

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Strengthening Partnership between People
and Local Elected Bodies for better
management of Union Parishad in
Bangladesh

Funded by
DANIDA/HRGG-PSU



7 Circuit House Road, Ramna, Dhaka-1000
Tel: 9330405, 9344225-6, Fax: 880-2-8315807
E-mail dwatch@bangla.net, Website: www.dwatch-bd.org

Contents

0. Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction:.....	4
2. Overall Project development.....	5
2.1 Evaluation of the pertinence of the project strategy, and eventual need for adjustments	5
2.2 Overall progress in relation to immediate objectives	5
2.3 Overall status on expenditure.....	6
2.4 Overall evaluation of achievements in relation to expenditure	6
3. Achievements.....	7
3.1 General Project Status and Performance.....	7
3.2 Achievements in terms of output	10
3.3 Discussion and analysis of progress and setbacks	20
3.4 Influence of external factors (Risks and assumptions)	21
3.5 Evaluation of achievements (outputs) in relation to expenditure	21
3.6 Justification of eventual lack of consistency	22
3.7 Challenges and way forward.....	22
4. Implementation mechanisms	22
4.1 The functioning of steering mechanisms, project management, planning, monitoring and administration.....	22
4.2 Progress in relation to donor coordination and harmonization.....	23
5. Budget and disbursement plan.....	23

Attachment:

1. Paper Clipping

0. Executive Summary

Democracywatch has been implementing ‘People’s Reporting Centre: Strengthening Partnership between People and Local elected Bodies for better management of Union Parishad in Bangladesh’ at 28 unions in Bangladesh since March 2006. The objective of the project was to let the poor and disadvantaged people gain access to better services concerning health, education, agriculture and alternative dispute resolution. Moreover, the project worked to increase people’s participation in budgeting, planning, implementation and monitoring of UP activities and get people’s organization such as Citizen Committees, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community Based Organization (CBOs) involved in the monitoring process of the project. The project contributed towards establishing an accountable and transparent Union Parishad in the project areas. There was scope for strengthening institutional capacity of Democracywatch and Partner NGOs while implementing the Project.

Key developments: Democracywatch undertook a number of activities during the last year which has enhanced people’s participation in UPs development and financial planning. Without the assistance of PRC 20 UPs conducted open budget. These UPs have identified their local needs through ward level pre-budget meetings. Citizen committee members met regularly and put forwarded their recommendations to UP through ward level 112 monthly meetings as well as 168 coordination meetings. UP representatives, standing committee members, representatives from service delivery bodies and CC members took part in these meetings. PRC coordination meetings were significant as it was a multi-stakeholder forum to discuss local problems and needs. During the reporting period the organization successfully facilitated the process of resolving 88 local disputes of which many were on land, early marriage, dowry and domestic violence against women. Local community received information on holding tax, service delivery, resource mobilization and UP Act 2009 through 504 yard meetings. During the reporting period Democracywatch conducted more than ten policy advocacy events and placed reform recommendations to the policymakers.

Problems and proposed solutions: If we broadly analyze the problems that we experienced during the reporting period were as follows,

1. Programme level: Due to delay in NGOAB approval (approval of revised budget and fund clearance) we receive the funding lately, but we overcome this challenge and conduct all the activities in stipulated time.
2. Management level: PRC Project ended this year therefore some field level staff lost their inspiration. DW management took required initiatives to motivate staff.
3. Policy level: UP representatives do not have enough knowledge about new UP Act 2009 as many of them did not receive the copy of act yet. UPs are not interested to initiate the implementation of the act as they did not receive any direction from the government. We have conducted orientation for the elected representatives in 27 UPs and a number of them are keen to start new initiatives. Also UPs were not keen to take any initiative as they started to take preparation for upcoming elections.

1. Introduction:

In Bangladesh, a decentralized system of Local Government (LG) based on the decentralization of powers, authorities and functions always remained a cherished goal of the people. During last one decade, local government and issues related to local governance have become the central focus of discussion and debate among the civil society activists, local government officials, researchers and other critical stakeholders including the elected office bearers of the Local Government Institutions (LGI).

Democracywatch believes that good governance can only be achieved through a strong local government with the contribution and participation of the local people. With a view to establish a society where people are able to exercise their democratic rights in all spheres of life irrespective of their socio-economic, cultural and political identity or status the organization is working in this sector seriously. After the five years journey of PRC, Democracywatch gained enormous experiences and learning, which are portrayed in this report.

2. Overall Project development

2.1 Evaluation of the pertinence of the project strategy, and eventual need for adjustments

Strategic focuses of the PRC project are,

- i) Sensitize and encourage community to participate in UP financial and development planning thus improve grassroots level service delivery and accountability of elected officials to their electorates,
- ii) Enhance multi party interaction with UP (interaction between UP, community, local administration, service delivery bodies, CBO, CSO and media),
- iii) Determine policy issues and conduct advocacy campaign to pave the ways for transparent and accountable LGI, and
- iv) Motivate UPs and citizen committee members to carry on participatory approaches that have been initiated by PRC.

