

Study on the potential of the Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) in Bangladesh

On behalf of Swiss Development Co-operation SDC



Final Report

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Abbreviations

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CECRC	Community Eye Care and Research Center
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BRDTI	Bangladesh Rural Development Training Institute
BRDB	Bangladesh Rural Development Board
BTN	Bangladesh Tele Centre Network
BUPF	Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum
CBO	Community-Based Organization
DAM	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DASCOH	Development Association for Self-Reliance, Communication and Health
DCC	District Coordination Committee
DDLG	Deputy Director Local Government
DF	District Facilitator
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering
DP	Developing Partner
GAT	Gandhi Ashram Trust
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HLC	Horizontal Learning Centre
HLP	Horizontal Learning Program
HL Centre	Horizontal Learning Centre
HYSAWA	Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDA	International Development Association
IC	Intercooperation, now HELVETAS Intercooperation
JASUS	Joutho Artho Samajik Unnyan Sangstha
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LGA	Local Government Association
LGD	Local Government Division
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGI	Local Government Institution
LGTI	Local Government Training Institution
LGSP	Local Governance Support Project
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
MJSKS	Mahideb Jubo Somaj Kallayan Somity
MMC	Mass-Line Media Center
MoH&FW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MoLGRD&C	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NGO Forum	NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
NRDS	Noakhali Rural Development Society
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
PRIP Trust	Private Rural Initiatives Program Trust
RDA	Rural Development Academy
RDRS	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SF	Solution Focused Approach
SMS	Short Message Service
SMPP	Safe Motherhood Promotion Project
TMSS	Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UDCCM	Union Development Coordination Committee Meeting
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UPGP	Union Parishad Governance Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VERC	Village Education Resource Center
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WB	World Bank
WSP	Water and Sanitation Program
WSS	Water Supply and Sanitation
WT	Working Team

Executive Summary

This study has been commissioned by SDC to provide SDC and its partners with an analysis of drivers, incentives and priorities of the Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh. Instead of a formal evaluation of results the study should provide a qualitative assessment of what HLP currently is and how it is working. This final report is based on documents, interviews and conversations with many stakeholders, observations of HLP events and meetings – and a joint reflection process within the study team, between January and June 2013.

The Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) was started in 2007 in the context of a long-year sanitation intervention involving Union Parishads (UPs), supported primarily by the Water and Sanitation Program WSP of the World Bank and Swiss Development Co-operation SDC. Today, the HLP is described as a UP-led peer-to-peer learning initiative facilitated by the government of Bangladesh and supported by a variety of development partners (WSP, SDC, AUSAID, JICA and 21 NGOs). It is expected to improve local service delivery, build capacities at local level, and impact on national authorities with a view to scale up good local practice, particularly in water and sanitation. Currently working in 37 upazilas, HLP aspires to cover all upazilas of Bangladesh in a few years time. HLP follows the principles of "appreciate, connect, and adapt", meaning that HLP emphasizes everyone's potential to improve, starts with what works locally and enables replication of good practice through exposure in the local context.

The HLP is targeting the learning of UP representatives which are part of and influenced by a complex political system. In accordance with the mandate and resources available, the study has a limited ambition to analyse this political context of decentralisation and local governance; however, some issues of Bangladesh's complex decentralization dynamics are to be highlighted to understand HLP's potentials and challenges. Many contextual factors impact on the UPs' capacities to deliver local services, such as the continuous top-down and party loyalty orientation of the administration giving the central government and its de-concentrated services a powerful role in shaping local governments' behaviour, despite of the formal transfer of responsibilities to local entities. Another factor is the lack of adequate financial and human resources, and the lack of strategy for matching poor resources with increasing tasks at local level. Many UPs and other local partners benefitted from long-year international financial and technical support from a variety of sources. This background makes it in principle difficult to attribute positive (or negative) results to an isolated intervention such as HLP.

How does HLP work concretely? The study presents findings by answering a series of more detailed questions (section 4). Findings can be summarized as follows:

- HLP stakeholders, the partners involved and UP-representatives express a big **variety of visions** and perceptions of HLP. For some partners, HLP is just a methodology to scale up good practice and improve on results at local level. For others, HLP is a means for improving institutional capacity of UPs. HLP is also seen as a network for exchange among UPs and/or among development partners, a platform for establishing contacts (for different purposes), or even a basis for a social movement for change.
- Consequently, the **perceptions of roles of and relations** among HLP stakeholders and partners also vary. While HLP is often presented as “UP-led”, the reality tends to be much more donor-led. Although the ownership of the Government of Bangladesh seems to be limited, HLP is carried by a certain commitment of the ministry responsible for local governments. Development partners have a supporting role that is interpreted in different ways. Nevertheless, the HLP network of committed bilateral and multilateral donors and NGOs is perceived by many as a main factor for HLP's success. The development of the partners' geographical presence in the districts and Upazilas is seen as key for implementing HLP, particularly with a view to scale up.
- The horizontal learning process consists of a **series of logical steps of activities** with a view enable "good practice" to be replicated and leverage changes in policies and institutional relations (workshops with UP-representatives presenting and identifying good practice, exposure visits, replication of practice, thematic workshops on widely replicated practice at national level). The Horizontal Learning working team and the Horizontal Learning Centre decide on learning objectives and content, sequence of events and methodology. Informally, the partners present in the upazilas targeted by HLP, have a say in what is learnt there. However, there is no systematic reflection process organized in the HLP working team on the learning process and its main features and roles of different stakeholders.
- Participating UPs are not systematically consulted on the learning process, but they have got discretion in **identifying practice** to be presented at workshops as well as in replicating practice. The criteria to identify "good" practice to be shared and replicated remain blurred, and when branded by HLP as "good", the practice is perceived as "good" forever, in whatever context it is replicated. Exposure visits for UP representatives to learn about identified good practice from other UPs are organized by the HLC and the HLP partners involved. UP representatives are selected by the UNO (representing the central administration at Upazila level), according to unclear selection criteria. In general, workshops and exposure visits are appreciated by UP participants for being unique opportunities to break out of daily routine, exchange with peers, and gain some factual knowledge.
- A number of good practices identified in HLP have been **replicated** by participating UPs, by their own financial means, without financial support from HLP, but attributed to the HLP learning. HLP does not monitor the replication

process itself and the lessons learned from successful and less successful replication. If a "good practice" is replicated more than 50 times, it is by solely this quantitative criteria considered as "best practice" and presented to national stakeholders at a thematic workshop. The HLC, together with the development partner involved, has organized five thematic workshops. However, there is no systematic follow-up on adapting the national policy framework to such "best practice".

- **Participating UP representatives** learn about the existence of local successes and practice, which corresponds to local needs, reflects local interests, and can be realized with the limited resources locally available. This is an important learning of "yes we can". While appreciating the pragmatic learning through HLP events, UPs do not seem to distinguish between "good practice" from peers and practice piloted by donors: It is just something "good" to replicate. Moreover, the HLP set-up is presenting "practice" as a technical project activity, somewhat disconnected from the general framework of UPs' (and in particular UP chairmen's) tasks, responsibilities and political priorities in public service delivery. Participating UP-representatives do not learn how to assess their own framework conditions, identify and overcome challenges ahead, and adapt practice if needed. Finally, there is no systematic transfer of the learning within the UP structures, thus making UP participants (usually the chair and some council members) learn individually, with some spontaneous collective learning - and limited indication of institutional learning and sustainable impact beyond the next local elections.
- The main **management tasks** are shared between the HLP working team (consisting of all development partners, chaired by the LGD) and the HLC (located at the National Institute for Local Development, staffed mainly by WSP and JICA). The working team meetings are used for sharing relevant up-to-date information, but they are not conceived for reflecting and discussing strategic planning issues or taking operational decisions. The loose structure of the HLC does not have a clear institutional framework or internal distribution of task. Roles and tasks are not clearly assigned within the partner system, between the working team and the HLC, and by treating all partners formally the same, the various roles and tasks and the power relations between partners are blurred, resulting in a rather non-transparent steering of the process. The LGD and the UNOs of participating Upazilas have a strong role in deciding on participation of the UPs, thus reinforcing the attitude of top-down control of local governments.
- While individual stakeholders are constantly assessing the progress of HLP from different perspectives, there is **no common monitoring** or evaluation process. There is hardly any monitoring regarding the learning process, limited scope for feed-back on individual events by the UPs targeted, and no systematic evaluation or feed-back loops to monitor the results and the methodology used.

The study then analyses the various – **explicit and implicit - theories of change behind the HLP** (section 5). In principle, the HLP is based on the (convincing) assumption that local capacities exist and networking among peers around good practices can build positive dynamics, help the replication of good practice, and increase policy influence. From this a series of more detailed hypotheses of change can be derived from HLP practice. From the perspective of modern learning concepts as well as from a governance perspective, some hypotheses are more convincing than others. The appreciate approach is particularly convincing: It valorizes existing capacities and existing local knowhow and practical experience, focuses on solutions and achievements, positive and practical examples instead of "problems". Moreover, investment in self-esteem and self-confidence of UP representatives is particularly important for any learning and change of attitudes. And knowledge exchange, networking and connecting local governments are important factors for making decentralization more effective.

On the other hand, there are other hypotheses which are less convincing, particularly those following a relatively simplistic logic of cause-effect relation: If a UP successfully replicates a model, this does not necessarily mean that it changes its attitude or behavior. Moreover, sharing positive experience among UPs and knowing about "solutions" is not enough for replicating solutions. Meetings and events are not automatically contributing to connecting and networking, and even less so contributing to a groundswell movement for reform. Finally and most importantly, local practice is not per se "good", in the sense of contributing to declared development goals (such as reducing poverty, fighting exclusion, promoting gender equality).

The study ends with a series of conclusions (section 6). It presents the HLP as a **dazzling shape**, based on a big variety of visions, theories of change, objectives and expectations expressed by stakeholders. The hypotheses of change seem to oscillate between two poles: the HLP as an empowering process to change UP's attitudes and increase their motivation to change behaviors on the one hand, and HLP as a technical process of replicating "good practice" on the other hand. The HLP partners have a variety of views on the essentials of the HLP process, and there are no common reflections on how this lack of common understanding would influence the process, particularly in the current phase of scaling-up. While a certain diversity of views and visions is a normal phenomenon in such a complex set-up and can contribute to creativity, the study identifies a considerable risk for HLP to break up and/or lead to completely arbitrary results, due to a lack of common understanding.

The HLP has delivered some **results in improving service delivery**. The HLP set-up does not really focus on successful service delivery in general, but on influencing attitudes of individuals perceived as UP leaders towards a specific and pre-existing "practice". The HLP also has some important **effects on attitudes of participating UP representatives**, making them gain factual knowledge and self-confidence, and increasing their motivation to perform. But the focus on isolated "good practice" in the sense of a fixed standard toolbox limits the effects with regard to strengthening the

capacities for overall management of UPs. While the national institutions responsible for decentralization are relatively well linked to the HLP, the process does not really impact on the UP's capacities to influence policies at national level.

With regard to the working principles of "appreciate, connect and adapt", HLP managed over the years of its existence to adapt its approaches to the evolving context profiting from its own experience. It has developed an "appreciative" approach which is promising - and with a great potential to improve in practice. For a highly centralized political system as well as for international development co-operation this approach is highly challenging, since the paradigm of "knowing better than the locals" is strongly anchored in those systems and their ways of designing development. HLP has also a great merit in having systematically developed a new way of learning for UPs based on sharing knowhow and experience among peers. However, this approach will need to focus more on power relations among peers and within the multilevel governance system. Moreover, the focus on resources available in the peer community bears a risk of ignoring the existing legal and policy context and excluding important external innovation.

According to its mandate and methodology, the study was not planned to provide recommendations for concrete next steps, but more generally recommend areas for further reflection. The study thus ends with a list of issues for further reflection with regard to the governance of HLP, the design of the learning process, and sustainability (section 6.9).

To facilitate the understanding of the learning perspective used in the study, the annex 1 provides a glossary of terms and concepts used.

1. Introduction

1.1 The object of our study: HLP in brief

The Horizontal Learning Program HLP emerged in the context of a long-year sanitation intervention involving Union Parishads (UPs), supported primarily by the Water and Sanitation Program WSP of the World Bank and Swiss Development Cooperation SDC. According to the HLP brochure¹ the program was started in 2007, when “a small group of UPs requested support to initiate a peer-to-peer learning process in Bangladesh: In response, the WSP with support from SDC initiated this process amongst UP Chairmen and Members from six upazilas. The main purpose was for UPs to identify and share their existing capacities. The horizontal learning process was developed by WSP and was launched as a program by the LGD and partner agencies in November 2007.” Today, the Horizontal Learning Program is described as a “Union Parishad led peer-to-peer learning initiative facilitated by the Government of Bangladesh and supported by development partners”, among them the World Bank’s Water and Sanitation Program WSP and SDC.

According to its program framework², HLP expects results in improving service delivery and capacity building of local governments as well as the national government. A key focus is on local service delivery: “Local governments connect with each other to identify, share and replicate the good practices of their peers.”³ A value added is seen in the fact that HLP complements top-down capacity building by reinforcing confidence of local practitioners as both providers and receivers of (practical) knowledge.⁴ The HLP is also expected to have an impact on national authorities with a view to scale up good local practice, particularly in water and sanitation.

The program framework emphasizes the active ownership of UPs and other local institutions as implementing partners, and the principle of self-selection (with regard to participation to the HLP, the identification of good practice to replicate, the replication of good practice). HLP is currently (beginning of 2013) working in 37 Upazilas in 25 districts where multiple HLP partners are already engaged.” Through the partners' network HLP is accessible in 3400 UPs in 430 Upazilas in 64 districts.

