PROJECT CLOSING REPORT

Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) Project

Dhaka | 28.12.22

Strengthen the capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development service delivery for the SDGs (especially achieving the goals and targets of 1.1.3; 4.5.6; 11-b, 15; and 16.7).

Project Summary

Project Title	Effective and Accountable Local Governance (EALG)
Award ID & Project no.	00106748
Project Duration	1 January 2018 to 31 December 2022
Executive Agency	UNDP Bangladesh
Implementing Partner(s)	Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
Donor(s)	Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Switzerland and UNDP
Total Budget (US$)	USD 7.77 Million
Total Expenditure (US$)	USD 7.77 Million
Related UNSDCF outcome(s)	Output 4.2: Public institutions, local government and other quasi formal institutions and normative and policy frameworks are more gender-responsive, accountable, and governed by the rule of law.
Related SP outcome(s)	OUTPUT 2.3: Responsive governance systems and local governance strengthened for socio economic opportunity, inclusive basic service delivery, community security, and peacebuilding.
	OUTPUT 2.1: Open, agile, accountable and future-ready governance systems in place to co-create and deliver solutions to accelerate SDG achievement
Related CPD outcome(s)	Output 3.2: Public institutions and other quasi-formal institutions and normative and policy frameworks have enhanced capacities and frameworks to ensure accountable and gender-responsive governance according to the rule of law.
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS/LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADP   Annual Development Program

ANC   Anti-Natal Care

BCC   Behavior change communication

BDT   Bangladeshi Taka

CBO   Community Based Organization

CPD   Country Programme Document

CSO   Civil Society Organization

DDLG   Deputy Director Local Government

DPHE   Department of Public Health Engineering

EALG   Efficient and Accountable Local Government

EC   Executive Committee

FWCMC   Family Welfare Center Management Committee

GoB   Government of Bangladesh

IAUZP   Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad

ICT   Information Communication Technology

IEC   Information, Education, and Communication

IGA   Income Generating Activities

LGD   Local Government Division

LGED   Local Government Engineering Department

LGI   Local Government Institution

LGRD& C   Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives

LGSP   Local Governance Support Project

M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation

MIE   Monitoring Implementation and Evaluation

MIS   Management Information System

NILG   National Institute of Local Government

NPD	National Project Director
PAG	Project Advisory Group
PELG	Policy for Effective Local Governance
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
PNC	Post-Natal Care
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RG	Research Grants
SC	Standing Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDUP	Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad
ToR	Terms of Reference
UDMC	Union Disaster Management Committee
UGDP	Upazila Governance and Development Project
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UP	Union Parishad
USD	US Dollar
UZDCC	Upazila Development Coordination Committee
UZP	Upazila Parishad
VAW	Violence Against Women
VC	Vice-Chairman
VGD	Vulnerable Groups Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
WASA	Water Supply and Sewerage Authority
WDF	Women Development Forum
ZP	Zila Parishad

1. INTRODUCTION

The Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project is a combined initiative of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and development partners (Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Switzerland) to strengthen Bangladesh's local governance system. The five-year project (2017–2022) is designed based on the successes and lessons learned from two previous UNDP-supported projects, the Union Parishad Governance Project and the Upazila Parishad Governance Project.

The project EALG has been supporting the lagging behind Upazila Parishads (UZPs) and Union Parishads (UPs) to improve service delivery through better governance. This project has three major program components: Component-1: Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad (IAUZP); Component-2: Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP), and Component-3: Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG) with the overall objective is to strengthen the capacity of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development and service delivery for the SDGs.

Component I, Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad (IAUZP): This component has been designed to strengthen governance framework of Upazila Parishad for inclusive, effective, and accountable planning and improved service delivery. Moreover, it has been working to improve the financial management of Upazila Parishad, strengthened downward accountability of the UZP Committees through public engagement mechanisms and practices, and strengthen ability of Women Upazila Parishad Members to fulfil their role and duties in council work.

Component-II, Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP): This component attempts to: i. strengthens the capacity of the Union Parishads to provide pro-poor, effective and accountable services; ii. make the Union Parishads (UP) more climate resilient by prioritizing resilience measures in the UP-development plan; and iii. empower and institutionalize the space for the poor and marginalized citizens especially the women in the UP's decision-making process.

Component III, Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG): This component provides policy support to the Government of Bangladesh for establishing effective local government irrespective of tiers.

1.1 Project Outline

- Component I, Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad (IAUZP): Under this component, targeted outcomes were as follows:
    - Percentage of citizens (disaggregated by men/women, poor/non-poor) satisfied with the services of Upazila Parishads
    - Number of UZP that received and monitored local plans and budgets by at least three transferred departments (transparency of local bureaucracy)
    - Percentage of Upazila Parishads who adopt public engagement strategies in their planning and service monitoring

- o Percentage of women councilors in selected Upazila Parishads who report they can participate effectively in debates and are able to influence council decision making
- o Percentage of Upazila Parishads who have improved expenditure against the budget (credibility of budget)

- ▪ Component-II, Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP): Under this component, targeted outcomes were as follows:

  - o Percentage of the poor, vulnerable and socially excluded citizensin50% of the targeted UPs under the targeted 8 districts have access to decision making process.
  - o Percentage of service recipients satisfied with services provided by selected UPs under the targeted 8districts (citizenship certificate, birth registration, safety-net allowances etc.

- ▪ Component III, Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG): Under this component, targeted outcomes were as follows:

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

1.2   Context

Strengthening local governance has been a key focus for the Government of Bangladesh, as well as the development partners. Considering the importance of the issue, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been working to strengthen the local governance system in Bangladesh for more than a decade and has contributed largely to strengthening the institutional capacity and policy landscape of local governance. UNDP supported Local Government Institution (LGI) projects have been proven to have high value for money and have demonstrated improved services for communities especially for the marginalized and disadvantaged people. Basically, the successes and lessons learned from two previous UNDP-supported projects, the Union Parishad Governance Project and the Upazila Parishad Governance Project led UNDP and Local Government Division (LGD) to co-design Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project with support from the Embassy of Switzerland, and Embassy of Denmark to keep the progress made by those two projects alive.

2. PROJECT RESULTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Given the COVID 19 challenges in 2020 and 2021, the EALG project has executed a variety of activities during the whole project year and has produced outstanding results in each of the three components of the project.

Under component 1, 94% (17 out of 18) project working UZPs secured performance grants from UGDP, 100% (18 out of 18) project working UZPs have published their annual reports and five-year plan, WDF's mobilized BDT 1,69,54,738 from ADP allocation based upon the govt. circular and undertaken number of gender responsive schemes at their locality, for the first time, a total of 32 public hearings at UZP level organized by the technical support from EALG where 102 issues instantly resolved. Since inception to date a total of 6633 people took oath to end violence against women by organizing 18 Orange Campaign at UZP level, 100% project UZPs published their budget timely and organized 49 open budget session in 2019, 2021 and 2022 for wider transparency and accountability where 7669 people participated.

Under component 2, 54% (136) project working UPs secured performance grants from LGSP III which indicates their better performance than earlier, 70% (178) project working UPs have published their annual reports whereas 43% (109) project working UPs have published their SDG and climate responsive five-year plan, 100% project working UPs' ward meetings (ward shava) were regularized before COVID 19 Pandemic and till today 9354 ward meeting were in place, 80% development schemes of the project working UPs is designed with the inputs from the ward meetings, 121 project UPs' introduced public hearing in their locality, where 760 issues were resolved right after the events, all supported UPs (8) have been able to mobilize their tax 3.15 times (BDT 8,842,874) higher than earlier average (BDT 2,810,581) at EALG areas.

Under component 3, The EALG project has conducted 32 studies on local government through 52 junior researchers from various public universities with the aim of building strong local government institutions and determining the learnings, challenges, and next steps for further development of related institutions. A total of 39 research has been conducted by various national experts at the national level. The EALG project has also provided technical assistance to local government departments in the formulation of policies resulting in the formulation/approval of 13 policies so far.

Top 3-5 Results

Result 1: Issuance of 13 Office Order/ guideline/ circular/ TOR to UPs and UZPs by LGD

The EALG project has provided technical assistance to local government departments in the formulation of several policies resulting in the formulation/approval of the following policies so far by LGD throughout the project.

ToRs/Guidelines:

1) Revision of earlier Upazila Revenue Fund Utilization Guideline, 2020
2) LGD approved Terms of Reference (ToR) for 17 UZP Committees
3) LGD approved Annual Reporting Guideline for UPs
4) LGD approved Annual Reporting Guideline for UZPs
5) LGD approved Operational Guideline for Women Development Forum (WDF)
6) LGD issued a guideline on organizing open budget session at UZP level

Circular/Office Order:

7. LGD issued Circular for using UP revenue for the preparation and publication of their Annual Reports.
8. The earlier WDF Circular has been revised in 2021 by LGD and made amendment on allocating 3% ADP fund to WDF which was up to 3% earlier.
9. LGD issued Circular on organizing Public Hearing at UP level.
10. LGD issued Circular on organizing Public Hearing at UZP level
11. LGD issued Office Order for updating UP's website with relevant information time to time.
12. LGD issued Office Order for updating UZP's website with relevant information time to time.
13. LGD issued circular for livestreaming of UP and UZP's public gathering events to ensure transparency and accountability at local level

It is easier to get approval over a guideline or a policy for the Upazila Parishad or Union Parishad by the Local Government Division based on piloting results instead of directly conducting advocacy without having any evidence. Following this strategy, EALG project has piloted several guidelines and policies at the filed first and based on the results of the piloting, the project conducted necessary advocacies with the Local Government Division (LGD) and got necessary approvals of these. Through this process the above 13 policies were formulated and circulated by LGD. Those policies will ensure accountable and gender-responsive local governance according to the rule of law.

The main contributing factor behind these achievements is EALG's evidence-based advocacy. As EALG started working with UP's and UZP's, it initiated several research and piloting of several activities on how to increase transparency and accountability of the LGD. Followed by those piloting and research, project did advocacy to Local Government Division to initiate several circular/policy/guideline etc. for all UP's and UZP's in Bangladesh. When LGD cross-checked then found visibility and issued several policies/guidelines/circular/ToR etc. on several actions like public hearing in

UP and UZP, LGD website updating, UP and UZP annual reporting etc. to ensure transparency, efficiency and accountability of the local government institutions.

Result 2: MIE Wing of LGD developed their online based MIS system with technical assistance from EALG project

LGD's MIE wing developed an online based MIS system which was not properly structured neither functional. But with the technical assistance of EALG, now the MIS is functional at national level by MIE wing officials, and they can see any project details and expenditure anytime and from anywhere. This platform has the provision to be accessible by the internal and external/field level staffs to enter and monitor information according to their scope. This system will strengthen the functional relationship between the tiers of LGIs and the LGD, enhance LGD's control and policy direction in project management and monitoring system which will be linked more effectively with desired national outcome.

Local Government Institutions (LGIs) of Bangladesh include 12 City Corporations, 329 Pourashavas (Municipalities), 64 Zilla Parishads (Districts), 492 Upazila Parishads (sub-districts) and 4,573 Union Parishads (rural local governments). Besides these, there are some other institutions under LGD such as LGED, DPHE, WASA, NILG etc. Local Government Division formulates and implements several developments works through these institutions to provide effective public service delivery to the whole country. Monitoring the projects and activities by different departments and LGIs is required to ensure projects are completed with quality and in time. Moreover, monitoring the governance activities at all LGIs is required to ensure more efficient and responsive public service through the local governance institutes i.e. UP, UZP, Pourashava, ZP, City Corporations etc. Keeping this in mind, EALG project assigned a consultant to this initiative who closely worked with the working team of this MIS project. Role of the consultant was to perform business and system analysis, software specifications preparing, communications and liaison with software vendors, vendor evaluation, preparing the ToR, follow-up and guidance to vendor for software architecture, design and development, hosting, supervision of training and rollout of the software etc.

EALG project found that though Monitoring, Implementation and Evaluation (MIE) wing of the Local Government Division is responsible for monitoring the activities of the local government institutions across the country but with limited manpower and in absence of an appropriate strategy and tools, it was difficult for the MIE Wing to monitor different tiers of LGIs effectively. Although Local Government Division and its MIE Wing took an initiative and developed a web-based Management Information System (MIS) but it was unstructured and non-functional. Following this, EALG sat with LGD, addressed their requirements and gave technical assistance to enhance its monitoring and evaluation system which will contribute to enhanced monitoring and analytical ability of the officers of MIE wing of LGD and will ensure accountability and transparency of LGD.

Result 3: Preparation and Publication of annual report and Five- Year Plan by UPs and UZP's

In EALG project areas, 100% (18 out of 18) project working UZPs have published their five-year plan & annual reports and 70% (178) project working UPs have published their annual reports whereas 43% (109) project working UPs have published their SDG and climate responsive five-year plan which indicates an improved capacity in planning addressing SDGs and reporting with improved transparency and accountability by UP's and UZP's.

Producing and publishing five- year plan and annual report is a legal obligation for the UPs and UZPs, as it allows citizens to know what initiatives is going to be taken by UP's and UZP's in future and what is being done by the local government bodies for them. But the UPs and UZPs need to be provided with technical assistance in the form of training and guidance, for preparing the annual plans and financial support to print it for wider dissemination. When EALG project came to know about this technical and financial lack of UP's and UZP's during working with LGD, it offered those assistance and helped the UP's and UZP's in their capacity building to prepare those plans and reports by their own. And finally, they prepared those plan and report. However, this technical assistance is not required for a longer period as they will be used to within a couple of years. The LGD has already issued a circular to print this planning document from its source revenue, making provision to spend up to BDT 100,000 for this purpose.

