



Impact of Horizontal Learning Program in Capacity Building of Union Parishad in Bangladesh

Manika Mitra ¹ and Shreekant Sharma²

Introduction

The Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) is an outcome-based Union Parishad (UP) led peer-to-peer learning platform, facilitated by the Local Government Division (LGD)³ and supported by development partners. Under this program, local governments (mainly Union Parishads and some Pourashavas) connect with each other to identify, share and replicate good practices of their peers. The goal of the HLP is to contribute to reforming of accountability of service providers to consumers; local and central governments to citizens; as well as projects to partners to ensure basic services for all. The local replication of existing successful practices of local governments contributes to the confidence of local government institutions (LGIs) to support an institutional environment for growth. Partners of HLP in the initial stage are World Bank, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, Development Association for Self-Reliance, Communication and Health (DASCOH); Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Plan Bangladesh; Water Aid Bangladesh through its local NGOs-Shushilon, Green Hill and Mohideb Jubo Samaj Kallyan Somiti (MJSKS); Dhaka Ahsania Mission , NGO Forum.

Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh

The traditional capacity building program usually starts with assumption that "there is a lack of capacity" that has to be addressed. What, how, and when these deficiencies will be delivered are generally decided upon by experts. In contrast, the basic assumption in the horizontal learning program is that "there are existing capacities, which are working well at grassroots level". What, how, and when learning will be undertaken is decided by a peer group. Therefore, though the horizontal learning

¹ Research Officer, National Institute of Local Government (NILG), Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C), Bangladesh. E-mail Id: manika_khama@yahoo.com

² Associate Faculty Member, School of Entrepreneurship and Extension, National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Hyderabad, India. E-mail Id: shreekant21@gmail.com

³ Ahmed Shams Uddin and Lahiri Santanu, "Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh"(November 1, 2011 to October 31, 2015).

program is not replacing conventional capacity building efforts, it aims to reinforce the target groups' commitment for enhancing its own capacities. Similarly, capacity building efforts are also adding values to horizontal learning program. The horizontal learning approach was launched in July and November 2007. This approach is intended to complement conventional methods of capacity building.

The UPs and partners stressed the need for actively involving the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives (MoLGRD & C), Government of Bangladesh (GoB), especially since the long term sustainability of the program had to be ensured. Subsequently, a learning framework was developed in consultation with UPs and partners. According to this framework, the LGD took the lead role in providing national-level policy support to the HLP.¹ The WSP was assigned to coordinate activities. The LGD designated a Deputy Secretary (Water Supply), who would act as the Focal Person of the HLP, thus giving the program an institutional and official shape.² The LGD started its formal activities by issuing letters to Deputy Commissioners, with copies sent to respective Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO) s of districts under the HLP.³

Review of Literature

Several studies have been identified in capacity building of the UPs in Bangladesh. The term capacity building has been defined to this effect: strengthening of an organization in order to perform specified activities (Eade, 1997). Adgate Mikelle; Hariri Maryam; Matheny Kathryn; Mendez Ethel & Singer Tammy (2009) conducted a study on "Horizontal Learning Program: An Independent Assessment" where they mentioned that HLP had been instrumental in building skills and knowledge across local government institutions in rural Bangladesh and it is employing the knowledge of experts, the program recognized local capacities and facilitates exchanges of knowledge across participating actors. It was a program with tremendous potential as it complements existing top-down capacity building efforts. Tsumagari I. Maki, Ph.D. (2013) carried out a study on the "Assessment of the Contribution of Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) to/from JICA Projects in Bangladesh" where she mentioned that HLP is an effective mechanism for project implementation agencies like JICA to create models. The study showed that HLP's peer-to-peer learning to be brought to the national level discussion; personnel are required to navigate the vertical channel to negotiate with HLP, other partners, and JICA Country Office. Islam M. Shafiqul, Rahman Mohammad Atiqur, Lahiri Lahiri and Ellery Mark etc. (2008) wrote the annual report on July 2007-June 2008 named "Horizontal Learning Program" mentioning that the most innovative

¹Ahmed Shams Uddin and LahiriSantanu, "Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh" (P-22/44, November 1, 2011 to October 31, 2015).