Having a close look into the critical issues of LG in Bangladesh the PRC project has been developed and achieved some success in increasing public awareness about the functions of LG, initiating community participation in UP planning and decision making thus improving institutional image of LGI, improving management and institutional capacity, enhancing women's participation and determining legal and policy issues that hinder the process of decentralization. We believe with some modifications PRC can be a model for all the UPs in Bangladesh.

In the year 2006 when DW started this project, it was in our mind that participatory approaches and best practices initiated by PRC will be carried forward by another elected group of representatives. This would have had example of sustainability of the examples. But due to delay in elections for several years we could not achieve this. We strongly believe that this type of project should have the provisions for further extension and replication.

2.2 Overall progress in relation to immediate objectives

During the reporting period field level implementation are as follows: Jessore 100%, Nilphamari 100%, Gazipur 100% and Dinajpur 100%.

An overview in relation to the overall progress of the project is as follows:

Planned Outputs	Programme achieved (January-Dec '10)
Output 1 UP standing committees and officials are capacitated for involving citizen committees and general people to identify and address problems through participatory analysis, planning and budgeting.	We have completed 100% activities under output 1
1.1 Developed strong and effective networks among UP standing committees, Govt. service providers and other stakeholders at local level for creating access to health,	

education agriculture and legal services for the poor and disadvantaged women, men and children.	
Output 2 Developed and well-functioned PRC as a platform where LEB, CC and general citizens can identify issue, make effective plan to address the problems and implement programme in a participatory process. 2.2 Mobilized and sensitised mass people, Community based organizations, civil society organizations, local media for demanding transparency and accountability of UP through their participation.	We have completed 100% activities under output 2
Output 3 3.1 Identified gaps and limitations in policy, system and practices of LGI	We have completed 100% activities under output 3
Output 4 Institutional capacity of DW as Human Rights organization has been developed and continued planned project activities	We have completed 100% activities under output 4

2.3 Overall status on expenditure

Head	Amount (BDT)
Total Budget for January-Dec 2010	10,873,632
Previous Unspent Balance	2,810,064
Fund Received during the Period	8,919,095
Total Expenses	11,323,825
Unspent Balance	405,334

2.4 Overall evaluation of achievements in relation to expenditure

Head Expenses	Amount (BDT)
Programme Personal	99%
Administrative Personal	100%
Activity and Running Cost	114%
Recurring Cost	88%
Audit Expenses	100%

3. Achievements

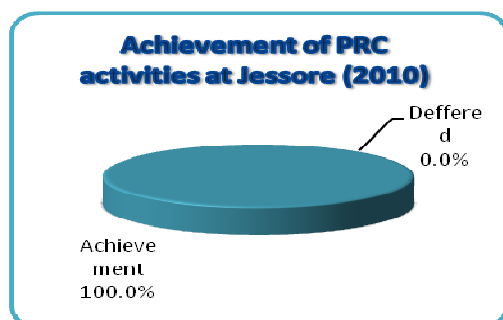
Analysis of outputs and expenditure.

3.1 General Project Status and Performance

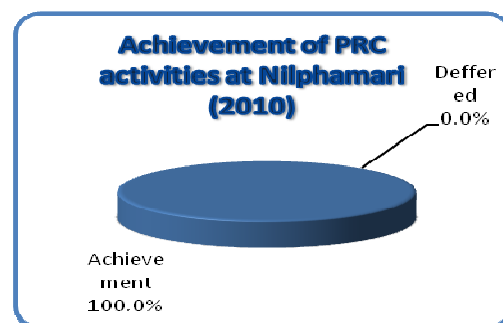
Achievement of PRC (January-December(2010))				
SLNO	Area	Target Activities	Achievement	Deferred
1	Jessore	547	547	0
2	Dinajpur	142	142	0
3	Nilphamari	182	182	0
4	Gazipur	144	144	0
5	Dhaka	31	31	0
	Total	1046	1046	0

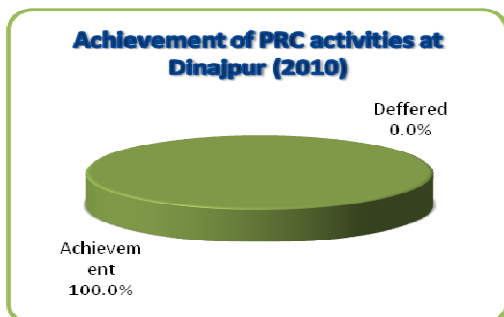
The overall performance of the project in terms of programme implementation at field level is satisfactory. According to our monitoring report 100% of the target activities have been achieved during the last year target plan. The overall performance is shown in the following pie chart:

A total number of 547 events were planned for implementation in 15 unions of Jessore district over a period of last year (January – December (2010)). 547 events have already taken place. It should be mentioned that in Jessore we have achieved 100.0% of total target which evident the satisfactory progress of implementation of the project.