While focusing on UPs as main implementing partners, the program has a multitude of “HLP partners” contributing to the process in different ways and cooperating in the

¹ Brochure on “Horizontal Learning Program” printed on 20 October 2011, <http://horizontallearning.net/Content.php?MId=35&SubMId=55> (visited 13-5-2013)

² Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh: the Program Framework, November 1, 2011 to October 31, 2015. According to p.2, this report reflects the findings, comments, and contributions made by HLP partners who attended the “Scaling up of the HLP in Bangladesh” on July 23-24, 2011, in the Spectra Convention Centre organized by the SDC and WSP.

³ Brochure, p.**

⁴ Program framework, p.16.

HLP working team chaired by the Local Government Division LGD of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Various multilateral /bilateral donor agencies (AUSAID, JICA, WB, WSP, SDC) and 21 NGOs are contributing with a variety of experience in supporting local service delivery and local institutions in particular sectors and geographical areas, and a set of good practices already developed. The “development partners” have a supporting role, and the partners’ network is perceived as a main factor for HLP’s success: The development partners’ geographical presence in districts and Upazilas is seen as an important strategy for scaling-up.⁵

The HLP documents always emphasize the particularity of the principles the program is using. Three principles are regularly mentioned:

- **Appreciate:** To realize everyone's potential to overcome the limits that we impose on ourselves.
- **Connect:** To remove the distinctions that separate us and detract from our collective well being
- **Adapt:** To start with what works and enable replication through exposure in the local context.

The HLP program framework has developed a series of logical steps of activities that are designed to enable good local practices to leverage changes in policies and institutions. These steps can be summarised as follows:⁶

- UPs are encouraged to identify their good practices (with indicators);
- UPs select the good practices they wish to visit, learn from their peers, and appreciate achievements;
- UPs prioritize, discuss with citizens and integrate appropriate good practices into their annual plan and budget;
- UPs replicate good practices with the support of their peers. Replication is not funded by donors, but by UP's annual budget and available resources;
- Progress in replication monitored through peer reviews and achievements recognized through the horizontal learning network.

For the current phase, the program framework expects the HLP to "scale up, deepen, and consolidate" its approach.⁷ The HLP aspires to scaling-up nationwide and reach out geographically to all districts, in a perspective of six years.⁸ District hubs are planned, and partner NGO as well as private companies are contracted to work with the Upazilas. The topics dealt with through practices for local government institutions are increasingly covering a variety of sectors (water and sanitation, community clinics, disaster resilience, school enrolment), and include cross-sectoral or

⁵ Program framework, p. 20.

⁶ Program framework, p. 16, see also brochure.

⁷ Program framework, p. 28.

⁸ Program framework, p. 20.

institutional issues (such as the coordination role of UPs, the management of financial resources, the decision-making on budgets, the empowerment of women). Efforts are also extended from rural to urban settings and issues.

Parallel to the scaling-up in Bangladesh, the main features of the HLP process are initiated and tested in several other country contexts in South and East Asia. However, this international dimension beyond our mandate, and we do not have the information needed on what exactly was initiated and tested.

1.2 Purpose and frame of our study

This study has been commissioned by SDC to provide SDC and its partners with an analysis of drivers, incentives and priorities of the Horizontal Learning Program. The study should not be a formal evaluation of HLP but it aims at providing a qualitative assessment of what HLP currently is and how it is working. It particularly should bring greater clarity about the theory of change and theory of action underpinning the HLP. The ToRs mention the following key questions of the review: What is the HLP? Does it work? Why? How will we know? What is actually HLP?

In the technical offer of December 7, 2012, Ximpulse proposed to frame the study around these key questions, with the objectives of (1) better explaining HLP to key stakeholders in order to shape their co-operation, and (2) contributing to the reflection process within SDC and WSP in order to assist them in taking future decisions on HLP. In response to this technical offer the study was commissioned to Ximpulse, Bern/Switzerland (Ursula König and Erika Schläppi), supported by the local expert Enamul Huda and by AFM Amir Uddin (the latter for the first mission only).

This report is the result of this study and a methodology described in the following section (section 2). Section 3 sets the scene in terms of relevant context, while section 4 presents our findings with regard to what HLP is and how it works in detail. Section 5 focuses on the plausibility of the various concepts of change behind the HLP. Finally, the conclusions in section 6 aspire to provide some food for thought for further reflection, as it was our mandate. In the annexes we gathered important background information on the various terms and concepts used ("glossary", annex 1) and the relevant context (annex 2), the ToRs (annex 3), a list of stakeholders (annex 4), the missions' programs (annex 5), the interview guidelines developed (annex 6) and a list of documents and literature consulted (annex 7).

2. Approach, methodology and process

2.1. Process and approach

Our approach focused on the key questions identified by the ToRs. We started by deconstructing and clustering these key questions and developed a list of more detailed questions, which we would like to address by the study. This allowed us to shape the study in the making and keep our own perceptions open and as far as possible free from preconceived focus or interpretation. Under such circumstances a

clear distinction between findings and interpretation is not always easy. We addressed this by introducing frequent joint reflection on questions and observations among the team, recalling the objectives of the study and the ToRs.

The work was started with an audio call for task clarification and preparation of a technical offer. We then worked in subsequent phases. The inception phase consisted of a compilation and desk study of relevant documents. A primary analysis of the data provided us with the basis for the inception report of end of January 2013, which shaped the methodology and working process and framed our first mission programme. Our visit of 10 days to Bangladesh (Ursula König, Erika Schläppi, Enamul Huda, and AFM Amir Uddin), in February 2013 was organised by SDC and WSP (see mission program in annex 5). The first assessments from this mission were shared with SDC and WSP in the form of a first mission report. Enamul Huda continued to collect data in March and April, and a second mission organised by SDC, WSP and Enamul Huda took place in late April (16 days). It provided Ursula König and Enamul Huda with another opportunity to compile information and assess jointly the situation on the spot.

This is the final draft of the report of the study which was discussed in a feed-back process by SDC and WSP. It is thought as a building block in an ongoing reflection process on the present and the future of HLP.

2.2 Collecting and analysing data

One of our first sources of information was the **study of documents on and around HLP**. The initially relatively short list of documents was extended considerably during the working process. We revised official documents of HLP (the current Program Framework of HLP in Bangladesh, publications, leaflets, factsheets, webpage and internal documents); outside views and analysis of HLP by other actors; relevant contributions from interview partners from within the HLP system and outside, publications and leaflets from partner organisations, websites of partners; the GoB website, relevant legislation, circulars, manuals and guidelines; articles in the newspapers.

Another source of information were the semi-structured **interviews and consultations** with key stakeholders and resource persons held by the team members in various compositions. We had identified groups of stakeholders and individual resource persons according to certain criteria in our inception report, which was partly used by WSP who selected and organised the interviews and guided and supported our missions. The mission planning was hence constantly reviewed and adapted to different criteria (and the availability of interlocutors). Based on our list of key questions to address we also developed interview guidelines targeted to the various stakeholders groups and resource persons, which were refined throughout the study process (annex 6)

In the majority oral **interviews** were made with individuals or groups of 2 to 20, in their working surroundings such as UP buildings. Sometimes we split the groups to

interview into sub-groups to allow for more open expression (e.g. women UP council members were heard separately from their male colleagues). In some cases audio calls were made and meetings were held by Enamul Huda with individuals from various stakeholder groups (details on stakeholder groups interviewed see annex 4; detailed mission programs annex 5) relying on his years of working with local governments in all divisions in Bangladesh. Although we had suggested to organize focus group discussions to accompany the study process and provide feedback to the progress in a continuous way, this was not possible. One of the purposes of the focus group was to get feedback from representatives of UPs, particularly with regard to their expectations towards the study, and to get information from a setting of exchange of stakeholders instead of interviews. Unfortunately, these aspects are missing now. We also participated in HLP events of different kinds as observers, such as several initiation workshops for UPs, district workshops, and HLC partner meetings.

All the discussions and conversations were open and transparent, the flow of information was relatively easy. We tried to contribute to a conducive atmosphere by conducting the interviews with an appreciative attitude, bringing out strengths and achievements without avoiding difficult questions, problems and challenges. We followed a systemic approach that does not allow for adopting different perspectives on the object of the study, but considers such diversity as necessary for a good result. Our interlocutors were also relieved by our statement that this was not an evaluation of results compared with the stated objectives, but a learning exercise based on an approach designed for learning and improvement.

2.3 Limitations and challenges in the study process

Of course, the limited time resources available for the study (in relation to the complexity of the object) set important limits. The study assesses the learning process and its management and identifies some factors shaping its relation to a broader context, but it does not address systematically the overarching question of what kind of impact the learning process has on the behavioral change at UP level, and what exactly can be attributed to HLP's contribution in this respect. This would need a different set of questions and a different methodology. Moreover, the current set-up of the HLP does not include a log-frame, which could clarify the expectations towards the logical sequence of outputs and outcomes of the process, as well as impact on behavioral change.

Time for discussion with our clients to clarify tasks and objectives of the study and find out about their perceptions was limited, and SDC representatives were only partly available in debriefings, which made exchange on and validation of findings relatively difficult. We also did not have the time to make a joint mapping of stakeholders and resource persons, which would have made it much easier to set priorities for interviews.

The limited time frame imposed a selection and a rough assessment of the ample documentation and limited the depth of reflection and analysis. The limited time

available for interviews also affected the data base which was collected. The number of interviews allows for an impression only but is far away from a representative survey or a comprehensive assessment of a system which would involve a myriad of different stakeholders and resource persons directly working with HLP (400 UPs more or less actively participating in HLP; 32 donors, NGOs and governmental partners involved in the partner system) and a variety of relevant actors outside HLP (e.g. the 4000 UPs in Bangladesh, other donor funded programs supporting UPs and the decentralisation process).

Moreover, the program is in its 7th year, thus relatively young for answering questions about its effects of any kind. There are long-term dynamics which may influence the learning of UPs and the learning process itself in a decisive way. Interestingly enough, interview partners referred to different time frames when talking about the life of HLP, some from 1980's on, some referred to the last 5 to 10 years. Many achievements are the fruit of long term engagement with UPs by a variety of actors, making it difficult in principle to attribute achievements to HLP only.

During our visits political unrest, high tensions and violence occurred in Dhaka, and frequent hartals in different parts of the country as well as in Dhaka influenced our interlocutors availabilities and our own possibilities to travel and meet interlocutors outside our hotel – and of course framed people's mindset. The focus group discussion planned in the second mission had to be cancelled due to an accident in a garment factory in Dhaka followed by manifestations in the streets.

In a complex system we can never get a complete picture. We select consciously and unconsciously according to our framing of the system and sub-systems, and hence create a specific and subjective focus. Some drivers of change may have escaped to our attention, and descriptions of the system by its own stakeholders are necessarily subjective. So this study does not aspire to be an objective analysis, but aims to contribute to a substantial reflection on the HLP.

2.4 Deconstructing key questions: our framework for analysis

As it has already been said a list of detailed questions gave us a framework for analysis and helped us to grasp the complexity of the HLP and the many factors and stakeholders involved in the process.

The following sections provide some findings relating to three groups of questions:

- What are most relevant elements of the governance **context the HLP is working** in? What are the challenges UPs are facing today in fulfilling their legal tasks and delivering adequate services? (section 3)
- **How does the HLP work concretely?** This question can be de-constructed into a variety of sub-questions to cover the various aspects of the learning process, the management system, and the governance aspects involved in a learning process targeting local governments. We use these sub-questions to structure our findings from interviews and discussions on HLP (Section 4).

- **What are the hypotheses of change behind HLP? Are these hypotheses convincing** in relation to the context? (Section 5)

The approach developed and the findings presented are based on our perspectives coming from our own expert knowledge on learning processes, organizational development, and local governance as well as the context knowledge about Bangladesh. The theoretical background used for our assessment include various concepts and approaches, such as phasing organisational development, the inter-linkage of parallel processes with a learning process, adult learning and organisational learning, the learning cycle, systems theory and stakeholder mappings; assessment of interactions, the solution focused approach and Appreciative Inquiry, the SPOT methodology (for a short description of these concepts see annex 1, Glossary).

3. The relevant context: local governance in Bangladesh

The HLP must be assessed in the concrete context it is implemented. In order to get a picture of the relevant (and complex) context, we analysed the main issues of local governance more in detail (see annex 2). This section sums up some key words sketching a multifaceted reality HLP stakeholders are confronted with.

In the last years, the legal and policy framework of decentralisation and local governance has changed considerably. Local governments have got new roles and responsibilities, local elections are providing legitimacy to the chairs and councils of the lowest tier of local governments (Pourashavas for the urban areas and Union Parishads for the rural areas), and participatory budget processes involving citizens have been established at local level. With a view to bring services closer to citizens, new buildings have been constructed in UPs to host de-concentrated units of the ministries responsible for services. With the strong financial support of donors UPs are getting some financial resources to spend according to their own priorities.

Many observers say that UPs have gained in public visibility in the last years. However, in reality, many challenges remain. In general, financial and human resources transferred to and available at local level do not correspond at all to the tasks and responsibilities. Internal decision-making is still dominated by UP chairs who often do not feel accountable towards the UP councils and the citizens, making institutional decisions depend on factors like the chair's personal leadership ability, party affiliation, personal network – and bearing the risk of clientelism and corruption. Observers say that local elections still had the effect of breaking with the quasi-feudal system of traditional elite leaders, and brought in new and younger elites – with a stronger concern for their own re-election, their reputation and image in their constituency.

