



## Enhancing the Participation of Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Democratic Governance in Bangladesh



Funded by the European Union



## Prelude

The “Enhancing the Participation of Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Democratic Governance in Bangladesh” is 3.5 years (2018-2021) initiative funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by Oxfam and the Centre for Policy Dialogue, which seeks to enhance the participation of community-based organizations (CBOs) of vulnerable and marginalized communities (led by women) and civil society organizations (CSOs) in democratic governance in Bangladesh. The project aims to strengthen grassroots CBOs and CSOs to secure the social and economic rights of vulnerable individuals and communities in the design and implementation of government policies and budgets related to SDGs.

## Project Goal



Enhance the participation of community-based organizations (CBOs) of vulnerable and marginalized communities (led by women) and civil society organizations (CSOs) in democratic governance in Bangladesh.



**1 January 2018 to 30 June 2021**

## Expected Results to be Achieved by our Programme

<b>Expected Result 1</b>	CBOs and CSOs have enhanced organizational and influencing capacity to work with local authorities (LAs) to address government commitments on SDGs and the National Five-Year Plan (NFYP).
<b>Expected Result 2</b>	CBOs and CSOs support LAs to effectively deliver people-centered services as per existing laws and policies relating to SDGs.
<b>Expected Result 3</b>	Communities, CBOs, and CSOs hold LAs and interest groups accountable on existing laws and policies relating to SDGs.
<b>Expected Result 4</b>	Relevance and effectiveness of SDG framework is enhanced through contextualization at local, national and global levels.

## The Context

Bangladesh has already translated the vision of a middle-income country, pronounced at the highest political level, into an actionable agenda. This offers tremendous opportunity to implement the 2030 agenda while reflecting the priorities of the SDGs in the national plan.

However, there have been consistent efforts to advance good governance in Bangladesh despite the challenging constraints posed on the processes. The key stakeholders have widely varying stances regarding their participation in democratic local governance in terms of role recognition, ownership, active participation, monitoring and follow-up of any development work.

## Project Coverage

### Project's Target Group

50,000 members of 325 women-led CBOs/CSOs and 300 CSO representatives of 13 districts.

A total of 450 local administration (LA) representatives responsible for administration of government services

650 local government representatives responsible for government oversight of service delivery

Final beneficiaries are approximately 175,000 women, men and children of CBO member household and other stakeholders in 13 districts

### How We Work

We work to organize communities and negotiate their needs with government representatives addressing different areas. Through that communities will be benefiting from improved knowledge on rights and entitlements with respect to SDGs, national and local policies, and Social Accountability (SAcc) tools, and improved social and institutional influence and networking.



## Programmatic Approach

### **Multi-stakeholder approach**

The project employs a multi-stakeholder approach across civil society and the public sector to seek long-term solutions to the challenges inhibiting solutions to structural issues of poverty, gender inequality, climate change, livelihoods and water management.

### **Cultivating community participation in governance**

The project's interventions aim to institute citizen participation in planning and decision-making in the implementation of government policies and programs linked to the achievement of SDGs.

### **Innovative tools for public accountability and oversight**

It employs and institutes accountability and oversight tools to be used by CBOs and CSOs to hold duty-bearers to account that have rarely been employed in governance in Bangladesh, particularly in rural areas.

### **Constructive government engagement for accountability**

In recent years, the government has signed and endorsed several regional and global declarations and agreements without accompanying actions to ensure public accountability and citizen participation. The project will be a step forward in terms of enabling communities and civil society organizations to hold government accountable to these agreements.

### **Women's leadership and participation in decision-making**

The project specifically targeted women-led organizations, guaranteeing that at least 60% of CBO/CSO members trained will be women. It incorporated women's experience and needs in the design of training, research and advocacy agendas, with a special emphasis on changing patriarchal attitudes towards gender roles throughout the implementation of the project.

### **Knowledge generation and evidence-based advocacy**

The project will generate new knowledge and evidence on the ground level situation regarding SDGs/7th NFYP implementation process, current practices of service delivery and accountability, and participatory governance mechanisms, which will enable to initiate the dialogue, build the case of the action's agenda and influence targeted stakeholders in an effective manner.