The main supporting factor behind this achievement is EALG projects initiatives towards research on LGD and emphasize on building the capacity of UP's and UZP's to make them more efficient, transparent, and accountable to the people. This locally led, need-based approach of EALG worked as good enabler to achieve the result.

3. PROGRESS REVIEW

The EALG project had a lot of targets set in ProDoc and it achieved tremendous progress in each target areas. For example, according to final evaluation report of EALG project, under component 1, all the participating UZPs had formed their respective UZP committees, and they had their documentation of committee formation and the name of the members of different committees, the cent percent (100%) Upazila formed Upazila Disaster Management Committee, 88.9% project working UZP's took initiatives on SDG localization, The satisfaction level regarding UZP services of the aggregate very satisfied and satisfied categories together stands at 57.9% for the project working UZP's.

Under component 2, all the Standing Committees have been formed in all the UPs (100 %) in the project area and are functioning as per the rules, all the UPs (98.1%) formed the Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC), 8 UPs have been able to increase their assessed tax by 3.15 times more on average as EALG project has facilitated eight UPs to conduct the tax assessment and later tax collection based on that tax assessment, 80.9 % of the project working UP's respondents were satisfied with the available UP

services. Regarding the UP activities, percentage of local people mostly attended Ward Shava (82.5%), Public hearing (49.6%); Open budget meetings (47.4%) in project working areas. It has also been found that citizens are raising their voices, individually or collectively, to mobilize their community people.

Under component 3, the EALG-supported policy change initiative brought some changes in some policies for efficient and accountable local governance and was duly approved by the LGD. Among the five policy change issues, the UPs were aware of even 94% of some policies, but their implementation rate was far below expectation. The UZPs, however, were found to be aware of the changes (more than 95% on average) and accordingly got almost all in practice.

As a result of EALG intervention, the UPs and UZPs have become more people-friendly and functional. In addition, the capacity-building interventions have brought a positive change in the mind-set of UP and UZP members resulting in an improvement in the performance of LGIs in all respects. More accountable LGIs, in turn, is leading to tremendous success in achieving SDGs. Moreover, the Union residents have become aware of their rights and responsibilities, the problems of their society, and the importance of engaging themselves in income-generating activities.

3.1 Inclusive and Accountable Upazila Parishad (IAUZP)

- 94% (17 out of 18) project working UZPs secured performance grants from UGDP which indicates UZP's working capacity has improved than earlier.
- 100% (18 out of 18) project working UZPs have published their annual reports which indicates an improved capacity in reporting with improved transparency and accountability.
- 100% (18 out of 18) project working UZPs have published their five-year plan which indicates an improved capacity in planning addressing SDGs.
- WDF's mobilized BDT 1,69,54,738 from ADP allocation in 2021-22 based upon the govt. circular and undertaken number of gender responsive schemes at their locality.
- For the first time, a total of 32 public hearings at UZP level organized by the technical support from EALG where 102 issues instantly resolved.
- Since inception to date a total of 6633 people took oath to end violence against women by organizing 18 Orange Campaign at UZP level.
- 100% project UZPs published their budget timely and organized 49 open budget session in 2019, 2021 and 2022 for wider transparency and accountability where 7669 people participated.

3.2 Sustainable and Democratic Union Parishad (SDUP)

- 54% (136) project working UPs secured performance grants from LGSP III which indicates their better performance than earlier.
- 70% (178) project working UPs have published their annual reports which indicates an improved capacity in reporting with improved transparency and accountability.

- 43% (109) project working UPs have published their SDG and climate responsive five-year plan.
- 100% project working UPs' ward meetings (ward shava) were regularized before COVID 19 Pandemic. Till today 9354 ward meeting were in place.
- 80% development schemes of the project working UPs is designed with the inputs from the ward meetings.
- 121 project UPs' introduced public hearing in their locality, where 760 issues were resolved right after the events.
- All supported UPs (8) have been able to mobilize their tax 3.15 times (BDT 8,842,874) higher than earlier average (BDT 2,810,581) at EALG areas.
- A total of 500 young people (285 female and 215 male) from six unions of Ukhiya & Teknaf Upazila of Coxs bazar got different skills training in poultry Rearing, Dry Fish Processing, and Packaging, Street Food Production, and Service, Small Business, Tiles Fitting, Plumbing, Electrical House Wiring & Solar System, Electronic & Mobile Phone Servicing etc. through the EALG project. Among those trainees, 151 developed entrepreneurship/self-employed and 129 is under wage employment (total 56% employed).

3.3 Policy for Effective Local Governance (PELG)

The EALG project has provided technical assistance to local government departments in the formulation of several policies resulting in the formulation/approval of the following policies so far-

ToRs/Guidelines:
1) Revision of earlier Upazila Revenue Fund Utilization Guideline, 2020
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13. LGD issued circular for livestreaming of UP and UZP's public gathering events to ensure transparency and accountability at local level.

3.4   Gender and Youth

The Local Government Division has repeatedly issued instructions to include women and marginalized groups in open public events to ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate, regardless of their gender. According to the final evaluation of the project, it was revealed that 70.1% of women participated in UP organized events, and among those participants, more than 90% had spoken out in meetings, 95.2% of women councilors in selected Upazila Parishads reported they can participate effectively in debates and are able to influence council decision making whereas 87.5% of women Vice -Chair and councilor trained and active in the Women Development Forums and 30% UZP schemes implemented under the leadership of women Vice -Chairs/women councilors.

With EALG projects support the Women Development Forum (WDF) of 18 UZP is integrating gender issues into its institutional (UZP and UP) planning process aiming to increase the participation of women in LGIs' decision-making processes, e.g., Ward Shava, Open Budget Sessions, and Public Hearings. etc. According to final evaluation findings, 31.6% of respondents or their family members received services from WDF within the last two years, and most of them were either very satisfied (28%) or satisfied (54.9%) with the WDF services.

Project activities have helped reduce discrimination against women. This has made the Women Development Forum (WDF) stronger, so that all events and programs involving women have been planned carefully and with the input of women and those who are disabled or from marginalized groups. In addition, training is provided so that women in leadership understand the project's action plan and carry it out appropriately with focusing on protecting women and girls in times of disasters, in public areas, and in everyday life.

Revision of the circular regarding allocation of 3 percent ADP fund to Women Development Forum is one of the significant steps towards empowering elected representatives of the local government bodies. It is to be mentioned that WDF mobilized BDT 49,23,380 in FY: 2020-21 but mobilized BDT 58,76,910 in FY 2021-2022 which is 16.23% increase than the previous year as an immediate result of WDF's revised 3% ADP Circular. WDF in FY: 2021-22 under 3% ADP allocation implemented 24 gender responsive schemes (distributed bicycle, sanitary napkin, school bag, wheelchair, musical instruments, goat, etc.) thereby benefited 1820 women and girls in their localities. Till now, Eighteen Women Development Forum (WDF) addressed 385 early marriages, 213 sexual harassment, 267 domestic violence and 178 other violence.

Considering the good results achieved by WDF for distributing bicycles among adolescent girls under its 3% ADP fund, EALG initiated to distribute more and distributed 675 bicycles to adolescent girls to empower them and reduce gender-based violence. This will help the girls get to school faster and save them money on

transportation costs. It will also make them more confident and self-sufficient. This will change the attitude of people in the area towards girls, and the WDF will be better equipped as a result with additional power and strength of 71 adolescent clubs in the respective districts.

The local youth is a huge human capital for the UPs and by engaging them on a volunteer basis, the UP's can minimize its shortage of manpower for implementing development. So, considering the local youths' potentiality and to improve the resource mobilization of the UPs, the EALG project has facilitated eight Ups (one UP from each of the eight administrative divisions in Bangladesh) to improve their resource mobilization by engaging local youth as volunteers in UP taxation process. This has resulted in an average increase of 3.15 times more in assessed taxes from before the volunteer engagement (before assessment BDT 2,810,581 and after assessment BDT 8,842,874) to after it where the lowest increase was 1.42 times more in Patuakhali, and the highest increase was 8 times more in Chandpur.

After providing orientation on local governance, EALG also engaged local youth in organizing Ward Shava, the public engagement strategy for planning and decision-making process at UP level. As a result of that, all EALG UPs were able to organize the large gathering twice in a year that ultimately ensured transparency and accountability at local areas. In addition, EALG also engaged 52 young researchers and undertaken 32 studies with UP and UZP's issues through which the young researchers were encouraged on local governance issues and personally benefited in their career by publishing the research reports by respective institutions. A bunch of fresh recommendations from fresh eyes came from this intervention to further improve local governance system in Bangladesh.

Besides, EALG project provided IGA training to 500 young people (285 female and 215 male) from six unions of Ukhiya & Teknaf Upazila of Coxs Bazar to earn different skills in poultry rearing, dry fish processing, and packaging, street food production, and service, small business, tiles fitting, plumbing, electrical house wiring & solar system, electronic & mobile phone servicing etc. through the project intervention. Among those trainees, 151 developed entrepreneurship/self-employed and 129 is under wage employment and up to project closing the total employment is 56% among the trainees.

3.5   Leave No One Behind

The EALG project tried to empower people by giving them the chance to claim their rights. This is done by focusing on the root causes of problems and working to fix them. Most of the interventions like open budget session, public hearing, ward shava etc. took place in public, where the community can participate. The project installed the motto of the Sustainable Development Goals into its Right Based Approach to implementing its field activities, and also provided training to elected representatives in order to help

them achieve the goals of the SDGs which created an atmosphere in the project intervention areas where the marginalized groups of the community including the poor, women, the minority groups, the ethnic and differently able groups etc. attended events like Ward Shavas, Open Budget Meetings, Public Hearings etc. and slowly got engaged and raised their concerns and interests. For example, at a public hearing, people agreed to continue paying for a girl from a very low-income family to go to university. She won a seat through the admission test in Rajshahi University, but her family couldn't afford to pay the admission fee. Someone at the public hearing donated money to cover her fees and promised to continue supporting her education. The project made sincere efforts to create access for marginalized groups in the community, so they don't remain excluded from local governance decisions that affect their lives. In addition, new rules and procedures were enacted to create an enabling environment for local bodies to participate in events, meetings and other activities organized by LGD in project intervention areas.

100% project working UPs' ward meetings (ward shava) were regularized before COVID 19 Pandemic and till today 9354 ward meeting were in place, 80% development schemes of the project working UPs is designed with the inputs from the ward meetings and 121 project UPs' introduced public hearing in their locality, where 760 issues of left behind people were resolved right after the events.

3.6   Social and Environmental Considerations

The project assessed the Social and Environmental Safeguard (SES) during the project design and found the likelihood of negative impact on the social and environmental settings are very low. Moreover, the project carefully designed its each year AWP so that the designed activities would not have any negative impact on the Social and Environmental aspects. Under the leadership of the Project Coordinator, the project team were regular to keep watching if there is any negative impact on the society and environment due to project interventions.

4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
4.1   Accountability

Accountability is a key priority for UNDP Bangladesh initiatives across the board. As part of this system, the EALG project has also made sure that accountability is uphold in all respects. The project also showed a high level of accountability and openness because it made the duration of its implementation and the funding allocated to it public. Additionally, the initiative has been held accountable through regular reports, sound financial management, assuring the validity of beneficiary selection and service delivery, government auditing, etc. Even the project has repurposed its budget to fight COVID-19 by raising mass awareness, providing PPE, hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, and soaps, and setting up hand washing facilities.

The project raised awareness of the citizen about the mandates of the Union Parishad (UP) and Upazila Parishad (UZP). The project also supported UP and UZP holding various public events (such as ward meeting, public hearing, open budget session) to know people's opinion on their services and development activities. The project also supported the UP and UZP to disclose their relevant information, both programmatic and financial information, by multiple channels such as through Annual Report, Website, Facebook, Five-year Plan Book, etc. Through these interventions, the project strengthened the UPs and UZPs accountability to stakeholders. The project itself maintained its accountability to the stakeholders by arranging periodic Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting, Project Implementation Committee (PIC) Meeting, Publication of Project Annual Report describing programmatic and financial progress and deviation, and meeting government reporting requirements on time.

4.2   Quality of Partnerships with Stakeholders

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

1) Project Advisory Group (PAG)
2) Project Steering Committee (PSC) and
3) Project Implementation Committee (PIC)

These committees were comprised of high-level ministry officials, representatives from other ministries and UNDP Officials, and representatives from the finance partners. The project is led by the National Project Director (NPD), who is an Additional Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh; below him, there were two Deputy National Project Directors in the rank of Deputy Secretary as well who provides operational support. The project Coordinator, supported by the Capacity Development and Gender Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, and Knowledge Management & Communication Officer along with other administrative staff, is responsible for implementing the project and is accountable to the Project Implementation Committee. Besides, UNDP, the Embassy of Denmark and the Embassy of Switzerland are the financial support partner of the Project.