In general, central government authorities continue to perceive the State as a top-down system, and particularly UPs are not in a position to challenge this perception

and defend their own scope of action foreseen in the new legal frameworks. The Local Government Division takes important responsibilities in local development, is responsible for the capacity building of the local governments (through the National Institute of Local Governments) and has the task to roll out the decentralisation process. Other ministries continue to function in a top-down mode, even where tasks are delegated to local government units. Public funds for development activities, infrastructure and public service delivery are mainly channelled through the line ministries and the UNO, with the MPs playing an important role in representing the interests of their constituency in the decision-making at central level. It seems that in many Upazila there is a strong ongoing conflict between the UNO, the MP and the Upazila Council Chair (representing the UPs of the Upazila) regarding the allocation of funds, with the risk of blocking UPs in their own development. Horizontal linkages between local governments are weak, and local Government Associations (like the Bangladesh UP Forum BUPF) are still seeking their role and are not very present in the decentralisation process. As the SDC portfolio review put it in 2012, Bangladesh is still "one of the most centralized countries in the world in terms of effective service delivery responsibilities, human resources, and public finances".⁹

Multi- and bilateral donors and NGOs continue to play an important role in the decentralisation process, although with different objectives and effects. While many donors are focusing on technical issues of building infrastructure and improving services (co-operating mostly with central authorities which they perceive as more efficient), UNDP and USAID (and also SDC) supported the decentralisation process in a variety of ways. Other agencies co-operate with local governments on a variety of issues and with different approaches and partners. Many NGOs continue to be involved in (rather isolated) direct service delivery activities at local level (facing the challenge of promoting parallel systems and indirectly weakening UPs). Other NGOs are supporting UPs in developing their capacities. This results in a myriad of projects at local level, with a variety of purposes and sometimes even conflicting objectives and approaches. However, some development agencies do have longstanding experience in advocating for decentralisation and improving local governance, enhancing citizen's participation and building democracy.

Political actors at local level are mostly connected to the parties dominating the national political discourse. For years already, the political landscape of Bangladesh is dominated by the in-fight of two political parties anchored in a resentful past with different kinds of political conflicts. The scars of the war of independence from Pakistan are currently breaking up again, and in the antagonism between the two big parties, religious fundamentalists seem to gain political power in an increasingly polarized atmosphere. Political unrest is currently growing, frequent "hartal" are threatening and even paralysing public life.

⁹ SDC portfolio review, S. 8.

The last decade has brought major social and economic changes, with many challenges remaining. While the rapid industrialisation provided job opportunities with low salaries and high risks for many workers, poverty in rural areas remains high, and infrastructure is poor. Emigration and internal migration towards the cities continue. Mobile phones and access to electronic media have fundamentally changed the ways how people get information and knowledge, how they communicate among themselves – to the point that for example money can be transferred by mobile from a worker in Dhaka to her husband in any village in the country in a second, while travelling around the country continues to be very cumbersome and often even impossible.

4. “What is HLP?” Our impressions from interviews and observations

With our outsiders' perspective, and taking into account the limited resources available for our assessment, we do not have any ambition to be complete or “objective” in our assessment of this simple but complex question. But based on our own knowledge and expertise, the relevant documents, interviews, discussions and observations we can summarize our findings as follows:

4.1 What are the visions and perceptions of HLP?

What are the visions and objectives among partners?

There is shared perception among HLP partners that classical, ex-cathedra training and teaching is less efficient than peer-to-peer learning: All partners seem to agree that motivation of UP participants to apply the learning in practice and to change behavior is higher. In general, HLP partners see HLP as a non-classical program with more flexibility than classical approaches of capacity building of local institutions. It offers an alternative to programs steered by individual donors' or NGO's interests (only). HLP partners perceive the approach as innovative, modern, chaotic, difficult to manage – and relatively expensive in terms of transition costs. In any case, many interlocutors are happy about the perceived fact of a positive movement at the local level, showing results in terms of replicated practice and gained self-confidence of UP institutions. And there is a shared commitment to "scale up, deepen, and consolidate" the HLP approach.

Beyond this common understanding there is a big diversity of perceptions of what HLP concretely is and what it should be (for more details see the various hypotheses of change described below, section 5).

While first initiatives came from some individual UPs and committed individuals within LGD and WSP, the horizontal learning was mainly conceptualised based on the vision of individual key actors in WSP and the HLP partner system. Today, the key representatives of the HLC do generally refer to the concepts developed in the reference papers (such as the program framework of 2011). According to this

framework, the HLP's objective is to **enhance the capability and accountability of local government institutions**. It is expected that by 2015,

- Capacity of public and private service providers will be increased to respond to the demands of consumers for safe drinking water and improved sanitation.
- Capacity of local government institutions will be strengthened to ensure the delivery of safe drinking water, improved sanitation services, and hygienic practices to all, including poor and poorest women and men, in a transparent manner.
- Capacity of national government will be increased to review and adopt a new policy framework for scaling up good practices from HLP.

Other individual members of the HLP working team as well as the representatives of UPs interviewed practically do not refer to these reference papers, and they expressed diverging views on what is the main purpose and the objectives of HLP. In general, they do not focus on water and sanitation, but expect more general results from HLP. Some expectations are compatible with each other, others are more difficult to combine or even mutually exclusive, and they all set different priorities for HLP:

- Some partners see HLP as a **tool or methodology to scale-up and/or improve on results** with regard to their own development programs and projects. HLP is expected to broaden the impact of the practice developed or initiated by their own projects and programs, and/or makes the achievements more sustainable.
- Others see HLP as an approach to **improve institutional capacity** of UPs in administrative processes and public services, or as a means to find practical solutions to local problems and increase the outreach of these solutions.
- Some see it as a learning/teaching process for a fundamental change of attitudes among UPs.
- Some NGOs see the process as an opportunity to establish contacts with a view to acquire additional funding for the future.
- For others it is an opportunity to build a **network for exchange**, or incite a **social movement** for change. Some see it as engaging political actors for reform, others emphasize that HLP's approach is a-political.
- Some perceive HLP as **an idea**, which has already taken off and is sustainable per se, others see it as a **project** with an established time frame.
- Some see the targeted UP representatives mainly as (elected) officials with **public functions** to be supported in their role in the governance system.
- Others see the HLP as a grassroots initiative **targeting local "community"** actors and not focusing on local governments.

What are the perceptions of UPs?

Representatives of UPs having participated at HLP events see the HLP as a platform for exchange with donors, NGOs, government representatives and UPs, as an opportunity to gain knowledge, and most importantly as a tool to replicate good practice (for more details see below, under: Why do UP participants engage?).

The representatives of UPs interviewed, which were not participating at events perceive HLP as a machinery for technical replication of good ideas (if they can see any transfer of knowhow). Others have no idea on HLP at all or are not able to link anything concrete to it.

What are the perceived roles and relationships?

As a result from this diversity of perceptions there are diverging (explicit and implicit) understandings about the roles of the various actors in the HLP system. :

The HLP is characterised as “**UP-led**” in documents and official statements by many stakeholders. The UPs interviewed, however, do not use this terminology; they consider the HLP explicitly as a programme of WSB/WB or other partners they had worked with before and identify with the practice established. Some HLP partners and stakeholders also expressed doubts about the real role of UPs in leading HLP and describe it as WSP-led, WB-led or (more generally) donor-led program, which would not continue without the efforts of those actors.

As it is stated in the documents (with some variation), the **Local Government Division** of the competent ministry (MoLGRD&C) sees itself as the owner of the HLP. The representatives of the government participating in the HLP working team claim ownership of the process and want to keep such ownership also in the perspective of scaling up. Various government officials (the UNOs which are the main doorkeepers of the HLP) and some UP chairs share the view that the government stakeholders will have to be the owner of the HLP in the future. Other interlocutors do not see the government with its hierarchical top-down logic as a driving force able to ensure HLP’s sustainability (with the current spirit of peer learning). They suggest that other actors independent of the government (i.e. the private sector, UPs) have to come in to make the process sustainable.

The “**development partners**” have a declared supporting role that is interpreted in different ways. The partners’ network of committed bilateral and multilateral donors and NGOs is perceived by many as a main factor for HLP’s success: The partners are “involved in this program to create a common platform for improving decentralized service delivery and improved local governance.”¹⁰ The development partners’ geographical presence in districts and upazilas is seen as key for implementing the HLP and as a strategy for up-scaling in all 64 districts. Representatives from various HLP partner agencies are also part of the HLP core

¹⁰ Program framework, p. 22.

group, a pool of resource persons technically supporting the HLC in its activities of organizing events.

Roles among the development partners group vary. The WSP is part of the “development partners” group and continues to have a specific role in technical support and in financing the scaling-up (with support of SDC) and mobilizing national and international resources for this purpose. Some observers see the HLP steered and funded by a coalition of donors (including WSP, JICA and SDC) and many NGOs see themselves rather as bystanders, not in the driving seat of the process. However, they benefit from HLP in various ways.

4.2 Why do UPs and HLP partners participate?

How do UPs enter the learning process?

Due to the history of HLP, participating UPs are mostly former partners of HLP partners (bilateral/multilateral agencies, NGOs) which were active in the area. Consequently, HLP partners are and will be key entry points for HLP learning. In reality, mainly UPs from Upazilas partnering with HLP partners will enter the system. Thus, the success of the scaling-up of HLP will depend on the attitude of HLP partners and their active door-opening at district and Upazila level.

From a more formal point of view, the UNO plays a key role as a door keeper. He/she requests the LDG to include the UPs of his/her upazila in the HLP, and the LGD formally decides. By giving this important role to the UNO (who is the administrative representative of the GoB at Upazila level) the HLP confirms the position of the UNO in coordinating (and overseeing) the UPs – and tends to undermine the position of the newly established Upazila council (consisting of the UP chairs) which might also be able to take this role. This means that in a way HLP is taking sides in the ongoing power struggle between UNO and Upazila council. While it is clear that for scaling-up the involvement of the LGD is necessary, the message of going through the UNO to reach out to UPs is not really coherent with the idea of strengthening UPs in a bottom-up logic.

In general, if a UP is interested in participating in HLP, this is only possible if the UNO agrees and makes a request for all other UPs of the same Upazila to join. The possibilities to “self-select” are thus rather limited.

Why do UP participants engage?

In our interviews we heard about a variety of motivations, triggering and hindering factors for actively engaging with HLP. UP participants showed general interest in **getting useful information**, and most elected UP stakeholders expressed the feeling that they are not well equipped for their tasks. UP chairs and council members generally lack a thorough understanding of their role and responsibilities as well as technical knowhow, and hope for knowhow transfer from whatever source, with a view to be able to deliver to their constituency and show their ability before the next elections.

An important motivating factor is the existing **relations with (former) donors/partners**: Many UP stakeholders expressed their appreciation of the relationship and do not want to disappoint their supporters, or even aspire to continue fruitful partnership.

Many UP stakeholders are motivated by HLP's **focus on practice**: They appreciate learning on replicable and applicable practice, and they appreciate the corresponding methodology (workshops and exposure visits). It was also often said that participants particularly from the country-side like workshops and exposure visits as break-outs of daily routine with very limited possibilities of collective entertainment. Thus, any project providing attractive visits will be welcomed by those participants, no matter the content or the goals.

Building contacts and relations was also mentioned as motivating and inspiring. UP participants see the HLP events as an exchange platform providing them with privileged access to information and ideas. UP participants very much value the possibility to gain status and reputation as well as self-confidence. The exposure to outsiders and the vertical connections established through informal contacts with government's representatives at Upazila and even district level helps participants to gain some access to power. Interestingly enough, UP interlocutors did not mention to be motivated by the desire to continuous networking, or linking-up with local stakeholders which would be relevant for the practice to replicate in a sustainable way (e.g. local services of health ministry for community clinics). Some UP chairs said that if the Government would take over the training their motivation to participate would be lost.

Some HLP partners perceive the participating UPs as highly motivated: They think that participants are UP officials that are particularly innovative and dynamic - worth working with for dissemination of practices.

Why do other stakeholders engage?

HLP partners participate "to gain access to the HLP's good practice and contribute in order to utilize this platform to disseminate good practices for potential replication at scale".¹¹ Thus, HLP partners see different kinds of benefits in joining the HLP:

- Some partners are clearly motivated to join the HLP by their expectation to broaden and deepen the implementation of practical experience which is related to their own initiatives, at low or even no cost for themselves. Some HLP partners who have got a clear mandate to replicate and disseminate their initiatives are not very interested in any learning beyond replication. Other partners are specifically interested in how to create a positive learning environment so that their own development efforts gain sustainability.

¹¹ Program framework, pg. 25.

- Many HLP partners express their appreciation of the possibility to get information and overview on what others are doing, to coordinate and reflect among development actors.
- It is also seen as an opportunity to network with (senior) government officials.
- Finally, HLP provides an opportunity for the partners' own staff to participate in capacity building events at very little costs.

Some NGOs express a specific motivation to join the HLP to keep contact with donors and government, form alliances and shape relationships with donors, and increase their influence on government and donor policies. They will also have an interest in getting new project contracts to implement – and getting support and funds. Financial interests are even more obvious in the case of private business (e.g., SDLG, recently joining the partner system as contractors for district hub management). For some NGOs it is also a matter of prestige to be on board and to be recognized as a partner of the WB – for others this is rather a matter of concern. Some NGOs aspire to take a more prominent (supporting) role while openly communicating that their motivation is the acquisition of projects and funds.

In general, some HLP partners worry about the high transaction costs in their view, the time resources needed to participate in HLP meetings and take up tasks for HLP are perceived as additional to their core mandate.

