REPORT
LESSONS LEARNED WORKSHOP
Upazila Parishad: Towards Smart Bangladesh

Date: 12 April 2023
Hotel InterContinental, Dhaka

Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division (LGD)
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperative
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgement
Acronyms
Executive Summary 1

1. Introduction **3**

1.1. Background and Context 3

1.2. Objectives 3

1.3. Approach & Methodologies 4

1.4. Date, Venue & time 4

1.5. Participants Profile 4

2. Workshop Activities & Output **6**

2.1. Opening Session 6

2.1.1. Welcome Address & Introductory Presentation on UGDP 7

2.1.2. Video Presentation 9

2.1.3. Keynote Paper “Lessons Learned from UGDP" 9

2.1.4. Speech by the Guests 14

2.2. Working Session 15

2.2.1. Panel discussion 16

2.2.2. Open discussion and reflection from the participants 17

3. Conclusion and Recommendations **20**

4. Annexes **21**

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Dr. Malay Choudhury
Additional Secretary, LGD and
Project Director (Additional Charge), UGDP

Acronyms

ADP	Annual Development Plan
CDSP	Capacity Development Sub-project
DPD	Deputy Project Director
DPHE	Department of Public Health and Engineering
DTL	Deputy Team Leader
DLG	Department of Local Government
DDLG	Deputy Director of Local Government
EALG	Efficient and Accountable Local Governance
FY	Financial Year
FYP	Five-Year Plan
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
INFSP	Infrastructure Sub-project
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KII	Key Informant Interview
LG	Local Government
LGD	Local Government Division
LGI	Local Government Institute
LGED	Local Government and Engineering Department
LIC	Learning and Innovation Project
MP	Member of Parliament
MoLGRD&C	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
NBD	Nation Building Department
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
PBA	Performance-Based Allocation
PA	Performance Assessment
PD	Project Director
PMU	Project Management Unit
PRDP	Participatory Rural Development Project
SDLG	Strengthening Democratic Local Governance
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound
SLGDFP	Sirajganj Local Governance Development Fund Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TL	Team Leader
ToR	Terms of Reference
UC	Upazila Committee
UGDP	Upazila Governance and Development Project
UDCC	Union Development Coordination Committee
UDF	Upazila Development Facilitator
UICDP	Upazila Integrated Capacity Development Project
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UPGP	Union Parishad Governance Project
UZGP	Upazila Governance Project
UZP	Upazila Parishad

Executive Summary

The Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP) organized a Lessons Learned Workshop to review and document the achievements, challenges and key lessons of the project. The workshop brought together representatives from Upazila Parishads, affiliated and collaborating departments, development partners, and other stakeholders. The workshop was held at the Hotel InterContinental in Dhaka on April 12, 2023.

Two hundred and forty (240) participants from various stakeholders attended the event. Dignitaries such as the Honorable Minister of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, the Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh and the Senior Representative of JICA and senior officials of the Local Government Division (LGD) were present in the workshop.

UGDP, implemented by LGD with support from JICA since late 2015, aims to strengthen the capacity of Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh to deliver improved public services. The project has conducted 5 times of Annual Governance Performance Assessments, and selected the best performing Upazilas to receive Performance-Based Allocations. Currently, 475 Upazilas are implementing sub-projects under UGDP funding, resulting in improvements in education, health, agriculture, and other public services in rural areas.

The workshop had three main objectives. First, it aimed to identify successful practices that can serve as models for future efforts. Participants shared and learned from examples of successful practices in order to apply them to their own work. Second, the workshop aimed to identify areas for improvement by examining current practices and processes. This would help streamline operations, reduce inefficiencies, and increase project effectiveness. Finally, the workshop aimed to identify the underlying causes of successes and challenges in order to develop more effective solutions and strategies for future projects.

The Lessons Learned Workshop followed a structured and inclusive approach to review the project activities and extract valuable lessons. A video documentary highlighting the project was prepared in collaboration with the participating Upazila Parishads. The workshop included keynote presentations, speeches, panel discussions, and reflections from participants. The participatory nature of the workshop facilitated discussions among stakeholders and allowed for the documentation of project challenges, achievements, and ways to achieve greater success in the future.

Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim, Secretary of LGD chaired the opening session of the workshop. The session included a presentation by Dr. Malay Choudhury, Additional Secretary of LGD and Project Director of UGDP, and a video documentary highlighting the activities of the project. A keynote speech and speeches were delivered by Professor Dr. Mobasser Monem of Dhaka University, Mr. KOMORI Takashi of JICA and Mr. IWAMA Kiminori, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh. The Honorable Minister, Mr. Tazul Islam, MP delivered a speech as the Chief Guest and gave his comments on the project.

In the second half of the workshop, the working session, which consisted of panel discussion and open discussion with reflection from the participants, was conducted. In these discussions, active exchange of ideas and various insightful comments were made.

Through these activities, the workshop reflected on the project's achievements, challenges and lessons learned. Stakeholders from different sectors participated to ensure a comprehensive review. The results of the workshop will help improve UGDP activities and similar initiatives in Bangladesh.

The results show that the project has improved governance, service delivery, transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement at the Upazila level. It has influenced policy discussions on decentralization and local governance in the country. The project also faces several challenges. These include outdated practices, limited understanding of stakeholders, frequent transfers of officials, weak coordination, and a lack of a clear roadmap for sustainability. Overcoming these challenges will require commitment from local leaders and policymakers, improved collaboration, the use of innovative technologies, and data-driven approaches.

Continued investment in capacity building, citizen engagement and knowledge sharing is crucial for sustaining achievements. A multi-dimensional approach that focuses on transparency, accountability, and participation is essential for long-term success. Lessons learned from UGDP can guide policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in Bangladesh and beyond. Sharing the successes and challenges by organizing a lessons learned workshop like this would undoubtedly contribute to generating new and practical knowledge and help communicate these useful findings and insights to policymakers.

1. Introduction

The Local Government Division (LGD) has been implementing Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP) with loan support from JICA since late 2015. UGDP arranged a lessons-learned workshop to discuss and document the significant achievements and results, challenges and key lessons learned from the project. Representatives from Upazila Parishads under the coverage of UGDP, representatives from the affiliated and collaborative government departments, development partners, and other stakeholder groups participated in the workshop. This report summarizes the key learnings and recommendations generated from the discussions.

1.1. Background and Context

Upazila Parishad is in the middle of three-tier local government institutions in Bangladesh. The primary role of Upazila Parishad is to ensure the economic and social development of rural areas by providing various public services to the people. Upazila Parishad has been involved in a range of development initiatives, projects and programs encompassing various sectors aiming to improve the living standards of people in rural areas. LGD has been implementing UGDP to strengthen the capacity of these Upazila Parishads for better service delivery to their residents.

Since its inception, UGDP has conducted five times of Annual Governance Performance Assessments (PAs) and selected the top scoring Upazilas to receive Performance-Based Allocations (PBAs) for delivering public services through Sub-projects. In the fifth round, UGDP selected 475 Upazilas and they are currently implementing Sub-projects.

Until now, UGDP has had a notable influence on enhancing the governance of Upazila Parishads and strengthening their ability to deliver improved public services. This, in turn, has led to advancements in the quality of life for rural inhabitants in Bangladesh, such as improved educational opportunities, healthcare accessibility, and a range of other public services. This Lessons Learned Workshop is held to assess and harvest the results of UGDP.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of the workshop are as follows: Firstly, the workshop aims to identify successful practices, which can be used as models for future endeavors. By identifying successful practices, participants can learn from these examples and apply them in their own work.

Secondly, the workshop aims to identify the areas for improvement. By examining current practices and processes, participants can identify the areas in need of improvement. This can help to streamline processes, reduce inefficiencies, and enhance the overall effectiveness of the project.

Lastly, the workshop aims to identify the underlying causes of both successful practices and areas for improvement. By understanding the root causes of success and challenges,

participants can develop more effective solutions and strategies for the upcoming round and also in future projects.

1.3. Approach & Methodologies

The Lessons Learned Workshop adopted a structured and inclusive method to review the project's activities and extract the significant insights gained from the UGDP's experience. Examining past experiences offers advantages such as enhancing processes, managing risks, and informing future project endeavours.

UGDP carried out a study in collaboration with external consultants and made a video documentary highlighting the project prior to the workshop. The workshop was facilitated in a participatory manner and included a thoughtfully selected group of participants representing different segments of the relevant stakeholders. The discussants and moderators were also involved to contribute valuable insights and facilitate discussions during the workshop. The workshop activities consist of PowerPoint presentations, Keynote presentations, video presentations, speeches, panel discussions, and reflections from the participants.

The Lessons Learned workshop helped UGDP to document project challenges and achievements to understand the root causes of difficulties and achieve greater success in future. This encourages continuous improvement of the project.

1.4. Date, Venue & time

The workshop was held on 12 April 2023 at Hotel InterContinental, Dhaka. It started at 9:30 AM with the registration of the participants. The workshop started at 10:00 AM with the inauguration session and continued up to 3:45 PM.

1.5. Participants Profile

The participants of the workshop were purposefully selected from relevant stakeholders. All Directors, Local Government (DLG) from 8 Divisions, one Deputy Director, Local Government (DDLG), one Upazila Parishad Chairman, one Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), one Vice Chairman, one Female Vice Chairman, one Upazila Development Facilitator (UDF) from all 8 Divisions, added with 14 other UDFs from various Upazilas were present. Other participants included officials from different ministries, Development Partners and other stakeholders from the national level. A total of 240 participants attended the workshop.

Mr. Tazul Islam, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives was present as Chief Guest. **Mr. IWAMA Kiminori**, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh as Guest of Honor, and **Mr. KOMORI Takashi**, Senior Representative, JICA Bangladesh Office as Special Guest and Mr. **Muhammad Ibrahim,** Secretary, LGD presided over the workshop as Chair.

Table: Number of Participants by Sources:

Participants	Male	Female	All
Stakeholder from Field			
DLG	8	0	8
DDLG	8	0	8
Chairman, Upazila Parishad	8	0	8
Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)	6	2	8
Upazila Vice Chairman	8	0	8
Upazila Women Vice Chairman	0	8	8
Upazila Dev. Facilitators (UDFs)	15	7	22
Nation Level Stakeholders			
University Teachers & Advisers	3	1	4
Development partners	6	0	6
JICA Officials	4	2	6
LGED/DPHE/NILG	4	0	4
Planning Commission & ERD	2	0	2
Related Ministry/Department	17	5	22
LGD Officials	16	1	17
PD of similar projects	5	0	5
Journalists and Media Partners	31	0	31
Others	38	0	38
UGDP Dhaka	33	2	35
Total	**212**	**28**	**240**

The UGDP officials welcomed the participants at the venue. All the invited participants arrived at the workshop venue by 10:00 AM. Dr. Malay Choudhury, Additional Secretary of LGD and Project Director of UGDP received the Honorable Minister, LGRD&C and Secretary, LGD.

2. Workshop Activities & Output

Dr. Malay Choudhury welcome the Honorable Minister, LGRD&C and Secretary, LGD at the workshop venue

2.1. Opening Session

Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim, Secretary, LGD chaired the opening session of the workshop.

- The workshop started with a presentation of project activities and results by Dr. Malay Choudhury, Additional Secretary and Project Director of UGDP.
- Presentation of a short video documentary on UGDP activities.
- Professor Dr. Mobasser Monem, University of Dhaka, presented a Keynote Paper
- Mr. KOMORI Takashi, Senior Representative, JICA and Mr. IWAMA Kiminori, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh spoke on the occasion.
- Mr. Tazul Islam, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives gave the speech as chief guest.

2.1.1. Welcome Address & Introductory Presentation on UGDP

The Lessons Learned Workshop commenced with a warm welcome from Dr. Malay Choudhury, Project Director (Additional Responsibility) and Additional Secretary of LGD. He expressed sincere gratitude to all the attendees for their participation and commitment, and for investing their valuable time. Dr. Malay Choudhury then proceeded to deliver a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation, providing a detailed overview of the activities, accomplishments, and achievements, as well as the limitations and challenges encountered throughout the implementation of UGDP. The summary of the Presentation is as follows:

Project Outline:

UGDP spans a substantial project period, commencing in December 2015 and concluding in December 2024, allowing a significant duration to accomplish its objectives. The project received considerable funding, amounting to 127,116.00 lakh BDT, and enabling the implementation of various initiatives and activities.

The Annual Governance Performance Assessment (PA) was conducted 6 times, of which the latest PA6 is still ongoing, to evaluate all Upazilas and identify target Upazilas (UZPs) for the project. A Performance-Based Allocation (PBA) ranging from BDT 50-70 Lakh allocated annually on top of ADP (Annual Development Program) for UZPs to implement Sub-projects for capacity development and infrastructures for public service delivery based on local needs. Total 200 Upazila Development Facilitators (UDFs) dispatched to UZPs facilitated the implementation of these Sub-projects. The sectoral Upazila Committees (UCs) reviewed all Sub-project Proposals, and 20% of the PBA (10 Lakh) was specifically earmarked for Capacity Development Sub-projects (CDSPs). The size threshold for Sub-projects varied, with CDSPs ranging from 1-2 Lakh and Infrastructure Sub-projects (INFSPs) ranging from 10-50 Lakh.

UGDP developed an online database for monitoring the Sub-project implementation and progress reporting purposes. All line departments transferred under the Upazila Parishad were actively involved in the selection, design, and implementation of both CDSPs and INFSPs.

Key Accomplishments:

The activities implemented to date under UGDP are: all Upazila's Annual Governance Performance Assessments for five times with its sixth currently ongoing; provision of PBA 50-70 lakhs per round to each UZP for their public service delivery through Sub-projects; orientation on Sub-projects to UZPs; facilitation of UZPs' activities through 200 UDFs;

Baseline Survey and Mid-term Assessment; Annual Upazila Audits; and a comprehensive Capacity Development Program consists of various trainings.

In the Capacity Development Program, the Basic Training was provided to all 492 Upazila Parishad teams consist of 12 people for each Upazila, involving BARD, NILG and RDA which was first time ever conducted for all Upazila Parishads after the Upazila election. Other trainings are also conducted, including Overseas Training in Japan, Annual Project Progress Review Workshops for 4th and 5th rounds UZPs, etc. Through this comprehensive training program, a total of 14,677 elected representatives and officials from key line departments, focusing on various management functions of the Upazila Parishad have been trained. The Project Management Unit (PMU) managed the program with the assistance from the International Consulting Team. The training programs covered a wide range of topics, including basics on Upazila administrations and service delivery, procurement, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and development planning.

UZPs have implemented a large number of various CDSPs using the PBA fund, which involved 17 Line Departments at the Upazila level. A total of 9,409 CDSPs for more than 11 lakh people have been implemented. Within this, in relation to SMART Bangladesh, a total of 78,014 stakeholders received training on various contents aimed at supporting the process of digitalization.

As for INFSPs, UZPs have implemented a total of 3,381 INFSPs as Upazilas' public service delivery with an investment of more than 658 Crore across sectors of education, health, agriculture, energy, etc. including COVID-19 response Sub-projects during the pandemic period.

Summary of Changes in Upazila Governance: The performance of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh has shown significant improvement over the project period. The number of Upazilas that passed preconditions in each PA increased from 217 (45%) to 475 (97%) up to the fifth round, indicating a substantial increase in the number of functioning local government units. Additionally, the average score increased from 34.1 to 70.9 out of a maximum of 100 in five rounds, demonstrating a significant improvement in the administrative capacity of the Upazila Parishads. These improvements are a clear indication that the efforts made to enhance the performance of Upazila Parishads have been successful.

Limitations:

The financial audits of UGDP only cover UGDP funds and not Upazila funds, and there was no intervention addressing of Upazilas' resource mobilization issues. Additionally, there were difficulties in implementing the exit policy for Upazila Development Facilitators (UDFs).

Challenges:

UGDP has brought significant improvements in various areas, but there are some needs to address challenges to ensure sustainability. Internal coordination among Upazila stakeholders

is a challenge. Upazila Parishads are facing staffing shortages, and there are issues with slow decision-making in the Sub-project selection and procurement of services taking too much time. (For detail, please see PowerPoint Presentation Annex-2)

2.1.2. Video Presentation

Prior to engaging in the discussion, a brief but informative video documentary was presented to the participants. In the video, the approach of UGDP was highlighted. The video displayed the successful and innovative Sub-projects of UGDP, with a focus on priority sectors such as health, agriculture, water, sanitation, and education. The video documentary provided a visual overview of the project activities and effectively drew the attention of the participants. It also featured valuable comments and feedback from key stakeholders involved in the project, providing rich perspectives and insights into its effectiveness and impact.

2.1.3. Keynote Paper “Lessons Learned from UGDP"

Prof. Dr. Mobasser Monem gave a Keynote Speech. The main highlights of the speech are given below. A PowerPoint presentation of the study findings is in Annex 3 and the full Keynote Paper is attached to this report as Annex 4.

Prior to the workshop, two external consultants, Prof. Mobasser Monem, Former Chairman of Faculty of Public Administration, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and Dr. Amitavh Sarkar, Former Chairman, Land Appeal Board (Secretary) of the Government of Bangladesh conducted a study on the UGDP. Based on the study findings the presentation was prepared.

Introduction:

Lately, Bangladesh has made significant progress in economic growth, poverty reduction, and human resource development over the past few decades, and is on track to achieve its vision of becoming a developed nation by 2041. The government is now pursuing an agenda of "SMART Bangladesh" to further advance development initiatives.

Local government institutions must align their initiatives with national plans and vision, and strike a balance between localized decision-making and cohesive coordination across all levels of government. The demographic situation is also an important factor to consider in the evolving context of the local government system in Bangladesh.

UGDP is a development project that started in late 2015 with funding from JICA. It builds on the experiences of several previous local government projects supported by other development partners, such as LGSP, PRDP and UZGP. UGDP aims to improve governance and service delivery at the local level by conducting performance assessments and providing additional

funding to all Upazila Parishads. The project is still ongoing and is considered a flagship project due to its unique approach.

Study Methodology:

The study used a mixed-method approach to assess the impact and effectiveness of UGDP. It included a review of relevant literature, field visits to 10 Upazila Parishads, consultation meetings with officials and beneficiaries, and Key Informant Interviews with government officials and consultants. The study team also visited Sub-project sites and consulted with beneficiaries and local residents. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to provide insights into the effectiveness of UGDP.

Critical Constraints to Governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh's rapid development transformation has prompted the government to develop a strong and effective local government system. The country's policy documents, including the Five Year Plans (6th, 7th, and 8th) and the Second Perspective Plan (2021-41), emphasize the need for local government institutions (LGIS) - particularly Upazila Parishads - to become more participative, accountable, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and responsive to citizens' needs.

The Keynote presentation covered eight key topics. These are:

1) Introduction
2) Overview of the Study Methodology
3) Emergence and Unique Operational Modality of the UGDP
4) UGDP's Responses to the Critical Constraints to Governance at the Upazila Parishads
5) Major Achievements of UGDP: Findings from the Field
6) Identify and Address the Challenges for Ensuring SMART Upazila Governance
7) Way Forward and Recommendations
8) Concluding Remarks

UGDP tried to create a more active Upazila governance system by bringing various government service providers under the Upazila Parishad's accountability framework. The project aims to develop a participatory, democratic, and accountable governance process with increasing citizen involvement, and enhancing Upazila Parishads' functional and institutional capacity. UGDP has successfully addressed critical constraints to Upazila governance by emphasizing citizen participation, enhancing accountability, and strengthening monitoring and transparency. The project has demonstrated effective interventions for strengthening local governance systems at the Upazila level.

Major Achievements of UGDP: Highlights of the Findings from the Field:

- UGDP has been successful in improving governance at the Upazila level. Many Upazila Parishads now formulate Five Year Plans and Annual Development Plans in compliance with the Upazila Parishad (Amended) Act (2011).
- UGDP has made additional funds available to Upazila Parishads, ensuring the predictability of funds. Performance-Based Allocation has created a sense of competition among Upazila Parishads, and the implementation of large and visible projects with UGDP funds has been successful.

- The Upazila Parishads cannot pay any advance or running bills to contractors while implementing UGDP-funded Infrastructure Sub-projects. This ensures the full implementation of the Sub-project component and compliance with the specifications.
- Upazilas tend to undertake smaller schemes with ADP funds and larger, more visible projects through UGDP funds. The average cost of infrastructure Sub-projects implemented with UGDP funds by Upazila Parishads is around 14 lakh taka, while with ADP funds the average scheme size of 10 visited Upazilas is 2.75 lakh taka.
- UGDP allocates a part of its PBA for capacity development purposes for organizing training on various innovative areas and has provided training to Upazila stakeholders.
- Upazila Development Facilitators (UDF) play a key role in Upazila governance improvement. The position of UDF is considered necessary at the Upazila level until the governance system becomes solidified and self-sustaining.
- Upazilas' governance performance does not depend on the availability of higher levels of Upazilas' own financial resources.
- The web-based governance performance assessment system attempted by UGDP in its sixth assessment seems feasible.
- UGDP has extended its support to help strengthen and institutionalize the Strategy Implementation Desk (SID) set up in LGD and holding of Strategy Implementation Committee (SIC) to monitor the implementation status of the Mid-and Long-term Upazila Governance Improvement Strategy adopted by LGD.

