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**BANGLADESH COUNTRY CASE STUDY  
CITIZENS' VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY EVALUATION**



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***Citizens' Voice and Accountability Evaluation – Bangladesh Country Case Study***

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Responsibility for the content and presentation of findings, conclusions and recommendations rests with the authors.

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দ্য সুইস এজেন্সি ফর ডেভেলপমেন্ট গ্র্যান্ড কোয়পারেশন এবং দ্য ব্রিটিশ ডিপার্টমেন্ট ফর ইন্টারন্যাশনাল ডেভেলপমেন্ট বাংলাদেশের দেশভিত্তিক কেস স্টাডি করতে সহায়তা দান করেছে। অক্সফোর্ড পলিসি ম্যানেজমেন্ট এর একটি দল এই কাজটি পরিচালনা করার দায়িত্ব লাভ করে। এই দলের সদস্যরা ছিলেন যথাক্রমে ড. ডী জাপ, ড. জেরেমি হলাভ, সোহেল ইবনে আলী ও জেস স্ট্যানিলাভস্কি।

## নির্বাহী সারসংক্ষেপ

যৌথ মূল্যায়নের মাধ্যমে নাগরিক মত প্রকাশ এবং জবাবদিহিতা (সিটিজেনস্ ভয়েস এন্ড একাউন্টেবিলিটি – সিভিএ) দ্য বাংলাদেশ কেস স্টাডি (বিসিসিএস) দাতা সংস্থাগুলোর উদ্যোগে নেওয়া সিভিএ কার্যক্রম উন্নয়নে সহায়তা করেছে এমন সব পদক্ষেপের পর্যালোচনা করে। অক্টোবর, ২০০৭ সালে অনুষ্ঠিত প্রারম্ভিক কর্মশালায় দাতা সংস্থাগুলো নাগরিক মত প্রকাশকে ‘অধিকতর সমতাভিত্তিক নীতিমালা ও বিধি কার্যকরীকরণে মতামত ও আকাঙ্ক্ষার মুক্ত প্রকাশ’ রূপে এবং জবাবদিহিতাকে ‘ক্ষমতার ভারসাম্য নিশ্চিতকরণে দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্তদের দায়বদ্ধতাসহ দায়-দায়িত্বের বাস্তবায়ন’ রূপে সংজ্ঞায়িত করে।

বিসিসিএস এই ধরনের পাঁচটি সিভিএ গবেষণা-পত্রের মধ্যে একটি যা সাতটি সহযোগী দাতাগোষ্ঠীর (বেলজিয়াম, ডেনমার্ক, জার্মানি, নরওয়ে, সুইডেন, সুইজারল্যান্ড এবং যুক্তরাজ্য) কেন্দ্রীয় মূল্যায়ন দলের (ইভালুয়েশন কোর গ্রুপ– ইসিজি) উদ্যোগে করা হয়েছে। সবগুলো কেস স্টাডিই ওভারসিজ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ইনস্টিটিউট কর্তৃক প্রস্তুতকৃত একই ধরনের মূল্যায়ন কাঠামো ও পদ্ধতিগত নির্দেশনা অনুযায়ী প্রস্তুত করা হয়েছে।

এই সম্পূর্ণ যৌথ মূল্যায়নের উদ্দেশ্যগুলো হচ্ছে:

- ভিন্ন ভিন্ন প্রেক্ষিতে উন্নয়ন অংশিদার কর্তৃক গৃহীত বিভিন্ন কৌশল নথিবদ্ধকরণের মাধ্যমে তাদের সিভিএ সম্পর্কিত উপলব্ধির বিকাশ ঘটানো;
- বিভিন্ন সিভিএ কার্যক্রমের পরিসীমার প্রভাব নিরূপণ করা;
- কোন কোন কৌশল সবচেয়ে ভালো কাজ করেছে, কোথায় এবং কেন, তা থেকে শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করা।

বিসিসিএস এর কার্যশর্ত (টিওআর) আরো তিনটি সুনির্দিষ্ট উদ্দেশ্যকে চিহ্নিত করে:

- প্রস্তাবিত উদ্দেশ্যগুলোর পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে কিছু সংখ্যক কার্যক্রম অধ্যয়ন করা এবং তার ভিত্তিতে উপসংহারে উপনীত হওয়া যে, কার্যক্রমভিত্তিক কর্মসূচি তত্ত্বের সাথে সম্পর্কিত কাজগুলো কোনটি সফল এবং কোনটি অসফল হয়েছে;
- নির্দিষ্ট দেশের প্রেক্ষিতে মত প্রকাশ ও জবাবদিহিতা শক্তিশালী করার ক্ষেত্রে কার্যক্রমগুলোর প্রাসঙ্গিকতা নিরূপণ করা;
- বিভিন্ন দেশের প্রেক্ষিতে সিভিএ কার্যক্রমে সহায়তা দানের ক্ষেত্রে দাতাদের ভূমিকা, সাফল্য ও ব্যর্থতাগুলোর একটি সার্বিক বিশ্লেষণ/ পর্যালোচনা করা।

২০০৫ সালে ব্যর্থ রাষ্ট্রের সারণীতে ৭৬টি দেশের মধ্যে বাংলাদেশের অবস্থান ছিল ১৭ নম্বরে। এর সাথে সম্পর্কিত প্রধান সমস্যাগুলো ছিল দুর্বল প্রতিষ্ঠান, আইন-শৃংখলা পরিস্থিতির অবনতি, রাজনৈতিকভাবে সমর্থিত সন্ত্রাসবাদ, স্বজনপ্রীতি এবং দ্বন্দ্বমূলক রাজনীতি। ২০০৪ সাল থেকে বিরোধী দল ক্রমাগত ১৮ মাস সংসদ বর্জন করে এবং নিয়মিত দেশব্যাপী ধর্মঘট (হরতাল) ডাকে। ১৯৭২ সালে প্রণীত একটি প্রগতিশীল সংবিধান থাকা সত্ত্বেও এর অনেক বিধানই গত ত্রিশ বছরেও কার্যকর করা হয়নি (উদাহরণ হিসেবে বলা যায়, বিচার বিভাগের পৃথকীকরণ, ন্যায়পালের মতো অভিভাবক প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রতিষ্ঠা)। সর্বগ্রাসী দুর্নীতি<sup>১</sup> এবং রাজনৈতিক নিরাপত্তাহীনতার কারণে বিনিয়োগ পরিস্থিতি ও আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য গুরুতরভাবে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়েছে। উপরে উল্লিখিত প্রেক্ষাপটের আলোকে বেশকিছু সিভিএ কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হয়েছিল। বাংলাদেশ সম্প্রতি একটি ক্রান্তিকালীন তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকার দ্বারা পরিচালিত হচ্ছে, যার লক্ষ্য ডিসেম্বর ২০০৮ সালের মধ্যে একটি জাতীয় নির্বাচনের মাধ্যমে ক্ষমতা হস্তান্তর করা। সিভিএ কার্যক্রমগুলো এডভোকেসি নেটওয়ার্ক এবং অংশগ্রহণমূলক প্রক্রিয়াকে - যা বিভিন্ন উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচির অংশ - সহায়তা দানের মধ্যে সীমিত ছিল। জননিরীক্ষার ঝুঁকি গ্রহণে এক ধরনের অনিহা এবং কিছুটা অভিভাবক প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলো অকার্যকর বা না থাকার কারণে জবাবদিহিতা বিষয়ক কার্যক্রমগুলো বাস্তবায়নের সুযোগ ছিল খুবই কম। ‘জরুরি অবস্থা’ ও জনসমাবেশের ক্ষেত্রে সীমাবদ্ধতা থাকার কারণে কিছুটা চ্যালেঞ্জ থাকলেও বেশিরভাগ মানুষই মনে করে, তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকারের আমলেই অভিভাবক প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলো কার্যকরীকরণ এবং সিভিএ বাস্তবায়নের লক্ষ্যে উপযোগী পরিবেশ প্রস্তুতের ক্ষেত্রে একটি সুযোগের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে।

<sup>১</sup> ট্রান্সপারেন্সি ইন্টারন্যাশনালের দুর্নীতি তালিকায় চার বছর ধরে বাংলাদেশ শীর্ষে অবস্থান করেছে।



বিসিসিএস গবেষণা দলটি মোট এগারটি কার্যক্রমের পর্যালোচনা করেছে (এরমধ্যে তিনটি কার্যক্রম সরকার কর্তৃক, দু'টি স্থানীয় এনজিও, একটি তৃণমূল সামাজিক আন্দোলন, দু'টি আন্তর্জাতিক এনজিও, একটি নাগরিক সমাজের ওয়াচ-ডগ, একটি ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন এবং একটি দাতা সংস্থা কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়িত হয়েছে) যা চাহিদা, জোগান ও একইসাথে চাহিদা-জোগান দিকগুলোর আন্তঃসম্পর্কের পর্যবেক্ষণ করেছে। দাতা সংস্থা, এনজিও, ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন প্রতিনিধি, গণমাধ্যম, সরকার ও চেম্বার অব কমার্সের সাথে একটি প্রারম্ভিক কর্মশালায় প্রণীত মানদণ্ডের ভিত্তিতে বিষয়গুলো মনোনীত করা হয়েছে এবং এরপরে ডিএসি যৌথ মূল্যায়ন দাতা সংস্থাসমূহের সাথে দ্বিপক্ষীয় আলোচনার মাধ্যমে তা চূড়ান্ত করা হয়েছে।

পর্যবেক্ষক দলটি ক) প্রকল্পে ব্যবহৃত নথিপত্র পর্যালোচনা, খ) প্রকল্পের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ব্যক্তিবর্গের সাথে আলোচনা গ) বিভিন্ন কার্যক্রমের স্থানীয় অংশীজনদের সাথে আলোচনার উদ্দেশ্যে পাবনা, খুলনা, গাজীপুর ও ফরিদপুরে মাঠ পরিদর্শনের পাশাপাশি প্রকল্প কার্যক্রম পর্যবেক্ষণের মাধ্যমে কেস স্টাডি পর্যালোচনার কাজটি সম্পন্ন করেছে। দলটি আলোচনা এবং আত্মমূল্যায়নের ক্ষেত্রে অংশগ্রহণমূলক ও পারস্পরিক তথ্য বিনিময় পদ্ধতি ব্যবহার করেছে।

এগারটি কার্যক্রমের সবকটিই বাংলাদেশের প্রেক্ষিতের সাথে সম্পৃক্ত এবং অনেকক্ষেে কার্যকারণ সূত্র কিছুটা দুর্বল মনে হলেও সবগুলোই দারিদ্র্য বিমোচনে অবদান রাখবে বলে প্রতীক্ষিত হয়েছে। বেশিরভাগ কার্যক্রমের পরিকল্পনা বর্তমান তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকার ক্ষমতা গ্রহণের পূর্বে করা হয়েছিল, যখন সরকারের জবাবদিহিতামূলক কার্যক্রম গ্রহণের ব্যাপারে সদিচ্ছা ছিল কম। প্রধানত এই কারণে জবাবদিহিতার চাইতে মত প্রকাশ বিষয়ক কার্যক্রমের উপর অপেক্ষাকৃত বেশি গুরুত্ব দেয়া হয়েছে। বেশ কয়েকটি দাতা সংস্থা আমাদের জানিয়েছে, তাদের তালিকায় কয়েকটি অভিভাবক প্রতিষ্ঠানকে সহায়তা করার জন্য কর্মসূচি গ্রহণের পরিকল্পনা ছিল কিন্তু সেগুলোকে কার্যকরী করা যায়নি। পুনরায় রাজনৈতিকভাবে সংসদ গঠনের আগেই তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকারের দুই বছরের মধ্যে করা সম্ভব এমন কিছু কার্যাবলী এ সুযোগে গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে এবং অধিক তৎপর দাতা সংস্থাগুলো নির্বাচন কমিশন<sup>২</sup>, বিচার বিভাগ পৃথকীকরণ এবং দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশনকে সহায়তা করার লক্ষ্যে ইতিমধ্যে তহবিলের জোগান দিয়েছে।

কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়নকারী নির্ধারণের ক্ষেত্রে দাতাদের মধ্যে কিছুটা রক্ষণশীলতা দেখা যায়। বেশিরভাগ মত প্রকাশ সংক্রান্ত কার্যক্রমগুলো এনজিওদের মাধ্যমে বাস্তবায়িত হচ্ছে। আমরা কার্যক্রমগুলোর বৈচিত্র্য অনুসন্ধানের লক্ষ্যে উদ্দেশ্যমূলকভাবে একটি সামাজিক আন্দোলন এবং একটি ট্রেড ইউনিয়নের কেস আমাদের গবেষণা-পত্রে সংযুক্ত করেছি, যদিও তারা গতানুগতিক ধারার নয় এবং বেশিরভাগ দাতা সংস্থা এদেরকে ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ সহযোগী হিসেবে বিবেচনা করে থাকে। একটি কার্যক্রম পুরোপুরি গণমাধ্যমকেন্দ্রীক কার্যক্রম হিসেবে শুরু হয়েছিল, কিন্তু একটি প্রথাগত এনজিও দাতা সংস্থার চাহিদার সাথে সামঞ্জস্য রাখতে গিয়ে অনেক তথ্য ও সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধিমূলক কার্যাবলীর সন্নিবেশ ঘটায়। মত প্রকাশকে গুরুত্ব দিয়েছে এমন দুটি সরকারি কার্যক্রমও আমরা উদ্দেশ্যমূলকভাবে নির্বাচন করেছিলাম, তবে এগুলো খুবই বিরল দৃষ্টান্ত বলা যায়। জবাবদিহিতা সংক্রান্ত কার্যক্রমের মূল লক্ষ্যবস্ত্ত হিসেবে ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের (কাউন্সিল ও নির্বাচিত স্থানীয় সরকারের সর্বনিম্ন স্তর) সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধিকে ধরা হয়েছে। এটা আংশিকভাবে এই জন্যে করা হয়েছে যে, বেশিরভাগ ক্ষেত্রে দরিদ্র মানুষই দুর্বল ও দুর্নীতিগ্রস্ত স্থানীয় সরকার দ্বারা ভোগান্তির শিকার হয়। তাই এর সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধির মাধ্যমেই দরিদ্র মানুষের উপর এর সবচেয়ে বেশি দৃশ্যমান প্রভাব পড়তে পারে। আবার এটাও ঠিক যে, কেন্দ্রীয় বা জেলা পর্যায়ে চাইতে এই স্তরটিকে সম্পৃক্ত করার জন্য সরকারের সদিচ্ছার অভাব ছিল কম।

সব কার্যক্রমে মূল গুরুত্ব দেয়া হয়েছে সচেতনতা সৃষ্টির বিষয়ে (তথ্য প্রাপ্তি অধিকারসহ অন্যান্য অধিকার, দুর্নীতি এবং সামাজিক বিষয়ে)। বেশিরভাগ মানুষ অক্ষরজ্ঞানহীন হলেও, যেখানে সাংস্কৃতিক কর্মকাণ্ড সাদরে গ্রহণযোগ্য, সেখানে সচেতনতা সৃষ্টির উদ্দেশ্যে সুনির্দিষ্টভাবে তাদের উপযোগী গণসাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান আয়োজনের ব্যবস্থা ছিল বেশকিছু কার্যক্রমে। সম্মিলিতভাবে দাবি উত্থাপন এবং পারস্পরিক সহায়তার মধ্য দিয়ে সুফল পেতে কমিটি ও জোটের মতো কিছু সংগঠনকেও সম্পৃক্ত করা হয়েছিল অনেক কার্যক্রমে। কার্যক্রমগুলোর বেশিরভাগই আবার জনসম্মুখে বিভিন্ন ইস্যু তুলে ধরা এবং সুনির্দিষ্ট কিছু গোষ্ঠী বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের অনৈতিক কার্যকলাপ তুলে ধরার ক্ষেত্রে সাফল্যের সঙ্গে গণমাধ্যমকে (প্রকাশনা ও সম্প্রচার) ব্যবহার করতে পেরেছে, বিশেষকরে এর ভাল-মন্দ দিকগুলো উপস্থাপনের ক্ষেত্রে।

অধিকাংশ কার্যক্রমগুলো এই ধরনের ভিত্তিতে গ্রহণ করা হয় যে, এগুলো সুশাসন ও গণতন্ত্র প্রতিষ্ঠায় অবদান রাখবে এবং এর ফলে সেবা সরবরাহ ব্যবস্থার উন্নয়ন ঘটবে ও দরিদ্রদের জন্য বরাদ্দ সম্পদের অপচয় হ্রাস পাবে। যদিও সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধিমূলক

<sup>২</sup> পর্যবেক্ষক দলটি সুযোগসন্ধানী তহবিল জোগানের ক্ষেত্রে উদাহরণ হিসেবে নির্বাচন কমিশনকে সহায়তার বিষয়টি পর্যালোচনায় অন্তর্ভুক্ত করতে চেয়েছিল, কিন্তু নির্বাচন কমিশন অত্যন্ত ব্যস্ত থাকার কারণে দাতা সংস্থাগুলো এবিষয়ে আমাদেরকে বিরত থাকতে বলেছে।

কার্যাবলী চাহিদা ও জোগান<sup>৩</sup> উভয় ক্ষেত্রেই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সাফল্য লাভ করেছে, কিন্তু এই দু'টি বিষয়কে একে অপরের সাথে সম্পর্কযুক্ত করা সহজ নয় এবং সাধারণভাবে এই সংক্রান্ত সুযোগগুলো সীমিত এবং অধিকাংশই প্রকল্প নির্ভর। এই দুটি ক্ষেত্রের প্রাতিষ্ঠানিকীকরণের উদাহরণ অতি সামান্য। অধিকন্তু, কার্যক্রমগুলোতে সাফল্যের কারণ হিসাবে প্রকল্পসমূহের অবদানকে এককভাবে চিহ্নিত করা যায় না। জনসংগঠনগুলো তাদের নিজস্ব চাহিদা আদায়ের ক্ষেত্রে পরিকল্পিতভাবে দরকষাকষির চেয়ে সরাসরি প্রকল্প কর্মীদের সহায়তার মাধ্যমেই অনেক পরিবর্তন এসেছে বলে মনে হয়। তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকার অপকর্ম ও অদক্ষতার জায়গাগুলোতে (গ্রেফতার ও মামলার হুমকিসহ) মনোযোগ দেওয়ার ফলে সব সরকারি সেবার ক্ষেত্রে উল্লেখযোগ্য প্রভাব পড়েছে। অনেকের ধারণা, দাবি তুলে ধরার সকল কর্মসূচির চাইতে এই উদ্যোগটির প্রভাব অনেক বেশি।

সাহায্য কার্যকারিতার উপর প্যারিস ঘোষণায় বিন্যাস ও সমন্বয় – উভয় ক্ষেত্রেই গুরুত্বারোপ করা হয়েছে। বাংলাদেশ দারিদ্র্য দূরীকরণ কৌশল পত্র (পিআরএস) (বিন্যাসের ক্ষেত্রে প্রধান হাতিয়ার) সুশাসন প্রতিষ্ঠার উপর গুরুত্বারোপ করেছে এবং এতে বলা হয়েছে যে, ‘স্বচ্ছতা, জবাবদিহিতা ও আইনের শাসন নিশ্চিত করণের মাধ্যমে’ এবং অন্য তিনটি বিষয় (অংশগ্রহণ নিশ্চিতকরণ, সামাজিক সম্পৃক্ততা ও জনগণের সকল বিভাগ, দল ও শ্রেণীর ক্ষমতায়ন এবং বিশেষত দরিদ্রদেরকে দক্ষতার সাথে ও কার্যকরীভাবে সেবা প্রদান করা) পরিবর্তন আনার জন্য জরুরী। যদিও বর্তমান তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকার পিআরএস সমর্থন করার ঘোষণা দিয়েছে, তথাপি কৌশলটির প্রকৃত মালিকানাবোধ সামান্যই এবং এটির মতবাদ ও কৌশল সম্পর্কিত জ্ঞান এখনও দুর্বল। অন্যদিকে দাতারা বিন্যাসকে ন্যায্যতা দিতে গিয়ে তাদের কৌশলগত নথিপত্রে ব্যাপকভাবে পিআরএসকে উদ্ধৃত করে থাকে। আসলে এর পেছনে প্রকৃত অর্থে সামান্যই সারবস্ত আছে। দীর্ঘ আলাপ-আলোচনার প্রক্রিয়া সত্ত্বেও এটি প্রকৃত অর্থে বিশেষজ্ঞদের দ্বারা প্রস্তুতকৃত একটি দলিল।

দাতাদের শাসন সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে একটি স্থানীয় পরামর্শক দল রয়েছে। যৌথ অর্থায়নের সামান্য কিছু উদাহরণ থাকলেও, সিভিএ সহায়তা দানের ব্যাপারে দাতাদের সমন্বয়ের অভাবের ফলে এক্ষেত্রে দ্বৈততা, পারস্পরিক দূরত্ব ও প্রতিযোগিতামূলক অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয়েছে।

সহস্রাব্দ ঘোষণা সরকারগুলোকে বিশেষ ক্ষেত্রে আরো দীর্ঘমেয়াদী সাহায্য প্রদানের প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছে। এটা তাদের ধারণক্ষমতার বাইরে বৈচিত্র্যময় প্রকল্প গ্রহণে (সবকিছুই একটি প্রকল্পের অধীনে হবে) বাধ্য করেছে, যা সুনির্দিষ্টভাবে মত প্রকাশ সংক্রান্ত কার্যক্রমের ক্ষেত্রে সল্প ব্যয়ে অধিক অর্জন নীতিমালার বিপরীত।

সুপারিশমালার সারসংক্ষেপ:

- সমন্বয় দাতা দেশগুলিকে সিভিএ বৃদ্ধিকরণ সংক্রান্ত একটি তত্ত্ব উদ্ভাবনে সহায়তা করবে, যার মধ্যে থাকবে সহযোগী কৌশল এবং কার্যক্রম;
- দাতা সংস্থাগুলো যদি বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে মত প্রকাশ কার্যক্রম বিষয়ে আন্তরিক হয় এবং একটি সক্রিয় নাগরিক সমাজকে সহায়তা করে তবে তাদেরকে অর্থায়নের ক্ষেত্রে সৃজনশীল হতে হবে। কীভাবে আনুষ্ঠানিক/অনানুষ্ঠানিক সংগঠন, বৃহৎ মতামত/ক্ষুদ্র মতামত, মূলধারা ও গতানুগতিক নয় এমন দাবিগুলোকে সম্পৃক্ত করা যায়? একটি সম্ভাবনা হচ্ছে, স্থানীয় ও জাতীয় পর্যায়ে এডভোকেসি কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়নের জন্য অনলাইন কলাকৌশল, বিকল্প আর্থিক সম্পদ ও অধিকার বিষয়ক ডাটাবেইজ, দরকষাকষি এবং যোগাযোগ দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধি এবং সাধারণ নাগরিক শিক্ষা এসব বিষয়ের জন্য জনগণের প্রবেশাধিকারের জন্য তহবিলের জোগান দেওয়া;
- আরেকটি সম্ভাবনা হচ্ছে, বাস্তবায়নকালে (জোগান-ফলাফল) নিয়ন্ত্রণ ও পরিমাপের চেষ্টা ছাড়াই দীর্ঘমেয়াদী তহবিল প্রদান করা এবং এর পরিবর্তে সাফল্য পরিমাপের বিষয়ে নজর দেওয়া (গতিশীলতা/প্রক্রিয়ার কর্মদক্ষতা মূল্যায়নের লক্ষ্য)। একটি অনুমোদকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রতিষ্ঠা করা যা সাধারণ মাপকাঠিতে ‘তহবিল প্রাপ্তির জন্য উপযোগী’ হিসেবে প্রত্যাশন পত্র দেবে, যা দাতা সংস্থাগুলোকে অপেক্ষাকৃত অব্যাহত কর্মসূচিগুলোতে তহবিল প্রদানে সাহায্য করবে এবং নিজস্ব অধিকার আদায়ের লক্ষ্যে জোরদার দাবি তোলাটা যে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এই ধারণাকে উৎসাহ প্রদান করবে;
- দাতা সংস্থাগুলোর অবশ্যই আরো অর্থপূর্ণ সূচকের অনুসন্ধান করা উচিত যা সরাসরি কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়নের সাথে সম্পর্কিত। এটি ফলাফল ও সহস্রাব্দ উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যসমূহ, প্রক্রিয়ার সূচক (দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিগত মান, ব্যবহার ও পছন্দের মান) ও প্রভাবের সূচকের মধ্যবর্তী স্থানটি পূরণ করবে, যেমন– শিক্ষক-শিক্ষার্থীর বাড়তি সহচর্য সময় বা

<sup>৩</sup> চাহিদার দিকটি মত প্রকাশকে নির্দেশ করে– যা দায়িত্ব পালনকারীদের (প্রাথমিকভাবে সরকারি খাত) অর্থাৎ ‘জোগান পক্ষের’ কর্মীর কাছ থেকে অধিকার প্রাপকের (নাগরিক) দ্বারা সেবা প্রাপ্তির বিধান ও অধিকার অনুযায়ী দাবি উত্থাপন করে।

উৎকোচ ছাড়া সরকারি সেবাগুলোর বিধান এবং/অথবা এমন সূচকের সন্নিবেশ ঘটানো যা শেষ পর্যন্ত মতামত প্রকাশকে মূল্য দেয়;

- মত প্রকাশ সংক্রান্ত কার্যক্রমগুলো অত্যন্ত ব্যয় সাশ্রয়ী হতে হবে। স্বেচ্ছাসেবা পরিহার না করা ও অতিরিক্ত সম্পদ ব্যয়ে অবকাঠামোর ক্ষেত্রে অপ্রয়োজনীয় বিনিয়োগ নিরুৎসাহিত করার বিষয়ে নজর দিতে হবে;
- কর্মসূচি ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হতে পারে এবং সংস্থাগুলো তাদের প্রকৃত সামর্থ্যের বাইরে চলে যেতে পারে এমন পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণের ব্যাপারে দাতা সংস্থাগুলোকে আরো সচেতন হতে হবে। নতুন কার্যক্রম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ক্ষেত্রে গণমাধ্যমের মনোযোগ আকর্ষণ বা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ব্যাপক জনসমর্থন পাওয়ার ক্ষেত্রে হতদরিদ্র, প্রান্তিক, অতি দুর্গম এলাকায় (যদিও নিঃস্বার্থভাবে) পৌঁছানোর চাহিদা সবচেয়ে ভালো শর্ত নাও হতে পারে। সারকথা, মত প্রকাশ সংক্রান্ত কার্যক্রমের ক্ষেত্রে অনেক বেশি কৌশলগত (এবং দক্ষতা) পদক্ষেপ নাও নিতে হতে পারে। একইভাবে উপযোগী পরিবেশ, জাতীয় পর্যায়ে এডভোকেসি বা আরো অন্য কিছু কার্যক্রমে যুক্ত হওয়ার মাধ্যমে বহিঃস্বার্থ হ্রাস ও সর্বোচ্চ পরিমাণ প্রভাব বৃদ্ধির চাহিদা কর্মসূচিটিকে লক্ষ্যচ্যুত করতে পারে;
- দাতা সংস্থাগুলোকে সুযোগসন্ধানীর মতো তহবিল সরবরাহের ক্ষেত্রে সক্রিয় হতে হবে। বর্তমান তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকার সুনির্দিষ্টভাবে অভিভাবক প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলো কার্যকরী করার ব্যাপারে সুযোগের জানালা খুলে দিয়েছে। এই সুযোগটি ব্যবহার করা যাবে শুধুমাত্র যদি দাতা সংস্থাগুলো খুব সল্প সময়ের মধ্যে তহবিল জোগানের ব্যবস্থা করতে পারে;
- দাতা সংস্থাগুলো একক প্রতিষ্ঠানের চাইতে প্লাটফর্মকে তহবিল সরবরাহের বিষয়টি বিবেচনা করতে পারে;
- প্রায় সব সিডিএ কার্যক্রমেই মনোভাব ও আচরণ পরিবর্তনের দিক থাকে। এই প্রক্রিয়াগুলো সময়সাপেক্ষ। দাতা সংস্থাগুলোকে দীর্ঘমেয়াদী সহায়তার ব্যাপারে প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ হতে হবে;
- সংস্থাগুলো যদি মত প্রকাশ ও জবাবদিহিতা উভয় ক্ষেত্রে কাজ করতে আগ্রহী হয় তখন গুরুতর স্বার্থের দ্বন্দ্ব দেখা দিতে পারে। কর্মদক্ষতা পরিবীক্ষণে আপোস এবং বিশ্বাসযোগ্যতার ভিত্তি দুর্বল হতে পারে। একটি মধ্যবর্তী সংস্থা দুই পক্ষের মধ্যে নিরপেক্ষতা বজায় রাখার লক্ষ্যে মধ্যস্ততাকারী হিসাবে গ্রহণযোগ্য হতে পারে। কিন্তু যেখানে একটি তৃতীয় পক্ষ মত প্রকাশ ও জবাবদিহিতা উভয় ক্ষেত্রে সংস্থার সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধির সাথে সম্পৃক্ত, এটি সরাসরি কাজ করার ক্ষেত্রে দুপক্ষের মধ্যকার সম্পর্ককে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত করবে অথবা অস্থায়ী নির্ভরতার সৃষ্টি করবে বা কর্মদক্ষতার সূচক অর্জনের জন্য এর প্রত্যাশা অনুযায়ী নিরপেক্ষ ভূমিকার সাথে আপোষ করবে। যে সংস্থাগুলো মত প্রকাশের ক্ষেত্রে কাজ করছে তাদের স্বাধীনতা অক্ষুণ্ণ রাখার ব্যাপারে দাতা সংস্থাগুলোকে আরো সচেতন হতে হবে;
- নিজেদের ব্যাপারে দাতা সংস্থাগুলোকে আরো স্বচ্ছ ও জবাবদিহিমূলক হতে হবে। নিজেদের দেশে তারা হয়তো সঠিক পন্থা অবলম্বন করে কিন্তু বাংলাদেশে তাদের নথিপত্র, কৌশল, তহবিল বরাদ্দ ইত্যাদির ক্ষেত্রে তারা কতটুকু সর্বজনবিদিত?

## **Executive Summary**

The Bangladesh Country Case Study (BCCS) under the joint Evaluation of Citizen's Voice and Accountability (CVA) reviews the intervention approaches donors in Bangladesh are taking to promote CVA. Donors in the inception workshop in October, 2007 defined Citizens Voice as '*Open expression of opinion and aspiration resulting in more equitable policies and institutions and Accountability as Fulfilment of responsibilities including answerability by duty holders to ensure check and balance in power*'.

BCCS is one of five such studies of CVA commissioned by the Evaluation Core Group (ECG) of seven donor partners (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK). All case studies were required to use the uniform Evaluation Framework and the Methodological Guidelines developed by the Overseas Development Institute.

The objectives of the entire joint evaluation are:

- To improve understanding of CVA among development partners by documenting their approaches in a variety of contexts;
- To assess impacts of a range of CVA interventions;
- To learn lessons about which approaches have worked best, where and why.

The TOR for the BCCS identify a further three specific objectives:

- To assess a number of interventions against their intended objectives and, on the basis of that, draw conclusions about what works, and what does not, in relation to intervention programme theories;
- To assess the relevance of the interventions for strengthening voice and accountability in the specific country context;
- To provide an overall analysis/assessment of donors' roles, successes and failures in supporting CVA in different country contexts.

Bangladesh was ranked 17 out of 76 countries in the failed state index (2005). The most salient problems related to weak institutions, law and order deterioration, politically sponsored terrorism, patronage and confrontational politics. From 2004 the Opposition continued a 18 month boycott of Parliament and regularly called country wide strikes (*Hartals*). Despite an enlightened Constitution developed in 1972 many provisions have not been enacted over the interim thirty years (e.g. separation of the judiciary, provision of guardianship organisations such as ombudsman). With pervasive corruption<sup>1</sup> and political insecurity the investment climate and international trade were severely undermined. It was against this backdrop that many of the CVA interventions were initiated. Bangladesh is currently governed by a transition Caretaker Government which intends to stand down for national elections to take place by December 2008. CVA interventions had been somewhat limited to support for advocacy networks and participatory processes embedded in development programmes in different sectors. There had been very little scope for accountability interventions partly because of an unwillingness to risk public scrutiny and partly because of the non-existent or non-functioning guardianship institutions. Whilst some challenges exist related to the 'state of emergency' and constraints on public gatherings, most people see the Caretaker Government period as a window of opportunity in which to operationalise guardianship institutions and provide an enabling environment for CVA.

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<sup>1</sup> Bangladesh topped Transparency International's corruption index for four years running.

The BCCS study team focused on eleven interventions (three implemented by Government, two implemented by local NGOs, one implemented by a grassroots social movement, two implemented by International NGOs, one civil society Watch Dog, one Trade Union and one implemented by the donor agency) and covering a range of interventions supporting demand-side, supply-side and demand-supply-side interaction. The selection was made on the basis of criteria developed in an Inception Workshop with donors, NGOs, Trade union representatives, the media, government and Chamber of Commerce and then finalised through bilateral discussions with DAC joint Evaluation Donors.

The team undertook the case study reviews by i. Reviewing project documentation, ii. Meeting with key project personnel, iii. Field visits to Pabna, Khulna, Gazipur and Faridpur to meet with local stakeholders of various interventions as well as observations of project activities. The team used participatory and interactive methods to facilitate discussion and self evaluation.

All eleven interventions are relevant to the context of Bangladesh and all are supported on the premise that they contribute to poverty alleviation, even if causal links can be a little tenuous. There has been more focus on voice than accountability mainly because most of the interventions were designed before the current Caretaker Government when there was less willingness on the part of government to support investment on accountability interventions. A number of donors told us that they had designed programmes to support guardianship organisations in the pipeline but had not been able to operationalise them. A flurry of activity has resulted to take advantage of the window of opportunity afforded by the two years of Caretaker Government before restoration of political parliament and the more agile donors have already contributed funds to support the Election Commission<sup>2</sup>, Separation of the Judiciary and the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Donors have tended to be quite conservative in their choice of actors. Most voice interventions are channelled through NGOs. We purposely included a social movement and a Trade Union case in our study to explore diversity of intervention but they are not typical and most donors would consider them risky partners. One intervention started out as a purely media intervention but has been moulded to fit donor requirements of a more conventional NGO engaged in a range of information and awareness raising activities. We also purposely selected two government interventions which emphasised voice but again these are rare examples. Accountability interventions are mainly targeted at capacity building of Union Parishads (councils and the lowest tier of elected local government). This is partly because the most visible impact on the poor can be achieved in this way since it is the poor who have suffered most from weak and corrupt local government. But it is also because there was less unwillingness of government to engage at this level than central and district level.

The main emphasis in all the interventions is on awareness raising (of rights including the right to information, corruption and social issues). Several interventions use popular culture to promote awareness which is particularly appropriate where many are illiterate but also where cultural events are so well supported. Many of the inventions also involve some form of organisation into committees and networks to raise voice collectively and benefit from mutual support. Many of the interventions have also successfully used the media (print and broadcast) to bring issues into the public domain and particularly to 'name and shame'.

Most of the interventions are premised on the assumption that they will contribute to good governance and democracy and will therefore lead to better service delivery and less leakage of resources intended for the poor. Whilst awareness raising activities have had considerable

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<sup>2</sup> The team had wanted to include a review of the support to the Election Commission as an example of opportunistic funding but it was so busy that donors dissuaded us.

success on both demand and supply-side<sup>3</sup>, the opportunities for interface are limited and are mostly project-driven. There is little evidence that the interface platforms have been institutionalised. Furthermore, changes in service provision efficiency are difficult to attribute directly to the interventions. Many changes seem to be facilitated by the project staff directly rather than through the people's organisations designed to negotiate their own demands. The Caretaker Government's crack down on malpractice and inefficiencies (with the threat of arrest and charges) has had a significant impact on all public services. Many feel that this alone has had more impact than any number of voice building programmes.

The Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness stresses both alignment and harmonisation. The Bangladesh Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) (the main instrument for alignment) emphasises the importance of good governance and states that it is promoted '*by ensuring transparency, accountability and rule of law*' and this strategy along with three others (*ensuring participation, social inclusion and empowerment of all sections, groups and classes of people and providing service delivery efficiently and effectively, particularly to the poor*) are essential to bring about change. Although the current Caretaker Government has declared support for the PRS, there is very little genuine ownership of the strategy and knowledge of the tenets of the strategy remain meagre. Whilst donors quote the PRS widely in their strategy documents to justify alignment, there is actually little substance behind what, despite the lengthy consultation process, is essentially a consultant commissioned document.

There is a local Consultative Group convened amongst donors on the theme of governance. Although there are a few examples of joint funding there is no coherent donor approach to supporting CVA leading to duplication, gaps and competition.

The Millennium Declaration pledged Governments to give more aid and perpetuates a '*more with less*' agenda. This leads to swamping projects beyond their absorptive capacity, forcing programmes to diversify (everything has to be under one project) and counters the principle that a little money can achieve a lot in voice interventions in particular.

Recommendations can be summarised as follows:

- Harmonisation provides an opportunity for donors to develop a coherent theory of change on enhancing CVA, with an accompanying strategy and set of interventions;
- If donors are serious about supporting diverse voices and contributing to a vibrant civil society then they will have to be creative about funding. How can formal/informal organisations, big voices/little voices, mainstream and unconventional voices be included? One possibility is to provide funds for public access resources, such as online toolkits for mounting local and national level advocacy, databases of alternative financial resources and entitlements, resources on negotiating skills and other communication skills, and generic civic education;
- Another possibility is to provide long-term funding without trying to control and measure implementation (inputs-outputs) and instead focus on measuring outcomes (as a means of evaluating the performance of the movement/process). Establishment of an accreditation body which certifies 'fitness for funding' on simple basis would allow donors to fund more open-ended programmes and promotes the notion that enhanced voice is valuable in its own right;

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<sup>3</sup> Demand-side refers to voice- the action of making demands for provision of services and entitlements by rights bearers (citizens) of duty bearers (primarily public sector) and thus 'supply side' actors.

- Donors must search for more meaningful outcome indicators which fill the middle ground between output and MDGs, process indicators (perceptions scores, choice and use scores) and outcome indicators which are directly linked to action, such as increased teacher: student contact time or the provision of public services without bribes and/or include indicators which value voice as an end;
- Voice interventions can be quite resource light and care should be taken not to choke voluntarism and encourage unnecessary investment in infrastructure by over-resourcing;
- Donors should be more cognisant of the way they can distort programmes and divert organisations away from their core competences. The demands to reach the poorest, most marginalized, most remote (albeit altruistic) may not provide the best conditions for piloting new approaches, getting media attention or nurturing a critical mass of support. In short it may not be the most strategic (and efficient) way to promote voice interventions. Similarly the demands to reduce external risks and maximise impact by engaging in other activities – such as promoting an enabling environment, getting involved in national level advocacy or scaling up -- can dilute the core focus of the programme;
- Donors need to be agile to be able to mobilise funds opportunistically. The current Caretaker Government situation opens windows of opportunity particularly in respect of operationalising guardianship institutions. These windows of opportunity can be used only if donors will be able to make funds available in a very short time;
- Donors can consider ways to fund platforms rather than institutions themselves;
- CVA interventions nearly all have an element of attitude and behaviour change. These are processes which require time. Donors need to commit for the long term;
- There can be serious issues of conflict of interest when organisations are expected to choose to support both voice and accountability. Performance monitoring is compromised and credibility might be undermined. It is acceptable for an intermediary organisation to facilitate and broker relations in a neutral way between the two sides. But where a third party is involved in the *capacity building* of organisations of both voice and accountability, it may distort the relationship between the two sides by acting directly, or creating unsustainable dependency or compromising their neutrality in its desire to meet performance indicators. Donors should be more aware of maintaining the independence of those organisations promoting voice;
- Donors themselves need to be more transparent and accountable. They may well be so to their own country but how public are their documents, strategies, fund allocations in Bangladesh?

## **Abbreviations and Glossary**

ACC	Anti Corruption Commission
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AGO	Auditor General's Office
AI	Advice and Information
AL	Awami League
BNP	Bangladesh National Party
BCCS	Bangladesh Country Case Study
BSSF	Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramic Federation
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CCC	Concerned Citizens Committees
CMCs	Community Management Committees (created under ROSC)
Crore	A number that is represented as a one followed by 7 zeros
CVA	Citizens' Voice and Accountability
DFID	Department for International Development
District (Zila)	Highest tier administrative unit of local government, managed by civil servants. There are 64 districts in Bangladesh
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
EFA	Education for All
EOP	End of Project
EW	Education Watch
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMRP	Financial Management Reform Programme
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
hartal	Strike/shut down. A demonstration requiring non-cooperation with the government: transport stops, offices close and instigators take to the streets to enforce this.
IC	Information Centre (established under the Mass-Line Media project)



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IEC	Information education communication
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-government organisation
khas	Khas refers to Government land or water bodies which is not utilised and has by law been committed for use by the poor via transfer of deed
LAND	Land and Agrarian Network for Development
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGIP	Local Government Improvement Plan
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MJF	Mannusher Jonno Foundation
MMC	Mass-line Media Centre
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MSC	Most Significant Change (research method)
MTBF	Medium Term Budget Framework
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTP	Meet the People (a MMC activity)
NFE	Non Formal Education
NGO	Non- government organisation
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PEDP	Primary Education Development Program
RAC	Rural Advocacy Centre
RDPs	Rural Development Projects (funded through the LGED)
RIBEC	Reforms in Budget and Expenditure Control (DFID predecessor to FMRP)
ROSC	Reaching Out of School Children project

RTI	Right to Information (Act)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Shalish	Local dispute resolution/arbitration mechanism
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SMC	School Management Committee
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
TLM	Total Literacy Movement
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	Union Parishad (council) (lowest tier of rural elected local government) A union comprises nine wards and approximately 30 villages. There are approximately 4466 unions with average population of 27,000.
Upazila	Upazila is an administrative unit of local government (in rural areas) between Union and District (Zila) level). It is administered by civil servants. There are about 508 upazilas in Bangladesh
VGD	Vulnerable group development
YES	Youth Engagement and Support (TIB Initiative)

# 1 Introduction

In 2006 a core group of DAC partners (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) responded to the increasing donor emphasis on good governance by agreeing to collaborate on a joint evaluation of development aid for strengthening citizens' voice and accountability (CVA). The DAC Evaluation Core Group (ECG) is applying an evaluation framework developed and piloted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to a series of country case studies across a range of country types.

The objective of the evaluation is to contribute to:

- An improved understanding of CVA among development partners by mapping and documenting their approaches and strategies for enhancing CVA in a variety of country contexts and to learn lessons on which approaches have worked best, where and why.
- An assessment of the effects of a range of donor CVA interventions on governance and on aid effectiveness and whether these effects are sustainable.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) invited proposals for the Citizens' Voice and Accountability Bangladesh Country Case Study (BCCS). Oxford Policy Management (OPM) was selected for this evaluation.

This report presents the findings of the BCCS. The objectives of the BCCS are to:

- assess the selected interventions against their intended objectives and on the basis of that draw conclusions on what works, and what does not in relation to intervention programme theories
- assess the relevance of the interventions for strengthening CVA in Bangladesh
- provide an overall assessment/analysis of the donors' role, success and failures in supporting CVA in Bangladesh.

As well as standing on its own, the BCCS will inform a synthesis report to be published in 2008 which will analyse the lessons learned from all the case studies and make recommendations to donors to consider and implement.

This report is structured as follows. Following this introduction, section 2 describes the methodology (with an expanded discussion in Annex B), section 3 provides an overview of the country context in which CVA interventions operate (with a much more detailed analysis of country context in Annex C). Section 4 presents the research team's findings from the examination of the eleven case studies (with detailed case study sheets presented in Annex D) and Section 5 presents lessons learned. Section 6 provides a set of recommendations to be considered for future CVA support.

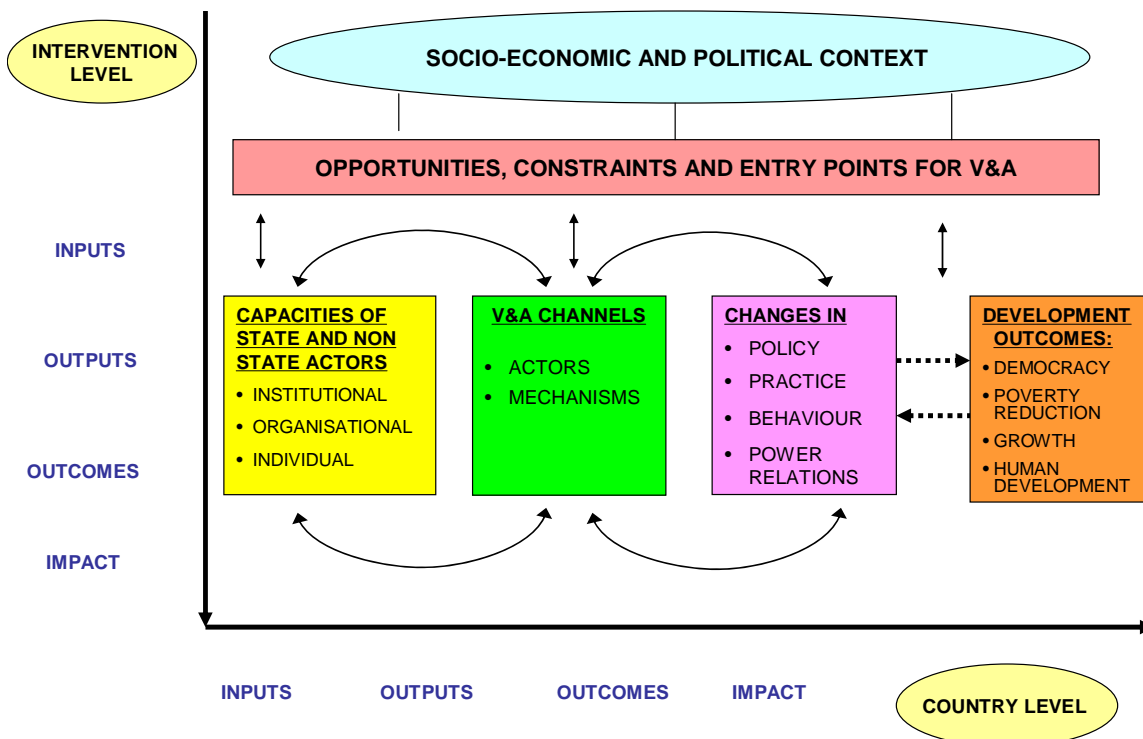
## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Analytical approach

Overseas Development Institute (ODI) developed the evaluation framework to be used in all the Country Case Studies (see Figure 2.1). Based on the first phase findings (literature review and Benin and Nicaragua pilot case studies), it sets out a comprehensive process in several steps:

- i. analysis of the socio-economic and political context in order to provide information on: i) The political and institutional framework and its actual operation; ii) a mapping and key features of the main CVA actors within the country; iii) the social and political landscape; and iv) main events of particular relevance for CVA
- ii. review of five core components: i) opportunities, constraints and entry points for CVA; ii) institutional, organisational and individual capacities; iii) CVA channels, actors and mechanisms; iv) changes in policy, practice, behaviour and power relations; and iv) broader development outcomes
- iii. development of models of change to understand the logic underpinning CVA interventions and to define the steps which constitute the main elements of the causal chain linking inputs and outputs to both expected and unexpected results
- iv. use of the DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability as an analytical framework.

**Figure 2.1 Context, framework components, levels of results and outcomes**



Source: Foresti et al, 2007. "Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework", London, ODI, August

## 2.2 Research questions

The TOR posed the following research questions (from the ODI Evaluation Framework):

**Question 1: Channels, mechanisms and processes:** What are the concrete channels, i.e. actors, spaces and mechanisms, supported by donor-funded interventions for (i) citizens' voice and empowerment, (ii) increased role of poor and excluded groups and women or their representatives in governance processes and (iii) accountability of government to citizens? How do these channels work and how important are they to achieve CVA outcomes?

**Question 2: Results and Outcomes:** To what extent have the different approaches and strategies adopted by donors contributed to enhanced CVA in Bangladesh?

**Question 3: Pathways to broader development outcomes and impacts:** In what ways are CVA interventions contributing to broader development goals, such as poverty reduction and the MDGs? In particular, what are the main pathways leading from improved CVA to such broader development outcomes?

**Question 4: CVA and aid effectiveness:** What can we learn from experience to date of donors' effectiveness in supporting CVA interventions with particular reference to the principles enshrined in the Paris Declaration?

## 2.3 Case selection process

Following the TOR and Evaluation Framework, the process of selection of case studies was initiated through a workshop in country with donors and a selection of other stakeholders<sup>4</sup>. Recognising that this phase was critical, the team emphasised the inclusion of civil society representatives, media, Trade Unions and private sector<sup>5</sup> who had limited or no current development aid, support in addition to more conventional representation by NGOs.

The half day workshop, held at a hotel in Dhaka, had the following objectives:

- to understand the purpose and process of the Joint Evaluation of CVA
- to develop a mutual understanding of voice and accountability
- to identify types of interventions and criteria which can be used to select the interventions
- to select interventions for the study
- to garner support and ownership of the study.

Participants were asked to identify a range of intervention types and then criteria which should be applied in selecting a broad range of interventions. Table B1 (Annex B Methodology) indicates the types of intervention identified by the participants, categorised as supply-side, demand-side and supply-demand side interface. Table B2 (Annex B Methodology) provides most of the other criteria which the participants felt were essential in making an 'interesting' selection of the diverse range of CVA interventions in Bangladesh. It was not possible for workshop participants to rank interventions based on these criteria since there was very little common understanding of the huge

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<sup>4</sup> Including NGOs, INGOs, Advocacy Bodies and Networks, Social Movements, Trade Unions, Media (print and electronic) and Chamber of Commerce.

<sup>5</sup> The team considered the inclusion of representatives of political parties but this was not possible in the prevailing Caretaker Government situation at that time where they both would not have agreed to participating and the meeting might have been subject to censorship.

number of possible interventions to choose from. Rather, the criteria were agreed and a process of applying these through bilateral discussions with each of the ECG donors was endorsed by the workshop participants. The participants agreed that the study would be most useful in Bangladesh if it explored the diversity of interventions rather than representativeness based on numbers of intervention or size of investment. Thus, the selection was expected to include interventions with different funding models, urban and rural, those addressing special groups (women, ethnic minorities, poor etc), integrated (within larger programmes) and stand alone CVA, local and national level, a mix of government, non-government, civil society and the less frequently supported social movements, Trade unions and media. It was also recognised that the selection should include cases supported by each of the ECG donors.

Following the workshop, discussions were held with representatives of all the donors<sup>6</sup>. During these discussions the donor portfolio of CVA interventions were reviewed on the basis of the typology of interventions as well as their fulfilment of the criteria developed by the workshop participants. Each donor was asked to rank their selections for the study. Inevitably some compromises had to be made recognising the wide range of criteria developed by the workshop participants with an expectation of being met. A shortlist of possible interventions for the study was developed and circulated among the donors for their comments and final approval. Table 2.1 presents the final selected case studies.

Tables B1 and B2 provide information on how the selected case studies met the criteria developed in the Inception workshop.

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<sup>6</sup> With the exception of Belgium which does not have a development aid office in Bangladesh. However, a discussion was held with the co-ordinator of World Solidarity Movement through which Belgian assistance to Bangladesh is channelled. Discussions with Norad were conducted through e-mail rather than face to face due to their unavailability during the Inception mission.