It is important to note that some donors (particularly UNDP) having contributed to the decentralisation process for a long time, do not engage with HLP,

GoB representatives (LGD, NILG, line ministries, or UNOs) generally express their appreciation for the replication of practices through horizontal learning, and the contribution of the HLP to capacity building of local governments (as expressed in the formal integration of the HLP into the recently developed NILG concept on capacity building). Many GoB actors participating to learning events do also express that they enjoy a break-out of the daily routine and nice surroundings, in particular if the visits are outside Bangladesh.

The **local governments' associations** might also have a specific interest in a horizontal learning process. However, the BUPF does not seem to show motivation to join the HLP, and up-to now HLP did not invest to take it on board. Coming out of an initiative of USAID which is not partnering with HLP, the BUPF has a different agenda. In any case, some BUPF members think along similar lines of peer networking, with a possible role of the BUPF in coordination and networking, bringing together local governments and/or individuals from local governments who are working well, taking an advocacy role at other levels of government, organizing exposure visits without HLP, develop and keep strong links to various government actors.

4.3 The design of the horizontal learning process

How is the horizontal learning process conceived?

HLP is targeting the capacities of actors at different levels. While the HLP focuses its activities at the UP level (the “micro level”), it also works closely with Upazilas and districts “to assist UPs in planning and executing their own activities (“meso level”), and it seeks to create a platform for lessons learned from self-replication to link with formal and informal institutions “to leverage policies and new sectoral investments” (the “macro level”).¹² With regard to the micro level activities, the HLP regularly characterizes its concept with the sentence: "Under this program, local governments connect with each other to identify, share and replicate the good practices of their peers."¹³

The HLP program framework has developed a series of logical steps of activities.¹⁴ In the meantime, some changes to the stated procedures were introduced in practice. From the interviews and the written information it is difficult to get an overview of the activities in the past and the present – and almost impossible to get a picture on the achievements and results. The process concept could be summarized as follows:¹⁵

- At an **initiation workshop** at upazila level, UPs are encouraged to identify their own **good practices** (with indicators)
- At **network workshop** good practices are presented, and UPs select the good practices they wish to visit;
- **Exposure visits** are organised for UPs to learn from their peers, and appreciate achievements;
- UPs prioritize, discuss with citizens and integrate appropriate good practices into their annual plan and budget;
- UPs **replicate good practices** which are described in factsheets. Replication is not funded by donors, but by the UP's annual budget and available resources;
- Achievements are shared and recognized through the horizontal learning network.
- If replicated more than 50 times, good practice is identified as **best practice**, condensed in learning notes and presented to national decision-makers and stakeholders at **thematic workshops**.

While it was difficult for us to get clarity on how the detailed concept is put into practice today, the interviewed UP actors participating to events had no clear picture of the process at all.

¹² Program framework, p. 15.

¹³ Program framewrok, p. 16.

¹⁴ For the original set-up see program framework, p.14.

¹⁵ Program framework, p. 16, see also brochure.

Who decides on learning objectives and content?

In principle, it is the HLP working team and HLC deciding on learning objectives of events, learning content and sequence, and methodology. Informally, the HL partners (donors and NGOs) have a say in what is learnt in the upazilas, which they have been partnering with.

The HLP has developed valuable tools and detailed structures of the process. However, other interests and principles seem to shape the process design more than the stated HLP principles do. The workshop examples we have observed show the risk of mechanically repeating the workshop and exposure visits, to handle the process like a toolbox, not as a process oriented towards a common goal. While within the HLC there is serious reflection on many issues regarding the objectives, content and methodology for individual events, no systematic and transparent reflection process is organised in the HLP working team or within HLP in general on what is learned by UPs and what is un-learned, what the learning content should be and what it is.

Interestingly enough, there is no systematic feedback by UPs (as target groups of the HLP) on objectives, content and methodology, although there might be informal feedbacks taken up individually. As we can see from the following, UP partners have discretion in identifying their own practice to be presented at workshops and exposure visits, and they decide on what to replicate. Many of our interlocutors expressed the view that this discretion with regard to the content of the learning is enough for UPs, and there is no need – and no adequate methodology – to involve them further in decision-making.

How are decisions taken with regard to "good practice"?

According to the HLP methodology HLP events (initiation workshops, network workshops) with the participation of UPs and other stakeholders are key moments to decide on “good practice” and on examples to visit. UPs participating to the initiation workshops at Upazila level “identify and present all of their good practices”, and participants vote to identify the top five good practices. UP representatives are individually and personally nominated to participate to the events by the UNO. The UNO, local representatives of line ministries, interested HLP partners are also participating to the workshops, which are usually facilitated by a facilitator from the HLP "core group" (a pool of facilitators experienced with the HLP approach and put at the disposal of HLP by HLP partners).

Although we could only visit a little number of initiation and network workshops we could get some impressions on how such decisions are taken. The atmosphere in all observed events was energetic, however sometimes chaotic. UP participants (consisting of UP chairs, some council members, and some secretaries) really seem to enjoy the procedure and methods perceived as different from traditional training, in particular NILG training (which is perceived as “punishment”, according to many interlocutors), or NGO trainings which are often perceived as far away from practical considerations. Almost nobody in the audience took notes – people might not be

expecting an amount of information and not aware of their responsibility of communication back to their councils, and there was no discussion or reflection about the principles of the process and the presented rules of the workshop (e.g. decision making procedures, different roles of individuals in the room, different ways of contributing to the process, who is involved and when, etc.). This decreases the chances for the individual participants' understanding, even more so for a shared understanding in the group, or ownership for the workshop process, let alone the HLP process. The facilitators have to cover ambitious objectives in a very limited time frame, making them focus on written results (e.g. flipcharts written with a certain number of selected practices and so-called indicators) and not on process related objectives (e.g. increasing inclusiveness, clarity, depth of substantial discussion, networking, creating shared understanding, retain the information given), or HLP principles. There is limited time for questions and answers in relation to the information given, no feed-back rounds. The atmosphere of the workshop with a relatively pushy and directive facilitator does not allow for learning about the HLP values of appreciation and connecting.

The participants in the initiation workshops decide in groups on the listing of "good practices" from the UPs present. The time available for this group work seems to be short considering the tasks the groups would have to manage (a group of about 10 participants, with unclear moderation and challenging power relations, and complex values to observe). Our impression is that there is little shared understanding of the task of selecting "good" practices, the purpose behind and the reasons for selecting. We could observe in the workshops that the groups just filled in the distributed number of cards – an indication that there was not much discussion or common decision-making about selection criteria and the choice of good practice within the group. The same limitation could be observed for the plenary discussion. The selection criteria for "good practice" were not explicitly discussed, and we heard statements like: "I know that chairman, this is why the practice is good". Whatever is presented at the workshops must be "good" practice; there are no general criteria for making a difference between "good" and "bad", just personal and non-transparent choices made.

From the list of "good practice" presented by participating UPs, participants vote for selecting five "good practices" (with five dots for each participant, to put with the preferred practice). The numbers of participants from each UP vary; however, all individuals have a voice. The voting procedure is not well reflected with regard to its consequences for results – and the weight it gives to some UPs which are represented more numerously than others. There is little time to decide for plenty of sometimes similar choices, which hardly allows for time for individual reflections. This means that basically participants vote for some keywords without informed choice. The "indicators" developed at the workshop are key elements describing the practice in general, but there is no possibility for exchange and in-depth discussion on the strengths or benefits of a certain practice, or the conditions for replication. Moreover,

the use of donor language such as "indicator" does not contribute to a shared understanding on how indicators could be helpful in the process.

While in the events visited voting procedure and the rules were explained partially, the objectives of the voting and the consequences for the follow-up remained unclear – so each participant forms its own logic of consequences. In general, participants were not really able to tell why the practices were chosen. Some UP participants told us that the voting is on “what we would like to replicate in our context”; others said that they voted for practices which are the easiest to replicate; others mentioned that the selected practices were responding to the most pressing needs in their community, others related it to the person they know. There is concern amongst the participants that the voting becomes biased and an unhealthy competition starts to get the highest number of votes for particular practices.

In any case the procedure is prone to group-pressure and manipulation. One implicit learning message to participants could even be on “how to design participatory processes in a way that certain predefined results are achieved”. The comments of participants clearly show that they are well aware of the possibilities of manipulation by other participants, or by donors and NGOs having an interest in validating the practice that was already developed and piloted in their programs and projects, to be replicated within the HLP system.

A series of factsheets were produced mainly by the UP and their HLP partners who piloted the practices. The factsheets currently present 22 practices¹⁶ and their indicators, and these factsheets are distributed to interested UPs and HLP partners and a broader public from the HLP website. However, it is not transparent neither to participating UPs nor HLP partners what were the criteria for selecting themes for factsheets from a longer list of "good practices" identified in initiation workshops. In any case, the factsheets do not seem to be widely used or even known in UPs. Even the UPs actively participating to the HLP events and presenting the practices mentioned did not know the corresponding factsheets.

The criteria to identify "good" practice remain blurred, and when branded by HLP as "good", the practice is perceived as "good" forever. There is no monitoring how the practice is replicated and how it is evolving with its application in changing contexts and times. Although some interlocutors are worrying about the possibility to transfer good practices from one region to another,¹⁷ the quality of some practices shared¹⁸

¹⁶ The factsheets cover the following issues....

¹⁷ For some “good” practices, e.g., like the open budgeting, the UNDP LIC evaluation provides concrete recommendations for improvement (Simon De-Lay, LIC Learning and Innovations Component of the Local Government Support Project in Bangladeshi Union Parishads – Lessons Learned, 2010). With regards to critical points in participation in general the WB- offers guidelines (study Ghazala Mansuri / Vijayendra Rao, Localizing Development, Does Participation Work?, The World Bank, Washington , D.C., September 2012 (2010). Different context factors, e.g. water salinity or the stability of the underground, need to be taken into account for technical solutions. It is as necessary – and even more difficult – to assess context factors in social processes, e.g. in open budgeting.

and their potential of negative impact of "doing harm" (involving a certain reputation risk for HLP), most HLP stakeholders do not express a major concern. Some said that they didn't reflect about that yet, or such cases did not occur yet. Others trust in the wisdom of UP participants in selecting and replicating, and if the number of replication is high, this confirms the quality, as so many people can't be wrong. Others think that the practices identified are (technically) so basic that they do not have a real potential to do harm. Another group of interlocutors is aware of the questionable quality of some practices, but they feel that the HLP has to accept that as "it is inherent in any instrument".

A last group thinks that the implementing NGOs and donors have enough experience and knowledge to look after the practice and its replication. This corresponds to the views expressed by some partners that they (or HLP) would have a responsibility to intervene if a "red line" is crossed. Other partners thought that any intervention on the quality of "good practice" would go against the principle of "self selection" and were afraid that such intervention would extinguish the "spirit" of HLP. Sometimes we heard different opinions from individuals working for the same organization.

Interestingly enough, we did not hear about any reflection on the side of the government at any level on the compatibility of good practice with legal standards and policies etc.

How are exposure visits organized?

Network workshops are organised at district or national level to present the good practices shortlisted in the initiation workshop, provide participating UPs with the opportunity to show their interest and select the good practices they would like to visit, and HLP partners identify the visits they are able to support financially. However, the process of design and organisation of such visits is not transparent to participating UPs who usually just wait for an invitation by the UNO to participate to an exposure visit.

The methodology and programme of exposure visits is decided by the HLC in cooperation with the HLP partners involved. Taking up the interest declared by the UPs participating to the workshops, the HLC proposes a list of visitors to the LGD who decides on which UP gets a permission to visit and sends the visitors list to the UNO concerned. In reality, the UNO finally invites participants – and may change the LGD's list of participants according to his/her personal preferences. In any case, for the UPs interviewed, the selection criteria are not transparent.

¹⁸ For example, the factsheet on Upazila women's forum developed under Sirjganj Local Government Development Program SLGDP by UNDP, describes the empowering impact of such a forum. As we heard from women members of the forum, its activities include the collection of money from members to distribute to the poorest women in the Upazila. Our interlocutors had the impression that even if charity is needed badly in the Upazila, it is not the women's role to cover this need. And they do not feel empowered at all by this activity, to the contrary: the collection of money from women even increases the financial burden on women UP members that are already disadvantaged in relation to their male colleagues.

The WSP, sometimes supported by other donors, bears the costs for transport, food and accommodation (but no per diem) of the visitors. The fact that there are no per diems for visiting UPs is enhancing ownership, according to HLC/WSP, but it is widely criticized by our UP interlocutors: They argue that their remuneration for their official tasks within the UP is already ridiculously small, and spending two unpaid days more for their public task is difficult and even impossible for some.

Exposure visits are appreciated by participants to be unique opportunities for breaking-out of daily routine and building relations with peers, and gain some factual knowledge about "good practices". Some participants reported negative impressions that visits were tiring, with many hours on the road, short presentation of technical aspects around the practice but limited opportunity to discuss with peers, and some side events not really linked to the learning. Of course, travelling together is an important opportunity to build relationships, but it is only a hypothesis that such relatively superficial relationships will last and contribute to a network of peers or a continuous exchange of information.

How are "good practices" replicated?

According to the program framework, a number of good practice "learned from the peers" has been replicated in UPs participating to HLP during the first phase of the program. The program framework lists good practices relating to a variety of technical issues (arsenic mitigation, climate change and disaster resilience, sanitation) as well as issues relating to administrative and political processes (raising local revenues and open budgets processes, gender-sensitive decision-making).

The participating UPs are fully responsible for replicating the "good practice" identified. Besides the one-page factsheets produced mainly by the UP and their HLP partners who piloted the practices, there is no technical or financial support for replication foreseen within the HLP framework (although some observers say that individual HLP partners continue to support UPs technically and financially in replicating practices they had piloted).