Key Challenges:

Based on the analysis in the previous section, and considering the information gathered during the site visit, it is important to identify some ongoing issues that require further attention. The identified challenges are summarized below:

In order to improve the state of Upazila governance, multiple challenges need to be addressed and to start with, there is still a low level of understanding and adherence to Upazila laws among stakeholders. Additionally, there is a need to move away from the tradition of implementing small-scale development schemes with ADP funds and instead focus on making local development more multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral. The distribution of Upazila's ADP funds among the Union Parishads also needs to be reconsidered, and the ADP allocation criteria must be updated. Upazila Committees are not yet fully functional, and the resource base of the Upazila Parishads needs to be enhanced.

Furthermore, there is a need to enhance coordination between Upazila-level stakeholders and establish proper linkage between Five-Year Plan and Annual Plans by the Upazila Parishad. Capacity building of Upazila stakeholders are also still on an unfinished journey, and there are inadequate human resources at the Upazila Parishad. Moreover, there is no single MIS system

at LGD for efficient monitoring, and institutional memories need to be preserved at the central level. Addressing these challenges will be crucial to improving Upazila's governance.

Way forward and Recommendations:

Upcoming projects focusing on Upazila governance improvement may consider these recommendations.

a) Institutional Reform at Central Level to be led by LGD:

- Monitoring the Implementation progress of the Mid-and Long-term Strategy for Upazila Parishad Governance.
- The Sub-projects selection criteria followed by UGDP can be replicated in ADP project (Minimum project cost BDT. 10 lac).
- Operation & Maintenance budget allocation should be considered in planning of development project for sustainability.
- The training of Upazila elected personnel is to be continuing through lump sum allocation from Upazila ADP.
- Single MIS system at LGD can be introduced and maintained.
- Preserve institutional memory and create a repository of project and policy related documents at LGD.
- Establish a dedicated research, documentation and policy formulation unit within LGD.
- Implement a knowledge transfer system.
- Develop a culture of knowledge sharing.
- Invest in technology and digital solutions.

b) Reforming ADP Grant System:

- Mainstreaming of performance grant system. ADP allocation criteria need a review.
- Putting a minimum ceiling on investment with ADP funds.
- The practice of distributing ADP funds equally among Union Parishads is to be discontinued.
- Strict guidance to Upazila Parishads for completing tender process on time.
- Utilization of ADP funds for capacity development of stakeholders.

c) Institutional Reform for Upazila Parishad:

- Clear guidance needs to be provided on the relationship between Upazila Parishad and Paurashavas.
- Number of Upazila Committees and frequency of meetings may be reduced.
- Directly Elected Members of Upazila Parishads with entire Upazila area as a single constituency maybe considered in the long run.

d) Human Resource and Capacity Development for Upazila Parishad:

- Operationalization of Mid-and Long-term Training Plan with the initiative of NILG.
- A system of learning from peers needs to be institutionalized.

- Recruitment of required work force for Upazila Parishads.
- Position like UDF is important for governance improvement at the Upazila level.

e) Upazila Financing and Revenue:

- Enhancing the resource base of Upazila Parishads.
- The existing revenue-sharing mechanism among Upazila Parishads needs to be equitable since the revenue resource gaps among Upazilas are too wide.
- Co-financing of development projects may be encouraged.

f) Making Upazila Plan and Budget Effective

- Situation analysis and wealth resource mapping is needed before planning.
- Encouraging UZPs to formulate Five-year Plan and Annual Plans with maintaining their synergy.
- Organizing special budget sessions by Upazila Parishads

Concluding Remarks:

UGDP has made significant progress in improving governance at the Upazila Parishad level, with positive outcomes such as enhanced and improved service delivery.

However, there are challenges such as old practices, lack of coordination, and weak institutionalization. Addressing these challenges will require political will, inter-institutional collaboration, and innovative approaches. Continued investment in capacity building, citizen engagement, and knowledge sharing is also necessary for sustained progress.

A long-term, multi-dimensional approach prioritizing transparency, accountability, and participation is needed. The lessons learned from UGDP can guide policymakers, practitioners, and researchers towards improving local governance and development in Bangladesh and beyond.

2.1.4. Speech by the Guests

Following the Keynote presentation, the distinguished guests delivered speeches that highlighted their reflections and recommendations on various areas that were emphasized during the presentation.

Mr. KOMORI Takashi- JICA Senior Representative said that UGDP has made some positive outcomes, including the provision of basic training for the Upazila Parishad Chairman, Vice Chairman, Female Vice-Chairman, UNO and Officials of key departments, which shown a beneficial impact. This training should be continued to ensure the continued advancement in Upazila governance. Additionally, there is a need to strengthen the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) to ensure the projects are implemented effectively. The Performance-Based Allocations made positive impacts on various sectors, with governance performance scores improving significantly from 34 to 70. These outcomes show that there is progress being made towards the development of Upazila governance, and there is a need to continue to focus on these areas to ensure continued success.

His Excellency **Mr. IWAMA Kiminori,** Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh highlighted that Bangladesh has made significant efforts to attain the SDGs and is optimistic about achieving them successfully. The government of Bangladesh has developed a National Action Plan to implement the SDGs and has taken several measures such as poverty reduction programs, increasing access to education and healthcare, and promoting renewable energy to achieve these goals.

In addition to the efforts made towards achieving the SDGs, Bangladesh and Japan have collaborated on several projects to promote economic development and growth. One such example is Upazila Governance and Development Project, which aims to improve local governance and improve the services to the people.

Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim- Secretary of LGD & Chair of the Workshop reflected on the findings of the Keynote Paper. He also thanked JICA for their cooperation for various projects of the government.

The Keynote Paper highlights the successful implementation process and strategies of UGDP, which can be replicated in other LGD-funded projects. UGDP focused on stakeholder engagement, capacity building, innovative financing mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation to ensure its success in improving local governance and service delivery, which produced good results.

Mr. **Md. Tazul Islam MP**, Honorable Minister, LGRD&C spoke during the last part of opening session as the Chief Guest and conveyed the following messages:

To alleviate poverty and achieve economic development, participation, sacrifice, and coordination are essential. These factors can help us to reach our goal of becoming a developed country by 2041. UGDP is implementing various development projects and training programs, which is beneficial for the poor people in rural areas. To minimize gaps and problems, it is important to have a congenial working environment, promote togetherness, respect for each other, exhibit good behaviour, identify priorities, and remain committed to achieving our objectives. There is a lack of connectivity between Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad, and it is crucial to improve coordination and relations between them.

2.2. Working Session

Dr. Malay Choudhury, Additional Secretary and Project Director of UGDP chaired the working session of the workshop.

- Panel discussions on the following topics were held: (i) Visible & Sustainable Development at the Upazila level; (ii) Participatory Inclusive Planning for Upazila Parishad; (iii) Financial Capacity of Upazila Parishad and (iv) Capacity Building of Upazila Parishad.
- Open Discussion and reflection on UGDP and its results with key recommendations by the selected participants of the workshop were conducted.
- Concluding Remarks by Dr. Malay Choudhury, Additional Secretary and Project Director UGDP were made.

2.2.1. Panel discussion

A panel discussion was conducted at the beginning of the working session. Dr. Malay Choudhury, Additional Secretary and Project Director of UGDP chaired the session. The panelists were (i) Dr. Ferdauz Arfina Osman, Chairman of the Department of Public Administration at Dhaka University; (ii) Dr. Mobasser Monem, former Chairman of the Department of Public Administration at Dhaka University; (iii) Dr. Amitavh Sarker, former Chairman of the Land Appeal Board (Secretary); and (iv) Dr. Harun Or Rashid Howlader, General Secretary of Upazila Chairman Association and Chairman of Dumki Upazila Parishad.

While discussing various important aspects during the panel meeting a few notable subjects came into light, encompassing: ensuring sustainable development at the local administration level by making it more visible to people's eyesight; encouraging people-centric planning via participatory approaches by establishing inclusiveness in decision-making processes; improving financial capabilities that would eventually lead to the enhanced public welfare through fair distribution and building necessary capacities within local governance bodies to make them more efficient & result-oriented.
The key points of the panel discussion are:

- To enhance local capacity development, allocate a lump sum budget in the Upazila level for continuing training activities and refresher courses for public representatives.
- Inclusive budgeting and planning are necessary to meet the needs of the community.
- Community members need training in income-generating activities.
- Poverty alleviation can be achieved through income-generating activities and training projects, followed by infrastructure projects. Innovative areas must be identified and institutionalized.
- Appropriate identification of needs and target setting is crucial.
- Coordination, honesty, transparency, and accountability of line departments are essential to achieve the goal.
- LGD should introduce a monitoring and follow-up action system using MIS.
- The reasons for coordination scarcity and role/responsibility demarcation between the Upazila Parishad and Union Parishad must be identified.
- Developing a Five-Year Plan aligned with ADP and identifying sources of funding can be helpful in local-level development.
- Planning policies should be bottom-up instead of top-down.
- Reviewing laws and guidelines is necessary to avoid dual management between the line Ministries and Upazila Parishad.
- The 17 SDG targets must be implemented by 2030.
- Changes in elected representatives and transfers of official personnel can hamper the achievement of Upazila targets.

- District-level training institutions should be developed.
- Identifying areas for revenue collection and increasing revenue collection, such as escalating land-selling revenue from 1% to 5% for Upazila Parishad.

2.2.2. Open discussion and reflection from the participants

Vice Chairman of Lohagara Upazila Parishad

The Vice Chairman of Lohagara UZP suggests the following improvements:
Public representatives require long-term capacity development training to work effectively alongside government officials. The Upazila Committee (UC) should meet monthly instead of bi-monthly to increase efficiency. To ensure accountability and transparency, UC meeting resolutions should be sent to LGD. UGDP should continue, and Female Vice Chairpersons should be given greater emphasis and value in this project. However, in other cases, they are not given an important role and are only required to provide signatures.

Women Vice Chairman of Bogura Sadar Upazila Parishad

She recommended continuing UGDP and emphasizing the value of having a Female Vice Chair position. Currently, there is no importance given to the Female Vice Chair role outside of UGDP. Additionally, there appears to be little interest among government officials to organize and participate in UC meetings.

As a result, the Female vice Chair has very little work to do beyond providing their signature. To address this issue, it is crucial to ensure the active participation of the Female Vice Chair in all development activities. This will require a concerted effort from government officials to recognize the important roles women play in development projects and to actively engage them in the decision-making process.

UNO, Singair, Manikganj Sadar UZP:

The UNO, Singair, Manikganj Sadar Upazila Parishad recommended the continuation of UGDP and Performance-Based Allocation. To ensure transparency and visibility, it is advised that all Sub-projects be of a size of 10 lakhs or more as Open Tender Method (OTM) is

mandatory in this case. Local employees of Upazila Parishad should receive training on different topics to enrich their knowledge base and skills so that they can render services for the people and maintain the sustainability of development activities at the Upazila level. Additionally, it is suggested that one UDF be posted in each Upazila to provide optimal support.

Chairman of Fakirhat Upazila Parishad

The Chairman has provided several insightful recommendations for effective governance. He emphasized that capacity development should not only focus on just holding training but also on implementation and self-motivation of the participants. This is a critical aspect, as the application of knowledge gained through training is essential.

He highlighted the importance of decentralization of power and good coordination. This approach can facilitate effective governance by delegating power to lower levels of government and promoting collaboration among stakeholders.

Lastly, he recommended to enhance the revenue collection and fund sharing, as exemplified by the successful INFSPs of UGDP,70 lakh Taka was budgeted, UGDP provided 40 lakh and the Upazila Parishad shared 30 lakh for the project. Effective financial management is vital for the sustainable development of local communities. Finally, he recommended appointing UDF for each Upazila. This approach can provide necessary funding for local development initiatives, leading to better outcomes for local communities. Overall, the Chairman's recommendations can serve as a useful guide for effective governance at the Upazila level.

General Secretary of Upazila Chairmans Association and Chairman of Dumki Upazila Parish

The recommendations made by the General Secretary of the Upazila Chairmans Association and Chairman of Dumki Upazila Parishad underscore the importance of positive attitudes towards development, adherence to guidelines, securing adequate funding, having a trained workforce, and continuous learning and development in achieving sustainable development. He suggests that the primary obstacle to progress is not a lack of money, but rather a lack of coordination and positive attitudes towards development. Secondly, he emphasizes the significance of adhering to the Local Government

(Upazila) Act's Third Schedule (The list of Transferred Line Department Officials and their job description) to solve problems. This implies that the Chairman recognizes the importance of following established guidelines to ensure effective and sustainable development.

This emphasizes the importance of securing adequate funding to support development efforts. Finally, the Chairman stresses the importance of introducing new types of training initiatives every year to improve the skills and knowledge of local employees and stakeholders. This highlights the significance of continuous learning and development to support sustainable development.

Consultant of LGSP

Mr. Aminul Islam, Additional Secretary (Retd.) and Consultant of LGSP Suggested strengthening of five tiers of local government should occur concurrently to promote effective governance. The utilization of web-based performance assessment in UGDP's sixth round is an admirable approach, with the potential to be replicated in other local governments.

There should be a sharing of good practices with other entities. Additionally, institution building at the District level is crucial, and a project exit strategy needs to be developed and implemented. Finally, coordination among all government-training institutions is necessary to provide effective capacity development training.

Ms. Azra Zabin, UDF

Ms. Azra Zabin, UDF of UGDP talked about effective planning, capacity building, and coordination. She mentioned that the capacity of Upazila Parishads has been developed to prepare Five-Year Plans (FYPs), Annual Plans, and budgets and this development has been supported by UGDP. FYP is an important tool for planning and managing local development activities. She suggested that completing FYP might be a requirement for Upazila Parishads to be eligible to receive development funds or ADP (Annual Development Program) allocations. She suggested that having a UDF assigned to each Upazila could help to ensure that development activities are well coordinated and the workload is manageable. This may help to ensure development projects are implemented efficiently and effectively.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

UGDP has already introduced some important approaches and taken steps to ensure SMART governance in the Upazila Parishads of Bangladesh. The project's comprehensive approach to institutional strengthening, capacity building, and community participation has yielded positive results, including improved governance and service delivery, greater transparency and accountability, and enhanced citizen engagement. UGDP's successes have also informed broader policy discussions on decentralization, local governance, and development in Bangladesh.

However, UGDP also faced several challenges, including dealing with outdated practices at the Upazila level, a general lack of understanding of legal requirements among stakeholders, frequent transfers of trained officials, weak coordination among stakeholders, and the absence of a clear roadmap for institutionalizing and sustaining key lessons learned to improve governance.

To address these challenges, it is essential to strengthen the political will and commitment of local leaders and policymakers, improve inter-institutional cooperation and coordination, and promote the use of innovative technologies and data-driven approaches in local governance. In addition, continued investment in institutional capacity building, citizen engagement, and knowledge sharing is necessary to sustain the gains achieved through UGDP.

Moving forward, SMART governance in Upazila Parishads requires a long-term and multi-dimensional approach that prioritizes transparency, accountability, and participation at the Upazila level. The lessons learned from UGDP can serve as a valuable guide for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working to improve local governance and development in Bangladesh and beyond. By drawing on these lessons and building on the achievements of UGDP, Bangladesh can realize its vision of a more inclusive, participatory, and effective governance system that serves the needs of its citizens in the years to come. Therefore, the experiences of successes, challenges, and lessons need to be documented, and the continuation of such learning and sharing into the future is very important to inform policy making.

Dr. Malay Choudhury, Additional Secretary, Project Director (Additional Charge), UGDP concluded the session by highlighting some of the key takeaways gathered through presentations, deliberations, discussions and reflections.

4. Annexes

1. Presentation on UGDP Activities, Achievements and Accomplishments
2. Presentation on "Towards Smart Governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh: Lessons Learned from UGDP"
3. Keynote Paper "Towards Smart Governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh: Lessons Learned from UGDP"
4. Display/Photographs for Branding UGDP
5. Video Document UGDP "Towards Smart Bangladesh"(not attached)
6. Stories of Success of 42 Sub-Projects (Not attached)

Annex-1: PowerPoint Presentation

"UGDP: Activities, Accomplishments, Achievements and Lessons Learned"

By

Dr. Malay Chaudhury
Additional Secretary, LGD
Project Director (Additional Charge), UGDP

Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)

Local Government Division (LGD)

UGDP: Activities, Accomplishments, Achievements and Lessons Learned

April 12, 2023

Hotel InterContinental, Dhaka

Dr. Malay Choudhury
Additional Secretary, LGD
Project Director (Additional Charge), UGDP

CONTENTS

- Brief Introduction
- UGDP Timeline
- Key Features
- Key Activities
- Key Achievements
- Key Outputs
- Lessons Learned
- Limitations
- Challenges

Project Introduction

Project At a Glance	
Ministry	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
Executing Agency	Local Government Division (LGD)
Funding Sources	GOB & JICA
Commencement	March 2016
Completion	December 2024
Budget	BDT: 127,116.00 lac

Overall Objective:

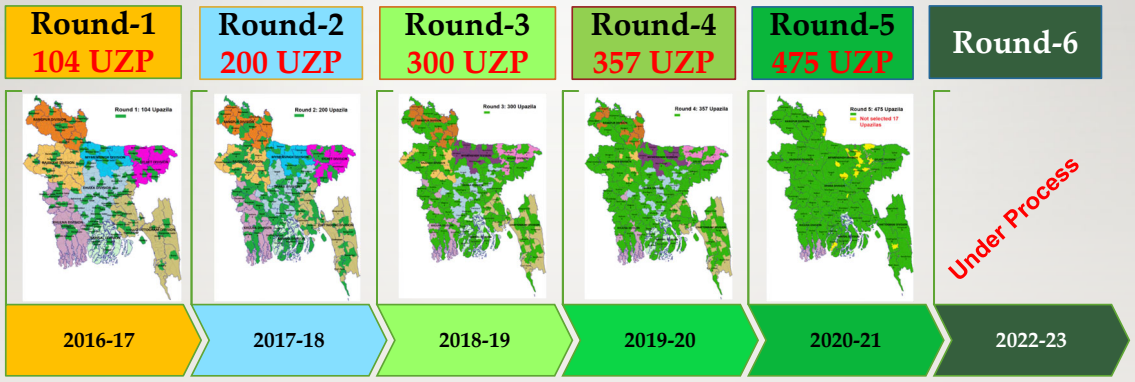
Enhance the capacity of Upazila Parishads to deliver more effective and responsive public services to citizens by providing additional development funds and a series of capacity development opportunities to concerned stakeholders.

Project Introduction

Specific Objectives

1. To provide Performance Based Allocation (PBA) to UZP, toward responsive public service delivery and infrastructure development;
2. To improve mutual accountability between LGIs and Nation Building Departments (NBDs) both at Upazila and Union levels and to facilitate synergy effects between them;
3. To improve the transparency of LGIs and NBDs to local communities through Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) and other good governance measures;
4. To strengthen the capacity of public servants both in LGIs and NBDs and their collaboration mechanism;
5. To facilitate an appropriate decentralization process.

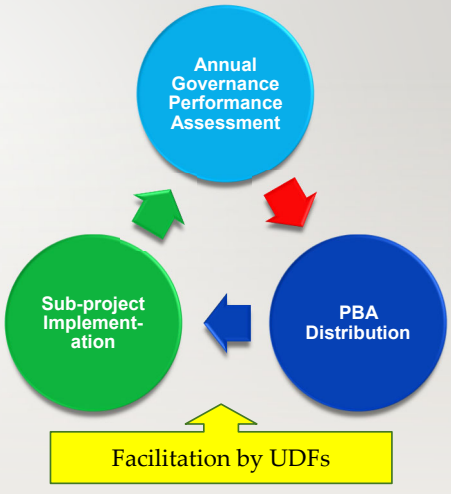
UGDP Timeline with Geographic Coverage



2016 . . . . . Dec.2024

Key Features of UGDP (Main Key Features)

- Annual Governance Performance Assessment of all Upazilas to select target UZPs
- BDT 50-70 Lacs Performance Based Allocation (PBA) on top of Annual ADP per UZP per Round
- UZPs implement Sub-projects based on local needs as their public service delivery
- Upazila Development Facilitators (UDFs) facilitate these activities



- These activities are cyclically repeated for UZP governance and service delivery improvements

Other Key Features 1/2

- All Sub-project Proposals reviewed by Sectoral Committees (UCs)
- 20% of PBA (10 lacs) earmarked for Capacity Development Sub-projects (CDSPs)
- Sub-project threshold size: CDSP 1-2 Lacs; INFSP 10-50 Lacs;
- Funding Modality: Prepaid for CDSP, Post Paid for INFSP;
- Less Priority Sector (Roads/ Earth Work);
- Online Database for Sub-Project Monitoring and progress reporting.

