

Executive Summary

People's Reporting Centre (PRC) project has completed its first year in September 2004. A total of six fully functioning Reporting Centers achieved enormous success within this period. The project achieved a number of successes, which are listed here below.

A total of 54 Citizen Committees have been formed with the consultation of local people in each area. Members of the citizen committees are taking a catalytic role in stimulating changes in the Union Parishad. Improvements to the areas such as introducing road cleaning, tree planting, direct dialogue with UP chairmen, disaster management, sanitation, bazaar development and more have been a direct result of the committees work.

The Chairmen of Ramnagor and Fathpur union in Jessore declared participatory and open budgets. In Ramnagor union standing committees have been formed in areas of health, education and agriculture etc and participated by PRC members.

Considerable local media coverage has been gained from this project, which eventually boosts the people's confidence on PRC activities as well as the union parishad.

After massive campaigns through yard meetings and press conferences organized by the PRC office, Singra, Dinajpur the attitude of the Chairman changed and now he is more open to working with women members.

Birth Registration has increased considerably in every union with a PRC.

Several types of materials have been published. This includes posters, leaflets and PRC bulletin. These were distributed in every area. Apart from this, Democracywatch distributed the bulletins and posters in another 350 unions including Ministers, MP's, All District Commissioners and Chairmen of UP's.

Democracywatch conducted 54 training sessions for the citizen committees in the last one year, which increased the capacity of citizen committee members. The organization also conducted 6 orientation training for UP representatives.

Within this period Democracywatch also conducted 108 yard meetings in six unions, 6 Spot Campaigns (i.e. Instant campaigns like Rally, Miking etc) 4 In-house workshops, 12 press conferences, 4 district seminars and 4 public meetings. Democracywatch also conducted a baseline survey in 9 unions to asses the performance of UP's before starting the project. It also survey conducting a process evaluation to asses the performance of PRC project.

Peoples Reporting Centre (PRC) of Democracywatch, funded by DANIDA-HRGG-PSU, contributed enormously to some of the positive achievements of the Union Parishad . This has created confidence which will ensure better results in the coming year.

Background to Union Parishad

The Union Parishad is the second lowest political chamber of the Local Government structure and a fundamental component of Local Government. Local government in Bangladesh started in 1870 and was initially an autonomous, independent and self-reliant body. All its activities were directed towards the welfare of the citizens of the state. As a result, citizen participation in the activities of the UP was welcome and forthcoming. Local Government is an essential medium by which citizens can incorporate themselves into the activities of the government for further development.

Generally, a union comprises of 10 to 15 villages of about 10 to 12 square miles area. A Union Parishad is divided into nine wards. It is headed by a chairman and consists of 12 members, one member from each ward and 3 women members for every 3 wards. The electorate of each union directly selects their chairman and members for terms of five years through elections. Besides the chairman and members, a UP may also includes officials such as a secretary and senior members of a village.

Functions of the Union Parishad are divided into different categories: statutory and optional functions. There are approximately 10 statutory functions and 38 optional functions. A UP member should perform their own duties such as helping the village police in maintaining law and order, assisting development work and looking after the rights of women and children. Other duties include encouraging women into cottage industries, education on health care, sanitation and family planning. The Chairman of the UP is the administrative head and gives his decision in all activities

In the media there have been many reports that UP Chairmen and Members are often not aware of their duties. There are also many instances of misuse of power. For example UP officials are known to patronize terrorists and extremist in order to consolidate their position. There have been irregularities while distributing rice and wheat for relief, corruption involving issuing VGF card, and many other cases.

Democracywatch is an NGO working to promote democracy and good governance in Bangladesh. This NGO was established in 1995 to conduct research and training along with different projects to build awareness on democracy and good governance. A 25 page manual has been written in Bangla which will be distributed to all members of current and future citizen committees.

Goal and Objectives of PRC

The goal of the project is to create an enabling situation for the UPs to develop their accountability and credibility.

The objective of the project is to assess the performance of elected representatives, increase awareness of the people of their civic rights, mobilise people to voice their demands and develop responsive leadership at grassroots level.

PRC will help the UP in strategic planning, participatory management and community participation and assist in linking UP's with traditional local community groups. PRC hopes to establish links between local government and the private sectors as well as representatives from women's groups and other NGO's.

