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## Leadership Development Program (LDP)

**Final Report**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
CDG	Community Development Grants
CL	Community Leader
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DG	Democracy and Governance
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DYD	Department of Youth Development
DW	Democracywatch
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GCSS-LWA	Global Civil Society Strengthening Leader with Associates
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IP	Implementing Partner
KM Portal	Knowledge Management Portal
LDP	Leadership Development Program
LOI	Leaders of Influence
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MKP	Manab Kallayan Parishad
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
PMEP	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PY	Program Year
SDLG	Strengthening Democratic Local Governance
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UYDO	Upazila Youth Development Officer
VAW	Violence against women
YL	Youth Leader
YPSA	Young Power in Social Action
YTC	Youth Training Center



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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Leadership Development Program (LDP) is a program funded by USAID under the Global Civil Society Strengthening Leader with Associates (GCSS-LWA) Agreement. The goal of LDP is to increase the capacity and participation of citizens to effectively and actively engage in democratic processes and enhance community development in Bangladesh. This goal is framed by two integrated programmatic objectives: (1) to build the capacity of community leaders to become change agents for democratic processes and development and (2) to build the capacity of youth to become change agents for democratic processes and development. Together with 5 local organizations, through cascading a series of trainings and conducting post-training activities Counterpart trained and worked with over 13,000 youth and community leaders in 4 of the country's 8 divisions.

Bangladesh, one of the world's most densely populated countries, is a developing democracy that is characterized by a highly centralized, insular and entrenched political system. Although the country has experienced huge gains where incomes have tripled over the past 30 years, and Bangladesh is becoming more competitive in the global economy, corruption and distrust of the national government are pervasive. Political unrest is widespread. The roles and responsibilities of local government structures are not clearly defined. Union Parishads (UPs), the lowest elected units of local government lack resources, capacity and transparency.

At least one third of Bangladesh's population still lives in poverty, child malnutrition rates are at 48 percent and the country ranks as one of the 25 poorest in the world. A substantial amount of the population is located in rural areas, where they have few opportunities to engage in development activities. Gender inequities continue to present obstacles to the country's overall development, as women experience gender-based violence, lower socio-economic status and access to resources, and fewer opportunities for upward mobility. Development at the community level is dominated by those who control public funds and align themselves with contemporary power holders.

This dynamic creates a void of leadership that is free of political and financial gain. Issues such as global climate change, unemployment, and political instability make it increasingly important that Bangladeshi youth are given an opportunity to carve out their futures and that of the country which will eventually be left in their hands. But those who might be motivated to advocate for more lack the understanding of their civic rights and skills and information needed to become effective agents for change in their communities and to hold their elected officials accountable.

A moderate Muslim country, Bangladesh has a proud history of civic activism. Yet many citizens lack understanding of their civic rights and responsibilities, don't actively participate in community decision making and are unaware of methods by which they may seek to hold their elected officials accountable. Moreover, development efforts at the local level traditionally have been dominated by those who align



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themselves with powerful leaders, chaining development efforts to the influence of political and financial gain.

With its Leadership Development Program, Counterpart sought to help the people of Bangladesh fill the gap of independent community-level leadership in their country. Building upon a growing demand for the decentralization of government, LDP aimed to improve the capacity of Bangladeshi community and youth leaders to engage in discourse with local government officials, citizens and other civic society sector leaders to enact change and development in their communities and hold government accountable for its role in service delivery and the development process.

The LDP program's theory of change is premised on the idea that a more educated and highly skilled youth and adult leaders will create a critical mass of citizen engagement where citizens both take responsibility for their own development and hold local governments accountable for their role in service delivery and the development process. Counterpart therefore worked with five local organizations to identify adult and youth community leaders whom it trained in participatory rural appraisal techniques to identify key development needs and identify assets and resources available to address them. The LDP trainings and activities built their capacity to engage with other community members, local government officials and other civil society leaders to promote needed development and improve accountability.

Specifically, LDP sought to teach leaders how to assess pressing development needs in their community using the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) method and to identify key assets and resources available to address these needs. Initial sessions focused on PRA training and on strengthening leadership skills such as communication and decision making that can facilitate the PRA process. Participants conducted a comprehensive PRA in their community and presented what they learned. The program then focused on expanding their knowledge of the specific sectors that can help address the community needs they identified.



## II. OVERALL DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

### Deliver Three-phased Trainings to Community Leaders (*Activities 1.1 & 2.1*)<sup>1</sup>

Over the life of the project, Counterpart trained 6,807 community and 6,874 youth leaders across four of Bangladesh’s eight divisions. Of the total 13,681 trained leaders 48.7 percent were female. Counterpart-Bangladesh’s LDP training program consisted of a three-phased approach to leadership development, wherein our leaders are trained in the following cycle of trainings:

*Chart 1: Names of trainings in different phases*

	Community Leaders Trainings (PY3)	Youth Leadership Trainings (PY3)
Phase I	Appreciative Community Leadership (4 days)	Appreciative Youth Leadership (4 days)
Phase II	Development Issues (2 days)	Youth Informed Citizenship (2 days)
Phase III	Good Governance and Community Development (3 days)	Leadership and Communications Skills (3 days)

**Community Leaders Trainings:** In addition to the three phases of training, Counterpart trained all participants on the “Appreciative Inquiry” (AI) methodology of approaching development (*see page 41*). In Phase I (*Annex G*), the training entitled Appreciative Community Leadership taught leaders how to identify existing local resources and opportunities through the use of AI, and participatory rural appraisal tools such as Social Resource Mapping and Venn diagrams. In Phase II (*Annex J*), the training entitled Development Issues focused on methods for addressing development issues relevant to the leaders’ communities. The module would start with a critical analysis of the participants’ experiences of working with their communities – utilizing the skills of AI, Social Resource mapping and Venn diagrams learned in Phase I. In this phase, leaders learned to develop community action plans, analyze resources found in Phase I and assess how and where these resources were better utilized in their communities. Following that analysis, participants learned how to address community challenges through an understanding of resources provided by the government, local CSOs, international NGOs, and in some cases the private sector. The leaders also began to make inroads towards building relationships with subnational governance actors and building their Union Development Forums (*see page 16 on UDFs*). In this phase LDP’s Implementing Partners (IPs) also began to lead discussion sessions with UP Standing Committees to introduce the leaders to the subnational governance actors and hold the UP Orientation Session (*see page 17 on UP orientations*).

Phase III training (*Annex L*), entitled Good Governance and Community Development, allowed leaders to practice the tools learned in the prior phases in a facilitator guided ‘training in action’ session which gave

<sup>1</sup> As defined in the Program Description of the Counterpart LDP Cooperative Agreement AID-388-LA-12-0001



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LDP leaders a theoretical foundation in democratic principles. Utilizing the AI approach taught in Phase I to guide the dialogue, enabled leaders to explore issues while simultaneously discussing how to hold government accountable for improved service delivery and support for the community. In this phase trainees were taught how to use Community Score Cards (CSCs), which helped them assess the quality of services and resources identified through applying the Venn diagram they learned about in Phase I. Applying the CSC helped leaders advocate for, and strengthen, good governance in service providing institutions.

Youth Leadership Trainings: Similar to the Community Leadership trainings in Phase I, through Appreciative Youth Leadership trainings (*Annex H*), youth leaders learned how to identify existing local resources and opportunities and were also trained on youth policies and gender issues. Having received trainings on AI and PRA tools such as Social Resource Mapping and the Venn diagram tool, leaders were able to develop their community action plans in Phase II.

Phase II trainings, entitled Youth Informed Citizenship (*Annex I*), focused on informing the youth about the roles that they could play in their community and their responsibilities as actively engaged citizens of Bangladesh. This module focused on democracy, and the ways to find information about local policy, how to hold the government accountable and whom to go to when those needs were not being met. This phase also utilized the skills of AI, Social Resource mapping and Venn diagrams learned in Phase I. In this phase, leaders learned to develop community action plans, analyze resources found in Phase I and assess how and where these resources could be better utilized in their communities. Following that analysis, participants learned how to address community challenges through an understanding of resources provided by the government, local CSOs, international NGOs, and in some cases the private sector. The leaders also began to make inroads towards building relationships with subnational governance actors and building their Union Development Forums (UDFs). A UDF was an effort to create a collaborative space wherein LDP leaders could gain access to elected and appointed government officials. It had a multi-faceted role in both LDP's work as well as in the community's development at large. From being involved in organizing events and advocacy measures to strengthening community development, these forums were intended to be collective, stand alone, and sustainable spaces wherein community and youth leaders could discuss development goals and work toward enacting them (*see Activity 1.5, page 16*). LDP's IPs began to lead discussion sessions with UP Standing Committees to introduce the leaders to the subnational governance actors and hold the UP Orientation Session.

Phase III trainings on Communication and Leadership Skills (*Annex K*) allowed leaders to practice the tools learned in the prior phases in a facilitator guided 'training in action' session. This session also enhanced leaders' communications and advocacy skills, informed them on how to properly identify their target audiences, taught them how to effectively network, and use ICT/social media in advocacy. This session



culminated in an advocacy action plan that was utilized by the leaders in the UDF, and as a training tool for the leaders undertaking advocacy efforts individually.

**Participant Selection:** LDP’s selected community leaders included adults (over 35 years) who had either served in a formal leadership capacity within their communities or who had been active but were not part of a formal government, including, but not limited to, members of elected UP councils, religious leaders, respected elders and community activists. LDP’s selected youth leaders were young adults between the ages of 18-35 who were permanent residents of their community; been engaged in voluntary social work; demonstrated an interest for or a tendency towards leadership within their communities; demonstrated good communication and negotiation skills; and were willing and able to make the time commitment to engage in the LDP project.

Counterpart developed detailed guidelines on participants’ selection, which included selection criteria and instructions on the participants’ selection process. For consistency in identifying qualified leaders from the community these guidelines were followed each program year:

Chart 2: LDP Leader Selection Criteria

Youth Leaders Criteria:	Community Leaders Criteria:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age: 18-35 years</li> <li>• Permanent resident and spend most of their time in the community</li> <li>• Have acceptance in the community</li> <li>• Active participation in voluntary/networking/alliances: Worked or presently working as any volunteer, (Red Cross Volunteer, REOPA Volunteer etc.), Answar VDP member, Club members etc.</li> <li>• Willing to work and provide time to training activities by CPI</li> <li>• Good communicator and skilled in motivation</li> <li>• Education: Minimum Class VIII</li> <li>• Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>• Ethnic Minority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age: 36-60 years</li> <li>• Permanent resident and stay almost time in the community</li> <li>• Have acceptance in the community</li> <li>• Active participation in voluntary/networking/alliances/ social works, formal or informal leader, Member or leader of Development Committee like WATSON committee/ Disaster Management Committee/Salish Committee/ UP Standing Committee, Health Committee/Safety Security committee, Leaders of Influence (LOI) graduates, Answar VDP member, TBA, Village Doctor etc.</li> <li>• Willing to work and provide time to training activities by CPI</li> <li>• Aptitude for good interpersonal and public communication and motivation</li> <li>• Articulate with ability to read and write</li> </ul>



Youth Leaders Criteria:	Community Leaders Criteria:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education: Minimum class V</li> <li>• Person with disability</li> <li>• Ethnic Minority</li> </ul>
<b>Among the selected leaders at least 40% will be female</b>	

**Annual Revisions of Training Manuals:** Based on the lessons learned and best practices from the field, Counterpart has been making revisions annually to its training manuals to better streamline some of the materials it covered for the leaders. The revisions took into account the feedback forms, evaluation studies, the IP staff’s and Counterpart’s observations, and USAID’s trip reports which were also conducted on at least an annual basis and then analyzed. Particularly in the last program year, in part due to the revised LDP program description, major revisions were made. Namely, on the material covering how Counterpart’s Appreciative Inquiry tool was taught; sections on Good Governance and Community Development, Communications and Leadership Skills were also revised. The finalized revisions of training manuals resulted in a changed number of days and hours, new activities as well as modified training content:

*Chart 3: Revised training module names and days for the three phases of trainings*

Phase	Community Leaders Trainings	Youth Leaders Trainings
Phase I	Current: Appreciative Community Leadership (4 days) Previous: Appreciative Community Mobilization, and Participatory Community Appraisal (5 days)	Current: Appreciative Youth Leadership (4 days) Previous: Appreciative Community Mobilization, and Youth Action and Advocacy (5 days)
Phase II	Current: Development Issues (2 days) Previous: Community Development Issues and Initiatives (2 days)	Current and Previous: Youth Informed Citizenship (2 days)
Phase III	Current: Good Governance and Community Development (3 days) Previous: Democracy and Good Governance (2 days)	Current: Leadership and Communication Skills (3 days) Previous: Communication and Leadership Skills (2 days)

Evaluation forms and observations have shown that the previous prolonged training approach (five consecutive days) accounted for a gap in participants’ ability to retain information effectively; as such LDP has restructured its Phase I trainings to be a four-day, rather than a five-day training. On the other hand, LDP restructured its Phase III trainings to be three days, rather than two days. The hours of training in a



given day were also revised, making a training day 5.5 hours including a lunch break, rather than 7.5 hours per day. Incorporating feedback from implementing partners, trainers and participants of the trainings into training design and the manuals has not only led to more effective trainings but has allowed the beneficiaries to feel more ownership of the trainings and activities.

