

# CARTA

Citizen Action for Results,  
Transparency, and Accountability



## Social Investment Program Project (SIPP)

### PROJECT DETAILS

#### PARTNERS

Partnership for Transparency Fund  
Manusher Jonno Foundation  
Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness  
Centre (BDPC)

#### TOTAL COST

US\$ 90,000

#### DURATION

February 2014 - March 2015

#### GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Jamalpur and Gaibandha districts (9  
upazilas and 80 villages)

#### SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS

Social audit, public hearings

### CONTEXT

Poverty alleviation is the greatest challenge that Bangladesh is currently facing. Although the country has shown impressive economic and social gains, as well as substantial rural development over the past decades, 32% of the total population was reported to be living below the poverty line in 2010. The objective of the Social Investment Program Project (SIPP) is to improve the quality of life for the rural poor and build their resilience to climate variability, natural hazards and other shocks. The first phase of SIPP, approved in 2003, primarily focused on critical small-scaled infrastructure services and social assistance given to the rural poor. The second phase aims to empower the community and prioritize support to the poor by building and strengthening systems and linkages with other programs. Focusing on micro-credit has been an important tool for poverty eradication and a central pillar of SIPP II.

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The CARTA sub-project was designed to improve the existing governance practices of village-level institutions, focusing on the micro-credit scheme under SIPP-II. The specific objectives were to:

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The objective of Citizen Action for Results, Transparency and Accountability (CARTA) is to enhance the development impact, sustainability and ownership of pro-poor projects in Bangladesh and Nepal financed by the World Bank (WB), by promoting civil society organization engagement and experience and capacity to demand better governance. The program was funded by US\$1.9 million grant from the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) and administered by the WB.

- Assess the transparency and accountability of funds management, as well as the effectiveness of internal accountability and supervision mechanisms, established in the framework of the micro-credit scheme.
- Improve the capacity of existing village-level, micro-credit supervision structures - Gram Parishad (GP), Gram Samiti (GS) and Social Audit Committee (SAC) - to ensure transparency and accountability of the micro-credit scheme at the village level.

## RESULTS

The sub-project survey provided valuable insights about the perceptions and experiences of beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and village level committee members, as well as useful statistics to improve the loan management processes. Some irregularities found in the loan disbursement practice and loan use allowed for a recommendation to be made to SDF and village organizations for stricter internal regulations, better control of money disbursement procedures, and disbursement register management.

Although it was expected that Social Audit Committees would play a central role in ensuring accountability of the schemes, these committees were found to be relatively inactive in many localities. In terms of community capacity-building, the TPM project has demonstrated a new participatory approach to conducting social audits of the village crediting operations, which can be drawn upon by SIPP II in strengthening the Social Audit Committees. The project also helped generate awareness among community beneficiaries through different training activities addressing access to income opportunities and jobs through proper utilization of micro-credit schemes, as well as ensuring their active participation in boosting committee levels of transparency and accountability.

## IMPACT

The sub-project invested considerable time and effort to increase the knowledge and skills of committee members. In the process citizens became visibly empowered to monitor the micro-credit processes more closely and speak out about problems. Unfortunately, it is too early to know whether they will continue these efforts, given the short term of the sub-project training activities.