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2015 *Lessons from* the CARTA Program in Nepal and Bangladesh

12 grants designed to increase citizen engagement and improve service delivery in World Bank-financed projects

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AS	Agrogoti Sangstha
BDPC	Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre
BRWSSP	Bangladesh Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Project
CAN	Community Action for Nutrition
CARTA	Citizen Action for Results, Transparency and Accountability
CBOs	community based organizations
CRC	citizen report cards
CSC	community score card
CSO	civil society organization
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering
DOLIDAR	Department of Local Infrastructure & Agriculture Roads
DW	Democracy Watch
EPSP	Emergency Peace Support Project
EVENT	Enhanced Vocational Education and Training
FSCN	Friends Service Council Nepal
IDCOL	Infrastructure Development Company Limited
JSDF	Japanese Social Development Fund
KII	key informant interviews
LC	learning center
LGD	Local Government Department
LGSP	Local Government Support Project
LPC	local peace committee
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MoPR	Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction
NEST	Nucleus for Empowerment through Skill Transfer
PAF	Poverty Alleviation Fund
PIU	project implementation unit
PSTC	Population Service and Training Center
PTF	Partnership for Transparency Fund
RAIDP	Rural Access Improvement and Decentralization Project
RDRS	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service
REREP	Rural Electrical Renewable Energy Project
RIC	Resource Integration Center
ROSC	Reaching Out of School Children II
SAC	Social Audit Committees
SDF	Social Development Foundation
SHS	solar heater system
SIPP	Social Investment Program Project
SPCA	Subproject Completion Assessment
SSRP	School Sector Reform Program
TPM	third party monitoring
TTL	task team leader
UP	union parishad
VDRC	Vijaya Development Resources Centre

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Executive Summary

Recent years have witnessed concerns about issues of governance, particularly public service delivery accountability. There is a growing need to identify and promote approaches toward building accountability that rely on citizen engagement. CARTA builds on the World Bank’s continuing emphasis on supporting initiatives aimed at engaging citizens and citizen groups as a way to strengthen the accountability of governments to poor people. CARTA offers valuable practical lessons on program design and operation, establishment of local partnerships, and project management. This report summarizes the primary findings and synthesizes lessons from the varied implementation challenges.

The Citizen Action for Results, Transparency and Accountability (CARTA) Program was a unique initiative designed “to enhance the development impact, sustainability and client ownership of pro-poor projects financed by the World Bank (WB), by promoting civil society organizations’ engagement, experience and capacity to demand better governance.” What made it unique was the feature that, to improve project responsiveness and results, the Government and World Bank agreed to complement the projects’ internal monitoring and evaluation systems with independent third-party monitoring by communities with the assistance of CSOs under the CARTA program.

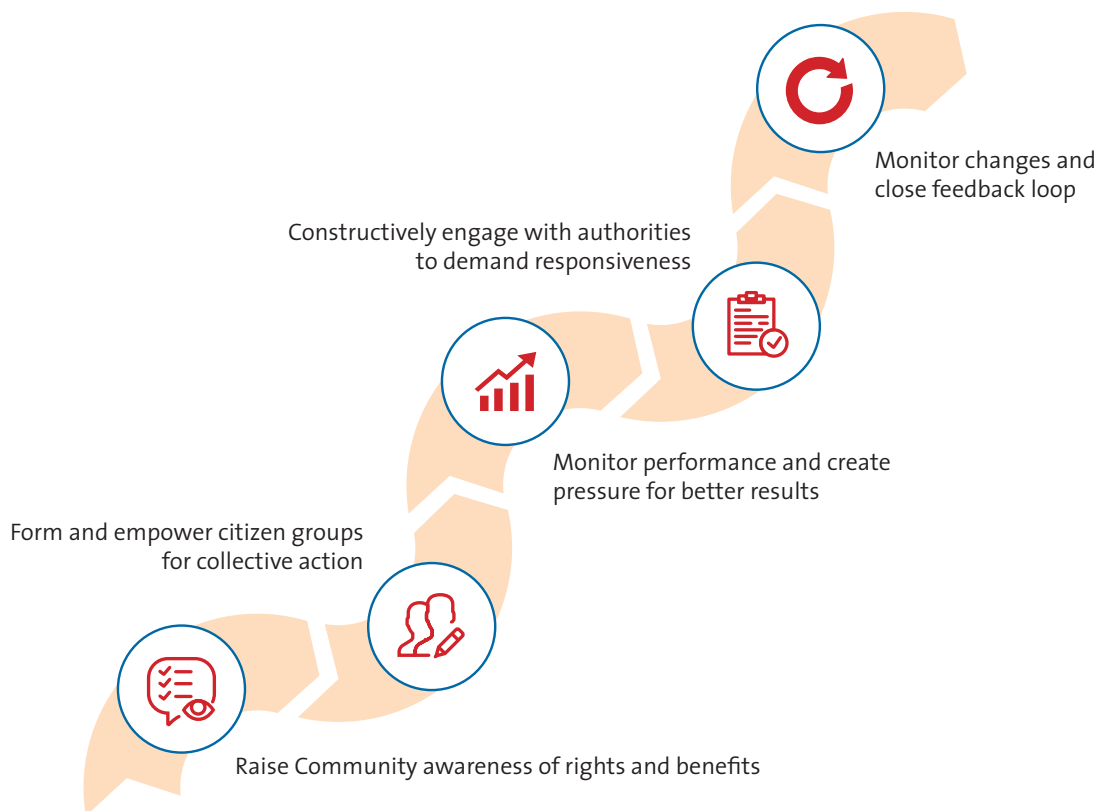
CARTA supported a total 11 World Bank-financed projects—6 in Nepal and 5 in Bangladesh with 12 sub-projects. CARTA started in mid-2011 and ended November 30, 2015, with each subproject lasting from one to two years during this period. Each of these sub-projects was a small-scale unique pilot for local CSOs to independently carry out awareness-raising, monitoring, capacity-building and empowerment activities through grants ranging from US\$65,000 to US\$150,000. Since the World Bank-financed projects covered many sectors, including education, restoration of livelihoods, road construction, and others, the sub-projects tested citizen engagement strategies in a variety of sectors, and in different implementation structures—some public and semi-private, and each with its own complex relationships.

The Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF), managed by the World Bank, provided a \$1.9 million grant for this pilot, and was thus independent from the project financing through the World Bank loan. The World Bank chose the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) to implement the program. PTF selected the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) in Bangladesh and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (HELVETAS) in Nepal as in-country partners to help select and manage local CSOs that conducted the monitoring and capacity building activities. Local CSOs were selected through open, competitive processes.

CARTA faced many challenges during the start-up period. Most CSOs had limited experience with increasing citizen engagement and, consequently, required substantial technical and capacity building support from PTF Advisers and in-country partners. In particular, independent monitoring of government service delivery by knowledgeable local citizens was new in both countries; few CSOs had any practical experience in efficient ways to go about it. The implementing agencies of the World Bank-financed projects were also wary of independent monitoring. Initially, there was little understanding of the CARTA program, and trust levels were quite low among all the parties; many expected major confrontations, delays, and were not convinced citizens could make a difference.

PTF Theory of Change

CSO's act as intermediary at all stages and play a key role



To overcome the low levels of trust, CARTA used a constructive engagement approach used by the Partnership for Transparency Fund. This approach is based on a theory of change developed on the basis of PTF's extensive prior experience. Constructive engagement, involves continuous two-way communication and feedback. Engaging local citizens improves their knowledge, capacity, and ability to work with government, and builds citizenship, with ripple effects through enhanced community motivation and capacity for public participation in public affairs. This third-party monitoring approach complements internal M&E arrangements in donor- or government-funded projects and programs.

The sub-projects were not designed to be policing actions, but were intended to help mitigate risks, and improve the implementation performance of projects being monitored. Complementarity and value added of independent monitoring relative to the project's internal M&E systems were emphasized. As a result of these collaborations and discussions, it became clear to communities and project authorities that the purpose of the CARTA program was to elicit real-time information about the operations and performance of selected components in these World Bank-financed projects from beneficiaries, and to share it with project authorities to improve project responsiveness and results.

CARTA achieved its expected outcomes. This report describes the specific outcomes in each subproject in more detail, but at the aggregated level CARTA had the following results:

- Awareness of beneficiaries about World Bank-funded project objectives, services and benefits increased significantly;
- Citizens were motivated and empowered to demand greater transparency and accountability in resource use, delivery of services and grievance resolution;
- Project beneficiaries, after being trained and assisted by the CSOs in monitoring service delivery, became more articulated and could provide feedback and demand better services through constructive engagement with authorities and service providers;
- Providers of services became more responsive to citizens claims and realized benefits of their more active engagement in the delivery of services.

Several examples show that the sub-projects had an impact: In Nepal, the RAIDP sub-project demonstrated that citizens can monitor road construction, using a simple tool kit. As a result citizens identified more deficiencies and filed more, better formulated written grievances. This tool kit, introduced by CARTA, was copied in many other communities, who heard about citizens' new ability to monitor this project. In Bangladesh, in LGSP-II, committees set up under the World Bank-funded project were not well informed about their roles and responsibilities. As a result of CARTA activities: committee members were more engaged in local decisions about the use of funds for public projects; local government officials became more efficient because citizens knew more about projects; and citizens' perceptions of corruption diminished because the processes were more transparent. Overall, citizens were more satisfied because they had more voice in the selection of projects and the monitoring of the funds used in those projects. An improvement in service delivery was also noted in World Bank-funded projects where the service delivery was effectively outsourced to the private sector. For example, additional training by CARTA enabled user committees such as those in BRWSSP and RERED improved the levels of users' feedback to the service providers. This change led to adjustments in the service providers' operations, higher user-satisfaction levels—and more sales.

This report describes results and lessons in each sub-project in more detail, but the main lessons are that:

- There is a need to work on both the demand and supply sides while promoting social accountability;
- The need for adopting a constructive engagement approach in order to be trusted by project implementers and national stakeholders;
- The challenge of engaging traditionally marginalized community groups involves a greater effort by all stakeholders;
- Citizens and CSOs need training to create levels of knowledge and skills that empower them to engage constructively with service providers. CSOs require technical assistance to refine data-collection methodologies, analyze data, and adapt tools, and on-going support during implementation. Most CARTA projects had base- and end-line surveys, which showed without exception that training had a positive effect on knowledge and skill levels.
- Independent monitoring can be a valuable tool in catalyzing citizen engagement, not only because it builds self-reliance, but because it induces service providers to be more accountable.
- Social accountability tools and data-collection methods that are intended for use by citizens in the future should be as simple as possible. The CARTA sub-projects learned that the data collected from sophisticated and extensive tools, such as surveys, is likely much more likely useful for a donor (partly because they create the questions) than for a local community's needs—even if it is summarized and fed back to the citizens in public hearings or short reports. Also, local citizens, and even CSOs, do not have the capacity to use very sophisticated tools, and the citizens, especially, don't have the time and funds to use tools that take too much of either. For example, surveys were mostly carried out by external consultants hired by CSOs. If the intention is to build citizen empowerment, then simpler tools that involve citizens, such as community scorecards, can have more effect activating citizens and collecting data useful to them.
- The sustainability of future citizen engagement depends on many factors—incentives, cultural factors, and power relations. Many of these take time to change; therefore short-term interventions will not likely be able to demonstrate results in the short term.

Based on the lessons from CARTA, several recommendations are presented for the design of future projects that incorporate citizen engagement in monitoring government service delivery.

