



Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability (JATRA)

CARE Bangladesh is implementing the Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability (JATRA) project. The project aims to strengthen the Union Parishads' (Lowest tier of local government) public finance management systems so that they are more transparent and aligned with the Local Government Act 2009. The project endeavors to ensure active participation of the community leaders, especially women, in key decision making spaces and bodies. Moreover, JATRA strives to allow the wider community to play an active role in social accountability mechanisms to ensure inclusive democratic processes, equal access to quality services and access to accurate information at all levels of Union Parishad.



Social Audit to Improve Quality of Schemes in LGSP-II project

The Local Government Support Project of the second phase (LGSP II) of the Local Government Division aims to strengthen accountable local governments that can deliver services which meet community priorities, supported by an efficient and transparent intergovernmental fiscal system.

The JATRA project is facilitating a social audit of schemes under LGSP II project. The purpose of the social audit is to improve the implementation of schemes, so that the process becomes more effective, efficient and transparent and that the benefits reach the larger community. It takes 2 days to complete a social audit in which Natural leaders (Local leaders emerged from community mobilization process), Citizen Forums (Project supported community group who engages in democratic dialogue with UP for interest of poor and marginalized), local government representatives, scheme supervision and ward committee members, journalists and a large number of citizens participate. In the first day, all the documents are assessed including the deed of contract, design and budget, tender process, selection of scheme and procurement process and bills/vouchers.

In the second day, the infrastructure is measured as stated in the documents, the quality and quantity of construction materials is verified, the public view on the quality of construction is taken and the effectiveness is assessed by the users.

At the end of the day an inter-phase meeting is called, and findings are presented to UP representatives in presence of the stated participants.

In all of the working unions, the project is facilitating at least one social audit on one prioritized scheme.

Two of the schemes that have already taken part in a social audit are: U-drain, in Barishal union of Polashbari Upazila under Gainbandha District, and Guard Wall in Bothlagari union of Saidpur Upazila under Nilphamari District. The two projects were selected from priorities that emerged during Ward Shava (Formal citizen meeting with elected UP representatives).

The social audit report of the two schemes revealed that the construction work followed most of guidelines provided by LGSP-II. The relevant documents are available and the construction is according to design, but the community people have stated that the quality of bricks is poor, the finishing work of the construction is not satisfactory, there is no sign board in place to display information and people do not know the overall budget allocation for the work. The site of the construction work was also changed due to rainy season and the design is faulty as the height of the wall should be up to the height of the road.

The recommendations that came out of the two exercises were:

- Strengthen monitoring of schemes by committee members.
- Establishment of mechanism for taking feedback from community to improve construction work by the contractor.
- Display of budgetary information for public by putting up a signboard.