



Annual Report 2014



Upazila Governance Project (UZGP)

Local Government Division
Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives



European Union



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



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Annual Report 2014 Upazila Governance Project (UZGP)

Published in June 2015

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Message from Secretary, LGD

Local government institutions (LGIs) are the building blocks of effective decision-making and accountable service delivery at the local level. People-oriented local governance practices, such as inclusive and participatory local planning and budgeting, help increase the efficiency and responsiveness of LGIs that in turn makes local infrastructure and service delivery effective.

The Government of Bangladesh recognizes the importance of introducing and endorsing such practices at the local levels of government and reaffirms its commitment to promoting responsive LGIs that have robust mechanisms for active civic participation and pro-poor development activities. The Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) is an initiative of the Government of Bangladesh to fulfill these commitments. UZGP has been implementing since 2012 by the Government of Bangladesh through the Local Government Division (LGD), in partnership with the European Union (EU), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).

UZGP has continued to build upon the successes achieved in 2013 by increasing the percentage of compliance and making the submission of annual budgets to LGD. The project continues to act as a platform for promoting dialogue, coordination and cooperation among government and elected officials at the local levels.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our development partners for their auspicious support. I believe that UZGP will continue to achieve more success in coming years.

Abdul Malek

Secretary
Local Government Division (LGD)
Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives



Message from NPD, UZGP

The Government of Bangladesh recognizes the need for the devolution of authority and the decentralization of service delivery. These components of democratic governance require strengthened and responsive local government institutions (LGIs) in order to be effective, efficient and sustainable. In order to facilitate this, the Government of Bangladesh has been extending its support to LGIs through the Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) to strengthen the capacity of elected public representatives and government officials to fulfill their mandates and serve their constituents better.

Alongside the project-supported capacity development initiatives, UZGP since 2013 simultaneously has been supplementing the Government of Bangladesh's grants transferred to Upazila Parishads (UZPs) under the Annual Development Plan (ADP) by providing a secondary performance-based grant to select UZPs. This grant provided against a set of specific criteria has yielded tremendous results in implementing MDG-oriented schemes.

Fourteen targeted UZPs, under the project-supported Upazila Fiscal Facility (UFF), initiated 120 schemes, of which 80 percent focused on helping achieve MDGs, particularly relating to primary education, health and poverty.

I would like to thank our development partners for their continued support and all the project staff and relevant government officials for their efforts in making 2014 a landmark year for UZGP!

Saurendra Nath Chakrabhartty
Additional Secretary, LGD &
National Project Director (NPD), UZGP

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADP	Annual Development Plan
AWM	Alternate Work Modality
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BIM	Bangladesh Institute of Management
B MDF	Bangladesh Municipality Development Fund
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DDLG	Deputy Director, Local Government
DF	District Facilitator
DLG	Director, Local Government
DVF	Divisional Facilitator
EU	European Union
FP	Focal Person
LGD	Local Government Division
L GIs	Local Government Institutions
LGSP	Local Government Support Project
LGSP-LIC	Local Government Support Project-Learning and Innovation Component
LM	Line Ministry
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MI&E	Monitoring, Inspection and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MLGRD & C	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
NAPD	National Academy for Planning and Development
NEX	National Execution
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
NGOs	Non-government Organizations
NPD	National Project Director
PAG	Policy Advisory Group
PB	Project Board
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RDA	Rural Development Academy
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SC	Standing Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
UFF	Upazila Fiscal Facility
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOs	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UZGP	Upazila Governance Project
UZP	Upazila Parishad
UP	Union Parishad
UPGP	Union Parishad Governance Project
VC	Vice-Chairman
WDF	Women Development Forum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) aims at strengthening Upazila Parishads (UZPs) as an effective tier of local government through capacity building, policy support and ensuring participatory citizen engagement for local development, effective service delivery and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The project focused on capacity building (institutional and individual) of the stakeholders, both elected public representatives and government officials, to improve effectiveness of Upazila Parishad (UZP). Coupled with training, it used Upazila Fiscal Facility (UFF) to demonstrate functional coordination, local development-based planning and utilization of fiscal resources, and operationalization of linked Upazila Committees. The policy advocacy and awareness raising on Local Government (LG) was spearheaded by the Local Government Division (LGD). Gender was mainstreamed across activities and the project focused on establishing and operationalizing new Women Development Forums (WDFs).

The project delivery was mostly on track despite the political impasse that characterised Bangladesh in 2014 and the newly elected public representatives of 4th Upazila Parishad (UZP) were on board from May onward. All newly elected public representatives and key line department officials received general training on the UZP Act and Administration that resulted in increasing the more effective functioning of Upazila Parishads nationwide. The project attained financial delivery of 98 percent in the fiscal year 2014.

In terms of key 2014 results for the project in comparison with previous years:



The Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) has largely contributed in improving institutional functioning of Upazila Parishad in compliance to UZP Act 1998 that was subsequently amended in 2009 and 2011. In project areas 100 percent Upazila Parishads (UZPs) have regularly conducted mandatory monthly meetings, while it was 88 percent in control UZPs as compared to 70 percent of UZPs in 2013 and only 30 percent in 2012.



In 2014, all 487 UZPs (100 percent) prepared and submitted Annual Budget to the Local Government Division (LGD) in time as compared to 95 UZPs (20 percent) in 2012.



Seven Rules and three Regulations of Upazila Parishad have been developed which is under review and expected to be finalized in early 2015.



Five policy researches on local governance reform and effective decentralization, and one citizen survey were completed.



Utilization of UFF activated sectoral committees and participatory planning in 134 UZPs resulting in publishing of first ever long-term development plan titled 'Information, Plan and Budget Book'.



A total of 200 WDFs with over 6,359 members have been established and operationalized; a total of 6,359 WDF members have received capacity development training in 2014.



Capacity of six persons including NPD, Focal Person, UNDP Assistant Country Director and Project Manager was enhanced through participation at a high profile training at the Hague Academy for Local Governance, in the Netherlands.



A total of 34 participants including officials from central and local government and staff members from UZGP and UPGP attended a five-day training on "Decentralization and Local Government" held in February 2014 in Cox's Bazar with a world renowned facilitator from the Hague Academy.

INTRODUCTION TO UZGP

The UZGP is part of the UNDP and UNCDF's overall programmatic framework for support to the Government of Bangladesh in the area of local governance reforms. The project is supported and assisted by the European Union (EU) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The Upazila is a middle-tier administrative unit and elected body which occupies a very strategic political and bureaucratic position in Bangladesh. The re-establishment of the Upazilla Parishad (UZP), after 18 years hiatus, created these democratically elected institutions at the sub-national level that act as the linkage, and a point of administrative decentralization, between the lowest tier of local government, Union Parishad (UP), and the 17 service-delivery line agencies situated at the Upazila level. The legal framework governing and empowering the UZP is the

Upazila Act of 1998, which was subsequently amended in 2009 and 2011.

The re-introduction of UZP in 2009 resulted in elections being held in all 482 Upazilas nationwide. The number of Upazilas now stands at 487. With an average population of around 300,000 people, UZP are entrusted to anchor local democracy, undertake local development initiatives, and ensure the efficient delivery of public services while allowing for and promoting civic engagement, and ensuring transparency and accountability.

The Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) has been appointed to maintain vertical and horizontal administrative coordination between the central government, UZP and local administration.

Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in general, and UZPs in particular, are facing a number of challenges affecting their

efficiency and effectiveness. The broad range of challenges includes capacity constraints, limited institutional practice of process under law and absence of elaborative Rules and Regulations. Poor coordination between UZPs and the transferred departments results in further fiscal constraints in terms of their collective capacity to plan, budget and ensure service delivery as per available resources to address local development.

The UZGP is positioned to assist the Government of Bangladesh in the implementation of the local governance reforms and to contribute in addressing challenges including participatory decision-making, planning, and budgeting and improved service-delivery. The project is designed to improve functional and institutional capacities of local government institutions for effective and accountable delivery of pro-poor infrastructure and services.