- Citizen engagement and independent monitoring initiatives that have operational and financial independence from the project implementing authorities can add value in improving project implementation, responsiveness and results.
- An independent constructive engagement approach from the outset is useful to make monitoring acceptable across stakeholders, particularly because it encourages open communication and transparent processes that build trust. All parties should understand how independent monitoring works, particularly the relationship to a project's M&E systems. If possible, monitoring activities should be mutually agreed upon at the beginning of the project.
- The importance of training cannot be understated, particularly instruction in citizen's rights. The goal is not only to provide information about projects, but also to empower citizens to be active participants in decisions to deliver services to their community.
- The effectiveness of independent monitoring depends in part on the how the findings are presented to decision-makers (e.g. government, donors, and project implementers). How the findings of independent monitoring will be shared with the public and other stakeholders should be identified and agreed upon in advance.
- Full access to information is an important precondition for conducting independent monitoring activities using a constructive engagement approach.

Each sub-project completion report has numerous lessons learned and recommendations based on the specific context. These can be found at the PTF website at <http://ptfund.org/project/carta/>.

The CARTA experience demonstrates that community empowerment and social accountability reinforce each other and make development projects more effective. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation should not be limited to procedures and achievement of results, but should also empower beneficiaries to a point where they are willing and able to demand good governance in projects. This inevitably requires considerable capacity building at the local level. On-the-job training for CSOs through CARTA proved to be a good catalyst to build the necessary environment and skills within local communities.



1. Objectives and Description of the CARTA Program

The Citizen Action for Results, Transparency and Accountability (CARTA) Program was funded by a US\$1.9 million grant from the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF). The grant was managed by the World Bank. CARTA started in mid-2011 and ended November 30, 2015, including a one-year extension. The World Bank chose the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) to implement the CARTA Program. PTF selected the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) in Bangladesh and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (HELVETAS) in Nepal as in-country partners to help competitively select Bangladeshi and Nepali civil-society organizations (CSOs) to implement the sub-projects, support the CSOs, and supervise program implementation.

The CARTA Program's goal was *"to enhance the development impact, sustainability and client ownership of pro-poor projects financed by the World Bank (WB) in Bangladesh and Nepal, by promoting civil society organizations' engagement, experience and capacity to demand better governance."*¹ The CARTA Program had the following components:

1. The CARTA Program was not designed to evaluate or displace monitoring and evaluation systems to be used by the implementing agencies

Part A: Sub-Grant Facility. Provision of sub-grants to beneficiaries to enable them to carry out sub-projects aimed at promoting DFGG (Demand for Good Governance), including: (i) third-party monitoring of expenditures and results in development projects; (ii) promotion of access to project information and building of capacity of citizens to act on that information; and (iii) strengthening grievance procedures and feedback mechanisms to address perceived violations of project policies, procedures or practices.

Part B: On-the-job Capacity Building. Carrying out activities aimed at building the capacity of CSOs to interact with governments in constructive ways to promote transparency and accountability, including: (i) action-learning by CSOs through designing and implementing DFGG activities; (ii) regular interaction by CSO staff with experienced advisers skilled in project design, results frameworks and impact measurement; (iii) oversight by experienced advisers on sub-project implementation to assist in solving problems and ensuring a continued focus on results; and (iv) interactions among CSOs to share lessons of experience and build mutual competence and confidence.

Part C: Learning and Knowledge Sharing. Carrying out activities aimed at building a body of knowledge and good practice in DFGG with lessons of experience and new methodologies and approaches to DFGG, including: (i) workshops (country-specific, sector-specific or activity-specific) to bring together the principal stakeholders/local people, governments and CSOs; (ii) publication of lessons of experience from South Asia (Bangladesh and Nepal) on DFGG; and (iii) international exposure to lessons of experience through media and information systems.



The CARTA program supported 11 World Bank-financed projects through 12 sub-project grants. The following table shows the government implementing agency for the World Bank-financed project and the competitively selected CARTA implementing CSO for the sub-project, along with the sub-grant amount.

Table 1: CARTA subprojects in Nepal

World Bank Financed Project	Project Implementing Agency	CARTA CSO	Sub-Project Grant Amount	Date Sub-Project Contract Signed
Rural Access Improvement and Decentralization Project (RAIDP)	Dept. of Local Infrastructure & Agriculture Roads (DoLIDAR)	SKY-Samaj	\$132,468	September 25, 2011
Poverty Alleviation Fund 2 (PAF)	Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF)	Friends Service Council Nepal (FSCN)	\$145,880	February 28, 2013
Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT)	Ministry of Education (MoE)	Vijaya Development Resources Centre (VDRC)	\$120,549	February 25, 2013
Emergency Peace Support Project (EPSP)	Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR)	Samuhik Abhiyan	\$110,335	April 1, 2013
Community Action for Nutrition (CAN aka First 1,000 Days Project)	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD)	Nucleus for Empowerment through Skill Transfer (NEST)	\$73,408	March 3, 2014
School Sector Reform Program (SSRP)	Ministry of Education (MoE)	SKY-Samaj	\$66,937	February 20, 2014

Table 2: CARTA subprojects in Bangladesh

World Bank Financed Project	Project Implementing Agency	CARTA CSO	Sub-Project Grant Amount	Date Sub-Project Contract Signed
Local Government Support Project II (LGSP)	Local Government Department (LGD)	Democracy Watch (DW) / Agrogoti Sangstha (AS)	\$149,948 / \$74,968	September 11, 2012
Rural Electrical Renewable Energy Project 2 (REREP)	Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL)	Population Service and Training Center (PSTC)	\$146,065	September 11, 2012
Bangladesh Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Project (BRWSSP)	Dept. of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)	Resource Integration Center (RIC)	\$97,000	February 2, 2014
Reaching Out of School Children II (ROSC)	Directorate of Primary Education (DPE)	RDRS, Bangladesh	\$80,000	February 2, 2014
Social Investment Program Project II (SIPP)	Social Development Foundation (SDF)	Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC)	\$90,000	February 2, 2014

2. This includes funds from CARTA but excludes contributions by the CSO itself which were less than \$10,000 per subproject.

The first four sub-project contracts were signed in September 2012 (three in Bangladesh and one in Nepal), but it took until April 2014 before all sub-project contracts were signed. The process took longer than anticipated mainly because of the time needed for the World Bank to select suitable projects from its portfolio and obtain the implementing agencies' concurrence to their inclusion in the CARTA Program. Sub-project implementation periods varied from one to two years and were monitored by the local partners, MJF and HELVETAS, in close coordination with a core CARTA team at PTF. In addition, each of the CSOs implementing a sub-project was assigned a PTF project advisor. CSOs participated in periodic coordination and information sharing meetings with the implementing agencies and World Bank staff. Each CSO produced a project completion report summarizing performance.²

2. A detailed project completion report is available for each sub-project at the PTF website, <http://ptfund.org/project/carta/>. An independent assessment is also available to download from the same site.

PTF and its local partners also organized capacity building, and learning and knowledge sharing workshops, to help the implementing CSOs. A final workshop was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in June 2015; however, a final workshop in Nepal did not occur due to the April 2015 earthquake and the difficult political situation later in 2015 that led to critical national fuel shortages. As an alternative, PTF and HELVETAS undertook a “*dissemination mission*” in November 2015, holding individual meetings with the CARTA stakeholders and development partners to brief them on the outcomes and results of the project, and to present options on ways the lessons learned could be applied to post-earthquake reconstruction. An independent assessment of the CARTA sub-projects results was carried out by an external consultant (available at: <http://ptfund.org/project/carta/>).



2. Country Context

“Social accountability (SA) is an approach to governance that involves citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) in public decision making. SA interventions can enable citizens and civil society actors to articulate their needs to governments and service providers. SA also brings the perspective of citizens and CSOs to government activities, such as policy making, the management of public finances and resources, and service delivery. Context is essential for any social accountability intervention.”³ It gives shape, “particularly in terms of incentives and capacities of the main actors promoting and enforcing SA.”⁴ The recent research calls for looking at both macro and micro contextual factors in which social accountability projects evolve.⁵ Macro refers to the national histories of citizen-state engagements, existing frameworks and the general political environment that affects the level of citizen involvement. On the micro level, various factors can determine the progress and success of SA initiatives, including personalities and power relations.

3. World Bank. Social Accountability E-Guide. Retrieved on Jan 5, 2016 from <https://saeguide.worldbank.org/what-social-accountability>

4. Burkenya, B., Hickey S., & King, S. (2012). *Understanding the role of context in shaping social accountability interventions: Towards an Evidence-Based Approach*. World Bank.

5. This framework is explored further in Joshi, A. (2014). Reading the Local Context: A Causal Chain Approach to Social Accountability. *IDS Bulletin*, 45, 23-35.

At national level, both Nepal and Bangladesh have made efforts to create a legal environment that supports greater citizen involvement in the delivery of government services.⁶ However, civic engagement and social accountability in both countries should be seen in the context of political transformation, broader governance issues, the nature and history of relationships between citizens and the state, the current state of civil society development and, in the case of Nepal, legacies of recent conflicts.

*“Nepal’s history of polarized politics has played a significant role in shaping the nature and extent of civil society activities. The governance structure has historically been a closed system with no avenues for civil society participation. The democratic reforms of the 1990s and the transition to democracy have been slow and erratic. Complicating the transition has been weak development of an active civil society, frequent cycles of political instability, and deeply entrenched social divisions.”*⁷ In the first decade of political democracy, a high level of corruption, coupled with weak formal control institutions, negatively impacted the credibility of rule of law and the regulatory functions of the state.

The gap between ruling elites and the population is large; the legacy of Panchayat nationalism still influences economic and social relations and access to political space, although historically excluded groups have started reclaiming their voice.⁸ In the context of a fragile peace process, the rise of identity politics (especially following the Madhes Movement of 2007), political deadlock and the absence of a Constitution (until 2015), social cohesion and trust has been a challenge in rebuilding the country’s infrastructure, economy and state institutions. The culture of political parties is underdeveloped; sources of political power are personalized and patrimonial traditions and patron-client relations dominate all political institutions. The absence of elected officials at local level, and the introduction of the All-Party Mechanism, has led to a spread of patronage systems. The long history of feudalism and monarchy affects the way citizens relate to the state: the hierarchy and the culture of deference to authority prevents citizens from questioning those in power.⁹

Bangladesh has one of the most centralized public sector governance and service delivery arrangements in the world. After Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971, local government institutions experienced a number of shifts in policy regarding their political, financial, and administrative authority and various tiers of government were established. *“Local government is a highly viable mechanism through which democratic processes and practices can be established and participatory development ensured.”*¹⁰ Historically, however, local government in Bangladesh has remained weak and susceptible to pressures exerted by the central government. *“Through the years, local government institutions have been struggling for sufficient fiscal and administrative power. They are also constrained by lack of transparency, low capacity, excessive bureaucracy, political interference, limited authority, lack of accountability of service providers, and weak financial resources and have limited orientation toward local communities.”*¹¹

Bangladesh is also one of the world’s most crowded nations and the territory is prone to frequent natural disasters. *“Natural disasters and political upheavals during the 1940s and subsequent decades have provided the impetus for the development of what is today one of the world’s largest non-government organization (NGO) sector.”*¹² From relief and rehabilitation, rural micro-crediting schemes to education and social welfare programs, NGOs have started filling in the gap between society and state, which lead to adopting the patronage culture in relations between NGOs and the citizens (reflecting the pattern existing already

6. In Nepal the government has passed many laws and regulations, including: the Local Self Governance Act (1999), and Local Self Governance Regulation (2000), the Decentralization Implementation Plan (2002), the Right to Information Act (2007), the Right to Information Regulation (2009), the Good Governance Act (2008), the Good Governance Action Plan (2012), the Local Bodies Resource Mobilization and Management Guidelines (2012), the MoFALD Public Expenditure & Financial Accountability and the Fiduciary Risk Reduction Action Plan (2012) and the Social Mobilization Guidelines (2014). In Bangladesh, the current Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009 further increased the responsibilities of the UP and established a planning process. Other acts, including the Union Parishad Operational Manual (UPOM) 2013, the Right to Information Act (2009), and Sixth fifth year (FY 2011-2015) plan of Bangladesh extended and clarified the role of citizens. These acts encourage consultation with citizens, which progresses from gatherings on the ward level to discussions on the union level and ends in approval at upazila level by the elected UZP chairman. Since 2009 a Right to Information Act has allowed citizens to access information on UP activities.