²Meeting minutes on Institutionalization of HLP in Bangladesh, Conference room of the Local Government Division, 11 November, 2010.

³Circulars Memo. No. -46.085.018.05.00.022.2011/-500(60) Dated:31/10/2011.

part of horizontal learning is introducing an 'appreciative inquiry' method for connecting UPs together in a process of peer-to-peer learning. This has naturally resulted in a self-motivated collaborative style among the UPs, who even provide 'hand holding' support to their peers. They also recommended that the strength of the horizontal learning process is organically growing deeper (that is, a growing range of best practices), moving horizontally (that is, across UPs), and going downwards (that is, peer learning across the wards), and going upwards (that is, learning of partner agencies). The sustainability of this process depends much on the endurance of the spirit of togetherness among the UPs, continuous discovering of the capacities that they already possess, and mutual sharing and support to enhance these capacities.

Research Question

This study tries to answer the following questions: 1) What are the impacts of HLP in capacity building of UPs; 2) What are the opinions/ impression of UPs about HLP; 3) How HLP helps UPs to institutionalize their good practices; 4) How HLP contributes in disseminating good practices to others?

Objectives of the Study

The principal objective of the study is to assess the impact of HLP in capacity building through learning of good practices. Other objectives of this study are as follows:

- To assess the impact of HLP in capacity building of UP (functionaries , institutions);
- To analyze the present situation of /overview good practices of Union Parishad identified by HLP;
- To find out the opinions of UP functionaries regarding HLP.

Methodology

This paper is mostly qualitative and had some extent explanatory, analytical and descriptive. However, in some cases a combination of approaches was adopted to collect qualitative and quantitative information.

Method of Data Collection

The study adopted various methodology to collect information i.e. review of secondary data from different published materials like the publication of HLP supported by WSP of the World Bank, Newsletter, Fact Sheets, Journals, books, Workshop reports, Meeting resolution, different studies on HLP, relevant writings of some scholars etc. Data were also collected using telephone survey to the secretary of in 110 selected UPs through UP Help line with a structured questionnaire. In-Depth Interviews with HLP Experts through email and face to face in-depth interview with selected six UP Chairmen and Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO) of the study areas and six focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted in 6 Union Parishads of the study area to get their views and comments about HLP. In the respective study area, all the members were attended in the FGDs. Observation method was also used in this study.

Location of the Study

There are 4571 Union Parishads at present in Bangladesh. For the telephone survey on HLP the study had been taken the information of 110 UPs and for the in-depth interview and workshops, the study area had been covered six union Parishads. These are as follows

S.L.	Division	District	Upazila	Union Parishad
1.	Rajshahi	ChapaiNawabganj	ChapaiNawabganjSadar	Ranihati UP
2.	Dhaka	Kishoregonj	Karimgonj	DehundaUP
3.	Rajshahi	Sirajgong	Tarash	Madainagar UP
4.	Rangpur	Nilphamari	Sayedpur	Boltagari UP
5.	Khulna	Satkhira	Tala	Tala UP
6.	Sylhet	Maulavibazar	MaulavibazarSadar	Mustafapur UP

N.B. These UPs were selected purposively with different identical nature like where the HLP concept was already disseminated, which UPs were already used for piloting of HLP and which were the best performer of HLP good practice.

Results and Discussion

1.1: Assessment on HLP

At the outset of survey, the 110 UP Secretaries of HLP area were asked whether they have the knowledge about HLP. In the table-1.1 and in the figure-1, it depicts that ninety seven percent of the UP secretaries replied that they had knowledge about HLP.