Training in Action: Counterpart had modified the training manuals based on lessons learned from previous years aiming to ensure that participants were effectively able to utilize their trainings in ‘real world’ situations. As such, Counterpart instituted a “Training in Action” activity in its last program year. This facilitator guided session took place at the end of the classroom sessions of each phase of training, wherein participants were tasked with conducting the PRA tools with their communities under the support and supervision of the trainer. Site visits during the trainings were conducted to observe which policies and strategies have been applied in local institutions. Discussions and advocacy planning sessions were also conducted to ensure that the leaders were able to voice their opinions/advocate on behalf of/or against these policies.

This ‘training in action’ approach allowed Counterpart to assess individual understanding of trainings and led to leaders feeling more comfortable in utilizing the tools learned outside of the sessions and to move forward with starting a community development initiative.

Training of Trainers (ToTs): Partnering with five local organizations with a focus on civil society strengthening, Counterpart cascaded its trainings to groups of trainers who worked at one of the local organizations. These trainers would then go out to the LDP working unions to conduct the trainings for the selected participants. Each year, Counterpart conducted ToTs for each training phase covering information and materials from the manuals that had been designed and revised each year.



Photo 1: TOT participant’s discussing participatory tools

All ToTs were conducted using an interactive methodology wherein training participants were actively engaged in brainstorming, discussions, and small/large group work, group presentations, role play, case study analysis, as well as question and answer and experience sharing sessions.



Conducting pre- and post-evaluations prior to and following the trainings were a significant factor for Counterpart to garner a better understanding of the level of knowledge that our IP’s trainers had and what follow-on technical assistance might be needed for these individuals in the future. Over the life of the project comparison of pre-test and post-test results showed that the participants achieved significantly higher scores in the post-test compared to their pre-test scores indicating improvements in their understanding of overall programmatic objectives and Counterpart’s training methodology. The topics on which questions were asked in both pre- and post-test were: qualities of the facilitator, participatory rural appraisal, appreciative inquiry, skills of an ideal leader, advocacy techniques and women’s involvement in development activities. While their answers to the pre-test questions were often inadequate, they were answered in detail in the post –test. Participants were able to identify the different tools of PRA and their application, the benefits of using appreciative inquiry in community development activities as well as ways of improving women’s participation and advocacy techniques. The results of the feedback ensured that Counterpart was on the right track with the quality of its trainings. Each program year yielded positive feedback and evaluations. The graph below depicts results from PY4:

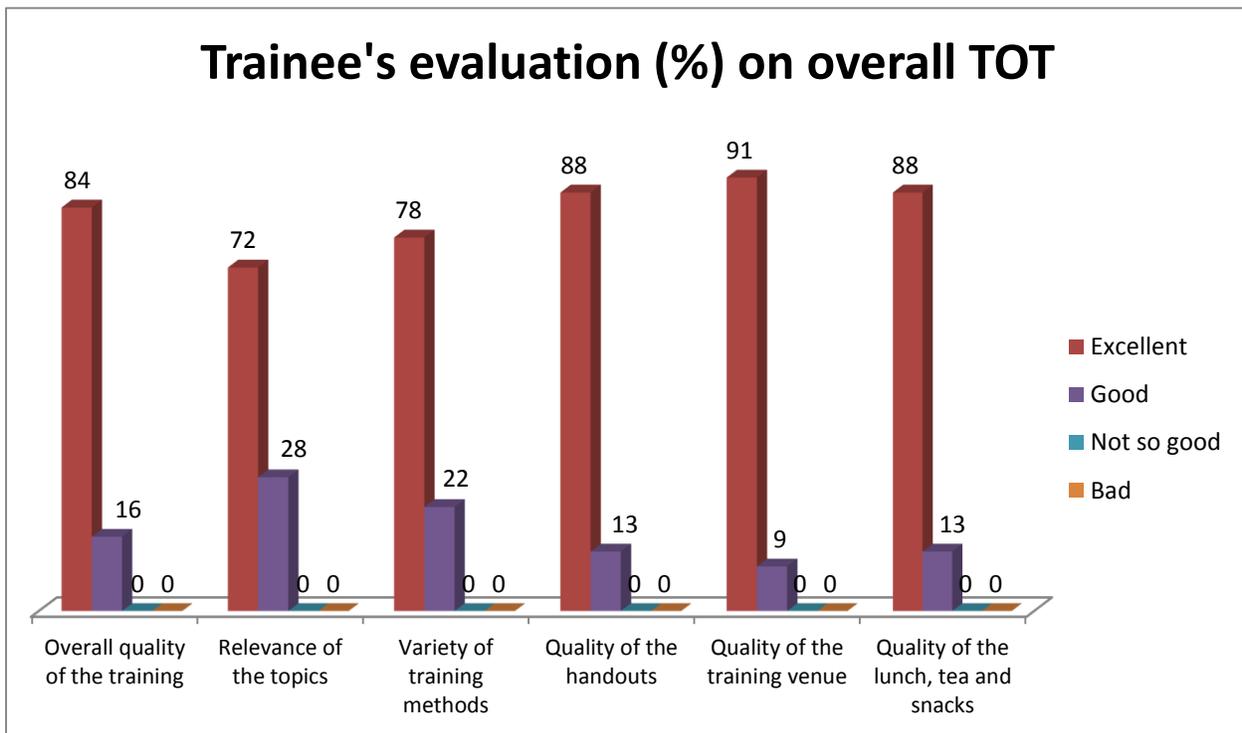


Chart 4: Trainee’s Evaluation (%) on overall TOT in PY4



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Monitoring and Evaluation of Trainings: Youth and community leaders also rated the LDP program overwhelmingly positively. From the feedback in the evaluation forms to those sampled for the final impact assessment report, nearly all found the training sessions highly interesting and the topics highly important. Ninety-seven to 98 percent rated their instructors positively for their ability to explain, knowledge, approachability and respect for participants. Seven in 10 said the trainings were “extremely interesting,” 74 percent found the topics discussed extremely important and 79 to 86 percent rated their instructors as “excellent” in each teaching area. Furthermore, nine in 10 said they learned at least a good amount from their training sessions and 93 percent said the program was highly effective at improving their comfort taking on a leadership role.

**Chart 5: Ratings of session quality**



The following matrix shows the geographic coverage for the LDP program:

Chart 6: LDP geographical coverage and participants

District	Upazila	Union	# of Youth Leaders	# of Community Leaders	Total
Bandaraban	2	5	411	401	812
Bogra	1	6	504	504	1,008
Chapai Nawabganj	1	5	405	405	810
Chittagong	2	11	903	903	1,806
Cox's Bazar	1	6	504	504	1,008
Jessore	1	5	405	405	810
Jhenaidah	1	6	504	504	1,008
Khulna	1	5	405	405	810
Kishoreganj	1	5	298	238	536
Mymensingh	2	10	663	668	1,331
Natore	1	5	277	281	558
Netrokona	1	5	405	405	810
Rajshahi	2	10	686	680	1,366
Tangail	1	6	504	504	1,008
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>6,874</b>	<b>6,807</b>	<b>13,681</b>



Chart 7: Map of LDP working areas





## **POST-TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

With the aim of bridging training to action, Counterpart also placed great emphasis on ‘post training’ activities which focused on targeted interventions with local/sub-national government officials, and forming Union Development Forums (UDF). This was further enabled through Counterpart’s partnerships with the Ministry of Youth and Sports’ (MoYS) Department for Youth Development (DYD) through the local youth clubs and community-based organizations (*see Section III, page 38, section on DYD*). A Community Action Network and Leadership Mentor Network enhanced communication and sharing of best practices as well as contributed to organizing national level conferences planned to further share experiences of development initiatives and partnerships among different regions and respective local communities.

Over the years, Counterpart promoted utilizing ICT tools such as an LDP blog site, Facebook and video conferencing using internet among its leaders, particularly its youth leaders. This led to leaders writing and sharing their experiences or causes they were working toward with other leaders in different areas as well as audiences connecting to those sites. In trying to develop this idea further, at the end of the program, Counterpart organized field visits during Phase II trainings to the Union Information and Service Centers (UISC) to strengthen the understanding of ICT and its significance in information sharing.

Also in PY4, Counterpart worked to link together DYD and UISC, to create a hub of information on the DYD trainings at the UISC. The LDP leaders’ database was made available by Counterpart and IPs, both to the UISC and DYD, so that DYD training participants could be selected from the LDP provided database. Through this process a central leaders’ database was created which could be accessed by all other organizations for their use, and could also be used for furthering policy issues and strategies such as the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS).

Counterpart also conducted the following activities including, but not limited to:

### **Provide Community Development and Youth Development Grants (*Activities 1.2 and 2.2*)**

In an effort to encourage leaders to utilize the LDP trainings they had completed, LDP released 40 community development grants (CDGs) in Program Year 2 as opportunities for graduated leaders to not only utilize their leadership skills, but also to initiate improvements within their communities. Out of the 40 grants released in 20 unions, 20 were for youth leaders and 20 for community leaders. 22 were awarded to initiatives in which women were actively engaged (of these 19 were directly led by women, while 3 included women as active participants) and 15 were focused on women’s issues such as women’s economic empowerment, prevention of dowry, child marriage and gender-based violence (GBV). Some additional initiatives that were supported by CDGs were setting up a community library, an adult education initiative, reforestation and creation of ‘green zones,’ and raising awareness regarding proper



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sanitation. These grants ranged in size but did not exceed USD \$1,500 each and were intended to motivate graduated leaders to utilize the skills they've learned in the LDP training programs to better serve the development of their communities.

LDP issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to its “graduated” leaders inviting them to participate in the Youth Programmatic Development Grant and Community Development Grant process. Counterpart, in an effort to further build the capacity of its IPs, awarded a consolidated Standard Grant of approximately USD \$30,000 and devolved the sub-grant process by which the IPs were fully in charge of (at most) 20 sub-grants to local leaders or consolidated groups of leaders.

Counterpart released \$46,833 in small initiative grants to support graduated leaders as they undertook small development projects that were directly resulted from LDP trainings and the development action plans that each trainee created in these trainings. On December 30, 2014 USAID placed a suspension on the CDGs which later resulted in the elimination of this activity in the modification of the LDP's program description.

Despite funding to carry out CDG initiatives were limited to a small pool of applicants which were selected in PY2, and after December 30, 2014 were subsequently no longer available in the later program years, LDP graduates who did not receive any source of funding through the LDP project still put together small development projects on their own initiative and through using tools they have acquired to mobilize other resources without taking grants from Counterpart. Over the life of the project LDP IPs have reported dozens of examples of leaders initiating development projects within their own communities (*see Annexes B and C, Success Stories*). Counterpart strongly believes that the management of sub-grantees was an integral facet of organizational strengthening and that this understanding will allow its IPs to be more competitive in their future endeavors, thereby building a more vibrant and effective civil society in Bangladesh.

### **Facilitate Citizen Oversight and Monitoring for Good Governance (Activity 1.5)**

Union Development Forums: Upon completion of the trainings, community leaders returned to their communities to put their learning into action by working with a larger group of community members and forming Union Development Forums (UDFs). A UDF was an effort to create a collaborative space wherein LDP leaders could gain access to elected and appointed government officials. It had a multi-faceted role in both LDP's work as well as in the community's development at large. From being involved in organizing events and advocacy measures to strengthening community development, these forums were intended to be collective, stand alone, and sustainable spaces wherein community and youth leaders could discuss development goals and work toward enacting them.



Upon completion of the Phase II trainings, selected community and youth leaders from the ward level gathered together to form a 54-member UDF. In each ward LDP had 18 leaders (nine community and nine youth leaders). From these 18 leaders, six were selected from each ward to represent in the UDF. The selection process was managed by the leaders, with the IPs providing technical assistance. Eighteen members became part of the executive committee with a formal structure, while 36 were general members. An advisory committee was also formed to guide the UDF consisting of members of the UP stakeholders, senior citizens, teachers and other related people. This formation process, roles and responsibilities of the committees and members and the operating procedures were outlined in a UDF activation guideline developed and provided to the UDF members by LDP's implementing partners. This process was then further streamlined to run in parallel to or in coordination with the local government's UP Standing Committees in areas where these were fully active, and where there was no formal Standing Committees the UDF filled that gap.



Photo 2: UDF members in Bagharpara, Rajshahi

The UDFs functioned as an advocacy arm for the communities, mobilizing the resources learned through the trainings to ensure that community voices were not only being heard by the local government authorities but that community needs were being enacted. In some areas, the UDF pursued the UP Standing Committee to include a UDF representative to work as a standing committee member. Over the life of the project, two UDFs per union were created in most of the 90 unions where Counterpart was actively implementing the project, resulting in over 150 UDFs being formed.

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The UDF helped LDP leaders chart strategies and develop community actions plans. The action planning process gave the leaders the skills and tools to mobilize citizens and secure resource commitments from the government for community-based projects. One of the major challenges in forming a UDF was the travel distance between wards. IPs reported to Counterpart that this led to members being reluctant to take responsibility to lead a UDF. To overcome this Counterpart worked with the IPs to motivate members through discussing the impact they could have should they become a UDF member. Furthermore, UDF meetings were changed to become bi-monthly instead of monthly in order to minimize the required travel.