This project is different and unique because it is developing a complete monitoring system by the community. Moreover this is absolutely a pro-people project where we ensure and encourage people's participation in demanding for better services. It also ensures transparency and accountability of UP representatives.

Basically the aim of the PRC project is to build self-reliance within the community so that they can discuss, advocate and implement changes by themselves. PRC should eventually be the glue between different layers of local government and will aid as well as monitor the effectiveness of union parishad.

Activities of PRC

1. Yard Meetings: Democracywatch has conducted 54 yard meetings in 6 PRC unions. This kind of program improved the credibility of PRC significantly. Its ability to disseminate information about good governance and democracy helped as well. Each meeting is approximately 3-4 hours in duration and attendance varies between 40 and 50. The participants, having received prior information gather at the site and form a circle. Many of the participants are women. The program officer takes the initiative to make friends with them so that they feel comfortable discussing their own problems relating to the union parishad. The discussion is participatory and the facilitator encourages everyone to join in. Another officer takes notes, which are developed into a report outlining the local problems and possible solutions. The report is sent to local elected members and then is submitted it to the Chairman. The yard meetings held so far are given below

Gazipur		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Yard Meeting	22 May 2004	Ward 1
Yard Meeting	15 June 2004	Ward 2
Yard Meeting	16 June 2004	Ward 7
Yard Meeting	29 June 2004	Ward 4
Yard Meeting	19 July 2004	Ward 9
Yard Meeting	21 July 2004	Ward 3
Yard Meeting	24 July 2004	Word 8
Yard Meeting	14 August 2004	Word 6
Yard Meeting	15 August 2004	Ward 5

Nilphamari		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Yard Meeting	1 June 2004	Ward 2
Yard Meeting	9 June 2004	Ward 1
Yard Meeting	11 June 2004	Ward 3
Yard Meeting	12 June 2004	Ward 4
Yard Meeting	25 August 2004	Ward 9
Yard Meeting	5 September 2004	Ward 7
Yard Meeting	11 September 2004	Ward 6
Yard Meeting	16 September 2004	Ward 5
Yard Meeting	29 September 2004	Ward 8

Dinajpur (Singra)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Yard Meeting	5 June 2004	Ward 6
Yard Meeting	8 June 2004	Ward 5
Yard Meeting	9 June 2004	Ward 1
Yard Meeting	16 June 2004	Ward 9
Yard Meeting	4 September 2004	Ward 8
Yard Meeting	5 September 2004	Ward 4

Yard Meeting	6 September 2004	Ward 2
Yard Meeting	11 September 2004	Ward 7
Yard Meeting	18 September 2004	Ward 3

Dinajpur Bulakipur		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Yard Meeting	07 June 2004	Ward 3
Yard Meeting	11 June 2004	Ward 1
Yard Meeting	13 June 2004	Ward 2
Yard Meeting	28 June 2004	Ward 4
Yard Meeting	02 September 2004	Ward 5
Yard Meeting	04 September 2004	Ward 9
Yard Meeting	05 September 2004	Ward 6
Yard Meeting	19 September 2004	Ward 7
Yard Meeting	19 September 2004	Ward 8

Ramnagor (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Yard Meeting	02 June 2004	Ward 5
Yard Meeting	05 June 2004	Ward 6
Yard Meeting	07 June 2004	Ward 7
Yard Meeting	09 June 2004	Ward 2
Yard Meeting	14 July 2004	Ward 8
Yard Meeting	17 July 2004	Ward 4
Yard Meeting	20 July 2004	Ward 9
Yard Meeting	24 July 2004	Ward 3
Yard Meeting	27 July 2004	Ward 1

Fathepur (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Yard Meeting	30 May 2004	Ward 3
Yard Meeting	3 June 2004	Ward 7
Yard Meeting	5 June 2004	Ward 1
Yard Meeting	8 June 2004	Ward 9
Yard Meeting	19 July 2004	Ward 8
Yard Meeting	24 July 2004	Ward 4
Yard Meeting	27 July 2004	Ward 2
Yard Meeting	30 July 2004	Ward 6
Yard Meeting	3 August 2004	Ward 5

2. Spot Campaigns : Democracywatch has organized 6 spot campaigns (UP Alliance sessions and Pre-budget session in Jessore, 2 Miking Sessions on Birth Registration in Dinajpur, 1 formal discussion with UP members in Gazipur and 1 open dialogue with Chairman and local people in Nilphamari) during the last six months.