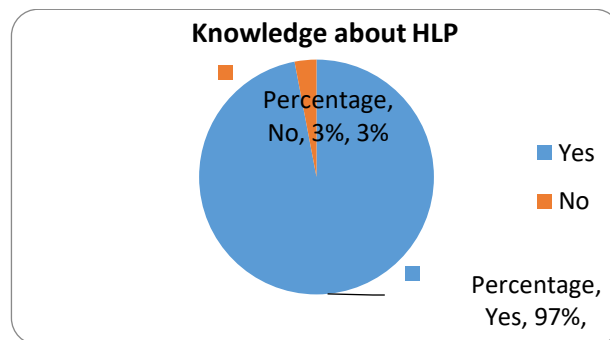


Figure-1: Knowledge about HLP

Table- 1.1: Present Status of HLP in HLP concept disseminated areas

Present Status	No. Ups	%
Still involved with HLP (Yes)	84	76
Not involved with HLP (No)	18	16
No Information regarding the specific matter (Do not know)	4	4
The new deputy commissioner obturated HLP from his district after his joining	1	1
HLP related works were happened two years ago	1	1
After 2012 not a single activities of HLP had been happened in his UP	1	1
HLP related works were happened three years ago	1	1
Total	110	100

Source: Telephone Survey 2015-16.

According to the table-1.1, it also reveals that approximately 76% UPs are currently involved with HLP whether 16% UPs are not currently involved with HLP. Only 4% mentioned that they don't know whether their UPs are involved with HLP at present. On the other hand 4 % of the total respondents particularly told that there is no activity on HLP at present. Up secretary of Saitara Union Parishad told that the deputy commissioner obturated HLP from his district after his joining while Rajarhat Up secretary told that HLP related works were happened two years ago. Now there is no activity on it. Biddanondo UP secretary answered that before 2012 HLP activities had been happened in his UP where as Fulsara UP secretary answered that HLP related works were happened three years ago in their UP.

According to the above table-1.2, it also shows that 84 UPs has the good practices out of 110. Out of 84 UPs 25 % had $1 \leq 2$ number of good practices; 21 % had $3 \leq 4$ number of good practices; 17 % had $5 \leq 6$ good practices; 13 % had $7 \leq 8$ good practices and 11 % had 10 + good practices. On the other hand, 7 % said they had no good practices and only 1 % mentioned that they had no information regarding good practices.

Table- 1.2: Number of Good Practices is running by HLP linked UPs

Number of Good Practices	No. Ups	%
$>1 \leq 2$	21	25
$> 3 \leq 4$	18	21
$> 5 \leq 6$	14	17
$> 7 \leq 8$	11	13
$> 9 \leq 10$	4	5
> 10	9	11
No	6	7
No information regarding good practices	1	1
Total	84	100

Source: Telephone Survey 2015-16

Table- 1.3: Replication of Good Practices by Other UPs

Response	No. Ups	%
Yes	36	33
No	42	38
Do not know	32	29
Total	110	100

Source: Telephone Survey 2015-16. Here Do not know means no information regarding the specific matter.

In the survey areas, approximately 38% UP secretaries mentioned that they didn't replicate good practices from other UPs whether 33% told that they replicated good practices and 29 % didn't know about the status of replication of good practices.

Table-1.4: Number of Good Practices has been replicated by other UPs

Number of Good Practices	No. Ups	%
1-10	29	26
11-20	2	2
21-30	1	1
31-40	1	1
41-50	-	-
50+	3	3
No	68	61
No information regarding good practices	6	6
Total	110	100

Source: Telephone Survey 2015-16

Thus, table-1.4 reveals that most of the sample UPs (61%) didn't replicate their good practices. Maximum UPs (33%) told that other UPs were replicating their good practices and only 6% UPs told that they didn't had any information regarding good practices. It also reveals that according to 33 % UPs who said other UPs replicated their good practices; these good practices number is 1-10 which percentage are 26. On the other hand, 3% UPs replicated good practice number is 50+ where only 1 % UPs told that the replicated good practices number is 31- 40.

