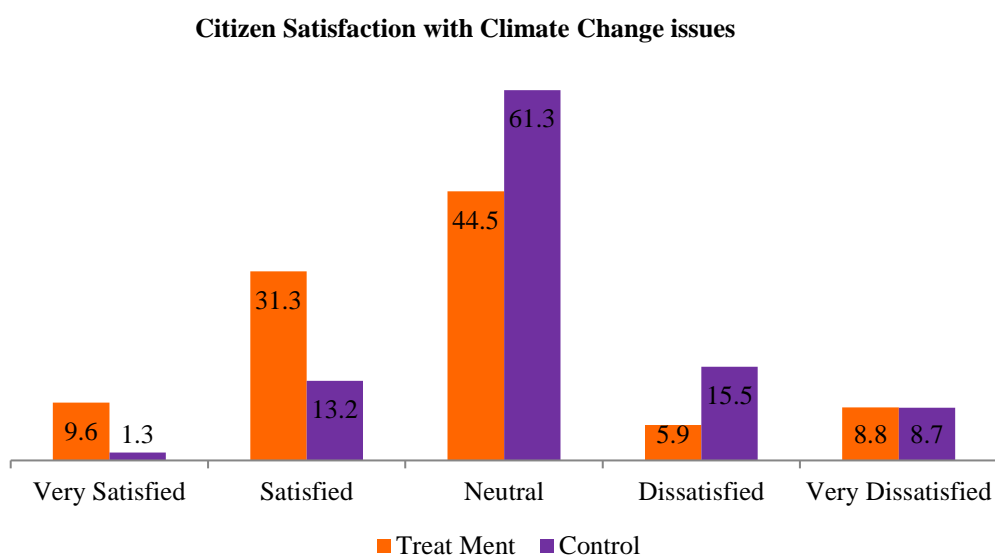


Chart 3.11: Citizen Satisfaction on Climate Change issues

Leaving aside the preceding discussions, it was learned from UP representatives and citizens during the FE that climate change is a problem that affects everyone. However, there are some pockets in Bangladesh that are more vulnerable than others but rarely get the right attention. Following a progressive system, ADP allocations should be distributed considering the vulnerability of the area concerned. This would enable the government

Transparency Matters

Deserving beneficiary received Widow Allowance

Over the past two decades, I have urged many locals, including Union Parishad members and women members, to obtain a widow allowance card for me. But my appeal could not leave such an impression on anyone. I used to live in a tin-shaded house with three sons after my husband died twenty years ago. But, unfortunately, the state of my house is so bad that if one stands outside, one can see everything. Since my husband's death, I have been working as a bidi worker to support my family. There was once a demand for bidi workers in my area, but now I earn BDT 200 to 300 by working two to three days a week. It will not take over my life. On the other hand, my sons cannot bear my expenses despite their wishes because they cannot afford themselves.

Meanwhile, I learned through miking that the Union Parishad will arrange a public hearing session which will be attended by senior government officials from districts and Upazilas. The Union Parishad assisted in organizing the public hearing session by the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project of UNDP. I attended the public hearing session on September 17, 2019, at the Union Parishad premises and raised my complaint that my husband died twenty years ago, but I still have not received my widow allowance card.

As a result of my complaint, the UP authority immediately collected my national identification cards and photographs. According to the decision of the public hearing, I went to my eldest son's house and advised him to keep me there. I currently share a home with my eldest son and grand-children. Union Parishad has listed my name as a widow allowance beneficiary this year. I will be getting a one-year allowance soon. If I receive this allowance, I will live more comfortably with my carpenter's assistant son in the coming days. I could not teach my sons due to a lack of funds, but I now want to teach my grandchildren.

I thank all the officials involved in the EALG project for organizing such an event, as I would not have received this widow allowance if this meeting had not taken place.

Source: Roshena Begum (59) of Dhumrekuth, Ward No: 03, Sarai Union, KauniaUpazila, Rangpur

Open budget meetings

Participation and presentation of opinions of male, female, marginalized/poor, ethnic minorities, differently able people of the society in open budget meeting

People of all walks of life participated in UZP's open budget meeting. Earlier it was not the case; rather it was mechanical process and the Upazila officials somehow managed to prepare a budget and submitted the same accordingly. With instructions from the LGD and efforts from different development projects including the EALG, the UZPs organize open budget meeting, invite people through different means and hold the meeting with festivity. The data shows that

in the treatment areas, the poor, marginalized, differently able, ethnic minorities, along with female and male participants attended the open budget session of the UZPs. From the data it is revealed that 59.1% of the respondents from poor and marginalized communities attended the open budget meeting and of them 98.6% expressed their opinion in the meeting, from differently able communities 54.8% attended the meeting and 96.7% of them expressed their opinion. Participation of ethnic minorities was relatively low 42.8%, but 76.1% of them shared their opinion in the budget meeting.

Table 3.16: Types of participants attended the UZP Open budget meeting and expressed their opinion (Treatment Group)

Treatment Group				
Respondents	Participated in the Open Budget Meeting		Participants who expressed opinion there	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Poor / marginalized groups	59.1	40.9	98.6	1.4
Differently able Community	54.8	45.2	96.7	3.3
Ethnic minorities	42.9	57.1	76.1	23.9
Male	62.8	37.2	96.8	3.2
Female	67.2	32.8	99.2	0.8

The scenario of open budget meeting among the control group respondent is little different in terms of participation in the meeting but those who attended expressed themselves in the meeting in quite a good rate, other than the ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities among the control group respondent's participation were only 21% and of them only 39.2% raised their voice in the meeting. It seems the ethnic minorities are yet to be mainstreamed in the society, and they are either reluctant to participate or live in state of fear.

Table 3.17: Types of participants attended the UZP Open budget meeting and expressed their opinion (Control Group)

Control Group		
Respondents	Participated in the Open Budget Meeting	Participants who expressed opinion there
	Yes	Yes
Poor / marginalized groups	40.3	96.7
Differently able Community	37.0	95.3
Ethnic minorities	21.0	39.2
Male	43.2	82.4
Female	55.0	98.1

Participation of different sections of population in the UP Open Budget Meeting

Table 3.18: Citizen Participation in the Open Budget Meeting of UPs (Treatment group)

Treatment group (N=2592)		
Item	Participated in the Budget Meeting	Participants who expressed opinion there
Poor / marginalized groups	70.1	97.5
Differently able Community	65.7	96.9
Ethnic minorities	48.5	95.7
Male	70.3	98.4
Female	67.2	88.3

Participation of people in the UP open budget meeting is relatively higher and the rate of expressing voice is also higher as revealed from the data. Here the ethnic minorities were also found to be active in regard to treatment group, though the rate of participation is yet to be satisfactory. Similarly, the participation rate in the control group in UP open budget meeting is poor compared to treatment group, However, those who attended raised their voice in the meeting very highly.

It is however needs to be mentioned that the key informants during data collection mentioned that overall open budget scenario has been changed, especially in the EALG intervention areas. The project provided training and guidance in holding open budget meeting as per rules, where citizens are to play a key role. Due to this preferential behavior, nowadays people get lots of interest in UP affairs and given the opportunity, they participate and make comments on the issues of their interest. The UP chair and secretaries also mentioned that they try their best to pay respect to the participants and adopt different strategies to get them on board at the Budget Meeting.

Table 3.19: Citizen Participation in the Open Budget Meeting of UPs (Control group)

Control group (N=1276)				
Item	Participated in the Budget Meeting		Participants who expressed opinion there	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Poor / marginalized groups	46.9	53.1	96.5	3.5
Differently able Community	41.8	58.2	95.3	4.7
Ethnic minorities	22.5	77.5	84.7	15.3
Male	47.3	52.7	95.4	4.6
Female	45.5	54.5	80.3	19.7

Needless to say, by raising voice they were taking part in the decision making during the open budget meeting. The baseline value for taking part in decision making in the open budget meeting was 50%, during MTR it was 92% and at the final evaluation the average is 90.44%.

On issues discussed in the UP open budget meeting, it is revealed that both in treatment and in control areas almost identical issues were discussed, though response was much lower in the control areas. However, sector-wise budgeting and maternal and child health were not mentioned at all. It seems that the UPs in control areas are not yet aware of sector-wise budgeting.

Table 3.20: Priority issues in UP Open Budget Meeting

	Treatment	Control
Development planning	69.7	45.8
Employment planning	39.0	14.4
Education	32.1	8.5
Maintaining social order	42.3	25.4
Early marriage	45.2	22.9
Dowry	36.8	18.6
Reducing conflict within village court	44.0	26.3
Appropriate sector-wise budgeting	29.3	5.9
Maternal and child health	17.9	0.0
Nutrition	9.9	0.0
Need assessment of the people	18.1	3.4
Other	9.3	31.4

Table 3.21 Priority issues in UP Open Budget Meeting (Sub-group wise)

	Sub-group 1 (N=1344)	Sub-group 2 (N=384)	Sub-group 3 (N=864)
Development planning	72.2	58.8	69.5
Employment planning	40.3	17.6	46.1
Education	34.0	19.6	38.0
Maintaining social order	43.8	25.5	47.9
Early marriage	46.6	17.6	52.7
Dowry	37.4	9.8	44.4
Reducing conflict within village court	50.8	13.7	46.6
Appropriate sector-wise budgeting	36.8	9.8	27.2
Maternal and child health	23.8	5.9	14.6
Nutrition	14.5	3.9	8.6
Need assessment of the people	23.2	3.9	18.3
Other	9.4	33.3	7.3

Public hearing

Table 3.22: Participation and engagement in the Public Hearing

	Treatment group		Control group	
	Participated in the Public Hearing	Participants who expressed opinion there	Participated in the Public Hearing	Participants who expressed opinion there
Poor / marginalized groups	72.0	97.6	45.9	96.1
Differently able Community	66.7	97.2	41.6	96.0
Ethnic minorities	49.6	96.2	22.6	83.7
Male	72.9	97.8	46.5	94.9
Female	78.0	98.8	59.8	97.5

The scenario shown in the above table revealed that Public Hearing took place both at treatment and control areas. Like ways, participation of the respondents from treatment areas was visibly higher than that of the control areas. However, those who participated in the hearing raised their voices almost in the similar fashion. This is a very interesting development in rural Bangladesh. Earlier, the citizens used to be passive participants in the public events. Nowadays, they not only attend such event but try to contribute the best way possible on the subject matter. The pro-poor policies coupled with training and motivation by development projects like the EALG, actually made the difference. It needs to be mentioned however that the participation of ethnic communities in both cases (treatment and control) are well below others. To make an inclusive society more work needs to be done to bring them forward.

