

CARTA

Citizen Action for Results,
Transparency, and Accountability



Bangladesh Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (BRWSSP)

PROJECT DETAILS

PARTNERS

Partnership for Transparency Fund
Manusher Jonno Foundation
Resource and Integration Center (RIC)

TOTAL COST

US\$ 97,000

DURATION

14 months

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayangonj districts
(4 upazila, 5 UPs)

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS

Citizen report card (CRC), community score card (CSC), Public hearing

Context

The Bangladesh Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Program (BRWSSP) is funded by the World Bank (WB) and has a lifespan of four years, from July 2012 to June 2016. The project aims to increase the access to arsenic-free safe water in the rural areas of Bangladesh, specifically in 383 unions in 33 districts. Arsenic is the single largest threat to safe water service provision. Other threats to safe water access are salinity, iron and bacteriological contamination in shallow tube wells.

A previous third party monitoring (TPM) assessment - conducted by the WB Country Assistance Strategy Department - indicated there were many social and accountability challenges to the implementation of BRWSSP, including:

- **Access.** Although most survey respondents (83%) reported regular access to water, 17% of the respondents claimed they had irregular access due to tensions with households owning land where the wells were located. The location of the tube well had been chosen in a participatory manner; however, 41% of the respondents said the location was changed for various reasons, including users' convenience, local elite influence and problems with land ownership.
- **Quality.** Community members reported cases of iron in the water, irregular water controls and tube-well platforms failing to meet standards. Also, some arsenic-free water wells didn't have a green identification.

- **Sustainability.** The community reported relatively poor awareness of the functions of the water user committees (WUCs), although they play a key role in the management and maintenance of the tube-wells.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The CARTA sub-project provided community feedback to the DPHE to improve the responsiveness of service providers. The specific objectives were to:

- a) Monitor and compare the quality and outcomes of the social mobilisation process under BRWSSP through a Citizen Report Card (CRC) survey in targeted areas.
- b) Build capacity for constructive engagement between service users/recipients and providers for monitoring the provision of water supply services in completed piped water schemes by introducing Community Score Cards (CSC).

RESULTS

The TPM collected data and provided recommendations on community awareness, water accessibility, water quality, scheme sustainability, transparency and accountability of WUCs.

The main sub-project outcomes were:

- WUCs were reformed, and now included 30% female members as per BRWSSP guidelines.
- Community awareness improved for the planned BRWSSP-II (e.g. 88% of the respondents were aware of the upcoming piped water system in their locality)
- Communication among user groups - WUC, CSO and DPHE - increased in all CARTA sub-project areas.
- DPHE officials agreed to increase their role in local monitoring.

CARTA

The objective of Citizen Action for Results, Transparency and Accountability (CARTA) is to enhance the development impact, sustainability and ownership of pro-poor projects in Bangladesh and Nepal financed by the World Bank (WB), by promoting civil society organization engagement and experience and capacity to demand better governance. The program was funded by US\$1.9 million grant from the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) and administered by the WB

- BRWSSP officials expressed their intention to amend the social mobilization strategies for the next BRWSSP phase after attending an information-sharing event organized by RIC.
- As a result of pressure exercised in the course of conducting Community Score Cards, the damaged water purification plant was repaired in Agla, Nawabgonj

IMPACT

DPHE officials and implementing NGOs realized the value of a functional WUC for the successful implementation of BRWSSP and the sustainability of the project. WUCs need capacity training to fulfil their roles efficiently and facilitate the constructive engagement between service users and providers. Eventually, WUCs will have to take over the management and operation of the water systems once the 18-year NGO concession ends. Social accountability tools could help improve WUCs performance in terms of accountability, transparency and community engagement. Many local officials have expressed their interest for extending the Community Score Cards to other existing water and sanitation projects in order to improve the quality of service.