Table-1.5: Replication of Good Practices by Own UPs from Other UPs

Response	No. Ups	%
Yes	54	49
No	24	22
Do not know	32	29
Total	110	100

Source: Telephone Survey 2015-16. Here Do not know means no information regarding the specific matter.

In table-1.5, it is shown that the status of implementation of good practices from other UPs in own UPs. Here we can say that 49% UPs told that good practices are replicated from other UPs where 22% said that no good practice replicated from other UPs. On the other hand, 29% UPs mentioned that they don't know about good practices.

Table- 1.6: Number of Good Practices has been considered for replication by own UPs

Number of Good Practices	No. Ups	%
$>1 \leq 2$	44	81
$> 3 \leq 4$	7	13
$> 5 \leq 6$	2	4
$> 7 \leq 8$	1	2
Total	54	100

Source: Telephone Survey 2015-16.

It also depicts in the above table-1.6 that about 81% UPs implemented good practices number is $1 \leq 2$ from other UPs whether 13% implemented good practice number is $3 \leq 4$ from other UPs in their UPs. Only 2 % UPs had implemented good practices from other UPs in their UPs whose number is $7 \leq 8$.

Table-1.7: Allocation of Budget in the FY 2015-2016 for implementation of Good Practices activities

Response	No. Ups	%
Yes	32	29
No	52	47
Do not know	26	24
Total	110	100

Source: Telephone Survey 2015-16. Here Do not know means no information regarding the specific matter.

Table-1.7 says about the status of money allocation in UP budget of 2015-2016 for implementation of HLP activities. Here we can see that 29 % UPs told that they allocated money in their budget for HLP activities like exposure visit, peer learning and workshop etc. On the other hand, 47% UPs said that they didn't allocate money in their budget for HLP activities and 24% Ups told that they had no information regarding budget allocation for HLP activities.

Table-1.8: Amount of budget for implementation of HLP activities

Amount (BDT)	No. Ups	%
Up to TK.100000/=	22	69
$> 100001 \leq 200000$ /=	6	19
$>200001 \leq 300000$ /=	2	6
$>300001 \leq 400000$ /=	2	6
Total	32	100

Source: Telephone Survey 2015-16.

In the above table-1.8, the highest percentage of money allocation for HLP activities is BDT 100000/= which is 69% where as the second highest percentage is 19 and which value is BDT $> 100001 \leq 200000$ /. The highest value of money allotment is BDT $> 300001 \leq 400000$ /=and $> 200001 \leq 300000$ /= but which is the lowest in percentage like (6%) in considering UPs number for HLP activities.

Table- 1.9: Satisfaction on HLP activities

Response	No. Ups	%
Yes	83	75
No	2	2
Do not know	25	23
Total	110	100

Source: Telephone Survey 2015-16. Here Do not know means no information regarding the specific matter.

However, table-1.9 also tried to measure the satisfaction level on HLP activities. Here it also reveals that 75% UPs said they are satisfied with HLP activities which is the highest number. On the other hand, only 2 % told that they didn't satisfy with HLP activities and also 23 % do not know about HLP and that's why they were not satisfied with HLP.

Results from FGDs

From the responses of the FGD, four overarching themes have identified which clearly represent the overall picture of HLP, such as, how HLP contributed; was it supportive program for UPs; how it helped to enhance capacity of UPs; challenges and others. Themes were,

1. HLP is flexible Platform which allows diverse good practice;
2. HLP Helps to disseminating the good practices across the UPs;
3. HLP has positive impact on capacity development of UPs;
4. Challenges in implementing good practices under HLP platform

Above themes are described below.

HLP is a flexible Platform which allows diverse good practice

After conducting this FGD, it has been found that all the groups consider HLP as a flexible platform which allows implementing diverse good practices. In this regard Dehunda UP highlighted that,

“Through HLP, multifarious good practices have implemented under each sectors of UP’s overall activities”.