The creation of the UDFs as one of the post-training activities allowed 2,716 leaders, of which 41 percent were women, to actively engage and directly interact with the local government in their respective communities.



**Union Parishad Orientations:** In order to formally introduce the new UDF, Counterpart developed a one-day “UP orientation” manual which focused on the importance of how to engage citizens in local development processes. Orientation sessions were attended by the LDP leaders, LOI graduates, citizens, CSOs and local subnational governance officer. The sessions also served the purpose of discussing leadership activities, the need for citizen voices in public policy formation, and to establish effective links with government stakeholders and to formally introduce and communicate the goals of LDP. The orientation’s goal was to make the key players within civil society more aware about their roles and responsibilities as well as the services they should expect from their respective local governments and other relevant institutions. CPI developed a manual in Bangla for the Union Parishad orientation in consultation with LDP’s IPs. The content of the manual includes the promotion of LDP as a leadership program, identifies the community engagement of the Union Parishad and other government service providers at the local level, defines the scope of collaboration between the stakeholders and the union development forum.



Photo 3: UP Chairman participating in UP orientation

Over the life of the project, a total of 43 UP orientations (*Annex O*) were held and a total of 1,784 participants (518 female; 1,266 male) attended the orientations. The orientations gave attendees the opportunity to learn about the seven primary government services at the union level that were currently available to all citizens. These services were: family planning, agricultural extension, fisheries and livestock, local government, health and family welfare, social welfare, primary and mass

education departments. Throughout Bangladesh, most of these services were highly under-utilized at the union level, and there was a distinct lack of information regarding these services to the extent that several LDP leaders and UP chairmen had mentioned in these orientation sessions of not even being aware of the availability of such services.

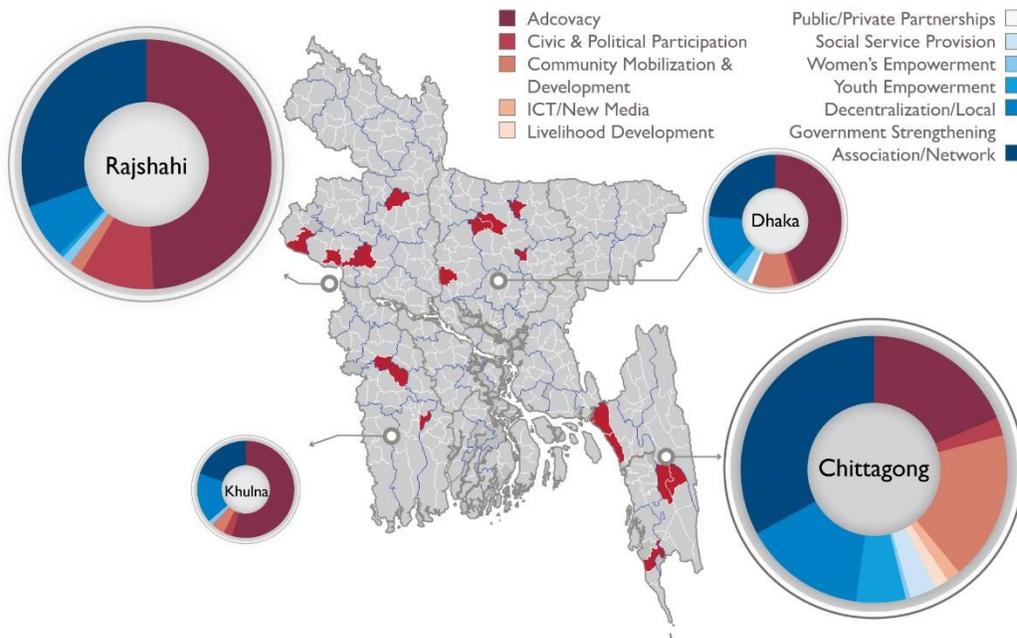
Referring to the community needs and how to overcome the challenges, participants overall felt the UP orientations were a highly useful platform for effective coordination between union level service institutions and community residents. In the orientation participants also learned how they could participate and play a role in the UP Standing Committees; Union Development Coordination Committees which monitor all development activities of a union; Project Implementation Committees which were responsible for organizing quality of services; Project Management Committees which were responsible for managing timeliness of projects and services and coordinating with other services in the union; and UP budget preparation which held open budget sessions each year.



**Organize Community Events and Exposure Visits (Activity 1.4)**

To build social capital and strengthen ties among neighboring communities, LDP provided opportunities for communities to organize public celebrations as well as showcase the successes of local development initiatives that have been independently carried out by the community as a result of the trainings. These celebrations promoted unity, afforded opportunities to share lessons learned and best practices, encouraged networking and strengthened LDP implementation. Over the years the events included leaders’ conventions, festivals, concerts, community theater performances, and competitions, among others. LDP also utilized the UDFs to organize such events by themselves and share best practices, challenges, lessons learned related to community development initiative and efforts. In such events, UDFs were able to also engage leaders, UP members, government service providers, media representatives, other NGOs and/or the private sector. Over the life of the project more than 503 events took place<sup>2</sup> focusing on a wide variety of topics highlighted below by region:

Chart 8a: Topic of events in each of the 4 LDP working divisions



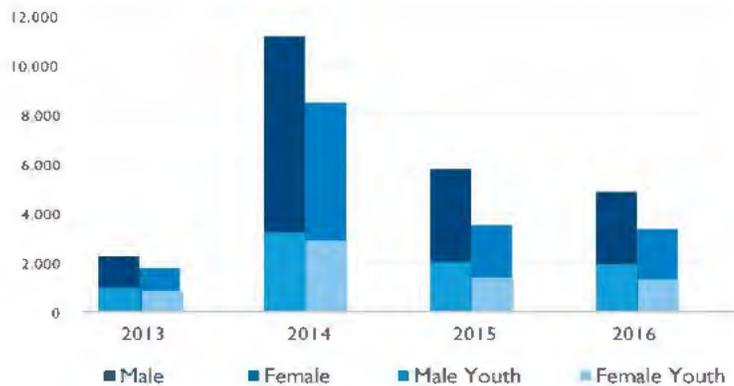
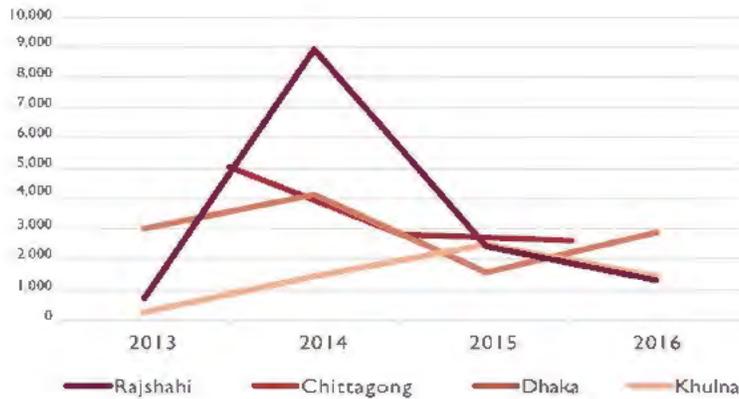
<sup>2</sup> 503 events were recorded in Counterpart’s KM Portal <https://mande.counterpart.org/> but Counterpart estimates many more events took place which the IPs weren’t able to capture or weren’t made aware of by the UDFs or participants.



Row Labels	Chittagong	Dhaka	Khulna	Rajshahi	Grand Total
Advocacy	34	39	36	82	191
Civic and Political Participation	4	1	2	16	23
Community Mobilization and Development	33	9	3	3	48
Information and Communication Technologies/Ne	3				3
Livelihood Development	3				3
Public/Private Partnerships		1			1
Social Service Provision	6				6
Women's Empowerment	1	3	1	2	7
Youth Empowerment	11	2		1	14
Decentralization/Local Government Strengthening	27	12	11	12	62
Association/Network Development	60	21	13	51	145
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>503</b>

*Chart 8b:  
Number of types  
of events in each  
division*

*Chart 9: Number of participants at the events, breakdown by regional division, female vs male, community leader vs youth leader*





**Tax Fair:** One of the most impressive initiatives that resulted from the community leaders' action was the formation of a UP Level tax fair. The objectives of the tax fair were to increase Union earnings so that the local government could allocate more funds toward community needs, to create awareness about the importance of taxation and to ensure participation of the masses in initiatives benefiting their communities.



*Photo 4: A UP Chairman, Fazlur Rahman Fakir of Sadar Upazila, speaking at the Dapunia Union Tax Fair on Sept 23,*

Over the course of the project more than 50 tax fairs were held in the LDP working areas. These initiatives were significant for community development as they allowed the leaders' access to UP level officials and held these officials accountable for their community's development.

**National Youth Day:** Counterpart's IPs organized various activities and events in observance of national youth day as a commitment to working towards LDP's goals and objectives throughout the life of the project. Generally, these events have included cultural programs, rallies, meetings to discuss relevant issues for youth, speaking at a talk show on a local radio station, and participating in a parliamentary debate session. Representatives from the Departments of Youth Development, Fisheries, Women's Affairs, Social Welfare, Cooperatives, Agriculture Extension, the Islamic Foundation, as well as the Deputy Commissioner and Upazila Nirbahi Officers from various districts and upazilas, NGO representatives from different working areas, local leaders, and LDP leaders also have taken part in one or more of these events.

For example, at a rally organized by the Wave Foundation in the Bagharpara upazila in Jessore, one of the rally's speakers – Nirbahi Officer Mr. Md Ashraf Hossain – encouraged 41 attendant LDP youth leaders (26 female, 15 male) to communicate with relevant government offices to get support and advice on implementing their trainings through development initiatives. Upazila Youth Development Officer Mr. Md Salimuzzam urged the youth to engage more in economic, political and social activities arranged by the government. He also informed them of the DYD's services/resources and how they would be able to avail themselves of these.



Photos 5,6,7: Examples of LDP organized activities on International Youth Day in 2014 - rallies, panel discussions and meetings with the local government to advocate for youth rights.

On International Youth Day in 2015, LDP leaders participated in two radio talk shows which reached an estimated 10,000 listeners. Leaders discussed the necessity of youth engagement in government and NGO initiatives. They also emphasized the government should introduce more skill development trainings that would lead to more employment opportunities.

In 2015, all five LDP IP's organized various events which included: a debate over the government's responsibility for creating jobs for the new workforce; a youth awareness rally; tree plantation; a consultation meeting on youth employment and draft youth policy. At these events the IPs made sure local government officials, parliamentarians, private sector representatives, NGO officials and UDF leaders were also present. In one of the consultation meetings discussing youth employment and youth policy in Tangail, Honorable Member of Parliament, Mr. Sanowar Hossain acknowledged the significance of providing youth trainings to achieve the target of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.



Photo 8: Talk show at Radio Padma, Community Radio Station, Rajshahi

Marking occasions such as International Youth Day served as a good opportunity for LDP leaders to apply some of the tools they had learned in the trainings as it enabled them to be proactively engaged in raising awareness around a specific cause.

**International Women's Day (IWD):** Counterpart and its implementing partners organized events and activities around International Women's Day (IWD) on March 8 each year. The activities organized were multi-purpose; connecting leaders to local government to advocate for women's rights; connecting leaders across different unions to come together to speak and discuss issues; and needs concerning gender mainstreaming in their areas.

Activities organized on this day included a video conference for LDP female leaders in different divisions to share ideas on the theme of IWD with community/youth leaders, using the event to strengthen the LDP leaders network with program, and building leaders' capacity on ICT communication for information sharing. The discussions held were instrumental in highlighting communication through ICT (a forum which few of the female leaders had ever utilized before) and familiarizing the female leaders with the concept of IWD.



Photo 9: IWD video conference in Mymensingh in 2014

Other activities surrounding IWD included meetings with local government stakeholders who were asked to participate or give presentations. For example, in Rajshahi a meeting was held in Chapai Nawabganj at the district level, two additional meetings in Putia and Paba of Rajshahi at the upazila level, and seven in Paba and Putia of Rajshahi and Chapai Nawabganj Sadar at the union level on International Women's Day to discuss the achievements and challenges in women empowerment at the local,



Photo 11: Upazilla Nirbahi Officer of Sitakund visiting women's fair organized by YPSA



Photo 10: A UP Chairman from Sadar giving a speech on IWD at a meeting discussing increasing female engagement in local government

regional and national level. The District Administrator was present as the chief guest at the discussion meeting held in Chapai



Nawabganj, and Upazila Nirbahi Officer<sup>3</sup> (UNO), government officers from Department of Women Affairs, Directorate of Social Services, Department of Youth Development and other government departments, UP chairman, UP members, and local community leaders were present in the other meetings. The youth and community leaders, especially the female leaders felt empowered as a result of these meetings and felt that it helped create a closer and more accessible relationship between them and their representatives at the local and upazila level government. Throughout the years, LDP partners also organized several events with local government officials both at the upazila and union level to celebrate IWD. In some cases, officials have also included those from the DYD and the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (MoWCA), Union Parishad Chairmen and Upazila Nirbahi Officers. Events have included essay competitions, debates, fairs to demonstrate women’s small scale enterprises development, and cultural programs.