UZGP OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

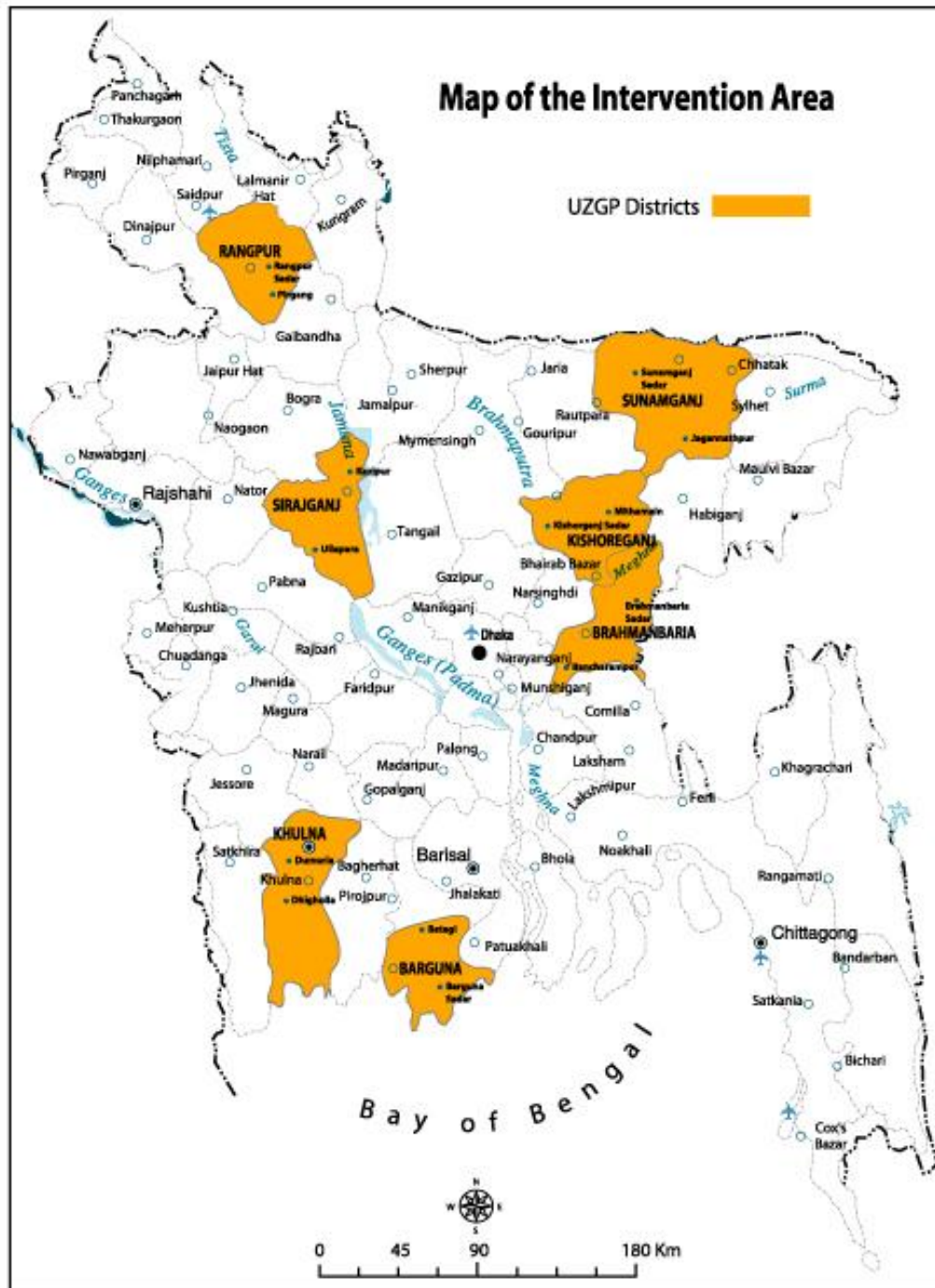
The **overall objective** of the project is **"Government institutions at the national and sub-national levels are able to more effectively carry out their mandates, including delivery of public services, in a more accountable, transparent and inclusive manner"**

The **specific objective** is **"to strengthen the capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development services for the MDGs."**

Output	Target Coverage
Output 1: Strengthened Upazila Parishads as more functional, democratic, transparent and accountable institutions.	487 Upazila Parishads
Output 2: Strengthened Planning and Budgeting system at Upazila Parishad with MDG orientation and pro-poor service delivery mechanism.	14 Upazila Parishads/ Year on a competitive basis from 65 target UZPs
Output 3: Strengthened national capacity for effective policy review, monitoring, lesson learning and capacity development of local government institutions (LGIs) for enhanced Local Governance.	Nationwide
Output 4: Effective Project Management Arrangement	Project Offices

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

The UZGP intervention areas comprise of seven districts, one under each division, and corresponding 65 UZPs. The target districts are —Kishoreganj, Brahmanbaria, Sunamganj, Sirajganj, Khulna, Barguna and Rangpur. The project, through its capacity building and technical policy support, extended its outreach to 487 UZPs; whereas Upazila Fiscal Facility (UFF) targets 14 Upazilas per year for intensive support.



487 UZPs

received capacity building and technical support

Selected 7 Districts

14 UZPs received fiscal facility support annually on a competitive basis from 65 target UZPs

Kishoreganj	Brahmanbaria	Sirajganj	Khulna	Barguna	Sunamganj	Rangpur
Kishoreganj Sadar Mithamoin	Brahmanbaria Sadar Bancharampur	Kazipur Ullapara	Dumuria Dhigolia	Betagi Barguna Sadar	Jagannathpur Sunamganj Sadar	Pirganj Rangpur Sadar

IMPLEMENTATION MODALITY

The UZGP is a nationally implemented (NIM) project, in accordance with the National Implementation Manual, adopted in December 2004 by the Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance and UNDP. Under NIM modality project has the following structure:

The **National Project Director (NPD)**, the Additional Secretary of Local Government Division (LGD), leads the project. The NPD is assisted by a Joint Secretary, who is the project's Focal Person from the LGD and by the National Project Manager provided by UNDP.

The **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** is chaired by the Secretary, LGD, and serves as strategic guidance provider and oversight body for the project. The PSC is the key decision-making body for the project and provides policy guidelines, review project progress against targeted results and tracks financial delivery. The PSC members include representatives from relevant ministries and departments of the Government of Bangladesh and respective development partners.

The **Project Board (PB)**, chaired by the NPD, is responsible to oversee the implementation of project activities. The PB is responsible for preparing and endorsing the annual and quarterly work plans and progress reports. It supervises the overall project implementation and day-to-day management of the project. It comprises of representatives from UP and UZP, UNOs, the UNDP and the UNCDF. Project Coordination and Management meetings are being held regularly to aide the PB.

The **Project Assurance (PA)** role is vested with the UNDP and the UNCDF. The Local Governance Cluster of UNDP has overall responsibility for quality assurance, with the technical support of the UNCDF, for the project. The PA is to ensure that the project deliver planned outputs as per the annual work plan, project document and results on the basis of monthly, quarterly and annual progress reports.





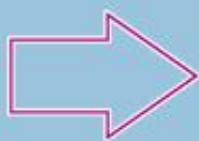
A female participant is seen raising her demands to incorporate in the Upazila Parishad Annual Development Plan and Budget. She made the demands at a discussion on "Upazila Parishad Annual Development Plan and Budget" held in Pirganj Upazila, Rangpur.

SECTION 1:

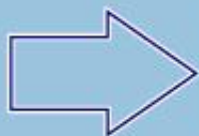
Key Results and Achievements in 2014

UPAZILA GOVERNANCE PROJECT: PLANNED OUTPUTS & RESULTS

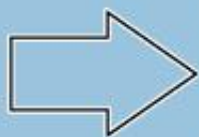
UZGP Outputs



Strengthened Upazila Parishads as more functional, democratic, transparent and accountable institutions.

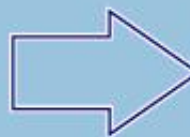


Strengthened Planning and Budgetary system at UZP with MDG orientation and pro-poor service delivery mechanism.

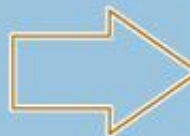


Strengthened national capacity for effective policy review, monitoring, lesson learning and capacity development of local government institutions (LGIs) for enhanced Local Governance.

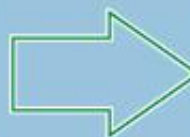
UZGP Planned Results 2014



Upazila Parishads (UZPs) improved democratic practices in managing its business complying with the Upazila Act.



Upazila Parishads improved their planning practices by engaging citizen/ constituents and addressing MDG off-tracked issues in planning and service delivery.



LGD demonstrates improved capacity by taking affirmative action in providing policy guidance and support to UZPs for effective delivery of services and mandated responsibilities.

RESULT 1:

Upazila Parishads (UZPs) Improved Democratic Practices in Managing its Business Complying With The Upazila Act

Capacity building sits at the core of UZGP activities. The focus of the project is on strengthening the capacity of elected public representatives and government officials for effective functioning of the Upazila Parishad in compliance with the Upazila Act. In 2014 at the end of the last tenure of UZPs, 70 percent of the UZPs were holding mandatory monthly meeting as compared to 30 percent of UZPs in 2012.