7. Sirker, K. & Cosic, S. (2007). *Empowering the marginalized: Case studies of social accountability initiatives in Asia*. Public Affairs Foundation, Bangalore, India for the World Bank Institute.

8. Malena, C. & Tamang, S. (2013). *The political economy of social accountability in Nepal*. The Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN).

9. Malena, C. & Tamang, S. (2013). *The political economy of social accountability in Nepal*. The Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN).

10. Khan (2000). Khan, Z.R. (2000). *Decentralized Governance: Trials and Triumphs in Raunaq Jahan* (Ed.), *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance*, Dhaka, University Press Limited (as found in the Centre for Policy Dialogue (2001) *Administrative reform and local government CPD task force report*, p 9.)

11. Sirker, K. & Cosic, S. (2007). *Empowering the marginalized: Case studies of social accountability initiatives in Asia*. Public Affairs Foundation, Bangalore, India for the World Bank Institute.

12. Asian Development Bank. *Overview of NGOs and Civil Society: Bangladesh*. Civil Society Briefs.

in relations between the heavily bureaucratic government system and citizens). Recent studies show that, while “in theory political elites and bureaucrats in Bangladesh advocate democracy, accountability and grass-roots participation, in practice they have an affinity for power and centralized authority. As a result, the half-hearted and disjointed reforms in Bangladesh restrict potential for the development of democratic culture and participatory governance.”¹³

While each country has its own unique determinants of civil engagement, they still share similarities¹⁴:

- Little trust in state structures and public institutions, mainly linked to corruption and deficient rule of law, evidenced by two separate perception indexes: the *Corruption Perceptions Index* 2014 (CPI) of Transparency International and the *World Justice Project Open Government Index 2015* (WJPOGI);¹⁵
- Culture of patronage and centralization of political institutions, weak sub-national governance systems (including decision-making and budgeting practices) that allow little space for citizen engagement in local affairs;
- Long and rich experience of community-level associational life contrasting with underdeveloped grass-roots culture of local CSOs. Accountability of the CSOs vis-à-vis citizens is often problematic: in Bangladesh, this is due to utilization of CSOs for service delivery (sometimes substituting the state) and political affiliation, and in Nepal, it is due to young CSOs, mainly sustained through international assistance, and CSOs elitist orientation;
- Lack of independent, objective information space; little autonomy of media in both countries and at all levels;
- Exclusion of certain society groups from decision-making (lower castes in Nepal and religious and ethnic minorities in Bangladesh).

Other common local impediments for both countries can be summarized:¹⁶

- Weak capacity of district and sub-district political structures;
- Limited history of participation by the public in local governance;
- Limited history of public monitoring of local authorities;
- Exclusion of lower caste and indigenous peoples in decision-making;
- Lack of public knowledge of individual rights as a citizen;
- Weak capacity of public oversight mechanisms;
- Persistence of corrupt practices in public institutions;
- Weak finances to support local government delivery of services.

All these factors have led to citizens’ low awareness of their rights and entitlements, limited public engagement, and a lack of citizen oversight mechanisms. It has also led to a segmented and not very credible CSO sector with a weak popular base and varying level of capacities.

13. Uzzaman, W.W., & Alam, Q. (2015). Democratic Culture and Participatory Local Governance in Bangladesh. *Local Government Studies*, 41/2, p 260-279. (abstract)

14. These similarities are based on the experiences of the World Bank staff and consultants, and were reported as common conditions to both countries.

15. The CPI found that, out of 175 countries, Nepal (126) and Bangladesh (145) ranked in the “highly corrupt” category. In the WJPOGI (that covers 102 countries and looks at such indicators as publicized laws and government data, Rights to information, Civic participation and Complaint Mechanisms) Bangladesh (73) and Nepal (40) rate in the middle of the sample (the higher the ranking, the lower the level of citizen engagement), indicating that there have been advances in transparency and accountability, but significant challenges remain.

16. This list was largely extracted from a 2008 DANIDA report on Nepal, but the list also applies to most countries with weak local governance indicators, such as Bangladesh. In the case of Bangladesh these factors were corroborated by the local partners who have been working in each country for decades.

THREE

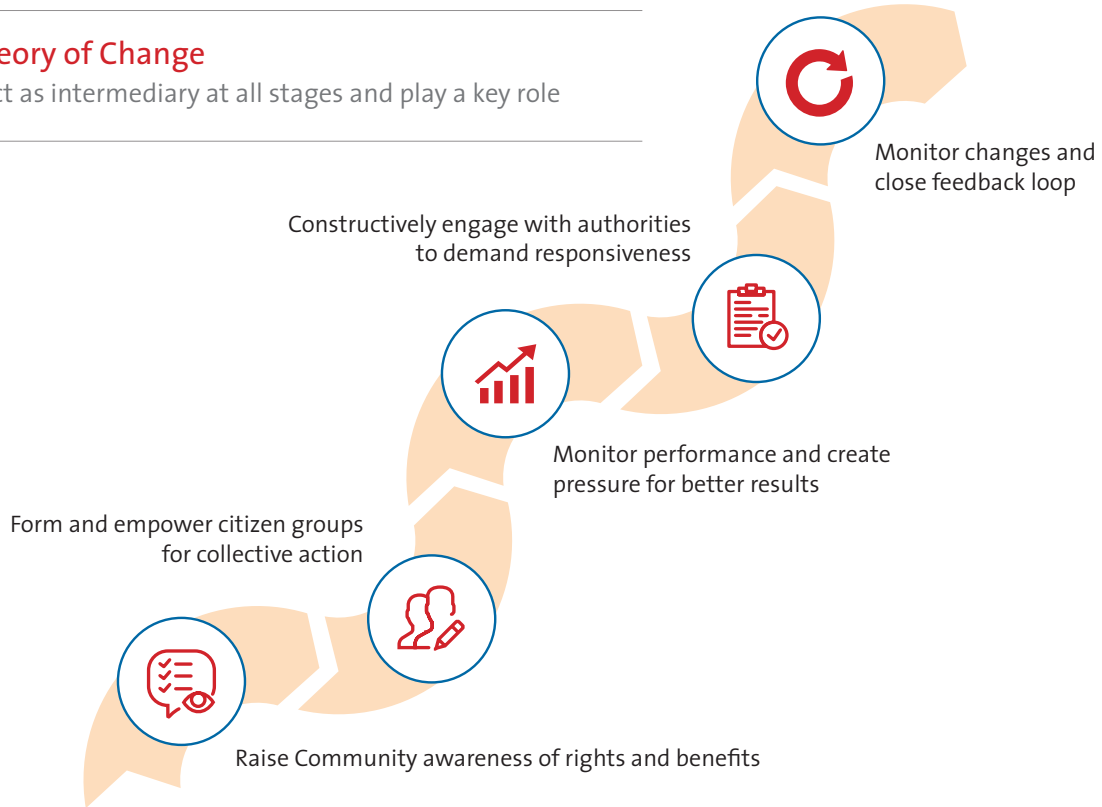


3. PTF Approach Towards Implementing the CARTA Program

Based on its extensive prior experience, the PTF approach to the CARTA Program sub-projects' design and implementation reflected a theory of change, which implies constructive engagement with all actors, particularly between government service providers and recipients. In the CARTA Program this collaborative approach was present from the beginning, when World Bank projects were selected jointly by the World Bank, PTF and its local partners, the implementing agencies, and during cooperative negotiations for terms of reference for each sub-project.

PTF Theory of Change

CSO's act as intermediary at all stages and play a key role



The PTF approach is consistent with the World Bank effort to engage citizens. It is based on the assumption that empowered citizens will be more likely to improve the performance of government. In the World Bank's strategic framework, citizen engagement is defined as *"the two-way interaction between citizens and governments or the private sector within the scope of World Bank Group interventions—policy dialogue, programs, projects, and advisory services and analytics—that gives citizens a stake in decision-making with the objective of improving the intermediate and final development outcomes of the intervention."*¹⁷

The main goal of the CARTA Program's citizen engagement activities has been to enhance the development impact, sustainability and client ownership of World Bank-financed projects. This process involves empowering citizens who can then demand better services. It became clear in the CARTA program that it takes significant effort over a relatively long period of time for citizens to reach this empowered stage. In designing the sub-projects, it became clear that while *"access to information"* is a necessary enabling condition, it is not a substitute for successful citizen engagement since it typically involves a one-way interaction. Consequently, access to information and awareness-raising activities do not meet this definition of citizen engagement. Closing the feedback loop—building a two-way interaction providing a tangible response to citizen feedback—is critical. The World Bank was well aware of this need and had often designed such feedback mechanisms into the projects they funded; however, the CARTA sub-projects discovered most were either underutilized or not functioning.

17. Although the World Bank has supported citizen participation in the projects it has funded since the mid-1990s, when the Participation Sourcebook was published, it has only recently more completely articulated guidelines for citizen engagement. World Bank (2014). *Strategic framework for mainstreaming citizen engagement in World Bank Group operations*. P8. CARTA sub-projects were designed before the World Bank citizen engagement requirements and guidelines were issued. Nonetheless, CARTA is entirely consistent with this approach and provides practical, on-the-ground experiences, which support the new citizen engagement framework. (See <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21113>)



4. CARTA Implementation

4.1 Sub-projects

The activities in the twelve sub-projects were individually designed to meet the needs of the respective World Bank-financed projects. Consequently, each sub-project had its own set of expected outcomes and activities leading to those goals. This uniqueness makes comparisons difficult; however, to generalize, most CARTA sub-project objectives were to: (i) gather data in the field, analyze the situation, and diagnose problems, (ii) provide community feedback to authorities on project implementation, (iii) build the capacities of communities and committee members, and (iv) suggest remedies to the problems they had identified. Most sub-projects had a combination of these objectives, with varying degrees of monitoring and capacity building.¹⁸

Tables 4 and 5 summarize the objectives and outcomes for each sub-project. A complete description of the activities that led to these outcomes can be found in a project completion report for each sub-project, available at the PTF website (<http://ptfund.org/project/carta/>).

¹⁸ The SSRP and EVENT sub-projects in Nepal were exceptions, since these were entirely monitoring activities.

4.2 Limitations

The following limitations in the CARTA Program should also be noted:

- Each sub-project had specific objectives based on terms of reference that were agreed between the World Bank Team(s), the government implementing agency, PTF and its partners. Therefore it is impossible to combine data from each project into a single set that would provide statistically significant results. Each sub-project should be viewed as a stand-alone pilot, with its own context, and circumstances that contributed to its outcomes.
- CARTA activities were designed to help enhance the development impact, sustainability and client ownership of the selected World Bank funded projects. Therefore, the focus of CARTA was not to measure the effectiveness of a particular social accountability tool, or citizen engagement approach, in different contexts.
- The CSOs used multiple, simultaneous community-level social accountability activities. Consequently, it is generally not methodologically possible to attribute the causal impact any specific single activity.
- The combination of short time-frames and relatively small grant amounts were constraints. The short sub-project duration led to selection of implementation activities that could be accommodated. Because the sub-projects were quite small, and the duration short—funding levels under US\$150,000 for one to two years of activity – the desire to show development impacts was constrained. However, on the positive side, we have observed that in most cases implementing agencies and World Bank Teams made adjustments in project implementation arrangements including grievance redress mechanisms or incorporated the lessons learned in new project designs.
- The process of selecting locations in the sub-projects was generally based on either the agreed terms of reference, convenience, or specific selection criteria were provided. In most cases, the selected CSOs were operating already in those areas. This knowledge of the area and the communities helped build trust levels, but it also meant that complete independence was not taken for granted, and had to be constantly scrutinized.