Gender-based Violence (GBV) workshops: Violence against women is a deeply entrenched problem in many societies due to attitudes and practices that support such violence at different levels within a society. Despite constitutional laws on gender equality and other affirmative interventions - such as the



Photo 12: LDP staff and GBV workshop participants

preventing child marriage law from 1929, the preventing dowry law from 1980, the acid violence law signed in 2002, and the domestic violence law from 2010 - women are subjected to discrimination and violence within their household, at their workplace and in other areas within society. LDP found that its leaders were very interested to learn more about preventing gender-based violence. Counterpart had already been working with other USAID IPs to find synergies and areas of collaboration (see Section III on PMG). With the help of Protecting Human

Rights project of Plan International, Strengthening Democratic Local Governance project of Tetra Tech ARD, and Action for Combating Trafficking in-persons project of Winrock International, LDP organized a two-day training workshop on “Combating Gender Based Violence (GBV): Role of Community Leaders” June 15-16, 2014 in Dhaka for LDP Gender Focal Persons (Annex P). A total of 14 participants from LDP’s

<sup>3</sup> A Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is the chief executive of an upazila (sub-district) and a junior-level officer of the Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration Cadre). A senior assistant secretary is usually assigned to this post.



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five IPs attended the workshop, which focused on key dimensions of gender based violence including causes and effects of GBV, human trafficking and violation of women’s rights, combating GBV, role of local government and legislative action to combat GBV, advocacy strategies and tools, and the role of the community in addressing GBV.

The workshop strengthened participants’ knowledge and skills on gender and causes of GBV; equipping participants with strategies for addressing GBV including advocacy tools; providing information on national laws related to GBV; and strengthening leaders’ capacity on prevention of GBV while conducting training at the community level. The participants found the workshop quite useful, especially since many leaders or their communities had been confronted with GBV. The participants shared stories of GBV that had affected them or their communities. Many of the workshop participants mentioned that the knowledge they learned about the different acts and policies in detail via this workshop assisted them in taking appropriate actions against GBV in their communities and incorporating this information into the interaction with LDP leaders and members in their communities.



Photo 13: A school girl shares her views on Eve-teasing at Sitakund

GBV prevention rally and human chain:

Although Bangladesh has attained remarkable success in increasing literacy rates for women and decreasing maternal and child mortality rates, violence against women is still prevalent throughout the country. “Eve-teasing”<sup>4</sup> or gender discrimination takes on many forms in Bangladesh – from a generalized bullying to more abusive forms of gendered abuse and violence.

To give another specific example of one of the many activities conducted under LDP to combat

violence against women, LDP youth and community leaders in the Chittagong district as well as community members, civil society organizations, and the media organized a rally and formed a human chain in Barabkunda Union, Sitakunda, along the Dhaka Chittagong Highway on June 10, 2014. The campaign was a great success with close to 550 people participating. An estimated 330 were female and mostly high school students who created a chain lasting a couple of hours to raise awareness and attention. Simultaneously, a general discussion was chaired by the Barabkunda Union Parishad Chairman, with school teachers, the Upazila Youth Development Officer, representatives of local civil society, YPSA-

<sup>4</sup> A euphemism used throughout South Asia which includes public sexual harassment by men of women.



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LDP project officials, youth and community leaders and other NGO officials participating. One of the outcomes achieved was advocating for increased awareness of violence against women through incorporating it in the school textbooks. Students speaking in front of teachers and parents said it was important for children to learn this at an early age. Students also sought emergency support from police and union administration engaging with them on how to and whom to approach when they witness either GBV or “eve-teasing.”

As a result, communities have become more aware about violence against women and the UP authority has promised its citizens that necessary action would be taken to stop GBV. The Chairperson of Barabkunda UP said, “If we arrange such events in every ward then violence against women would certainly decrease.” Numerous similar events have taken place over the life of the project.

Openly discussing how eve-teasing affects the education of female students was significant because in many cases parents would stop sending their daughters to school. Both male and female students shared their views and experiences on the topic while community leaders expressed solidarity to stop GBV and eve-teasing which overall would ensure that girls’ education wasn’t cut because of such discrimination. Communities expressed their commitment to working together to prevent all the various types of GBV.

These activities gave LDP leaders and their communities the opportunity to discuss different laws on GBV such as the Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act 2000, which many were hearing about for the first time. This decision from the High Court decision in 2009 gave the government an eleven-point directive that provided a detailed definition of sexual harassment that included all other existing definitions of non-contact sexual offences. The act also included the use of modern technology - like sending suggestive text messages. Additionally, to combat GBV the government authorized mobile courts to take legal action against those who were convicted of stalking and harassing, yet many citizens remained uninformed about these developments until such meetings or rallies were held.

Drama skits, folk songs and different events on women’s health, violence against women and child marriage were other activities undertaken to raise awareness around gender mainstreaming. One of the LDP IPs, Wave Foundation was able to capture that 25 drama skits had been organized by LDP participants in their working area in 2014 which reached close to 3,500 people watching the skits<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Due to LDP leaders and UDFs driving forward initiatives independently as part of Counterpart’s vision to make these sustainable and not dependent on Counterpart’s involvement beyond the trainings and post training activities provided, many activities and events weren’t captured by the IPs that took place. With 13,861 leaders trained and many being a part of or creating activities Counterpart believes that at least double the amount of activities and events have and are still being undertaken.



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Social Good Summit: On September 24, 2013 Counterpart-Bangladesh took part in the world wide Social Good Summit (<http://mashable.com/sgs/> ). This ground breaking social media platform was the first of its kind for Counterpart-Bangladesh, and LDP's participation made Dhaka one of 300 cities that took part in the event. Counterpart's LDP hosted a day-long session entitled "How technology can be used to solve community challenges and innovative use of technologies for youth from rural communities." LDP's IPs selected 12 youth leaders, 7 male and 5 female, aged 18-35, from Natore, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Kishoreganj districts to attend the event. The event generated a lot of social media interest on Facebook and Twitter, and even caught the attention of a reporter from the Economist.

### **Establish Leadership Mentor Network (Activity 1.3)**

Mentorship was a key priority for Counterpart as the LDP program was built upon the successes of USAID's past Leaders of Influence (LOI) program. Counterpart was able to start utilizing this group at the beginning of PY3 in October 2014, as it was a rather lengthy process of accessing records of these past participants and garnering their buy-in and interest in being mentors. Counterpart initially anticipated using these LOI leaders to further strengthen LDP leaders' capacity to bring about change in their communities while creating an opportunity to further enhance the knowledge and skills of the LOI program graduates. However, upon closer review it became clear to Counterpart that the LOI leaders – while showing great aptitude for leadership – were also in need of further leadership skill development themselves. As such, Counterpart and the Iman Training Academy (ITA) jointly designed and developed a training manual (*Annex M*) that included necessary sessions to enhance the LOI leaders' mentorship skills. The manual included the following:

- Human rights and Islam
- Religious principles regarding women's rights and participation in development activities
- Tolerance, respect, and management of inter-faith groups
- The importance of moral values and positivity towards social development
- Communications and networking
- Facilitation skills

Counterpart conducted numerous two-day mentorship training for Imams. Over the life of the project, Counterpart conducted nine mentorship trainings. Following the training, the selected mentors worked as facilitators in training sessions, and provided guidance to leaders to carry forward activities such as



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rooted advocacy, community development planning, setting up linkages between leaders and service providers, and facilitating leaders' convention. Counterpart has been promoting the mentorship program as a possibility for future engagement and exposure for the individual mentor to network with other stakeholders and build connections that might lead to other opportunities in the future.

Mentorship training enabled LDP to ensure the sustainability and continued transfer of community-based leadership and engagement processes and skills. This mentoring approach has enabled LDP to reinforce learning under LOI; draw upon capacity from LOI to support LDP. Through LDP new trainees and LOI trainees helped ensure the sustainability of program legacies and continued transfer of community-based leadership and engagement processes and skills. These mentors were invited to co-train and co-facilitate the LDP trainings and post-training activities. Mentors also took part in the mentorship training where they shared their experiences and learning with others.

Jesmin Khatun, one of the mentorship trainees from the Chapai Nawabganj Sadar Upazila, said "Women's rights are described very nicely in the holy Quran but we hardly practice it. I understand from the training that there is no other way for things to improve unless men and women work together in community development". Another mentor Mr. Ali Hasan, LOI graduate and Imam of Arunbari Jame Mosque of Chapai Nawabganj, began contributing to the UDF's activity by raising community awareness about the causes of early marriage. Counterpart learned from that community leaders tended to learn from experts with real life examples. Engaging mentors from their communities added value in mentorship training helping to learn and understand matters more quickly. It also helped develop the planning processes of community development and foster one-on-one relationship with the individual supporting further community development after the end of LDP activities.

### **Facilitation of Internship Opportunities (Activity 2.6)**

Counterpart placed 75 youth leaders into approximately 3 to 6 month-long internships over the life of the project. Counterpart considered this effort an integral milestone toward recognizing youth leaders' future potential in Bangladesh and a step towards creating financial and leadership sustainability for LDP leaders after the program ended. IPs assisted young participants to prepare one-page applications listing participants' motivation, skills and past experience in community development. The IPs matched the selected youth with projects that met their skills and sector interest, in or near their own community. These internships provided youth leaders with hands-on experience in a formal work environment with a CSO or USAID IP. The main responsibilities of the interns included assisting the IP Program Officers (POs) in working on the numerous post training activities, in particular working with UDF members to help organize various events, and/or to serve as co-facilitators during the trainings. Counterpart had identified



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a number of USAID-funded projects which were suitable for internships with LDP trainees, in addition to other CSOs.

### **Strengthen Youth Participation with Subnational Governance Actors (Activity 2.3)**

The Government of Bangladesh's youth development strategy and infrastructure includes a countrywide network of Youth Training Centers (YTC) at the district level supported by the Department of Youth Development under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. After signing an MoU with the DYD in January 2013, LDP IPs and Counterpart have conducted 51 activities at these centers over the life of the project which included coordination meetings with high level government officials at the district and upazila service delivery institutions, discussion meetings about youth leadership and youth participation in ensuring good-governance, and ICT trainings. The activities also covered need-based supplementary trainings for youth leaders, utilizing the physical and online training resources available at these centers. These activities jointly implemented by IPs and YTCs have built capacity of youth in multifarious areas. However, collaborative programs with the YTCs remained a challenge to implement because of the geographical distances between the YTCs, which were built at the district level, and the LDP leaders' residence, which were at the union level.

The YTCs play a great role in the development of Bangladeshi youth, creating new leaders in fighting poverty and bringing economic stability in their communities and their own lives. The YTCs provide training to Bangladeshi youth in more than 30 trades and also have ongoing projects around the country that offer need-based livelihood trainings at the upazila level. While LDP was able to utilize the physical resources and training expertise of the YTCs, in turn LDP and Counterpart worked toward strengthening the capacity of these YTCs so that the YTCs were able to ensure a long-term investment in youth leadership skills development beyond the life of project. For this reason, LDP also undertook a needs-assessment of all the new YTCs in LDP's working areas. LDP IPs discussed collaboration with the YTCs, which resulted in the IPs providing support and training to expand the effectiveness and impact of the centers. Each YTC took part in ICT trainings provided by Counterpart.



### Utilize ICT to Increase Youth Engagement and Outreach (Activity 2.4)

LDP has tapped into the many ongoing efforts to expand ICT facilities and access in rural areas. Because of shared internet access points developed by government agencies and the Bangladesh Tele-Center Network, opportunities to use internet and social media as tools for information dissemination have expanded. . In this context, over the years LDP conducted numerous two-day trainings at the DYD Training Centers focused on empowerment through the usage of social media. LDP ICT and program staff discussed how leaders could use social media tools to expand their reach and make their interventions more effective. For instance, one leader pointed out that he wanted to prevent child marriage in his community and put a post on Facebook to generate ideas. Another mentioned that they spread awareness on child vaccination via texts to community members. DYD trainers in turn would facilitate sessions on Access to Information which was a government initiative to create citizens' access to information, laws, citizens' rights and services through ICT. The trainings generally concluded with practical sessions on creating email, Skype and Facebook accounts.



Photo 14: LDP staff and DYD trainer conducting ICT training in Mymensingh

Other ICT activities included:

**TWITTER** - Counterpart set up its LDP focused Twitter account to initially publicize the Social Good Summit. However, this tool proved highly effective in engaging urban youth both within and outside of Bangladesh and was used for posting regular updates on LDP activities. Over the life of the project, Counterpart tweeted 29 times to bring attention to major events or activities it was carrying out. The LDP twitter handle was <https://twitter.com/CounterpartLDP>

**LDP Blog**: An LDP blog was officially launched and has been used by LDP leaders, particularly youth leaders, as a portal for sharing their stories, best practices, observations and opinions on how to increase youth engagement and outreach. Link of the blog is <http://ldpbd.blogspot.com/>

**Facebook**: The most widely-used and most successful social media mechanism by the leaders was LDP's Facebook group page <https://www.facebook.com/CounterpartBangladesh.LDP>. As of June 2016, 2,417



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Facebook members have liked the page and despite the program closing in March 2016, new posts were up introducing new initiatives that leaders were undertaking on their own. The Facebook site has been a highly effective way for leaders from various parts of the country to stay in touch and share information about the post-training activities they were, and are still, involved in.