**Table 2.1 Selected CV & A case studies**

<b>Intervention name</b>	<b>Brief description</b>
<b>Government Programmes</b>	
1. Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC)	A government programme funded by WB/SDC under which Centre Management Committees are established through community mobilisation which select service providers and manage funds for non-formal education for children who are not accessing the formal system <a href="http://www.mopme.gov.bd/About_ROSC.htm">http://www.mopme.gov.bd/About_ROSC.htm</a> <i>Age: on paper since 2004 but only just rolling out</i>
2. Rural Development Programmes of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)	LGED has integrated participatory approaches within its RDP projects for many years, including village level planning, community supervision and open contracting for local roads and market development. LGED is regarded as a leader in public engagement. RIIDP 2 (the latest RDP) is funded by GTZ and DFID (with ADB/KfW) <a href="http://www.lged.gov.bd">http://www.lged.gov.bd</a> <i>Age: RDPs since 80s with strong participatory element since 1992</i>
3. Financial Management Reform Project (FMRP)	The goal of FMRP is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the allocation of Government resources and to achieve more equitable and improved public service delivery through the development of accountable and transparent institutional management and operational arrangements for aggregate fiscal discipline, strategic prioritisation of expenditure and improved performance during budget execution. It is a 13 year intervention which has significantly improved technical capacity and is now challenged in the new phase to enhance public engagement. Website: <a href="http://www.fmrp.org">www.fmrp.org</a> <i>Age: started in 2003 but built on RIBEC (Reforms in Budgeting and Expenditure Control funded by DFID)</i>
<b>NGO Programmes</b>	
4. Mass-line Media Centre (MMC)	MMC is a local NGO established in 1995 and working for the promotion of human rights and democratic values through professionalism in media, particularly journalism. MMC was previously funded by Danida. Manusher Jonno (DFID intermediary) funds 'Ensuring Access to Information to Promote Governance for Better Livelihood' to raise awareness and create demand for information among grassroots groups. The project is being implemented through 21 information centres in 21 districts. Website: <a href="http://www.mass-line.org">http://www.mass-line.org</a> <i>Age: DFID funded project 2006-2009</i>
5. Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) acting as secretariat /co-ordinator for Education Watch	CAMPE is a national coalition of NGOs working in the field of literacy and education, committed to develop and promote quality products and innovative literacy models for its partner organizations and agencies. Education Watch Bangladesh, set up in 1998, has established an independent, research-based monitoring mechanism which conducts periodic independent review of the state of primary and basic education through research, surveys and studies and publish annually a report on aspects of basic and primary education, disseminates findings and engages in advocacy in support of Education for All. Website <a href="http://www.campebd.org">www.campebd.org</a> <i>Age: Education Watch supported since 1998</i>
6. Oxfam 'We Can'	Oxfam is an international NGO which supports the South Asia regional 'We Can' End all Violence Against Women campaign which aims to change some of the attitudes, practices and behaviours that perpetuate violence against women in Bangladesh. Oxfam's advocacy and lobbying work with its partners on violence against women in Bangladesh was successful in getting the Government of Bangladesh to pass the Acid Crimes Control Act, 2002 against acid violence <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/countries/bangladesh">www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/countries/bangladesh</a> <i>Age: launched 2004</i>

<b>Intervention name</b>	<b>Brief description</b>
7. Rupantar	Rupantar, a local NGO, implements 'An Alternative Programmatic Intervention to Develop Grassroots Women Leadership in Union Parishads' 20 Unions of 4 Upazila under Khulna and Bagerhat districts. This promotes the socio-political empowerment of women by developing leadership skills, encouraging contesting of elections and participation in local committees and Union Parishad standing committees <a href="http://www.sdc.org.bd/en/Home/Human_Institutional_Development/RUPANTAR">www.sdc.org.bd/en/Home/Human_Institutional_Development/RUPANTAR</a> (note <a href="http://www.Rupantar.org">www.Rupantar.org</a> site expired Nov 20, 2007) <i>Age: SDC has been supporting since 1998</i>
Social movements	
8. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)	TIB is a the local chapter of Transparency International based in Germany and has since the beginning been working as a catalyst of social movement against corruption. It has elaborate research and advocacy programmes for policy change and institutional reform for creating conditions for reducing corruption and promoting good governance in Bangladesh. <a href="http://www.ti-bangladesh.org">www.ti-bangladesh.org</a> <i>Age: supported since 1998</i>
9. Samata	Samata is a social movement supporting members to access their entitlements to khas (government owned land and water body) resources and services. It works primarily on the demand-side but also support local government institutions to respond. <i>Age: new phase of accelerated support from 2002</i>
Donor direct programme	
10. GTZ-brokered dialogue	GTZ directly facilitates interaction between labour organisations, workers advocacy groups, entrepreneurs and government around labour law compliance <i>Age: these dialogues mostly took place around 2004-6</i>
Trade Union	
11. Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramic Federation (BSSF)	Established in 1968, BSSF is a registered national trade union federation without political party affiliation working in both the formal and informal sector. The objectives of the project under BSSF are to i. unite the workers with a view to establishing their social, economic and political rights; ii. organize workers educational seminars and training programs/ workshops so that the level of knowledge and awareness of the workers are raised; and iii. represent the workers at various levels such as National, Regional and International levels. Capacity building of BSSF is supported by the Belgian Trade Union Movement. <a href="http://www.bssfbd.org">www.bssfbd.org</a> <i>Age: BSSF has been funded in several phases by the World Solidarity Movement. It was previously known under another name</i>

These 11 interventions are, broadly speaking, representative of the large and diverse landscape of donor interventions on CVA (see also section 3.2 and Annex C.2 for more information on the donor landscape). There are, however, some types of interventions which are over- and some which are under-represented in the chosen sample:

- Interventions supporting trade unions and social movements are over-represented in the sample. The main reason is that the country case study Bangladesh has been seen as an opportunity to analyse the results and the potential of this kind of the interventions which are often neglected by the donors.
- Interventions supporting minorities, in particular ethnic minorities, and guardian institutions (e.g. the Election Commission) are under-represented in the sample. The guardianship organisations were either not yet functional or were overstretched under the current Caretaker Government situation (Election Commission, Anti Corruption Commission). Choices had to be



made regarding voice interventions and there are many. Samata does include ethnic minorities.

## 2.4 Methods and instruments

The Methodological Guidelines suggested that the study drew on participatory approaches to engage with the cases. All of the study team use participatory approaches routinely and were able to adapt methods as the context and participant mix dictated. Table 2.2 gives a summary of the types of approach adopted:

**Table 2.2 Research methods used**

<b>Intervention name</b>	<b>Research methods</b>
1. Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC)	Focus group discussion (FGD) and visualised analysis of CVA changes with Centre Management Committees Interviews with programme staff
2. Rural Development Programmes of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)	Interviews with range of LGED staff involved in different projects which promote different models of participation FGDs with union parishads, community led supervisory committees involved in consultative processes
3. Financial Management Reform Project (FMRP)	Interviews with programme staff to establish current experience with and future intentions for citizen engagement.
4. Mass-line Media Centre (MMC)	Visit to information centre and Rural Advocacy Centre FGD with users. Ranking and scoring of the benefits FGD with senior staff around the study team field findings
5. Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Education Watch (EW)	Workshop with those involved in Education Watch (EW) Bangladesh to review significant milestones, critique impact and role of EW
6. Oxfam 'We Can'	Use of Most significant change (MSC) methodology to review change emanating from grassroots participants.
7. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)	Interview with the Executive Director FGD with members of Concerned Citizen Committees FGD with youth members of Youth Engagement and Support (YES)
8. Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramic Federation (BSSF)	Interviews with the project manager Observation of training FGD with trade union members
9. Rupantar	FGD with beneficiaries
10. Samata	FGD with movement members
11. GTZ brokered dialogue	Interviews with different stakeholders in the brokered dialogue to gauge their views on the appropriateness and effectiveness of this intervention. Interviews with senior GTZ representatives in Dhaka.

For each of the interventions, the research methods mentioned above were complemented with a study of the relevant project documentation.

The different methods focusing on written documentation as well as on exchanges with the direct beneficiaries, involved stakeholders, and partly also with observers not involved in the interventions enabled the team to complement and triangulate the findings obtained by each single source of information.

## 3 Context for CVA

### 3.1 Country context

Substantial achievements have been made in Bangladesh in recent years despite poor governance and widespread corruption<sup>7</sup>. GDP growth has averaged at around 5% for more than a decade (and is estimated to be 6.5% in 2007) and relative level of poverty has fallen by over 10% over the same period. Bangladesh has moved up the ranks of the UN's Human Development Index, and in 2004, rose from a low to a medium human development ranking. Nevertheless, its overall ranking remains relatively low – 139<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries. With one of the highest population densities in the world<sup>8</sup>, and a rapid population growth rate that is expected to reach 170 million by 2015, the actual number of poor is likely to increase.

Modest successes in achieving the MDG targets are tempered by recognition of a growing divide between the rich and poor and urban and rural populations. In recent estimates, the annual growth of incomes of the poorest is put at 0.88%, compared with 3.92% for the richest.

A review of the political history of Bangladesh is crucial to the understanding of the current political context. Annex C provides detail of the history which is generally regarded as 'tumultuous'<sup>9</sup>. Following Partition in 1947 and the War of Independence in 1971, Bangladesh has gone through periods of limited democracy, martial law and interim caretaker governments. The two major political parties, Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh National Party (BNP), are led respectively by the daughter of the first Prime Minister assassinated in 1975 and the widow of the second Prime Minister assassinated in 1981. Both parties are dominated by family members and the rivalries based on the bitter history run deep. Both parties differ very little on approach and priorities but both command support from sections who have been directly or indirectly affected by the turbulent and often violent periods of political history. The animosity between the two parties even precluded cooperation to oust the military government which governed for nine years (1982-91). The BNP has recently tried to claim credit for a role in the War of Independence as this is the most important event that has shaped nationhood. The years before and after military rule are characterised by a pattern of reprisals and standoffs. There have been eight national elections but all but three have been regarded as cosmetic or flawed. Even where elections [1991, 1996 (June) and 2001] have been regarded by international observers as "free and fair", the losing party has staged protests, *hartals* (strikes) and boycotted parliament. There has thus never been a responsible Opposition and stable conditions for the operation of parliamentary democracy enshrined in the Constitution of 1972.

#### Notable recent achievements in Bangladesh

- Poverty reduction around 1% per year since early 1990s to current level of 35-40%
- Population growth halved to 1.3%
- Child mortality halved in the 1990s
- Life expectancy increased to 61 during the 1990s
- Primary school enrolment higher than 96% and gender parity achieved in primary and secondary school
- Incidence of hunger related only to seasonal deprivations and largely confined to northwest
- Gradual emergence of a vocal and assertive civil society and participation by the poor

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 7; *Governance and Growth; The Bangladesh Conundrum* in 'Bangladesh; Strategy for Sustained Growth' World Bank, July 2007

<sup>8</sup> Population density is more than 1,000 people per sq km.

<sup>9</sup> www.virtualbangladesh.com

Nevertheless apart from 1975, when one-party rule was instigated, large numbers of political parties and independent candidates have contested elections. Various reports indicate between 40 and 80 political parties exist but only a few are regarded as effective political organisations.

The original Constitution was considered relatively enlightened and was drawn up on secular grounds. Since 1972, it has undergone 14 amendments most of which have provided for conditions to bolster the ruling party's hold on power. The Constitution provides for a (largely ceremonial) President, Prime Minister and unicameral legislature, comprising 345 members of Parliament. All except 45 nominated women members are directly elected by popular vote. Elections are due to take place every five years. All three elections which have taken place since 1991 (and, as mentioned above regarded as relatively free and fair) have resulted in the Opposition being voted in.

Legislation is dominated by the Executive. Ministries initiate laws, limit debate and do not pass Bills to Select or Standing Committees. Prime Minister's Question time was introduced in 1997 but has never been fully exploited and is undermined by the Prime Minister's authority to select questions. It has, in effect, been turned into a propaganda tool.

Despite provision for a separate Judiciary in the Constitution, this has yet to be actualised regardless of a ruling to this effect by the Supreme Court in 2001<sup>10</sup>.

Many other provisions in the Constitution have not been enacted, particularly the establishment of effective public oversight mechanisms. Despite the BNP-promoted Ombudsman Act (1980) no serious efforts were made to establish the Office. The position of Ombudsman has thus been symbolic only and has never functioned as an impartial focus for investigating citizens' complaints against public institutions. The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General has been largely ineffective. Political pressure circumscribed its role and it was unable to provide independent information. The Public Expenditure Review Commission has identified hundreds of irregularities in public expenditure and wastage of funds as well as criticised parliamentary standing committees for their inability to ensure accountability.

Parliamentary oversight committees have not been particularly effective although some progress was made between 1996 and 2001. The patron-client nature of politics and inclusion of Ministers in these committees has severely undermined their ability to demand accountability.

The Anti Corruption Commission was set up in 2004 under pressure from the international community. Initially it suffered from accusations that appointments to the Commission were made on partisan grounds. Only since the current Caretaker Government has this body been given the support required to function independently.

The bureaucracy, police and judiciary have become politicized, particularly since the return to multi-party democracy in 1991.

Local Government comprises four tiers but the only elected tier is at Union level<sup>11</sup>. Various efforts have been made by government to strengthen local government but these have mostly been related to structure and relationship rather than the more substantive issues related to devolution of power. Union Parishads (UPs) (councils) have suffered from being severely under-resourced, poorly informed and subject to political interference and corruption. They do not have a tradition of participation and

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<sup>10</sup> The Current Caretaker Government has set in motion a process to ensure this.

<sup>11</sup> There are about 4466 unions in Bangladesh serving average populations of 27,000.

the guidelines and ordinances under which they operate are complex. The National Institute for Local Government has the mandate to provide training for all UPs but is grossly under resources. Furthermore, the five year term of office means that there is constant turnover of members and an endless demand for training.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) notes that among the “*most important factors behind governance failure are the absence of openness, lack of checks and balances with regard to power and discretion and lack of institutional opportunities for raising citizen’s voice against the abuse of power, maladministration, violation of rights, negligence, nepotism and corruption*”<sup>12</sup>. Thus, non-electoral accountability has been largely limited to citizens mounting protests, rallies, *gheroas* (lock ins), human chains and exposing bad practice in the media. The route of Public Interest Litigation is rarely pursued<sup>13</sup> and is rarely effective as the State may chose to ignore court verdicts.

Bangladesh is regarded as having a vibrant and diverse NGO sector. NGOs have an exceptionally strong presence extending to 78% of all villages (ref: Hunger Project website). They have evolved from a relief orientation to service provision to promotion of rights and empowerment since Independence in 1971. NGO members and members of social movements have thus begun to access the political infrastructure through exercise of franchise, contesting local elections, participation in local bodies such as school management committees, (Health) Community Groups<sup>14</sup>, water users groups and *shalishes* (local courts), as well as participating in (generally) project-brokered consultations. There have been concerns about the politicisation of NGOs and there were major rifts among NGOs in the recent past which led to the fracture and reconfiguring of key umbrella organisations.

The media is extensive<sup>15</sup> and is relatively free. The Constitution guarantees its freedom except in matters of state security, defamation and incitement. Government has absolute power in the issuance of licences but it is felt that the ownership of the media has more influence than government *per se* on the content and coverage of its publications. Although others argue that daily newspapers depend on government-sponsored advertising.

Bangladesh has a strong tradition of trade unionism but almost all are highly politicised.

Participation through exercise of franchise has resulted in limited accountability largely because of the patron-client relationships that prevail. As mentioned above, election results have usually been contested and followed by protests and non-cooperation by the ousted Government. Bangladesh has a history of very low rates of tax collection (and a culture of tax evasion) and so hitherto there has been little demand for accountability of tax investment. The main route for public voice has traditionally been protest marches, rallies, *gheroas*, *hartals* and these approaches have been used by NGOs, social movements and trade unions.

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<sup>12</sup> *Ombudsman for good Governance in Bangladesh, Why now and How?* Iftekharuzzaman, Transparency International 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Some exceptions being those pursued by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and Ain-o-Shalish Kendra (ASK).

<sup>14</sup> Community Groups were established under the Health SWAP (Health and Population Support Programme HPSP) starting in 1998, comprising local government representatives, local service providers and local residents.

<sup>15</sup> 15 TV stations, 26 radio stations, 40 daily newspapers (5 in English). See [www.pressreference.com](http://www.pressreference.com)

Throughout the 1990s and beyond significant efforts have been made to promote participatory practices in development activities. These efforts have been facilitated by NGOs and some Government departments, notably Local Government Engineering Department, Department for Agricultural Extension and Department for Social Welfare. The adoption of participatory consultative planning approaches has been particularly widespread and has become an accepted norm over the last decade. However, access to land, education, position and status are strongly linked to ability and willingness to exercise active citizenry and participate. Local informal power structures based on family and Islamic networks and associations capture resources and influence local decision making. They have successfully infiltrated spaces for participation created by NGO and government projects. People living in poverty as well as other marginalized groups (ethnic minorities, some occupational groups) feel that they are “lesser citizens” and acquiesce to acceptance of this inequality [referred to by Kabeer (2002)<sup>16</sup> as “absence of question”]. A whole range of institutions and systems which are supposed to be accessible by all are in fact hijacked by the elite, with the prevailing power structures firmly entrenched by social norms. Poverty and risk aversion further limit the participation of those living in poverty or otherwise excluded<sup>17</sup>. Special efforts have to be made to include the traditionally marginalised women, ethnic and religious minorities, and persons with disabilities in participatory processes.

Women in particular face social, economic and institutional barriers to decision making; this includes dependency on male patronage, vote hijacking, voter harassment, poor political education, subordination in elected bodies, and unsatisfactory quota arrangements at local (elected) and central government (nominated) levels.

Concomitant with increasing opportunities to participate afforded to people living in poverty, the middle class in Bangladesh has expanded phenomenally since the 1990s and become more vocal. The recent efforts to reform tax collection has led to a 41.6% growth in tax collection over the period July-December 2007<sup>18</sup> and a greater interest in demanding accountability for “tax investment”.

Although business interests and politics have a strong nexus and concerns abound regarding the high number of politicians who are businessmen (60% of the last administration), there is evidence of a more independent voice emerging from the buoyant ready-made garment, shrimp and other export-oriented industries and from returnees who have set up new businesses in recent years, and which is organised through independent associations.

The last ten years has seen a mushrooming of advocacy and citizen groups in Bangladesh, but there is serious concern that they tend to be urban-centric and that secular organisations have been favoured, thus crowding out indigenous forms of associational life. Furthermore there is a tendency for many to equate civil society to non-governmental organizations, which are inevitably intermediaries. By overlooking the significance of other organizations such as community groups, trade unions, business and trade associations, faith groups, independent media, recreational and

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<sup>16</sup> Kabeer, N. (2002). “Citizenship, affiliation and exclusion; perspectives from the South”, *IDS Bulletin* 33 (2).

<sup>17</sup> Mahmud (2004) further lists poverty, power inequalities, fear of exclusion through dissent, low self esteem, invisibility and dominance of party politics as constraints to active citizenship and participation by people living in poverty. Mahmud, S (2004). “Citizen Participation in the Health sector in Rural Bangladesh, Perceptions and Reality”, *IDS Bulletin* 35 (2) New Democratic Spaces.

<sup>18</sup> ADB Quarterly, Dec 2007.

cultural groups, there is a risk of reducing the possibility of enhancing healthy pluralism.

### **Recent developments**

The range of interviewees met during the Inception Phase, (October, 2007) concur on the view that Bangladesh is currently experiencing “*uncertain times*”. It is presently governed by a transition Caretaker Government which intends to stand down for national elections to take place by December 2008. This arrangement commenced in January 2007 as a response to months of violent protests by opposition parties over the electoral system and, in particular, the national elections which were to have been held in late 2006.

The Caretaker Government initially enjoyed popular support as it vowed to “*clean up*” politics, in particular, taking tough action against insidious corruption. However, the imposition of a state of emergency which included banning all kinds of political activities, protests and rallies as well as curtailment of freedom of speech was increasingly criticised amidst allegations of abuse of power. These criticisms came to a head in August, 2007 with a series of violent student protests. On September 10th, 2007 the Caretaker Government lifted the ban on indoor political meetings to pave the way for crucial negotiations between the Election Commission and the political parties on electoral reforms, planned over the following two months. As a consequence of the state of emergency all meetings regardless of the purpose or the convenor (NGO, Trade Union, CSO or Government Department) required police authorization, which included prior approval of all participants as well as the agenda. The impact of this continues to be felt and even government-led consultation processes have been curtailed<sup>19</sup>.

The Caretaker Government is determined to stem corruption before the elections. Over 200,000 people have been arrested including 160 high-profile political leaders and the leaders of the two main parties, both former Prime Ministers who ruled the country for 16 years until October, 2006.

There is much speculation regarding the future. It is feared that despite the efforts to prepare for elections at the end of 2008 including the preparation of a new voters list and ID cards and instigation of new qualifying regulations for candidates, the two main parties will boycott the election. The two year transition period is regarded as too short for the establishment of and mobilization of support for alternative political parties. Other scenarios suggest the possibility of an institutionalised and expanded version of the current Caretaker Government arrangement of advisors or further infiltration by the military.

In principle, the Caretaker Government claims to support not only enhancing accountability (where the main opportunities appear to currently lie) but also voice. It has publicly endorsed the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) which remains the key document for alignment of development aid. Under the title “*Unlocking the Potential; National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction, 2005-7*”, the document spells out a commitment to poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals. Along with growth and human development, governance is one of the three key elements of the policy triangle used in the PRS to determine priorities. The consultations leading up to development of the PRS gave high priority to improving governance and suggested a concentration on the local governance agenda, which is described in the PRS as “*central to the critical issues of decentralized service-delivery, grass-root accountability and the newer focus on regeneration of local*

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<sup>19</sup> e.g. Local Government Engineering Department has suspended its customary village consultation process on small infrastructure priorities and feels that its credibility as participatory agency is being undermined.

economies through relevant partnerships amongst local government bodies, CBOs, NGOs, private sector and central government agencies” (1.13). Local governance is thus one of the eight strategic agenda (1.15). Promoting “good governance by ensuring transparency, accountability and rule of law” is also one of the four supporting strategies. The PRS identifies the “needs” of the poor regarding governance as: *i) better service-delivery particularly in the areas of health and education, ii) reduction of leakage in targeted programmes, iii) access to justice, iv) regulatory support to the informal and un-organised sectors of the economy where a majority of the poor pursue their livelihoods, and, v) reduction of income erosion threats to the poor due to various forms of insecurity and improper application of power* (4.29). It highlights a need for reformulating the decentralisation agenda to one of promoting local governance as a “*political and institutional process which can contribute to the required scaling up of the rate of poverty reduction through more effective resource mobilization and enhanced development choices available at local level and better inclusion of all social groups in these choices*” (5.441).

### **3.2 Donor landscape regarding CVA interventions**

Members of the evaluation team met with representatives from all the DAC partners involved in the Joint Evaluation except Norway. Belgian interests are channelled through World Solidarity Movement (Trade Union) and an interview was held with a representative of the Bangladesh Chapter. The current CVA interventions of the DAC partners are presented in C.5 (Annex C).

Interviews were also held with UNDP and EU representatives. Other information on CVA interventions was gathered through an internet search. The current CVA interventions of other development partners are presented in Table C.8 (Annex C).

It should be noted that some CVA initiatives are embedded in projects and programmes and are not easy to uncover. For example, the Education SWAp has provision to support School Management Committees and School Level Improvement Programme (SLIP) Committees which are intended to create conditions for greater community voice and enhanced accountability.

**Table 3.1 Top ten donors to Bangladesh**

<b>DONOR (highlighted those involved in this study)</b>	<b>Gross ODA (2005-6 average US \$)</b>
IDA	478
ADB	266
Japan	199
<b>UK</b>	<b>193</b>
IMF	124
EC	90
USA	81
Netherlands	64
Canada	54
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>48</b>

Source: OECD ([www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org))

The concept of citizens' voice and accountability is not widely used as such, most donors refer to related concepts as good governance and empowerment. All the donors and lending organisations in Bangladesh currently have ‘*governance*’ as a strategic focus. The Development Banks have been able to establish large programmes of public sector reform under this agenda. The size of their programmes inevitably confers more clout in bringing about institutional change (see

below in this section, their influence on local government reform through infrastructure investment). UNDP and USAID are the most proactive in supporting democratisation explicitly and their portfolios demonstrate a range of small interventions such as supporting round table debates and broadcasts. UNDP has the most diverse portfolio in terms of CVA and has more programmes trying to address accountability than any other development partner but its funds are relatively small and impact is more at a pilot/demonstration level.

C.5 and Table C.8 clearly reveal a skewing of support to voice rather than accountability. This is particularly so for the DAC partners supporting this study (C.5), which, with the exception of DFID, have relatively small programmes. Where accountability is supported it is at local rather than central Government level. The context summarised in section 3.1 and in more detail in Annex C indicates that until the advent of the Caretaker Government, there was less scope for donors to work with accountability than with voice. The political climate of boycott and standoffs between the successive ruling parties and their oppositions meant that there was little exercise of parliamentary democracy. The patron-client culture of electoral representation and its concomitant corruption and resource capture led to a resistance and delay by ruling parties to open up to public scrutiny. Several donors told us that they had detailed in their Country Strategy Papers or the analyses prepared for these, intentions to support parliamentary standing committees, public oversight institutions and processes and capacity building of political parties but that these had not materialised due to lack of opportunities and lack of interest from the Government. As a result, donors have concentrated their efforts on the supply-side in enhancing effectiveness of service delivery (particularly for the poor) as evidenced by massive portfolios (too extensive to list in Annex C, Tables C 1-2)

Since the 1990s, there has been a growing emphasis on local government and donors tentatively began support to capacity building of Union Parishads (UPs). Initially, the main experiments were channelled through infrastructure programmes (roads, markets, water schemes) which required local level prioritisation, supervision of construction and maintenance. The desire to secure the longevity of costly investment drove the International Development Banks to promote participation and seek ways to ensure local authorities would be able to manage operation and maintenance costs. Thus, huge efforts were put into facilitating UPs consultation with their constituents and building UP capacity to collect local revenue. Ten years on from these pilots and as NGOs moved orientation from service delivery to a fairly universal adoption of participatory approaches and many went further to facilitation of rights based approaches, opportunities emerged to support the demand-side of local government. Most of these interventions date from the end of the 90s and beginning of the 00s.

A look at the DFID CVA portfolio is typical. On the voice side, it contains a number of interventions supporting the rights based approach of the very poor or otherwise marginalised persons. It also has a number of initiatives with well respected independent research organisations and advocacy networks. On the accountability side it has a '*proposal in waiting*' to work with parliamentary standing committees and a long standing Financial Management Reform Programme. Discussion with a consultant and DFID staff working with this, however, indicated that there has been little emphasis on the accountability aspects of this programme as '*so much basic work needed to be done and there was simply no political will or leadership will to promote this*'.



## 4 Findings

The findings from the Bangladesh Country Case Study are presented under headings related to the five components provided in the Evaluation Framework. Under each heading we provide an introduction drawn from the Evaluation Framework paper<sup>20</sup> which explains the significance of each component.

### 4.1 Opportunities, constraints and entry points for CVA

In this section we address two main and interlinked dimensions:

- the key factors – in the shape of initial conditions, opportunities and constraints - that determine the type and extent of CVA exercised in Bangladesh. These factors are derived from our earlier analysis of the social, political, legal and economic context for CVA (see also Annex C)
- the main entry points for donors' interventions in CVA. These are based on an analysis of donors' overall strategies for CVA interventions in the country and their relevance in relation to the CVA context.

The analysis of these key factors and entry points is critical in defining the **scope for change** that is envisaged by CVA interventions. It is important to analyse donors' strategies in order to reveal the assumptions about change (or models of change) that underpin them by asking: *how do donors think change will happen as a result of their CVA interventions/strategies, and how will they know when it has happened?*

The CVA evaluation considered the following questions:

- How do donor interventions take the social, economic and political context into account in the design and implementation of CVA interventions? To what extent are the entry points, opportunities and constraints for CVA interventions grounded in the analysis of the context and are relevant in the specific country context?
- How explicit/clear are donors' overall strategies for CVA at the country level? How far are these articulated in the interventions' aims and objectives?
- Are there areas of the social, economic and political context that donors are not currently engaged with which could be important for strengthening CVA?

Political context has had a major influence on CVA interventions. Until 1991 and the restoration of multi-party democracy, there was only limited scope for intervention in local or central level government. Even since, the centralised nature of government and the unwillingness of ruling parties to embrace democratic practice and expose themselves to public scrutiny has meant that there have been few opportunities to work on supply-side government accountability. As successive governments showed little inclination to operationalise public oversight mechanisms, donors were constrained to confine development assistance to government to enhancing efficiencies in service delivery rather than accountability measures.

Most of the interventions made by donors have been strongly circumscribed by the political context and have responded to social context. There were more responsive entry points in terms of voice than accountability during the 90s when most of the early CVA interventions were initiated. By this time, many NGOs were beginning to adopt "rights based approaches" to development and moving away from direct

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<sup>20</sup> Foresti et al, 2007. "Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework", London, ODI, August.

service delivery to facilitation modes of operation. Similarly some government departments were embracing participatory approaches. It is not clear to what extent these moves by both NGOs and government departments were internally driven or were in response to changing demands and agendas of donors. But the upshot was a surge in opportunities to finance local level participatory processes, particularly related to planning. LGED and CARE led the way in terms of building capacity of UPs to adopt participatory planning approaches regarding road and market construction and maintenance. Through their projects and complementary projects (notably the UNCDF-funded Sirajganj local government project) revenue collection by UPs was encouraged and the possibility of the UP having to maintain some level of accountability to the taxpayer and their constituents was promoted. These pilots gained the attention of NGOs and donors and opportunities for strengthening the interface between UPs and their constituents opened up. Most donors seem to have at least one intervention now which relates to UP capacity building or UP/public engagement (see Tables C7 and C8).

The obstacles to participation by women have been recognised in Bangladesh for decades and many of the women's movements and networks have long histories. Support for these has been in the portfolio of donors since the 70s. As political developments occurred, notably the provision for direct election of women to the UP in 1998, donors have responded by supporting coalitions for women elected members, provision of training to women UPs and women voter education.

The marginalisation of ethnic minorities has emerged as an important issue in the public domain in the last ten years. Concomitantly, numerous minority-led rights groups, NGOs and movements have been established and have provided donors an opportunity, hitherto limited, for supporting their voice activities.

Donors have responded to the opportunities afforded by the gradual empowerment of local government and have concentrated efforts to build capacity of UPs through various means. This same opportunity has been supported by building NGO and social movements to facilitate the voicing of citizen demands and participation of citizens in development activities. The relative freedom of the press and the proliferation of print and electronic media in the last few years have also presented opportunities for donor support. Grassroots journalism has been particularly successful in exposing malpractice and motivating service orientation amongst local public servants.

Recently several independent research organisations and think tanks have been established. These too have been successful in attracting donor interest as they present an opportunity to provide independent research data and analysis.

The current Caretaker Government situation changes the context for CVA interventions dramatically and donors are demonstrating mixed abilities (and agility) at supporting interventions which respond to these emerging opportunities:

- The suspension of parliament and de-emphasis on partisan politics which has in the past pervaded all aspects of life and livelihoods is regarded by many grassroots citizens as a positive step which empowers them to make demands of and lodge complaints with local service providers: "*we would not have dared to before for fear of politically motivated reprisal*" (comments made in field October 2007). Donors might therefore find it appropriate to continue to fund social movements and other informal constellations of citizens.
- Consultations with citizens (Sida Reality Check 2007) indicates that there is a strong feeling that the Caretaker Government is "pro-poor" as evidenced by timely resource distribution (e.g. benefits for the poor, school resources, resumption of free medicine provision in hospitals etc) and a crack down on

corrupt practices (e.g. broker arrangements (speed money) in health facilities, absenteeism among government officials etc.). Donors might support these initiatives in addition to the voice support they are already giving to watchdog groups.

- The absence of political interference in the allocation of resources has led to a perceived fairer distribution. Processes such as the award of contracts at local and national level are regarded as more transparent and fair. Donors might support government initiatives to ensure the procurement procedures are transparent and open to public scrutiny
- The Caretaker Government is emphasizing the establishment and/or operationalisation of guardianship institutions which support horizontal accountability [e.g. an Anti Corruption Commission (ACC), separation of the judiciary<sup>21</sup>, Electoral Commission (EC)], which are enshrined in the Constitution but were not enacted. Donors have been quick to engage with these opportunities and have pledged considerable support to the capacitation of the ACC, EC and Supreme Court.

There are, however, concerns related to the Caretaker Government:

- The media, which in recent years has become more independent and neutral, has been encouraged to provide extensive coverage of the drive to bring corrupt officials to justice but there is evidence of interference and directives not to publish anti-government material. Private TV companies have been directed to suspend all their programming of current events and political debate. Some existing donor interventions supporting the media are at risk.
- Civil society meetings, workshops and other forms of association have been subject to police approval and censorship. Many of the existing voice interventions have been at least temporarily suspended or contained.
- There are allegations of serious incidents of human rights abuses by the security forces. Perhaps this challenge is also an opportunity for donor intervention?
- The Caretaker Government is seen as promoting strongly secular interests to the exclusion of Islamist ones.

In sum, the entry points and donor response has been skewed in favour of voice interventions in the recent past but the window of opportunity for support to institutionalisation of instruments of accountability has been opened, somewhat ironically, by the advent of a relatively long term, non-elected Caretaker Government (2 years) rather than political government which in the context of Bangladeshi politics has never supported public oversight.

## **4.2 Capacities of state and non-state actors**

In this section we address the capacities – comprising resources, skills and knowledge - required for the exercise of CVA. Capacity building constitutes one of the most common entry points for donor interventions. Broadly, capacity can be conceived of as having two constitutive elements: (i) competencies of individuals (their skills, abilities and behaviour) and (ii) capabilities of organisations (functional, technical, thematic, political and creative). Capacities take different forms, including

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<sup>21</sup> Historically achieved on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

financial and technical capacity, but also political capacity, which relates to issues of political will, leadership and negotiating skills which are often key to effective CVA.

The CVA evaluation considered the following questions:

- How relevant is donors' support for capacity development vis a vis the needs of different actors of CVA?
- How effective is donor support for capacity building and training initiatives of state and non-state agents involved in CVA interventions? What are the expected, unexpected, positive and negative results (outputs or outcomes) of these initiatives?
- How effective is donor support for advocacy and coalition building initiatives? What are the results (outputs or outcomes) of these initiatives? Are some individuals/groups more difficult to reach?
- How sustainable is donors' support to capacity development of CSOs?
- What factors militate against increased capacity being translated into action?

Below we consider whether donor interventions have effectively addressed the needs of state and non-state actors.

### **Capacity needs of state actors**

The challenge for donors seeking to build capacity on the “supply side” of the CVA equation is that capacity requirements are both technical and political (see Box 4.1). Without this recognition, narrowly technical donor interventions will struggle or fail to make an impact.

Donors in Bangladesh on the whole recognise and respond to this challenge of reconciling the political and technical.

At the sub-national level they combine technical support for regional and local administrations with political support through creating “political spaces” for interaction with civil society. At the national level, due to the context described in section 4.1 above, donors have provided more narrow technical support, and in a limited number of cases.

#### **Box 4.1. State actor CVA capacity needs**

State actors, at both the local and national level, are largely responsible for formulating CVA policy and implementing programmes. Their skills requirements include not only technical management and financial competencies, but also the capacity to manage *reform processes* (e.g. decentralisation, including devolvement of decision-making responsibilities as well as technical functions), to improve *transparency* and the policy dialogue with civil society (including managing greater participation of civil society in decision-making processes). These forms of capacity needs are primarily of political rather than technical nature and often require leadership, vision and the capacity to think strategically.

*Source:* Foresti et al, 2007. “Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework”, London, ODI, August

Donor CVA activity in Bangladesh aimed at building the capacity of state actors is less conspicuous than interventions supporting non-state actors (see discussion below). What activity there is tends to be focussed on the level of sub-national government. In part this is because of the restrictions on national-level democratic process prevalent at the time of the interventions. But it is also because the donor model of change in Bangladesh sees accountability mechanisms impacting on

citizens most strongly at the daily interface between state and citizen; i.e. in the *implementation* of budgets and policies.

Donor support to state actors focuses on the administrative technical capacity to implement policy and their transparency and accountability to citizens in this role. Direct support to state actors is illustrated by nation-wide intervention to build capacity (and encourage accountability) of Union Parishads (UPs) under the new UNDP/World Bank-funded Local Government Support Programme and encouraging them to become more responsive to and accountable to their elected constituencies.

The case study intervention in this evaluation highlighted donor capacity building support to UPs via technical interventions in Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) rural development projects (RDPs) (see Box 4.2). These project interventions have *bundled up* support for governance capacity with support to infrastructure investments.

LGED's RDP capacity building has been largely implemented through sub-contracting third party NGO training units, which brings its own set of challenges. Criticism abounds that where Government contracts NGOs, corruption is prevalent (e.g. bribes to secure contracts, nepotism favouring family backed NGOs).

In addition to formally contracted support to state actors, some NGOs provide *more informal means* of capacity building support. Samata, for example, directly engages in UP capacity building and mentoring but although it has provided formal training on roles and responsibilities to UP Chairpersons and members, it is most effective in mentoring UPs on a more informal basis and with limited resources. By providing on-going on the spot mentoring through its own resources Samata retains independence from Government and credibility with its members. We pick up on this issue of NGO-Government relations in capacity building in Section 5 below.

**Box 4.2. Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) Rural Development Projects: Direct donor capacity building for state actors**

DFID and GTZ have been providing continuing support to Union Parishads (UPs) through the LGED under a series of Rural Development Projects (RDPs). From the early 90s, these projects have introduced the notion of participatory selection of roads and small schemes for improvement which involved engaging in public consultation. The projects have supplied equipment, financial and technical support for monthly meetings, secretarial support for UPs and grant/seed money for revolving funds. UP members have been trained on their roles and responsibilities and supported to develop development plans and budgets. They have received gender and environment orientation.

*Source:* Authors' analysis

Donor capacity building support to state actors extends to *creating or expanding political spaces*, which give government officials the enabling environment to expand beyond a technocratic role and be more open and transparent in their political actions. Donors have also been innovative in working to support citizens, particularly women, to get elected to local office so that the *capacity building starts on the non-state side and continues through to the state side*. Recent national and local elections have seen an increase in women exercising their franchise and since 1997 there have been provisions for three reserved seats on the Union Parishad for women (each representing three wards). Women's political empowerment is still constrained by their limited political awareness, limited access to public platforms, their inexperience in political process.

Hence through donor interventions in Bangladesh (see Box 4.3 on donor support to Rupantar), poor and marginalised citizens, including women, are now more visible and active in government administrations, justice mechanisms and so on. Given this type of external support it has been shown that not only can women become more active members of UP but will be invited to participate in other forums and have successfully contested general UP seats (competing against men).

**Box 4.3. From non-state to state actors: Rupantar's capacity building work towards political inclusion**

The SDC-funded NGO Rupantar works specifically with women candidates for and elected women members of the UP. The establishment of networks of women at ward level through to Upazila (sub district) level ensures visibility and mutual support which builds confidence for women to exercise voice and builds a constituency of support for women elected to UP office. Rupantar also works to include the traditionally marginalised fishing communities in the political, economic and social mainstream.

It has taken 10 years to develop a norm of women's participation and establish credible women's organisations at local level. Women have competed against men in the UP elections and won seats. Women are invited to participate in Standing Committee decisions, local shalish (dispute resolution/arbitration processes) and other village level committees. There is evidence that duty bearers are performing more satisfactorily e.g. sub assistant agricultural officers meeting farmers more regularly, teachers attending schools on time, health staff more regularly attending their duty stations – and this is attributed to the women's groups.

*Source: Authors' analysis*

On the whole donors have shied away from tackling capacity needs at the national level. The notable exception here is the continuing capacity building support being provided by DFID to the Ministry of Finance under the Financial Management Reform Programme (FMRP). In the area of intervening to influence centre-of-government processes, DFID amongst the donors involved in this study has done most to work to build and sustain transparency and accountability.

The focus of DFID efforts to date in the FMRP has been on technical interventions to strengthen systems and procedures. The important premise here is that improved financial management systems can increase efficiency, transparency and predictability and by extension enhance accountability. These technical interventions have been carefully allied to support for "internal" accountability mechanisms which, when political power is restored, will be driven by parliamentary oversight. There is noticeably and deliberately less focus on external citizen national budget oversight in this process.

This focus on internal accountability mechanism is a significant point for CVA models that reify the role of the citizen. CVA models can seem simplistic and naïve in a highly charged political economy context where gains are small, long-term and incremental. There is no simple institutional tweaking fix for political and cultural embedded norms. While "internal" accountability has voice and accountability mechanisms inbuilt which can be tackled, these are highly politicised. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) faces a backlog of accounts in part because no one wants to examine recent audits which can be used to accuse party members of poor performance. As a result accounts can be delayed for 5-6 years at which point they are irrelevant.

Because of these challenging circumstances, the (limited amount of) oversight activity in the FMRP has actually been on downstream public expenditure tracking/social auditing activities, for instance of child protection services. These are seen as "sexy quick wins" by the donors and can be funded as a discrete exercise in

contrast to the demands of funding long, slow and intractable institutional change within government. Yet from a CVA perspective it is important for donors to keep their eye on the bigger budgetary prize of improving the flow of budget out of the Ministry of Finance rather than in settling for downstream accountability.

**Box 4.4. Building capacity in the centre of government: The Financial Management Reform Programme**

Working in the 1990s through the Reforms in Budget and Expenditure Control (RIBEC, 1993-2001) family of projects, and subsequently through the Financial Management Reform Project (FMRP), DFID has sought to “develop accountable and transparent institutional management and operational arrangements for aggregate fiscal discipline, strategic prioritisation of expenditure and improved performance during budget execution”.

The main CVA activities in the FMRP are aimed at strengthening internal accountability through support to Auditor General and Parliamentary Committees through the following project components:

- Component 1: to provide improved audit reports and well-researched reports on other financial management issues for parliamentary scrutiny of public accounts
- Component 5: to build the capacity of the Financial Management Academy as a sustainable centre of excellence for financial management training in government.

*Source: Authors' analysis*

**Capacity needs of non-state actors**

Notwithstanding the discussion above, non-state actors are key to the creation and exercise of voice, but also to ensuring that voice leads to greater responsiveness and accountability of both state and state actors. Civil society organisations, the media, trade unions and other non-traditional non-state actors such as political parties and professional associations are all involved in the creation of voice and its channelling to wider audiences.

In order to fulfil these roles non-state actors require a range of specific capacities including advocacy and engagement, knowledge/awareness of rights and the capacity to participate in political processes (see Box 4.5).

**Box 4.5. Non-state actor CVA capacity needs**

- *Advocacy and engagement.* This can depend on factors such as: (i) communication, networking and policy influencing skills; (ii) capacity to engage with community or informal organisations that represent the interests of poor or marginalised groups; (iii) the openness and capacity of public officials/institutions to engage, and on which issues; and (iv) the existence of formal or informal mechanisms for engagement.
- *Knowledge/awareness of regulations, rights and entitlements:* Awareness of formal rights and entitlements is a precondition for exercising them but this knowledge may be restricted to certain groups or awareness of particular type of entitlements may be more widespread than others. Citizens also need to be aware of what channels and mechanisms are available through which they can express their voice or demands.
- *Capacity to participate in political processes:* Individuals or organisations may be aware of their rights and entitlements and have sufficient resources and skills but lack the necessary political capacity or power to act upon these. This may be because the political environment is not conducive to the expression of CVA (e.g. it is repressive or horizontal accountability institutions are weak) or because formal rights/rules are in tension with dominant social-cultural norms (e.g. those based on relations of hierarchy/exclusion).

Source: Foresti et al, 2007. "Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework", London, ODI, August

Strategies for advocacy and engagement are a key element of civil society activity in Bangladesh and are an important area for donor capacity building interventions.

This type of capacity building takes two forms: (i) direct capacity building of civil society; and (ii) funding to third party NGOs who have a capacity building mandate. There is a stronger donor emphasis on the second form of intervention because of the tradition of social mobilization in Bangladesh, with many NGOs engaged in strategies of social mobilization with targeted population groups.

Social mobilization implies a process of bridging awareness – raising to organisation and agency. It is generally facilitated by outside agents (by 'mobilisers', 'animators' or 'field organisers'). Rupantar, "We Can" and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) are active in this field, building networks of citizens and local organisations. They achieve this by building local awareness of largely externally generated agendas and providing forums for mutual support and combined action around these at different tiers of the power structure. They are organisations that often combine local level advocacy and watchdog functions.

Building knowledge and awareness of regulations, rights and entitlements often goes hand in hand with non-state actor capacity building in Bangladesh. Through a strategy of funding NGOs with a capacity building mandate, donors have helped to create the precondition for effective advocacy by civil society actors.



### 4.3 CVA channels: Actors and mechanisms

Channels for CVA are defined by a combination of *actors and mechanisms* (see Box 4.6) through which:

- individuals express their voice or demands and are able to hold the state to account
- states are responsive to citizens' voice and, ultimately, accountable to the public.

All CVA channels are defined by the function they perform and include formal and informal organisations, modes of expression and public fora, legal mechanisms such as courts as well as informal processes for expressing complaints and seeking redress. These channels can be situated within either the state or society.

#### **Box 4.6. Actors and mechanisms**

*Actors* include all the different agents, individuals, organisations, collectives, movements, institutions, informal groups which can play an active role in support of CVA, whether from within or outside the state sector.

*Mechanisms* refer to the concrete rules, processes and procedures (the "rules of the game") – both formal and informal - which allow (i) citizens to ensure that their voices are not just heard but "recorded" and acted upon and (ii) states to exercise their accountability to citizens.

Source: Foresti et al, 2007. "Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework", London, ODI, August

The CVA evaluation considered the following questions:

- How effective are donors at engaging/supporting different channels for citizens' voice? What is the balance between working to support different actors and to support concrete accountability mechanisms?
- What is the balance between state and non-state actors supported by donors and at what level (national/local)?
- What kind of non-state actors are supported by donors and how? How do donors decide which organisations to engage/support in their CVA interventions? In particular, what kind of CSOs are supported (or not) by donors?
- How effective are donors at engaging with 'non-traditional' channels, including those situated within political society (such as political parties or parliaments), organised interests groups (such as professional organisations) and community or faith-based groups? What factors facilitate or constrain engagement with these groups?
- To what extent are there synergies between the channels for voice and the mechanisms for accountability? What are the factors that improve such synergy? Are there tensions between efforts to support voice and those aiming to strengthen accountability?
- How effective are donors at engaging with informal channels, including those that may sit outside formal structures (such as traditional authorities) or those that are ad hoc (such as social movements and innovative spaces)?
- How do donors ensure that they are engaging with different groups (rural, women, children, minorities, refugees and the extremely poor), as well as reaching marginalised or excluded individuals within these groups?

Donors in Bangladesh have identified different types of actors and mechanisms to enhance CVA. These range from the daily interaction of villagers and local government officials over entitlements and services to high profile spotlights directed at government policy by professional advocacy groups.

The focus of donor interventions to support NGOs such as Rupantar and Samata place a lot of emphasis on supporting local people exercising voice in their daily interaction with government service providers. These actors rely on traditional mechanisms of local government structure, where rights and responsibilities are relatively clearly delineated. In these instances the interventions build the level of consciousness and self-confidence amongst ordinary citizens, including particularly women, to talk to officials that they would previously seen as distant and out of reach.

The team is concerned however about the level of duplication of this kind of voice intervention. Many NGOs which had previously worked in a service delivery mode (particularly micro-finance) are finding that they need to support rights based approaches in order the 'chase further funds'. This has resulted in a proliferation of organisations claiming legitimately or otherwise to support 'voice'. Not only does this create problems of attribution when many work in the same area but results in duplication in tangible outputs such as conferences, marches, rallies, essay writing competitions, IEC materials<sup>22</sup>. This does not only result from different organisations operating in the same geographical or thematic areas but can happen within an organisation too. As SDC commented to us an organisation implementing one of their projects is '*involved in plenty of different projects funded by many donors without any co-ordination effort. .... we are discovering only step by step*'. Senior staff of another case indicated that their projects funded by different donors had many overlaps and they were spending money on the same thing in each. NGOs employed by different LGED RDP projects (funded by different donors) to support voice interventions have produced their own guidelines, own IEC with very limited cross sharing.

A similar approach to the exercise of voice in daily interaction with public service provision, illustrated in the case of the Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC) project (see Box 4.9), is to build in *new forms* of accountability mechanisms into the institutional design of a project. The Community Management Committees convened under the ROSC programme are endowed with oversight of the programme to encourage out-of-school children back to school. They are given autonomy to select and monitor the performance of the education provider and funds to manage the facilities and resources required. LGED promotes the formation of supervisory committees involving members of the community to supervise construction contracts.

Donors are also conscious of the value of support existing or new mechanisms by creating *physical and social space for interaction*. In the case of the LGED RDPs, for example, UP Complexes are being built to provide '*one stop service centres*' for citizens and promotes Citizen Forum meetings. These provide physical space for the UP as well as all local level operations of other departments such as health, agriculture, livestock and fisheries. Interestingly, the Mass-Line Media Centre (MMC), another case study project, has successfully negotiated space in some of these UP complexes to establish the Information Centres and facilitate "Meet the People" sessions. Samata promotes similar types of open meetings between UPs and constituents, while Rupantar supports a range of meetings at different levels. GTZ promotes Round Table dialogue at national level.

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<sup>22</sup> There is a particular problem with IEC materials. Often they seem to be produced as marketing for the organisation rather than good quality user-oriented materials. Posters, videos are often not well aimed at the audience they are intended and there is much duplication.

All of the above cumulatively suggest a healthy pursuit of expanding or creating mechanisms for CVA for a wide range of stakeholders. Our only caveat here is the weak evidence of the institutionalisation and therefore sustainability of these mechanisms beyond the life of the lead taken by external project staff.

Donors are also concerned to make sure that professional groups of citizens are supported in CVA activities through existing or new mechanisms. The comparative advantage of working with these actors is their influence with government stakeholders and their ability to move between the national and the local. A notable example from the case study interventions evaluated is TIB's Concerned Citizens' Forums which use commissioned studies and report instruments to monitor local health and education services while also pursuing monitoring and advocacy activities at the national level (see Box 4.7).

Both TIB and "We Can" draw on their international links and experience to support social mobilisation. On one hand this association can bring credibility, clout and international interest and scrutiny but on the other hand can be threatening. The activities and profile of TIB, for instance, typically invites very mixed reactions. TIB does not have any of its own grassroots projects in any country other than Bangladesh and we wonder, in the context of country blessed with a plethora of NGOs and CSOs, whether it should be involved in social mobilisation itself at all. On the other hand it was clear during a fieldwork visit to speak with the youth volunteers of the TIB YES campaign, that these young people felt validated by their association with TIB.

**Box 4.7. Evidence-backed advocacy: Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) "Making Waves"**

TIB is funded by a group of donors (including DFID, Sida and Norad) in its Making Waves campaign. The goal of the campaign goes the heart of the CVA objective: *"Increased demand by men and women for transparency and accountability in public, non-profit and private sector transactions"*.

At the local level, the campaign establishes Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCC) as anti-corruption watchdogs. The CCCs have introduced report cards as a research instrument for assessing the quality and accessibility of local services. TIB has also established advice and information desks at CCC and satellite offices. TIB's local campaign also includes a voluntary initiative with groups of young people. These are called the YES (Youth Engagement and Support) groups, which aim to reach young people and schoolchildren through theatre and outreach work. The YES volunteers are largely drawn from a pool of middle class university students and are highly committed to breaking what they see as a culture of corruption. This sense of responsibility derives from their self-perception as leaders and professionals of the future.

At the national level, TIB also conducts research and advocacy at the macro level, maintaining a corruption database, publishing analytical studies on specific service providers, providing recommendations for various guardianship organisations (the Public Service Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission and Election Commission) and conducting a national household survey of corruption experience. TIB also monitors activities of parliament through Parliament Watch initiative, in particular focussing on the work of the parliamentary committees, although this activity has changed in nature under the restrictions imposed by the Caretaker Government.

*Source: Authors' analysis*

In addition to advocacy activity, professional groups are also able to play an advisory role with government stakeholders, backed by evidence and analysis. The Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Education Watch initiative has earned an important reputation as a research and advisory body with the Ministry of Education. Its supportive approach has enabled it to take on an advisory function, providing

coherent and timely policy advice. Substantial chunks of CAMPE's policy analysis reportedly found their way into the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) Paper and the main primary education policy document, the Primary Education Development Programme II (PEDP II). In recent year's CAMPE's policy advice has included discussions on increasing women's participation in school management committees, setting a target teacher: pupil ratio at primary level and setting a 50:50 target for male: female teachers. CAMPE's influence has been achieved through the make up of its Education Watch members; these are highly respected educationalists who "have to be taken seriously".

Donors have also identified the agency of the media, who play such an important role in highlighting performance and enhancing accountability using the mechanism of a free press. The Danida/DFID-funded Mass-line Media Centre (MMC) has trained local grassroots journalists and brokers an association with MMC Resource Advocacy Centres and Information Centres at village level. They are encouraged with financial incentives to write articles about local development issues and attend public meetings to 'put service providers on the spot'. Their acquired confidence and style of questioning is said to encourage citizens to adopt a similar approach. 'Naming and shaming' in the local news media has had immediate and fruitful effect although a question mark remains as to whether this leads to any lasting behavioural change.

Donors have also supported civil society actors to use legal channels to advocate and claim rights:

- The Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation (BSSF) successfully lobbied for union rights for weavers, agricultural labourers and fishermen
- MMC is lobbying for the Right to Information Act
- "We Can" successfully lobbied for the Acid Crimes Control Act, 2002
- GTZ dialogues contributed to the reform of the Labour law
- Samata has championed the rights of the landless to claim their entitlement to government *khas* land (see Box 4.8).

**Box 4.8. Samata: A grassroots movement for social justice**

Samata evolved as a social movement from below which is motivated by a desire to re-possess land designated for the poor from land grabbers. It derives its strength from the solidarity of huge numbers of poor people around issues of great concern to them. This momentum is intrinsic rather than extrinsic as most of its staff are local and regard themselves as local activists rather than field workers. The movement has gathered momentum as its many successful land and water body acquisitions have fuelled the confidence of its members to claim their rights to land. With this acquired confidence Samata members have subsequently successfully negotiated for other rights, including fair distribution of special provisions for the poor (relief, pensions, school stipends, distribution of subsidies and so on), have demanded improved services (attendance of teachers, services of sub assistant agricultural officers) and have been invited to participate in local arbitration, local committees as well as successfully contesting seats in Union Parishads.