4.3 Sub-project objectives and outcomes

The outcomes assessment of the sub-projects is based on evidence from the field monitoring and, for most of the projects, on a comparison of base- and end-line data.¹⁹

Table 3: Nepal sub-project objectives and outcomes



CARTA Sub-Project : Main Objectives : Outcomes

Rural Access Improvement and Decentralization Project (RAIDP)

Local CSO implementer: Sky Samaj

Main Objectives

- Support 80 CBOs to understand the policy principles in Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and their roles and responsibilities
- Capacitate CBOs to understand quality of construction work by providing training, a manual and tool kits
- Capacitate the CBOs for monitoring the labor contract process and payment of contractors
- Support the CBOs for easy and productive access to report the grievances and assist them in understanding any malpractice

Outcomes

- CBO members felt more knowledgeable and confident during their monitoring activities and applied their knowledge to make contractors mitigate potential impacts. 97% of CBO members had knowledge of ESMF (compared to the baseline level of 28%); 92% of CBO members had knowledge on quality of civil work and community monitoring methods (baseline: 26%)
- Responsibilities for monitoring were assigned to CBO members. By the end of the project 84% of CBOs (baseline: 0%) were able to monitor the construction
- More information boards posted road construction data (96% versus baseline: 60%)
- Due to a significant increase in better formulated written grievances, district government agencies have experienced frequent monitoring by officers from the locality and the district, and most grievances were resolved locally

19. Although many improvements are largely attributable to the capacity-building and monitoring activities supported under CARTA, it should be noted that social accountability gains were also due to contributing activities of on-going WB-funded projects. These activities included separate capacity-building of governmental and public organizations involved in relevant projects, (i.e. improving the "supply side")

Poverty Alleviation Fund 2 (PAF)

Local CSO implementer: Friends Service Council Nepal (FSCN)

Main Objectives

- Increase the community organizations' (COs') abilities to hold their service provider partner organizations (POs) more accountable
- Strengthen CO support to their constituent communities

Outcomes

- Improved CO operational performance (e.g. establishment of maintenance funds, registration of grievances, POs returned withheld checkbooks to COs, PO social mobilizers activated the COs)
- Improved CO's organizational development and knowledge (e.g. more public audit/hearings and display boards, improved financial management)
- 100% of targeted COs conducted self-review (baseline: 17.5%)
- 100% of the COs received training plans from their POs (baseline: 0%)
- Increased ability of COs to become members of larger thematic networks (federations, cooperatives)

Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT)

Local CSO implementer: Vijaya Development Resources Centre (VDRC)

Main Objectives

- Monitor and verify the outputs and activities related to indicators in implementing agency reports that trigger World Bank loan disbursements under component 1 of EVENT
- Report on trainee profiles and the use of advertisements to attract candidates
- Assess the quality of training from the perspective of trainees

Outcomes

- Verified that implementing agency reports were generally accurate
- Trainees and trainers reported that trainee engagement and the quality of training improved when they were aware of the presence of independent monitors
- Improvement in the completeness of document submission to the training organizations
- Dissemination of sub-project output verification process

Emergency Peace Support Project (EPSP)

Local CSO implementer: Samuhik Abhiyan

Main Objectives

- Assess extent that service providers were delivering the entitled rehabilitation support to entitled conflict affect persons (CAPs)
- Increase the level of understanding of benefits and support among beneficiaries and to increase citizens' familiarity with peace support projects
- Revitalize the grievance mechanism at the local level
- Promote accountability among service providers by identifying the key areas for improvement

Outcomes

- Increased delivery of benefits (80% of entitled CAPs received rehabilitation support compared to 21% in the baseline)
- Citizens felt empowered to demand improvements in service delivery
- Service providers now update the citizen charters and keep them in a proper place in their offices
- Increased awareness level (96% of the beneficiaries knew about EPSP compared to 56% in the baseline survey)
- Enhanced direct communication between beneficiaries and district level providers (live radio programs)
- Joint monitoring system at the district level, which increased the frequency of training, governance, transparency and accountability among training providers
- Establishment of a functional and transparent grievance mechanism with the active participation of LPCs
- District LPCs monitor the village LPCs

School Sector Reform Program (SSRP)

Local CSO implementer: SKY-Samaj

Main Objectives

- Familiarize stakeholders with the printing and distribution process
- Verify the quantity of printed school textbooks as per printing plan
- Gather data about the distribution process
- Make recommendations to improve the process

Outcomes

- The CRC survey revealed that 45% of students reported receiving an incomplete set of textbooks by 2 weeks after the start of the school year
- Responsible Government agencies are making changes to improve the printing and distribution processes after receiving sub-project reports

Community Action for Nutrition (CAN aka First 1,000 Days Project)

Local CSO implementer: Nucleus for Empowerment through Skill Transfer (NEST)

Main Objectives

- Increase access of stakeholders to information about rapid rural nutrition initiatives (RRNIs)
- Verify that the project teams have carried out all the activities for effective implementation of the RRNI projects
- Verify reports developed by the key service providers with the help of RRNI team

Outcomes

- There were delays in the approval of initiatives, the release of funds and the completion of initiatives (only 59% of the first cycle initiatives were completed within 100 days)
- Orientation meetings, planned reviews, and monitoring were delayed or not conducted; public audits were only conducted in 46% of the first cycle of RRNIs.
- The reports were considered accurate in only 62% of the first cycle cases.
- Positive findings included greater awareness of the project, more community enthusiasm about the opportunities to participate in the selection and implementation of initiatives, and greater inclusiveness in the processes.

Table 4: Bangladesh sub-project objectives and outcomes



CARTA Sub-Project : Main Objectives : Outcomes

Local Government Support Project II (LGSP)

Local CSO implementers: Democracy Watch (DW) and Agrogoti Sangstha (AS)

Main Objectives

- Increased awareness within beneficiary groups of services, resources and grievance mechanisms available through World Bank financed projects.
- Improve the constructive engagement among beneficiary groups, selected CSOs and PIA
- Improve skills of civil society organizations to monitor the physical and/or financial progress of World Bank financed projects

Outcomes

- Increased citizen participation in ward and open budget meetings
- Organized citizens played a proactive role in LGSP monitoring
- LGSP II team arranged training for WC and SSC after first survey data revealed their limited knowledge
- Increased local tax collection which could finance future community level projects
- Increased collaboration between CG and UP officials (e.g. UP used the data produced by CGs to improve their activities)
- Increased transparency and accountability at the local level (more information disclosure)
- UP following closer the UP operation manual, including the UP arranged budget and ward shava meetings
- Improvement in the management of the Block Grant process

Rural Electrical Renewable Energy Project (RREP)

Local CSO implementer: Population Service and Training Center (PSTC)

Main Objectives

- Solar Home System (SHS) users become more knowledgeable to participate with POS, and ensure accountability
- SHS users able to provide systematic feedback throughout project implementation process
- Provide suggestions for improving the service delivery of the SHS program

Outcomes

- Increase in participation of SHS users in capacity building training
- Trained users informed neighbors about the importance of maintaining SHS regularly
- PO became aware of the positive effects of training and organized trainings themselves
- Increased level of knowledge about SHS among Businesses
- Time taken by POs to solve a SHS problem decreased from “31-60” days to “1-15” days
- Increase in the percentage of users briefed by the technician before and during the installation including information dissemination (e.g. user manual, leaflets)
- Decrease in problems experienced with SHS equipment (28% to 5% in HH and 16% to 1% in BS)
- Increase knowledge about issues related with the sustainability of the project during project implementation process (batteries, SHS maintenance)
- Enhanced dialogue spaces for direct feedback from service user to State agency about sustainability, social and environmental concerns (social inclusion, safe battery)

Bangladesh Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Project (BRWSSP)

Local CSO implementer: Resource Integration Center (RIC)

Main Objectives

- Monitoring the quality and outcomes of the social mobilization process under both BRWSSP components through Citizen Report Card (CRC)
- Provide community feedback to DPHE to help improving the responsiveness of the service providers addressing the community demand within the framework of BRWSS (access to safe drinking water and sanitation among the population)
- Build capacities of BRWSSP partners to introduce mechanisms of constant constructive engagement between service users/recipients and provider through Community Score Cards (CSC)

Outcomes

- Identification of barriers and weakness of the social mobilization process (feedback to DPHE)
- Successful introduction of bottom up approach to monitoring and evaluation of the project (implication for social mobilization)
- Increased dissemination of information of the performance of implementing agencies (DPHE and CSOs)
- Public hearings offered for the first time a space for direct constructive dialogue between users and local providers (opportunity to raise complaints)
- DPHE officials agreed to increase DPHE role in local monitoring
- After BRWSSP partners participated in a training course on CSC, they realized the positive impacts of CSC (buy-in of decision makers)
- Enhanced beneficiary ownership of development project
- BRWSSP officials expressed their intention to amend the social mobilization strategy for next phase
- Damaged water treatment plant was repaired as part of the implementation of the action plan
- Increased communication between CSO, DPHE and WUC
- WUC reformation and reactivation in progress (30% females included in reformed WUCs)

Reaching Out of School Children II (ROSC II)

Local CSO implementer: RDRS

Main Objectives

- Verify selection process under ROSC II (LCs locations, teachers, and children)
- Improve capacity of the Parents Committees to monitor quality of education and to hold LCs accountable

Outcomes

- Verification of implementation gaps from the supply side (non-compliance with LC location requirements and teachers and children selection requirements)
- Verification of shortcomings from the supply side after interviews and document review (e.g. parents presented fake birth certificates to qualify)
- Increased capacity of Center Management Committee (CMC) and parents to supervise and assess performance of LCs
- Improvement of LCs conditions (e.g. water and sanitation facilities)
- Increased number of CMC visit to LCs after CARTA intervention
- Increased transparency and access to information (e.g. achieved more information sharing during CMC meetings)
- Increase in community engagement and investment in the physical sustainability of the project (e.g. installation of toilets)
- Organization of annual sports and picnic events with the support of the community and Union Parishad (first time event)

Social Investment Program Project II (SIPP II)

Local CSO implementer: Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC)

Main Objectives

- Increased awareness within beneficiary groups of services, resources and grievance mechanisms available through World Bank financed projects
- Improve the constructive engagement among beneficiary groups, selected CSOs and PIA
- Improve skills of civil society organizations to monitor the physical and/or financial progress of World Bank financed projects

Outcomes

Assessed the transparency and accountability of the micro-credit scheme and found that:

- Most of the Gram Parishad committees did not function well so the general public was not interested in the activities conducted by the third-party-monitoring teams
- Arranging meetings during the harvesting season was a challenge since most of the villagers were working in the fields
- The distances between villages, poor communication system, and the rainy season together presented obstacles that hampered project activities
- There was a general lack of knowledge in the community about SIPP II
- There were low levels of administrative transparency; most villagers did not know how the micro-credit system operated
- Some questionable practices (such as deleting a depositor's name, and using an individual's deposit to repay a group loan without the person's knowledge) were reported
- The grievance process was not known

Overall, the sub-projects met their specific objectives. Positive testimonials from stakeholders, including project beneficiaries, officials from implementing agencies, and World Bank Task Team Leaders during various workshops and information sharing meetings. Several TTLs wanted to expand the CARTA sub-project to cover more government operations, and this was possible in several sub-projects (RERED, SSRP).

4.4 Social accountability tools used in the sub-projects

The CARTA sub-projects used a variety of tools to gather data and to empower citizens. The following table lists the sub-projects and tools used. Not every tool was introduced through the CARTA Program; the World Bank-financed project design often included tools such as public hearings, grievance redress mechanisms, focus group discussions, user committees and public information disclosure. The CARTA CSOs added the use of new tools in specific projects where needed.²⁰ In almost all the sub-projects, the CARTA Program provided capacity building to effectively use tools.