## Our Journey so far

A total of 325 grassroots community leaders are taking practical actions for localizing SDGs aligned to the slogan “Leaving No One Behind” to create positive social changes that will benefit to the broader communities of 13 districts. Since the inception of the project, it has been supporting marginalized people who are vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. The project participants substantially interact with different stakeholders i.e., civil society, self-help group, community leaders, and media. This initiative is facilitating ‘social connectedness’ by fostering knowledge, skills on SDGs-linked programmes, policies, and services. Both service recipients and service providers have been oriented with SDGs-linked programmes, policies and services. About 360 representatives of CBOs, 240 representatives of CSOs and 120 media personnel have been oriented with an aim to build their capacity to hold the government accountable on SDG targets. A total of 325 local administrators and local government representatives of 13 districts also took part in the 13 orientation sessions

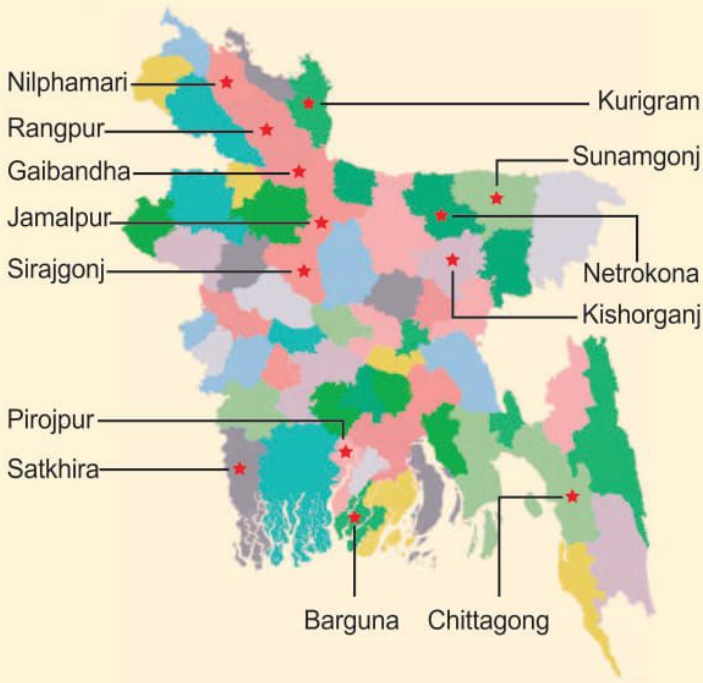
A total of 325 CBOs, 300 CSO, and 65 media are united under 13 ‘District level networks for SDGs’ where they share their development priorities, collectively identify solutions, and prepare their joint action plans. They are having six-monthly meetings accordingly. These districts level networks are linked with national Citizen’s Platform for SDGs. The project is also fostering to build the capacity of CBOs on social accountability (SAcc) tools and public finance management (PFM) tools that enable them to conduct evidence-based advocacy. About 300 CBO representatives (60% of them women) of 13 districts are now able to implement public finance management tools and social accountability tools.

Grassroots community leaders are preparing themselves to bring their issues at the National level Annual CBO/CSO conference to gain the attention of the policy makers. A Citizen’s Charter will be adopted at the Annual CBO/CSO conference to highlight citizens’ needs. There commendations and declarations from the conference will be captured by the Charter. It will be shared with the members of the National Parliament, and government officials of the relevant ministries and departments. At the sub-national level, dialogues have been organized to secure commitments from public authorities and policy makers on the local development agendas. A total of four subnational dialogues have been organized at Gaibandha, Sunamganj, Chittagong, Barguna on the efficacy of public services delivery related to social protection, agriculture, gender, and health respectively. These dialogues were participated by member of parliaments, local government representatives, local level government officials, representatives of various civil society and grassroots organizations, private sector, local media.



At National level, the project emphasizes on the importance of localization of the SDGs in the context of development approach of the Government. For the first time in the country, a framework for a Universal Pension Scheme in the context of Bangladesh has been developed under this project intervention considering it as one of the critical cross-cutting themes of SDGs. Both Oxfam and CPD participated in global and regional platforms to share the voice of the community people on SDG discourse to emphasize the need for ensuring participation of non-state actors and to facilitate cross learnings. Also, on the side of the High-Level Political Forum in 2019, CPD and Oxfam along with some other partners organized and participated in a discussion session on role of non-state actors in implementing SDGs at the country level.

## Project Locations



Oxfam in partnership with CPD implementing this project, with support from the European Union, to strengthen grassroots CBOs' and CSOs' knowledge and leadership capacities in securing the social and economic rights of vulnerable individuals and communities through the design and implementation of government policies, programmes and budgets related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since its inception

on 1 January 2018, the project has prioritized active citizenship and knowledge management of rural communities to contribute to the implementation of the National Five Years Plan and achievement of the Government's Vision 2021.

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