They also stated some of the good practices which they already implemented in their place such as 100% sanitation programme and sustainable development; One-stop

service for pregnant women; Campaign for breast feeding; E-service for birth and death registration; Awareness for Waste Management.

Similarly, Botlagari UP mentioned a good amount of diverse good practices under different sectors of UP's activities such as,

Development sector

- I.Disability Inclusive Latrine, Ramp construction; Justice
- II.Social audit, self-appraisal; Financial development
- III.Tax collection, special budget allocation for marginalized people.

Likewise Tala Sadar UP stated handful examples of diverse good practices that they have in their UP. They are,

- I.Fund from trade license and tax used in overall development of the UP including upgrading of marketplace such as built chadni shed in market; constructed roads, culverts and dams.
- II.Social afforestation in different educational and religious institutions.

So through the HLP, different good practices are implemented in all the sections of UP because it gives enough space to implement different good practices according to UP's priority.

HLP helps to disseminating the good practices across the UPs

It has acknowledged by all the members of focus group that HLP helps to disseminate good practices across the Ups as in the process of HLP the first step is to identify good practice from each UP and then conduct exposure visit on the importance basis. Through this process one UP can showcase its good practice to several Ups and this unique characteristic has made the program distinct from other. Bhotlagari UP brought up some of the good practices which they familiarise through HLP and replicated in Bhotlagari UP. For instance,

- a) 100% sanitation –Sytara UP, Dinajpur;
- b) Initiative to save handful rice for distributing marginalized people in Monga Period-Rajendrapur UP, Rangpur;
- c) Employment for poor people through Apiculture-Saptibari, Lalmonirhaat.

In the same way, Ranihati UP erudite and replicated good practices through HLP such as,

- a) Arsenic Screening – learnt from Chowghacha, Jessore;
- b) Tax collection- learnt from Tarash, Sirajgonj.

Similarly Tala Sadar UP gave an example of good practice they implemented in their UP which they learnt from other UP. They installed street light for the night time which was adapted and replicated from Norshindi Union.

Dehunda UP also cited in their FGD that, “Through HLP, Union Parshad and other institutions share the good practices among themselves as well as disseminate those practices to other UPs.”

Therefore, FGDs’ members were agreed that HLP facilitates its stakeholders to identify the priority sector to improve by knowing and visiting others’ good practices which eventually helps to disseminate the practices.

HLP has positive impact on capacity development of UPs

It has found from the response of the FGDs that HLP has positive impact on capacity building of UPs. In this regard Dehunda UP stated that,

“HLP has positive effects on enhancing UP’s capacity such as, through appreciative enquires the key actors of UPs learn about good practices practically. Meeting, training, and workshops organized by HLP also help to develop skills of UP personnel.”

Participants of Bhotlagari UP also stated that,

“It helps to enhance our skills and makes us to deliver quality services to the local people quickly”.

Challenges in implementing good practices under HLP platform

However, very few challenges are there which sometimes create obstacles to implement good practices as per plan but the challenges are.

Ranihati UP stated in the FGD that they faced few issues like, Lack of human resources; Insufficient fund; Takes longer time to encourage people.

Similarly, Tala Sadar UP found some different challenges such as land owner creates problem; Hard to dig earth in rainy season; VGD and VGF cards are less than demand.

In the same way, Bhotlagari UP mentioned some of the problems for instance People’s demand cannot always fulfill by UP so they lose their interest; people don’t want to give enough time for implementing good practices.

Surprising Mostafapur UP did not found any single issue while implementing good practices.

Therefore, through decoding the responses from FGDs it can be said that the challenges UPs faced were avoidable or technically curable. It is all about dedication of UP personnel implement good practices for the well-being of UPs.

Findings from In-depth Interview

In this study two types of in-depth interviews were conducted i.e. in-depth interview with HLP Experts through email and face to face in-depth interview with selected six UP Chairmen and Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO) of the study areas. The following is the findings from in depth interview.