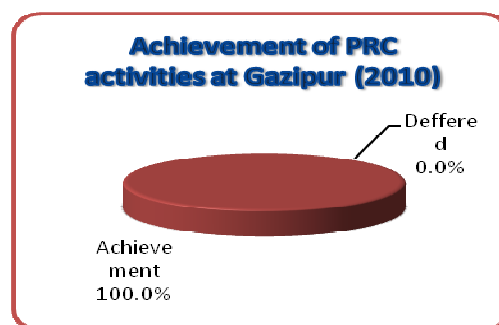
100% of the targeted activities in the project areas at Nilphamari district have been completed during this period. Out of 182 events, a number of 182 events have been held by Democracywatch and its partners.



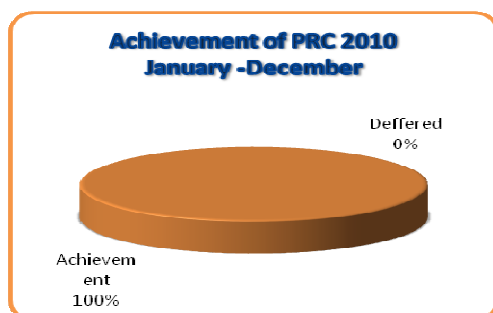


100% of the targeted activities in the project areas at Dinajpur district have been completed during this period. Out of 142 events, a number of 142 events have been held by Democracywatch and its partners over the last Year.

A total number of 144 events have been designed for 4 unions of Gazipur; within this period 144 activities have been carried out.



Out of 1046 events, we have organized 1046 events at field level which is 100% of total targets.



People's Reporting Centre (PRC)

[illegible]

3.2 Achievements in terms of output

Output

- 1.1 UP standing committees and officials have taken effective measures for involving citizen committees and general people to identify and address problems through participatory meeting, planning and budgeting.

Achievements

During the final year Democracywatch observed the UP participatory budget planning process instead of assisting them. Without any support from Democracywatch, 20 UPs organized open budget sessions in two districts. Within this period a number of fourteen open budget sessions were conducted in the project areas at Jessore district. A series of budget sessions were held on 20 May 2010 at Chacra, on 23 May at Upashahar Union, on 26 May at Lebutola and Haibatpur Union, on 27 May at Fathepur and Narendrapur Union, on 30 May at Ramnagar Union, on 31 May at Arabpur Union, on 2 June at Noapara and Churamonkathi Union, on 10 June Kachua union, on 12 June Kashimpur union and on 29 June at Ichali Union of Jessore. Open budget sessions were conducted at Palsha Union, Dinajpur on 20 May 2010; Purba Chatnai UP, Nilphamari on 21 July 2010; Balapara UP on 28 June, Goyabari UP on 27 June and Pashchim Chantai UP, Nilphamari on 30 June 2010; and Kaultia UP, Gazipur on 21 June 2010.



Pre-Budget at Ghoraghat UP in Dinajpur

Prior to the participatory budget pre-budget sessions were organized by the UPs where elected chairman, local people, elite, teachers, women representatives, doctors, local journalist and representatives from different professional groups were present to identify and prioritize their problems. On the basis of the problems and priorities identified, a draft budget was prepared by the UPs. The whole exercise was participatory. The process made UP budget-making and financial management more transparent.

A brief analysis and impact

Participatory budget declaration is one of the most important tasks of UP which entails projection of income and expenditure of UP to the people. This process ensures transparency and accountability which is prerequisite for good governance. Considerable proportion of budget allocation has been used in poverty reduction and human development such as education, agriculture and health. The entire process of budget discussion and question & answer session has contributed to promoting participation of people. The extent of participation by UP functionaries in the project and their understanding about the project has been remarkable. This year UPs conducted Open budget session of their own initiatives. It is a remarkable change in PRC project area.

Output

- 1.2 Strong and effective networks among UP standing committees, public service providers and other stakeholders at local level for facilitating access to health, education agriculture and legal services for the poor and disadvantaged women, men and children developed.

Achievement

- Total 168 coordination meetings have been held in last year of which 90 were held in Jessore, 24 in Gazipur, 30 in Nilphamari and 24 in Dinajpur.
- A number of 88 cases of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) by Union Parishad have been conducted in last year of which 12 were in Gazipur, 16 in Nilphamari, 9 in Dinajpur and 51 in Jessore. Early marriage, dowry and domestic violence against women were major problems.
- 27 workshops on UP Act 2009 have been conducted in 27 UPs. Total 246 male and 70 female UP representatives attended the workshops. 15 workshops have been conducted in Jessore, 5 in Nilphamari, 4 in Dinajpur and 3 in Gazipur. LEB workshop at Baria in Gazipur could not be conducted due UP audit and other emergency engagement of the UP representatives.