Table 5: Summary of tools used in CARTA sub-projects

WB Project	Country	Sector	Public information disclosure	Information campaigns	RTI	CSC	CRC	Social audit	Input tracking	Grievances review	Public hearing	FGD	Satisfaction/perception survey TPM	Participatory/ community monitoring
LGSP	Bangladesh	Governance	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X
BRWSSP		Water	X			X	X			X	X	X		
RERED		Energy								X		X	X	
ROSC		Education	X			X			X	X		X		
SIPP		Livelihoods						X		X	X	X	X	
EVENT	Nepal	Education	X	X					X			X	X	
EPSP		Peace building	X	X	X		X			X	X	X		X
RAIDP		Construction	X							X		X	X	X
PAF 2		Livelihoods		X				X			X	X	X	
SSRP		Education					X					X	X	
CAN		Health & Nutrition		X								X		

A description of specific findings related to the tools used in the sub-projects can be found in the individual project completion reports at: <http://ptfund.org/project/carta/>

20. For example, CSCs and CRSs (surveys), input tracking, and social audit activities.



5. Conclusions and Lessons Learned Across Projects

5.1 CARTA results framework

The overall CARTA Program had three broad objectives. While each of the individual sub-projects had outcomes which met one or more of these objectives, it is difficult to summarize these quantitatively into an array of numerical values, since each sub-project was contextually different, and had unique sub-project goals and objectives. Still, there are a few qualitative statements that can be deduced.

Table 6: CARTA results framework

Goal

Enhance the development impact, sustainability and client ownership of pro-poor projects financed by the World Bank in Bangladesh and Nepal, by promoting civil society organizations engagement, experience and capacity to demand better governance.

Objectives

Beneficiaries of pro-poor projects financed by the World Bank will be empowered to demand greater transparency and accountability in resource use, delivery of services and grievance resolution.

Beneficiaries will influence the quality of service delivery, and the transparency and accountability exhibited by public agencies and development programs.

Lessons from experience, and learning from action-oriented programs, will further enhance the evidence-base on interventions in the demand side of good governance.

Outcomes

Beneficiaries of World Bank-financed projects in the sub-project areas became more aware of their entitlements under specific projects. Once the constructive dialogue was established and changes in implementation arrangements were made, community members' access to benefits and the rate of grievance resolution significantly increased.

Beneficiaries showed greater ownership over development results, were better trained to monitor service delivery, and better able to formulate their demands constructively.

Capacity building and other activities implemented under the CARTA have been shared with implementers, government officials and donors to increase the knowledge of benefits of citizen engagement.

In this report, the evidence supporting these outcomes is based on a comparison of base- and end-line survey data completed for most sub-projects. The improvement in knowledge and skill levels is attributable to a large extent to the capacity building done by the local CARTA CSOs. Of course, it should be noted that other activities by the World Bank-funded project implementers were also ongoing during the CARTA Program, so that in some cases there were other activities that also could be a contributing factor.

5.2 Conclusions

Although the CARTA Program was often described as an independent third-party monitoring (TPM) program, the sub-projects employed a combination of information dissemination, monitoring, capacity building, citizen engagement and empowerment activities to achieve objectives.

The point is that no single activity was solely responsible for a sub-project outcomes; instead, each sub-project used a variety of tools, such as information campaigns, community report cards and score cards, surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and public hearings. The tools had two purposes: to increase knowledge and skills among the citizens about the World Bank-funded project, and to activate them to become more involved in the success of that project. In terms of importance, the CSOs believed that their successes were primarily due to the CARTA-led citizen-empowerment activities. The CSOs believed that the tools were the method, but the critical difference was that citizens had to have the confidence and self-efficacy to engage in the political process, to hold public officials accountable. Therefore, although CARTA is described as a TPM program, this description should be understood as a combination of information dissemination, monitoring, capacity building, citizen engagement and empowerment activities employed by the CSOs. It was the package of activities that produced the outcomes.

The CARTA Program addressed critical governance and implementation gaps in the World Bank financed projects.

Many CARTA sub-projects were originally designed (mostly as a result of agreement among the World Bank, PTF and the local partners) to monitor selected activities; however, as the benefits of citizen input into the projects became more apparent, this limited scope often widened to include more CARTA activities to mobilize and empower community groups and citizens. For example, while much of the initial capacity building focused on village committees, CARTA expanded to increase the capacities of the CSOs working in the World Bank-financed projects. The type of training also expanded to include IEC activities, to provide more empowerment activities for citizens. People first needed to learn about the projects, their rights and responsibilities, and then get support to use this knowledge.

The sub-projects greatly increased transparency levels and government accountability.

The combination of training, information campaigns, and transparency increased the knowledge levels of citizens and local government officials about the roles of committee members and citizens in World Bank-financed projects. Every sub-project final survey, without exception, recorded how citizens and village committee members in the World Bank-financed project were more knowledgeable and capable of performing their roles and responsibilities. This knowledge not only increased their ability to perform roles in the projects, but hopefully in the future as active citizens in their community.

Sub-project activities and findings benefitted the government and the World Bank as well as community members.

Findings from TPM led to many recommendations by the CSOs, which were used by the implementing agencies and World Bank staff, when restructuring an existing project or designing a new World Bank-financed project. Most of these impacts will become more evident over time; the sub-projects were too short to ascertain and fully document the effects.

The change in government officials' mindsets towards an independent monitoring process during the CARTA sub-projects' short duration, although not well documented, was extremely encouraging.

This was not an explicit objective of the sub-projects, but it was noted by all CSOs in both countries that by the end of each sub-project, the ability of the CSO to work cooperatively with the local government implementing agency had improved. It had been hoped that at the beginning of the sub-project the implementing agencies would support the CARTA sub-projects because they had initially agreed to the terms of reference. As it transpired, the government representatives, who interacted with the CSOs in CARTA, often were highly skeptical of CARTA and what the sub-projects would contribute. Approval of CARTA sub-projects by central officials did not guarantee the support of local implementers. The reason for this change in attitude was attributed to the many meetings, communications, coordination and joint implementation experiences.

CARTA has been a learning experience, a pilot program.

It was important during the program implementation to allow flexibility, as CARTA partners were learning "on the job". Therefore, adjustments were made during implementation depending on the situation on the ground and feedback from stakeholders. The outcomes from CARTA can be the basis for future research in specific areas.

The lessons learned in the next section reflect the broad involvement by CARTA CSOs as they attempted to empower citizens to demand better service delivery by the government. The lessons are not narrowly focused, partly because there are too many local factors that make generalizations impossible. Instead, the lessons focus more on the strategic considerations—the broader themes—that should be considered when designing new projects. Likewise, not every lesson is completely new; some confirm what is intuitively known already, but bear repeating. For more detailed recommendations based on the circumstances of a sub-project, see the sub-project completion reports at the CARTA website.

5.3 Lessons Learned

Short but intensive in experience, CARTA has produced a rich set of lessons, both thematic and operational. Lessons related to specific sectors and CARTA projects are documented in detail in project final reports and CARTA project briefs (<http://ptfund.org/project/carta>) This chapter summarizes lessons, and make recommendations, that are programmatic and strategic, to provide guidance for future designs for similar interventions. Not all ideas presented here are completely new; some confirm what was already known (albeit intuitively), but are now confirmed through the CARTA experience.

Lesson One

Both demand and supply-side governance-building activities are necessary—they are complementary.

On the demand side, citizens should be aware of their rights, the potential benefits of public projects/ services, and the need to get organized in order to formulate and express their claims and engage. On the supply side, the government and service

providers should proactively disclose information that is of public interest, and provide citizens with opportunities for constructive engagement.²¹

Lesson Two

Both government and citizens need capacity building for citizen engagement.

demand side, citizens need to understand not only project activities, but probably more importantly, their rights as citizens. Unless community members feel they have the power to influence the local decision-making process, they will not

actively engage. The CARTA sub-projects show that meaningful participation is an empowerment process that leads to active participation. Whether this civic participation lasts requires a follow-up study.

21. Even though Nepal and Bangladesh have legal frameworks that encourage citizen engagement on the supply side, the perception among beneficiaries—the demand side—in most sectors is that the delivery of government services had not significantly improved before the CARTA program. The reasons for this perception were not fully explored in CARTA, but based on observations by the CSOs, it is believed that the prior lack of empowerment and project-related training for citizens led to apathy.

Lesson Three

The change from an essentially top-down governance system at the local level to a democratic process involving traditionally marginalized members of the community is a long developmental process that needs continuously to be discussed and revisited

There are several implications of this lesson:

- A different approach to capacity building may be needed at different times within a project. The World Bank-financed projects all had capacity building activities, yet one of the most pervasive findings across all the projects was that project committee members did not know their roles and responsibilities. Since the initial training method most often used was a top-down training-of-trainers approach, involving large numbers of participants, the assumption is that this training method may have to be modified in subsequent trainings (however, more study needs to be done before a firm conclusion can be made). The CARTA training methods—which could be considered a follow-on training—often used hands-on, intensive, flexible, demand-driven, adult-centered training²² over a longer period. These efforts were effective, but this approach is more costly.
- Training has to be an iterative process, not a one-off exercise. Based on the CARTA experience, it appears that a few training sessions provided under the World Bank-funded project were not enough for citizens to completely grasp the nature of their roles and responsibilities.
- The broad goal of building an empowered citizenry,²³ including marginalized groups, most likely requires a holistic, long term approach, sometimes referred to as ‘strategic’ rather than ‘instrumental’, to be sustainable. The underlying assumptions of the strategic approach is that there is no single tool or method for all contexts that can be used to increase levels of citizen engagement needed to reduce the barriers in public service delivery.²⁴

Lesson Four

Citizens can monitor technical projects and government service delivery, as long as the tools provided to citizens are simple and easy to use.

CARTA demonstrated that even technically unsophisticated local groups (CBOs) can effectively monitor road construction, including the quality and compliance with social and environmental safeguards. In the RAIDP sub-project, CARTA provided technical assistance and introduced easy-to-apply tools for CBO monitoring of the up-grading or construction of 27 rural roads. The success depended on one very important factor:

a simple hands-on toolkit was introduced that local citizens could easily understand. The proof of this value was that the use of this simple tool spread from community to community without any help from the CARTA staff. The citizens only knew that it worked well for someone just like them, and therefore they were confident they could use it as well.

22. This approach uses well-known adult-learning methods based on experiential learning techniques—on the job training—with visibly effective results.

23. The World Bank has committed to incorporating more citizen engagement in all of its projects. The conceptual approach is to take steps to lead to empowered citizens who can demand good governance. (WB, *Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement in World Bank Group Operations*).

24. Public service delivery barriers include corruption, affordability, acceptability and inefficiency in service delivery.

Lesson Five

Social accountability tools should be simplified

Many of the tools used in the CARTA sub-projects were too complex (and too expensive) to be sustained by local citizens after the sub-project ended.²⁵ The reasons for this complexity are understandable: in an effort to systematize the data, and to make the most use of the time spent using any tool, there was a tendency by all involved to

enlarge the scope of the tool—e.g., by adding more questions in a citizen report card or community score card. In CARTA, there were experts to guide the use of the tools, so the problem of complexity was not a significant issue in most sub-projects; however, the sustainable use of any tool in the future is an open question that requires follow-up study.