Television/radio/media: LDP continuously encouraged training participants to participate in popular phone-in programs on public and private TV channels, engage in community-based radio programming, and to explore innovative ideas including developing video documentary information campaigns, and using mobile phones and cameras to produce video reports on development topics or policy priorities in their communities. From national radio stations to local radio stations, LDP leaders participated in over a dozen shows raising awareness of development issues at the community level.

LDP received a wide range of media coverage due to the various advocacy initiatives held and the national level conferences. LDP also hired a media production company to produce a documentary on LDP which aired on a local Bangladeshi television channel. The documentary can be viewed at the following link: [https://youtu.be/eomLdmqC1\\_k](https://youtu.be/eomLdmqC1_k)

Through utilizing links with the media, Counterpart estimates to have reached at minimum a few hundred thousand people in Bangladesh through the articles that were published, the radio shows it participated in and the television broadcast on the program which was aired on TV in February 2016.

### **Create an LDP Youth Network (Activity 2.5)**

In PY1 and PY2, Counterpart had already created 120 youth networks at the union level covering more than 1,620 selected youth leaders. In line with its training referral mandate, Counterpart facilitated LDP youth knowledge of and engagement in other youth movements, platforms and initiatives to expand their opportunities to lead change. Leaders particularly engaged with DYD's in trainings on mobile servicing and repairing, homestead gardening, sewing and fabric. These helped them start small scale entrepreneurship initiatives by utilizing their own resources. Through the trainings the leaders were able to build a network with the DYD established youth clubs and also draw from DYD's services to help expand their initiatives (see Page 37 of Section III on DYD).

In the last program year, Counterpart created a combined UDF with Youth and Community Leaders. In PY3 and PY4, Counterpart created 30 UDFs in 30 unions which would actively engaged youth leaders. This group worked collaboratively on community development issues and created a strong advocacy network. Events held at Youth Training Centers, CBOs and youth NGOs were supplemented by virtual connections through the LDP website, blog and various topical web chat activities. The increased physical and virtual meetings and information sharing sessions enhanced relationships among youth leaders and community



leaders from ward to the upazila level; spread the increase of innovative civic engagement initiatives among youth and community; and strengthened the bonds of a growing Bangladeshi youth network.

**Organize Youth and Social Partnership Conferences (*Activities 1.6 and 2.7*)**

In PY4, Counterpart worked with the UDFs to organize leader conventions at the local level where leaders, community and stakeholders were invited to share best practices, challenges and lessons learned related to community development. The final output of these conventions were filtered out and linked to facilitate national level social partnership conference organized by Counterpart in collaboration with other stakeholders at the local and national level. In the program’s final year, 15 leaders’ conventions were held in LDP working areas. The conventions provided an opportunity to identify ways to further promote the idea and practices of community engagement and leadership. Counterpart worked with the UDFs to organize the leaders’ conventions at the local level, where UDF members, representatives of UP, local administrative people, private sector, NGOs and local media together, were brought together to create a network of cooperation discussing higher level needs from the LDP working areas.

The National Youth Rights Assembly (NYRA) was organized by LDP local partner WAVE Foundation on 24-25 January 2016 in Dhaka. The purpose of the event was to create broader networking among those at the community, regional and national level and advocate for youth rights and development issues LDP leaders were faced with and worked on during the course of the program. Notable high level officials came to participate in the event, including the State Minister of Youth & Sports, Dr. Shri Biren Sikder, the Minister of Education, Nurul Islam Nahid, the Minister of Information, Hasanul Haq Inu, as well as other policymakers, political activists, economists, academia, and social figures, including Rezwana Choudhury Bannya, one of the most popular Rabindra singers in Bangladesh.



Photo 15: State Minister of Youth & Sports speaking at the Youth Assembly on Jan. 25, 2016

The Assembly started with a youth rally following an inauguration speech by the State Minister of Youth & Sports. The two-day conference focused on how a more skilled younger generation could help build a happy and prosperous nation and as such, policy initiatives and interventions should focus on youth development. After listening to LDP youth leaders, high level officials said they would advocate for favorable environment being



created for youth education, skill development and employment opportunities.

Linking the findings and discussions from the Union Leader’s Conventions, a similar national level dialogue on Social Leadership and Sustainable Development was organized by LDP’s local partner Youth Power in Social Action (YPSA) on January 27, 2016. The event included officials from the Department of Youth Development under the Ministry of Youth & Sports, NGO professionals, Union Parishad members as well as LDP youth leaders and local entrepreneurs.



Photo 16: National Level Dialogue held in Chittagong in Jan 2016

Recommendations that came out of discussing the draft youth policy resulted in the youth leaders documenting these and giving the recommendations to members of the parliament that had attended LDP events/conferences. LDP youth advocated for the Government of Bangladesh to: a) highlight youth development issues in light of a rights-based approach; b) ensure effective skill development training to mobilize employment for the unemployed, illiterate or less educated youth groups; c) develop and implement a national plan for ICT and other entrepreneurship for youth; d) implement a national plan for youth employment generation; and e) ensure youth representation in all aspects of national level decision making.

Social Partnership Conference organized by Counterpart International: On February 7, 2016, Counterpart held its Social Partnership Conference at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka. The purpose of the conference was to share LDP activities, experiences and lessons learned during implementation of the program and facilitate stronger linkages among LPD leaders, IPs and external stakeholders including other local organizations, media members and businesses. A total of 40 guests



Photo 17: Social Partnership Conference participants – Feb 7, 2016



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participated in the conference including representatives from South Asia Youth Society (SAYS), ACLAB, Child Bangladesh Foundation (CBF), Physically Challenged Development Foundation (PDF), Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights-BSEHR, Hunger Free World and HOPE '87.

The conference brought LDP's five local implementing partners and trained community and youth leaders from different regions together to discuss opportunities to carry forth tools and activities they had learned and been involved in after the end of the LDP program on March 31, 2016.

The discussions focused on the importance of continuing the democratic processes and development at the local level. A video documentary on 'Change Agents for Development' was shown which reflected the work and initiatives by the community and youth leaders in the LDP areas. LDP leaders shared what they had found most effective during their time as LDP leaders, such as carrying out community score cards, forming Union Development Forums which gave them the opportunity to engage with their local government directly, and feeling empowered in the trainings.

The leaders and implementing partners specifically pointed out the contribution and support of Counterpart and the LDP program in building the capacity of leaders that motivated them to take community development initiatives at the local level. All five implementing partners assured commitment to providing guidance to the leaders in the future.

The Department of Youth Development also actively participated in the conference and in their speech, Mr. Shahidul Islam, Director of Training, and Mr. Abul Hasan Khan, Director of Planning at the DYD said, "We appreciate the initiatives of the leaders and encourage working together to find innovative ways to cooperate in the future with LDP leaders and our Ministry."

After speeches from the DYD, Counterpart's senior staff members and the implementing partners, the conference proceeded with an open discussion on ideas to continue activities that would foster democratic processes and development. The main ideas that were discussed by participants were, a) establishing a youth parliament – LDP youth leaders particularly liked this idea and added having a youth council that could work with the government on drafting laws concerning youth; b) increasing awareness raising of development issues in Bangladesh through social media; c) private sector funding for the already established initiatives; and d) ensuring inter-ministerial coordination for youth development.

### **III. METHOD OF ASSISTANCE USED AND THE PROS AND CONS**



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Counterpart's goal in closing the local leadership gap was to provide existing and emergent leaders with the technical and communication skills, resources and opportunities to spearhead local development and collaboration in a number of sectors.

Work with Local Partners: Since the beginning of the program, Counterpart's strategy has been to maximize the use of local resources. Using the grant-making mechanism, Counterpart's approach to creating a partnership with a local organization was through establishing clear goals and outputs both sides would agree on. To ensure an effective partnership and working relationship, Counterpart also invested in the capacity building of its Implementing partners in the continuous working relationship it upheld with the local organizations in each subsequent year. Over the life of the project, Counterpart partnered up and worked with five local organizations in different parts of the country to effectively conduct and implement the LDP trainings and post-training activities through awarding 19 grants totaling \$1,911,720.

Counterpart started working with three IPs in PY1 – Democracywatch, MKP and Wave Foundation. In PY2 Counterpart-Bangladesh expanded LDP's geographic coverage to include Chittagong and the Chittagong Hill Tracts regions, which necessitated an increase of two more IPs YPSA and Toymu. Over the life of the project, which was contingent upon satisfactory work product, continued to work with these 5 IPs in target geographies to ensure that participants received trainings and technical support from an easily accessible support center. These partners were also able to tailor program trainings and other activities to meet the specific local needs of participants and established relationships with local government structures in order to better facilitate linkages between leaders and their local government representatives. The IPs had a significant role in training delivery as well as planning and implementing local activities and small grants. Furthermore, the IPs also assisted with overall program monitoring and reporting.

Program staff of IPs took part in regular Training of Trainers (ToTs) which gave them the opportunity to learn new development approaches as well as enhance their trainings skills and also teach them how to ensure citizens' participation in local development process. The local partners also were invited by Counterpart to participate in a monitoring and evaluation training, and a grants management training to increase their capacity for smooth operation of program activities.



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Photo 18: One of the several orientations Counterpart conducted for IPs at Counterpart's Office in Dhaka in Feb 2014

There was usually a learning curve involved when working with local organizations who, for the most part, had not worked with U.S. Government funding or had limited experience working on grants funded through USAID. Through separate meetings and workshops with the local partners at the beginning of each program year and through Counterpart's grants management team, the work with Counterpart served as a capacity building experience for the partner organizations.

All of the LDP implementing partners expressed the need of continuing the work and trainings LDP has made possible for the communities. With every new program year, LDP trainings and activities had spread to new upazilas. When neighboring communities not within the working area would hear about LDP, they would reach out to the implementing partners to find out how they too could get trainings and be involved. Several of the implementing partners, particularly Toymu, mentioned that its 2-year involvement was far too little and just when results were starting to become more visible in the Bandarban district through the initiatives created by the youth and community leaders, the popularity and demand for the trainings among others were growing, the organization felt ending the program was premature.

Despite the Leadership Development Program ending sooner than envisioned, Counterpart wanted to leave behind its tools and methodologies with the various stakeholders it had worked with over the past 3-and-a-half years. Counterpart distributed complete sets of its training manuals which had been revised and reworked over the years together with its local implementing partners and input from its leaders and trainers. These manuals were given to the NGOs that attended the Social Partnership Conference, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and other stakeholders it had engaged with during the course of the program. Counterpart believes these manuals are cross-cutting and the ideas and tools which focus on community development and engagement can be incorporated into the work conducted by other organizations regardless if their focus is on health, agriculture, nutrition, education, etc.

Work within Existing Development Plans: Another method of assistance used to help align LDP activities was through existing development plans, particularly the National Youth Policy 2003, Union Parishad Act 2009, Right to Information Act 2009, National ICT Policy 2009, and the Domestic Violence Act 2010. Counterpart's existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the DYD allowed Counterpart to



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leverage opportunities for its leaders to align themselves with activities currently underway in the Nation Building Departments (NBDs)<sup>6</sup> and for the government officials to create links with citizens.

Relationship at the National Government Level: LDP and DYD signed a strategic partnership agreement to work jointly to promote youth leadership by assisting youth action network building and identifying needs to strengthen DYD youth training centers.

Established in 1984, the Ministry of Youth and Sports aims to organize and mobilize youth for voluntary participation in the development activities of the country, coordinate youth services with ministries, and programs with the aim of encouraging a sense of responsibility, confidence and achievement. The Ministry houses the Department of Youth Development which is the only implementing agency of the government policies and programs for the youth and has offices in 64 districts and 476 sub-districts, with 60 institutional training centers throughout Bangladesh. Counterpart signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Youth Development (DYD) within the Ministry of Youth & Sports (MoYS) which allowed Counterpart to leverage opportunities for our leaders to align themselves with activities currently underway in the Nation Building Departments (NBDs)<sup>7</sup> and for the government officials to create links with citizens.

Over the life of the project the relationship with MOYS-DYD proved to be fruitful and mutually beneficial. DYD continuously shared information with Counterpart on the government's strategy on youth and their plans to incorporate this strategy in their ongoing program implementation. This placed Counterpart in the perfect position to allow its leaders access to government resources and to build a bridge between the government and citizens. In this manner community initiatives created by the leaders also lined up with existing development plans of the local government. UP bodies engaged with the IPs to find ways for citizens to effectively engage in development processes. Conducting Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) exercises in the field gave community members the opportunity to assess the quality of services and resources currently available in their communities and to develop an action plan to address them. LDP designed and developed a UP Orientation manual which reviewed existing plans and combined it with LDP's work. These stakeholders included UP bodies, service departments<sup>8</sup> working at the union level, UDF

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<sup>6</sup> Nation Building Departments are the government's 20-service delivery departments, which are based in the upazila and district levels. These departments include the Department of Women Affairs, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Cooperatives, Local Government Engineering Department, Health, Education, Bangladesh Police, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Nation Building Departments are the government's 20-service delivery departments, which are based in the upazila and district levels. These departments include the Department of Women Affairs, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Cooperatives, Local Government Engineering Department, Health, Education, Bangladesh Police, etc.