*Source:* Authors' analysis

Few interventions have been at central government level. The notable exception to this pattern was DFID's FMRP and its predecessor project. DFID's support to centre-of-government financial management is gradually opening up the possibility of greater citizen involvement in public budget oversight at the centre of power rather than at the margins of local government where budgets are small and therefore where the potential marginal impact of oversight is low. We noted that the thrust of the FMRP's efforts to strengthen oversight have focussed on support for "internal"

citizen oversight mechanisms, notable the Auditor General's Office and by extension the (presently impotent) Parliamentary Committee structure. DFID's project implementation unit talk positively of the potential in the long term to move towards a system of accountability driven by decent information on budget implementation and impacts - with an oversight role for the Auditor General and with civil society oversight at different levels - but cautions that progress is necessarily slow and incremental. One observer commented: "we are talking here about evolution rather than revolution". One donor representative noted:

*'We would have liked to have done much more with government accountability to citizens in FRMP and its predecessors but there was just so many other, bigger, systemic needs to tackle first. Now (after 13 years) we think we might be able to make some progress here'.*

Donors have also "bundled up" support to enhanced accountability through integrated projects supporting civil service reform (FMRP) or large sector development programmes (e.g. LGED's road and market improvement RDPs). These elements have tended to get obscured, however, by the pressing and huge demands of developing technical and financial systems. In the early projects of LGED, community participation and local administration accountability were elements of the programme but there was little support for these and little attention paid to them (they were often supported by specially contracted in staff with little clout in terms of changing attitudes and practice within the organisation). Donor insistence on and funding for these elements over many cycles of projects has gradually brought these to centre stage.

#### **4.4 Changes in policy, practice, behaviour and power relations**

CVA interventions can produce changes at different levels and these can range from direct outputs of a specific intervention which produce results at the very local level to changes of policy and regulatory frameworks at the national level.

Depending on the level of the intervention, the Evaluation Framework for this study identifies four types of changes for CVA interventions:

- Changes in *policy*: including the legal and regulatory framework (e.g. the introduction or approval of new laws) and reform implementation (e.g. the implementation of decentralisation policies)
- Changes in *practice*: these would include changes in the concrete provision of information, improved transparency, equal access to services, inclusion and consultation with marginalised groups, new/strengthened mechanisms to exercise accountability, etc.
- Changes in *behaviour*: at the individual or collective level, signalling greater awareness of CVA; more adequate and timely response of the authorities to citizens demands; more responsible actions at the community level to ensure greater participation of all citizens, etc.
- Changes in *power relations*: these refer to the 'rules of the game' and the extent to which CVA interventions manage to redress unequal power relations between citizens and the state, among different groups of citizens, between state actors at the local and national level, between formal and informal institutions, progressive and traditional societal groups, etc.

The CVA evaluation considered the following questions:

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- To what extent are donor supported interventions directly contributing to changes in relation to (i) state responsiveness and improved accountability; (ii) actions taken on citizens' claims; (iii) equal access to basic services; (iv) budget allocations, public revenues and expenditures; (v) power structures and relations?
- To what extent are donor funded interventions producing unexpected or unanticipated CVA outcomes? What are the reasons behind such unexpected outcomes?

Direct citizen participation in state institutions at the local level has enhanced state responsiveness, or at least demonstrated in pockets of donor activity that this is possible. In the case of Rupantar, for instance, field visits elicited the impression amongst government officials and citizens that the responsiveness of the local administrations has been transformed as they become motivated by an engaged citizenry. Citizen engagement by Samata as a social movement, backed by social and legal support from Samata as an NGO body, using entitlement to government *khas* land and water bodies has created a more responsive state, with property rights realized and land and water body redistribution resulting. Monitoring and watchdog activities, illustrated by the activities of TIB CCCs, have anecdotally changed the performance and accountability of service providers, while state responsiveness in macro-level policy design and delivery is illustrated through the influence of Education Watch on the NPRS and PEDP II content and subsequent policy statements.

There is less compelling evidence from the case study interventions studies that CVA activity has influenced budget allocations and public finances. This is in large part because a lot of CVA interventions have been at the lowest end of the budget food chain where budgetary discretion and maneuverability is minimal. As the FMRP moves in its next phase more purposefully from technical support to institutional realignment there will be an opportunity to see whether civil society engagement leads to, for example, a more progressive reallocation of budget towards social sector spending.

There is plenty of evidence from the evaluation that donor interventions have challenged and in some cases transformed institutions through addressing power relations and inequalities in entitlements.

An emphasis in donor interventions on information and awareness raising has been instrumental in empowering the poor. BSSF, for instance, has made specific efforts to include those working in the informal sector as well as rickshaw drivers, farm labourers and weavers. These occupations are all synonymous with those living in poverty.

Both Rupantar and Samata are active in raising awareness of rights and provision of political education for the poor and marginalised. They both use public meetings, cultural events, rallies and small courtyard discussion sessions to highlight peoples' rights to resources and services. Both make efforts to reach those who are least politically empowered (landless farmers and poor women). Rupantar, however, puts more emphasis on the use of cultural forms of communication (*The Rupantar Approach*) which are proven to be a very popular means to affect social transformation. Samata, as a social movement, places more emphasis on public rallies and protest.

MMC is also concerned with awareness raising at local village level, arguably in less radical ways by providing Information Centres and promoting reading and discussion around local issues. The Information Centres carry a range of information including names and contact details of people in the administration and service providers, job

vacancies, booklets/leaflets/posters explaining laws and entitlements as well as daily newspapers.

The adoption of rights based approaches among many NGOs in Bangladesh means that huge numbers of NGOs are active in awareness raising around rights. Whilst the awareness raising activities of Rupantar and Samata are in no way unique, both have successful models to achieve this. Despite all this activity in the area of rights and entitlements, there is no comprehensive document which provides a compilation of entitlements for the poor and much duplication of effort here. This points to a need for donors to invest in one off commissions which can be of use to all those agencies involved in awareness raising.

The recent impact assessment (2007) of the social movement Samata suggests that it has had remarkable success. While many other NGOs were entrapped in the provision of micro-credit, Samata managed to maintain the ideology of a people's movement (and therefore no service provision) with a dynamic that requires little external support. In fact there is growing criticism that this intrinsic dynamic may have been damaged by the infusion of very large sums of donor money, notably by DFID. That said, it is important to note that the reported rapid increase in land redistribution happened *after* DFID started supporting the project. Rupantar seeks to achieve somewhat similar ends to Samata but has a higher staff to beneficiary ratio and, although not specifically investigated in this study, appears to be less efficient in achieving the scale of change attributed to Samata primarily because it is driven from outside rather than internally, even though issues confronted are local ones.

Changes in government institutions have been most evident at the level of local government, with donor-supported NGO activity redressing power imbalances by increasing the level of participation of marginalized social groups, including women and occupational "castes", in government administrative and justice institutions.

**Box 4.9. Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC): Empowerment through participation**

The SDC/World Bank-funded ROSC project is specifically targeted to out-of-school children and their parents. It thus tends to target the poor who have found supporting their children in continuous primary education particularly hard. It is their voices which are supposed to be most influential in designing locally appropriate solutions for the education of their children.

The ROSC project establishes local management and oversight of the schools through Community Management Committees (CMCs), comprised of 5 parents, a female ward member, an Upazila education officer (Ministry EDU), an educationist expert, a headmaster of a nearby government primary school and a teacher who acts as secretary.

Amongst other impacts, this institutional innovation has had an empowering effect on the women involved. The parents had grown more confident and used a variety of social and administrative skills through their activities at the CMC. The CMC activities were a positive learning experience for parents, who could better express themselves, communicate and hold meetings, use bank accounts and save money.

*Source: Authors' analysis*

Institutions beyond the state have also been influenced by CVA interventions. These include informal social institutions in communities and households, with a particular focus on gender empowerment.<sup>23</sup> The involvement of poor women in marginalized

<sup>23</sup> There are several programmes in Bangladesh specifically targeted to assist ethnic minorities to raise their voice but restrictions on the number of case studies to be include in this study prevented an example from being included.

communities in the CMCs under the reaching Out of School Children (ROSC) project has been empowering for women in their household roles and relations and in their position in the wider community (see Box 4.9). Women involved in Rupantar citizen's committees describe the positive effect on their self-esteem, community status and capacity to aspire to do things that they previously would not have done.

The influence on women's empowerment in the community and in the household of property rights redistribution and political participation in the Samata case study has been profound. Samata has insisted that property acquired through the movement is shared equally between husbands and wives and their names both appear on the deeds. This and other efforts to work with both men's groups and women's groups simultaneously builds an awareness and social pressure to observe the rights of women. Social space has thus been created for women to exert their own agency. Samata women movement members have been able to make important advances such as taking up employment themselves (e.g. working on their own land and hiring others), voting independently of their husbands, participating actively in village committees and standing for local elections.

Added to these indirect empowering effects of state-citizen interface is the interesting example of non-state accountability mechanisms targeted by donors. The "We Can" campaign seeks to transform social institution of the family through an externally driven social mobilization campaign that aims to win "hearts and minds" (see Box 4.10).

**Box 4.10. "We Can": Towards accountability in the family**

"We Can" is an OXFAM-funded social mobilization campaign that seeks through external intervention to create a critical mass and expand social space for change in a fundamental social institution: the family. This very sensitive campaign against domestic violence has grown out of the Bangladesh women's movement and has been adapted to resonate with donor developmental interests. Furthermore, it is clearly a theory-led campaign of creating a "benign virus" of change in individual attitude and behaviour. Significantly, "We Can" has been supported by Oxfam in an appropriately low key way in order to avoid a backlash against a perceived "western agenda".

Source: Authors' analysis

One caveat to these achievements needs to be highlighted however. The project-driven approach of some of the NGOs, CSOs and Government (e.g. LGED) in brokering the citizen-state interaction may undermine the potential sustainability of these relationships. The events bringing supply and demand side together may only happen if external persons promote them, facilitate them and external funds are available for them. Worse, in terms of sustainability, results from these external agencies directly intervening on behalf of communities, by-passing the citizen-state relationship (e.g. exercising their clout to get public services rather than empowering the community to demand directly). This was evident in several of the cases we reviewed to a lesser or greater extent. When challenged about this appropriation of relationship by the so-called facilitator, the projects justified this as their zeal to meet (often imposed) project targets and the concern with proving change over short project timelines to justify expenditure to donors. *'We cannot ask donors for ten years funds but that is what we need to make sure that the community and service providers have a sustained relationship'*. Several project staff indicated that the auditors of their projects did not understand behaviour change processes and expected budget lines to be followed to the letter. So, if x number of exchanges between community and UPs were budgeted in a certain time frame this is what has to be delivered irrespective of whether it was the right moment, demand had been created and ownership by UP and Community had been achieved.



## 4.5 Development Outcomes

Broader development outcomes include meta-goals such as poverty reduction, human development and social justice, as well as more instrumental goals such as economic growth and democracy. CVA interventions may not lead directly to or be primarily responsible for these broader outcomes. However, changes in power, policy and practice may play a role in the pathways leading to broader development goals in the long term. In accordance with the evaluation questions, the main aim of the framework is to identify and describe these pathways leading to development outcomes, and to assess the extent to which individual interventions are likely to make a more or less direct contribution to these.

The CVA evaluation considered the following questions:

- To what extent do donor interventions make explicit the link between CVA outcomes and broader development outcomes? What are the specific broader outcomes that CVA is expected to contribute to?
- Are there typologies of pathways leading from direct results (e.g. increased capacity of actors) to intermediate outcomes (e.g. changes in power, policy and practice of institutions) to the broader development outcomes of poverty reduction, democracy and growth? Do they vary according to the end goals, context or other factors?

There is an implicit model of change common to all donors in Bangladesh that links governance reform more broadly to poverty reduction and MDG realization. This evaluation has shown that there is anecdotal evidence of an instrumental role for CVA in improving development outcomes in two inter-related ways: (i) by improving the quality and accessibility of *public* services provided through CVA activities; and (ii) by improving the economic and social well being of individuals and social groups whose *private* entitlements have been successfully claimed. These improved development outcomes have shown themselves in the cases study interventions in the shape of improved livelihood security and incomes, intergenerational social and professional mobility, enhanced service delivery, improved policies and (to a lesser extent) budgetary allocations, reduced leakage of special provisions for the poor and changing attitudes and behaviour. Yet there remain questions regarding the systemic wider development impact of CVA interventions that can not easily be proven by this type of evaluation.

Certainly, when the focus of the evaluation shifts to testing or proving the instrumental value of CVA in poverty reduction and other MDGs, there is a concern around scale and outreach which motivates donors, anxious to show the instrumental rather than intrinsic value of CVA by attempting to scale up “models” with local partners that may not be healthy or sustainable. These efforts are supported by a results-based management approach within donor agencies that shifts attention beyond inputs and outputs by encouraging the measurement of outcomes and impacts. This is surely a positive shift to outcome-based and evidence-based management, but there is an underlying tension if donors have to stretch their case for engaging in CVA process interventions rather than delivering things directly in the shape of infrastructure or services.

Samata's recent evaluation (2007) has indicated that there are very good returns on investment in terms of poverty reduction resulting not only from productive use of land and water bodies transferred to members but from improved public service delivery and reduction in bribe-giving. It is these latter benefits, Samata argues, which encourages members to remain with the movement even when there is little prospect of land acquisition. The solidarity of members around local resource distribution (including safety net provisions) and preparedness to confront injustices works as an effective means to ensure provision of public services to the poor.

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However, it is not clear to what extent there has been any lasting institutional change in the various government bodies with whom Samata members interact (UP, Land offices etc.) that would imply continuity of improved service delivery. Such improvements may only be apparent where there is a constant threat of confrontation and exposure. This clearly limits the development impact TIB has made attempts to quantify savings made from reducing or removing bribe-giving and 'speed money' to access public services and direct implications for poverty reduction can be derived.

However, when LGED and its donors promote CVA, the motivation is less related to poverty reduction and has more to do with promoting local ownership of development projects and reducing (government) construction and maintenance costs. By addressing community infrastructure priorities, the assumption is that there will be a greater willingness of the community to maintain them both directly and through a willingness to pay local taxes. Similarly, cost efficiencies are promoted by encouraging transparent contracting procedures at local level.

The ideology of the CVA component of ROSC is not concerned with income poverty reduction directly but with finding a way to involve, particularly marginalised, parents in their children's education and demanding schooling more appropriate to their children's needs. The short term costs are likely to increase for these parents as their children's direct and indirect earning opportunities are displaced by school and some, albeit low, costs associated with school attendance are incurred.

The advocacy programmes (e.g. of CAMPE) and media support organisation (MMC) have difficulty in relating their work to poverty reduction goals. It is this pressure to do so by one of MMC's donors that has driven it to work in relatively remote areas and in direct social mobilisation outside of its core competency. We argue that the work of MMC to promote and protect grassroots journalism is intrinsically important in enabling freedom of speech and exposure of different points of view (i.e. voice is itself an important 'end' and not only a 'means'). It should not need to have to prove a direct impact on poverty reduction. Similarly support to platforms for dialogue (e.g. GTZ brokered dialogue, BBC Sanglab (supported by DFID but not included in this study) and USAID sponsored Round Table discussions on democracy and related issues), which the team feels are extremely valuable, can be appreciated on the same basis of promoting open dialogue (multiple voices) rather than higher development goals.

'We Can', Samata and Rupantar all have contributed enhancing the environment for claiming private social entitlements (e.g. through improved gender relations) which can be linked to MDGs and poverty reduction. However, again the team feels that too often too much pressure is exerted on programmes such as these to prove impact on wider development goals.

## **5 Lessons learned**

In this section we outline lessons learned from the above discussion. We organize lesson learning using the four evaluation research questions listed in Section 2.2 above.

### **5.1 Channels, mechanisms and processes**

It is clear from the evaluation that donors in Bangladesh have creatively identified channels, mechanisms and processes for enhancing CVA.

Donors have relied quite heavily on funding NGOs as intermediaries supporting both the demand-side and supply-side of the state-citizen interface. However, this strategy brings attendant risks around conflict of interests and claims of corruption. There can be a conflict of interest here if these NGOs are also working on the demand-side and supporting communities to raise voice. Maintaining independence is important. If the NGO builds its own relationship with, for example, the UP then this may distort the intended interface between the UP and community. Similarly, performance monitoring on both supply and demand sides becomes inter-dependent and compromises both. There is also a risk of politicising donor intervention in the eyes of Government by giving support to NGO/CSO advocacy.

These risks extend to the contracting of NGOs by Government under donor interventions. Many NGOs are reluctant to be contracted by Government as it limits their independence and they are not prepared to be monitored and supervised by governmental agencies. How can they criticise the “*hand that feeds*” them? The advantage of using NGOs which is much flaunted internationally is that they can be the source of innovation, yet NGOs in our cases questioned how they could be innovative when bound by government contracts.

In their rush to support NGOs, either directly or via Government, donors have exposed themselves and the communities they are serving, to the danger of duplication in their efforts by working through intermediary NGOs to build the capacity of state and non-state actors and to support political inclusion. There is no clearer indication of this risk that the proliferation of committees and NGO presence in a community or local area.

We also noted the relatively small number of efforts by donors to tackle CVA issues at the level of the central government, largely a function of the (pre Caretaker Government) prevailing political climate but also perhaps reflecting the relative quick wins at the local level interface of state and citizen.

Donor attempts to “scale up” successful CVA channels, mechanisms and processes have created risks, including the risk of overloading the technical and financial absorptive capacity of the implementing organisations. For example, Samata was provided a massive budget primarily from DFID Bangladesh<sup>24</sup> and it was expected to deliver results from the outset. Despite provision within the project design for extensive technical assistance to its finance and human resources divisions, the expectations to transform what was essentially a people’s movement with humble youth club origins into a professional NGO were hugely ambitious. It was also not what the Movement itself wanted as it diverted attention from their core mission. One can question whether the transformation required was really needed for the

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<sup>24</sup> Personal communication indicates that DFID Bangladesh could only justify full project status and allocate their administrative time if the project budget exceeds £5 million.

Movement to perform better or in order to fulfil the donors' needs and own frameworks for structure and accountability. Similarly, Rupantar feels it is expected to spread the 'Rupantar Approach' and engage in national level advocacy. Since their skills lie primarily in design, development and piloting of communication through culture (creative aspects of programming) these demands require taking on more staff and diversifying their skills. Strategic partnerships might be a more appropriate approach but donors find it difficult to fund multiple partners and competition for funds generally prohibits the ideal of channelling funds through one partner for sub-contracting of a range of supporting organisations.

An additional conundrum for donors looking to spend in this thematic area is that enhancing CVA does not necessarily require large financial investment. For example MMC indicated that if the UP Dialogue sessions could be funded for a few more years this would ensure acceptance of this type of platform. BSSF manages its awareness and advocacy programme primarily through its own funds raised by member subscriptions. GTZ brokered dialogues are low cost and (arguably) effective.

Often hand-in-hand with attempts to scale up existing channels, processes and mechanisms, is the donor tendency to try to control fluid and organic CVA activities by "projectising" them. As with scaling up, projectising CVA can result in a number of problems which threaten quality and sustainability with intervention processes as follows:

- The outputs driven<sup>25</sup> nature of projects may encourage facilitating organisations to intervene excessively to meet targets: as mentioned in section 4.4. in the 'zeal to meet targets' direct intervention may undermine the process of relationship building between citizen and state and de-rail chances of permanent institutional change (e.g. LGED organises the meetings between UP and Communities, MMC members felt that the dialogue sessions 'needed' MMC to organise them and rallies and public debate may be taken over completely by Samata staff rather than by Samata Movement Executive Committee).
- Donors mostly require projects to clearly articulate cause-effect logic interventions (and use of log frames) and clearly define outcomes in order to prove cost effectiveness and return on investments. There are problems with this when supporting CVA interventions. Firstly, the behaviour change and outcomes of advocacy are difficult to predict (often requiring the 'right moment', critical mass for support for change and external contextual changes (e.g. The Caretaker Government has opened possibilities which were constrained before). A 'project' may have an excellent advocacy programme which is trying to influence legislation but there are systemic and human blocks to change over which they have no control (e.g. Samata's influence on the Ministry of Land). The spontaneity and opportunistic nature of voice cannot be predicted in advance.

Secondly, too much emphasis on quantifying outputs can lead to '*participation by command*' (e.g. x number of consultations, y number workshops, z number protest marches/rallies/observation of special days) without emphasis on who is participating or not participating or what effect participation is having.

Thirdly, 'projectisation' leads to expectations that money can only be spent where budgeted even if circumstances change. This lack of flexibility<sup>26</sup> can lead to opportunities being missed or inefficient consolidation of lessons learned as experience is gathered. For example the current Caretaker Government situation

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<sup>25</sup>E.g. numbers of events facilitated which are directly linked to specific budget lines. Donor bureaucrats, often with limited experience of the working context, make demands on output rather than outcome accountability.

<sup>26</sup> This may be due more to rigid interpretation by accountants and administrators rather than lack of understanding by sectoral experts in donor agencies.

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was not predicted and opens up a number of opportunities for Voice organisations, but budget lines are difficult or impossible to re-negotiate with donors and surpluses cannot be reallocated.

Fourthly, CVA interventions involving changing attitudes and behaviour of both citizens (confidence building, feelings that they will be taken seriously, can influence) and duty bearers (willingness and commitment) take time (e.g. LGED has been plugging away at this since the early 90s and still has not *embedded* a positive mindset among UPs to work with citizens) but most projects have short life spans. SDC will fund for longer periods but most others do not fund more than two cycles (6 years, (2x3years)). Six years is an inadequate time scale for CVA outcomes. Furthermore, second phase funding is contingent on first phase achievements so there is pressure on the implementing organisation to demonstrate results in first phase when perhaps only ground work can be realistically achieved.

- Materials and resources generated still tend to target the word and picture literate (see findings 4.4). The messages in the advocacy material, leaflets and other information materials in circulation, seen by the study team and discussed with community members are largely inaccessible. Duplication is very much in evidence with many organisations producing their own Information Education Communication (IEC) materials (which may even dilute or confuse the message-conventional wisdom suggesting that campaigns benefit from simple unified messages). Such materials are visual and thus easily verifiable indicators of awareness raising action (tangible outputs). However, we feel that they can be a smokescreen and perhaps further the marketing objectives of the organisations more than genuine information sharing and knowledge transfer with intended beneficiaries. It is important that the materials are field tested and have proven impact on intended audiences to justify the investment.

Finally, an important lesson from the evaluation of channels, mechanisms and processes is that if the ideal of a democratic society is for it to be pluralistic then donors need to be creative in finding ways to fund groups other than NGOs.

It takes courage to fund a social movement. The decision for DFID to fund Samata was ground-breaking at the time and has not had an easy ride subsequently as waves of different personnel within DFID Bangladesh have prioritised different intervention ideologies. For example, it did not have much support as DFID Bangladesh adopted a strongly neo-liberal pro-economic growth stance from 2003-5. Social movements are not NGOs and have not acquired the same professional orientation to strategy, projects and budgets. They thus present fund administration and monitoring challenges. They are generally responsive to emergent issues which are not only hard to capture but arguably should not be captured in log frames and other similar frameworks. This spontaneity is what makes the organisation successful and meets members' needs. Furthermore, social movements are highly political albeit not necessarily partisan. The confrontational approach to demanding rights puts movement workers and members at risk and, by association, can put donors in politically compromising positions. A social movement is fiercely defensive of its own ideology and approach and makes a difficult partner for donors who are trying to meet a variety of their own agendas (often at odds with the underlying principles of the movement) in their funding. For example, DFID Bangladesh expected Samata to provide specific data on return on investment related only to land acquisition and derive a figure for its direct contribution to poverty reduction. Samata repeatedly explained that many groups meet regularly and have done so for more than 20 years without ever securing rights to land so there were other important benefits from Movement membership, some of which had economic implications (reduced bribe giving, reduced waiting time for services, access to entitlements such as school stipends) but many had social and political benefits. As a result of their unpredictability, lack of experience of being recipients of aid and their unwillingness

to compromise on their fundamental values and confrontational approaches, social movements in Bangladesh are rarely funded. In our view this is an important opportunity missed in terms of supporting citizens' voice, although as noted above the type of donor support needs to be more nuanced to prevent social movements being distorted by large sums of donor money.

There are similarities here with funding Trade Unions. Like the social movements they are efficient and effective means to raise awareness and voice demands around issues of immediate concern to members. There has been a reluctance for donors in Bangladesh to fund Trade Unions and our case study (BSSF) in fact involved direct funding from a Belgium-based solidarity movement rather than a traditional donor. This is partly because of the highly partisan nature of conventional Trade Unions in Bangladesh and their poor record of corruption but also, in best case scenarios, a recognition of the risks of being associated with potentially volatile organisations. BSSF has proved it is possible to maintain and extend an active trade union movement without infiltration by partisan politics and corruption and may encourage donors to consider funding in the future. GTZ has side-stepped the risks by funding processes (dialogue, research) rather than organisations involved in the trade union movement.

In conclusion, we would question the efficacy of donor investment in externally driven 'social movements'. Social movements are most successful when driven by their own dynamic and agenda. They sustain only as long as the issue around which they convene remains relevant. Funding social movements requires nerve, flexibility, recognition and understanding of the nature of the organisation which, among other things, may only be temporary. Current funding constraints limit or even preclude funding to organisations which may be more informal, un-registered, without recognised structure and temporary. Rather than providing direct support to these organisations, we suggest that donors should further explore the idea of funding specific activities and events (e.g platforms for debate) or providing generic support (e.g. funding development of public access resources (e.g. web resources such as a data base on entitlements for the poor in Bangladesh, a data base on alternative funding resources for mounting advocacy campaigns, a data base of 'how to' guides for running successful advocacy campaigns) which these less formal organisations can tap into

## **Results and outcomes**

The case studies confirm that there is a wealth of activity in CVA operating in different sectors, at different levels (micro-macro) and in different spheres (social, economic and political). But how has this contributed to enhancing the CVA situation overall?

There is good evidence to suggest that the interventions which are targeted at enhancing voice have built awareness and confidence, particularly among grassroots people (and women and marginalised groups<sup>27</sup> in particular), in making demands, negotiating their rights and lodging complaints collectively and individually. Provision of information is improving and the interest generated in this by the organisations active in advocacy for the Right to Information Act (including TIB, MMC and MMC's intermediary donor, MJF) has contributed greatly to building a demand for information.

The media has been particularly effective in exposing corruption and highlighting other issues of concern. MMC's training of and support to grassroots journalists has resulted in local action. Samata makes extensive use of the print media for both local

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<sup>27</sup> Donors have proactively sought and favoured interventions supporting marginalised groups (see Annex C).

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and national level advocacy with many documented achievements particularly at local level. TIB also uses media exposure to great advantage. There is no doubt that its international pedigree contributes greatly to the attention it gets from the national media (of course it also helps that members of the Board are influential in the media!). The report cards produced at local level get good local media coverage.

Rupantar and Samata have made significant achievements in political empowerment of women. They exercise their franchise independently and increasingly contest elections. Both CAMPE and Samata were active in influencing the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the former as an invited advisor and the later invited after public protest over non inclusion of land issues in the first draft of the document. Watchdog functions have been supported at different levels and in a range of sectors.

However, there are concerns in relation to the results and outcomes. It is difficult to confirm attribution, e.g. Rupantar operates alongside several other interventions (see summary sheet), efficiency changes observed for example in hospital management and school teachers punctuality may be due more to the current Caretaker Government<sup>28</sup> than pressure from TIB's CCCs or Samata's local pressure or MMCs (or others) media exposure.

Furthermore there is the very real possibility of double accounting. Organisations working in the same thematic or geographic area are actually always meeting the same people, e.g. with regard to Violence Against Women (VAW) work: who goes to conferences? Who joins rallies? Same people? Does this result in provision of support only for forums of the like-minded? There is no means to check how much duplication of effort is actually taking place where there is reliance on traditional log frame approach reporting (as required by many development partners and Manusher Jonno Foundation (DFID funded foundation)).

The team also wonders if enhanced exercise of voice can be a sufficient end in itself as an outcome of voice interventions. Is it reasonable, in an immature democracy such as Bangladesh, to expect significant impact of that voice? Voice raising is a process and needs to be monitored as such. For example, GTZ brokered dialogue arguably may not have resulted in changes in the Labour Laws but it provided an opportunity for diverse and dissenting groups to speak and to listen. Danida funds one of the widest ranges of voice interventions with marginalised groups (sex workers, fishermen, Adivasi groups) as does DFID via its MJF channel. BSSF has supported the unionisation of rickshaw pullers, agricultural labourers, weavers and fishermen thus providing them a collective voice for the first time. These voices are relatively new ones to be heard in Bangladesh. Capacity and confidence building followed by inclusion of these voices in different platforms and channels should be the immediate objectives of such interventions. Furthermore, to avoid the 'same old voices' (often urban-centric NGO ones) dominating, it may make sense to support unusual voices (profession-based organisations, faith-based groups, political parties, informal groups, youth organisations etc.) as important checks and balances in the exercise of voice. Different voices are then valued in their own right (nothing changes without dissent). Interventions can then be generic - providing a level playing field for this eclectic mix of voices (e.g. as mentioned above, provision of public-access capacity building resources such as 'how to' guides for advocacy campaigns and support to 'platforms' rather than specific organisations).

There are positive signs that an enabling environment is emerging which is supported by both legislative and procedural reform. LGED has regular consultations with communities and these have procedures become enshrined in LGED operational guidelines with moves to incorporate these into standing orders of UPs.

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<sup>28</sup> Fear of arrest, losing job.

Whilst we can still be critical of the formulaic approach and wonder who participates and who does not this is nevertheless an important achievement.

## **5.2 Pathways to broader development outcomes**

The overriding assumption justifying support to CVA in Bangladesh is that democratization is more likely to lead to poverty reduction (although despite the prevalence of this assumption it remains a contested one). All the DAC partners in this study have *governance* as a theme (some within a broader interest in democratisation). Whilst there is evidence of improved outcomes such as enhanced service delivery, improved policies and budgetary allocations, reduced leakage of special provisions for the poor and changing attitudes and behaviours there are questions regarding the wider development impact and even the need to prove these at all. Is voice intrinsically valuable in its own right?

The focus on poverty reduction and meeting MDGs generates a concern with scale and outreach. The need to link intervention logic directly with **contribution to MDGs** for CVA work can be tortuous and artificial. Whilst an organisation may prioritise a focus on key themes of the MDGs (e.g. TIB focus on health and education, CAMPE focus on education) expecting its CVA activities to have direct impact may be asking too much. It places a burden on CVA interventions to prove a causal link and may result in some important means to achieve pluralist and vibrant voice being neglected for funding as it does not obviously fit the MDG agenda. If CVA are intrinsically 'good things' then why put pressure on organisations to make this link?

Donors are encouraging the practice of results-based management of projects but still place too much emphasis on counting participation and wanting evidence of contribution to MDGs. There needs to be more effort made to establish a middle ground of identifying attitude and behaviour indicators which are a direct outcome of CVA activities.

## **5.3 CVA and aid effectiveness**

The Paris Declaration (2005) promotes alignment and harmonisation as key elements for enhance aid effectiveness. In terms of alignment, the Declaration emphasises '*respect for partner country ownership*' and intends for partner countries to be in the driving seat. The Government of Bangladesh Poverty Reduction Strategy strongly supports the principle of good governance identifying it as one of the three key elements (growth, human development and governance) of a policy triangle required to bring about poverty reduction. It states that good governance is promoted '*by ensuring transparency, accountability and rule of law*' and this strategy along with three others (*ensuring participation, social inclusion and empowerment of all sections, groups and classes of people and providing service delivery efficiently and effectively, particularly to the poor*) are essential to bring about change. It thus endorses both the supply side and demand side promoted by CVA interventions. The interpretation of voice in the PRS is primarily limited to representation by NGOs and other mechanisms (through CSOs, Trade Unions, Professional Associations, informal organisations) are not mentioned. The document says little about how these strategies might be operationalised.

Although the current Caretaker Government has declared support for the PRS, there is very little genuine ownership of the strategy and knowledge of the tenets of the strategy remain meagre. Whilst donors quote the PRS widely in their strategy documents to justify alignment, there is actually little substance behind what, despite the lengthy consultation process, is essentially a consultant commissioned document.



The Paris Declaration has fuelled the practice of direct general or sectoral budget support. This in turn means that many programmes require that Government contract NGOs. The problems associated with this have already been outlined above.

There are a number of Local Consultative Groups of (mostly) donors which convene around different themes. The intention is that these provide a platform for sharing lessons and for enhanced donor co-ordination. There is a Local Consultative Group (LCD) around the theme of governance. Despite donors recognition that they should work together more to endorse common theories of change with regard to CVA and find ways to support CVA more coherently this does not happen in practice. Donors are the first to admit that this has led to a scatter gun approach. One reason echoed by a number of donors interviewed for this and other recent studies by the authors is that although they value LCG discussions, they are all busy people who find this and other harmonisation activities time-consuming. Secondly, a rift developed a couple of years ago when the World Bank, ADB, DFID and Japan produced a joint strategy in response to the PRS which required other donors to 'fit in'. The dominance of these four and their strong neo-liberal orientation was not endorsed by other development partners. Thirdly, the donor community experiences high turnover as duty periods seem to be exceptionally short. Building consensus on CVA requires time and relationship building between individuals representing donors. The large scale local governance support programme of the World Bank and UNDP has failed to attract the support of donors other than SDC. *Manusher Jonno* (a fund management foundation) which is regarded by its founders, DFID, as 'the' instrument to channel funds to 'voice' interventions has largely failed to attract joint funding because many donors do not feel it is innovative enough, sufficiently independent or flexible enough to fund, except through projects. Having said this, when the Caretaker Government window of opportunity for support to central government public oversight mechanisms, there was an extremely high level of collaboration around support to the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Election Commission.

Aid effectiveness has also had to embrace the increased and more timely flow of aid sanctioned by the signing of the Millennium Declaration. This has led to what is referred to as the '*more with less*' approach of donors, particularly DFID (among the DAC partners included in this case study). This has the following consequences:

- It has resulted in large funding going to interventions beyond the absorptive capacity\_of the organisation. This organisational swamping was most extreme in Samata but also evident to a lesser extent in MMC (funded by DFID's intermediary fund manager). It can lead to inefficiency, over extending already weak management and information systems. It also prompts recruitment of large field staff and expansion to new geographic areas which brings huge practical, management, training and supervision challenges.
- The need to reduce donors administrative costs and cut down the number of projects leads to expectations of organisations providing turn key services, i.e. do everything. Donors want a 'one stop service' (it is easier to work with one organisation and channel money this way rather than picking suitable and appropriate organisations with their own special expertise/competence to work together and complement each other). Rather than maintain their key competence and expertise they are expected to diversify, e.g. Rupantar got its reputation from education through culture but is expected to be able to engage in national advocacy, LGED, with core expertise in civil engineering has trained its own community workers (many are ex storekeepers) and social development staff (all of whom are supervised by engineers!), MMC with core expertise in journalism employs village workers and mobilises grassroots people but has no special experience or expertise in this, TIB is the only chapter in the world to have its own field level programme - is it the right sort of organisation to do this? The motivations for comprehensive

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programming are not all due to the '*more with less*' principle, organisations themselves want to '*get their hands on the whole pot of money*' (for survival, sustainability, empire building and resource capture reasons) and competition for scarce funds and well as deep-seated suspicion of working with others and poor culture of co-operation (referred to by interviewees as '*ego culture*') means they prefer this. It is unlikely to be the most effective way to promote CVA.

- Unnecessarily big funds encourage spending on physical plant, e.g. village resource centres, meeting places when there are plenty of unused or underutilised buildings, or better use can be made of UP complexes or schools for demand-side as well as demand-supply interface interventions. Too much money can lead to un-strategic and unsustainable interventions. While direct budget support can arguably bring about CVA through conditionality approaches, much can be achieved – arguably with greater ownership and more sustainably – with very little infusion of money.

## 6 Recommendations

Harmonisation provides an opportunity for donors to develop a coherent theory (or theories) of change on enhancing CVA, with an accompanying strategy and set of interventions. These interventions need not reduce the scope for imaginative thinking but should cohere around an understanding of: (i) the need to address capabilities and entry points for voice; (ii) the need to address capabilities, incentives and sanctions for responsiveness; and (iii) the need to tackle the opportunity structure for CVA (this means being more transparent about strategic assumptions regarding the link between micro and macro level). We recommend that donors use the Local Consultative Group on Governance **to discuss and agree on coherent theory/ies of change**. To avoid duplication and problems associated with attribution when many actors are working in the same geographic and thematic areas, donors should request fundees to regularly undertake surveillance of their operating micro-environment (internal and external) and actively search for alliances and minimise duplication.

The findings suggest that voice is primarily supported through NGO interventions which are relatively risk-free<sup>29</sup>, urban-centric and supportive of a somewhat common ideology. If donors are serious about supporting diverse (and dissenting) voices and contributing to a vibrant civil society<sup>30</sup> then they will have to be creative about funding. The current requirements of “projectisation” put pressure on organisations to meet targets and prove impact which is not always appropriate for CVA interventions, particularly in the initial stages. Furthermore it places less knowledgeable actors (groups other than NGOs) at a disadvantage. MJF (DFID’s window for voice interventions) does not fund organisations which are not registered NGOs or research bodies as it is set up primarily to fund ‘projects’. Taking just one example, social movements in Bangladesh which are historically situated and which have grown “organically” are not necessarily suited to a logframe straightjacket of inputs and outputs. Neither are they automatically well suited to having loads of money thrown at them. Indeed some of the most effective movements are resource light. The answer here is perhaps not to “over-design” interventions that support CVA movements and processes. Perhaps the OXFAM approach with “We Can” is a good example of how this can work. There are many informal groups, temporary issue-based groups, faith-based groups and political groups which are part of the fabric of a pluralistic society. Most of these have little hope of accessing funds either because they are unregistered, too small or too “risky”. Donors should find ways to ensure a level playing field in terms of voice to include formal/informal organisations, big voices/little voices, mainstream and unconventional voices. Possibilities lie in providing funds for **public access resources**, such as online toolkits for mounting local and national level advocacy, databases of alternative financial resources (both national and international so that they can seek funds beyond the traditional bilateral donors) and data base of citizen entitlements, resources on negotiating and other communication skills and generic civic education. There are models for such interventions in other countries and with the rapid spread of access to internet, such investments could have significant reach. In addition, donors should consider funding **processes and platforms** which can be opened up to more diverse voices.

To address the idea that voice is valuable in its own right and the study finding that funding is often too inflexible<sup>31</sup>, donors might consider **providing open-ended funding** without trying to control and measure implementation (inputs-outputs) and

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<sup>29</sup> As opposed to support for Trade Unions, social and political movements.

<sup>30</sup> One defined by participants of the Inception workshop as accommodating many voices.

<sup>31</sup> Does not allow for changed context, opportunistic moments, time needed for behaviour change.

instead focus on measuring outcomes (as a means of evaluating the performance of the movement/process). This is what GTZ says it is doing with its own thematic programmes. But it could be applied to local organisations too. This mirrors the approach adopted in several of the donor countries, where governments, conscious of the need to have a strong civil society voice, subsidise organisations who are accredited to a Charities Commission or other accreditation institution with almost “no strings attached”; they are valued for existing and serving the purpose of a counter balance to State. There has been much discussion in Bangladesh recently about establishing such a commission/accreditation body (very different in function from the NGO Bureau). If this could function then donors could be more confident of open ended funding for accredited organisations. We feel it could be time to reflect more critically on the “projectising” approach when dealing with long-term processes of change prevalent in CVA interventions.

In the context of a shift to outcome-based monitoring and evaluation, **donors should find a "middle ground"** of observable and measurable change between counting participation and tracking MDGs. This means finding measurable outcome indicators that move within a project cycle. These could include:

- (i) process indicators such as perception scores of the responsiveness and inclusiveness demonstrated by duty bearers in different contexts or observable changes in the frequency of use of institutions, such as justice systems, police and social services, that previously would not have been used, either because they were inaccessible or because citizens didn't have the level of agency to choose to use those services;
- (ii) outcome indicators linked to improved quality and accessibility of services, for example decreased water/sanitation-related illness or decreased school drop out rate.

Donors' apparent need to spend money is not always appropriate in promoting voice. As mentioned above some of the most effective voices are **resource light** (e.g. MMC Meet the People, GTZ brokered dialogue, BSSF's voice raising). Furthermore, money can choke voluntarism (e.g. MMC pays community teamleaders) and encourage unnecessary investment in infrastructure which then becomes a burden to maintain.

Donors should be more **cognisant of the way they can distort programmes** and divert organisations away from their core competences. The demands to reach the poorest, most marginalized, most remote (albeit altruistic) may not provide the best conditions for piloting new approaches, getting media attention or nurturing a critical mass of support. In short, satisfying such demands may not be the most strategic (and efficient) way to promote voice interventions. Similarly, the demands to reduce external risks and maximise impact by engaging in other activities – such as promoting an enabling environment, getting involved in national level advocacy and scaling up – can dilute the core focus of the programme.

Donors need to be agile to be able to **mobilise funds opportunistically**. The current Caretaker Government situation opens windows of opportunity, particularly in respect of operationalising guardianship institutions. These windows of opportunity can be used only if donors will be able to make funds available in a very short time. The team recommends that donors examine more efficient ways to mobilise resources when contexts change unexpectedly. The current model of some donors to have 'funds in waiting' could be expanded.

Donors can consider ways to **fund platforms** rather than institutions themselves. GTZ, for example, funds Round Tables, while MMC felt that funds to support only the Meet the People programme would have been extremely valuable. Funding events rather than the organisation should theoretically, limit manipulation of who

participates and who does not participate in these platforms ,thus creating opportunities for diverse and dissenting voices to be heard. Similarly, support to e-governance initiatives might be one platform worth investigating, although these are more exclusive in a country with unequal, if growing, access to the internet.

CVA interventions nearly all have an element of attitude and behaviour change. These are processes which require time (e.g. LGED has been promoting participation for more than 12 years). Donors therefore need to **commit for the long term**; we heard too many examples of apparent donor fatigue or organisational constraints to funding more than two or three cycles.

There are serious issues of **conflict of interest** when organisations are expected to/or chose to support both voice and accountability. Whilst this is not a problem for a neutral facilitating organisation, it becomes a problem if the same organisation is involved in capacity building on both sides. Performance monitoring is compromised (e.g. proving improved public service delivery but also having an interest in empowering the community criticise) and credibility (whose interests is the organisation promoting? Demand or supply-side?) might be undermined. Donors should be more aware of maintaining the **independence of those organisations promoting voice**.

Finally, **donors themselves need to be more transparent and accountable**. Although not reported in the findings as the framework did not permit, during most interactions, staff from the different interventions studied raised this issue. *‘Why are the donors advocating CVA so strongly when they are amongst the worst in terms of accountability to the people of Bangladesh. We have no idea what they are doing or what is their motive. Sometimes this makes us quite suspicious.’* Donors may well be expected to have high levels of accountability in their own countries but this does not permeate to their host country. This is not a matter of having a website but providing opportunities for public scrutiny of their activities through a variety of channels. As this was such a strong theme running through many of our interactions with projects, we recommend that the donor community consider ways to become more accountable in Bangladesh.

# **Annexes**

## **Annex A. Terms of reference**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORS) FOR THE BANGLADESH COUNTRY CASE STUDY CITIZENS' VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY EVALUATION**

1 A core group of DAC partners (Evaluation Core Group/ECG<sup>32</sup>) agreed in 2006 to collaborate on a joint evaluation of development aid for strengthening Citizens' Voice and Accountability (CV&A). As an initial stage in this process, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) undertook development of an evaluation framework to assess CV&A interventions<sup>33</sup> and piloted the framework and methodology in two countries. The ECG now wishes to use this framework and its accompanying methodology to evaluate interventions across a range of country types. At the end of this process, a synthesis report will be produced which will make recommendations for donors to consider. These will draw on lessons about CV&A interventions from the case studies and, importantly, place them within the broader context of existing literature on the subject and extant policy approaches.

2. These TORs outline the generic requirements for each country case study (CCS), which will be commissioned by donor partners separately. It should be noted that although commissioned by a single donor each CCS will evaluate interventions across all ECG partners active in the country or region. Additionally, in order to gain a holistic understanding of the scope of CV&A initiatives across the country, a minor mapping exercise to record other relevant donor and national interventions will be necessary.

#### **Background and Rationale**

3. There is an increasing emphasis on governance in development fora as the key dimension to addressing poverty reduction and inequality and promoting economic stability and growth. This goes beyond the institutional framework of government to the interaction between formal and informal actors, processes, customs and rules. It is a process of bargaining between those who hold power and those who seek to influence it. But only those who can convey their views have a "voice" and only governments or states who are accountable, and can be held so, will respond.

4. Good governance thus requires a just and responsive relationship between citizen and state. Development actors have long recognised this and worked on programmes to enhance the ability of the most vulnerable in society to articulate their needs, and with partner governments to provide the mechanisms and capacity to respond. Despite these efforts, there is a lack of evidence and real understanding of the dynamic and complex nature of factors influencing voice and accountability and there is thus a need to more systematically examine and evaluate current interventions.

5. This donor initiative seeks to identify both what works and what does not and why, and to identify gaps, overlaps and duplication in donor provision. By becoming

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<sup>32</sup> Donor partners from the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Belgium, Norway and Germany

<sup>33</sup> It should be noted that donors are unable to work directly on voice (an action) or accountability (a relationship). In practice, donors strengthen CV&A by seeking to create or strengthen the preconditions for the exercise of CV&A and/or particular channels and mechanisms that underpin actions of CV&A relationships. In the context of this evaluation, such activities are referred to as 'CV&A interventions'.

more effective and transparent in our delivery of assistance to this vital area of both governance and social development aid provision, it also, as espoused by the Paris Declaration, seeks to improve donor coherence and accountability to those with whom, and on whose behalf, we work.

6. Quality of governance is recognised as a key factor correlated with poverty reduction and macroeconomic stability, and therefore influencing the achievement of the MDGs and preventing conflict<sup>34</sup>. Good governance is concerned with how citizens, public institutions, and leaders relate to each other, and whether these relationships lead to outcomes that reduce poverty.

7. Voice and accountability are concerned with the relationship between citizen and the state, which is a core feature of the governance agenda. A large body of research and experience has demonstrated that active participation of citizens in the determination of policies and priorities can improve the commitment of government to reduce poverty and enhance the quality of aid and outcomes.

8. Similarly, it is increasingly recognised that government/state accountability, and the ability of citizens and the private sector to scrutinise public institutions and to hold them to account is an important facet of good governance. Failures of accountability can lead to pervasive corruption, poor and elite-biased decision making and unresponsive public actors<sup>35</sup>.

9. Thus Citizens' Voice and Accountability<sup>36</sup> are important for developing more effective and responsive states and for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of aid, particularly in the context of country led approaches. The Paris Declaration includes specific commitments on these issues by development partners<sup>37</sup>.

10. There are many forms of accountability relationship (for example formal and informal accountabilities; social, political, and electoral accountabilities, accountabilities between different public institutions). This evaluation is focused on donors' support to the development of CV&A, focusing on downward or vertical accountability i.e: that operating between the state and citizens.

11. Strengthening CV&A is pursued through a wide range of approaches. Examples include civic education, media strengthening, national and local policy and planning processes (including decentralisation), participatory budgeting and expenditure monitoring, social auditing and civil society and advocacy programmes. But the processes of empowerment and fostering an environment conducive to accountability and responsiveness are complex and dynamic as are the difficulties of attributing the factors that provoke change – both negative and positive. Donors have thus recognised that there is a need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of this area by using a common framework to evaluate interventions in

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<sup>34</sup> This association and the direction of causation is the subject of a significant body of research, for example many of the papers by Kaufmann & Kraay, and discussion of this subject in the Global Monitoring Report 2006 (pp. 121-2)

<sup>35</sup> In development debates a stronger focus on participation emerged during the 1980s, in relation to projects, and has since been taken into the consultation of poor people on development priorities for Poverty Reduction Strategies, with varying degrees of success (see for example McGee, Levene, J. & Hughes, *Assessing Participation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers*, IDS research report 52; World Bank & IMF (2005) *Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Approach*). A range of information on the topic of CV&A will shortly be available from the Governance & Social Development Resource Centre website ([www.grc-dfid.org](http://www.grc-dfid.org)).

<sup>36</sup> The attached "ODI Literature Review and Donor Approaches on Citizens' Voice and Accountability" highlights the complexity of this subject and the various interpretations of what constitutes CV&A in different contexts.

<sup>37</sup> Principally Sections: 14 &15 on ownership; 38 on Fragile States; and, 48 on Mutual Accountability.



a number of different country contexts. With regard to the specific context of Bangladesh, particular attention should be given to the local power dynamics including formal and informal hierarchical structures, as well as to the gender aspect – considering that, for women, there are still several obstacles for expressing their voice and accessing to power.

### **Purpose and Use**

12. The purpose of the evaluation is twofold:

- a) To improve understanding of CV&A among development partners by mapping and documenting approaches and strategies of development partners for enhancing CV&A in a variety of developing country contexts; and to learn lessons on which approaches have worked best, where and why;
- b) To assess effects of a range of donor CV&A interventions on governance and on aid effectiveness, and whether these effects are sustainable.

13. In enhancing learning about CV&A interventions, the evaluation will hence make a contribution in an area of development co-operation which is allocated increasing resources but in which there is still little evidence on results. The evaluation also serves an important purpose of enhancing the transparency and accountability of donors.

14. As an instrument of both learning and accountability, the evaluation will contribute to policy development, improved practices and understanding in an important aspect of governance, and be of use to a wide audience: policy makers, desk officers, country offices and implementing partners and evaluators.

15. This multi-donor initiative will culminate in a synthesis report to be published in April 2008. It will analyse the lessons learned from the various case studies and make recommendations for donors to consider and implement. The CCS are thus a vital part of this process, and need to be reflective of different governance contexts and provide examples of the variety of approaches to CV&A.

### **Objectives and Scope of the Country Case Studies**

16. Against the described background and purpose of the evaluation the objectives of each of the CCS are to:

- a) Assess the selected interventions against their intended objectives, and on the basis of that draw conclusions on what works, and what does not, in relation to intervention programme theories.
- b) Assess the relevance of the interventions for strengthening CV&A in the specific developing country context.
- c) Provide an overall assessment/analysis of donors' role, success and failures in supporting CV&A in different country contexts

### **Scope**

17. In accomplishing the objectives of the assignment a thorough understanding of, and familiarity with, the CV&A Evaluation Framework and associated documentation<sup>38</sup> will be necessary. The evaluation will be based on the common

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<sup>38</sup> See attached files. It is important to note that the Evaluation Framework and Methodology is integral part of the present TORs.

Framework and it will be carried out according to the processes/steps outlined in the methodological guidance attached as an annex to that document, which provides references to a choice of methods and tools for the evaluation.

18. Prior to undertaking the evaluation phase itself, considerable work will be required by the CCS Team to finalise with donor partners in country those interventions selected for evaluation. Critical to this process is gaining an understanding of the context against which CV&A interventions can be gauged and establishing a dialogue with key international and national actors to explore the various interpretations of “voice and accountability” and, in some contexts, “citizen”.

#### Tasks

19. Using the Evaluation Framework and Methodology, and adapting it to the specific country context, the Country Case Study Team (CCS Team) will provide answers to the following overarching evaluation questions:

- **Question 1: Channels, mechanisms and processes**  
What are the concrete channels, i.e. actors, spaces and mechanisms supported by donor-funded interventions for: (i) citizens' voice and empowerment; (ii) increased role of poor and excluded groups, and women or their representatives in governance processes; and (iii) accountability of governments to citizens?  
How do these channels work and how important are they to achieve CV&A outcomes?
- **Question 2: Results and outcomes**  
To what extent have the different approaches and strategies adopted by donors contributed to enhanced CV&A in partner countries?
- **Question 3: Pathways to broader development outcomes and impacts**  
In what ways are CV&A interventions contributing to broader development goals, such as poverty reduction and the MDGs? In particular, what are the main pathways leading from improved CV&A to such broader development outcomes?
- **Question 4: V&A and aid effectiveness**  
What can we learn from experience to date of donors' effectiveness in supporting CV&A interventions with particular reference to the principles enshrined in the Paris Declaration?

#### **Process**

20. Two pilot studies were conducted in Benin and Nicaragua. They indicated that there was insufficient mutual understanding of the meaning of “voice and accountability” among ECG donors and partners. Without such an understanding amongst donors, host nation and implementing partners it will be difficult to identify appropriate interventions for study. To overcome this, each CCS will consist of two phases and the commissioning donor will play an active part in the first phase along with the CCS Team leader. In the case of the CCS Bangladesh, which is mandated by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), this active role will be in the responsibility of the Evaluation and Controlling Unit of the Thematic Department, supported by the SDC Country Office in Dhaka when necessary.

#### **First “Inception” Phase**

21. The first phase will occur some weeks in advance of the second “main” phase. Initially desk based research and work to initiate the context analysis and identify, with “in country” donor partners, potential interventions for evaluation. This will be followed by an “in country” visit (probably capital based) of some 5-7 days to:

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- Conduct introductory meetings and/or workshops to explain the Framework and Methodology and explore the different perceptions and interpretations of “Voice and Accountability”;
- Finalise, in close consultation with relevant country offices (and SDC representatives), the range of interventions to be evaluated ensuring balance between “supply and demand” side policies, programmes and projects and spread of rural/urban, formal/informal, empowered/disempowered actors.
- Determine the most appropriate evaluation methodology and tools (drawn from the options contained in the Methodological Guidance);
- Ensure that there is adequate background material and expert advice on the country context<sup>39</sup>; in the case of Bangladesh, this issue will be particularly important, considering the great amount of studies which have been recently undertaken in thematic fields related to CV&A;<sup>40</sup>
- Arrange a programme of appointments and field visits in preparation for the full team’s visit;
- Ensure logistics and accommodation arrangements are in hand;
- Report progress and observations in the form of an inception report to the commissioning donor and donor partner country offices (indicative length 4-6 pages); and,
- Be prepared to attend and discuss/present the inception report at a meeting of the ECG in Germany (Bonn, October 22-23, 2007).