Coordination Meeting at Bulakipur UP at Dinajpur



LEB Workshop at Kawltia UP at Gazipur

A brief analysis and impact

- Officials of government service delivery bodies are more accessible to the people.
- Deprived and poor women and girls have better access to local arbitration and local disputes that are resolved through ADR.
- Open and participatory budget have been institutionalized as regular practice in many UPs.

Output-2:

- 2.1 A well-functioning PRC emerges as a platform through which LEB and general citizens can work together to identify factors causing violation of basic human rights of people especially of women and children.

Achievements

Targeted all 112 monthly meetings have been held of which 16 were held in Gazipur, 20 in Nilphamari, 16 in Dinajpur and 60 in Jessore.



Monthly Meeting at Ghoraghat UP at Dinajpur

- 2.2 Mass people, community based organizations, civil society organizations, local media have been sensitized and mobilized in order to raise and promote people's demand on ensuring transparency and accountability of UP and improving better service delivery to the poor.

Achievements

- 56 spot campaigns have been undertaken in the project areas. Process of ward shava conduction was major issue of the spot campaigns.
- 56 video shows were undertaken to raise awareness of people about their rights and responsibilities towards UP.
- During the reporting period, local community determined local problems and needs which are considered in the budget for 2010-2011. Citizen committee members took important role in order to incorporate local needs in the UP budgets. All targeted 504 yard meetings have been held.



Spot Campaign at Singra UP in Dinajpur



Yard Meeting at Palsha UP in Dinajpur

A Brief Analysis and impact

Local community is more aware about their rights to services and participation in the decision making process. Also they are playing watchdog role over UP functions and service delivery bodies.

Case Study

Lucky (22) lives in a village called Kashimpur. She got married to Kamal Uddin (28) from nearby village, Kazipur, of Ramnagar Union. Kamal's family was solvent enough owning land and livestock. Kamal knew Lucky and they were having a relationship before marriage. Their dream came true through marriage. Unfortunately, Kamal along with his family members began to behave strangely with Lucky. Kamal started irritating and misbehave with his beloved wife. He started to return home at mid-night and torture her.

Lucky realised her mistakes but it was too late. Lucky became pregnant which makes women proud and happy. She was tolerating all repressions thinking of her child. One day Kamal demanded 20,000/- taka from Lucky and asked her to bring it from her father's house. Lucky's in-laws became cruel and increase the level of torture as she disagreed with the proposal. Lucky was forcefully driven away from her husband's house. Lucky returned to her father's house at Kashimpur. Lucky's parents could do nothing but to cry and worry.

Lucky shared her experiences with a relative named Taizel. Taizel was a member of citizen committee of 'Peoples' Reporting Center (PRC)'. He knew about Alternative Disputer Resolution (ADR) as well as village court through various capacity building programmes of PRC. It was hard for Taizel as an enlightened citizen to accept such heinous incident. Taizel discussed several members of Citizen Committees named Akram, Jalil, Samad and Hazrat Ali. They, along with Lucky, came to ward Member Mr. Liakat Ali. In November 28, 2010, through a long discussion, an allegation was filed on the issue. Taking the allegation into immediate account with significance, the UP Chairman Mr. Aiyub Hossen and others summoned both the parties. Standing in court, Kamal confessed the charges against him. It was decided and declared in the open court that Lucky should not be tortured, dowry should not be demanded and Kamal must maintain his wife, kid and family. On December 10, Kamal took back his wife in his family.

Output-3:

3.2 Micro issues are raised in macro level on local government and pro-poor issues.

Achievements

- Two roundtable discussion meetings have been organized in PRC working areas (10 May in Jessore, and 29 June in Gazipur). Total 129 Participants including elected Upazila representatives, government officials who are responsible for service delivery (health, education, family planning, agriculture), UP chairman, members, women members, secretary, citizen committee members, civil society organization representatives, journalists, political party representatives and CBOs actively participated.



Participatory dialogue on 'Role of UP in managing social safety net programme'

Both the meetings were lively and a number of critical issues were raised by the participants. Some common issues are as follows:

- There is lack of supervision and monitoring from the government and concern ministry about the implementation of safety net programmes.
- There is corruption from the ministry to grassroots level government officials but elected LG officials have to take all the blames on their shoulder as their role is more visible to the people.
- UP should prioritize the list of beneficiaries that are discussed in ward shava.
- Local elites and political activists manipulate the distribution of Test Relief, VGD and VGF etc. UPs are unable to work neutrally because of their interference.
- Full authority of the social safety net programmes (from planning/ designing to distribution) to be handed over to the local government.