<sup>8</sup> Service Departments: Family Planning, Agricultural Extension, Fisheries and Livestock, Local Government, Health and family welfare, Social welfare Primary and mass education, among other departments.



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members and LOI graduates. As a Strategic Partner, DYD committed to continuing the monitoring of those activities even after LDP's phase out.

The DYD set-up youth clubs at the community level to enhance youth's active participation in the local development process. Counterpart created linkages between LDP leaders and DYD, formed youth clubs so that LDP youth leaders could organize themselves under an umbrella to continue their collective initiatives. Best practices guided LDP leaders to support the advocacy process, and community development planning.

Counterpart placed special emphasis on its implementing partners to create linkages between communities and local civil society organizations as well as DYD's youth clubs. One of the selection criteria for LDP program participants was that a leader work or be associated with CSOs or local youth clubs. The purpose behind this was to ensure program sustainability.

Upazila Youth Development Officers of the DYD were invited to facilitate LDP training sessions, especially the ones on youth policy and youth entrepreneurship. During their facilitation they also would outline DYD trainings such as residential trainings on agriculture, fisheries and poultry, and non-residential trainings on basic computer skills, computer graphics, modern office management, mobile servicing and repairing, and electrical wiring. Furthermore, in an effort to ensure sustainability of work in community development, Counterpart introduced LDP leaders to the DYD's credit programs where, after completion of a DYD training, a youth was able to apply individually or as a group for credit from the DYD ranging from BDT 25,000-50,000 (USD \$325 – USD \$650) for small microenterprise loans. The conditions for loan eligibility were as follows:

1. The participant needed to have completed DYD training
2. The participant must be between the ages of 18-35
3. Application of the loan had to be within three years of training completion
4. The participant could only apply for the loan once the project is already underway
5. The participant had to share copies of documents of land mortgage or present a guarantor

DYD officials have stated that although DYD services were available to youth, they lacked publicity, many did not know about them. Through LDP's trainings, more youth who were geared towards community development work and became aware of DYD's services started enrolling in the trainings and utilizing the services provided by DYD. DYD's field level training programs, especially on agriculture, fisheries and



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poultry, basic computer skills, computer graphics, modern office management, mobile servicing and repairing, and electrical wiring attracted many LDP youth leaders. In FY15 alone, DYD accepted a total 152 LDP leaders in their own trainings.

Other collaborative work undertaken with the DYD included working closely with LDP youth through different activities which included but weren't limited to: holding coordination meetings with LDP youth leaders and high ranking government officials representing departments (such as the Departments of Agricultural Extension, Livestock and Fisheries, Women Affairs, Cooperatives and Directorate of Social Services) which gave youth leaders the opportunity to engage with their represented government officials and speak to them about the various issues and potential opportunities that they as youth saw in their communities.

Such meetings resulted in increased communication between the LDP youth and government officials and served to provide an avenue for the youth to advocate for better service delivery as well support various youth initiatives at the community level. For example, a group of youth in Damkura Union, Paba, Rajshahi, who took up a fishery project, began directly communicating with the Department of Fisheries on pond maintenance and sustainable fishing. In another case, a youth forum in Hojuripara Union directly communicated with the Department of Social Welfare and Department of Youth Development in order to become formally registered as an entity. Registration allowed the youth a variety of benefits including: invitation to regular trainings and engagement in their grants and microcredit programs. Moreover, any government events which took place at the district-level provided them automatic invitations to participate and facilitate.

The DYD also held meetings with LDP leaders to provide guidance in developing their youth action plans for their youth development initiatives. The DYD provided guidance in helping LDP leaders identify different institutions and government support services that they could use to implement their initiatives. DYD officials at the upazila and union level also advised LDP youth leaders on establishing effective networks and liaising with local government, community clinics, and service centers in achieving their goal.

The DYD held action-networking meetings with the youth leaders to strengthen and expand their existing networks among youth and also between youth and different actors in the communities such as government officials, NGOs, different institutions, and the private sector.

Finally, the DYD held orientation meetings with dozens of registered youth clubs to further orient and assist LDP youth committees and forums in numerous unions that LDP worked in over the years in order to assist the youth clubs in registration and allow them a space for sharing their experiences, best practices, challenges and success stories in carrying out different development initiatives. These



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involvements resulted in increased confidence among the youth and increased communication and networking with government officials and service providing departments.

One engagement with the DYD involved seven Upazila Youth Development Officers of the DYD being invited to LDP training sessions to talk about Youth Policy and DYD programs. LDP leaders benefitted by learning key features of the national youth policy and the government's priorities on youth issues at the sub-national level.

Build on Past Experiences and Leverage Current Experiences: The LDP technical approach built on the successes of past USAID and government run capacity building programs. Counterpart engaged past Leaders of Influence (LOI) program participants as well as the former Strengthen Democratic Local Governance (SDLG) programs on strengthening Standing Committees in the UPs. These resulted in LDP seeking LOI graduates and UP's support and cooperation to engage in community development activities. Counterpart also had gathered information from Protecting Human Rights (PHR) and Action to Combating Trafficking-in-Person (ACT) program on how they had engaged and ensured women's participation. These learnings were incorporated in LDP's gender strategy.

Furthermore, in assisting with selecting regions for program implementation, Counterpart conducted research to identify communities with an optimal overlap of past and current aid assistance which would help the program determine which new districts to work in in the next program year. To determine this, the Counterpart team would look at a) the presence of USAID DG programs, b) USAID Presidential Initiatives including Feed the Future, and c) the presence of the Leaders of Influence (LOI) program participants. Each year, identifying the districts with the highest potential from the existing divisions was prioritized.

Apply an Appreciative Inquiry Approach in Community Mobilization. During the course of the program, Counterpart has used Appreciative Inquiry (AI), which is an asset-based approach that helps communities approach problem solving from a new and positive perspective by focusing and building upon strengths and assets. With this approach Counterpart focused on what was working in the communities and building on those strengths to solve problems. The methodology allowed Counterpart to infuse best practices and positive achievements with existing resources, traditions and values, to provide a relevant community mobilization methodology. This approach allowed citizens to take better control of their lives by being proactive participants in their own development process.



Ensure Gender Sensitivity and Equity: Gender inequity remains a challenge in Bangladesh, and will require continual attention and engagement of community leaders to develop culturally relevant approaches and messages. Respecting the challenges in ensuring equal participation, over the life of the project Counterpart worked to identify barriers to equal participation, and identify specific corrective measures to address these barriers. Capacity building and technical assistance to Counterpart’s local partners helped ensure that gender mainstreaming was always given priority and institutionalized within each of the five organizations. Methodologies such as the women’s participation assessment tool were implemented into the programmatic activities (*Annexes Q and R*).

One of the major benchmarks reached towards mainstreaming gender into the LDP program, was the revision of the training manuals and focusing on the trainings through a gender lens. A Gender Action Plan and two training monitoring forms were also developed to better assess gender sensitivity in the trainings.

Counterpart, together with the IPs, identified areas (detailed in the table below) in which LDP needed to improve regarding its gender mainstreaming efforts:

Program Design/Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Integration Strategy</li> <li>• Gender indicators in PMP</li> </ul>
Program Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Sensitive Training Manuals</li> <li>• Gender sensitive Small Grants Template</li> <li>• Recruitment of Gender Specialist</li> <li>• Gender Action Plan</li> </ul>
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Training Monitoring Form (inclusion of Women’s Participation Assessment Tool)</li> <li>• Gender sensitive Grants Site Visit Report Form</li> </ul>

Gender mainstreaming of the complete project cycle, and improved monitoring of the two gender indicators in the PMP was a priority and resulted in improved reporting on LDP’s gender focus as per the two PMP indicators:

- Acceptance of women
- Inclusion of women

Furthermore, all IPs identified and hired a gender focal person to add to their current roster of LDP related staff. The main responsibility of these focal persons was to encourage women facilitators to conduct trainings and to mentor male and female leaders in their ability to respond to Gender Based Violence (GBV) and other pertinent issues. The IPs gender focal person was supported with knowledge and skills on gender and development so that they were able to help and encourage community level facilitators for gender related updated information i.e. particularly government policy framework/laws to address



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gender based violence. The focal person was also linked with local institutions/organizations to address violence against women. Counterpart provided trainings to gender focal persons and IP training staff on advocacy approaches and national and international laws protecting women's rights.

Networking/synergy with other USAID projects: On a quarterly basis, Counterpart-Bangladesh staff held networking/coordination meetings with a variety of USAID IPs including: Winrock International; Solidarity Center; Plan International Bangladesh; and the Strengthening Democratic Local Governance program (SDLG). This formed the Program Management Group (PMG).

In sharing their best practices and challenges, the PMG members found that there was an avenue for synergy among the different organizations and parties especially regarding capacity building on need based issues, networking, sharing best practices, exposure visits, entrepreneurship, community development Initiatives and use of social media. For example, there could be collaboration among the partner organizations regarding the provision of topical trainings on access to justice and gender sensitive media training. The PMG was formed as an Advisory Committee focused on management and operational issues, and developing collaboration in the field. The PMG met quarterly and focused on sharing resources and approaches to develop collaborative training and development activities where organizations were working in the same geographic areas with similar populations. The PMG did share training resources and curricula, jointly organized trainings on GBV and women's rights in Islam, and coordinated efforts to address gender specific issues at the local program level.

GIS Mapping – Following the recommendation of USAID, LDP began using GIS mapping to view programmatic data geographically. GIS-based maps and visualizations greatly assisted in understanding the breadth of LDP's access across Bangladesh. They also helped Counterpart track where leaders were located in relation to potential policy or development activities that might benefit from LDP involvement and respond to USAID or the Bangladesh government's request for information on LDP's reach. Counterpart also anticipated that this information would be very useful for other USAID Implementing Partners and Stakeholders as it detailed the grantees' ability and geographic reach, and enabled comparison of their performance, which might be invaluable for future programming for USAID, its implementing partners and other bilateral and private sector donors.

Counterpart updated the GIS Map with information for all of its working districts of Bangladesh. This map shows a visual representation of the number of individuals attending each training session, disaggregated by gender and age, and the IP responsible for the training. The map can be accessed at: [www.counterpart-leadershipbd.org](http://www.counterpart-leadershipbd.org)



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## IV. LIFE-OF-PROGRAM RESULTS

Using a wide variety of mechanisms, extensive monitoring and evaluation was conducted periodically throughout the life of the program. Literature on the effectiveness of training in leadership, civic engagement, democratic values and community development was also reviewed by Counterpart in 2013 at the beginning of the Leadership Development Program. Monitoring Activities included:

Participants' Database: In PY1 Counterpart-Bangladesh's M&E team created an innovative virtual database of LDP's participants showing GPS locations of their trainings, demographic information, participation in the baseline survey, the completeness of their trainings (how many phases accomplished), and relevant contact information. Following the selection of new participants in PY3, the M&E team not only entered all new participants in Counterpart-Bangladesh's virtual database but also spot-checked a certain percentage of selected leaders to verify if the selection process being conducted by the IPs was conducted properly. All of these inputs fed into the creation of an ideal leader profile, so that training content matched the needed skill sets and expected outcomes of each individual leader.

The database served as the major tool for analyzing leader's participation in LDP. The database was also used to generate a sampling frame and provide additional information relevant for analysis in mid-term and final evaluations of the LDP program impact surveys.

Knowledge Management Portal: Counterpart-Bangladesh continued to use Counterpart International's Knowledge Management Portal for its program monitoring, evaluation and reporting purposes. The Portal captured LDP generated inputs, outcomes and impacts and enabled effective monitoring of and reporting on all program activities. All LDP related data and activity documentation were entered in the following components of the system:

- 1) Management Information System (MIS) – allowed Counterpart and its implementing partners to enter and access program information in real time and run monitoring reports that inform management decisions;
- 2) Local Contacts Database – provided a listing of local contacts, including CSOs, media and government agencies; and
- 3) Document Management System – enabled users to share important programmatic, financial, marketing, reporting and other documents with project staff, Counterpart and USAID.

Women's Participation Assessment: In order to facilitate gender inclusivity, Counterpart developed a Women's Participation Assessment tool, which allowed Counterpart to measure women's participation in



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supported training, program events, and particularly in meetings held to conduct needs assessments leading to subsequent planning of community development initiatives. Counterpart designed the tool to measure women's participation in LDP supported events, particularly trainings, and subsequent community development planning and initiatives. Counterpart staff as well as IP staff used the tool on every monitoring visit, at IP supported events, meetings, community leader activities and the implementation of community development grants. The assessment tool measured the extent that activities integrated gendered perspectives in addition to the facilitation and participation of women.

TraiNet: TraiNet is USAID's official training data management system that is accessed from a web browser and the entry point for data about training programs and participants in their country of origin, a third country, or for potential exchange visitors who will visit to the United States on a USAID J-1 visa. LDP complied with entering data into TraiNet for any program activities fully or partially funded by USAID. As training was a major component of the LDP program, updating all the training information into the TraiNet system was a major undertaking for the M&E unit. After completion of each training, grant managers checked all the training related expenses and then implementing partners updated the training related data into Counterpart's Knowledge Management Portal. M&E units updated the TraiNet with training information on a quarterly basis.