The project has also built partnership with UNDP other projects (such as Social Cohesion Project of Cox's Bazar) has maximized impact over the targeted beneficiaries lives and has been able ensure efficient use of resources by avoiding duplications. The project by building partnership with the local NGOs (such as Uttaran and ACLAB) has been able to add expertise with EALG project to deliver IGA training and awareness on social cohesion in Cox's Bazar. Through this partnership, the project was able to reach people living in the remotest areas, utilize expertise of the NGOs that EALG did not have, cost minimize, and creating impact over the beneficiaries' lives.

4.3   Technical Capacity

The EALG project has worked with the local government for the last five years to help them learn about and implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project has also helped the government to develop policy to help establish effective local government systems. After the project's final evaluation was completed, the local government representatives who had been involved confirmed that the project had improved their skills and knowledge about local government institutions. It was also revealed that the EALG project has trained a group of master trainers who can now provide training to senior government officials about issues related to the SDGs. Most of the elected representatives of local government institutions and the secretaries have also been trained in these areas. In addition, the EALG project has provided information on budgeting, local resource mobilization, climate change knowledge, disaster management, human rights, and good governance. These efforts have helped local government institutions become more aware of and responsive to the SDGs.

The project helped to improve the capacity of local government representatives to provide better services to citizens, and LGI representatives, including elected representatives from Upazila and Union Parishad and secretaries, were very satisfied with the project as it helped increase their awareness of the prudent use of public resources and improved their capacity to discharge duties effectively.

4.4   Communication and Advocacy

The project has developed a comprehensive communication and visibility plan that covers all aspects of project implementation, such as communication, documentation, publications, and information communication materials for awareness raising. Furthermore, the project created various types of communication and visibility materials to ensure project visibility, such as brochures, thematic leaflets and posters, SDG training tools, COVID-19 awareness materials, various audio-visuals based on achievements and success stories, and instructional animation videos on technical areas.

During the project's tenure, the EALG project awarded research fellowships to encourage and create young researchers' specialization in local governance, as well as to conduct research on local governance. A total of 52 research fellowships were awarded, and 32 research papers were produced, which were later published as edited books by their respective affiliated institutions. Based on all research papers and findings, four (4) research books were published.

The project raised awareness about COVID-19 through different initiatives such as Loud miking (using an amplifying microphone), disseminated and distributed posters, and a Facebook campaign. During 2020, EALG assisted in sensitizing 1,050,165 people about COVID-19, gender, and human rights issues. In addition, EALG created and distributed the following information, education, and communication (IEC) and behavior change communication (BCC) materials, including 37,650 COVID-19

posters. One grassroots awareness song for the COVID-19 prevention campaign; On COVID-19 initiatives, one audio-visual product, 'Fighting Back COVID-19".

The project also created a storybook based on success stories; three audio-visual products showcasing the project's success; one audio-visual product on 'How to Prepare Mask,' an initiative of the WDF of Chandpur; SDG-responsive billboards in 11 UP and two UZP premises in Cox's Bazar; yearly annual reports showcasing project results; and branding on banners, presentations, and various documents.

To promote the best practices of the EALG project, the EALG project initiated a Media Fellowship titled "Media Fellowship on Local Governance" to young and promising journalists from electronic and print media as well as online media, including two each from Bangla (The Daily Prothom Alo, the Daily Samakal) and English (The Dhaka Tribune, The Bangladesh Observer) dailies, three from electronic media (Channel 24, ATN Bangla, and Nagorik TV), and one from online media. Each of the media fellows produced three reports on local governance issues, for a total of 24 media reports produced through the Media Fellowship, which assisted the project in demonstrating the results to a wider audience at the national level.

Finally, to promote results and document accomplishment, the project prepared annual reports, collected stories and produced story books, and worked on photo documentation from the field on a regular basis throughout the project's duration.

5. MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

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

5.1   Project Design

The project was designed to help improve the awareness, capacity, and skills of local government officials in rural Bangladesh. The project has made it easier for people to get the services they need and helped to reduce the barriers to the demand and supply of local government services. The project followed the following criteria as well indicating a well- designed scenario:

- **Alignment with government development agenda/UNSDCF output/CPD output**

The project is directly linked to the decentralization efforts of Bangladesh, which the government has pursued in the last four decades to ensure nation-building, poverty reduction, and the integration of the general people into decision-making processes. The project activities, e.g., public hearing, guidelines on Ward Shava, open budget session, training on standing committees, and the orientation of UP and UZP activities, have matched to public institutions, local government and other quasi formal institutions and normative and policy frameworks are more gender-responsive, accountable, and governed by the rule of law(UNSDCF output4.2) along with focusing CPD output 3.2 which also implies that public institutions and other quasi-formal institutions and normative and policy frameworks have enhanced capacities and frameworks to ensure accountable and gender-responsive governance according to the rule of law.

- **Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

EALG project aimed explicitly to achieve Target 16.6 of SDGs, which focuses on developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels. Moreover, the citizen's satisfaction regarding public services is another component of the project that directly aligns with 16.3. The project also aligns with ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels (16.7).

- **Right-Based Approach**

The EALG project helped improve the services that local governments provide to their citizens by teaching them about their rights and how to use these rights to affect their lives. This approach was also designed to include different groups of citizens, such as the poor and marginalized, to create more inclusive and democratic services. One participant said that the EALG team's assistance in introducing public hearings to the local governments helped to resolve many local issues.

5.2   Oversight

The EALG project has worked with a variety of different government organizations to help make the project a success. The LGD was the main government organization involved, and they were responsible for leading the project. The Ministry of Finance was also important because it approved financial matters related to the project. The Cabinet Division was important because it helps to deal with issues at the inter-ministerial level, more specifically, to ensure that 17-line ministries and their departments cooperate in the overall functioning of the UZP. The EALG project also engaged young researchers as well as supervisors to conduct studies on local government issues. At the implementation level, the project mainly involved local government institutions (i.e., UZP and UP) and Upazila-level government service providers. Besides, the project also engaged the community, community leaders, CBO

leaders, and local civil society. Nevertheless, the NPD, DNPDs, Project Coordinator and the DDLGs played a great role in both implementation and oversight of the implementation progress and quality.

5.3   Monitoring and Evaluation

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

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

5.5   Cost-Effectiveness and Timely Delivery

The EALG project aimed to help local government institutions become more effective in providing participatory local development services, as well as to help communities get involved in planning and carrying out these services. Overall, the project has been successful in achieving its goals. Stakeholders from all levels have told the evaluation team that EALG has helped to develop the capabilities of local governments, promote participatory planning, and mobilize citizens to support these efforts which is discussed below in brief.

Capacity building of LGIs

The EALG project has helped to build the capacity of UP and UZP leaders so that they are better able to carry out their responsibilities and meet the requirements of the Sustainable Development Goals. The project has also helped to improve UP and UZP

governance by teaching leaders about relevant legislation and how to carry out effective, people-centered development.

Participatory planning approach

The EALG project is appreciated for its participatory planning approach, which helps to invest local resources and funds from the central government. This approach helps to mobilize people's representatives and get them to engage the community in planning and carrying out activities that positively impact the living conditions of people in rural areas. From the final evaluation, it is observed that the highest percentage of respondents (82.5%) attended the Ward Shava, which is the main forum where citizen and local body meet and discuss.

Social mobilization

The EALG project helped to activate Ward Shavas, which are public engagement activities held twice a year in each ward. Ward Shavas are both forums where citizens can discuss issues and development planning, and a way of collecting information from citizens and presenting it to the UP meetings. According to the final evaluation, all of the UPs in the project areas make regular efforts to ensure that citizens participate in Ward Shavas, and 82.5% of the surveyed community people informed that they participated in Ward Shava. The EALG also supported the Women Development Forum (WDF) in integrating gender issues into its institutional planning process, and according to the final evaluation, 31.6 % of respondents or their family members received service from WDF within the last two years. Most of them were either very satisfied (28%) or satisfied (54.9%) with the WDF services.

The EALG project is successful because LGI representatives are following local development initiatives based on what the community wants, and the key informants agreed that the project staff were efficient. This was done in a cost-effective way, because the project built on what had been done before and achieved more than expected within the short timeframe.

6. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

6.1 Challenges

EALG project worked with the LGD officials and faced a no of challenges during implementation of project activities on capacity building of UP and UZP officials, taking initiatives on SDG localization, arranging people's engagement strategies like ward shava, public hearing, open budget session etc. as UZP and UP level officials remain very busy, most of them have lack of capacity and arranging all those activities in presence of LGD officials was very challenging for EALG project.

6.1.1 Frequent transfer of UP secretaries

Frequent transfer of UP secretaries sometimes delayed implementations in the secretary transferred UPs. As UP secretaries are the ultimate focal point who possess all the information on UP activities and plays a vital role in carrying out project activities, their frequent transfer hindered/slowed project activities in some places as those activities were shifted to next quarter. To overcome this challenge, the new secretaries were introduced and trained on EALG activities so that the new secretary is familiar with the system and has the backing of the other UP functionaries as well.

6.1.2 Lack of full time Deputy Director Local Government in some districts

Lack of full time Deputy Director Local Government in some districts hindered project implementation as DDLG is holding the power to run project activities and all UP and UZP officials in any district with his leadership, so his support was required to carry out project activities effectively but, in some districts, full time DDLG was not commissioned by government and as a result project activities were delayed or hindered. To overcome this, EALG project gave more effort on relation building with part time DDLG followed by other LGD officials.

6.1.3 COVID 19 pandemic has slowed down the project implementation.

COVID 19 pandemic has slowed down the project implementation. If it wasn't come, the project could achieve some more results. Gathering community people safely during COVID 19 was a challenge. EALG took sufficient preventive measures to maintain social distance and enforced wearing masks to run public engagement related events like open budget session, ward shava, public hearing etc.

6.1.4 Lack of knowledge and capacity of UP and UZP officials.

Many of the UP and UZP officials and standing committee members have lack of knowledge and capacity to prepare annual report and five-year plan considering community needs which was a challenge for EALG project. To overcome this, EALG had to give extra effort and time with technical support to LGD officials so that they could prepare those report and plan on their own with or without limited technical support.

6.2 Lessons Learned

The Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project is designed to improve the way local governments in Bangladesh operate. It is likely to leave some lasting lessons for the local government divisions it interacted with, as well as other interested parties, like academics, civil society organizations, and development partners. To make sure these lessons are learned and implemented effectively, it is important to make sure that the local government system functions efficiently and is held accountable for its actions.

6.2.1 Lessons Learned 1: Evidence based Policy Advocacy required for successful policy reform.

For formulating new or revised policy evidence -based advocacy is required. Policy changes in Bangladesh can be difficult, but it is easier if you have evidence to back up your arguments. The EALG project showed that successful policy change can be achieved by developing guidelines, conducting field trials, and requesting changes from the Local Government Development Department (LGD). Other organizations might want to try this approach if they are serious about advocating for policy change in Bangladesh.

6.2.2 Lessons Learned 2: The more functional WDF, the more beneficial.

Regular meetings are a key part of a functioning body. The EALG project helped to keep the Women Development Forum (WDF) together throughout the project period. WDF meets bi-monthly to discuss the issues that are important to them and to make decisions about how to best use their resources. Meeting regularly helps to bring people together and build solidarity. This strength has helped the WDF to fight for their rights to have 3% of the overall budget from the local government allocated to women-sensitive projects. Beyond this, the WDF has also implemented various women's development activities, such as preventing violence against women. This has been possible because of regular meetings.

6.2.3 Lessons Learned 3: Tax assessment, through local volunteers.

Tax assessment is a job that requires special skills and knowledge, which the UPs in Bangladesh don't have. This is one of the reasons why the UP doesn't do a good job of assessing its own taxes. There are also political reasons why the UP might does not want to go along with the recommendations of a proper tax assessment. This leaves the UPs with less money and more dependency on central government help. The EALG project is working with the UPs to try to improve their tax assessment skills. In some areas, the EALG is helping the UPs to get local youth volunteers to do the assessment work. This way, the UPs can get more money from their taxes and don't have to rely on the central government to do the work.

7. SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT STRATEGY

By demonstrating transparency and accountability, the project improved the development plan and budgeting system of UP and UZP, aimed to contribute to achieving SDGs. The EALG project has helped to create good social networks among people in all of the project sites, which can help to support the interventions. In fact, the project has brought many benefits, including strengthening the institutional capacity of UP and UZPs to improve their planning and budgeting process. Additionally, the project interventions have connected CSOs/CBOs with different groups at the local level, which will likely continue since the group members have experienced their benefits and know how to keep the links functioning. However, the project's 13 policies

and support for UP Secretaries and UZP officials will have a long-lasting effect in the institutional strengthening and service delivery. Ward meetings, open budgeting and public hearings are now very popular in UP and UZP, and these have taken place in their regular habits. The UP and UZP have learned a lot about how to prepare and publish annual reports and yearly plans, which means that the project interventions are likely to be highly sustainable.

The project also prepared an Exit strategy incorporating the key issues as follows:

- National Stakeholders' Conference on Lesson Learnt and Good Practices
- Project Closing Workshop at the District Level
- Final Evaluation of the Project
- Final Project Evaluation Findings Sharing Workshop
- Preparation of Project Closing Report (PCR)
- 13 Vehicle handover to Local Government Division (LGD)
- Assets transfer to LGD
- Assets transfer to District Administration

Based on review and recommendations by the Project Implementation Committee, the Project Steering Committee approved the Exit plan/ strategy, and the PMU closed the project following the approved exit plan/ strategy.