- Existing LG Structure used in project implementation (Upazila Committees are involved in implementation)

Other Key Features 2/2

Involvement of Line Departments:

All the line departments working at Upazila level are involved in selection, design & implementation of Sub-projects (Both CD & Infrastructure)

Transferred Line Departments (TLDs)
1. *Office of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer*
2. *Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE)*
3. *Department of Fisheries (DOF)*
4. *Department of Livestock (DLS)*
5. *Department of Women Affairs (DWA)*
6. *Department of Youth and Sports (DYS)*
7. *Department of Secondary Education (DSE)*
8. *Department of Primary Education (DPE)*
9. *Department of Health and Family Planning (DHFP)*
10. *Department of Family Planning (DFP)*
11. *Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)*
12. *Department of Environment and Forest (DEF)*
13. *Department of Public Health & Engineering (DPHE)*
14. *Department of Disaster Management (DDM)*
15. *Department of Social Service (DSS)*
16. *Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB)*
17. *Department of Cooperatives (DOC)*
Non-Transferred Line Departments
1. *AC Land Office*
2. *Department of ICT. etc.*

All the Transferred Line Departments are involved with UGDP Implementation

Key Accomplishments

TASKS	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Overseas Training to Japan				☑				
Base line Survey		☑						
Upazila Performance Survey	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑	
Performance Based Allocation 50-70 lac		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑
Orientation on Sub-Projects	☑	☑	☑	☑				
Mid-Term Assessment					☑			
Sub-Project Implementation								
Basic training to 492 UZPs				☑	☑			
Upazila Audits			☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Annual Project Review Workshop					☑	☑	☑	
End line Survey (under process)								☑
Support through UDF								
Lessons learned Workshop							☑	

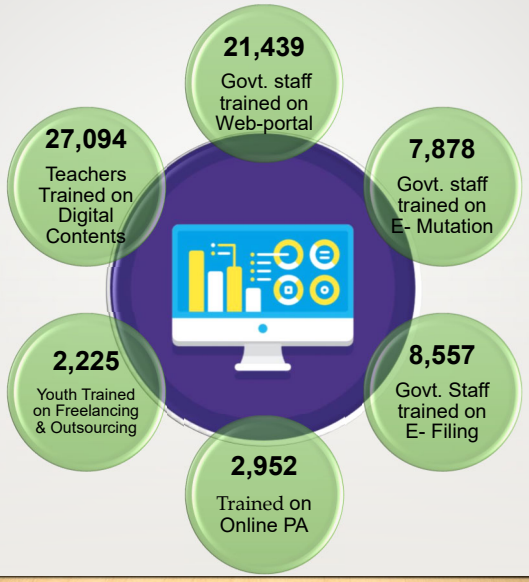
We are at here ⬆

Capacity Development Initiatives (Trainings provided by PMU)

- Overseas Training to Japan for selected stakeholders;
- Basic Training on Upazila Plan and Service delivery for 492 Upazila;
- Orientation on Sub-project Management for UZP;
- Financial Management Training for Upazila Staff ;
- Project Monitoring & Evaluation Workshop to LGD Officials, all DLGs and DDLGs;
- UDF Training on UGDP Implementation and Procurement Law;
- Training on Online PA for 492 Upazila Teams;
- Annual Progress Review Workshops with 475 Upazila Parishads who received UGDP funding.

❑ 14,677 Officials Trained/Participated in the Capacity Development Program

Contribution Towards SMART Bangladesh

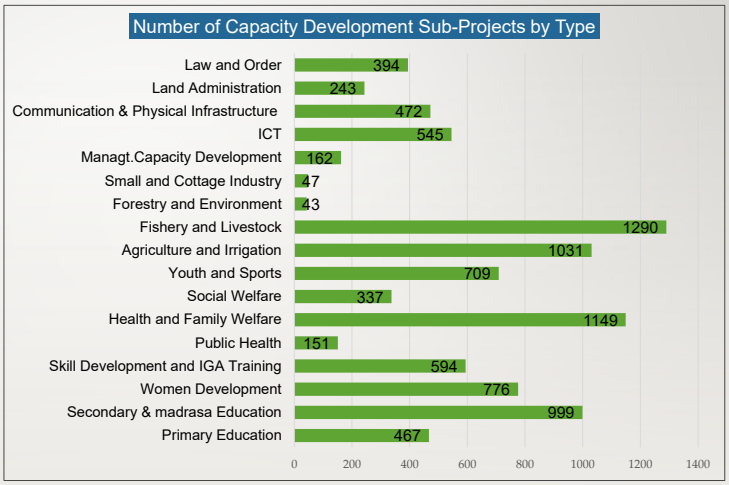


78,014 People Received Training on Various Components Supporting Digitalization Process

Summary of Key Output of CD-Sub-Project

Training Participants Profile

- ❑ Key Service providers (Line Department staff, Union Parishad Representatives, UP Secretaries, Officials, TBAs, Teachers, etc. to develop their capacity for better service delivery for citizens.
- ❑ Beneficiary groups/ general people on various issues related to their life, livelihoods and awareness.

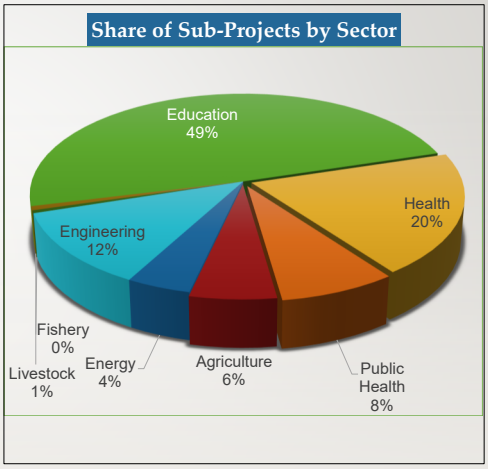


❑ 9,409 Sub-Projects ❑11,75,620 people trained ❑Investment BDT 148.61 Crore ❑19 Line Departments

Summary of Key Output of INF Sub-project

3,381 INF Sub-Projects Implemented

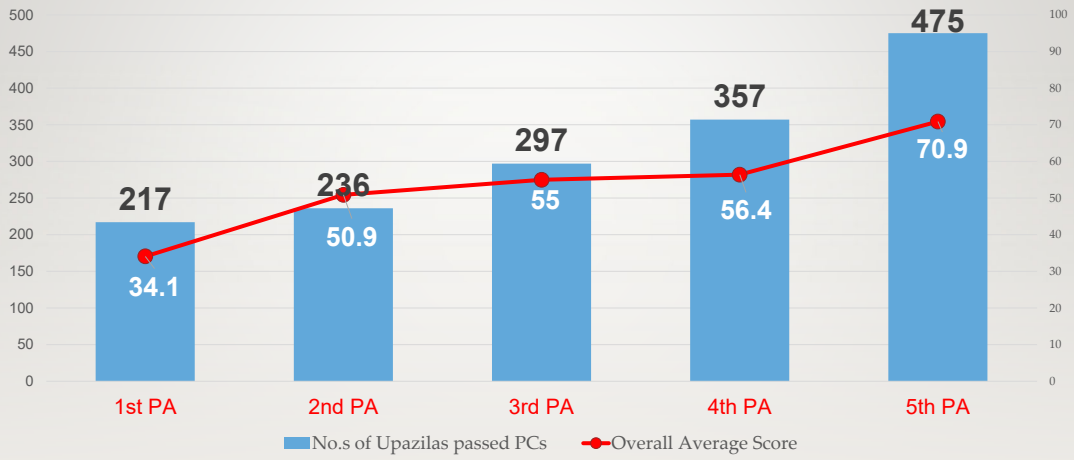
- ❑ Educational Facilities & Equipment
- ❑ Medical Facilities & Equipment
- ❑ Public Health Facilities & Equipment
- ❑ Agriculture Facilities & Equipment
- ❑ Solar Energy
- ❑ Water Supply Facilities & Equipment
- ❑ Disaster Risk Reduction
- ❑ Rural Roads and Drainage



COVID-19 response through Special Projects in all Upazila……

❑ 3,381 INF Sub-Projects ❑ Investment BDT 658.57 Crore ❑ 49% for Education

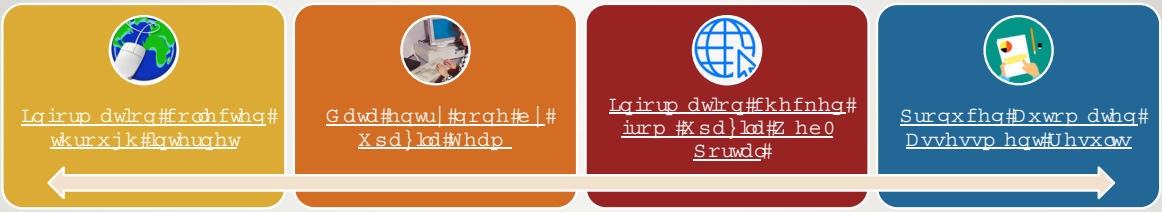
Governance Improvement Measured through PAs



❑ The number of Upazilas passed preconditions increased in 5 years
❑ Both average and median scores steadily increased over the period

Online Performance Assessment in 6th Round

UGDP Conducted an "Online Performance Assessment of 492 Upazila Parishad"
(This is First Time Ever in Bangladesh)
Modality of 6th Performance Assessment



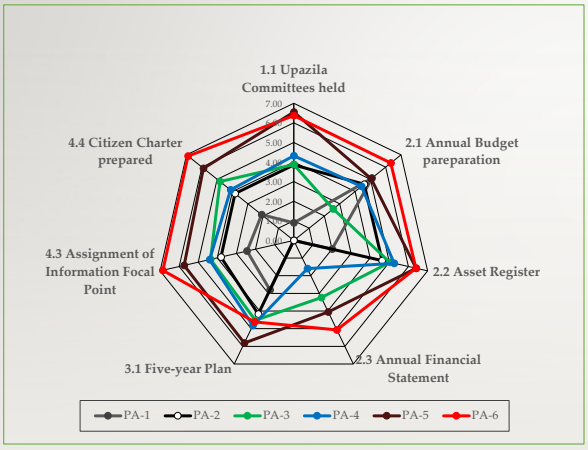
Activities:

- ✓ Developed Online Database and Data Assessment Software Package;
- ✓ Provided training to UDFs on indicators, registration and data entry process,
- ✓ Provided training to 2,952 Participants from 492 Upazila Parishad Teams on the Online Performance Assessment System.
- ✓ Data verification to ensure validity of the data uploaded and entered

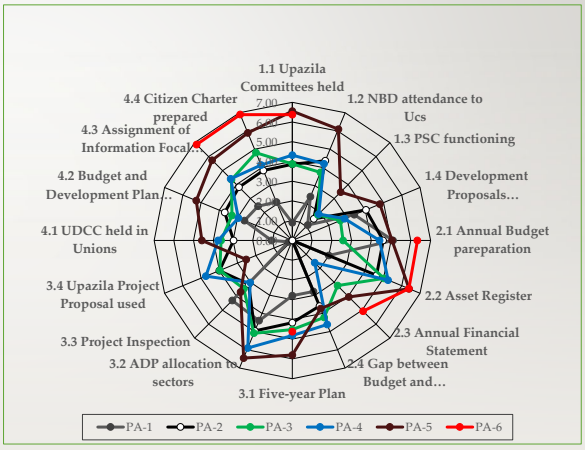
❑ Upazila Web-portal is now updated and ready with all required information;

Governance Improvement Measured through PAs

Directly Comparable Indicators from PA1 toPA6



All Indicators fromPA1 toPA6



❑ In Round 6 the average score increased significantly against key indicators Tentative Result)
❑ Relatively poor performance in Five-year planning and preparation of Annual Financial Statements is found

The Changes Enhanced through "PA+PBA Cycles"

Changes:
Progressive improvement of UZPs' "service delivery" through cyclical implementation of a set of activities

PA:
Gradual Improvement of UZPs' General Administration Capacity

PA5
PA4
PA3
PA2
PA1

Round-5 SPs
Round-4 SPs
Round-3 SPs
Round-2 SPs
Round-1 SPs

PBA:
Gradual Activation of UZPs' Service Delivery Mechanism

Facilitation by UDFs and Training Provided for UZP Stakeholders

Contribution to SDGs Localization

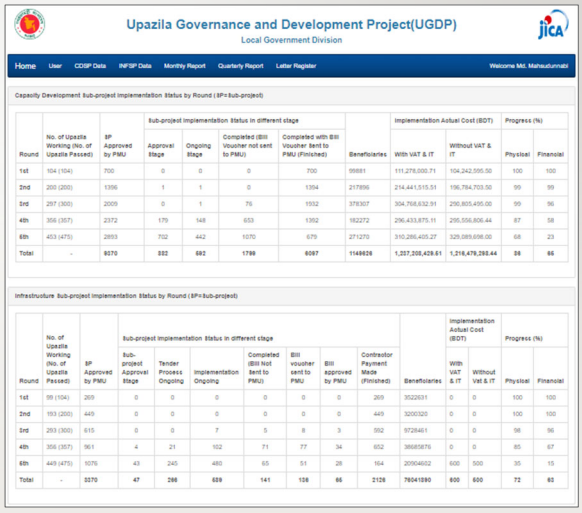
- UGDP contribute to the localization of SDGs and touched all the Goals through its sub-projects.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

- Upazilas' governance improvements directly contribute to achieving SDG Goal-16 (esp. Strong Institutions) nationwide.

- UGDP's Intervention through sub-projects addressing various sectors contributes to multiple SDG Goals at local level.

Online Database of Sub-projects



- Developed and maintained an online sub-project database for sub-project tracking, monitoring and reporting.
- This is a useful instrument for real-time tracking of development Projects

Achievement & Lessons Learned

UZPs' Basic Administrative Capacity is Enhanced:

Upazila's score increased from 34.1 to 70.9. No. of Upazila increased from 217 (45%) to 475 (97%) who passed preconditions.

Service Delivery of Upazila Parishad Increased/Improved:

Quantity and Quality of public service delivery by Upazila increased (9,424 CDSP and 3,998 INFSP implemented)

Understanding & Capacity of UZP stakeholders Enhanced:

If funds and opportunities are provided, Upazila can deliver various services.
Upazilas have proven their capacity In designing and implementing Sub-Project in various sectors.

Policy reforms based on the learnings of UGDP :

LGD introduces Annual Financial Statement Format developed by UGDP

- More Lessons learned can be used for policy reforms will be presented in the following sessions

Limitations & Challenges

Limitations

- Financial Audits by UGDP focuses only on UGDP Fund, not Upazila Fund
- UGDP did not take any initiative for Upazilas' resource mobilization issue
- UDF's exit policy couldn't executed properly

Challenges/Issues

- Internal coordination among stakeholders.
- COVID-19 pandemic
- Staffing Shortage of Upazila Parishad
- Slow decision-making in selection of sub-projects.
- Too much time required for the procurement of services

UGDP has brought about significant improvements in many areas, though there is a need to address these limitations and challenges to ensure its sustainability.

Thank you

Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division (LGD)
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives

Annex-2: PowerPoint Presentation of Keynote Paper

“Towards Smart Governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh”

By

Prof. Dr. Mobasser Monem

Dr. Amitavh Sarker

Towards Smart Governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh

Lessons Learned from the UGDP

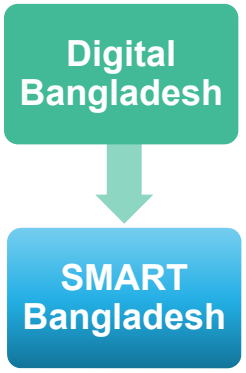
Dr. Mobasser Monem
Dr. Amitavh Sarker

01

Introduction

Introduction (1/2)

- Bangladesh has a remarkable record of poverty reduction and development, having gone from one of the world's poorest nations at birth in 1971 to reaching lower-middle income status in 2021, and being on track to graduate from the UN's Least Developed Countries list by 2026.
- Bangladesh is now aspiring to move further ahead with an agenda of "SMART Bangladesh" which would eventually contribute to the achievement of Bangladesh's vision-2041 to become a rich nation.



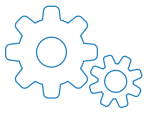
Introduction (2/2)

- At this critical juncture, it is important for our local government institutions come out of only **"doing their business as usual" to "doing their business in a SMART manner**".
- And this can be done **by thinking outside the box and by aligning local development initiatives with the national plans and Vision**.

02

Overview of the Study Methodology

Methodology of the Study



- Review of literature such as project documents, performance assessment results, other available documents focusing on UGDP;
- Making field visits to **10 Upazila Parishads (UZPs)** covering a mix of Upazilas located in different parts of the country also considering number of times they secured UGDP provided funds for governance performance;
- Consultation meetings with the **Upazila Chairmen, UNO, Vice Chairmen, officials of the line departments, Union Parishad Chairmen**;
- **Visiting some sub-project sites** and **consultations with the beneficiaries** and local residents;
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with the beneficiaries of capacity development training;
- **Consultations with government officials** associated with UGDP and also the members of the international and national consultants at the PMU and LGD.

Selection of Upazila Parishads for the Study

Upazilas	District	PA Scores (max. 100) (*could not pass pre-conditions.)					Times Enrolled in UGDP	Total PBA (Lac)
		PA1	PA2	PA3	PA4	PA5		
Dighalia	Khulna	38*	48*	87	72	75	3	160
Dumuria	Khulna	55	68	92	60	75	5	250
Fakirhat	Bagerhat	21*	47*	32	82	82	3	170
Natore Sadar	Natore	43*	29*	95	84	95	3	180
Singra	Natore	56	85	88	90	82	5	280
Puthia	Rajshahi	54*	68	82	91	81	4	230
Mohanganj	Netrokona	5*	54	55	59	64	4	200
Barhatta	Netrokona	20*	57*	9*	9*	44	0	0
Kapasia	Gazipur	35*	20*	58	14*	35	2	100
Sreepur	Gazipur	15*	47	21*	52*	7*	1	50

Source: Authors

03

Emergence and Unique Operational Modality of the UGDP

Emergence and Unique Operational Modality of the UGDP (1/3)

- Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP) started its operation back in **2015** with the funding support of JICA.
- The UGDP's primary objective is **to enhance citizen services by providing training programs and making additional development funds available to UZPs** apart from regular ADP allocation.
- UGDP provides **Performance-Based Allocation (PBA)** to target Upazilas, with an average size of **50 lac Taka** per year, along with capacity development support to all Upazilas.

Emergence and Unique Operational Modality of the UGDP (2/3)

5th PA in 2021

- 475 UZPs that passed all preconditions were selected as target UZPs for PA under UGDP.
- It was also revealed that General administrative capacity of UZPs in Bangladesh has improved in various aspects since the first PA.

6th PA in 2022

- The first web-based assessment.
- Upazila stakeholders uploaded the necessary documents to their respective Upazila web portals for the assessment.

- **There is no denying the fact that a lot has been achieved on the governance front thus far, but there is still a room for further improvement of various areas of Upazila governance in the years to come.**

04

UGDP's Responses to the Critical Constraints to Governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh

UGDP's Responses to the Critical Constraints to Upazila Governance (1/5)

- The country's policy documents, including the Five Year Plan (6th, 7th, and 8th) and the Second Perspective Plan (2021-41), emphasize the need for local government institutions (LGIs) - particularly Upazila Parishads - to become more participative, accountable, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and responsive to citizens' needs.

- It is worth noting that the UGDP has been successful in responding to the critical constraints to the governance of Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh.

UGDP's Responses to the Critical Constraints to Upazila Governance (2/5)

Nature of Constraints	Consequence(s)	UGDP's Responses
✓ **Many Upazila Parishads not holding monthly meetings suggested by law.**	✓ Upazila Parishad not working as a corporate local government entity. ✓ Dominance of a few influential individuals. ✓ Low level of coordination and arbitrary local development.	✓ Owing to the performance assessment approach of UGDP, now almost all Upazilas hold monthly meetings as per the legal framework.
✓ **Inertia in submitting the ADP implementation report to the LGD.**	✓ Poor compliance with the rules in implementing ADP. ✓ Incognizance of the Ministry about the ADP spending of Upazilas.	✓ Due to UGDP interventions, ADP implementation reports are submitted within 31 August by the Upazilas now.
✓ **Budget guidelines existed but only limited number of Upazilas prepared their budgets**	✓ Arbitrary approaches in spending the revenues generated. ✓ No budgetary predictability.	✓ Institutionalization of the budgeting process and contributed to the formulation of the related rules. ✓ Ensured compliance with the rules and prescribed budget formats.

