



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.



Fostering Local Political Economy Analysis in Developing Pro-poor Inclusive Participatory Local Government Planning

As an integral part of understanding the local context for the development of context-specific implementation strategies, the JATRA project facilitated local political economy analysis by involving Union Parishad elected representatives, the citizen forum (Project supported community group who engages in democratic dialogue with UP for interest of poor and marginalized) and Natural leaders (Local leaders emerged from community mobilization process) in each of its' working unions. The political economy analysis includes the mapping of resources and powerful actors and their influence over the decision-making process of local governance, the understanding of poverty dynamics and social and natural vulnerabilities.

Findings and analysis of the exercise were used by Union Parishads to develop five year plans as stipulated in the Union Parishad Act 2009. The Planning is mandatory in obtaining block grants from the Local Government Support Program II of the Local Government Division. The baseline shows that most of the

working unions of the JATRA project have very limited access to "block grant" opportunities, as the Unions could not submit competitive proposals for conditional and performance grants. The analysis provides relevant information for the Union Parishad to articulate its vision of development for a five year plan focusing on equitable resources and services for the poor and vulnerable communities that were overlooked in the past. Union Parishads then also have opted to use participatory and inclusive processes in development planning, which will contribute to the access of greater resources through performance grants in the future.