8. FINANCIAL REPORTING

	Budget	Utilization	Difference	Reason of variance
Year 1 (2018)	1,543,787.00	1,454,446.99	89,340.01	
Year 2 (2019)	1,732,599.00	1,682,975.56	49,623.44	
Year 3 (2020)	2,028,193.00	1,730,900.41	297,292.59	
Year 4 (2021)	1,580,456.00	1389131.81	191,324.19	
Year 5 (2022)	1,513,717.00	1,513,398.43	318.57	
Total		**7,770,853.20**		

9. CONCLUDING SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The project has been able to achieve most of its targeted results. The project has tremendous success in policy preparation and circulation. Uniqueness of this project was that the project advocacy issues were piloted first before submitting the policy agendas to the Local Government Division. The project was very vigilant to protect its direct and indirect beneficiaries from the disasters. For example, after Rohingya inflex and COVID 19 pandemic, the project started to support its working stakeholders to face these disasters and reduce the likelihood of the negative impact of the disasters. Although, there are very few targeted results that have not been achieved by the project, but that are not due to the less effort of the project, rather these targeted results were high ambitious which requires a massive reform not only in the local government system but also some other part of the government system. If we exclude these high ambitious targets, we can easily conclude by saying that the project was highly successful in improving the capacity (both institutional and human capacity) of the targeted LGIs in terms of citizen engagement, organizing public events, efficient service delivery, tax collection, disclosure of information, women leadership, financial management, reporting, planning and project implementation.

However, here are some recommendations for further consideration.

- The EALG did excellent work by piloting holding tax assessments through local volunteers that showed huge potential. This low-cost assessment model should be institutionalized for the UPs and include business tax as well.
- The LGD should make the MIS system, developed last year supported by EALG, full functional for wider transparency and accountability of the LGIs.
- LGD should take necessary initiative to monitor the implementation status of the thirteen policies circulated by the LGD with support from EALG project.
- If there is any next generation project is designed by LGD or UNDP, the project should focus on
    - Digitalization and Digital governance of the targeted LGIs.
    - Deepening Women Development Forum at the Union Level, now it is base at the Upazia level.
    - Climate governance and allocation of ADP based on climate vulnerability.
    - Resource mobilization of the LGIs
    - Public-private partnership
    - Social audit including public hearing, citizen report card survey, etc.
    - Strengthening financial management and auditing of the targeted LGIs.
- Replicate EALG project working LGIs good practices in non-project working LGIs.

ANNEX 1

Results Framework

Indicator	Baseline	EOP Target	Achievement	Remarks
Outcome Indicators (Component 1)				
Percentage of citizens (disaggregated by men/women, poor/non-poor) satisfied with the services of Upazila Parishads	N/A	N/A	Poor-50; Non-poor-66 Male-57.8; Female-59.9	
Number of UZP that received and monitored local plans and budgets by at least three transferred departments (transparency of local bureaucracy)	N/A	N/A	16 out of 18 UZPs under intervention with 5 transferred department	
% of Upazila Parishads who adopt public engagement strategies in their planning and service monitoring	N/A	N/A	100 (Open budget, public hearing, Live streaming of events)	
% of women councilors in selected Upazila Parishads who report they can participate effectively in debates and are able to influence council decision making	N/A	N/A	95.2	
% of Upazila Parishads who have improved expenditure against the budget (credibility of budget)	N/A	N/A	58.33	
Components 1:	**INCLUSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE UPAZILA PARISHADS (IAUZP)** Upazila Parishads plan and deliver services in a more effective, inclusive and accountable way through a strengthened governance framework.			
Output 1.1	UZP Committees strengthened their horizontal coordination and oversight capacity with line departments and upward accountability with the District Development and Coordination Committee for inclusive, effective and accountable planning and service delivery			
Indicator	**Baseline**	**EOP Target**	**Achievement**	**Remarks**
Terms of References (ToRs) for UZP committees approved and introduced into UZP regulatory framework (Number of UZP Committee)	-	17	17	
Tools for UZP service delivery oversight of at least 3 transferred departments piloted and disseminated (Number of tools)	-	4	5(5 transferred departments)	
Circular for UZP core staff issued and core staff introduced in all selected UZPs. (Number of staff)	-	3	0	
Circular with provision for allowances for participation in UZP committee	-	40%	75.9%	

Indicator	Baseline	EOP Target	Achievement	Remarks
work issued and practiced in all selected UZPs (Percentage of Upazila in project areas)				
% of Upazila undertook initiatives on SDGs localization	28.6	50%	100%	
% of Upazila for which UZP and local functionaries of at least three transferred departments coordinate their activities at the District Development and Coordination Committee (at least twice a year).	-	50%	78.3%	
% of UZP functionaries developed planning and budgeting and managed schemes in participatory manner	-	50%	100%	
% of UZPs published plan book/ annual report	-	60%	100%	

Output: 1.2	Upazila Parishad financial management, funding absorption capacity and financial accountability have improved			
Indicator	**Baseline**	**EOP Target**	**Achievement**	**Remarks**
Public Financial Management (PFM) manual prepared, piloted (Number)	-	-	-	In progress
Timeliness and regularity of accounts reconciliation by Upazila	-	85%	93%	
% of UZP that publish their budget timely	-	50%	100%	
Number of poor youth and women received training and inputs on IGA at Cox'sBazar	-	100	500	

Output 1.3	UZP Committees strengthened their downward accountability through inclusive public engagement mechanisms and practices.			
Indicator	**Baseline**	**EOP Target**	**Achievement**	**Remarks**
UZP Act amended with mandatory UZP committee provision for inclusion of citizens, CSO and local media and practised in all selected UZPs (Number of UZPs and amendment)	-	-	-	N/A (Covered by approved ToR of 17 UZP Committees)
Open budget and participatory Planning mechanisms in UP Act piloted, adapted and replicated in UZP Act. (percentage in project area)	-	100%	100%	100 (Covered by Open Budget Policy)
All pilot UZPs have active Facebook and Twitter accounts (Percentage in project area)	-	100%	100%	
% of citizens in the selected UZPs are aware of UZP activities and key priorities in the annual budget	10.83%	35%	76.8%	

Output 1.4	Women Upazila Parishad members strengthened their ability to fulfill their roles and duties in the council work			
Indicator	**Baseline**	**EOP Target**	**Achievement**	**Remarks**

Percentage of women vice-chair and councilor trained and active in the Women Development Forums and percentage of men councilors sensitized	28.6%	95%	87.5%	
% of UZP schemes implemented under the leadership of women vice-chairs/women councilors	-	40%	30%	
Number of youth and women received training and inputs on entrepreneurship at Cox's Bazar.	-	15 batches	32 batches (500 nos.)	

Indicator	Baseline	EOP Target	Achievement	Remarks
Outcome Indicators (Component 2)				
25% of the poor, vulnerable and socially excluded citizensin50% of the targeted UPs under the targeted 8 districts have access to decision making process. (Baseline:11.3%, 2019:10%, 2020:15% and 2021:25%)	11.3%	-	93%	
50% of service recipients satisfied with services provided by selected UPs under the targeted 8districts (citizenship certificate, birth registration, safety-net allowances etc. (Baseline: 39.8%, 2019: 20%, 2020:30% and 2021:50%)	39.8%	-	80.9%	
Components 2:	SUSTAINABLE AND DEMOCRATIC UNION PARISHAD (SDUP)			
Output 2.1:	Capacity of targeted UPs is significantly strengthened to provide democratic, transparent, accountable, responsive and pro-poor services			
% of targeted UPs have operational Standing Committees (on the basis of ToR)	70%	60%	100%	
% of UPs ensured participation of poor and marginalized citizens at Ward Shava (Ward level meeting) and Open Budget Session	-	65%	100%	Open budget meeting 100%, Ward Shava 100%
Output 2.2:	UPs are increasingly climate resilient by identifying and prioritizing resilience measures in the UP-development plan and their implementation			
% Of climate vulnerable UPs with climate resilient measures integrated into their five-year Development plan.	14.3%	50%	60.56%	
Output 2.3	Poor and marginalized citizens, including women, are empowered to make decisions on local development and political participation			
% Of women and marginalized citizens taking part in Ward Shava/ Election	-	25%	Women 73.11% Marginalized groups- 72.11%	
% Of budget allocation for participation of marginalized citizens and women in development initiatives	-	20%	25 %	

Output 2.4	Policy dialogue at national and local level engaging civil society and other stakeholders initiated to promote democratic and accountable service delivery at the local level			
Indicator	**Baseline**	**EOP Target**	**Achievement**	**Remarks**
Number of measures (memos/ circulars/guidelines) issued by LGD on the issues including fiscal flow to UP, UP taxation and assignment of health and education services to UP	-	4	13	13 Policy is approved and circulated by LGD
Components 3:	**POLICY FOR EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE (PELG)** Policy dialogue addresses functional assignments and division of responsibilities among tiers of LGIs including the coordination with line ministry officers and public engagement strategies.			
Outcome Indicators (component 3)				
A clarification of functional assignments between LGI tiers is established	-	-	-	
Circulars for an integrated planning system for the UP/UZP/ZP are issued.	-	-	-	
Circulars are issued in order to overcome challenges of female's participation in the activities of local governance.	-	-	-	
Output 3.1	Functional assignments of UP, UZP and Zila Parishad are clarified for at least three transferred subjects			
Indicator	**Baseline**	**EOP Target**	**Achievement**	**Remarks**
Detailed options for division of responsibilities among LGI tiers are available and discussed by GoB.	-	-	-	Not found feasible at this moment
Ways and mechanisms of integration and supplementation of UZP plans and plans of transferred departments are identified for more effective service provision	-	1	1	1 (Periodic coordination meeting)
An integrated planning system of UP, UZP and ZP is developed. (District)	-	5	-	Not found feasible at this moment
Review of the existing tax collection system of the UP is completed and a new model tax system is developed.	-	-	Research done; revised Tax Rule being reviewed by the LGD	
Output 3.2	Public engagement strategies of UP/UZP/ZP have become strengthened through overcoming institutional and structural challenges			
Dialogues with political parties and policy makers are held to implement the commitment of at least 30% women in political party governance structures	-	3	0	
Dialogues with the government policy makers are held in order to convince	-	5	4 policy dialogues held	4 policy dialogues held (stakeholders'

them to initiate legal reforms for improved female participation in the activities of local governance. (# dialogue)				workshop, policy workshop coordination meeting etc. As a result, policy changed on 3% ADP allocation and WDF operational guidelines
% of public engagement strategies adopted by LGIs in project areas that ensure the participation of women, ethnic and religious minorities and media in LGIs (% Upazila and UPs)	-	80%	UP-92.9% UZP- 84.3%	
Percentage of people from different ethnic group attended in Open budget/Ward Shava	-	30%	Open budget session- 48.5% Ward Shava- 72.9%	

Output 3.3	UP/UZP committees and inter-ministerial coordination committee is strengthened for better performance of LG bodies.			
Indicator	**Baseline**	**EOP Target**	**Achievement**	**Remarks**
Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of UP and UZP committees including the coordination with line ministry officers	-	1	17	
Dialogues with the government policy makers are regularly held in the framework of the inter-ministerial coordination committee in order to address priority challenges for effective local service provision	-	5	1	

ANNEX 2

List of Publications

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
Concept Note			
1.	Research Grant (RG) to create young researchers on Local Governance		
2.	1. Violence Against Women Campaign		
3.	2. Workshop on Integrated Planning Systems at LGIs		
4.	3. COVID19 Response		
5.	4. Media fellowship		
Guidelines			
1.	5. Guideline for organizing awareness program to address SDGs target at UZP Level (activity # 1.1. 2018)		
2.	6. Guideline for organizing an annual workshop for each district on coordination (activity # 1.2. 2018)		
3.	7. Guideline for organizing six-monthly review meetings with UZPs at District Level (activity # 1.4. 2018)		
4.	8. Guideline for organizing six monthly coordination meetings with UGDP/LGSP and other relevant actors at the district level (activity # 1.6. 2018)		
5.	9. Guideline for providing technical assistance to hold Ward Shava and Open budget for selected UPs (activity # 2.1. 2018)		
6.	10. Guideline for organizing a series of dialogues on activating Ward Shavas of UPs/Planning meetings of UZPs especially youth and CSOs (activity # 2.1. 2018)		
7.	11. Guideline for organizing six-monthly review meetings with UPs at the UZP level 12. (Activity # 2.2. 2018)		
8.	13. Guideline for organizing inception workshop on EALG at the District level (activity # 2.5. 2018)		
9.	14. Guideline for organizing inception workshop at Cox's Bazaar District		