Annual Focus Group Discussions: Counterpart conducted an annual Focus Group Discussion (FGD), a qualitative study, as one of the program evaluations to get feedback on program interventions particularly on the trainings, and how leaders translated their learning into practice. The FGDs helped LDP management to refine the training curricula, training methodology and improve the project implementation modality. The objectives of the FGD study were to understand the existing practices and identify the scope of improvement regarding program interventions and to learn the leaders' perception in terms of program implementation.

Each program year a random and multistage sampling of approximately 150 community and youth leaders were selected. The FGDs helped Counterpart learn the following: a) participants demonstrated a deeper understanding of the Union Parishad and its functions, b) the trainings helped the leaders' ability to communicate their needs to the authority, c) the trainings helped leaders change their perception of the local government. Several participants felt that local governments weren't responsive but they themselves didn't realize that they as community members also had a role to play. The trainings also made them realize that collective action could make a change. A great number of leaders said that after the training, they were now more proactive in participating in community development activities such as preventing child marriage, raising awareness on social issues, and meeting with school management committees to talk about services, among other topics. Leaders also had a few suggestions for



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improvement such as increasing the training time to accommodate more in-depth discussion on certain topics, or bringing in the chairperson or other local civil servants to facilitate relevant sessions, among other suggestions.

Baseline: The baseline study was carried out from February 20 to March 20, 2013, where 1,750 of LDP's 2,400 leaders were randomly selected and interviewed (*Annex D*). The LDP Baseline report was finalized in early June 2013. The report is a consolidated analysis of the data received from the baseline survey and sketches out a comprehensive picture of the LDP working areas and participants. Among the notable findings, the low rate of 5% of Bangladeshi rural population having convenient access to internet and computer service needs to be given special attention since communication between leaders within the action network Counterpart was planning to form was initially envisioned to take place via the internet. The lack of internet technologies was also troubling, as access to information for the leaders was more and more readily available via the internet rather than in paper/person sources. Information on policy changes, development agendas, and municipal budgets were prime examples of information that could be found online. The resources needed to understand these documents are also more likely to be found online than in person/on paper.

Another integral finding was that women were considerably less confident in answering questions about their knowledge and ability to influence the decisions of local government than men. Specifically, men recruited for LDP expressed greater confidence, involvement, information, and commitment to community development than women. In one example, while only about a third of men expressed high levels of confidence that they knew how to hold the government accountable for community problems, that fell by half among women, to just 16 percent. The survey also showed that 70% of women believed that their roles at meetings/community events were of observers/participants rather than leaders – which was troubling for LDP.

Indicators: The described M&E mechanisms fed into the results for the indicators. The overall results of the indicators show that the program was highly successful, with important lessons to be learned for future community leadership training efforts. The monitoring and evaluation conducted in assessing each of the indicators demonstrate that the LDP successfully produced measurable, positive advances in trainees' political and community engagement and commitment to community development. While gains vary in magnitude, and areas for additional focus are identified, positive outcomes are apparent across virtually every indicator examined.

### **PMEP #1 - Increased knowledge and understanding of democracy among LDP leaders**

LDP increased participants' knowledge and understanding of democracy, including how informed they felt about the government and, to a lesser degree, the importance they placed on democratic values, as well



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as the extent to which they view civic and religious values as compatible. Assessing changes to this indicator included analyzing participants' political efficacy and information about government, the importance they ascribed to civic values and the extent to which they saw civic and religious values as compatible.

LDP trainings improved leaders' self-confidence and trust in government. While not formal indicators in this assessment, statistical modeling conducted by Langer Research (*Annex E*) showed that these outcomes, along with an improvement in leaders' living conditions, contributed to advancement on many key attitudes and behaviors. In one individual item, the number of leaders saying they had at least a little information about the UP government increased from 63 percent before training to 75 percent after it. Furthermore, the portion who thought they had at least a little ability to influence decisions taken by the UP and upazila administrations increased respectively from 40 and 12 percent before training, to 61 and 30 percent after it, resulting in gains showing 21 and 18 percent increase.

There also was a small increase in the subscale assessing the extent to which leaders viewed civic and religious values as compatible. The results reflect 10- and 8-percent gains in the percentage of leaders who saw equal rights for youth and women as highly compatible with the teachings of their religion, and 11- and 7-percent gains in the number who saw their religion as compatible with the rule of law and tolerance of differing opinions, respectively.

Following trainings, from the surveyed participants, 94, 92 and 86 percent said equal rights for youth, women and minorities was highly important to them, which is an increase of 9, 8 and 6 percentage points, respectively, compared with pre-training results. Perceptions of the importance of the rule of law and tolerance for differing opinions also increased, by 7 percentage points in each case, to 94 and 92 percent. From the participants, 98 and 85 percent viewed voting and political compromise as highly important in the post-training results; these did not increase.

## **PMEP #2 - Increased knowledge and understanding of community development among LDP leaders**

Trainees' knowledge and understanding of community development, which was a central goal of LDP, achieved one of the largest positive changes. After trainings, leaders reported increased understanding of community development, as well as greater confidence in their ability to bring about change in their community.



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Assessing participants' knowledge and understanding of community development was measured by the amount of information leaders felt they had about community development and their understanding and efficacy in this area. PMEP #2 showed one of the largest post-training changes. Examples of gains in efficacy and understanding include that at the pre-training stage, 27 percent of leaders felt they could have a great deal or good amount of influence on conditions in their community, while 22 percent felt they could have no impact at all. Following the LDP training, 36 percent of leaders felt they could have a strong influence, and just 13 percent felt they held no sway – a gain and drop of 9 points each in a favorable direction.

Other examples include the number of LDP participants saying they well understood ways in which “community groups can obtain grant money from government, private or international agencies for local development” increased from 12 to 20 percent. The number, showing they didn't understand this process well at all decreased from 42 to 27 percent. Furthermore, youth and community leaders' confidence in their ability to create “an action plan that describes their strategy to best meet community needs” increased to 49 percent, which was a 14 percent increase compared with pre-training results. More generally, leaders' confidence in their skills and knowledge to help solve community development problems increased by 12 percent, to 62 percent.

After training, 41 percent of leaders reported at least a good amount of information about development needs in their community, 34 percent said the same about ways to get involved in community development, two in ten felt well-informed about development work being done in the area and 15 percent had at least a good deal of information about resources available for community development. While these results suggest a continuing need for greater information, they measured gains of 9, 7, 8 and 8 percent, respectively, compared with pre-training results.



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Chart 10: Confidence in ability to create community action plan



### **PMEP #3 - Increased acceptance of the role of women and minorities in community development and government**

Compared with the baseline assessment, trained LDP leaders were more accepting of the role of women and minorities in community development and government. Respect for women and minorities and willingness to work with them on community projects increased moderately. Acceptance of women taking on non-traditional roles showed a smaller but statistically significant improvement.

The indicator increased among LDP participants which suggests that training helped to increase leaders' acceptance of women and minorities in community development activities and politics. The training was most effective at increasing leaders' respect for and willingness to work with women and minorities.

Before training, 67 percent of LDP participants with religious and ethnic minorities in their community indicated that religious leaders of other faiths were highly respected there, and 64 percent said the same of religious and ethnic minorities overall. After the program, these increased to 88 and 75 percent, gains of 21 and 11 percent, respectively. These increases occurred among cohort 1 and cohort 2 participants alike.



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Eighty-four and 75 percent of participants indicated after training that women and young women who were involved in the community were highly respected, with increases of 9 and 14 points, respectively.

Willingness to work with religious minorities to address community problems also increased, from 63 to 81 percent for working with religious leaders of non-Muslim faiths and from 60 to 76 percent for working with religious and ethnic minorities in general.

Willingness to work with women in general increased by 10 points, to 92 percent, and willingness to work with young women in particular increased by 13 points, to 90 percent.

The sub-index assessing perceptions of women who take on non-traditional roles increased after training, but only slightly (from 3.45 to 3.51). Part of this sub-index measured the acceptability of women taking on traditionally male roles, including participating in community development, leading a community development activity, pursuing a law degree, running for a position on a UP and seeking a seat in parliament. This set of questions was asked three times, assessing the extent to which participants saw each one as acceptable for a female community member, a close female family friend and a daughter of their own.

Before training, leaders scored very high in accepting a female community member pursuing non-traditional roles, but lower when it was a female friend and lower still for a daughter of their own. After the program, leaders were more accepting of a family friend or their own daughter pursuing non-traditional roles, raising these to near-parity with views on a female community member doing so.

#### **PMEP #4 - Percentage of LDP interventions focused on women's engagement**

The LDP program exceeded its target of 40 percent female engagement. Over the life of the project Counterpart directly worked with and trained 6,547 females which resulted in a 48.7 percent female engagement.



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### **PMEP #5- Number of people who have completed USG assisted civic education program**

Between 2013 and early 2016 – LDP trained 13,681 community and youth leaders across 4 of Bangladesh’s eight divisions meeting its goal as identified in the program’s cooperative agreement. Of these 6,874 were youth leaders and 6,807 were community leaders.

### **PMEP #6 - Increased participation of youth in youth activist network to share experiences, best practices, and ideas for community development**

Through its work with the DYD’s Youth Trainings Centers and LDP’s creation of Youth Networks, LDP exceeded this target as youth were very active and had higher participations than expected. Over the life of the project 1,920 youth were engaged in one of the youth related networks.

### **PMEP #7 - Increased use of ICT materials by youth leaders to promote democratic principles**

The only indicator with nominal change was use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), such as the internet, social media, SMS texting or an internet enabled cell phone, to promote democratic principles. Overall use of ICT resources increased modestly after training, but to a still-low level, and only because of increased access to the internet, with no independent impact of training apparent. Use of ICT resources is likely to remain limited, and training effects on this outcome negligible, until internet access becomes more widespread.

Measuring use of ICT resources to promote democratic principles, is based on a question asking respondents who participated in any of nine civic activities in the previous year using “the internet, social media, SMS texting or an internet-enabled cell phone.”

Such activity is not widespread; after training, a net total of 11 percent of LDP participants said they had used ICT resources as part of a civic activity. However, that was up from just 4 percent pre-training, a modest 7-point gain.

There was a cohort effect in this result, relating to internet access. Post-training, 15 percent of cohort 2 participants said they’d used ICT resources to promote democracy, compared with 6 percent of cohort 1 participants. This is partially due to the fact that cohort 2 leaders were somewhat more likely than those in cohort 1 to have easy access to the internet (19 vs. 14 percent). Those with internet access were, in turn, much more likely than those without it to have used ICT resources to promote democracy (32 vs. 6 percent).



There also were no significant advances in cohort 1 ICT usage among demographic groups (e.g., gender, age and education). Given the strong relationship between internet access and use of ICT resources, it seems that as long as leaders' access to the internet remains limited, it will be difficult for training to have a substantial impact on the use of ICT resources.

In regression modeling, the strongest independent predictor of LDP leaders' use of ICT resources after training, not surprisingly, was having easy access to the internet.

As was the case in pre-program results, use of ICT resources post-training was higher among youth leaders than community leaders (14 vs. 7 percent) and among men than women (also 14 vs. 7 percent). This was almost entirely due to the fact that young men were especially apt to have used ICT resources to promote democracy in the previous year (21 percent had). ICT usage also continued to be highest among those with a college degree (22 percent).

#### **PMEP #8 - Percentage of community development initiatives where LDP community leaders actively engage women**

LDP exceeded the target of ensuring that 50 percent of community development initiatives actively engaged women by 5 percent – totaling 55 percent. Out of the 40 grants released in 20 unions, 22 were awarded to initiatives in which women were actively engaged (of these 19 were directly led by women, while 3 included women as active participants) and 15 were focused on women's issues such as women's economic empowerment, prevention of dowry, child marriage and gender-based violence (GBV).

#### **PMEP #9 - Increased number of formal communications between local government representatives and local community leaders on development and social initiatives**

Through the numerous post-training activities and events that took place, the LDP program exceeded the targeted 320 formal communications between local government representatives and community leaders by 178, totaling 498 captured instances when such communication occurred. Most of these took place during UDF meetings, UP orientations, post-training events such as tax fairs, presentations on GBV, or at conferences and meetings to which UP chairmen or other officials from the local government were invited.

#### **PMEP #10 - Number of policy impacts resulting from youth-led policy initiatives**



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Numerous youth-led policy initiatives were conducted in which several actions were taken and ultimately raised to the national level by either informing a ministry official in writing or speaking in front of a national level official at a conference. Policy issues raised by youth to the national level were:

1. Highlight youth development issues in light of a rights-based approach
2. Align quality general education with the technical, vocational as well as other medium of education
3. Ensure effective skill development training to mobilize employment for the unemployed, illiterate or less educated youth group
4. Develop and implement National plan for ICT and other entrepreneurship for youth
5. Take initiative to implement National plan for youth employment generation
6. Ensure youth representation in all aspect of national level decision making
7. Develop and implement effective youth policy to establish youth rights

### **PMEP #11 - Increased commitment of LDP leaders' to addressing development challenges**

This indicator evaluated participants' commitment to addressing development challenges and included a sub-index that assessed their community development participation. Alongside their increased knowledge, leaders reported greater commitment to addressing development challenges after training. This included greater participation in development projects as well as an increased role in advising and informing others about community development issues. Participation could be better still; in post-training results a minority of leaders, 37 percent, said they were highly involved in organized efforts to improve their community. This was an increase of 11 points compared with its pre-training level. Similarly, while just 35 percent said they participated very or somewhat frequently in "organized efforts to improve conditions or opportunities in your community" in the previous year, that represents a 14-point increase.

