

FINAL REPORT

**REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE INTERVENTIONS OF  
SHOUHARDO II PROGRAM OF CARE BANGLADESH**



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September 17, 2014

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The study team wishes to express their gratitude to CARE Bangladesh for the opportunity given to them to carry out this review. , The Chief of Party, Marc Nosbach, provided highly useful clarification about the broader context and overall objective of the review at the very start of the assignment. SHOUHARDO II staff members based in the Dhaka Office of CARE Bangladesh – particularly HJM Kamal, National Technical Coordinator and Mannan Mazumder, Senior Technical Manager-Governance – also extended valuable cooperation to the team throughout the entire duration of the study. Many other CARE personnel as well as SHOUHARDO II program staff members based in partner NGOs have been equally supportive. We thank them all.

We are particularly grateful to more than two hundred individuals – ranging from project participants to UP representatives and government officials at various levels – who generously made themselves available for interviews and discussion sessions, patiently responding to our questions, sharing their experiences, and providing necessary information, clarifications, and perspectives. It may be mentioned that the data collection part of the present study was carried out during Ramadan, the fasting month for Muslims, posing some logistical limitations that could be easily overcome with the help of all concerned.

Special thanks are due to various staff members of SHOUHARDO II or other units of CARE Bangladesh who provided valuable comments and suggestions on the draft report. Since such feedbacks were usually forwarded to the review team indirectly, without the commentators named, we have not tried to identify and name them individually here. But they know who they are and we hope that they will find that their comments and suggestions are reflected in, and has helped to improve, this final report.

While we remain grateful to all those who provided information, support and cooperation to us, it goes without saying that no one outside the study team bears any responsibility for any aspects of the interpretation and analysis offered in this report. The study team as a whole and contractually speaking the Team Leader in particular, takes the responsibility for any shortcomings of the study. It is our hope that the findings and recommendations of this report will be deemed useful by those who may be using it in the course of further evaluation and refinement of SHOUHARDO II.

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September 17, 2014

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BDT	Bangladeshi Taka (name of local currency)
CAP	Community Action Plan
CAV	Community Agriculture Volunteer
CF	Community Facilitator
CHV	Community Health Volunteer
COG	Core Occupational Group
CRC	Community Resource Center
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DAE	Department of Agriculture Extension
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EKATA	Empowerment Knowledge And Transformative Action
EVAW	End Violence Against Women
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FF	Field Facilitator
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCS	Labour Contracting Society
LEB	Local Elected Body
LGSP	Local Government Support Project
LOA	Life of Award
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSS	Management Score Sheet
NBD	Nation Building Department
NNPC	Nari Nirjaton Protirodh Committee (Committee for resisting oppression of women)
PACC	Program Advisory and Coordinating Committees
PEP	Poor and Extreme Poor
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
PNGO	Partner NGO
SHOUHARDO II	Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities II
SO	Strategic Objective
TOR	Terms of Reference
UDCC	Union Development Coordination Committee
UDMC	Union Disaster Management Committee
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi (Executive) Officer
UP	Union Parishad
USCC	Upzila ShouharDO II Coordination Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present review examines the results of the governance interventions of SHOUHARDO II program, which CARE Bangladesh and its partners have implemented in different parts of Bangladesh since 2010 with the objective of transforming the lives of poor and extreme poor households in some of the poorest areas of the country. In order to achieve the overall goal of reducing the vulnerability to food insecurity of the targeted households, SHOUHARDO II pursues a total of five strategic objectives (SOs), one of which (SO-4) deals specifically with trying to make Union Parishads and government line departments more responsive and accountable to the poor.

### Objective and methodology of the study

This review has been commissioned with focus on SO-4 and having as its main objective the study of the impact of improved governance on the food and livelihood security of poor and extreme poor beneficiaries, and to generate better understanding of the nature and quality of engagement of poor and extreme poor women in local governance structures and processes.

The methodology employed involved review of documents and qualitative data collection from the field – using FGDs and KIs – carried out during July 5-24, 2014. Study sites were selected on the basis of purposive sampling, representing Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Union Parishads (UPs) at different levels of performance and comprising a total of 16 villages from 8 Unions in 4 Upazilas (1 per project region). Altogether, 36 persons were interviewed and a total of 23 Focus Group Discussion sessions (FGDs) involving around 200 persons were held.

### Key findings

Findings from the review generally confirmed positive trends reported by relevant reports and studies of SHOUHARDO II, e.g. the midterm review and recent project progress reports. In broad terms, the **positive changes** on which different groups of stakeholders – project participants, staff members and representatives of UPs and National Building Departments (NBDs) – generally agree are as follows:

- SHOUHARDO II project interventions have resulted into the Union Parishads and NBDs being generally more responsive and accessible to PEP project participants.
- The poor and extreme poor are seeking services from the Union Parishad and NBDs on larger scales, and in return they are also receiving improved services.
- Participation of the poor and extreme poor – especially of women – in the affairs of Union Parishads through VDCs has increased.
- VDCs have meant greater voice, better services, and more initiatives for the poor
- Improved participation of women in local governance structures and processes are taking place in the context of broader efforts to promote women's empowerment, and slow but steady progress relating to changes in women's role and status at home and beyond.
- In terms of impact of improved local governance on the food security of PEP, various interventions of SHOUHARDO II – including those related to governance – are largely on track.

Some **issues** that came up in the course of the present study, and may warrant further attention – from the perspective of governance – in the course of remaining implementation of SHOUHARDO II, or in designing its successor program, are noted below:

- The positive changes noted in general terms above are not necessarily taking place equally everywhere. Factors such as geographical or social barriers may be slowing down the pace of desired changes in many places.
- Changes in quantitative indicators do not necessarily reflect equivalent degrees of qualitative changes, e.g. when it comes to some fundamental issues such as deeply entrenched attitudes of men towards women.
- At present UPs are not necessarily properly resourced or capacitated to do what is expected of them. Yet outside agencies, project and programs – including SHOUHARDO - may add to their workload without necessarily providing them with extra resources or working strategically by seeking systemic changes and synergistic effects.
- Improved governance cannot be achieved without changes in attitudes, behavior and institutional practices. Positive changes at this level remain somewhat localized or isolated, and are not necessarily part of any wider and systemic change at present.
- At present involvement of UPs in SHOUHARDO II program is mainly ensured through top-down means. Opportunities to generate interest locally and to facilitate linkages among UPs and other actors are not explored adequately.
- There may be room for improvement in supporting better coordination and communication at the field level in the context of services provided by government and non-government organizations.
- Many project participants were found to be using various acronyms, technical or English terms used by SHOUHARDO II, indicating that not enough effort may have been made to ‘translate’ these terms in the local context.
- During the study, one issue that was found foremost on many people’s minds was that of the future of SHOUHARDO II. A large number of informants demanded expansion of geographical coverage of the project as well as its extension into the future, and many were generally concerned about possible end of the project.

### Recommendations

Most of the issues noted above are fairly broad and cannot be addressed adequately within the remainder of the implementation period of SHOUHARDO II. These may be taken into account in designing a successor program. However, in the context of the upcoming end of SHOUHARDO II, some immediate measures that could be taken (by project staff members) –in line with the exit plan of the program – are noted first below; then the longer term options are listed down.

#### Short term recommendations:

- Communicating SHOUHARDO II’s exit plan as early as possible to all stakeholders, especially to the VDCs, project participants, and PNGOs.
- Taking necessary measures to ensure the participation of VDC members in different Union Parishad or union level committees after phase out.
- As Community Resource Centers are envisaged to be important centres for post project activities, establishing linkages and coordination among adjacent VDCs, including those that do not have such facilities may be considered.
- Linking up weak VDCs with nearby stronger VDCs through effective facilitation, coordination and communication may generally be considered.

- Registered facilities – evolving out of program supported platforms - may also be utilized as centres for facilitating activities of VDCs after phase out.
- Introducing VDCs with other NGOs operating in the area.

### Long term recommendations:

- Building more flexibility into program design to allow for tailored (e.g. Haor-specific) interventions taking into account local specificities.
- Co-financing mechanisms may be explored as a way of leveraging project resources to influence governance structures and processes going beyond meeting targets related to project specific service delivery.
- Deepening and broadening work related to attitudes, behavior and institutional practices, e.g. building on starts made in relation to changing attitudes of men regarding the participation of women in local governance, community affairs and local development.
- Greater emphasis on capacity building of local government bodies, and strengthening their relationships with community groups, NGOs and various NBDs, and advocacy with the government and local government bodies on governance issues (e.g. related to greater decentralization, devolution etc.).
- Continuing to improve coordination mechanisms, together with greater exchanges of experiences and knowledge sharing; establishing greater linkages with other NGOs operating in the area for long term support
- Paying greater attention to translating project related information and messages in terms of linguistic and cultural categories that are familiar in the local context, and aiming for project staff to speak the language of the project participants rather than the other way around.
- As the exit plan of SHOUARDO II disseminated, it may be refined and strengthened further in some areas. For example, it presently places more stakes on individual focal persons of VDCs for continuing its activities. There should be greater emphasis on collective efforts instead. All measures proposed should be communicated to and equally understood by all concerned.

On the whole, it is noted that although SHOUHARDO-II has a strategic objective specifically devoted to governance, other areas of the program's intervention also are related to governance in various ways. As such, there is no fundamental difference between the issues and themes that programs or projects specially thought of under the heading of governance, and a program such as SHOUHARDO II which may be conceived of as 'food security' program with a strong focus on governance. SHOUHARDO II program can deepen and broaden its governance interventions in the future by building up further on the solid experience it has on the ground, and by drawing on the lessons and experiences of others, to start influencing systems and practices more strategically to keep contributing to the eradication of extreme poverty in Bangladesh.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

The SHOUHARDO (Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities) II Program of CARE Bangladesh, which has been implemented since June 2010 in four regions of the country, has the following overall goal:

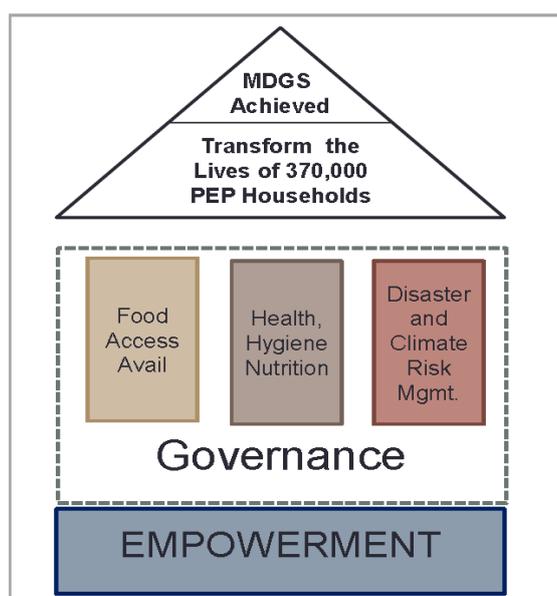
*Transform the lives of 370,000 Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) households (HH) in 11 of the poorest and marginalized districts in Bangladesh by reducing their vulnerability to food insecurity.*

In order to achieve the above goal, five Strategic Objectives (SOs), as listed below, have been established:

- **SO-1:** “Availability of” and “access to” nutritious foods enhanced and protected for 370,000 PEP households.
- **SO-2:** Improved health, hygiene and nutrition status of 281,000 children under 2 years of age.
- **SO-3:** PEP women and adolescent girls empowered in their families, communities and Union Parishad.
- **SO-4:** Local elected bodies and government service provider’s responsiveness and accountability to the PEP increased.
- **SO-5:** Targeted community members and government institutions are better prepared for, mitigate, and respond to disasters and adapt to climate change.

The interrelationships of the different strategic objectives and the higher goals are represented diagrammatically below (using a figure taken from a SHOUHARDO II program document):

**Revised Conceptual Model - The SHOUHARDO II House**



The present review relates to the Strategic Objective (SO) 4, which has two intermediate results, as described below:

- IR4.1: Nation Building Departments (NBD) and Union Parishads proactively work to address the needs of the PEP, especially women.
- IR 4.2: PEP access to entitlements and services increased, including safety nets and natural resources.

In pursuing the intermediate results related to SO-4, the principal means used by SHOUHARDO II include Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Program Advisory and Coordination Committees (PACCs). VDCs are formed with the interested natural leaders – both men and women – of the community for empowering local communities to develop and implement plans for community-driven development in the community. These committees are also responsible for addressing the development needs of poor and extreme poor households and serve as liaisons between poor and extreme poor and government service providers. The VDC members are given training on different issues and to leverage necessary services to meet the livelihood needs of the poor and extreme poor, through facilitated linkages with Union Parishads (UPs) and Nation Building Departments (NBDs). The VDC members and the representatives of poor and extreme poor are co-opted in the different standing committees of the Union Parishads. VDCs are also given direct responsibility for coordinating and supporting the efforts of volunteers engaged in different program SOs, including Community Health Volunteers (CHVs), Community Agriculture Volunteers (CAVs), EKATA group, ECCD (Early Childhood Care and Development) management committee, Disaster Volunteers and EAW (End Violence Against Women) forum members. Program guidance suggests that VDCs should be comprised of minimum 11 individual members, at least 50% of whom should be women.

The SHOUHARDO II Program has a formal agreement with the Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives to form the Program Advisory and Coordinating Committees (PACCs) at national, divisional, district and Upazila levels consisting of representatives of 13 ministries (In practice the acronym PACC is reserved for the national level only, and the committees at district and upazila levels are referred to as SHOUHARDO II Coordination Committees). At the Upazila level the 'PACC' (i.e. USCC) also includes Union Parishad chairpersons as its members. The SHOUHARDO II Program is also member of PACCs at all levels. The overall role of the PACCs are to coordinate the activities of various government departments involved in SHOUHARDO II and provide advice on policy and implementation as necessary. National and Divisional PACCs are scheduled to convene semi-annually, the District PACC meets three times a year, and the Upazila PACCs quarterly. Trainings are given to NBDs officials on good governance, roles and responsibilities of NBDS and Local Elected Bodies (LEBs), development planning and implementation, resource mobilization and allocation, linkages between governance institutions, and facilitation of community participation in government structures and processes.

The SO-4 is a cross-cutting objective closely linked with other SOs of SHOUHARDO II. The achievements of those objectives also depend on the committees and achievement of results under SO-4. A midterm review of SHOUHARDO II indicated that there has been significant progress towards achievement of the intermediate results under SO-4. However, it has been determined that there are some areas – particularly relating to the quality of involvement of poor and extreme poor

women in local governance structures, and the impact of improved governance on the food and livelihood security of poor and extreme poor beneficiaries – that need a more in-depth review. It was in that context that the present study has been commissioned.

## **1.2. Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the review, as laid out in the Terms of Reference (TOR) (Annex 1), has been to study the impact of improved governance on the food and livelihood security of poor and extreme poor beneficiaries, and to generate better understanding of the nature and quality of involvement of poor and extreme poor women in local governance structures.

In examining the extent to which the poor and extreme poor women (program participants of SHOUHARDO II) are engaging within local government (Union Parishad) structures in an effective and meaningful way, one specific objective of the review has been to capture the obstacles and challenges women face in the context of their engagement within local government structures as well as processes including the experience and process for the inclusion of Community Action Plans (CAPs) into the Union Parishad budget. Efforts have been made to capture the perception of men in relation to women's participation within local governance structures, and also to identify the trends and changes in perception that may have occurred over the life of the SHOUHARDO II program. Based on observations in the identified areas, the review has sought to offer recommendations on how quality participation of poor and extreme poor women may be enhanced by programs such as SHOUHARDO II, and also on how SHOUHARDO II program team members and EKATA groups may better support women in emerging as public leaders in Union Parishads.

The other specific objective of the study has been to demonstrate and capture the results/impact of improved governance (as can be attributed to SHOUHARDO II interventions) on food and livelihood security of poor and extreme poor beneficiaries. Specifically the study was meant to investigate a) the role of the poor and extreme poor in decisions made by Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC), Union Development Coordination Committees at the Union level and Program Advisory and Coordinating Committee (PACC) at the Upazila level; b) how these decisions have affected program implementation and outcomes, especially in relation to the food and livelihoods security of program poor and extreme poor and other non-program poor and extreme poor (Union Parishad area only); c) linkages between Union Parishad and the VDC/Communities; d) linkage between the Nation Building Departments (NBDs) and the VDC/Communities; and e) changes in the mindset of representatives of Union Parishads and NBDs to be pro-poor and pro-women. Recommendations on specific actions are being made based on the findings, so that the program can maintain the desired level of "pro-poor engagement" by local governance structures (Union and Upazila levels), as well as increase meaningful participation of poor and extreme poor.

## **1.3. Methodology**

This review, carried out by a team of six (Annex 2) as per an agreed schedule (Annex 3), was designed to be a study with focus on qualitative methods of generating primary data along with use of secondary data gleaned from program documents (Annex 4). The main qualitative research tools employed were Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Data collection from the field using FGDs and KIIs was carried out during the period from July 5-24, 2014.

## REVIEW OF SHOUHARDO II GOVERNANCE INTERVENTIONS (FINAL REPORT)

The review covered each of the 4 geographical regions that SHOUHARDO II works in. Specific sites for field visits were selected on the basis of purposive sampling, representing VDCs and Union Parishads at different levels of performance and comprising a total of 16 villages from 8 Unions in 4 Upazilas distributed in four regions (one district per region, one Upazila per district, two Unions per Upazila, and two villages per Union, as shown in Table 1 below). Unions and villages were selected on the basis of Management Score Sheet (MSS) data maintained by SHOUHARDO II, which ranked



Photo 1: FGD with a PEP group, Dharmapasha

different Union Parishads and VDCs on the basis of their performance against SO-4 related indicators. The breakdown of the different categories of unions and villages covered by the review is shown below:

**Table 1: Breakdown of sites according to performance ranking of Ups and VDCs**

Performance	No. of UPs	No. of VDCs	Remarks
High	3	6	A 'high performing' union may contain a village performing relatively poorly, and vice versa. Selections made using Shouhardo MSS data.
Medium	3	6	
Low	2	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	

**Table 2: Geographical distribution of FGDS and KIIs (as originally planned):**

Sl	Zone (Z)	District (D)	Upazila (Uz)	Union (Un)	Village (V)	NO. of FGD*	No. of KII**	Stakeholders
1.	Z1	D1	Uz 1	Un 1	V1, V2	6	8	VDCs, PACCs, UPs, officials of NBDs, CARE and PNGO staff in the field, program participants, SHOUHARDO II senior management, national level PACC members, and government officials
				Un 2	V3, V4			
2.	Z2	D2	Uz 2	Un 3	V5, V6	6	8	
				Un 4	V7, V8			
3.	Z3	D3	Uz 3	Un 5	V9, V10	6	8	
				Un 6	V11, V12			
4.	Z4	D4	Uz 4	Un 7	V13,	6	8	
				Un 8	V15, V16			
5.	Dhaka				-	-	3	
Total	4/4	4/11	4/30	8/172	16/1558	24	35	

**Note:** Annex 5 provides the names of specific study sites, which were selected in consultation with SHOUHARDO II management.

## REVIEW OF SHOUHARDO II GOVERNANCE INTERVENTIONS (FINAL REPORT)

FGDs were conducted at village and Union levels, while at the Upazila level and above, the main method of data collection was KII, which was used alongside FGD at Union and village levels as well. Altogether 24 FGDs and 35 KIIs with different stakeholders were planned (Tables 2-4), but some minor adjustments had to be made on the ground due to unavoidable circumstances. For example, one FGD with Union Parishad and NBDs in Palongkhali Union in Cox's Bazar could not be held due to severe weather condition and landslide warning. Instead of the FGD that was cancelled in Cox's Bazar, one KII with the Union Parishad chairman was conducted. Altogether, over 36 persons were interviewed in the end (Annex 6) and a total of 23 FGDs (Annex 7) involving around 200 persons were held.

**Table 3: Distribution of FGDs (@8-12 persons per session) by stakeholders:**

Sl. No.	Category of stakeholders	Number of FGDS	Remarks
1	Project participants (PEP beneficiaries)	2	In two of four target villages
2	VDC members	2	In other two villages
3	UP (including union level NBD officials)	2	
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	

**Table 4: Distribution of KIIs by stakeholders (in each region):**

Sl. No.	Category of stakeholder	Number of KIIs	Remarks
1	Project participants (PEP beneficiaries)	2	At least one female
2	VDC members	1	Any active and knowledgeable member
3	UP	1	UP chair or councillors
4	NBD Officials	1	At union or upazila level
5	PACC	1	At Upazila level
6	SHOUHARDO II staff	2	Both PNGO/CARE and frontline/managers
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	



**Photo 2: A key informant interview (KII) in progress**

Apart from review of documents, FGDs and KIIs, if and when possible, members of the research team tried to attend relevant ongoing events (such as a prescheduled UDCC meeting in Dimla, Nilphamari) that helped them observe firsthand the institutional and local cultural dynamics

involved. The study team also visited a village in Maddhanagar Union in Sunamganj for better understanding of the geographical characteristics of the Haor region and the life of people there.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this section, the key findings of the study are presented in relation to some broad headings, namely: 1) Union Parishads and NBDs, 2) VDCs, 3) women's participation in local governance, 4) impact of improved local governance on the food security of PEP, and 5) miscellaneous issues. Before going straight into the findings, however, we may take note of the nature and context of the focus of SHOUHARDO II on governance. In this regard, we may begin by recalling that the constitution of Bangladesh provides for elected local governments at all levels of administration. However, except at the very lowest tier – where there are Union Parishads – the system of local governments to date remains largely underdeveloped. Even the Union Parishads (UPs), which have been in existence for a much longer period and are constituted through elections that are held relatively smoothly and regularly, do not yet function in the way they are meant to. Generally speaking, most of the UPs do not yet function by maintaining sufficient levels of participation, transparency and accountability. In particular, they display little pro-poor and gender sensitive responsiveness. Instead, most UPs tend to follow conventional practices of elite-dominated decision making, thereby perpetuating existing systems of social inequalities, exclusion and discrimination, particularly when it comes to the poorest and most marginalized segments, including women, of local communities. Apart from having limited spaces for the poor and women, local government bodies also have poorly developed institutional capacities and systems, and function with limited financial resources and authorities. The policy environment is also not very supportive of strong local governments and decentralization. In particular, top level policy makers and bureaucrats remain largely unaware and unsupportive of the achievements and promises of local governments at the grassroots level (Ahmed 2014). However, for over a decade, there have also been concerted efforts, with significant support from development partners of Bangladesh to promote improved local governance in Bangladesh (cf. Hussain 2003).

Against the above background, CARE Bangladesh has been working to promote improved local governance through various initiatives, including local governance-focused pilots and projects (e.g. an inclusive governance pilot in Botlagari; cf. Huq 2003) and paying greater attention to governance over time in the context of food security programming that SHOUHARDO II is the successor to. In this connection, we may recall that one of the main strategic objectives of SHOUHARDO II is to improve local governance (SO-4) for enhancing the food security of targeted beneficiaries. The idea is that if local government (Union Parishad) and NBD officials improve their service delivery by being responsive and accountable to the PEP, the food security of the latter will be improved. This approach rests on general observations – e.g. as documented in the baseline report (CARE 2011) – that services delivered by Union Parishads and NBDs are not at the expected level, especially in relation to the poor people. At the same time, the level of seeking of services by the poor people from UPs and NBDs is also very low.

Union Parishads have 13 standing committees. In addition to these, there are also other special committees linked to the UPs under different government programs and initiatives. Some of the most important of such committees are UDCC, UDMC, Union WASH committee, NNPC, etc. Usually

those committees are formed with the Union Parishad chairmen and members, there is usually no effective or meaningful participation from the community, especially that of the poor and extreme poor. If left to themselves, UP leaders tend to pick members from among their supporters who do not necessarily represent the interest of the poor and in any case such nominations are often mere paper exercises. The social safety net programs of the government are especially designed for ensuring the food safety of the poor and extreme poor but in reality they are often deprived of those supports. Some thirty nine departments of the Bangladesh government also rely on the Union Parishad for reaching the community level. Many of the departments (NBDs) such as health and family welfare, agriculture, livestock, youth development, social welfare and land administration are supposed to have their field level staff members posted at the Union Parishad level, who are supposed to be present at the Union Parishad complex or visiting house to house in the community during the office hours. However, they rarely maintain the desired level of field presence. Many of the departments do not even have any staff member posted at the Union Parishad level. From the point of view of SHOUHARDO II, the most important departments with which the program participants have regular interaction include Agriculture, Health and Family Welfare, Livestock, Youth and Sports, Fisheries, Education, and Social welfare. The elected representatives of the Union Parishads and the NBD personnel are to provide assistance and advice to the people, especially to the poor and extreme poor people. But the latter usually have limited access to the services provided by the former, and they usually also have little capacity to demand and get those services. Lack of awareness and information, coupled with weak negotiation capacity and organization are some key factors behind this general state of affairs.

Despite all the limitations noted above, local people do have interactions with Union Parishad Chairmen and councilors at different levels on different occasions. As members of local communities, they meet in everyday life and social events, but if they need anything from them, community people also go to the Union Parishad members and chairmen personally or in groups. Poor people usually go to them for VGD, VGF cards (known as 'big' and 'small' cards respectively in some places), different allowances for the elderly, disabled, widows, etc. They also seek assistance for installing tube wells, sanitary latrines, seeds for cultivation and improvement of infrastructure in their locality. One of the major reasons why local people go to the Union Parishad representatives is that the latter are expected to play roles in dispute resolution; people seek their mediation or arbitration during dispute with others. In addition to routine but informal mediation and arbitration, the UP representatives can now also redress some disputes through the village court.

### **2.1. Findings related to Union Parishads and NBDs**

Against the general trends noted above, relevant reports and studies of SHOUHARDO – e.g. the midterm review (CARE 2013a) and recent program progress reports (CARE 2013b, 2014a, 2014b) – have reported noticeable improvement, at least insofar as some quantitative indicators are concerned, in the level of responsiveness of UPs and NBDs to the poor and women. The FY 2013 Results Report (CARE 2013b), for example, reports of 121 UPs practicing open budget against Life of Award (LOA) target of 50 UPs, that 62 UPs have allocated increased resources to meet the needs of the PEP against LOA target of 34 UPs, and that an increased no. of UPs (171) co-opted PEPs in different UP committees against the LOA target of 170 UPs. Similarly, the FY 2014 2nd Quarter (Jan-Mar 2014) report that 64% of beneficiary HHs surveyed accessed services from Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) against the baseline of 22.5%; for livestock it is 46% vs. 24%, and for

common resources 67.5% vs. 21% (CARE 2014b). At the level of Union Parishads as a whole, the SHOUHARDO II annual results report for the year 2013 describes that overall management score of the Union Parishads has been reached up to 77 against the program lifetime goal of 70. Findings from the present study may be said to be broadly in line with such quantitative trends as reported. However, observations from the present review indicate that changes in quantitative indicators do not necessarily reflect fundamental changes in terms of the attitudes and practices of duty bearers and service providers. There are of course positive changes at this level too, but they remain somewhat localized or isolated, are not part of any wider and systemic change, something which is probably beyond the scope of a single program like SHOUHARDO II anyway.

### **The Union Parishads are more responsive to PEP program participants of SHOUHARDO II**

Information obtained from FGDs and KIIs indicate that the level of participation of the poor and women in various UP activities and committees has generally increased. According to information provided by FGD participants, VDC members, especially the women, are now incorporated in various Union Parishad Standing Committees and other committees. VDCs have active role in Ward level planning meetings if and when these are held and in open budget sessions, which are held more regularly and widely nowadays. More women now go out and demand services from the Union Parishad, where they can speak directly with the Union Parishad members and chairmen. Community Action Plans (CAPs) prepared by VDCs are also reportedly being incorporated into UP plans and budgets. The unmet demands of the VDCs are often discussed in the UDCC meetings and there are positive trends in terms of resolutions taken in the meetings being implemented. VDCs prepare list of poor and extreme poor people in the locality who are eligible for VGD, VGF cards, 100 days work program and other government stipends under the social safety net programs. They submit those lists to the Union Parishad members, many of which consider such lists as being helpful for them. Otherwise they have to prepare those lists themselves. The VDCs help the Union Parishad representatives organizing meetings at the locality. VDCs also invite the Union Parishad members and Chairmen during their meetings, workshops, preparation of CAP and distribution of goods to the poor. The UP representatives ceremonially hand over the SHOUHARDO II assistance packages to the poor, an act that is



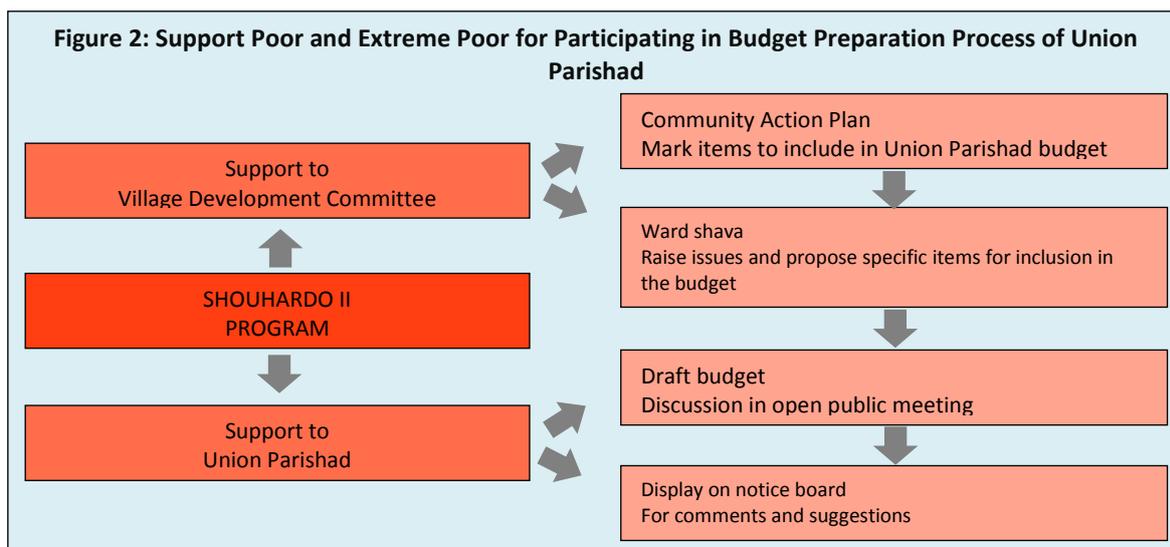
Photo 3: A UDCC meeting in progress in Dimla

very good for improving their image among the people. Participation in SHOUHARDO II events is also a good opportunity for the members and chairmen for meeting their constituency. As some of them put it, many of the SHOUHARDO II activities are similar to those they are supposed to do anyway, so in a way the program is supplementing their work and reducing their burden.

However, as pointed out by some of the UP representatives that the study team spoke to, interventions by SHOUHARDO II sometimes cause some problems too, as the people who are not

included among program beneficiaries may become unhappy at their exclusion and blame the Union Parishad Chairmen-members for that. Besides, people outside the SHOUHARDO II working area, may also feel deprived and think that the Union Parishad officials are colluding in discriminating against them.

Moreover, the Union Parishad members who do not have the program working in their wards are often annoyed with it as it is seen as raising questions among their constituency as to why they are not getting its benefits. In the context of discussing such matters, some of the Union Parishad representatives (around three individuals) even claimed that the activities of SHOUHARDO II



program are carried out without informing them. They also added that if they were informed, coordination and results would have been better. It has also been claimed by some that NGO activities are undermining the importance of Union Parishad, as people think that they need not go to the Union Parishad, instead they can go to the NGOs. There seemed to be some correlation between the grades of UPs and the attitudes of the UP Chairs and members. Those graded higher tended to say more positive things about the program ; on the other hand those graded lower were more critical. However, there were a few instances in which even the UP Chairs and members generally perceived as cooperative made critical remarks.

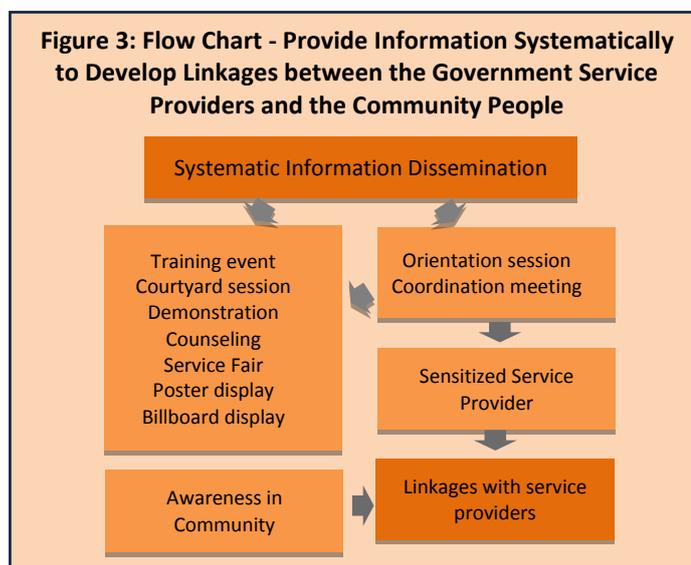
### **NBDs too are generally more responsive and accessible**

As noted already, although field level personnel of agriculture, livestock, land administration, youth development and fisheries departments are supposed to hold offices at the Union Parishad complexes, they remain largely absent; some of the departments such as fisheries and livestock do not have sufficient staff members at the field level, thus finding them or working and liaising with them is difficult. Findings from the study indicate that this situation has improved noticeably in SHOUHARDO II working areas. Earlier NBD officials rarely visited the villages, people did not know about them, about their services and could not contact with them. People did not know earlier that they could seek advice from the health, family planning, agriculture and such other departments for free, now they are aware of it. Now SHOUHARDO II has introduced them with the villagers, and informed the people of their services; all the VDCs have the mobile phone numbers of the NBD field staff members; they now call them if needed and the officials often respond. The health, family welfare and community clinic staffs are more available at Union Parishad level than other

departments. It makes working with them easier and success of SHOUHARDO II is higher with these departments.

People now have more interactions with them and service deliveries of them have improved. But the staff members of the fisheries, livestock and land administration departments are reportedly hard to find. Nonetheless, reportedly they too visit the villages more frequently now than earlier.

People go to the different NBD officials for different needs and demands according to the specialization of their line department. For example, they go to the FWAs of Health and Family Welfare department mostly for contraception, immunization and pre-natal care. The FWAs also provided advice for mothers and infants on nutrition. However, due to lack of training or supplies, they cannot provide some services, for which they refer visitors to FW inspectors or medical officers. The FWAs – and frontline staff of some other NBDs as well – welcome the presence of VDCs, which help them extend their reach by



Source: SHOUHARDO II best practice document

providing them with necessary information about remote villages that NBD officials cannot visit. VDCs also send service seekers from those villages to the NBDs. VDCs inform and gather people during their visits to the villages which reduce their work of visiting house to house.

**The UPs and NBDs from the perspectives of PEP program participants of SHOUHARDO II**

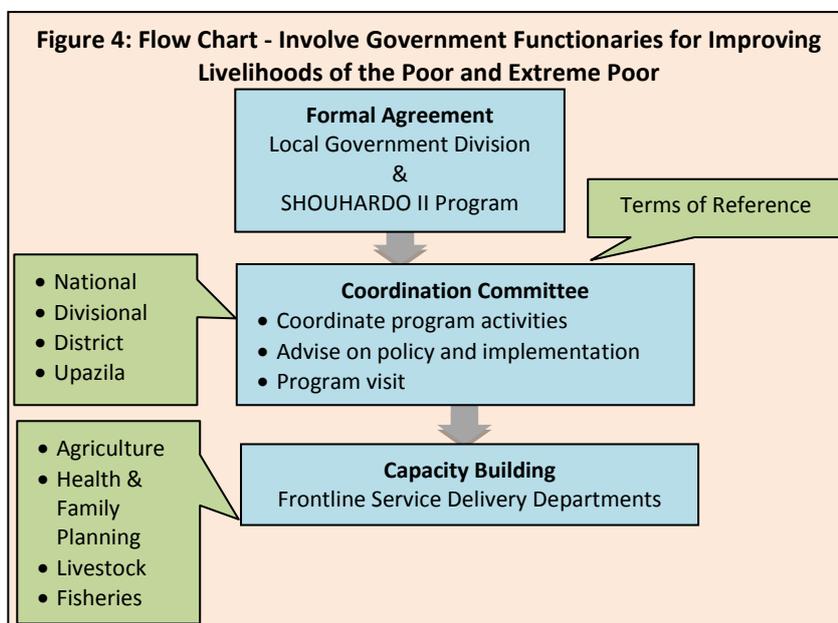
Poor and extreme poor program participants of SHOUHARDO II program say that they have learnt about many things from the program, especially about their rights. As a result their awareness level has risen. Earlier they were unable to go to the Union Parishad or other government offices, they did not have the courage to talk with them and to demand service but now they know about their rights; they have also learnt how to contact with the Union Parishad and NBDs and how to seek service from them. They have learned about domestic violence and child marriage from EKATA, EVAW committees and VDCs. They also receive information from SHOUHARDO II staff about the provisions of social safety net programs. All this helps them deal with the authorities more effectively. Similarly, SHOUHARDO II is assisting them to claim *khas* land from the government and they are now petitioning to the land administration and UNO office for the allocation of *khas* land.

They used to go to the Union Parishad or NBDs alone, now they go in groups so the latter are more likely to listen to them. And as some of them have become well-known to the officials now, even if they go alone, the Union Parishad and NBD officials are more likely to pay attention to and respect them. However, they do still have to continue visiting and trying to persuade the Union Parishad or NBDs for getting their demands met.

**Government directives help SHOUHARDO II to get the support of UPs and NBDs, up to an extent**

In implementing various activities of SHOUHARDHO II, program staff members have to take the support of government officials at various levels. For examples, the UP representatives are provided training on good governance, arranged locally through the facilitation of local civil servants such as UNOs and Deputy Directors of Local Government department. Similarly, in various training events organized at the village

level, help is taken from relevant line department officials. While many of the officials are usually cooperative, there are also those who are not necessarily forthcoming. When the SHOUHARDO II staff members encounters problems (such as lack of full cooperation) from the Union Parishad or government officials, they try to take the matter up with the higher authorities



such as UNO, DC and so on, who – if they are cooperative – then direct the Union Parishad Chairs or other officers to cooperate. If the higher officials themselves are not supportive, then SHOUHARDO II staff members show them the copies of MOUs with concerned ministries (SHOUHARDO has MOUs with 14 ministries) and related circulars (including Terms of Reference of PACC) urging all concerned to extend cooperation to SHOUHARDO II. Such tactics are usually useful to get the job done. However, some of the government or elected officials may still remain uncooperative, in which case SHOUHARDO II staff members have to live with the situation and try to carry out program activities as best as they can, even in the face of humiliation that they may have to put up with. (Referring to such difficulties, one SHOUHARDO II staff member described having to deal with uncooperative government officials as the most difficult and unpleasant part of their job. Some staff members even suggested that they would like to have some additional circulars (i.e. explicit directives from higher authorities of the respective line departments or ministries) that would ‘compel’ the UNO or Union Parishad Chairs to cooperate with them.

**Some issues that need further attention**

Making the ‘supply side’ of local governance more pro-poor and gender sensitive is a major challenge that goes beyond what a program like SHOUHARDO II can address or achieve in the context of one of its strategic objectives (i.e. SO-4). In this regard, some areas of concern or issues that came up in the course of the present study, and may warrant further attention in the course of future implementation and refinement of SHOUHARDO II, are noted below (in no particular order).

- UP representatives feel that they are not properly resourced, and thus cannot meet all the needs or expectations of all the poor people of their constituencies. As one UP Chairman put it: “The UP can at best fulfill 20-30% of the needs of the local people. The government is not

providing sufficient allocations. MPs get much more allocation. The local government is just a table [i.e. like a show piece]. The government helps us [local governments/UPs] become thieves.” However, the UPs are not necessarily very proactive in terms of local resource mobilization – particularly in terms of collection of taxes (e.g. holding tax) that they are entitled to – a largely untapped area that is generally acknowledged, but not adequately addressed, which CARE or SHOUHARDO may consider as an intervention area in future. (Experience suggests, and even some UP representatives interviewed confirmed that local citizens are actually willing to pay taxes as long as they know that these are being put to good use.)

- In the context of their involvement in SHOUHARDO II, some of the UP representatives as well as NBD officials have suggested that they should have greater role and authority (e.g. signing authority) in the program. The program staff members, however, reject such ideas and say that any such provision will make their work more difficult and increase the likelihood of misuse or misappropriation of resources.
- While open budget meetings or regular meetings of committees such as UDCC and UDMC are seen as indicators of improved performance of UPs, it is observed that the frequency and quality of such meetings – which are supposed to be regular features of the functioning of UPs – are not uniform. These are largely dependent on chance factors such as the attitudes of UP representatives, the presence of other NGOs or projects (e.g. RDRS in Nilphamari and Sharique in Sunamganj) working on strengthening existing UP mechanisms, and the degree of informal coordination and collaboration among different players. The review team did not find any clear evidence of such collaboration that was built into the design of the program or its implementation strategy.
- Many FWAs and other NBD field staff struggling to meet their targets of service delivery through door to door visits currently welcome, or have become habituated to, the convenience of gatherings and referrals made possible through VDCs. However, this situation entails the risk that in case of withdrawal of program support, service delivery may fall sharply in those localities. At present, there may also be occasional duplication of efforts between NBDs and SHOUHARDO, as when FWAs and VDC representatives may both go to the same house on the same day; which puts significant pressure on the busy household work schedule and quite undesirable to its members.
- Although the Union Parishads are heavily relied upon by so many ministries and other actors (such as NGOs), the UP has some inbuilt limitations. For example, it runs like a ‘presidential system’ in which one office (that of the Chairman) has too much power. While a program like SHOUHARDO II cannot do much about this, it can seek to contribute to the policy dialogue in this area by sharing its experience of finding innovative ways of promoting pro-poor local governance within the existing system, and highlighting systemic constraints that need to be changed.

## 2.2. Findings related to VDCs

Village Development Committee or VDCs are community based organizations set up and supported by SHOUHARDO for program delivery and to promote program implementation collectively by PEP. In the context of governance, the VDCs are meant to serve two specific purposes: first, to represent

the community in demanding services from and negotiating with the Union Parishad and NBDs; second, to organize and sensitize local people, to facilitate the development of natural leaders in the community and improve governance. The VDCs are usually formed with 11 members from the poor and extreme poor (members could increase in larger villages), with women given priority as members as well as in key positions. For the posts of Chairperson, General Secretary, Organizing Secretary and Treasurer, at least two must be women, and for rest of the posts, 50% women are desirable. One member of VDC could be from non-poor population (rich or middle class) if s/he is selected by the community, given that s/he is helpful and committed to the causes of the development of the poor and extreme poor. The VDC usually meets monthly but there is provision of other meetings such as AGM and weekly or emergency meetings. The program staff initially prepared a list of the poor and extreme poor of the community after consulting with its members. They gathered the poor and extreme poor in the community and the VDC was formed with the support of the majority. The SHOUHARDO II has provision of forming the VDC only once. Though the committee could be reformed every two years with the majority vote of community members, usually change is not common in VDCs. They have been given training on different issues such as governance, their rights, functions of Union Parishad and NBDs, women’s rights, disaster preparedness and organization building.

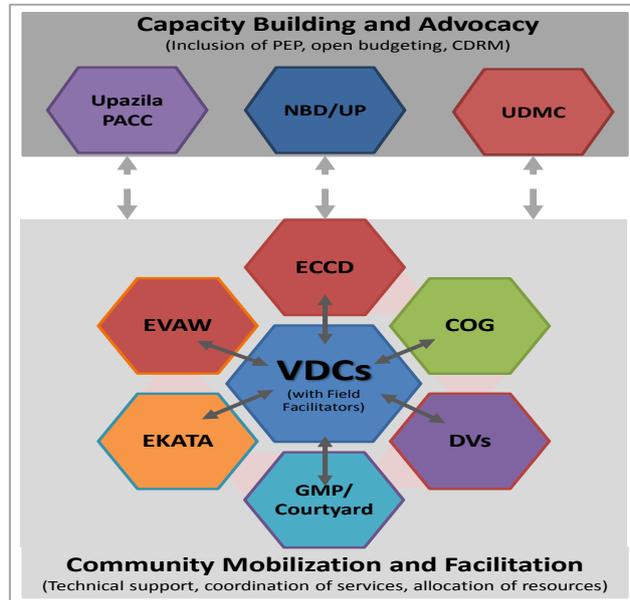


Figure 5: Functions of VDC in SHOUHARDO II

**How VDCs work**

VDCs prepare Community Action Plans (CAPs) for the village and try to incorporate CAP activities in the Union Parishad development plan. CAPs are usually prepared with a large ceremony initially, with the Union Parishad Chairman and members invited, and are revised annually. The reviews take place in a smaller forum, usually with the presence of 30-40 people from the community. The CAP

preparation process is heavily dependent on the facilitation of the SHOUHARDO II staff and apparently program led activities dominate its agenda. As the ward meetings of the Union Parishad are not commonly practiced (except in Sharique implementation areas), they have to rely on lobbying with the UP Chairs and members for including those in the Union Parishad development plan and budget. They also work to raise awareness among the



community along with other committees formed under SHOUHARDO II. These include committees on agriculture, disaster management, local infrastructure, early childhood development, women's rights and violence against women, health and nutrition, Union Parishad and NBD service and good governance.

Some of the most important activities of VDCs are organizing the poor and extreme poor, taking collective initiatives and liaising with Union Parishad and NBDs. For example, they identify unused patches of khas (government or community owned) land and initiate cultivation of vegetables collectively by poor and extreme poor households; they also take collective initiatives to repair or construct local infrastructure such as roads, country bridges and so on, with voluntary labor from the community. They liaise with the field staff of agriculture, livestock, land administration, youth development, social welfare, women affairs and fisheries department and Union Parishad for ensuring better service for the poor and extreme poor in the community. The SHOUHARDO II field staffers prepare them through training and mentoring for this purpose. They also introduce the VDC members initially to NBDs and Union Parishad. After this orientation, the VDC starts its work but the program staffers continue their support, and advise them regularly. The NBD field personnel are hired for facilitating some training sessions organized for the VDC and poor and extreme poor; through such training, the VDC-affiliated poor and extreme poor and NBD officials are introduced with one another, and rapport is developed among them. People say this rapport is very helpful for securing service from the NBDs, since prior familiarity with the service seekers make the providers more likely to respond quickly and positively. When other members of the community need help from the NBDs, they too often contact with them through VDC members. The NBDs of some departments have also started visiting the community; those who used to visit the community infrequently earlier have become more regular. When they visit community now, they sit in the VDC room/office and people meet them there.

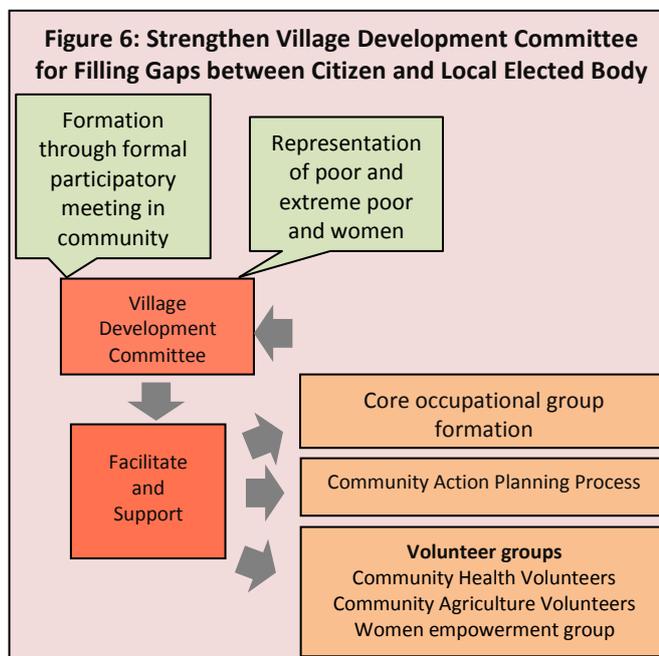
Members of VDCs also work as contractors (LCS) for the SHOUHARDO II funded infrastructure development activities; they organize group of workers from the poor and extreme poor and work on contract to implement those activities. On the other hand some of the members of VDCs along with SHOUHARDO II staff members and others work as procurement committee for these infrastructure development activities. VDC members have savings programme to raise funds for meeting up the emergency expenses. They lend this money to the members when needed; as well as use it for sustaining their community institutions including ECCD Centers.

Besides liaising with NBDs and the Union Parishad, VDC members are also incorporated into the Union Parishad standing committees to represent the poor and extreme poor. VDCs prepare list of poor and extreme poor in the community and give it to the representatives of the Union Parishad for allocation of VGD, VGF, elderly allowances and other provisions of social safety net programs, including 100 days work creation program. They seek assistance in terms of supply of sanitary latrines, tube wells, etc. for the poor and extreme poor from the Union Parishad. They also place their demands for infrastructure development such as construction or repair of roads and culverts. They try to put these development activities in the Union Parishad development plan and budget. Sometimes, these works are done jointly with the Union Parishad and SHOUHARDO II funding together.

VDCs are also involved in the process of the distribution of provisions such as nutrition package for pregnant women, agricultural inputs, goat and poultry by SHOUHARDO II. They help select the input beneficiaries, who receive the provisions that are usually distributed through ceremonies in which the local Union Parishad member or chairman are present.

VDCs may provide informal arbitration service (salish) in the community to resolve minor disputes among community members as well. Earlier the poor and extreme poor had to go to the local influential people for seeking their help for mediation of disputes; they had to pursue day after day to make them sit for the mediation, yet they were highly prone to partiality/bias. Now, many of the poor and extreme poor go to the VDC for mediation; it takes less time and is relatively impartial.

Another important task of VDC is to establish contact with the programs/projects of other NGOs in the area and to seek assistance from those for the poor. For example they contact with BRAC WASH program for sanitary toilets or tube wells, as has been found in several instances.



**VDCs have meant greater voice, better services, and more initiatives for the poor**

From talking to members of various VDCs and people affiliated with these organizations, it is evident that the VDCs have helped the poor and extreme poor people of SHOUHARDO working areas become better organized, have greater voice vis-à-vis UPs and NBDs, and take various initiatives to seek solutions to their development problems. The following – rough translations of actual utterances – are some examples of typical statements heard in various FGD sessions or interviews.

*‘We were asleep. The program has awakened us.’*

*‘The program has given the opportunity for us to vent our grievances. We can now say twenty things instead of ten.’*

*‘We did not get services before. We did not know. We had no identity.’*

*‘We can get the officers transferred. Those who sit on chairs have much to lose. We don’t. We can protest.’*

*‘We had to talk a lot in the past to get services from the UP; now that is not needed.’*

*‘Earlier they [UP/NBD] did not have to answer to us. Now they do.’*

Generally, most respondents affiliated with VDCs spoke of positive changes in terms of enhanced knowledge and income, improved services from the UP, and improvements in areas such as growing of vegetables, fruits trees, and livestock.

When VDC members and poor and extreme poor people go to the Union Parishad and NBD for different needs, first they demand the service; if the demands are not met in time they go again in large groups and demand it again with greater vigor. Usually such collective force works. The engagement with Union Parishad and NBDs by VDCs and poor and extreme poor has increased and more of their demands for services are met. The poor and extreme poor said that earlier they feared to go to the Union Parishad or NBD; if they had to go, they used to go alone and the officials ignored them, they could not even talk, let alone receiving the service; now they go to the VDC and with VDC they go to seek service in groups. Now they are no longer ignored, rather they are respected and service delivery also has improved significantly.

### **Case Study 1: The difference a VDC makes**

The people of Chhatnai Block-8 in Dimla, Nilphamari had very limited interactions with Union Parishad and government offices. They did not know about the services and social safety net programs. VDC was formed by SHOUHARDO II and they were informed about the services, rights and entitlements. They were also guided by the program staffs on how to deal with the Parishad and government offices. All the activities of the program are conducted through the VDC, including the input support distribution. They also work with Union Parishad to include the names of poor and extreme poor people in lists of VGD-VGF cards, 100 days program and other social safety net stipends. Earlier if they asked for those cards, the Chairman-Members used to say that those had run out; after few years they call them for preparing list. VDC also distribute SHOUHARDO II nutrition package and input support for the poor. The procurement of those inputs is completed by the VDC.

They work for awareness-raising against violence against women and early marriage. If anyone arranges early marriage they try to prevent it. As a result violence against women and early marriage both has been reduced. The women were given preference in the VDC for their empowerment. In the VDC meetings women participate and their opinions are taken seriously.<sup>1</sup> Some of the VDC members including women are members of Union Parishad standing committees. Earlier women did not go out, now they go out for attending meetings. In the meetings of Union Parishad they talk about different local issues and problems. Once a field staff of the health department sent anti-worm medicine by another person rather than being present himself, which is mandatory. The issue was raised in a meeting in Union Parishad, as a result the staff apologised and promised not to do so in future. They also participate in the open budget and try to incorporate the activities from it in the budget. At the beginning Union Parishad Charman-Members did not want to work with them but they were convinced that if they work with VDC it will improve their image, they agreed and now the call the VDC members about the village affairs. They also take the villagers in offices such as land office for receiving services.

They have claimed that many of their fellow poor people have been able to improve their economic condition due to their activities. Approximately 150 households received 3 goats each from SHOUHARDO II and at least 9 of them have been able to be owners of a cow from that.

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<sup>1</sup> There are indicators to track changes in these areas (e.g. in terms of number of women included in various committees). In general, the positive trends as reported by the members of the VDC under consideration are in line with relevant findings of the midterm review, which adds an important additional observation that in general villages with EKATA groups are performing better in terms of women's empowerment, voice etc. than those without.

Generally, if poor and extreme poor people in SHOUHARDO II working areas face any socioeconomic problem or development challenge, they now tend to go to the VDC for solution. They discuss the problem with the VDC and if they fail there, then they go to the Union Parishads or to Upazila.

The Union Parishad representatives, on their part, seem to value what the VDCs have to offer. For example, they say that the VDC members prepare lists of the poor and extreme poor and other eligible candidates of social safety net provisions for them; it is helpful for them as they do not need to prepare such lists themselves. The list prepared by the VDCs are said to be quite accurate and reliable enough. Most of them also say that when they participate in SHOUHARDO II provision distribution or local infrastructure development activities, it increases their image among the poor; as more people get assistance they remain pleased with them. However, some of them said that as SHOUHARDO II covers only parts of their constituency, so people in other parts who do not get the help, are not happy with them.

Though VDCs have been designed as community organizations of the poor and extreme poor – and as vehicles for program delivery - some of them are trying to get registered with the social welfare department of the government through EKATA group and claimed that they are saving money to continue their activities. They want to sustain their entity; SHOUHARDO II staffs at different levels have also been seen to be fond of this idea as they present this aspect to the visitors with zeal. Some of the VDC members have openly expressed their ambition to contest for Union Parishad membership, they have been quite confident about their prospect; the SHOUHARDO II staffs, particularly higher management seemed to be enthusiastic about this.

From talking to members of various VDCs, the optimism and self-confidence that this community organization has induced among many of them could be seen quite readily. As one male VDC Chairperson put it, “No one else will be able to develop the village unless people like us take initiative; we are now in a position to take the lead for our own development in our village.”

### **2.3. Women’s participation in local governance and their changing status generally**

*‘We had no courage before. We had no knowledge. Now, after joining EKATA group, we know how to talk. We have the opportunity to talk.’*

*‘In the past, when we [women] went to the UP, we would be asked: Why are you here by yourself? Where is your husband? [We don’t face such questions now.]’*

*‘We [women] earn now. Earlier, only men earned. Now, if the husband displays temper, the wife can face up to him on a more equal footing.’*

The above quotes, paraphrased translations of actual statements made by women met by the study team in the course of the present review, indicate the kind of changes that the poor women targeted by SHOUHARDO II have experienced through their participation in the program. In this section, we first outline the broader context of SHOUHARDO II’s work on women’s empowerment, and examine the depth and extent of progress in relation to women’s participation in local governance, and their changing status in family and community affairs more generally.

#### **The broader context of women’s empowerment in SHOUHARDO II**

The SHOUHARDO II program aims for empowerment of women generally, and through their participation in the local governance process, which constitutes one of its strategic objectives. In line with these objectives, SHOUHARDO II has given priority to women's participation and leadership in the VDCs. Two of the top four VDC positions must be occupied by women and it is expected that the rest of the membership will also consist of at least 50% women. Women are given priority in the constitution of VDCs with a view to improve their capacity as leaders and organizers as well as to increase and ensure their participation in the governance process. Women as VDC members are also co-opted as members within the Union Parishad standing committees. This incorporation in the UP committees is giving them a unique opportunity to know about the functioning of the Union Parishad and to participate and have a say in the affairs of Union Parishad.

Enhanced roles of women in the context of VDCs and UP affairs is particularly significant in a context where women were not used to going out of their homes much earlier. Moving around freely outside the home was considered as shameful, outrageous and against social norms. They were dependant on their husbands. Even in the time of crisis they did not go out or work outside. Women themselves also thought that they should not go out and they could not work with men in the public arena such as the Union Parishad. They did not have much awareness about their rights, ability and responsibilities. In such a situation when they started to participate in public events and affairs against dominant male views that saw them as 'unfit' for those businesses; men used to say that they lacked knowledge and intelligence to offer opinion about public affairs and that they were supposed to stay at home instead of moving around in the male dominated public domain.

#### **Slow but steady progress in terms of changing roles and status of women at home and beyond**

As a result of various interventions over a considerable period by different NGOs and programs including SHOUHARDO II, now Bangladeshi rural women are generally more conscious about their rights. They have learned how to express their opinions, too. SHOUHARDO II has given them a good opportunity to test their own abilities and prove it to the male dominated society. Besides their positions in the VDCs and incorporation in Union Parishad committees, the training, mentoring and awareness raising courtyard sessions that they take part in are also helpful in making them more conscious about rights and to build their confidence. In particular, judging by what most of the informants said during interviews and FGDs, courtyard meetings with men in the community to make them aware about the rights of women and the importance of their participation in economic and other activities has been quite effective in changing the attitudes of men. More generally, through their participation in different meetings, forums and activities, women are having more interactions with men. As a result men are beginning of have better understanding and appreciation of the ability of women, thus helping change their old ideas about women. Men are also learning to listen to their opinion. As one woman put it, "In the past people used to say: Women are immature; there is no reason to listen to them. Now things have changed. We are valued."

In the VDC during preparation and review of the CAP, women's opinions are given priority. The committee that is responsible for implementation of CAP and following up on its progress is also formed including women members and in fact they are prioritized as members. Such initiatives are helping the women to realize their role in the local governance process. The all-women or women-focused groups formed besides the VDC such as EKATA and EAW are also giving them the opportunity to develop their leadership ability and skills. This experience is helping them to work

with different groups and committees at different levels, e.g. or as members of village level committees representing the poor and extreme poor, or as members of UP standing committees.

Earlier, when women went to the Union Parishad, their husbands were not supportive. Instead, they used to say things like: “What is your business in the Union Parishad? Do they pay you any wages that you should go there? Now, due to SHOUHARDO II courtyard meetings, activities of EKATA forum and other awareness raising activities, men are more aware about ‘what business women have in UPs’ and are not opposed to the idea. Significantly, women are now contributing to the income of the household; as a result, they are valued more within the household and beyond. Given such trends, it may be said generally that the involvement of women in SHOUHARDO II activities is helping women have a greater voice, and greater standing, within various spheres – at home, within the community, and in UP affairs as well.

**Case Study 2: The story of a woman who sees knowledge as the best means to overcome poverty**

Sujina Begum (not her real name) was a very poor housewife in a village in the Haor area of Sunamganj. People in her community used to be without work during the monsoon when Haors were flooded. Thus making a living was very difficult. They could barely afford the food for the family with four children. After the start of SHOUHARDO II, she enlisted as a beneficiary in the category of Extreme Poor. Later she was selected as a VDC member as well. She could learn many things about the rights of women, services from Union Parishad and government offices and assistance for the poor. Besides awareness she was given training on the tailoring and farming. She started to work as part-time tailor from home and growing crops in the fallow land around the homestead. She is earning from these activities and could bear the expenses of the education of the children as well as assist her husband. As a result the total income of the household has increased and they can afford at least simple meals for the family round the year. They have greater security against hunger than they used to do.

Sujina’s awareness about livelihood, governance and services from the UP and NBDs has increased. She participates in different development activities in the village, work for raising awareness of the villagers about the VGD-VGF cards, different stipends of social safety net programs and violence against women. As a VDC member she regularly goes to Union Parishad and attends different meetings. There she speak on open budget, CAP and development of village. She also goes to the government offices with the villagers if they face any problem and help them seeking services. As a result her status in the family and community has increased; her opinions are respected; her husband now consults with her on household affairs. She said, “Earlier I did not go out of home; now I go to different places, speak to people and they respect me”. After stating that she has benefited from SHOUHARDO II, which she says has helped her change her life for the better, she added, “Knowledge is more important than aid, because it could always be used”.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the women spoken to in the course of the present study indicated that they were generally more aware of the law now, and were capable of speaking at the village court as well. In general, both male and female informants said that since different NGOs had been working in their areas

<sup>2</sup> Here, by ‘aid’, the narrator meant direct assistance in the form of money or goods. Her statement does not necessarily mean that there is no room for such aid, but it does bring to light the need to come up with the right mix of direct delivery and other forms of development assistance (training, facilitation, advocacy etc.) in food security programming. This is a matter on which no general formula can be provided as it depends very much on the specific contexts involved.

with many projects, and the accumulated impact of all those had gradually improved the situation of women's rights. They spoke of stopping many incidents of violence against women through VDCs; they also mentioned having contributed to significant reduction of child marriage; incidence of dowry and related violence had also been reduced. The EKATA group members in particular acted together with the VDC to stop early marriage and VAW in the community.

Despite many outward signs of changing roles and status of women, there are also indications that there are also some deeper forces at play that are not necessarily changing to the same extent. In particular, there are signs that true changes in attitudes towards women may take far longer to come by. For example, during the study, remarks were heard that indicated that women who were active in VDC or UP affairs were still seen as falling outside of the expected gender roles. The study team also came across situations in which women were present in larger numbers, but were not necessarily equally vocal. For example, in one FGD session, the male chairperson of the VDC involved kept stopping the female members and trying to speak on everything himself; he even scolded some of the women who tried to speak, calling for interventions by the study team to allow the women to speak. Such observations indicate that there may be a need to increase and expand work with men and male leadership.

#### **2.4. Impact of improved local governance on the food security of PEP**

The ultimate objective of the SHOUHARDO II governance component is to contribute to the food security of the poor and extreme poor. In this context, improved governance would mean increase in the participation of poor and extreme poor in the social safety net provision distribution and local government decision making, thus they would have better access to government aid. It has been envisaged that increased access to the services offered by different departments of the government will increase food production, utilization and contribute to better health of the targeted people. All this will thus improve the food security of the poor and extreme poor.

The present review found that at the level of activities and outputs, various interventions of SHOUHARDO II – including those related to governance – are largely on track. To achieve the stated objectives, the program has organized various training sessions for the poor and extreme poor on different topics related to agriculture, fisheries, livestock rearing, homestead gardening and governance. Knowledge and skills gained through such training have helped program participants to engage in farming activities more efficiently and grow more crops and livestock. They have followed the prescribed methods for growing crops in the field, planted vegetables and fruit plants around the homestead and collectively in the common public lands, and raised goats or poultry. According to them all this has led to higher levels of production - as is also indicated in SHOUHARDO II's latest quarterly report, which states that 74.9% of the households claimed increase in production-(CARE, 2014b) - and earning of extra money. The quarterly report just mentioned also states that 68% of the program participants have been able to increase their goats by breeding and 25% of them have diversified their income generating activities. It may be mentioned that by 2013, 119,640 program participants were reportedly able to utilize their learning along with input support from SHOUHARDO II (CARE 2013b). Such reports seem to be in line with the findings of this review team as well. Generally, informants say that they have gained higher access to the services of respective government departments, as they can now contact the government field staff through VDCs. The line department officials are said to have become more responsive generally, who reportedly visit

the communities more frequently now than earlier. All this have meant improved services, which in turn have been helpful for improved production.

It may be mentioned that women are also participating in increasing numbers in the process of production of crops and livestock. Both men and women are given training on women's rights, VAW and so on. All this are having positive impact on women's participation in food production and income earning for the family. The SHOUHARDO II program report (CARE 2013b) shows that per capita annual income of the households increased up to BDT 1255 in 2013 against end of project target of BDT 1039 and annual target of BDT 890. Such positive trends were confirmed by what informants told this review team as well. Earlier women could not work outside that much, but now they go out and work more freely, so their contribution to the household has increased. Earlier the husband used to work alone, now the wife also works for food production and income generation. Nowadays women even work outside as day laborers. The wage of the women workers is also increasing, they are getting equal amount of wage as the men get. These things are contributing to increase in household income and food security.

As mentioned earlier, poor and extreme poor participants of SHOUHARDO II program say that they have come to understand their rights and entitlements in relation to government services better. Earlier they were not much used to going to the Union Parishad or other government offices, and even if they went to those places, they could not raise their voice to the officials in demanding the services they needed. But now that they know about their rights and entitlements, and have also learnt about how to contact with the Union Parishad and NBDs, and how to seek service from them, they feel more empowered. They have also learned about domestic violence and child marriage from EKATA, EAW committees and VDCs. They receive information from SHOUHARDO II about the provisions of social safety net programs. Similarly, SHOUHARDO II is assisting them to claim *khas* land from the government and they are now petitioning to the land administration and UNO office for the allocation of such land.

The VDCs are now preparing lists of the poor and extreme poor of the area and submitting it to the Union Parishad members and chairmen for allocation of VGF, VGD and other social safety net provisions of the government. They also collectively demand for allocation of those provisions to Union Paraishads. The Union Parishads in turn seem to have started relying on the VDCs for listing the eligible poor and extreme poor for certain types of aid. As a result, corruption and mismanagement in distribution of those aids seems to be reducing and more of the genuine poor are receiving the assistance.

Taken together, all the positive trends noted above have contributed to increased availability of and access to food for the poor and extreme poor targeted by SHOUHARDO II. The program participants spoken to by the study team generally said that earlier many of them struggled to have two meals a day, but now they can afford to eat three times a day for most of the year. Others said they could not buy fish and other food items from the market earlier due to poverty, but now they can buy those stuffs. Many informants did say that they still face seasonal scarcity for few months a year, especially in the months of February-March (Falgun-Chaitro) and September-October (Ashwin-Kartik) but the intensity of the dearth is significantly lower now. They can store food for more months now and they are less dependent on market for buying food as they themselves are growing more food. Earlier they did not pay much attention on storing food but now they have been advised

from SHOUHARDO II for storing food for six months and try to store food for next few months. The savings groups are also saving money for emergencies; by March 2014 they have saved approximately BDT 15,837,119 (USD 204,700) and from that BDT 4,298,410 (USD 54,410) has been given as loans, of which 89% were invested for IGAs and 11% were used for meeting emergencies (CARE 2014b) and the rate of distress selling of assets has also been reduced (CARE 2013b).



**Photo 4: Each child in a ECCD center was seen holding a textbook, provided freely by the government (as a result of MOU with the relevant ministry)**

Our discussion above indicates that the contribution of improved governance on the food security of the program participants cannot be measured in isolation. Instead, it is linked to interventions in other areas, the relative contributions of which also need to be better understood. For example, it has been commonly asserted by the poor and extreme poor, VDC and others almost in the same voice that due to training, input support and women's participation in economic activities, they are now able to grow more food crops and livestock. They also earn more. As a result, the household income has increased and food security improved significantly. However, while many program participants seem to have highlighted the importance of input supports, some SHOUHARDO II staff members have downplayed the same, saying that the input support provided by the program is minimal, and that it may not make much of a difference by itself.<sup>3</sup> Given this, there seems to be need for better understanding of factors such the effectiveness of input support and training

<sup>3</sup>The importance given to input supports, as mentioned here, seems to go against the emphasis on 'knowledge' as seen in a case study presented earlier. However, differences in perspectives on such matters are normal, and need to be understood in terms of the specific contexts involved. It would be premature to draw any general conclusion as to the relative importance to be attached to input supplies or knowledge from such isolated observations.

activities. Some in-depth studies of such factors, together with grounded analysis of the contribution of governance interventions may result into better understanding of their relative roles in terms of ultimate impact on the food security of the poor and the extreme poor.

### **Case Study 3: The story of a man who is no longer in the PEP list**

Md. Haider Akanda of Tekani Chukainagar, Sonatola, Bogra was listed as a poor member during primary community assessment of SHOUHARDO II. After his membership in the program, he received different trainings from it along with input support of goats. He has also learned that he could seek assistance from government agriculture and livestock officials for free. From the trainings he has learned the benefit of planting paddy in lines, using natural manure, preparing compost and alternative pest management techniques using bird perches. He contacts with the agriculture department staff for advice if there is any problem with his crop; it is helping to prevent damage of crops. As a result the production cost has reduced as he does not need to use costly chemical fertilizer and pesticides in large quantity. His production has also increased so he could make more profit from farming. He also seeks advice from the livestock official for the illness of his cattle; now he could prevent the death of his goats and cows; which has significant economic benefit for him. All these have contributed to improve his livelihood and economic condition. He is no longer threatened by seasonal starvation. In the recent community assessment his name has been struck out of the list of poor in the community.

## **2.5. Other relevant observations**

In what follows, some general observations that go beyond the immediate focus of the present study, but are nonetheless relevant in addressing the issues involved, are noted. For the sake of convenience, these notes have been grouped under some broad statements which are somewhat tentative in nature.

### **Variation of contexts and results, the challenge of isolating key factors behind observed trends**

- It is evident that the achievements of the SHOUHARDO II program are not the same across the country, rather they are highly variable, depending on a host of factors including the geographical context involved, the levels of enthusiasm and resourcefulness of the VDC members and staff involved, the willingness of Union Parishad and NBD officials to cooperate, distance from the administrative centers, local social norms, etc.
- The areas close to the administrative centers (such as district or Upazila headquarters) and having good communication facilities seemed to be better performing in general, though there are also villages and unions close to the Upazila headquarters which may not be doing well. Some of the informants said that remote and distant villages are very rarely visited by NBDs, Union Parishad officials, and in some cases even by SHOUHARDO II staff members (i.e. other than those who are already posted in the community)<sup>4</sup>. Achievements are very limited in those areas

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<sup>4</sup> This statement does not necessarily mean that the personnel involved are not doing their job, as even with the best intentions and concerted efforts of all concerned, regular visits to some of the remote areas in which

- In places such as Cox's Bazar, which is generally perceived as a 'conservative' area, local communities may adhere to stricter social norms relating to women's participation, visibility and mobility in community and public domains. For example, during one FGD session in Cox's Bazar, one participant who seemed to be following strict 'Purdah' refused to talk directly to members of the study team, and was whispering to another participant's ears instead, who then relayed what she had to say to the larger group. Given this situation, it is not clear what 'active participation in public affairs' means for such women. On the other hand, there are also many women are found to speak forcefully and directly. Faced with such diversity, it is important to try to isolate the extent to which the differences observed are results of pre-existing social factors and individual propensities.
- In selecting the specific sites for this study, it was decided that various categories of UPs and VDCs would be included in terms of their position in the MSS of the SHOUHARDO II. However, later it was discovered that the differences between the selected units were not necessarily as sharp as their scores suggested, as the difference between 'A' and 'B' grades may be just a matter of 2 marks (e.g. 91 vs. 89). It was also learned that the presence or absence of some components such as ECCD Centers could make a difference in the assigned scores of two otherwise similar villages into strong or weak categories.
- It may be noted that although an attempt was made to cover diverse geographical contexts for the present study, the unions and villages that were finally selected for field visits still tended to be relatively close to the administrative centers, having relatively better communication facilities than many communities targeted by SHOUHARDO II. Thus there remains the possibility that the sample covered by the present study could be slightly biased in favor of the better performing UPs and VDCs.

#### **The need to explore different means of more effective engagement with UPs and NBDs**

- SHOUHARDO II program staff – particularly those who have knowledge of projects such as Sharique (cf. Witteveen 2010), which uses co-financing as a means to influence UP systems – say that under the present mode of program delivery, they cannot offer sufficient incentive or allocation for Union Parishads as a leverage to try to influence these institutions in a more systemic way.. One said that it is like 'bossing without authority'. They can get things done mainly because of MoU with ministries and pressure from the higher authority. But there should be alternative mechanisms to generate active interest and involvement of the UPs from below.
- As suggested by one SHOUHARDO staff member, there could be more emphasis on advocacy with the government and local government on governance issues within SHOUHARDO II. On a slightly different note, it may be noted that a few staff members of SHOUHARDO have indicated that they often struggle to get the support of government officials, and that they would like more explicit circulars from respective ministries to ensure the support of such officials. Such views seem to indicate an over-reliance on top-down approaches to ensure necessary government support within SHOUHARDO program.

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SHOUHARDO II works are not possibly due to poor communication infrastructure and restrictions on mobility imposed by factors such as natural hazards like floods.

- It has been claimed by a few Family Welfare staff members and others that the SHOUHARDO II nutrition package is encouraging the poor and extreme poor to have more children as there is no limit for number of children being eligible for this assistance, since any pregnant poor woman is entitled. However, the SHOUHARDO II field staff explained that this might have been a ploy by the concerned line department personnel to divert attention away from their own failures. They have pointed out that the nutrition package has been introduced less than three years ago; therefore, conceiving twice for aid during this time could not have been possible. They also added that people are not so foolish as to take more children just for the sake of few kilograms of rice and pulse. However, the fact that there are divergent views on such matters suggests that there need to be more dialogue and sharing of information among all concerned.

### Language of change

- One interesting trend that the study team noticed was the preponderance of various foreign words, technical terms and acronyms in the language used by the program participants. For example, one informant – a woman categorized as ‘PEP’ – in Nilphamari was found to be using a lot of English words, which was somewhat unexpected for a poor village woman. Similarly, another key informant, a man dressed in jeans and quite articulate, who was categorized as PEP was hard to perceive as a poor person. It may be that they were both poor earlier but were not necessarily so any longer. More generally, the study team found program participants routinely using various technical terms and acronyms used by SHOUHARDO II, e.g. many routinely described themselves as *pep* or *cog* (meaning PEP and COG respectively), whereas English words and phrases like ‘process’, ‘eve teasing’ and ‘input support’ were also heard when ‘PEP’ program participants talked.
- Alongside the above phenomenon, a parallel trend was also observed whereby special local terms were found to be in use for certain provisions that are more commonly known by other names among officials and development professionals. For example, in Dimla, Nilphamari, UP representatives and local people were found to speak of VGD and VGF cards as *boro* (‘big’) and *chhoto* (‘small’) cards respectively.

### The future of SHOUHARDO II

- During the study, one issue that was found foremost on many people’s minds was that of the future of SHOUHARDO II. A large number of informants including SHOUHARDO II staff members, Union Parishad representatives and NBD official demanded expansion of geographical coverage of the program as well as its extension into the future. Even some PEP participants shared similar views, especially with regard to program extension. It seemed that a large number of people were concerned about the end of the program. Some informants including poor people, UP representatives and program staff, however, also added that aid could corrupt or spoil the people by developing opportunism and dependency, which was counter-productive for achieving self-reliance. One program participant who was poor socioeconomically stated that “knowledge is more beneficial than money”, suggesting that there may be more room for training on matters such as Union Parishad budget, government allocations, stipends and services of different departments than may be provided for at present.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

#### 3.1. Summary of key findings

##### 3.1.1. Positive changes generally noted

Our review indicates that the awareness and knowledge about the rights, entitlements and services available have increased among the poor and extreme poor people and VDC members due to SHOUHARDO II interventions. The poor and extreme poor are seeking services from the Union Parishad and NBDs on larger scales, and in return they are also receiving improved services. Participation of the poor and extreme poor in the affairs of Union Parishads through VDCs has increased through various means such as some of them being co-opted as members in UP standing committees and incorporation of CAP activities in the Union Parishad development plan. They are also participating in the selection process of social safety net provision beneficiary selection through submitting their own lists and demanding their shares. In a way they are now influencing the decision making in the Union Parishad to some extent. The Union Parishad representatives are also giving them importance and asking their support in beneficiary list preparation, organizing meetings or asking for their presence in the Open budget sessions.

NBDs are now visiting the villages more often, and they also respond more readily when called upon, with greater rapport developed among the service providing officials and the local people. The VDCs are not only representing their members, but also helping other poor and extreme poor members of their communities to the Union Parishad and NBDs for seeking service. VDC members are usually from the category of poor and extreme poor people themselves, and except for being part of VDC under SHOUHARDO II program, they could have hardly engaged with Union Parishads and NBDs effectively. They themselves have said that before SHOUHARDO II if they approached those officials they were often ignored or not provided with the services sought; most of them did not even dare to approach the formal institutions. Moving from that position to one in which they can demand and secure services, and are counted by the UPs and NBDs, is definitely a significant change for the better.

The same is true of women's empowerment and participation in local governance. As reported by program participants interviewed by the study team, earlier women in the local communities were not allowed to go or work outside; they could not even take part in the decision making in their own families. In such a context, they have been given leadership responsibility in the VDC and nurtured; as a result they are now actively participating in the community development activities as well as in the Union Parishad functions as representatives of the VDCs and standing committee members. They have acquired the skills of public speaking, negotiation, managing organizations and motivating people, all of which constitute quite a big leap for them. The respondents in this study claimed that there has been a significant change in attitudes towards women's participation in the public sphere and economic activities. The negative attitude towards them and their participation in public affairs as well as working with male counterparts in the Union Parishad and VDC is subsiding.

However, the changes are not taking place equally everywhere. In some areas it is quite significant, whereas in other areas there is still a long way to go. In areas that are close to administrative

centers, closely supervised by program staff, where Union Parishad and NBDs are supportive and the villagers are enthusiastic, and most are skilled enough, good deal of change may be taking place. However, geographical and social barriers, such as strict practice of 'Purdah' in places like Cox's Bazar, may be slowing down the pace of desired changes in other places. Chance factors such as the willingness of the UNO and Union Parishad chairs to cooperate, and ability of the staff to overcome challenges in this area, may also prove to be crucial. One way to overcome these challenges would be to build in sufficient flexibility in program design, which can respond to local specificities, and allow local staff members, partners and other stakeholders to play a greater role in tailoring details of implementation modalities.

VDCs, along with image of CARE as a large aid provider, are giving the poor and extreme poor in SHOUHARDO II working areas a platform to organize and collectively negotiate for their entitlements. However, the extent to which the empowerment of the VDC members have reached among the masses of the poor and extreme poor remains an important concern. It may be that gain in this area is not very deeply rooted among the poor at present. Such a situation may give rise to a small elite stratum among the poor and the possibility of their joining hands with the non-poor exploiters cannot be ruled out. It may be noted that a number of the VDC members harbor ambitions to become elected Union Parishad members. While such ambitions are not problematic in themselves, there is the risk that in the hands of such individuals, platforms such as VDCs may end up serving other ends than that serving the interests of the poor and extreme poor.

Finally, it may be noted that SHOUHARDO II is at present designed as a program that offers fairly uniform packages of intervention for the whole country. This limits its chance of success in areas having special geographic features such as Haor, and social features such as strict 'purdah' in Cox's Bazar.

To recapitulate, the positive changes on which different groups of stakeholders – program participants, staff members and representatives of UPs and NBDs – generally agree may be summarized as follows:

- SHOUHARDO II program interventions have resulted into the Union Parishads and NBDs being generally more responsive and accessible to PEP program participants.
- The poor and extreme poor are seeking services from the Union Parishad and NBDs on larger scales, and in return they are also receiving improved services.
- Participation of the poor and extreme poor – especially of women – in the affairs of Union Parishads through VDCs has increased.
- VDCs have meant greater voice, better services, and more initiatives for the poor
- Improved participation of women in local governance structures and processes are taking place in the context of broader efforts to promote women's empowerment, and slow but steady progress relating to changes in women's role and status at home and beyond.
- In terms of impact of improved local governance on the food security of PEP, various interventions of SHOUHARDO II – including those related to governance – are largely on track.

### **3.1.2. Issues to be noted or further addressed**

Making the 'supply side' of local governance more pro-poor and gender sensitive is a major challenge that goes beyond what a program like SHOUHARDO II can address or achieve alone,

regardless of the of achievements related to SO-4. Some issues that came up in the course of the present study, and may warrant further attention – from the perspective of governance – in the course of remaining implementation of SHOUHARDO II, or in designing its successor program, are noted below:

- a) The positive changes noted in general terms above are not necessarily taking place equally everywhere. Factors such as geographical or social barriers may be slowing down the pace of desired changes in many places. SHOUHARDO II is at present designed as a program that offers fairly uniform packages of intervention for the whole country. This limits its scope to be flexible or adaptive to specificities in local contexts in terms of geographical features, social factors etc.
- b) At present UPs are not necessarily properly structured, resourced or capacitated to meet all the needs or expectations of the poor people of their constituencies. There are numerous ministries and quite a few agencies, programs or projects that try to use UPs to deliver various services, but they do not offer extra resources to the UPs, and do not seek to work strategically by seeking systemic changes and synergistic effects. SHOUHARDO II too seems more narrowly focused in this regard.
- c) Some of the quantitative indicators used at present may be out of date or not sufficiently ambitious. For example, as per existing rules (in the context of LGSP), all UPs are supposed to hold regular open budget meetings. As a result, SHOUHARDO II has generally over-achieved in terms of the original targets set. In this regard, the program could have revised such targets.
- d) Improved governance cannot be achieved without changes in attitudes, behavior and institutional practices. In this regard, changes in quantitative indicators do not necessarily reflect equivalent degrees of qualitative changes, e.g. when it comes to some fundamental issues such as deeply entrenched attitudes of men towards women. There are of course positive changes at this level too, but they remain somewhat localized or isolated, are not necessarily part of any wider and systemic change.
- e) At present involvement of UPs in SHOUHARDO II program is mainly ensured through top-down means. Program staff say that they cannot offer sufficient incentive or allocation for Union Parishads, e.g. in the form of co-financing support to UP budgets. They can get things done mainly because of MoU with ministries and pressure from the higher authority. But opportunities to generate bottom up interest, and facilitating linkages among UPs, NGOs, CBOs etc. are not explored adequately.
- f) There may be room for improvement in supporting better coordination and communication at the field level in the context of services provided by government and non-government organizations. For example, NBD field staff members such as FWAs struggling to meet their targets of service delivery through door to door visits currently welcome, or have become habituated to, the convenience of gatherings and referrals made possible through VDCs. However, this situation entails the risk that in case of withdrawal of project support, service delivery may fall sharply in those localities.

- g) Many program participants were found to be using various technical terms and acronyms used by SHOUHARDO II – e.g. acronym-based words like *pep* and *cog*, and English words and phrases like ‘process’, ‘eve teasing’ and ‘input support’ – indicating that not enough effort may have been made to ‘translate’ these terms in the local context.
- h) During the study, one issue that was found foremost on many people’s minds was that of the future of SHOUHARDO II. A large number of informants including SHOUHARDO II staff members, Union Parishad representatives and NBD official demanded expansion of geographical coverage of the program as well as its extension into the future. A large number of people were generally concerned about possible end of the program.

### 3.2. Recommendations

Most of the issues noted above are fairly broad and cannot be addressed adequately within the remainder of the implementation period of SHOUHARDO II. These may be taken into account in designing a successor program, so that more effective and efficient measures could be taken in continuing to promote pro-poor and gender sensitive local governance. However, the last point above (h) brings up the need to take some immediate measures relating to the upcoming end of SHOUHARDO II. In this context, immediate measures that could be taken (by program staff members) – recommended in line with the exit plan of SHOUHARDO II – are noted first below; then the longer term options are listed down.

#### 3.2.1. Short-term recommendations

- Communicating SHOUHARDO II’s exit plan as early as possible to all stakeholders, especially to the VDCs, program participants, and PNGOs.
- Taking necessary measures to ensure the participation of VDC members in UDCC, UDMC and other committees after phase out.
- As CRCs are envisaged to be important centres for post program activities, establishing linkages and coordination among adjacent VDCs, including those that do not have such facilities may be considered.
- Linking up weak VDCs with nearby stronger VDCs through effective facilitation, coordination and communication may generally be considered.
- Registered EKATA group establishments and other such facilities may also be utilized as centres for facilitating activities of VDCs after phase out.
- Introducing VDCs with other NGOs operating in the area.

#### 3.2.2. Long-term Recommendations

- a) *Building more flexibility into program design to allow for tailored (e.g. Haor-specific) interventions taking into account local specificities.*

The proportion of service delivery and other modes of working (e.g. greater focus on governance, capacity building etc) may be adjusted accordingly. One way to do this would be to allow for *different combinations* of existing interventions of SHOUHARDO II program implemented in different locations. At present all the five SOs having similar range of activities are implemented everywhere in more or less the same way, with only one Field Facilitator (FF)

or Community Facilitator (CF) working to accomplish those. They have to work with approximately 4 to 8 villages (800 households) depending on the demographic distribution, thereby causing many field staff members to lose focus, making it difficult on concentrating on prioritizing specific targets to be achieved. Especially, given the qualifications and skills of CFs or FFs this host of activities is a very tough task to accomplish. More focused, streamlined and area-specific interventions may be more effective in the end, especially from a governance perspective. In this regard, the role of CARE or partner NGO (and of their frontline staff) should be confined as much as possible on facilitation in the true sense of the word, while UPs and other service providers and duty bearers should be supported in taking over much of the delivery. If such adjustment is not feasible in a given context (say due to very poor capacity of UPs and absence of other service providers), and the frontline staff members cannot devote sufficient time on facilitation and accompaniment, there could be deployment of additional staff members – perhaps on a temporary or rotational basis – to allow free them up for such purposes.

- b) *Co-financing mechanisms may be explored as a way of leveraging program resources to influence governance structures and processes going beyond meeting targets related to program specific service delivery.*

As per current design, there is not much direct incentive for Union Parishads to engage wholeheartedly with SHOUHARDO II interventions. Although some of the smart Union Parishad representatives are still able to use their association with the program to boost their image, many see the additional activities as burdensome, which they put up with mainly because of instructions coming from above (as a result of various MOUs). This is not a very effective and sustainable strategy for promoting good governance and change governance practices. Rather than relying on compulsive measures, awareness and incentive based strategies should be considered. More generally, SHOUHARDO II should look for leveraging the significant resources under its disposal to influence the local governance system as a whole, rather than using mechanism within it to deliver its own good and services. Presently, SHOUHARDO II seems to be aiming rather low (e.g. aiming to have only a certain percentage of the UPs to conduct open budget sessions although these are actually required by all under existing rules). In this regard, SHOUHARDO II could try to incorporate best practices of projects such as Sharique, with which it has overlaps (e.g. in Sunamganj) by piloting the options of working through Union Parishads-giving a grant to Union Parishad and ensuring proper monitoring, transparency and accountability to the people

- c) *Setting more challenging indicators above and beyond routine activities that UPs are supposed to undertake anyone (e.g. all UPs are supposed to hold open budget meetings; therefore the number of these meetings per se should not be taken as indicators.)*

Any future local governance related interventions from SHOUHARDO II should emphasize on the ward meetings and open budget practices. They should take aim for taking it further than the government rule required levels. Especially bottom-up budgeting process from the ward levels should be vigorously pursued to ensure the participation of poor in resource allocation and to sustain the gains so far made through VDCs.

Such intervention should also strive for facilitating effective participation of poor people in the UP standing committees to ensure their participation in decision making.

- d) *Deepening and broadening work related to attitudes, behavior and institutional practices, e.g. building on starts made in relation to changing attitudes of men regarding the participation of women in local governance, community affairs and local development. There should be greater*

attention to developing qualitative and process indicators to pay attention to and track changes in these areas.

- e) *Greater emphasis on capacity building of local government bodies, and strengthening their relationships with community groups, NGOs and various NBDs, and advocacy with the government and local government bodies on governance issues (e.g. related to greater decentralization, devolution etc.).* N.B. Training sessions organized locally (facilitated by civil servants and other local resource persons) for UP representatives have not reportedly been very effective in many places (in some places it was satisfactory to the participants). The modality of such training may be changed altogether, e.g. by allowing for greater levels of 'learning by doing' on the one hand, and organizing some training events residentially away from immediate surroundings and facilitated by qualified expert facilitators. More generally, there should be greater emphasis on knowledge management within the program, and in terms of learning from others.
- f) *Continuing to improve coordination mechanisms, together with greater exchanges of experiences and knowledge sharing; establishing greater linkages with other NGOs operating in the area for long term support*
- g) *Paying greater attention to translating program related information and messages in terms of linguistic and cultural categories that are familiar in the local context, and aiming for program staff to speak the language of the program participants rather than the other way around.*
- h) *As the exit plan of SHOUHARDO II disseminated, it may be refined and strengthened further in some areas. For example, it presently places more stakes on individual focal persons of VDCs for continuing its activities. There should be greater emphasis on collective efforts instead. All measures proposed should be communicated to and equally understood by all concerned.*

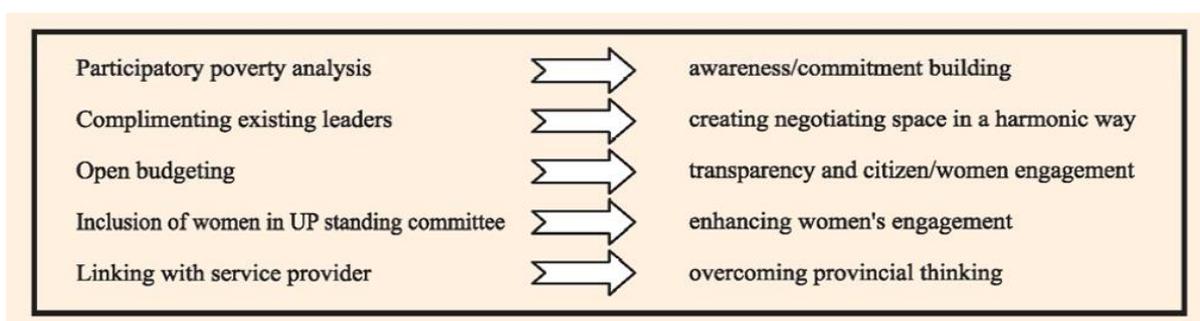
It is expected that SHOUHARDO II phase-out strategy, developed recently would have explicit measures for ensuring the sustainability of the governance interventions of SHOUHARDO II, including the gains of VDCs. Such measures should be more concrete than handing over the lists of VDCs to government offices or giving the VDCs the service list of NGOs. More importantly, such measures should be communicated to and equally understood by all concerned.

### **3.3. Concluding reflections**

SHOUHARDO II is a massive program with various interventions, many of which have implications for governance other than the ones explicitly linked to SO-4. While the present review has sought to capture all these dimensions in the context of diverse geographical settings, there are several areas that could have been explored in greater depth and more holistically than has been possible within the specified scope of work and the corresponding time and resources available. Considering the time and resource constraints, the study has mainly sought to focus on questions especially relating to the intermediate results under SO-4. In this context, it was found that generally speaking UPs and NBDs in SHOUHARDO II operating areas have become more responsive to the needs of the poor and extreme poor people and to women as well. On the demand side, the poor and extreme poor people have also started going to the UPs and NBDs seeking services. Partly as a result of the improved services received in this way, many of the program participants have been able to improve their food security.

Considering the technical and financial resources at its disposal, however, SHOUHARDO II could probably do much more in influencing the local governance systems as a whole rather than trying to utilize existing mechanisms to meet its program specific objectives. In this regard, there is much that SHOUHARDO can learn from the lessons and experiences of various initiatives that have been taken by CARE as well as other actors (e.g. Clark 2011, CARE 2012, One World Action 2008, Witteveen 2010). Most of these initiatives deal with challenges and issues that are being dealt with in the context of SHOUHARDO II as well. For example, through a governance action research supported by CARE International UK and participated by six CARE country offices– namely Angola, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Nepal and Peru – three interlinked domains were highlighted as the most important outcome areas of governance programming: empowerment of citizens; accountability and effectiveness of public authorities; and the space for negotiations between citizens and authorities (Clark 2011). It was found that achievement of desired results in these outcome areas depended on choice of appropriate strategies that included careful targeting and building the capacities of marginalized groups, adapting and expanding existing spaces as well as creating new spaces, building horizontal and vertical linkages, sensitizing dominant groups, and optimal mix of service delivery, facilitation, capacity building and advocacy. Taken together, all these are issues that SHOUHARDO II has been dealing with as well, though not necessarily within the context of SO-4, but through a combination of various SOs.

Within the context of Bangladesh, we may take note of approaches and experiences of two projects that CARE has been involved in. The first is the Local Governance (EC-NSA) Project, which was directly implemented by two local partner NGOs with technical guidance of CARE Bangladesh in 35 Unions of two northern district, Gaibandha and Lalmonirhat, from 2009 - 2012. The project sought to improve the accountability and responsiveness of UPs through a two-pronged strategy: enhancing the capacity of UPs to respond to the needs and demands of their constituents and to demonstrate pro-poor tendencies in resources and services allocation; and enhancing the capacity and opportunity for citizens, particularly the most marginalized and poorest citizens, to participate in political and development processes. In a study commissioned to look at poor and extremely poor women’s engagement in local government development initiatives within the context of this project, the following good practices (shown on the left column below) were identified as promoting changes in knowledge, behavior and attitudes needed in the context of effective good local governance:



It is worth noting that the good practices mentioned above are there in one form of another in some form in SHOUHARDO II as well.

Sharique, a local governance project that CARE Bangladesh was involved with during its first phase (2006-2009) and is presently running in its third phase, essentially follows the same two-pronged approach noted in case of the EC-NSA project above. However, as previously noted, the project uses co-financing of UP budgets as an instrument of promoting pro-poor and pro-women improved local governance. As noted by Witteveen (2010), although focus on inclusion of the poor and especially the poorest (most excluded) in local governance is not easy, it has been found that ‘through instruments like co-financing of local government budgets and specific labeling of this money for excluded groups, it is possible to work towards [improved] pro-poor service delivery.’ She also adds that through support to communities and community based groups, ‘poor people can be empowered to not only be beneficiaries of growth and service delivery, but also to become more active agents.’ In this regard, Witteveen goes on to depict the story of women who started being involved in community based development activities and slowly grew towards playing more active roles in local governance. Some even became local leaders and are acting as role models for other women in their communities. We have seen similar examples in SHOUHARDO II as well.

Finally, we may take note of a project called Citizens’ Participation and Local Governance in South East Asia, implemented in four countries (Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia) by One World Action. The distinctiveness and reasons for success of this project has been described in terms of factors such as analysis of power and exclusion, experience sharing and cross-learning, bottom up approach, working with local officials and flexibility. Again, these are themes that have been encountered in the context of the design and implementation of SHOUHARDO II as a whole.

What the preceding discussion shows is that in terms of the nature and range of issues to be dealt with in the context of program design and implementation, there is essentially no difference between projects or programs that are primarily seen in terms of ‘governance’, and a program such as SHOUHARDO II in which governance is seen as only one of various components or strategic objectives. This is of course well-recognized by those who have been involved in designing and implementing SHOUHARDO II. But this is mentioned here to highlight the interconnected nature of the outcome areas related to SO-4 that this study has been concerned with. Findings of this study and examples of the experience and context of other relevant initiatives as discussed above indicate that SHOUHARDO II can draw on lessons from both within and without in deepening and broadening its ‘governance’ work in the future. The program has a solid base of experience on the ground, on which it can build up further to start influencing systems and practices more strategically by drawing on its own lessons and that of others.

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## Annexes

### Annex 1: TOR for the Review of SHOUHARDO II Governance Interventions

#### [Terms of Reference for the Review of the Impact of the Governance Interventions of SHOUHARDO II program of CARE Bangladesh]

##### I. Introduction & Program Background

The SHOUHARDO (Strengthening Household Ability to Development Opportunities) II Program has been implemented in four regions (North Char, Mid-Char, Haor and Coastal), reaching 11 districts, 30 Upazilas and 172 Unions since June 2010. The five-year Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP) builds on the previous phase (SHOUHARDO) which established an effective, integrated model for reducing child malnutrition while contributing to greater livelihood security and women's empowerment.

The program focuses on addressing the availability, access, utilization and stabilization of food insecurity and solving the underlying causes that include social injustice and discrimination, lack of participation and voice, and heightened vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change.

The overall goal of the SHOUHARDO II program is to:

*“Transform the lives of 370,000 Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) households (HH) in 11 of the poorest and marginalized districts in Bangladesh by reducing their vulnerability to food insecurity.”*

In order to achieve this goal, the Program has the five key Strategic Objectives (SO) (see Annex 1 for overview) and Strategic Objective (SO) 4 focuses specifically on **Governance**. Within the context of SHOUHARDO II, SO 4 acknowledges the role of local government in ensuring food and livelihood security for the PEP. In addition to making local government activities more responsive, transparent and accountable to constituents, SO4 also focuses on increasing awareness of and demand for government services among PEP households. SHOUHARDO II has established two intermediate results to guide implementation of activities under SO4:

***IR 4.1: Nation Building Departments (NBD) and Union Parishads proactively work to the needs of the PEP, especially women***

***IR 4.2: PEP access to entitlements and services increased, including safety nets and natural resources***

The primary means through which SHOUHARDO II is pursuing these intermediate results is through establishment of Program Advisory and Coordinating Committees (PACCs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs).

##### **Village Development Committees (VDCs)**

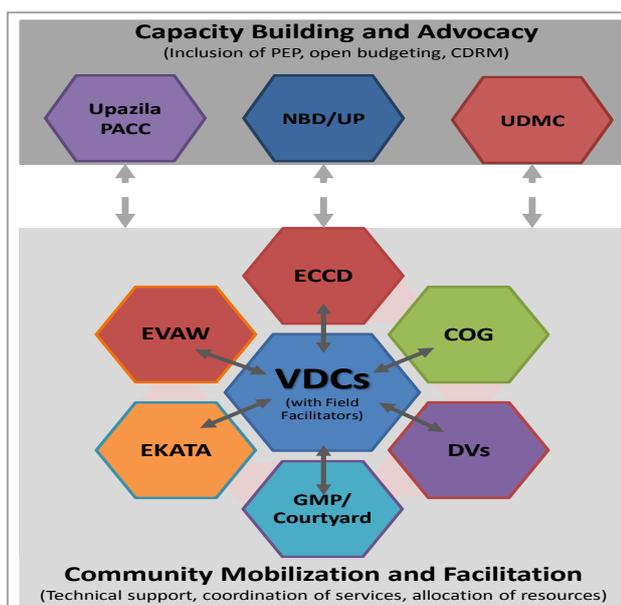
The Program promotes establishment of Village Development Committees (VDC) as a primary means of empowering local communities to develop and implement plans for community-driven development in the community with responsibility for addressing the development needs of PEP households and serving as liaisons between PEP and government service providers. VDCs are formed with the interested natural men and women leaders of the community with the responsibility of addressing the development needs to the PEP households and serving as liaison between PEP and

government services from UPs and NBDs. Under SO4, VDCs are given primary responsibility for ensuring that PEP participants are included in different UP standing and special committees. VDCs are also given direct responsibility for coordinating and supporting the efforts of volunteers engaged in all programs SOs, including Community Health Volunteers (CHVs), Community Agriculture Volunteers (CAVs), EKATA group, ECCD management committee, Disaster Volunteers and EVAW forum members etc. Program guidance suggests that VDCs should be comprised of minimum 11 individual members, at least 50% of whom should be women.

The general purpose of VDCs is to work with CARE and PNGOs to identify constraints to development within the community and then, through the Community Action Planning (CAP) process, collaborate with SHOUHARDO II, local government representatives and the private sector to identify means to address them. Key activities under VDC component includes;

- formation of VDC followed by a Community Action Plan (CAP) in each VDC.
- formal and on-the-job training for the VDCs
- building linkages with Union Parishads(UPs) and Nation Building Departments (NBDs) to leverage necessary services to meet the lives and livelihood needs of the PEPs.
- formal training for the co-opted PEP members in UPs standing and special committees.

**Figure 1: Role of VDC in SHOUHARDO II Implementation**



### Union Parishads (UP)

Union Parishads are the lowest tier of local government bodies to serve communities. The Program worked with and facilitated the targeted UPs to play a more pro-poor role to improve food security of PEP participants. Key activities under UP component include;

- formal and on-the-job capacity development initiatives for the UPs on topics including principles of good governance, roles and responsibilities of NBDS and Local Elected Bodies (LEBs), development planning and implementation, resource mobilization and allocation, linkages between governance institutions, and facilitation of community participation in government structures and processes.
- Strengthen Union Coordination Committee (UDCC) meeting organized by the UPs.

### Program Advisory Coordination Committees (PACCs)

The Program has a formal agreement with the Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives to form the PACCs at national, divisional, district and Upazila levels consisting of representatives of 13 ministries. At the Upazila level PACCs also include UP chairpersons as its members. The SHOUHARDO II Program is also member of PACCs at all levels.

The overall role of the PACCs within SHOUHARDO II is to coordinate the activities of various government departments involved in SHOUHARDO II and provide advice on policy and implementation as necessary. National and Divisional PACCs are scheduled to convene semiannually, the District PACC meets three times per year, and the Upazila PACCs quarterly.

Key activities under PACC component includes:

- formal training for the frontline staffs of Nation Building Departments (NBDs) on topics including principles of good governance, roles and responsibilities of NBDS and Local Elected Bodies (LEBs), development planning and implementation, resource mobilization and allocation, linkages between governance institutions, and facilitation of community participation in government structures and processes.
- facilitate periodical meetings of PACCs at the National to Upazila level aiming to review the progress of the program and find ways to improve government services for the poor and extreme poor.
- facilitate field visits for the PACC members to the SHOUHARDO II program areas.

***Linkages with other SOs (See Annex 1 for overview):***

Strategic Objective 4 is explicitly linked with each of the other SOs in the SHOUHARDO II program model. Support for PACCs, a key component of SO4, is specifically intended to improve the capacity of key government counterparts to understand and address the full range of critical issues influencing food and livelihood security at the community and household level. Specific examples of linkages between So4 and other SOs include:

- SO4 and SO1:FGDs have supported introduction and dissemination of new crops and production practices and helped producers find market opportunities.
- SO4 and SO2: By working with CHVs to encourage attendance at GMP sessions held at EPI sites, VDCs have enabled greater awareness of government health services.
- SO4 and SO3:SHOUHARDO II has created linkages between SO4 and SO3 by advocating for women's participation on PACCs, UDMC, and VDCs and VDC have actively supported the efforts of EKATA and EAW at the community level.
- SO4 and SO5: SHOUHARDO II's support for reformation of UDMC and UzDMC represents a clear linkage between effective governance and disaster and climate risk management.

***Achievements/Results:***

The SHOUHARDO II Mid Term Review (2013) shows that there has been good progress in achieving the stipulated targets related to SO 4. In specific these include:

***IR 4.1: Nation Building Departments (NBD) and Union Parishads proactively work to the needs of the PEP, especially women***

Government and other stakeholders attest that SHOUHARDO II has worked closely and consistently with government counterparts and that as a result, local representatives and their constituents have a greater appreciation for the potential of government to contribute to food and livelihood security among PEP households. As per Union Parishad Act 2009, all Union Parishads should practice open budget process. According to the 2013 ARR 120 Union Parishads located within the SHOUHARDO II program area, are now practicing open budgeting. This figure far outpaces the annual target of 50 (Fifty) for FY 2013 and even exceeds the goal of 50 for the entire life of the program. Of these 120, 62 UPs reportedly increased their budget allocations on behalf of the PEP. The program also far exceeded its goals for inclusion of PEP in various UP committees, reaching 171 PEP individuals participating versus an annual target of 150. The Annual Results Report 2013 (3.1b) also highlights that 852 poor & extreme poor (PEP) women have obtained membership in Union Parishad committees.

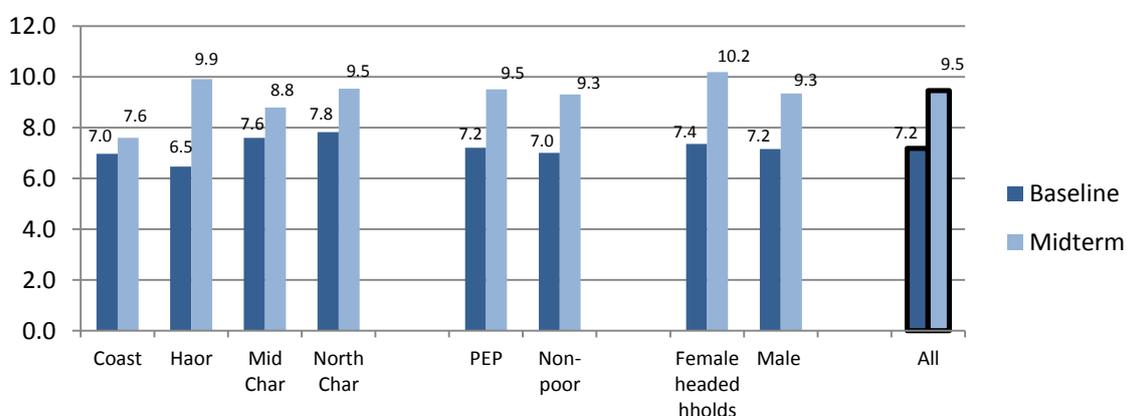
The SHOUHARDO II Management Score Sheet (MSS) addresses specific themes with a series of questions and assigned scores to measure the performance and management capacity of UPs, Union Development Coordinating Committees (UDCCs) and Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs) as it pertains to SHOUHARDO II program implementation.<sup>5</sup> Data suggest a decline in participation of female UP members in planning meetings and incorporation of women’s issues in annual workplans. Likewise, there has apparently been a slight decline in the participation of UP chairman in Upazila Development Coordination Committee meetings since the baseline.

**IR 4.2: PEP access to entitlements and services increased, including safety nets and natural resources**

The Mid-Term review (see Figure 2) revealed that across all households, utilization of services has increased approximately 32 percent (from an average of 7.2 to 9.5). In terms of programming regions, the largest increase in utilization of services was reported in the Haor area, whereas the smallest increase was reported in the Coastal area. While increases in the use of services were virtually the same for both PEP and non-poor households, analysis shows that the increase in use of services was greater among female-headed households than among male-headed households (38 versus 31 percent, respectively).

In terms of specific services utilized, the largest increases were reported for the Department of Agricultural Extension, Union Parishad, Department of Fisheries, and Department of Cooperatives. The smallest (nearly negligible) gains were reported for Primary Health Care Services, BADC Seed Wing. Use of services from Government land offices actually declined by one percent since the baseline assessment.

**Figure 2: Average number of services utilized, by region, well-being category and gender of household head**

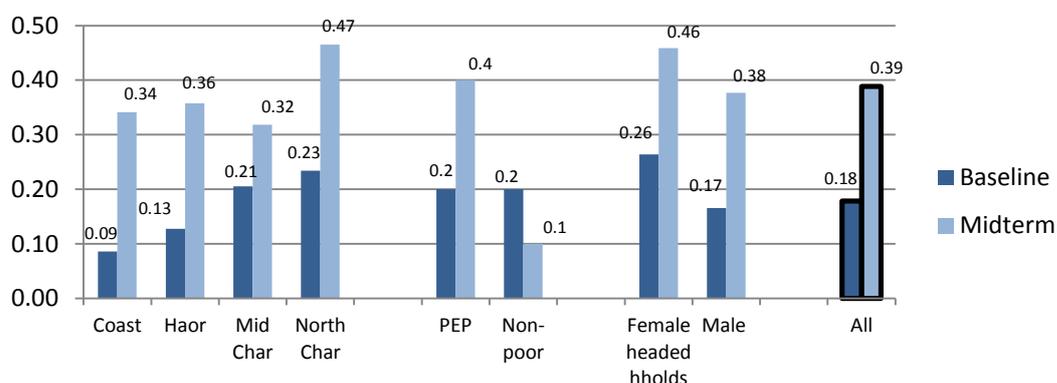


Quantitative data presented in the Mid-Term Review (2013) also shows that while use of government safety nets remains minimal among beneficiary households, it has increased significantly (117 percent) since the baseline. Increases in access to safety nets were most substantial the Coastal and Haor areas and were much greater among male-headed households than among female-headed households. By far, the largest increase in safety nets was for Vulnerable

<sup>5</sup> The MSS includes 14 weighted indicators with specified means of verification, such as regular conduction of various types of meetings, meeting attendance, participation of women in UP planning and activities, participation of vulnerable people in standing committees, UP capacity building, community engagement by the UP, DRM activities undertaken by the UDMC. The maximum total weighted score that can be achieved is 100 percent. The ranges for the ranking of UP institutional capacity are defined by SHOUHARDO II in the existing MSS tool: scores in the range 0-49 percent are ranked as ‘poor’, 50-74 percent are ranked as ‘moderate’ and 75-100 percent are ranked as ‘good’.

Group Feeding (VGF). According to quantitative analysis, 13.3 percent of sample households received VGF compared to just 4 percent at the baseline. Smaller increases were also reported for the aged allowance and for Vulnerable Group Development (VGD). FGD participants and key informants consistently report that among target communities access to Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) and monthly food assistance for elderly and disabled PEP households has expanded as a result of VDC advocacy.

**Figure 3: Average number of safety nets engaged in, by region, well-being category and gender of household head**



Note: Figures represent the average number of safety nets used by individual households out of a total of 11.

SHOUHARDO II staff, government representatives and community members agree that SO4 activities have increased awareness of entitlements among Local Elected Bodies (LEBs). For instance, UP members now understand that they are legally bound to support the regular meeting of village courts, institutions that have been authorized for decades but have only recently become functional in SHOUHARDO II operational areas. VDCs have successfully advocated with local government officials for expanded access to social safety nets (VGF, VGD, widow, elderly allowances) among PEP, installation of deep tube wells and extension/resurfacing of roads.

## II. Consultancy

### **Purpose of the consultancy**

While the above mentioned achievement of the SHOUHARDO II program are noteworthy, the proposed study needs to examine the following key aspects on the impact of governance interventions on the food and livelihoods security of PEP beneficiaries, as well as the programs impact on the status of women’s engagement related to local governance structures.

### **Detailed Description**

1) The study should examine, if there is real and meaningful engagement of (SHOUHARDO II) PEP women within local governance (*Union Parishad only*) structures? In specific the consultant(s) should examine which obstacles and challenges women face within their engagement within local governance structures (as well as processes including the experience and process for the inclusion of Community Action Plans (CAPs) into the UP budget) **and** recommend how quality participation by PEP women should be enhanced by programs such as SHOUHARDO II (proposed strategies should be linked to successful applications within the context of Bangladesh and/or South East Asia). As required, outline how SHOUHARDO II program team members and EKATA groups may have supported women in emerging as public leaders in UPs. As part of the documentation, capture the perception of men (within local governance structures) in relation to women’s participation within

local governance structures. As much as possible identify trends and changes in perception that may have occurred over the life of the SHOUHARDO II program.

*Note: Women's equal right to participate in politics is a constitutionally entrenched right, which is affirmed in several pieces of legislation in Bangladesh, including the Local Government Act 2009 (the Act). Union Parishad structures in Bangladesh can note a 23.28 % participation of women and Upazila Parishad record 33.47% participation of women (Status Report 2010), which can be partially linked to the fact that a certain number of seats are reserved for women. However there are real concerns as to whether the 'reservation' in itself ensures meaningful participation by women in local governance structures, especially as only 0.17% of women are elected as UP Chairs and 0.42% are elected as chairs for Upazila Parishad (Results in Status Report 2010). Some other research suggests that women's opinions often "fail to attract any significance in the local governance committee and they are virtually excluded from decision-making, especially in dealing with financial issues of UP (Begum, Critical Mass).*

2) The study should demonstrate and capture the results/impact of improved governance (which can be attributed to SHOUHARDO II interventions) on food and livelihood security of PEP beneficiaries. In specific the study should investigate a) the role of the PEP in decisions made by UDMC, PACCs and Development Coordinating Committees (at both the Union and Upazila levels); b) how these decisions have affected program implementation and outcomes, especially in relation to the food and livelihoods security of program PEPs and other non-program PEPs (Union Parishad area only); c) linkage between Union Parishad and the VDC/Communities d) linkage between the Nation Building Departments (NBDs) and the VDC/Communities e) changes in the mindset of representatives of Union Parishads and NBDs to be pro-poor and pro-women. Recommend specific actions the program should take to maintain level of "pro-poor engagement" by local governance structures (Union and Upazila levels), as well as increase meaningful participation of PEPs. Outline successful applications of strategies, which have a proven track record of success in addressing PEP participation within the Bangladesh (and South East Asia) context.

*Note: In the SHOUHARDO II program, Village Development Committees (VDCs) serve as an umbrella for all different groups particularly of PEP women, and as a vehicle of community development to bring changes in their communities (see Section x for details).*

### **III. Process and methodology**

The Consultant(s) will prepare a work plan immediately upon signature of contracts. The work plan will describe how the consultancy will be carried out and may propose refinements to the Terms of Reference. This work plan (see sample key steps below) will be approved by the SHOUHARDO II Chief of Party. The work plan will address the following elements/ subject to discussion and fine tuning with the consultant:

- Expectations of the final report;
- Specific Roles and Responsibilities;
- Scheduling and timelines for activities and deliverables;
- Methodological framework

### **Key Tasks**

The Consultant(s) will be required to:

- Prepare a work plan with timeline and deliverables in consultation with the SHOUHARDO II team;
- Familiarization with the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of the program;

## REVIEW OF SHOUHARDO II GOVERNANCE INTERVENTIONS (FINAL REPORT)

- Review all relevant program documentation (reports, guidelines, baseline, mid-term review, Technical Paper on CARE Bangladesh's Inclusive Governance Framework, etc.)
- Undertake selective field research, including Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews
- Submit a draft report
- Submit a satisfactory final report
- Conduct a feedback/sharing session with the program staff on the findings and recommendations.

Other dimensions could be added as the consultant sees fit given time and budget available

### ***Outputs and deliverables***

The Consultant(s) will prepare:

1. A draft work plan;
2. A draft report with annexes (list of people interviewed, methodology, survey instruments, etc.);
3. E-mail and phone updates/de-briefs on progress of the review at regular intervals;
4. Within stipulated deadline (and after receiving comments on the draft report), the Consultant(s) will submit a final report including an abstract/executive summary and all relevant annexes;
5. Conduct a feedback/training/sharing session with the SHOUHARDO II program staff on the findings and recommendations.

CARE will assess the quality of the final report based on the degree to which the report demonstrates that the evaluation has fulfilled the purpose for which it was conducted.

### **IV. Level of Effort and Budget**

The time frame proposed for the submission of the report is by no later than three (3) months after signing of the contract. The level of effort is estimated to 30 working days. Time breakdown will be set by the consultant in consultation with the SHOUHARDO II program team in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Travel expenses and per diems will be covered by CARE directly. All contractual, travel, payment procedure will be done according to CARE rules and procedures and will be coordinated by the CARE Bangladesh Dhaka office.

### **V. Consultant(s) Qualifications**

The consultant needs to be a Bangladesh Local Governance Expert and expected to have experience in food security of Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) especially women.

### **VI. Contract Supervision**

The SHOUHARDO II point person will be responsible for:

- Coordinate site visit, key meetings, interviews, etc.
- Feedback throughout all phases of execution.
- Supplying the needed documents
- Approval of all deliverables (e.g. work plan, the draft final report and the final report).

The Consultant(s) are responsible for:

- Preparing a draft work plan;
- Preparing the report;
- Coordinating with the SHOUHARDO II program in Bangladesh;
- The day-to-day management of operations;
- Regular progress reporting to SHOUHARDO II;

- The production of deliverables in accordance with contractual requirements

**Annex 1 [Annex to the TOR]:**

**SO1: "Availability of" and "access to" nutritious foods enhanced and protected for 370,000 PEP households.**

*IR1.1: Improved and diversified agriculture systems developed and linked with private and public services.*

*IR1.2: Increased household income among PEP in the target communities.*

**SO2: Improved health, hygiene and nutrition status of 281,000 children under 2 years of age.**

*IR2.1: "Access to" and "utilization of" health and nutrition services improved to care givers of children under 2 years of age.*

*IR2.2: Care givers of children under 2 adopt improved health, hygiene and nutrition behavior and caring practices.*

**SO3: PEP women and adolescent girls empowered in their families, communities and Union Parishad (UP).**

*IR3.1: Influence of PEP women and adolescent girls in decision making increased.*

*IR3.2: Local support systems strengthened to reduce Violence Against Women (VAW).*

**SO4: Local elected bodies and government service providers responsiveness and accountability to the PEP increased.**

*IR4.1: Nation Building Departments (NBD) and Union Parishads proactively work to address the needs of the PEP, especially women.*

*IR 4.2: PEP access to entitlements and services increased, including safety nets and natural resources.*

**SO5: Targeted community members and government institutions are better prepared for, mitigate, and respond to disasters and adapt to climate change.**

*IR5.1: Disaster contingency systems in place and functioning.*

*IR5.2: Influence local and national humanitarian assistance initiatives.*

## Annex 2: Review Team

The study team consisted of the following members, with the key roles and responsibilities of each noted briefly:

- **Prashanta K. Tripura, Team Leader:** responsible for leading the study, and preparation and submission of the study report.
- **Professor Ainoon Naher, PhD, Gender and Development Expert:** provided inputs and guidance to the team at key moments during the inception phase, data analysis and reporting.
- **Abu Ala Mahmudul Hasan, Associate Reviewer:** under the guidance of the Team Leader, contributed towards developing the details of research plan, coordinated field work, and provided inputs to data analysis and preparation of the draft report
- **Sharmin Afrose, Sharmin Akhter and Muid. Naimul Amin, Research Assistants:** assisted in primary data collection from the field through FGDs and KIIs, and compiled their field level observations and findings.

**Annex 3: Chronological summary of activities**

Date	Place	Activity	Responsibility	Remarks/Support Required
Jun 19 – Jul 2, 2014	Dhaka	Meetings, review of documents, recruitment of RAs	Team Leader (TL)	NTC and STM-Governance, SHOUHARDO II
Thu, Jul 3	Dhaka	Meeting at CBHQ to finalize detailed work plan	Study Team	Do. (RAs will join if possible)
Fri, Jul 4	Do.	Preparations for field work	Do.	
Sat, Jul 5		Travel	Do.	
Sun, Jul 6	Dimla, Nilphamary	FGDs 1-2, KIIs 1-2 (at village level)	Do.	CARE and PNGO
Mon, Jul 7	Do.	FGDs 3-4, KIIs 3-5 (incl. FGD and KII at Union level)	Do. (Divided)	Do.
Tue, Jul 8	Do.	FGDs 5-6, KIIs 6-8 (incl. KII at Upazila level)	Do. (Divided)	Do.
Do.		Travel		TL to Dhaka
Wed, Jul 9 to Fri, Jul 11	Sonatala, Bogra	FGDs and KIIs at village/Union and Upazila levels	Associate Evaluator & RAs	<b>Inception report</b> submitted on July 10
Jul 12-13	Dhaka	Organization of field notes and team meeting		
Jul 15-17	Ukhia, Cox's Bazar	Fieldwork	AE & RAs	Do.
Jul 19-20		Rest, field notes etc.		
Jul 21-23	Dharmapasha, Sunamganj	Fieldwork	Full team	TL returned on 22/7/14
Jul 25 – Aug 14	Dhaka	Compilation and analysis of field data	Study Team	
Aug 15-27	Dhaka	Preparation and submission of draft report	TL	Submitted on 27/8/14
Aug 28 – Sep 14	Dhaka	Feedbacks on draft report received and incorporated	TL, AE	
Sep 15 – Sep 17	Dhaka	Finalization and submission of the final report	TL	Contract ends on Sep 17

#### Annex 4: Project documents reviewed

Sl. No.	Name/Description of Document	Sources/Type
1.	SHOUHARDO II Program Overview	SHOUHARDO II website
2.	Midterm Review Report of SHOUHARDO II	Printed copy
3.	Baseline Study Report of SHOUHARDO II II	Do.
4.	Thematic Study Report on Governance Issues	Do.
5.	Annual Results Report, FY '13	Do.
6.	Quarterly Reports (Q1 and Q2, FY '14)	Do.
7.	Module guidelines on SO-4 (in Bangla)	Do.
8.	Other guidance notes (in Bangla)	Do.
9.	M&E Report with indicators	SHOHARDO II website
10.	Sample completed formats used in ranking UPs and VDCs using Management Score Sheet (MSS)	Photocopy
11.	Sample meeting minutes of PACCs/SHOUHARDO II Coordination Committees	Photocopy
12.	SHOUHARDO II Program Exit Strategy and Action Plan March 2014	PDF file
13.	SHOUHARDO II Program Best Practice (DRAFT) 2014	Zip file

**Annex 5: Selected sites for fieldwork**

Upazila, District and Region; PNGO	Union	Grade* (Union)	Village	Grade* (Village)
1. Dimla, Nilphamari, North Chars Region  PNGO: JSKS	1. Purbo Chhatnai	A	1. Chhatnai Block 8	A
			2. Chhatnai Block 9	B
	2. Khoga Khoribari	B	3. Dahol Para Gucchagram	C
			4. Bonder Khoribari Dangapara	B
2. Sonatola, Bogra, Mid Chars Region  PNGO: GBS	3. Tekani Chukainagar	A	5. Purbo Tekani	A
			6. Purbo Moheshpara	B
	4. Sonatola	C	7. Namajkhali	A
			8. Sujaetpur	B
3. Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Coastal Region  PNGO: SHED	5. Palong Khali	B	9. Goyal Mara	A
			10. Ukiyar Ghat	B
	6. Haldia Palong	C	11. Uttar Barobill	C
			12. Batta Tali	B
4. Dharmapasha, Sunamganj, Haor Region  PNGO: SUS	7. Paikurati	A	13. Paikurati	A
			14. Nizampur	C
	8. Selborash	B	15. Matikata	A
			16. Singpur Bamonerchar	C

## Annex 6: List of Persons Interviewed

(Name, designation/category, place and date - in reverse chronological order of the interviews)

1. Md. Akram Al Hossain, Joint Secretary, Local Government Division, Dhaka, 23/7/14
2. Md. Liakot Ali, Deputy Chief, Planning, Ministry of Food, Dhaka, 23/7/14
3. Md. Jahangir Alam, Uz. Fisheries Officer, NBD, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj, 22/7/14
4. Hamida Banu, Female PEP, Selborash, Matikata, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj, 22/7/14
5. Ali Amjad, UP Chairman, Selborash, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj, 22/7/14
6. Harunur Rashid, CARE Staff, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj, 21/7/14
7. Md. Motahar Hossain, Uz. Women's Affairs Officer, PACC, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj, 21/7/14
8. Sabina Yasmin, Technical Officer, SUS (PNGO), Dharmapasha, Sunamganj, 21/7/14
9. Md. Nurul Islam, VDC, Nijampur, Paikurati, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj, 21/7/14
10. Md. Bojlur Rahman, Male PEP, Paikurati, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj, 21/7/14
11. Ujjal Barua, Field Supervisor, SHED (PNGO), Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, 17/7/14
12. Md. Shawkot Ali, PNGO, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, 17/7/14
13. Dr. Moniruzzaman Tarafdar, Uz. Livestock Officer, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, 17/7/14
14. Joinal Abedin, CARE Staff, Cox's Bazar, 17/7/14
15. M Gafur Uddin Chowdhury, UP Chairman, Palongkhali, Cox's Bazar, 17/7/14
16. Md. Shahjahan, Sub-Assis. Agriculture officer, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, 17/7/14
17. Nazir Ahmed, VDC, Borobila, Holdiapalong, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, 16/7/14
18. Masud Rana, Male 'PEP', Boktatoli, Holdiapalong, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, 16/7/14
19. Abdur Rahim Raja, UP Member, Palongkhali, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, 15/7/14
20. Rozina Akter, Female PEP, Balukhali, Palongkhali, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, 15/7/14
21. Alhaj Ashraf Uddin Akhondo, UP Chairman, Tekani Chukainagar, Sonatola, Bogra, 11/7/14
22. Haidar Akhondo, Male PEP, Tekani Chukainagar, Sonatola, Bogra, 11/7/14
23. Jahura Khatun, PNGO, Sonatola, Bogra, 11/7/14
24. Anju Ara, Female PEP, Sujaitpur, Sonatola, Bogra, 10/7/14
25. Habiba Khatun, CARE Staff, Sonatola, Bogra, 10/7/14
26. Uttam Kumar Mandol, UNO (PACC), Sonatola, Bogra, 9/7/14
27. Abudur Razzak, VDC, Purbo Tekani, Sonatola, Bogra, 9/7/14
28. Abudul Kader, Sub-Assis. Agriculture Officer, Sonatola, Bogra, 9/7/14
29. Subrata Kumar Saha, Regional Coordinator, SHOUHARDO II, CARE, Rangpur, 8/7/14
30. Shayamapada Ghosh (Line department official/PACC), Dimla, Nilphamari, 8/7/14
31. Md. Jowel Hossain, Male PEP, Bondor Kharibari, Khogakharibari, Dimla, Nilphamari, 7/7/14
32. Marhana Begum. FWA, Dimla, Nilphamari, 7/7/14
33. Abul Khaier, VDC, Purbo Satnai, Dimla, Nilphamari, 6/7/14
34. Md. Montajul Islam, Unit Manager, JSKS (PNGO), Dimla, Nilphamari, 6/7/14
35. Md. Ansar Ali, UP Member, Dimla, Nilphamari, 6/7/14
36. Ojifa Begum, Female PEP, Purbo Satnai, Dimla, Nilphamari, 6/7/14

**Note:** In addition to the persons listed above, members of the study team have had other meetings with CARE staff members (e.g. the Associate Evaluator met with Sajeda Begum, Regional Coordinator and Tamiz Uddin Ahmed, RTM at CARE Regional Office in Mymensingh on 24/7/14, and the Team Leader have met with HJM Kamal, NTC and Manna Mazumder, STM-Governance at CARE Bangladesh HQ in Dhaka on several occasions.)

## Annex 7: Schedule of FGDs held

Sl No.	Place	Category of Participants	Date
	<b>Nilphamari</b>		
1.	Chhatnai Block-8, Purbo Chhatnai, Dimla, Nilphamari	PEP	06/07/2014
2.	Chhatnai Block-9, Purbo Chhatnai, Dimla, Nilphamari	VDC	06/07/2014
3.	Bondor Kharibari, Dangapara, Khogakharibari, Dimla, Nilphamari	VDC	07/07/2014
4.	Khogakharibari, Dimla, Nilphamari	UP & NBD	07/07/2014
5.	Doholpara Guchoqram, Dimla, Nilphamari	PEP	08/07/2014
6.	Purbo Chhatnai, Dimla, Nilphamari	UP & NBD	08/07/2014
	<b>Bogra</b>		
7.	Purba Tekani, Tekani Chukainagar, Sonatola, Bogra	VDC	09/07/2014
8.	Tekani Chukainagar, Sonatola, Bogra	UP & NBD	09/07/2014
9.	Sonatola, Bogra	UP & NBD	10/07/2014
10.	Sujaitpur, Sonatola, Bogra	VDC	10/07/2014
11.	Purbo Moheshpara, Sonatola, Bogra	PEP	11/07/2014
12.	Namajkhali, Sonatola, Bogra	PEP	11/07/2014
	<b>Cox's Bazar</b>		
13.	Goyalmara, Palongkhali, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar	PEP/VDC	15/07/2014
14.	Ukhiaghat, Palongkhali, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar	PEP	15/07/2014
15.	Boktatoli, Holdiapalong, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar	VDC	16/07/2014
16.	Holdiapalong, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar	UP & NBD	16/07/2014
17.	Uttor Borobila, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar	PEP	16/07/2014
	<b>Sunamgonj</b>		
18.	Paikurati, Dharmapasa, Sunamganj	VDC	21/07/2014
19.	Nijampur, Dharmapasa, Sunamganj	PEP	21/07/2014
20.	Paikurati, Dharmapasa, Sunamganj	UP & NBD	22/07/2014
21.	Matikata, Selborosh, Dhormopasha, Sunamganj	VDC	22/07/2014
22.	Selborash, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj.	UP & NBD	22/07/2014
23.	Singpur, Bamonerchar, Selborosh, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj	PEP	23/07/2014

**Note:** In addition to the FGDs listed above, the study team also met with the VDC and some project participants (PEP) at Galuikhali, Maddhanagar, Dharmapasha Union, Sunamgang on 23/7/14.

## Annex 8: General Checklist of Key Questions (for FGDs and KIIs)

### General list of questions:

1. Are the PEP women (covered by SHOUHARDO II engaging within local governance (*Union Parishad only*) structures in an effective and meaningful way?
2. Which obstacles and challenges do women (particularly PEP women) face while engaging within local governance structures?
3. What is the extent and experience of PEP women's engagement in project supported process, e.g. the inclusion of Community Action Plans (CAPs) into the UP budget?
4. What are the perceptions of men (within local governance structures) in relation to women's participation within local governance structures?
5. What are the trends and changes in perception of men that may have occurred over the life of the SHOUHARDO II program?
6. How could quality participation of PEP women be enhanced by programs such as SHOUHARDO II II?
7. How may SHOUHARDO II program team members and EKATA groups support women in emerging as public leaders in UPs?
8. What are the results/impact of improved governance (which can be attributed to SHOUHARDO II interventions) on food and livelihood security of PEP beneficiaries?
9. What are the role of the PEP in decisions making by UDMC, PACCs and Development Coordinating Committees (at both the Union and Upazila levels)?
10. How may these decisions have affected the food and livelihoods security of program poor and extreme poor and other non-program PEPs (within the Union Parishad area)? How could the situation be improved further?
11. What are the linkages between Union Parishad and the VDC/Communities? How could the linkages be improved further?
12. How are the linkages between the Nation Building Departments (NBDs) and the VDC/Communities? How could the linkages be improved further?
13. Has there been any change in the mindset of representatives of Union Parishads and NBDs towards the poor and women?
14. Are Nation Building Departments (NBD) and Union Parishads proactively working for the needs of the PEP, especially women (With regard to budget allocation, participation of PEPs, etc)?
15. How are they supporting them? How could it be improved further?
16. Has PEPs' access to entitlements and services (including safety nets and natural resources) increased (in different areas, among different beneficiaries)? To what extent? How could it be improved further?
17. Has awareness of entitlements among Local Elected Bodies (LEBs) increased? To what extent? How could it be improved further?
18. Has access to social safety nets (VGF, VGD, widow, elderly allowances) among PEP increased? To what extent? How could it be improved further?
19. What were the measures taken to improve the areas where decline was evident?
20. What were the outcomes of those measures?

## Annex 9: Sample questions tailored according to different categories of respondents:

### Stakeholder category 1: Primary project participants (i.e. PEPs)

- ১। আপনাদের যে দাবী দাওয়া চাহিদা আপনারা সেটা ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ বা সরকারি অফিসগুলিতে কতটুকু কিভাবে জানাতে পারেন? যদি ঠিকমত জানাতে না পারেন, সেটা কেন?

- ২। আপনাদের চাহিদা বা দাবী দাওয়া জানাতে গিয়ে আপনারা কোন সমস্যা বা বাধার সম্মুখীন হলে সেগুলি সম্পর্কে একটু বলবেন? এগুলি কিভাবে কাটিয়ে ওঠা যায়?
- ৩। সৌহার্দ কর্মসূচির বিভিন্ন কর্মকাণ্ডে আপনাদের কি অংশগ্রহণ কেমন? অংশগ্রহণের ফলাফল কি? চলমান কর্মকাণ্ড ও সেসবে আপনাদের অংশগ্রহণকে কিভাবে আরো কার্যকর করা যায়?
- ৪। ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ ও সরকারি বিভাগগুলির কাছে আপনাদের দাবীদাওয়া জানানো, সৌহার্দ কর্মসূচির বিভিন্ন কর্মকাণ্ডে সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ, মতামত প্রদান ইত্যাদির ক্ষেত্রে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ কতটুকু আছে?
- ৫। বিভিন্ন কর্মকাণ্ডে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ নিয়ে পুরুষদের মনোভাব ও মতামত কেমন? আগের তুলনায় কি ধরনের পরিবর্তন আপনারা লক্ষ্য করেন?
- ৬। প্রকল্পের বিভিন্ন কর্মকাণ্ডে আপনাদের অংশগ্রহণের ফলে আপনাদের খাদ্য নিরাপত্তায় কতটুকু পরিবর্তন হয়েছে? (সরাসরি ‘খাদ্য নিরাপত্তা’ না বলে ‘অভাব কতটুকু কমেছে’, ‘সারাবছর ধরে পরিবারের সবাই ঠিকমত তিনবেলা খাওয়াদাওয়া করতে পারছে কিনা’ ইত্যাদি বলতে হবে।)
- ৭। ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের কাছে আপনারা যে বিভিন্ন দাবী দাওয়া জানান, এর ফলাফল কি হয়েছে?
- ৮। ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/সৌহার্দ কর্মসূচির কর্মকাণ্ডে আপনাদের/নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ, দাবী দাওয়া জানানো বা মতামত দেওয়ার সুযোগ ইত্যাদি বাড়ানোর জন্য আর কি কি ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া যেতে পারে?

### Stakeholder category 2: VDC (গ্রাম উন্নয়ন কমিটি)

- ১। গ্রাম উন্নয়ন কমিটি হিসাবে আপনারা মূলত কি কাজ করেন? (এই বিষয়ে বা পরবর্তী যে কোন প্রশ্নের প্রেক্ষিতে CAP-এর প্রসঙ্গে কিছু আলোচনা হতে পারে।)
- ২। ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের সাথে আপনাদের কতটুকু কি ধরনের যোগাযোগ আছে? কিভাবে সেটা করে থাকেন? ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের বাজেট প্রণয়ন, বিভিন্ন কমিটিতে আপনাদের কতটুকু অংশগ্রহণ ছিল/আছে?
- ৩। বিভিন্ন সরকারি বিভাগ/অফিসারদের (কৃষি, স্বাস্থ্য ইত্যাদি) সাথে আপনাদের কি ধরনের যোগাযোগ, কাজ আছে?
- ৪। ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ বা সরকারি বিভাগগুলিতে যে আপনারা যাওয়া আসা করছেন, আপনাদের বিভিন্ন চাহিদা ও দাবীদাওয়া তুলে ধরছেন, তাতে কতটা কাজ হচ্ছে? ইউপি ও সরকারি লোকজনের মধ্যে কি ধরনের পরিবর্তন আপনারা দেখতে পাচ্ছেন?
- ৫। ভিডিসির বিভিন্ন কর্মকাণ্ডের কারণে গ্রামের দরিদ্র মানুষদের খাদ্য নিরাপত্তায় কতটুকু পরিবর্তন হয়েছে? (সরাসরি ‘খাদ্য নিরাপত্তা’ না বলে ‘অভাব কতটুকু কমেছে’, ‘সারাবছর ধরে পরিবারের সবাই ঠিকমত তিনবেলা খাওয়াদাওয়া করতে পারছে কিনা’ ইত্যাদি বলতে হবে।)
- ৬। ভিডিসির বিভিন্ন কর্মকাণ্ডে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ, মতামত দেওয়ার বা সিদ্ধান্ত দেওয়ার জায়গা কতটা কি আকারে আছে? তাদের অংশগ্রহণকে সমাজের লোকেরা কি চোখে দেখে?
- ৭। ভিডিসির মাধ্যমে বিভিন্ন কাজ করতে গিয়ে কি ধরনের সমস্যা হয়েছে? সেগুলি কিভাবে কাটিয়ে ওঠা গেছে বা যেতে পারে?
- ৮। কিভাবে ভিডিসিকে আরো কার্যকর করা যায়?

### Stakeholder category 3: UP/NBD (ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/সরকারি সেবাদানকারী সংস্থাসমূহ)

- ১। কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে এলাকার লোকজন আপনাদের কাছে বেশী আসে? কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে আপনারা বেশী সফলভাবে কাজ করতে পারেন?
- ২। দরিদ্র ও হতদরিদ্র মানুষদের জন্য, নারীদের জন্য, আপনারা কি কি কাজ করেন? তারা আপনাদের কাছে কতটা আসে, এবং আসলে কি ধরনের সমস্যা, চাহিদা ও প্রত্যাশা নিয়ে আসে? তাদের চাহিদা বা প্রত্যাশা আপনারা কতটা পূরণ করতে পারেন? প্রত্যাশা পূরণ করতে পারার ক্ষেত্রে আপনাদের সাফল্যের রহস্য কি, আরা না পারলে তারই বা কারণ কি?

- ৩। ভিডিসির লোকজন আপনাদের কাছে কতটা আসে, এবং কি ধরনের বিষয় নিয়ে আসে? তাদের চাহিদা বা দাবী দাওয়ার প্রেক্ষিতে আপনারা কি করেন?
- ৪। ভিডিসিদের কর্মকালকে আপনারা কিভাবে দেখেন? তাদের সাথে কাজ করতে গিয়ে আপনাদের সুবিধা/অসুবিধা কি হয়? তাদের সাথে কাজের ক্ষেত্রে মূল চ্যালেঞ্জগুলি কি?
- ৫। ভিডিসিদের সাথে কাজের ক্ষেত্রে আরো কিভাবে উন্নতি সাধন করা যায়?

#### **Stakeholder category 4: PACC (সৌহার্দ সমন্বয় কমিটি)**

- ১। পিএসিসির মূল কাজ কি? কমিটির সদস্য হিসাবে আপনার ভূমিকা কি?
- ২। পিএসিসির সভাগুলিতে দরিদ্র ও অতি দরিদ্রদের নিয়ে কি ধরনের আলোচনা হয়?
- ৩। সৌহার্দ কর্মসূচির অগ্রগতি কতটা কি আকারে হচ্ছে, এ ব্যাপারে আপনার মতামত ও করণীয় কি?
- ৪। পিএসিসির সভাগুলি কতদিন পরপর হয়? কারা সচরাচর উপস্থিত থাকেন বা থাকেন না, এবং কেন? অনুপস্থিতির ক্ষেত্রে কি করা হয়? সাধারণভাবে পিএসিসির কাজের ক্ষেত্রে কি ধরনের চ্যালেঞ্জ রয়েছে? সেগুলির ব্যাপারে কি করার আছে? উপজেলা সৌহার্দ সমন্বয় কমিটির সাথে অন্যান্য পর্যায়ের পিএসিসির কি ধরনের যোগাযোগ বা সমন্বয় আছে?
- ৫। ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের মাধ্যমে দরিদ্র ও অতিদরিদ্রদের যেসব সেবা দেওয়ার কথা রয়েছে, সেগুলি নিশ্চিত করার ক্ষেত্রে আপনাদের/পিএসিসির কি ভূমিকা রয়েছে?
- ৬। সৌহার্দ কর্মসূচিকে আরো গতিশীল করার ক্ষেত্রে আপনার পরামর্শ কি?

#### **Stakeholder category 5: Project staff (প্রকল্প কর্মী/কর্মকর্তা)**

- ১। SO4-এর মূল কাজ কি? কিভাবে এই কাজ আপনারা করেন?
- ২। অন্য SO-গুলি SO4 অর্জনে কিভাবে সহায়তা করে?
- ৩। কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে SO-4-এর লক্ষ্য অর্জনে উল্লেখযোগ্য অগ্রগতি অর্জিত হয়েছে? এই অগ্রগতি কিভাবে সম্ভব হয়েছে?
- ৪। কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে লক্ষ্য অর্জন আশানুরূপ হয় নি? কেন হয় নি?
- ৫। SO-4-এর সফলতা অর্জনের ক্ষেত্রে কি ধরনের চ্যালেঞ্জ রয়েছে?
- ৬। SO-4-কে আরো কার্যকর করার জন্য কি কি পদক্ষেপ নেওয়া যায়? বি বা সি ক্যাটাগরির ইউপি/ভিডিসিকে আরো শক্তিশালী করার জন্য আপনাদের কর্মপন্থা কি?

### **Annex 10: Recommendations by FGD and KII participants grouped by stakeholders**

#### **Poor and extreme poor**

1. More families need to be brought under SHOUHARDO II project
2. Relationship with Union Parishad needs to be strengthened
3. More counseling needed for husbands to make them more aware about the women empowerment
4. VDC, Ekota and ECCD needs to be strengthened
5. Need handicraft training and marketing support
6. Trainings need to extend beyond listed beneficiaries
7. Need Health support form SHOUHARDO II
8. Need Education support from SHOUHARDO II
9. Need more training

10. Need to give sewing machine and training on tailoring for the women.
11. Need a bridge for the community
12. Supports needs to expand

#### **VDC**

13. Need to introduce loan program
14. Input support needs to be increased
15. Initiative for allocation of Khash land needs to be strengthened
16. Need to register the VDC and ensure its sustainability beyond SHOUHARDO II project
17. Need to expand and extend SHOUHARDO II

#### **Union Parishad**

18. Need to cover the whole Union rather than few selected villages/wards
19. Need to increase salary/honorarium for staffs, volunteers and VDC
20. Need to give signing/approval authority to the Union Parishad chairmen and members

#### **NBD**

21. SHOUHARDO II should increase input support for farmers
22. Need to cover the whole Upazila rather than few selected villages
23. NGO can provide financial or input support and the Government departments can provide technical support, such collaboration could be successful
24. Training and marketing support for handicraft production
25. The number of beneficiaries should be increased, by lowering overhead cost if possible.
26. SHOUHARDO III planning should start now.

#### **SHOUHARDO II**

27. One CARE staff said that capacity building and strengthening of the local government bodies such as Union Parishad is necessary for better service delivery from them. Besides, accountability of different departments of the government needs to be ensured
28. More focus on governance
29. Haor focused intervention needed
30. For education of children boat service or boat based school is needed
31. More focus needed on education, prevention of school dropout
32. More income generating activities needed for women, especially those of cottage industries; need to increase IGA and input support
33. Need more training for the Union Parishad member-chairmen
34. Need more staff
35. Need to expand and extend the project
36. There is a possibility of greater impact by coordinating the family planning related activities of VDCs and family planning department, which they do now separately

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