Eight Seminars on policy advocacy were organized in Dhaka on different policy issues.

On 14 January 2010 Democracywatch organized a policy advocacy seminar on “Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009: expectation and reality” at NILG auditorium. Honourable Chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of Land Mr. A K M Mozammel Haque, MP chaired the meeting where Honourable Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of LGRD



Policy advocacy seminar on “Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009: expectation and reality” at NILG auditorium.

& Cooperatives Mr. Monowar Hossain Chowdhury, MP and eminent local government expert Dr. Tofail Ahmed were present as special guests. Also representatives from local government association, international development partners, government officials, civil society representatives and activists were present in the meeting.

Some important recommendations were:

1. Government has to initiate the process to hand over government officials under UP according to Article 63 and third schedule. In order to make the government officials responsible to UPs, Annual Confidential Report (ACR) need to written by the UP Chairmen
2. Article 34 of UP Act regarding temporary suspension of UP chairman and members has to be abandoned. There is chance for misuse this law against an elected representative.
3. All of the local government institutions need to be function under a uniformed act/ mother law.
4. Government has to circular immediate direction to form ward shava (article 4), publish citizen charter (article 49), conduct open budget in line with priorities set by ward shava before 60 day of ending fiscal year (article 57), ensure right to information (article 78)
5. Prepare all the important rules without delay.

Democracywatch organized a discussion meeting on “Important agendas for devolution of power to local government institutions and the role of LG Associations” held on 19 April 2010 at 10:30 am at National Press Club VIP Lounge. Purpose of the meeting was to analyze demands/ recommendations of local government associations and to determine common agendas for future advocacy. Leaders of Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB), Bangladesh Upazila Chairman- Vice Chairman Okkyo Parishad, and Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum (BUPF) actively participated in the discussion; Professor Mohammad Mobhat Khan, Department of Public Administration chaired the meeting where Dr. Tofail Ahmed was present as a local government specialist.



Role of local government associations in strengthening Local Government

Some important recommendations were:

1. An umbrella law with precise specification of jurisdiction would be effective rather than separate laws for different local government units.
2. A separate budget for local government institutions should be prepared and placed by the Local Government Minister to the parliament.
3. For infrastructural development at local government level, Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) needed to make transparent, accountable, and effective.
4. In order to increase revenue all the resources to be handed over to local government bodies.
5. Honorarium for elected LG representatives has to be realistic.
6. Government may think of bringing elected representatives under the coverage of life insurance.
7. Keeping the spirit of the constitution in mind government should initiate the process to handing over government officials under elected representatives as the local government institutions are declared as administrative units.

On 12 May 2010 Democracywatch organized a seminar on “Empowerment of elected women representatives in local government” at the institute of diploma engineers, Dhaka.



Empowerment of elected women representatives in local government

During the implementation of PRC in 28 UPs we have observed that despite having the provisions for women to be elected directly and in reserved seats they are unable to play effective role in decision making due to weak legal framework and patriarchy values in the society. Also women representatives face obstacles from their male counterpart. Women are deprived although there is provision for them to play important role in project implementation committees. A few women have contributions in protecting dowry, early marriage and domestic violence against

women. Keeping this context in mind DW organized this seminar to address the social and political issues for the empowerment of women in local government institutions.

Dr. Selina Hayat Ivy, Mayor of Narayanganj Paurashava presented the keynote paper. Mrs. Durafshan Chowdhury of UNDP-UNCDF, Advocate Rokshana Khandaker, Executive Director of Khan Foundation, Professor Shamim Al Razi, Secretary General of Municipal Association of Bangladesh, Kartick Chandra Mondal, Programme officer of Danida were present and took part in the discussion. Some important recommendations were,

1. Government should determine specific job description for the elected women representatives especially for those who are elected in reserved seats.
2. Elected women representatives should get full authority of beneficiary selection, list preparation and distribution of at least 40% of all social safety net programmes.
3. National training institutes like BARD, RDA, BRDB and NILG should design and impart extensive training for the elected women representatives especially on leadership, development project planning and implementation etc.

Poverty and natural disaster are major challenges for development and severely affect human life in Bangladesh. Government has initiated a number of social safety net programmes as a strategy to fight poverty and natural disasters. Main purpose of these safety net programmes is to safeguard our disadvantaged citizens from all social, economical and natural disasters. Approximately 48 social safety net programmes are being implemented by various ministries and departments of which most of them are implemented by Local Government Institutions. We often get information about corruption, irregularities and political influence during the implementation and management of social safety net programmes. In this context Democracywatch organized a seminar on “Implementation and management of social safety net programmes and the role of Union Parishad” held on 1 June 2010 at 3:00 pm at National Press Club VIP Lounge.