Lesson Six

Citizens can help make the tools simpler:

all adaptations do not have to be done by the implementer. The CARTA experience is that citizens can adapt social accountability tools for their own use, and that they should be encouraged to do so. The assumption is that—if the purpose of data collection is less project-based, i.e., it is more systemically about citizens' ability to gather sufficient data to make demands of government *after a donor's project ends*—then citizens need simple tools. An advantage of a simpler tool is that

it can have more immediate impact because the simplicity allows it to be applied quickly, providing useful, indicative data about an immediate issue. Such simple tools have long been used in action-research methodologies to empower citizens, because they can see the cause and effect quickly. The CARTA experience shows that, if given an opportunity, citizens can simplify the social accountability tools.

Lesson Seven

A constructive engagement approach requires time to build levels of trust, particularly with the service providers.

One of the lessons learned from CARTA was that a constructive engagement approach to improve accountability can initially take considerable time in places where trust levels between parties are low. One possible, but unexplored reason, may be that CARTA relied on positive incentives to encourage participation—better project outcomes that would benefit everyone—rather than sanctions of any kind. The assumptions underlying this approach are: first, that as long as the project has sufficient time (or assistance) to build trust levels, it should be possible to effect positive changes without resorting

to sanctions; second, that the use of sanctions can create a threatening environment that can easily destroy trust levels and thus lead to lower levels of transparency; and third, that most people can do a good job if they have the knowledge and skill, and if the context encourages positive behavior. The effectiveness of this approach was evidenced by the improvement in relationships between the government implementing agencies and the CARTA CSOs.

²⁵ One example is the community score card, which is a very useful tool in its simplest form, but in CARTA tended to become overly complex as the CSO consultant attempted to fulfill the data needs of the project implementers and donors. In LGSP, the data collection became much too involved, so much so that the CSC process had to be discontinued because it became too complex (i.e., too many indicators), and citizens could keep clear what they were supposed to track. Another example is the use of citizen report cards. This tool is very useful in its simplest form—as a short action-research tool, based on citizen-defined indicators—but it became overly complex, with over 100 questions in some cases (LGSP, ROSC, etc.). This simple tool morphed into complicated document that eventually resembled a standard survey, although it kept the vestigial CSC name.

Lesson Eight

A third-party monitoring approach can generate genuine interest and engagement by communities to provide unique project data.

Whereas the typical monitoring and evaluation group within a project is mostly concerned with collecting data that matches project indicators, third-party monitoring can be used to draw out a broader range of stakeholder experiences, including

perceptions of project outcomes and impacts. Based on CARTA experiences, citizens see the value of independent third-party monitoring by CSOs and communities, because they believe it will be less biased.

Lesson Nine

Local independent monitoring organizations should be selected carefully.

It was essential that CARTA used an open competitive bidding process that rated “independence” over “facilitation-ability” in the selection of local CSOs. Given the country context, the critical factor was to select an organization that could build trust with citizens.²⁶ This meant that CSOs had to have credibility in the selected

geographic areas, but they also must not be servants of government or political interests. While there are tradeoffs, efforts should be to maximize the ‘independence’ of the local CSO, rather than seek one that is well connected to the government or politicians, and thus can facilitate relationships.

Lesson Ten

Independent monitoring is not a license to do whatever the monitoring entity wishes.

Parameters help both the implementer and the monitor, because they focus the activities in areas that can lead to real service delivery improvement. To build this common goal, task teams and project implementing agency staff should clearly identify the objectives and scope of the independent monitoring activities in a terms of reference agreement. Based on the CARTA experience, agreement by the central authority to use independent monitoring doesn’t necessarily lead to local cooperation. There must be agreement with key stakeholders on the specific methods, objectives, timing, and reporting at all levels of government. In the spirit of constructive engagement to build

trust, the terms of reference should be jointly reviewed with involved parties to verify mutual understanding of the contents. Understandably, there are practical considerations; it may be too difficult to contact local implementers to get their feedback on a terms of reference. Of course, mutual understanding can be easier if the independent monitoring starts with project inception and lasts for the duration of the project. Most implementers worry about wrong impressions of their project because the monitor took only a snapshot showing what still remained to be done, and not the progress made from the initial baseline.

26. Most of the CARTA CSOs in Nepal were national or regional organizations. They enhanced local sensitivities by hiring local staff or collaborating with local CSOs.

Lesson Eleven

The media played a role.

Two CARTA CSOs used the public media (radio) in two sub-projects as part of the monitoring activities. The benefits of using media to provide greater exposure to a project are well known: a “watch-dog” role can promote good governance by raising awareness, sensitizing people on good governance practices, and motivating all concerned stakeholders including contractors to be transparent and to carry out quality work. In CARTA, the media proved

to be an important vehicle for communication including: setting agendas, exposing malpractice, building awareness among citizens, and providing a forum for resolution of issues. In EPSP, local radio provided information related to the peace process, the role and responsibility of the Local Peace Committees and other service providers. The media was fundamental in disseminating the sub-projects’ success stories, and building transparency.

Lesson Twelve

Empowering the poor and marginalized to participate must be a leading objective, and not a byproduct of other goals

While the World Bank-funded projects were directed to enhance the participation levels of marginalized groups, this was one objective (perhaps the most difficult) among many. The World Bank-funded projects tried at least two approaches to increase participations levels for this group. Legislating participation, for example, by requiring minimum seats on committees for these groups is necessary, but was not always effective. Based on initial survey data, most marginalized groups were still under-represented, and those who did participate were not especially effective, since there were many barriers—education, status, history, lack of information, etc.—that reportedly impeded their contribution. Besides quotas, the World Bank projects also envisioned low-risk opportunities, such

as public hearings, for these marginalized groups to know more about the projects and their local government leaders. If the objective of increasing participation among the poor and marginalized was made primary, then it is possible that more focused efforts would have been made to identify innovative ways to bring these groups into the process to demand better government service delivery. CARTA was successful in increasing the participation rates by focusing on trainings and extended efforts to disseminate information about committee quotas, meetings and public hearings in poor and marginalized communities.²⁷ As a result, there were instances where conspicuously marginalized people²⁸ participated to a greater degree at public hearings.

Lesson Thirteen

It should not be assumed that the benefits of user groups will be known beforehand

In CARTA there were two sub-projects, RERED and BRWSSP, where user groups were initially

discouraged, but proved to very worthwhile and accepted over time.

²⁷ The sub-projects used “miking” (loudspeakers on vehicles), meetings with local leaders, newspapers, and posters to inform.

²⁸ According to observations by the CARTA partners.



6. Recommendations

The CARTA experience leads to several recommendations:

Recommendation One

In order to make TPM by citizens acceptable to stakeholders, such as government officials and others, a constructive engagement approach should be employed that takes the local context into consideration. All parties need to understand how TPM works and what will happen with the findings. The purpose is to avoid sanctions (unless there is illegal behavior) and instead create a collaborative approach that is open and positive.

Recommendation Two

Since TPM is intended to provide an external view of project processes and results, ensuring the independence of third-party monitors is critical. The assumption is that funding TPM with funds external to the project, rather than with project funds, avoids the conflicts of interest inherent when the implementer uses project funds to monitor its own activities. Based on the CARTA experience in both countries, CSOs reported that citizens admitted to being more willing to discuss project-related issues with an independent entity, compared to staff in the World Bank-funded project. The reason may be intuitive: citizens don't wish to criticize a donor directly while it is generously providing funds, but they are willing to share problems indirectly with an outside entity who promises anonymity and who will then feedback the information to the donor in a constructive way.

Recommendation Three

TPM effectiveness depends to a large extent on the credibility of the findings. What defines a credible finding needs to be understood by all parties from the beginning. For example, many of the CARTA CSOs often had difficulty defending the findings, primarily because the PIU has a different standard of evidence. They initially thought that the data would be based on certain data-collection methods, while the CSO used another approach. Effectiveness also depends on how the findings are presented to decision-makers (government, donors, and project implementers). The ways of sharing TPM findings with local stakeholders and the public need to be identified and agreed in advance.

Recommendation Four

Acceptance of the TPM findings by the donor and the government to a large extent depends on their involvement into the process of defining the scope for monitoring. Their initial engagement can help to increase the relevance of the TPM scope and to ease access to necessary project related information by monitors. In particular, the success of TPM may to a large extent depend on how well the indicators of its expected effectiveness and impact were defined in the beginning of the intervention. The objectives and scope of TPM need to be clearly defined and coordinated with different parties. For example, the roles of the entity providing TPM and of other organizations contracted directly by PIUs to implement social accountability and grievance mechanisms have to be delineated.

Recommendation Five

Full access to information (or willingness to provide full access to information) is an important precondition for conducting TPM activities quickly. The constructive engagement approach depends on willingness by all parties to provide timely information. However, even though cooperation is essential the differences in the role of each organization has to be maintained. For example, although a support letter from the government or donor can be a good “door opener” for the CSOs on the ground, there are certain conflict of interest issues involved with a donor providing backing to monitors in such a formal way. Also, non-disclosure agreements by TPM monitors, to facilitate monitoring operations, should be avoided. CARTA sub-projects did not enter into such agreements; however, there was agreement about the sequencing of public disclosure.

Recommendation Six

Finally, the trust level in communities needs to be built by demonstrating how the process works. CARTA initial data showed that there was much confusion in most projects among the local government officials, CSOs and citizens about third-party monitoring, using a constructive engagement approach. There was little to no experience with this concept; consequently, there was little initial trust in the methods used and skepticism about the expected outcomes. This undoubtedly led to lower levels of trust between the government officials and the citizens as rumors spread through negative anecdotal information. Only after the sub-projects started to actively engage the various parties could they see—and trust—that the steps would lead to more informed citizens who could engage actively in the World Bank-financed project activities. This was a step-by-step demonstration with hands-on involvement, not a classroom learning experience. In this case learning-by-doing was essential to building the trust levels needed.

ANNEXES





Nepal sub-project details

7.1 RAIDP

Before the subproject only a small number of verbal grievances had been filed. By the end of the subproject, 187 written grievances had been filed about the 27 road construction projects that were monitored; most were resolved satisfactorily.

The World Bank-financed Rural Access Improvement and Decentralization Project (RAIDP) is a follow-on project to the Rural Infrastructure Project (RIP), aimed at replicating good practices and lessons of RIP. Ideally, local CBOs would provide RAIDP implementers additional quality feedback of the construction work, including: the probity and integrity in contracting local labor; the resolution of complaints; information dissemination; indications of collusive procurement practices; and environmental and social safeguard issues. There were known accountability and capacity issues that prevented the effectiveness of CBOs, to function as planned:

- Monitoring of road construction was a random process; CBO members did not know their monitoring responsibilities; the technical aspects of monitoring were challenging for most monitors.
- Few CBO members had knowledge of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) due to a lack of training.
- Grievances were only submitted orally.

The purpose of the CARTA sub-project was to strengthen the capacities of different types of local road user committees, which monitor road construction. The CARTA team recognized that CBO members were discouraged from monitoring because of their inability to understand technical specifications. CARTA demonstrated that villagers could do this monitoring, provided they had some knowledge and simple tools.

CARTA introduced a tool kit that enabled local citizens to monitor road construction quality. Based on a comparison of base- and end-line survey data, by the end of the sub-project, 84% of CBOs did monitoring, whereas none did before receiving the training and toolkit. The number of grievances filed about construction deficiencies and other issues provides an indication of the subproject's impact. Before the subproject only a small number of verbal grievances had been filed. By the end of the subproject, 187 written grievances had been filed about the 27 road construction projects that were monitored; most were

7.1 RAIDP cont.

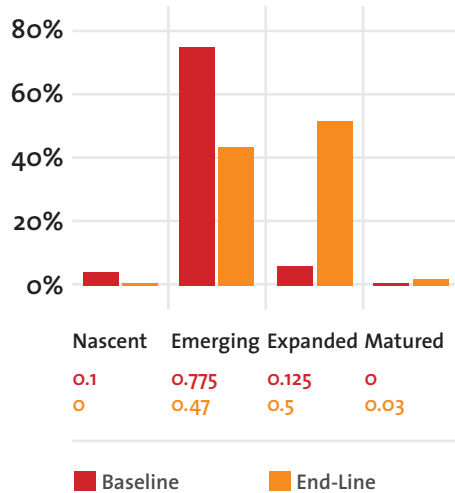
resolved satisfactorily. And, due to the increased filed written grievances, district government agencies have experienced frequent monitoring by officers from the local development office and district's technical staff. One unexpected result, which clearly showed the success of the project was that other communities from non-CARTA locations came to learn how to use these tools so they could begin monitoring road projects in their community. Recognizing this success, the World Bank included more citizen monitoring using the simple tools in the subsequent project.

