

# [There both service providers and local community](https://assignbuster.com/there-both-service-providers-and-local-community/)

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There has been asignificant change in citizen engagement through awareness raising and capacitybuilding of the community people. They have been proactively participating inward shovas, planning meeting and open budget sessions. Women participation hasbeen increased in UP led initiatives.

Community support groups have proactivelyvisiting the implemented development schemes and provide recommendations toUPs. Capacity building ofthe institution made the UP representative more responsive and accountable tothe service users. A large number of first and second round Wardshava has beenconducted ensuring participation of women and poor and vulnerable groups. Thishas capacitated the local governments to become familiar with accountabilityprocess in planning and implementation of their budgets. By exercising tworounds of community score card process the local elected public officials havegained confidence to become more responsive to the community. Enhanced responsiveness had been attained by engaging both serviceproviders and local community though developing joint action plan aimed atimproving the service quality through efficient use of public resources. Thesystemic introduction of the complaint mitigation process in local governmentshad helped people to lodge complain in relation to schemes implemented by usingUnion Parishad budget and block grants.

Respective community support groups andthe Union Parishads jointly developed a mechanism to redress peoples’grievances by monthly meeting of respective UPs.   Rights of access toinformation has been the key area of improvement interms of capacity buildingof the community and their local government institutions. The local governmentshave changed their views on proactive disclosure of information regardingdevelopment initiatives, the fiscal information in particular. Community peoplehave changed their reluctant behavior pattern on access to information. Now, they are eager to know more information about the services provided by theservice providers. Transparency and accountability of the Union Parishadsthough disseminating information to the people and identifying if there is anyflaw in budget expenditure in particular in relation to the block grantsdisbursed under LGSP II as well as defined recommendations for respectiveservice providers.  IDEA-SEBA project hasbeen implemented in 09 UPs of Dakshin Surma Sub-district under Sylhet district witha view to enhance the fiscal transparency of local public spending ensuring peoples’participation and to create a responsive and accountable local government. Forthis, the project has formed community support groups and capacitated themthrough different training and meetings on LGSP-II and Social Accountabilitytools through which they can create an enabling environment for citizens togreater access to information and services.

UP representatives had beencapacitated by different trainings and workshops on LGSP, social accountabilitytools and Right to Information (RTI) Act-2009.  Throughout theproject duration, the UPs were sensitized in disclosing different informationand engaging local community in development initiatives. But after the latestUP election in 2016 the situation has been changed because of newly elected UPbodies. Now, there are some newly elected UP representatives along with somere-elected members in the local governments.

The re-elected members should orient the newlyelected members on social accountability mechanism and their roles in ensuringtransparency and accountability of the public spending. Knowledge needs to betransferred through institutional process so that the local governmentscontinues with the changes acquired over time. The district administration ofthe local government department should become the vehicle to capitalize thelessons learned.

The designated officials responsible to implement the LGSP hadbeen engaged with the project interventions. They are also informed about thelearning captured by the project. The community support group are the localchange agents which need to be remain functional. It is possible by the localgovernment department and UP bodies to ensure peoples’ participation in the political-administrative and governance system throughrecognizing the community support group.    Historically the accountability to the people inpolitical-administrative and governance system has been insignificant inpractice in the context of Bangladesh.

The colonial culture ofpolitical-administrative system which is mostly top-down in nature has beensustained in local governance system. The idea of social accountability is relativelynew in Bangladesh context and has been practiced by donor driven CSO programme. The educated and more informed segment of the society want accountability to beensured in providing basic services. The poor and marginalized community peopleare indifferent about their rights into basic services. However, once they areeducated on their rights entitlement and they become familiar to the process ofparticipation they tend to demand accountability from their service providers.

The entire social accountability mechanism needs facilitationparticularly in educating community people the process of participation and itsimportance to establish people centred governance. The Community Score Cardtool needs to be practiced for a long period of time to benefit both theservice users and service providers. The success always depends on peoples’participation.

Also, success in a particular context never confirms success inevery other context. There is no shot-run process for this mechanism to achieveultimate success.