	Sub-Group 1		Sub-Group 2		Sub-Group 3	
	Participated in the Public Hearing	Participants expressed opinion	Participated in the Public Hearing	Participants expressed opinion	Participated in the Public Hearing	Participants expressed opinion
Poor / marginalized groups	78.3	97.3	30.7	92.4	75.1	99.2
Differently able Community	72.4	95.5	24.7	91.6	72.1	98.6
Ethnic minorities	47.4	95.9	26.0	86.0	63.3	98.2
Male	77.4	97.7	34.1	90.1	78.8	98.1
Female	83.7	98.4	37.8	93.8	80.7	98.4

When we go for sub-group wise, we find that, the respondents from sub-group 1 and sub-group 3 were much more proactive than the respondents of sub-group 2. Participation of ethnic minorities are generally low but in sub-group 3, more than 63% of them participated in the public hearing and 98.2% from the ethnic communities expressed their voice in the meeting. The more they attend such event, the better for having an inclusive society.

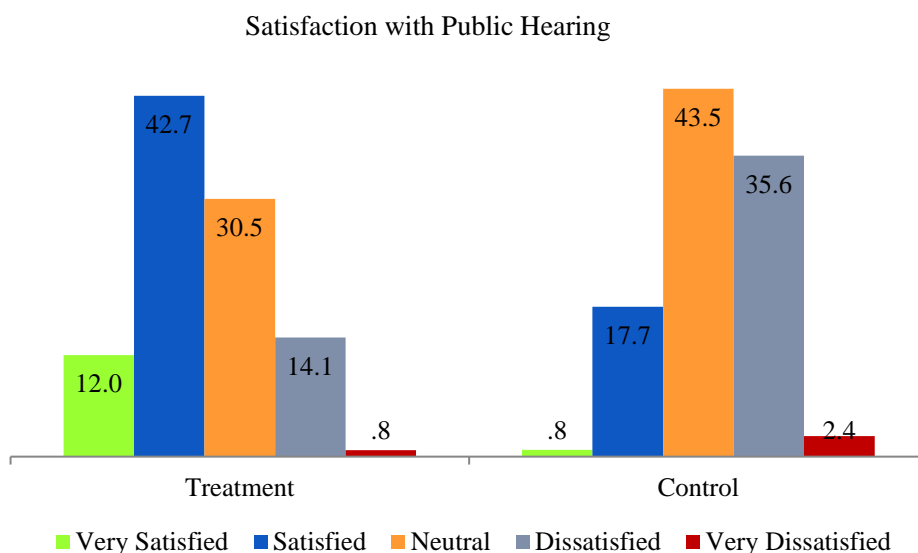


Chart 3.11: Citizen Satisfaction on Public Hearing

Public hearing is relatively a new event both for the UPs and UZPs, but it is getting popular day by day. And not only the grassroots people, officials, elected representatives and local civil society organizations all equally like public hearing. As a new event, there was no baseline data for Public Hearing. **The MTR value for Public Hearing was 52.5% and the final evaluation average for participation in the Public Hearing is 90.44%.**

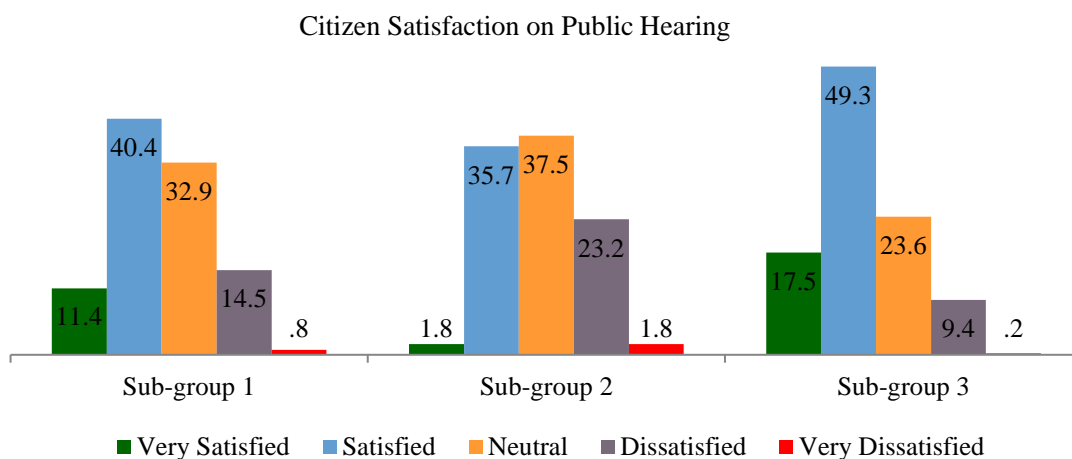


Chart 3.12: Citizen Satisfaction on Public Hearing (Sub-group wise)

Citizen Charter

The respondents in the survey were found to be aware of their UZPs citizen charter more in the treatment areas than control areas. In the treatment areas 60% respondents had seen or heard of the citizen charter of their respective UZPs, while only 23.8% of the respondents from control areas did the same.

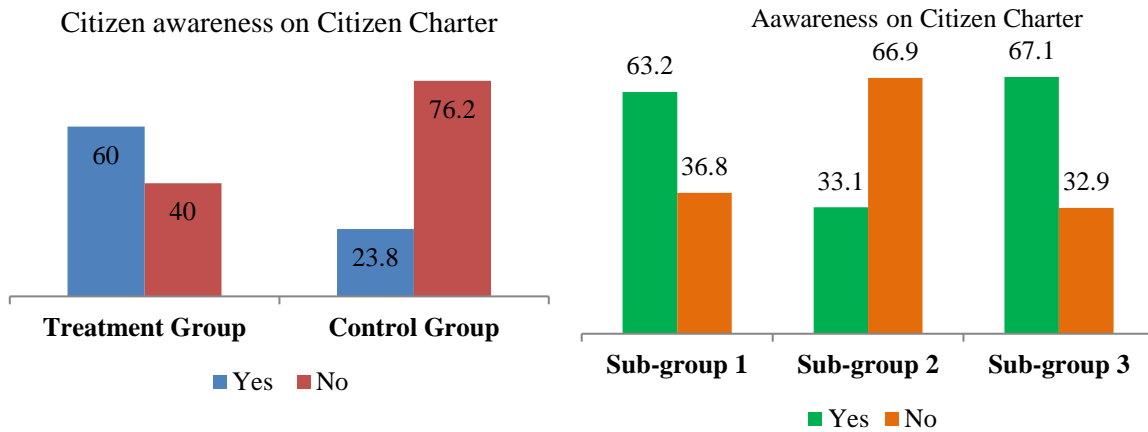


Chart 3.13: Citizen Awareness on Citizen Charter

In sub- group categories, there was similarity of the responses from Sub-group 1 and 3 and Sub-group 2 is just reverse, but they were better off than the control group responses.

In the following chart reflected whatdid the respondents do when they saw the CC first and if they tried to go through it? From the data it revealed that of the respondents both from treatment and control areas, only 46.8% Of the treatment group respondent could read the citizen charter. Among the control respondents, 31.7% respondents could read the CC they came across. The rest either could not read or did not have a clue what it was after reading.