UGDP's Responses to the Critical Constraints to Upazila Governance (3/5)

Nature of Constraints	Consequence(s)	UGDP's Responses
✓ **Very Few Nos. of Upazilas have development plan .**	✓ Arbitrary selection and implementation of local development schemes without linking this to the national development priorities.	✓ For the UGDP fund, UZPs required to prepare five year and annual plans following the prescribed planning guidelines and ensuing linkage to the national development priorities.
✓ **Upazila officials lack budget and plan formulation capacity.**	✓ Upazilas not having a budget and plans.	✓ UGDP provided training to the Upazila elected and appointed officials on the upazila budget and plan formulation.
✓ **Upazilas suffer from fund constraints and this limits its ability to contribute to local development.**	✓ Upazila on its own could not undertake and implement as many local development sub-projects as it was expected by its constituents.	✓ UGDP provided Performance Based Allocation (PBA) to the UZPs and made sure that the UZPs spend more on social and SDG related sectors.
✓ **Low level of information disclosure at the Upazila level**.	✓ Often led to corrupt practices and misunderstanding between the local people and the elected representatives.	✓ UGDP required proactive disclosure of UZPs budget, annual financial statements and other reports on the Upazila web portal and notice board.

UGDP's Responses to the Critical Constraints to Upazila Governance (4/5)

Nature of Constraints	Consequence(s)	UGDP's Responses
✓ **Upazila committees not functional at the Upazila level.**	✓ Problems with identification of the sectoral priorities and keeping sectoral balance in expenditure decisions.	✓ UGDP linked the Upazila committee activation with Preconditions and performance indicators.
✓ **Weak linkage between line departments and Upazila Parishad.**	✓ Lack of coordination between these two entities had negative implications on local development.	✓ UGDP focused on establishing an effective linkage between Upazila Parishad and the line departments in terms of planning and budgeting.
✓ **Tendency of undertaking small scale sub-projects by the Upazilas.**	✓ Small scale sub-projects failed to serve residents of multiple UPs. No visibility of the impact of the sub-projects	✓ UGDP emphasized on undertaking and implementing relatively large scale and visible schemes (minimum worth of Taka 10 Lakhs and above). ✓ UGDP also suggested priority social sectors for investments to ensure balanced local development.

UGDP's Responses to the Critical Constraints to Upazila Governance (5/5)

Nature of Constraints	Consequence(s)	UGDP's Responses
✓ **Upazila Parishads focus mainly on physical infrastructure sub-projects**	✓ Local development has generally been one dimensional, with some exceptions.	✓ UGDP wanted a break away with this tradition and focused on implementing different sub-projects covering social sectors such as health, education, agriculture, livestock, fisheries.
✓ **Rare evidences of Partnership and co-financing activities between Upazila and other entities working locally**	✓ Upazilas were always on their own and the concept of partnership was not given adequate attention.	✓ UGDP's intervention has prompted many UZPs for undertaking sub-projects in partnership (co-financing), although the number of such initiatives is still low.
✓ **Limited initiative for capacity development of the Upazila level stakeholders including women.**	✓ Local citizens including women were being deprived of establishing their rights and largely remained unemployed.	✓ UGDP emphasized on the capacity development of UZP stakeholders including women and thus, created opportunities for them to involve in income generating activities.

5

Major Achievements of UGDP: Findings from the Field

1. UGDP has contributed to improve the governance at the Upazila Level

- UGDP conducts performance assessment of all the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh each year by involving third party firms through **4 Precondition Indicators and 16 Performance Indicators**.
- The broad areas of performance include-
  - ✓ **Institutional Capacity**
  - ✓ **Financial Management Capacity**
  - ✓ **Planning and Budgeting Capacity, and**
  - ✓ **Transparency and Accountability**
- Some Upazila Parishads performed considerably well, while some lagged behind.
- Governance improvement requires a **team work, proactive leadership and coordination between different stakeholders at the Upazila level**, among other things.

2. Many Upazila Parishads now formulate FYPs and APs to comply with UGDP's requirements (1/3)

- Most Upazila Parishads visited seemed to have prepared FYPs and Aps but not following the guidelines.
- However, there was no attempt made by the Upazilas to link their plans horizontally with the plans of the Paurashavas or vertically with the plans of the Zila Parishads.
- Upazila stakeholders did not receive adequate training on the formulation of FYPs and APs.
- There was a general weak linkage between the FYPs and APs.

2. Many UZPs now formulate FYPs and APs to comply with UGDP's requirements (2/2)

Synergy between FYP and AP		
Upazila	**District**	**Percentage (%)**
Dighalia	Khulna	35%
Dumuria	Khulna	30%
Fakirhat	Bagerhat	80%
Natore Sadar	Natore	50%
Singra	Natore	80%
Puthia	Rajshahi	50%
Mohanganj	Netrokona	30%
Barhatta	Netrokona	0% (No plans prepared)
Kapasia	Gazipur	40%
Sreepur	Gazipur	30%

Source: Field Survey Data

3. UGDP has made additional funds available to UZPs

- UGDP has helped the Upazila Parishads with its additional funds known as Performance Based Allocation (PBA) and predictability of funding.
- With the increased financial resources, Upazila Parishad has been able to undertake need based social sector focused sub-projects. For instance, supporting schools, hospitals, clinics in different ways, construction of irrigation canals, drinking water treatment plant etc.
- Upazilas have proven their capacities to deliver needs-based public services when opportunities, resources and proper facilitation with stricter stipulations.

4. Performance Based Allocation has created a sense of competition among the UZPs

- The **Performance Based Allocation (PBA)** of UGDP and also making the PA results public on an annual basis by UGDP has created a sense of competition among the stakeholders of Upazila Parishads to improve their governance performances. The above mentioned practices have contributed to-

  ✓**making the Upazila Committees functional,**
  ✓**improve accountability and transparency,**
  ✓**ensuring proper financial management,**
  ✓**proper budgeting, and**
  ✓**capacity development of the functionaries.**

5. Upazila Parishads Implement of Large and Visible Sub-Projects with UGDP Funds (1/3)

- Upazila Parishads have been undertaking and implementing large and visible sub-projects with UGDP funds. The project puts **a stipulation of taka 10 lacs as the minimum ceiling** for an infrastructure sub-project.
- UGDP has contributed to the shift in focus of Upazila Parishads from **traditional rural road construction schemes to investing in social sector schemes** in areas such as education, health, fisheries, and agriculture.
- It is essential that Upazila Parishads **create a maintenance budget head** which can be used to **ensure sustainability of these innovative social sector sub-projects.**

5. Upazila Parishads Implement Large and Visible Sub-Projects with UGDP Funds (2/3)

Snapshots of the Nature of Infrastructure Sub-Projects Implemented with UGDP Funds

Upazilas	District	Nature of Infrastructure Sub-Projects
Dighalia	Khulna	Change room at school for the adolescent girl students, High flow oxygen nasal cannula
Dumuria	Khulna	High flow oxygen nasal cannula, Drinking water treatment plant, Irrigation drainage
Fakirhat	Bagerhat	Farmer's training and demonstration centre, Multimedia classrooms, Construction of public toilets, and Installation of digital attendance machine at girls school, Construction of a community clinic
Natore Sadar	Natore	Purchase of an ambulance for the Upazila health complex, and Construction of wash blocks at different educational institutions
Singra	Natore	Supply of medical equipment for the Upazila hospital, Construction of public toilets in different bazars, Construction of additional classroom for a school, and Construction of a physio-therapy centre at the Upazila Hospital

5. Upazila Parishads Implement Large and Visible Sub-Projects with UGDP Funds (3/3)

Snapshots of the Nature of Infrastructure Sub-Projects Implemented with UGDP Funds		
Upazilas	**District**	**Nature of Infrastructure Sub-Projects**
Puthia	Rajshahi	Construction of shades for the display of products produced by farmers, and Construction of science lab for the students of secondary schools
Mohonganj	Netrokona	Construction of wash block facilities at schools
Barhatta	Netrokona	No INFSP was implemented as it failed secure UGDP provided funds
Kapasia	Gazipur	Distribution of high and low benches at different schools
Sreepur	Gazipur	No INFSD project implemented

6. Implementing UGDP Funded Sub-Projects without Paying "Advance" or "Running Bills"

- Upazila Parishads do not pay "advance money" or "running bills" to the contractors in charge of implementing sub-projects with UGDP provided funds.
- This provision has helped the Upazila Parishads to have undertaken sub-projects completed by the contractors on time and without any delay.
- The contractors also know that low quality work will further delay payment and therefore they became more attentive and cautious to maintain the quality of their work.

7. Tendency of Upazilas to Undertake Smaller Schemes with ADP Funds (1/3)

- Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh tend to focus on small-scale projects using Annual Development Programme (ADP) funds provided by the central government.
- Upazila Parisahds tend to spend primarily in the **communication and infrastructure sector (Road)**. This has led to a one-dimensional approach to local development, with limited or no focus on implementing larger-scale projects.
- ADP funded small-scale projects having no visible impact and also too many sub-projects are difficult to monitor and ensure quality.

7. Tendency of Upazilas to Undertake Smaller Schemes with ADP Funds (2/3)

Upazila	District	Own Source Revenue 2021-22 (In Lac Taka)	ADP received 2021-22 (in Lac Taka)	Total (ADP+OSR) (in Lac Taka)	Number of projects undertaken with ADP+OSR	Average size of the scheme (in Lac Taka)	Size of the largest scheme (in Lac Taka)	Size of the smallest scheme (in Lac Taka)
Dighalia	Khulna	23.00	66.00	89.00	130	00.68	05.00	00.50
Dumuria	Khulna	800.00	82.00	882.00	503	01.75	10.00	00.50
Fakirhat	Bagerhat	100.00	50.00	150.00	90	01.67	10.00	00.50
Natore Sadar	Natore	142 .00	70.00	212.00	60	03.53	19.00	03.32
Singra	Natore	114.00	92.00	206.00	56	03.68	08.00	02.00
Puthia	Rajshahi	00.00	80.00	80.00	14	05.71	08.32	04.00
Mohanganj	Netrokona	26.00	76.00	102.00	39	02.62	05.00	00.50
Barhatta	Netrokona	15.00	98.00	113.00	60	01.88	07.00	00.50
Kapasia	Gazipur	300.00	100.00	400.00	125	03.20	12.00	02.00
Sreepur	Gazipur	1800.00	81.00	1881.00	677	02.78	20.00	02.00
Average	**--**	**332.00**	**79.50**	**411.50**	**175.40**	**02.75**	**10.43**	**01.58**

Source: Field survey data

7. Tendency of Upazilas to Undertake Smaller Schemes with ADP Funds (3/3)

Observations on the Size of Schemes of Upazilas with ADP Funds:

- Own source revenue is generally poor, except for those Upazilas which are located close to the economically/commercially vibrant areas
- ADP ranges from **minimum 50.00 Lac** Taka to maximum **100.00 Lac Taka**;
- Most Upazilas have a tendency to undertake too many projects with ADP and own source revenues. Among the Upazila Parishads visited, Dumuria was found to have undertaken 503 schemes, while Sreepur Upazila had undertaken 677 schemes;
- Upazila Parishads have a tendency to undertake small projects in general (ranging from **0.50 Lac Taka to 20.00 Lac Taka**);
- The average scheme size ranges from **0.68 Lac to 05.71 Lac Taka**.

Two additional relevant observations:

- The average cost of the infrastructure sub-projects implemented with UGDP funds by Upazila Parishads is (approx) **14 lac taka**, while average scheme size of 10 visited Upazilas is **2.75 lac** with ADP funds;
- If Upazila Parishads can implement larger and visible sub-project with UGDP funds, then why Upazilas are not implementing such sub-projects with ADP and other funds?

8. Capacity Development Funds for Training on Innovative Areas (1/3)

- Based on the Performance Assessment, UGDP disburse Performance Based Allocation (PBA) to the Upazila Parishads.
- It is a UGDP requirement that out of the total PBA allocation received by a Upazila Parishad **10 lac taka is supposed to be kept aside for organizing local need-based training** meant for the local citizens.
- These capacity development training helped the local citizens particularly the youth and women by involving them in income generating activities and for their empowerments.

8. Capacity Development Funds for Training on Innovative Areas (2/3)

Snapshot of Areas of CD Training Organized by UZPs Visited		
Upazilas	**District**	**Nature of Training**
Dighalia	Khulna	Nakshi katha Stitching, Driving for women, and Training on producing jute made goods meant for the individuals who are physically challenged.
Dumuria	Khulna	Freelancing for women, Training of women on fashion design, Primary and secondary teacher's training on ensuring quality education, and Training of village doctors on primary health care and emergency management.
Fakirhat	Bagerhat	Organic vegetable cultivation, English language improving skill for the primary and secondary teachers, Training of businessman and commercial vegetable cultivators about food safety.
Natore Sadar	Natore	ICT knowledge improving skill for the secondary teachers, and Training on midwifery, Training of women on fashion design, Modern irrigation practices, Training on e-filing and management of web portal.
Singra	Natore	English language improving skill for the primary and secondary teachers, Iron rod binding, Driving, Freelancing, Modern agricultural Practices, Training of the drivers on traffic law, Skill training of medical staff and nurses.

8. Capacity Development Funds for Training on Innovative Areas (3/3)

Snapshot of Areas of CD Training Organized by UZPs Visited		
Upazilas	**District**	**Nature of Training**
Putia	Rajshahi	Cottage industries, fisheries, and modern agricultural practices, Safe motherhood and nutrition during pregnancy.
Mohonganj	Netrokona	Modern agricultural practices, ICT knowledge improving skill for the secondary teachers.
Kapasia	Gazipur	Safe food production and processing, Freelancing, Technical training on shoe-making for the members of the cooperatives, and Training on block and batik for the unemployed young women.
Sreepur	Gazipur	English language improving skill for the primary and secondary teachers.

9. UGDP Provided Capacity Development Training to the Upazila Stakeholders

- The UGDP provided training to elected representatives and officials of the Upazilas to enhance their capacity so that they can contribute to improve the quality of governance at the Upazila level.

- There is a Mid-and long term training strategy for Upazila stakeholders developed by JICA supported UICDP and **National Institute of Local Government (NILG) is responsible for implementing this**. It is important that LGD follows up the matter with NILG so that the training can be organized as planned.

10. UDF Played a Key Role in Upazila Governance Improvement

- The UGDP has deployed the UDF (Upazila Development Facilitator) to facilitate the improvement of Upazila governance.
- Both elected representatives and deputed government officials alike were in favour of **"One Upazila, one UDF"** option.
- The position like UDF will be required at the Upazila level and until the governance system becomes solidified and self-sustaining.
- So, there needs to be a carefully designed and well thought out exit strategy for the UDF, as a sudden discontinuation of UDF in the upcoming phase of UGDP if it gets materialized, could have adverse effects on whatever governance improvements have taken place at the Upazila level.

11. Upazila's governance performance does not depend on availability of higher level of financial resources

- Upazila Parishad's governance performance does not seem to be correlated with their financial resource bases.
- **Some Upazilas with higher resource base failed to meet the governance performance conditions** set-forth by UGDP.
- On the contrary, many **Upazilas with poor resource base have been able to perform consistently** against the governance indicators adopted under UGDP.
- Rather, quality of **leadership, teamwork, coordination between stakeholders and stakeholder's determination and commitment to local development** seem to contribute to improved governance performance at the Upazila level.

12. Inadequate Human Resources for Service Delivery

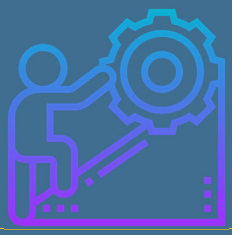
- UZPs are responsible for a wide range of functions. However, there is a problem with the insufficient number of human resources available to the Parishad, which is impacting their ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively.

13. Effective Web-Based PA System

- The Web-based governance performance assessment system introduced by the UGDP seems to work and it has been proven to be an effective system.
- This is in contrast to the traditional auditing practice of physically visiting Upazila Parishads.
- Nonetheless, it is pertinent to note that some **physical monitoring by DDLG would still be necessary** to ensure the integrity of the data and prevent possible manipulation.

14. UGDP is Spearheading the Responsibility to Strengthen and Institutionalize SID and SIC

- JICA supported UICDP was a TA project which focused on improving certain aspects of Upazila Governance. During its existence, UICDP supported LGD in formulation of **a Mid- and Long-Term Strategy for the Improvement of Upazila Governance**, which is set to remain in effect until 2041. UICDP phased out in December, 2022.
- UGDP is extending cooperation to help **strengthen and institutionalize Strategy Implementation Desk (SID) and Strategy Implementation Committee (SIC)** as a part of implementing the Mid-and Long Term Upazila Governance Improvement Strategy.
- UGDP has been providing support to LGD to hold the **SIC meeting on quarterly basis and thus helping LGD to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Mid-and Long Term Upazila Governance Improvement Strategy.** A total of 4 meetings of SIC have been held thus far.



06

Identifying and Addressing the Persistent Challenges for Ensuring SMART Upazila Governance

Challenges to SMART Upazila Governance (1/2)

The identified challenges are as follows:

- Understanding and compliance of the Upazila stakeholders with the Upazila laws still at low level;
- Breaking away with the tradition of implementing small scale development schemes with ADP funds, making the local development multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral;
- Distribution of Upazila's ADP funds among the UPs;
- ADP allocation criteria has not been updated in the recent past
- Upazila Committees are not yet fully functional;
- Resource base of the Upazila Parishads is to be enhanced;

Challenges to SMART Upazila Governance (2/2)

- Enhancing coordination between Upazila level stakeholders;
- Establishing proper linkage between FYPs and APs by the Upazila Parishad;
- Capacity building of Upazila stakeholders is still an unfinished journey;
- Inadequate human resources at the Upazila Parishad;
- Absence of a single MIS system at LGD for efficient monitoring; and
- Preservation of institutional memories at the central level.

07

Way Forward and Recommendations

Recommendations:
1. Institutional Reform at Central Level to be Led by LGD

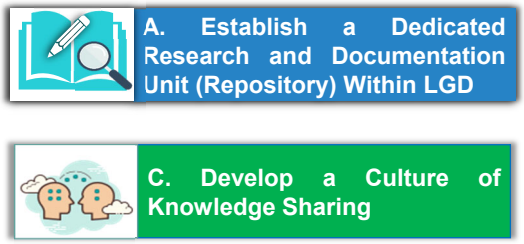
Recommendations:
1. Institutional Reform at Central Level to be Led by LGD (1)

1-1. Monitoring the Implementation progress of the Mid-and Long-term Strategy for Upazila Parishad Governance: It is important that the **implementation progress of the strategy should be regularly monitored through SID/SIC platform**, and it should be periodically reviewed, updated, and adjusted in accordance with the changing needs of the Upazila governance.

1-2. Single MIS system at LGD: Local Government Division needs to have a single MIS system internalized within it. In the second phase of UGDP, the performance assessment system is to be integrated into the MIS system of the MIE wing of LGD.

Recommendations:
1. Institutional Reform at Central Level to be Led by LGD (2)

1-3. Preserve institutional memory and create a repository of project and policy related documents at LGD: Currently, Local Government Division does not have **a separate and dedicated research, documentation and policy related information repository unit**. Setting up such a unit within LGD may help preserve the memories of different local government projects which were implemented in the past and also preserving the policy related documents, which may facilitate the local government policy making.



Recommendations:
2. Reforming ADP Grant System

Recommendations: 2. Reforming ADP Grant System (1)

2-1. Mainstreaming of performance grant system: To mainstream performance grants, **we propose allocating 50% of ADP to all Upazila Parishads as entitlement grants, with the remainder distributed after assessing their performance** based on governance indicators and preconditions.

2-2. ADP allocation criteria needs a review: The existing ADP distribution criteria that the government currently follows need a careful review. For instance, one new criteria could be added e.g, **"volume of own source revenue" (negative value)** of Upazila Parishad.

2-3. Putting a ceiling on investment with ADP funds: The current Upazila law allows for 30% of projects to be implemented through PICs, with the remaining 70% implemented through a tendering process. To promote larger and more visible sub-projects, **LGD may issue a circular suggesting that the rest of the ADP funds be used for projects worth 5 lac or more**. **Failure to comply may result in Upazilas receiving only the entitlement grant of 50% of the ADP grant.**

Recommendations: 2. Reforming ADP Grant System (2)

2-4. The practice of distributing ADP funds equally among UPs is to be discontinued: It has been observed that in many Upazilas the ADP funds are divided equally among the Union Parishad members upon the insistence of the Union Parishad's Chairmen. This has been an age old practice, although it is not backed by any legal provision. **This practice should be discontinued.**

2-5. Strict guidance to Upazila Parishads for completing tender process on time: A guideline may be issued to complete the selection of project and all tendering process of Upazila Parishads within October/November. The guideline may as well clearly state that **failing to comply with this provision would ultimately result in 3rd and 4th installments of ADP funds not being disbursed to the non-compliant Upazila Parishads**.