The Union Parishod Alliance, formed on 13 June 2004, created a platform for UP representatives in Jessore where they could relate their problems and then solve them with

the help of PRC and citizen committee members. At this stage all UP representatives from Fathepur and Ramnagor, headed by Chairman Advocate Afzal Hossain, made an alliance to resolve all their problems with the help of local people. Another spot campaign was held at Ramnagor union where local people sat with the UP chairman to discuss local needs and demands and to sketch a participatory budget before open declaration in front of local people.

In Dinajpur local PRC office arranged miking to create awareness among the general people about the role and responsibilities of UP representatives and general people as well.

In Gazipur a group of UP representatives from Bason union met with PRC members and conducted a meeting for whole day. In that meeting they talked about their problems and the means and ways to resolve the problems. This was the first time where the UP representatives have talked freely without the Chairman's presence.

In Khogakhoribari union a direct dialogue session was made where the UP chairman held a question and answer session with local people. This was the first such occasion in the history of this union and a large number of people were present. The Chairman made some commitments like proper allocations of VGD and VGF card amongst the poor people and allocation of Tube wells.

These initiatives received colossal appreciation from the local people.

Fathepur (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
UP Alliance	13 June 2004	Fathepur PRC Office

Ramnagor (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Pre- Budget Section	1 July 2004	U.P. Bhabhan

Dinajpur (Singra)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Miking on birth Registration	15 July -24 July, 2004	Singra Union

Dinajpur (Bulakipur)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Miking on birth Registration	4July- 13 July, 2004	Bulakipur Union

Gazipur		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Discussion Meeting With U.P Members	5 September 2004	Local P.R.C Office

Nilphamari		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Open dialogue with Chairman and local people	25 June 2004	PRC Office at Khogakhoribari

3. In-house Workshops: Democracywatch has conducted 4 in-house workshops to develop a comprehensive understanding about the union parishad with in this period. The aim of this program is to collect opinions from the different people to develop their union parishad.

Eminent journalists, NGO activists, Teachers, Advocate, LG experts expressed their opinion and gave suggestions and comments on it. This type of program helped us to collate opinions from different sections of society.

Gazipur		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
In-house Workshop	27 May 2004	Zilla Porishad Auditorium

Nilphamari		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
In-house Workshop	1 May 2004	P.R.C. Local Office

Dinajpur(Singra)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
In-house Workshop	15 May 2004	P.R.C. Local Office

Ramnagor (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
In-house Workshop	01 May 2004	Jessore PRC Office

4. Press Conferences: Democracywatch conducted 6 press conferences in last 6 month at union and district level as well. A significant number of journalists attended these press conferences. These press conferences focused on the activities of PRC and some of its results. Opening up PRC to the press has made journalists more enthusiastic about the project and local government in general. The local and national media have been very keen to publish the results of PRC.

Gazipur		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Press Conference	7 August 2004	Press Club

Nilphamari		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Press Conference	15 September 2004	Press Club

Dinajpur (Singra)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Press Conference	14 September 2004	PRC Office

Dinajpur (Bulakipur)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Press Conference	24 July 2004	Press Club

Ramnagor (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Press Conference	16 August 2004	PRC Office

Fathepur (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Press Conference	22 July 2004	Press Club

5. Training for the Citizen Committee: Democracywatch has conducted 30 citizen committee training sessions in 6 PRC unions in last 6 month (April to September, 2004). Both the local and national staff of PRC conducted these training programmes focusing on the role of citizen committee, the objectives of PRC and those of the Union Parishad.

The session was divided into three sessions. First session is about the history of Union Parishad and the role of chairman and members: the second session is about PRC project, goal, objective and activities of PRC. The third session is about the citizen committee, role and responsibilities of citizen and advocacy committee.