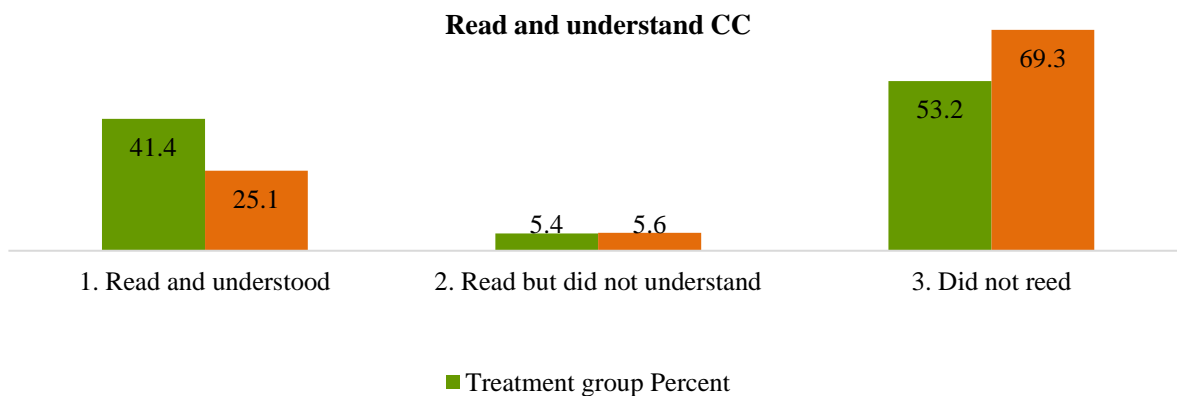


Chart 3.14: Respondents understanding of the Citizen Charter

Standing Committees

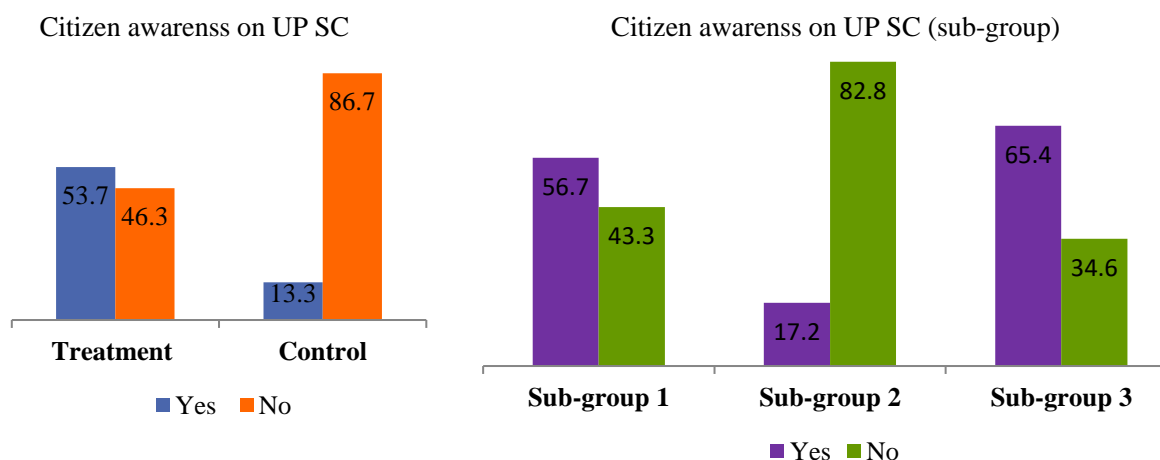
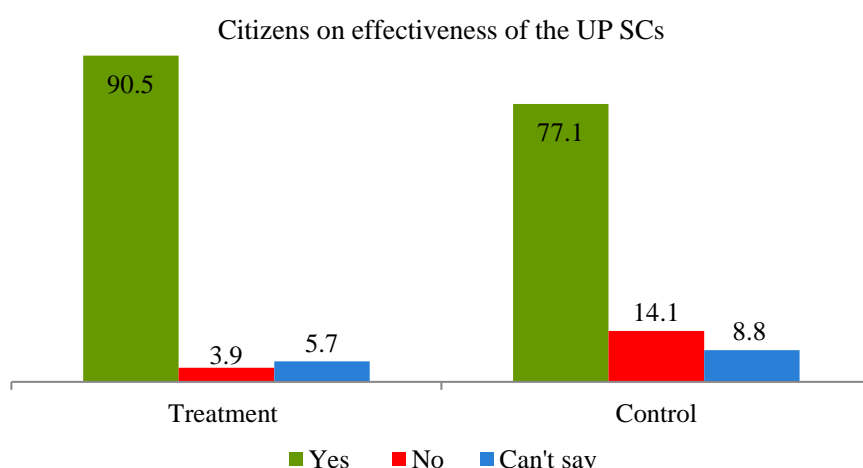


Chart 3.15: Citizen awareness of UP Standing Committee

The survey data revealed that the respondents from the treatment areas had more knowledge about UP standings committees compared to the control areas. Among the respondents from treatment areas 53.7% were informed and had knowledge about UP SCs and 46.3% did not have any idea about it. On the other hand, 86.7% respondents from the control areas had no knowledge about UP SCs,

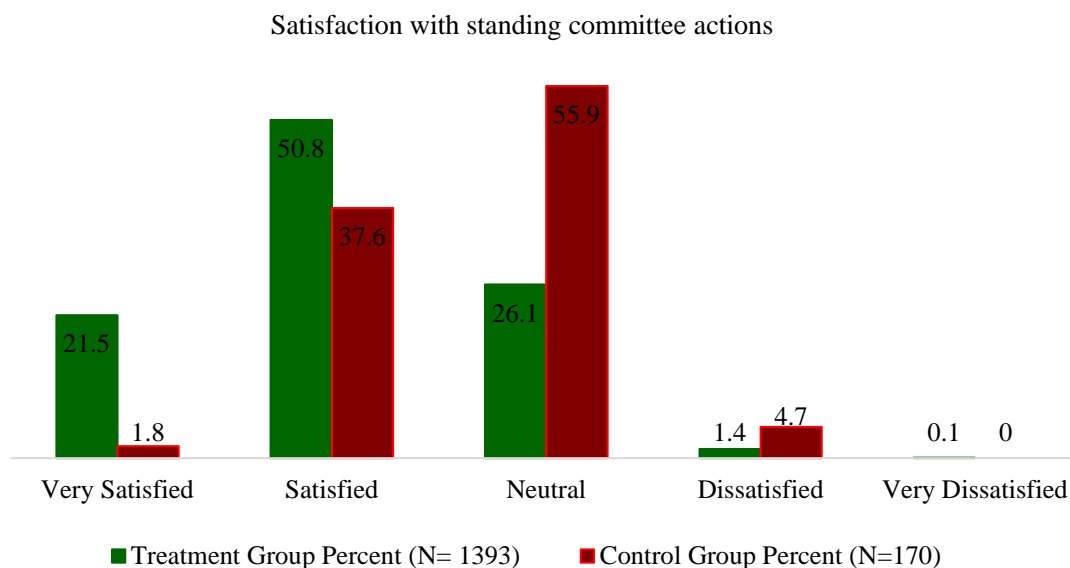
Effectiveness of the UP SCs



The above chart presents the citizen perception on the effectiveness of the UP Standing Committees. Most of the respondents from both the treatment and control areas thought that the Standing Committees were effective, 90.5% from treatment and 77.1% from control areas. On the other hand, 3.9% from treatment and 14.1% from control areas mentioned that the Standing Committees of UP were not effective. Among others, 5.7% from treatment and 8.8%

from control areas could not share their ideas about the effectiveness of the UP SCs. The associated data here reflects acultural bias of the respondents, who did not want to hurt anybody by saying anything bad about the SCs.

Citizen satisfaction with the UP SCs



Though both camps were found to be considering the UP SCs as effective bodies, but in terms of satisfaction with the SCs, there was gulf of difference. The data revealed that the level of satisfaction among the respondents from treatment and control about the activities of standing committees. While 21.5% were very satisfied from the treatment areas, only 1.8% from the control areas was recorded in that category. Among the satisfied respondents, 50.8% and 37.6% belonged to the treatment and control areas respectively. 26.1% and 55.9% respondents from the treatment and the control areas could not decide what to say and identified them as neutral. However, the rate of neutrality was higher among the control area respondents, but those belonged to treatment areas was found to be more satisfied.

Women Development Forum

The above charts describe the citizen awareness of the Women Development Forum (WDF) both in treatment and control areas. The data reveals that the awareness of the respondents from the treatment and control areas were 51.6% and 11.1% respectively. Among the sub-group respondents, Sub-group 1 and Sub-group 3 were found to be more aware of the WDF in the study areas. The gulf of difference between the treatment and control areas was the functionality of the WDF itself. A functional entity may be small in size and exposure but the actions undertaken by it, certainly makes the difference. The EALG attempted to make the WDF functional by encouraging them to hold their meeting regularly. Once they meet, they feel the urge to do something for their electorate and by doing so they are becoming popular.

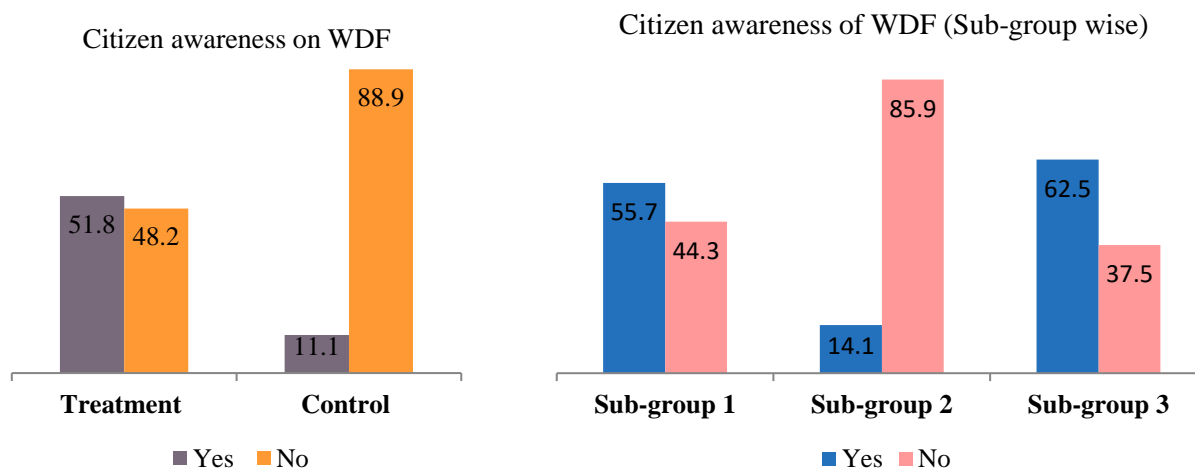


Chart 3.16: Citizen awareness on WDF

Services received from the WDF

Table 3.23: Whether citizen received any services from the WDF

	Treatment	Control
Yes	31.6	3.1
No	68.4	96.9

	Sub-group 1	Sub-group 2	Sub-group 3
Yes	33.6	1.8	41.7
No	66.4	98.2	58.3

This table describes the incidents of receiving service from WDF by the respondents of their family members. Regarding services from the WDF, 68.4% from the treatment areas and 96.9% from the control areas responded negatively, while 31.6% from the treatment areas and 3.1% from the control areas respondent affirmative. However, the respondents from the treatment areas had been receiving much more services than that of the control areas. In terms of sub-groups, the respondents from group 1 and group 3 used to receive more services than the groups respondents in the study areas.

Citizen Satisfaction with WDF

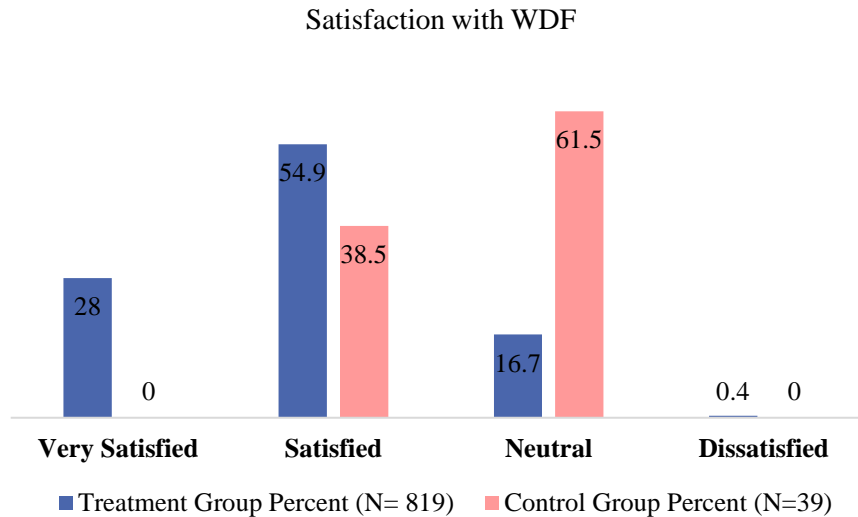


Chart 3.17: Citizen Satisfaction with the WDF

The chart depicts the level of satisfaction on the services of WDF. Among the respondents from treatment areas, 28% were very satisfied, 54.9% were satisfied, 16.7% were neutral and only .4% are dissatisfied; while 38.5% and 61.5% were satisfied and neutral respectively for the control areas. The above chart clearly denotes that the respondents from the treatment had better interaction with the WDF and used to receive expected services from the WDF and more satisfied with the WDF as well, unlike the control area respondents.