2-6. Utilization of ADP funds for capacity development of stakeholders: UZPs now provide need-based training to the local people with a view to involve them in income generating activities with UGDP provided funds. These type of innovative and **need based training programs should be undertaken by the Upazila Parishads using their ADP funds or own source revenues.**

Recommendations:
3. Institutional Reform for Upazila Parishads

Recommendations:
3. Institutional Reform for Upazila Parishads

3-1. Clear guidance needed on the relationship between UZPs and Paurashavas: A clear guidance as to how Upazila will **implement development schemes within the territorial jurisdiction of Paurashavas** needs to be provided.

3-2. Number of Upazila Committees and frequency of meetings may be reduced: Despite UGDP's intervention, the 17 Upazila committees are not functioning as expected. **We recommend to reduce the number of committees from existing 17 to maximum 10 by clustering the committees** having almost similar or overlapping jurisdictions. It is also important to **reduce the frequency of Upazila committee meeting** according to the practical needs.

3-3. Directly Elected Members of UZPs: Currently, the Chairmen of the UPs are ex-officio members in UZPs. We suggest that in the long run, **members of the UZPs may be elected through adult franchise** taking into account the entire Upazila as a single constituency. There is no denying that this will help solidify the governance at the Upazila level.

Recommendations:
4. Human Resources and Capacity Development for Upazila Parishads

Recommendations:
4. Human Resources and Capacity Development for Upazila Parishads (1)

4-1. Operationalization of Mid-and Long-term Training Plan: Measures should the undertaken to operationalize of the Mid-and Long-term Training Plan for Upazila Parishad functionaries prepared through UICDP's support and adopted by LGD. NILG is in charge of implementing this plan.

4-2. A system of learning from peers needs to be institutionalized: The practice of horizontal learning or in another words, **learning from peers should be introduced and mainstreamed**. If this peer learning system can be organized on regular basis, this will help the Upazilas with poor governance records to learn from those Upazilas which are leading by examples.

Recommendations:
4. Human Resources and Capacity Development for Upazila Parishads (2)

4-3. Recruitment of required manpower for UZPs: There is a shortage of manpower at the Upazila Parishad for service delivery. Government needs to make an effort **to provide the Upazila Parishad with legally required manpower** with view to perform their functions mandated to them.

4-4. UDF position is important for governance improvement at the Upazila level: We suggest the retention of the position of UDF for at least another 5 years, if not for more for sustaining the improvement in governance which has been achieved till today. **It will not be a judicious decision to carry on the UGDP activities at the Upazila level in the upcoming phase without UDFs before carefully designing an effective exit strategy.**

Recommendations:
5. Upazila Financing and Revenue

Recommendations: 5. Upazila Financing and Revenue ☑

5-1. Enhancing the resource base of Upazila Parishads: In this regard, Upazila Parishads, where possible, should be given the **authority to build market/commercial buildings** which will ensure their constant income.

5-2. The existing revenue sharing mechanism needs to be equitable. Currently, some economically vibrant Upazilas earn more revenue than remote ones, leading to an inequitable system. To ensure equitable revenue sharing, **we suggest depositing the total earnings from 1 percent land registration fees in a separate account at the central level** and distributing the funds either equally among the Upazilas or by using a new formula to be devised by LGD.

5-3. Encouraging the co-financing of development projects: Co-financing between Upazila Parished and other organizations may be encouraged.

Recommendations:
6. Making Upazila Plan and Budget Effective

Recommendations:
6. Making Upazila Plan and Budget Effective

6-1. **Encouraging UZPs to formulate FYP and APs maintaining synergy:** It is important to keep encouraging Upazila Parishads to prepare FYP and APs and also to ensure alignment between these two plans. **A provision may be Introduce penalizing UZPs for not maintaining this alignment.**

6-2. **Organizing special budget session by Upazila Parishads:** By law, **UZPs are required to organize a special budget session for ensuring their financial transparency and accountability**. **But Upazilas do not tend to hold this session**. To ensure this, for example, the holding of this session may be included in the preconditions in the PA system in the upcoming phase of UGDP.

08

Concluding Remarks

Concluding Remarks

- UGDP has already taken some important approaches and steps towards ensuring SMART governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh.
- However, the UGDP also faced several challenges, including dealing with the age-old practices at the Upazila level, stakeholder's general lack of understanding about the legal provisions, frequent transfers of officials received training, weak coordination among stakeholders, and the absence of a clear roadmap for institutionalization and sustainability.
- Finally, by leveraging these lessons and building on the UGDP's achievements, Bangladesh can realize its vision of a more inclusive, participatory, and SMART governance system at the Upazila Parishads that serves the needs of its citizens in the years to come.

THANKS!

Annex-3: Keynote Paper

"Towards Smart Governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh: Lessons Learned from the Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)"

By

Prof. Dr. Mobasser Monem

Dr. Amitavh Sarker

Keynote Paper

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Dr. Mobasser Monem
Professor and former Chairman
Department of Public Administration
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dr. Amitavh Sarker
Former Chairman (Secretary)
Land Appeal Board
Government of Bangladesh

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Towards Smart Governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh: Lessons Learned from the Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)

Dr. Mobasser Monem[1]
Dr. Amitavh Sarker[2]

Introduction

Despite global uncertainties, Bangladesh has demonstrated a strong track record of growth and development over the past decades. Notably, Bangladesh has a remarkable story of poverty reduction and development, having gone from one of the world's poorest nations at birth in 1971 to reaching lower-middle income status in 2021, and being on track to graduate from the UN's Least Developed Countries list by 2026. Furthermore, human development indicators have improved significantly in various dimensions. By overcoming a multitude of challenges, Bangladesh has managed to establish itself as a success story in economic growth, poverty reduction, and human development. Earlier, government of Bangladesh has successfully pursued its agenda of digital Bangladesh and now it is aspiring to move further ahead with an agenda of "SMART Bangladesh" which would eventually contribute to the achievement of Bangladesh's vision-2041 to become a rich nation. At this critical juncture, it is important for our local government institutions come out of only "doing their business as usual" to "doing their business in a SMART manner". And this can be done by thinking outside the box and by aligning local development initiatives with the national plans and Vision. It is to be noted that in the past the local government institutions in Bangladesh have worked very closely with the national government and also contributed meaningfully in achieving all the development milestones that Bangladesh has achieved in the past.

I. The Evolving Context for the Local Government in Bangladesh

The local government system is dynamic and ever-changing. What may have been an appropriate system for Bangladesh immediately after gaining independence may not be applicable today. Therefore, the local government system must be forward-looking to address emerging opportunities and obstacles in the next 10-20 years. The suitability of the system is based on several factors, such as the nature of the political environment, political and economic forces, demographic factors, technological advancements, and the economic condition of the country. These factors provide a context for assessing the local government system in Bangladesh. It can be argued that the political and economic landscape of a country plays an important role in shaping its local government system. Although Bangladesh has made remarkable progress on the economic front, but there is still room for further improvements, and the government must prioritize improving governance to achieve its development goals. The current national political leadership is interested in empowering the local communities

[1]Professor and former Chairman, Department of Public Administration, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.
[2] Former Chairman (Secretary), Land Appeal Board, Government of Bangladesh.

through decentralized local governance, while also recognizing the importance of collaboration with central-level stakeholders. To navigate the whole process, it is essential to strike a balance between the benefits of localized decision-making and the need for cohesive coordination across all levels of government.

The second important factor to consider in the local government system of Bangladesh is the demographic situation. The majority of the population in Bangladesh is under 30 years of age, with one-third of the population being under 15. This means that the youth will play a critical role in shaping the future of the country. The youth are more empowered now than ever before, with access to unlimited information through technology and communication innovations. Policy makers and development practitioners must understand the ideas and values of young people about politics and social justice to effectively serve them. Providing services to the youth is crucial for setting up their lives, both personally and professionally, as they are a core constituency for policy makers and service providers. Access to education, livelihood opportunities, and governance mechanisms are important for youth development. This information provides insight into the direction that the local government system in Bangladesh should take in the future.

With the emergence of a broad based middle class, a demand for good governance arises too in Bangladesh, which typically requires the state to establish responsive local government institutions. Therefore, it is important for Bangladesh to develop a local government system that is capable of responding to the needs of the local community and providing essential public services in a transparent and accountable manner, to support sustainable economic growth and good governance at the local level.

II. The Vision of SMART Bangladesh and the Role of Local Government

There is not denying the fact that in order to achieve government's vision of creating a "SMART Bangladesh," the country's local government institutions are expected to play a crucial role. Local governments can facilitate the implementation of smart solutions that can improve the quality of life of citizens and create a more sustainable future for them. Local governments can also work to ensure that the benefits of these solutions are distributed equitably across communities, including those who are lagging behind. By working collaboratively with the central government and other stakeholders, all tiers of local governments can help make the vision of a SMART Bangladesh a reality. Considering the concept of SMART Bangladesh and the role we are expecting our local government institutions to play in the process, it can be said that JICA supported Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP) implemented by the Local Government Division has already been making significant contributions to develop Upazila Parishads of Bangladesh as the SMART local government institutions with its innovative, well-thought out and effective interventions.

III. Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP): Emergence and Unique Operational Modality

Having received funding support from JICA, Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP) started its operation back in late 2015 drawing heavily on the experiences of number of predecessor local government projects supported by other development partners. Following table shows name of the projects and lessons from which UGDP has greatly benefited.

Table 1: An overview of the local government projects for rural LGIs in Bangladesh and their focus of attention.

Name of the Project	Development Partner (s)	Focus
Sirajganj Local Governance Development Fund Project (SLGDFP)	UNCDF, UNDP	Union Parishad
Local Governance Support Project (LGSP)-I, II, III	World Bank,	Union Parishad
Local Governance Support Project-Learning and Innovation Project (LIC)	UNCDF, UNDP, DANIDA, EU	Union Parishad
Participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP)	JICA	Union Parishad
Strengthening Democratic Local Governance (SDLG)	USAID	Union Parishad
Sharique	SDC	Union Parishad
Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP)	UNCDF, UNDP, DANIDA, EU	Union Parishad
Upazila Governance Project (UZGP)	UNCDF, UNDP, DANIDA, EU	Upazila Parishad
Upazila Integrated Capacity Development Project (UICDP)	JICA	Upazila Parishad
Efficient and Accountable Local Governance (EALG)	UNDP, SDC, DANIDA	Upazila and Union Parishad

Source: Authors

It is to be noted that UGDP is still continuing its operation on extension. It is a flagship project on its own right for adopting a unique approach to cover all Upazila Parishads with a view to improve Upazila's governance and local level service delivery through conducting governance performance assessment and making additional funding available to the Upazila Parishads.

As just mentioned, the Government of Bangladesh has been implementing UGDP with the support of a loan from the Government of Japan through JICA. The project aims to strengthen the Upazila Parishad (UZP), which was revitalized in 2009 and is expected to play a key role in rural development through effective local governance. UGDP's primary objective is to enhance the capacity of UZPs to deliver more effective and responsive public services to citizens through providing additional development fund and a series of capacity development opportunities to concerned stakeholders. This project started its operation back in late 2015. To achieve its objective, UGDP provides Performance-Based Allocation (PBA) to target Upazilas, with an average size of 50 lac Taka per year, along with capacity development support to all Upazilas.

The target Upazilas are selected based on the Governance Performance Assessment (PA), which assesses Upazilas against precondition and performanceindicators and ranks them based

on their governance performance. The number of target Upazilas was planned to increase yearly from 100 to 495 Upazilas based on the results of the PA. In early 2021, the 5th Governance Performance Assessment was conducted, and 475 Upazilas that passed all preconditions were selected as target Upazilas for PA under UGDP, which means 97% of all Upazila Parishad received PBA from UGDP. The assessment also revealed that the general administration capacity of Upazilas in Bangladesh has substantially improved in various aspects since the first PA.

The 6th PA was conducted from late 2022 to early 2023. For the first time in Bangladesh,the web-based assessment was conducted in which the Upazila stakeholders were requested to upload the necessary documents to their respective Upazila web-portals for assessing their performance by UGDP. The results have further confirmed the findings mentioned earlier. This achievement has been possible through the joint efforts of all Upazila stakeholders who understand the importance of Upazilas and worked relentlessly to improve them and the PMU.That being said, there is no denying the fact that a lot has been achieved on the governance front thus far, but there is a room for further improvement of various areas of Upazila governance in the years to come.

IV. Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)'s Responses to the Critical Constraints to Governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is currently undergoing a rapid process of development transformation, and the government has recognized the importance of developing a strong and effective local government system to support this transformation. The country's policy documents, including the Five Year Plans (6th, 7th, and 8th) and the Second Perspective Plan (2021-41), emphasize the need for local government institutions (LGIs) - particularly Upazila Parishads - to become more participative, accountable, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and responsive to citizens' needs. To achieve these goals, UGDP has been implemented. The project aims to create a more active Upazila governance system by bringing all service providers at the Upazila level under the accountability framework of the Upazila Parishad. UGDP also seeks to develop and strengthen a participatory, democratic, and accountable governance process, as outlined in the Upazila Parishad Act (2009). The project focuses on enhancing the functional and institutional capacity of Upazila Parishads, increasing democratic accountability, citizen involvement.

It is worth noting that UGDP has been successful in responding to the critical constraints to the governance of Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh. The project's interventions, including its emphasis on increasing citizen's participation, enhancing accountability, and strengthening the capacity for monitoring and transparency, have helped to address some of the critical challenges facing Upazila governance. Overall, UGDP has demonstrated the potential for effective interventions in strengthening local governance systems at the Upazila level. The matrix below presents the UGDP's responses to the critical constraints to Upazila governance.

Matrix 1: UGDP's Responses to the Critical Constraints to Upazila Governance.

Nature of Constraints	Consequence(s)	UGDP's Responses
Many Upazila Parishads not holding monthly meetings suggested by law.	Upazila Parishad not working as a corporate local government entity, dominance of a few influential individuals, low level of coordination and arbitrary local development.	UGDP through its performance assessment approach has been able to turn around the system and now almost all Upazilas hold monthly meetings in accordance with the legal framework.
Many Upazila Parishads not proactively submitting the ADP implementation report	Upazilas were not complying with the rules and the Ministry did not have enough information about how Upazilas were spending the ADP funds	Due to UGDP interventions the situation has significantly improved and ADP implementation reports are submitted by 31 August by most Upazilas now.
Budget guidelines existed but only limited number of Upazilas prepared their budgets	Upazilas adopting arbitrary approaches to spend the revenues generated. No budgetary predictability.	UGDP contributed to the institutionalization of the budgeting process at the Upazila level. Also ensured that the Upazilas comply with the government rules and budget formats provided by the government.
Limited Nos. of Upazilas have development plan	Arbitrary selection and implementation of local development schemes without linking this to the national development priorities.	UGDP encouraged and also facilitated Upazilas to prepare five year and annual development plans having a clear local development vision and linking the plans with the national priorities and also establishing a link between the five year and annual plans.
Upazila officials lack budget and plan formulation capacity	Upazilas not having a budget and plans.	UGDP provided training to the Upazila elected and appointed officials with a view to improve their budget and plan formulation capacities.
Upazilas suffer from fund constraints and this limits its ability to contribute to local development	Upazila on its own could not undertake and implement as many local development sub-projects as it was expected by its constituents.	UGDP made additional funds available to the Upazilas known as Performance Based Allocation (PBA) and made sure that the Upazilas spend more on social sector or SDG related development schemes.
Upazila Committees not functional at the Upazila level	Problems with identification of the sectoral priorities and keeping sectoral balance in expenditure decisions.	UGDP emphasized on activating the Upazila Committees for ensuring the sectoral balance by linking the Upazila Committee activation with precondition and performance indicators.
	Lack of coordination between these entities had negative	UGDP focused on establishing an effective linkage between

Nature of Constraints	Consequence(s)	UGDP's Responses
Weak linkage between line departments and Upazila Parishad	implications for local development.	Upazila Parishad and the line departments in terms of planning and budgeting through activation of Upazila Committees and sub-projects.
Small scale sub-projects undertaken by the Upazila Parisah	Small scale sub-projects failed to serve residents of multiple UPs. No visibility of the impact of the sub-projects	UGDP required the Upazilas to keep their focus on undertaking and implementing relatively large scale and visible schemes (minimum worth of Taka 10 Lakhs and above). Also suggesting important social sectors where investments are to be made for ensuring balanced local development.
Upazila Parishads focus mainly on physical infrastructure sub-projects	Local development has generally been one dimensional, with some exceptions	UGDP wanted a break away with this tradition and focused on implementing different sub-projects covering social sectors such as health, education, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and also other SDG related sub-projects.
Rare evidences of Partnership and co-financing activities between Upazila and other entities working locally	Upazilas were always on their own and the concept of partnership was not given adequate attention	UGDP's intervention has prompted some Upazila Parishads for undertaking and implementing sub-projects in partnership based on the unique idea of co-financing at the Upazila level, although number of such initiatives is still low.
Limited initiative for capacity development of the Upazila level stakeholders including women by providing need-based training	Local citizens including women were being deprived of establishing their rights and largely remained unemployed.	UGDP has promoted the idea of capacity development training on various areas meant for the Upazila level stakeholders including women and thus creating opportunities for them to involve in income generating activities.
Low level of information disclosure at the Upazila level	Often led to corrupt practices and misunderstanding between the local people and the elected representatives of Upazila Parishads	UGDP required the Upazila Parishads to make efforts to proactive disclosure of budget, annual financial statements and other reports by putting these up in the Upazila notice board for public display and also on uploading these in the Upazila web portals.

V. Major Achievements of UGDP: Highlights of the Findings from the Field

Before embarking on sharing the highlights from the field level findings, it is important to briefly provide an overview of the methodology adopted in connection with this exploratory study. The following methodologies were adopted:

- Review of literature such as project documents, performance assessment results, other available documents focusing on UGDP;
- Making field visits to **10 Upazila Parishads (UZPs)** covering a mix of Upazilas located in different parts of the country also considering number of times they secured UGDP provided funds for governance performance;
- Consultation meetings with the **Upazila Chairmen, UNO, Vice Chairmen, officials of the line departments, Union Parishad Chairmen**;
- **Visiting some sub-project sites** and **consultations with the beneficiaries** and local residents;
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with the beneficiaries of capacity development training;
- **Consultations with government officials** associated with UGDP and also the members of the international and national consultants at the PMU and LGD.

The following table provides the overview of the Upazilas visited by the study team members.

Table 2: Governance performance wise distribution of the Upazila Parishads visited.

Upazilas (District)	Comments	PA Scores (max. 100) (*Could not pass pre-cond.)					Times Enrolled in UGDP	Total PBA (Lac)
		PA1	PA2	PA3	PA4	PA5		
Dighalia (Khulna)	This Upazila is located in the southern part of Bangladesh. Dighalia Upazila could not meet the preconditions during the first and second round of performance assessments. But this Upazila secured UGDP funds during the 3rd, 4th and 5th rounds of performance assessments.	38*	48*	87	72	75	3	160
Dumuria (Khulna)	This Upazila is located in the southern part of Bangladesh. Dumuria Upazila has been able to secure UGDP provided funds in all 5 rounds of performance assessments.	55	68	92	60	75	5	250
Fakirhat (Bagerhat)	This Upazila is located in the southern part of Bangladesh.	21*	47*	32	82	82	3	170

Upazilas (District)	Comments	PA Scores (max. 100) (*Could not pass pre-cond.)					Times Enrolled in UGDP	Total PBA (Lac)
		PA1	PA2	PA3	PA4	PA5		
	Fakirhat Upazila could not meet the preconditions during the first and second round of assessments. But secured UGDP funds during the 3rd, 4th and 5th rounds of performance assessments.							
Natore Sadar (Natore)	This Upazila is located in the North-Western part of Bangladesh. Natore Sadar Upazila could not meet the preconditions during the first and second round of assessments. But secured UGDP funds during the 3rd, 4th and 5th rounds of performance assessments.	43*	29*	95	84	95	3	180
Singra (Natore)	This Upazila is located in the North-Western part of Bangladesh. Singra Upazila has been able to secure UGDP provided funds 5 times.	56	85	88	90	82	5	280
Puthia (Rajshahi)	This Upazila is located in the North-Western part of Bangladesh. Puthia Upazila has been able to secure UGDP provided funds 4 times.	54*	68	82	91	81	4	230
Mohanganj (Netrokona)	This Upazila is located in the haor area North-Eastern part of Bangladesh. Mohanganj Upazila has been able to secure UGDP provided funds 4 times.	5*	54	55	59	64	4	200
Barhatta (Netrokona)	This Upazila is located in the haor area North-Eastern part of Bangladesh. Barhatta Upazila has not been able meet the preconditions as yet.	20*	57*	9*	9*	44*	0	0
Kapasia (Gazipur)	This Upazila is located closer to Dhaka. Kapasia Upazila has been able to secure UGDP provided funds 2 times.	35*	20*	58	14*	35	2	100

Upazilas (District)	Comments	PA Scores (max. 100) (*Could not pass pre-cond.)					Times Enrolled in UGDP	Total PBA (Lac)
		PA1	PA2	PA3	PA4	PA5		
Sreepur (Gazipur)	This Upazila is located closer to Dhaka Sreepur Upazila has been able to secure UGDP provided funds only once.	15*	47	21*	52*	7*	1	50

Source: Authors

The following section focuses on the findings from the field based on the information gathered during the field visits and also from the analysis of the contents of the documents reviewed.