Gazipur		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Training for the citizen committee	21 June 2004	Ward 8
Training for the citizen committee	21 June 2004	Ward 9
Training for the citizen committee	23 June 2004	Ward 7
Training for the citizen committee	24 June 2004	Ward 4
Training for the citizen committee	26 June 2004	Ward 3

Nilphamari		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Training for the citizen committee	23 June 2004	Ward 3
Training for the citizen committee	23 June 2004	Ward 5
Training for the citizen committee	24 June 2004	Ward 9
Training for the citizen committee	24 June 2004	Ward 7
Training for the citizen committee	25 June 2004	Ward 8

Dinajpur(Singra)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Training for the citizen committee	10 June 2004	Ward 4
Training for the citizen committee	12 June 2004	Ward 7
Training for the citizen committee	13 June 2004	Ward 2
Training for the citizen committee	14 June 2004	Ward 8
Training for the citizen committee	15 June 2004	Ward 3

Bulakipur (Dinajpur)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Training for the citizen committee	11 June 2004	Ward 6
Training for the citizen committee	12 June 2004	Ward 9
Training for the citizen committee	13 June 2004	Ward 7
Training for the citizen committee	15 June 2004	Ward 5
Training for the citizen committee	16 June 2004	Ward 8

Ramnagor (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Training for the citizen committee	10 June 2004	Ward 9
Training for the citizen committee	11 June 2004	Ward 7
Training for the citizen committee	12 June 2004	Ward 4
Training for the citizen committee	13 June 2004	Ward 2
Training for the citizen committee	14 June 2004	Ward 8

Fathepur (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Training for the citizen committee	11 June 2004	Ward 7
Training for the citizen committee	12 June 2004	Ward 9
Training for the citizen committee	13 June 2004	Ward 8
Training for the citizen committee	15 June 2004	Ward 1
Training for the citizen committee	16 June 2004	Ward 3

6. District Seminar: Four district seminars were held during this period. The title of the seminars was 'PRC: Objective and Importance'. The aim of the session was to disseminate the concrete information about PRC at district level and to get support from all sections of the society. Prominent journalists, local civil society members among others attended the district seminars.

Gazipur		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
District Seminar	17 August 2004	ADIP Auditorium

Nilphamari		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
District Seminar	15 September 2004	Nilphamari Municipality Auditorium

Dinajpur (Singra)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
District Seminar	25 July 2004	Palli Sri Auditorium, Dinajpur

Ramnagor (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
District Seminar	23 July 2004	B.D Hall, Jessore

7. Public Meeting: Democracywatch organized 4 public meetings in 4 areas. These public meetings had between 500 and 1000 people in attendance. Here PRC members with UP representatives give presentations about the activities of PRC. They also invite the audience to come forward to understand the basic issues of union parishad. This type of activity received a great deal of appreciation from the local community despite harassment from some local politicians.

Nilphamari		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Public Meeting	16 September 2004	PRC office premises

Dinajpur (Singra)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Public Meeting	14 September 2004	Raniganj High School

Ramnagor (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Public Meeting	7 July 2004	Ramnagor UP Bhavan

Fathipur (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Public Meeting	5 September 2004	Fathepur UP Bhavan

8. Orientation for UP representatives: Democracywatch has organized 6 UP representative orientation training at 6 UP's during this time. We produced a handy manual for them and described the PRC activities in a daylong program. In every union the members and chairman were present. From these sessions many UP members learnt more about the role and responsibilities of Union representatives.

The PRC Program Manager, Program officer (both local and national) conducted these orientation programs.

Gazipur		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Orientation for UP representatives	12 September 2004	U.P. Bhaban

Nilphamari		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Orientation for UP representatives	16 September 2004	P.R.C. Local Office

Dinajpur (Singra)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Orientation for UP representatives	15 September 2004	PRC local Office

Dinajpur (Bulakipur)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Orientation for UP representatives	15 September 2004	PRC local Office

Ramnagor (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Orientation for UP representatives	7 September 2004	PRC Local Office

Fathepur (Jessore)		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>
Orientation for UP representatives	6 September 2004	PRC Local Office

9. Bulletin: A bulletin was published (Jonogoner Dorbar Barta) in May 2004 and disseminated to 250 unions by the DW partners including PRC areas. Local government expert Dr Salauddin M. Aminuzzaman, Dr Tofael Ahmed and some of the Union Chairmen wrote articles and views on PRC in that bulletin. It also described the activities and results of PRC thus far.