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
10.	15.　　Guideline for organizing periodical coordination meetings with field staff of line agencies at the UP level (activity # 2.6. 2018)		
11.	16.　　Guideline for activation of WDF in selected 16 UZPs (activity # 4.3. 2018)		
12.	17.　　Guideline for organizing six monthly periodical coordination meetings with line officials of UP at the Upazila level		
13.	18.　　Guideline for organizing Ward Shava at Union Parishad		
14.	19.　　Guideline for organizing UP open budget session		
15.	20.　　Guideline for organizing UZP open budget session		
16.	21.　　Guideline for organizing public hearings at the UP level		
17.	22.　　Guideline on organizing Orange Campaign		
18.	23.　　Guideline for organizing learning visit		
19.	24.　　Guideline for girl students for organizing dialogue with UZP and administration on prevention of VAW		
20.	25.　　Guideline for creating Union and Upazila Facebook page		
21.	26.　　Guideline for preparing and publishing UP annual, financial, and administrative report		
22.	27.　　Guideline for organizing sensitization workshop at the district level on Anti-Corruption and awareness		
23.	28.　　Guideline for organizing orientation with CBOs on LG operation and service delivery		
24.	29.　　Guideline for organizing orientation for UP elected representatives and secretaries on Climate change and its impact		
25.	30.　　Guideline for orientation of UP SC members on their roles and responsibilities and meeting organization		

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
26.	31. Guideline for organizing training on Gram Police service delivery and security at the UP level		
27.	32. Guideline for organizing 3-day advanced training for UP Secretaries on planning, management, and administrative process		
28.	33. Guideline for organizing advanced ICT training for UP Secretaries		
29.	Comprehensive Guideline on Women Development Forum (WDF)		
30.	Guideline for the working of the Upazila Development Coordination Committee (UZDCC)		
31.	Guideline for UP Tax Fair		
32.	Guideline on UP's Annual and Five-Year Planning		
33.	Shadow Guideline on UZP's Annual & Five-Year Planning		
34.	Guideline on COVID-19 Program Implementation		
35.	Designing Tools and Guidelines to support LGIs in achieving SDGs		
36.	Guideline for 16 Days Campaign Against VAW 2021		
37.	Guideline for Dialogue with UZP and Administration on VAW		
38.	Guideline on UZP Budget Review Session		
39.	Guideline for Training to Newly Elected Representatives at Cox's Bazar		
40.	Guideline for organizing UP SC meeting		
41.	Guideline for Awareness on UP Mandate		
42.	Guideline for Orientation on UP Mandate		
43.	Guideline for Policy Orientation		
44.	Guideline for District-Level Project Closing Workshop		
45.	Guideline for Women's Conference at District level		
46.	Guideline on Coordination of UPs & UZPs		

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
47.	Guideline for UP Tax Assessment		
48.	Shadow Guideline for UP Tax Orientation		
Training Manual			
1.	Manual on Gender Awareness and Analysis Training		
2.	Training Manual on Leadership Skills Development of Elected Women Representatives		
3.	Training Module on SDG Localization ToT		
Strategy			
1.	Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy of the EALG Project		
2.	LGI's Capacity Development Framework (Bangla translation)		
Survey/Study			
1.	Baseline Survey Report for EALG Project		
2.	A study on 'Identifying Policy Recommendations and Developing Strategies for Implementation and Advocacy for Rural LGIs in Bangladesh'		
3.	A study to examine 'Scope and Areas of Fiscal Decentralization for LGIs in Bangladesh		
4.	A Study on Exploring Potentials and Identifying Challenges of UZP Vice Chair (women) for Active Participation and Engagement at LGIs		
5.	A Policy Paper on Proposing Structure and Developing Operational Modality/Guideline for UZP Development and Coordination Committee (UZDCC) Integrating Experiences of UDCC		
6.	Voices of Young Researchers on Local Governance		
7.	Study on 'Mobilization of Local Resources by Rural LGIs in Bangladesh'		
8.	A Study on Integrated Development Planning of Local Government Institutions: Problems and Prospects		

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
9.	Conducted 240 UP Website Assessments and prepared a Draft Report		
10.	Final Evaluation Report for EALG Project		
11.	34. A study on 'Developing Guideline and Tools for mapping eligible Social Safety Net beneficiaries and Database for improving service delivery in Two Upazilas in Cox's Bazar		
12.	Mid-term Evaluation of the EALG Project		
13.	Union Parishad in Local Governance: Progress, Challenge and Way Forward (Centre for Governance Studies published book under the Research Grant Activity)		
14.	Bangladesh Local Governance: Practicalities, Participation, and Priorities (Book published by University of Rajshahi under Research Grant)		
15.	Local Governance in Union Parishad: Progress, Opportunity, Challenges and Way Forward (Book published by NILG under Research Grant)		
16.	Local Governance in Bangladesh: Grassroots Realities, Challenges, and Potentials (Book published by Bangladesh Academy of Rural Development- BARD under Research Grant)		
Policy			
1.	ToR for UZP's 17 Standing Committees		
2.	Upazila Parishad Revenue Budget Utilization Guideline, 2020		
3.	Policy Brief: Policy recommendations for minimizing problems and challenges of UZP VCs (women) and creating more space for their participation and engagement at LGIs		
4.	Policy Brief: Proposing Structure and Developing Operational Modality/Guideline for UZP		

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
	Development and Coordination Committee (UZDCC) Integrating Experiences of UDCC		
5.	Policy Brief: A Study on Integrated Development Planning of LGIs in Bangladesh: Challenges and Prospects		
6.	Circular: Regular update of UP and UZP Websites		
7.	Circular: Regarding revenue allocation and expenditure for UP annual report development and publication		
8.	Circular: Minimum 3% allocation of UZP annual budget for WDF		
9.	Circular: Increase of UZP ADP allocation from 5% to 15% (Covid Response)		
10.	Circular: Livestreaming of Public Events		
11.	Circular: Guideline on organizing UP public hearing		
12.	Circular: Guideline on organizing UZP public hearing		
13.	Circular: Guideline on organizing UZP budget session		
14.	Circular on WDF Operational Guideline		
15.	Circular on updating the website of Union Parishads		
16.	Circular on updating the website of Upazila Parishads		
17.	Circular on Revenue Fund Utilization Guideline		
IEC Materials			
35.	EALG Factsheet (Bangla and English)		
36.	Factsheet on SDGs (Bangla)		
37.	Factsheet on SDGs (English)		
38.	Printing Materials (Notebook, Pen, Folder, Festoons)		
39.	32 UP Annual Reports under EALG Project Areas		
40.	EALG Newsletter		The issue 01 is available only
41.	One Pager on Gender Responsive Budget and Planning		Content Development Completed

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
42.	Content Developed for producing poster on Ward Shava		Content Development Completed
43.	Poster on 16 Days Activism		
44.	Awareness Posters (02) on COVID-19		
45.	Awareness Poster on Hand Washing for UP		
46.	Awareness Poster on Hand Washing for Market Place		
47.	Awareness Poster on Hand Washing for Health Facility		
48.	SDG Billboard		
49.	Path Towards Local Governance: A Photographic Journey (Photobook)		
50.	Policy Booklet: Operational Reforms of Local Government: Resource Mobilisation, Effective Coordination, and Development Functions		
51.	EALG Notebook 2022		
52.	EALG Calendar 2022		
53.	SDG Localization installation tool for awareness raising		
54.	Awareness Poster on Ward Shava		
55.	Awareness Poster on UZP Standing Committees		
56.	Awareness Poster on UZP Standing Committees		
57.	Awareness Poster on Women's Participation		
58.	Awareness Poster on Five-Year Planning		
59.	Awareness Poster on Social Inclusion		
60.	Awareness Poster on Governance		
61.	Awareness Poster on Women Development Forum (WDF)		
62.	Awareness Poster on Open Budget Session		
63.	Awareness Poster on Public Hearing		
64.	Awareness Poster on Tax Assessment and Collection		
65.	Awareness Sticker on Ward Shava		
66.	Awareness Sticker on UZP Standing Committees		
67.	Awareness Sticker on UZP Standing Committees		
68.	Awareness Sticker on Women's Participation		

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
69.	Awareness Sticker on Five-Year Planning		
70.	Awareness Sticker on Social Inclusion		
71.	Awareness Sticker on Governance		
72.	Awareness Sticker on Women Development Forum (WDF)		
73.	Awareness Sticker on Open Budget Session		
74.	Awareness Sticker on Public Hearing		
75.	Awareness Sticker on Tax Assessment and Collection		
76.	SDG Localization Tool for Conducting Training		
Audio-visual			
1.	Dreams on Wheels (Based on WDF Scheme)		Yes
2.	Public Hearing		
3.	Orange Campaign 2019 (16 Days of Activism)		Yes
4.	Ward Shava		Yes
5.	Women Development Forum		Yes
6.	Open Budget Session		
7.	COVID-19 Awareness Song by Folk Singer Salma		Yes
8.	Fighting Back COVID19 (Based on COVID19 Response Initiatives)		Yes
9.	Video on SDG Localization		
10.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on Open Budget Sessions of UP		
11.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on Open Budget Session of UZP		
12.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on Ward Shava of Union Parishad		
13.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on Public Hearing of Union Parishad		
14.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on Public Hearing of Upazila Parishad		
15.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on Tax Assessment of Union Parishad		

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
16.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on Five-Year Planning of Union Parishad		
17.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on Five-Year Planning of Upazila Parishad		
18.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on the Annual Report of Union Parishad		
19.	Animation Videos (Instructional Videos, process documentation) on Annual Report of Upazila Parishad		
Media Coverage			
1.	Media Fellowship		• The Prothom Alo (সরকারি সহায়তায় এগিয়ে যাচ্ছেন নারী–কিশোরীরা) • The Prothom Alo (জনপ্রতিনিধিদের জবাবদিহি করার সুযোগ ভোটারদের) • The Prothom Alo (১৩ স্থায়ী কমিটি চাঙা হলে সুফল পাবে ইউনিয়নবাসী) • Bangla Tribune (UP Income will Double) • Bangla Tribune (ইএএলজি প্রকল্পের সুফল: নাগরিকের দুয়ারে জনপ্রতিনিধি) • Bangla Tribune (এসডিজি'র ধারণা পাচ্ছে তৃণমূল) • Dhaka Tribune (WDF gathering momentum in rural areas) • Dhaka Tribune (Ward meetings, public hearings transforming villages) • Dhaka Tribune (Public Meeting transforming villages) • Dhaka Tribune (What's holding back UPs from developing SDG plans?) • Daily Observer (WDF gathering momentum in rural areas) • Daily Observer (Country's rural development needs more emphasis on Gender and ICT programmes)

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
			• Daily Observer ([UNDP-EALG focuses gender sensitivity in rural Bangladesh](#)) • Daily Samakal ([নারীর ক্ষমতায়নে অনন্য অর্জন](#)) • Daily Samakal ([উপেক্ষিত তৃণমূলে নারী জনপ্রতিনিধি](#)) • Daily Samakal [মিলছে কাঙ্ক্ষিত সেবা, বেড়েছে জবাবদিহি](#)) • Channel 24 ([অনেক ইউপিতে হচ্ছে না ওয়ার্ড সভা, জবাবদিহিতা নিশ্চিতের তাগিদ](#)) • Channel 24 ([কেন ব্যর্থ তৃণমূলের স্থানীয় সরকার ব্যবস্থা?](#)) • Channel 24 ([নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন উদ্যোগে কিছু ইউপি চেয়ারম্যানের অসহযোগিতা; মিলছে না সুফল](#)) • Nagorik Songbad ([২৫১টি ইউনিয়নে সক্রিয় ইউএনডিপির স্থানীয় সরকার প্রকল্প](#)) • Nagorik Songbad ([করোনা মহামারী কালে দেশের ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ গুলির ভূমিকা কি ছিল](#)) • ATN News (https://youtu.be/CkvoQg6c1Kw) • ATN News (https://youtu.be/qntwOb2B7yc) • ATN News (https://youtu.be/ip2pVxtMaSM)
2.	Others		• [Integrated dev. plans underscored for UP](#) • [426 LGI people get SDG training in Rajshahi](#) • [Bringing change through people's participation](#) • [SDG-focused local govt project launched](#) • [Project to strengthen local govt launched](#) • [Local govt institutions can replicate the good practices of](#)

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
			EALG project, says LGRD Minister • UNB: Local government representatives should early dignity by their work for people: LGRD Minister • Business Standard: Local government institutions can replicate the good practices of EALG project: LGRD Minister • BSS: Local govt institutions can replicate good practices of EALG project: Tazul • Business Insider: Local govt representatives should be accountable to people: Minister • Business Post: Local govt institutions can replicate good practices of EALG project: Tazul • JaagoNews: সুশাসন নিশ্চিত করলে ভোটের জন্য যেতে হবে না: তাজুল ইসলাম • SomoyNews: মানুষের জন্য কাজ করলে ভোট চাইতে হবে না: এলজিআরডি মন্ত্রী • ManabJamin: সুশাসন নিশ্চিত করলে ভোট চাইতে হবে না-তাজুল ইসলাম • RisingBD: 'মানুষের জন্য কাজ করলে ভোট নিয়ে ভাবতে হবে না' • Bangla News24: ভোটের জন্য নয়, মানুষের জন্য কাজ করার আহ্বান • BSS: সুশাসন নিশ্চিত করলে ভোট চাইতে হবে না : এলজিআরডি মন্ত্রী • DhakaTimes: সুশাসন নিশ্চিত করলে ভোট চাইতে হবে না: তাজুল • ManabKantha: সুশাসন প্রতিষ্ঠা করতে পারলে ভোটারদের কাছে যেতে হবে না: এলজিআরডি মন্ত্রী • Samakal: মানুষের জন্য কাজ করলে ভোট নিয়ে ভাবতে হবে না: তাজুল ইসলাম • Daily Bangladesh: মানুষের কল্যাণে কাজ করতে হবে: তাজুল ইসলাম