1. UGDP has contributed to improve the governance at the Upazila Level

It is noteworthy that no local governance project has covered all Upazila Parishads ever in Bangladesh before UGDP. UGDP conducts performance assessment of all the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh each year by involving third party firms for maintaining the quality of assessment against 4 Precondition Indicators[3] and 16 Performance Indicators[4] and the broad areas of performance include "Institutional Capacity", "Financial Management Capacity", "Planning and Budgeting Capacity" and "Transparency and Accountability". It has been observed during the field visits that some Upazila Parishads have been able to comply with and perform considerably well against the predetermined governance indicators of UGDP, while some Upazila Parishads were still lagging behind as indicated in Table 2. Governance improvement requires a team work and coordination between different stakeholders at the Upazila level, among other things. It was apparent during the field visits that quality of leadership and cooperation of the line department officials can substantially contribute to improve governance at the Upazila level. The study team members have observed how visionary and active leadership and coordination can transform a Upazila's governance and make it exceedingly citizen-centric and service oriented and on the contrary, it was also observed as to how dismal the Upazila's governance performance can be without proper coordination between stakeholders,which failed to comply with the performance improvement requirements set-forth by UGDP.

2. Many Upazila Parishads now formulate FYPs and Annual Development Plans to comply with Upazila Parishad (Amended) Act (2011)

By law the Upazila Parishads were required to prepare Five Year Plans (FYPs) and also an Annual Development Plans (APs) aligning it with the Five Year Plans. With a few exceptions, most Upazila Parishads visited seemed to have prepared FYPs and APs. However, a common problem was that there was a general weak linkage between the FYPs and APs. But the

[3] UZP Meeting held regularly, UZP meeting attendance, Committees establishment, Committee functioning, Annual budget prepared, development plan prepared, ADP reports prepared, ADP report sent to LGD.

[4]**Institutional Capacity** (Committee meetings held and recorded, NBD attendance to committee meetings, PSC functional, Development proposals). **Financial Management Capacity** (Annual budget preparation, Asset register maintained, Annual financial statement prepared, Gap between budget and expenditure). **Planning and Budgeting Capacity** (FYP with project list, ADP allocation to different sectors, Project sites inspection, UPP prepared).**Transparency and Accountability** (UDCC functional, Budget and Annual Development Plan displayed, Information focal point, Citizen's Charter).

evidence suggests that the plans were prepared in haste to comply with the requirements imposed by UGDP. Therefore, in most cases they seemed to have lacked the consistency, coherence and logical sequence. It occurred to the study team members that there was no review by the Upazila Parishad of the contents of the plan documents prepared. It was also evident that most plan documents were prepared without consulting the government guidelines and therefore no common format or sequence was found to have followed by the Upazilas. Also, there is a lack of clear understanding and effective information sharing between Upazila Parished and some line departments in preparing the Five year and Annual Plan. The vertical and horizontal integration of the Upazila plan was found to be almost non-existent. The Upazila plans had some clear linkages with the UP plans to the extent that a list of development schemes was submitted to the Upazilas by the UPs for their inclusion in the Upazila plans. In most cases, the scheme lists of the UPs were included in the Upazila plans in their entirety. However, there was no attempt made by the Upazilas to link their plans horizontally with the plans of the Pourashavas or vertically with the plans of the Zila Parishads.

The plan documents focused on multi-sectoral schemes but still in many UZPs, the elected representatives could not come out of their traditional mindsets of focusing on implementing small schemes or only infrastructure sector schemes. On the other hand, the schemes related to social sectors were generally low in the priority when making their plans especially with ADP funds. It was also gathered during the field visits that Upazila stakeholders did not receive adequate and/or sufficient training on the formulation of FYPs and APs. The important challenge that hindersthe timely preparation of the APat the Upazila level is due to the failure of Union Parishad chairmen to submit the list of schemes on time. This delay generally has adverse effects on the timely implementation of development projects. To address these challenges, it is important for UGDP to provide capacity-building support to the Union Parishad chairmen in the upcoming phase to improve their understanding of the development planning process and their roles in it. Based on the information gathered during the field visits, the table below demonstrates the linkage between the FYPs and APs of the Upazila Parishads under the purview of this study.

Table 3: Synergy between FYP and AP[5].

Upazila (District)	Percentage
Dighalia (Khulna)	35%
Dumuria (Khulna)	30%
Fakirhat (Bagerhat)	80%
Natore Sadar (Natore)	50%
Singra (Natore)	80%
Puthia (Rajshahi)	45%
Mohanganj (Netrokona)	30%
Barhatta (Netrokona)	0% (no plans are prepared)
Kapasia (Gazipur)	40%
Sreepur (Gazipur)	30%

Source: Information collected during the field visits

[5] This is an approximate calculation based on consultations with the stakeholders and in some cases quick review of the contents of the relevant Upazila Parishad's plan documents was made. The idea was to demonstrate a rough estimation on the level of FYP and AP alignment.

3. UGDP has made additional funds available to UZPs, predictability of funds ensured

UGDP has helped the Upazila Parishads with its additional funds known as Performance Based Allocation (PBA) and predictability of funding. The additional funds provided by UGDP have played a significant role in promoting local development as well as enhancing the service delivery at the Upazila level. With the increased financial resources, Upazila Parishad has been able to undertake need based development sub-projects, such as supporting schools, hospitals, clinics in different ways, construction of irrigation canals, drinking water treatment plant, which are critical for the well-being and economic growth of the community, added also by various training activities that are also based on local needs. These sub-projects have contributed to improve the living standards of local people and have also helped to create new employment opportunities, thereby contributing to poverty reduction. Moreover, the predictability of funding provided by UGDP has helped Upazila Parishad to plan and implement development projects in a more effective and efficient manner. Based on this experience, it can be said that Upazilas have proven their capacities to deliver needs-based public services when opportunities, resources and proper facilitation are provided.

4. Performance Based Allocation has created a sense of competition among the Upazila Parishads

UGDP's experience suggests that performance grant which is called Performance-based Allocation (PBA) under UGDP is an essential tool for improving local governance in Bangladesh. The PBA provided by UGDP has created a sense of competition among the Upazila Parishads to improve their governance performance and in the process also contributed to making the Upazila Committees functional, improve accountability and transparency, ensuring proper financial management, formulation of Five-year Plan and Annual Development Plan, proper budgeting, and capacity development of the functionaries. It may be mentioned here that making the results of PA public on an annual basis has also contributed to this sense of competition among the stakeholders of Upazila Parishads. The Upazila Governance Performance Assessment (PA) system, which covers all 495 Upazilas in Bangladesh, is a prime example of how PBA can contribute to the improvement of Upazila governance. As mentioned already, the PA system is based on eight pre-conditions and sixteen performance indicators, and the composite areas of performance are institutional capacity, financial capacity, planning and budgeting capacity, and transparency and accountability. Based on the lessons learned from the six rounds of PAs completed thus far combined with five rounds of PBAs, it can be said that performance grants provided by UGDP has significantly contributed to the improvement of Upazila governance in Bangladesh. The PA system has enabled officials to identify areas where improvements are needed, and PBAs which financially enables Upazila Parishads to deliver their services to citizenshave provided the necessary incentives to make those improvements. It is critical to mainstream the performance grant system in Bangladesh's local governance sector.

5. Implementation of large and visible projects with UGDP funds

Based on the information collected during the field visits it was evident that Upazila Parishads have been undertaking and implementing large and visible projects which are producing successful development outcomes at the local level. Larger development schemes have the potential to generate greater impact by addressing larger and more complex problems. These schemes can bring about transformative changes in economic development and social well-being that would not be possible with smaller schemes.

Table 4: Highlights of the Nature of Infrastructure Sub-Projects Implemented by Upazila Parishads with UGDP Funds.

Upazila (District)	Nature of Infrastructure sub-projects undertaken with UGDP funds
Dighalia (Khulna)	Change room at school for the adolescent girl students, High flow oxygen nasal cannula, Construction of a long drain for stopping water logging and facilitate irrigation of agricultural land.
Dumuria (Khulna)	High flow oxygen nasal cannula, Installation of deep tube-wells for ensuring safe drinking water, Drinking water treatment plant, Construction of integrated examination hall at a college, Construction of facility for disadvantaged rural women to display handicrafts.
Fakirhat (Bagerhat)	High flow oxygen nasal cannula, Multimedia class rooms, Change room at school for the adolescent girl students, Construction of labour room at the community clinic, Construction of public toilets, installation of digital attendance machine at girl's schools, Construction of a community clinic, Farmer's training and demonstration centre, Construction of an organic fertilizer processing facility.
Natore Sadar (Natore)	Supply of Street lights, Purchase of an ambulance for the Upazila health complex, Supply of dryer machines to the poor farmer's cooperatives for drying medicinal plants during monsoon, Distribution of high and low benches at different schools, Construction of wash blocks at different educational institutions, Construction of labour room at the community clinic.
Singra (Natore)	Supply of medical equipments for the Upazila hospital, Installing high flow oxygen nasal cannula at the Upazila hospital, Supply of medical equipment to community clinics, Supply of benches at the secondary school, Construction of wash blocks at different educational institutions, Construction of additional classroom for a school, Construction of a physio-therapy centre at the Upazila Hospital.
Puthia (Rajshahi)	Supply of medical equipments for the Upazila hospital, High flow oxygen nasal cannula, Supply of medical equipments for the community clinics, Construction of wash blocks at different educational institutions, Construction of change room at girl's school, Construction of delivery room at the community clinic, multimedia class room, construction of science lab for the students of secondary schools, Construction of class rooms at a college, Installation of digital attendance machine at girl's school, Construction of public toilets in different bazaars, Construction of shades fish and meat for local small businessmen.

Upazila (District)	Nature of Infrastructure sub-projects undertaken with UGDP funds
Mohanganj (Netrokona)	High flow oxygen nasal cannula, Distribution of benches to different schools, Construction of change room at different girl's schools, Construction of wash facilities at schools, Multimedia classroom.
Barhatta (Netrokona)	No project undertaken as this Upazila could not secure UGDP's funds
Kapasia (Gazipur)	High flow oxygen nasal cannula, Construction of RCC drain for irrigation, Distribution of high and low benches at different schools, Supply of medical equipment to Upazila health complex, Construction of a delivery room at the Union health and family welfare centre.
Sreepur (Gazipur)	No INF sub-project implemented.

Source: Field survey information

As apparent from the above table, the UGDP has contributed significantly to the shift in focus of Upazila Parishads from traditional rural road construction schemes to investing in social sector schemes in areas such as education, health, fisheries, and agriculture. The above table exhibits the highlights of the nature of sub-projects implemented by Upazila Parishads with the UGDP provided funds. This shift in focus is due to the unique funding mechanism and investment stipulation imposed by UGDP. The project puts a stipulation of taka 10 lakhs as the minimum ceiling for an infrastructure sub-project which also allows the procurement of equipment for public service purposes. The project also encourages investment in different social sectors. The investment in social sector schemes has enabled Upazila Parishads to address critical development needs in their communities, leading to improved access to basic services, such as healthcare and education, which are essential for improving the quality of life for rural residents. Below we would like to share two case stories on how social sector sub-projects are making a huge difference to the lives of the poor people at the Upazila level.

Case 1: Seeing is Believing: Singra Upazila Health Complex has turned into a Smart Medical Service Providing Facility

They say "seeing is believing". One has to visit Singra Upazila Health Complex to see and believe how a Upazila level hospital can be turned into a facility providing better medical services than many Zila level hospital. Singra Upazila Hospital is no longer an ordinary hospital. This transformation is the result of the visionary thinking and leadership of the Upazila Chairman Mr. Md. Shafiqul Islam and proper planning and hard work of Dr. Md Aminul Islam, the Upazila Health and Family Planning officer of Singra Upazila. With just 10 lakhs taka received from the UGDP project, Dr. Aminul Islam bought some medical equipment such as ultrasound machines, platelet counting machines, and digital X-ray machines. Additionally, with the financial support of the Upazila Parishad, the Upazila health complex employed some additional manpower to provide 24 hours and 7 days a weekmedical services to the poor at a much cheaper cost than the local private clinics. For instance, for an ultra-sonogram of full abdomen the private diagonistic centre charges 800 taka, while Upazila hospital charges only 200 taka. The Upazila hospital has made the service affordable to the local residents. Upazila Parishad also facilitated the training of its medical staff and nurses with capacity development fund of UGDP. This forms an example of judiciously combining CD and INFSP funds. Besides, efforts were also made to ensure that these medical equipments remained functional at all times. The impact of this transformation has been remarkable. Patients no longer have to travel long distances to access better medical services. The availability of modern medical equipment and skilled personnel has greatly improved the quality

of care provided to patients. The hospital has become a smart medical service providing facility that others can look up to and emulate. The success of this transformation also serves as a message for others to follow. With a clear vision, proper planning, and effective utilization of available resources, even a small facility can be transformed into a hub of quality medical services. This story proves that it is not just about the amount of resources available, but how effectively they are used that matters. With determination and hard work, the goal of providing better medical services to all can be achieved.

Case 2: UGDP's funds have made a difference to the lives of the poor people through a new Community Clinic

The Gunarigram village under the Boro Haripur Union Parishad of Natore Sadar Upazila, located in the relatively remote area, and access to healthcare has been extremely limited. Pregnant women would have to travel hours on foot to reach the nearest hospital, which was often too far for them to make the journey. This resulted in many women giving birth at home, without proper medical care, which often led to complications and even death. But everything changed when the Upazila Parishad decided to invest in a new community clinic in Gunarigram, with the support of a development project. With the funds received fromUGDPthe clinic was equipped with trained medical staff, basic medical equipment, and a new labour room to ensure safe deliveries for pregnant women. One of the first women to benefit from the new facility was Rima Begum, a 22-year-old pregnant woman who had previously lost a child due to complications during delivery. With the community clinic having the delivery facilities now available in her village, Rima had access to regular prenatal checkups and was able to give birth in the safe and clean environment of the new labour room. Thanks to the UGDP funds which helped local community clinic to have labour room with trained medical assistant. The maternal mortality rate in Gunarigram and other nearby villages has dropped significantly, and the villagers now have access to basic medical services that were previously out of reach. Rima Begum now has a healthy baby boy, and she is filled with gratitude towards the Upazila Parishad for investing in the community's health and well-being. The clinic has become a beacon of hope for the entire community, and it is a shining example of what can be achieved when Upazilas prioritize the needs of their citizens. For the people of Gunarigram, the new community clinic is a symbol of progress and a sign of better days ahead.

The improved healthcare services have contributed to improving the overall quality of life for the local community. These case stories demonstrate the success of the UGDP funding approach in promoting investment in social sector schemes, which contribute to significant positive impacts on the development outcomes at the Upazila level, improving access to basic services. Besides, the implementation of these large and visible development sub-projects are continuously contributing to improved governance, accountability and also service delivery at the Upazila level. This is because the implementation process involves consultation and engagement with local communities, which leads to improved transparency and accountability in decision-making processes. However, it is important to ensure that the necessary mechanisms are in place to ensure the sustainability and maintenance of some of these sub-projects. In this regard, it is important that Upazila Parishads create a maintenance budget head which can be used to ensure sustainability of these innovative social sector sub-projects, and/or through adjusting the proportion of Upazila ADP allocation or its own source revenue to maintenance purpose of existing facilities.

6. Upazila Parishads are not paying advance or running bills to the contractors while implementing UGDP funded sub-projects

Upazila Parishads do not pay advance or running bills to the contractors in charge of implementing infrastructure sub-projects with UGDP provided funds. Although the existing public procurement rules has the provisions to pay advance and running bills. The practice of UGDP on this front has helped the Upazila Parishads to have the undertaken sub-projects completed by the contractors on time, without any delay and better quality.[6] In fact, this provision has a wider applicability. This practice can be mainstreamed at the Upazila Parishads level and this can be used in case of implementing development schemes with ADP and other funds.

7. Upazilas tend to undertake smaller schemes with ADP funds

Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh tend to focus on small-scale projects using Annual Development Programme (ADP) funds provided by the central government, that too they tend to spend primarily in the communication infrastructure sector, usually roads. This has led to a one-dimensional approach to local development, with little focus on larger-scale projects. This approach can have several adverse effects. First, it may limit the potential for economic growth and development in the local area. Small-scale projects may not have the same impact as larger ones in terms of creating jobs or stimulating economic activity. Additionally, focusing only on communication infrastructure may not address other critical needs in the community, such as education, healthcare, or agriculture. While small-scale projects can be important components of local development, an overemphasis on them at the expense of larger-scale initiatives may limit growth potential and miss opportunities to address critical community needs. A more strategic approach to local development that considers both small and large-scale projects may be necessary for sustainable and inclusive growth. The following table demonstrates some important facts about the use of ADP funds by the Upazila Parishads visited in connection with this study.

Table 5: Some important facts about the use of ADP and OSR funds by the Upazila Parishads visited.

Upazila (District)	Own Source Revenue 2021-22 (In Lac Tk)	ADP received 2021-22 (in Lac Tk)	Total ADP+OSR) (in Lac Tk)	Number of projects undertaken with ADP+OSR	Average size of the scheme (in Lac Tk)	Size of the largest scheme (in Lac Tk)	Size of the smallest scheme (in Lac Tk)
Dighalia (Khulna)	23.00	66.00	89.00	130	00.68	05.00	00.50
Dumuria (Khulna)	800.00	82.00	882.00	503	01.75	10.00	00.50
Fakirhat (Bagerhat)	100.00	50.00	150.00	90	01.67	10.00	00.50

[6] Because the contractors know that low quality work will further delay payment and therefore, they became more attentive and cautious to maintain the quality.

Mohanganj (Netrokona)	26.00	76.00	102.00	39	02.62	05.00	00.50
Barhatta (Netrokona)	15.00	98.00	113.00	60	01.88	07.00	00.50
Natore Sadar (Natore)	142 .00	70.00	212.00	60	03.53	19.00	03.32
Singra (Natore)	114.00	92.00	206.00	56	03.68	08.00	02.00
Puthia (Rajshahi)	00.00	80.00	80.00	14	05.71	08.32	04.00
Kapasia	300.00	100.00	400.00	125	03.20	12.00	02.00
Sreepur	1800.00	81.00	1881.00	677	02.78	20.00	02.00
Average	**332.00**	**79.50**	**411.50**	**175.40**	**02.75**	**10.43**	**01.58**

Source: Field survey data

- **Observations and comments based on the table:**
  a. Own source revenue is generally poor, except for those Upazilas which are located close to the economically/commercially vibrant areas
  b. ADP ranges from minimum 50.00 Lac Taka to maximum 100.00 Lac Taka;
  c. Most Upazilas have a tendency to undertake too many projects with ADP and own source revenues. Among the Upazila Parishads visited, Dumuria was found to have undertaken 503 schemes, while Sreepur Upazila had undertaken 677 schemes;
  d. Upazila Parishads have a tendency to undertake small projects in general (ranging from 0.50 Lac Taka to 20.00 Lac Taka);
  e. The average scheme size ranges from 0.68 Lac to 05.71 Lac Taka.

- **Two additional relevant observations:**
  1. The average cost of the infrastructure sub-projects implemented with UGDP funds by Upazila Parishads is (approx) 14 lac taka, while average scheme size of 10 visited Upazilas is 2.75 lac taka with ADP funds;
  2. If Upazila Parishads can implement larger and visible sub-project with UGDP funds, then why Upazilas are not implementing such sub-projects with ADP and other funds?

8. UGDP provides CD funds to Upazila Parishads for organizing training on various innovative areas

Following the Performance Assessment, UGDP disburse Performance Based Allocation (PBA) to the Upazila Parishads. It is a UGDP requirement that out of the total allocation received by a Upazila, taka 10 lakhs (20% of total PBA amount) is supposed to be kept aside for organizing local need based training meant for the local citizens. In this case the Upazila Parishads are expected to think outside the box and identify innovative areas of training which would suit the needs of the local people and which will also have a long lasting effect on the lives of the trainees. The following table exhibits the nature of training organized by Upazila Parishads under the purview of this study.

Table 6: Highlights of the areas of CD training organized by Upazila Parishads.