10. Poster and Manual: A poster on transparency and accountability of Union Parishad has been developed in a participatory way and designed by renowned artist Mr Maksudur Rahman. It will be published soon.

A manual on Union Parishad is also ready written by Dr Salauddin M. Aminuzzaman, a local government expert in the Country. Although not yet published we are taking the opportunity to use a draft copy in our training sessions.

11. Internship for Capacity Building: In the PRC Project there is scope to appoint 6 interns for one year. The objective is to appoint interns who will be able to develop themselves and build their own careers. They will learn official procedures and formalities, how to maintain offices files, office management and office decorum. The main task of the interns at Democracywatch is to assist the Program Manager and Officers in all manner of tasks from organizing workshop, seminars, and training programs at local level. They also scan news on UP related news and produced 12 monthly reports, which are sent to media as well. The media are very keen to get this report and publish it regularly.

12. Process Evaluation: Democracywatch is running a process evaluation survey in 6 PRC areas after one year of the project. The organization designed a comprehensive questionnaire and sends it to all local PRC offices. Democracywatch is still doing data entry and analysis to assess the performance of PRC project.

Program Implementation Strategy

Democracywatch conducted this program through its partner organizations (i.e. Swapno Sahajjyo Shangstha, Jessore, Nilachal, Nilphamari, Samajik Unnyon Shangstha (SUS), Gazipur and PRADIP, Dinajpur).

In addition a small team of PRC frequently visits in PRC area and assist them to conduct their program smoothly. Moreover they are also discuss the problems to find out ways and means to resolve them.

Democracywatch also conducted a partner assessment report from the research division and shared with partners internally in experience sharing meeting to improve them and Provide opportunity to learn.

Lessons Learnt

Democracywatch is working to ensure transparency and accountability of Union Parishad. During this period Democracywatch and its partners faced lot of difficulties and risks. This kind of project is not very easy when the question of transparency and accountability of Union Parishad comes in. It is sometimes hard to arrange a real platform for general people where they can raise their voices.

People have become aware of the PRC concept but their expectations are high. They thought that this project would give direct service delivery. It is up to us to make them understand that it will contribute indirectly in the development process and also ensure people's participation in democratic process.

People are not convinced about NGO activists. A Lot of NGOs worked here previously. But most of them are doing credit programs and maintaining businessman relationship with local people. That's why they were surprised and unable to trust when they became aware about our activities. Finally we make them understand that this type work will definitely help in their development process.

Government has selected Gram Sakar in all Union Parishads. But their neutrality and bias is questionable. Democracywatch selected citizen committee members with the consultation of local people. That's why the parallel existence may create conflict between citizen committees and Gram Sarker. Still we are trying to find out ways and means to resolve problems so that the two entities can co-exist.

Achievements

We have passed one year and achieved enormous success with in this period which are given below

Dinajpur (Singra Union)

- Discussion is going on with the Chairman and local people to prepare the UP annual budget.
- Women members of are now receiving proper work from UP.
- Birth Registration is improving.

Dinajpur (Bulakipur Union)

- Regular monthly meeting between the citizen committee and the people.
- In joyarampur village a citizen committee assisted in building a road.
- Discussion is on-going with the chairman and local people to prepare the annual budget.

- Health and Education department of this union are active due to proper PRC monitoring.
- Birth Registration has improved.

Jessore (Ramnagor Union)

- The Birth Registration has improved.
- Several Pre-Budget sessions held with general people.
- The Chairman declared open budget in front of people in Union Parishad.
- All Standing Committees formed with the help of PRC.
- Regular dialogue with UP Chairman and general people initiated.
- UP Members are sitting on a regular basis with citizen committee

Jessore (Fatehpur Union)

- Several Pre-Budget Sessions were held with the general people.
- An open budget declared by Chairman Mr Manzurul Haq Bitu on 5th September, 2004.
- Increasing women participation in democratic process through yard meeting.
- Citizen Committee has taken steps against a drug businessman.
- Regular meeting between Citizen Committee and general people.
- Meeting is going on with the government officials with PRC staff and citizen committee to develop the service of UP.
- UP Alliance were formed consisting 30 members of UP where chairman of Ramnagor union took the leading role. This alliance will work together to bring some positive changes in union parishad.