Moreover, the number of leaders who never participated in community improvement efforts, or who said there were no such efforts in their area, dropped by more than half, from 36 percent before training to 15 percent afterward. Participation in formal community development committees also rose, from 26 to 41 percent. Reflecting this greater participation, 54 percent of LDP participants said their participation in community projects increased over the previous year, up from 39 percent prior to training.

Thirty-two percent of leaders in post-training results said people in their community often came to them to discuss community development issues, up 12 percentage points. Forty-two percent said they



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frequently spoke to assembled groups on community development issues, up from 33 percent before training. Most leaders continued to be highly interested in organized efforts to improve their community and highly committed to improving conditions in their community (83 and 76 percent, respectively, in the post-training data). Neither changed after training.

### **PMEP #12 - Increased political and community engagement among LDP leaders**

As with commitment to addressing development challenges, greater knowledge and understanding of democracy is associated with greater political and community engagement. Training increased this sort of engagement, including the range of civic activities in which LDP leaders participated. LDP participants showed greater political and community engagement post-training than they did before attending LDP training.

Post-training, leaders reported participating in more civic activities in the previous 12 months than they did in the 12 months before the program. Those activities ranged from organized efforts to solve community problems to participating in a protest or advocating for equal rights. Among the biggest differences:

Before training, 47 percent had participated in an organized effort to solve a neighborhood problem in the previous year. After training, that rose sharply, to nearly two-thirds. There was a similar 18-point gain in the number of leaders who said they'd worked with community organizations to plan an event, from 43 to 61 percent. There was a 16-point increase in the number who'd advocated for religious or ethnic minorities in the previous year, and a 13-point jump in the number who'd contacted a community or religious leader about a community problem.

Participants were 11 percent more likely after training to have contacted a local government official about a community program, and to have advocated for youth rights in the previous year. Many of the individual items in the sub-index assessing political and community involvement also increased after training. For example, half of leaders indicated high interest in matters of politics and government, which is a 10 percent increase from 40 percent before training.

Self-reported involvement in government and politics, while still low, improved significantly as well. More (but still relatively few) reported at least some involvement in the UP administration (40 vs. 29 percent), political organizations in their community (34 vs. 28 percent) or in the upazila administration (19 vs. 9 percent).



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Community involvement also increased in other measures. LDP participants became significantly more likely to say they were frequently asked by members of their community (outside their immediate family) for advice on personal matters, community and religious matters and information in general.

Young women showed the greatest increase in their political and community engagement, including a medium-sized increase in political and community involvement and a large gain in civic activities.

Before training, female youth leaders reported engaging in just one of nine civic activities in the previous year, on average. After training, that rose to 2.63. In the largest increases, 45 and 42 percent, respectively, said they participated in organized efforts to solve a community problem and to plan a community event, up very sharply from 19 and 16 percent.

### **PMEP #13 - Number of community development initiatives by USG assistance**

For PY2, LDP exceeded the 20 CDGs by awarding 40 grants released in 20 unions. In PY3, this activity was suspended by USAID and the suspension never lifted, which resulted in the elimination of grants being awarded to further initiatives. Of the 40 CDGs, 20 were for youth leaders and 20 for community leaders. 22 were awarded to initiatives in which women were actively engaged (of these 19 are directly led by women, while 3 include women as active participants) and 15 were focused on women's issues such as women's economic empowerment, prevention of dowry, child marriage and gender-based violence (GBV).

### **PMEP #14 - Number of activities implemented by Youth Development Centers to build youth leadership capacity**

LDP exceeded its target of 50 activities slightly in achieving 51 activities which were implemented by Youth Development Centers which built leadership capacity.



## V. PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Program accomplishments related to strengthening access to justice in Bangladesh can be seen through many of the surveys conducted throughout the project years and comparing how perceptions have changed over the years. Counterpart has successfully trained 13,681 leaders over a 3 ½ year duration, worked with 5 local organizations strengthening their capacity to continue work within communities in Bangladesh. The program exceeded several of its goals such as ensuring 48.7% of its beneficiaries were women. \$1,911,720, which is 32% of its total awarded budget, went towards grants it awarded local organizations to directly implement at the field level.

Leaders’ assessments of the quality of the training activities were overwhelmingly and uniformly positive. While this is not a formal indicator, past research has shown that the quality of leadership training strongly influences its impacts. High ratings for LDP sessions were another reason for the advancement summarized above and detailed below.

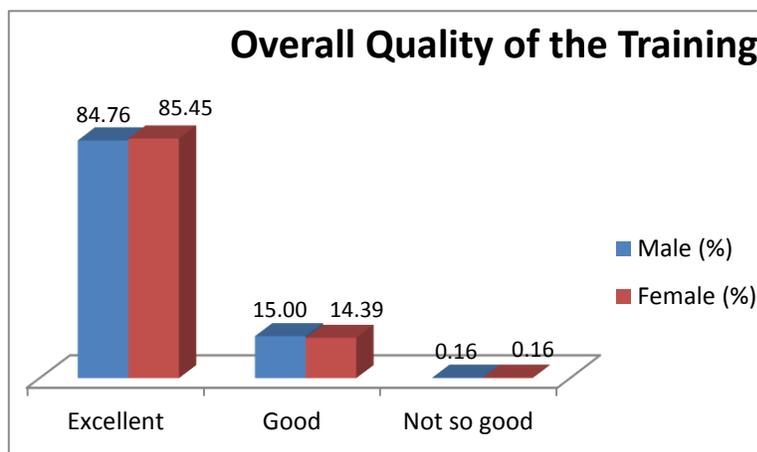


Chart 11: Overall quality of the training



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At end of the trainings in PY4, a total of 5,040 leaders participated evaluations of the training. The graph above shows that 84.76% and 85.45% of male and female leaders, respectively, rated the overall quality of the training as excellent.

The three-phased LDP trainings influenced a variety of attitudes and beliefs related to civic and community engagement. Previous research shows, for example, that people's views of their government often impact their willingness to participate in democratic and civic activities. And as noted in discussion earlier concerning the indicator on increased political and community engagement among LDP leaders, an index of trust in government indeed predicted political and community engagement.

LDP leaders' trust in government, as measured for Indicator #12, increased modestly after training, with scores (on a scale of 1 to 5) rising from 3.60 to 3.82. This included advances in trust across all levels of government. Specifically, before training, 46 percent of leaders said they highly trusted their upazila government to carry out its responsibilities. After training this rose to 65 percent, a 19-point increase. Trust in the UP government rose similarly, with the number saying they had at least a good amount of trust increasing from 56 to 72 percent. Trust in the federal government increased from 52 to 62 percent.

Trust in government rose the most among male youth leaders. Male youths' trust in the upazila and UP governments increased by 26 and 21 points, respectively. Trust increased more modestly among female youth and male community leaders; it did not rise significantly overall among female community leaders. Male youth leaders' trust in government may partially reflect their greater knowledge and understanding of democracy (PMEP #1), including having greater self-reported information about government.

Greater trust in government was not accompanied by any change in perceptions of the amount of corruption in Bangladesh or in ratings of the government's performance. In post-training data, more than eight in 10 LDP leaders saw corruption as widespread; 53 percent called it very widespread. And the vast majority, 90 percent, continued to say the government could be doing a better job providing basic services and assistance, an attitude that was related to perceptions of corruption.

Beyond the overall confidence index, leaders' confidence that they would know how to hold the government accountable for a disruption of services also increased. In 2013, a quarter of leaders were highly confident they would know how to hold the government accountable; that rose to 44 percent post-training. Those not so or not at all confident dropped from 49 percent to 20 percent. Confidence in holding the government accountable increased across groups, advancing the most among male youth leaders (by 25 points) and least among female community leaders (12 points).



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## VI. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

**Budget cut:** Half way through the program in May 2015, Counterpart received the following notice from USAID: “due to fiscal constraints of USAID/Bangladesh’s FY15 Democracy and Governance budget and changing ground conditions, no additional incremental funding will be issued for the subject award.” While this did not change the program’s goal, it necessitated significant changes to the program with the award amount being reduced from USD \$10,000,000 to then existing obligation amount of USD \$5,978,467.84. The original June 2017 program end-date was reduced by a year-and-a-half to 45.5 months in accordance with the reduced budget, resulting in a revised end-date of March 31, 2016. Due to the reduction in funding, the total number of individuals trained was reduced from the original 24,000 to 13,681 individuals. The overall geographic reach for LDP was reduced from 150 Union Parishads in 16 Districts to 90 Union Parishads in 14 Districts.

**Suspension:** As of December 30, 2014, Counterpart received a formal letter from USAID to suspend all subgrantee activities until further notice. Counterpart immediately complied per the letter from USAID in response to concerns that were raised by the midterm evaluation done by Social Impact as well as site visits conducted by USAID’s AOR for LDP. During the suspension period Counterpart focused on addressing these concerns and implementing a Corrective Action Plan that was submitted to USAID. As such, given the programmatic delays during the suspension period and the budget cuts, Counterpart was able to implement LDP through March 2016 with the understanding that no further expansion (in either number of individuals trained or in geographies) would take place with the revised award amount of USD \$5,978,468. Counterpart also would no longer be engaging grants to support Community Development Initiatives.

In overcoming these challenges, Counterpart revised its program description to address the concerns expressed by USAID and to adapt to the budgetary changes. However, the reduction in budget resulted in a decreased scope which has affected the sustainability of LDP interventions. With 10,000 fewer leaders trained, the Leadership Development Program only was able to reach 90 unions when the original scope had been to reach 150. In several other instances, Counterpart’s original goals fell short and not being able to carry out the full 5-year term made it harder to carry out some of the higher-level discussions it



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had hoped for at the national level. While still exceeding targets which were adapted to the programmatic revisions after the budget cuts, activities such as formal communication with government with an original program target of 800, only 498 such instances were conducted.

While youth leaders undertook numerous policy initiatives, it is hard to see the policy impacts this may have led to at the higher and more national level. Being able to see the full impact requires time. However, Counterpart does believe that the community initiatives which had an impact at the local level will over time trickle up to the regional and eventually the national level for bigger results.

Despite these shortcomings, Counterpart is proud to have witnessed that its participants emerged from the program better equipped to recognize community needs and to act to address them – potentially critical elements in Bangladesh’s development in the years ahead. Furthermore, the work conducted by Langer Research & Associates (*Annex E*) which took into account a sampling size significantly greater than what Social Impact had used in their research, methodically discounted the concerns that had been raised in the reporting conducted by Social Impact, further speaking to Counterpart’s effective program implementation.

## **VII. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

During Counterpart’s implementation of the Leadership Development Program in Bangladesh from 2012 to 2016, the country has witnessed a rise in extremism and violence stemming from rejecting religious, ethnic and political plurality.

In Counterpart’s opinion there has never been a more opportune time than now to promote leadership among youth, especially in the rural areas in Bangladesh where unemployment continues to remain high and where the youth are especially vulnerable to falling prey to extremist groups providing them another path due to their having no other economic outlook.

Having programs fostering collaboration between communities and local governments, where the population still feels there is a disconnect, it is important to promote a more peaceful and accepting population in Bangladesh. Working with local governments and applying pressure to focus on community needs is vital in ensuring communities don’t feel neglected and left to fend for themselves which often times has been the sentiment.



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Counterpart strongly recommends continued and further programming at the community development level in Bangladesh. Programming focusing on strengthening the country's civil society, communities and people will be all the more crucial in years to come and can build on the existing work that has been done but not completed in the country. Counterpart feels that it played a significant role in creating leadership and working with communities that led to being able to train 13,681 Bangladeshis in various parts of the country. While a big accomplishment, it is a small part of a bigger accomplishment that still needs to take place. Follow-on projects which build on the previous accomplishments achieved will be very important for USAID not to lose momentum of the work accomplished by previous USAID IPs. A lack of funding in civil society in a country that is seeing growing threats of extremism, intolerance towards its religious and ethnic minorities will be detrimental to Bangladesh's overall development.



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## **VIII. ANNEXES**

Annex A – LDP PMEP

Annex B – Success Story, Road Construction

Annex C – Success Story, Mobile Servicing

Annex D – LDP Baseline Report

Annex E – LDP Impact Assessment Report

Annex F – Links to media clippings and videos

Annex G – Phase 1 Community Leader Training Manual

Annex H – Phase 1 Youth Leader Training Manual

Annex I – Phase 2 Youth Leader Training Manual

Annex J – Phase 2 Community Leader Training Manual

Annex K – Phase 3 Youth Leader Training Manual

Annex L – Phase 3 Community Leader Training Manual

Annex M – Mentorship Training Manual

Annex N – UDF Formation Guidelines

Annex O – UP Orientation Manual

Annex P – Combatting GBV Module

Annex Q – Gender integration in LDP

Annex R – Gender Mainstreaming in LDP