



## Socially Accountable Public Services at the Local Level

**S**ocial accountability strategies enable citizens to help enforce social and state rights, and put the demands of citizens before government officials and concerned service providers. The social accountability strategy is based on three principles: **Transparency, Responsibility, and Participation.**

The primary objective of the social accountability strategy is to contribute in good governance by strengthening government's accountability through expression of views and opinions by civil society and citizen-led grassroots organisations concerning state policymaking, state and local development financing, service delivery, etc. In addition, it creates an opportunity for CSOs to monitor and respond to government activities in a participatory manner. Enhancing accountability and widened space for citizen's participation in the delivery process of the public services are also critically important to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Citizen-led oversight through the application of social accountability tools is one of the major activities being implemented as part of the current project. During the project period, based on trainings imparted by the CPD, partner CSOs and CBOs conducted a total of 26 social audits in 13 districts, in two phases. The social audits were conducted on at least six SDG-oriented services, including VGD, Food Relief (SDG 1), Agriculture services (SDG 2), Health services (SDG 3), Education services (SDG 4), Water and Sanitation services (SDG 6), and Training and Credit services for Youth (SDG 8). The findings of these social audits were shared among local administration, local government representatives, media, and other interested stakeholders. Challenges in delivering the selected services were highlighted through 26 public hearings. A number of possible solutions also emerged through this programme.

Thanks to dissemination activities and several follow-up initiatives including the half-yearly meetings of the district-level network, community consultation with service providers, grassroots citizens, and CBOs in the project areas were successful in bringing accountability in the delivery of selected SDG-oriented services. The concerned partners interacted with officials dealing with the public service delivery at the grassroots level and ensured, that their voice was heard. Since in most cases the issues were associated with interests of the marginalised groups, the outcome was better accountability in upholding and advancing the aspiration of 'leave no one behind'.

The social audit findings were also shared at the Annual CBO Conference 2019 titled 'Democratic Governance and Development: Role of Grassroots Citizens Organisations', held in Dhaka on 2019.



About 650 participants from across the country took part at the day-long event, including representatives from hard-to-reach communities, officials from local government and administration, development practitioners, social activists, and international development partners. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and Honourary President, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), pledged to take the recommendations of the social audit findings presented at the conference to the Parliamentary Standing Committee that he chairs. He emphasised that the government would continue to take necessary steps to ensure transparency and accountability in delivering public services and implementing national development policies at all levels, from national to the local level. It may be mentioned here that he did take the recommendations to the committee and shared his takeaways from the session with the committee members.



### **Socially Accountable Health Services**

Due to social audit and public hearings on Community Clinics by CBOs with Upazila Administration and LGs:

- Two community clinics restarted operating in Sirajganj;
- Health staffs are regularly attending to their respective CCs in Netrakona;
- In Swandip, doctors and health staffs are ensuring timely presence; irregularities such as getting money from patients for medicines have been stopped; CC staffs that are on duty improved their behaviour with patients; FWAs now regularly visit wards and villages and provide health services and consultations.



### **Socially Accountable Local Infrastructures**

CBO members applied the learnings from training on social accountability and Public Finance Management tools and raised their demands in union *ward sabhas* and budget discussions. It contributed to:

- Completing the construction of 1.5 km long road from Khursimul to Baladarshi while construction of four other (three paved, one non-paved) roads are almost completed in Nilphamari;
- Completion of the construction of one km long road in Kishoreganj;
- Completion of the construction of half km long and, repair of one km long roads in Swandip;
- Completion of the construction of 115 feet long wooden culvert in Jamalpur.



### **Socially Accountable Training and Credit Services for Youth**

- As a result of regular CBO consultation with LAs under the project, Upazila Women Affairs Division (UWAD) provided tailoring training to four disadvantaged youths out of 11 applicants. Each of the beneficiary youth also received low-interest loans of Tk. 15,000 at the end of the training in Satkhira.
- Consequent to consultation of District network in UWAD regarding the need for vocational/technical training for disadvantaged women. UWAD organised skill development training for 30 women of Phulchari and Gozaria unions of Gaibandha.



### Socially Accountable Agriculture Services

Owing to regular consultation of District Network with local Agricultural Offices:

- After the public hearing on Agriculture services, the Project Coordinator of the local partner in Kishoreganj was included in Upazila Agricultural Committee;
- A total of 600 and 230 CBOs (farmers) that were severely affected by flood, received seeds and fertilisers for free as subsidy and rehabilitation in Jamalpur and Gaibandha, respectively;
- Three CBO members affected by cyclone 'Amphan' received 20 kg fertiliser, five types of seeds and Tk. 500 for cultivating their land and maintaining other costs as rehabilitation in Satkhira;
- Total 46 CBOs (cattle farmers) were included in the incentive (Tk. 4,600 to 10,000) list of upazila livestock office in Nilphamari;
- A total of 87 CBOs received different agricultural inputs in Netrakona.



### Socially Accountable Education Services

Thanks to public hearing by CBOs with primary school teachers, SMC members, parents, Upazila education officers, and local government representatives:

- Teachers started to attend and teach regularly in Roumari and Jamalpur;
- Teachers stopped whipping students in Roumari and Jamalpur;
- Parents regularly visit schools, and students are also more attentive to classes in Jamalpur;
- Education Officers regularly visit schools in *char* areas; parent and SMC meetings are regularly held; the system of temporary/alternative teachers has been abolished in Roumari, Kurigram.



### Socially Accountable Social Protection Services

Thanks to social audit and public hearings on VGD by CBOs:

- LAs and LGs disseminate information about various services available at local level by understanding various activities in Nilphamari and Gaibandha;
- LGs follow proper beneficiary selection guideline in Rangpur;
- LGs hang potential and preliminary list of beneficiaries in union parishad in Nilphamari and Gaibandha;
- The case of including ineligible people in the list of beneficiaries for money has been reduced in Gaibandha;
- The beneficiaries are getting the service with actual quantity, without any kind of hassle and additional transaction cost in Rangpur and Gaibandha;
- LA's visits and field level presence have increased.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.localizingsdg.cpd.org.bd](http://www.localizingsdg.cpd.org.bd)