Active and dynamic activities of UP through HLP

Mr. Lahiri, HLP Advisor of SDC/WB viewed that HLP is a process through which Union Parishad functionaries learn from their peers regarding the existing good practices emerged and revealed within a jurisdiction of union and learn from them and upon discussion with own citizen plan and execute the replication of the same with adaptation. That helps both learner and provider functionaries of both Union Parishads to enhance their capacities and confidences.

Mr. Mizanur Rahman, ICD Expert of JICA-HLC said that HLP can coordinate Peer to Peer positive experience sharing among UPs that stimulate them to adopt more dynamic and active manners related with UP's activities.

Ms. Shaharuk from Water Aid said that HLP gives the scope for UP staff to become exposed to new ideas that are feasible and effective to replicate. It therefore acts as a catalyst for action, as well as a capacity building exercise, in that it teaches and provides handholding support throughout replication. It incentivizes innovation, and encourages a sense of ownership through its spirit of appreciative enquiry.

Process of replicating good practices from one UP to other UP

Dr. Akira Munakata said that the UP which is interested in a good practice visit the original UP which is implementing the good practice. Then the UP will replicate the good practice which is learned from the original UP.

Since inception, HLP has followed six steps, which is designed separately for HLP activities. This requires additional funds and human resources to organize them. While scaling up HLP from 44 Unions to 658 Unions, it was realized that it will be quite difficult to manage these steps separately, until they are integrated within local governmental institutions' regular activities. Thus, it is proposed to now integrate them with Unions' and Upazilas' regular workshops during consolidation phase. What activities will be integrated in each step is highlighted in the following table 1.10.

Table- 1.10: Steps taken during 2007 to 2015

Purpose	Steps
Union Parishads/Pourashavas need to identify good practices and develop indicators for them.	Organize UP Workshop to identify good practices within UP.
Validate these good practices by other Unions and partners.	Organize Upazila Workshop to discuss and validate good practices.
Share these good practices in a network workshop with peers.	Organize Network Workshop for sharing.
Visit and learn about these good practices.	Organize exposure visits from HLP funding.
Prioritize and carry out dialogues with citizens about which good practices to integrate in the annual plan and budget.	Develop replication plan.
Adapt and replicate good practices and carry out peer reviews to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of replications.	Replicate and organize peer review missions.

Actual issues of replicating good practices from one UP to other UP

Mr. Santanu Lahiri said that it depends upon unions – sometime the interest to learn, sometime the passion of internalization and replication to demonstrate the success, sometime the passion for improving the services and good governance. Sometime just by virtue of being connected with passionate peers and doing same what they are doing.

Dr. Akira Munakata mentioned that actually the will of UP Chairman and cooperation from other stakeholders like UP members, UP secretaries etc. are working like the driving force for replicating these good practices from one UP to another Up.

Ms. Shaharuk said that while the idea of HLP is simple, field level implementation may see some challenges, such as finding the budget for exposure trips and replication. Maintaining the HLP practice over the years requires additional resources (both time and budgetary).

The capacity building activities through HLP at UP

Ms. Saharuk viewed that HLP process itself can be thought of as a capacity building process, as it introduces certain values such as appreciative enquiry, and the practice of reflecting on good performance. Moreover, with each good practice that is adopted by a UP, there is a capacity building element. For example, a UP looking to make their ponds disaster resilient will ideally be oriented on operating a joint bank account on for the operations and maintenance of the pond, and the processes involved therewith. Similarly, there will be a learning element in every good practice that will contribute to the collection of the UP.

Dr. Munakata mentioned that how to organize creative discussion, asking questions, summarizing learning etc. are learned by UPs through HLP.

Mr. Mizan said that HLP enhance/develop capacity and that make dynamic the overall UP's activities through maintaining four ways: Techniques adopts that reduce time, labor and cost in service delivery and revenue generation as well. HLP process support to build a strong partnership among the stakeholders for development activities implementation and mentoring at local level.