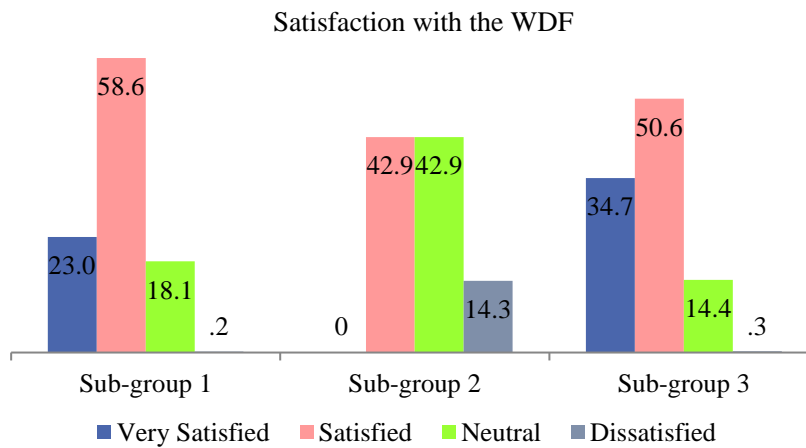


Chart 3.18: Citizen satisfaction with the WDF (sub-group wise)

Among the sub- group respondents, the level of satisfaction is higher in group 3 followed by the group 1 and group 2. The satisfaction largely depends on the functionality and leadership of the WDF concerned.

Training for WDF Members

In terms of receiving the training on the Upazila Act, Rules and Regulations the WDF members from both treatment and control areas are almost at par. But in terms of other issues like Upazila Manual, budget and planning, SDG localization, violence against women and sexual harassment the WDF members are lagging behind. The EALG activities in the project intervention areas made the difference here.

Table 3.28: Training Received by WDF members

Name of the Training received by women members	Treatment	Control
Upazila Acts, Rules and Regulations	87.5	83.3
Training on Standing Committee	50.0	33.3
Financial and office management	58.3	50.0
Upazila manual of LGD	70.8	33.3
Gender analysis training	54.2	16.7
Child marriage	33.3	33.3
Budget and planning	58.3	33.3
SDG localization at UP and UZP planning process	54.2	33.3
Dowry	50.0	50.0
Sexual harassment/violence against women and children	75.0	33.3
Health and education	41.7	50.0
Public Procurement Rules (PPR)	41.7	50.0
Scheme designing and monitoring	56.0	66.7

The WDF is primarily based at the UZP level, is led by the UZP Vice Chair (a woman), and has female reserved seat members at the UPs. Regardless of affiliation, the elected women representatives wanted the WDF to expand their activities at the UP level so that women in rural areas could benefit from WDF initiatives.

EALG Policy Change Initiatives and its implementation at UP level

The project did some superlative job in terms of getting policy recommendations approved by the Local Government Division (LGD) for the UPs, which were likely to improve efficiency in service delivery and increase transparency and accountability in delivering those services. These responses were taken from the participating UPs in the project intervention areas.

Table 3.29: UPs awareness on new policies and implementation

Concept of approved policies at Union level			
Name of policy approved at Union level	Aware about policy changes	Implemented so far	
		Yes	Partial
Approval of guidelines for preparation of annual report of Union Parishad	94.3	83.0	81.1
Union Parishad annual report publication circular regarding allocation issued	3.8	13.2	13.2

Union Parishad issued a circular regarding public hearings	69.8	64.2	62.3
Union Parishad website update office order issued	0	0	3.8
Union Parishad's public engagement programs are broadcasted live and special sections are issued on the Union Parishad's website.	1.9	0	0

It revealed from the above table that other than the guidelines for preparation of annual report of the UPs, no other changed policy could call their attention as expected and the implementation of the same was higher as well compared to the other policies changed due to policy advocacy of the EALG. In terms website updating, formally they motioned that they did not know about it but 3.8% of the UPs actually updated their website, which presupposed the good work of the District Facilitators of the project.

Citizen Charter (CC) at UZPs

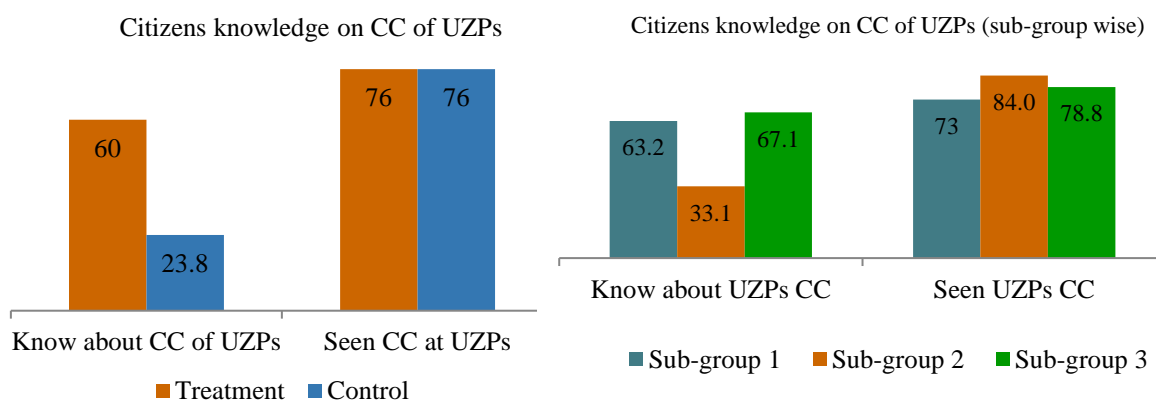


Chart 3.19: Citizens knowledge on CC of UZPs

Citizen Charter is one of the tools of National Integrity Strategy being popularized and practices in Bangladesh. All government, semi-government, autonomous bodies as well as local government bodies have been preparing and installing their respective CCs in visible places for citizens or service recipients. It revealed from the evaluation data that 60% of the respondents from the treatment areas know about the CC of UZPs while it was only 23.8% for the control areas. It is exciting that those who knew about the CC at UZPs, 76% of them saw CCs at UZP premises equally for treatment and control areas.

Among the respondents of the sub-group areas, the respondents from sub-group area 2 did know less about CC at UZPs (only 33.1%). However, among those who personally saw CCs at UZPs premises, the respondents from sub-group 2 scored as high as 84%. It suggests that CCs in the sub-group 2 UZPs might placed their CCs in the most visible places that the citizens could not escape it.

Participation in UZP organized events by different section of citizens

One of the key challenges of the local government bodies is to ensure participation of different sections of citizen in the events organized, especially by the UZPs. In the study areas it was revealed that different sections of the citizens including poor and the marginalized groups.

Table 3.30: Citizen Participation in UZP organized meetings, events

Respondents	Treatment		Control	
	Participated in the Open Budget Meeting	Participants who expressed opinion there	Participated in the Open Budget Meeting	Participants who expressed opinion there
Poor / marginalized groups	59.1	98.6	40.3	96.7
Differently able Community	54.8	96.7	37.0	95.3
Ethnic minorities	42.9	76.1	21.0	39.2
Male	62.8	96.8	43.2	82.4
Female	67.2	99.2	55.0	98.1

From the above table it is seen that the participation of the different sections of citizens are somewhat satisfactory those who participate really contribute in the process. However, in terms of participation and contribution in the UZP affairs, the ethnic minorities are still lagging behind. More work to mainstream them in the process is desperately needed.

Table 3.31: Citizen Participation in UZP organized meetings, events (Sub-group wise)

Respondents	Sub-Group 1		Sub-Group 2		Sub-Group 3	
	Participated in the Open Budget Meeting	Participants who expressed opinion there	Participated in the Open Budget Meeting	Participants who expressed opinion there	Participated in the Open Budget Meeting	Participants who expressed opinion there
Poor / marginalized groups	69.5	98.6	22.4	91.9	59.1	99.8
Differently able Community	63.9	95.7	19.3	94.6	56.5	98.8
Ethnic minorities	45.4	72.5	21.1	85.1	48.7	80.9
Male	71.7	96.6	30.2	93.2	63.4	97.7
Female	76.6	99.3	33.9	94.6	67.5	99.8

In the sub-group categories, the respondents from sub-group 2 were lagging behind in terms of participation in the said events, but the contribution of the participants in the events was on the higher side. However, the participation of the ethnic minorities in the sub-group 2 areas was significantly poor (21.1% only).

Open Budget Sessions at UZPs

Legally the UZPS have to hold open budget session once a year gets citizens opinion on the most important yearly document. In the one budget sessions the citizen not only participate but also express their concerns in an open forum and the UZPs on many occasions accommodate citizens union if they are most pressing and within the capacity.

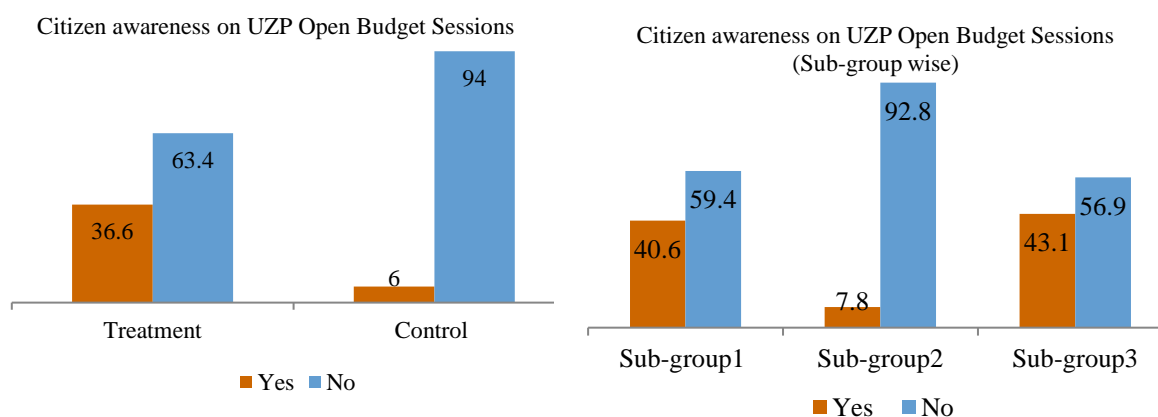


Chart 3.20: Citizen Awareness on UZP Open Budget Sessions

The evaluation data revealed that only the respondents from control areas were more aware of the UZP open budget session (36.6%) than those of the control areas (6% only). The project sensitized the UZP to ensure participation of the citizens and the result of their efforts is visible here.