One of the primary lessons learned was that local citizens could monitor technical projects, provided certain interventions: citizens needed (1) training in their roles and responsibilities; (2) knowledge of acceptable road-building practices;²⁹ (3) a simple tool to “standardize” their assessment;³⁰ (4) practice using their knowledge and tools; and, (5) training to effectively use the data. When these needs were met, citizens could effectively monitor construction quality.

²⁹. The Environmental and Social Management Framework manual is an example
³⁰. The labor-based tool kit is an example.

7.2 PAF2

CSO Capacity Classifications



The Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF2) Project, funded by the World Bank, and implemented by the Poverty Alleviation Fund Nepal, involves over 20,000 Community Organizations (COs) throughout Nepal. The development objective is to improve living conditions, livelihoods and empowerment among the rural poor, with particular attention to groups that have been excluded by reasons of gender, ethnicity, caste or location. The Fund implements the project by signing agreements with Partner Organizations (POs), which act as intermediaries between the Fund and COs.³¹ The POs are responsible for delivering services to facilitate the formation of COs, provide technical assistance to COs, supervise them, and facilitate their institutional maturation.³² The POs provide services to COs through their Social Mobilizers (SMs), who are supposed to visit COs at least monthly. The types of services are based on an assessment of the COs and their needs. Based on this analysis, SMs prepare annual action plans with COs and then are responsible for training events included in these plans.

The CARTA sub-project activities had two main objectives: to increase the COs' abilities to hold their PO's more accountable by demanding services that they are entitled to and to strengthen COs' support to their constituent communities. To enable the COs to demand PO services, CARTA trained COs and provided follow-up coaching support to strengthen them organizationally to understand PO obligations under the PAF 2 project. This knowledge allowed the CO members to recognize and claim their rights and entitlements, which would make the POs more accountable toward the COs and also improve the POs' performance.

31. The Fund is not mandated to directly work with COs formed at a local level.

32. In this process the CSO will learn to network and partner with different stakeholders, other POs—including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), local government bodies such as Village Development Committees (VDCs), District Development Committees (DDCs), and humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross.

7.2 PAF2 cont.

Baseline and end-line survey data—using a CSO organizational capacity assessment tool (OCAT)³³—showed that COs’ organizational capacities had increased substantially since the beginning of the sub-project. Before sub-project interventions, 89% of the COs were classified as “nascent” or “emerging”; after the sub-project interventions, 50% of the COs were rated “expanded” or “matured.” Several specific improvements demonstrated the COs’ increased capacities:

- 100% of targeted COs now conducted self-reviews, compared to 17.5% before CARTA.
- 100% of the COs now received training plans from their POs, compared to 0% before.

Although the frequency of visits by SMs increased only marginally during the sub-project, the quality of their support improved. Survey results indicated that at the end of the sub-project 92% of the COs were satisfied with the services provided by POs, compared to 60% at the beginning.

33. The OCAT tool, introduced by FCSN, enables a comprehensive assessment of the functional capacity of an organization, by focusing on seven components of organizational effectiveness—governance, management practices, human resources, financial resources, service delivery, external relations, and sustainability. This OCAT data was primarily used to rate the institutional development of a CO. The tool consolidates the various data into a single score, from zero to four—scores from 0 to 1.4 were categorized as “Nascent,” from 1.5 to 2.4 as “Emerging,” from 2.5 to 3.4 as “Expanding,” and, from 3.5 to 4 as “Mature.”

7.3 Event

According to Miss Pabitra Pokhrel, one of the trainees who attended the LToT training in Biratnagar, “The presence of a monitor has made us more serious in our learning process, ... since we have the feeling that there is someone who is inspecting our performance.”

The World Bank-financed *Enhanced Vocational Education and Training Project* (EVENT) focuses on creating skilled human resources. Essentially, EVENT trains a professional training cadre who in turn train workers, or individuals who can assess worker skills, in key trades. The objective is to improve the skill levels of workers within Nepal and the opportunities for better paid work for migrant workers. The Ministry of Education (MOE), the implementer, entered into MOUs with two Nepali organizations, the Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI), and the National Skill Testing Board (NSTB), to do five categories of trainings: “Master trainers”, “Lead trainers”, and “Assistant trainers”, “Skills test assessors” and “Skills test manager”. Trainees were selected through an open, transparent process that was advertised locally and nationally.

The primary objective of the CARTA sub-project was to verify the accuracy of reports of outputs under one component of the WB-funded project, which were used to trigger the disbursement of funds from the World Bank. The sub-project also rated the quality of the training, using a beneficiaries-satisfaction-survey questionnaire. The 2012-13 and 2013-14 training sessions were sampled.

The findings generally verified the accuracy of the reported outputs. However, problems areas included the limited effectiveness of the chosen notification processes to inform interested participants about the training sessions and the inability of most skills assessors to use their newly acquired skills. Although the EVENT sub-project was designed primarily to verify reported project information and assess the quality of training, in surveys trainees reported that the presence of independent third party monitors also improved the quality of the training.

Vijaya FM (101.6 MHz) was the project’s media partner. From May 2013 until August 2014, this partner broadcast a total of 32 episodes, on a fortnightly basis, using interviews with the stakeholders to convey information about the training sessions. To make the radio interviews more useful, Vijaya also uploaded its broadcast for on-line listening in case listeners missed the biweekly show. These broadcasts also included features about the use of TPM—observations about on-the-spot monitoring, with expert views on the benefits of TPM. It appears that local radio and newspapers are less effective in remote areas, causing fewer marginalized people to participate. One reason may be the expense of owning a radio or buying a newspaper, but the factors need more study.

7.4 SSRP

According to the Assistant District Education Officer (ADEO), “The main problem is the lack of accurate information throughout the printing and distribution process. The system is not functioning.”

The *School Sector Reform Project* (SSRP) is a continuation of the ongoing *Education for All* program in Nepal. In 1975, the Government of Nepal began distributing—at no cost—textbooks to primary students in remote districts. Since 2010, free textbooks have been distributed to all students up to grade 10 in community schools throughout the country. According to the program guidelines, students are expected to receive their textbooks by April 28, but unfortunately, textbooks have not been getting to students by this date. The CARTA sub-project survey revealed that 45% of students reported receiving an incomplete set of textbooks by April 28. The district education office of Janakpur complained that until CARTA provided some verifiable data, they could not trust any textbook data it received. During a meeting, district officials explained the problem: the central authorities believe the local enrollment levels are inflated, so they send only 60-75% of the money to the schools to purchase books. The schools know this will happen, and routinely increase the enrollment figures to compensate. The ministry knows the numbers are even more inflated, and decreases the amount sent to buy books by even more—and the schools compensate by increasing enrollment figures even more.

The primary role of the CARTA sub-project was to provide data about the textbook production and delivery processes and familiarize stakeholders with these processes. The specific goals³⁴ of the sub-project were to verify the quantity of printed textbooks versus plan and report the numbers received by students.

The outcome was that CARTA provided reliable data which led to a greater understanding of the real production and distribution problems. The CARTA data was widely accepted as being the only accurate information available, because the use of an independent third-party monitor provided the objectivity needed for all stakeholders to trust the numbers. Consequently, one of the districts asked CARTA to expand its data collection activities to include larger samples from more locations. The World Bank TTL also made a special request for the CARTA project to expand monitoring activities to all private printers.

34. The sub-project had four objectives: a) to familiarize stakeholders with the printing and distribution process, b) to verify the quantity of printed school textbook as per printing plan; c) to gather data about the distribution process, and d) to make recommendations to improve the process.

7.5 EPSP

CARTA increased delivery of benefits—80% of entitled beneficiaries received rehabilitation support compared to 21% before CARTA. This was likely due to increased awareness levels of benefits—96% of beneficiaries knew about EPSP compared to 56% before CARTA.

The World Bank provided financial support for the implementation of an Emergency Peace Support Project (EPSP) in 73 districts of Nepal. This assistance included: rehabilitation support to conflict-affected families and individuals; cash benefits to families and widows of those killed as a result of the conflict; capacity building of institutional structures in support of the peace process; and project management support. A rapid assessment showed that monitoring was lacking after support had been provided, the grievance mechanism was not in place (no grievances were recorded), and there were few awareness-raising activities.

The objective of the CARTA sub-project was to:

- Assess the extent that service providers were delivering the rehabilitation support to CAPs to which they are entitled.
- Increase understanding of the benefits available among beneficiaries, by increasing citizens' familiarity with peace support packages.
- Revitalize the grievance mechanism at the local level.
- Promote accountability among service providers (SPs) by identifying areas for improvement.

The sub-project produced a report based on the citizen report cards as well as a final assessment. Both reports included recommendations to improve the delivery of benefits to CAPs.

The awareness campaign and dissemination of information resulted in an increase in multi-stakeholder engagement. For instance, local peace committees (LPCs), CAPs, civil society and political parties publicly committed their support to enhance the effectiveness of EPSP through citizen participation. The service providers showed notable improvement by the end of the sub-project: 89% of the service providers knew their roles and delivered rehabilitation support to entitled CAPs.

Some of the key results included:

- Increased citizen engagement and empowerment facilitated the formation and organization of local CAP alert groups, citizen charters and LPCs at the village development committee (VDC) level.
- Establishment of effective grievance mechanisms in each of the 16 VDCs.
- Enhanced fulfillment of the Right to Information Act 2064 through the formation of an information desk at the district level.
- Increased citizen awareness and motivation through media mobilization. Local FM radio broadcasted interviews with key stakeholders and motivated citizens to follow community organizations and informed people about grievance management mechanisms to register complaints at LPC.

7.6 CAN

The administrative problems are significant: One village claimed that, “We only received the second disbursement after over 10 requests.”

The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) has been implementing the *Community Action for Nutrition* (CAN) Project with the support of the World Bank. The primary goal is to improve nutritional practices of women and children. The project uses a rapid results approach—based on a 100-day project cycle—with nutrition improvement objectives selected by communities from a prescribed list.

CARTA provided independent third-party monitoring using seven Cluster-Verification Officers to monitor the implementation process and verify CAN project reports. Focus-group discussions, key informant interviews, and field observations were used to collect information after completion of the first cycle of CAN initiatives, and initiation of second cycle initiatives.

The monitoring identified several deviations from mandated procedures and inaccuracies in service providers’ reports. For example, there were delays in the approval of initiatives, the release of funds and the completion of initiatives (only 59% of the first cycle initiatives were completed within 100 days); orientation meetings, planned reviews, and monitoring were delayed or not conducted; and public audits were only conducted in 46% of the first cycle cases. The reports were considered accurate in only 62% of the first cycle cases. The monitoring also reported several positive outcomes, including greater community awareness of a nutrition project, community enthusiasm about the opportunities to participate in the selection and implementation of initiatives, and the inclusiveness of the process.



Bangladesh sub-project details

7.7 ROSC II

“One of the schools was located next to an ordinary primary school. Stakeholders complained about this misplacement, but had not been able to influence the decision to change the location. Vested interests and local elite influence in decisions came to light.”