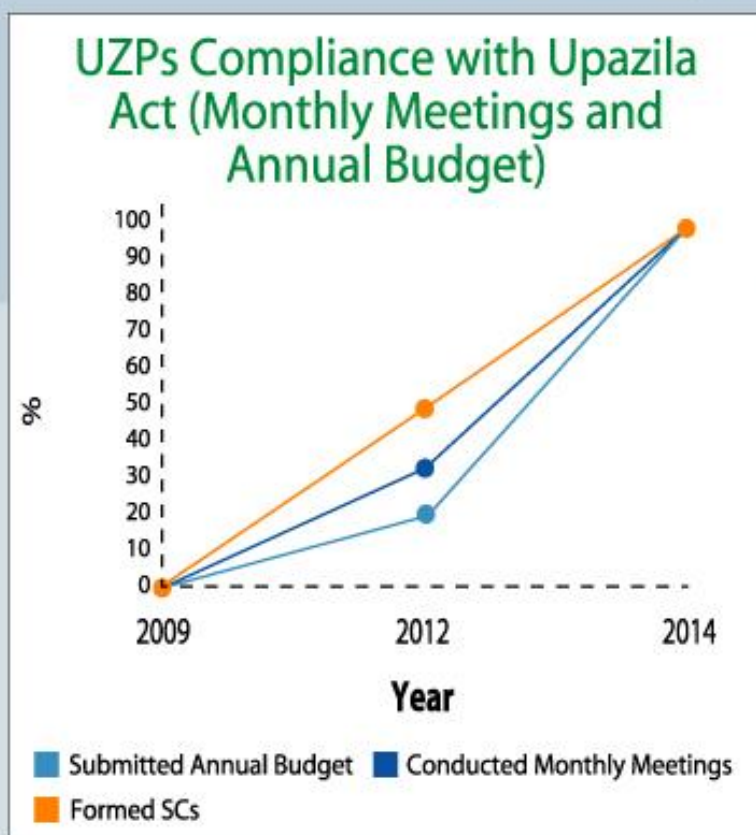
Despite new leadership in over 90 percent of UZPs, 99 percent of UZPs in project areas are regularly holding their monthly meeting compared to 88 percent of control UZPs. 2014 was an exceptional year, as it raised UZP budget submission to 100 percent from a mere 20 percent in 2012. UZGP's Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) confirmed that the project supported UZPs are more compliant with national legislation, are better in record keeping and maintaining, and are able to show greater parity in the participation of both genders in decision-making and governance process than the

control UZPs from control districts. The MTE also concluded that the UZP Chair, Vice-Chairs and members are more actively involved in UZP affairs and standing committees, and that operational Line Ministry linkages are stronger than the control group.

To maintain and sustain the institutional practices for effective functioning of UZP, the project has

arranged general training where 3,435 elected public representatives and government officials from 487 UZPs participated, while field-based technical backstopping to form Committees and holding of monthly meetings in line with the law were going on simultaneously. It is worthwhile to mention that for the first time in the history of Bangladesh,

elected public representatives of UZPs within the very first few months of assuming offices received training on their roles and function due to effective and timely initiative of UZGP.



RESULT 2:

UZPs IMPROVED THEIR PLANNING PRACTICES BY ENGAGING CITIZEN/ CONSTITUENTS AND ADDRESSING MDG OFF-TRACKED ISSUES IN PLANNING AND SERVICE DELIVERY

In 2014, the newly elected Upazila Parishads have reaffirmed their commitment to develop long-term plan for UZPs in compliance with the Upazila Act. UZPs had consultations with civil society groups and sector professionals prior to developing their 5 year and annual development plans in all UZPs in project intervention areas. Additionally, 68 Upazilas not covered by the project area are following suit. This is expected to result in the publishing of a total of 133 Information, Plan and Budget Books by 133 Upazilas by the end of 2014.

According to an independent performance assessment, the seven (7) pilot UZPs completed 104 schemes in 2013, of which 65 (62 percent) directly focused on addressing MDG goals particularly in primary education, health and poverty issues. A total of 316,455 beneficiaries, of which 116,168 are female, directly benefited from these schemes. In 2014, 14 targeted UZPs have implemented 120 schemes, of which 96 schemes (80 percent) were MDG focused. Such practices demonstrate that UZPs have increased capacity

in terms of planning and also that their accountability to the constituents has increased. The training on MDG-oriented planning by UZGP demonstrated good practices of local planning and financing as per local needs and, with the support of fiscal facility provided by UFF, contributed to the attainment of local MDG targets.

The MTE examined the process of budgeting in both project areas and control areas; planning in project areas engaged citizens, while no such examples could be found in control areas. Thus significant progress was seen in terms of participatory budgeting and MDG-oriented planning. The Citizens' Perception Survey (CPS), also undertaken in 2014, revealed that 81 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that UFF supported projects are contributing to improving the socio-economic condition of poor and marginalized citizens. Similarly, around 81 percent of the respondents believed that UZPs have implemented development schemes in a transparent manner.



With the financial support from the UZGP, Kishoreganj Sadar Upazila has provided 11 "Power Tillers/Cultivators" to 11 Union Parishads under the Upazila. The initiative is helping about 20,000 poor and marginalized farmers to rent the machines with subsidized cost, saving their time and money in preparing land for cultivation. According to the Kishoreganj Sadar Upazila Agriculture Office, a farmer can cultivate only one acre of land by bullock in a day while eight to 10 acres of land can be cultivated by per power tiller. For preparing per acre of land for cultivation, the charge of a power-tiller is BDT. 1200 while BDT. 3,600 for bullock.

Success Story: A Budget, of The People

"Earlier, we never knew about when and how the Upazila Parishad prepare the Annual Plan and Budget and what are the development plans they are going to take for us for the next fiscal year," said Ratan Mian, 52, a farmer from Mukimpur Village at 3 No Durgapur Union under Pirganj Upazila in Rangpur district.

"But after participating in the budget discussion on Upazila Parishad Annual Plan and Budget, we now know what the development initiatives the Upazila Parishad are going to take and we also made our demands and proposals to incorporate in the plan and budget," Mr. Ali said, coming out of a budget discussion held at Pirganj Upazila Parishad under Rangpur district.

For Ali it was an overwhelming feeling to have his opinions, and those of his fellow residents, recognized in prioritizing development spending for his area.

When Pirganj Upazila Parishad (Upazila is a tier of local government institutions) announced its Budget for the coming fiscal year through an 'Open Budget Discussion' on 5 May 2014, Mr Ali was one of more than a thousand people who attended. "We are facing huge difficulty in preparing and cultivating land for cropping due to lack power tillers. It would be better for us if the Upazila Parishad provide some power tillers and rent those to us in subsidize cost which will surely save our time and money for cultivation," he demanded. Other farmers participated in the budget discussion seconded him.

"What I have been a part of today fills my heart with pride, that one of the upazilas of the country has announced its budget through an open discussion with its residents," Md. Momin Akand, another elderly person hailed from Prajapara village under Pirganj Union of the Upazila said at the end of the session.

Pirganj Upazila Parishad was one of 487 UZPs of the country to announce and hold an open discussion on budget for fiscal year 2014-2015.

"Until last year, we hadn't seen any participatory plan and budget for my upazila. This is the second consecutive year the Upazila Parishad is going to prepare the plan and budget having discussions with its residents that prioritise their demands and addresses problems," said Mr Akand. "This is democracy," he stressed.

The total budget of Tk 2.61 crore (roughly US



\$334,615) was to place special emphasis on education, health and information and communications technology.

Before announcing the budget, the Upazila Parishad, with the support from Upazila Governance Project (UZGP), had held a series of pre-budget meetings and consultations with a cross-section of citizens, professionals, civil society members and local journalists to identify local problems, demands and priorities and incorporate those in the budget. Immediately after launching its journey in 2012, the UZGP has provided General and Specialised trainings to Chairs, Vice-chairs and Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) of all 487 UZPs of the country to make the UZPs more effective and service-oriented for citizens.

"The training given by the UZGP has helped us in preparing the plans and budget. We now know how to prepare the budget more meticulously and in a more participatory manner," said Mr. Nur Md. Mondol, Chairman of Pirganj Upazila Parishad. "And this was possible for the knowledge and skills we got from the trainings provided by the UZGP," he added.

"This open budget discussion demonstrates how vibrant the Upazila Parishad is and we are really happy to see elected public representatives, citizens, government officials, members of the civil society, NGOs and media contribute towards making the budget more democratic, transparent and participatory," he said.