While the program framework's indicators for HLP results refer to replication and scaling-up of good practice in service delivery particularly in water and sanitation, it seems that the HLP is not really interested in monitoring such replication, be it through these indicators or other means. The HLC is systematically monitoring the allocation of resources in UPs budgets only (in order to see whether the UP had foreseen financial resources for the replication). There is no monitoring of the replication processes, the lessons learned from the replication, the changes made by adapting the established practice to a different context, the sustainability of the practice. Under these circumstances it is rather difficult to get evidence of the quantity and even more so of the quality of replication in participating UPs, beyond some anecdotic impressions.

From our (limited) sample of observations and interviews we can say that UP stakeholders reported on various experience with successful and less successful

replication of good practice which they had learned about at HLP workshops, exposure visits, or other occasions. A variety of challenges for replication were reported such as convincing other UP stakeholders (which did not participate in the events) to implement the idea, mobilizing the necessary financial and human resources, unexpected technical difficulties and the need for adaptation, the lack of support, etc. However, such challenges do not feed-back into the definition of "good practice" or its "indicators".

How are "best practices" identified and used?

Under the heading of "leverage", the HLP methodology foresees a "thematic workshop" on those practices, which were replicated more than 50 times, thus called "best practice". This quantitative criteria makes the number of formal replications the determining factor for a decision on "best practice", and there are no explicit qualitative criteria (for example, cost-efficiency ratio, responding to priority needs, relevance for development goals such as poverty reduction, promoting gender equality, or targeting areas difficult to reach, etc.). The HLP website lists five thematic workshops organized, on water and sanitation, arsenic screening, participatory planning for own revenue utilization, adaptation to climate change, and Union Council Coordination Meetings. Very recently, a thematic workshop was organized on social accountability.

A HLP "learning note" is normally documenting such "best" practice and partly recommending future action by the central government and the UPs.¹⁹ Interestingly enough, the contacts given by the learning note mention the UNOs of the upazilas involved, the ministries and HLP partners involved, but no UPs. The learning notes also mention that the learning note had been reviewed by "peers"; however, the list of names given does not mention UP peers, but individual officials from central government, UNOs, representatives of the HLC and other HLP partners.

The decision to organize a thematic workshop is taken by the HLC, in consultation with the ministries concerned. The one-day workshop is formally convened by the HLP partners concerned with the best practice. It takes place in Dhaka with a view to make it easier for national government actors to participate. These workshops provide an important opportunity to the representatives of certain UPs having piloted or replicated the practice (and the HLP partners involved) to show their success to central level authorities and to other development partners. By presenting local successes at national level, such experience and the local officials involved are appreciated and validated, and the conditions for scaling-up such practice at national level are discussed with invited national stakeholders, particularly focusing on the integration of practice into the trainings of the NILG. However, there is no systematic follow-up on such policy changes neither from HLP nor other UP actors.

¹⁹ "Learning notes" have been produced on the following practices, in various formats: ***

4.4 Results of the learning process

What is really learned by participating UPs?

Participating UPs presenting their own practice report that they gain self-esteem and self-confidence by the mere fact that other UPs and other stakeholders are interested in learning about their practice. In fact representatives from UPs presenting their practice also deepen their own reflection on the success factors and "indicators", and increase their know-how and skills in presenting: The presentation of such practice is often prepared with the support of HLP partners who had framed and piloted the practice.

UPs participating to workshops learn about the existence of a practice, which corresponds to local needs, reflects local interests and is aspiring to be realized with the limited resources locally available. Creative ideas and innovation, which are practical and low-cost and tend to be overlooked, can be picked up by other UPs facing the same challenges. Participants learn that local initiatives are possible even within the current limitations of UPs in terms of competence and resources. They acquire some factual know-how for replication of a variety of practice in the workshops. In exposure visits the practice is getting concrete shape. Participating UPs can see and even touch the success, get an impression of the various elements needed for successful replication, and ask the UP responsible for additional information relevant for implementing the practice. A considerable learning of "yes we can" and a change of attitude of those participating is reported and can be observed. Behavioural change in UPs is observed by various interlocutors (including self-assessment of UP leaders) in the areas concerned. (The question always remains whether this change can be attributed directly to HLP and the particularity of its approach.)

Many issues are learned implicitly in the workshop processes and visits. For example, the voting system is prone to manipulation, and participants quickly learn how to manipulate participation with a view to get the desired results in the voting on "good practice".

The set-up of workshops and visits and the limited time available does not allow for learning about the details of a practice and the process for replication. Participants learn that UP stakeholders explicitly or tacitly taking responsibilities for local solutions, and they do appreciate the pragmatic learning through HLP's events. According to our interviews, it is evident for many participating UPs that the practice was not initiated by UPs but was framed by an external source (such as WSP, other HLP partners, donors, NGOs). They do not really distinguish between "good practice" of peers from HLP or practice piloted in peer UPs by donors and NGOs: It is just something "good" to replicate.

In relation to the general framework of UPs tasks and roles in public service delivery, the promoted "good practices" seem to be somewhat disconnected and even isolated – just an activity with a corresponding item in the annual budget to cover by the UP.

The HLP set-up is presenting "practice" as a technical project activity, with an impact on a specific sector or the functioning of an administrative process. Good practice is in a way de-linked from the top-down governance system the UPs are working in, and does not adapt to changes in the legal and policy framework. For example, the UCCM was piloted in the context of the "link model" by JICA and BRDB from 2005-2010 and continues to be replicated as a "good practice" (with variations) under HLP. But since 2009 it is much more than good practice to select for replication or not, but mandatory for all UPs (with a series of implications on resources and methods needed for implementation).

Although some practices (particularly the "Union Coordination Committee Meetings") are targeting the coordination role of UPs, the HLP set-up does not actively support UPs' capacities to connect with central government stakeholders or coordinate with other actors providing public services. Thus, HLP's impact on the UP's legal role in coordinating public services funded and provided by the ministries is very limited.

While horizontal learning is seen as a complementary (but self-standing) pillar of the concept for capacity building for local government, its content (and methodology) seems to be completely separated from the ordinary training activities of the NILG, with no reflection on whether the learning contents and messages are corresponding or contradicting. While the two pillars can use different methodology constructively and in a complementary way, contradicting content and value messages transferred by the NILG and the HLP "good practice" might be confusing, frustrating and demotivating for individual UPs.

UPs interested in replication of a certain practice do have a general support in the factsheets describing the practice and some "indicators" of the practice, where such factsheets exist. However, the current set-up does not make participating UPs learn how to assess their own framework conditions for replication, identify and overcome challenges ahead, and adapt practice, if needed, to their own context (which may be different from the practice presented, in terms of local needs and priorities of the population, human and financial resources available locally, etc). While HLP's strategy of no support for replication may be successful in UPs with sufficient financial and capable human resources available, many UP representatives stressed the need for (technical) support and further learning: If the replication meets some kind of challenge to overcome, UPs often have difficulties in finding appropriate solutions on their own and mobilizing the necessary support from their peers or from other private or donor sources. HLP is not monitoring any learning from the replication process in the UPs, neither from successes nor failures.

Moreover, HLP and participating UPs do not seem to systematically think about how to meet the challenge of making "good practice" sustainable: How to ensure maintenance and budget for maintaining costs of, for example, the new tube well platform, or the constant supervision of water quality?

As traditional training, instruction and policy guidance for UPs do, the HLP continues to focus on "what to do" and factual knowledge, on pre-defined good practice and tool-boxes even on political processes, and the exchange of peers and learning on "how to do it" may be happening spontaneously, but is not built in systematically.

What is learned by HLP partners and HLC?

Several HLP partners (particularly those represented in the HLC, but also other donors and NGOs) confirm that they have learned a variety of things with HLP. However, the representatives of HLP partner organisations seem to learn individually, based on their personal engagement and interest. In particular, there is no explicit joint reflection and learning process of the HLP working team, HLC and partners on how to organize and manage the learning process of UPs. It seems that the HLP working team did not take up and reflect on the specific external knowledge created with regard to practices, for example by the lessons learned from the evaluation of UNDP LGSP Learning and Innovation Component.²⁰

An important learning effect can be observed with some HLP donors and NGOs, particularly in reflecting their own practice, stereotypes and prejudices. The HLP system provides an opportunity for sharing experience regularly among various donors and NGOs that too often do not communicate and follow competing and even contradicting approaches. The HLP system values what all donors and NGOs have done and are doing, and HLP partners acknowledge that their own methodology and approaches may not be always the best.

Although our interlocutors from HLP partners generally agree among themselves that the UPs are not capable to really lead the HLP process, the HLP made them realize that UP actors are more motivated to change attitudes and behaviour when such change is not imposed by donors but copied from peers.

Who is learning within UPs?

The UPs are usually represented by the chair and some UP members, in some cases also by the secretary. Although there is no systematic monitoring of the participants' learning at the various HLP events, we got the impression that most participants did appreciate what they experienced and were grateful to take home some individual learning on practices that work and ideas to replicate.

UP participants to HLP events are selected by UNO and HLC according to criteria which are not clearly set and not transparent to other UP stakeholders. In our interviews we heard about bad feelings about this selection mechanisms, and some interlocutors from UPs or individuals who were not invited to the events complained about a certain bias or favouritism of the UNO in favour of his/her party mates, or other friends.

²⁰ Simon De-Lay, LIC Learning and Innovations Component of the Local Government Support Project in Bangladeshi Union Parishads – Lessons Learned, mandated by UNDP 2010.

Some interlocutors also expressed their concern about HLP's clear focus on targeting chairs and council members. Some participants do transfer information and learning to other stakeholders within their UPs, but there is neither systematic transfer nor support for this transfer. Of course, UP chairs and council members are the political power holders within the UPs, and their attitude towards change is crucial, so it is only logic that they have to be sensitized for and convinced by a new practice. But depending on the issue at stake, other key actors within the UP (ward members, secretary, evt. Standing committees, citizens) and outside (local representatives of the relevant ministries, civil society, private sector) have to be onboard and must gain the necessary technical knowledge and skills for a successful budgeting, planning, implementation and maintaining of a certain practice. Moreover, the HLP approach targeting mainly decision-makers tends to leave out those operationally responsible for replication (particularly the secretary) of more technical practices. We heard several times that the secretaries who did not participate in the events did not feel well informed by participating chairs, and missed basic information, motivation and capacities for successful replication. The HLP approach does not explicitly plan for the institutionalisation of the learning within the UP, or for a learning which is adequate to the role the participants are fulfilling within the UP, and such transfer does not seem to happen systematically.

Targeting elected power holders also includes the risk of losing critical knowhow in the election process. A big number of participants to learning events before the 2011 local elections were not re-elected. In general, the newly elected power holders are not always keen to take over projects and learn from their predecessors, and tend to ignore what had been learned by them. The HL Center is aware of this risk of knowhow and skills, and planned to use the non-re-elected chairs as HLP champions and "facilitators", although there is no clear attribution of role in the learning process, and some of the "facilitators" interviewed were not aware of and ready for such tasks at all. Some interlocutors confirmed that these old "champions" are often not well accepted by the new office holders.

The learning is focused to UPs directly participating to the events. Although the factsheets document a series of good practice and could be useful at least for the sensitization of other UPs beyond HLP participants, the transfer of learning from HLP to other UPs not participating to events does not seem to happen regularly. Ministries and other stakeholders are targeted by the learning on "best practices", in "thematic workshops" to explain and discuss established practice with different stakeholders ("learning notes"), but they are not involved in the learning process among peers.

The learning is mostly occurring at individual level, there is little indication that there is a collective learning other than between spontaneous, small groups of interested individuals. We do not see indications for institutional learning within UPs, and individuals are not supported to bring their learning back to their institutions, beyond replicating a well defined practice.

How do participants learn?

HLP workshops and exposure visits follow an approach explicitly drawing on the stated HLP principles. As far as we could see from our limited observations, the concept of HLP's appreciative approach is used in the workshops and exposure visits when UP participants present their own practice. UP participants learn from their peers, thus learning that UP stakeholders are not only receivers, but can switch to the empowering role of experts sharing their knowledge.

The workshops are run in a very tight timeframe with regards to the number of participants and objectives. Furthermore the inaugural session, and delays caused by late arrival of chair persons or important guests are reducing considerably the available time for substantial discussion. The time constraints often do not allow for a workshop process that would fully apply HLP's principles. In the workshops we observed there was neither clarity of roles of participants nor clarity on the various phases of the workshop process.

Beyond the explicit rules for organising workshops and exposure visits, we can guess a series of implicit and non-transparent rules for selecting topics, presenters, participants, methodologies and programmes. This is an implicit learning message of a "value" of non-transparency and selectivity with the high risk of contradicting the values promoted by HLP. HLP's appreciative approach to learning particularly refers to those UPs presenting and replicating successfully good practice – but it risks to turn into non-appreciative and a source of frustration for participating UPs that are not able to overcome the challenges in the replication process: Those UPs will feel frustrated by their inability compared to the "champions" and not appreciated at all in their efforts they might have deployed.

Although tacit learning is inherent in all learning processes, we have the impression that HLP learning is in reality more on explicit content than on tacit learning. The learning content is framed by the description of good practice in workshops, particularly in formalised fact-sheets (although the fact-sheets are not widely known in the UPs). Exposure visits may have a tacit learning element, but to make tacit learning happen more systematically, HLP would need another organisational set-up in exposure visits, such as smaller numbers of participants, more extensive and intensive visits.