Sl #	Title of Publication	Year (2018-2022)	Remarks
			[Bangladesher Kantho: সুশাসন নিশ্চিত করলে ভোট চাইতে হবে না-স্থানীয় সরকার মন্ত্রী] [KalerKantho: 'মানুষের জন্য কাজ করলে ভোট নিয়ে ভাবতে হবে না'] [ZoomBangla: সুশাসন নিশ্চিত করলে ভোট চাইতে হবে না] [BonikBarta: সুশাসন নিশ্চিত করলে ভোট চাইতে হবে না – স্থানীয় সরকারমন্ত্রী] [DesheBideshe: সুশাসন নিশ্চিত করলে ভোট চাইতে যেতে হবে না] [Local Government Institutions Can Replicate Good Practices] [https://fb.watch/eFTbqAlKWl/] [https://fb.watch/eFTgTaQ08p/] [Encouraged to hear about development of effective admin structures & increased involvement of #women in decision-making at today's EALG meeting. Let's continue to translate policies in action] [Local govt institutions can replicate good practices of EALG project] [Strengthening capacity of UPs to attain SDGs stressed] [Strengthening capacity of UPs to attain SDGs stressed] [Strengthening capacity of UPs to attain SDGs stressed]

ANNEX 3
Pictorial Illustration of Project Activities

Open budget session at Sunamganj

People watching EALG disseminated awareness related poster

Exercise on SDG tools in Netrokona

Public Hearing at ward level in Khulna

kolapara upazila WDF giving sewing machine in Patuakhali

Open Budget Session in Cox's bazar

Public Hearing at UZP level in Patuakhali

Standing Committee meeting in Rangpur

Ward Shava in Khulna

International Women's Day celebration in Patuakhali

Public Hearing at UP level in Netrokona

Ward Shava at UP level in Netrokona

WDF orientation in Rajshahi

Training on SDG Localization in Khulna

Open budget session at Khulna

Periodical Coordination meeting at Coxsbazar

Public Hearing at Netrokona

Ward Shava at Rangpur

WDF bi-monthly meeting at Khulna

EALG disseminated awareness related poster

WDF executive committee formation meeting at Rangpur

Kalapara WDF Distributing School Bags among the primary students

Billboard installation on SDG goals in UP and UZP of EALG intervention areas

Awareness Programme on Women Rights, Anti-Corruption, and Climate Resilience

Orange Campaign as a Part of 16 Days Activism

Training on Information Disclosure using Facebook and Website

Coordination Meeting among UP and UZP officials

Installation of handwashing facility at UP level by EALG project

Bi-monthly meeting of WDF in Rupsa, Khulna

Exercise on SDG tools in Khulna

Ward Shava at Rangpur

Orientation on approved policy to UP and UZP functionaries at Khulna

Workshops on Prioritizing Sector-Wise Development Needs

IGA training by EALG to host community youth and women in Cox's Bazar

Orientation Workshops on Performance Indicators of UPs

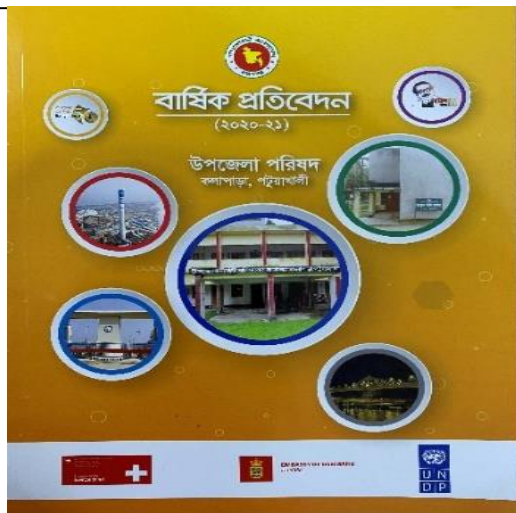UP Operations and Financial Management Training for ACCOs

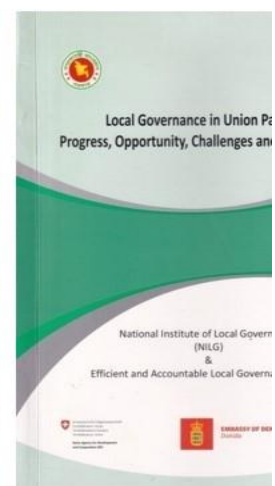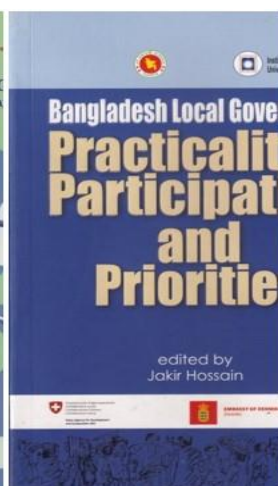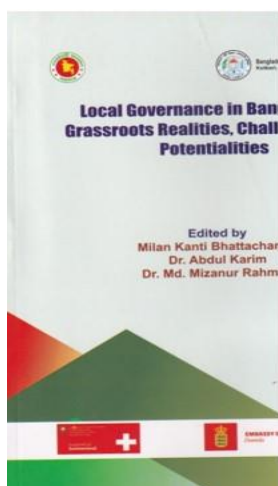COVID 19 Preventive Materials Distribution by EALG project

COVID 19 related awareness building initiatives by EALG project

Annual report of Upazila Parisad

SDG responsive 5 -year plan of Union Parisad

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

ANNEX 4
Case Story

Case 1: Accelerated Emergency Services for COVID 19
Md. Eskander Ali Mridha
Gram Police
Joinkathi Union Parishad
Patuakhali Sadar Upazila, Patuakhali District

I am Md. Eskander Ali Mridha, Gram (Village) Police of Joinkathi Union Parishad, Patuakhali Sadar Upazila in Patuakhali District. The Gram Polices are the focal point for preserving peace in the village and monitoring the situation to see if any suspicious incidents need reporting to the police station. As a frontline emergency respondent, most of the Gram Police are stationed in Union Parishad and keep COVID-19 patient information, assist UP in ensuring home or institutional quarantine, maintain lockdown procedures, and provide relief. Despite this, we always remain on the frontline to face any disaster. For example, we served on the frontlines from the beginning of the pandemic to fight COVID-19 without having any safety equipment because we could not obtain any preventive materials from any other sources during this time, and due to the financial crisis, we cannot purchase either. As a result, we had to work without any protection and with less confidence.

The EALG project of UNDP, funded by Embassy of Switzerland and Embassy of Denmark recognized our situation, and as a result, we got personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, soaps to continue our work for people while protecting ourselves and ensuring safety measures for others. Therefore, other gram police and I am delighted because we got preventive materials for the first time as we always get the least priority to get anything.

The support with preventive materials motivates us to play roles effectively in maintaining safety measures. So, this time, we will perform our job more confidently, and community people will get quality emergency services during this pandemic situation. We have already provided door-to-door emergency food supply to COVID-19 infected families and wish to support more without hesitation and fear. I appreciate the EALG and other stakeholders for considering us as frontline workers and helping with the preventive materials to combat the pandemic.

Case 2: Appropriate information lessen infection

Mamunur Rashid
Medical Assistant
Matlab North Upazila Health Complex
Chandpur

"I have been disseminating the relevant message on COVID-19 among the community because even a single COVID positive case can cause a mess," said Mamunur Rashid, Medical Assistant Matlab North Upazila Health Complex, Chandpur, who was also active as Union Focal Person for Islamabad Union Parishad (UP) of the same district.

COVID-19 has put Bangladesh into an unforeseen challenging situation that led the Government of Bangladesh to ask for the shutdown of all economic activities except for emergency services in March 2020. However, the local government institutions lacked the expertise to act and respond against the COVID-19. Considering these issues, with help from Embassy of Switzerland and Embassy of Denmark, EALG has engaged 251 Union Focal Person to respond and disseminate appropriate messages on COVID-19. Mamunur Rashid is one of the designated Union Focal Persons who has supported the people of Islamabad UP since June 2020.

Mamunur was the in-charge of informing those who had come to use UP's services over the phone and messages. Since his appointment as the Union Focal Person, he arranged group discussions on Corona prevention and control. In addition, he conveyed corona awareness messages by explaining how to avoid exposure and the importance of frequent hand washing and using the mask. He also worked as a contact tracer, collected the contact list of all COVID-19 positive patients, identified, followed them up to see if they had any signs or symptoms of the disease, and referred them to a doctor for treatment if required. He also volunteered for the funeral of COVID-19 deceased while nobody was there to treat the corps.

The appointment of Mamunur as a Union Focal Person ensured the dissemination of appropriate messages among the community people, sensitized the citizens regarding COVID-19, and influenced them to change their behavior. Mr. Sajedul Hasan Babu, the Chairman of Islamabad UP, said that "*Mamunur has performed admirably. Therefore, villagers were encouraged to reach out to him and express their concerns about the* COVID-19.*"*

Case 3: Transparency Ensured as Real Beneficiary Received Widow's Allowance

Roshena Begum (59)
Dhumrekuth Village, Ward No: 03
Sarai Union, Kaunia Upazila,
Rangpur

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

Meanwhile, I learned through miking that the Union Parishad will arrange a public hearing session attended by senior government officials from districts and Upazilas. The Union Parishad assisted in organizing the public hearing session by the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project of UNDP, which Embassy of Switzerland and Embassy of Denmark funded. I attended the public hearing session

on September 17, 2019, at the Union Parishad premises and raised my complaint that my husband died twenty years ago, but I still have not received my widow allowance card.

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

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

Case 4: Rina Akhter: Story of a COVID19 Frontliner

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

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

My school was closed when the global corona epidemic broke out. However, the UP appointed me as a member of the Union Coronavirus Prevention Committee. The Committee is always on the front lines of any Covid-related situation. However, because I lacked personal protection equipment, I was constantly concerned about my family members' safety. However, I have to leave the house every day to conduct public awareness campaigns against the coronavirus among the villagers.

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

Case 5: Anti-Corruption Training Uprooted the Corruption

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

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

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

In December 2020, the Ministry of Local Government approved the no-confidence motion and declared the Chairmanship of the Union Parishad vacant. In the 150-year history of local government, this is the first time a chairmanship has been deemed vacant due to a no-confidence motion.

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

Case 6: WDF Saved a Vulnerable Family from Eviction

Mr. Kalam Mollik
Beneficiary
Mohipur Union Parishad
Kalapara Upazila
Patuakhali

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

administration and elected representatives and requested them to protect him from evacuation.

Ms. Shahina Pervin Shima, Kalapara UZP Vice-Chair and President of the Women Development Forum (WDF), came to know about the incident and visited the land with other WDF members and officials. They discussed and resolved the issue with both parties and restored the land to the helpless family.

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

Case 7: Self-reliant Union Parishad, Way to New Hope, a New Era

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

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

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

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

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

Case 8: Public Hearing, A Real Magic Lamp

Moslem Miah
Palakhal Model Union
Kachua, Chandpur

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

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

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

The following day, Mr. Muslem Uddin and his team visited Hazera's house and found an electric pillar within 130ft of distance. Mr. Imam Hossain, the UP-Chairman, also visited the place and verified the necessary documents. During his presence, Moslem Miah deposited 650 takas to the Palli Bidyut Samiti and got an electric connection by 3 pm. Hazera Begum said, "no poor farmer like my husband could provide extra

money to the brokers for electric connection. I would never think of electric connection at my house so easily if I was not present in the public hearing session on time."

Case 9: Pakhi's Journey to Becoming an Entrepreneur

Mariam Akhter Pakhi
Entrepreneur, Kalapara Upazila
Kalapara, Patuakhali

It was not long back that I was struggling to maintain my family on my husband's income alone. Since I was married off at an early age, I fell behind in my studies. But my husband was supportive and helped me to complete my school and now I am studying for HSC. But with his limited income, it was hard to provide for my children.

So, I went to EALG's Women Development Forum of Kalapara Upazila, and they advised that I get a vocational training on sewing from the Upazila's Women Affairs Department. I took their three-month training but my dream of having my own income still seemed very far. I couldn't afford to buy my own sewing machine. The WDF came forward in the meantime to help me from their ADP allocation. Since then, my dream began to come true. Now my average earning is 20,000BDT per month, and my children are getting good education.

I'm grateful towards WDF for making such a difference in my life that inspired the whole neighborhood who wants to work like me and provide support to their family economically.

Case 10: Wahid Morol, A Volunteer!

Wahid Morol
Volunteer
Barakpur Union Parishad
Digholia Upazila
Khulna

The COVID 19 pandemics have brought everyone under the same hood inoculating empathy and harmony. People of Barakpur Union Parishad under Digholia Upazila of Khulna district were unaware of dos and don'ts during this pandemic. When the Government started the national level immunization, many of them could not trust the consequence of the vaccine, while others were not aware of the vaccination process.

While volunteering at Barakpur Union Parishad, I felt like I had something to do for my community. Hence, I used my learning experience of EALG provided training for CSO/CBO members on the Role and Functions of LGIs that I received in 2019. Since

then, I have been volunteering in many issues for my locality. Given the context, I registered with the Surokkha app for the COVID 19 vaccination and tried to convince others to be immunized. Since February 2021, I have assisted approximately 600 people in registering for vaccinations. People's smiling faces after being inoculated bring me peace. I consider myself fortunate to have been able to help my community in such a compassionate way!