### **Second “Main Evaluation” phase**

22. The second main phase of the mission will involve all members of the CCS Team. The duration of the field study should not exceed three weeks. The CCS Team will conduct an evaluation of the interventions identified based on, and drawing questions from, the Evaluation Framework and accompanying Methodological Guidance.

23. At the end of the evaluation period the CCS Team will:

- Conduct a debriefing seminar on the preliminary findings; and
- Write the CCS Evaluation report.

24. As the Team will be using a new framework and approach for evaluating CV&A, it will be important to note, throughout the evaluation exercise, aspects of the Framework which proved of most value (and vice versa) and areas where additional guidance would have been of benefit.

25. Apart from the country mission, time should be also allocated for pre reading, documenting and writing up the Evaluation (CCS) Report. A Quality Assurance (QA) panel for this process has been established and all CCS reports, in addition to being submitted to the commissioning donor, have to be copied to the QA Panel for their advice. The QA Panel will be available (by telephone) to the CCS Team leader for advice on standards and queries on methodological approaches.

26. A one-day workshop may be arranged, probably on completion of all CCS (mid to late January 2008), to further share experiences and comments on the CCS, the Framework and methodologies employed with other consultancy teams, ECG members, the QA panel and Synthesis report authors. All of this is designed to contribute to a greater understanding of the issues involved and assist in the compilation of the Synthesis report.

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<sup>39</sup> This knowledge may be available through the selection of consultants for the CCS Team but it may also be necessary for the Team to commission additional work (included within the terms of the consultancy contract) from a national expert.

<sup>40</sup> See for instance: ODI/Scanteam: Support Models for CSOs at Country Level – Bangladesh Country Report, Oslo, August 2007, as well as the studies mentioned in this document.

### **Outputs and Deliverables**

27. The following specific reports and outputs are required over the period of the assignment:

- In country Introductory Workshop - CCS Team leader
- "Inception" Report - CCS Team Leader (prior to initiation of second phase);
- Evaluation Debriefing Seminar in Bangladesh (prior to end of the "in country" mission of the main evaluation phase)
- Debriefing Note summarising the findings, conclusions and recommendations (to be presented at the end of the in country mission of the main evaluation phase, max. five pages);
- Draft Evaluation Report (indicative length 40 pages) to be delivered to SDC and the QA panel within two weeks of the end of the in-country mission of the main evaluation phase. Comments on the draft report will be provided by SDC within two weeks after reception.
- Final Evaluation report (indicative length 40 pages) – to be delivered to SDC and copied to the QA Panel no later than January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008;
- Attendance, as available by CCS Team members and Team Leaders at a feedback workshop (location and date to be confirmed – probably mid to late January 2008 in Bern or in Oslo); and,
- A brief post-mortem note (max four pages) as a feed-back to SDC of the evaluation process as experienced by the team.

28. All Country Case Study reports are expected to adhere to DAC reporting standards and conventions but for ease of the Synthesis Report's compilation and analysis the following layout is to be adopted:

- Executive Summary
- Part 1: Introduction
- Part 2: Process undertaken to complete the assignment: rationale for interventions selected and methodologies employed; challenges encountered in using the Framework and Methodological Guidance; field trips undertaken, logistics challenges etc
- Part 3: Country/Regional context relevant to CV&A
- Part 4 (MAIN): Interventions evaluated. Use the Evaluation Framework and describe the outputs, outcomes and impacts against the evaluation questions and, specific criteria and indicators used to answer them. Use specific interventions to illustrate key issues. Conclusions drawn and intervention-specific recommendations made.
- Part 5: Lessons learned and general recommendations

29. The main report's indicative length is some 40 pages but annexes may be attached as required to cover, inter alia, TORs, Inception Report, Context Analysis; Interviews/meetings conducted etc.

### **Team Composition, Contracting and Reporting Arrangements**

30. The work should be conducted by a small team of up to 4 consultants (including the nominated Team Leader). The Consultancy team, at least one of whose consultants must be from/based in Bangladesh, should possess the following:

- Experience of complex evaluations;
- Experience and knowledge of participatory approaches to evaluation, and of joint evaluation (desirable);
- Expertise in Governance, Social development and, as appropriate, conflict prevention issues;
- Strong analytical, reasoning and writing skills;
- Experience of working in sensitive environments

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- Regional/country knowledge and expertise including awareness of the political context of development interventions in this area;
  - Knowledge of the country lingua franca (indispensable). In the case of Bangladesh, it is required the knowledge of English. Moreover, at least one team member should speak Bangladeshi.
31. All team members should be sensitive to issues relating to working with the poor, marginalised and vulnerable members of society.
32. A consultancy company will be appointed on the basis of the quality and the concreteness of the proposal, the skills demonstrated in the team composition, costs, availability and access to in house expertise and reach back.
33. The reporting language is English. Consideration will be given to translating each report and the follow on synthesis report into the most common languages used by donors and beneficiaries.
34. The successful bidder is expected to assure a quality control of its own work prior to submission to SDC and the QA Panel.
35. Consultants will be responsible for making their own logistics and accommodation arrangements in Bangladesh but introductions to relevant development offices and embassies will be made by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Dhaka.
36. The start date for this work will be October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. The first mission to Bangladesh should take place in Week 40-41 starting October 7<sup>th</sup>, and the second mission in the period November 5<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>. The draft evaluation report should be ready by December 7<sup>th</sup> and the final evaluation report should be submitted no later than January 11<sup>th</sup> 2008.
37. Evaluation Management: The various roles of the ECG, Evaluation Theme Leader, commissioning donor, QA Panel, and the local donor representatives, are as outlined below:

The Evaluation Core Group provides overall endorsement of, and direction to, the key components of this initiative e.g. Terms of Reference, timing, reports' publication and dissemination decisions etc. Chairmanship of the Group is shared, rotating as per the location of ECG meetings. ECG members are the key interlocutors between consultancy teams engaged in the work and donor colleagues in both capitals and country offices.

The Evaluation Theme Leader: DFID provides the management and administrative support for this initiative through its nominated Evaluation Theme Leader.

Commissioning donor is the donor which undertakes to commission, fund and manage a specific component of CV&A work. In the case of the CCS Bangladesh, the commissioning donors is SDC.

The Quality Assurance Panel (see TORs attached) has been commissioned by DFID on behalf of the ECG to ensure that the DAC Evaluation Quality standards are adequately reflected in the final Evaluation Framework, Methodological Approach, Country Case Studies and Synthesis Report; and, that reporting standards are uniformly observed as per the TORs for CCS. It has an advisory role and it reports through the Evaluation Theme Leader to the ECG.

## **Annex B. Methodology**

### **The Research Team**

Research team comprised the following:

Name	Domicile	Specialisation	Role in team
Dee Jupp PhD	UK (formerly 12 years in Bangladesh)	Participatory social development expert	Teamleader- but shared with Dr Holland because of illness
Jeremy Holland PhD	UK	Participatory governance expert	Team member/teamleader
Sohel Ibn Ali MBA	Bangladesh	Activist and local governance expert	Team member/logistics
Jens Stanislawski	Bangladesh	Politics and local governance	Team member

### **1. Research Questions**

The Bangladesh Country Case Study was expected to answer four main research questions

- Channels, mechanisms and processes:
  - What are the main channels (actors, spaces and opportunities) for citizens' voice and empowerment (especially for the poor, marginalised and excluded groups) and accountability of government to its citizens?
  - How do these channels actually work?
- Results and outcomes:
  - How effective are the approaches adopted by the donors – effective in contributing to enhanced CVA?
- Pathways to broader development outcomes and impacts:
  - In what ways are CVA interventions leading to poverty reduction and to the achievement of the MDGs?
  - Which intervention strategies ('models of change') have proved to be successful in leading from improved CVA to broader development outcomes?
- CV&A and aid effectiveness:
  - What lessons can be drawn about donors' effectiveness in supporting CVA – particularly in relation to the principles of the Paris Agreement – principles of ownership, alignment and harmonisation?

In an attempt to answer these questions, the team carried out

- Interviews with a range of key Bangladeshi research persons to elaborate the country context
- An inception workshop with a range of CVA stakeholders including NGOs, CSOs, faith based groups, media(print and electronic), Trade Unions, Chamber of Commerce and representatives of the donor community (both those involved in the study and others) to agree on definitions of CVA and criteria for selection of case studies
- Interviews with the DAC donors to select CVA interventions as case studies
- Interviews with donors other than those involved in this study to understand the wider range of CVA interventions
- Interviews and focus group discussions with staff of projects selected as case studies
- Focus group discussions with beneficiaries of CVA case study interventions
- Field visits to the projects to observe CVA activities.

## **2. The Analytical Framework**

The analytical framework was taken from the ToR and the two documents provided by ODI: The Evaluation Framework and the Methodological Guidelines. The analytical framework, was used for structuring the findings in the main body of the report;

- A. Opportunities, constraints and entry points for CV&A:**
  - Initial conditions, opportunities and constraints;
  - Donors' overall strategies for CV&A intervention.
  
- B. Institutional, organisational and individual capacities:**
  - Capacity needs of state and non-state actors;
  - Donor's strategies for capacity development.
  
- C. Voice and accountability channels:**
  - Availability and type of channels;
  - Representativeness of channels;
  - Accountability and legitimacy of channels.
  
- D. Changes in policy, practice, behaviours and power relations:**
  - State of responsiveness and state accountability;
  - Budget allocation and public finances;
  - Power and equality relationships.
  
- E. Broader development outcomes:**
  - Direct and indirect influence/contribution of CV&A interventions;
  - Sustainability of development outcomes.

## **3. Preparatory Phase**

The preparation phase comprised i. the context analysis and ii. inception workshop

### **i. context analysis**

The ODI methodological guidelines state that '*The main purpose of the context analysis is to consider the linkages (or lack of them) between V&A interventions and the political and socio-economic context where they take place.*'

This was carried out by Dr Dee Jupp with assistance from Sohel Ibn Ali. It involved two steps; one to map the political context and the second to map donor's CVA response to the context. It thus involved several interviews with number of leading researchers and academics as well as a range of donors. The team's own work in this area formed the basis of much of the analysis and was supplemented by further secondary data sources. Box 1 was provided in the ODI Methodological Guidelines and was followed in structuring the context analysis report.

**BOX 1: Elements of the context analysis**

(i) Political and institutional framework and actual operation

- An analysis of **legal rights** to information, participation, accountability
- An analysis of **public oversight mechanisms** spanning the executive, legislative, judicial and other constitutionally mandated institutions
- An analysis of the **distribution of powers** across divisions and levels of government, and opportunities/mechanisms for participation and public oversight within this
- An analysis of the **economic** structures and institutions, including dependency from natural resources, market regulations, how the economy is organised (e.g. is it predominantly agrarian, urbanisation processes) and affect on class structure

(ii) Mapping and key features of main actors

- An analysis of the **principal state and non-state actors**, spanning governments ministries, regulatory bodies, local administration, networks, social movements, NGOs, those aligned with government and those not, and the historical reasons for this
- An analysis of the **aid architecture**, including donors' presence, principal fora for strategic dialogue on poverty reduction and governance, the main instruments and modalities for aid delivery as well as mechanisms for civil society support

(iii) Social and political landscape

- An analysis of the **political landscape**, including the alliances and sources of power on which the current government depends, as well as the degree of political control over the different branches of government (including the key public oversight mechanisms)
- An analysis of **informal power structures** and institutions, including religious groups, traditional institutions, networks related to the informal economy, patronage and rent seeking arrangements, gender relations and culture.

(iv) Recent events that shape opportunities and risks for voice and accountability

The overview of the aid environment was intended to be a 'light touch' analysis. There was no existing documentation mapping the entire CVA intervention portfolio of donors so the tables presented in the context analysis had to be developed from scratch by the team.

**ii. inception workshop**

The team deviated a little from the original intention of the workshop as defined in the ODI Methodological Guidelines. It was not felt that a workshop would be the best means to '*map the CVA interventions of the country*'. Rather the workshop was used as opportunity to introduce a wide range of stakeholders to the concept of the evaluation and to elicit their ideas about how best to select case studies. We felt that if we got a diverse mix of stakeholders then we would be able to derive criteria for selection of cases which would represent the wide the diversity of CVA and not be skewed by donors' perceptions and preferences. Rather than selecting from the criteria provided, we decided to let the participants develop the criteria themselves (although the facilitators kept in mind those suggested by ODI<sup>41</sup>)

<sup>41</sup> *Levels of interventions (national and local); Different functions of state actors (executive, legislative, judicial) and non state actors (NGOs, trade unions, media, political parties, social movements etc.) involved; Different mechanisms at play e.g. local planning committees, trade unions, ombudsman commissions, the media, parliamentary committees, electoral processes; The role played by donors, including active facilitation of the interface between citizens and the state; Duration of interventions; Availability of key stakeholders.*



It was not possible for workshop participants to rank interventions based on these criteria since there was very little common understanding of the huge number of possible interventions to choose from. Rather, the criteria were agreed and a process of applying these through bilateral discussions with each of the ECG donors was endorsed by the workshop participants. Table B-1 identifies the types of intervention that the workshop participants felt represented the diverse range found in Bangladesh. They felt it would be useful to explore diversity rather than representativeness based on numbers of intervention or size of investment.

Initially it was proposed by the team that six interventions would be selected but following the Bonn meeting in October of ODI, ECG and research teams, this was considered too few. Finally, eleven interventions were selected in an attempt to capture the diversity of interventions highlighted through the Inception Workshop, covering voice and accountability, rural and urban, national and local scale as well as examples of the currently less supported types of intervention (e.g. Trade Union, social movement and direct involvement of donor (e.g. GTZ brokered dialogue).

**Table B.1. Typology of interventions<sup>42</sup> and case studies which contribute to these types**

Type of intervention (as identified by inception workshop participants)	Case study proposed <sup>43</sup> to meet elements of the typology
<b>Supply-side</b>	
Improving monitoring process and mechanisms	Financial Management Reform Programme (FMRP) Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC- programme of Ministry of Education)
Supply-side answerability (managed by GO directly to CS)	FMRP LGED rural development programmes
Support to guardianship organisations/institutions	NB the team had hoped to include a review of the current support to the Election Commission but as they are exceedingly busy, donors recommended against this
Good governance conditionalities	ROSC; LGED
Policy review and review of implementation mechanisms	Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) 'Education Watch' Transparency International Bangladesh
Supporting compliance with international treaties and conventions	GTZ brokered dialogue with GO, private sector, TU and advocacy groups (Kormojobi Nari, NUK, Phulki)
Technical resources and capacity building for state institutions	FMRP LGED rural development programmes
<b>Demand side</b>	
Capacity building of marginalized groups and Support to rights programmes	Rupantar (women) Samata (very poor and women)
Support to those challenging international aid structures, mechanisms and globalisation	Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramic Federation (BSSF)
Technical resources and capacity building for non-state institutions e.g communication asset building	Mass-line Media Centre
Influencing beliefs and values	Oxfam 'We Can' programme advocacy around Violence against Women
Creating spaces and platforms for civil society	ROSC- centre management committees LGED-community based project implementation committees FMRP-participatory budgets

<sup>42</sup> The types of interventions (with modest re-wording) were developed by the Inception workshop participants

<sup>43</sup> Through discussions with donors

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<b>Type of intervention (as identified by inception workshop participants)</b>	<b>Case study proposed<sup>43</sup> to meet elements of the typology</b>
	Samata, MMC, Rupantar- face to face meetings with local councils (Union Parishads) CAMPE –round table debates Brokered dialogue (GO/PS/Advocacy/TU) (see above)
Media and information dissemination	Mass-line Media Centre
Awareness raising and mass mobilization	Samata Oxfam 'We Can' programme
<b>Supply/demand side</b>	
Research	CAMPE TIB

**Table B.2. How proposed case studies met other criteria<sup>44</sup>**

	Funding modality	Urban/rural	Special group	Stand alone CV & A or integrated	level	Supply-side/demand side or both	Type of institution	Which of joint evaluation donors supports?
ROSC	Joint	both	Out of school children	integrated	local	both	GO	SDC
LGED	Joint	rural		integrated	local	both	GO	GTZ, DfID
FMRP	Joint	both		integrated	central	Primarily supply-side	GO	DfID
MMC	Through intermediary (MSJ)			Stand alone	middle	Primarily demand-side	NGO	Danida (past) DfID
CAMPE	Direct	both		Stand alone	Primarily central	both	CSO	SDC, Sida
CPD	Direct	both		Stand alone	Primarily central	both	CSO	Sida. Norad
Oxfam	Through UK PPA & then through partners	both	women	Stand alone	Local + national level advocacy	Primarily demand side	INGO	DfID
TIB	direct	both		Stand alone	central	both	CSO	DfID Sida Norad
BSSF	Belgian TU	urban	workers	Stand alone	central	Primarily demand side	TU	Belgium
Supreme Court support	Joint			Stand alone	central	Supply-side	Guardian institution	Consortium
GTZ brokered dialogue	GTZ direct	urban		Stand alone	central	both	Donor/TA led	GTZ (Norad supports KN)
Election Commission support	Joint			Stand alone	central	Supply-side	Guardian institution	Consortium
Rupantar	Direct	rural	women	Stand alone	local	both	NGO	SDC
CODEC	Direct	rural	Fishing communities	integrated	local	Demand side	NGO	Danida
Samata	Donor consortium	rural	Very poor & women	Stand alone	Local with national level advocacy	both	Social movement	DfID Sida Norad

<sup>44</sup> Criteria developed in the Inception workshop

The Inception Report provides full details of the outcomes of this workshop.

#### **4. Main Evaluation Phase**

Continuing from the preparatory phase, further interviews were carried out to inform the context analysis. Sets of common questions were not prepared as more fluid discussions were held with the various key informants around the following topics

- i. their perceptions of current CVA activities
- ii. the evolution of these interventions and the opportunities that have been exploited over time
- iii. the constraints to CVA work in the past
- iv. new opportunities/challenges presented by the Caretaker Government
- v. future political context

Interviews were conducted with each of the ECG donors except Belgium (no direct representation in Bangladesh) and Royal Norwegian Embassy (too busy to meet with us). These interviews were intended to gain a better understanding of the donors strategies to support CVA and to facilitate their selection of case studies. We found that the ODI guidelines for these interviews<sup>45</sup> were ambitious given the very short times staff of donor agencies were prepared to give us in December.

#### **Case studies**

Interviews were held in Dhaka and at project field offices. The team made visits to Gazipur, Faridpur, Khulna and Pabna to meet with beneficiary groups and observe project activities.

**Table B.3. Participatory methods used in the case studies**

<b>Intervention name</b>	<b>Participatory methods</b>
1. Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC)	FGD with Centre Management Committees Interviews with programme staff
2. Rural Development Programmes of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)	FGDs with union parishads, community led supervisory committees, community groups involved in consultative processes. Most significant change methodology used Semi-structured interviews with LGED project staff, management advisor.
3. Financial Management Reform Project (FMRP)	Interviews with programme staff and design consultants to establish current experience with and future intentions for citizen engagement.
4. Mass-line Media Centre (MMC)	Visit to information centre and resource advocacy centres and visualised FGDs with users FGD with journalists/staff
5. Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Education Watch	FGD with Education Watch members Interviews with staff
6. Oxfam 'We Can'	Interviews with programme staff. Filed observation
7. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)	FGD with Concerned Citizen committee FGS with Youth Engagement and Support group
8. Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramic	FGD with Trade Union executive FGD general members

<sup>45</sup> ODI Methodological guideline indicated the following Purpose: (i) to gain an overview of the donors' approaches and strategies on V&A in the country; (ii) to explore the drivers and priorities of donors' actions in this sector, including the context, political priorities, etc. (iii) to better understand the programme logic underpinning the V&A interventions supported by donors.

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<b>Intervention name</b>	<b>Participatory methods</b>
Federation (BSSF)	Observation of training and meetings
9. Rupantar	FGD with villagers Interviews with project staff, union and upazila coordination committees. Use of most significant change methodology
10. Samata	Samata has recently undergone an extensive impact evaluation. FGD with women and men's groups. FGD with Women's Action Committee members, FGD with advanced leaders. Use of most significant change methodology
<b>Mini Review</b>	
11. GTZ brokered dialogue	FGD with NGO staff included in dialogue sessions Interviews with Trade union leaders Interviews with GTZ

In addition to the extensive interview and focus group discussion processes, secondary data including Evaluation reports and Annual reports were reviewed. All of these are mentioned in the Summary Sheets (Annex C)

**Models of change** were developed 'to test their main components in relation to how the interventions are actually implemented, the results achieved or not and, crucially, why the implementation logic of a given intervention might differ from the original programme theory'. (ODI methodological Guidelines) These were derived from project log frames where available or from discussions around the intervention logic held with project staff.

**Final Analysis using DAC criteria**

The analysis of the findings of the case studies used the five DAC evaluation criteria;

**Table B.4. DAC Evaluation Criteria and CVA questions**

<b>DAC Criteria</b>	<b>Relevant questions in relation to CVA</b>
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How well matched are V&amp;A interventions to the political and socio-economic context?</li> <li>▪ In what ways do V&amp;A interventions take account of the specificities of the enabling environment?</li> <li>▪ Are opportunities, entry points and risks clearly articulated?</li> <li>▪ Are the objectives and activities of V&amp;A interventions consistent with the key features of the enabling environment?</li> <li>▪ Are the objectives and activities consistent with expected results and outcomes?</li> <li>▪ What are the key assumptions? (particularly for capacity building)</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are project/programme inputs consistent with the efficient achievement of outputs and outcomes?</li> <li>▪ Have project funds been disbursed in ways consistent with the efficient achievement of objectives?</li> <li>▪ Given objectives, were alternative approaches available that could have used resources more efficiently?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have V&amp;A interventions achieved or are likely to achieve their objectives?</li> <li>▪ To what extent is the choice of V&amp;A channels and mechanisms adequate to achieve the intended results?</li> <li>▪ What are the main obstacles/challenges to achieve policy, practice and behaviour change?</li> <li>▪ Has there been any change in objectives?</li> <li>▪ What explains any non-achievement of objectives?</li> <li>▪ Are there unexpected outcomes?</li> </ul>

<b>DAC Criteria</b>	<b>Relevant questions in relation to CVA</b>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the key achievements of V&amp;A interventions in terms of policy, practice and behaviour change?</li> <li>▪ To what extent are these related to outputs and direct results (i.e. capacity building, channels and mechanisms)</li> <li>▪ What are the intended/envisaged pathways from V&amp;A outcomes to broader development outcomes such as poverty reduction and governance?</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How likely is it that outputs supported by V&amp;A interventions will be sustained?</li> <li>▪ What actions/conditions have been put in place to sustain changes in channels and mechanisms for voice and accountability in the future?</li> <li>▪ Will positive changes be difficult to reverse?</li> <li>▪ Are capacities supported by V&amp;A interventions likely to be sustained and result in sustained improvements in V&amp;A over time?</li> </ul>

**Analysis of Donors effectiveness**

An assessment of donors' effectiveness based on the principles of the Paris Declaration was undertaken, using the three principles suggested in the ODI Methodological Guidelines; harmonisation, ownership and mutual accountability.

**Final stakeholders workshop**

A half day workshop with those stakeholders involved in the initial inception workshop as well as staff of case study projects was facilitated to share the main findings of the evaluation with the stakeholders involved and draw joint conclusions from the study.

A power-point presentation of the interventions and findings was made by the research team. Following this, small groups were convened around the following questions:

<b>Break-out Group</b>	<b>Break-out group questions and summary of discussion</b>
<b>Donor Group</b>	<b>How coherent is the donor theory of change about CVA in Bangladesh? Is the total effect of donor activity in CVA more than the sum of the parts?</b>
	<b>How does the donor concern with poverty reduction/MDGs impact on their CVA interventions?</b>
<b>Govt Group</b>	<b>How can government reform itself towards enhanced CVA?</b>
<b>Civil Society Group</b>	<b>Are we witnessing an emergence of a "citizenship culture" in Bangladesh and have the donors played a role in this?</b>

In accordance with DAC Standards on ethics (Standard 7) the anonymity of some respondents has been preserved particularly around issues related to the current political context. Thus, there are some comments in Annex C Context Analysis which are not attributed. Only those interviewees who agreed to be quoted have been acknowledged.

## **Annex C. Context analysis**

The literature review and intervention analysis undertaken by ODI suggests that the context is crucial for understanding and hence assessing CVA (ODI Evaluation Framework, August 2007). The Methodological Guidance thus requires '*a thorough analysis of the socio-political and economic context as an important benchmark for assessing the relevance of CV and A interventions in the specific context where they take place*'. Thus the main purpose of the context analysis is to consider the linkages (or lack of them) between CVA interventions and the political and socio-economic context where they take place'.

### **C.1. Political and institutional framework**

#### **Legal framework**

Bangladesh's Constitution (1972) guarantees protection of basic human rights, including freedom of assembly and expression. Bangladesh has ratified all the major International treaties related to human rights.

The Bangladeshi legal system is regarded as inefficient and lacks accountability. It has been accused of politicisation and corruption. The Constitution calls for the independence of the Judiciary but the lower courts (until end of 2007) have operated under the control of the Executive who decide on appointments, transfers, and promotion of lower court judges and magistrates. The High Court and Supreme Court have also been tarnished by partisan politics as appointments have been traditionally made by the President along party lines. Several attempts to separate the Judiciary by successive governments made little progress due to lack of political will, and despite a 1999 Supreme Court ruling. Progress on this has finally been made under the current Caretaker Government

Article 39 (2) of the Constitution confirms "*a) the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression and b) freedom of the press are guaranteed.*" However, there remain serious issues with regard to rights to information. The Official Secrets Act (1923), the Evidence Act (1872), Penal Code (1860), Government Servants (Conduct) Act (1979) the Code of Criminal Procedure (1960), the Rules of Business (1996) and the Oath of Secrecy are all laws which restrict people's rights of access to information. Article 19 of the Government Servants (Conduct) Act says: "*A government servant shall not, unless generally or specially empowered by the government in this behalf, disclose directly or indirectly to government servants belonging to other Ministries, Divisions or Departments, or to non-official persons or to the Press, the contents of any official document or communicate any information which has come into his possession in the course of his official duties, or has been prepared or collected by him in the course of those duties, whether from official sources or otherwise.*" This Oath has effectively blocked any forms of disclosure. In 2002, the Law Commission drafted a Rights to Information Act but this has never been processed for enactment. Currently, a national movement comprising several civil society organisations and networks is actively demanding for the right to information.

The legal framework for participation is outlined in the Constitution as essentially the right to vote in five yearly national and local elections. The 1991, 1996 and 2001 National elections were regarded by international observers as 'free and fair' and are presided over by the Election Commission. Other provisions for public consultation and inclusion in decision making bodies are largely recommendations rather than legally binding. At the lowest level of local government (Union Parishad (UP)), there are such provisions (see section on local government below) but as UPs are dependent on central government and local elite for financial support there is little incentive to encourage citizen participation.

Bangladeshis have a high level of national identity, bolstered by their history of struggle; Partition (1947) on religious grounds and then linguistically and culturally in their War of Independence (1971). This sense of belonging provides some motivation to hold the state accountable. However, Bangladeshis pay the least tax among South Asian countries. There are only 1.4 million registered taxpayers (approximately 1% of the population), just over 300,000 businesses are registered to pay value added tax and the National Board of Revenue allegedly used to take bribes to assist individuals and businesses to avoid paying tax. This lack of connection to and concern with 'tax-investment' by citizens and business means there is reduced motivation to hold elected national representatives to account. Election preferences are still based on patron-client relationships. Accountability is largely measured by patronage. At local government level where tax collection has been a major focus of development assistance in recent years, there is evidence of increasing demands for accountability.

The political history of Bangladesh is crucial to the understanding of the recent and current situation in which the CV and A initiatives were designed. Typical of many writings on the politics the virtualbangladesh ([www.virtualbangladesh.com](http://www.virtualbangladesh.com)) website notes '*Bangladesh's political scene has been tumultuous since independence. Periods of democratic rule have been interrupted by coups, martial law, and states of emergency*'. (see Box C.1 for an overview of the political history).

When British India was partitioned, the region of Bengal was designated East Pakistan and made part of an independent Pakistan comprising predominantly Muslims. It was made an Islamic Republic within the Commonwealth in 1956 but civilian political rule failed and most of the period until 1972 was characterised by imposition of martial law. Friction between East and West Pakistan (separated by 1000 miles of Indian territory) was rife as Bengalis felt alienated from the West Pakistan dominated central government. Students led the struggle against this domination and, in particular attempts to introduce Urdu as the official language. The Awami League (AL) emerged from a student organisation to become the main force in leading the Bengali autonomy movement. Amid growing demands for self determination, the military regime of Ayub Khan was finally overthrown in 1969 and elections held in 1970. The Awami League won most of the seats in East Pakistan which led to serious impasse about divisions of power between the East and West. Khan suspended the National Assembly which sparked massive protests in East Pakistan. As the leader was arrested, the main party members fled to India to form a provisional government. The Pakistan army instigated a bloody crackdown and the Bengali nationalists (Freedom Fighters) declared an independent Bangladesh. As the War of Independence continued, ten million refugees fled to India. The already tense relations between India and Pakistan (still strained after the 1965 Indo-Pak War) erupted and India intervened on East Pakistan's behalf bringing the Pakistan army to surrender by the middle of December 1971.

Initially, the AL and, in particular its leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ('*Father of the Nation*') enjoyed enormous popular support and in the first parliamentary election held in 1973, the AL won a massive majority. However, the task of reconstruction, re-integrating 10 million displaced Bengalis returning from India, the drought of 1972, cyclone of 1973, widespread famine and an inexperienced civil service and elected Government led to growing civil unrest. In response, a State of Emergency was imposed and major Constitutional reform was enacted instituting a one-party system and limiting the powers of the legislature and judiciary. The AL leader was assassinated in 1975 and drew to an end the domination of the AL in politics.



**Box C.1. Political history in Brief**

- 1947 Partition of Pakistan and India, and establishment of East and West Pakistan
- 1954 Awami League wins elections in E Pakistan, but ousted by the Government of Pakistan within 3 months.
- 1965 Indo-Pak War. Led to increasing feeling of isolation by Bengalis from the West Pakistan-dominated 'united Pakistan' (through culture and language and economic exclusion)
- 1971 War of Independence. Bangladesh declares independence from Pakistan. Provisional Government
- 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh based on AL's four basic *principles; nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy*
- 1973 First parliamentary elections; AL wins with massive majority
- 1974 State of Emergency proclaimed. Constitutional amendment limits legislative and judicial powers and institutes a one party system
- 1975 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of AL, assassinated Series of attempted military coups
- 1977 Gen.Zia Rahman becomes Chief Martial Law Administrator and promises elections in 1978. Floats Bangladesh National Party (BNP)
- 1978 Elections ; BNP wins with 76% vote
- 1979 Election with 30 participating Parties. Zia Rahman survives 20 coup attempts
- 1981 Zia Rahman assassinated in attempted coup. State of Emergency imposed.
- 1982 Bloodless military coup .Gen Ershad suspends Constitution and imposes martial law. Sets in motion de-centralisation programme with local elections. Floats the Jatiya Party (JP)
- 1986 Election; boycotted by BNP, AL contests (lending some credibility to process). Widespread charges of voting irregularities. JP elected with AL as official Opposition.
- 1987 Parliament pushes through Bill to include military representation on local administration. Opposition stage walk out of Parliament. Under Special Powers Act, numerous arrests, violent clashes at protests and marches. Numerous country wide strikes. State of Emergency called and Parliament dissolved.
- 1988 Elections but boycotted by main opposition parties. Amendment to Constitution making Islam the state religion
- 1990 In response to increased strikes, campus unrest, disintegration of law and order, Ershad resigns
- 1991 First multi party elections; BNP wins in coalition with Jamaat-e –islami
- 1994 Perceived rigging of by-election leads to Opposition boycott, more strikes and finally mass resignation of AL Members of Parliament (MPs) with the intention of forcing the government to resign
- 1996 Election called in February but denounced as unfair by the three main Opposition parties. Constitutional amendment made to put in place a Caretaker Government to allow parliamentary elections 5 months later
- 1996 Election: AL wins. International observers satisfied but BNP accuses the Government of vote rigging and walks out of Parliament. BNP returns and stages at least three more walk outs. BNP boycotts by-elections and municipal elections. BNP demands caretaker Government to be put in place for fresh elections.
- 2001 Election; BNP wins with a coalition including several Islamist parties.

( Note: 1973-2001 eight elections held –three under military regimes)

Data sources: <http://en.wikipedia.org>; [www.albd.org](http://www.albd.org) ; [www.stategov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3452](http://www.stategov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3452)

Zia Rahman emerged as a leader from a power struggle among the military and a series of coup attempts following the assassination. He established the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) Zia was assassinated in 1981.

A review of the brief history (Box C1) reveals a pattern of reprisals and standoffs between the three major parties (BNP, AL and JP). The BNP is led by the widow of assassinated Zia Rahman and the AL is led by the daughter of assassinated Sheikh Muhibur Rahman. There is thus enormous animosity between the two which has precluded co-operation, even when trying to oust the military rule of Ershad in the eighties. Elections pre 1991 were all regarded as cosmetic exercises to legitimise the ruling party. Consecutive elections continued to be (even the three post 1991) regarded by losers as unfair and public protests (sometimes violent), *hartals* and boycotts of Parliament and elections have been the main instruments to destabilise the incumbent governments (e.g. 173 days of hartals were called during the BNP term of office and BNP retaliated with 85 days of strikes during the AL term (Datta, 2003)). The boycotts of Parliament have meant that there has rarely been a responsible opposition and stable conditions for operation of parliamentary democracy. Parliament is treated as a forum for the ruling alliance and the Constitution amended to meet their needs thus undermining political legitimacy.

In 2006, Bangladesh plunged into political crisis when the coalition government led by the BNP and AL led 14 party opposition could not reach agreement about the management of elections due in December (this is discussed further below in section C.4).

### **Institutional framework and distribution of powers**

The People's Republic of Bangladesh was declared a *parliamentary democracy* in 1972 following the War of Independence. A Constitution based on the AL's four principles; *nationalism, secularism, socialism* and *democracy* was instituted. It made provision for a largely ceremonial President, a Prime Minister and unicameral (single house) legislature (Parliament) and an independent judiciary. It has undergone 14 amendments since then, many of them of a major nature. The current Constitution bears the most similarity to the original intentions of the first Constitution. Thus, the Executive should comprise a President (Chief of State), Prime Minister (Head of Government) and Cabinet with a 345 member parliament. The most recent Constitutional amendment (2004) secured 45 reserved seats in Parliament for women (increasing the Parliament number from 300 to 345). These seats are distributed among political parties in proportion to the numerical strength in Parliament (although the AL did not take up these in the last Government arguing against the indirect election /nomination of women in favour of direct election).

The President is elected by Parliament every five years and appoints the Prime Minister supported by the majority of Members of Parliament (MPs). Most MPs are elected by simple majority in single member districts through universal suffrage at least every five years (the exception to this is the nominated women members). All adults over 18 are eligible to vote.

The political administrative units comprise six Divisions (regions), sixty four Districts and 4,451 Unions and approximately 80,000 villages (grams). There is an administrative tier between District and Union (at various times referred to as Upazila or Thana and numbering about 460) but although intended to be an electoral unit in the Constitution, elections have yet to be held at this level. The Divisions are placed under a Divisional Commissioner who plays a supervisory role over all the Government agencies and departments at this level. However, the District is the focal point for the administration headed by the Deputy Commissioners. Annual development plans are made at this level, which include all the proposed construction of infrastructure for the District. Municipalities (five have been elevated to City Corporations) and Pourashavas replace thana and unions as the administrative units. Elected mayors run the City Corporations.

Legislation is dominated by the Executive by initiating laws, limiting debate on laws and not passing Bills to Select or Standing Committees. Prime Ministers Question time was introduced in 1997 but has never been fully exploited and is undermined by the Prime Minister's authority to select questions. It has in effect been turned into a propaganda tool.

Despite provision for a separate judiciary from the Executive in the Constitution, this has yet to be operationalised, although recent moves (notably in November 2007) under the current Caretaker Government have set this process well on its way. The Judiciary has thus functioned as an extension of the Executive. The independence of the High court and Supreme Court is inadequate.

### **Public Oversight Mechanisms**

Despite provisions in the Constitution the establishment of effective public oversight mechanisms has been weak. The BNP supported the Ombudsman Act (1980) but then no serious efforts were made to actually establish the Office. The position of Ombudsman has thus been symbolic only and has never functioned as an impartial focus for investigating citizens' complaints against public institutions.

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General has been largely ineffective. Political pressure has circumscribed its role and it was unable to provide independent information. The Public Expenditure Review Commission has identified hundreds of irregularities in public expenditure and wastage of funds as well as criticised parliamentary standing committees for their inability to ensure accountability.

Parliamentary oversight committees have not been particularly effective although some progress was made between 1996-2001. The patron–client nature of politics and inclusion of Ministers in these committees has severely undermined their ability to demand accountability (Ahmed,2001).

The Anti Corruption Commission was set up in 2004 under pressure from the international community. Initially it suffered from accusations that appointments to the Commission were made on partisan grounds. Only since the current Caretaker Government has this body been given the support required to function independently.

A Tax Ombudsman was established in 2004 to deal with tax related mal-practice but an actual appointment was only made in 2006.

### **Governance indicators**

The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project of the World Bank indicates that Bangladesh does not fare well in all of the six indicators examined. The Indicators combine the views of a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. The individual data sources underlying the aggregate indicators are drawn from a diverse variety of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations.

**Table C.1. Worldwide Governance Indicators**

Indicator	2006 percentile rank	Cf 2006 percentile rank India	Cf 2006 percentile rank Pakistan	Comment (by authors)
Voice and accountability	30.8	58.2	12.5	Better score than other indicators but decreasing over the period 1996-2006

Indicator	2006 percentile rank	Cf 2006 percentile rank India	Cf 2006 percentile rank Pakistan	Comment (by authors)
Political stability and absence of violence	8.7	22.1	4.8	Deteriorating-but this last measure made in 2006, which was particularly tumultuous
Government effectiveness	23.7	54	34.1	Worsening
Regulatory quality	20.0	48.3	38.5	Slight improvement since 2002
Rule of law	22.9	57.1	24.3	Worsening
Control of corruption	4.9	52.9	18	Poor and worsening

Data from <http://www.developmentdata.org/governance.htm>

### **Corruption**

A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report noted that corruption is taking a heavy toll on the Bangladesh economy, causing hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of loss in terms of unrealized investment and income (Mustafa, 1997). The report pointed out: "*If Bangladesh were to improve the integrity and efficiency of its bureaucracy, its investment would rise by more than five percentage points and its yearly GDP rate would rise by over half a percentage point*" (Mustafa, 1997).

Transparency International placed Bangladesh at the bottom of the corruption table (Corruption Perception Index) for four years running from 2002 -5.

### **Economic structures and institutions**

The economy of Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable economies in the world characterized by an extremely high population density, low resource base, high incidence of natural disasters, and persistent socio-political instability, especially during the initial years following Independence.<sup>46</sup> Through the 1980s and beyond, observers, infused with "economic pessimism" characterised Bangladesh as a country unable to make the transition to modernity.

In recent years this pessimism has given way to a recognition that Bangladesh is now a lead performer amongst LDCs, graduating into the league of "medium human development" according to the UNDP. Per capita GDP has been growing at an extremely healthy rate of 6-7% (compared to 1.6% in the 1980s and 3% in the 1990s) and recent figures show a significant drop in poverty incidence.

This performance has been aided by a shift to a more "market responsive" economy, built on macroeconomic stability, democratic governance, a growing emphasis on private sector growth as the engine of the economy, liberalisation and outward orientation.

<sup>46</sup> Sen B, M K Mujeri, and Q Shahabuddin (2004). "Operationalising Pro Poor Growth: A Case Study on Bangladesh", unpublished, October. Available at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/oppqbangladesh.pdf>.

Private sector growth in Bangladesh has had a transforming effect on economic opportunities, particularly for women. While remaining primarily an agrarian economy, relying on large-scale subsistence farming, Bangladesh's non-tradeable (construction, services and small scale industry) and tradeable sectors (manufacturing and fisheries) have grown rapidly in recent years. The rapid growth in tradeable manufactures has dramatically transformed the labour market by bringing huge numbers of women into the non-traditional garment sector. Observers note the beginnings of a social transformation taking place, with social and gendered hierarchies under the traditional rural economy beginning to break down as economic modernisation and diversification take hold.

Bangladesh faces a number of serious challenges, however, as a result of rapid economic growth, population growth and urbanisation.<sup>47</sup> It is estimated that the population may be 200 million by 2035, and 240 million by 2050, in a country the size of UK. In 2005 it was estimated that 35 million people (25% of the population) lived in urban areas. This could rise to 80 million by 2030. Dhaka will be among the world's largest mega cities, with major implications for social and economic infrastructure needs as well as urban governance.

Certainly, Bangladesh has sustained good growth rates, and seen poverty reduced significantly, over the past decade or so. However, growth has not benefited all equally: income growth of the poorest Bangladeshis is significantly lower than that of the richest, and these differences are particularly stark in urban areas. Some 40% of the population lives on less than \$1 a day; and 83% on less than \$2 a day. Almost 20 million (over 7%) are extreme poor, living on less than \$0.3 a day.

**Table C.2. Selected Economic Indicators**

Indicator/year	'96	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06
<b>GDP growth %</b>	<b>4.62</b>	<b>5.27</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>5.62</b>	<b>6.27</b>	<b>5.96</b>	<b>6.71</b>
<b>Manufacturing growth %</b>	<b>6.41</b>	<b>6.68</b>	<b>5.48</b>	<b>6.75</b>	<b>7.10</b>	<b>8.19</b>	<b>10.45</b>
<b>Industrial growth %</b>	<b>6.98</b>	<b>7.44</b>	<b>6.53</b>	<b>7.26</b>	<b>7.60</b>	<b>8.28</b>	<b>9.56</b>
<b>Agricultural growth %</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>4.49</b>
<b>Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) inflow US \$mill</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>-</b>

There is a general consensus among the major political parties that Bangladesh should be a market-based democracy.

## **C.2. Mapping and key features of main actors**

### **Political parties**

There are approximately 40 registered political parties in Bangladesh but the most influential are the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), the Awami league (AL), Jatiya Party (JP) and the Jamaat-e-Islami Party. The Communist Party (Jatiyo Samjtranick Dal) has a relatively small following but is forceful.

<sup>47</sup> DFID (2007). "Country Fact Sheet", Dhaka, DFID Bangladesh, December. Available at [http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/bangladesh\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/bangladesh_factsheet.pdf).

**Table C.3. Overview of main political parties**

Party	Date convened	Type of politics	'Pop vox' comments
BNP	1977	Right of centre/conservative	Regarded as being supported by business sector. Credited with bringing socio-economic stability
AL	1954	Originally strongly socialist, currently centre left	Regarded as having more grass roots support, secular interests and 'pro poor'
Jatiya Party	1982	Right of centre	Used to be regarded as largely military supported party.
Jamaat-e-Islami	1941	Largest Islamic political party. Promote Islamic state	A major player in coalition building with both main parties. Funded from the Gulf and ,despite limited popular support ,often exercises power of veto

Since the return to a multi-party system in 1991, there has been growing concerns regarding the mix of business and politics. 60% of MPs in the most recent Government (2001-6) were businessmen (cited BRAC, 2006). Huge sums of money are needed to mount election campaigns contrary to the legal ceiling of US\$8000. Wealthy businessmen are thus actively approached by the political parties for nomination and essentially 'buy' their nomination. Businessmen who *'wish to receive a contract or to conduct business without harassment tend to affiliate with the ruling party'* (BRAC 2006) and there are many advantages including preferential licences

The main political parties are highly centralised and do not demonstrate internal democracy. Party leaders are selected rather than elected. Local level leadership is increasingly competitive but conflicts are resolved through central interventions.

The ruling party has strong influence on local resource distribution; taking control of the Upazila Development Committee and thus allocations of relief, control of government contracts for the construction and repair public infrastructure including of roads, markets and schools

### **Caretaker Governments**

Following repeated protests about the fairness of elections, Bangladesh has instituted a unique system of transfer of power; at the end of the tenure of the government, power is intended to be handed over to members of civil society for three months, who run the general elections and ensure transfer of power to elected representatives. This system was first practiced in 1991 and adopted to the Constitution in 1996 (13<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Constitution, 1996). Under this Constitutional amendment, the President, who is largely ceremonial in the Parliamentary Government has expanded powers in the Caretaker Government (CTG) He has control over the Ministry of Defence, authority to declare a State of Emergency and power to dismiss the Chief Advisor and other members of the CTG.

The caretaker system has been used four times now. According to Datta (2003) 'it underscores the deep-seated distrust among political parties and lack of popular confidence in the ability of elected government to hold, organise and conduct non-partisan elections' but even this arrangement is distrusted by both parties as being partisan.

'Lack of public trust in the elected government has made the caretaker administration an integral component of Bangladeshi politics. At the same time the onset of regular elections has not removed mass politics, public protests and hartals' (Datta,2003)

### **Local Government**

The evolution of the local government system in Bangladesh is rather similar to India and Pakistan. A form of local government has existed for centuries introduced and perpetuated under British rule from 1765-1947. These were mostly intended to ensure tax collection and maintain law and order. General Ayub Khan who seized power in 1958 introduced a system of local government called 'basic democracy'. Since Independence, various forms of local government were experimented with. In 1976, the Local Government Ordinance provided for three tiers; union parishad (UP) (Union Council comprising nine elected members, two nominated women members and two peasant representatives); the thana parishad (Thana Council) consisting of the sub-Divisional Officer, Circle officer and UP Chairmen and the Zila (District ) Parishad to consist of .elected members, official members and nominated women members. District elections were never held and Government officials ran the District Council.

In 1980, the Ordinance was amended to include the institutions of 'village government' (gram sarker) but this was abandoned under martial law in 1982. The last BNP government attempted to re-instate this provision and *gram sarkers* were established but amongst criticism that they were politically appointed with the intention to bolster BNP's otherwise weak grassroots support. Gram sarkers basically do not function at the moment.

In 1988, the Upazila Parishad Ordinance made provision for the Upazila to become the focal point of local administration with a directly elected Chairman, under whom the Upazila Nirbahi officer (civil servant) would manage day to day affairs. This system was abolished by the BNP in 1991 but failed to replace it with any other democratic form of local government. The AL came to power in 1996 and commissioned a Report on Local Government Institutions which recommended a four tier system; village, union, thana and district level and laid down detailed responsibilities for each tier (as shown in the following table)

**Table C.4. Overview of local Government bodies**

Tier of local Government	Composition	Responsibility (according to 1997 Report on Local Government Institutions)
Gram parishad <sup>48</sup>	Supposed to be elected but in fact nominated	Household Socio economic surveys Birth, death , marriage registration Supervision of primary education Maintenance of law and order Ensure participation in local government planning Initiate participatory development of local transport infrastructure Support GO and NGO development activities, including those related to agriculture Plan for natural resource management and development (including tree plantation) Create awareness for better primary health care
Union Parishads	Nine elected members (one per ward) three elected women members (one for each of 3 wards)	As above but also implementation of poverty alleviation programmes
Thana Parishads	Civil servants directly recruited and seconded	As above but also development of integrated Five year development plans on the basis of plans submitted by UPs.

<sup>48</sup> Despite the Gram Sarker Act , this tier has not been properly formed

Tier of local Government	Composition	Responsibility (according to 1997 Report on Local Government Institutions)
	staff from central government, representing all local development agencies.	
District (Zila) Parishads	Supposed to have direct election of Chair and members + ex officio Upazila and Municipality Chairs. Seconded central government staff MPs act as advisors	Monitoring the Thana Parishad Implementing District level development programmes Infrastructure development planning

The functions of local government are mostly of a development nature rather than regulatory. These development functions are implemented by national government agencies (Ministries of Health Ministry of Education, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Agricultural Extension) and so local government's role which is supposed to be supervisory is in fact minimal<sup>49</sup>. UPs have some judicial function in that they conduct local courts (shalish) but they lack authority to ensure compliance of verdicts. The village police are placed under the UP but since they draw their salary from the Upazila Nirbahi Office, in effect they are accountable to him.

The biggest constraints to performing the functions outlined above efficiently and effectively are lack of funds and excessive central government control. Ahmed (1997) noted *'despite the strong support for local government enshrined in the Constitution, the central government has compromised these advantages by exercising control over local government and starving these agencies of resources. Most administrative decisions still remain to be taken centrally. Frequently they involve top-level officials in the secretariat, even some ministers depending on the subject. Several abortive attempts have been made at decentralisation, but the system has remained highly centralised. As such, local bodies are characterised by weak administrative capacity, a limited financial and human resource base and little public participation.'* Though written ten years ago, these observations remained largely true.

The local government bodies are authorised to mobilise and generate resources themselves through taxes, leasing of markets and water bodies and issuance of trade and transport licenses. Until recently the UPs resources generated in this way were passed onto the Upazila Nirbahi officer and released against annual budgets. Further funds were available from Annual Development Plan block grants regulated by central government

In sum, Local government autonomy is extremely limited and all tiers are subject to control by the Central Government through financial and administrative legislation (even local government regulations have to be approved by central government), control of grant awards, control of appointments, inter-institutional dispute resolution and the power to dissolve a local body. Most Governments have been accused of using local government for their own political interests. *'Many a times, LG has been used to provide political legitimacy to the regimes that usurped state powers through unconstitutional means'* (Khan and Hussain, 2001) During the last administration (BNP), the behaviour of MPs was considered particularly interventionist as they were perceived as 'hijacking' resources and by-passing the administration system altogether. UPs claimed that they were increasingly powerless to make any decisions (Samata UP Evaluation, 2004, Sida Reality Check (Unpublished, 2007).

<sup>49</sup> Many NGOs also do not recognise this supervisory role and there has tended to be a lack of collaboration and even competition for implementation of local development programmes.



Khan and Hussain (2001) note three reasons why local government has been 'mere tools of the national government'

- i. the historical legacy- local government was created in the colonial period to ensure tax collection
- ii. democratic governance was not practiced for a considerable time following the formation of Pakistan and during military rule following the emergence of Bangladesh. This led to a dominant bureaucracy.
- iii. politicians at national level did not want to devolve powers to local government out of fear of loss of authority and influence.

### **Local Government capacity**

Although various efforts at various times have been made to strengthen local government bodies, mostly these have been related to structure and relationship. More substantive issues related to devolution of power and functions have not been addressed.

UPs have suffered from being severely under-resourced, poorly informed and qualified and subject to political interference and corruption. The ordinances and guidelines under which they operate are complicated and many UP members are never oriented to these. They do not have a tradition of participation and generally have a poor record of service orientation. Furthermore the monitoring and Evaluation wing of the Local Government Department of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development responsible for monitoring the functions of local bodies is weak and ineffective (Khan and Hussain, 2001) The five year term of office for all elected representatives means that there is potentially a constant turnover, creating a challenge for providing training and support. The National Institute of Local Government has the mandate to provide training for local government personnel but is grossly under-resourced. Few UP members receive training. However, over the last decade increasing attention has been paid to them, particularly with regards to their role in rural infrastructure development. Since 1997, LGED has intensified support to them to prioritise schemes for development, plan and supervise implementation, improve their revenue mobilisation and engage in public consultations. CARE Bangladesh has worked with almost all UPs and built their capacity to plan and manage rural road maintenance. Many NGOs have been providing training and support, particularly to women elected members. The World Bank funded Local Government Support Programme, which commenced in 2006, will provide additional block grants, training and support to all UPs so that they can realise their potential as key local government institutions.

### **Civil service**

About 1 million civil servants are employed in 37 ministries, 11 divisions, 254 departments and 173 statutory bodies (ADB 2005). The civil service is considered to be highly politicised. Research indicates that partisanship often begins at recruitment by the supposedly neutral Public Service Commission (BRAC, 2006).

BRAC (2006) notes that there is little service culture within the civil service due to i. a pre-occupation with on administrative procedure, ii. status conferred by promotion to central administration rather than field, iii. 'embarrassment envisioned from taking orders from *'uneducated and less qualified (UP) chairmen'*'. TIB reports confirm that citizens experience enormous obstacles in accessing public services.

### **NGOs**

Bangladesh has a large, diverse and vibrant NGO sector which enjoys relative independence from Government interference (despite a lengthy bureaucratic process of registration and funding approval). In fact, Government has sought to build partnerships with NGOs, particularly in the education and health sectors to deliver services.