Upazilas (District)	Nature of Training
Dighalia (Khulna)	Nakshi katha Stitching, Driving for women, Freelancing for women, Modern irrigation practices, Training on block-batik for the unemployed young women, Training on producing jute made goods meant for the individuals who are physically challenged, Training on cultivation of local sweet water fish meant for fishermen, Software Application and computer trouble shooting training meant for the youth.
Dumuria (Khulna)	Service delivery using ICT, Freelancing for women, electric wiring training for women, Capacity building of UP elected representatives, Training of gram police, Training of school management committees, Training of Upazila level journalists, Training on the use and maintenance of solar panel, Training of women on fashion design, Primary and secondary teacher's training on ensuring quality education, Training on e-filing and management of web portal, Training of women on beautification, Training of village doctors on primary health care and emergency management
Fakirhat (Bagerhat)	Organic vegetable cultivation, Management of cooperative for the organic cultivators, Training on nakshikatha stitching, English language improving skill for the primary and secondary teachers, Training for the female rural medical assistants on safe delivery, ICT knowledge improving skill for the secondary teachers, Freelancing, Training on midwifery, Training of businessman and commercial vegetable cultivators about food safety, Training of the adolescent girls on reproductive health, Training on freelancing, Training on commercial cultivation of fruits meant for unemployed youth.
Natore Sadar (Natore)	ICT knowledge improving skill for the secondary teachers, Training on midwifery, Modern irrigation practices, Training of women on fashion design, Primary and secondary teacher's training on ensuring quality education, Training on e-filing and management of web portal, Training of women on beautification.
Singra (Natore)	English language improving skill for the primary and secondary teachers, Training on midwifery, Iron rod binding, Driving, Freelancing, Cottage industries, Fisheries, and modern agricultural Practices, Training of the drivers on traffic law, Training on e-filing and management of web portal,Skill training of medical staff and nurses
Puthia (Rajshahi)	Driving, safe motherhood and nutrition during pregnancy, plumbing, cottage industries, fisheries, and modern agricultural practices.
Mohanganj (Netrokona)	Training in cottage industries, Modern agricultural practices, Training on cultivation of fish in modern way, ICT knowledge improving skill for the secondary teachers.
Barhatta (Netrokona)	No training program organized (because this Upazila never selected under UGDP)
Kapasia (Gazipur)	Training of the dairy owners on livestock raising, Safe food production and processing, Training on safe motherhood and nutrition during pregnancy, Training on enhancing the English language proficiency for the secondary school teachers, Technical training on shoe-making for the members of the cooperatives, Training on cultivation of fish in modern way, Training on block and batik for the unemployed young women.
Sreepur (Gazipur)	Modern agricultural practices, Training on flower cultivation, Training on cottage industries.

It was gathered during the field visits that in some Upazilas some unique innovative training programs were organized with the UGDP provided fund earmarked for capacity development which had direct bearing on transferring special skill-sets to the trainees. On the other hand, it was also revealed that not all Upazilas were able to organize innovative training programs, they just provided training on usual areas. Yet, while talking to the participants of the training it was reported that those training programs had opened-up some opportunities for them to learn additional skills which eventually will help them earn extra income. Below we present a few success stories of the CD training programs organized by a few Upazila Parishads we visited.

Case 3: UGDP's training on freelancing has changed life of a rural youth

Anisur Rahman is a young man from a small village in Kapasia Upazila. After graduating from college, he struggled to find a job that would allow him to support his family. Despite his computer skills, he couldn't seem to catch a break. But one day, he heard about a training program being offered by the Kapasia Upazila Parishad on freelancing. Eager to learn more, Anisur attended the program and absorbed all the knowledge he could. With new skills under his belt, he began to offer web design, graphic design, and other freelancing services to clients around the world. Anisur's hard work paid off. He was able to earn Taka 25000 per month on average to support his family, pay for his father's treatment, and send his younger siblings to school. But he didn't stop there. He continued to work hard and dream of new ways to enhance his income. Through his determination and newfound skills, Anisur had not only lifted himself out of poverty but had also become a beacon of hope for others in his village. His success story inspired others to pursue their own dreams and showed that with hard work and perseverance, anything is possible.

Case 4: Innovative Training programs: changing life, impacting on local economy

Jubaida Akhter's life was a constant struggle. As a resident of a small village under the Dighalia Upazila, she and her husband had to rely on daily wages to make ends meet. Their son, who was born with Down syndrome, needed special medical attention each month, but their economic hardship made it impossible for them to afford it. Jubaida had a natural talent for stitching, but she never thought of utilizing her skills to earn money until she heard about the Nakshikatha stitching training program organized by Dihgalia Upazila Parishad. With a glimmer of hope in her heart, Jubaida attended the training program twice. She learned new techniques and honed her skills. It was not long before she started earning money by stitching beautiful Nakshikatha designs on cloth. At first, it was a small amount, but as her skills improved, so did her income. Now, Jubaida earns between 3,500 taka and 4,000 taka per month. When asked about her success, Jubaida was tearful. She said that without this opportunity, it would not have been possible for her to ensure her son's proper treatment. She was grateful for the training program, which not only provided her with a new source of income but also gave her the confidence to believe in herself. Jubaida's story is not unique. The Nakshikatha stitching training program has helped many unemployed women in Dighalia Upazila to earn a living. By providing skills training and job opportunities, the program has had a significant impact on the local economy. The additional income generated by these women has helped to boost the purchasing power of their families, creating a positive ripple effect throughout the community. Jubaida's story is a testament to the power of small but judicious interventions in promoting economic growth.

It is evident that providing training on innovative or outside-the-box areas may also promote entrepreneurship and innovation, particularly among the youth. This can lead to the emergence of new business opportunities, contributing to the diversification of local economies and the

creation of new employment opportunities. But it is important to identify the training needs very carefully by the Upazila Parishads so that training programs can make a direct impact on the lives of the trainees. In this case, duplication of training is to be avoided as different line departments also organize Upazila level training for local residents. But most departments do not have adequate budget to organize training on a regular basis or cover too many participants through their training progarms. Given this, it can be said that UGDP's earmarked CD training funds can provide the Upazila Parishad with a cushion to organize training on the areas where there is a gap. It was also reported during the field visits that in some cases the innovative training programs organized by a few Upazila Parishahds had a snowball effect and these were later emulated by local NGOs and other departments while providing their training. However, in the upcoming phase of UGDP may suggest some areas for innovative training to the Upazila Parishads, but also ask the Upazila Parishads to identify areas for training by carefully consulting the local people. Those areas of training should be chosen which will help trainees to find jobs in the domestic or in international market.

9. UGDP provided training to the Upazila stakeholders for capacity development

UGDP is provided with a commendable initiative that aimed to improve the quality of governance at the Upazila level by providing training to elected representatives and main officials, including the initial training of Upazila Parishad governance conducted forall Upazilas after the last election and which was first time ever case in Bangladesh. Based on the information gathered through field visits the impact of the training has been positive, however, there are several challenges that need to be addressed. Firstly, not all officials could be covered by the training program. In order to address this challenge, a more comprehensive and inclusive training program could be developed that targets all officials at the Upazila level. Secondly, refresher courses could not be organized, refresher courses are important to ensure that elected representatives and officials remain up-to-date with new developments and are able to apply their knowledge effectively. It is important that such courses are organized on a regular basis to sustain the impact of the initial training program. It was gathered during the field visits that those who received initial training got transferred elsewhere following the prevailing practice in the civil service. This challenge could be addressed by developing a comprehensive training strategy that ensures that officials receive training on a sustained basis, regardless of their location or position. There is a Mid-and Long Term Training Strategy for Upazila stakeholders developed by JICA supported UICDP and National Institute of Local Government (NILG) is responsible for implementing this. It is important that LGD follows up the matter with NILG so that the training can be organized as planned.

10. Upazila Development Facilitators (UDF) played a key role in Upazila governance improvement

UGDP has deployed the UDF (Upazila Development Facilitator) to facilitate the improvement of Upazila governance. Total number of UDF is 200 and they shift Upazilas they are stationed from one to another,as the Upazila's number under UGDP increases and required intensity of

their support shifts from experienced to newly-selected Upazilas.This is a positive step, as governance is crucial for effective service delivery and sustainable development. During the field visits it was found out that the all Upazila stakeholders were in favour of having position like UDF for facilitating the governance improvement at the Upazila level. It was stated by the Upazila stakeholders that whatever governance improvement at the Upaizla level has taken place, the UDFs played a critical role in that and this indicates that the UDF is viewed as a key player in the governance improvement process under UGDP. The Upazila stakeholders both elected representatives and deputed government officials alike were in favour of "One Upazila, one UDF" option as gathered during the field level consultations. The table below contains the views and opinions of the Upazila level stakeholders regarding UDFs.

Table 7: How Important is the Role of UDF?

Upazila (District)	UDF like Position is Required for Governance Improvement	UDF and their Preferred Operational Jurisdiction
Dighalia (Khulna)	Strongly agreed	1 UDF per Upazila
Dumuria (Khulna)	Strongly agreed	1 UDF per Upazila
Fakirhat(Bagerhat)	Strongly agreed	1 UDF per Upazila
Natore Sadar (Natore)	Strongly agreed	1 UDF per Upazila
Singra (Natore)	Strongly agreed	1 UDF per Upazila
Puthia (Rajshahi)	Strongly agreed	1 UDF per Upazila
Mohanganj (Netrokona)	Strongly agreed	1 UDF per Upazila
Barhatta (Netrokona)	Strongly agreed	No comment
Kapasia (Gazipur)	Strongly agreed	1 UDF per Upazila
Sreepur (Gazipur)	Strongly agreed	1 UDF per Upazila

Source: Based on the field survey information

The position like UDF is considered to be required at the Upazila level until the Upazila's governance system becomes solidified and self-sustaining. It is important to realize that Upazila already has manpower shortages and mainstreaming the activities performed by UDFs is not easy and it will require more time, while this aspect definitely needs to be under serious consideration of policy makers. It is important to note that there needs to be a careful exit strategy for the UDF, as a sudden withdrawal of UDF in the upcoming phase of UGDP could have adverse effects on governance improvement at the Upazila level. It is important to ensure that the UDF position is gradually phased out in a careful manner to ensure sustainability of project outcomes achieved thus far.

11. Upazila's governance performance does not depend on availability of higher level of financial resources

While resource availability is important for governance performance, it is not the only factor that determines success. The information collected from the field in connection with this study provide enough evidence to suggest that governance performance of Upazila Parishads does not depend on higher level of resources. It has been observed that many Upazilas with poor resource base have been able to perform consistently against the governance indicators adopted under UGDP. On the other hands, many Upazilas with relatively healthy resource base have

failed to receive the Performance-based Allocation (PBA). Upazilas with strong resource bases may not feel the need to perform well to receive additional resources, while those with limited resources may have to work harder to secure additional funding. Therefore, we often witness a situation where Upazilas with limited resources outperform those with more resources due to their greater motivation and effort. This implies that there are other factors at play that affect the ability of Upazilas to perform well in terms of governance indicators. It was gathered during the field visits that other factors, such as leadership quality, administrative capacity, transparency and accountability, public participation, and stakeholder's coordination and engagement, also play an important role in determining governance outcomes.

12. Inadequate human resources for service delivery

Upazila Parishads are responsible for a wide range of functions. However, there is a consensus among the researchers, experts and other Upazila stakeholders that there is a problem of insufficient number of human resources available to the Parishad, which is impacting on their ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively. This means that despite the many mandates given to them, the Upazila Parishads are struggling to fulfill their responsibilities due to the lack of human resources. This is also related with strong appeals of Upazilas to place one UDF in one Upazila.It is therefore crucial to address this issue in order to ensure that the Upazila Parishads are given the legally required human resources to enable them to meet their obligations and serve their communities adequately.

13. Web-based governance performance assessment system attempted by UGDP seems to work

The Web-based governance performance assessment system attempted by UGDP seems to work and it is proven to be effective. This is in contrast to the traditional auditing practice of physically visiting Upazila Parishads. The Web-based governance performance assessment system has a number of important virtues. Firstly, this system is cost-effective as it eliminates the need for physical visits by auditors, which can be a significant expense for the government. The online system can be accessed remotely, allowing auditors to evaluate governance performance at a lower cost and with greater efficiency. Secondly, the Web-based system is more transparent and less susceptible to manipulation if real time information and documents upload can be ensured. Thirdly, this Web-based PA significantly contributed to the Upazilas' governance improvement in terms of transparency and accountability, since uploading of the Upazilas' key documents to their web-portals allow general public to see how Upazilas are managing their affair and this has vital link with the path to achieve SMART Upazila governance. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to note that some physical monitoring by DDLG would be necessary to ensure the integrity of the data and prevent possible manipulation.

14. UGDP has extended cooperation to help strengthen and institutionalize SID and SIC as a part of implementing the Mid-and Long Term Upazila Governance Improvement Strategy developed by JICA supported UICDP project

The Upazila Integrated Capacity Development Project (UICDP) was a JICA supported technical assistance project that aimed to improve governance at the Upazila level in Bangladesh. One of the key outcomes of the project was the development of a Mid- and Long-Term Strategy for the Improvement of Upazila Governance, which is adopted by LGD and set to remain in effect until 2041. To ensure the smooth implementation of this strategy, UICDP also assisted LGD to introduce two institutional mechanisms: the Strategy Implementation Desk (SID) and the Strategy Implementation Committee (SIC) at the Local Government Division. Although UICDP has phased out in late 2022, its sister project, UGDP has extended its support to help continue and institutionalize the implementation of the Mid- and Long-Term Upazila Governance Improvement Strategy. This includes support for the SID and SIC, which will play a crucial role in ensuring the effective implementation of the strategy. The SID and SIC can help to ensure that the Upazila governance improvement strategy is implemented in a coordinated and efficient manner, and that progress is monitored and evaluated over time.

VI. Identifying and Addressing the Persistent Challenges for Ensuring SMART Upazila Governance

Based on the analysis in the previous sections and also considering the information collected during the field visits, it is important to identify some of the persistent challenges which need further attention. The identified challenges are as follows:

1. Understanding and compliance of the Upazila stakeholders with the Upazila laws still at low level
2. Breaking away with the tradition of implementing small scale development schemes with ADP funds, making the local development multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral
3. Distribution of Upazila's ADP funds among the UPs
4. ADP allocation criteria has not been updated in the recent past
5. Upazila Committees are not yet fully functional
6. Resource base of the Upazila Parishads is to be enhanced
7. Enhancing coordination between Upazila level stakeholders
8. Establishing proper linkage between FYPs and APs by the Upazila Parishad
9. Capacity building of Upazila stakeholders is still an unfinished journey
10. Inadequate human resources at the Upazila Parishad
11. Absence of a single MIS system at LGD for efficient monitoring
12. Preservation of institutional memories at the central level

Addressing unresolved challenges is crucial to ensure SMART governance at the Upazila level. To this end, the government may consider prioritizing the mitigation of these persistent problems in the upcoming phase of UGDP. By doing so, the government can effectively promote the sustainable development of Upazilas in Bangladesh. This would require a multifaceted approach that includes capacity building, stakeholder coordination, transparent and equitable distribution of resources, and the implementation of multi-dimensional and

multi-sectoral development initiatives. Additionally, the government needs to promote greater awareness among elected representatives and officials to ensure effective governance. Preserving institutional memory and knowledge is also critical for ensuring continuity and effective governance across successive administrative cycles. By addressing these unresolved challenges, the government can promote SMART governance at the Upazila level and ensure sustainable and inclusive development for the benefit of the local communities in Bangladesh.

VII. Way Forward and Recommendations

Based on the findings from the field and our consultations with different stakeholders we propose the following way forward and recommendations. It is to be noted that in the upcoming phase of UGDP or any other upcoming project focusing on Upazila governance improvement may consider these recommendations. These recommendations will help us meet the requirements of SMART Upazila governance as emphasized by our government.

1. Institutional Reform at Central Level to be Led by LGD

1-1. Monitoring the Implementation progress of the Mid-and Long-term Strategy for Upazila Parishad Governance: The Mid-and Long-term Strategy for Upazila Parishad Governance Improvement has already been adopted by LGD. It is important that the implementation progress of the adopted strategy should be regularly and continuously monitored through SID/SIC platform and it should be periodically reviewed, updated and adjusted in accordance with the changing needs of the Upazila governance.

1-2. Single MIS system at LGD: Local Government Division needs to have a single MIS system internalized within it. In the second phase of UGDP, the performance assessment system is to be integrated into the MIS system of the MIE wing of LGD.

1-3. Preserve institutional memory and create a repository of project and policy related documents at LGD: Currently, Local Government Division does not have a separate and dedicated research, documentation and policy related information repository unit. Setting up such a unit within LGD may help preserve the memories of different local government projects which were implemented in the past and also preserving the policy related documents, which may facilitate the local government policy making. It has been observed that the officials of the ministry get transferred elsewhere frequently, which is beyond the control of LGD, the transfer and positing issues are the jurisdictions of Ministry of Public Administration. The lack of a dedicated research, documentation and information repository unit within LGD has also created a major information gap, which hinders the ability of newly appointed officials to learn from past experiences and build upon them for future projects and policy formulation. Without a well-preserved records and memories of past projects, and policy related documents it becomes difficult to identify successful strategies, lessons learned, and potential areas for improvement on the local governance front. Besides, there is no denying that all these can result in a cycle of repeating mistakes and missed opportunities for growth and development. This also creates a stumbling block in the way of effective policy formulation and potential reform

in local governance in general and Upazila in particular in the context of Bangladesh. To address this challenge, we suggest the following way forward:

a. **Establish a dedicated research, documentation and policy related information repository unit within LGD:** This unit should be responsible for preserving the memories of past projects, preserving policy related documents, documenting lessons learned, and sharing best practices with newly appointed officials.

b. **Implement a knowledge transfer system:** This system should be designed to ensure that knowledge and information are transferred from outgoing officials to incoming officials. This could include the creation of knowledge sharing networks, mentorship programs, and the establishment of knowledge management systems.

c. **Develop a culture of knowledge sharing:** Encourage officials to share their experiences and insights with their colleagues and to participate in professional development programs that focus on knowledge sharing.

d. **Invest in technology and digital solutions:** Utilize modern technologies such as cloud storage, knowledge management software, and digital archives to store and share information more efficiently.

2. Reforming ADP Grant System

2-1. Mainstreaming of performance grant system: Considering the success of Performance-based Allocation (PBA) we suggest the mainstreaming of performance grant. We suggest that 50% ADP allocation can be made to all Upazila Parishads as entitlement grant. And for the rest of the allocation may be disbursed after assessing the performance of UZPs against predetermined governance indicators and preconditions. PA system has demonstrated the potential for performance grants to significantly contribute to the improvement of Upazila governance in Bangladesh. To ensure the sustainability of the PA system and its benefits, mainstreaming the performance grant system is essential.

2-2. ADP allocation criteria need a review: The existing ADP distribution criteria that the government currently follows need a careful review. Some new criteria can be added to the existing ones (population, area and backwardness) to make the criteria more equitable and contextually suitable. For instance, one new criterion could be added and e.g., “volume of own source revenue” (Negative value) of Upazila Parishad.

2-3. Putting a ceiling on investment with ADP funds: Existing Upazila law suggests that 30% projects can be implemented through PICs and the rest 70% of the ADP can be implemented following other means of tendering process. Upazilas are still found to be undertaking smaller sub-projects which are not making any development impact for the communities. Given this, LGD may issue a circular for utilizing rest of the ADP funds by implementing larger and visible sub-projects (5 lakhs or more). LGD may issue a circular in this regard for introducing the provision and suggest that the failure to comply with the new

provision may result in Upazilas, for example they are only getting the entitlement grant which is 50% of the current level of ADP.

2-4. The practice of distributing ADP funds equally among UPs is to be discontinued: It has been observed that in many Upazilas the ADP funds are divided equally among the Union Parishad members upon the insistence of the Union Parishad's Chairmen. This has been an age-old practice, although it is not backed by any legal provision. This hinders the process of Upazila Parishads spending funds available to it assessing the actual needs of the communities. It is important for LGD to issue a Circular providing clear guidance on the matter and this will also allow the Upazila Parishad's to use its discretion over the ADP funds.

2-5. Strict guidance to Upazila Parishads for completing tender process on time: A guideline may be issued to complete the selection of sub-projects and all tendering process under Upazila Parishads within October/November. The guideline may as well clearly state that failing to comply with this provision would ultimately result in 3rd and 4th installments of ADP funds not being disbursed to the non-compliant Upazila Parishads.

2-6. Utilization of ADP funds for capacity development of stakeholders: Upazila Parishads now provide need-based training to the local people with a view to involve them in income generating activities with UGDP provided funds. These type of innovative and need based training programs should be undertaken by the Upazila Parishads using their ADP funds or own source revenues.

3. Institutional Reform for Upazila Parishad

3-1. Clear guidance needs to be provided on the relationship between Upazila Parishad and Paurashavas: A clear guidance as to how Upazila will implement development schemes within the territorial jurisdiction of Paurashavas needs to be provided. The guidance must also include how the horizontal coordination between Upazila and Parushavas can be effectively established for ensuring effective local development by avoiding disputes and tensions between these two institutions.