Like other features of the evaluation the respondents from sub-group2 were on the back seat in terms of their participation (7.8% only) in the UZP openbudget sessions as well while the treatment areas result in the evaluation was 36.6%.

Issues discussed in the Open Budget Session at UZPs

The respondents who participated in the UZP open budget session had described the issues described in those sessions. It revealed from the data that both in treatment and control areas infrastructure occupied the highest position (64.8% and 55.2% respectively). Increasing benefits for the poor people also got discussed (51.6% for the treatment and 48.3% in the control) significantly. Due to the EALG involvement with citizens and the councils in the treatment areas market development (42.1%), employment generation (34.7%), improvement of health and sanitation system (46.2%) and improvement of water supply (35.9%) got attention of the participants during discussion in the treatment areas, while these issues did not get proper attention in the control areas.

Table 3.32: Issues discussed in the UZP Open Budget Session

Issues	Treatment	Control
Budget allocation for road development (infrastructure)	64.8	55.2
Market Development	42.1	20.7

Electricity	24.8	24.1
Increased security	36.2	13.8
Increasing benefits to poor people	51.6	48.3
Employment generation	34.7	13.8
Improvement of sanitation/health system	46.2	24.1
Improvement of water supply/ source	35.9	10.3
Other	3.9	17.2

Among the sub-groups of the treatment areas, sub-group 3 scored better though almost at par with sub-group 1, however sub-group 2 respondents had visibly good score where security issue was concerned, as shown in the table below.

Table 3.33: Issues discussed in the UZP Open Budget Session (Sub-group wise)

	Sub-group 1	Sub-group 2	Sub-group 3
Budget allocation for road development	61.2	57.1	69.5
Market Development	43.0	14.3	41.7
Electricity	25.7	14.3	24.1
Increased security	29.0	42.9	45.1
Increasing benefits to poor people	51.0	42.9	52.6
Employment generation	32.5	28.6	37.6
Improvement of sanitation/health system	46.0	-	47.7
Improvement of water supply/ source	39.1	14.3	32.3
Other	5.1	14.3	2.3

Functionality of UZP Committees

During the institutional survey it was revealed that all the participating UZPs had formed their respective UZP committees and they had their documentation of committee formation and the name of the members of different committees. From the data it revealed that in terms of functionality during the year 2020-21, the UZP committees in the treatment areas were little ahead of the control areas. Especially the Law and Order committee in the treatment areas was found to be much more functional compared to other committee, among the committees in the treatment areas let alone the control areas. Interestingly, the Public Health, Sanitation and Pure Water Supply Committee in the control areas were found to be little more active compared to treatment areas. Thus, it can be said that the project intervention made the UZP committees in the treatment areas more functional in the study areas.

Table 3.34: Functionality of UZP Committees

Name of the UZP Committee	Number of meeting held during year		Number of decisions taken year		Number of decisions implemented	
	TMT	CON	TMT	CON	TMT	CON
1. Law and order Committee	32.14	6.9	40.56	8.4	108.61	12.4
2. Communication and Physical Infrastructure Committee	5.71	5.6	7.54	7.6	11.26	10.7
3. Committee on Agriculture and Irrigation	5.33	5.4	7.62	6.4	10.83	9.0
4. Committee on Secondary and Madrasa Education	5.07	5.1	6.96	6.9	9.65	9.1

5. Committee on Primary and Mass Education	5.37	5.0	7.60	6.9	10.68	9.3
6. Committee on Health and Family Welfare	5.41	5.0	7.56	6.1	11.36	9.6
7. Committee on Youth Sports Development	5.19	5.0	7.52	6.0	10.41	9.0
8. Women and Children Development Committee	5.35	5.4	6.85	6.6	10.17	9.9
9. Committee on Social Welfare	5.00	4.9	6.77	6.1	9.48	8.7
10. Committee on culture	5.00	5.0	6.16	6.3	9.05	8.7
11. Committee on Environment and Forests	4.80	4.3	5.75	5.0	8.73	7.4
12. Committee on Freedom Fighters	5.08	5.3	5.63	6.5	9.64	9.8
13. Committee on Rural Development and Cooperatives	5.12	5.0	6.84	6.0	10.73	8.9
14. Committee on Market Price Monitoring, Monitoring and Control	4.88	5.0	6.52	6.6	15.55	8.7
15. Committee Finance, Budget, Planning and Local Resources	4.85	4.9	7.24	6.1	10.14	9.4
16. Fisheries and livestock	5.04	4.9	7.73	7.4	10.96	10.1
17. Public Health, Sanitation and Pure Water Supply Committee	5.65	5.7	7.32	7.6	11.30	11.4

*TMT= Treatment; CON=Control

UZP Committee members receiving meeting allowance

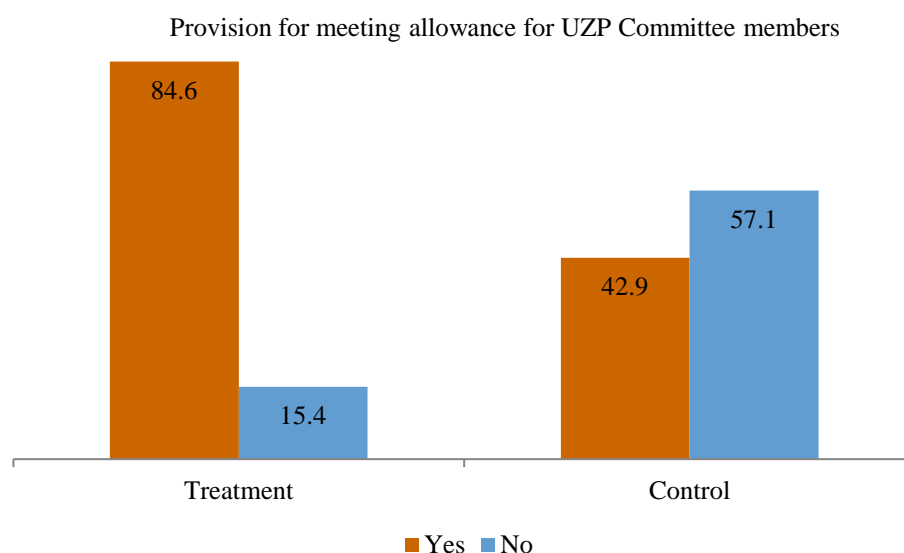


Chart 3.21: UZP Committee members getting meeting allowance for attending meetings

To strengthen the functionality of the UZP Committees, the government has made a provision for meeting allowance (tea, snacks) for the attending members in the meeting. To ensure participation of the committee members in the meeting it was made mandatory of the UZPs to invite committee members mentioning the allowance in the invitation letter. The institutional survey data suggests that the UZPs in the treatment areas issued invitation letters (84.6%) mentioning the allowance, while the same for the control areas was only a half of the treatment areas (42.9%). This has certainly improved that participation of the UZP committee members in the respective meetings which was not the case beforehand.

UZPs working towards SDG Localization

One of the main agendas of the EALG project was to work on localizing SDGs through the local government bodies in Bangladesh. The project had undertaken different initiative through the local government bodies including placing billboards in visible locations, orientation and training for officials of the councils, songs etc. The institutional survey data revealed that the UZPs in the treatment areas were ahead (88.9%) compared to the UZPs of the control areas (71.4%) in terms of LDG localization activities. During field visits it was observed that the presence of some other projects in the control areas and through their facilitation the UZPs to work on SDG issues helped them gain a respectable score in this regard.

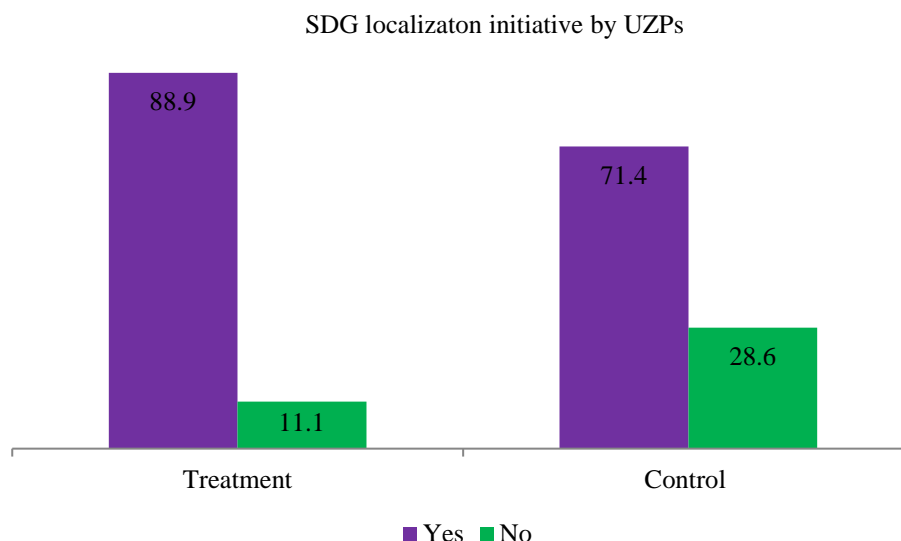


Chart 3.22: SDG localization initiative by UZPs

Table 3.35: EALG Initiated policy changes and implementation at UZP level

Concept on approved policies for UZP functionaries		
<i>Name of Policy approved at UZP level</i>	<i>Aware about policy changes</i>	<i>Implemented so far</i>
Revision of earlier Upazila Revenue Fund Utilization Guideline, 2020	96.3	100
Terms of Reference (ToR) for 17 UZP Committees	100	91.3
LGD approved Annual Reporting Guideline for UZPs	100	100
LGD approved Operational Guideline for Women Development Forum (WDF)	100	90.9
LGD issued a guideline on organizing open budget session at UZP level	100	93.8
The earlier WDF Circular has been revised in 2021 by LGD and made amendment on allocating 3% ADP fund to WDF which was up to 3% earlier.	100	82.4
LGD issued Circular on organizing Public Hearing at UZP level	96.2	78.6
LGD issued Office Order for updating UZP's website with relevant information time to time.	100	93.8
LGD issued circular for live streaming of UZP's public gathering events to ensure transparency and accountability at local level	100	93.3

Through evidence based policy advocacy of the EALG project a number of policy had been changed which came into effect immediately through facilitation of the project. It was evident from the institutional survey that the UZPs were more aware of the policy changes than that of the UPs under project intervention. The data from the abovetable suggests that the UZPs were well aware of all nine policies those were change based on the recommendation of the project and duly approved by the LGD, and likely the level of implementation was also very high as well.