The appreciative, empowering and practice oriented methodology of HLP is highly appreciated by many participating UPs, particularly in comparison with the classical methods of training provided by the NILG. The concept of appreciative approach and its use in HLP was mentioned very positively in our interviews by some governmental stakeholders, and some are indeed enthusiastic about its impact on the learning of UPs, although they do not seem to have thought it through and see its implications and limits. In the new concept on capacity development for local governments the horizontal learning is complementary to the classical trainings of the NILG. This institution does appreciate the new methodologies and sees it as a means to approach UPs and their needs, with a focus on replication of practice instead of

general learning. There is no reflection reported within the NILG on how the horizontal learning ideas could be brought into its own ex-cathedra training methodology. Currently, the NILG does not even distinguish between the learning in collectives and institutional learning.

How is learning implemented?

The main implementation of learning is the replication of practice at the level of UPs, but it is difficult to say anything concrete about this process. As already mentioned the HLP has not developed any methodology to follow-up on replication apart from counting the number of UPs having budgeted some costs for replication. Some HLP partners do follow-up on the HLP good practices they had piloted themselves, so the follow-up on practice depends very much on the interest of the HLP partners concerned – and their own agenda, of course.

Looking at the expected outcomes of HLP, learning could also have an impact on capacities of UPs as well as on legal standards and behaviour, policies and practices at national level. While some effects in capacity building can be observed with regard to technical issues around the “good practice” replicated, it is not possible to say whether there is an impact of the learning in other areas of UPs' competence.

There are a few initiatives amongst UP-chairmen to continue the exchange among peers outside the events organised by the HLP. They report to contact each other, mainly by phone, in order to seek support in the implementation of practices. However, little effects on self-organisation of UPs can be observed. The vertical learning is limited to the national thematic workshops on "best practice" where such practice is presented by UPs (selected by HL working team/HLC) and discussed among national and international stakeholders (relevant line ministries, private sector, NGOs, donors), but without a major role of the UPs concerned.

4.5 HLP process management

Who takes decisions on steering and management?

Management tasks are shared between various actors. According to the program framework, the **HLP Working Team** consisting of all development partners (LGD, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and partner NGOs) is the "think tank" at the national level, responsible for the oversight of the program, reviewing progress and planning for up-coming events, providing assistance to the HLP secretariat/Horizontal Learning Center. The Working Team meetings take place at least six times a year. Meetings are chaired by the Deputy Secretary of LGD.²¹

The **Horizontal Learning Center** HLC implements the approved activities of the HLP Working Team. The HLC is responsible for implementing the decisions of the working team: planning and organising the events, prepare documentation, etc. The HLC is a loose structure located in the premises of NILG, funded and technically and logistically supported mainly by WSP and JICA. Under a certain guidance of WSP staff some

²¹ Program framework, p. 25, 28.

additional personnel from JICA and NILG are working more or less together, without a clear institutional framework and no administrative hierarchy, distribution of tasks and decision-making structures.

The **District Coordination Committee** (DCC) is planned to support the scaling up and institutionalization of the horizontal learning process, with similar functions than HLP Working team, at district level. The HLP partners present at district level are expected to support the process of HLP, in parallel to the HLP Working Team activities at central level. Moreover, management tasks are planned to be delegated to a "**district hub**" outsourced to a contractor following an open tender. The first contracts have already been concluded with NGOs and private firms.

In general, the HLP working team and the HLC have the main role and responsibility for steering and managing the HLP. The working team is meeting regularly, on the invitation of one of the HLP partners, according to a meeting program prepared by the HLC. The meetings seem to be crucial for the sharing of up-to-date information on and relevant for the HLP, but they are not conceived for reflecting and discussing issues of strategic planning or taking decisions on operational management. The LGD has a (formal) key role by chairing the working team meetings.

In general, the LGD and the UNOs of the participating Upazilas manage the access for UPs, and decide on whom to include/exclude in the HLP process. The planned decentralisation of management decisions at district level will probably reduce the role of Upazila stakeholders such as the UNO.

Our general impression is that the roles of the various partners and the distribution of tasks between the working team and the HLC are not very explicit and clear in the partner systems, resulting in a rather non-transparent steering of the process from the back. By treating all partners formally the same, the various roles and tasks in the system and power relations between the HLP partners are blurred. Participating NGOs do have a role in formally participating in the HLP working team meetings process and providing human resources (in the "core group" for facilitation tasks, more generally as contracted service providers in the future scaling-up), but it is not clear what kind of role they have in decision-making on HLP, particularly in relation with the donors funding the process.

In general, we heard some **concerns about the effectiveness** of the management arrangements. While the current centralised set-up is seen as relatively costly and heavy, the decentralisation of the steering process to the district level is perceived as a good option to make the HLP more effective in this scaling-up phase. The district facilitator (recruited from former UP chairs as HLP champions) is planned to help the decentralisation of the process at a more operational level; however, the district facilitators' role and tasks are neither clear to themselves nor to the HLP partners. Not much reflection was heard on how this decentralisation will impact on the overall steering of the HLP: How can a common approach and common values be kept in a

decentralised system steered mainly by HLP partners that might have specific objectives and visions?

The HL Working team and the HL Centre are further developing their vision and concept and steering the process based on a kind of **perceived mutual understanding** among HL partners, probably based on the program framework for the current phase which was developed in workshop of HLP partners. However, there are no formalized feed-back systems which could re-confirm this common understanding or make visible different expectations of HLP partners, and lead to transparently reflected revised visions, if needed. Moreover, the current coalition among donors is not very stable, since HLP partners also change (and will continue to change) in their own strategic orientation (e.g. WSP). So the tacit common understanding could be shaky in the long term and bear a growing risk of hiding contradictions and tension between various expectations towards HLP.

In any case, the role of UPs in steering and managing the HLP process is very limited - and far from "leading". The UPs do not have a formal role at all in the decision-making on the HLP process.

Sustainability of the process is an important concern. The process seems to rely on the personal engagement and resources of key individuals who will sooner or later exit the process. Equally the links to the governments give the impression to be based more on personal relationships than institutional stability. While it is great to have individual supporters advocating HLP's approach within the government's structure, this is not enough to institutionalize the government linkages.

HLP partners expressed different opinions on how to achieve sustainability of the HLP management system in the long run. Firstly, some partners mentioned that it is the empowering impact on UPs that must be sustainable (and not the HLP process as such). When referring to the HLP process, some said that the LGD/NILG will have to take over, some think that there must be increased involvement of donors and NGOs. A third group sees the HLP sustainable only if UPs themselves will take over a steering role. However, no vision is visible on how to bring the UPs more into the driving seat.

How are monitoring and evaluation processes organized?

It is evident that the individual stakeholders are constantly assessing the progress of HLP from different angles, coming to sometimes differing conclusions. Though, there is no formal HLP monitoring or evaluation system covering the different learning and management processes.

- With regard to the learning process within UPs, there is hardly any monitoring. Statistical data are collected with regard to the number of good practices replicated, based on the indicator of local budget allocation for the replication. No data are available that could inform decision-makers on the real

implementation of the practice, its quality and sustainability, the satisfaction of the population. Monitoring of the implementation of individual practices is done in the individual projects of partners orientated towards the projects' log-frames - and not towards the HLP learning process itself. This makes it particularly difficult for HLP decision-makers or participating UPs to reflect on "good" practice and the corresponding criteria or the learning process as a whole.

- At the level of individual events (workshops and exposure visits) there is no scope for feed-back of participants on content and methodology at all. This makes it very difficult to find out about and stimulate reflection on what is really learned and how.
- At the level of HLP management there are no systematic evaluations and feed-back loops to monitor the results and the methodology.

The core of an appreciative approach refers to the acknowledgement of "what is": mapping and assessing the context the participating UPs are working in and struggling with. The HLP does not have any reference (or baseline) to build on, so it is particularly difficult for HLP to show improvements and even more to attribute visible changes to HLP.

How is internal – external communication organized?

A considerable amount of efforts have been made by the HLC to develop communication tools and use a variety of communication channels and methodologies, to transfer messages within the HLP system and to outsiders. We are not in a position to get a consolidated overview of all communication efforts, particularly relating to internal communication, but we can make some rather erratic comments:

- A brochure was published in 2011 providing some basic information on key features of HLP. This brochure is available on the net, but we do not know for what purpose this brochure was made and how and to whom this information was distributed.²²
- The program framework of 2011 describes the concept and values of HLP, however it does not seem to be used as a basis for common understanding among HLP partners and UPs.
- The website provides useful information and documentation on the HLP process and learning, for public use. However, the documentation does not seem to be up-to-date (at least the English version). Only two newsletters have been put on the website, both in 2010. The English website publishes information without any explanation on the purpose and targets of papers, thus often difficult to understand for outsiders. The website in Bangla contains

²² <http://www.horizontallearning.net/Files/Brochure.pdf>

two newsletters, however one of them is different than the one on the English website²³.

- The factsheets (not available on the English website) and learning notes do provide general information on good and best practice as well as contact information to learn more about the practice. However, this information is not up-dated and include contact numbers of UP chairs who are not any more in office.
- Key messages on events and achievements regarding replication of practice are sent by SMS to the mobile contacts of representatives from UPs. However, we do not really know what the content and purpose of these messages are. The last sending of SMS registered on the website is of October 2012.
- The most important internal communication channels for general values and principles of HLP are the various HLP actors in direct contact with UPs and other stakeholders (LGD and UNO inviting and selecting UPs, workshop facilitators, workshop presenters, etc.). However, they do not seem to send a common message on the HLP.
- Particularly, the district facilitators are planned to be a communication channel between UPs and HL Centre, among UPs in the district concerned. We have seen that some district facilitators do work as distributors and collectors of information from and to WSP / HLC. Other district facilitators exist only on paper and do not have any clear perception what is expected from them.

Our general impression is that there is a public image of HLP around the catchwords of peer-to-peer learning of UPs, and sharing and replicating of good practice. With regard to concrete achievements the picture of HLP is mainly shaped by individuals engaging with HLP and some HLP partners who communicate their own perceptions and priorities. For example, if looking at WSP's and SDC's websites it is mostly about water and sanitation, or about "real-life facebook"²⁴; if looking at JICA's publications, it is about successful replication of arsenic screening and implementing the UCCM.

5. HLP's hypotheses of change and intervention logic

HLP's approach and expectations for concrete results are based on a series of explicit and implicit hypotheses or theories of change. According to our mandate, this section condensates and summarize the most important hypotheses which we can recognize behind the perceptions, concepts, strategies and actions reflected in our findings. The question then is: Are these hypotheses convincing to us?

²³ December 2010-June 2011

²⁴ <http://www.sdc-learningandnetworking-blog.admin.ch/2012/10/16/horizontal-learning-program-is-like-real-life-facebook/>

5.1 HLP's hypotheses of change

HLP starts with an important assumption: "...that capacities already exist and that networking peers around good practices can enable those practices to be identified and replicated to influence policies."²⁵ The HLP is thought to complement more conventional top-down efforts to strengthen capacities of UPs. From this, a series of more detailed – and not always homogenous - hypotheses of change can be derived, with regard to various levels of change:

At the level of changing attitudes and behaviours

- Appreciating the UP leaders' existing capacities for developing practical solutions to local problems will increase their self-confidence, and the sharing of positive experience with other local leaders will increase the self-esteem of local government institutions in general, thus changing their attitude.
- Connecting and learning among peers (i.e. UPs providing solutions and expertise, and UPs looking for solutions and expertise), has an empowering effect on UPs.
- The focus on achievements (instead of problems) will change the attitude of UP leaders from passive complaining to pro-active looking for solutions.
- Horizontal learning from peers and integrating "tacit learning" about practical local solutions will change the UP actors behaviour and will make local practice replicated, without help from central government, donors, or NGOs.
- Replication of good models will be an essential contribution to change attitudes and behaviours of UP actors.

At the level of improving local services:

- Whatever the features of "local practice" are: If the practice is presented in HLP as a practice and voted for by some other local governments, it will be "good", go into the "right" direction and be ready for replication.
- UP chairs have the responsibility (competence and task) and the capacity (resources) to replicate the selected good practice.
- Replication of models taken from peers will bring results in improving services.
- UPs taking initiatives to replicate good practice will create UP leadership of HLP.
- The UP chairs are the main leaders of the UP. If they change their attitude, they will also change their behavior, together with all other stakeholders in the UP (Council members, secretary, etc.).

At the level of institutional reform:

- Networking of local government institutions and knowledge sharing around good practices will lead local institutions (and not only individuals) to improve service delivery as well as reform bottom-up.

²⁵ Program Framework, p. 7.

- Replication of models will strengthen UP institutions in terms of performance, respect for democratic values, gender, accountability etc.
- Capturing and replicating good local practices will build a “groundswell movement on local governance reform”, and inform policy changes based on real and practical experience.²⁶
- The quantity and quality of replication of a local solution will provide new models and make central government learn, thus positively impact on national law, policy and training standards.

5.2 Are these hypotheses convincing?

From this list of hypotheses we can identify some important elements, which are in our view decisive for HLP’s achievements. They are the “ingredients for the recipe” to make horizontal learning successful.

Firstly, we agree that an **appreciative approach** valorising existing capacities can contribute effectively to building capacities. Appreciation aspires to create a respectful environment and respectful interaction, and invites to reflect on the UP’s own capacities, roles and attitudes. It opens up a space for talking about solutions and achievements instead of problems and limitations, through acknowledging and raising awareness on own resources and self-efficiency. Capacities are not primarily built on the top-down transfer of expert knowhow, but on existing local knowhow anchored in local practice and adapted to the real context. The appreciative approach is not just another term or concept for development co-operation. If taken seriously, it may imply a real shift of paradigm, leaving behind traditional “training” and capacity building approaches based on the transfer of external expert knowhow.

Secondly, the focus on **practical experience** is very much convincing. Learning must be oriented towards using the potentials and resources available on the ground and overcoming the real-time challenges. And this can only be learned from practice and practical examples.