–Knud Nielsen, CARTA adviser

The development objective of the ROSC II Project in Bangladesh is to improve equitable access, retention and completion in quality primary education for out-of-school children in selected under-served areas. “ROSC faces challenges mainly associated with public information disclosure, citizens’ oversight and vigilance, grievance redress mechanism, and clarity in roles and reporting arrangements, as well as technical aspects and financial monitoring at the local level” (WB, 2015, p25). There was a need for independent monitoring of the selection process for the schools location, students and teachers under CARTA program.

Consequently the CARTA sub-project had a dual focus:

- Verifying the eligibility and selection process – LC locations, teachers, children (rural areas) - by conducting a survey; and
- Strengthening capacities of CMC and parents to supervise and assess performance of the LCs by introducing Parent School Committees to the Community Score Card (CSC) tool.

Using surveys and input tracking tools, CARTA reported cases of non-compliance with LC location requirements and teachers and children selection requirements e.g. parents presented fake birth certificates to qualify.

7.7 ROSC II cont.

After capacity building with CMCs and Parents School Committees in the use of CSCs, improvements were noted in the following:

- Increased adherence to CMC roles and responsibilities, including additional public meetings and more participatory decision making.
- Increased displays of LC action plans. Increased transparency and access to information was also observable in CMC meetings
- Increased capacities of Center Management Committees (CMCs) and parents to supervise and assess LCs' performance, with an increased number of CMC visit to LCs.
- Enhanced community participation in the physical improvement of LCs, especially water and sanitation facilities. Several LCs generated local funds to pay for these improvements.
- Organization of annual sports and picnic events with community support for the first time.

Most significant, the survey findings supported the contention that the ROSC schools appear to be competing with the local public schools, rather than augmenting the public system. The ROSC schools appear to be a "first choice" for parents, because the local public schools are perceived to be inferior, while these ROSC schools are perceived to be higher quality.³⁵

Consequently, where this is a ROSC school in the vicinity, there is less support for the public schools. This claim is supported by two early observations: first, the students selected for ROSC appear to be almost all "new" students, not primarily dropouts as intended. Second, according to local interviews, the ROSC schools are affecting the enrollments levels of the local public schools in the area. Apparently in some catchment areas this is depriving the public schools of sufficient students.

³⁵ There is also a claim that there are financial reasons for choosing the ROSC schools over the public.

7.8 RERED

“The replication and sustainable use of SHS technology is linked to users’ proper awareness and adequate education related to the...O&M issues”

(WB, 2015, p30).

The *Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development (RERED II)* Project was designed to increase access to electricity by expanding the use of Solar Home Systems (SHSs) in rural areas of Bangladesh. The Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL) started the SHS program to supplement the Government’s vision of ensuring “Access to Electricity for All” by 2021. The SHS program aims to provide access to clean electricity for the energy-starved, off-grid rural areas of Bangladesh.

The purpose of CARTA was to provide detailed survey information about the usage of solar home systems, user satisfaction levels, problems associated with the use of systems, training experiences from the entity providing the SHS, and demographic information.

Based on initial survey findings, owners of SHS units required more training to operate solar units effectively. Consequently, it was recommended to begin capacity-building activities for newly created user groups, although this suggestion was initially not encouraged by the IDCOL. As a result of user-group trainings the time taken by POs to resolve a SHS problem decreased from “31-60” days to “1-15” days, and there was a decrease in problems experienced with SHS equipment—from 28% of households initially to only 5% by the end of the sub-project, and for businesses from 16% who had problems in the beginning to just 1% by the end. There was also an unplanned result—commercial vendors that supply the solar heaters found that better-informed user groups actually help them make more sales. Apparently, based on interviews, users who are better trained, make better use of the equipment, have fewer operating problems, and become more positive about recommending the apparatus to other potential buyers. Sales increased because user problems decreased.

7.9 BRWSSP

After CARTA WUCs were reformed and now included 30% of female members.

One objective of the Bangladesh Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Project (BRWSSP) is to increase the provision of safe water supply in the rural areas of Bangladesh, where shallow aquifers are highly contaminated by arsenic and other pollutants such as salinity, iron, and bacterial pathogens. In each locality, the water delivery service was outsourced to a CSO that had a 19-yr license to provide the water in that specific community. Water rates were supervised by a separate board; a Water User Committee provided feedback to the CSO on issues. Based on a pre-CARTA assessment, communities reported relatively poor awareness of the functions of the water user committees (WUCs) even though they are supposed to play a key role in the management and maintenance of the tube-wells. The World Bank had also identified “a lack of effective grievance redress mechanism.”³⁶

Based on this initial assessment, CARTA was asked to:

- Monitor the quality and outcomes of the social mobilization process under both BRWSSP components using a Citizen Report Card (CRC);
- Provide community feedback to DPHE to help improve the responsiveness of the service providers; and,
- Build the capacities of BRWSSP partners to use a constructive engagement approach with service users through trainings in the use of Community Scores Cards (CSC)

The first CARTA survey data reported additional issues:

- WUCs were not formed according to guidelines; specifically the membership did not include sufficient females (30%) and at least one representative from the very poor.
- Water users were not aware of the WUC.
- Water providers were not motivated to make concessions to the poor to achieve their client targets.
- No formal meetings were conducted between CSOs and Water User Committees.

³⁶ The project does not have GAAP but its ORAF identified lack of effective grievance redress mechanism as main SA challenge. (World Bank (2015). Portfolio review of social accountability approaches in WB-funded projects in the context of Bangladesh WB “Triple-5” strategy and the Citizen Engagement Framework, p28.)

7.9 BRWSSP cont.

CARTA collected data and held trainings to increase the knowledge levels of the committee members about BRWSSP, and in the use of several social accountability tools. The outcomes was that committee members became more active, which led to several reactions:

- DPHE officials agreed to increase their role in local level monitoring.
- Communities have begun to realize that they will take over the water schemes in the future; the CSO will manage the project for a defined period only. This realization is believed to be one reason for sustainable community participation.
- CSOs realized the value in improving their service based on feedback from users.
- Community awareness improved for the subsequent BRWSSP-II³⁷ (e.g. 88% of the respondents were aware of the upcoming pipe line water system in their locality)

The World Bank 2015 Portfolio Review of Social Accountability Approaches in Bangladesh, also noted two important lessons learned from the CARTA independent monitoring process (p29):

- Users engagement in service management is dependent to a large extent on the quality of initial community mobilization process; and,
- Community Score Cards can be an effective tool for making a WUC operational, and enabling constructive dialogue between service users and providers.

³⁷The end-line survey included communities that would be part of the World Bank-funded follow-on project.

7.10 LGPS-II

The citizen monitoring group (set up under CARTA as an external monitor to the LGSP project) has become the “most important committee in our UP. They make things happen, because they keep an eye on what’s going on, and report the gaps, so we can make improvements.”

-UP Chairman

LGSP-II is a national decentralization project that aims to strengthen local governance. LGSP II provides grants to Union Parishads (UPs) - the oldest and local government system in Bangladesh – so UP communities can determine which public projects serve best them. The main purpose of the project is to build the capacity of local governments to manage public services and resources. The project structure uses a block-grant methodology – from the central government to the UP. Two local UP committees are the key actors: the Ward Committee (WC) is responsible for the planning, procurement and implementation of the public projects while the Scheme Supervision Committee (SSC) acts as the local monitoring agency.

These committees had many challenges:

- Lack of experience and skills for community engagement in budgetary processes.
- Limited experience in active disclosure of information.
- Low community demand for budget transparency.
- Poor citizen feedback mechanisms to measure citizen satisfaction with local governance and service delivery.
- The WC formation process was not participatory as directed by the UP’s operation manual.

The CARTA sub-project was mainly a TPM project, which employed social audit tools. The main capacity building component consisted in forming and training a new citizen group (CGs) under CARTA, whose members were charged with monitoring the LGSP-II block-grant process by reviewing WC and SSC performance. These CGs were effective; as a result of the extensive capacity building under CARTA: LGSP committee members now follow the prescribed LGSP-II operations manual procedures. The proof is based on a World Bank audit—almost all the CARTA UPs received subsequent “good governance,” performance-based allocations: in Satkhira, 28 out of 30 UPs received more funds; in Nilphamari and Jessore, 24 out 30.

The CARTA UPs demonstrated a significant improvement in transparency and accountability. For example, all the UPs now posted their budgets, projects and meeting dates, and even membership in committees compared to 70% (Nilphamari, Jessore) and 78% (Satkhira) at the sub-project’s outset; and, all UP committee and community members had knowledge of the LGSP-II scheme, compared to 80% (Nilphamari, Jessore) and 58% (Satkhira) before the CARTA trainings. Another significant achievement was the increase in women-led projects in Jessore and Nilphamari UPs, where 25 new projects were started

7.10 LGPS-II cont.

compared to only a single woman-led project in the year prior to CARTA activities. This increase was attributable to the CARTA trainings which included information about quotas for women-run projects.

One surprising comment from one UP chairpersons that is believed to be representative of others, was that increasing the role of citizens in the decision-making process had not made their job more difficult, but had simplified their work. Now, there are fewer time-consuming, “unreasonable” requests from citizens, because the villagers know what the budget allows and what the village projects will be for the next year. Villagers no longer need to ask; the plan is visible to all, and since the citizens agreed on the projects, he does not have to constantly defend a decision to use funds for a particular project over another.

One perceived result of increased citizen awareness that bears further study has been an increase in local tax collection to support future projects: 43% of the targeted tax level was collected versus 35% at the beginning. There appears to be a growing recognition by local citizens that tax funds will be used for projects that benefit themselves and their community. The perception that payment of taxes and future improvements seems to be growing. As one UP chairperson remarked, when asked if the citizens understood the necessity to pay taxes to see improvements, “the people know they are responsible for paying taxes. I tell them that if they don’t pay; we won’t provide the service—it’s that simple.”

7.11 SIPP-II

Only 39% committee members admitted that the loans are used for right purpose and are duly monitored. In addition, 27% of committee members believe that the loan is a grant so it does not have to be repaid.

-CARTA survey

The Social Investment Program Project (SIPP II), is designed to improve the livelihoods, quality of life and resilience to climate variability, natural hazards and other shocks, of the rural poor, especially the left-out poor and vulnerable households. This particular project had a unique feature: as part of the World Bank design, a Social Audit Committee was established in all village level micro-credit schemes to ensure compliance with project operating manuals. Overall the SIPP project had suspected governance issues, but it was not clear from a citizen's perspective how the project was functioning. 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:

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

CARTA created a citizen monitoring group (CMG) in each community to interface with SIPP committee members and local citizens. The CMG reported several specific problems that were later addressed in CARTA trainings:

- There was a general lack of knowledge in a community about SIPP.
- There were low levels of administrative transparency; most villagers did not know how the micro-credit system operates.
- Some questionable practices (such as deleting a depositor's name, and using an individual's deposit to repay a group loan without the person's knowledge) have been reported.
- The grievance process was not known.
- The Social Audit Committees were not functioning.
- Most of the Gram Parishad committees do not function well.

7.11 SIPP-II cont.

The CARTA data showed that SIPP was better implemented in one district, Jamalpur, but not as well in Gaibandha. This disparity showed the importance of context. The primary issue in Gaibandha was a misunderstanding by individuals from the implementing agency for the World bank-funded project of the independent monitoring process.

There were common issues that pertained to both districts. These included:

- Arranging meetings during the harvesting season was a main challenge since most of the villagers were engaged in more important work with their crops.
 - The distances between villages, poor communication system, and the rainy season together presented obstacles that hampered project activities.
- Through the data collection process, it was noticed that many officials and elites were reluctant to cooperate when asked for an interview. It is believed that widespread knowledge in the community of their unwillingness to cooperate had a negative effect on the beneficiary willingness to participate freely in public hearings. A complete buy-in from all stakeholders is required for the free flow of information.



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