NGOs have an exceptionally strong presence [extending to 78% of all villages (ref: Hunger Project website)] which has evolved from a relief orientation to service provision to promotion of rights and empowerment since Independence in 1971. NGOs were mostly involved in relief and then service provision activities in the decade following the War of Independence. Just as some were beginning to evolve as social mobilisers and interlocutors on behalf of the poor to demand rights, micro-credit arrived and was taken up by practically all NGOs partly as a means to ensure their financial sustainability in the face of donor reduction of support. Many regard the 80s and early 90s as "the lost decade" of NGO activity due to their pre-occupation with micro-credit and the change in the relationship to villagers. This was also the period of the military government of Ershad and NGOs were under constant surveillance for any political activity. There was very little

interest or scope to promote political conscientisation at this time. Most NGOs continue to be engaged in the provision of micro-finance but increasing numbers are adopting a rights based approach to development and encouraging their members to demand their rights and entitlements. The approaches vary between empowering members and facilitating interface with duty bearers to acting as direct interlocutors. NGO members and members of social movements have thus begun to access the political infrastructure through exercise of franchise, contesting local elections, participation in local bodies such as school management committees, (Health) Community Groups<sup>50</sup>, water users groups and shalishes (local courts), as well as participating in (generally) project-brokered consultations.

There have been concerns about the politicisation of NGOs and there were major rifts among NGOs in the recent past which led to the fracture and reconfiguring of major umbrella organisations.

The last ten years has also seen a mushrooming of advocacy and citizen groups in Bangladesh, but there is serious concern that they tend to be urban-centric and that secular organisations have been favoured, thus crowding out indigenous forms of associational life.

### **Media**

Bangladesh media has, in recent years, arguably enjoyed relative freedom from direct government control and censorship. The Constitution guarantees freedom of the press except in matters of state security, defamation and incitement (Article 39). These exceptions limit the reporting of government failures and scrutiny of key leaders. The Government has absolute power in issuing licences. A major part of newspapers' regular revenue comes from Government advertising (tenders etc) and this may constrain editors' independence to some degree. However, the press is probably more influenced by its ownership. Many daily newspapers and TV stations are owned by business and political leaders with an interest in promoting their own agendas.

Legal action by government officials against journalists occurs regularly both at national and local levels. Threats of violence against journalists are also increasing. [Reporters sans Frontières](#), has named Bangladesh as the country with the largest number of journalists physically attacked or threatened with death. Freedom House rates Bangladesh's '*media independence and freedom of expression*' at a relatively moderate to low 4.25. One of the case studies selected in the study (Massline Media Centre) was originally established to build the capacity of grassroots journalists and provide legal support. The risks associated with independent journalism can make support by international donors problematic<sup>51</sup>.

### **Security forces**

All security forces (police, Bangladesh Rifles and the regular army) operate under the civilian government.

Despite ratification of International treaties on human rights, Bangladesh continues to have a poor record on human rights abuses. The police are institutionally weak and corrupt. They have been used by successive ruling parties to arrest opposition supporters during rallies and *hartals*. Often trial was delayed inordinately. In January 2005 a grenade attack on an AL rally killed five including a former Finance Minister. The Government did not meet demands for a public enquiry

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<sup>50</sup> Community Groups were established under the Health SWAP (Health and Population Support Programme HPSP) starting in 1998, comprising local government representatives, local service providers and local residents.

<sup>51</sup> A similar problem exists in supporting other traditionally confrontational 'voices', social movements and Trade Unions

The BNP introduced a new security force in 2004 comprising 'hand –picked' members of the police and army known as the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). This force has widespread public support (BRAC 2006) but donors and human rights activists have expressed concern with the un-democratic means to curb crime. The RAB are accused of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and torture<sup>52</sup>

### **C.3. Social and political landscape**

#### **Exercising voice through franchise**

The US State Department website notes 'despite serious problems related to a dysfunctional political system, weak governance and pervasive corruption, Bangladesh remains one of the few democracies in the Muslim world. Bangladeshis regard democracy as an important legacy of their bloody war for independence and vote in large numbers.

Despite an enlightened Constitution (1972) which made provision for direct participation in constituting local bodies, this ideology has not always been promoted by successive administrations. Elections have not been held at regular intervals and have been boycotted or criticised for lack of fairness.

**Table C.5. Overview of Elections**

Year of election	No of contesting parties	% of eligible population voting
1973	14	55.6
1979	29	51.29
1986	28	66.31
1988	8	51.81
1991	75	55.45
1996 (Feb)	41	26.54
1996 (June)	81	74.96
2001	54	75.59

Ex National Election Commission website [www.ecs.gov.bd](http://www.ecs.gov.bd)

Although candidates are legally not supposed to spend more than US\$8000 on their election campaign, they use a variety of financial incentives to secure votes.

#### **People's participation**

Despite (or perhaps because of?) the poor electoral discipline and its ineffectiveness in promoting democracy, other democratic spaces of civil society voice have emerged in recent times. Think tanks, independent research bodies, development and advocacy organisations and the media are increasingly playing a role in checking the excesses of the ruling elite. However, the main channel for participation has been rallies, 'gheroas' (lock-ins of officials by the public), strikes and 'hartals' (days of non-cooperation). Social movements and unions have used all these forms of protest effectively.

At local government level, the UP Ordinance makes provision for citizens to be co-opted to various standing committees, tender committees but the Deputy Commissioner has the authority to endorse membership. Thus, if these appointments are made at all they have traditionally been made on political bases.

<sup>52</sup> 2007 statistics indicate that RAB had made over 17,000 arrests of (so-called) terrorists or leaders of banned political groups and killed 397 in 'exchanges of fire' (RAB website. 2007)

UP regulation requires them to publicly display their budget, accounts, audit reports and information on major decisions of UP meetings, particularly with regard to development activities. This rarely happens, partly through reluctance on the side of the UP to share but also because the public is unaware of this provision.

Participation at village and union level has been supported by the efforts of NGOs and some Government departments, notably the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), the Department for Social Welfare and Department of Agricultural Extension supported by development assistance. The adoption of participatory consultative planning approaches have been particularly widespread and have become an accepted norm over the last decade although they generally require some form of external facilitation. Most processes actively seek to include the opinions of women and marginalised. The definition of 'marginalised' has evolved and expanded over the last decade. For example, the latest project concept papers describing current Rural Development Programmes of LGED in addition to minimum quotas of women to be included in participatory processes throughout the project cycle, also specifically require inclusion of persons with disabilities and the opinions of school children. Despite these efforts at inclusion, poverty and risk aversion further limit the participation of those living in poverty or otherwise excluded<sup>53</sup>.

Increasingly, civil society groups or NGO supported community groups have taken the initiative to encourage UPs to engage with them through open dialogue meetings and open budget meetings. This has included providing training, orientation and guidelines to UPs to fill the gap in training provision by the National Institute of Local Government due to resource constraints.

### **Women's political participation**

As in other countries, Bangladeshi women face social, economic and institutional barriers to decision making in the household, community and at every level through to national level. They have fewer channels for political representation, to influence policy or to hold the state to account.

For many poor women the first exposure to behaving as a 'citizen' rather than being trapped in patron-client relationships has been as a member of a NGO group or informal labour group. These forums have provided opportunities for self identity, collective action and redressing of collective injustice.

Although the Constitution of Bangladesh as well as numerous legislative provisions and the Government's commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) uphold the principles of gender equality and forbid discrimination against women, there are many challenges to making this a reality. The following table identifies the current challenges to women's political participation.

**Table C.6. Challenges for women's political participation**

<b>Provision/issue</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Voting rights	Women leaders and party workers engage in the task of mobilizing and canvassing voters, particularly women, for their party candidates. By making special arrangements such as separate election booths for women, and females presiding as polling officers, the turnout rate of women voters

<sup>53</sup> Mahmud (2004) further lists poverty, power inequalities, fear of exclusion through dissent, low self esteem invisibility and dominance of party politics as constraints to active citizenship and participation by people living in poverty see Mahmud, S (2004). "Citizen Participation in the Health sector in Rural Bangladesh, Perceptions and Reality", *IDS Bulletin* 35 (2) New Democratic Spaces

Provision/issue	Challenges
	has increased. However, voter harassment still exists, women are often expected to adopt the politics of their spouse, may experience strict religious prohibition (fatwa) and have little political education.
Direct election of women representatives to Union Parishad (UP) for three reserved seats.	The first direct election was held in 1998. Women UP member's constituency covers three wards unlike men who cover only one. Women thus incur relatively higher costs associated with the election process and to adequately represent a large geographic area. Women are often put forward by male relatives who are active politically and rely on these relatives for financial backing. Most elected members are comparatively un-educated and have not served in this capacity before. Independent candidates are harassed and bribed to join established political parties. Newly elected women members report they lack knowledge about their role and Parishad procedures and lack confidence to actively participate in UP business.
At least three of the 13 standing committees of the Union Parishad should be headed by women	Compliance with this provision is variable. All three suggested committees are related to welfare and have little to do with disbursement of resources, thus reinforcing women's subordinate role. Women rarely head other standing committees or chair the UP.
Equality of Union Parishad membership	Women are either sponsored by politically active male relatives or have garnered their support base through NGO groups and federations. The latter are often poor and therefore challenge (but also threaten) the traditional power structure of the UP. Widespread belief still prevails that women should not get involved in politics. Most women UP members regularly attend Parishad meetings, but only a few of them participate in the deliberations and decisions. They are usually confined to involvement with social welfare such as mass education, family planning, immunization, handicrafts, relief activity, and shalish (mediation in the village court). Men withhold critical information, do not inform the women members of meetings and meetings are said to 'have a quorum' without the participation of women. Women are asked to sign blank papers to secure their consent to resolutions without knowing what these might be. Men further sub-ordinate women members by suggesting that whilst they have been elected on merit women are there only by virtue of the quota system.
Village court	The participation of women UP members in village courts (shalish) has seen a remarkable increase but the cases they are asked to mediate are usually related to family disputes and not economic resources (e.g. land, property)
Municipality and City Corporations reserved seats 1/3	Women Ward Commissioners are generally well educated and many are university graduates. Most come from politically active families. However, they do not have role models and find that they are marginalised from decision making.
Collective voice	Women representatives feel isolated and vulnerable. Their

Provision/issue	Challenges
	resource constraints and travel and communications limitations result in minimal exposure to experiences which would enrich their capacity to affect change in their constituencies. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs has highlighted the problem of the lack of integration of small voices and detachment of policy makers from grassroots experience.

Source: Table adapted from a Consultancy Report prepared by Dee Jupp for Nari Uddog Kendro (2006)

### **Informal local Institutions**

In Bangladesh, access to land, education, position and status are strongly linked to ability and willingness to exercise active citizenry. People living in poverty as well as other marginalized groups (ethnic minorities, some occupational groups ) are thus 'lesser citizens' and acquiesce to acceptance of this inequality [referred to by Kabeer (2002)<sup>54</sup> as 'absence of question']. A whole range of institutions and systems which are supposed to be accessible by all are in fact hijacked by the elite, with the prevailing power structures firmly entrenched by social norms. Poverty and risk aversion further limit the participation of those living in poverty or otherwise excluded<sup>55</sup>.

In addition to the UP, there are influential informal institutions which operate on the principles of charity and reciprocity. One of these is based on the family and the male lineage ('*Gushti*'). Many families have systematically captured local resources over decades and continue to exert considerable local power. '*Jama't*' is the name given to the association of men worshipping at the same mosque and '*Samaj*' refers to the wider Islamic brotherhood at local level and inclusion is based on the adherence to Islamic values. The three groups all exert some form of social control. They also have strong influence on resources and formal institutions and maintain their position largely through patron-client relations. Rather than working against the formal system of democracy, these groups have devised ways to ensure inclusion and benefit from the formal system. Thus UPs are often comprised of members of these groups. Watchdog committees, school management committees and other local supervisory committees are also infiltrated by these groups to protect their interests.

### **Minorities**

Bangladesh has a population of 147 million comprising 98% ethnic Bengali. 88.3% are Muslims , 10.5% Hindu, 0.6% Buddhist , 0.3% Christian and 0.3% other. Although initially Bangladesh opted for a secular nationalist ideology as embodied in its Constitution, the principle of secularism was subsequently replaced by a commitment to the Islamic way of life through a series of constitutional amendments and government proclamations between 1977 and 1988. The Constitution establishes Islam as the state religion but provides for the right to practice--subject to law, public order, and morality--the religion of one's choice. Despite these Constitutional guarantees, ethnic and religious minorities do experience discrimination. The Government has recently taken more serious action to protect Hindus, Ahmadis (small Islamic sect) and tribal groups (Adivasis) but it is still generally regarded as inadequate. Adivasis feel that they are regarded as 'second class citizens' and have been the victims of aggressive resettlement programmes and land grabbers.

<sup>54</sup> Kabeer , N.(2002). "Citizenship, affiliation and exclusion; perspectives from the South", *IDS Bulletin* 33 (2).

<sup>55</sup> Mahmud (2004) further lists poverty, power inequalities, fear of exclusion through dissent, low self esteem invisibility and dominance of party politics as constraints to active citizenship and participation by people living in poverty see Mahmud, S (2004). "Citizen Participation in the Health sector in Rural Bangladesh, Perceptions and Reality", *IDS Bulletin* 35 (2) New Democratic Spaces

## **C.4. Recent events that shape opportunities and risks for voice and accountability**

The range of interviewees met during the Inception Phase, (October 2007), concur on the view that Bangladesh is currently experiencing '*uncertain times*'. It is currently governed by a transition Caretaker Government which intends to stand down for national elections to take place by December 2008. This arrangement commenced in January 2007 as a response to months of violent protests by opposition parties over the electoral system and, in particular, the national elections which were to have been held in late 2006.

The Caretaker Government initially enjoyed popular support as it vowed to '*clean up*' politics, in particular, taking tough action against insidious corruption. However, the imposition of a state of emergency which included banning all kinds of political activities, protests and rallies as well as curtailment of freedom of speech was increasingly criticised with allegations of abuse of power. These criticisms came to a head in August, 2007 with a series of violent student protests. On September 10th, 2007, the Caretaker Government lifted the ban on indoor political meetings to pave the way for crucial negotiations between the Election Commission and the political parties on electoral reforms, planned over the following two months. As a consequence of the state of emergency all meetings regardless of the purpose or the convenor (NGO, Trade Union, CSO or Government Department) required police authorization, which included prior approval of all participants as well as the agenda. The impact of this continues to be felt and even government – led consultation processes have been curtailed<sup>56</sup>.

The Caretaker Government is determined to stem corruption before the elections. Over 200,000 people have been arrested including 160 high-profile political leaders and the leaders of the two main parties, both former Prime Ministers who ruled the country for 16 years until October, 2006.

The current situation thus provides both opportunities and challenges for promoting citizens' voice and accountability:

### **Opportunities**

- The suspension of parliament and de-emphasis on partisan politics which has in the past pervaded all aspects of life and livelihoods is regarded by many grassroots citizens as a positive step which empowers them to make demands of and lodge complaints with local service providers '*we would not have dared to before for fear of politically motivated reprisal*' (comments made in field October 2007)
- Consultations with citizens (Sida Reality Check 2007) indicates that there is a strong feeling that the Caretaker Government is 'pro-poor' as evidenced by timely resource distribution (e.g. benefits for the poor, school resources, resumption of free medicine provision in hospitals etc) and a crack down on corrupt practices e.g. broker arrangements (speed money) in health facilities, absenteeism among government officials etc.
- The absence of political interference in the allocation of resources has led to a perceived fairer distribution. Processes such as the award of contracts at local and national level are regarded as more transparent and fair

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<sup>56</sup> e.g. Local Government Engineering Department has suspended its customary village consultation process on small infrastructure priorities and feels that their credibility as a participatory organisation is being undermined.



- The Caretaker Government is emphasizing the establishment and/or operationalisation of guardianship institutions (which support horizontal accountability e.g. Anti Corruption Commission, separation of the judiciary<sup>57</sup>, Electoral Commission etc), which are enshrined in the Constitution but were not enacted.

### **Challenges:**

- The media, which in recent years has become more independent and neutral, has been encouraged to provide extensive coverage of the drive to bring corrupt officials to justice but there is evidence of interference and directives not to publish anti-government material. Private TV companies have been directed to suspend all their programming of current events and political debate
- Civil society meetings, workshops and other forms of association are subject to police approval and censorship
- There are allegations of serious incidents of human rights abuses by the security forces
- The Caretaker Government is seen as promoting strongly secular interests to the exclusion of Islamist ones.

There is much speculation regarding the future. It is feared that despite the efforts to prepare for elections at the end of 2008 including the preparation of a new voters list and ID cards and instigation of new qualifying regulations for candidates, the two main parties will boycott the election. The two year transition period is too short for the establishment of and mobilization of support for alternative political parties. Other scenarios suggest the possibility of an institutionalised and expanded version of the current Caretaker Government arrangement of advisors or further infiltration by the military.

In principle, the Caretaker Government claims to support not only enhancing accountability (where the main opportunities appear to currently lie) but also voice. It has publicly endorsed the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) which remains the key document for alignment of development aid. Under the title 'Unlocking the Potential; National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction, 2005-7', the document spells out a commitment to poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals. Along with growth and human development, governance is one of the three key elements of the policy triangle used in the PRS to determine priorities. The consultations leading up to development of the PRS gave high priority to improving governance and suggested a concentration on the local governance agenda, which is described in the PRS as 'central to the critical issues of decentralized service-delivery, grass-root accountability and the newer focus on regeneration of local economies through relevant partnerships amongst local government bodies, CBOs, NGOs, private sector and central government agencies.' (1.13). Local governance is thus one of the eight strategic agenda (1.15) Promoting 'good governance by ensuring transparency, accountability and rule of law' is also one of the four supporting strategies. The PRS identifies the "needs" of the poor regarding governance as: i) better service-delivery particularly in the areas of health and education, ii) reduction of leakage in targeted programmes, iii) access to justice, iv) regulatory support to the informal and un-organised sectors of the economy where a majority of the poor pursue their livelihoods, and, v) reduction of income erosion threats to the poor due to various forms of insecurity and improper application of power' (4.29). It highlights a need for reformulating the decentralisation agenda to one of promoting local governance as a 'political and institutional process which can contribute to the required scaling up of the rate of poverty reduction

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<sup>57</sup> Historically achieved on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007)

through more effective resource mobilization and enhanced development choices available at local level and better inclusion of all social groups in these choices' (5.441).

Bangladesh is still regarded as a democracy in infancy. The following are the main challenges to maturation (Datta,2003)

- i. Extra-parliamentary protest through strikes and violent activism have become the most effective way to confront elected government thus weakening the democratic process.
- ii. failure to operationalise guardianship institutions to monitor the activities of the executive
- iii. religious extremism has flourished as a result of political instability and poor governance

Nevertheless, enormous progress has been made in terms of political empowerment of citizens and the use of different channels, particularly the media, to expose malpractice and public service inefficiencies. There is thus a growing demand for accountability of the state and private sector which now needs to respond. While vested interests have militated against a willingness to open up to public scrutiny, citizen voice is gathering strength and moving towards a critical mass which the state will soon not be able to ignore. As tax revenue collection increases the strength of demands will also increase. The hope of many is that the window of opportunity conferred by the current CTG will enable the firm establishment of institutions and structures which will aid public accountability. Many actually hope that the CTG will stay in office longer than the two years proposed to provide sufficient time for these frameworks to be fully operationalised and prove efficacy.

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## C.5. Donor Landscape

Table C.7. CVA donor landscape: Development partners involved in this joint evaluation

(NB those highlighted in red have been selected for the Case Study)

Development partner	Strategic intent	Project intervention (with CVA component)	Specific CVA intervention
DFID	DFID' is currently revising its Country Assistance Plan but intends to emphasise <b>better governance</b> as a key focus.		
	Promotion of human rights and good governance	Mannusher Jonno Foundation (funding intermediary) Includes funding for <b>Massline Media Centre</b> and <b>We Can programme ( Oxfam led)</b> , Rights to Information programme ( including BBC Sanglab) garment workers rights ( including <b>Kormojobi Nari, Phulki</b> , Nari Uddog Kendra), rights of ship breakers (IPSA), shrimp workers (SAFE)	Small projects to promote voices of people whose rights are denied and violated
	Political empowerment and improved access to resources	<b>Samata ; Empowerment of the Landless through Resource Mobilisation (2001-2008)</b>	Social mobilisation and support to realise rights to resources and information and counter exploitation
	Political empowerment and improved access to resources	Nijera Kori; Social Mobilisation , Voice and Democracy Programme 2001-8	Social mobilisation of women's groups to act as lobby /pressure groups
	Create increased demand for transparency in public, non profit and private sector transactions	<b>Transparency International: 2003-7</b>	Social mobilisation
	More effective legal services and access to justice	Bangladesh Legal Aid services Trust (BLAST) 2003-8	Advocacy for increased access to justice for the poor
	Transparency in design and implementation of market and village roads construction and maintenance	<b>Rural Infrastructure Development Programme RIIP II (2007- 11)</b>	Strong community participation element to ensure infrastructure is a. a priority b. user friendly c. includes needs of women and persons with disabilities
	More efficient and accountable public administration	<b>Financial Management Reform Programme (1994-</b>	New current phase includes civil society component
		Considering providing support to Parliamentary Standing Committees in the future.	
NORAD	MOU between Norway and Bangladesh (until April 2008) highlights <b>good governance</b> as the overriding concern, including the fight against corruption, enhanced financial management and respect for human rights.		
	Promotion of women's voices through network	Nari Pokkho: Women's Network (1996-2008)	Local movements strengthened,

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Development partner	Strategic intent	Project intervention (with CVA component)	Specific CVA intervention
	and national platform		focus on violence against women
	Empowerment of working women	Kormojobi Nari (2000-8) see under GTZ brokered dialogue	
	Promotion of women's rights	Bangladesh Mohila Parishad (1996-2008)	
		Ain O Shalish Kendro (1997-2011) see below under Sida	
		Samata ( see above under DFID)	
		Centre for Policy Dialogue ( see below under Sida)	
		Mannusher Jonno ( see above under DFID)	
		Asia Foundation ( see below under Sida)	
		Transparency International ( see above under DFID)	
		BLAST (see above under DFID)	
GTZ	Governance and local development is one of three priorities for Germany's Development Cooperation with Bangladesh ( other two are health and energy)		
		Rural Road and Market Improvement Programmes e.g. RIIP II (see above under DFID)	Civil society participation in planning and monitoring
	Promotion of women's rights	Support to local Women's NGOs under Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs.	
	Adoption of international labour laws	Brokered dialogue with garments industry stakeholders around compliance with international labour laws	Direct technical assistance by GTZ to facilitate discussion
		Good governance in Pourashavas ( secondary towns) to start in 2008	Strengthen civic engagement
Sida	Sida has a new Country Strategy (2007) which applies Sweden's global policy of the rights perspective and poor people's perspectives on development. <i>Participation, non discrimination, transparency and accountability</i> are its four underpinning principles for its work in policy dialogue, interventions in education and health and work with NGOs, media and CS to build demand-side pressure.		
		Samata ( see above under DFID)	
		Transparency International ( see above under DFID)	
	Promoting women's rights and changing attitudes ( rather than policy)	Steps Towards Development (2003-7) – a lead in the We Can programme (violence against women initiative)	Enhancing women's participation in decision making and governance at institutional, political and community levels
	Promoting gender equity	Ain O Shalish Kendra (2003-7)	Community activism for gender and social justice. Advocacy.
	Realisation of human rights and	Bangladesh National Women Lawyers association	Awareness raising, strengthening of

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Development partner	Strategic intent	Project intervention (with CVA component)	Specific CVA intervention
	democratization	(2003-7)	legal services, empowering women workers to negotiate rights
	Independent research/ debate	Centre for Policy Dialogue ( 2004-9)	Review and dissemination of macro-economic performance
	Building democratic culture through dialogue	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (2004-7)	Raise awareness of democratic principles & encourage citizen participation
	Improve accountability of national elections	The Asia Foundation (2006-7)	Election monitoring, voter and civic education, better candidate accountability, strengthening of Election Commission
		<b>CAMPE (see below under SDC)</b>	Education Watch
		Funds reserved for Children's Ombudsman- when moment right	
Danida	Danida's Country Strategy (2005-9) highlights to promotion of democratization and respect for human rights, intending to increase the participation and voice of the poor, improve public accountability and transparency. Danida has a programme of human Rights and Good Governance with a separate component ' <i>Transparency and Accountability</i> '		
		<b>Transparency International ( see above under DFID)</b>	
	Separation of the judiciary to enhance accountability and transparency	Local Consultative Group working committee <sup>58</sup> supporting the Separation of the Judiciary and strengthening the Supreme Court	
	Access to justice	Madaripur Legal Aid Association	Raising grassroots voices for access to justice and local government services
	Citizen participation in local government	Democracy Watch ( with USAID)	Inclusion of citizens in Union Parishad budget discussions. Direct participation as elected representatives
	Women's political empowerment-	Nari Uddog Kendro Nari Pokkho	Network of women elected representatives at union, district and national levels. Political education. Making policies more women freindly
	Social and political empowerment of fishing communities in coastal belt	CODEC	Group formation and interface with union parishads
	Social and political empowerment	Various Adivasi partners	Mobilisation, organisation of tribal

<sup>58</sup> World Bank, UNDP, CIDA, DFID , Danida and GTZ

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Development partner	Strategic intent	Project intervention (with CVA component)	Specific CVA intervention
			groups to raise voice
	Social and political empowerment	Durjoy Nari Shanga ( association of sex workers)	Raising voice on rights and social inclusion
	Information provision	Massline Media Centre (see above under DFID)	Journalist training, support to media debates etc
	Enhanced local government responsiveness to citizen concerns	WAVE Shushilan	Engagement of civil society with local government institutions. Raising grassroots voices to demand more effective local government
		BLAST (see above under DFID)	
		Local Government Support Programme (see SDC below)	
		Support to Parliamentary Standing Committees ( with UNDP)	Capacity building of MPs. Provision of computer technology
		Centre for Policy Dialogue ( see above under DFID)	
		Election monitoring	
		Monitoring of the PRS ( in pipeline)	
		Financial Management Reform Programme (see DFID above)	
The Directorate General for Development Cooperation of Belgium	There is no programme in Bangladesh but the Trade Union Movement, The World Solidarity Movement (WSM) (Brussels) supports WSM Bangladesh		
	Promotion of independent Trade Union voice	BSSF Workers Federation	Strengthen internal governance Capacity building to fulfil role more effectively.
Swiss Development Cooperation	SDC is currently developing a new Country Strategy which will take effect from 2008 and will expand its focus on <b>local governance</b>		
	Enhanced local government services	Local Government Support Programme – Learning and Innovation Component ( since 2007)	Promotion of dialogue on voice and accountability
	Promotion of government –community partnership with community managed funds	Reaching out of School Children	Mobilise community to form committees to manage education centres,
	Political empowerment	Rupantar	Use of drama to promote women in local government and advocacy networks on rights issues
	Strengthen local government through water and sanitation initiatives	Dascoh	Strengthen water and sanitation committees and water user organisations. Promotion of transparent tendering processes.
	Promotion of rights of Shantals and Orao	Ashrai	Rights education Promotion of

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<b>Development partner</b>	<b>Strategic intent</b>	<b>Project intervention (with CVA component)</b>	<b>Specific CVA intervention</b>
	(minority ethnic groups)		platform for minorities to dialogue with local government
	Advocacy for education	<b>CAMPE (Campaign for Popular Education)</b>	Education Watch
	Promotion of voice ( around economic activities)	LEAF	Supports indigenous community based organisations to interface with local government on agro-forestry, horticulture and other farming issues
	Addressing community development priorities	Sunamganj SHARIQUE	Action research to promote community driven local level planning and development



**Table C.8. CVA donor landscape: Development Partners not involved in this Joint Evaluation**

<b>Development partner</b>	<b>Strategic intent</b>	<b>Project intervention (with CVA component)</b>	<b>Specific CVA intervention</b>
World Bank	<b>Overall</b> The Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (06-10) aligns with the Bangladesh PRS by emphasising two pillars i. empowerment of the poor and ii. improving the climate for growth. This is supported by the cross cutting theme of <b>good governance</b>		
	Enhancing local government responsiveness to community priorities	Local Governance Support programme (LGSP) 2006-11.	Mobilisation of communities to prioritise needs
	Community driven development (CDD) in small scale infrastructure and social assistance programmes	Social Investment programme 2003-9	Building the capacity of Village Development Committees
	Enhanced urban services	Municipal Services Programme 2002-7	Strengthen capacities of municipalities and City Corporations. Strengthen civic engagement around access to urban services and housing.
	Improve governance in public procurement	Public Procurement Reform Programme 2002-13	Promote greater public awareness and engagement in procurement monitoring
	Improving efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of civil justice delivery system	Legal and Judiciary Capacity Building Programme 2001-07	
UNDP	<b>Overall</b> UNDP's Country Assistance Strategy (2006-10) aligns with the PRS and within its democracy and governance programme prioritises i. parliamentary development, ii. electoral reform, iii. civil service modernisation iv justice and human rights. This is further elaborated in the Strategic Plan (2008-11) i. fostering inclusive participation (electoral process and civic engagement) ii strengthening accountable and responsive government institutions iii. grounding democratic governance in international principles.		
	Scaling up best practices of Sirajganj project (active since 1999)	Local Government Support Project -Learning and Innovation Component 2006-11	Promote local accountability institutions
	Empowerment of urban poor and capacity building of local government	Local Partnership for Urban Poverty Alleviation	Support to Community Development Committees and Development of Community Action Plans
	Civil service improvement	Developing Civil Service Capacity for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Administration	Training and capacity Building within Bangladesh Public administration

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<b>Development partner</b>	<b>Strategic intent</b>	<b>Project intervention (with CVA component)</b>	<b>Specific CVA intervention</b>
			Training Centre
	Enhance police practice	Police Reform Project	Support to community/police/media relations
	Raise public awareness on corruption	Anti Corruption Advocacy Campaign	Support to TV shows, e governance, journalist training
	Transparent accountable local justice system	Activating Village Courts ( to start 2008)	
	Free and fair elections	Support to Electoral Process	Capacity building of Electoral Commission
USAID	<b>Overall</b> USAID's Strategic Statement (2006-10) identifies three focal areas : <i>democracy and human rights; economic prosperity; and investing in human capital</i> . It includes among its objectives ' <i>More effective and responsive democratic institutions and practices</i> '		
		Under its <b>democracy and governance</b> portfolio, USAID supports i. debates and surveys on the state of democracy, ii. the establishment and support for Associations of Elected Representatives ( e.g National Union Parishad Forum), iii, Children's Councils, Transparency International, iv human rights organisations and coalitions, v. political party reform vi. Parliamentary Committee strengthening	
CIDA	<b>Overall</b> CIDA's Country Development Programme Framework (2003-8) identifies four priority sectors: <i>basic education, primary health care, private sector development, and governance</i> . CIDA also has <b>governance</b> as a cross cutting theme running through all its programmes .		
	Improved governance of the electoral process	Fair Election and Institutional Reforms Project 2005-10	i. Support to citizen-government dialogue, ii. strengthening civil society role in ensuring integrity of electoral process and empowerment to demand accountability form, elected representatives iii. enhanced independence of the Electoral Commission.
	Enhanced gender responsive policy, planning and monitoring	Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equality 2004-9	Strengthen capacity and linkages among government and non government institutions
		A number of NGO programmes promoting women's rights (LOSAUK, STD, Dhrubo Society ) worker rights (CDMS, USHA, BARCIK voter education	

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Development partner	Strategic intent	Project intervention (with CVA component)	Specific CVA intervention
		(MMC, UTTARAN, GKS, ESDO, YPSA) gender equality in Local government ( UTTARAN, South Asian Partnership), enhancing role of civil society in local governance (Gandhi Asram Trust, MROCHET) influencing policy ( Unnayan Shamannay) promotion of women journalists (BNSK)	
EU	<b>Overall</b> The EU Country Strategy (2007 13) addresses three focal areas identified in the PRS: i. <i>Social sectors with preference for education ii. Good governance and human rights and iii. Economic and trade development</i>		
	Provision of pro-poor government services in effective and accountable manner	Local Governance Support project –learning and Innovation Component (2007-12)	
	Support marginalised groups to exercise franchise	Civic Awareness ( 2006-7)	Working with 11 NGOs to support vulnerable groups to make informed choices in the elections
	Influence policy through advocacy	Disabled Peoples' Rights and Inclusion Project (2007-10)	Support to the formation of Disabled People's Organisations and their federation so that they can act as effective advocacy and pressure groups
	Enhanced voice	Strengthening Communities Rights and Empowerment (SCORE) (2006-9)	Enhance community participation and raise people's voice to influence government policy and practice at local and national levels
	Advocacy	Integrated Community Development Project for Minorities of the Coastal belt (2007-9)	Support advocacy efforts by 'excluded' groups
JICA	<b>Overall</b> JICA supports the tenets of the PRS contributing to the goal of poverty reduction and concentrates in three areas i. <i>social development and human security, ii. pro poor economic growth and ii. governance</i>		
	Community participation	Participatory Rural Development Project (II) (2005-10)	Use of the Link Model to build relationship between villages ( Village Committees) and local government
	Supply side capacity building	Enhancing Capacity of Public Service Training (2007-10)	Extensive training in Total Quality Management
ADB	ADB's Country Strategy and Program (2006-10) aligns with the PRS and emphasises three focal areas i. <i>promoting sustainable economic growth, ii. fostering social development iii.</i>		

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<b>Development partner</b>	<b>Strategic intent</b>	<b>Project intervention (with CVA component)</b>	<b>Specific CVA intervention</b>
	<i>good governance</i>		
	Improved access to urban services	Urban Governance Infrastructure Improvement Project	Participatory planning in pourashavas (secondary towns)
	Enhanced capacity of urban poor to access urban services	Participation of the Urban Poor in Municipal Governance 2005	Social mobilisation, participatory planning, establishment of Municipal Forums comprising urban poor, elected representatives and municipal officials
	More effective and efficient public sector with less corruption and improved public confidence	Supporting Good Governance Initiatives	Technical support to Anti Corruption Commission
Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE)	RNE supports the PRS with emphasis on four sectors; <i>i. integrated water resource management, ii. basic health, iii. basic education iv. Rural electrification</i> . It emphasises <b>good governance</b> and gender equality as cross cutting themes and as strategic foci in their own right through a focus on <i>i. ensuring human security and human rights</i> (particular support to VAW and elimination of child labour initiatives) <i>ii. fighting corruption</i> and <i>iii. enhancing democracy</i>		
	Improve efficiency and effectiveness of public administration	Financial Management Reform Programme	
		Election Monitoring and programmes to promote women's political participation	

## **Annex D. Intervention summary sheets**

## **D.1. Reaching Out-of-School Children (ROSC)**

### **I: Profile of the Intervention**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Details</b>
1. Donor agency	SDC, World Bank / IDA
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) through its second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP II).
3. Objectives : regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	To provide equitable access to out of school children in area where the poverty incidence is highest, enrolment & gender parity is lowest. The project focuses on partnership among government - service providers and the community and on (programmatic and financial) decentralization, delegation and de-concentration.
4. Main CVA and other activities	The establishment of primary schools in rural communities with high drop-out rates, and the incorporation of parents and / or community members into the management of these through the establishment of Community Management Committees (CMCs).
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	Primary school "drop-out" children; ages 7 to 14, approximately 0.5 million nation-wide.
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes	The project is linked to and implemented through the PEDP II under the government's National Plan of Action for Education for All (EFA 2002-2015), making education compulsory accessible and all-inclusive.
7. Duration	5 years
8. Starting date	July 31, 2004
9. Total budget	Euro 40.8 million (US\$ 62.8 million)

### **II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria**

#### **Relevance**

The ROSC initiative is highly relevant. It directly addresses the significant obstacles to attaining full enrolment rates (compulsory under EFA), such as:

- grinding poverty within certain communities making attendance too costly for families, or lack of interest / tradition of school attendance on part of parents;
- belonging to a minority / disadvantaged groups (or castes) which are "dislocated" (isolated) from the mainstream of the larger community;
- lack of capacity of government officials to enforce EFA.

Arguably, the relevance of ROSC in terms of CVA is further strengthened by mechanism of empowering parents and community members as "real" stakeholders by encouraging (and enabling) their management of the schools at the community / village level.

#### **Efficiency**

ROSC has made good use of local resources exemplified by 1) recipient communities donating part of their private land for use of the schools, and remaining physical facilities, against a one-time grant of Taka 2000, and 2) utilizing existing service delivery function of NGOs as trainers, facilitators for teachers and stakeholders.

This efficiency gain through local donations is not, however, without problems. A focus group discussion with CMCs revealed that a problem with one school visited was that the landlord who

donated his land in exchange for Taka 2000 (provided as a grant by ROSC) now wanted to increase his rent and so was pressuring the CMC to collect more rent-payments from parents. Discussions with key informants suggested that this might be a significant problem in other ROSC communities.

### **Effectiveness**

Three years into the programme, in July 2007, 351874 students were enrolled into the ROSC School programme (out of the 0.5 million target). The drop-out rate from the ROSC schools is low, at 0.28 % in 2007, down from 0.48 in the previous year.

### **Impact**

#### **Students**

There have been positive impacts on students. The project has delivered primary education to some 350,000 children in the poorest regions of the country. An SDC-commissioned study found that 90% of the children are from households that live below the poverty line. Many project schools are in remote and inaccessible areas. Approximately 10% of households are headed by widows. A 50: 50 gender parity between boys and girls has been achieved.

The SDC study also found (in their sample survey) a significant educational achievement of students. Almost 60% of students attained more than 65 % in Bangla and 63% attained more than 65% marks in Maths.

There were, however, some problematic impacts in respect of students: 37% enrolled children in the survey were found not to meet the eligibility criteria of a) being drop-outs and b) being under the age of 15. This partly reflects the demand for schooling in remote areas, but may indicate an area of systems loss.

#### **Communities**

The project has had positive impacts on the local communities. A unique feature of the ROSC programme, and of special relevance to this CVA study is the set of activities surrounding local management and oversight of the schools through the Community Management Committees (CMCs), comprised of 5 parents, a female ward member, an Upazila<sup>59</sup> education officer (Ministry EDU), an education expert, a headmaster of a nearby government primary school and a teacher who acts as secretary.

The primary objective of establishing the CMCs is to empower the communities, particularly women, to ensure institutional autonomy and accountability. The CMCs are responsible for selection of teachers as well as their salary structure and payment schedule, supplied through the ROSC project in form of grants based on the child's entry into the programme.

The incorporation of the CMCs as a central management force of the program seems to go a long way to improving voice of otherwise marginalized parents across the country, enabling them to hold government better accountable for their children's constitutional entitlements to education, as citizens of Bangladesh.

Additionally, focus group discussion at the community level, using the Most Significant Change (MSC) method (see Table 1) revealed that:

- Parents had grown more confident and adept in a variety of social and administrative skills through their activities at the CMC. The CMC activities were a positive learning experience for parents, who could better express themselves, communicate and hold meetings, use bank accounts and learn to save money;
- The establishment of the grant system, distributed through the Sonali Bank, meant that parents would now access bank accounts in their names and make transactions on behalf of the family. Especially for women members this seemed to represent a significant empowerment function, as they became the holders of tuition fees, 'tiffin' allowances and teachers salaries;

<sup>59</sup> Upazila refers to a non-elected administrative tier between the District and Union levels (see Glossary)

- One teacher stated that members were now more socially responsible, and would act as mediators within the community, visiting other family houses to encourage attendance of their children;
- NGOs were more easily accessed in the vicinity providing benefits such as micro-credit and learning centres for adults.

In marginalized communities such as the Hindu cobbler caste community in Kiddipur village (see Table 2) visited during the evaluation, there are indications that the ROSC intervention has helped to enhance both the self-image and external image of the communities and their residents. This increased respect in the case of the cobbler community is likely to have been as a result of the *cumulative* impact of ROSC and other NGO activity in the community.

There were also some problematic impacts in respect of communities. Nepotism is a significant phenomenon under the CMC management system as 40% of teachers appointed are directly related to the chairperson of the CMCs, according to the SDC survey. The report, as well as our interviews, indicates that the manipulation of the CMCs for the personal gain of local elites is a concern. The SDC report states (somewhat cryptically): "In the schools where the learning outcomes are not very positive, the CMCs are controlled by powerful men or the teachers. (In these cases) the functioning of the CMCs is without active participation of the community" (p. 6-3, Mapping the Profiles of Learners).

### **Sustainability**

The ROSC project is referred to as a "stop-gap" programme (by donors and the implementers). As such, it is intended to fill the gap of the current inadequacies of the PEDP II, until its capacity to enrol out of school children by the project end in 2009 would be reached. Exactly how this capacity will be achieved, aside from intentions to increase the supply side of the educational interventions (facilities etc), is somewhat unclear, given the significant poverty-related obstacles to keeping children in school (outlined above).

In this regard, The World Bank Project Appraisal Report states that the strategy of the MoPME is, via the ROSC experience, to test and rigorously evaluate alternative approaches, enhancing the demand side of educational access and delivery of quality education (p. 2).

Our interviews with SDCs ROSC programme coordinator and the ROSC director (implementer) gave conflicting responses regarding the CVA intervention via the CMCs. According to SDC, the CMC's structure would be incorporated into the government's mainstream program under PEDP II. This claim was not supported by the programme director at Ministry of Education.

As noted in the World Bank Appraisal Report, the study recognises an important opportunity in learning from the demand level interventions of ROSC, and seriously considers that the derived benefits to the project beneficiaries could significantly improve CVA within schools nation-wide. We believe replication of demand-driven CVA type interventions would go a long way to improve educational service delivery within PEDP II.

### **Lessons Learned**

The ROSC strategy is an innovative example of stimulating and enabling an environment of better accountability by allowing citizens voices to be heard in the public sphere. In contrast to "the name and blame culture" of typical GO / NGO interaction, it is refreshing to see government and NGOs working cooperative rather than adversarial role. The study team witnessed a positive management culture at the ROSC headquarters, with a seeming degree of managerial autonomy from the MoPME, which perhaps accounts for this positive atmosphere.

### **III: Models of Change Developed**

The ROSC model of change (see Figure 1) is based on a CVA approach that assumes that supply-side interventions focusing on building more schools and classrooms and hiring more

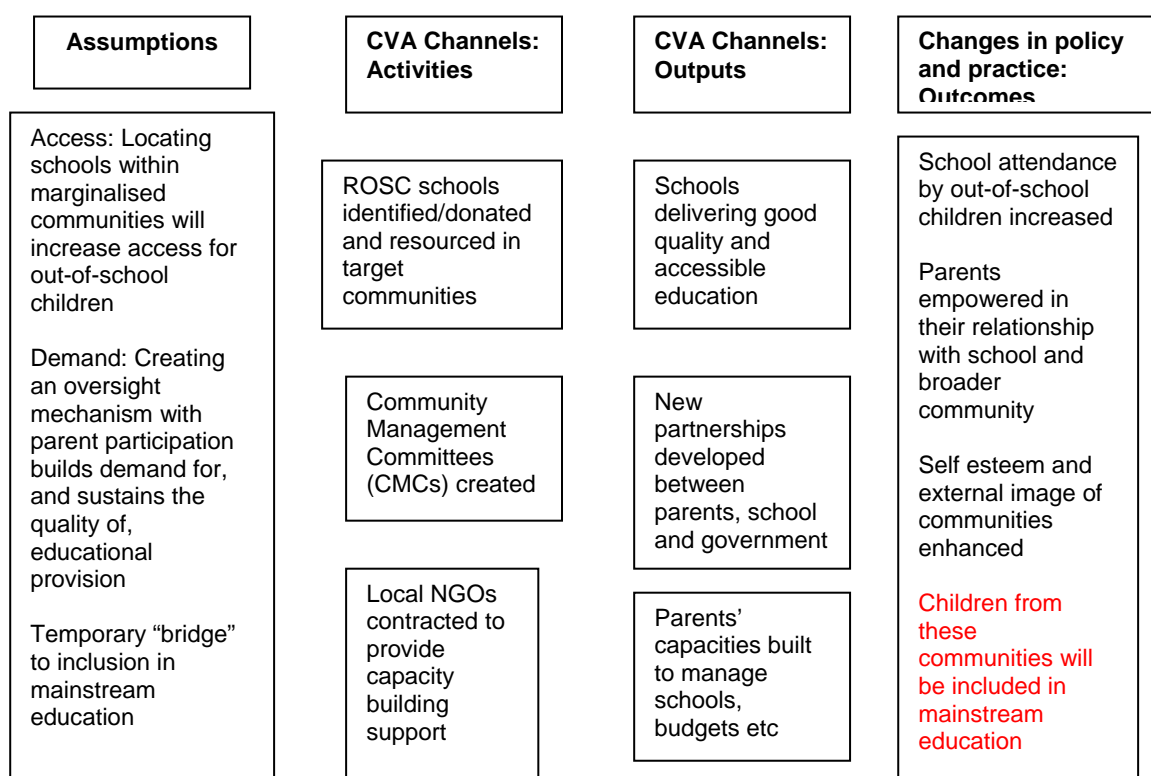


teachers does not tackle the root causes of non-attendance. Some supply side intervention – identifying buildings and resourcing them in marginalised communities -- is necessary (in order to increase access for out-of-school children those communities to access school) but not sufficient to attract these children to school.

The model assumes that it is necessary to develop “demand-side” interventions, by compensating the children and their families for the direct and indirect costs, by providing an attractive learning environment and by creating an oversight mechanism with parent participation. The development of such an environment requires both community / parent participation and oversight of learning centre management as well as providing flexibility in letting the learning centres manage and allocate the resources with some degree of autonomy.

There is a further “effect assumption” in the ROSC model that the project, through its success at tackling the root cause of non-attendance, will make itself redundant in the medium to long term. In other words, the ROSC model is intended to act as a temporary “bridge”, bringing existing out-of-school children into ROSC schools, while ensuring that their younger brothers and sisters will be included in mainstream education in the future as their families become empowered while recognising the true value of education for their children. This assumption is unproven and while this micro level CVA approach to empowering parents, while having a demonstrable impact on the families involved, may not be a sufficient policy response to the twin systemic challenges of high poverty levels and entrenched social exclusion.

**Figure 1. ROSC CVA Model of Change**



#### IV. Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work

##### Documents

SDC, 2006. ROSC Credit Proposal, 7 July

SDC 2005. *Agreement between the Govt of the Swiss Confederation and The GoRPB on Financial and technical Cooperation for the ROSC Project*, February

World Bank, 2004. *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Grant to the PRB for a ROSC Project*, Human Development Sector Unit, South Asia Region, May 19

GoPRB, 2004. *Project proforma: ROSC Project*, August

Mira A, S D Khan and F Mannan, 2006. *Mapping the Profiles of Learners and other Stakeholders in the ROSC Project*, SDC Dhaka, February

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Interaction, 2005. *Boosting the Chairpersons and Teachers of Ananda School Stopgap Orientation: An Evaluation Report*, SDC Dhaka, October

DoPE, 2004. Project Operation Manual 3.1. Management of Ananda School: Education Allowances and Grants, September

DoPE, 2004. Project Operation Manual 3.2. Management of Ananda School: Education Grants Only, September

DoPE, 2006. *Introducing ROSC*, November (Booklet)

##### Interviews/Focus Groups

Tahsinah Ahmed, Senior Programme Manager (SDC)

A K Nazmuzzaman (Joint Secretary), Project Director

Upazila Education Officer, Narsigdi

FGD with CMC, Modhu Para in Chinish village

FGD with CMC, Rishi Para, Kiddipur village, Norsindi.

**Table 1. Most significant change analysis, conducted by focus group of CMC members, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (6 women), Modhu Para in Chinish village**

##### **What has been the most significant change in the past ten years?**

- Getting allowance and uniforms; sending children to school regularly. The local school is far from here; this school is close. Children who were deprived of education are now in school. "It makes us happy that our children can read and write. They sketch pictures and do crafts"
- Financial support (tiffin/"snacks") of T50/month
- We are happy that our children will have a more hopeful future (we are illiterate)
- We have learned a lot through CMC membership. We meet once a month. We ask the teacher what is going on and we have learned to express our opinion
- Personally, we are more confident about talking with strangers, relatives and husbands
- Teacher: The CMC helps me a lot: makes it easier to run the school and the children are well behaved and respect me

**Table 2. Most significant change analysis, conducted by focus group of CMC members, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (8 women), Rishi Para in Kiddipur village (A Hindu village of cobbler occupational caste)**

<b>What has been the most significant change in the past ten years?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our children didn't go to school before. Now they are getting an education.</li><li>• The CMC has a new experience of working together</li><li>• We have changed as a result of our CMC membership. We feel happy to be involved and we have much more confidence</li><li>• People from other villages used to call us by derogatory names ("rishi") but now we feel that they treat us with more respect<sup>60</sup></li><li>• We see education for our children as the key to removing our problems and giving them a better future with more opportunities</li><li>• Teacher: I see more responsibility on the part of these women beyond their role in the CMC, e.g. mediating conflict within the Para and visiting parents' houses to get them to send their children to school<sup>61</sup></li><li>• The houses in this community are now better built and the community is now neat and clean. People have TVs and now can save money. These improvements are due to NGO activity, including ROSC, BRAC micro credit activity and an Education centre for Adults.</li></ul>

<sup>60</sup> This Hindu low caste community feels pressured and degraded in some instances by some surrounding Muslim communities.

<sup>61</sup> The ROSC school teacher in this village is actually a village resident which is a great advantage and "almost unique" in ROSC.

## D.2. Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)

### I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	DFID (RIIP II) , GTZ (RIIP 1 and II) ( cases also compared with RDP 26 (Rural Transport Improvement Project supported by World Bank)
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	Local Government Engineering Department (LGED).
3. Objectives : regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	<p>Within large local infrastructure development projects (roads and market development) '<i>to reduce poverty through sustainable growth, rural development and improved physical infrastructure</i>' there are components which focus on local government capacity building and enhanced community participation</p> <p>WB supported Local Government Improvement Project (LGIP, within RDP 26) ) makes the objective more specific' <i>to address the internal weaknesses of the UPs</i>' and '<i>enhance transparency, accountability and participation in UP functioning</i>'. The team was informed that this is also the intention behind the UP capacity building elements of RIIP1 and 2</p>
4. Main CVA and other activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic training for all UPs under the project (e.g. RIIP 1 includes 102 UPs in its 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, RIIP II will work with 1833 UPs and LGIP support 1465 UPs) on i. roles and responsibilities ii. enhanced participation of women UP members .iii participatory planning of infrastructure schemes to increase transparency iv community participation in road safety schemes</li> <li>• Intensive training of Union Parishads on pilot basis (e,g, LGIP 21 UPs)</li> <li>• Short duration training on roles and responsibilities, local resource mobilisation (taxes, duties) and budget preparation gender, human rights and family law.</li> <li>• Weekly mentoring to help with book keeping, planning, budgets, planning of participatory consultations, holding monthly meetings. Coaching has evolved as the preferred approach to supporting UPs in the more recent RDPs</li> <li>• Provision of office equipment and maintenance of the office facilities</li> <li>• Grants for minor works</li> <li>• Citizen Forum Meetings at ward level held at least twice per year where plans and budgets are shared. Union Development Coordination Committee Meetings Public display of budgets/ notice boards</li> <li>• Building of 'one stop service' centres (UP Complexes)</li> <li>• Set up comments /complaints box at UP Complex</li> <li>• Awareness building of local communities regarding the role of UP and the importance of participation in local development through yearly meeting</li> </ul>
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	Union Parishads Communities Road construction workers
6. Key linkages with other programmes	Internal links between RDPs of LGED with very limited sharing of experiences in CVA
7. Duration	RIIP 1 5 years RIIP II 5 years
8. Starting date	RIIP1 started 2004

	RIIP II started 2007
9. Total budget	RIIP1 US \$117million Euro 75.5 million (budget for CVA activities not known) RIIP II US \$260 million Euro 168 million (budget for CVA activities not known)

**II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria**

**Relevance**

The inefficiencies and weaknesses of the UPs are well documented. Women UP members are particularly disadvantaged in participating actively in UP activities because of inexperience and marginalisation by male members. (see discussion in Annex C). These recent RDPs provide formal training and informal mentoring/coaching to build technical capacity and assist UP members to adopt a service orientation towards their constituents. As infrastructure investment and maintenance of infrastructure represent both the largest expenditure of UPs and often the highest priority for constituents, the RDPs and the close relationship and support of LGED is highly relevant.

LGED was commissioned by the Government to build new UP Complexes. However, it was found that these were not being effectively used. Local Government components were added on to conventional RDPs to make this investment work. The objective is to provide citizens with better access to services (representatives of different government departments have office space allocated at the complex under the 'eye' of the UP), improve capacity for UPs to implement participatory programmes and to provide their services more efficiently. Although arguably 'putting the cart before the horse', the capacity building of UPs is highly relevant in order to enhance their supervision role at a central location (all field level line ministries have office space in the Complex and were not utilising this).

**Efficiency**

It seems on the face of it that the wrong organisation is getting involved in CV A work. LGED is essentially an engineering institute although recently it has recruited sociologists. However, its credibility at local level is high because engineers have been active and highly visible. It maintains offices at thana level with bigger staff than any other government department. Operating under Local Government Department it is the only institute with a large field level staff so capacity building of UPs and awareness raising of communities has fallen to it almost by default.