Thirdly, people only are able to learn and change their attitudes if they have a certain level of **self-esteem and self-confidence**, and if they have the feeling and experience that they do have the competences to act and achieve concrete results. Investing in self-confidence is an important ingredient of a learning process.

Fourthly, we believe that the **knowledge exchange among peers** has the potential to stimulate motivation, and under some conditions innovation and creativity.

Finally, from a governance point of view, **networking and connecting local governments** are important factors for making decentralisation more effective. Local governments have got common interests to have a voice to influence the legal and policy set-up and the distribution of tasks, roles, responsibilities and resources

²⁶ Program Framework, p.12.

between the various levels of government. And networking and connecting will empower local governments to identify, use and defend scopes of action and powers transferred.

Other hypotheses are less convincing, mostly following a relatively simplistic logic of cause –effect relation, for example:

- Replication of a model solution tested in a particular context does not necessarily mean that the actors replicating will change their attitude. Thus, replication of practice may not result in sustainable solutions.
- Sharing a positive experience and raising awareness about the existence of a solution does not mean that this solution will be successfully replicated.
- If a learning process is successful in changing attitudes of participants, this does not automatically result in changing behaviours. Changing attitude is a necessary element for changing behaviour, but other factors (human and financial resources available, legal competences, personal interests) are equally important in shaping behaviour.
- Replication of solutions does not necessarily result in a “groundswell movement” of reform in decentralization: If the actor replicating a practice is not interested in reforming, he/she will be happy with the solution replicated.
- Meeting at events and joint learning cannot be equalized with connecting and networking; this happens only if events are designed accordingly.
- Learning contents and learning experience do not automatically contribute to development goals (such as reducing poverty, fighting exclusion, promoting gender equality etc.).

6. Conclusions: “What actually is HLP?”

6.1 ... a dazzling shape

Our impressions show a big variety of visions, theories of change, and objectives of HLP. Some hypotheses of change are convincing to us, others less. Looking at the practice of HLP we see that activities are driven by a mix of hypotheses oscillating between two main perceptions:

- HLP as an **empowering process to change UP’s attitudes** and increase UP’s motivation to change behaviour. This means that the first objective is to increase motivation and provide orientation to UPs to act differently.
- HLP as a process of **replicating predefined “good practice”**, mostly piloted with the support of donors and NGOs. Replicating practice mainly requires factual learning of participants (first order learning) on techniques and processes.

These two orientations may not seem coherent at first sight, but they are not per se incompatible among themselves. However, they can cause misunderstandings and des-orientation in HLP decisions, strategies, and concrete actions, and in the

expectations of partners. In fact, the two directions imply different learning goals and consequences for the understanding, management and design of the process.

In reality, the HLP partners do have a variety of views on the essentials of the HLP process, and there are no common reflections on how such differences would influence the process, particularly in the current phase of scaling-up. More concretely, the HLP management system does not reflect this diversity of views at all. HLP partners (including NGOs) are just seen as "friends" of the UPs creating a blind spot with regards to the diverging objectives and heterogeneous interests HLP partners may have. For example, HLP partners will not feel accountable to the targeted UPs and their constituencies, but to their own accountability systems asking for development results according to their own strategies and indicators. Partners who see themselves as users (and not co-owners) of HLP will have little interest in getting involved, shaping a common understanding on learning, or increase the role of UPs, since HLP serves their current interest of a donor-led dissemination process.

Thus, heterogeneous ambitions and a variety of actions may be seen as an expression of creativity, but it carries, in our view, an increasing risk of breaking-up the HLP system. Learning processes need a frame and a vision – "chaos" needs to be framed, otherwise the outcome of the process will be completely arbitrary. In other words, change does not necessarily mean improvement, it might very well turn into the extinction of a system, or at least do harm to key values and objectives of HLP partners. While it is normal that a group of partners will have a diversity of objectives and interests to cope with, the HLP lacks **common orientation** to keep the process together and make it governable and manageable, particularly in a process of scaling-up. A common orientation must not necessarily be expressed in formal management language (such as log-frames and outcomes) but it can also materialize in other expressions of a shared belief system (such as success stories).

Last but not least, in our eyes, the HLP does not have the shape of a "movement" of UPs, it is rather a type of network organised around the HLP partner system, more particularly the WSP, with very limited networking activities among UPs.

6.2 ... with some results in improving service delivery

In the last years, a number of UPs have learned from peers that improvements in service delivery are possible with locally available resources. However, the HLP set-up does not really focus on successful service delivery by local institutions, but on influencing attitudes of individuals perceived as UP leaders towards a specific "good practice".

UP leaders are motivated by HLP to change their attitude and deliver results responding to their constituency's expectations. However, the causal chain from the individual learning to changing institutional behaviour (also of administrative staff, or newly elected power holders) and improving practice (also in challenging contexts, in

UPs not directly participating in HLP) is not well established and thought through. This makes it particularly difficult to attribute a certain change observed to the HLP: We might assume that certain successful projects will be replicated anyway by those UPs interested by and informed about the project, even without the rather complex and costly HLP process. In these cases, the merit of HLP will just be another channel for disseminating practice developed beforehand, with the support of HLP partners. Other context factors may influence the change in service delivery and the replication processes more than HLP does, such as the LGSP-II providing additional resources to UPs.

Throughout the HLP there is limited reflection on what is “good practice” in service delivery, resulting in making UPs replicate rather mechanically some models that have been piloted as projects in a variety of contexts and with different objectives and value systems. The risk of isolated, even incoherent replication efforts, inaccurately responding to the local context, the needs and interests of citizens, conflicting with current standards of governments and/or donors, policies and norms, is evident.

6.3 ... and building capacity of UPs

In general, HLP's primary focus is on replication of practice, and there are no clear objectives for the learning process itself. It does neither foresee indicators to measure learning results nor establish a monitoring of the learning process.

Of course, HLP has some important effects on attitudes. Participating UP stakeholders agree that particularly those presenting good practice do gain self-confidence and self-esteem by the events, through the appreciation of their efforts and results. Participating UP stakeholders seem also to learn how to respond to expectations of their constituency and increase popularity and leadership. They connect to peers and get acquainted to power holders at other levels of government – a first step to network and lobby. They also learn that their scope of action might be bigger than they thought in terms of human and financial resources. However, they do not learn how to assess their own capacities, in relation to the tasks a UP has to fulfil in a decentralised system, and how to close the gaps. With regard to replication, they do not learn how to use the model as an example (and not a blueprint) of a solution tested and piloted, and adapt it to their own context.

Particularly those UPs presenting practice do improve their skills in presentation and communication, and all participants make experience in group and team work and develop their networking skills. The HLP events are appreciated by participating UPs as being much more interesting and motivating than classical top-down trainings. One of the motivating factors is a new scope of action discovered by participants: UP leaders are invited to decide on their own what to replicate instead of just following orders. Moreover, the orientation towards practical learning which will be useful in every day life, is motivating as well. The contacts, exchange of experience and networking amongst UP chairs are reported to grow, however the HLP is not

promoting such networks actively, or is institutionalising the networking among participating UPs.

HLP focuses on the transfer of factual knowledge needed for technical replication of “good practice”, but its effect on strengthening the UP’s competences for fulfilling functions and tasks and for overall management of UPs is limited. “Good practices” on budgeting, tax collecting, internal coordination processes and gender would address important management issues, but they tend to make UPs replicate a certain model and use a fixed toolbox instead of improving their capacities to take up their responsibilities in decentralized governance and plan, prioritize, implement and monitor the 39 legal tasks given to them. HLP does not help UPs to understand and reflect the arguments behind a certain practice and its links with norms, standards and policies stemming from the outside world.

HLP learning processes are focusing on individual UP leaders participating to the events. Depending on the content of the learning, UP leaders may be the wrong target group. For example, UP leaders will not be responsible for implementing the practice, so information on technical details will not be needed for them. In HLP today, transfer of information and impact on other key actors within participating UPs or non-participating UPs do happen more or less spontaneously, if ever, and sustainability of the impact is anyhow challenged by the high turnover of office holders after local election. Though the HLP does not really have a concept for institutionalizing the learning more systematically within and among UPs.

The HLP events change perceptions of other stakeholders in the governance system: Representatives of the central government at district and Upazila level, NGOs and donors do see UPs increasingly as competent and indispensable actors in decentralization since they can demonstrate that they can mobilise resources and realize projects at local level. As several UP stakeholders said in the interviews, HLP events are an empowering opportunity for them to get in contact with central government stakeholders, donors and NGOs at an eye level – an important learning with a big potential for changing attitudes and behaviours not only of UPs, but of governance actors at central, regional and local level.

The current set-up of learning events does not use fully the potential of an appreciative and connecting approach. These terms tend to be used as catchwords, but not as principles shaping methodology and design of events. Moreover, learning events tend to be isolated events for UPs instead of a learning process: Participating UPs have very little information on the whole process.

For the HLP partners, the knowledge exchange with other NGOs and donors is definitely a gain.

6.4 ... with limited results in policy development

As the program framework states, scaling-up can have different dimensions. Increasing the number of UPs replicating good practice or increasing the number of

good practices to replicate are two important aspects of such up-scaling. The third aspect (mentioned as expected outcome 3 in the program framework) relates to increasing capacity at national level to review the policy framework and make it more adequate to scaling-up of good practice and improving and monitoring quality service delivery at local level.

Through the direct involvement and (partly) ownership of the LGD/NILG in the learning processes the HLP is relatively well linked to the national institutions responsible for decentralisation (or at least with individual representatives of such institutions). The recently adopted concept on capacity development of local governments presents horizontal learning as one of the three pillars of capacity development. This is an important result of close relationship. However, this concept is not yet put into practice, and it can be only the beginning of the development of a NILG learning policy integrating horizontal learning – and learning from practical experience instead of exclusive top-down ex-cathedra instructing.

In specific sectors interlocutors report on some isolated vertical feedback in the line ministries concerned (ministries of health, education).²⁷ The HLP addresses vertical learning mainly through the national thematic workshops on "best practice". The UPs' role is to present the practice, but is not foreseen to lead the discussion with the national stakeholders. In the workshops and events at Upazila level government representatives at various levels do hear about good practice from UPs. However, there is no room for UP representatives to discuss the implications of such practice for more general policy issues and convey a common message to the central government involved.

Some HLP learning notes on best practice formulate recommendations to the central government to review their policies with a view to take up and learn from the UPs' experience made and/or facilitate the replication of the practice further. However, HLP does not follow-up on these changes. Some HLP partners expressed the expectation that donors or NGOs, particularly WSP and informal personal networks by their informal power will create the policy impact. However, if there are lobbying attempts from the partner system, it seems that donors and NGOs do that on behalf of the practices which they had piloted themselves – not for HLP practices in general. Except WSP, nobody said in our interviews that they would lobby for HLP results to be taken up in national policies.

A key aspect of decentralization is that UPs are not any more seen as administrative service providers instructed by the central government, district or Upazila. The HLP is building on the assumption that local governments do have a certain liberty on how they fulfil the tasks delegated to them, within the framework provided by national laws, resources and policies. However, decentralisation and local governance only works if UPs are recognized as political actors, and this includes their legitimacy to

²⁷ For example, the Community Clinics (under the Ministry of Health) have improved services in some partner UPs, due to the continuous monitoring of UP bodies.

lobby for a more appropriate legal, financial and policy framework. HLP does not address the capacities of UPs to lobby for such change at national level.

6.5 ... with an appreciative approach

It has already been said that HLP's **appreciative approach** reflects a theory of change which is highly convincing (see the additional information in the glossary, annex 1). In practice, HLP's appreciative approach has a positive impact particularly on those UPs invited to present their practice: They are learning through self-reflection, conceptualising of their own experience and teaching others. The UPs that successfully replicate will also perceive a positive impact and learn about their own capacities to perform. An open question is the impact on UPs that unsuccessfully try to replicate "good practice". Unsuccessful UPs will not feel appreciated at all, although they might have invested a lot of efforts and resources; and they might lose motivation to learn.

Many HLP interlocutors seem to understand critique as degrading someone else, thus in contradiction with the appreciative approach. However, learning needs to deal constructively with successes as well as mistakes and failures to learn from. HLP's lacking attention to monitoring mechanisms, evaluation and reflection bears an important risk of ignoring or even denying the existence of context factors behind success and failure, and a risk of simplifying complex realities. Moreover, individual mistakes and institutional failures are pushed into a taboo zone. Important opportunities for improvements of practice cannot be taken up and assessed systematically.

In reality, contrary to the classical appreciative inquiry approach (which acknowledges "what is"), HLP distinguishes between "good", "best", and "bad". "Good" practice is practice that is liked by UPs for whatever reason, brings immediate benefits, has been proven as feasible and is expected to be replicable, at least in the piloted context. The HLP system does not include reflection on evaluation of what is "good" and "bad", with the risk of making invisible the values and interests behind this distinction.

As the program framework of HLP points out, an appreciative approach also builds on the power of **connecting** stakeholders and empowering each other through mutual appreciation, around a collective and common objective. From our interviews we have the impression, however, that UPs participating to HLP have their individual interests to increase individual performance, but they do not really follow collective objectives within HLP (e.g. influence central government policies and decisions of relevance for UPs' tasks), while it is the HLP partners who have some common development objectives (e.g. the strengthening of UPs in service delivery). The UPs' individual interest tends to be replicating practice with immediate positive effect on their constituency - but not long-term objectives. In fact, UPs tend to lose motivation in participating in HLP, if they think that the process does not bring them individual benefit any more. This is particularly visible in some UPs statements like: "HLP is not interesting any more, always the same practices are presented".

