

★ People's Participation

★ Accuracy & Accountability

★ Excluded People's Rights



COAST Foundation has been implementing a project named “Citizens’ Engagement in Public Institutions (CEPI) Project” from January 2019 which is technically supported by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and financially supported by FCDO. The project runs its activities in Bhola Sadar, Daulatkhan and Lalmohan Upazila under Bhola District. Its goal is to uphold the poor, marginalized and socially excluded people obtaining rights and access to materials, resources and services from the responsive public institutions (LGIs).

The LGI’s sector-based development budgets is increasing as five-year plans get more priority

Following the five-year plan, the Union Parishad is now developing an Annual Development Plan [ADP]. In this process, non- infrastructural development plans, as well as infrastructural plans, are getting equal importance. Locals feel that the adoption of priority-based projects in



Mr. Golam Mostafa, Chairman, Ramagonj UP, is taking public opinion on proposed budget. Photo: Noman- PF

the ADP has created an opportunity to implement their long-term demands. In the current fiscal year of 2021-22, the Ramaganj Union Parishad has allocated a total of 8.2 million for the development budget, of which more than 75% of the plans have been adopted from the five-year plan which was only 35% in the last fiscal year.

Mr. Golam Mostafa, Chairman of the Ramagong Union, said that to achieve balanced development, it is necessary to have a long-term plan. Apart from the allocation for infrastructure development, we have also given more importance to health, education, agriculture, safe water, irrigation system, and human resource development sector in the current year budget.

Mr. Jhunnur Rahman, President of the Union Citizens 'Forum, said that the Citizens' Forum has been continuously lobbying with the Union Parishad for the adoption of priority-based development plans and budget allocation. We observed the institutional change in the UP has begun, they are emphasizing citizen demands in adopting and implementing development plans.

To prevent spreading corona virus in the project area daylong miking and leaflet distribution to raise community awareness

The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic situation is increasing in our project working area. The people are being affected more day by day. In the future, COVID may be long term terrible because of people’s free movement and extra Haat-Bazaar for livestock purchasing for Eid-ul-Adha. Considering the situation analysis, the Upazila administration requested us to organize daylong miking for increasing mass awareness to prevent the spreading of COVID-19.

The initiative was seen seriously and prompt action was taken. The public is made aware through miking and leaflet distribution in the project working area. In addition



Daylong miking & leaflet distribution addressing COVID-19, North Digholdi Union, 18 July’21. Photo: Rahman- PF

that we have developed an audio clip as part of the campaign to raise community awareness. According to the local people’s thought, many people have come to the village for Eid-ul-Adha, so the infection is likely to increase. Local people and the administration thanked to COAST for taking such a timely great initiative.

A virtual seminar was held to share one year project progress, learning, challenges, strategy and next action plan details.

Virtual seminar with stakeholders and project staff was held on 13 July 2021 at 07:30 PM to share **one year project progress, learning, challenges, strategy and next action plan details**. Different stakeholders from project working area have participated in this meeting. The meeting was presided over by Professor Shafia Khatun, Secretary- District Citizen Forum and Panel Chairman, Zilla Parishad, Bhola. **An overview of the project was presented to show the impact level progress and systematic changes.**

The proposal to disclosure five years plan book of LGIs in the presence of local Member of the Parliament (MP) Daulatkhan Upazila citizen forum members were expressed their feelings positively that are willing to organize the event in their Upazila. From the each meeting everyone must take structural and nonstructural scheme especially for Tube well which should implement



Key discussion moment of virtual seminar, 13 July 2021

by next 5 years. A proposal to organize virtual meeting with stakeholders' bi-monthly basis. The participants will from 4 of district, 3 of each Upazila and 2 for each LGIs forum. An online group will be created for communication of the members of district, Upazila and union citizen forum.

Our strategies and achievements; what works well and what doesn't work

Strategies that worked well: (a) **Participatory Planning Meeting:** The annual budget of LGIs increased on different sectors. (b) **Applying Social Accountability (SA) Tools to increase service at the grassroots level:** The role of mediation of local government representatives for decision making was extremely important. (c) **Annual Meeting with Chairmen and Secretaries:** We can see that those decisions have played a vital role to ensure governance.

Strategies that didn't work well: (a) **Mobilization for Tax Collection to increase own revenue:** The people have no willingness to pay annual tax and similarly, LGIs have no interest to take tax collection from the political interest. (b) **Day Observation (Rights to Information):** Due to the Pandemic and government restriction, this strategy did not work well. (c) **Initiatives to economically empower**

poor women and adolescents: This type of government initiative at the local level is currently postponed.

Limitations and challenges faced during the implementation of project activities

(a) In this present situation, the reality is that some UP chairmen are uncertain about their candidacy in the next elections, so they are frustrated and staying most of the time in Dhaka for lobbying with MPs. That is why they give less time to the Union Parishad. (b) The local political leaders pressured the UP representatives to get the benefit for the selected beneficiaries politically. That is why it becomes challenging to ensure benefits for the project's targeted beneficiaries. (c) The pandemic COVID situation being a long term we faced a challenge to ensure the presence of LGIs representatives, government officials in the meeting.

Lessons learned and best practice (Learning)

(a) If the citizens raise their demands strongly to the Local Governments, then it is possible to adopt an annual development plan according to the five-year plan. Which is necessary for balanced and sustainable development. (b) If the citizens can be involved in the participatory budgetary process, it is possible to increase the sector-wise annual budget in response to local needs and demands. (c) Local problems can be solved locally if local citizens can acquire the skills to identify and raise their issues and give pressure to local representatives together through citizen dialogue.

Project Activities: Target & Achievement in July 2021

Sl	Activities	Target	Perform
1	Miking Addressing COVID-19	11	11
2	Union citizen forum meeting	06	06
3	UDCC meeting of LGIs	11	03
4	Ward citizen forum meeting	33	14
5	Social audit on SSN sector	02	02
6	Citizens' representation in different Govt. committee	150	181

The project all staff coordinated providing necessary information to publish it.

For details information and communication:

Mobile: +880 1708 12 04 14

Email: monir1992.coast@gmail.com

COAST Foundation, CEPI Project Implementation Unit, Circuit House Road, Bhola Sadar, Bhola- 8300 published and preserved. For visiting website: www.coastbd.net