A senior local consultant in LGED agreed that it was inappropriate for Government to be promoting voice as it has little motivation to increase criticism of its action. Nevertheless he felt that they could contribute greatly to building the attitudes and behaviour needed amongst the government staff and elected bodies to embrace people's participation as well as develop platforms for interface. However, project staff directly intervene where there are cases of mismanagement or irregularities in other departments working at union level. This undermines the role of the UP and is contrary to their capacity building efforts.

LGED tries to develop in house experts rather than hire in relevant skills. This means that the sociologists and community organisers are supervised by engineers. The top down nature of LGED's management means that activities are controlled by centrally driven directives. The combination of these leads to outputs- driven action which is not context specific. While LGED can be lauded for its massive geographic coverage providing support to thousands of UPs the blueprint nature of this support may compromise quality.

### **Effectiveness**

Official monitoring and evaluation of the CV A components of the RDPs is dominated by counting participation (numbers of meetings, citizen forum meetings, numbers participating) rather than demonstration of change in service delivery. RIIP1 has included user perception surveys (baseline, mid term and end of project –see Impact below) in its monitoring but these tend to get less attention than the quantitative approaches. However, there is evidence of the following:

- Improved performance of UP and UP secretaries, improved book keeping, documentation, development of annual plans and budgets
- Participation of women UP members increased
- Citizen Forum meetings are held twice per year i. To approve the budget and ii. to review performance. As well as the UP, other government officials working at union level also attend as well as other key people (religious leaders, teachers, doctors) so this is an important platform for UPs to demonstrate accountability.
- Budgets are displayed publicly
- Local revenue collection has increased significantly , partly because tax payers understand the system better and are also willing to pay as they have more control over what happens to the revenue collected. (rising 58% from 2004-2006 in one Division)

One of our team has had periodic involvement with LGED RDPs since the early 90s and during field observation in this study was impressed with the level of articulation of roles by UP members, their confidence and understanding of their responsibility to their electorate as well as the enhanced professionalism of the UP secretaries. It is still questionable whether the UPs would undertake consultative processes without required to by the project.

UP members accommodated in new complexes say they feel motivated '*we can be more efficient and are more respected*'.

### **Impact**

LGED has been promoting participatory selection and planning of local roads, markets and small schemes for more than 12 years. LGED is a huge organisation and it has internalised the rhetoric of participation in this time. Without doubt it is regarded as a role model in comparison with other Government departments.

Its very large projects, individually covering as much as a third of the country (and collectively nearly all) means that it interfaces with almost all UPs. Basic Training has been given almost everywhere. This is a tremendous achievement in itself.

Small scale impact evaluations by LGED consultants using perception interviews suggest that citizens are satisfied that there is more participation in UP activities and indicate enhanced satisfaction with service provision. Some of the project UPs have been awarded 'best UP' in annual National Awards.

Construction and better utilisation of the UP Complexes has raised the UP profile and gradually the public is making use of these facilities (see also MMC summary sheet: space at the UP complexes has been given to set up Information Centres). As the visibility and credibility of UPs has enhanced so has the demands on their time. Only the secretary is salaried so the additional demands make it harder for UP members to manage their own income generation. In the long run this might be a disincentive to run for election and may favour candidates with secure incomes/financial backing.

### **Sustainability**

UP Elections take place every five years. This means there is a constant turnover of members and a potential for continuous training and mentoring. However, the UP Secretaries remain and our field interactions with them suggest that they feel capable of passing on the training to new members. They are familiar themselves with the bookkeeping and annual development plan processes and advise on the correct procedures.

We noticed that LGED staff intervene on behalf of the communities and UPs thus undermining the relationships between them and other service providers. This would suggest a risk in terms of sustainability as dependency may be created. However, although carrying out a RDP project in the area means that there is more intensive activity and more staff than usual, LGED staff will always be available at local level. Does it matter if they continue to intervene on behalf of communities?

As mentioned above, it is not clear whether UPs would continue the level of consultation required of the projects for their normal activities. Arguably, they would considering the other interventions currently supporting UP behaviour change and because of the growing demands for accountability from below.

Selection of better performing UPs for intensive training enhances the chances of success but puts less well performing UPs at even greater disadvantage. RIIP2 has included all UPs in its project area for support irrespective of their performance.

### **Lessons Learned**

Although it would seem that an Engineering Department is the wrong channel for enhancing CVA, there are a number of factors which mean that it works (in fact one of our team more familiar with NGO capacity building of UPs, was of the opinion that LGED<sup>62</sup> performed as well if not better). These factors include:

- a history of working at very local level so LGED is well known (a familiarity and openness about its objectives and a confidence that it delivers (albeit one of the most corrupt departments according to TIB's assessment in 2006))
- a large cadre of staff to enable regular interface with UPs, provision of incentives (small grants for performance, funds for local infrastructure (highly visible to the electorate!) development for compliance with CV and A provisions
- an organisation with national coverage and large staff can roll out training and support efficiently albeit somewhat blueprint
- changing attitudes and behaviours takes time- LGED has been pushing participatory approaches for more than 12 years
- because LGED is under the Local Government Division, its activities and achievements are fed into government policy
- construction of physical space for CV A can be motivating. In LGED's case construction of UP complexes raises the profile of UPs and enables them to carry out their functions more effectively. It seems an odd sort of logic to construct them first and then make sure they are used properly but this seems to be working. (although with hindsight and experience of actual operations the designs of UP complexes leave much to be desired)
- most projects target a small number of UPs for intensive support. These are selected on the basis of good performance. Whilst this increases the chances of success it does put the less well functioning UPs at even greater disadvantage. Often more can be learnt from pilots in worst case conditions. RIIP2 intends to cover all UPs.

<sup>62</sup> Although LGED does sometimes contract NGOs to provide training, the mentoring support is primarily from LGED staff.

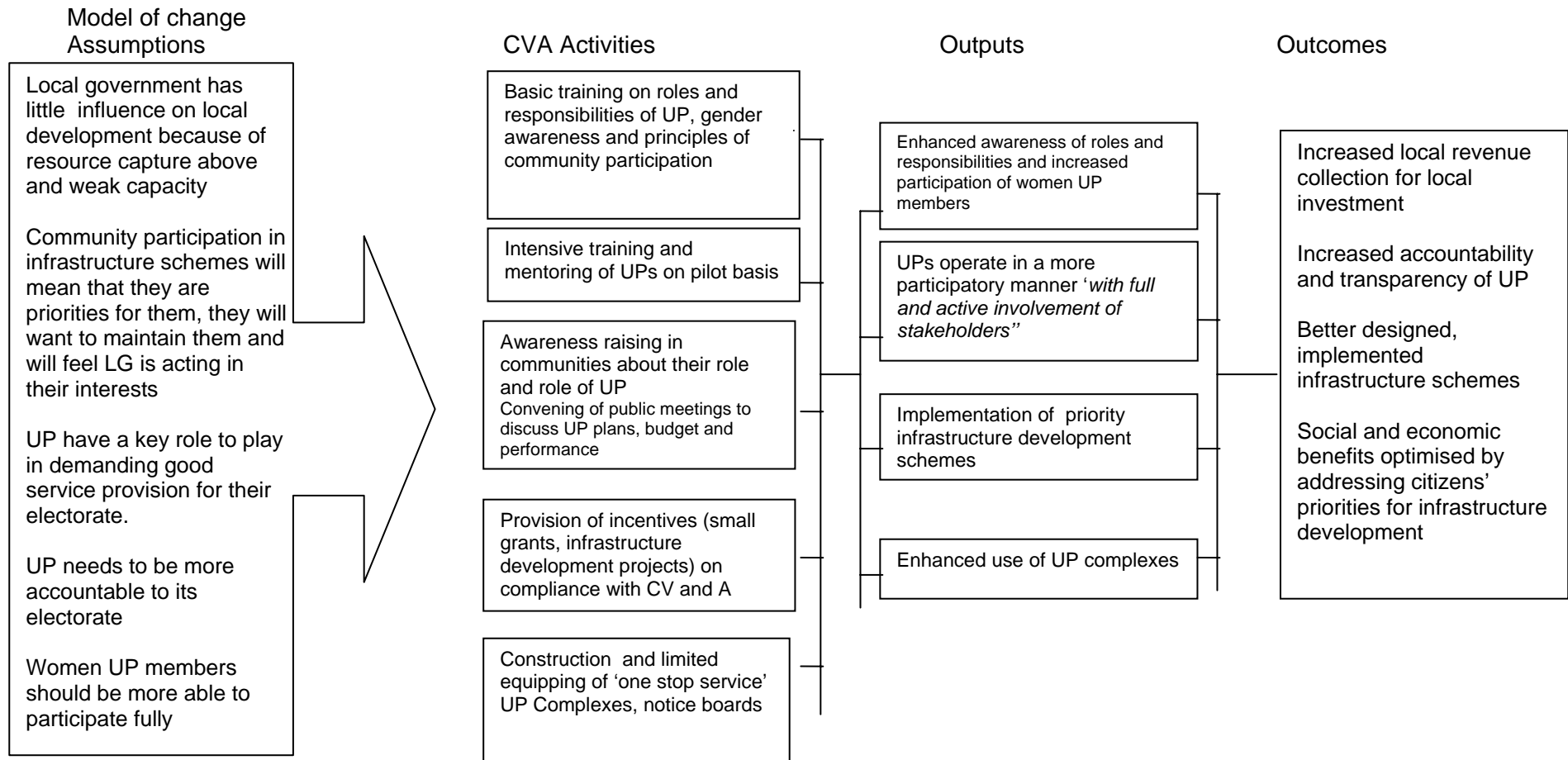
### **III: Models of Change Developed**

The model of change is predicated on the assumption that have pervaded RDPs for the last 12 years, that if citizens are consulted on their local infrastructure development priorities (roads, markets, bridges, culverts) , these will be most likely to be maintained. The model of change has widened in scope in recent RDPs to include the assumption that if tax collection is improved then not only will UPs have more local funds to allocate without central government interference but these funds can be allocated to genuine local priorities which taxpayers will demand accountability for.

The indications are that UPs which previously worked in a mostly patron client manner are now responding to taxpayers and constituents demands. The consultative processes do enhance maintenance- local contracting societies manage routine maintenance and there is reportedly less destruction of road sides and less use of roads for non-transport purposes.

UPs vary enormously in terms of member's educational background and experience and the projects to date have mostly worked with better performing UPs . The degree of mentoring required for weak UPs may be inordinately intensive. Corruption is rife in may UPs and TIB has indicated that LGED is one of the most corrupt Government departments. As much of the work in the RDPs relates to the distribution of construction contracts, it is likely that this activity is still common. In order for the necessary checks and balances to be ensured, there would be a need to build up citizen voice (directly and media exposure) independently of RDP.





**IV Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work**

**References**

Rural Infrastructure Improvement Project (RIIP 1 ) Results of Mid Term Surveys on benefit monitoring and Evaluation, 2006 GITEC Consult  
Local Government Engineering Department Final Report SAP (draft Nov 2007) Chapter 5  
Sustainable LGED Roles in Support to Local Government Institutions

**Interviews**

Md. Hossain, Social Analyst, LDCP  
Mr. Nur Mohammad, Project Director-LDCP, LGED  
Mr. Ramesh Guha, Union Educator, LDCP  
Md. Abdus Shahid, Project Director-RIIP-2, LGED  
Mr. Habib Rahman Akanda, Team Leader, IVDP, LGED

**Other sessions**

FGD with UP members, Scheme Implementation Committee members (14) in Gazipur Faridpur Visit  
Meeting with Project's Field Staff (Mr. Hossain, Socio-economist, Mr. Ramesh Guha, Assistant Program Officer)  
Meeting with Union Parishad Members including chairperson  
Meeting with Women Committee Members  
Meeting with government officials of Nation Building Organizations (NBDS)- fisheries officer, livestock officer, family planning assistant etc.  
Meeting UDC and WDC members includes school teacher, business men, women leaders, NGO representatives etc.

**Jessore Visit**

Meeting with project staff  
Meeting with Citizen Forum Meeting  
Meeting with U.P includes Chairperson

## D.3. Financial Management Reform Programme (FMRP)

### I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	DFID/Royal Netherlands Embassy
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	HELM, Ministry of Finance (MOF)
3. Objectives: regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	Project purpose: to develop accountable and transparent institutional management and operational arrangements for aggregate fiscal discipline, strategic prioritisation of expenditure and improved performance during budget execution.
4. Main CVA and other activities	Strengthening internal accountability through support to Auditor General and Parliamentary Committees through the following project components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component 1: to provide improved audit reports and well-researched reports on other financial management issues for parliamentary scrutiny of public accounts</li> <li>• Component 5: to build the capacity of the Financial Management Academy as a sustainable centre of excellence for financial management training in government.</li> </ul>
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	Poor women and men
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes	Previous phases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFID Reforms in Budget and Expenditure Control (RIBEC) family of six projects 1993-2001.</li> </ul> Related projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extended DFID funded project on VAT</li> <li>• initiative in NBR on Direct Taxation</li> <li>• extended Asian Development Bank (ADB) support to macro economic analysis</li> <li>• DFID support to the four Parliamentary Committees associated with financial management</li> <li>• DFID and UNDP support to the Ministry of Planning (MoP)</li> <li>• Support to achievement of the recommendations of the IMF Code on Fiscal Transparency and the World Bank Country Financial Accountability Assessment.</li> </ul>
7. Duration	Several phases since 1998 (EOP June 2008)
8. Starting date	2002
9. Total budget	Euro 32.9 million [GBP25 million (of which DFID GBP18.75 and RNB GBP6.25)]

## **II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria**

### **Relevance**

This project is highly relevant to improving development outcomes through more transparent accounting procedures.

The project does not have accountability as a principal objective, but has internal accountability elements (see below).

With increasing emphasis on governance/accountability in budgeting the project is likely to emphasise these elements more overtly in the next round of Bank-led Multi-donor Trust Funding.

Poverty and Gender Beneficiary Assessment work was planned for Year 4 of the project but this activity got cut because Year 4 budget had been spent in Year 3.

### **Efficiency**

It is difficult to assess efficiency of the project because of the process elements of the project are more significant than tangible deliverables. However, the project has emphasis from the beginning has been on achieving the greatest possible involvement of the GoB, including in development budget funding provision.

### **Effectiveness**

It is difficult to measure effectiveness because this is a process project. However, there are a number of reported successes, including:

- Improved accounting systems and improving transparency of accounts
- Rules and procedure changes (e.g. Treasury rules; general financial rules)
- A new budgetary regime in place
- A new Medium Term Budget Framework (MTBF) (new concept piloted in 16 ministries)
- Progress on trying to integrate stand-alone systems
- Networks to connect field accounts (across all districts and divisional offices)
- Formalising and standardising auditing process: focussing on particular ministries so that the Principal Accounting Officers in that Ministry can be held to account by Parliament.

There have also been significant achievements in capacity building. Capacity building of Auditor General Office staff and subsequent social audits has opened eyes to the power of assessing budget implementation (expenditure tracking, activities and outcomes).

There is the potential in the long term to move towards a system of accountability driven by decent information on budget implementation and impacts, with an oversight for the Auditor General and with civil society oversight at different levels. However, as one key informant put it, "we are talking here about evolution rather than revolution".

### **Impact**

DFID's previous family of projects in this sector [RIBEC (1993-2001)] had been instrumental in strengthening the budgeting, financial reporting and auditing capacity of government.

FMRP has managed to build on these achievements by strengthening the link between financial information flows and resource allocations (as the basis for achieving more equitable resource allocations).

There has been some observable impact on budget tracking and allocation has a result of these technical improvements. The AGO reports that in the past 2 years the it has started audit meetings with ministries to addresses audits that have not been addressed by parliament (see Section 2.1 under "Lessons learned" below). By so doing they have recovered Taka 800 crore<sup>63</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> A crore is a single unit with seven zeros.

The National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) has been important for MOF budgeting, providing a policy framework against which the MOF can analyse and allocate budgets. The FMRP has supported the MOF in developing line ministry capacity and linking the NPRS to the Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFS).

## **Sustainability**

One of the identified weaknesses of the RIBEC projects was lack of sustainability with regard to staff turnover (through frequent transfers) and lack of provision for equipment maintenance. FMRP was designed to improve sustainability through:

- prior agreements with the Ministry of Establishments about securing staff and staffing stability during programme implementation
- continuing the practice of training trainers
- obtaining undertakings for the maintenance and replacement of equipment
- securing continuity of the existing training courses in the Financial Management Academy; and
- encouraging more demand (from civil society and parliament) for better quality financial information.

The FMRP reports a significant step towards greater sustainability during the bridging period between RIBEC and FRMP where Finance Division agreed to manage all the activities of the programme and made funding provision from the development budget.

## **Lessons Learned**

1. Voice/Accountability models can seem simplistic and naïve in a highly charged political economy context where gains are small, long-term and incremental. There is no simple technical fix for political cultural embedded norms.

2. There is a significant distinction between “internal” (parliamentary and other) accountability mechanisms and “external” (civil society) accountability:

2.1. Internal accountability has voice and accountability mechanisms inbuilt which can be tackled. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is, however, highly politicised and faces a backlog of accounts. No one wants to examine recent audits which can be used to accuse party members of poor performance; as a result accounts can be delayed for 5-6 years at which point they are irrelevant.

According to the Auditor General's Office (AGO) there are 825 reports from the AGO lying unread with the PAC because of the suspension of parliament under the caretaker government. As a result, Government liabilities have been blocked. The AGO proposed in July that a temporary PAC be established (i.e. until Parliament restarts), with citizen representatives, in order to keep the pipeline moving, but the AGO has yet to receive a reply. Apparently the speaker is blocking this initiative because he thinks that it isn't constitutional.

Parliamentary reform needs to ensure that the Accounts Committee is “well fed and well led”; i.e. that it has good and timely information from the AGO and has a good secretariat with competent staff and chairperson. The AGO reports that the Accounts Committee is well fed but that competence is presently lacking because of political agenda and activities. It is important to remember that Parliament did not have a public accounts committee for years because of military rule.

2.2. External accountability is complicated by tense relationships between government and non-government stakeholders: The MOF exhibits antipathy towards NGOs, is suspicious of their motives and doesn't see them as representing a broader non-agenda constituency. For this reason attempts to engage the Line Ministries to consult with civil society have, according to one key informant, been “aspirational rather than reality”. The AGO comments that while the donors are very keen to get civil society oversight of the AGO reports, this is very sensitive because there is no provision under the constitution for this type of oversight.

3. Civil society engagement with budgets needs to be achieved earlier if it is to exert leverage. At

present CSOs contest *fait accompli* budgets that are presented to Parliament. CSOs need to engage at the earlier stage of budget analysis. At present MOF invites some analysis from academics at the budget analysis stage but is suspicious of inviting wider and more “popular” forms of participation.

4. Risks to successful accountability are posed by formal institutional rules as well as informal organisational culture. In this case the Official Secrets Act is still in force which allows MOF to shelter behind the law. This needs to be tackled and redressed. One key informant commented: “In this day and age can we (continue to) separate ourselves from the wider audience?” To this end, the media in Bangladesh plays an important role in pushing for greater transparency.

The “cadre culture” in the civil service prevents flexible allocations of technicians across Ministries. Introducing a MTBF approach in line ministries is hindered by a command economy Planning Commission that does not have that mentality (although incremental gains through overseas courses and on the job training for up to 100 officials so that they can be “change agents”)

5. Social auditing of budget implementation performance has been shown to be effective and provide opportunities for civil society oversight. They are sexy and have attracted donor interest. However, with structural blockages preventing release of up to 80% of the budget at national level, these types of downstream audit need to go hand in hand with efforts to release budgets (i.e. there’s no point in hanging local schools, hospitals and children’s homes out to dry if they don’t get budgets and are therefore not in control of improving performance).

8. The Audit Accounts cadre only has 200 people out of 1.2 million civil servants: one-third on the railways, one-third in army and one-third split between an accounts function and audit function. As one key informant observed wryly: “which leaves you a bit short when there are 32 Chief Accounts Officers!”.

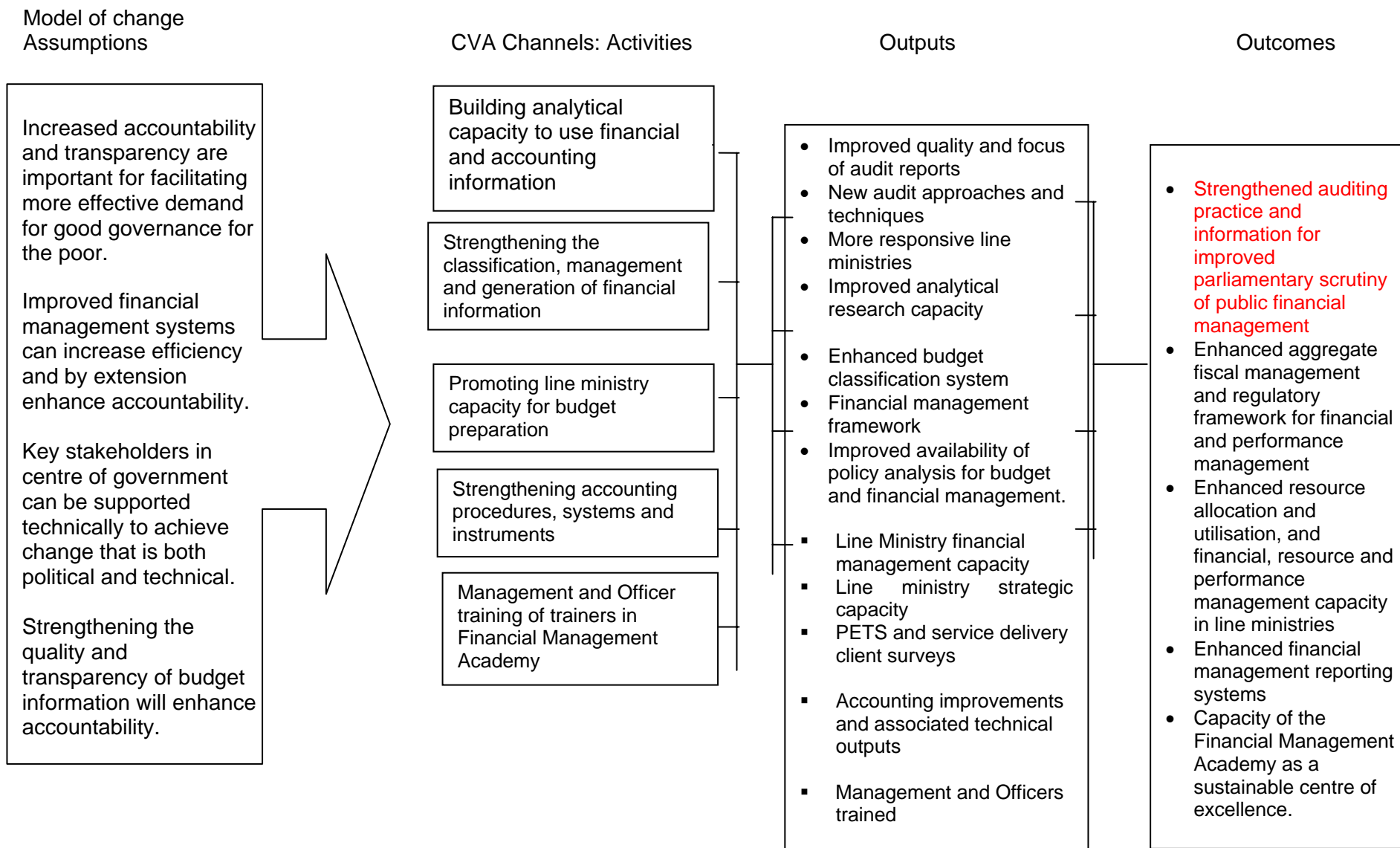
### **III: Models of Change Developed**

The model of change underpinning the FMRP is geared towards improving financial management through strengthened accounting systems (see Figure 1 below). The model is based on the “effect assumption” that technical improvements in accounting and reporting will provide the basis for more transparent and accountable systems.

Most of the project activities have improved the technical capacity within government as detailed in Figure 1. Some of these technical changes have allowed the AGO to improve oversight of budget allocations. This has delivered some successes, most notably in the recovery of Taka 800 crore from line ministries through auditing.

The translation of these technical improvements to more systemic improved CVA outcomes has, however, been more problematic. This has largely been a function of the rapid politicisation of technical information generated. As a result, effect assumptions about generating information to enhance accountability needs to be reality checked. Information on geographical allocation of budgets, for example, is very sensitive and very quickly becomes politicised. Similarly, as discussed above, no one wants to examine recent audits which can be used to accuse party members of poor performance, even if the PAC were functioning under a Parliamentary democracy.

This politicisation and its implications for CVA outcomes has been cited by the FMRP project partners to justify their strategy resisting naïve donor enthusiasm for civil society oversight and instead concentrating on improving systems and technical capacities in expectation of future institutional change in parliamentary procedures and accountability structures once the suspension of parliamentary procedures has been lifted.



IV. Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work

**Documents**

DFID, 2001. Bangladesh Financial Management reform Programme: Terms of Reference for international Consultants and Tender Evaluation Criteria, DFID, Dhaka, January

DFID, 2004. Bangladesh Financial Management reform Programme: Project Memorandum, DFID, Dhaka, May

GoPRB, 2007. Report on a Social Performance Audit of Government Orphanages (Shishu Sadan/ Paribar), Draft, 10 March, Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

**Interviews/Focus Groups**

Ranjit Kumar Chakraborty (Joint Secretary), Project Director

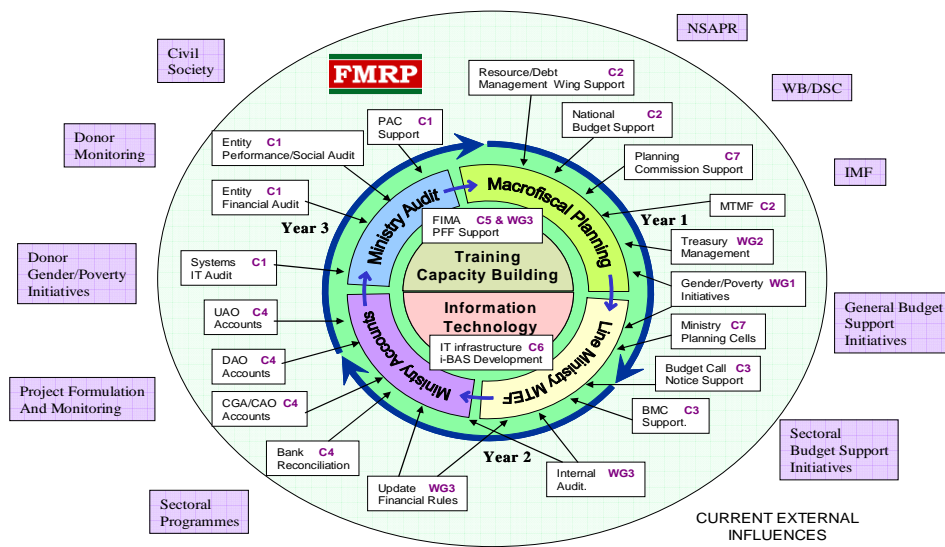
Mike Frazer, Team Leader (HELM)

Mr Asif Ail, Auditor General's Office

Honor Flanagan, Governance Adviser (DFID)

Sheila Ryan, independent consultant

Figure 2. GoB PFM Cycle with FMRP linkage



Source: FMRP Project Office



## D.4. Mass-line Media Centre (MMC)

### I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	(i) Danida (ii) Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) <sup>64</sup>
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	Mass-line Media Centre
3. Objectives : regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	The stated overall objective is ' <i>Creating an enabling environment for better livelihood</i> ' for both projects. MMC's intention is more specific as stated in its mission statement, ' <i>strengthening of local media through skill development and training of newsmen, social workers, opinion leaders, human rights activists and civil society members so they could play an effective role to change the existing centralised media for alternative people oriented system</i> '
4. Main CVA and other activities	<p><b>(i) Danida supported project:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishment of Rural Advocacy Centres (RAC) at Union level run by local Centre Management Committees and local Teamleaders (Social Advocates), who identify local priorities for advocacy</li> <li>• provision of daily newspapers at the RACs to promote '<i>reading habit</i>' and bridge information gap</li> <li>• facilitation of quarterly '<i>Meet the People</i>' (MTP) public meetings with local government officials</li> <li>• use of folk media for awareness raising at MTP</li> <li>• financial and capacity building support to one local journalist per RAC and promote local reporting on development issues.</li> <li>• establishment of Media Advocacy Network of affiliated journalists</li> <li>• orientation of Union Parishad (Councils) to the programme/involvement in MTP</li> <li>• development and dissemination of IEC materials.</li> </ul> <p><b>(ii) MJF supported project</b> Basically the same project design as above but community focal points are called Information Centres and the emphasis is on citizen's rights to information as well as taking up local issues for advocacy rather than strengthening the relationship between people and administration which is the focus of project (i). More information, particularly related to livelihoods (e.g crop diversification, land office charges) is available at these centres than the RAC which are primarily meeting points and for reading newspapers.</p>
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grassroots people (i and ii)</li> <li>• local journalists</li> <li>• (union parishad members)</li> </ul>
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes	No formal linkages
7. Duration	i. three years ii. three years
8. Starting date	i. 2005 ii. 2006
9. Total budget	i. not available (now funded by Embassy) However previous projects (to 2004) Euro 1,170,000 Tk 123,538,086 ii Euro 82,620 (Tk8,700,000)

<sup>64</sup> A Fund Manager established by DFID

## II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria

### Relevance

The recent emphasis on rights based approaches and empowered citizenry by donors and INGOs and some local social movements, in particular, has highlighted the fact that information about entitlements and services is scattered, difficult to obtain and confusing. The previous political climate, which supported patronage, had a vested interest in suppressing public access to this type of information. Poor and uneducated people were particularly affected by this lack of transparency and denied access to resources, entitlements to special provisions for the poor and subjected to eviction, misappropriation of land and other social injustice. MMC (2004) noted that *'the existing media-electronic and print serves the rich and middle classes ignoring the realities of the poor and the marginalised'*.

Currently, there is a major movement supporting the formulation and enactment of the Right to Information (RTI) Act. Involving journalists (the core competence of MMC) in the operationalisation of RTI is particularly relevant. However the main focus of these case study projects is the establishment and operationalisation of local information centres and mobilising communities. This is not what journalists are best at and does not motivate them. The mismatch between MMC's priorities and desired area of operations and the design of these projects is recognised by MMC and justified by the *'need to survive and therefore chase after available funds'*.

Community level surveys were carried out at the start of project to establish the implications of lack of information, the priorities for information and the problems people face sourcing this information. As the projects have developed, communities are regularly consulted about which local issues they want to take up. MMC regards its responsiveness to local issues as one of the elements which make it different from other advocacy facilitating organisations which *'impose agendas from Dhaka'*

The two donors both regard this intervention as appropriate and timely and are very much in line with their priorities. However, after more than 10 years of funding from Danida, the decision has been made to terminate. The current funding is a one-off grant from the Embassy

### Efficiency

Under the Danida project, in total, 64 Rural Advocacy Centres have been established, one in each district. Most are located in simple buildings but 17 Union Parishads have accommodated the RACs within their complex. Each RAC is supported by a salaried (local) team leader and local journalist supported by an honorarium. Other costs include training and underwriting the Meet the People programme and supply of daily newspapers. Limited other contact information for union and upazila government departments is also available. Finding suitable locations for the RACs and mobilising local community interest took longer than anticipated and so there is pressure to *'make the centres active and sustainable'* within a few months before the project comes to an end. The anticipated impact has not been realised and MMC feels that withdrawal of funding is too soon.

Under the MJF project, a total of 21 Information Centres (ICs) have been established in 21 different districts. These are better resourced than the RACs (partly by community contribution e.g. for equipment). The one visited in this study had TV, table and chairs and electricity connection provided by the community at their initiative. They provide a wide range of information collected by the salaried team leader. These include job vacancies, maps, posters and campaign materials although our observation noted that most of the contact information was for the district administration not the more local upazila or union and therefore was of limited value. Costs include the team leader salaries, journalist honoraria and the costs of meetings at different administrative levels. Since the project only supports one IC in each district it is hard to understand the justification of supporting district level meetings, as local experience from one IC cannot be generalised to the whole district. These meetings, albeit less frequent, are six times more expensive than union level meetings.

MMC sees its core competence as journalist training, supporting journalists (in particular

those facing harassment), research and documentation on media issues and advocacy for legal reform relating to media laws. It is hard to accept that staff having these skills and motivations are the best to work as field staff, mobilising interest in the project and setting up RACs/ICs and making practical arrangements for meetings. They do sometimes prepare 'keynote papers' for these public meetings and feel that journalists are good at provoking discussions and '*putting the service providers on the spot*', thus encouraging members of the public to speak out. But overall the skills of most staff are being inappropriately channelled.

Staff of project (i) suggested that efficiency was assured by timely disbursement, monitoring by the donor and accountability to the centre management committees (budgets prepared with them, displayed in the RACs). This explanation relates to accountability and transparency rather than efficiency. Our evaluation raised the following questions and issues:

- is this the right organisation to be doing this work? We feel that an organisation of journalists with special expertise and motivation in this area should not be expected to become a more generalised social mobilisation NGO, thus diluting their core competences
- why is local volunteerism not promoted more (access to information being in everyone's interest)? The team feels that the payment of team leaders and village mobilisers is non-sustainable. This leads also to human resource management issues which distract MMC from its core mission. Information centres can be run by rotas of volunteers, thus effectively endorsing the principle of empowerment.
- why is only one journalist selected in each district and provided an honorarium? The team feels that this has the potential to distort reporting depending as it does on a contractual relationship between the press and its client. The ultimate objective is to encourage quality grassroots journalism – this would be better served through independent journalism.
- why do RACs have to be rented? The team concurs with the views expressed by community members we met that locating these within UP complexes would lead to better outcomes and could be cost-free
- since Meet the People is the most successful aspect of the programme (see discussion under "Effectiveness" below), in terms of efficiency it might be better to simply fund these activities more widely without heavy projectisation.

Staff of project also used adherence to financial guidelines as an indicator of efficiency. Disbursements are extremely late at times (up to 4 months) so that MMC has been forced to borrow funds. The donor administration is staffed by ex government officials and efficiency is reduced to accounting accuracy and output monitoring (budgets spent exactly as specified), leaving no room for flexibility and no link between expenditure and outcomes.

Other organisations such as D -Net, Grameen phone and BRAC have established information centres. With their vast networks already established and their technological advantages, one might question the efficiency and effectiveness of investing in new centres without this organisational back –up and experience.

To support the CTG drive for identity cards and voter registration in preparation for the 2008 Elections, both projects have been active in advocacy.

### **Effectiveness**

The quarterly 'Meet the People' programmes facilitated by MMC between UP and their constituents is an important opportunity for exchange and relationship building. More than half of the community members we met pointed to the solution of local issues as the most significant achievement, whilst most of the rest indicated that access to newspapers and meetings or enhanced relationships with administrative officials are the most significant achievements.

ICs retain good quality and up to date information including job vacancies; the IC visited has about 60 users per day. A Study Circle for adults and Readers' Forum for boys have been started totally on the initiative of the community. Both are active without any external funding. So in terms of promoting positive behaviours towards reading and accessing information, the project is effective.

Those accessing the IC are inevitably literate and mostly male even though access is encouraged for all. There is limited direct interaction with service provider institutions so they are not proactive in supplying information. Despite a project strategy to facilitate communities to raise their voice, our observation indicates that the project staff and journalists put pressure on the district level service providers on behalf of the communities rather than the communities exercising their own agency. There is no attempt to link the IC with other CBOs or NGO groups for their use, which would increase utilisation and enhance inter-and intra-community exchange. Limiting support to one journalist creates tension with others and limits their healthy interaction with the IC and its users.

A further 36,700 have personally attended forums and folk events where the RTI issue has been promoted. 65 memoranda have been sent to offices of the local administration, Civil Surgeon and police regarding a variety of issues (e.g. corruption in local land office, absence of agricultural officers, shortages of livestock vaccination). Less emphasis was given to following up on these than submission of new ones.

### **Impact**

The Danida project claims to have made significant impact on building peoples' confidence to solve local issues and, in particular to meet with and make demands of the Union Parishad. It was the model on which the MJF project was designed.

The Danida Project makes somewhat sweeping statements about its impact, claiming for example, that it has increased agricultural production due to access to information about pesticide and fertiliser use, enhanced service provision in government institutions such as hospitals, schools, reduction in bribe giving and improved access to entitlements for the poor (e.g. flood relief, school stipends, old people's allowance etc). Proving attribution is a major challenge and it is hard to accept that an IC, which depends on a significant level of agency of community members to actually use it, would have such far reaching impacts. Our FGDs indicated that small numbers of farmers had received training and support at the IC and their production had increased. But one wonders whether this is the impact of the IC or simply agricultural officers doing their job properly. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence suggests that corruption has reduced in local land offices, that an agricultural officer attends the IC on a weekly basis and that the IC has become the focal point for livestock vaccinations.

The use of journalists to highlight issues ('name and shame') has had immediate impact, for instance in ensuring a fairer distribution of Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) cards, relief and reduction in bribe taking. Local elites are not supportive of the establishment of ICs as they would have been the focus for those seeking information in the past, with implications for their continued control over resources.

We question the impact of establishing one RAC or IC per district. The ICs have been located in remote areas (to meet funding criteria rather than strategic ones) and may have had more impact if they had greater visibility and genuine relations had been built established between service providers and community.

### **Sustainability**

The Danida Project is very concerned to make arrangements for the RACs to continue to supply newspapers, provide a meeting venue and are trying to identify ways in which they can earn income. This seems like an unnecessary diversion; if RACs had been accommodated in UP complexes or existing facilities, such as in schools after school time, then this problem would have been manageable, as subscriptions would cover the costs of newspapers.

Team leaders feel that they will have no authority to organise meetings without the support and affiliation of MMC and the funds for meetings will not be forthcoming. The basis for sustaining elements of the project activities could have been better managed and given more time demand generated may have stimulated more community volunteerism and contribution. Projectisation has put pressure on MMC to deliver agreed numbers of centres rather than allowed demand to develop and be nurtured from below.

We question the wisdom of paying journalists to write articles- where is the incentive to

continue after withdrawal of funds?

Unless service providers recognise the value of the ICs and proactively supply information, there will be a continual need to chase after information. Unless greater use is made of the centres then they will not be sustained.

In order to meet funding criteria, ICs have been established in 'the poorest, remote and marginalised' areas. As a pilot we question this strategy as these ICs will face the greatest difficulty to sustain themselves after withdrawal of project funding. Furthermore, situating ICs where they are more visible might create demand from other area.

Our observations suggest a high level of dependency on the project staff and journalists, particularly in putting pressure on service providers. The project is rather centrally driven. Nevertheless communities have established their own initiatives at the IC (including a Readers' Forum and Study Circle) which are independent of external funding and are considered to have a good chance of sustaining themselves.

### **Lessons Learned:**

Lessons learned from the two phases of the project to date include:

- There is a mismatch between an organisation's own mission and core competencies and what it does in these projects (primarily for its own sustainability). The core competences of this organisation could be put to better use (and better serve the agenda of promoting CV and A) if there were funds available for media promotion (less conditionalities relating to linking with MDGs, donor goals, inclusion etc)
- There is too much concern with outputs rather than outcomes
- The project timeframe is too short to create demand from below
- There is an insufficient linkage with service providers to generate interest in, and provide resources for, the ICs
- There are serious sustainability concerns emerging from inadequate strategic thinking and an over-dependence on project support
- In the MJF project, there is competition between donor and recipient as the donor also implements RTI programmes directly and imposes its 'brand' on all of the recipients activities)
- There is a lack of flexibility in budgeting and use of funds which prevents genuine local context responsiveness
- There is a disconnect between grassroots advocacy and national advocacy.
- Projectisation leads to over-design and too many activities. MTP, for instance, is a worthwhile activity of the Danida project and could be a stand alone initiative. Similarly, the establishment and proper operation of ICs are useful in themselves and do not have to be centres of advocacy or social mobilisation ( which others do anyway and probably better)
- The location of RACs /ICs needs to be considered from a strategic perspective (pilots or models need to be where they will be most visible) as well as from a practical perspective (e.g. the advantages of locating in UP complexes).

### **III Models of Change developed**

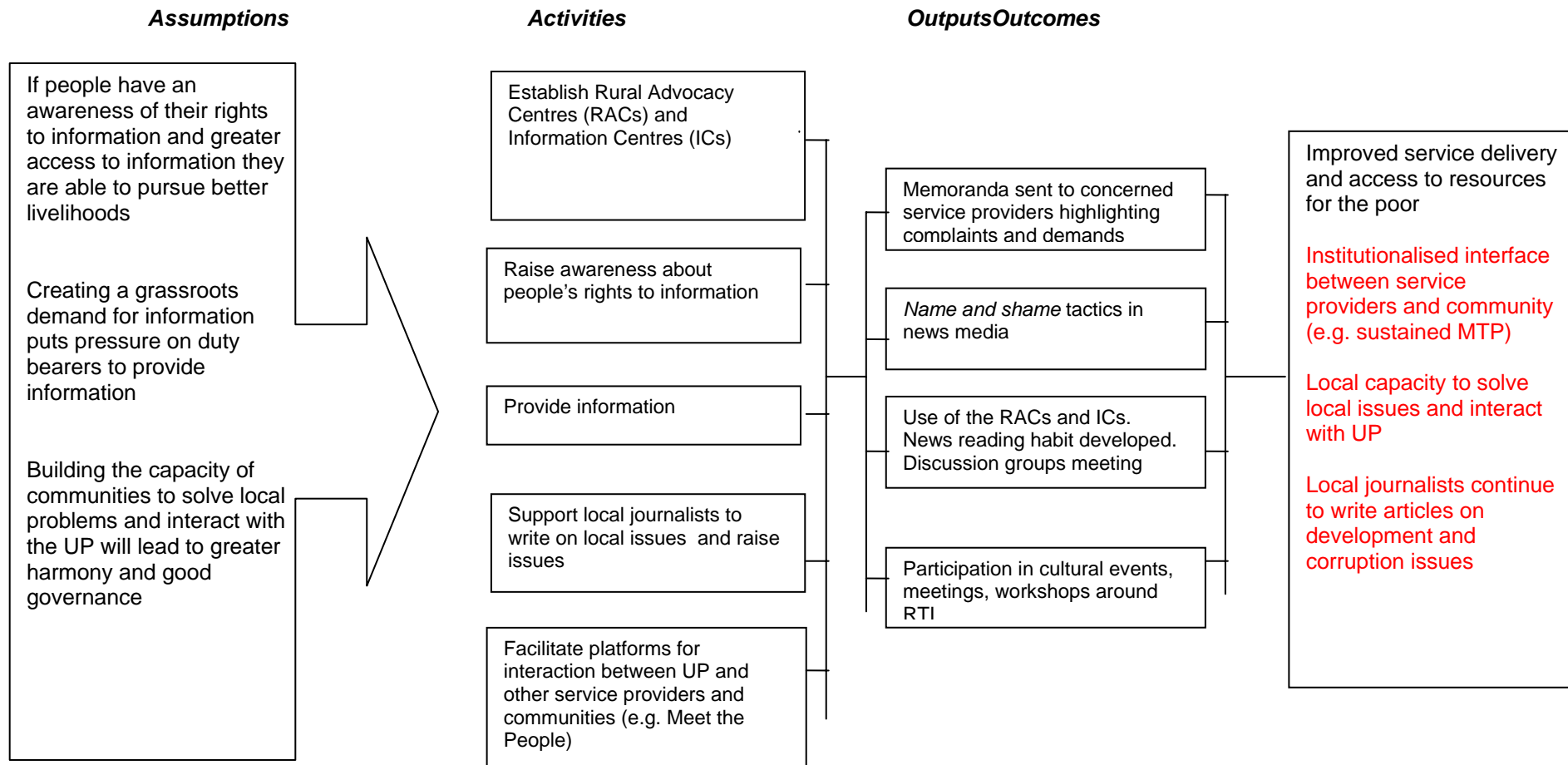
The intervention logic suggest that provision of information and awareness raising about rights to information among community members will enhance their agency to demand their entitlements and to demand accountability of elected representatives.

A number of outcomes have not been achieved. There is too much dependency on the NGO and its salaried team leaders and journalists as intermediaries between the community and the state actors. The communities we met did not feel able to raise issues or confront service providers alone, not did they feel able to resolve internal community problems without the support of MMC. Part of this is related to the short duration of the intervention ( behaviour change takes times) but the team also felt that that MMC is being expected to mobilise groups in communities rather than working with existing groups with the necessary cohesion and strength already to work together on information issues.

The access to RACs and ICs tends to be restricted to the literate and men, so issues being

brought to the attention of authorities will tend to be skewed to their interests.

III: Models of Change Developed



#### **IV Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work**

##### **Documents**

- MMC, 2002-07. *Annual Reports*
- MMC, 2007. *Annual Reports 1999-2006* (on various themes), MMC Dhaka
- Shishu Prokash, nd. *Let Children Speak: Annualreport*. MMC Dhaka
- Neepu S U and k M R Alam (eds) , 2006. *The State of Women and Chidlren in Bangladesh*, Newspaper Monitoring 2005
- MMC, 2007. Justification for No cost extension
- Monju K H, nd. *Perspective Analysis of Local Press of Noakhali, Feni, Lakshmipur, Patuakhali and Barguna*
- Danida, 2000. Project Document: Support to the Media Sector Bangladesh: Support to the Local Press Phase 2, Danida, May
- Danida, 2003. Project Document: Support to the Media Sector Bangladesh: Support to the Local Press Phase 3, Danida
- Rashid M, 2005. *Report on Lesson Learned and Impact Assessment of "Strengthening the Role of the Local Press for the Promotion of Juman Rights and democratic Values"*, MMC Dhaka, November
- Capacity Assessment of Mass-Line Media Centre, Final Report 2004 Danida
- Afsan Chowdhury and Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, 1998. Mid term evaluation Strengthening the Role of local Press of Noakhali, Feni, Lakshimpur, Patuakhali and Barguna Districts

##### **Interviews/Focus Groups**

- Participatory discussion meeting with 10 senior staff of MMC
- Visit to RAC and participatory visualised discussion with 21 users
- Visit to IC and participatory discussion with 27 users



## D.5. Bangladesh Quality Education for All/ CAMPE

### I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	SDC Royal Netherlands Embassy
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	CAMPE
3. Objectives : regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	<p>This case study focussed on CAMPE's Education Watch activities, It is also coordinates the People's Forum on MDGs and other advocacy efforts. The focus of CAMPE's Education Watch (EW) study is on improving the quality of primary education through the annual publication of a themed report.</p> <p>Education Watch is just one of the tools that CAMPE uses to meet its broader objectives, which are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of people of all classes about the importance of popular education in terms of literacy, democracy, human rights, gender, and environment.</li> <li>• Establish and promote a nation-wide network and coalition of NGOs and civil society to achieve Education for All (EFA).</li> <li>• Facilitate the process of achieving MDGs.</li> <li>• Advocate and lobby to enhance NGO participation in educational policy making and other national and international educational activities/ issues.</li> <li>• Promote and support education programs focusing on early childhood care and development, formal and non-formal primary education, adolescent education, adult literacy, continuing education and inclusive education.</li> <li>• Strengthen, supplement and complement the primary and mass education programs (both formal and non-formal) of government providing networking, liaison, coordination and facilitation services and technical assistance.</li> <li>• Strengthen capacity of partner NGOs (specially grassroots NGOs ) through providing technical assistance and other support services to enhance education programme management (good governance and accountability).</li> </ul>
4. Main CVA and other activities	Launched 7 reports on different themes
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education service providers including government and NGOs managing and implementing education programmes in the country, The education system of the country</li> <li>• Education policy makers and practitioners</li> <li>• Learners (children, adolescents &amp; adults)</li> </ul>
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes	No formal linkages
7. Duration	1991-2001 (SDC pilot phase) 2002-07 (SDC Phase 1) 2007-2012 (Phase 2)
8. Starting date	May 2007
9. Total budget	Euro 4,610,000 [CHF 7'237'240 (SDC contribution 35%, Royal Netherlands Embassy 65%)]

## **II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria**

### **Relevance**

The objectives and activities in the CAMPE intervention are highly relevant to the developmental needs/MDG targets by focussing on the primary education sector as (i) a very effective way of targeting the poorest primary stakeholders; and (ii) a key driver of development.

CAMPE is also highly relevant to the government policy making and implementation, encouraging a shift away from input-driven and towards evidence-based strategic thinking and annual planning.

### **Efficiency**

CAMPE is highly efficient because it does not have a high proportion of delivering “things”, but is based on analytical inputs and a voluntaristic sense of participation by professionals in the education field.

The secretariat is low cost and works closely with the Advisory Group and Working group.

The intervention is based on networking. Education Watch has a 1,000 NGO network that it can draw upon.

### **Effectiveness**

CAMPE plays a dual role in influencing government primary education policy makers. The CAMPE-designed monitoring instrument (quant/qual) was developed and information generated enables EW to play:

(i) Coaching/Advising role

(ii) Watchdog/ policing role: Using/revising legal frameworks and government commitments for accountability

e.g. Challenging law on punishment of children: “You said that you would do something about this”

e.g. Challenging government narrative on literacy trends and patterns against MDG2 commitments

This means, for instance, that CAMPE both influenced the design of PEDP II it is also monitoring performance at the mid-term review point.

It was suggested by the evaluation team that there is a tension between coaching/ advisory and watchdog/policing roles. The response is that EW has developed two strands of influence which work effectively in parallel:

(1) Developed a monitoring instrument and advised government

(2) EW has a separate unit responsible for advocacy

The CAMPE method specifically with the Education Watch tool is to generate an Annual Report with events built around this. CAMPE also reportedly tries to play a bridging role between local voices and policy discussions (i.e. bringing the voice of primary stakeholders into the macro level).

The initial tendency of government in the early days of CAMPE was to negate the EW findings. Nowadays it has reportedly become more responsive and recognises the importance of the work done and seeking policy advice.

This shift in position is reportedly due to: (i) quality of reports: education and analysis; (ii) people behind the reports; (iii) support to education from grassroots; (iv) international recognition of EW work.

## **Impact**

CAMPE stakeholders make a strong case that the impact on primary education policy is observable: The following recommendations reportedly made their way into government policy recommendations:

- > recommendation that more women should participate in the School Management Committees (SMCs). They just heard that govt is increasing women's participation to 40% from next year
- > you must give free books if you want to achieve the MDG2.
- > make teacher's pool through competitive examination in order to improve standards (based on 2005 EW report 2/3 of rural teachers college graduates with a high % of 3<sup>rd</sup> class degrees)
- > Aim for a primary student:teacher target ratio of 40:1
- > CAMPE found that female teachers are more effective and recommended an increase in female teacher numbers. The Government moved to 50:50 target; they have increased so far to 38% female teachers)
- > CAMPE advised support for post primary distance learning education
- > PDP I and II content is significantly influenced by CAMPE policy analysis (although this is unacknowledged by Government)
- >. CAMPE research found problems with the distribution of a stipend for disability etc under the Food for Education Programme.

CAMPE's EW members have grassroots connections which lends credibility to their data/ analysis.

CAMPE analysed the impact of creeping privatisation in the education sector and discussed the implications for rural-urban discrimination and exclusion of poorest families. Based on this analysis, EW recommended increasing the budget for public education.

CAMPE brought in the media to spotlight problems. For example, the Government's Total Literacy Movement (TLM) declared some districts illiteracy-free and claimed 63% literacy levels. However, CAMPE's survey came up with a figure of 45% literacy and that used the media to highlight this discrepancy and prompt debate.

CAMPE stakeholders also suggest that the government used to be motivated by quantity goals (e.g. literacy eradication) but now, partly due to the continuing influence of CAMPE, are focussing more on quality and sustainability issues

CAMPE is also co-ordinating the mapping Non Formal Education (NFE) with Government participation and support. Note that 'NFE Mapping' is another study which is being conducted by the government and coordinated by CAMPE. This mapping process identifies and educates adult illiterates and others who wouldn't go into formal education, representing a short- to medium-term bridging mechanism as part of long-term goal of mainstreaming education. There is an important element in this NFE process of involving community people in delivering NFE. The inputs sequence need-based training (vocational skills) for 6 months on the back of literacy training.

CAMPE also emphasis bridging the national with the local by bringing in teachers and local stakeholders to discuss their experiences/ raise voice with PEDP officials.

## **Sustainability**

Donor funding for CAMPE has avoided the pitfalls of creating externally imposed, costly and unsustainable project mechanisms. As mentioned above, donor support for CAMPE builds on a voluntary-based sense of participation by professionals in the education field. CAMPE's Education Watch members, for instance, are known as highly experienced resources; "all the known people in the country".<sup>65</sup>

Neither are the project outputs are not too ambitious. One important output is the annual Education

<sup>65</sup> The technical team revolves (e.g. this years EW report was led by the Bangladesh Economic Federation), while the EW Advisory Group is constant. The Working group is also more or less constant.

Watch report and this provides a sustainable tool for engaging with the Government on substantive policy issues.

There is also a sense that donor activity has supported, and certainly not undermined, a shift in CAMPE activity onto a more institutionalised and sustainable footing, with CAMPE stakeholders arguing that CAMPE has shift from individualised activity in the 1990s to the “institutionalised voice” of the education sector. As part of this institutionalisation process, CAMPE has reached out to a network of civil society partners, claiming that it has a 1,000-strong NGO network that it can draw upon.