Facebook Page of the UZPs

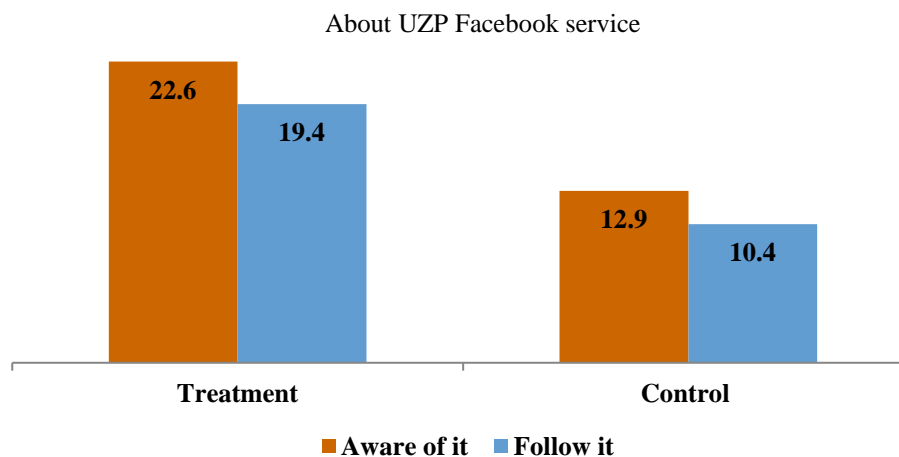


Chart 3.23: Awareness on and visit to UZP Facebook pages

The EALG project encouraged the UPS and UZPs to maintain facebook pages as an engagement strategy to get citizen involved with the respective local government bodies. All the UZPs under the project however, used to maintain Facebook pages so that citizens can see what the UZPs were doing, how these activities were benefiting the citizens and what can be done in the near future along with the upcoming events and so on. The citizen survey data revealed that respondents from the treatment areas (22.6%) were more aware of the UZP Facebook pages compared to the control areas (12.9%). Though a higher percentage of the respondents visited the UZP Facebook pages from the treatment areas (19.4%) compared to the control areas (10.45), the number is not that encouraging. However it is very likely that the rural people are yet to get used to visit Facebook pages for necessary information.

Chapter 4 : Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Findings

Taking information from the FGDs and key informant interviews, a thematic analysis was done. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify the patterns or themes within qualitative data collected for this evaluation. The goal of this process was to identify themes, i.e., patterns in the data that were important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research questions. Thematic analysis is more than simply summarizing the data. (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). For this evaluation, the following themes emerged from the information collected.

i) Participation Increased in UP Events

The project has been in operation since 2017, focusing on building capacity of the UPs to become more efficient in delivering services and becoming accountable for their actions both upward and downward. Both objectives were sincerely approached by the project. While interviewing the project stakeholders at different levels, all agreed that the people generally are getting their interest back to the UPs and UZPs slowly but steadily. The proof of their claim was that participation in the UP or the UZP organized events had gradually been improving. This interest of the people must be respected and utilized for bottom-up planning, participatory budgeting, and monitoring of the development projects and other services delivered by the state agencies at sub-national levels.

ii) General Apathy of the elected representatives to hold events

The elected representatives of the local government bodies are political elements, and they have rivalries in the locality. It was evident that at the outset, the elected representatives showed their apathy to hold such events where too many people will be attending. The other reason was



FGD with Community Group at Mithapukur, Rangpur

the cost of these events for the resource poor UPs and UZPs. The project supported some of the events to make it a habit and now they were found to be organizing such events of their own because the intelligent ones found benefits in interacting with the people, the voters. How long this interest will remain is a big question? As local government bodies, there are opportunities of getting new faces at least every five years. Thus, it is a scope to mold

them into making democratic leaders who will be more accountable to the people, and more efficient, as expected by many respondents. There is lack of efforts/ initiatives on cross visiting by the UP functionaries to the best performing UPs.

iii) Own Source Revenue situation remains the same

With a never-ending emphasis on mobilizing local resources on the part of the government, civil society, researchers, and development partners, the situation hardly changed. The elected leaders and a few informed citizens were found to be more vocal on this issue. The traditional sources of mobilizing resources were taken away from the local government bodies; especially the UPs were the ultimate victims. An UP Chairman said, “.....*managing UP affairs at present is like swimming in the river with tied hands*”. He further elaborated that according to law, UPs were supposed to conduct the environmental impact before granting permission to establish new industry. Unfortunately, UPs neither have the capacity to conduct the environmental impact nor have the courage to impose tax on them. The elected representatives got to learn things and for this more training was need, he elaborated. However, the EALG conducted tax assessment piloting could be the answer to many of these questions.

iv) Reform- a never ending process

A lot have been done to reform local government system in Bangladesh, but a lot more is required, said a DDLG. He was saying that local government is like a guardian less child. Everybody tries to get their job done by the UPs but nobody cares about them. There is a dire need for a unified law to streamline local development programs. The Zila Parishad, the Upazila Parishad and the Union Parishad all should come under one law so that coordinated effort are made for development to happen. The local government experts interviewed for this evaluation also underscored the need for a unified law. The Upazila Parishad as of now cannot be called a council. There was hardly any coordination among the rural local government bodies and thus duplication and overlapping in development activities is a common phenomenon. The financing of the local government bodies is the most neglected business in Bangladesh, they opined. Thus, a lot of issues need to be reformed to have an efficient local government system in Bangladesh. More research should be done on coordination, a unified local government law and revenue sharing between central and local government so that policy makers take note on these issues.

v) Refresher training is an imperative

The EALG has provided a lot of training to different stakeholders of the project. It is too much to expect that one-day of training would make things better. In the remote areas, one day of training turned into a half -day training and thus, all impetus of the training is lost. To have



KII with UNO, Haimchar, Chandpur

greater impact of training, many of the respondents mentioned training must be followed up with refresher training so that the knowledge gained is ingrained among the participants. For elected representatives, training should be a residential one and far from their locality so that they are not distracted by official business while in the session. Paying due respect, some of the respondents also mentioned that all government officials

were not good trainers. The organizers have to be careful about selecting trainers before launching a training program.

vi) BCC curriculum could yield better result

Many of the respondents who received training and some of the trainers mentioned that change in behavior was an important issue for the local government leaders. As political being, the elected leaders of the local government bodies had to deal with so many things and easily forget what the issues in the training were. Thus, they urged for incorporating behavioral change communication training to be incorporated. Some government officials interviewed also shared the same view.

vii) Improved governance practices is an External Agenda- the dependency syndrome

The elected representatives of the local government bodies generally understand that training and workshops were the agenda of the donors. As they had to attend this program on instruction of the government officials, they attended. Thus, by heart, they were usually not part of the process, the development project was trying to achieve. For example, the EALG has long been trying to have efficient and accountable local government system in Bangladesh. It can never be achieved unless the elected representatives of the local government bodies start to believe that it is their agenda, and they need to achieve it. The elected representatives of the UZPs were found to be more naïve, as they think there will be project one after another and they would be pushing us to change things, and one day all these would surely be in order. When they were challenged if they thought training was not important for them, they replied “Yes, it is important”, but donor support was what they needed to have such training.

viii) COVID 19, threat is an opportunity

During COVID 19 pandemic the EALG received additional funds to be responsive to prevent the project stakeholders and other associated people from getting infected. It was actually implemented as a separate project but with existing EALG implementation mechanism. It was an initiative to complement government initiatives to prevent COVID 19 infection among the population and the EALG was asked to work together with the local administration.

The purpose of the project was to provide necessary preventive materials (mask, sanitizers, soap, hand gloves, PPE, hand washing facilities, capacity building and awareness raising support to the EALG beneficiaries/ stakeholders, UP representatives, Steering Committee members, Gram Police so that they could keep themselves safe while participating the COVID 19 response initiatives implanted in the localities by the government and other development actors. The project management unit (PMU) of EALG and its field force with assistance from the DDLG and UNO implemented the EALG project’s COVID 19 response initiative under the capable leadership of the National Project Director (NPD) and the Deputy National Project Directors (DNPDP’s).

Table 4.1: Achievements of COVID 19 response initiative

EALG’s achievement from COVID 19 Response initiative	
1	37629 EALG project stakeholders to be provided with preventive materials

2	8771 EALG project stakeholders to be supported by PPE
3	251000 people become aware through awareness raising programs
4	125500 people get access to hand washing facility
5	251 UPs having improved capacity for COVID 19 response
6	62750 people reached by Union Focal Point for COVID 19 response

The respondents in the field were so enthusiastic about the EALG's COVID 19 response that many believe that the people remember the EALG for the support during the pandemic, keeping all other things aside. The government officials, the elected representatives of the local bodies all, appreciated the EALG efforts to support the people with safety materials, PPE, hand washing facilities etc. When the people appraise things in public, it needs to be taken sincerely and it can be said that the EALG project's COVID 19 response was a success.

ix) Revenue Sharing, the option

As of now, the rural local government body in the shape of Union Parishad is a resource poor institution. The visible sources for mobilizing local resources include holding tax, business tax and fees from non-motorized vehicles. There has long been emphasis on mobilizing local resources in Union Parishad to reduce burden of the national government for development funding. Needless to say, almost all the UPs are incapable of managing their revenue expenditure from the local sources even after realizing the potential of local resources let alone contributing to meet the development expectations of their electorate, with the options available as of now. One option to increase local resources for the UPs could be given their leasing authority back, that include the markets, water bodies, kheya ghats, sand beds etc. which were taken away from them over the years. Year's back, to increase the local resource base of the UPs, legislation was made to share 1% of the land transfer tax with the UPs. Making it 2% would encourage UPs truly.

x) Public Hearing- the innovation

Public Hearing is an idea that was promoted by the EALG project, and eventually, the LGD issues a circular for the UPs and UPs to hold public hearings as and when necessary. It is such an event where the communities can share their problems, extend their suggestion and recommendations, and even placedemand son the local government bodies. It was designed in such a way that the officials of line department working in the respective UZP or in UPs are supposed to attend. In the presence of the public officials who are the agents of the central ministries, many things can be solved instantly, and that is the beauty of public hearing. Instant solution of problem is what attracts people most to attend public hearing.