Elected local government officials, policymakers, researcher, academia, media professionals and NGO professionals were present in the seminar. Professor Muzaffar Ahmed, Member of TIB Trustee Board and Chairperson of SUJON chaired the seminar where Mr. A K M Mozammel Haque, MP and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of Land was present as the chief guest. Among others Mrs. Sharifa Khan, Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Commerce and Mr. Munir Chowdhury, Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management; Dr. Tofail Ahmed, Professor Zarina Rahman Khan and Dr. Akhter Hussain addressed the audience as special guests. Some important recommendations were,

1. Government may think of a comprehensive national policy in order to coordinate different ministries and departments who are linked with social safety net programmes.
2. Elected local bodies have to be given full authority in determining beneficiary and distribution process. Local elected bodies should prepare a complete database of the beneficiaries considering the vulnerability of poor, women, minority and indigenous groups. Also they have to update the database every year.
3. We should have a long term, regional and advance planning for the social safety nets considering the important factors like river erosion, arsenic, salinity, water level etc.

On 1 December 2010, Democracywatch organized a Policy advocacy seminar on “Analyzing the process of resource mobilization and management at UP level and way forward” at National Press Club. The programme was moderated by Dr Salahuddin Aminuzzaman, Professor, Department of Public Administration, Dhaka University. Wazed Feroj, Programme Director of Democracywatch, presented the critical issues of UP’s resource mobilization. Mr. A K M Mozammel Haque, MP and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of Land was present as the chief guest. The dialogue was chaired by M Hafizuddin Khan, Former Advisor to Caretaker Government.



Policy advocacy seminar on analyzing the process of resource mobilization and management at UP level and way forward

Major recommendations were,

1. Government should follow a standard policy to transfer resources and allocation to the UPs. All allocations to UP (from different ministries under several safety net programmes) should be distributed in a planned way so that UP can make optimum use of allocations.
2. UPs technical knowledge and manpower have to be improved in order to increase revenue (holding tax, business tax, licence, permit, fee) and resource management. Model Tax Schedule has to be modified and made flexible. Also administrative support to be ensured in order to enable UP to impose and collect taxes.
3. All local resources (local haat-bazaar, bus stand, ferry terminal etc.) to be transfer to UP.
4. National budget should reflect the amount of revenue collected from the local level and should declare a separate budget for local government bodies.

On 09 December, 2010, Democracywatch organized a Policy dialogue on “Human Rights of the grassroots and the role of Union Parishad” at BIAM Foundation. The programme was moderated by Mohammad Jahangir, Executive Director of CDC.



Policy dialogue on “Human Rights of the grassroots and the role of Union Parishad”

In the inaugural speech, Taleya Rehman, Executive Director of Democracywatch, welcomed everyone. Ms. Aroma Dutta, Executive Director PRIP Trust and Honourable Member of National Human Rights Commission was present as the main speaker. Advocate Rahmat Ali MP, Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of LGRD and cooperatives was present as the chief guest. Dr. Mohabbat Khan, Professor, Public Administration Department, Dhaka University, Advocate Sigma Huda, Secretary General of

BSEHR and Advocate Alina Khan, Executive Director of Bangladesh Human Rights Foundation were present as special guests. Also elected UP representatives, development partners, government officials, civil society representatives and activists were present in the meeting. During his comment on the keynote paper Professor Mohabbat Khan said that lack of proper education is the main reason for the poor condition of human rights. After that open

discussion took place. Shahidul Islam Milon, Gazi Khorshed Alam, Golam Mostofa and Sheikh Muhammad Rahmatullah of different Union Parishad gave their speech. They talked about their duties, opportunities and limitations. They mentioned that Union Parishad can play an important role in establishing human rights in all spheres of rural life.

Some important recommendations were,

1. Functions of National Human Rights Commission to be extended up to UP level. Some elected representatives are keen and playing proactive role against dowry, early marriage, domestic violence and trafficking. The commission should encourage these initiatives by giving them recognition.
2. In order to activate Village Court and Salish there are needs for coordination and monitoring with lower court, thana, law enforcement agencies and relevant departments. Also elected UP officials will have to be properly oriented about the process of Village Court and Salish.
3. UPs have to be careful during the implementation of social safety net and development programmes so that underprivileged people are not excluded from their services.
4. All inhuman practices (*Hilla Marriage, Dorra Mara, Nake Khat Dea*) that humiliates human dignity to be redundant by making laws and ensuring implementation.
5. A Victim Support Centre to be established in each Upazila in order to support the victims of human rights violation (rape, trafficking, physical torture etc.). This centre will monitor the incidents of human rights violations and support the victims.