### **Lessons Learned**

Voluntarism and networking platforms work effectively when combining professional expertise and group commitment to influencing and improving policy design and implementation.

Many of the kinds of institutional connections that generate demand amongst policy makers on the supply side for advice and which generate accountability through the spotlight of monitoring and media activity are beyond the design ambitions of donor projects.

This donor intervention illustrates how light-touch secretariat support and funds for designing and implementing research and research tools, and producing and disseminating outputs, can be positive in supporting and not diverting or undermining the institutional momentum generated.

The stated emphasis on facilitating local citizen voice and participation in policy process appears to be less significant in CAMPE's model of change although some activities do include local people in a participatory process. It seems clear that CAMPE's comparative advantage in the CVA field is clearly in policy analysis and leverage and that it shouldn't feel that it has to go into more populist CVA areas of citizen participation, whether this be to satisfy a perceived donor demand for such activity or whether to expand or overcomplicate its own model of change (see discussion below).

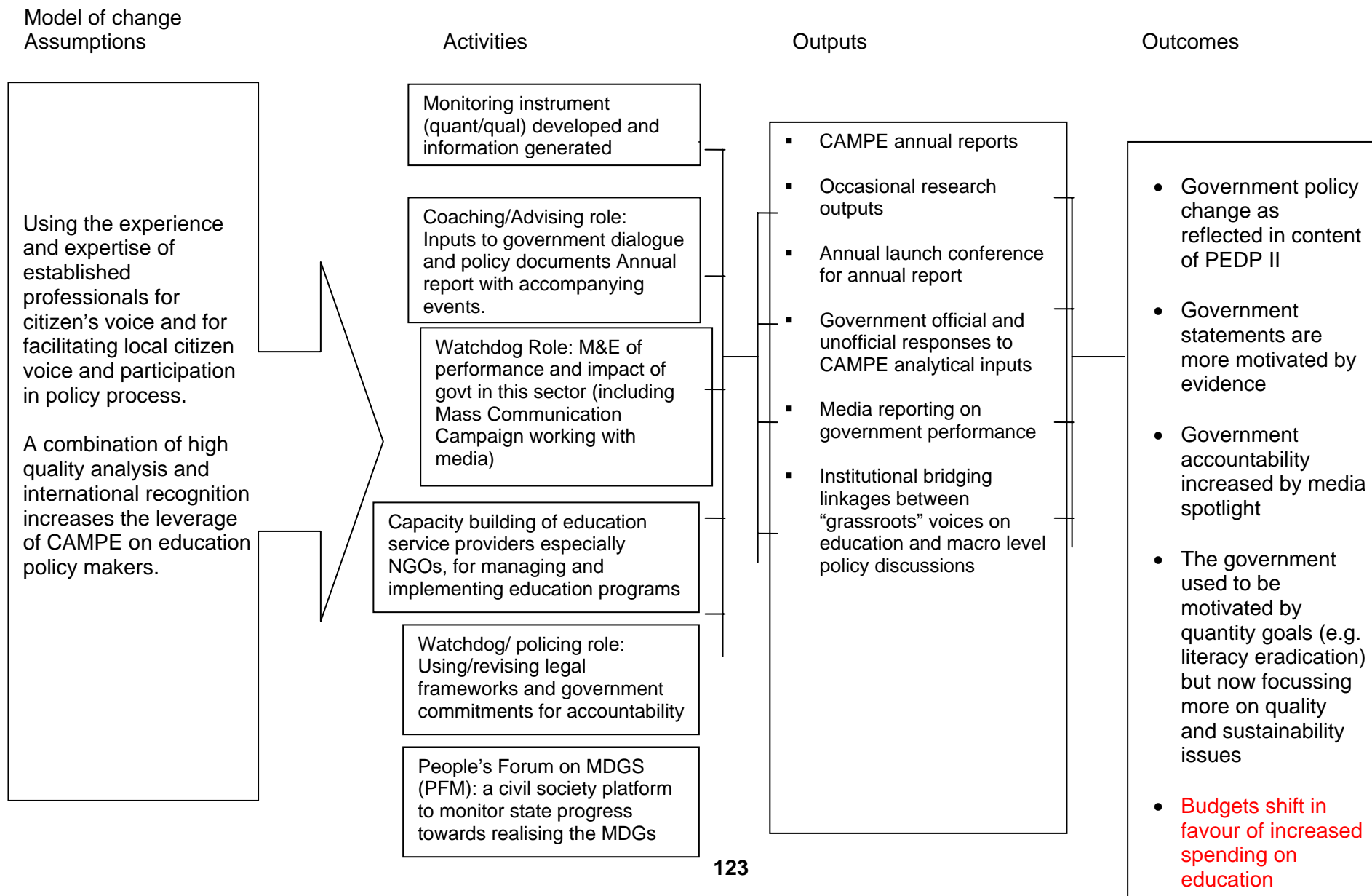
The effectiveness of the People's Forum on MDGs (a broad based civil society platform which monitors government's progress towards realising the MDG targets) appears to have been less effective. This may be in part due to the broad sectoral scope of the task. The effectiveness of EW lies in its narrow focus and sectoral expertise in primary education.

### **III: Models of Change Developed**

The model of change employed (see Figure 1 below) is based on the assumption that using the experience and expertise of established professionals for citizen's voice can, through advocacy and policy dialogue, exert significant leverage on the policy process.

There is also a set of assumptions around the government as a participant in this dialogue. The model assumes that policy makers are prepared to listen carefully to CAMPE in its advisory role and to respond constructively to the advocacy role of CAMPE. It seems indeed there has been a growing maturity and increased self confidence amongst education officials which allow it to listen to criticism rather than dismissing or ignoring it. There is also a greater sense of partnership in policy discussions, so that even though in the case of the PEDP II there was no acknowledgement of CAMPE's contributions, the Ministry was listening and distilling the evidence and ideas produced through Education watch and other CAMPE tools.

The effect assumption that evidence-based discussions will filter through to increased allocations of budget appears, however, to be one missing step in the CVA link to improved education outcomes. On the one hand it appears that CAMPE's advisory role is “empowering” MoPME in its internal relationship of accountability with the MoF by enabling it to back up its sector budgeting with more considered policy analysis. On the other hand, there are power relations and interests within the centre of government that can remain immune to evidence-based policy approaches to budgeting.



#### **IV Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work**

##### **Documents**

Jennings J, 2006. *CAMPE Evaluation Report*, November  
CAMPE, 2007. *Quality education for All: Proposal for Phase IV, April 2007 – March 2012*, CAMPE, Dhaka  
SDC, 2007. *Bangladesh Quality Education for All/ CAMPE: Phase 2, 1 May 2007 – 31 March 2012*, SDC Dhaka  
CAMPE, 2006. *Our Education: Our Thoughts. Dossier for Primary Level Students, Teachers and Guardians*, May  
CAMPE, 2005. *MDGs: A People's Progress Report. Bangladesh Main Report*, December  
CAMPE, 2005. *Out of School Children: The Disadvantaged Group*  
CAMPE 2000-5. *Education Watch* (Annual Reports and booklets with changing theme)

##### **Interviews/Focus Groups**

Rasheda K. Choudhury, Director (CEO), CAMPE  
Tasneem Athar, Deputy Director, CAMPE  
K M Enamul Hoque, Programme Manager, RMED Unit, CAMPE  
FGD with Education Watch members

## D.6. “We Can”

### I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	Oxfam
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	12 main NGO partners as funding partners; “We Can” alliance office acts as secretariat 236 NGOs + thousands of alternative agencies as part of “We Can” network
3. Objectives : regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	Ending domestic violence through attitude change and social accountability of men and wider community towards women’s rights and capabilities.
4. Main CVA and other activities	<p>Three-phase campaign:</p> <p>(1) Awareness building: awareness of domestic violence and expectation that people have the capacity to change it</p> <p>(2) Network building (2007-11): Working with local alternative agencies that have the potential to support change (e.g. educational institutions, youth clubs, cultural agencies) and empowering them to continue the campaign</p> <p>(3) Integration: into education, culture, youth clubs (2011-16)</p> <p>Main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change maker support</li> <li>• 16 day campaigns</li> </ul> <p>Method: reflective dialogue method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 questions</li> <li>• 1,000 change makers identified; select 10 change makers; do a three hour session with these change makers using the 10 questions; go back every six months</li> <li>• Based on principle that if you want to be a change maker you have to first make the change yourself</li> </ul>
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	Women and Men in Bangladesh
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes	Network member women’s rights movements.
7. Duration	7 years
8. Starting date	Sept 2004
9. Total budget	Euro 665,000 (Tk7 crore) annual budget

## **II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria**

### **Relevance**

Domestic violence was not initially seen as a “development issue” by NGOs and donors; it was seen as a private issue. In three years, the alliance has worked hard to make it a development issue. This is intrinsically a DFID human rights goal but with additional instrumental impacts of domestic violence reduction on health, well being and poverty outcomes.

A 2003 study conducted by the Alliance office analysed local perspectives on violence. The study concluded that violence against women was locally perceived as necessary to control women and maintain discipline in society.

The movement is built on the premise that there is a need to “break” this belief but that change cannot be achieved through policy change alone.

This prompted a campaign on domestic violence; however this was qualified by a concern of the likely reaction towards what might be perceived as a “northern” agenda; so it was important to use local actors to lead. It was initially backed by Oxfam and then other donors joined.

### **Efficiency**

The initiative is relatively low cost. It is not a staff-driven campaign; Staff members are not responsible for mobilising change makers; they are responsible for backstopping. Furthermore, the campaign taps into a sense of voluntarism.

Oxfam directly contracts the 12 funding partners (achieving geographical coverage). The Alliance Platform doesn't even have a bank account. Oxfam pays salary costs to platform staff for consultancy services.

The Alliance office functions in a way that improves efficiency in the relationship between donors and partners. By acting as a secretariat it takes pressure off NGO-funded partners to do reporting to donors, while sharing targets/indicators with partners.

### **Effectiveness**

Although there are measurable effects of the campaign, notably the change maker numbers, it is difficult to judge effectiveness with outputs that are intangibles linked to attitudinal and cultural change.

One major concern with the effectiveness of the campaign, however, is the issue of Change maker quality control. There are presently 200,000 change makers, with a “critical mass” target of 1 million. Beyond that the movement will not try to maintain quality control.

There is another issue with overlapping activities between partners, particularly around the change maker model. Although there are tensions resulting from similar approaches being adopted by different movements, it appears that this has probably undermined the objectives because of the solidarity resulting from its roots in the women's movement in Bangladesh.

### **Impact**

The impact of the campaigns hard to discern beyond the numbers of change makers enlisted and the personal testimonies of those whose lives have been affected and transformed, there is no “robust” evidence that there has been an impact on domestic violence incidence or on development outcomes that are assumed to follow from gender equality in the household.



## **Sustainability**

Attitudinal change is a virtuous spiral of continuous change (in contrast with one-stop change). Indeed, the entire *raison d'être* of the campaign is to create sustainable change.

In pursuit of this sustainability, funding is reportedly not a burning issue for Alliance. For the past two years there has not been much funding from donors (Oxfam providing most of the funding: Euro1.6 million for change makers support and 16 day campaigns). The Alliance office is planning to mobilise additional funds, phase-wise, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> phase beginning shortly. But money is not a prime motivator or priority for this campaign. One key informant commented: “we’re happy to get support but not by losing our identity”.

## **Lessons Learned**

The issue of “projectising” this kind of social movement is particularly challenging given the sensitive nature of the focus and sensitivities around “western cultural agendas”. Oxfam to their credit have recognised the sensitivity of the campaign by not imposing a restrictive project framework and by not insisting that the campaign use their logo. A key informant noted: “using logos can be good but sometimes you need something other than a logo”.

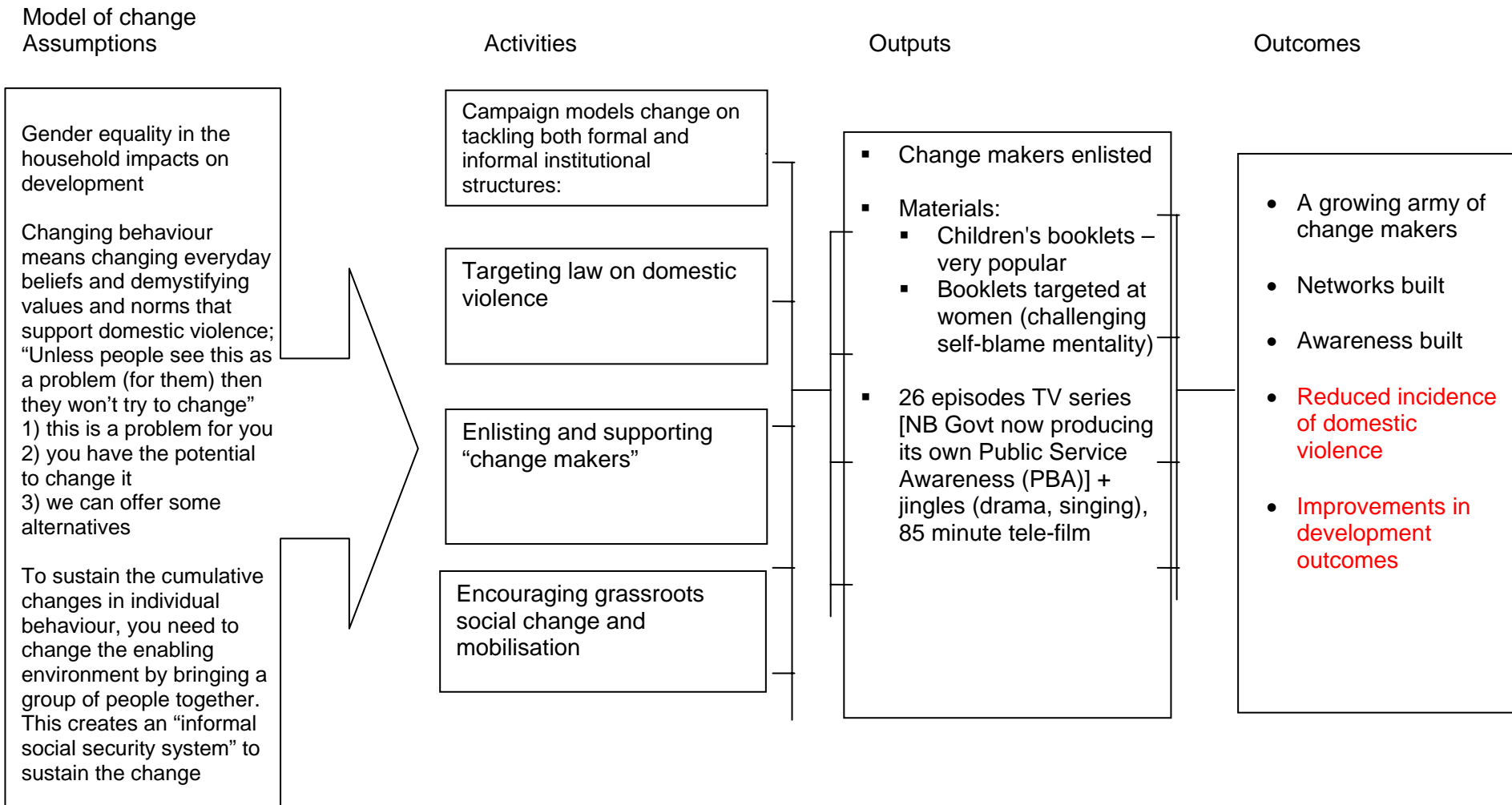
## **III: Models of Change Developed**

The motivation for making this a development issue was fuelled by the effect assumption that gender equality in the household impacts on development (see Figure 1 below).

The model takes as its starting point the objective to break the socio-cultural norm that violence against women is locally perceived as necessary to control women and maintain discipline in society. The movement is therefore built on the premise that there is a need to transform this social institution (to change the rules that govern behaviour) through building a social consensus and renegotiating social contracts rather than to rely on the sanctions of policy change alone.

The model is based on effect assumptions that are difficult to test. Firstly it is very difficult to reliably measure the incidence of a taboo like domestic violence. In reporting on its achievements, the movement therefore leans heavily on accumulation of anecdotal evidence, which does not amount to a robust data set. Of course the movement cannot and should not be criticised for not being able effectively to measure its impact, but it should be careful to qualify its reporting on the effects of the campaign.

This means that the assumption that public declarations of change in attitude and behaviour are sufficient proxies for assessing the impact of the movement. Secondly, it is extremely difficult, and probably unwise, to attempt to attribute change in development outcomes to a reduction in domestic violence. The campaign is partly trying to do this because of donor demands for instrumentality but also because of a reported identification of empowerment in the family as a key to broader development achievements and outcomes.



#### **IV Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work**

##### **Documents**

We Can, 2007. *"We Can" Campaign; Annual Report, 2006-07*

Steps, 2006. *Gender and Development Alliance: Activity Report 2006*

Steps, 2007. *Conference Report*

WE CAN has a lot of case studies on reducing violence against women, but they do not have any statistical information.

##### **Interviews/Focus Groups**

M B Akhter, Gender Programme Coordinator, Bangladesh programme

Md. Habibullah Bahar, Director, Manab Mukti Sangstha (MMS) NGO Partner)

Rekha Saha, Director, Steps (NGO Partner)

Ferdinand Pereira, Sr. Programme Officer, Steps (NGO Partner)

## D.7. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) 'Making Waves'

### I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	DFID (67.5%) SIDA (15.9%) Norway (10.9%) Danida (5.7%)
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	Transparency International
3. Objectives : regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	Goal states: <i>More accountable governance in Bangladesh at all levels through greater transparency in public, non-profit and private sector transactions, leading to sustainable poverty reduction</i> Making Waves purpose states: <i>Increased demand by men and women for transparency and accountability in public, non-profit and private sector transactions</i>
4. Main CVA and other activities	At micro level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increasing citizen's voice regarding standards of transparency and accountability in governance</li> <li>• establishment of Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCC) and volunteer youth groups (YES –Youth Engagement and Support) as anti-corruption watch dogs</li> <li>• establishment of volunteer youth groups (YES – Youth Engagement and Support) attached to the CCCs, which focus on awareness raising</li> <li>• establishment of advice and information (AI)desks (basic public service information, factsheets on basic rights) at CCC offices and satellite</li> <li>• enhancing channels of communication and introduction of Report Cards as a means to assess public services</li> </ul> At macro level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research and advocacy- maintenance of corruption database, publication of analytical studies on specific service providers, provision of recommendations for various guardianship institutions., national household survey of corruption experience</li> <li>• Parliament Watch</li> </ul>
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	Citizens (respected, role models) as members of CCCs Youths (15-30 years) National level guardianship organisations ( Public Service Commission, Anti –Corruption Commission, Election Commission)
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes	Because of the nature of advice sought through CCCs, links now forged with NGOs involved in legal aid, gender and women's rights and land issues.
7. Duration	6 years
8. Starting date	Jan 2003
9. Total budget	Euro 4.2 million (US \$ 6.5 million)

## II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria

### Relevance<sup>66</sup>

The issue of corruption is high on the national agenda and even more so under the CTG whose fight against corruption has been its main focus since taking office. On Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, Bangladesh scores 2 (2007) which suggests a high level of corruption on a scale of 1-10. On the World Bank measurement of governance framework (2006), 'control of corruption' index Bangladesh scores among the 5% worst countries. The estimated annual household burden of corruption is £358 million (2005).

TIB has decided to focus on health, primary education and local government which fits well with the priorities detailed in the PRS as well as with citizens priorities. For example, subjects for Report Cards (monitoring and evaluation tools) are selected by the CCCs in consultation with local communities and relate to issues that most affect people's lives (health and education services and local government).

### Efficiency

The budget is split approximately 1:3 on macro-level: micro level activities. This TIB chapter is the biggest in the world (with 190 staff, of whom 76 are in the field). TIB reports to its donor consortium using accepted reporting standards and external audit.

A recent impact assessment of TB (Knox and Yasmin, 2007) attempted to quantify the projected monetary savings (over 8 years) if corrupt practices were curtailed:

- for 36 hospitals the savings were in the region of £840,000;
- for 36 primary schools savings were approximately £110,000; and
- for 36 unions and pourashavas savings were £768 million.

If these figures are confirmed this represents a significant return on investment and income savings for citizens and particularly the poor since the corruption is mostly linked to leakage in provision of special support to the poor (educational stipends, pensions, relief, widows allowances etc).

There is some concern that (as a result of awareness raising) the AI desks are swamped with requests for help and that dealing with these can divert the CCCs from their core activities. There is also growing demand to look at corruption in other sectors such as land reform, water and banking. Responding to these demands is likely to overstretch TIB's resources and compromise the quality of its work.

This is the only example in the world of a TIB Chapter undertaking its own social mobilisation programme with its own field staff. Although this confers advantages in terms of TIB having direct access to grassroots experience to inform its national level advocacy, we question the appropriateness and efficiency of this for this kind of organisation. Running a field programme is a massive undertaking with human resource management headaches which can divert attention from its main focus. Perhaps the campaign<sup>67</sup> could have been channelled through the massive number of NGOs and CSOs already existing? However, we acknowledge that CCC members were attracted to become members because of the TIB name and international recognition. The importance of having respected and well known members of CCCs cannot be underestimated. However, perhaps TIB can work more strategically in the future with its NGO Alliance.

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<sup>67</sup> We find it hard to use the term social movement which TIB prefers, as social movements are not externally driven and are thus a very different 'animal'

## Effectiveness

At local level the Making Waves project has the following achievements (Knox and Yasmin, 2007):

- 36 CCCs working in 34 districts across all six Divisions of Bangladesh.
- 1819 members of CCCs. YES and Citizens for Transparency Groups (Swajon)
- 36 Advice and Information Desks at CCCs and 209 satellite desks. These provide resources to the public on corruption issues and referral service for people with corruption issues
- 35,467 users of AI Desks (in CCC offices and satellite), although with a concern that the main users are men
- Many civic engagement activities such as concerts, debates, workshops, dialogues, 'face the public' meetings with local government, mothers gatherings and School Management Committees (around primary education) and essay competitions
- 62 report cards published (22 Primary education, 21 health and 19 on Local Government).

The volunteer youth (YES) groups are particularly active in reaching young people and schoolchildren through theatre and satellite AI work. These volunteers are largely drawn from a pool of middle class university students and are highly committed to breaking what they see as a culture of corruption. This sense of responsibility derives from their self-perception as leaders and professionals of the future. The volunteers that we talked to in a focus group discussion in Khulna work with schoolchildren in poor surrounding villages but also stress the importance of reaching middle class schoolchildren, again because they are seen as the makers and shapers of a post-corruption institutional culture in the next generation.

At macro level, the research and advocacy programme is strong and influential. The Parliament Watch TIB monitors activities of parliament, in particular the parliamentary committees. This particular activity has changed in nature during the CTG. The corruption database is regularly updated and half yearly reports are shared in round table conferences and are well covered in the national press.

TIB also conducts corruption surveys at household level which track actual experiences of corruption rather than perceptions. The latest of a series of four (since 1997) of these is due to be published soon.

TIB lobbied extensively for reform of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption, put forward the draft law for establishment of the Anti Corruption Commission and made recommendations for the Election Commission and Public Service Commission.

## Impact

According to the 2007 Impact Assessment '*TIB has become synonymous with the fight against corruption*' and a respected '*brand name*' which attracts media and public attention.

**At the micro level** local CCC members are well known and respected and as such gain access to and the ear of service providers. The publication of report cards (the main activity) which highlight deficiencies is, according to the recent impact assessment (2007) 'directly correlated with changes effected'. They include improvements in teacher and student attendance, reduced leakage in administration of special provisions (stipends, free books) and improved toilet facilities, enhanced efficiencies at out patient clinics, reduction of activity of *dalals* (brokers), provision of information boards, fair distribution of special provisions for the poor through local government.

The People's Theatre has effectively raised awareness of rights, particularly amongst the illiterate.

**At the macro level** there are many examples of 'waves made'. The 2007 Impact Assessment notes three important ones:

- 1 TIB conducted a study on corruption at Chittagong Port (with a reputation as one of the '*most expensive and unsafe ports in the world*') in 2004/5 which was much publicised and resulted in a team from the Anti Corruption Commission undertaking its own investigation and a significant 'clean up';
2. A TIB study revealed that corruption was rife in the passport services involving collusion between passport officials, police and middlemen. These findings led to a radical shake-up, with almost 60 brokers arrested. A computerised system and enhanced signage have resulted; and
3. A TIB report on corrupt practices within Dhaka Medical College Hospital resulted in the establishment of a disciplinary committee under the Health Directorate which took action against three hospital employees.

With regard to impact on the functions of three guardianship institutions (the Anti Corruption Commission, Election Commission and Public Service Commission), the CTG has initiated an investigation of irregularities identified by TIB and made important changes, including (i) the re- establishment of an independent Anti-Corruption Commission and abolishment of the Bureau, and (ii) cancelling civil service exam results and starting afresh with more transparency, establishment of a separate civil service commission.

TIB has gained enormous respect from the CTG and has been requested by the Anti Corruption Commission to work with them at local and national levels (a letter from the ACC Chair requests TIB's 'sharing technical and organisational experience and expertise' related to its 'social movement against corruption' and suggests the possibility of 'joint programming'). Although this is a significant endorsement of TIB's expertise we question whether such collaboration is appropriate on the grounds that TIB's independence (both real and perceived) is crucial to its continued credibility.

## Sustainability

At the micro level, there is significant demand for TIB to expand its CCC programme to all 64 districts but the current volunteers need further support and nurturing. Their sustainability depends on gaining more experience and deepening their work. The TIB ED feels that the current CCC programme was a 'laboratory' and as such TIB will phase out and not get involved in expansion itself, arguing that TIB 'needs to go back to its original agenda'.

The sustainability of the CCCs is crucial. TIB has started to look at ways of ensuring financial sustainability by setting up an Endowment Fund and fund raising through the Bangladeshi Diaspora. While TIB has been embraced by the CTG (see comment above under "Impact") this positive experience may not continue under a political government. In some ways TIB is enjoying a 'window of opportunity'. If sufficient progress is made with support to Guardianship Institutions prior to elections, however, then TIB will probably be able to maintain its influence.

Financial sustainability to continue to support the macro level activities is a challenge for TIB. Suggestions that TIB could charge for studies and data provision may compromise their work. They would have to be very careful, for example, about who commissions work and sources of funds for this, while fee charging would restrict free and open access to data, which is essential to promotion of the cause.

## Lessons Learned

A number of important lessons have been learned from this case study evaluation:

- work of this kind can only have positive impact if there is political will. The current emergency government situation (non political government) has initiated a strong drive against corruption, providing a 'right moment' for TIB
- The international recognition afforded TIB endows it with a level of clout with its publications and campaigns. People are enthusiastic to become involved because of the international 'brand' and take notice.
- This work brings significant personal risk. Staff and the ED have endured considerable harassment. But this also can create strong moral support when publicised and enhances the case.
- Care has to be taken to maintain independence. Real or perceived alliances with Government, sponsors, or donor interests can jeopardise the acceptance of its work
- Success brings demands which cannot be met. It is essential that the focus is maintained on priorities in order to maintain a reputation for quality work
- Although direct links with grassroots are important for TIB, perhaps running its own field programme is not the most efficient way. To what extent was TIB encouraged to do this by donors and its search for funds?
- Social movements are endogenously driven; TIB is promoting a campaign not a movement.

## III: Models of Change Developed

The TIB initiative is based on a model of change which links the generation of evidence and associated advocacy activity to behavioural change amongst officials and duty bearers. In this sense the Making Waves project is a classical CVA intervention which links magnified citizen voice with enhanced accountability, thus encouraging citizens to act as a bulwark against state malfeasance. The added ingredient in this change model is the agency of professionals and middle class students in (a) tackling the state directly armed with evidence of wrongdoing; and b) building awareness amongst poor communities about corruption, entitlements and advocacy.

It is clear that at the output level the Campaign has been successful in establishing CCCs and active YES groups. It is impossible to state whether these activities have created a critical mass for a social movement. And there is certainly greater public debate on corruption as an important outcome of the project. Other CVA outcome effect assumptions, however, would need to be tested more robustly before the campaign can make claims about the impact of activities on service delivery performance, corruption and associated costs for households. Similarly there is no clear attribution of any anticipated change in Guardianship institutions to the project activities.



### Model of change Assumptions

Corruption creates all kinds of injustice , prevents development, aggravates poverty and undermines governance an democracy

It is possible to create pressure from below to demand attention to corrupt practices irrespective of the government in power

Citizens need a local platform for organising drives against corruption and raising awareness. They need credibility to do this

Credible and rigorous evidence based research into corruption by an independent body can bring this issue to centre stage and demand response

### Activities

General awareness raising through campaigns, meetings, media, popular theatre, youth arm

Establishment and mentoring of Committees of Concerned Citizens at district level comprising volunteers committed to anti-corruption

Use of record cards to assess services provided in hospitals, primary school and local government. Publication and debate around these.

Maintenance of and provision of information from data base on corruption

Independent research studies on priority issues

### Outputs

Establish a critical mass to act as a 'social movement'

36 CCC s active  
36 YES groups active

Advice and Information centres both at CCC (36)and satellite(209) providing information and advice on corruption to drop in visitors

Research studies and position papers published, launched and reported in news media

### Outcomes

Improved service delivery at local level (education, health and local government)

Reduced costs associated with corruption for households

Public debate on corruption

Enhanced organisation and functioning of Guardianship institutions (Anti Corruption Commission, Public Service Commission and Election Commission)

Corruption tackled in highlighted institutions e.g., Port Authority, Dhaka Medical Hospital, Passport Office

#### **IV Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work**

##### **References**

Colin Knox and Tahera Yasmin, 2007. "Transparency International Bangladesh Impact Assessment", Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, November

Transparency International Bangladesh, 2005. "Corruption in Bangladesh: A Household Survey", Dhaka, Bangladesh

##### **Interviews and Focus Groups**

Iftekharuzzaman Executive Director, TIB

Focus Group with CCC members, Khulna

Focus Group with YES youth volunteer members, Khul

## D.8. Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation (BSSF)

### I: Profile of the Intervention<sup>68</sup>

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	World Solidarity Movement (WSM), Belgium
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation (BSSF)
3. Objectives :	Promotion and protection of workers in Bangladesh through human resource development, strengthening and empowerment of the trade unions and advocacy for law reformation.
4. Main CVA and other activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness Building on labour rights, OSHA (occupational safety and health act), work environment, labour unity and solidarity etc.</li> <li>• Mobilization through meeting, rally, gathering, mass procession, demonstration, submission of charters of demand to the respective ministries. to claim rights from government and owners</li> <li>• Motivational activities such as orientation, training, workshop and seminar on national labour law 2006, labour code, OSHA, trade union rights and human rights, good governance, organization and development</li> <li>• Development and dissemination of advocacy materials such as stickers, pamphlets, posters, newsletters</li> <li>• Observation of National Days such as national Victory day, Independence day, May Day to raise awareness</li> </ul>
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	Jute, cotton and textile workers, agricultural workers, handloom weavers, fisher folks, transport workers, construction workers, metal workers, tobacco workers, indigenous workers, boiler workers, rickshaw pullers and hawkers (1,55,000 members)
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes <sup>69</sup>	Programme has linkages with other partners of World Solidarity Movement Bangladesh, namely Christian Workers Union and Gano Shashthya Kendro (a national NGO working in helathcare) These three organizations organise joint programmes on trade union rights, human rights and good governance for the workers in order to build the labour movement in Bangladesh.
7. Duration	3 years
8. Starting date	2005
9. Total budget	Euro 27,718 (Taka 29,19,000)

<sup>68</sup> In case CVA is part of a larger intervention (which is the case in 40 % of the interventions that were reviewed in the Intervention Analysis, see Evaluation Framework Box 1 on p 6) describe what the CVA part is of the intervention, what other parts of the intervention are and how these are interrelated.

<sup>69</sup> Identify key linkages of the selected intervention with other programmes of the donor concerned and/or other key stakeholders in order to realise the objectives identified.

## II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria

### Relevance

In Bangladesh, workers, especially in the non-farm sectors (e. g agricultural workers, fishermen, weavers) have been socially, politically and economically deprived due to lack of their awareness, united voice and not having legal trade union entity. Some workers have not traditionally been unionised and others which have still face problems because representation is corrupt and politicised and serves political party interest rather than the interests of the members. BSSF is trying to support a role model of non-partisan, efficient and effective trade union.

BSSF has been trying to build workers awareness, solidarity and unity so that they can claim and establish their rights. Amid patronage on one hand and tensions on the other hand between Government and politicised Unions and a current climate of suppression of union activity under CTG, BSSF is trying to retain a non-partisan stance and to transform workers movement into '*social movement of the workers*'. This approach has already earned recognition from society, Government and the international community, because it is purposely non-partisan, democratic and more dynamic and organized. Networking with international trade unions and federations of workers has helped BSSF to develop organizational capacity and expertise and to influence international policies and conventions relating to worker's interest and rights.

BSSF developed a strategic plan which considered their context, experience and future possible scenarios, and in which they have clearly articulated their opportunities, entry points and risks. BSSF provides training to trade union leaders and members on various issues relating to union rights and movements and organises workshop, seminars and national dialogues to communicate their workers needs and demands to the owners and Government. This culminated in the formulation of 'Labour Law-2006'. The key intervention logic of BSSF regarding capacity building are; if workers become aware about their rights, a cadre of committed worker leaders will be developed and trade union activity will be enhanced.

### Efficiency

BSSF sees its core competence as workers training (e. g leadership development, trade union rights, human rights, good governance), supporting workers (in particular those facing harassment by owners and government), research and documentation on workers' issues and advocacy for legal reform relating to labour laws. We observed one of the awareness training and discussion meeting. It which was participatory and effective and undertaken at low cost as BSSF uses their own office as training venue, leaders take sessions as voluntary basis and participants do not get any travel costs or honorarium.

Only three coordinators (trade, transport and research) and one office secretary get salary from the project and office rent only provided by the project. Rest of the administrative costs run by the organization from their own fund which is mainly raised by the member's subscriptions, because, WSM does not provide administrative overheads.

BSSF gets financial assistance through WSM-Bangladesh and they provide support following the annual action plan which is developed through workshop with all stakeholders. BSSF has to submit half-yearly and annual progress reports and annual audit report to WSM and once a year WSM undertakes a monitoring visit to BSSF when they visit field activities, meet with leaders and members and review all the documents. BSSF leaders told us that efficiency was assured by timely disbursement and monitoring by WSM. Besides, there is a 'Project Steering Committee' and a 'Working Committee' consisting of representatives of the partner organizations which regularly coordinate, monitor, follow-up and audit the implemented activities and they try to best use of the resources.

## Effectiveness

BSSF provides 22 training courses annually on various issues relating to worker's rights and quality of the observed training course was good. BSSF organizes discussion meetings, workshops, seminars and public dialogues to promote workers' rights and influence modifications of existing laws. We observed discussion meetings on Human Rights Day, which was effective. It also observed that media published significant number of reports in which they highlighted the role of BSSF in protection and promotion of worker's interest. BSSF was invited to assist in formulating new Labour Law 2006.

BSSF seems to be successful in i. Quality leadership development, ii. Promotion and protection of workers' interests and iii, Law reformulation. However, in terms of its massive membership the number of training courses and other promotional events is less. Furthermore, there is limited interaction with NGOs working in the workers' interest, non-members trade unions and political parties in the country except SKOP (Sramik Karmachari Oaikko Parishad) platform. Limiting supports to few members (e. g micro-credit supports to Bangladesh Handloom Weavers Service) creates tensions and competition among members and ultimately negatively impacts on their healthy interaction and cooperation.

## Impact

BSSF claims to have made significant impact on building worker's awareness and confidence to promote and protect their issues and in particular to meet with and make demands of the factory and enterprise owners and government.

The impact of BSSF interventions noted are ;

- a. 150 national leaders, 150 trade federation leaders and 250 grass root level leaders are regarded as having appropriate leadership skills
- b. Transparency, accountability and democracy have been established within the 292 member trade unions,
- c. union membership has been extended to other workers (e.g. government employees, teachers, rickshaw pullers, van drivers) and geographical coverage (e. g new 10 districts) have been included
- d. as a result of increased credibility as a non-political and efficient Union, the organization's membership has increased from 50 to 292 and individual membership increased from 50,000 to 1,55,000,
- e. 200,000 (includes non members) workers have become aware about their rights through training, workshops, seminars, meetings, gatherings, rally and campaigns,
- f. Job security and promotion of service conditions of the workers increased due to collective bargaining and negotiation with owners and government,
- g. New Labour Law 2006, National Fishing Policy, Water Bodies Management Policy were formulated and 5<sup>th</sup> National Pay Scale for Workers properly implemented due to strong lobby and advocacy of BSSF along with SCOP (Sramik Karmachari Oaikko Parishad).

## Sustainability

The project activities are not sufficient to get Trade Unions up to the level of professionalism and independence that is needed. It requires much more support and time. The majority of the members of the trade unions are yet to get any training or to participate in any programme event except mass gathering. However, BSSF has been encouraging participants who have received training to organise sharing meetings at their union level after the training courses. They also try to discuss the basic things at the mass gatherings and mass mobilization activities.

The poor workers do not pay their annual subscriptions regularly and therefore it is very difficult for BSSF to become financially solvent which increases dependency on the donor.

The project developed significant numbers of committed leaders including women leaders whom can lead the organization more professional and cost effective way. Project developed policy and procedure of good governance and successfully implemented at the member trade union level. As a result, free and fair elections were held in the union level and proper representations of the workers ensured which significantly reduced corruption, mismanagement and irregularities.

Presently, it will be not possible to run all the project activities without external funds. However, the overall activities (e. g workers sensitization and movement) of BSSF will be continued with their own resource which is almost 30% of the total budget of the organization (e. g annual membership fees, subscription from well-wishers of the community), government grants and public supports. If external funds were withdrawn, the capacity building, organizational strengthening and labour welfare (e. g soft loan) activities will be reduced. BSSF already took initiative to raise funds from the external funds (10-15% of the external fund use as revolving fund of the organization) and started discussions with like-minded (who believes in trade union movements and their importance) donor agencies in order to diversify its overall funding mechanisms.

BSSF sustains last 44 years due to strong ownership of general members, dynamic leadership and recognition from government and owners community.

### **Lessons Learned**

1. There is a good match between organization's own mission and core competence and what it does in the project.
2. Limiting supports to few members (e. g micro-credit supports to Bangladesh Handloom Weavers Service) creates tensions and bad competitions among members and limit their healthy interaction and affects overall healthy environment.
3. Too limited supports to create strong demand from the below.
4. Trade Union can earn recognition from society, Government and international community through purposively non-partisan stance, strong institutional and organizational development and external support.
5. Trade Unions can be an alternative of NGOs to raise citizen's voice and accountability in the country. Trade Union Movements now have become transformed as social movement (e. g BSSF is now organizing price hike movement, democracy movement). Therefore, TUs are now raising voice not only for their labour rights but also for other rights which affects their lives.
6. Political affiliation, corruption and fraction of unity distort Trade Union Movements. The politicised and corrupt representation serves their own interest or interest of the political parties rather than interest of the members. Lack of unity distorts the collective bargaining power of the workers which affects the worker negotiation process with owners and government.

### **III: Models of Change Developed**

This project uses human resource development, strengthening and empowerment of trade unions and advocacy for law reformation for promotion and protection of workers in Bangladesh as a starting point

In the context of highly politicised Trade Unions and very high levels of corruption, the model of change is ambitious in the time frame and this is the reason we have indicated limited fulfilment. This is only one (albeit major) Trade Union among many. Whilst it can be claimed that the more transparent leadership and improved internal accountability processes are helping this Union to become a role model, there is little likelihood of other Trade Unions following their lead as the positions of corrupt leaders are too entrenched. The positive is that the image of Trade Unionism in Bangladesh may be enhanced and promoted among other stakeholders (State, Private Sector (national and international, Labour and Social Compliance organisations). The model of change should result in changed perceptions of these others and a gradual inclusion in dialogue and joint action where they have been excluded in the past.

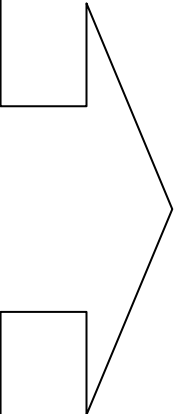
**Model of change Assumptions**

Human Resource Development will lead to economic, political and social forms of empowerment.

Strengthening trade unions encourages solidarity and mutual support to sustain action and encourage institutional change.

Visible and effective collective bargaining by men and women workers with owners and government will increase wages and improve working conditions.

Policy reformation will allow workers to enjoy ILO norms, conventions and laws.



**Activities**

Human resource development activities such as orientation, training, workshop, seminar, sharing meeting, exposure visit, observation of national days

Policy, system and procedure development, leadership development, annual convention, mass gathering, mass rally, dialogue with government and owners

Development and dissemination of advocacy materials, media campaign, strike, charter of demand submission, international networking, participation in national and international forums

Policy advocacy activities on legal reformation



**Outputs**

New skilled leaderships are developed and they are played an important role to promote and protect workers in Bangladesh.

Trade unions are strengthened enough to sustain action and encourage institutional change.

Fair wages promoted, decent working conditions improved and exploitation of workers reduced.

Pro-workers laws and policies formulated



**Outcomes**

Workers in Bangladesh are promoted and protected through human resource development, strengthening and empowerment of trade unions and advocacy for law reformation.

Model of non-politicised Trade Union

#### IV. Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work

##### **Documents**

Annual Progress Report  
Events Report  
Annual Audit Report  
Organizational Brochure  
Organizational Constitution and policy  
Meeting Minutes  
AGM Report  
Papers on Election Procedures.

##### **Interviews and Focus Groups**

Focus group discussion with BSSF Executive Committee Members (seven) includes Tofazzal Hossain Bagu, president, Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, secretary general, Sultan Alam Mallik, vice president, Shamsul Alam Zulfiquar, joint secretary, and Ahsanul Karim Chowdhury, vice president, Ali Reza Haider, Treasurer etc. to get general information of the organization. It was almost a half-day participatory discussion.

Semi-structured interview with Mr. Ali Reza Haider, President, Garments Workers Association to gain information face to face using a series of broad questions to guide conversations, but allowing for new questions to arise as a result of the discussion. It took almost one and half hour.

Focus group discussion with the general members of BSSF (twenty), participants includes president-transport workers union, secretary- handloom workers union, president- public employees union, president-garments workers union, general secretary-transport workers union, president-metal trade union, general secretary-agri trade union, convenor-fishermen association, organizing secretary-construction workers and president-clerical workers union. It was an almost half-day participatory discussion to check or clarify information and gather opinions about the issues from a small group of selected people who represent different view points.

Observation of on going events- Training on Traffic Rules for Transport Workers and Discussion Meeting of Garments Workers on World Human Rights Day.

Visited field areas (Sonargaon of Narayangonj District) of BSTS (Bangladesh Sanjukta Tanti Samity-member organization of BSSF) and met and discuss with the leaders and general members. Visited their income generating project activities (e. g micro-credit for small handloom weavers). It was a day visit.

Meeting and discussion with Dr. Tariquzzaman, Coordinator, WSM-Bangladesh in order to about the project, their priorities and role to support BSSF. It was a participatory discussion meeting of one and half hour.



## D.9. Rupantar Grassroots Women's Leadership

### I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	Rupantar (NGO established 1982)
3. Objectives : regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	<i>To facilitate active participation of women in local decision making process that contributes to improved living conditions for the women and members of their communities</i> The core focus of the third phase is to consolidate women's leadership and to disseminate Rupantar's approach.
4. Main CVA and other activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to develop women's committee structures, train, advise and accompany grassroots women leaders and organisations at ward, union parishad and upazila levels so that they are able to advocate for women's rights, ask for quality public services and participate more responsibly in local decision making processes</li> <li>to create awareness among UPs on gender issues in their duty/work and about opportunities to include the gender perspective</li> <li>promote knowledge transfer /replication of Rupantar's approach (ref: adapted from SDC Credit proposal July 2007)</li> </ul> <p>Note that Rupantar, in addition to its support for accountability institutions, is also playing a coaching role, advising local government on fiscal issues (e.g. raising tax on profit making NGOs, billboards etc)</p>
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>women and adolescent girls (23,000)</li> <li>elected UP members, local leaders, other members of the administration, husbands (for support for women's political empowerment)</li> <li>media, activists, development workers, policy makers ( to champion on behalf of poor women)</li> </ul>
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes	Another project of Rupantar funded by USAID which support UPs and establishes Citizen Committees in the same union thus enabling ' <i>the much –needed triangular linkage of local government/local administration, citizens and emerging women leadership to establish a participatory and accountable system of governance</i> ' (ref Khan 2006)
7. Duration	Phase 3 three years (2007-2010) phase 1 commenced 1998.
8. Starting date	July 2007
9. Total budget	CHF 2,000,000

## II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria

### Relevance

In line with the PRS which highlights both women's advancement and local governance as a key priorities of the Government of Bangladesh.

SDC has local governance as a priority thematic focus and guiding principles of gender equity, human rights and social justice. Furthermore, this is the only directly supported grassroots NGO in SDC's governance portfolio and is seen as important to '*enable SDC to gain direct field experience on gender equity, women participation and empowerment and offer the opportunity to consolidate the experimentation of a women's leadership development model for wider dissemination and replication*' (SDC, 2007).

Rupantar's vision is to '*establish a gender equitable democratic society with cultural values, free from injustice and superstitions*'.

Recent national and local elections have seen an increase in women exercising their franchise and since 1997 there have been provisions for three reserved seats on the Union Parishad for women (each representing three wards). Women's political empowerment is still constrained by their limited political awareness, limited access to public platforms and their inexperience in engaging in political processes. Given external support it has been shown that not only can women become more active members of UP but will be invited to participate in other forums and have successfully contested general UP seats (competing against men).

### Efficiency

Funding started for this programme in 1998 so in total there will have been 12 years of funding (by 2010) amounting to approximately Euro 1.27 million (CHF 2 million). The work is concentrated in 20 unions in four Upazila.

The mid-term Evaluation of Rupantar noted its cost effectiveness. The Rupantar model uses staff from local communities with low salaries and does not provide traditional services. The 2006 Mid Term Evaluation and SDC's credit proposal (2007) noted the following achievements:

- 11,566 women organised into women's groups and 'aware of their rights'
- competent women leaders, participating in different development work and included in different local committees (300)
- 15 women elected to reserved seats and 2 to general seats in the 2003 local elections and 100 active in UP standing committees (while remaining partisan politics-neutral)

Rupantar has a team of 59 project staff, including 20 union organisers and 20 cultural organisers (1:200 direct beneficiaries) In the third phase, Rupantar intends to cover all the unions (32) in the four Upazilas (two parliamentary constituencies).

### Effectiveness

Over the past 10 years, Rupantar has measurably gone a significant way to developing a norm of women's participation and to establish credible women's organisations in the localities where it works. Women have competed against men in the UP elections and won seats. Women are invited to participate in Standing Committee decisions, local shalish (dispute resolution/arbitration processes) and other village level committees. There is anecdotal evidence that duty bearers are performing more satisfactorily -- e.g. sub assistant agricultural officers meeting farmers more regularly, teachers attending schools on time, health staff more regularly present at their duty stations -- and this is attributed by local stakeholders [see the Most Significant Change (MSC) analysis in Tables 1-3 below] to the work and engagement by the women's groups. This is discussed in more detail under "Impact" below.

## Impact

Phase 1 resulted in a cadre of women leaders and formation of women's organisations at ward and union (9) levels and some success in local elections in 2003.

Phase 2 expanded the approach to other unions (20), and creation of Women Co-ordination centre at upazila level

Phase 3 is ongoing but intends to expand to 32 unions and work more intensively with LGI to encourage greater acceptance of gender focus in their activities.

The MSC analysis conducted with stakeholders during the evaluation (see Tables 1-3) indicate that the impact of Rupantar on the political, economic and social empowerment of women has been significant. Women exposed to the *combined* effect of Rupantar and other NGO CVA interventions are more politically active (voice) and mobile (visiting government offices). They are also more socially active in challenging dowry and child marriage practices and in contributing more meaningfully to family decision making. There are also indications that they are engaged in a slightly wider range of economic activities.

Increasing women's political participation as a project outcome has reportedly led to other social impacts (as a result of spillover female participation and mobilisation) (see Table 2 and Table 3) including a lower rate of male school drop out, a much lower level of early marriage and a decreasing divorce rate.

Increasing voice has now motivated the supply side, with Upazila officials and Union Parishad (UP) chairmen now more motivated to actively attend meetings through the efforts of the participating women. Government officials and Union and Upazila level are now more transparent with annual budgeting and are more responsive to people's problems. There are also indications, although less convincing to the evaluation team (see Tables 1-3) of improved performance by service providers, such as the government hospital, as a result of more effective citizen engagements.

While it seems that the combined cumulative influence of Rupantar and other NGO activity on formal and informal social institutions has been felt, it is difficult when shifting from outcomes (the committee structure in place) to impacts (political, economic and social) to isolate definitively the impact of Rupantar from other NGO activity in this field.<sup>70</sup>

It is important to note that many unions in this area are very conservative rural Muslim communities and that these types of changes are necessarily slow and evolving rather than transformational. This requires a long-haul commitment by Rupantar and other social change NGOs. The Rupantar senior management believe that a political sea change will be achieved when women start successfully contesting the UP *general* seats rather than allocated seats.

## Sustainability

Rupantar is concerned about sustainability. The NGO emphasises the principle that the women's organisations should work independently and thus provides them with training in organisation building, leadership and confidence building. Permanent centres have been constructed on land donated by the community.

Significantly, Rupantar staff support appears to be "low key" rather than driving the process of political engagement. Although it is important for Women's Committees, by their own admission, to have Rupantar presence and backing, it is also clear that these Committees are self motivating. Rupantar support includes guidance on establishing committees, training (women's empowerment/gender, law, local government processes and budget/tax issues, disaster management).

Rupantar also emphasise the importance of networking between its women's organisations both horizontally and vertically so that their advocacy/ demands and response to hostility can benefit from

<sup>70</sup> Note that there is an important distinction here between service delivery NGOs providing interventions (which themselves need to be held accountable to service users) and NGO support to political processes of voice and accountability.

the solidarity. The stress on participation is also intended to ensure sustainability of the women's organisations by keeping the focus on issues which are relevant to the members.

In Phase 3, Rupantar is emphasising 'women to women' coaching and peer learning whereby older groups nurture new groups.

### Lessons Learned

A number of useful lessons have been learned from the Rupantar experience to date, including:

- A long time is needed to affect change- this initiative has been supported for 10 years
- There is a sense that the cumulative effect of combined NGO operation in the area has been to empower women. This needs to be qualified, however, by an accompanying impression that NGOs initiatives are overlapping. Hence women on a Rupantar WCC may also be members of up to 8-10 other committees (approx 4-5 of which are NGO-formed committees) and may end up talking to UP and Upazila officials multiple times as representatives of different committees with different sectoral foci. This is a *crowded accountability market place* which to some extent is feeding the donor appetite for this type of (gendered) CVA activity. The risk is that process outcomes/impacts become inefficient or even damaging.
- The development of an appropriate and innovative communication approach through cultural means is effective and 'marketable' to others, and has been picked up by national media
- Projectisation leads to measurement by numbers of meetings and cultural events; e.g. Rupantar's project proposal lists regular events and the predicted number of participants implying that, irrespective of whether there is a meaningful agenda, meetings will take place.
- Over-rigid and/or meaningless indicators in the log frame [e.g (i) at least 50% of women's demands met by local government or other service providers (ii) 40% of women inputs taken up, addressed by the UP (iii) 70% women leaders participating /active in socio-cultural-religious events'] put pressure on the organisation to deliver regardless of external circumstances and to set up monitoring instruments and indicators which may not be relevant to the change that target groups are actually experiencing.
- The above discussion suggests that there is a careful balance that needs to be achieved in this type of intervention between "top down" mobilisation and "bottom up" social mobilisation.
- The main competence and motivation is the Rupantar model" of social transformation through drama and song'. Rupantar feels a pressure (although SDC says that it does not put this pressure on) to (i) scale up (leading to possible inefficiencies when an organisation has to enlarge) and (ii) bring the voice of poor women into policy dialogue at national level, which may not be what Rupantar either wants to do or is good at doing.
- There remains a question about the extent to which the women's organisations themselves are affecting change in attitude and behaviour of service providers and local administration and how much of is affected by the presence (and clout) of a foreign aided project. This question is difficult to really unpack during a relatively short evaluation visit.