Case 11: Khaleda Begum, Journey of an Entrepreneur

Khaleda Begum
Beneficiary,
EALG, Cox's Bazar

"My dream was to become an entrepreneur. But challenges like lack of capital, market knowledge and resource management skills were making the dream seem distant. But after receiving the 20-day handicraft training from UNDP's EALG project, I am now a step closer to fulfilling my dream. After the training, I started making Moras (traditional bamboo seats) at my home. I involved other family members as well and in the last six months, earned over Taka 10000 from selling them. I then started to involve other women in the neighborhood. They also get to learn the trade. It feels great that I am utilising my training from UNDP to train and teach my neighborhood women and motivating them to become self-reliant."

My husband has been addicted to drugs for many years now and there is absolutely zero communication with him. I left him two years back and since then, I have been living with my parents. We became more vulnerable when my father suddenly died as he was the only earning member in our family.

With my 4-year-old kid and 3 younger siblings, my mother and I had to struggle a lot to find a way out of this misery. As the eldest sibling, I thought I should take the family's responsibilities on my shoulder. Meanwhile this handcraft training from UNDP has been a great way forward and right now I can run my family with my income.

Case 12: Vaccination Campaign: No one will be left behind

Ms. Radhamani Mardi
Beneficiary,
EALG, Mohonpur

Ms. Radhamani Mardi said, "I am very happy to be able to vaccinate my 2 years boy Shadhin. Now we can give vaccination to our children easily in our area." Shri Radhamani Mardi added "I live in Shantipara village of Babudying under Mohonpur union, which is located at a distance of 5 km from the Union Parishad. The local roard with the Ward is very delicate and there is no transportation system except walking, as the village is separated from the main part of the Union by a narrow canal. She also added that there is a total of 150 ethnic family lives in the Shanti Para village where 17

km is muddy road. To get vaccine to the children people needed to go to the vaccination center by crossing about 5 km across the creek. Due to the fact, no children were covered by the vaccination program. About 100 children in the village of 3-5 years did not not receive any vaccination earlier.

One day Shri Radhamani Mardi attended in the Ward Shava, organized by EALG project, where she raised the issue of immunization program in their locality. Mr. Manwi, a neighbor of Shri Radhamoni also agreed with and supported her about the absence of immunization program. Afterwards, many of the villagers supported the issue and demanded for regular immunization program in their locality. Later, Md. Mustafa Hossain contacted with the chairman of the Mohonpur Union Parishad and Mr. Shimul Akter the Executive Officer of Godagari Upazila. In consultation with UNO, Dr. Mezbahul Haque, Upazila Health Officer of Godagari decided to ensure vaccination program for all children in the area.

Under the leadership of Mr. Md. Abdul Hai, Health Supervisor, by including Upazila Health Officer formed an eight (8) members team. The team successfully completed the vaccination campaign on November 02, 2019, in 4 spots in the locality. A total of 61 children then got vaccine for the first time. The Union also ensures the birth registration of all vaccinated children so that the next dose can be given on time. The people of Babu Dying village also demanded a permanent vaccination camp in their area. It has already been presented at the Upazila Parishad meeting and a permanent vaccination camp is under process. Until the camp is set up, the Upazila Health Officer advised them to provide next doses regularly on a schedule date through a temporary camp.

Case 13: Girls Pedaling for Education

Girls in rural areas in Bangladesh often drop out from school or college as their educational institutions are far from where they stay. Like the girls in Kaunia Upazila of Rangpur district, who had to travel 4.5 kilometers on average every day to ensure their education. The poor girls couldn't afford money to commute to school or college. As a result, the girls get married at very early stage of their lives. Noticing the difficulties in commuting to school and college, Upazila Women Development Forum (WDF) came

up with an eco-friendly, enjoyable solution by providing bicycles for the girls. Ms. Afroza Akter, an eighth grader at Kaunia Mofazzol Hossain Govt Model High School, said, "I had to spend Tk 50-60 every day for commuting my school. Now as I have a bicycle, I do no need to spend extra money just to go to school." Many of the girls said that this bicycle has increased their attendance in school and made it easier for them to be punctual. This initiative was made possible to undertake by WDF through funding from Kaunia Upazila Parishad.

Upazila Parishad provided Tk 4,50,00 as part of its 3% annual allocation for WDF, which was used to purchase 50 bicycles for underprivileged girls from remote areas. The bicycles were distributed among the students on May 26, 2019. Upazila WDF President, Angura Begum and Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Ulfat Ara Begum were present at the programme among other upazila representatives. Olyma Akter Lima, a second-year student at Haragachh Degree College said, "I use this bicycle multiple times every day. Sometimes my mother rides as pillion. I feel happy to be able to help her, and I am proud that I get to commute on my own bicycle in the village." The Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project of UNDP, funded by Embassy of Switzerland and Embassy of Denmark re-activated WDF in 2018 through Upazila level workshops.

Through this project, WDF members received training on SDG localization and leadership. A total of 551 WDFs were established during the Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) and Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP), the earlier phase of EALG. Passionate about sustainable development goal-4 which seeks to ensure quality education for all, WDF decided to ease the communication constraint of young girls by providing them bicycles, so that they can focus on a bright future with full of learning. "This initiative will help the girls stay in school, as it eliminated communication expenditure and gave them more freedom to pursue education," said Angura Begum.

Case 14: Increased Service Delivery through Upazila Parisad Engagement

"Earlier, some people used to visit the Family Welfare Center (FWC) only for collecting primary health information, but now a lot of women including pregnant women visit the FWC to avail various health services. A huge number of adolescent girls from different villages also come to get advice on various health problems" said Mina Rani Talukdar, a FWC Volunteer. Badaghat Union Family Welfare Center is the only health service provider that is easily accessible to the people in the locality. She also added that the management committee of FWC and Union Parishad bodies regularly visit and help the FWC by providing materials and emergency support. She was really happy and thanked the Badaghat (South) UP especially the Union Parishad Chairman and the Upazila Family Planning Officer for their continuous support.

As a part of the SDG localization initiative, the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) Project, funded by Embassy of Switzerland and Embassy of Denmark and UNDP, including training and orientation efforts were made to enable the Union Parishad bodies to raise awareness, ensure health services and adolescent

care by undertaking various schemes targeting marginalized people. After the orientation, Union Parishad took the initiative to form the Family Welfare Center Management Committee (FWCMC) to assess the present situation of FWC and ensure proper health care, monitoring and improved service delivery. FWC received 16 chairs, 04 tables, a 330-Watt solar panel and a gas canister from the Badaghat Union Parishad and FWCMC provided another 04 fans, as well as 14 chairs after the assessment. As a result, now around 100 to 120 individuals could receive health care services on a daily basis. Alongside successfully handling an average of six to eight safe delivery cases in a month, around 70-80 Anti-Natal Care/Post-Natal Care services are also provided through the FWC. The FWC also provides awareness to more than a hundred adolescent girls on sexual and reproductive health. Before the intervention by Union Parishad, childbirth rates were handled inadequately due to lack of bed spaces and necessary instruments at this FWC. While around 30-40 people visited daily, none of them received proper treatment or medicines. Rather, most visitors were served only verbal consultation on ANC or PNC.

The UP Chairman, Mr. Ershad Mia said, "The UH&FWC is the only center for providing primary health care services and as most of the people in our locality are very poor, they have limited access to the district level hospital. I have seen a lot of women come to our UP to receive VGD, pension allowance, disability allowance etc., but most of them were found to be physically very weak. This observation motivated me to take this initiative for investing in the FWC to make it well-functioning and to ensure accessible healthcare services for the local people."

Case 15: Publication of the Annual Report for the First Time

Mr. Zakiul Islam, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Bagmara Union of Rajshahi received the published Union annual report from a UP chairman. After receiving the annual report, he was highly impressed with the quality of the report, especially because this has been the first time in the history of Union Parishads (UP) that such a feat has achieved. "Publishing annual report is a good initiative which helps Union Parishads to be transparent and accountable to the people and the relevant stakeholders. It also helps the Union Parishad to enhance their capacity regarding proper documentation," Mr. Zakiul said. According to the Union Parishad Article 76 under Act 2009, every Union Parishad is supposed to prepare its annual, financial, and administrative reports and submit to the government accordingly. Despite having the legal obligations to prepare an annual report, none of the UPs published as such earlier. By keeping this in mind, the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) Project took the initiative to support the Union Parishads in publishing the annual report. As a part of this piloting initiative, a total of thirty-two UPs have developed and published their annual reports.

The objective was to prepare a report incorporating income and expenditure as well as the overall progress of the Union Parishads; ensure transparency and accountability through furnishing necessary information; inform the senior authorities and citizens concerned about the overall development of the Union; and increase the capacity of the Union Parishad through the preparation of annual reports. "Some Union Parishads

are now capable to publish the annual report using their own budget. We may also think of adding some success stories in the annual report." Mr. Zakiul Islam added.

Case 16: Transparency Ensured through Facebook Pages

Transparency and accountability are essential for effective service delivery. The Upazila and the Union Parishads Facebook pages can help to ensure transparency. As part of strengthening the service delivery of Upazila Parishads and Union Parishads, the EALG project has provided support to UPs and UZPs for creating Facebook pages, so that they can inform citizens about their services and mandates. After providing advanced ICT training, a total of 246 Union Parishads among 251 and 15 Upazila Parishads among 18 created Facebook pages with the assistance of the respective UP Secretaries and other officials.

The Facebook were created for sharing information about the first point of contact to ensure citizens' easy access to relevant information. The objectives of creating Facebook pages were to make people aware about the services delivered by the UP and UZP as well as getting feedback from the mass people to improve the quality of services provided by the respective institutions. EALG Project also intended to educate the respective individuals on how to maintain and update the respective Facebook pages. The Union Parishads Facebook pages helped UP bodies to inform the public about the importance of the services provided by the Upazila and Union Parishads. They were now also able to share information with the people on the first contact and receive feedback through the Facebook pages.

Through these pages, anyone can easily learn about their activities and achievements. Now everyone is promoting their activities through their respective Facebook pages, as we can see the interventions of the Union and the Upazila Parishad from anywhere. As the EALG Project is working for promoting transparency and accountability, the Facebook pages is a step to move them forward.

Case 17: Ensured ICT Training for Local Youths through Youth Participation

Ms. Mahmuda, an energetic young woman from Rajshahi, completed her B.S.S. degree from the Bangladesh Open University. Like many other youths in her area, she had been looking for a job but failed to do so. Afterwards, she also explored other opportunities to become self-dependent because as a graduate, she did not want to be a burden for her family.

Then she thought of taking computer training which might help her to get a job. While collecting information about the available computer training programmes near her area, she found that there was no computer training center in that area as Mohonpur Union Parishad is one of the remote areas with a low-income community. The local youth of this area are hardly equipped with computer literacy and hands-on training on ICT. Ms. Mahmuda met with the Union Parishad Chairman with a proposal for low-cost computer training center at Union Parishad level so that they can avail for the opportunity of taking computer training. As per the UP-Chairman's suggestion,

Ms. Mahmuda with some of her friends who hardly had access to computer literacy and practical training shared the proposal in the Ward Shava. Ward Shava members agreed to the proposal and listed in the Ward Shava regulation as priority scheme.

By this time the EALG Project arranged "Advance ICT training for the project covering UP Secretaries" at Rajshahi. This training encouraged the Union Parishad Secretaries to start the computer training center by 2 No. Mohonpur Union Parishad. In the general meeting of the Union Parishad the scheme of "Computer Training Center for the Local Youth" was approved. Mr. Kamal Uddin, Member 6 No. Ward, playing a vital role in the negotiation process for selecting the scheme in the final development plan. The Union Parishad allocated 420,000 Taka from 1% land transfer fund from 2018-19 and 2019-20 to the training center. This computer training center is located inside the Mohonpur Union Parishad Complex. The center primarily started a 6-month long MS Office package for the local youth. Already 15 students have enrolled and started the ICT course in the training center. This computer training center created an opportunity for the local youth to enhance their computer skills. It will subsequently also promote employment for the young talents.

Case 17: Shaheenur: A Women Entrepreneur

"Before I grew up my parent's arranged marriage for me. I ran away from my house and took shelter at my uncle's house. But I could not save myself as my parents brought me from there and arranged marriage without my consent", Shaheenur Khatun, a women entrepreneur of Auchpara Union Parishad said.

Shaheenur was studying in seventh grade when she got married. After 2 years of marriage, her husband divorced her at that time she already become a mother. Since, she has been living at his father's house. She carried out her expenses by working in a poultry farm in Palopara, where she got 3000 tk. as a monthly salary. Shaheenur is now working as an Entrepreneur of the Auchpara Union Parishad.

After receiving gender training organized for UP and UZP representatives by EALG project, and listening Shaheenur's issues in the Ward Shava, Mst. Mazeda, female member of the reserved seat also recommended to Mr. Jan Mohammed, Chairman to appoint Shaheenur as the woman entrepreneur of the Auchpara Union Parishad. Mst. Mazeda said, "I was aware about her condition, and I felt to do something for her. On those feelings, I recommended to the chairman to appoint her as a women entrepreneur of the Union Parishad as I found her educated and hard working." Later Mr. Jan Mohammed, Chairman of the Auchpara Union Parishad appointed her as the woman entrepreneur on 25th August 2019.