Democracywatch organized a discussion meeting on “UP budget analysis and way forward” held on 21 December 2010 at National Press Club VIP Lounge. Mr. Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru MP, Honourable Member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives was present as the chief guest. Dr. Akbar Ali Khan, Former Advisor to Caretaker Government chaired the dialogue. Mr. Abul Khayer Bhuyan, MP and Honourable Member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives was present as special guest. Among other Mrs. Tahrunnesa Abdullah, Professor Akhter Hussain, Dr. Tofail Ahmed and Mrs. Durafshan H Chowdhury were present as panel discussants. Some important recommendations were,



Advocacy seminar on UP budget analysis and way forward

1. All the local government units should have a five-year and an annual development plan as the central government does have. Local governments should complete their annual plan by May each year and submit so that central government can consider local needs and priorities in national development plan.
2. Government should consider local government (UP) revenue and expenditure while preparing national budget.
3. We should have a comprehensive inter governmental fiscal transfer policy and ensure its implementation.

4. Government should avoid disbursement of development budget and allocations at the end (May-June) of the fiscal year and give pressure to the LGIs to implement them that leads to corruption and poor quality of development projects. There should have a pragmatic and long term planning for fund disbursement.

Three national press conferences were organized during 2010. Through these conferences Democracywatch raised the critical issues that were identified while implementing different project activities in order to build public support in favour of the issues. Another objective of the press conference was to draw the attention of the important stakeholders including policymakers about the issues.

1. The first press conference was held at Dhaka Reporter's Unity on 30 June 2010 on Union Parishad Act 2009. In the briefing paper Democracywatch thanked present government and Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives for passing Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009 for the first time after having a thorough discussion on the bill. Also DW acknowledged this Act as progressive as it incorporated a number of articles on Citizen Charter, Ward Shava, Open Budget, Right to Information, declaration of UP as an administrative unit, provisions for increase UP revenue, provision for handing over government officials to UP and many more. In addition, DW raised some challenges for example, the new act has not been properly distributed among UPs, majority of the UP officials do not have any idea about this act and there are some articles which are against constitutional spirit of local government.



National press conference on Union Parishad Act 2009

2. The second press conference was held on ‘UP Election’ at Democracywatch conference room on 27 December 2010. The organization presented a briefing paper in which it portrayed the emerging social, political and legal problems for not holding local government elections in due time. According to field level experiences of PRC project, many UP officials are reluctant to take any new initiative including holding ward shava, open budget, activating UP standing committees etc. Therefore, the organization presented seven recommendations to the government and election commission for their consideration.



National press conference on UP election

3. The final press conference was held on 30 December 2010 on 'PRC Achievements, Observations and Recommendations' at Democracywatch hall room. UP chairman, civil society representatives and journalists were present in the press conference. Democracywatch presented some important achievements of PRC project. Some of them are,



*National Press conference on
PRC Achievements*

- a) Several hundred thousand grassroots people are more aware of their rights and civic responsibilities.
- b) At least 252 Citizen Committees have been formed and activated in 28 UPs that represents more than 2,800 members. Citizen Committee members are playing watchdog role over UP and government service delivery bodies.
- c) Over 350 UP officials have been trained on UP management, financial management, Village Court, Salish, participatory planning, resource mobilizations etc.
- d) At least 20 UPs have adopted participatory planning and open budgeting.
- e) More than 400 poor persons and their families (most of them are women) have received better access to justice.
- f) Elected women representatives are more empowered and they are now more active in development and UP decision making process.

Besides, Democracywatch presented more than twenty recommendations on seven critical issues in order to make Union Parishad more functional, accountable and poor tire of local government in Bangladesh.

Four local level press conferences were organized in Jessore, Dinajpur, Gazipur and Nilphamari in which our local partner NGOs gave a briefing about project activities of current phase to the local journalists and civil society representatives. Moreover, UP open and participatory budget was another important issue of discussion in the press conferences.

3.3 Discussion and analysis of progress and setbacks

Democracywatch has undertaken a number of activities during the last year which has enhanced people's participation in UPs development and financial planning. Without the assistance of PRC 20 UPs conducted participatory budgeting in 2010-2011. These UPs have identified their local needs through ward level pre-budget meetings. Citizen committee members met regularly and put forward their recommendations to UP through ward level 112 monthly meetings and 168 coordination meetings. UP representatives, standing committee members, representatives from service delivery bodies and CC members took part in these meetings. PRC coordination meetings are significant as this is a multi-stakeholder forum to discuss local problems and needs. This is a significant changes of UP, they are now use to conduct open budget of their own initiatives. During the reporting period the organization successfully facilitated the process of resolving 88 local disputes of which many were on early marriage, dowry and domestic violence against women. Local community people

received information on holding tax, birth registration and importance of participatory open budget through 504 yard meetings.

One major setback of this year was the expiration of UPs tenure. Many elected representatives were not keen to initiate new programmes.