Public Hearing

The Magic Lamp, a real one

It is like Aladdin's magic lamp! They kindled my darkroom within a day!" Mr. Muslim Miah, husband of Hazera Begum, an inhabitant of Palakhhal Model Union under Kacua Upazila of Chandpur district, expressed his gratitude like this way. Mr. Moslem Miah (40) was delighted to get an electricity connection in his household within 15 hours after raising the issue in a Public Hearing supported by the EALG Project and conducted by Palakhhal Union Parishad, Chandpur.

On 8 September 2021, Palakhhal Model Union Parishad organized a public hearing with the support of the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project. In the hearing session, people highlighted their issues/complaints on different services of Union Parishad and government service providers and the concerned officials got a chance to resolve the problems.

During the session, Hazera Begum (30) raised an issue on electricity connection addressing the official of Polli Bidyut Samiti. She said, “Three months ago my husband built a tiny house, but we did not see the ray of light yet. The children live in the darkroom and cannot study after the evening. How long will our sufferings be continued?” Hearing this, the local wearing Inspector of Kachua Palli Bidyut Samiti, Mr. Muslem Uddin informed that if there is an electric pillar within 130 ft from the house and if the UP Chairman verifies necessary documents, they can proceed to provide electric connection in Hazera’s home within an hour.

The following day, Mr. Muslem Uddin and his team visited Hazera’s house and found an electric pillar within 130ft of distance. Mr. Imam Hossain, the UP-Chairman, also visited the place and verified the necessary documents. During his presence, Moslem Miah deposited 650 takas to the Palli Bidyut Samiti and got an electric connection by 3 pm. Hazera Begum said, “no poor farmer like my husband could provide extra money to the brokers for electricity connection. I would never think of electric connection at my house so easily, if I was not present in the public hearing session on time.

Source: Moslem Miah, Palakhhal Model Union, Kachua, Chandpur

xi) Open Budget Meeting- the festival

Open budget sessions are being organized both at UP and UZP level. The respondents came across the evaluation team were more aware of the open budget session at their UPs. Most of them were found to be familiar with the term and the event. In a FGD session participants said, “Nowadays it is like a festival to us, as the UP building and the venue is decorated and there is a free meal available,” Some other who never made an issue in the Open Budget session but mentioned that they enjoy it when someone ask a question to the Chairman, and he had to answer. This means they may not speak out in the budget session but knowingly or unknowingly enjoy the time when the UP Chair was forced to answer the question. Surely, they want their elected representatives to be answerable, accountable to them, who sent them there through voting.



KII with a community leader

xii) Ward Shava- the dream comes true

Ward Shava is a forum where only people of the concerned ward attend, all the familiar faces. Thus, the attendees can speak freely of their needs and aspiration which was not possible if the meeting took place in the UP office. Through this ward meeting, the ward member, and the women member work together to capture the requirement of the people and share openly what is there in the basket and how much they can spend, thus decisions making in the ward shava is a fair deal. Sometimes, the proposed schemes get rejected in the UP meeting, and the ward members get back to people to inform them about what happened in the UP meeting and why

they failed to get the proposed scheme funded. The whole scenario was described by an old man when asked, how a ward shava works. It could be that he was an aide of the ward member or an influential person in the locality, but the way he described the story means he loved the process because of transparency. Some other person also feeds him with information if he missed anything in the process. This is the beauty of transparency and accountability and the EALG project for years had facilitated these ward shavas. Though ward shava meets only twice a year, the impact lasts long as the people own it.

Cross Cutting Issues

Gender Analysis of the Project

One of the main objectives of the EALG project was to establish inclusive governance at the rural local government bodies. To make this happen, the project since its inception had encouraged the participation and engagement in different events organized by the local government bodies of their respective territories. The local government laws of the UPs and UZPs urge the local government bodies to make their decision -making process as well as the



development activities as much inclusive as possible. Here in this evaluation gender analysis was done based on three indicators commonly used in governance assessment including Participation, Access, and Control.

Generally, there is legal provision for both the UPs and UZPs in Bangladesh, to do their planning, budgeting at regular interval on one hand and implement development schemes/ projects on the other.

However, participation in the local government activities is one thing and inclusion of all section of the population in the functioning of these bodies is another issue. Historically, in a male dominated society the women in general are used to take a back seat. Thus, generally the

FGD with community women

people are not used to see that from a gender lens. That needs to be changed and besides the local government laws, the Local Government Division time and again issued circular and directives to change the scenario. That's why, of late the local government bodies were asked to hold open budget sessions, ward shava, public hearing etc. These are public events where people from all walks of life are supposed to attend. The UPs and UZPs were asked to device their own strategies to invite the citizens in such events especially the women and other marginalized communities. During the final evaluation of the project, it was revealed that 70.1% of women participated in the UP organized events. While participation of women in UP organized events was encouraging the control, they hold in such event to

articulate their own interest was certainly a reason to be cheerful. Those who participate in those events, more than 90% had raised their voice in the meetings be it a Ward Shava, Public Hearing or One Budget Sessions. Once the representatives of the women establish their strong presence in all the important meetings of the UPs, it is likely that they would be able to influence to elimination of the causes and consequences of discrimination, exclusion, prejudice, stigma and other barriers to accessing the services provided by the UPs on one hand and contribute to the local development on the other.

The project has significantly contributed to the cause of reducing general discrimination in all project activities. Thus, the WDF was strengthened, all events organized by the UPs and UPs ensure participation of women and the marginalized ones, provided training and other orientation so that the women leaders understand the agenda for action and act accordingly. Moreover, through practicing these, the women would be able to explore and analyze the relationship between men and women, and the inequalities of those relationships in relevance of gender roles and power dynamics in local government context. The women leadership were oriented on when the protection is needed for the women and children, the girls in particular, in normal life (keeping the VAW focus), in public places and during disaster.

Overall, the EALG has contributed to make the women understand the inequality they are facing, the causes of such inequality and how to overcome them so that women participation, access and control in the development process is enhanced, practiced and sustained.

Climate Change Issues

The project made some sincere efforts to make awareness on climate change issues though not a primary focus. As Bangladesh is one of the climate vulnerable countries, all the development interventions attempt to cover this issue in one way or the other. Through different training and other motivational activities, the project made the local bodies, the UPs and UPZPs aware of the climate effects on lives and

livelihoods and encouraged them to make their plans climate sensitive. Especially when they undertake any development schemes, they discuss the climate issues with the people to be benefited of that scheme, and make them aware not to implement any project that affect environmental balance. This way, the local bodies make the people aware of the climate change consequences and keep their development endeavors climate sensitive. The efforts on part of the project and the concerned local bodies in particular were visible in the project intervention areas. The survey respondents in the intervention areas mentioned that their UPs undertook awareness program on climate change issues (69.5%) while the same for control UPs were only 30.5% in the control areas.

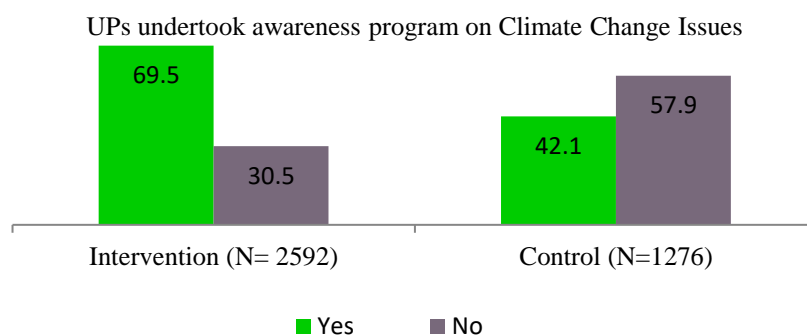


Chart 4.1: Climate change awareness initiated by the local government

The respondents were asked if they could mention some of the activities undertaken by their respective UPs both in the intervention and control areas. The following table represents the responses, and it revealed that in both cases there are climate change awareness activities but the UPs in intervention areas were well ahead because of the EALG activities. Besides, most of the UPs in the EALG intervention areas published their annual plans and five- year plans where climate change issues as well as SDG issues were considered and plans were implemented accordingly, which suggest their better understanding and commitment to climate change issues.

Table 4.2: UP actions towards awareness raising on Climate Change Issues (multiple responses)

Activities	Intervention	Control
Awareness Raising Campaign	60.4	46.7
Yard meeting	20.5	9.5
Ward Shava	29.8	13.8
Public Announcement / miking	82.4	80.6
Billboard/leaflet	23.4	33.9
Tree plantation	16.3	7.8
Awareness through Facebook page	14.2	6.1
Building shelter home	33.0	22.9
Adopting climate resilient production technology	12.5	8.4
Relief Distribution	45.1	21.0
Other	.4	-

The situation was almost similar at the UZPs both in intervention and control areas though in a little lower scale as citizens had less scope to participate directly on such activities of the UZPs. The respondents were however, asked to rate their satisfaction on the climate change activities. The results indicated that respondents in the treatment group were more satisfied (40.9%) compared to their counterparts (14.5%) in the control areas, with the UZP actions relating to disaster management and climate change issues. It was interesting that most of the respondents, 44.5% in the intervention areas and 61.3% in the control areas took the middle path, i.e. tried to be neutral in making their observations. Notably, the respondents who were very dissatisfied with climate change activities of the UZPs, were very identical, 8.8% for the intervention areas and 8.7% for the control areas.

Table 4.3: Citizen Satisfaction on UZP activities on climate change issues

Responses	Treatment group	Control group
Very Satisfied	9.6	1.3
Satisfied	31.3	13.2
Neutral	44.5	61.3
Dissatisfied	5.9	15.5
Very Dissatisfied	8.8	8.7

As a matter of fact, the project, through different activities including training, orientation, discussionundertook



efforts to make the local government leaders understand the importance, causes and consequences of the climate change effects in Bangladesh, and how to address the within the resource limitation.

Through the EALG training, the UPs and UZPs got to know how

FGD with differently able communities at Ukhiya, Cox'sBazar

to prepare climate smart budget incorporating climate change issues in

the annual budget, and in yearly and five year plans. Truly, climate issue is no longer an isolated one, but has become an integral part of contemporary development endeavors.