Bason Union of Gazipur

- A reading society has been formed where all the members are coming on a regular basis to read the newspapers and different books of UP.
- Citizen Committee is involved in social and development work.
- UP representatives and Secretary are maintaining office time regularly.
- Monthly meeting is taking place regularly among the citizen committee.
- The Birth Registration has improved.

Khogakhoribari Union of Nilphamari

- Sanitation activities have increased in Khogakhoribari Union with the help of citizen committee
- Members are pro-active and maintaining regular connection with PRC office
- Chairman of UP has regular dialogue with local people to make him accountable and transparent
- Several public-hearing sessions organized by Chairman
- UP members are sitting with citizen committee once a month
- Birth registration have improved
- Local people have taken initiative to disseminate information about PRC to different layers of UP.

Unplanned Achievements

1. Number of union parishad, MP's and general people are interested to work on PRC and have made several verbal and written requests to Democracywatch to introduce this project in their own area.
2. Number of visitors came from Kenya and England including DANIDA officials visited PRC center of Jessore and Gazipur.
3. Number of local, National organizations and journalists visited PRC center at Jessore and Gazipur.
4. A group of UP chairmen and members from Sylhet visited PRC center at Jessore.
5. Number of experts on local government visited Gazipur PRC Office including DANIDA.
6. Another PRC (Janotar Dorbar) formed recently at Jessore where a Minister (Mr Tarikul Islam, Minister, Environment and forestry) came usually in a month and answered people's different question, which made him accountable and transparent.
7. PRC staff both national and local visited another local government project in Madaripur and participated in 2 daylong training programme conducted by Madaripur Legal Aid Association.
8. Strong network with all local bodies
9. A full-fledged website on PRC has been developed and about 500 people are visiting the website regularly.
10. A complete database on 6 union parishad has been developed
11. The other organizations involved in local government activities developed better relations.
12. Locally PRC office staff are empowered and also relied upon by the local people to resolve their personal problems.
13. The salary (Honarium) of UP representatives increased by the advocacy of Democracywatch.
14. Democracywatch is also lobbying to build up Union Parishad complex at Ramnagor Union of Jessore at National level.

Objectives Achieved at a glance

Project objective

1. Setting-up a monitoring system to assess the performance of elected representatives

Indicator

Number of monitoring reports published

Objective Achieved so far

- 6 PRC office has been established to develop permanent monitoring system at Union level
- A monitoring form has been designed.
- Monitoring from the local offices has been started. (Gazipur-60 forms, Jessore 40 forms, Dinajpur- 80 forms and Nilphamari 90 forms so far)

Results not achieved

- Community is not monitoring the situation of UP's. They are preparing to monitor the UP's situation.
- Monitoring form or Report card still not published. It will be published soon.

Objective

2. Increasing awareness of the UP's on their civic rights
3. Mobilizing people to voice their demands

Indicator

People's participation

Objective achieved so far

- A number of 108 yard meeting in 6 unions arranged at Union level where about 10000 people were present
- A number of 12 spot campaigns were held where about 2000 people were present including UP representatives.
- 4 public meeting were held where about 3000 people were present
- 12 focus group discussion, 5 expert discussion and 4 in-house workshop were held where 600 people were present
- 54 citizen committee were formed where about 12000 people were communicated at 6 unions
- 15000 leaflet on PRC were distributed in 6 Unions
- 5000 bulletin distributed in 350 unions including 6 PRC areas
- 18000 posters were distributed in 6 PRC areas

- 10 daylong miking about PRC and role and responsibilities of UP representative where most of the villages covered in 2 working areas in Dinajpur
- 12 press conference in 6 union and districts
- A baseline survey

Objective

4. Increasing people's participation in local decision making process

Indicator

Involvement of local leaders

Objectives achieved so far

- 1 Pre-budget session at Ramnagor Union, Jessore
- 1 Pre-budget session at Fathepur Union, Jessore
- An open budget declaration by UP Chairman at Ramnagor union, Jessore on 7July, 2004
- An open budget declaration by UP Chairman at Fathepur union, Jessore on 5 September, 2004
- An open dialogue between UP Chairman and general people was held at Khogakhoribari union in Nilphamari on 25 June, 2004
- 13 Standing committee was formed with the help of PRC on 21 August, 2004 at Ramnagor union in Jessore

Objective

5. Developing grassroots level responsive leadership

Indicator

Involving local leadership

Objective achieved so far

- 54 citizen committee training in 6 unions
- 6 UP representative training
- 4 district seminar
- Monthly meeting between citizen committee and PRC local office

Recommendations

A similar visit is required in India where MKSS (Majdur Kishan Sramik Shangothon) are working to promote good governance at local levels. This type of project will help us a lot to bring some positive changes in Union Parishad.