3.4 Influence of external factors (Risks and assumptions)

1. In some cases Upazilla chairman and parliament member influenced and politicized UP activities. In many places political activists manipulated the distribution of Test Relief, VGD, and VGF etc.
2. Non cooperation of Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) to support LG strengthening programmes.
3. UP representatives of the opposition party were less interested to actively participate in their duties.
4. Some UP representatives were not keen to undertake development initiatives as their tenure has ended.

3.5 Evaluation of achievements (outputs) in relation to expenditure

Output	Budget	Expenditure	Percentage (%)
Output 1 UP standing committees and officials are capacitated for involving citizen committees and general people to identify and address problems through participatory analysis, planning and budgeting.	890,000	512,786	58%
1.1 Developed strong and effective networks among UP standing committees, Govt. service providers and other stakeholders at local level for creating access to health, education agriculture and legal services for the poor and disadvantaged women, men and children.			
Output 2 2.1 Developed and well-functioned PRC as a platform where LEB, CC and general citizens can identify issue, make effective plan to address the problems and implement programme in a participatory process.	1,027,200	1,145,873	112%
2.3 Mobilized and sensitized mass people, Community based organizations, civil society organizations, local media for demanding transparency and accountability of UP through their participation.			

Output 3			
3.1 Identified gaps and limitations in policy, system and practices of LGI	460,000	1,632,429	355%
Output 4			
4. Institutional capacity of DW as Human Rights organization has been developed and continued planned project activities	3,823,523	3,797,139	99%

3.6 Justification of eventual lack of consistency

There were some external and internal factors which hindered the consistent implementation of the project such as,

Although we plan the project activities from January but due to delay in NGOAB approval we receive the funding lately and become overwhelmed of activities both at the field and national levels. Therefore, we could not be on schedule and many large scale events have to be organized during the last quarter of the project.

3.7 Challenges and way forward

1. Programme level: Due to delay in NGOAB approval we receive the funding lately but we overcome this challenge and finished all the activities in stipulated time.
2. Management level: Due to the final phase of the project some field level staff have lost their inspiration. DW management tried to keep staff motivation.
3. Policy level: UP representatives do not have enough knowledge about new UP Act 2009 as many of them did not receive the copy of act yet. UPs were not interested to initiate the implementation of the act as they did not receive any direction from the government. We have conducted orientation for the elected representatives in 27 UPs and a number of them became interested to start new initiatives

4. Implementation mechanisms

4.1 The functioning of steering mechanisms, project management, planning, monitoring and administration.

DW took its entire programme related decisions at monthly Project Management Meeting (PMM). The PMM are participated by Executive Director, Programme Manager, Programme Coordinator, M&E Coordinator, Finance Manager, 1 Internal Auditor, 1 Accountant, 2 Programme Officers and 3 Assistant Programme Officers, 1 Technical Assistant and 1 Driver.

Organizational and implementation strategies were discussed and reviewed from time to time through active participation of PNGOs. Partner organizations used to propose their ideas, views and plans through regular partnership meetings.

For smooth running of the project activities all the PNGOs used to prepare the work plan, implement and monitor the day to day activities. PNGOs implemented the project with 50 % responsibility of Executive Director in addition to his/her regular work. To run the project they recruited; 1 Project Coordinator, 1 Programme Officer, 1 Assistant Programme Officer, 1 Union Organizer, 1 Accountant with 50% responsibility and 1 support staff. Alongside

partners have recruited 1 PRC Representative from each union who communicated and gave messages to people about PRC. All recruitments were based on the number of UPs and target activities. Management of each partner provided on the job/in-house and formal training for staff capacity building. A small team of PRC monitoring the project activities and DW ensured the necessary capacity building of the individual partners. Partners reported to Programme Manager and Programme Manager reported to the Executive Director of Democracywatch.

Finance Department of DW kept accounts for the expenses and produced financial reports. All financial budgeting and reporting were coordinated by Finance department of DW in close cooperation with the Programme Manager.

DW prepared and submitted the periodic and progress reports and programme completion report to DANIDA.

DW in Dhaka and individual partners operated separate bank accounts for projects. The accounting process was carried out in accordance with financial and administrative guideline of DANIDA

An NGO Bureau enlisted firm of chartered accountant and approved by DANIDA conducted audit financial statement at the end of each year. Draft audit reports were sent to DANIDA and finalized with their recommendation.

Democracywatch appointed one M & E coordinator with full responsibility of developing comprehensive M&E system, tools and techniques, which were practiced both at Democracywatch and field level. DW on a regular basis monitored the implementation of the individual projects based on the developed monitoring system.

4.2 Progress in relation to donor coordination and harmonization

Programme Officer of DANIDA always used to keep contact with us to know the status of PRC Project and give his suggestions for programme development.

5. Budget and disbursement plan

Please see the financial report