Chapter 5 : Lesson Learnt and Good Practices

The Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project is one of the kinds of initiatives that are likely to leave some legacies. Once phased out, the project would leave some lessons for the local government bodies it dealt with, along with others who are concerned with improving the local government system in Bangladesh, including the local government divisions, academia, civil society actors, and development partners. Keeping these lessons in mind and installing the good practices in place, the local government system will go to the next level with efficient service delivery to the electorate in particular and become accountable for the actions undertaken.

5.1 Institutionalization of Public Hearings at Local Bodies

Public hearings are relatively new in the sphere of local government bodies in Bangladesh. From the EALG's experience promoting public hearings at the UPs and UZPs, it can be said that these hearings are not only helping these local government bodies get feedback on the services delivered from the recipients but also facilitating the identification and resolution of local issues locally through civic engagement. As the transferred department and line department officials participate in the public hearing, there are instances of long-standing issues being solved instantly, which could have taken years otherwise. In the long run, institutionalizing public hearings will benefit citizens by ensuring both upward and downward accountability in local government affairs.

5.2 Coordination meeting, the best solution

The lack of coordination between elected and appointed officials is an issue that makes things tricky for having well-functioning UZPs in Bangladesh. There is a structure called the Upazila Development Coordination Committee, which meets once a month, but it is evident that this body rarely meets, which is the thrust of the coordination between these two camps. There should be a system in place to hold semi-annual and annual coordination meetings, getting officials of transferred departments and representatives of the local government bodies in the UZP territories along with their officials on board, which would make this harmonization worthwhile. This will enable all parties to come together and share their differences and build a better working relationship for the betterment of the people. Once, at a given point in time, this coordination takes shape, the governance at the local government level will certainly jump to the next level. Coordination, however, does not happen like anything else; it has to be well nurtured, and the directions from above really work in this regard.

5.3 The Preparation and Publication of the Annual Report for the UPs and UZPs

Producing and publishing an annual report is one of the routine functions of any living organization. For the UPs and UZPs, it is a legal obligation. Benefits of publishing an annual report include increasing the transparency of the report-producing organization, and the same is true for the UPs and UZPs in Bangladesh, as it allows citizens to know what is being done by the local government bodies for them. However, the UPs and UZPs need to be provided with technical assistance in the form of training and guidance for preparing the annual plans

and financial support to print them for wider dissemination. However, this technical assistance is not required for a longer period as it will be used within a couple of years. The LGD has already issued a circular to print this planning document from its source revenue, making provision to spend up to BDT 100,000 for this purpose.

5.4 Preparation and Publication of the Five-Year Plan

The preparation of a five-year plan by the local government bodies is imperative. They are being considered as the centers of development activities in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, publication of the five-year plan is a legal obligation of the UPS and UZPs. Such a plan certainly increases the transparency of the concerned bodies and incorporates the needs and aspirations of the people they serve by implementing development initiatives suggested by them as well. It also allows citizens to get updated knowledge and information about current and future development and other activities of the local government bodies. External support in developing such five-year plans is always welcomed by the UPs and UZPs, until they become attuned to doing it themselves. If the local government bodies can accept the pains of developing five-year plans, money will not be a problem for the printing and distribution of the same, from this point forward.

5.5 Tax assessment, through local volunteers

Tax assessment is a highly technical job that the UPs are severely lacking in. This is one of the primary reasons for not conducting proper tax assessments among the UPs in Bangladesh. The other reason includes fear of losing popularity among the electorate and an unwillingness on the part of the council to accept the pain of conducting the assessment as suggested in the guideline. As a result, less revenue is generated from sources other than the government, and reliance on central transfers grows. Overcoming the prevailing situation, the EALG facilitated a tax assessment pilot in eight UPs in Bangladesh, i.e., in the project intervention areas. For the assessment, the EALG, with the help of the UPs, selected local volunteers who knew the UP territory well and had an advanced level of education and training. The volunteer-led assessment revealed that if the UPs were serious about maximizing their own source revenue potential, they could generate four to eight times² the current amount. The rest of the UPs may benefit from enlisting the assistance of local volunteers to conduct proper tax assessments, which could significantly increase their own source of revenue.

5.6 The more functional WDF, the better

Regular meetings are one of the most important indicators of a functional body. The EALG project nurtured the Women Development Forum (WDF) throughout the project's lifespan; it was inherited from previous projects. WDF is supposed to meet bimonthly to discuss their issues of interest and make a decision on how to realize what they need most. Meetings are such an effective tool for bringing harmony and strength to the members who attend them. Thus, meetings can increase its operational functionality. As mentioned, the EALG project used to provide technical support in regularizing WDFs' bimonthly meetings in the project intervention areas. Regular meetings gave them the strength to claim their rights to a 3% ADP allocation from the Upazila Parishad to implement women-sensitive schemes and projects. Beyond this, the WDF also implemented various women's development activities, including the prevention of violence against women in their localities. This has been made possible by the WDFs' regular bimonthly meetings. As seen in the project intervention areas, functional WDFs would be assets to the local bodies.

²Gohait-North UP under Chandpur District could earn this much if they are able to realize the assessed tax as revealed during the tax assessment piloting.

5.7 SDG Localization

SDG awareness is a globally important issue nowadays, especially for the elected representatives who are the important players in localizing SDGs to maintain the spirit of "no one left behind." Likewise, lack of awareness of the SDGs among the local authorities and the elected representatives is one of the biggest challenges to SDG localization. The EALG project was able to raise SDG awareness among them through various trainings, orientations, and technical assistance. As a result, the UPs and UZPs could integrate the SDGs into their five-year



plan. The five-year plan can be the entry point for the UPs and UZPs to localize the SDGs. Needless to say, these local bodies require adequate training and technical assistance to make this happen in other areas. Implementation of the plans prepared in any setting is challenging; the same is true for the local bodies as well. The local bodies could contribute more to the SDGs if they were able to implement the plans they prepared.

5.8 Awareness-raising through cultural events

Cultural sensitivity among the people in this part of the world, including Bangladesh, is nothing new to mention. Taking advantage of cultural events in various awareness-raising programs of the EALG project was found to be effective. The project used various songs, rhymes, and role play in its various awareness-raising events to disseminate necessary messages and information, which the target audience enjoyed and could recall later on. Field experience suggests that the awareness-raising songs on COVID-19 and the SDG rhymes for billboards were the ones worth mentioning. This way, important messages on other issues may be disseminated in the near future as well. Awareness-raising through cultural events is a proven tool, and the EALG used this tool smartly. The local bodies may also utilize this tool for collecting taxes and sharing other messages and information in the same way.

5.9 EALG's Evidence-Based Policy Advocacy

Changing policies has never been an easy task in Bangladesh. However, things become easier if evidence such as the results of pilot testing, action research, and so on is presented to policymakers. Asking for change in anything from the government without evidence is hardly appealing. The EALG project underscored the importance of generating evidence before asking for a policy change. The LGD approved the annual reporting guidelines for the UPs and UZPs only after assessing their success in the field. This is true for creating provisions for holding public hearings at the UPs and UZPs. This model of demonstrated success and asking for policy change in this manner was extremely beneficial to the EALG project. Others engaged in similar businesses may follow suit if they are serious about policy advocacy in Bangladesh.

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Chapter 6 : Conclusion and Recommendations

The Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project has been in operation for almost five years, though only poorly performing UZPs and UPs have pulled them upfront by complying with the existing legislation in Bangladesh. In other words, the EALG took on the challenge of working with poor students to make them accessible to higher education. The nature of the development project is that it has a short life, but the successful ones leave behind a legacy that everybody keeps in mind for years. Because of the same reason, the local government bodies also need to demonstrate their commitment to change, by taking advantage of the presence of such capacity building projects and improving their capacity to serve their electorate in general and the citizens in particular efficiently, transparently, accountably, and inclusively. The result of the final evaluation and other secondary reports and studies suggest that the project did the right thing in working with the selected local government bodies to generate evidence that change is possible with no extra effort but to comply with the rules and procedures. The followings are some of the recommendations for consideration.

1. Over the years, the EALG project has demonstrated its relevance and effectiveness to the primary stakeholders, i.e., the UPs and UZPs. The other stakeholders, such as DDLGs and UNOs, also felt the need for such a project to build the capacity of the rural local government bodies in Bangladesh, which is otherwise not possible by other means. By any standard, five years to change things that have been practiced for decades is insufficient. While the capacity of government officials, including UP secretaries, remains constant, the number of elected representatives changes every five years via election, resulting in a gap. Thus, to keep the momentum of the work being done in the field, support for the local government bodies should be continued in any form.
2. Mobilization of local resources has always been a priority for local government bodies, particularly in Bangladesh. The EALG did superlative work by piloting holding tax assessments through local volunteers, which showed huge potential. This low-cost assessment model should be institutionalized for the UPs; this should include business tax as well.
3. Climate change issues have been on the agenda globally and locally. The UPs and UZPs are now better prepared than at any time in the past to face the challenge of climate change effects. The plans that these bodies prepare and incorporate into their plans should be supported through a positive discrimination policy so that the climate-vulnerable areas get more support in the form of central transfers.
4. To reduce dependence on central transfers, public-private partnerships should be encouraged with appropriate policy support from the government to implement climate change adaptation schemes in the most vulnerable areas.
5. To have better coordinated local development, a unified local government law is a pre-requisite. Without this, integrated planning and budgeting will be a far cry.
6. To ensure greater transparency and accountability of local government bodies, the Local Government Division (LGD) should make good use of the management information system (MIS) supported by the EALG.
7. The financial management system and practices should be modernized by encouraging information and communication technology and putting digital governance in place in the local government system in Bangladesh.
8. The local government division (LGD) should take the initiative to replicate the good practices of EALG among the other local government bodies, as donor support would not be available

all the time in a similar fashion. Likewise, the LGD should monitor the implementation status of the thirteen policies circulated by the LGD and recommended by the EALG project.

9. Last but not least, if the LGD or UNDP designs any future local governance initiative, it should focus on contemporary issues, including:
 - Digitalization and digital governance of the targeted LGIs.
 - The Deepening Women Development Forum at the Union Level is now based at the Upazila level.
 - Climate governance and allocation of ADP based on climate vulnerability
 - Resource mobilization of the LGIs
 - Public-private partnership
 - Social audit, including public hearings, citizen report card surveys, etc.
 - Strengthening the financial management and auditing of the targeted LGIs.
 - The practice of the National Integrity Strategies is of the utmost importance, and the Citizen Charter is already in place. The other three tools—Right to Information (RTI), the Annual Performance Agreement (APA), and the Grievance Redress System (GRS)—should be practiced as well.