"It's a great demonstration of a pluralistic society where decisions were taken through wider public opinion by consultations and we expect that this practice will be supported through legislation soon," Mr. Farid Ahamad,

Deputy Commissioner, Rangpur district, who was present at the discussion as chief guest, said.

A lively discussion for and against the budget allocations of the UZP for FY 2014-2015 was also held soon after announcing the budget. "There is no allocation for disabled and marginalized people in the budget," Sadek Ali, 57, and a father of 11-year old physically-challenged boy, said, adding, "It would be really good if the Upazila Parishad provide us some wheelchairs so that the physically-challenged students and elderly people can go to school and work."

"The roads and hat-bazaars (markets) should be repaired and renovated so that we can take our products to hat-bazaars and sell it," Chand Mian, another farmer of the Upazila, demanded.

Priyanka Rani, a female resident from Projapara village under Pirganj Sadar union, hailed UZGP for providing them training on pottery and equipment to revitalize the "comatose pottery industry".

The women entrepreneurs receiving the "Sataranji Training" provided by the UZGP recently, demanded to allocate fund to continue the training and help marketing the products to national and international levels.

"We could not prepare the budget from 2009 to 2011 as UZP functionaries had no knowledge or training how to prepare it. Now, after getting the training provided by the UZGP, the UZPs are much more capable and confident in preparing the budget in a participatory manner," said ATM Ziaul Islam, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Pirganj Upazila.

RESULT 3:

LGD DEMONSTRATES IMPROVED CAPACITY BY TAKING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN PROVIDING POLICY GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TO UZPs FOR EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND MANDATED RESPONSIBILITIES

The UZGP has provided technical assistance to LGD in drafting a planning guideline, and relevant Rules and Regulations to make UZPs more functional. The planning guideline was shared by LGD with the Planning Commission and comments made by the latter were addressed. The planning guideline was then placed before the National Committee on Upazila Affairs, and, after approval, it was accordingly shared with all UZPs. Accordingly, LGD asked all UZPs to prepare their Five-Year and Annual Development Plans by 31st March 2015.

In addition to this, UZGP also provided technical assistance to LGD in drafting six Rules pertaining to the Upazila Parishads in 2014.

UZGP has also supported in drafting three model Regulations pertaining to Upazila Parishads' conduct of business, conduct of meetings, and delegation of power. The drafted Rules are currently under review of LGD prior to being forwarded to the Ministry of Law for vetting.

In 2014, the project has provided support to the government in conducting five policy researches that examined current local governance challenges and Bangladesh and determined policy actions required for the improved performance of LGIs. They are currently being published and disseminated.

It is noteworthy to mention that due to advocacy from UZGP, LGD issued an Official Order to all UZPs instructing them to ensure nomination of a designated Information Officer. As a direct result, 65 UZPs have already confirmed their nominations and others are in a process of finalizing the name of the Information Officer. Information Officers, along with their respective Upazila Chair, from 65 UZPs already received training on the Right to Information (RTI) Act and Digital Bangladesh vision.

UZGP's Assistance in Drafting UZP Rules:

- ✔ Maintenance and Publication of Record, Reports;
- ✔ Custody, Administration, regulation and Investment;
- ✔ Maintenance of Accounts and Audit;
- ✔ Conduct of Officers and Staff for Maintenance of Property;
- ✔ Appeal Against Orders; and
- ✔ Upazila Parishad Chairmen, Vice Chairmen and Members' Resignation, Removal and Vacation of Office.
- ✔ Upazila Parishad Tax Rule and Schedule.



POLICY RESEARCHES WITH UZGP SUPPORT:

- ✔ Local Government system in Bangladesh: Comparative perspective and practices
- ✔ Functional Assignment to Local Governments (Union Parishad and Upazila levels) in the delivery of health and education services (Part I & II)
- ✔ Review of local government laws towards a uniform local government legislation
- ✔ Local government financing that includes fund flow system grant, taxation, accounting and audit practices
- ✔ Prospects of a Uniform Tax schedule/regime for LGIs in Bangladesh
- ✔ Citizen Perception Survey on Service Delivery: Upazila Parishad and Union Parishad.



Beyond The Result Matrix: Empowering Women

Gender mainstreaming across project activities and establishment of 200 Women Development Forums (WDFs) in 2014 for elected women representatives to network and build partnerships



304 Master Trainers

Received ToT on WDFs



4093 WDF MEMBERS

Received 2-day orientation training at 126 UZPs



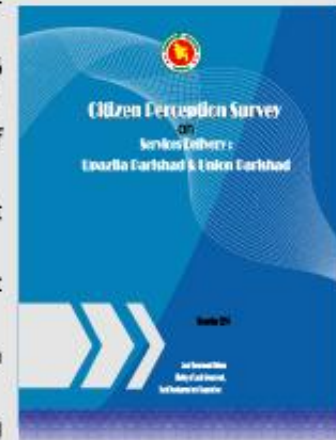
63 UZPs

Completed campaign against child marriage, dowry and food adulterations

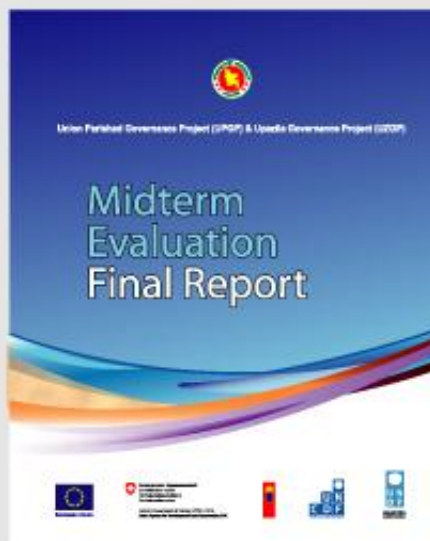
Overall Key Achievements For UZGP

Main findings of Citizen Perception Survey (CPS) on Service Provided by Local Government Institutions as well as Assessment of Results Achieved by UZGP Survey, November 2014:

- Citizen Charter was displayed in 100 percent Upazilas in project areas, compared to being displayed in 76.9 percent of control Upazilas.
- All the UZPs (100 percent) in project areas took initiatives on RTI Act compliance while this figure in control areas was 92.3 percent.
- People aware of their UZP having an Annual Development Plan was 19.6 percent in project areas compared to 13.9 percent respondents in control areas.
- 29.3 percent of respondents in project areas and 22.8 percent of respondents in control areas knew about UZP council meetings.
- All the UZPs (100 percent) in project areas developed their Annual Development Plan for the year 2013-14 whereas in the control areas it was 84.6 percent.
- 19.3 percent of the respondents knew about their UZP budget in project areas compared to 13.2 percent in control areas.
- 100 percent Upazilas in project areas compared to 92.3 percent Upazilas in control areas prepared their budget.
- 57.5 percent of the respondents in project areas were satisfied (including highly satisfied) with the activities performed by UZP while control areas showed only 40.3 percent satisfaction.
- 59.7 percent of respondents were aware of the Women Development Forum (WDF) in project areas while the figure in control areas was far lower at 29.4 percent.



Key Achievements as noted by the Mid-Term Evaluation Team, December 2014:



- MTE confirmed UZP meeting procedures are better recorded and maintained, showing participation of both male and female representatives. The MTE also confirmed that the governance process and procedures are relatively better in project areas compared to control UZPs.
- 100 percent of UZPs became enabled to form Standing Committees as compared to 50 percent in 2012, and 40 percent of the formed UZP Standing Committees conducted mandatory meetings.
- MTE stated democratic oversight, civic engagement, transparency and accountability are improving significantly in target UZPs compared to non-targeted UZP due to workshops at UZP level aimed at local administration, civil society, NGOs and CBOs.
- The project has contributed to improving functional and institutional capacities of UZPs in the target areas to ensure effective and accountable delivery of services and responsive governance, but has also contributed to the improved performance of UZPs nationwide through general capacity building.
- UZGP investments are reflected in the level of citizens' satisfaction within project areas with the services provided by their UZP (58 percent) as compared to the control group where only 40 percent of respondents are satisfied with the services.
- Budgeting and planning in project areas engaged citizens, while no such examples in control areas was observed. This was equated as significant progress in UZP planning process with MDG orientation.
- The utilization of UZGP's UFF has led to the implementation of schemes focused on achievement of MDGs at the local level and the combination of capacity building support, incentives and grants have been instrumental in achieving a greater level of schemes targeting MDGs.