Role of HLP for rendering services of UP

Mr. Lahiri recommended fostering enhancing capacities, scaling-up of good practices and help to create a platform for UPs for networking to share, learn and raise practice to policy advocacies.

Dr. Munakata commended that through HLP UP became more confident in their activity and getting new ideas from other UP.

Mr. Mizan mentioned that for rendering services of UP, HLP promotes peer relation and mutual learning through positive/ appreciative experience sharing among the UPs/LGIs.

Mr. Salim told that UP strengthen their capacities by replication of good practices.

Role of HLP for incorporating good practices in national policies

Dr. Munakata mentioned that HLP apply the role of informing good practices which are already implemented by UP to the central government, so that the central government can form policies based on the field reality.

Mr. Lahiri said already HLP contributed LGD to develop four circulars on the basis of replicated best practices (A Best Practice is that which is replicated more than 50 times with UP's own budget –either LGSP fund of Own Source Revenues).

Mr. Salim said from HLP platform national thematic workshop, learning notes are prepared for practice to policy.

Mr. Mizan said that HLP influenced LGD about the thematic workshops, after that in consultation with LGD, HLP prepares Policy advocacy note and then new policy initiated by Ministries and circulated to the LGIs i.e. UDCC and Disable friendly UPs.

Next step of HLP as UP's good practices have already included in policy

According to Dr. Munakata, the next step of HLP is to make other Ups to understand or know it. About this question Mr. Mizaur Rahman answered that making wider relation with other Ministries and mapping to revive old Partners would be the next step of HLP. On the other hand, Mr. Salim told that by ensuring support from Govt. and leadership, HLP used to prepare advocacy and learning note for policy influence and reform. Mr.

Lahiri expressed that the next step HLP is to make this policy in to action in all UPs in Bangladesh. Ms. Shaharuk mentioned that HLP can play a valuable role in monitoring whether implementation of policies is actually taking place, and do a ‘second round’ of good practice identification, which focuses on UPs that are implementing the policy-bound practices in the most effective and sustainable manner. These UPs can serve as models or demonstrations for other UPs.

Problem and issues of UPs and HLP activities

Mr. Lahiri said that HLP discuss about challenges – “problem’ itself is a ‘negative’ expression and HLP does not deal with problems, but discuss with solutions of challenges. Mr. Munakata viewed that the strong HLP Secretariat can determine problems and issues of HLP and they can find a way, if they are serious.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made considering sustainability of HLP as principles of mutual learning and capacity building of UPs in Bangladesh.

- Good practices should be defined by the highest authority in consultation with UPs, Upazila and district and informed to all concern through government circular to avoid misinterpretation. A set of indicators should be set while defining good practices.
- HLP can play a valuable role in monitoring whether implementation of policies is actually taking place, and do a ‘second round’ of good practice identification, which focuses on UPs that are implementing the policy-bound practices in the most effective and sustainable manner.
- Deputy Director of Local Government (DDLG), Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), UPs, municipality bodies and all relevant government officials should be oriented properly on HLP, including its process and role of stakeholders. Regular training and refreshers should be organized by NILG for the UP bodies and Secretaries.
- Technical support for replication of good practices is necessary. UP bodies and secretaries participated in exposure visits learn many good practices through exposure visits.
- UP network should be made stronger and effective for regular contact to share and disseminate new ideas and good practices by the UPs. Network should be properly guided by the HLP management team.
- HLP management at all three tiers should explore resources available with stakeholders which could be procured and mobilized to make HLP properly functioning. UP should be encouraged to generate local resources. People (ex-UP

Chairmen and Secretaries) and other skill people can be engaged to support and promote HLP at local level.

➤ Documentation of HLP activities and establish HLP cells using digital IT. HLP cell should be established at union, Upazila and district levels. At union level the cell will be maintained by the UP Secretary under the guidance of UP Chairmen. At Upazila level the cell will be under control and management of UNO or staff assigned by the UNO. Similarly, HLP district cell should be established by the DDLG under supervision of the DC. All documents should be preserved in digital form and hard copies. Website of HLP should always be updated with necessary information on HLP.