Some capacity building factor will be the key of this project. PRC local staffs are doing the entire field-based program and keep regular connection with local people. They need to develop better techniques and motivational strategy to conduct more programs. That is why the need to develop their capacity should be a prime target in this project.

We are monitoring UP representatives' activities on a regular basis. Under this process they are going to be more accountable and transparent. Previously it was impossible to implement such a system as UP representatives became uneasy at the thought of monitoring. However, now many enjoy the exposure that PRC gives them.

Some of the members of the Citizen Committee are working seriously to bring some positive changes in union parishad. They are working closely with local PRC staff and UP representatives. To do this work properly Citizen Committees must see other project interventions. This will ensure better understanding and innovations.

Now that the PRC project is running successfully we should incorporate some promotional activities to alert more people to their capabilities. Billboards in these areas would be an effective tool.

The members of the Advocacy committee are very enthusiastic and eager to work closely with local PRC. But they need more training, so that they can create a strong impression among the policy makers.

In the near future we have to allocate some resources to build up Union Parishad by enhancing their capacity by provision of such important equipments such as computers, typewriters, mobile telephone sets, bi-cycles/Motorbike etc.

Activities at a glance

Democracywatch **PRC- Activities** **(October 2003 – September 2004) 1 year**

Code	Name of Activities	Target	Done
9.1	Baseline Survey	9 Unions	9 Unions
9.9	Yard Meeting	108	108
9.3	Publication On UP Manual	On going	
	Focus group Discussion (FGD)	12	12
	In-house workshop	4	4
	Expert Discussion	5	5
9.11	Meet the pres	28	12
9.2	Formation Citizen Committee	54	54
9.4	Training on Citizen Committee	96	54
9.12	District Seminar on PRC	12	4
9.6	Spot Campaign	12	12
9.14	UP Chairman/Member Orientation	24	6
9.10	Public Meeting	22	4
9.21	Bulletin (Janogonar Dorbar Barta)	2	1
9.7	Poster	2	1
9.18	Advocacy Seminar at (district and Thana)	10	-
9.15	Formation of Advocacy Group	6	Processing
9.23	PRC Experience exchange meeting	2	Processing
9.16	Quarterly meeting with citizens committee and advocacy groups	14	Processing
9.14	Up Function monitoring by PRC	6 Unions	On going
9.8	Exhibition and Video Show	12	Processing
10.1	Process Evaluation	1	On going
9.17	Preparation and Presentation of Recommendation	12	Processing

Cause for delayed activities

There has been some delay in the implementation of some of the scheduled activities due to factors beyond our control. This project being the first time in Bangladesh it was bound to have teething problems. The day to day activities are usually run by the local people (Members of the Citizen committee) with the assistance of PRC staff. Sometimes they have little time since they have their own work to run at the same time. As we cannot impose work on them many of the activities have been held late. Also the density of work is very high in this project.

Ramadan, Eid, hartals and flood disrupted the many of the main activities. During this time the people who live in villages are reluctant to participate. Hartals called by the opposition parties' create panic among the people and usually no official work happens at that time.

Our funding was stopped by DANIDA-HRGG-PSU from 12 August 2004 to 25 October 2004 due to unresolved position for another project NIPOM. This impeded our efforts to run this project smoothly.

Nevertheless we are committed, competent and confident to do this work properly and within time and to achieve the expected results.

Glossary

PRC	Peoples Reporting Centre
UP	Union Parishad
Gram Sarker	Lowest level of local government
VGD	Vulnerable group development
VGF	Vulnerable group feeding
Jonogoner Dorbar	Bengali term for PRC
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance