



STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE (SDLG) IN BANGLADESH

QUARTERLY PROGRESS PERFORMANCE REPORT— NO. 7

NOVEMBER 2013

This report was prepared for the United States Agency for International Development
It was prepared by Tetra Tech ARD

This report has been prepared for the United States Agency for International Development, under USAID Contract Number EPP-I-00-04-00035-00, Order Number AID-388-TO-11-00001.

Tetra Tech ARD Primary Contacts:

Anna Farmer, Project Manager
Dr. Jesse Biddle, Senior Technical Advisor/Manager
159 Bank Street, Suite 300
Burlington, VT 05401
Tel: (802) 658-3890
Email: anna.farmer@tetratech.com; jesse.biddle@tetratech.com

**STRENGTHENING
DEMOCRATIC LOCAL
GOVERNANCE (SDLG)
PROGRAM IN BANGLADESH
QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE PROGRESS
REPORT – NO. 7: JULY 1, 2013 – OCT. 31, 2013**

NOVEMBER 2013

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

CONTENTS

- ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS..... ii**
- 1.0 INTRODUCTION..... 1**
 - OPPORTUNITY: PROJECT EXTENSION.....2
- 2.0 SDLG PROGRESS BY COMPONENT AND TASK AREAS 3**
 - 2.1 COMPONENT 1: ROLES AND AUTHORITIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS3**
 - MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF3
 - 2.1.1 Task A: Research and Information Dissemination 4
 - 2.1.2 Task B: Policy Dialogue.....4
 - 2.1.3 Task C: Innovative Practices 5
 - 2.1.4 Task D: Partnership Building 5
 - 2.2 COMPONENT 2: ADVOCACY AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS 6**
 - MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF6
 - ACHIEVEMENTS BY WORK PLAN TASK AREAS.....6
 - 2.2.1 Task A: Training and Technical Assistance 6
 - 2.2.1 Task B: operational support services 7
 - 2.3 COMPONENT 3: TRANSPARENT AND EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS 8**
 - MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF8
 - ACHIEVEMENTS BY WORK PLAN TASK AREAS.....9
 - 2.3.1 Task A: Training and Technical Assistance 9
 - 2.4 COMPONENT 4: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING 11**
 - MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF 11
 - ACHIEVEMENTS BY WORK PLAN TASK AREAS.....11
 - 2.4.1 Task A: Developing Citizen Participation Forums 11
 - 2.4.2 Task B: Training and Technical Assistance (previously Participatory Strategic Planning) 12
 - 2.5 COMPONENT 5: WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY 12**
- 3.0 COMMUNICATIONS 14**
 - MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF 14
- 4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)..... 16**
 - MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF 16
- Annexes 1 – 9 Presented as Attachments 17**

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BUPF	Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum
CiG	Citizens-in-Governance forum
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GIS	Geographic Information System
HDI	Howard Delafield International
HLP	Horizontal Learning Program
LCG	Local Consultative Group
LG	Local Government
LGCI	Local Government Capacity Index
LGSP	Local Government Support Program
LGU	Local Government Unit
MAB	Municipal Association of Bangladesh
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
MP	Member of Parliament
MPG	Media Professionals Group
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PNGO	Partner Nongovernmental Organization
PSP	Participatory Strategic Planning
SDLG	Strengthening Democratic Local Governance Program
UDCC	Union Development Coordination Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UP	Union Parishad
US	Unnayan Shamannay
UZPAB	Upazila Parishad Association of Bangladesh
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Strengthening Democratic Local Governance (SDLG) in Bangladesh Project is a 39-month activity (December 2010 – March 2014) funded by the USAID/Bangladesh Mission. Building on more than a decade's worth of local government strengthening programs in Bangladesh, the SDLG Project combines a focus on research and policy advocacy, capacity development for local government associations, and training and technical assistance for local government units at union parishad (UP), upazila parishad and Municipal levels. Tetra Tech ARD is the implementing partner for the SDLG Project.

Major SDLG Project objectives are to:

- **Expand the roles and authorities of local governments:** Stimulate evidence-based policy dialogue at the national level, test/disseminate innovative practices and partnerships with local governments, and demonstrate the benefits to policymakers;
- **Strengthen and expand the capacity of local government associations:** Work with the existing union and municipal local government associations – the Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum (BUPF) and Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB), respectively -- to articulate emerging policy dialogue issues and advocate for legal and policy reform on behalf of their constituencies, and strengthen their member communications and financial sustainability. We will also help form a unified association of upazilas, the Upazila Parishad Association of Bangladesh (UZPAB);
- **Improve and expand the service delivery and resource mobilization of local government units:** Work to expand existing capacities of Union Parishads (UPs) and municipalities. We will also help the newly forming Upazila-level governments to understand and utilize their service delivery and resource mobilization authorities; as we do this, we will support elected women officials at all local levels by clarifying roles and responsibilities and strengthening their capacities; and
- **Ensure public participation, accountability and transparency in local government finances and decision making:** Increase the participation of citizens, including women and youth, through citizen participation forums, newly legislated Ward Committees, Open Budget meetings and activated Standing Committees and other local participatory strategies.

Our technical strategy involves building on USAID/Bangladesh's history of local governance support programs; linking with USAID/Bangladesh's and other donor's programs; integrating global and local lessons learned and proven tools for successful and sustainable local governance programming; identifying, developing and demonstrating to local governments innovative practices to improve performance; integrating gender and youth concerns across the SDLG program while supporting women's participation; and acquiring, developing and disseminating through multiple media information on the SDLG and local governments in Bangladesh.

The report is organized to provide information on project performance in relationship to the Year 3 Work Plan. The project work plans were organized according to broad Components, subsidiary Task Areas and proposed Activities under each Task Area.

OPPORTUNITY: PROJECT EXTENSION POSSIBILITY

In September 2013 USAID/Bangladesh provided Tetra Tech ARD with a letter of intent to possibly extend the SDLG project for 12 months until March 2015. The SDLG team is preparing to respond to an extension request for proposal (RFP) and to develop a Work Plan for the extension period, both for USAID review. However, Tetra Tech ARD understands that until and unless USAID/Bangladesh modifies the SDLG contract period of performance (and any other modifications), the existing contract terms and conditions remain in place.

2.0 SDLG PROGRESS BY COMPONENT AND TASK AREAS

2.1 COMPONENT 1: ROLES AND AUTHORITIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

Major Achievements

This Component combines research, a series of advocacy events designed to promote more informed public discussions and debate, and behind the scenes efforts to build policy maker consensus on specific reforms designed to increase local government authority. This Component also includes work with women leaders from union, municipal and upazila local governments, and domestic and international study tours.

In early 2013, SDLG selected research partner Unnayan Shamannay (US) through a competitive process to research local government advocacy activities, arrange private advocacy sessions, perform ‘best practice’ field research and organize a national conference.

During the July 2013 to September 2013 reporting period:

- **Research Completed on Advocacy Activities** – Research organization Unnayan Shamannay (US) completed its mapping of the advocacy activities of international donors and NGOs on decentralization and local government policy reform, as well as a detailed review of sources of local revenue generation that identified real and perceived overlapping sources among union, municipal and upazila councils. Final reports on advocacy activities and sources of local revenue are attached in **Annexes 1 and 2**.
- **5 Advocacy Meetings Conducted with Policy Makers** – Based on the above research and in consultation with SDLG, US identified common advocacy themes among donors and NGOs and also determined that few other international donors had planned advocacy events. As discussed further below, one policy reform was identified as the subject of a series of small advocacy meetings with influential policy makers initiated by US in the month of August. A report on one of those meetings is attached in **Annex 3**.
- **12 Leadership Trainings Completed for Women Representatives** - During the reporting period, 12 one and a half day leadership trainings were conducted for the Divisional Women’s Committees of both BUPF and MAB. Training sessions were conducted ‘back to back’ over a three-day period in each Divisional capital and are discussed further below. A list of training sessions is included as **Annex 4**.

Major Challenges

- **Hartals and Political Party Activity** – Ongoing political party programs including hartal strikes, demonstrations, and political meetings made it increasingly difficult for SDLG research partner US to secure appointments with important political party members and MPs due to limited time and a focus on pre-election party activities. Appointments had to be rescheduled many times resulting in uncertainty and delays in conducting the advocacy work.

2.1.1 TASK A: RESEARCH AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

TASK A, ACTIVITY 1: LOCAL GOVERNANCE POLICY RESEARCH PROGRAM (YEARS 2 AND 3)

Current Status: *Phase II Continuing.* As noted above, for Phase II research activities, grantee US conducted an assessment of ongoing initiatives by local NGOs and international actors and identified those decentralization policy reform issues considered most important. From among these issues and in consultation with SDLG, US chose a single pressing upazila reform initiative that appeared to have the best chances of achieving reform within the short, pre-election time period. The final research report is provided at **Annex 1**.

In early 2013, the Local Government Division submitted a draft policy initiative that would transfer funds for salaries of central government ministry officials from the Ministries to the Upazila Parishad account. This would effectively give these councils the ability to ensure national civil servants posted at the upazila level are responsive to local requests to improve health, education, agriculture and other services that had been legally transferred *in name only* under the councils in 2009. Final approval for implementation of this draft policy initiative has been pending for several months with the Prime Minister's cabinet and was described by LGD officials as a 'political decision.' US chose this issue as the focus of its planned advocacy meetings.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 2: SUPPORT REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES TO DEVELOP LOCAL GOVERNANCE RESEARCH CAPACITIES (YEARS 2 AND 3)

Current Status: *Completed previously.*

2.1.2 TASK B: POLICY DIALOGUE

TASK B, ACTIVITY 1: LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDER POLITICAL MAPPING (YEAR 1)

Current Status: *Completed previously.*

TASK B, ACTIVITY 2: OPINION POLLING ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ISSUES (YEAR 1)

Current Status: *Completed previously.*

TASK B, ACTIVITY 3: LOCAL GOVERNANCE POLICY REFORM ROUNDTABLES (YEARS 1 AND 2)

Current Status: *Completed previously.*

TASK B, ACTIVITY 4: CONSENSUS-BUILDING DIALOGUES (YEARS 1 AND 2)

Current Status: *Completed previously.*

TASK B, ACTIVITY 5: CLOSED DOOR MEETINGS (YEAR 3)

Current Status: *Ongoing.* Unnayan Shamannay conducted five small meetings with policy makers between August and September to discuss and advocate for the policy reform initiative noted in Task A, Activity 1 above including two MPs, one influential Minister, one ruling party central committee member and one senior policy advisor. A sample report on one of these meetings is included as **Annex 3**.

During the discussions, US informed policy makers on the status and importance of the pending policy initiative to transfer funds under the Upazila Parishad for ministry offices and officials placed under these elected councils as per the Upazila Act amendment of 2011 but not implemented in practice. Prior to its meetings, SDLG arranged for US to discuss the reform issue with leaders of UzPAB who were fully supportive. UzPAB had conducted a press conference in the previous reporting period which included demands for implementation of the same reform.

TASK B, ACTIVITY 6: NATIONAL CONFERENCE (YEAR 3)

Current Status: A national conference in Dhaka based on the best practice case study findings and the policy initiative advocacy results is scheduled for the next reporting period.

2.1.3 TASK C: INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

TASK C, ACTIVITY 1: INVENTORY/TOOLKIT OF LG STRENGTHENING PRACTICES (YEAR 1)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK C, ACTIVITY 2: SUPPORT TO WOMEN'S COMMITTEES OF LG ASSOCIATIONS (YEARS 1 - 3)

Current Status: Completed. SDLG completed a series of 12 leadership training sessions in six of Bangladesh's seven divisions for women local government representatives from BUPF and MAB during the July to September reporting period. A list of these sessions is included in **Annex 4**. These followed a similar series of trainings for UzPAB during the previous September 2012 to March 2013 reporting period, and were lead by the Component 2 Team Leader with some support from DCOP Zarina Rahman Khan. Trainings focused on association building including dues collection, the characteristics of effective leadership and strategies of women elected representatives that had been successful in assuming positions of responsibility in their local councils and related subcommittees.

TASK C, ACTIVITY 3: IN-COUNTRY STUDY TOURS FOR LG OFFICIALS (YEARS 1 - 3)

Current Status: Continuing. In the previous reporting period, SDLG partner NGOs discussed the World Bank's Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) with SDLG-trained UP leaders in the five districts of Rangpur, Naogaon, Jamalpur, Sirajganj and Bhola and encouraged them to express their interest to upazila officers. By June, upazila officers in all five districts had submitted formal requests for participation in HLP.

On September 5th, with an SDLG representative in attendance, HLP formally announced the acceptance of the five upazilas with SDLG unions into the HLP program at a regular meeting. Under HLP, the World Bank will be contracting with agents (NGOs, private firms, or others) to provide support for peer learning discussions and UP to UP exchange visits in each area. HLP meeting minutes are attached as **Annex 5**.

TASK C, ACTIVITY 4: INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOUR FOR LG ASSOCIATION OFFICIALS (YEARS 1 - 3)

Current Status: In early August, SDLG began the process of preparing for an international study tour as approved in its Year 3 Work Plan. The tour planning was modeled on the successful study tour to the Philippines in November 2012, described in the semi-annual report ending March 2013, with a similar number and composition of participants, learning focus on SDLG's three training areas, and partnership with a local organization with expertise and an extensive network in local government. After a competitive selection process, local think tank URDI (Urban and Regional Development Institute) was selected and the process of developing a study tour schedule initiated. A draft tour schedule is provided as **Annex 6**. However, towards the end of the reporting period, USAID support for continuation of the study tour became uncertain and the possibility of postponing the tour was being considered.

2.1.4 TASK D: PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

As discussed in previous reports, SDLG integrated this task into activities designed to activate Standing Committees at the union and upazila levels as part of Components 3 and 4 capacity building.

2.2 COMPONENT 2: ADVOCACY AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

Major Achievements

This Component focuses on strengthening Bangladesh's existing local government associations MAB and BUPF, and the formation and strengthening of the new Upazila Parishad Association of Bangladesh or UzPAB. Major achievements during the July to September 2013 reporting period include:

- **Final Dues Collection Workshops Held for BUPF and UzPAB:** - Final dues collection workshops were held for BUPF in July and UzPAB in August to review dues collection progress and encourage greater regional involvement and initiative in collecting dues. Progress on previous collection commitments was disappointing but resulted in both associations pledging to conduct dues collection drives in September.
- **Board Management and Sustainability Training Completed** – With SDLG support, the consultant team completed the sixth and seventh Board Management and Financial Sustainability trainings for BUPF in Barisal and Khulna Divisions in July. After both trainings, there were temporary increases in dues collection by BUPF members regionally.
- **Quarterly newsletters prepared by MAB, BUPF and UzPAB** – For the first time, Office Managers at the Secretariats of all three local government associations working together with member Publication Secretaries, prepared quarterly newsletters with no SDLG support beyond procurement of final printing and publication.

Major Challenges

Dues collection and membership building - Despite continued support and motivation in trainings and workshops by SDLG since early 2013, the payment of membership dues has been slow. Component 2 team members as well as some would-be BUPF members believe the continued lack of communication and lack of democratic decision making by senior association leaders has contributed to a reluctance of many councils to formally join and pay dues to the associations.

While MAB, BUPF and UzPAB have been equipped with tools and knowledge for newsletter production and mass SMS communications, their potential memberships continue to feel distant from the association leadership and have failed to develop a sense of ownership or allegiance to the associations. Many members, in particular women representatives, have been extraordinarily active in dues collection but have received limited support from male district, divisional and regional committee members in the actual work of convincing councils they have a stake in supporting the associations continued operation. All three associations are planning sharp reductions in their core operating expenses from early 2014.

ACHIEVEMENTS BY WORK PLAN TASK AREAS

2.2.1 TASK A: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

TASK A, ACTIVITY 1: SUPPORT MAB ELECTIONS FOR REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (YEAR 2)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 2: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY/BASELINE STUDY OF MAB AND BUPF (YEAR 1)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 3: DEVELOP STRATEGIC/ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS WITH UZPAB AND BUPF (YEAR 2)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 4: LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR UZPAB (YEAR 2)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 5: ASSOCIATION BUILDING, BOARD MANAGEMENT, AND REVENUE GENERATION AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY TRAININGS FOR MAB AND BUPF (YEAR 3)

Current Status: Completed. As noted above, final courses in Board Management and Financial Sustainability were held for Khulna and Barisal Divisions in July. A total of 30 participated in the Khulna course including 7 women and a total of 30 participated in the Barisal course including 8 women, for a grant total of 228 participants in the series of seven divisional courses including 58 women.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 6: DEVELOPMENT OF BUPF TRAINING CELL (YEAR 3)

Current Status: Suspended. As discussed in the prior reporting period, due to continued questions about BUPF's ability to collect sufficient dues, and the departure of key consultants after a prolonged approval process, the project team decided to suspend plans to develop a training cell and focus BUPF activity on building its paid membership base.

2.2.1 TASK B: OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

TASK B, ACTIVITY 1: DEFINE AND SUPPORT CORE OPERATIONS OF MAB AND BUPF (YEARS 1 TO 3)

Current Status: Ongoing. SDLG continued to support core operations costs (including office rent, staff salaries and supplies, and committee meeting costs) for all three associations, at the 70% level for BUPF and MAB and 100% level for new association UzPAB. This support is set to end in December 2013.

TASK B, ACTIVITY 2: SUPPORT UNIFIED UPAZILA PARISHAD ASSOCIATION (YEAR 1)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK B, ACTIVITY 3: COORDINATION COMMITTEE OF MAB/BUPF/UPAZILA ASSOCIATION (YEARS 2 AND 3)

Current Status: Suspended. As reported earlier, while a formalized coordination committee for all three associations is unlikely, LG association leaders continue to coordinate on an ad-hoc basis.

TASK B, ACTIVITY 4: EFFECTIVE DUES COLLECTION AND MEMBER COMMUNICATION (YEAR 3)

Current Status: Ongoing. With continued strong support, encouragement and occasional technical assistance from the SDLG Component 2 team, all three associations saw a rapid rise in dues collection towards the end of the reporting period, though starting from a low base. As noted, final dues collection workshops were held for BUPF and UzPAB. All three associations are using electronic fund transfer via mobile phone to make payment convenient for members, require council resolutions and provide cash receipts. In September, BUPF and UzPAB declared a membership drive and reported progress to SDLG on a weekly basis.

Dues Collection - Results as of the September 30th end of the reporting period were as follows.

- **MAB – 42.9%** - While MAB has been the most successful collecting dues from over **136 of the 317** possible member municipalities, its collection rate continued to be slow in Q3. MAB collects on a July – June fiscal year basis. Collections for the new July 2013-June 2014 fiscal year totaled 51.

- **BUPF – 22.74%** - Collections increased rapidly during September drive period but still remain low overall at **1034 of 4547** total possible BUPF members. BUPF also began has distributing certificates to dues paying members. Despite newsletter appeals and SMS reminders, phone calls and personal visits continued to be needed in most cases to motivate dues payment and these steps are dependent on the willingness of BUPF and UzPAB committee members themselves to take action.
- **UzPAB – 20.33%** - Only **98 of 482** total possible UzPAB members had paid dues by the end of September. UzPAB’s strategies are similar to BUPF’s. In both associations top leadership has shown limited initiative and while a few members in each Division are very active in dues collection, their numbers remain too low to ensure widespread payment of dues.

Member Communications - All three associations produced quarterly newsletters in September based on technical assistance provided by SDLG and subcontractor UNITREND. As reported previously, all three associations have promotional videos and trial websites have been turned over to BUPF and UzPAB to complete uploading of additional content. MAB is using a website developed for it under a project funded by the Royal Danish Embassy.

TASK B, ACTIVITY 5: SUPPORT KEY ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES BY MAB, BUPF, AND UZPAB (YEARS 2 AND 3)

Current Status: Suspended. As noted previously, resources for advocacy activities were eliminated from MAB and BUPF grants after the USAID request to slow down spending early in 2013. However, under Component 1 SDLG is using small meetings with policy makers arranged by its research organization grantee to continue advocacy for specific policy reform, and a national conference with LGA leaders attending is planned in December 2013.

2.3 COMPONENT 3: TRANSPARENT AND EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

Major Achievements

This Component trains, facilitates, and mentors local government elected representatives in key processes of transparent, accountable and effective governance in 600 LGUs across Bangladesh. Citizens receive corresponding training under Component 4 including sessions with LG officials. Training is delivered by nine local partner NGOs with past experience working with LG in their assigned areas.

Major achievements in the July 2013 to September 2013 reporting period were:

- **Increase in ‘A’ Grade LGUs** -- The most recent round of LGU grading saw a sharp increase of ‘A’ grade local councils from 20.4% in Q2 to 46.2% in Q3 2013. Those receiving an ‘A’ grade are correctly practicing almost all key processes and expected to continue them in the future. The SDLG grading tool is attached as **Annex 7**. Since June, SDLG partner NGOs have been conducting this review process on a regular basis assigning grades of A, B, C for excellent, good, and fair performance. Current status and rating issues are discussed further under Task A, Activity 7 below.
- **91 Upazila Parishad Trainings Completed** – More than fifty percent of the total (53) Upazila Parishad trainings were completed during the reporting period with over 800 council members participating, 30% of whom were women. In total, 91 out of 100 upazila councils in the SDLG project area have been trained as of September 30th. The three-day training combines financial management, participatory planning and budgeting, and service delivery and monitoring into one session focusing on

the authorities provided in the upazila law as amended in 2011. All elected members of the upazila councils – Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Mayors and UP Chairs – are trained together, a challenge for implementers as discussed below.

Major Challenges

Challenges during the subject reporting period included the following:

- **Conflict within Upazila Councils** - In three Upazila Parishads (namely, Monpura in Bhola District, Khoksa in Kustia District, and Sundergonj in Bogra District) conflict among council members has made delivery of the SDLG training impossible during the reporting period. SDLG regional offices and Dhaka-based Team Leaders will continue explore possible resolution of these conflicts and have contacted UZPAB leaders for their advice and assistance in doing so.
- **Demands for Greater Transportation Allowances by Trainees** - SDLG provides a standard transportation allowance for all trainees, and this amount differs from that of other donors and government departments. While SDLG is certain that the allowance adequately reimburses participants for reasonable expenses, several Upazila Chairs and council members have demanded more and refused to attend the training. Through repeated communication and interaction with potential participants, SDLG's program team was able to resolve this issue, stressing the effectiveness of the training and its benefits for upazila council members to eventually secure full participation.
- **Hartals Continue to Delay Trainings** – Sporadic one or two day *hartals* or transport and work stoppages occurred several times during the July to September period contributing to cancellations, postponements and rescheduling of trainings.

ACHIEVEMENTS BY WORK PLAN TASK AREAS

2.3.1 TASK A: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

TASK A, ACTIVITY 1: LGU CLUSTER SITE SELECTION (YEAR 1)

Current Status: Completed previously. A series of map files detailing project work areas is available online at www.sdlg-bangladesh.com under **Maps**.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 2: BASELINE STUDY OF LGUS (YEAR 1)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 3: DEVELOP TRAINING MATERIALS WITH NGO PARTNERS (YEAR 1)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 4: TRAINING-OF-TRAINERS WITH NGO PARTNERS (YEARS 1 AND 2)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 5: CLUSTER RECEPTION MEETINGS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN COLLABORATION WITH PARTNER NGOS, MAB AND BUPF (YEAR 2)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 6: TRAININGS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (YEARS 2 AND 3)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 7: LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY INDEX – LGCI (YEARS 1 TO 3)

Current Status: Years 1 and 2 Completed. Year 3 Completed. SDLG conducted a sharply abbreviated LGCI assessment at mid-year focusing on the testing and scoring of a sample of LGU leaders trained by SDLG on basic knowledge of local government. Results of this assessment provided values for one of the project’s PMP indicators. After the sharp slow-down in USAID’s available funding early in 2013, a full LGCI was considered impractical and a lower priority when compared to other methods of measuring project progress such as the ABC grading and GIS data collection initiatives.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 8: TRAINING OF 100 UPAZILA COUNCILS (YEAR 3)

Current Status: Ongoing. As noted above, 53 upazila council trainings were completed between July and September bring the total number of trainings to 91. Overall, more than 1400 upazila council members have received training from senior PNGO staff members with the assistance of SDLG regional office staff. Trainers encountered two major challenges in conducting these sessions: 1) ensuring participation of all council members and 2) tension between the chair and two vice chairs, and referred extensively to guidance in the Upazila Parishad Law to minimize tensions and develop an understanding of the need for full council participation. While it is still too early to fully assess training results, in at least a few upazilas receiving SDLG training the full upazila council has met, reviewed the council budget and for the first time taken steps to form upazila standing committees as per law.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 7: REFRESHER TRAINING AND MENTORING OF 500 UNION AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS; FOLLOWUP ACTIVITIES (YEARS 2 AND 3)

Current Status: Ongoing. An increase in available funds announced by USAID in May allowed partner NGOs to complete off-site refresher training on financial management and revenue generation early in the reporting period. Planned service delivery and participatory training remained cancelled and PNGO project officers relied on follow up facilitation and mentoring efforts to discuss key contents of this training and ‘reactivate’ learning from sessions in 2012.

A special emphasis was placed on standing committees in PNGO in the past quarter in follow up visits. This contributed to excellent results across all UPs including the reformation of all 13 standing committees per law with citizen members included, women councilors chairing one third of the standing committees, and monthly meetings held. Similarly in municipalities, standing committees were reformed and women elected representatives assumed key positions and greater roles in council decision making. SDLG’s nine main partners NGOs also played a role in providing feedback on activities of the four smaller NGO partners offering supplementary training on monitoring services to three selected standing committees in each LGU.

The latest round of ABC grading shows that A-rated LGUs have more than doubled from 102 to 231, and C-rated LGUs have dropped sharply from 96 to 27. The high concentration of B-rated LGUs (242) indicates that most governance practices are being practiced and will be sustainable. The grading process follows set criteria to assess the practice of key governance processes such as tax assessment, citizen ward meetings, standing committee meetings, and others taught by SDLG. In the final quarter of 2013, SDLG field activities will focus on increasing the number of LGUs with A ratings, and strengthening standing committee roles in sector service monitoring and activities.

The chart below details the latest ABC ratings for the 500 LGUs and the percentage increase from Q3:

Grade	Q2 % (Baseline)	Q3 %	% Change (Q2 to Q3)
A	20.4% (102)	46.2% (231)	+ 126%
B	60.2% (302)	48.4% (242)	- 20%
C	19.4% (96)	5.4% (27)	- 72%

2.4 COMPONENT 4: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

Major Achievements

Major achievements under Component 4 are similar to those under Component 3 and support the effective functioning of the elected council. Citizen mobilization has played an essential role in producing project results such as increased local revenues, citizen participation and service delivery.

Major achievements in the July 2013 to September 2013 reporting period were:

- **Citizen Folk Dramas Completed in 70% of 450 Unions** – In Q3, 125 folk dramas were performed by local actors modeling how local councils and citizen work together under the law bringing the total number of unions to 315 or 70% of target by September 30. Folk drama actors trained by SDLG NGO partners consisted of citizens (54%), SDLG-trained Citizen in Governance (CiG) forum members (24%) and local government representatives (22%). Once formed and trained, local drama groups are encouraged to repeat the drama in other areas of the union after the initial performance.
- **CiG–Council Joint Planning Reviews Held in 72% of 500 LGUs** – CiG members supported LGUs to make an annual activities plan in the name of joint planning, mentioning the responsibilities of both LG representatives and citizens. Each SDLG LGU had developed a joint plan with the help of Citizens in the last year. As a result, in 360 LGUs (72%), both CiG members and LGU officers reviewed their previous year’s joint plan and experiences as part of developing the new joint plan.
- **Second Round Ward Meetings Held in 24% of 500 LGUs** – Per law, unions and municipalities are required to hold a second ward meeting each year, after the initial ward planning meeting to select development projects held at the beginning of the February to May planning and budgeting cycle. Some 120 LGUs (24%) held 1056 second round ward meetings to inform citizens of the status of initial ward meeting decisions on project selection and implementation, and to motivate citizen participation in resource mobilization including annual tax payments. Second round ward meetings are expected to be completed in the remaining LGUs by December.

Major Challenges

The Challenges in this Component are similar to those under Component 3.

ACHIEVEMENTS BY WORK PLAN TASK AREAS

2.4.1 TASK A: DEVELOPING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FORUMS

TASK A, ACTIVITY 1: DEVELOP TRAINING MATERIALS WITH NGO PARTNERS (YEAR 1)

Current Status: Completed previously.

TASK A, ACTIVITY 2: ESTABLISH AND SUPPORT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FORUMS (YEAR 2)

Current Status: Completed previously.

2.4.2 TASK B: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIC PLANNING)

TASK A, ACTIVITY 3: REFRESHER TRAINING, PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR CITIZENS GROUPS IN 500 UNION AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS (YEARS 2 AND 3)

Current Status: Ongoing. As noted above, CiG members were involved in second round joint planning reviews and ward meetings during Q3 with support as needed from partner NGO project officers. CiG members also continued to be active in various council functions as allowed by law including tax fairs in many LGUs, an optional event initiated by councils themselves. Component 4 Team Leader completed refresher trainings for all nine major partner NGOs offering instruction on the activities to emphasize during the final quarter of SDLG activities for most LGUs.

2.5 COMPONENT 5: WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

Current Status: Ongoing. Two Windows of Opportunity activities have received concurrence from the USAID COR.

- Strengthening LG Ministry audit and monitoring functions (grant)
- Activation of women's leadership in LG standing committee activities (grants)

The first activity was completed in February 2013 and the second activity was initiated in October 2012 and continued during the July to September 2013 reporting period.

COMPONENT 5, ACTIVITY 1: FRIENDS OF SDLG GROUP (YEAR 1)

Current Status: Completed previously.

COMPONENT 5, ACTIVITY 2: RAPID RESPONSE CAPACITY (YEAR 1)

Current Status: Completed previously.

COMPONENT 5, ACTIVITY 3: LG AUDIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS (YEARS 2 AND 3)

Current Status: Completed previously.

COMPONENT 5, ACTIVITY 4: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LG STANDING COMMITTEES (YEARS 2 AND 3)

Current Status: Ongoing. Implemented by four women-headed NGOs partners, this field training activity deepens work done by SDLG's nine major partner NGOs with Standing Committees in 500 LGUs. As reported previously, these committees have monitoring and oversight authority which is rarely exercised.

In the June to September reporting period, local councilor and citizen members of these committees continued to conduct site visits, utilizing SDLG training on how to monitor central government services in community health clinics, primary schools, agricultural extension, and other areas; and how to review local council finances and accounts of income and expenditures. In small groups of three to five, SC members used monitoring checklists to ask questions and compare actual services to those outlined in official government schedules. Service shortfalls and additional needs were noted down for reporting.

Major achievements in the reporting period include:

- **Reporting to local councils by 74% of selected standing committees** – 74% of trained standing committees submitted reports to their local councils based on their monitoring visits. The local council is the first of three local government bodies that can receive standing committee reporting and take action to resolve the issues identified.

- **Local council decisions made in response to reports for 58% of standing committees** – 58% of standing committees said that their local councils had discussed their monitoring report results and made decisions to address issues identified in these.

Standing committees' report findings can also be raised at bimonthly meetings of the Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) where junior field officers from service providing ministries attend. If local council and UDCC reporting does not result in improved services, LGU chairs and mayors can raise these issues at the monthly upazila council meetings where senior upazila-level field officers are present.

3.0 COMMUNICATIONS

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

The SDLG communications strategy is designed to support project results and organized on *three themes*:

1. **Media training and capacity building** activities to educate journalists and other media personnel in local governance issues and encourage informed coverage.
2. **Local government association and citizen participation** activities to improve LG associations' ability to communicate with their members and advocate successfully for policy reform.
3. **Advertising and promotion campaign** activities to spur citizen participation through innovative IEC materials and support of promotion of LG associations.

Under a subcontract included in the original proposal to USAID, US – based communications firm **HDI** (Howard Delafield International) is providing overall strategy design, research and technical assistance. *Theme One* activities were implemented by local grantee **MPG** (Media Professionals Group) and *Theme Two and Three* activities are being implemented by local subcontractor **UNITREND**.

Broadly speaking, all communications activities contribute to one of three project objectives:

1. **Improving Media Coverage** of Local Governance (supporting all Components)
2. **Strengthening LGAs** or Local Government Associations (supporting Component 2)
3. **Improving Citizen Participation** in Local Governance (supporting Components 3 and 4)

Major Achievements

THEME 1: Media Training and Capacity Building

Most activities under this theme were completed during the previous April to June period by the Media Professionals Group (MPG). Activities accomplished during the July to September period included:

Improving Citizen Participation

- **LG Online Website:** The *LG Online Clearinghouse* at www.lgbd.org developed by previous grantee MPG continues to serve the media and others interested in local government, and is being regularly updated with latest local government news, features and articles. The website's database of different local government tiers and government information is being updated gradually.
- **Online and Print version of *Shokoler Kotha (Voice of All)*:** Per its previous commitment, prior grantee MPG has also launched a Bengali language online portal on local government named *Shokoler Kotha (Voice of All)* at shokolerkotha.com/ which is being regularly updated. The associated print periodical is awaiting government clearances and is expected to begin regular publication in early 2014.

THEMES 2 and 3: LG Association and Citizen Participation/Advertising and Promotion Campaign

Local subcontractor **UNITREND** completed the following deliverables during the July to September reporting period:

Strengthening LGAs

- **Workshop on Newsletter Publication:** A day-long hands-on training on “How to Develop an Organization Newsletter” was provided to the three SDLG supported associations, MAB, BUPF and UzPAB. Four association leaders from each of these organizations including the publication secretaries and a female leader and the office managers participated in this workshop. The interactive training helped the organizations to identify their color branding, logo branding, content management, and sections of newsletter and make decisions on several related issues. Action plans were completed to guide production of the newsletter on a regular, ongoing basis.
- **Digital & Emailing Strategy:** A strategy paper was developed for the three SDLG supported LGAs on how best to use digital and social media platforms to meet their membership marketing and media related needs. Based on the mobile penetration rate (63%) in Bangladesh and convenience of operation for a relatively older target audience, the paper emphasized the use of SMS and group SMS, and provided detailed information on freely available services. A copy of the strategy paper is attached as **Annex 8**.

Improving Citizen Participation

- **TV/Radio Selected for PSA Airing:** TV spots previously developed on ‘we are government’, ‘citizen participation’, and ‘women leadership’ themes will be aired on satellite channels during the December to January period prior to the February – May planning and budgeting cycle for local councils. Considering the relatively lower cost and increasing audience coverage of these private channels, public BTV and Betar radio were dropped from the selection list. A tentative list of channels selected includes Channel I, ATN Bangla, Desh TV and Ekattor. The timing of the TV spots will coincide with the airing of radio spots on the first two themes on FM radio and available community radio stations. The PSAs can be viewed at:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/m3y2hmt2byeypa8/KV1ZSv3LqL>
- **Citizen's Reporting - Youth (Video Blogs, “Eye/I Reports”):** To encourage citizen journalism among youth, a month long, internet-based training and competition will be organized from October to November to be followed by a national workshop for the best performers with an international expert. In preparation for the workshop and based on a strict selection criteria, 50 local youths from SDLG’s 22 working districts have been selected. The selected youths are mostly from the UISCs (Union Information and Service Center) and CIG (Citizen in Governance) forums. Youths from two overlapping districts of another USAID program, (Leadership Development Program or LDP), have been selected as well. These youths will be supported with in-person and remote assistance during October to December to produce a video on a local government issue using their own basic video capture devices and will publish these videos on available social media platforms.
- **Women's Hour Radio Program:** A 12-episode weekly radio program by and for women is being produced featuring women representatives speaking on the key topics from their perspective.

Documentation of SDLG Communications: Development of a pictorial brief on SDLG successes and communication interventions was initiated in Q3 and is ongoing.

Major Challenges

Apart from series of strikes and political unrest which hampered the implementation of some programs, there were no other major challenges.

4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

Routine collection of M&E from the field data continued during the July to September reporting period with the submission of quarterly reporting on training activities by SDLG's nine major partner NGOs and four smaller partner NGOs receiving Windows of Opportunity funding.

Major Achievements

- **Fiscal Year PMP Data** – Data measuring SDLG's actual achievements as of September 30, 2013 was collected for USAID reporting. Actual achievement data was not available for a further 4 PMP indicators that will be measured by an annual field survey scheduled for December 2013. PMP data is summarized in the revised fiscal year chart provided in **Annex 9** to this report.

Major Challenges

There were no major challenges during the reporting period.

ANNEXES 1 – 9 PRESENTED AS ATTACHMENTS