UZGP Year in Numbers



The banner text includes: মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর স্বাস্থ্য সমাজিক সচেতনতা ও উন্নয়ন বিষয়ক সচিবালয়, কুমিল্লা ও কর্মশালা

120 schemes

undertaken by 14
select UZPs

**304,666
beneficiaries**

received direct
benefit from UFF
schemes

**70 million
BDT**

disbursed to select
14 UZPs as UFF
grants

3,685

stakeholders

received 5-day
general training
on UZP Law and
Administration

2,965

stakeholders

joined local level
mapping of CSOs,
CBOs and NGOs

7,253

stakeholders

participated in open
sessions on UZP Plan
and Budget

251 media

stakeholders

attended day-long
workshop aimed at
promoting reporting
of LGI development
interventions

29,846

people

participated in
social mobilization
and awareness
programme

SECTION 2:

Progress Towards Outputs

OUTPUT 1:

Strengthened Upazila Parishads as more Functional, Democratic, Transparent and Accountable Institutions

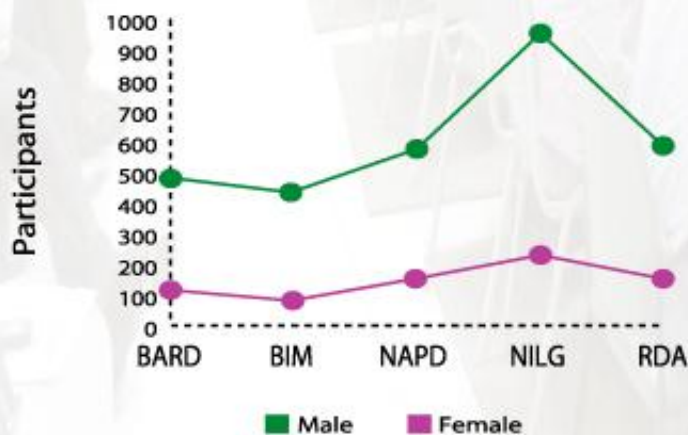
Initiatives and Trainings

General Training for Capacity Development for UZPs:

Capacity of the key UZP functionaries was enhanced significantly through a five-day General Training on Upazila Parishad Law and Administration provided by the project. UZGP has organised the training to orient the newly elected (4th Upazila Parishad) UZP representatives along with key line department officials to manage UZP affairs effectively. A total of 3,685 participants from 487 UZPs have received the training, of them, 2,979 are male and 706 are female. Eight participants from each Upazila includes Upazila Chair, Vice-Chairs, UNO, Upazila Engineer, Upazila Education Officer, Upazila Agriculture Officer and Upazila Family Planning Officer took part in the training.

Five national training institutes—National Institute of Local Government (NILG), Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Bangladesh Institute of Management (BIM), Rural Development Academy (RDA) and National Academy for Planning and Development (NAPD) conducted the training in 111 batches.

Training on UZP Law and Administration



Source: UZGP Data

Output 1 Initiatives and Trainings: continued



Specialised Training on Planning and Budgeting, Leadership and Management and Financial Management and PPR of 200 UZPs :

Upon declaration of the fourth Upazila Parishad elections, UZGP management has revisited the training plan and decided to drop the Specialised Training and merge the budget session with General Training to cover newly elected public representatives along with the key line department officials. The duration of General Training was increased to five days from three days to include some content in the training issues e.g. planning and budgeting.

Orientation on Finalisation of General and Specialised Training Module and Preparation of Lesson Plan:

UZGP in consultation with the training institutes came to the consensus that experts from the training institutes would finalize the training schedule and content through email communications instead of physical meetings and split the workshop days in 3 different slots instead of consecutive 3-4 days. Training schedule and content were finalised through e-communications and sessions were also allocated to individual experts to prepare the draft and share with each other for review and inputs prior to physically meeting in a formal workshop. Such initiative enabled effective engagement of experts and reduced the costs. Participants utilized two days to review the draft materials in a big group and met for one day to finalize the draft. The final version of the training module was shared with respective institutes for preparation. A one day orientation was provided to a 50-member Facilitator/ Trainers' pool to effectively delivering the sessions.



Orientation for Members of the 65 UZPs under 7 Districts:

A day-long orientation was organized for the members (UP Chairs and Municipality Mayors) of UZPs along with elected public representatives of UZPs to improve their understanding on Upazila Parishad Act, ADP and revenue fund utilization guideline so that they effectively participate in managing UZP resources. A total of 722 participants from all 65 UZPs in select 7 districts received this orientation. The orientation enabled effective utilization of ADP grants by altering the conventional practices of dividing the allocations to UPs.

Name of District	Participants attending one day orientation by District						
	UZP Chair	UNO	Vice-Chair	Female Vice Chair	UP Chair	Other	Total
Kishoreganj	11	11	13	13	97	0	145
Khulna	7	7	8	7	48	5	82
Sirajganj	9	9	9	9	70	8	114
Sunamganj	11	11	11	11	87	0	131
Barguna	6	6	6	5	42	7	72
Brahmanbaria	7	6	8	6	36	0	63
Rangpur	8	8	8	8	76	7	115
Total	59	58	63	59	456	27	722

Training on Improving Coaching, Mentoring and Backstopping Support Skills of DLGs and DDLGs:

The UZGP has organised a three-day training on Coaching, Mentoring and backstopping support to improve coaching, mentoring skills of the officials concerned to enable hands on support during their monitoring visits. A total of 70 participants including all Directors, Local Government (DLGs) and Deputy Directors, Local Government (DDLGs) along with Divisional Facilitators (DVs) and District Facilitators (DFs) of UZGP received this training aimed at improving UZPs performance in holding regular monthly meetings and improving the documentation etc.



Preparing and Publishing Plan and Budget Book in UZPs:



All 65 Upazila Parishads in select seven (7) districts have organised a day-long workshop in order to better organise the planning process by having citizen engagement, integrating departmental support and articulating and analyzing relevant information. Such workshop enabled UZPs to develop a detailed Action Plan for developing the Information, Plan and Budget Book.

Nationwide peer dialogue/ exchange visit events to promote good practices:

Exchange visits were organised at division and district level. The divisional team, under the leadership of respective DLG, and district team with their respective DDLGs visited project UZPs that have developed their plan book, implemented MDG focused schemes under UFF grants, and WDF interventions to enable learning from each other's practices through the sharing of experiences. All the teams prepared a brief visit report and action plan to apply their learning that included plans on how to focus on and ensure the sustainability of schemes e.g. how community people took up ownership of running the school feeding program after the completion of the schemes in Sunamganj or how to explore co-financing and resource mobilization for implementing development projects. In addition to the interlinked learning themes of sustainability, community ownership and co-financing/resource mobilization, the teams looked at how community engagement can be ensured in the schemes' selection and implementation process, as well as how to accurately assess the schemes' benefits. These major thematic areas were addressed when developing their action plan after returning from the exchange visit. It should also be noted that UNOs, UZP Chairs and Vice Chairs took part in additional district-level visits as well. Such visits enabled practical learning to plan for feasible scheme implementation and also enhanced networking among the UZPs. However, some visits had to reschedule due to political situation, which was a major barrier for this initiative until the situation improved.



Support UZPs in holding open sessions on Planning and Budgeting:

A total of 133 UZPs including 65 UZPs in project areas completed open sessions on Plan and Budget, with the active participation of local communities. A total of 7,253 participants (of which 5,802 were male and 1,451 were female) took part in the discussion and helped prioritizing the local development interventions and contributed to developing long-term plans. These open session meetings helped bring together the community, CSO, NGO representatives, government officials and elected representatives to analyze the need and identify the priorities for selecting development schemes as well as potential collaboration in implementing projects.

Name of District	Participants attended in open sessions on Planning and Budgeting		
	Male	Female	Total
Kishoreganj	1080	197	1277
Khulna	533	90	623
Sirajganj	792	274	1066
Sunamganj	1194	289	1483
Barguna	521	157	678
Brahmanbaria	890	170	1060
Rangpur	792	274	1066
Total	5802	1451	7253



Finalization of ongoing UZP legislation framework (Law, By-laws, Rules, Regulations, Probidhan and Guideline):

UZGP supported the Local Government Division (LGD) in drafting seven Rules and three Regulations directly relating to the functional assignment of UZPs. LGD has taken deliberate initiative to review the draft and engage all relevant officials. UZGP is now supporting LGD in addressing the review recommendations and sharing the final draft with the Ministry of Law for vetting.

Mapping of local level CSOs, NGOs and CBOs to assess the capabilities and expertise of these organizations at 65 UZPs:

Upazila Parishads in select seven (7) districts organised workshops with the representatives of NGOs, CSOs and CBOs to better understand their scope of work, coverage, services and major beneficiaries with a view to explore opportunities for future engagement and integration of services as well as avoid duplication of services. A total of 2965 participants from different organizations took part in those workshops and provided

information on their work that enabled UZPs to improve coordination of services with existing local services.