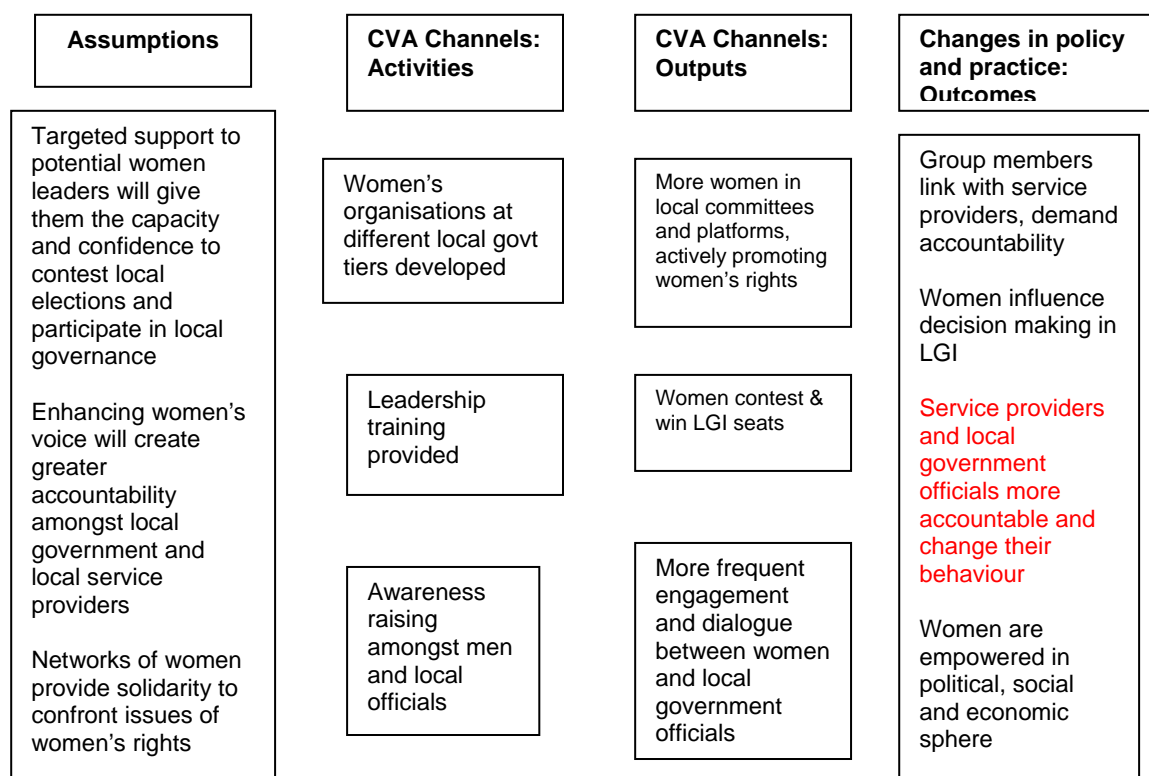
### III: Models of Change Developed

Rupantar has a clear model of change which builds improved service delivery and outcomes on the basis of a classic model of enhanced citizen voice and government accountability (see Figure 1).

The gendered nature of this support suggests an "effect assumption" that women's political participation is highly effective in engaging government officials and service providers, but it also suggests a broader set of effect assumptions. These centre on the assumption that political empowerment of women in their relationship with local government will effect empowerment in other spheres, notably in their social empowerment in their households and communities, as well as their economic empowerment in respect of economic decision making and activities.

The discussion above (particularly on impacts and on lessons learned) suggests that these assumptions have for the most part been well formulated. Perhaps the area of outcomes where they are least tested is in the impact of this CVA activity on government and service provider performance, i.e. beyond the encouraging noises and frequent meetings that clearly now take place between women and these officials. There are indications that, even if they are now more willing and have a higher level of motivation, local officials may lack the authority and resources to make these types of observable changes.

**Figure 1. Rupantar CVA Model of Change**



#### IV. Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work

##### References

Khan, Zarina Rahman and Akhter Hussain, 2006 Final Report of Mid Term Review ' *An Alternative Intervention to Develop Grassroots Women's Leadership in Union Parishads*'  
 Rupantar Phase 3 Project Document 2007-2010  
 SDC March 2004 Credit Proposal ( internal document) 'Rupantar: Grassroots Women's Leadership Phase 2'  
 SDC July 2007 Credit Proposal ( internal document) 'Rupantar: Grassroots Women's Leadership Phase 3'

##### Interviews/Focus Groups

Rupantar Senior Management  
 Upazila Government Officials, Khulna  
 Female elected Union Parishad representatives from four different UPs  
 Rupantar Area Office Staff, Khulna  
 Female WCC and Upazila Coordination Committee (UCC) members, Amirpur Union  
 Upazila Coordination Committee (UCC) members, Baliadinga Union  
 Group of female villagers (non committee members)  
 Group of male villagers

**Table 1. Most significant change analysis, conducted by focus group of Upazila Government Officials, Khulna [7 male officials (cooperative society, engineer, livestock, youth development, village defence, fisheries and rural development) and 1 female (Women's Affairs)], 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2007**

What has been the most significant change in the past ten years?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the past couple of years women are more informed about the services available and they are asking about services: e.g. asking about what livestock services are available</li> <li>• More “small” people are coming to the office to ask for technical advice. This includes more women entering the office for advice; on the other hand, women are not participating in businesses (only in shops) so their engagement with Upazila is limited in scope</li> <li>• The number of female representatives on the Upazila Coordination Committee is increasing and they are now able to influence decision making, e.g. on construction activities</li> <li>• The Government has many social welfare projects: Women come and advice the Upazila on targeting. All these women are on the Rupantar committees.</li> <li>• The Rupantar committee women are also working in their communities to raise awareness about early marriage and dowries. If there are abses then the Women's Committee goes to the Upazila Women's Affairs Officer and she takes it up with the UP chairman to sort it out</li> <li>• Women's leadership is increasing in local communities:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e.g. when a young girl died in suspicious circumstances in a local village, the women organised a successful protest to the thana level to pressure the police into taking up the case</li> <li>• e.g. contractors; irregular activities are decreasing as a result of increasing women's voice in the communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There has been a decrease in the incidence of early marriage and of domestic violence, which is due in significant part to the influence of Rupantar. The Upazila has declares itself a “dowry free upazila”</li> <li>• In Muslim unions within the Upazila there has been an increase in women's participation in recent years due to information received via Rupantar's women's committee</li> <li>• Union Parishads are now increasingly likely to reveal their budget spending under pressure from citizens (NB Most UP spending comes from central government, with only 10-15% raised locally through a house tax)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b></p> <p>Note that there are 5 female upazila officials (including women's affairs, social affairs and education) and 17 male officials. If you include all professional staff there are some 40-50 women. Upazila posts are all centrally appointed civil service posts.</p> <p>The Upazila Parishad is headed by an elected person but this is elected official is not presently functioning in the current political context.</p> <p>Attempts to increase voice and accountability at the upazila level need to be assessed against an understanding of upazilas as vertically upwardly accountable institutions, spending resources to meet central government targets against 5 year development plans and annual action plans. So much reporting is presently to Ministries.</p> <p>Balanced against this there is an obligation on the Upazila parishad to listen to the UP chairmen who sit on the Upazila committee. The UP chairman in turn is under pressure from citizens who are increasingly knowledgeable about their entitlements and who complain to the UP chairman if they don't get services</p> <p>The Upazila officials noted a significant difference between this Upazila and adjoining Upazilas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher level of civic participation (in development committees)</li> <li>• Higher frequency of visits to Upazila</li> <li>• Higher level of female economic participation (offices, shops)</li> </ul> <p>They explained this difference in part because this Upazila is mainly Hindu and less conservative. There is less conservative religious influence (including on fertility rates which are higher in muslim communities and on women's mobility).</p> <p>But they also described the impact of Rupantar as significant on the MSC observations above.</p>

**Table 2. Most significant change analysis, conducted by focus group of female elected Union Parishad representatives, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2007**

<b>What has been the most significant change in the past ten years?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When reserve seats came in in 1997 women faced stiff resistance from families and communities but now the situation has changed with women participating more actively.</li> <li>• Upazila officials now more motivated to actively attend meetings through the efforts of the participating women</li> <li>• Now women claim their rights. In the early days women were not claiming their rights. Now they can access information and access activities (including economic activities)</li> <li>• Numbers of school drop out children have reduced through female participation in school management committees and meeting with parents and schoolteachers to motivate them to send and keep boys (a particular problem) at school</li> <li>• Early marriage is now very low. The women UP reps complained to the TNO about this and he used law enforcement: "Day by day attitudes are changing"</li> <li>• Dowry practice has significantly dropped (the Women's Committee arranged a survey to identify families who had taken dowry secretly and submitted this to the Department for Women's Affairs (Upazila officer)</li> <li>• Health official rent seeking for operations (10-15,000 Taka) has decreased following a WCC-organised demonstration and awareness building. Now very poor people can get operations for free</li> <li>• Divorce rates are decreasing through dispute resolution/ arbitration women are now "ready to bear any kind of risk". Women can also now ask for help from UP, police, shalish, backed by respect from local people who will come to them (WCC) with issues: "people first come to the WCC with their problems.. the Thana takes the advice of the WCC: "We (the WCCs) have already created a position in the local power structure"</li> <li>• Decision making within the family has seen a progressive change towards combined decision making regarding property, children, finance. Now husbands are also talking about their feelings with their wives.</li> <li>• The prized fish head used to go husbands and sons at mealtimes. Now wives and daughters are more likely to get their turn at eating the fish heads.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b></p> <p>These women decided to stand for election "to serve the people". The leadership role is very hard but very rewarding when they see the impact on poor people and poor women.</p> <p>The positive MSCs listed above are due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education rate is now higher amongst women</li> <li>• NGOs have been working here for the past 10-15 years. Through development projects women are getting information and they are WCC members involved in many projects, events, trainings and public sessions</li> </ul> <p>Commenting on sustainability of Rupantar impacts and process, the women were confident that people were sufficiently aware and motivated to continue with these processes.</p>

**Table 3. Most significant change analysis, conducted by a focus group of female villagers (non-committee members), Mishir Union, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2007**

<p><b>What has been the most significant change in the past ten years?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women are coming out of their homes more; a few years ago this was very rare. The WCC has improved security in the community (i.e. girls getting snatched) and so reduced the pressure from religious leaders, allowing women to move more freely</li> <li>• Women and child trafficking (to abroad) is much lower; this used to be quite high in this area</li> <li>• Women are much more aware about education and health information</li> <li>• Poor families are more aware of the importance of education and get support from NGOs and government. Drop-out rate is decreasing</li> <li>• Girl children could not continue education previously beyond primary education (12 years) as their parents wanted them to go into early marriage. Now parents try to continue their education and early marriage has dramatically reduced because security is much better and enforced by law (previously early marriages were common because it discouraged boys from disturbing girls)</li> <li>• There has been little change within the household; husbands are still taking decisions on finance. Husbands are mostly farmers and expect their wives to help but take the money and control the family budget</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b></p> <p>This is a very conservative Muslim rural community where change is slow. However, there are indications that social position of women and girls is changing as bulleted above. When asked who eats the fish head, the women said that this has changed and is now more fairly distributed whereas ten years ago it mostly went to the boy children.</p> <p>It seems that the combined cumulative influence of Rupantar and other Ngo activity on formal and informal social institutions has been felt, though of course it is difficult to isolate the impact of Rupantar from other NGO activity.</p>



## D.10. Samata – Empowerment Through Resource Mobilisation

### I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	DFID, Sida, Norad
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	Samata
3. Objectives : regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	Landless men and women in Samata's programme area improve their livelihoods, become socially and politically empowered, and able effectively to pressurise government, political and other elites to address the needs and rights of poor men and women.
4. Main CVA and other activities	Main activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group formation (including land groups and women's groups)</li> <li>• Land registration</li> <li>• Participation in local government and other public committees</li> <li>• Support to production</li> <li>• Networking with like-minded NGOs</li> <li>• Advocacy programme</li> <li>• Organisational strengthening of Samata</li> </ul>
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	Poor landless women and men
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes	Because Samata is a social movement endogenous to a particular area and historically contextual, links to programmes are not clear cut.
7. Duration	7 years
8. Starting date	2001
9. Total budget	Euro 13.7 million (GBP10.5 million)

### II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria

#### Relevance

The project is highly relevant to the priorities of the target group and donors

The Samata approach to social justice is highly relevant to the CVA model of change promoted by donors. Its most central activity has been the facilitation of *Khas* land (government managed land) redistribution (output 1) to landless men and women farmers. Landless farmers are by law prioritised as specially deserving and entitled to *Khas* land – yet in practise the process of redistribution is blocked by elite interests. In rural Bangladesh, land is a powerful issue because of its direct productive and economic benefits, its impact on social status and security, and because the failure of *khas* re-distribution is a symbol of abusing power within the social elite, as well as administrative and judicial corruption within the government.

Complementing their work on land rights, Samata are increasingly focusing on failures of the local government administration more generally, aiming to improve the accountability of local service providers (output 2). They challenge all forms of social inequality, such as gender injustices (output 3); and facilitate access to farm production support (output 4). Samata supports a major LAND<sup>71</sup> network of smaller organisations to replicate its *khas*, democratisation and gender strategies in six districts (output 5); and is a leader among civil society organisations working on land-rights advocacy (output 6).

<sup>71</sup> Land and Agrarian Network for Development.

## Efficiency

Efficiency levels appear extremely high as measured by land redistribution beneficiaries per unit of expenditure.

A recent draft-stage evaluation suggests, however, that there is significant uncertainty over Samata's claims on land redistribution levels (69052 acres were reported to have been redistributed in the July 2006 Output to Purpose Report, at a cost of Taka 8906 per acre) , so conclusions based on this efficiency measure must be qualified at this stage.

Although staff costs are relatively high at 69% of total budget, this is because Samata does not provide any assets directly to its members (these transfers are secured from government).

## Effectiveness

The project is highly effective in attaining its objectives.

Samata has 432,000 members organised into 26,000 groups in which over 60% of members are women. Samata reports that it has recovered and redistributed 94,000 acres of khas and other resources to 184,250 families since the 1980s. Over 90% of this was recovered during the project DFID funded project period (since 2001). Its members are reportedly able to influence wider decisions affecting their families and communities, as over 300 members of Samata and LAND groups have been elected to local union councils.

Samata has successfully mobilised local communities to gain improved access to health, education and other services.

## Impact

The secondary literature and primary fieldwork [Stakeholder interviews and Most Significant Change (MSC) analysis] reveal a profound impact of khas access on the political, economic and social opportunities and activities of the landless poor (see Tables 1-3 below). Previously they earned money as landless day labourers, but since accessing and gaining property rights to *khas* land they have increased their productive assets and incomes, with derived benefits such as food security and improved housing conditions. A knock-on effect of this has been that they become empowered in their social environment within and beyond their communities, while, within a single generation, the adult children of the original Samata landless and poorly educated rights claimers are now high school or college educated and moving into professional careers.

Samata members have also gained bargaining power in relation to government officials enabling access to land entitlements and public services. They now have better access to (and participation in) local justice systems as a result of Samata's facilitation.

The MSC analysis conducted with women during the evaluation (see Table 3 below) indicates that the impact of Samata on the political, economic and social empowerment of women has been significant. Female members have become empowered in their relationship to men, with indications of joint decision making, higher levels of mobility and independent income streams. Through women's inclusion in the process of *shalish* (informal village court of justice) men are also more accountable with respect to lawful marriages and divorces. Female members now engage local governments independently of their husbands (or fathers) and their children are reaching education levels of secondary school certificate (SCC) and beyond.

## Sustainability

Sustainability of developmental impacts of Samata land redistribution is ensured through asset ownership and derived benefits described above. Intergenerational sustainability is likely through the combination of opportunities such as asset transfer and higher levels of educational attainment. In an environment of deep inequalities, entrenched corruption and abuse of power, sustained empowerment impacts depend on the continued work of the Samata project to support contestation of government and elite interest through its rights-based mobilisation of marginalized groups.

## Lessons Learned

Important lessons learned include:

- Social change and social movements are historically situated and explained. This needs to be taken into consideration when attempting to scale up successful movements.
- Resource distribution can be a highly effective driver of economic, social and political empowerment.
- Influencing resource distribution to ensure key elements of gender equality (in this case the 50:50 property rights entitlement) can have a transformational impact on gender roles and relations (see Most Significant Change tables below)
- Psychological gains such as improved self-esteem, motivation and aspiration can be achieved through a successful entitlement claim.
- Dramatic gains in social and economic well being and mobility can be achieved within a generation as evidence by reports of educational attainment of second generation Samata children.

## III: Models of Change Developed

As described above, this project uses social mobilisation for claims against the khas land entitlements as the starting point for empowerment in social, economic and political spheres (see Figure 1 below).

Recent evaluations and this CVA evaluation suggest that these assumptions are credible and are sound, with observable and measurable impacts as mapped out in Figure 1. There are only two significant question marks highlighted in Figure 1. The first is the assumption that because of the demonstrable progressive impact of a movement that has helped the poorest claim their entitlement to khas land under a government law, this will somehow enlighten policy makers to bring other legislation and procedures in line with this model of change. This is certainly not a great claim in the project or movement, and is more of a tacit assumption. Given the broader political economic and social context of concentrated power and hierarchy, this assumption must be treated with some scepticism. The second question mark is over the effect assumption relates to assumed output of the project a social movement such as Samata can be "modelled", scaled up and replicated unproblematically. The historically and geographical specific context of the Samata movement, combined with the absorptive capacity constraints of the movement, should prompt a serious amount of reflection on this assumption.

Model of change  
Assumptions

Resource distribution (land and public services entitlements) will lead to economic, political and social forms of empowerment.

Group formation encourages solidarity and mutual support to sustain action and encourage institutional change.

Visible and effective participation by men and women in formal and informal institutions will change attitudes towards the poor and challenge sociocultural norms.

Policy norms will change to align with increased visibility and inclusion of the poor.

Activities

*Khas* land claims and registration  
Group savings  
Accessing public services  
Non-formal education

Village committee, UP, shalish membership and influence  
Women promoted to leadership positions  
LAND network expansion

Land rights group formation  
Women's Action Committee formation  
Gender mainstreaming

Policy advocacy activities on legal and constitutional reform.

Outputs

- Landless poor people are able to access and secure resources to improve their livelihood
- Formal and informal institutions ensure active involvement of and accountability to landless poor people
- A growing constituency of support for pro-poor development and influence of landless poor people is apparent in decision making with regard to changes in policy and practice
- Samata and its network maintains a credible, accountable and replicable approach to empowerment of landless poor people through resource mobilisation

Outcomes

Landless men and women in Samata's programme area improve their livelihoods, expand their asset base, become socially and politically empowered and able effectively to pressurize government, political and other elites to address the needs and rights of poor men and women

#### IV Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work

##### Documents

DFID, 2001. *Samata: Empowerment through Resource Mobilisation Programme: Project Memorandum*, DFID Dhaka, 16 August  
J Gardener, M S Huq and A Chowdhury, 2006. *Samata: Empowerment through Resource Mobilisation Programme Output to Purpose Review*, DFID Dhaka, July  
Meta-development, 2007. *Impact Assessment of Social Mobilisation for Economic Empowerment*, Draft 31 October  
Samata, nd. *Annual Report 2006*  
Samata, nd. *AGRP Report, June 05-December 07*, AGRP & MIS Unit, PIMERC

##### Interviews/Focus Groups

Dr. Indranil Chakrabarti, Social Development Adviser (DFID-B)  
Md. Abdul Kader, executive Director (Samata)  
Md. Amzad Hossain, Director (Implementation) (Samata)  
Md. Sarowar Alam, Director (Program) (Samata)  
Ms. Zafrunnahar Shelly, Deputy Director (GRD) (Samata)  
Samata Operational Office Staff  
Advanced leaders focus group  
Male group leaders focus group  
Female group members focus group  
Women's Action Committee members

**Table 1. Most significant change analysis, conducted by focus group of “Advanced Group Leaders”, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (15 older men)**

<b>What has been the most significant change in the past ten years?</b>
<p>We have achieved so many things            We now see ourselves as having rights in this society            We participate in UP, SMC            We can at least write our name            We send our children to school (some are already in higher education)            Biggest achievement is that the Khas land registrations have been replaced by genuine deeds with male and female (50:50) certification (held at district level). This 50:50 split is because this movement was led by female members as well as male. Samata has encouraged men to support women in full participation in social, economic and political life. Women mobilise on water and sanitation and on mother and child health            We can easily talk to UP members, police and ADCs and didn't previously dare talk to them            Previously day labourers, now we are self-employed and can share our products with the landless</p>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b>            The formative battles over khas land were solidarity forming: “Whenever I call someone (the Whooh” cry) I know that 2,000 people can gather.... Now that we are united we know that we can be strong”            With and without comparison indicator: “If you go to Sild district and shout ‘Whooh’, no one will come”            Without the Samata (leadership) this movement cannot work: “We had legs but could not walk, we had a mouth but could not speak”</p> <p>Future for their children?            “Previously we lived in a crumbling thatched house... Now my brother is a University student, my nephew is on a paramedics course and my daughter is a student”            “My son is doing a BBA in Chittagong University”</p> <p>How does this group now assist younger group members to make land claims?            &gt; encouraging groups in shared cultivation            &gt; Jointly giving a piece of land to a landless member            &gt; Claiming new land: Form new group in an area where land is available and support claimants to go to the administrative office to fill in the application (supported by the Samata office)</p>

**Table 2. Most significant change analysis, conducted by focus group of male group leaders, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (4 men, each leaders of different groups)**

<b>What has been the most significant change in the past ten years?</b>
<p>Before Samata we did day labouring for others, now we work for ourselves; sometimes we even hire our own labourers            10 months out of 12 we get rice from the Bir            I was so poor, sometimes I had to be like a beggar; now, thanks to samata, I have 2 aras of land, a good house with a floor and a zinc roof, as well as livestock            Some of us rent out land to other people            We are very much interested to send our children to school. I have four children, all being educated up to college level: one daughter has been to college; another daughter was in college but she got married to an NGO worker; my third child (boy) is in Grade 10 (SSC next year); my fourth child (boy) is in Grade 6. Before Samata we didn't have these expectations for our children            Previously we wouldn't enter any type of committee; now we can enter any type of committee (my wife is a member of the SMC here)            We are very much confident these days; whenever we go to town we see people living in polythene shelters. We used to be like that but now we feel united and confident and have good shelter            The number of diseases amongst children has been decreasing; we have been receiving medicines and advice. Especially in this area children suffer from worms, but in our movement we have less incidence; so this is an advantage and we are privileged            Previously I had a hut; now I have a strong house with foundations            You hardly find any poor people in this area            Since 1985 I have had 33 cases brought against me. I was in jail and I was tortured. But in the last 5 years I haven't had any cases against me. There were 20 cases brought against another member; with the help legal aid he has so far fought off 18 of them. Why all these cases? Police hassle them but having the guardianship of Samata keeps the police off their backs. Legal ownership of the land prevents landgrabbers pursuing them through the courts</p>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b>            These men have been with Samata since its inception: "We make Samata"            NB These men are not interested in UP membership; they have female members in UP on reserved seat but get help from UP chairmen on requests, in return for votes            "We feel that Samata should spread out across the country and that all landless people should have security"            "When I visit town, beggars and children ask for money; I give it to them but I don't like to because I feel that they should be part of the Samata movement"            "Samata is not like the other (credit) NGOs; whatever we get from Samata we get permanently. BRAC etc just give money and take money. Not changing lifestyle"            "We feel for the landless people because we are developing and changing our own lifestyle"            "All the time we feel Allah over our head and Samata on the ground!"            "When I was fleeing for four months in 1985/6 the landgrabbers took a cow and killed it. Now Allah's curse is on them because I can buy 10 cows and they can't"            Now some of these landgrabbers are under them and actually part of the samata land movement – friendly on the face of it            Samata has inspired us but if we are not united then samata cannot help us            This land is so fertile: last year I cultivated onions and mustard: 2,000kg of onion from just 30 decimels of land; paddy produces 1,200 kg of rice per harvest (*2 harvests); jute 10 months at 970 thaka income/month; open water fish &gt; from these crops I built two houses            "You should try to encourage this elsewhere in Bangladesh.. spread the organisational change through the country.. we would like to see this in the next five years. There should also be a 'second revolution' to access the water bodies from the landgrabbers"            Are there younger men in the men's groups? Yes: process for accessing land entitlements + support from Samata. They approach govt for deeds to new areas of khas land and then all the groups go together (group solidarity) to take over the land. We couldn't do this without the groups            Procedure: (1) Survey land with Samata; (2) AC (Assistant ??) Land Office with husband and wife claimants; takes up to one year to get land registration sorted; in the meantime they go to the land and start cultivating.</p>

**Table 3. Most significant change analysis, conducted by focus group of female group members, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (17 women aged 40 +)**

<b>What has been the most significant change in the past ten years?</b>
<p>We can easily have food and sustain a good house            More motivated about our rights            Our children our getting educated; I have two daughters: one is taking SSCs and the other has just completed SSCs            We (as women) can participate fully in the family court (shalish)            Previously our husbands told us who to vote for on the UP and local government; now we can decide who to vote for            I can talk with you people; previously we stayed in the house            4 or 5 of our group go and take a course at the Arabic Education centre (sewing skills): We never thought that thus stage of life we would learn something new            Previously land was only for me; now we have 50:50 ownership; now joint decision making in land use within household. E.g. One woman in the group negotiated with her husband over whether to sell one of their two goats linked to school fees for daughters            Not only assets; now we women are earning money through planting trees, rearing cows etc.            We vote group member ot stand for the UP; we have a meeting before deciding who to put forward as a candidate (the women who got elected to the UP made sure that relief cards went to the vulnerable people            Through our links to the UP and to higher levels of government we mobilised to sort out water and sanitation along with relief cards, old age allowance, infrastructure/roads            Our relationships with our husbands have changed: there is less divorce because now worried about the community reaction and aware of the strictures of the law; "you can't just say 'I divorce you'"            We talk about our land; in other communities women talk about their husbands' land            We take our children to the Upazila health centre; previously we waited for our husbands if a child was sick; now we go straight to the doctor</p>
<p><b>Additional notes:</b>            The women's group has weekly meetings. They sort out problems with health and diaorrhhea            Women's group makes chilli powder and bricks for land rights struggle            Joint signature means that women have to get involved in the registration process (previously just husband)</p>



## D.11. GTZ brokered dialogue within the Promotion of Social Environmental and Production Standards in the Ready Made Garment Sector (PROGRESS)

### I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	GTZ
2. Partners / Implementing agency/ies	Self implemented ( as a technical assistance organisation GTZ can implement its own projects) but part of project with Ministry of Commerce
3. Objectives : regarding CVA and wider objectives in case CVA is component of broader intervention	PROGRESS original objective was to improve the competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises. Since 2006 it has narrowed its focus on compliance standards and corporate responsibility..
4. Main CVA and other activities	Round table discussions to develop uniform system of social standards and new labour law
5. Target Group/Beneficiaries	Ministry of Commerce, business associations, buyers, suppliers, workers organisations, NGOs and civil society groups
6. Key linkages of intervention with other programmes	
7. Duration	Periodic (needs based)
8. Starting date	2004
9. Total budget	Flexible and needs based but 2 years funding of the Multi-stakeholder Forum Bangladesh was funded with Euro 150,000 including GTZ TA time

### II: Overall Assessment of Intervention using DAC Criteria

#### Relevance

There was great concern about the future of Bangladesh's garment industry in the run up to the end of Multi-fibre agreement (2005) and withdrawal of quotas. The predicted crisis did not materialise. However, the emergent situation means that the garments industry must become more competitive and thus address increasing pressure to meet international social compliance standards. The highly publicised death of 64 workers in a factory collapse in April 2005 and a subsequent series of factory fires highlighted the hazardous conditions which workers face. Workers mounted violent protests in May 2006 demanding increased minimum wage, the right to unionisation, appointment letters, weekly holidays, overtime pay and maternity leave.

GTZ sponsored round table discussions to make recommendations for new labour law (2006) and to develop a uniform system of social compliance

#### Efficiency

GTZ has the flexibility to draw down funds as needed. There is no project framework to work to, only an overarching objective to facilitate information flow and build capacity in the ready made garments sector. It is impact and results oriented, investing money when and where it believes results will be significant. GTZ is now a 'private firm' owned by the German Government which allows it flexibility and avoids budgeting constraints which apply to other public institutions. This 'commercialisation' means that it has to prove its worth and ensure transparency and accountability.

This flexibility was put to the test when the programme originally designed to address the predicted fall out from the cessation of the Multi Fibre Agreement was no longer needed as the crisis never materialised. GTZ was able to immediately respond to the Ministry of Commerce's request for help with the newly emerging challenge of meeting international social and environmental compliance standards. GTZ sees this as a comparative advantage over other donors because they can engage with processes and adapt as they go along.

As far as possible GTZ claims to use local expertise (efficient in terms of cost and 'need for local synergy') GTZ staff directly engage in projects and since they are working with

programmes rather than projects they feel their efficiency has improved.

Some stakeholders feel that the round tables are expensive and not value for money and exclude the voices of the workers because they are held in expensive hotels in Dhaka.

### Effectiveness

The Round Tables, according to GTZ have been very productive. They were first introduced at the request of buyers in Germany but the model has been taken forward by GTZ to address other issues. They enable multiple voices to be heard including the international ones. GTZ insists on tangible results and that these fora should not just be 'talk shops'. It is a facilitator and functions as a secretariat but not chair.

As an outsider and mostly perceived as 'neutral' GTZ believes it can bring together diverse groups, which are often in confrontation (buyers/suppliers, workers/factory owners, trade unions/Government). Accompanying the 'process' GTZ can provide advice and can be transparent and accountable for all stakeholders, is interested in change not political statements

The Round tables are felt to be effective by GTZ because they address burning issues, which attract the attention of all the stakeholders. A new emerging issue currently is the Trade Barriers to the US . The Government of Bangladesh wanted stakeholders to unite and respond to these with one voice, but GTZ has indicated that the US wants to hear the public voice on this too.

Whilst GTZ , the two main Manufacturers Associations and the Ministry of Commerce are positive about the outcomes of these Round Tables our interviews with Trade Union members and NGOs were less positive. The labour law reform culminated from over two decades of Union lobbying they say, '*it is not the result of GTZ brokered dialogues*'. They feel that GTZ was not inclusive in its invitations and was biased by German business interests, local factory owners and pro-government trade unions. Some felt that development partners should not be involved in negotiation between government, factory owners and labour organisations but should engage a neutral third party to facilitate these dialogues. One NGO leader wondered why GTZ was not supporting the Ministry of Labour to organise the dialogues.

The dialogues involved the same faces and developed a 'comfortable group think'. '*Where were the dissenting voices ?*' one NGO leader asked us. Furthermore where were the workers voices? The politicisation and corruption endemic in the Trade Union movement undermines their credibility as true representatives of workers concerns.

There is a feeling that GTZ has projectised support and in doing this has selected a particular constellation of implementers to the exclusion of others

### Impact

Consultative development of new Labour Law (2006) but labour organisations dispute this attribution to the dialogue and round table as it was a result of a much longer process of negotiation and protest initiated by the labour movements in 1986. Others told us that the Labour Law was pushed by the BNP Government as they wanted credit for it<sup>72</sup> in the run up to the anticipated elections in Dec 2006.

Contribution to a unified code of practice for social compliance.

An NGO leader felt that GTZ had no impact on establishing the rights of workers and described their contributions as '*less sincere and less committed*' and they should not be directly implementing

In the current CTG many feel that it can simply 'demand compliance' or arrest! So there is no need for a debate on compliance!

<sup>72</sup> Even suggesting that the labour unrest in May 2006 was sponsored by the BNP

### **Sustainability**

GTZ feels that the flexibility they have in providing support means that they can accompany a process for as long as needed. TU leaders we spoke felt quite differently and saw GTZ's involvement as piecemeal and budget driven. Ownership of the change process has to be ensured and with GTZ facilitating, they feel that that is not achieved. As an NGO leader told us '*there is no sustainability of such works. It needs long term, non formal, flexible and continued works.. not meeting in five star hotels with heavy dinner or lunch*'.

Others indicated that since there is a high turnover in GTZ that the impetus and institutional memory is lost over the period of what are always long processes of change.

### **Lessons Learned**

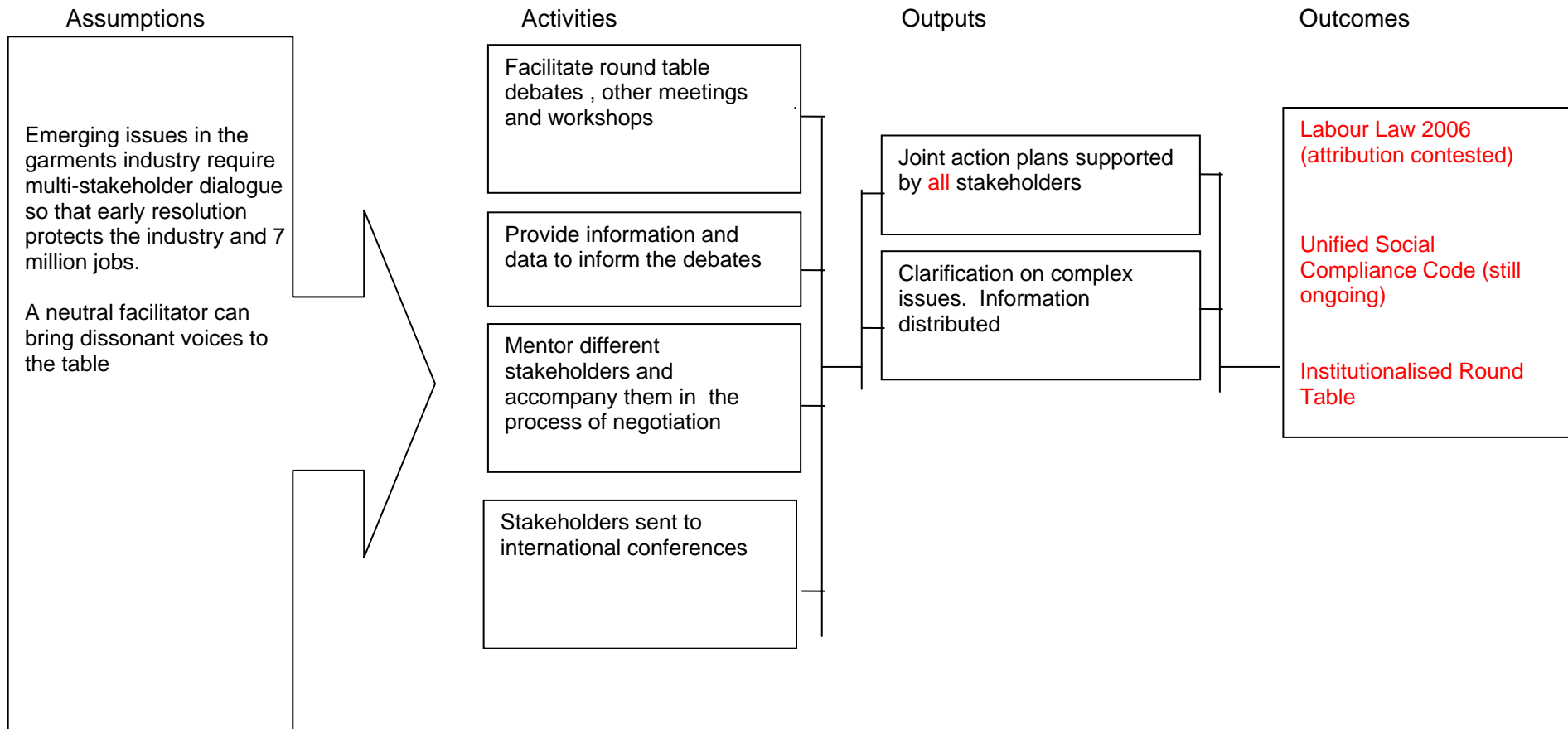
- Flexibility of funding can enable responsiveness to 'burning issues' and 'right moments'. It also enables the organisation to accompany a process for a long time.
- Direct implementation by a donor can be positive as they are seen as reliable, neutral and 'hands on' (and therefore interested as BKMEA puts it 'somebody to accompany us'). GTZ indicated to us that other donors are recognising the value of this and coming to GTZ to request TA. However, it can also be perceived as meddling ('a donor should not be involved in negotiations between government, factory owners and labour organisations') and it might be perceived as having vested interest (e.g. German business)
- Funding platforms for CV and A dialogue rather than organisations is one way to encourage participation of diverse voices. Funding through an organisation may result in selection of some participants and exclusion of others (allies vs opposers, some may opt out because they do not want to be associated with the convener).

### **III: Models of Change Developed**

The model of change suggests that providing a neutrally facilitated platform for different (and often traditionally confrontational) stakeholder will further discussion, sharing and debate towards a resolution of complex issues around labour reform.

Although achievements have been made, it is contested whether these result directly from the round table discussions promoted. The neutral role of GTZ is also questioned by some stakeholders who claim that German business interests motivate their involvement and others who feel that an external agency should not be so intimately involved in national law reform. Despite GTZ's claim to the contrary, some stakeholders feel they were deliberately excluded from these debates

The outcomes claimed by the project are disputed by others, particularly the Trade Union movement which feels that these changes were the result of concerted action over many years rather than a short intervention by GTZ.



#### **IV Relevant Primary and Secondary data collected during the field work**

##### **Documents**

GTZ briefing note on Governance and local development ; PROGRESS Focus on Compliance Issue  
GTZ briefing note; Bangladesh Garment Industry at a Crossroads

##### **Interviews/Focus Groups**

Peter Palesch GTZ Country Director  
Deitrich Stotz GTZ advisor  
Ali Reza Haider, President Bangladesh Garment Workers Union  
Abul Hossain, President, Bangladesh United Labour Federation  
Suraiya Akhter, Executive Director, Phulki  
Executive Director and other staff, Nari Uddog Kendra.

## Annex E. Table of People and Documents Consulted

### Citizen Voice and Accountability Evaluation: Bangladesh Country Case Study. Summary of projects, partners, interviews and documents reviewed

Project (Donor)	Partners/ PIUs	Interviews/FGDS	Documents reviewed
1. Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC) (World Bank/SDC)	Directorate of Primary Education(DoPE), MoPME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tahsinah Ahmed, Senior Programme Manager (SDC)</li> <li>• A K Nazmuzzaman (Joint Secretary), Project Director</li> <li>• FGD with CMC, Rishi Para, Kiddipur village, Norsindi</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDC, 2006. ROSC Credit Proposal, 7 July</li> <li>• SDC 2005. <i>Agreement between the Govt of the Swiss Confederation and The GoRPB on Financial and technical Cooperation for the ROSC Project</i>, February</li> <li>• World Bank, 2004. <i>Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Grant to the PRB for a ROSC Project</i>, Human Development Sector Unit, South Asia Region, May 19</li> <li>• GoPRB, 2004. <i>Project proforma: ROSC Project</i>, August</li> <li>• Mira A, S D Khan and F Mannan, 2006. <i>Mapping the Profiles of Learners and other Stakeholders in the ROSC Project</i>, SDC Dhaka, February</li> <li>• ROSC, 2007. <i>Semi Annual Monitoring Report</i>, July</li> <li>• Interaction, 2005. <i>Boosting the Chairpersons and Teachers of Ananda School Stopgap Orientation: An Evaluation Report</i>, SDC Dhaka, October</li> <li>• DoPE, 2004. <i>Project Operation Manual 3.1. Management of Ananda School: Education Allowances and Grants</i>, September</li> <li>• DoPE, 2004. <i>Project Operation Manual 3.2. Management of Ananda School: Education Grants Only</i>, September</li> <li>• DoPE, 2006. <i>Introducing ROSC</i>, November (Booklet)</li> </ul>
2. Rural Development Programmes of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)	LGED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Md. Hossain, Social Analyst, LDCP</li> <li>• Mr. Nur Mohammad, Project Director-LDCP, LGED</li> <li>• Mr. Ramesh Guha, Union Educator, LDCP</li> <li>• Md. Abdus Shahid, Project Director-RIIP-2, LGED</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Infrastructure Improvement Project (RIIP 1 ) RDP 25 Results of Mid Term Surveys on benefit monitoring and Evaluation, 2006 GITEC Consult</li> <li>• Local Government Engineering Department Final Report SAP (draft Nov 2007) Chapter 5 Sustainable LGED Roles in Support to Local Government Institutions</li> </ul>

Project (Donor)	Partners/ PIUs	Interviews/FGDS	Documents reviewed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Habib Rahman Akanda, Team Leader, IVDP, LGED</li> <li>• FGD with UP members, Scheme Implementation Committee members (14) in Gazipur Faridpur Visit</li> <li>• Meeting with Project's Field Staff (Mr. Hossain, Socio-economist, Mr. Ramesh Guha, Assistant Program Officer)</li> <li>• Meeting with Union Parishad Members including chairperson</li> <li>• Meeting with Women Committee Members</li> <li>• Meeting with government officials of Nation Building Organizations (NBDS)- fisheries officer, livestock officer, family planning assistant etc.</li> <li>• Meeting UDC and WDC members includes school teacher, business men, women leaders, NGO representatives etc.</li> <li>• Meeting with project staff, Jessore</li> <li>• Meeting with Citizen Forum Meeting, Jessore</li> <li>• Meeting with U.P includes Chairperson, Jessore</li> </ul>	
3. Financial Management Reform Project (FMRP) (DFID)	HELM, Ministry of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranjit Kumar Chakraborty (Joint Secretary), Project Director</li> <li>• Mike Frazer, Team Leader (HELM)</li> <li>• Mr Asif Ail, Auditor General's Office</li> <li>• Honor Flanagan, Governance Adviser (DFID)</li> <li>• Sheila Ryan, independent consultant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFID, 2001. Bangladesh Financial Management reform Programme: Terms of Reference for international Consultants and Tender Evaluation Criteria, DFID, Dhaka, January</li> <li>• DFID, 2004. Bangladesh Financial Management reform Programme: Project Memorandum, DFID, Dhaka, May</li> <li>• GoPRB, 2007. Report on a Social Performance Audit of Government Orphanages (Shishu Sadan/ Paribar), Draft, 10 March, Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General</li> </ul>
4. Support to the Media Sector Bangladesh: Support to the Local	Mass-line Media Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory discussion meeting with 10 senior staff of MMC</li> <li>• Visit to RAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MMC, 2002-07. <i>Annual Reports</i></li> <li>• MMC, 2007. <i>Annual Reports 1999-2006</i> (on various themes), MMC Dhaka</li> </ul>

Project (Donor)	Partners/ PIUs	Interviews/FGDS	Documents reviewed
Press (UNICEF, Danida)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit to IC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shishu Prokash, nd. Let Children Speak: Annualreport. MMC Dhaka</li> <li>• Neepu S U and k M R Alam (eds) , 2006. <i>The State of Women and Chidren in Bangladesh</i>, Newspaper Monitoring 2005</li> <li>• MMC, 2007. Justification for No cost extension</li> <li>• Monju K H, nd. <i>Perspective Analysis of Local Press of Noakhali, Feni, Lakshmipur, Patuakhali and Barguna</i></li> <li>• Danida, 2000. Project Document: Support to the Media Sector Bangladesh: Support to the Local Press Phase 2, Danida, May</li> <li>• Danida, 2003. Project Document: Support to the Media Sector Bangladesh: Support to the Local Press Phase 3, Danida</li> <li>• Rashid M, 2005. <i>Report on Lesson Learned and Impact Assessment of “Strengthening the Role of the Local Press for the Promotion of Juman Rights and democratic Values”</i>, MMC Dhaka, November</li> <li>• Capacity Assessment of Mass-Line Media Centre, Final Report 2004 Danida</li> <li>• Afsan Chowdhury and Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, 1998. Mid term evaluation Strengthening the Role of local Press of Noakhali, Feni, Lakshimpur, Patuakhali and Barguna Districts</li> </ul>
<p>5. Bangladesh Quality Education for All/ CAMPE (SDC)</p> <p>5a. Education Watch</p> <p>5b. MDG People’s Forum</p>	Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rasheda K. Choudhury, Director (CEO), CAMPE</li> <li>• Tasneem Athar, Deputy Director, CAMPE</li> <li>• K M Enamul Hoque, Programme Manager, RMED Unit, CAMPE</li> <li>• FGD with Education Watch members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jennings J, 2006. <i>CAMPE Evaluation Report</i>, November</li> <li>• CAMPE, 2007. <i>Quality education for All: Proposal for Phase IV, April 2007 – March 2012</i>, CAMPE, Dhaka</li> <li>• SDC, 2007. <i>Bangladesh Quality Education for All/ CAMPE: Phase 2, 1 May 2007 – 31 March 2012</i>, SDC Dhaka</li> <li>• CAMPE, 2006. <i>Our Education: Our Thoughts. Dossier for Primary Level Students, Teachers and Guardians</i>, May</li> <li>• CAMPE, 2005. <i>MDGs: A People’s Progress Report. Bangladesh Main Report</i>, December</li> <li>• CAMPE, 2005. <i>Out of School Children: The</i></li> </ul>



Project (Donor)	Partners/ PIUs	Interviews/FGDS	Documents reviewed
			<p><i>Disadvantaged Group</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAMPE 2000-5. <i>Education Watch</i> (Annual Reports and booklets with changing theme)</li> </ul>
6. "We Can" Campaign (OXFAM)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M B Akhter, Gender Programme Coordinator, Bangladesh programme</li> <li>Md. Habibullah Bahar, Director, Manab Mukti Sangstha (MMS) NGO Partner)</li> <li>Rekha Saha, Director, Steps (NGO Partner)</li> <li>Ferdinand Pereira, Sr. Programme Officer, Steps (NGO Partner)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We Can, 2007. <i>"We Can" Campaign; Annual Report, 2006-07</i></li> <li>Steps, 2006. <i>Gender and Development Alliance: Activity Report 2006</i></li> <li>Steps, 2007. <i>Conference Report</i></li> </ul>
7. Concerned Citizens' Forum	Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Iftekharuzzaman Executive Director, TIB</li> <li>Nakib Rajib Ahmed, Assistant Programme Officer (R&amp;I), Research Division</li> <li>FGD, Concerned Citizens Forum, Khulna</li> <li>FGD YES youth volunteer members, Khulna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colin Knox and Tahera Yasmin, 2007. "Transparency International Bangladesh Impact Assessment", Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, November</li> <li>Transparency International Bangladesh, 2005. "Corruption in Bangladesh: A Household Survey", Dhaka, Bangladesh</li> </ul>
8. Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramic Federation (BSSF)	BSSF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus group discussion with BSSF Executive Committee Members</li> <li>Semi-structured interview with Mr. Ali Reza Haider, President, Garments Workers Association</li> <li>Focus group discussion with the general members of BSSF</li> <li>Observation of on going events</li> <li>Field visits (Sonargaon of Narayanganj District) of BSTS (Bangladesh Sanjukta Tanti Samity- member organization of BSSF)</li> <li>Meeting and discussion with Dr. Tariquzzaman, Coordinator, WSM-Bangladesh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Progress Report</li> <li>Events Report</li> <li>Annual Audit Report</li> <li>Organizational Brochure</li> <li>Organizational Constitution and policy</li> <li>Meeting Minutes</li> <li>AGM Report</li> <li>Papers on Election Procedures</li> </ul>
9. An Alternative Programmatic Intervention to Develop Grassroots Women Leadership in Union Parishads *SDC)	Rupantar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swapam Guha, Chief Executive</li> <li>Rafiqul Islam Khokan, Director</li> <li>FGD with elected women UP representatives, Rupantar Area Office, Batiaghata</li> <li>FGD with Upazila level officials, Rupantar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Khan, Zarina Rahman and Akhter Hussain, 2006 Final Report of Mid Term Review ' <i>An Alternative Intervention to Develop Grassroots Women's Leadership in Union Parishads</i> '</li> <li>Rupantar Phase 3 Project Document 2007-2010</li> </ul>

Project (Donor)	Partners/ PIUs	Interviews/FGDS	Documents reviewed
		<p>Area Office, Batiaghata</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FGD with Samata field staff, Rupantar Area Office, Batiaghata</li> <li>• FGD with Ward women coordination committee leaders, WCC Office, Amirpur Union</li> <li>• FGD with Union women coordination committee leaders, WCC Office, Baliadanga Union</li> <li>• FGD with Upazila women coordination committee leaders, Rupantar Area Office, Batiaghata</li> <li>• FGD with a group of women, Rupantar Area Office, Batiaghata</li> <li>• FGD with a group of men, Rupantar Area Office, Batiaghata</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDC March 2004 Credit Proposal ( internal document) 'Rupantar: Grassroots Women's Leadership Phase 2</li> <li>• SDC July 2007 Credit Proposal ( internal document) 'Rupantar: Grassroots Women's Leadership Phase 3</li> </ul>
<p>10. Samata: Empowerment through Resource Mobilisation Programme (DFID, Sida, Norad)</p>	<p>Samata</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Indranil Chakrabarti, Social Development Adviser (DFID-B)</li> <li>• Md. Abdul Kader, executive Director (Samata)</li> <li>• Md. Amzad Hossain, Director (Implementation) (Samata)</li> <li>• Md. Sarowar Alam, Director (Program) (Samata)</li> <li>• Ms. Zafrunnahar Shelly, Deputy Director (GRD) (Samata)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFID, 2001. <i>Samata: Empowerment through Resource Mobilisation Programme: Project Memorandum</i>, DFID Dhaka, 16 August</li> <li>• J Gardener, M S Huq and A Chowdhury, 2006. <i>Samata: Empowerment through Resource Mobilisation Programme Output to Purpose Review</i>, DFID Dhaka, July</li> <li>• Meta-development, 2007. <i>Impact Assessment of Social Mobilisation for Economic Empowerment</i>, Draft 31 October</li> <li>• Samata, nd. <i>Annual Report 2006</i></li> <li>• Samata, nd. <i>AGRP Report, June 05-December 07</i>, AGRP &amp; MIS Unit, PIMERC</li> </ul>

## Annex F. Summary of Stakeholder Debriefing Workshop

Bangladesh Citizen Voice and Accountability: Stakeholder Debriefing Workshop  
Hotel Crystal Garden, Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2008

Break-out Group	Break-out group questions and summary of discussion
Donor Group	<p><b>How coherent is the donor theory of change about CVA in Bangladesh? Is the total effect of donor activity in CVA more than the sum of the parts?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory of Change: Agreed that this is important</li> <li>• Results-Based Management: How to measure?</li> <li>• Core funding among some donors already exists but it maybe that we are a little bit pushy on this &gt; too directive: How can we be more supportive to the wishes of local stakeholders?</li> <li>• Challenge to find a local counterpart on the government side: it is not clear who are the (potential) change makers with authority to make decisions. This is why it is often easier to stick to the lively demand side (while acknowledging that the demand side actors themselves are not always accountable)</li> <li>• Joined up approach: Analyse activities and assess what works and what does not (i.e. just like this workshop, so we are looking forward to the findings of this evaluation and hoping for recommendations)</li> </ul> <p><b>How does the donor concern with poverty reduction/MDGs impact on their CVA interventions?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty reduction focus links to our concern with scale and outreach. This is a significant influence on our approach (e.g. Challenge Fund which is a step back from understanding the reality on the ground. It is much more indirect which is a risk. Reflects tension of reaching MDG goals</li> <li>• Awareness amongst donors that multiple funding through different channels to NGOs creates distortions, perverted incentives and risks: “we are very aware of this and our discussions are ongoing... we put much of the blame on ourselves for creating these distortions”</li> </ul>
Govt Group	<p><b>How can government reform itself towards enhanced CVA?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National reform Commission and Local Government Reforms represent CVA enhancement</li> <li>• Change requires incentives and sanctions for a “listening culture” to develop</li> <li>• Union Parishad infrastructure development for one-stop services is good but people need political space as well as physical space.. so this is good, but not enough</li> </ul>
Civil Society Group	<p><b>Are we witnessing an emergence of a “citizenship culture” in Bangladesh and have the donors played a role in this?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, a citizenship culture is emerging, especially in our capacity to articulate demands for change and its impact in the supply side.. but there is a long way to go</li> <li>• Yes donors have played a role, albeit that it is homegrown</li> </ul>

Break-out Group	Break-out group questions and summary of discussion
	<p><b>Are donors reflecting on the appropriateness and/or challenges to scaling up geographical and issue-based “pockets” of CVA? Are there alternative ways to scaling up beyond the implementing agency?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are positive and negative effects; this needs to be more carefully considered</li> <li>• Need for <i>bridging</i>: between donors and government sector and between NGOs and donor community (triangular relationship)</li> <li>• Transparency and accountability of the NGOs themselves: need to be looked at closely and it is the responsibility of the NGOs to look at this closely themselves</li> <li>• Politicisation of donor support: Donor support can get stuck because of this but the reality is that all NGO activity is political; it is incumbent on us (the NGOs) to ensure that this is not partisan</li> <li>• Alternative ways of scaling up <i>beyond</i> implementing agencies. Important here is that we wish there were alternative ways but the only option is to look at local, small-scale alternatives; the problem is that the trend is in the opposite direction, which unfortunately creates an obstacle to reaching smaller institutions. Donors should be careful about parking resources with a small number of big NGOs</li> <li>• Importance of print and other forms of media in amplifying voice in Bangladesh</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Plenary contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, the use of intermediaries by donors is a problem. An alternative is to work with networks and platforms</li> <li>• We need to flesh out alternatives to “projectising”</li> <li>• Labour “mobilisation” or “sensitisation”?</li> <li>• Challenge of supply side culture/ bureaucracy but supply side also needs support (i.e avoid the “blame culture”</li> <li>• Relationship between direct budget support (DBS) and CVA: there is a strong history of DBS in Bangladesh</li> <li>• Civil society initiatives, donor models and core areas of competency: Are donor models open and clear?</li> <li>• Answers? Concrete alternatives</li> <li>• NGOs have matured and have found a better way of working with government (+ good examples)</li> <li>• Do not underestimate the national level demand side activity and impact: it proves that the supply side does listen</li> </ul>