3-2. Number of Upazila Committees and frequency of meetings may be reduced: There are 17 Upazila Committees and despite UGDP's intervention, the Upazila committees are not functioning as expected following the legal provisions. Many Upazilas are holding the meetings just to fulfill the requirements of performance assessment of UGDP. As a result, the actual purpose of committee system is getting defeated. Considering the reality on the ground, it is important to address this challenge. We recommend to reduce the number of Upazila committees by clustering the committees having almost similar or overlapping jurisdictions and this way the number of committees can be brought down from existing 17 tomaximum 10. Additionally, it is also important to reduce the frequency of Upazila committee meeting. Currently, each Upazila committee is supposed to hold meetings bi-monthly. Conisdering the realities on the ground and based on the consultations with the Upazila stakeholders we recommend holding Upazila Committee meetings on quarterly basis.

3-3. Directly Elected Members of UZPs: Currently, the Chairmen of the Union Parishads are ex-officio members in Upazila Parishads. This has both up and downsides. The primary benefit of this is that it creates an organic linkage between these two institutions. But this has certain disadvantages, too. In many cases, Union Parishad Chairmen as members with voting rights can forge alliance amongst them and they can turn any decision in their favour if they so wish. Besides, as the members of the Upazila Parishads they hardly think about the development of Upazila as a whole. Rather, they are concerned with obtaining funds from the Upazila's ADP for their respective UPs only. Given this, it would be ideal if Upazila Parishads can be made structurally delinked and functionally linked with UPs. We suggest that in the long run, members of the Upazila Parishadmay be elected through adult franchise taking into account the entire Upazila as a single constituency. There is no denying that this will help solidify the governance at the Upazila level.

4. Human Resource and Capacity Development for Upazila Parishad

4-1. Operationalization of Mid-and Long-term Training Plan: Measures should the undertaken to operationalize the Mid-and Long-term Training Plan for Upazila Parishad functionaries which is prepared through UICDP's support and already adopted by LGD. NILG is in charge of implementing this plan.

4-2. A system of learning from peers needs to be institutionalized: The practice of horizontal learning or in another words, learning from peers should be introduced and mainstreamed. If this peer learning system can be organized on regular basis, this will help the Upazilas with poor governance records to learn from those Upazilas which are leading by examples.

4-3. Recruitment of required manpower for UZPs: There is a shortage of manpower at the Upazila Parishad for service delivery. Government needs to make an effort to provide the Upazila Parishad with legally required manpower with view to perform their functions mandated to them.

4-4. Position like UDF is important for governance improvement at the Upazila level: We suggest the retention of the position of UDF for at least another 5 years, if not for more for sustaining the improvement in governance which has been achieved till today. In the upcoming phase, UGDP may rely on Web-based performance audit of Upazilas instead of physical performance assessment by third party audit firms, and to orient the Upazilas with the Web-based performance assessment and to build on the achievement thus far with regard to governance improvement at the Upazila level, the presence of UDFs is important. Currently, the Upazila's are exceedingly dependent on the UDFs for governance improvement and this dependence needs to begradually reduced. It is in this pretext we suggest that it will not be a judicious decision to carry on the UGDP activities at the Upazila level in the upcoming phase without UDFs before carefully designing an effective exit strategy.

5. Upazila Financing and Revenue

5-1. Enhancing the resource base of Upazila Parishads: Upazila Parishads, where possible, should be given the authority to build market/commercial buildings which will ensure their constant income. And also need to develop a display centre in the same facility where local women and small entrepreneurs can display their products. This will help UZPs create market linkage for those poor stakeholders.

5-2. The Existing revenue sharing mechanism needs to be equitable: Under the existing arrangement, Upazila Parishads receive 1 percent of the land registration fees which gets added to their own source revenue. It is important to note that this is an automatic process and the Upazila Parishads do not have to put any effort to earn it. Now value of the land tends to vary from one location to another. Therefore, it is often seen that all Sadar Upazilas or Upazilas which are located closer to the district headquarters or otherwise economically vibrant areas earn a lot more revenue from 1 percent than Upazilas which are remotely located where the value of land is not high. This has an implication for governance. The UGDP's experiences suggest that Upazilas with higher level of own source revenue mobilization capacity usually pay less attention to governance improvement. Given this, we suggest that total earning from 1 percent of land registration fees within a District may get automatically deposited on separate account at the District level and then the total earning can be distributed among Upazilas under the district equally to ensure equity and also to ensure that Upazilas pay attention to improving the crucially important governance issues.

5-3. Co-financing of development projects may be encouraged: Co-financing between Upazila Parished and other organizations may be encouraged. During field visits it was gathered that in some Upazilas with the visionary leadership of Upazila Chairman some innovative and large sub-projects were implemented in collaboration with Union Parishads and different other institutions.

6. Making Upazila Plan and Budget Effective

6-1. Encouraging UZPs to formulate FYP and APs maintaining synergy: It is important to keep encouraging Upazila Parishads to prepare FYP and APs and also to ensure alignment between these two plans. Additionally, introduce a provision of penalizing UZPs for not maintaining this alignment.

6-2. Organizing special budget session by Upazila Parishads: By law, the Upazila Parishads are required to organize a special budget session involving peoples from different walks of life and also the stakeholders who are deemed to be able to contribute to the Upazila budget process. However, Upazilas do not tend hold this special budget session. We suggest that Upazilas hold the open budget session which would ensure their financial transparency and accountability. To ensure this, for example, the holding of this session may be included in the preconditions in the PA system of the following phase of UGDP if it gets materialized.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

UGDP has already taken some important approaches and steps towards ensuring SMART governance at the Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh. The project's comprehensive approach to institutional strengthening, capacity building, and community participation has yielded positive outcomes, including improved governance and service delivery, greater transparency and accountability, and enhanced citizen engagement. The UGDP's successes have also informed broader policy discussions on decentralization, local governance, and development in Bangladesh.

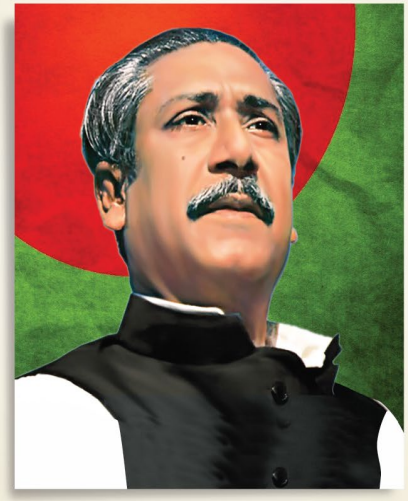
However, UGDP also faced several challenges, including dealing with the age-old practices at the Upazila level, stakeholder's general lack of understanding about the legal provisions, frequent transfers of officials received training, weak coordination among stakeholders, and the absence of a clear roadmap for institutionalization and sustainability of the key lessons learned for improving governance.
To address these challenges, it is essential to strengthen the political will and commitment of local leaders and policymakers, enhance inter-institutional collaboration and coordination, and promote the use of innovative technologies and data-driven approaches in local governance. Moreover, continued investment in institutional capacity building, citizen engagement, and knowledge sharing is necessary for sustaining the gains achieved by the UGDP.

Moving forward, SMART governance at the Upazila Parishads requires a long-term and multi-dimensional approach that prioritizes transparency, accountability, and participation at the Upazila level. The lessons learned from UGDP can serve as a valuable guide for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working towards enhancing local governance and development in Bangladesh and beyond. By leveraging these lessons and building on the UGDP's achievements, Bangladesh can realize its vision of a more inclusive, participatory, and effective governance system that serves the needs of its citizens in the years to come.

Annex-4: Display Boards/Photographs used in Lessons Learned Workshop

"আপনারা মানুষের সেবা করুন।
মানুষের সেবার মত শান্তি দুনিয়ায় আর কিছুতে হয় না।"

Lessons Learned Workshop
Upazila Parishad: Towards Smart Bangladesh



12 April 2023
Hotel InterContinental

JICA
Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Lessons Learned Workshop
Upazila Parishad: Towards Smart Bangladesh

12 April 2023
Hotel InterContinental

JICA
Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

Lessons Learned Workshop
Upazila Parishad: Towards Smart Bangladesh

Chief Guest
Mr. Md. Tazul Islam MP
Honorable Minister, Ministry of Local Government

12 April 2023
Hotel InterContinental

JICA
Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

Lessons Learned Workshop
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Honorable Minister, Ministry of Local Government

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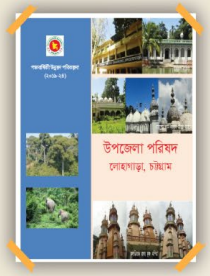
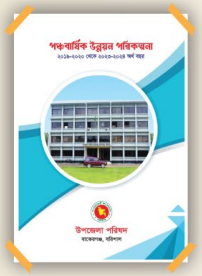
Local Government Division

UGDP'S Five Year Development Plan



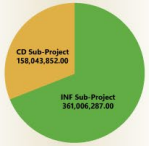


Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division (LGD)

UGDP's Contribution to Agriculture Sector

Utilize every inch of land for food production, we have to go for savings and practice austerity. I hope that all will maintain that course.

-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina



Types of INF SP

- Irrigation Drain
- Ag. Equipment
- Ag. Market shade
- Solar Pump
- Thunder storm Shelter

Types of CD SP

- Agriculture Training
- Horticulture Training
- Fruit & Flower Production
- Pesticides Free veg. Production
- High value crop production

Agriculture Training Coverage By Divisions

DIVISION	TRAINEES
Barishal	5,955
Chottogram	26,470
Dhaka	17,536
Khulna	14,658
Mymensingh	3,705
Rajshahi	18,682
Rangpur	10,603
Sylhet	7,371
TOTAL	104,980

Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) provided Training to their farmers group or individual beneficiaries through UGDP Funding channelized through Upazila Parishad.

Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division (LGD)

UGDP'S Capacity Development Program

APRW 23

Divisional Level Orientation

Divisional Level Orientation2

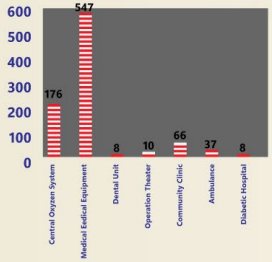
14,699 People Trained under UGDP Capacity Development Program

Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division (LGD)

UGDP's Contribution in Health Sector

Sub-project Name	Number of Upazilas	Item Quantity (Nos)
Central Oxygen System	152	1695 No Cylinder
Medical Equipment	260	20,029
Dental Unit	8	8
Operation Theater	9	9
Community Clinic	54	259
Ambulance	36	47
Diabetic Hospital	6	6

NUMBER OF SUB-PROJECTS



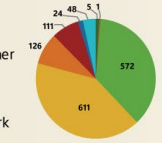
Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division (LGD)

UGDP's Contribution in Education Sector

Sub-project Name	Number of Upazilas	Item Quantity (Nos)
High Low Bench(Pair)	336	1,32,316
School Building & Room Construction	267	1,154
Computer (Desktop Laptop & All in One)	93	2,260
Multimedia Equipment	86	1,516
Science Lab	17	24
Hygiene Corner	39	138
School Bus	4	7
Education Park	1	1

NUMBER OF SUB-PROJECTS

- High Low Bench(Pair)
- School Building/Room Construction
- Computer (Desktop/Laptop/All in One)
- Multimedia Equipment
- Science Lab
- Hygiene Corner
- School Bus
- Education Park

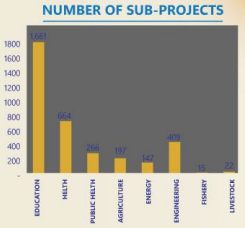


Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division (LGD)

Summary of the Key Outputs of Infrastructure Sub Projects

Sector	Male	Female	T.Gender	Total Beneficiaries
Education	5,508,494	4,989,692	6,351	10,504,537
Health	18,705,438	19,503,451	3,894	38,212,783
Public Helth	2,248,031	1,182,192	2,055	3,432,278
Agriculture	2,712,942	2,359,975	76	5,072,993
Energy	3,976,153	2,617,570	1,238	6,594,961
Engineering	6,196,019	5,140,142	2182	11,338,343
Fishery	64,500	43,290	5	107,795
Livestock	605,625	305,103	-	910,728
TOTAL	**40,017,202**	**36,141,415**	**15,801**	**76,174,418**

NUMBER OF SUB-PROJECTS



Summary of the Key Outputs of Capacity Development Sub Projects

Sector	Male	Female	T.Gender	Total Beneficiaries
Primary Education	31,170	24,437	0	55,607
Secondary and madrasa Education	84,254	79,409	0	163,663
Women Development	66,997	101,186	45	168,228
Skill Development and Income Generation Activity (IGA) Training	14,801	10,806	26	25,633
Public Health	17,601	20,474	14	38,089
Health and Family Welfare	63,926	152,318	294	216,538
Social Welfare	28,556	24,080	89	52,725
Youth and Sports	26,384	10,995	29	37,408
Agriculture and Irrigation	70,165	25,521	120	95,806
Fishery and Livestock	75,005	28,817	35	103,857
Forestry and Environment	4,325	3,326	0	7,651
Small and Cottage Industry	626	1,060	1	1,687
Management Capacity Development	9,357	2,936	0	12,293
ICT	21,581	9,573	0	31,154
Communication and Physical Infrastructure Development	36,887	8,863	3	45,753
Land Administration	20,953	7,618	0	28,571
Law and Order	64,212	26,651	14	90,877
Total	**636,800**	**538,070**	**670**	**1,175,540**

UGDP'S Contribution to SDG Localization

UPAZILA GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (UGDP)
LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION

Avarage Score of Performance Assesment (1-5)

- The number of upazillas passed preconditions has incresed.
- Both average and median scores steadily improved.

UPAZILA GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (UGDP)
LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION

UGDP'S Contribution to E-Governance

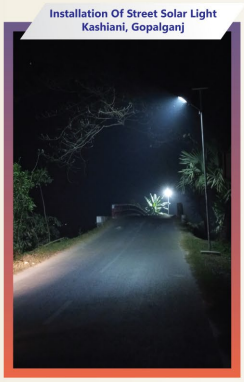
- **6209** Government Employees Trained on Electronic Filing System (e-governance)
- **2348** Government Employees Trained on Electronic Land Mutation
- **4772** Government Employees Trained on Electronic Government Procurement
- **9138** Government Employees Trained on Web-portal management
- **16326** Government Teachers Trained on digital content making & Presentation
- **5206** Unemployed Youths Trained on Freelancing Outsourcing

UPAZILA GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (UGDP)
LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION

UGDP Contribution In Governance Improvement

Dhaka Division

Wash-block Cum Passenger Shade
Karimganj Upazila, Kishoreganj


Installation Of Street Solar Light
Kashiani, Gopalganj

Grameen Ambulance, Saturia, Manikgonj

Pd, Ugdp's Field Visit To Bandar
Narayanganj

Market Shed, Nikli, Kishoreganj

83 Upazilas In 13 Districts
PA 5 Average Score 69.4
Infrastructure Sub-projects 621
Capacity Development Sub-projects 1777

Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

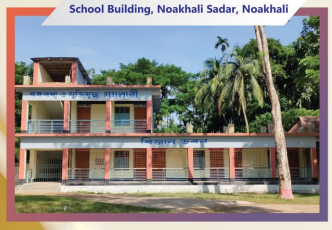
UGDP Contribution In Governance Improvement

Chattogram Division

Water Ambulance Supply
Ramgati, Lakshmipur

Irrigation Drain
Rangunia, Chottogram

College Bus, Daudkandi Cumilla


School Building, Noakhali Sadar, Noakhali

Slaughterhouse, Dighinala, Khagrachari

102 Upazilas In 11 Districts
PA 5 Average Score 71.6
Infrastructure Sub-projects 731
Capacity Development Sub-projects 1942

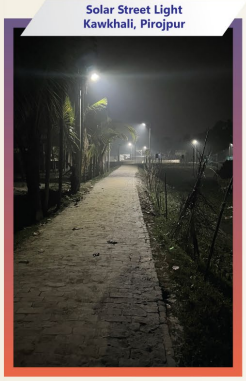
Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

UGDP Contribution In Governance Improvement

Barisal Division

Power Tiller For Farmers Groups
Banaripara, Barishal

Solar Street Light
Kawkhali, Pirojpur



Reconstruction Of Community Clinic
Nalchity, Jhalakathi

Reverse Osmosis Plant, Indurkani, Pirojpur

High-low Bench Supply
Kawkhali, Pirojpur

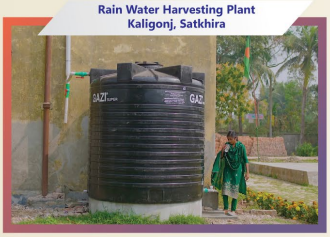
41 Upazilas In 06 Districts
PA 5 Average Score 63.6
Infrastructure Sub-projects 278
Capacity Development Sub-projects 760

Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

UGDP Contribution In Governance Improvement

Khulna Division

Rain Water Harvesting Plant
Kaligonj, Satkhira



Water Treatment Plant
Kalaroa, Satkhira

Iron Bridge, Morrelgonj
Bagerhat

Education Park, Salikha, Magura

Sanitary Nepkin Training
Kumarkhali, Kushtia

59 Upazilas In 10 Districts
PA 5 Average Score 74.2
Infrastructure Sub-projects 459
Capacity Development Sub-projects 1270

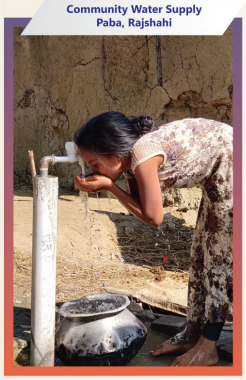
Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

UGDP Contribution In Governance Improvement

Rajshahi Division

Bench Distribution Hon. Ict State Minister
Palak Mp-singra-natore

Community Water Supply
Paba, Rajshahi



Dryer Machine (Agriculture)
Natore Sadar, Natore

Science Lab
Puthiya, Rajshahi

Medical Equipment
Bholahat, Chapainawabgonj

67 Upazilas In 08 Districts
PA 5 Average Score 80.5
Infrastructure Sub-projects 521
Capacity Development Sub-projects 1485

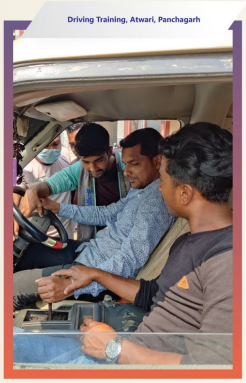
Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

UGDP Contribution In Governance Improvement

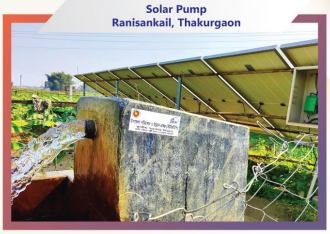
Rangpur Division

Dental Unit
Fulchhari,gaibandha

Driving Training, Atwari, Panchagarh

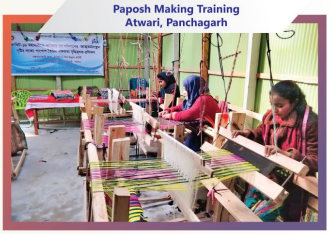


Solar Pump
Ranisankail, Thakurgaon



Online Frelance Training Center
Debiganj, Panchagarh

Paposh Making Training
Atwari, Panchagarh



56 Upazilas In 08 Districts
PA 5 Average Score 72.4
Infrastructure Sub-projects 385
Capacity Development Sub-projects 1052

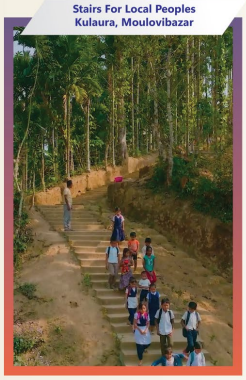
Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

UGDP Contribution In Governance Improvement

Sylhet Division

Patient Waiting Room
Osmaninagar, Sylhet

Stairs For Local Peoples
Kulaura, Moulovibazar



Autistic School
Moulvibazar Sadar, Moulvibazar

Fish Shade
Madhabpur, Habiganj

Central Oxygen System
Derai , Sunamganj

37 Upazilas In 04 Districts
PA 5 Average Score 62.4
Infrastructure Sub-projects 236
Capacity Development Sub-projects 685

Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division

UGDP Contribution In Governance Improvement

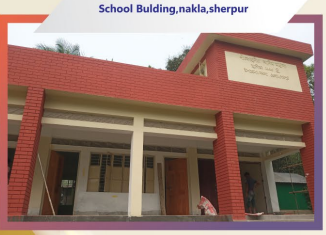
Mymensingh Division

Women's Training Centre
Netrokona Sadar, Netrokona

Diabetic Hospita, Nandail
Mymensingh

Computer Lab, Sreebardi Sherpur

School Bulding,nakla,sherpur



Computer Lab, Sreebardi Sherpur

30 Upazilas In 04 Districts
PA 5 Average Score 65.1
Infrastructure Sub-projects 161
Capacity Development Sub-projects 467

Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
Local Government Division