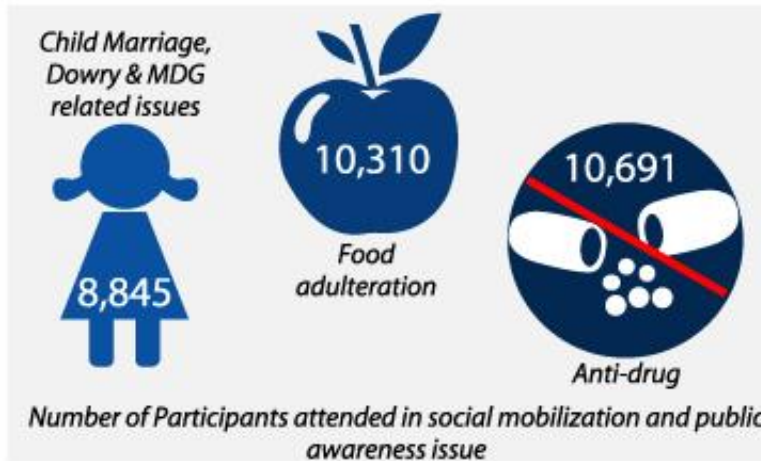
Total Participants attending CSO mapping workshops: 2965

Issue-based sharing meeting/ orientation with health, education and agriculture focused NGOs/CSOs:

All 65 UZPs in select seven (7) districts and another 63 UZPs from non-project areas, organised three workshops to improve the education, health and agriculture related services and aimed at facilitating grassroots discussion. Such workshops enabled local voices to be heard by the UZPs, encouraged LGIs to take affirmative action to improve target services by undertaking appropriate development interventions, and put emphasis on the needs identified during these workshops. The workshops enabled interactions between the government service provider and the service recipients which contributed to promote an enabling environment of improving services.

Social mobilization/ public awareness on child marriage, dowry & MDG related issues:

All 65 UZPs in select seven (7) districts have organised social awareness campaign against early marriage, dowry and food adulteration with a view to reduce the incidence of violence against women and children as well as create awareness among the traders and consumers on the danger of food adulteration. The UZPs led these campaigns involving government officials, education institutes, traders' associations, marriage registers, representatives from local clubs, social leaders, NGOs and CSOs. These campaigns included organising an in-house seminar followed by a rally where a mass amount of people turned out to participate. These campaigns resulted in developing a broader action plan to take action against violence against women and improve bazaar food monitoring on a periodical basis.



Training on RTI Act 2009 for designated Information Officers and UZP representatives:

A three-day long training was organised to orient designated Information Officials of 65 UZPs along with the UZP Chair to the RTI Act. National Institute of Local Government (NILG) in Dhaka conducted the training in five batches which included a total of 122 participants. Participants were supported to open email accounts and briefed on how to download and upload information to the web portal.



Media workshops to promote role of LGs:



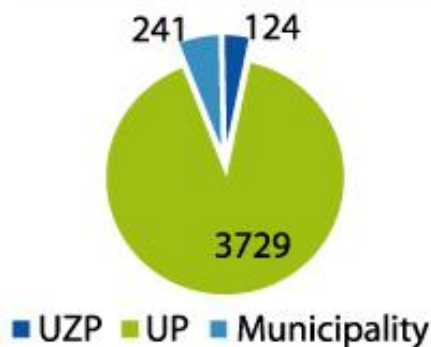
Seven media workshops were organised on local governance issues in select seven (7) districts involving the media professionals in both electronic and print media. Upazila Parishad representatives along with the DDLGs shared information on UZGP and UPGP's work on the ground and urged them to write more reports on development interventions by the local government institutions (LGs). The workshops discussed the important role of media in portraying good practices on the ground and playing its role as watchdog in improving transparency and accountability of LGs activities. A total of 251 participants attended the media workshops and expressed their interest in reporting on LGs activities.

Support WDF formation workshop:

A day-long workshop was organised in 200 UZPs to form WDF at Upazila level under 26 districts where a total of 6359 women representative attended (of which 5696 women were from Union Parishads, 201 from Upazila Parishads and 419 from Poaurashavas). The participants were oriented on functions, roles and responsibilities of women representatives as WDF members. Women representatives demonstrated their high enthusiasm and expressed wish to form the forum and elect their office-bearers as Executive Committee members. As a result, 200 WDFs were formed with a range of 7-11 members in the Executive Committee. In addition, the workshop also identified the challenges for WDFs and future actions. Participants urged the new leadership to consider working on the socio-economic development of women and addressing gender issues in Parishad activities.



WDF member attending Orientation Training, by level



Orientation training for WDF members:

A two-day training was provided to improve the capacity of WDF members so that they can raise their voices to LGIs for gender responsive planning, budgeting and implementing development schemes targeting women. Master Trainers, upon receiving the TOT, provided training to 4093 WDF members at Upazila level where women members from UPs and municipalities took part along with the Women Vice Chairs from 126 UZPs under 16 Districts. Major contents covered in the orientation include Gender Relations at LGIs (UZP, UP & Poaurashava), Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting at the Parishad, Gender Responsiveness in LGIs, and Resource Mobilization and Networking.

Support WDF for holding Bi-Monthly Meeting:

WDFs in 191 UZPs are regularly holding bi-monthly meetings. A total of 932 meetings were held both at Upazila and District level with the support of the program. This meeting enabled WDF members to share their achievements and challenges and to learn from each other's experiences in addressing the issues of preventing dowry, child marriage, polygamy, divorce and eve teasing as well undertaking schemes through LGIs for benefiting women. In addition, they discussed the issue of registration and took collective action for registration. Twelve WDFs got registration from Women Affairs Department.

During the reporting period WDF contributed in preventing:

- 417 early marriages
- 225 dowries
- 183 sexual harassments
- 303 others types of violence against women

OUTPUT 2:

STRENGTHENED PLANNING AND BUDGETARY SYSTEM AT UZP WITH MDG-ORIENTATION AND PRO-POOR SERVICE DELIVERY MECHANISM

Initiatives and Trainings

First and second tranche of UFF performance-based grants (PBGs) for FY 2013-2014:

Under UZGP's UFF, support allocations to Upazilas were calculated and the first tranche of Performance-based Grants (PBGs) totaling BDT 35 million were disbursed to 14 UZPs. UZGP disbursed the second tranche for 2013-2014 to 14 Upazilas on time. UZPs receiving UFF support are implementing 120 schemes, covering a total 304,666 direct beneficiaries (of which 1,47,562 are female) and indirectly benefiting approximately 2,15,236 beneficiaries.

Direct and Indirect Schemes Beneficiaries by District

SL	Name of UZPs	Total # schemes	Direct Beneficiaries			Indirect Beneficiaries		
			Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
1	Brahmanbaria	11	12800	13200	25000	19000	18500	37500
2	Bancharampur	11	8500	10200	18700	12500	14500	27000
3	Barguna	6	6250	9000	15250	1650	2900	4550
4	Betagi	7	6800	8650	15450	1650	2550	4200
5	Jagannathpur	17	12200	16050	28250	4650	4950	9600
6	Sulla	9	6000	4700	10700	3800	4150	7950
7	Kazipur	8	18530	23400	41930	8875	8875	17750
8	Pirgaccha	9	6772	7659	14441	12902	22199	35221
9	Pirganj	9	570	325	895	2560	380	2940
10	Ullapara	8	9250	9000	18250	450	450	900
11	Dakop	7	30240	29000	59240	4100	3275	7375
12	Dumuria	10	11580	9410	20990	5750	4650	10400
13	Kishoreganj	3	8100	6500	14600	19000	25500	44500
14	Mithamoin	5	9970	11000	20970	2350	3000	5350
	Total	120	147562	158094	304666	99237	115879	215236

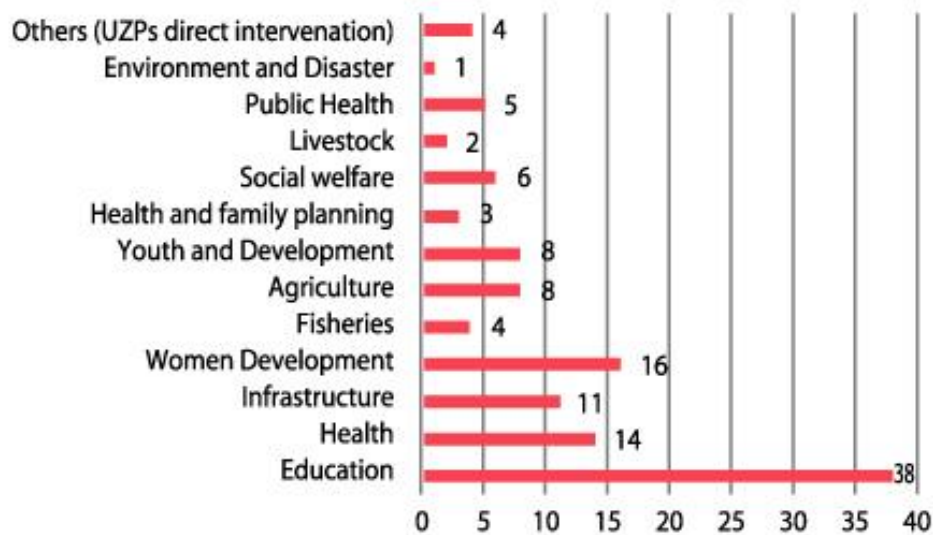
Source: UZGPM & F Data.