➤ Institutionalization is much more essential to bring HLP into proper chain of management where government should play vital role. To give HLP an institutional shape all three levels of government development tiers should be considered i.e. UP, Upazila and district with equal importance. UP will led the process of good practices; Upazila will support and cooperate UP in replicating, documentation and monitoring good practices and district will provide support to Upazila in disseminating good practices, wider dissemination of good practices within and outside districts and NILG can play vital role for liaison with central/national level and advocate for promotion of good practices with concern line ministries.

➤ MoLGRD & C should take responsibility for wider dissemination of HLP approach to be used by other ministries. Concern department will forward UPs good practices to the line ministries for wide dissemination. LGD and NILG should also disseminate good practices to all UPs of Bangladesh through workshop, seminar, newslatter, HLP website and face-book.

Conclusion

In the current context of Bangladesh, HLP seems to offer a fitting mechanism to promote peer-learning/co-working across different segments of concerned parties, whose collaboration is required for improving effectiveness in public service delivery. HLP helps and coordinates the overall process from identifying good practices to successful implementation which assists to enhance UP's capacity of implementing good practices for rendering the public services to its community has reached to a greater extent. However, HLP's horizontal learning is essentially an approach that defines how leaning process occurs. Thus currently advocated argument on the use of HLP as a mandate for local government's capacity development seems rather out of context. It might make sense for a central government body to endorse a particular learning mechanism backed by successful evidences, however, use of particular learning approach, or in this case, "a particular brand of learning called Horizontal

Learning Program”, might not be a subject of governmental mandate. UPs will own HLP but there should be a proper chain of management headed by the district authority and NILG as the public sector training and research institute may take the responsibility to monitor & liaison with central/ national level and advocate for promotion of HLP activities with concern ministries and line ministries.

References

- Ahmed, S. U., & Lahiri, S. (2011). Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh: The program framework November 1, 2011 to October 31, 2015.
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2011). Population and housing census 2011: Bangladesh at a glance.
- Bhuiyan, S. H. (2013a). Overview of HLP scaling.
- Bhuiyan, S. H. (2013b). Results of the hearing from Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) partners conducted to inform: Assessment of the contribution of Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) to/from JICA projects in Bangladesh.
- Boex, J., Lahiri, S., & Thévoz, L. (2012). SDC local governance portfolio strategy review: A review of local governance in Bangladesh and implications for SDC.
- Bushe, G. R. (2011). Appreciative inquiry: Theory and critique. In D. Boje, B. Burnes & J. Hassard (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion To Organizational Change* (pp. 87-103). Oxford, UK: Routledge.
- CARE International. (2010). CARE's perspective on the MDGs: Building on success to accelerate progress towards 2015 MDG Summit, 20-22 September 2010.
- Eade, D., 1997, “Capacity Building: an approach to people centered development”, Oxfam Publishing, P.24-35.
- HLC. (2013). Upazila wise UP good practice matrix (FY 07-12).
- JICA. (2008). Bangladesh Sustainable Arsenic Mitigation Under the Integrated Local Governance System: Terminal evaluation report.
- JICA, & BRDB. (n.d.). Participatory Rural Development Project.
- Lahiri, S. (2007). Project document on strengthening the capacities of local government institutions on improving water supply and sanitation services in Bangladesh.
- MoHFW. (2013). Revitalization of Community Health Care Initiatives in Bangladesh Retrieved March 7, 2013, from <http://www.communityclinic.gov.bd/about.php>
- MoLGRD&C/LGD, & Water and Sanitation Program. (2008a). Horizontal learning for strengthening capacities of local government institutions in Bangladesh: Report on the national dissemination workshop. Dhaka.
- MoLGRD&C/LGD, & Water and Sanitation Program. (2008b). Horizontal Learning Program annual report: July 2007 - June 2008.