Currently, as an entrepreneur, Shaheenur involves in various developmental activities of the UP. In the Union Parishad, she is earning six thousand takas (6000 taka) by serving the people who come for receiving various services like birth registration, citizenship certificate, trade license etc. "As my husband left me, I used to work in people's house. Now with the grace of God, I started to study again. I am independent at present and my only one dream is to give my child a good life. I am thankful to the

Union Parishad, because the UP created a job opportunity for me which has helped me to be self-dependent," Shaheenur added.

Case 18: SDGs Delivering a Message of Hope

Ms. Zohura Begum, who lives in Charbhadrasan Union of Faridpur, saw a colorful billboard with a few interesting points written on it. One that she could particularly relate with "quality education". A 43-year-old Zohura, who works as a housemaid, always felt that education could have been her progress pathway in life she had been

leading. But according to her it is too late now, and she does not want a similar future for her two children.

"I did not get formal education and have to work as a domestic worker. But I do not expect the same for my children and want a better life for them. That is why I spend a major share of my income on purchasing their books, uniforms, and other education materials," Zohura said. Seeing the colorful billboard Ms. Zohura realized that education is not just a priority to herself, but that it is a priority for the nation as well. She showed the billboard to other parents in the village, and a conversation initiated in the community especially on education, health and gender equality. Many parents realized that taking their children out of school was not the right thing to do, while new parents made it a priority to send their young children to school as soon as they were old enough.

The billboard depicting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their vibrant forms was an initiative of UNDP's Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project with the government, which provides support to local government institutions to integrate SDGs in their development plans and policies in a bid to reach the masses. "It is not only the easy language that the villagers could understand or the vibrant colors that drew them in. What truly struck a chord with them was the message of hope that SDGs deliver," pointed out Mr. Abu Shahin M Ashaduzzaman, former project coordinator of EALG. "Beneficiaries must be aware of SDGs, in order to spread the message of sustainable development among everyone. Learning about the 17

global goals has made the villagers more aware of social and economic issues in their community," he added. "They can now engage in constructive and productive discussions on how to solve these issues and reap the benefits of sustainable development initiatives offered by their local government," he ended on a note of hope.

With support from United Nations Development Programme, EALG project installed 256 billboards on Sustainable Development Goals in 240 unions and 16 sub-districts (Upazila) of Bangladesh under eight districts (Chandpur, Faridpur, Khulna, Netrokona, Patuakhali, Rangpur and Sunamganj). Later on, EALG project also installed 13 billboards in Cox's Bazar with new rhymes which are easier for the community people to understand.

Case 19: Anand Roy's Battle against COVID-19

"I don't have any choice as I am the only earning member of my family. Without my earning, my family members cannot survive. So, I need to come out for work to meet the needs to live our life", told Mr. Anand. Mr. Anand Roy (31) a person with a disability lives in Kursha Union of the Kaunia Upazila of Rangpur district. He is also the president of the local Anirban Disability Organization. He needs to get out of home every day to earn money in order to manage the livelihoods for his four (04) member's family, including his parents and his wife. He is a goldsmith and works in a small jewelry shop located in the union market.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, he goes out earlier to earn money since staying home creates huge money crisis and pressure mounts on him for managing their daily expenditures which may consist of managing even a minimum amount of food for the family members. Although he comes out, he was much worried about the likelihood of COVID-19 infection as he needs to use his hands for preparing jewelry and exchanging jewelries with the customers.

However, in the marketplace, there was a lack of handwash facility. Day by day he was losing his confidence in coming out for earning due to COVID-19 infection fear looking at the increasing trend of infection among the people. He became very happy when he found that the UP with support from the EALG Project has installed a handwashing facility for the businesspersons and customers of the market. Now, he washes his hands again and again and has got back his confidence to stay safe from the likelihood of the COVID-19 infection. He also has observed that every day around 300 people cross the marketplace as it's adjacent to Kursha Union Parishad. So, this hand washing facility helps these people to wash their hands. Mr. Anand added, "I am very happy and grateful to them who have made this arrangement. This has made our life easy and reduced the likelihood of contracting corona virus".

Case 20: Nazma Begum: A Front liner, An Inspiration

In Bangladesh, there are lots of women who are directly serving the community as local government representatives. Likewise, Ms. Nazma Begum, a female member of

a reserved seat of Khaleya Union Parishad under the Rangpur Sadar Upazila, said, "From the very beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic, I was actively engaged in all kinds of activities related to COVID-19 response in her union, including making all kinds of list of beneficiaries of the Union Parishad, distributing food items, ensuring home quarantine of the COVID-19 suspects.

However, while serving the people, I was a bit afraid of being infected by COVID-19. I was also feeling that if I could have a set of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), I could better serve the people with more confidence as it would reduce the likelihood of contracting COVID-19". She was one of the PPE recipients from the EALG Project of UNDP funded by UNDP, Embassy of Switzerland and Embassy of Denmark. While expressing her feelings about receiving the PPE she expressed, "I am really happy after receiving the health care items such as PPE, masks, eye protection glasses, hand gloves, gumboots, hand sanitizers etc. from UNDP's Efficient and Accountable Local Government Project (EALG) Project. It's a very timely initiative from the project, which will motivate us to work more without fear. These have also supported to get back our confidence in working for the people within the pandemic". She also added, "This is the first time since I have been elected as a member of the Union Parishad that we have received any kind of health care equipment through any project". She conveyed her gratitude to UNDP, Embassy of Switzerland and Embassy of Denmark for taking this initiative timely to save them from the infection.

Case 21: Khairul's Dream for a COVID-19 Free Community

In the COVID-19 outbreak time, people's awareness is very important. Mr. Khairul Islam, a UP Member of Sarai Union Parishad under Kaunia, Rangpur district actively engaged in awareness-raising activities. From the very beginning, I have been advising people about hygiene practices, wearing masks, social distancing and not to go out unnecessarily. As a result, and by the grace of Allah, there are no COVID-19 patients in my Ward so far" said Mr. Khairul Islam.

Mr. Khairul also added that from my childhood it is my innate habit of doing something for people. People are of topmost priority for me. I have always tried to do something for the betterment of people. This thought encouraged and motivated me to take the challenge and as a result, I was elected as a Union Parishad member. Whenever I came to the Union Parishad, as a member I tried to make sure that I should do the right things to improve the living standards of the poor people.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, and before receiving government instructions to deal with the epidemic, I have been compiling a list of the unemployed people, distributing relief among them including doing other tasks of the Union Parishad. He also pointed out that while he was working to spread awareness without mask the fear of contracting the virus was always in his mind. At such a time, receiving protective equipment from the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) project of UNDP, funded by Embassy of Denmark, the Embassy of Switzerland has been a blessing to him. "I feel delighted to receive personal protection materials (PPE, KN-95 masks, goggles, hand sanitizers, gumboots, and hand gloves) from UNDP's

Efficient and Accountable Local Government (EALG) project. Now I can do more work during this outbreak by keeping myself safe," he remarked.

Case 22: The EALG Project of UNDP joins the fight against COVID-19

The Efficient and Accountable Local Government (EALG) Project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Government of Denmark repurposed the project activities and launched COVID-19 response initiatives on June 04 through a virtual meeting. The EALG project, implemented by the Local Government Division, has been working for 251 Unions and 18 Upazilas under 09 districts (Khulna, Chandpur, Faridpur, Patuakhali, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Netrokona, Sunamganj and Cox's Bazar) to strengthen the capacities of the local government.

During this pandemic, the project engaged to response COVID-19 by raising mass awareness, providing PPE, hand sanitizers, masks, gloves, soaps and setting up handwashing facilities, benefitting almost 500,000 people. Mr. Helal Uddin Ahmed, Senior Secretary of Local Government Division attended the online launching event as the Chief Guest. "These are unforeseen times, yet there has never been a better time to help those who are in need. With the economy gradually reopening, it is crucial to maintain health guidelines and stay cautious.

The EALG Project's COVID-19 response initiatives will decrease the likelihood of people contracting the disease," said Mr. Helal Uddin Ahmed. Ms. Montarin Mahal Aminuzzaman, Senior Adviser of DANIDA and Suzanne Mueller, former Director of Cooperation, SDC, both highlighted the importance of raising mass awareness at union levels, ensuring personal safety.

"Adapting to the times and meeting the needs of our beneficiaries is necessary during this pandemic, especially as we remain committed to leaving no one behind. Transparency is extremely important while doing that," said Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, Resident Representative of UNDP Bangladesh. "This is an opportunity as much as it is a crisis. This is an opportunity for transformative thinking for development, embracing the 'new normal'. I salute all the frontline workers, who are working at the union level to protect people's lives," Sudipto added. The online session was moderated by EALG's former National Project Director (NPD) Mr. Amitavh Sarker. Among others, UNDP's Deputy Resident Representative Ms. Van Nguyen; former Governance Cluster Lead, Ms. Mahmuda Afroz; Project Coordinator Mr. Shariful Hoque, and local government representatives were present in the inaugural session.

Case 23: Wheelchair Friendly Strolls in Kutubpur Union Parishad

"When I used to walk normally, I did not realize how troublesome it must be for a disabled individual to walk. Presently I get understand how hopeless their life is, how difficult it is for them to move on a regular basis." Mr. Quader said. Around 7/8 years back, Mr. Abdul Quader (93) suffered from feed and got paralyzed at the same time. From then on, he has been wheelchair bound.

He lives in Kutubpur Village under Badarganj Upazila of Rangpur. He was once the head of Gram Sarker. He pointed out, "I used to come to the Union Parishad from time to time to collect old age allowance. At that point, I saw numerous impaired individuals like me in wheelchairs holding up at the Union Parishad ground. They cannot manage to go the verandah, the Chairman's or the Secretary's room since no such disable friendly arrangements was in the Union Parishad complex. In case they came to the Union Parishad, numerous people like me may not go to the Chairman's or Secretary's rooms or that of the other authorities since there were no wheelchair ramps that would accommodate wheelchairs. After seeing this, I was thinking about this and felt I had to do something. I talked to some people many times about this matter, but nothing happened.

Meanwhile, one day I came to know through public announcements that there will be a public hearing at the Union Parishad's premises, where senior government authorities from the District and Upazila levels would join. I attended and raised this issue at the session on December 15, 2019, organized by UP and supported the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) Project. During the public hearing session, I expressed concerns of many disabled individuals like me, who visited the Union Parishad for different purposes and due to the lack of a wheelchair ramp, might not get the opportunity to meet the UP Chairman and Secretary. Hence, we are being deprived of various services."

So, considering the fact, I proposed to construct a wheelchair ramp within the Union Parishad. Based on the concern, UP Chairman announced to build a wheelchair ramp. "I never thought it would work for an individual like me," Mr. Quader said. He moreover added that, from now on, disabled individuals like him would come to the Union Parishad and be able to move effortlessly and avail all the services. Later he included that "If this meeting had not taken place, we might never have seen this wheelchair ramp in UP."

Case 24: Mr. Dhaniraj Accessed to Rights through Public Hearing

"We lived in Bhagirat Machimari Village generations after generations, we never got the chance to lead a normal life, was never able to sit in any hotels or tea stalls in the area and have tea and breakfast like all other people. We always faced discrimination in various ways," Mr. Dhaniraj Devdas expressed.

A Robidash (cobbler/muchi) community with 150 families live at Bhagirat Machimari village under 1 No. Sarai UP, Kaunia, Rangpur who were neglected and did not have access to local hotels/restaurants and have food with the other customers. He pointed out that his relatives and distant friends also faced similar problems. Many times, when someone from another area came for marriage, they also faced humiliation. For this reason, many people did not want to come to get married in this area.

Mr. Dhaniraj's original occupation was the shoemaker, but now he is mainly dependent on agriculture. He also works as a priest in his community here. In Bangladesh, the cobbler community is widely known as 'Muchi' throughout the

country. The cluster is called as 'Muchipara' administer under a village. However, they are considered as 'untouchable' and thus a socially excluded class in the society and therefore constantly are discriminated by the society as far back in history as it goes. He added that previously they shared this issue with the members and chairmen of the Union Parishad, but nothing was resolved. Later he came to know that a public hearing will be held in the Union Parishad, where different government officials from Districts and Upazilas will attend.

Having heard about the public hearing, he attended the public hearing and raised his concern on 18 September 2019, which was organized with the support from the Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG) Project of UNDP. He said that their community had no problem in having snacks at other hotels in the Union area, but they were not allowed to have snacks or tea at the hotels in this Machimari market, which is near to their house. "It's surprising that in this twentieth century, we are still looked down upon. But I am also a member of this society, I have been living here for generations. We are treated so rudely only because we belong to another community," he retorted.

After raising the issue in the public hearing, Mr. Ashraful Islam, UP Chair consulted with all hotel owners to give them access to have food just like any other people. Now the problem has been resolved and the cobbler community has been given access to have food at the hotels. Mr. Dhaniraj or others from his community no longer need to go far to freely have food in hotels. Mr. Dhaniraj thanked the EALG Project of UNDP and the UP Chairman for solving their problem.