Output 2 Initiatives and Trainings

Sectorally Focused, Locally-driven Schemes:

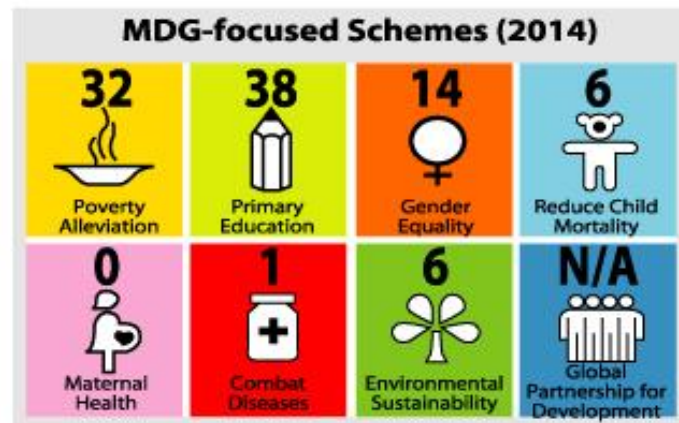
The graph below depicts the wide range of sectors touched by UZPs and developed schemes to address the needs of the constituents. Distribution of schemes by sectors demonstrates the highest priority on poverty eradication, education and women's empowerment- all of which are aligned with MDGs. UZPs have identified the off-track MDG areas (such as maternal health and combatting diseases and considered undertaking more schemes to address those which reflects their increased understanding and commitment in achieving the target of MDG.

Number of schemes by Sectors -UZGP



UZGP: Supporting the localization of MDGs

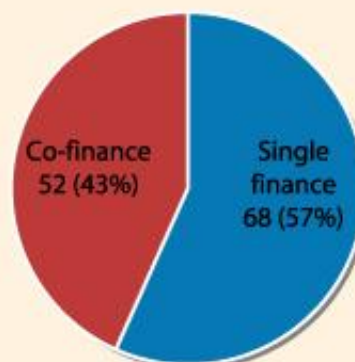
The infographic shows a total of 97 out of 120 schemes are directly linked to MDG focused areas. It depicts that the majority of UZP schemes concentrated on education and poverty. However, women's empowerment and gender issues were also given due importance along with environmental protection.



Financing status of UFF schemes

UZGP and UFF put special emphasis on co-financing and encouraged UZPs to consider co-financing and implementing tangible and feasible schemes. The diagram depicts that 43 percent of schemes were co-financed in 2013-14 FY which is significant progress compared to the previous year. This relatively high percentage demonstrates the attitudinal shift of UZP representatives in terms of greater ownership and accountability for locally-proposed schemes. It is observed that co-financing is done in partnership with UPs, NGOs and community contributions which is a further progress towards widening engagement of CSOs, NGOs and community in UZPs' development work.

Financing status of schemes



Carrying out financial audit minimum conditions through independent sub-contracting:



One of the key activities for 2014 was a financial management assessment of Upazilas. The objective was to review how fiscal resources in the form of grants were used in the 14 supported Upazilas. It was outsourced to an external financial audit company. The assessment looked at the cash situation, documentation, asset registrars, accounting procedures, expenditure, physical verification of schemes etc. The overall findings were positive. There were some recommendations to improve financial management practices at Upazilas, which will be incorporated in capacity building support activities in 2015.

Performance Assessment of Upazilas for 2014-15 fiscal year:

Bangladesh Institute of Management (BIM) in Dhaka was selected to carry out performance assessments of 65 Upazilas to identify the best performing 14 Upazilas, who will be consequently received PBGs, for 2014-15 fiscal year. Field work (data collection) is on-going in the field for assessment. Upon completion of the assessment, the first tranche will be disbursed by first quarter in 2015.



MDG and socio-economic impact assessment by government institutions of UFF in 14 UZPs:



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) was selected through a competitive process to conduct the assessment. BIDS has already shared the draft Inception Report along with the field plan but could not move into the field due to political impasse in 2014. It has already developed relevant tools and is ready to move forward once the situation improves.

Orientation training/workshop on performance based criteria of UFF and Financial Management capacity facilitation:

A total 65 UZPs have received orientation in seven (7) Districts in 2014 on the performance based criteria of UFF.



A 15-day "Skill Development Training on Nakshi Kantha weaving for women entrepreneurs" provided by the UZGP at Jagannathpur Upazila Parishad, Sunamganj district helped rural poor women to enhance their livelihood skills which eventually bringing the ultra-poor communities out of poverty and empowering the women.

OUTPUT 3:

STRENGTHENED NATIONAL CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE POLICY REVIEW, MONITORING, LESSON LEARNING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS (LGIs) FOR ENHANCED LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Initiatives and Trainings

Five policy researches on local governance reform and effective decentralization and one survey completed

- ✔ Local Government system in Bangladesh: Comparative perspective and practices
- ✔ Functional Assignment to Local Governments (Union Parishad and Upazila levels) in the delivery of health and education services (Part I & II)
- ✔ Review of local government laws towards a uniform local government legislation
- ✔ Local government financing that includes fund flow system grant, taxation, accounting and audit practices
- ✔ Prospects of a Uniform Tax schedule/regime for LGIs in Bangladesh
- ✔ Citizen Perception Survey on Service Delivery: Upazila Parishad and Union Parishad.



Output 3 Initiatives and Trainings

Data base as identified in all outputs developed (MIS systems):



UZGP M&E and MIS professionals supported installation of a database and provided hands on training on the MIS database and MIS software to project staff (DVF, DF and Project Assistant). A prototype has been developed to capture data in four customized forms. These forms are being piloted with the assistance of DVF, DF, and DDLG from seven Districts. In addition, a prototype has been developed to capture data on UFF Schemes, WDF training workshops and WDF Master Trainers, and General training information. Such installations and trainings will improve the capacity of district and divisional offices to collect information and produce outputs. It will also enable DLG and DDLGs to take the necessary action to improve performance of UZPs based on adequate information and evidence.

UZGP supports Structured M&E for LGD:

An Operational M&E Strategy and a toolkit for monitoring the performance of key local governance indicators/ mechanisms was developed with the support of UZGP. Quarterly reviews and joint monitoring are organized at district level using these monitoring tools.



Finalization of Citizen Perception Survey (CPS) and Result Capture in collaboration with UPGP



In 2014, a CPS was conducted to delve into and understand how citizens perceive and value the services made available by LGIs and to assess the results achieved so far by UZGP and UPGP against their respective annual work plans. The CPS revealed that 81 percent of respondents were of the opinion that UFF supported projects are contributing to improving the socio-economic condition of poor and marginalized citizens. Around 81 percent of people believe that UZPs have implemented development schemes in a transparent manner.

Conduct of international study tours and international capacity building:

Six persons including NPD, Focal Person, one Deputy Secretary and DLG along with Project Manager and Assistant Country Director of UNDP have received international training on Local Service Delivery in the Hague Academy, the Netherlands. Participants have developed an action plan to apply the learning of the training course which already included in AWP-2015 for implementation.



UZGP/UPGP progress review meetings at divisional level with key line department official, DLG & DDLG:



DLG offices in 7 divisions took initiative to have project progress reviewed twice in 2014 inviting concerned DDLGs and senior officials of transferred line departments. DDLGs are asked to come up with a brief report on UZPs performance using a prescribed format to capture information on UZP meeting, Committee meeting, planning and budgeting as well as utilization of resources. In addition, coordination and cooperation from line departments are reviewed in presence of Divisional Commissioner and senior officials. This meeting was found fruitful regarding improved coordination as well as increased monitoring of UZPs by DDLGs.

Output 4 : Effective Project Management

Annual Planning Workshop

UZGP organized an Annual Planning Workshop in Cox's Bazar during 12-13 December where Mr. Monzur Hossain, Senior Secretary, LGD took part as Chief Guest and representatives from development partners including Ms. Selina Miah, Regional Manager of UNCDF and Ms. Shaila Khan, ACD, UNDP along with UNDP staff members took part in the workshop. The workshop was a big gathering of UZGP staff, with DLGs and DDLGs from 7 districts. This event facilitated the opportunity to reflect on achievements and challenges faced in 2014 for better planning for 2015.

Based on this reflection, a draft plan for 2015 was presented by the Project Manager and Focal Person of UZGP. In addition, findings and recommendations of MTE were also shared and decisions were made to include relevant activities in their AWP to address the recommendations made by the MTE.

Staff Coordination Meeting on bi-annual basis:

Two coordination meetings were held in 2014. Both meetings were held at NILG. Mr. Md. Shah Kamal, Additional Secretary (Admin), LGD and National Project Director (NPD), UZGP, and Mr. Akram-al-Hossain,

Joint Secretary, LGD and UZGP Focal Person, chaired both meetings. The first meeting had 54 participants, while the second had 47 attendees, both of which included DLGs and DDLGs of seven pilot UZPs and all the staff of UZGP. The Local Governance Cluster team and UZGP PMU and field team were also present in the meeting.

In-country LG and decentralization training by external international expert for LG stakeholders:

A five-day training on "Decentralization and Local Government" conducted by the Hague Academy experts in Cox's Bazar where 34 participant from senior government officials including project staff participated. This training paved the way improved understanding and sensitization of government officials on the importance of decentralization for improve service delivery.

Procurement (Equipment & Furniture):

As per the procurement plan, UZGP has procured five Laptops, nine Multimedia, two Mobile sets, one water dispenser, one Vacuum cleaner, one TV, six Stand fans, one Oven, one Refrigerator, two Cameras, one Photocopier and one Generator. Asset register is maintained and updated regularly.



Staff of the Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) are attending a Staff Coordination meeting at Rural Development Academy (RDA), Bogra.



A large billboard containing the information on the schemes taken with the support from fiscal facility grant provided by Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) and its implementation status is seen in the picture.

SECTION 3:

Challenges and The Way Forward

LESSONS LEARNT

Due to the national parliament election and the Upazila election, 2014 was a challenging period for Bangladesh. During this period, the focus of UZP elected stakeholders was split between responding to national electoral landscape and their struggle to maintain UZP as an important tier of sub national government. UZGP, being the lone programme supporting UZPs at an institutional and individual level by providing capacity building, was met with high demand and expectations on the government's side for its outreach and implementation.

Some lessons learnt from the field are as follows:

- Capacity building and technical assistance support backed by the UFF contributed to make the UZPs more accountable
- Creation of WDF promoted gender responsive planning, budgeting, improved women's voice and leadership in decision making and addressed violence against women and children
- Soft guidance on utilization of PBG worked better in focusing on MDG off-tracked areas and also improved horizontal linkage with UPs
- Capacity development of elected and line department officials is invaluable in making UZP a more accountable service provider
- Divisional level coordination of senior officials of transferred departments is important for administrative accountability of LD officials transferred to UZP
- Issue-based workshops and special sessions on plan and budget preparation as well as awareness campaigns were found to be an effective instrument to ensure citizen engagement and peoples' participation in the Upazila Parishad affairs.
- Standing Committees could play very important role in reflecting the actual needs and priorities of the grassroots people in planning and budgeting of the Upazila Parishad
- Six monthly progress review meetings act as a platform for continuous monitoring, sharing ideas and improvement
- Design project's activities in such a way that it supports institutional performance through demonstration effect

Mitigation Of Challenges

Challenges/ Risks	Mitigation measures/ Way forward
Schemes proposed by UZPs are not well elaborated hence take longer time from LGD for clearance that affect implementation	Project is providing technical support in proposal review process and completing missing information to speed-up the process with LGD.
Election of Women members at UZP	Policy advocacy through LGD to Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC)
Slow implementation as a result of slow process in getting contractor for providing services	Encourage pilot UZPs to develop a pool of contractor/ service providers i.e. enlistment of relevant vendors
Inadequate backstopping and mentoring support to UZPs due to absence of full time DDLG in districts especially in the pilot districts	Keep continuous communication with LGD to influence Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA) to ensure posting of DDLGs
Functioning of UZP Committees suffers from competent UZP Vice Chairs	Special initiative should be taken to improve the capacity of Vice-Chairs for effectively and confidently handling the committee meetings.

MTE RECOMMENDATIONS

UZGP Management:

- 1) The performance assessment process should be accelerated to ensure that it fits with the UZP annual planning and budgeting cycle (results should be ready before the planning process starts)
- 2) The performance assessment results must be communicated in full detail to the LGIs and their citizens to ensure maximum transparency, accountability and incentives
- 3) The performance assessments should continue to be conducted by external, neutral teams of assessors/auditors as per the UPGP/LGSP and the first rounds of assessments under the UZGP. The principle that assessors involved in CB support cannot at the same time do the assessments of the same UZPs should be maintained
- 4) The internal performance assessments by UZP, conducted in 2013 prior to the external assessments, should be reintroduced to ensure that LGIs are well prepared and aware, when the external assessments are launched. This will serve as a strong internal learning tool and also supports the external assessment
- 5) The system of QA of the performance results, decision-making and appeal should be formalized, as per the lessons learned from the UPGP/LGSP
- 6) The information and internalization of the investment menu should be strengthened to enhance a strict focus on public services (i.e. avoid the area of private investments) and to uphold the multi-sectorial discretionary objectives of the grant system.
- 7) Advocate for improvement of the ADP grant system and related guidelines to ensure that lessons learned from the piloting of UFF is impacting on review and up-date of the ADP grant guidelines
- 8) Strong linkages between the MIS and the annual performance assessments and the subsequent CB support should be supported by the project for learning and enhancing synergies (jointly with UPGP)
- 9) The planned support to the MIE Wing of LGD should be revisited. It should be considered to base a project M&E officer in LGD for a few months to ensure a comprehensive transfer of the project M&E/MIS system for national upscale. Furthermore, the links with the planned MIS development under LGSP should be intensified (jointly with UPGP)
- 10) The linkage between the external performance assessment system and the M&E system under the MIE Wing of LGD should be strengthened in terms of reviewing the indicators applied by the MIE Wing, monitoring etc. to ensure that APA results are applied in the monitoring and follow up by LGD (jointly with UPGP)

WAY FORWARD

Looking beyond project termination in 2016, it is evident that there will still be a need for international support to LGIs and reforming of the subnational government system. Even if a LGSP 3 and the upcoming JICA-support to UZPs move ahead and successfully roll out UZGP results, they cannot stand alone. Local government reforms take time and the need for support to policy development and "systemic" improvements such as the implementation of a national CB framework or an enhanced local fiscal framework remains, notwithstanding successful policy support for the remainder of the project duration. The WB and JICA support is also based on loans, not grants, and most likely there will be a need to push for new innovations on the ground, e.g. through another "LIC" project linked to LGSP and the JICA project. These arguments alone fully justify another joint UN-led LGI support program from 2016.

Based on discussions with stakeholders and the outcome of the MTE, some guiding considerations and recommendations for future programming are listed below:

Beyond 2016:

- ✓ Moving from project to programme approach
- ✓ Broadening geographical focus area of project to include weaker LGIs with lower levels of development
- ✓ Share lessons learnt from effectiveness of PBGs with LGSP and GoB's general block grants
- ✓ Explore opportunities for moving the good experiences from block grant funding into innovations on sector funding
- ✓ Expand thematic focus: continuation of the work on core LGI operations, governance, downwards accountability, PFM etc., but combine this with stronger mainstreaming of cross-cutting interventions such as human rights, local economic development, and climate change issues in local governance (climate change through a separate focused but linked project in the programmatic framework), planning and service delivery



Statement of Expenditure 2014

The Following expenditure arrived in 2014 as per final combined delivery report of 2014 against Annual Work Plan 2014

Outputs	Budget (in USD)	Expenditure (in USD)	Percentage of Expenditure
Output 1 : Strengthened Upazila Parishads as more Functional, Transparent and Accountable Institutions	2,189,910	2,419,249	110%
Output 2 : Strengthened Planning and Budgetary system at UZP with MDG Orientation and Pro-poor service delivery mechanism	1,375,129	1,056,130	77%
Output 3 : Strengthened National capacity for effective Policy review, monitoring, lesson learning and capacity development of local government institutions for enhanced Local Govrenment	485,267	436,880	90%
Output 4 : Effective Project Management	624,671	661,081	106%
Total	4,674,977	4,573,340	98%



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