HLP has other dimensions tending to contradict the appreciative approach. The non-transparent selection process steered by the HLP partners and the central governments' LGD and/or its de-concentrated units risks to provoke highly negative feelings of rejection and lacking fairness among those individuals and UPs not able to participate. HLP does not really address the issue of power inherent in the concept of appreciation. In our view, there is an inherent risk of reinforcing hierarchical relations: Lastly, it is the HLP working team and the HLC deciding on appreciation, not the peers' community.

In general, the design and facilitation of HLP events have a potential for improvement from the perspective of an appreciative and connecting approach (e.g. awareness of contradicting messages on values, reflection on group dynamics, program design, facilitation style, voting system).

One of HLP's challenges linked to the appreciative approach is the fact that UPs are switching from a "receiving" role to a "sharing" role. This is not only challenging for the UPs themselves and their perception of each other, but may even more demanding for HLP partners who may have piloted practice with UPs and must acknowledge this principal shift in roles: The participating UPs are not any more seen as beneficiaries of predefined development projects but partners who have the capacities to know best what's good for them. The appreciative approach within HLP helps to enhance coordination amongst donors and NGOs offering possibilities to exchange and better target intervention through coordination.

It is interesting to note that HLP partners do not seem to use the appreciative approach within their own institutions or in individual relationships. If partners are convinced that the appreciative approach is working well – why do they not take it up within their own organizational processes? Or is it just good for UPs and their chairs and not for donor agencies and NGOs? Implicitly, this brings in a hierarchical dimension.

6.6 ... based on horizontal learning

HLP works with the potential of peer learning providing **motivation** basing itself on the fact that a lot of credibility is attributed to peers, in a situation of constructive competition. However, in our view, the HLP approach could profit more from this potential, in changing contents of learning, adapting the way to learn and working differently with the HLP principles and concepts.

HLP seems to assume that putting "peers" together is automatically working. In the HLP the UP chairs and some other UP actors (Council members, secretaries) are identified as "peers" learning from each other. The HLP concept does not explicitly reflect the **various roles and hierarchies among "peers"** as well as within UPs internal hierarchies (e.g. rank, functions, family, gender, economic and/or social status, relations to local or national elites, political parties etc.). More specifically, the HLP concept does not reflect on how the informal learning process can be systematically transferred from participating UP leaders to non-participating UP

stakeholders, and how HLP's strengthening of leaders and their capacities is connected with the formal participation processes within the UPs involving civil society and citizens.

HLP also uses the term for HLP partners making the term of "peer" somewhat **blurred**. In factsheets and learning notes the term explicitly seems to include all HLP partners, such as UNOs (participating in presenting and identifying "good practice"), or even representatives of the LGD, donors and NGOs (participating to the "peer review" of best practice). In HLP events representatives of the central government (UNOs) and UP chairs are often presenting practice together as "peers". This may have a positive effect on lowering conventional barriers and hierarchies, thus creating an atmosphere conducive for mutual learning. On the other hand, it tends to ignore existing power relations in the governance system as well as in the HLP partner system and may have a strongly negative impact on the wished-for peer-learning dynamics and UP leadership. An implicit learning message is generated: The term "peer" is hiding hierarchy.

Peer learning tends to focus on **resources available in the peer community**. Together with HLP's tendency to ignore critical reflection this bears a risk of ignoring the existing legal and policy context and excluding necessary innovation from external sources. Additional knowledge frameworks (such as qualitative standards for UPs set by the central government or by international state of the art, experience made in other countries) are not included. Innovation may be brought in through the partner system, however in a non-transparent way, often following particular interests of donors and NGOs aspiring to replicate their own ideas through UPs.

6.7 ... a series of management challenges

In general, UPs are involved in identifying and replicating practice, but they are not involved in the steering and management of the HLP process as such. Thus, the main self-characterization of HLP - "UP-led" – does not describe adequately the management of HLP.

Management challenges need to be addressed at the present stage by the partner system. They can be framed in several sub-processes (see glossary in annex 1) and need to take the rapid expansion and its dynamics into account.

"Good practice" is **not only a technical term** but an issue of HLP management. HLP does not reflect on what kind of learning messages on values and priorities are transferred with the "good practices" promoted. The HLP partners supporting and managing the process do have individual values, which they aspire to transfer. There is no reflection in the HLP management system on how to monitor the impact of HLP activities, and no measures foreseen to avoid harm to important values and goals such as social inclusion, non-discrimination, democratic participation, gender equality. Those issues are important orientations to the HLP partners and might be decisive for their decision to support the HLP in the future.

Moreover, the **HLC's institutional structures** are weak and seems to be stretched to the limits of their project management capacity. Weak structures are perceived by stakeholders to have the merit of flexibility. At the same time they bear the risk of being manipulated by supporting partners. The HLC works based on individual initiatives and the strategic involvement of some partners, but there is neither a clear orientation nor designated leadership nor a clear distribution of roles, responsibilities and tasks and organization of decision-making and implementation processes, which would provide some institutional stability and independence to the HLC. Additionally, the links to the government of Bangladesh seem to be based more on individual relations than on institutional co-operation – involving a big risk for sustainability.

With a view to the imminent future of expanding, the creation of **district hubs** (with outsourced management competences) will be a major management challenge. The risk of a loss of control by the HLP working team, particularly of the central government actors has been expressed various times. Moreover, there is some suspicion among the partners that district hub leaders (HLP partners present in the district, selected, contracted and paid by HLP) will influence the process in favour of their own interests and objectives. Moreover, using an open market tender to identify the managers of the HLP the district hubs (inviting HLP partners as well as private actors to offer for paid contracts) may put at risk an already difficult co-operation system within HLP.

The HLP partner system tends to **avoid sensitive issues** and open disagreement in the working team. We assume that partners perceive open communication and possible disagreement as a risk for harmonious collaboration (and therefore their own interest). Thus, the working team seems to focus on exchange of information on activities, facts and figures, and a ritual confirmation of key words hiding the lack of systematic reflection about other substantial topics. Moreover, despite of a formal equality of HLP partners, individual partners feel very differently about their role in the HLP working team. WSP/WB is perceived as the powerful owners of the process, so other partners do not necessarily feel ownership for HLP, they therefore don't engage with the process and follow (silently) their own objectives.

Despite of its focus on a process of change, HLP management structures and processes do not really focus on **making the results of the learning visible** and communicable, beyond the replication of individual projects. Of course, it is easier to make visible concrete infrastructure and monitor quantitative results in improving service delivery, and attribute the achievements to a certain actor supporting the process. However, if learning outcomes are invisible, the learning impact is even more a phantom, and it is impossible to link perceived impact to a specific contribution of HLP.

A specific challenge in the current system is the **knowledge management**. It has already been mentioned that the knowledge created is **not systematically monitored or evaluated** within HLP. The website is the main door to get information and access to knowledge created within HLP. The fact that more and more

documents are published in Bangla may be an indicator that the information is increasingly targeting UPs and Bangla stakeholders instead of donors and international NGOs. It is rightly recognized that former HLP “champions” (the first generation of UP chairs who have a lot of experience gained in HLP and were not re-elected in the last local elections) do have important knowledge and practical experience, which should not be lost to the HLP. The role of the “district facilitator” was created to keep them on board, but there is no clear idea on how the knowledge should be kept, and what task the district facilitator should fulfil in the system. What is still clearly missing in HLP is a knowledge broker who could systematically follow-up on newly created knowledge, and distribute that knowhow according to the needs of UPs and HL partners in the field.

With regard to the knowledge and information available outside HLP, there is no systematic approach to use relevant information and analysis relating to the UPs’ working context, the applicable standards and norms. In any case, a systematic exchange with outside knowledge is not foreseen, exchange happens based on individual initiatives and occasions.

6.8 ... limited prospects of sustainability

There are three levels of sustainability to reflect on: the replicated practice, the peer learning process, and the HLP itself.

Good practices will be sustainable if UPs can mobilize the resources needed to sustain them (acceptance within UP, human capacities, financial resources from own revenues or from corresponding ministries), and if the national framework will be conducive. Thus, it will be important to focus on sustaining and increasing ownership within UPs – not only by leaders, but by councils, secretaries and citizens who will be there after the next elections. Moreover, it will be important to lobby for improving national policies where they are not adequate – a challenging endeavour given the fact that HLP good practices cover many sectors of local tasks, and there is no systematic analysis of the relevant national framework for the replication of practices.

Horizontal learning as a concept will be sustainable if national stakeholders take up the idea of peer learning, be it UPs themselves, or the LGD responsible for the training and capacity building of local governments. LGD/NILG did take up the peer learning idea as one pillar of its concept on capacity building, thus providing an excellent basis for sustainability. It seems that WSP continues to be perceived as the main driver of horizontal learning. In this sense, the new concept of NILG seems just to provide space for horizontal learning to be filled by donors and NGOs, and if there is no external drive any more, the space risks to stay empty.

The sustainability of the **HLP process** itself is very much linked to the issue of the challenges of institutionalization and ownership. HLP partners often express concern that making HLP’s institutions stronger would make it inflexible and lose its “spirit”. However, in our view, the term flexibility hides the fact that there is no common understanding on the future of HLP, thus opening space for HLP partners to follow

their own objectives, with the resources of the HLP. This might contribute to the sustainability of the partners' programs and activities, but probably not be conducive to sustain the HLP as a process in the long run.

The issue of HLP ownership is difficult, particularly from the perspective of sustainability. It will be difficult for LGD and other ministries with their vertical power structure to own and drive a peer learning network with a very different horizontal power logic. However, it is clear that the HLP must be supported or at least provided space by the government to develop.

HLP is presenting UPs as "leading" the process. Although we have seen that this is not really the case, UPs' engagement will obviously be a key factor to continue horizontal learning in a sustainable way. **UP leaders** express a keen interest in learning how to cope with the expectations of constituencies. Peer learning is perceived as one of the resources to tap on to improve performance – but not the only strategy. Learning directly from donor driven pilots, and mobilize support directly from power holders at Upazila, district and national levels will be other approaches not involving the horizontal learning approach. The learning of "good practices" might not be a strong enough incentive to invest in keeping HLP running in the long term, and take real ownership and lead.

Many UP interlocutors express an interest in networking and establishing direct contacts with peers and with stakeholders at Upazila, district and national level – one of their main stated motivation to participate in HLP events is to meet important stakeholders they would not have a chance to meet individually. However, the HLP network of UPs is not strong at all, there are non-transparent selection criteria for joining, and the network is not systematically strengthened by HLP.

Some interlocutors have high hopes for the already existing network of UP leaders, the Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum BUPF to take a role in the HLP in the future. The BUPF was funded ten years ago with the support of USAID and is bringing together the 4'500 UP chairs of Bangladesh. It is perceived as facing challenges in terms of capacities and resources, and seems to be concerned with its own agenda as well as internal power struggles.

A scaling-up process has been started in a variety of dimensions. From the point of view of geographical areas covered, the number of HLP UP partners has multiplied by factor 20. The topics dealt with are covering a growing variety of sectors and cross-cutting issues. Efforts are also extended from rural to urban settings and issues. This rapidly increases complexity and involves a myriad of management challenges. HLP's weaknesses will have to be reflected on and addressed quickly. HLP is in a transition phase from a pioneering to a more differentiated stage (see glossary, annex 1), and this has to be reflected in a new form of steering, adequately addressing the increasing complexity.

6.9 ... and a need for further reflection

Summing up from these conclusions HLP's tasks are highly challenging and it is beyond the scope of the study to provide concrete recommendations for next steps. However, we can identify several areas and a series of issues for further reflection.

With regard to the governance of HLP

How to form a guiding coalition of partners that can build a sound foundation for developing shared visions, perceptions and objectives, with a view to coordinate action and strengthen cohesion in the partner system?

How to sustain motivated cooperation of development partners towards a common HLP goal?

How to organize reflection processes (monitoring, evaluation, learning processes) in a constructive and attractive way? How can a minimum of platforms for reflection (e.g. guiding coalition, sounding board, steering board) be created taking into account time and resource constraints? These platforms should allow for inclusion of participants in the partner system, dialogue, critical reflection, opening taboos and informed decision-making.

How to profit more from existing external and internal knowledge on management of complex systems?

How to build steering capacity adequate to the increasing size and implied complexity? How to decentralize the system with shared quality standards and principles? How to manage the transition to the next stage without losing the HLP potential and avoiding the risk that the HLP system falls apart?

How to define a reference framework to measure improvements? Which indicators would be better suited to monitor the outcome levels? Which indicators for monitoring learning are helpful, distinguishing between different stages and contents of learning? Which innovative methods could be applied to track behavioural change and the contribution of HLP to it? How to combine external follow-up and self-monitoring?

How to monitor and evaluate the envisioned network itself with regards of the different issues as value for network members, participation, connectivity, governance and leadership, capacities of members, adaption learning going beyond the monitoring of outcomes?

How to use the log-frames potential creatively and keeping the process flexible, without getting stuck in a linear cause-effect logic?

How to improve the knowledge management adequate to the enormous amount of generated knowledge?

How to improve communication processes with the view that different stakeholders are oriented and feel connected? How can the knowledge generated in different dimensions be accessible and communicated to support the vision of HLP?

How to gradually increase ownership of UPs including them more in the process of setting contents and shaping the learning process? How to strengthen the network of UPs with a view to exchange knowledge and strengthen their voice in political processes at other levels?

How to develop a clearer picture of the new roles and task of UPs and the shift of power in a decentralized system impacting on partners, UPs and other governmental actors? How to strategically integrate UNO and government officials in the learning process?

How to deal constructively with the power relations and the distribution of roles and tasks between different level of government (in particular at the Upazila level), within UPs, and among development partners with different motivations and agendas?

How to build awareness of and use upcoming social and economic developments trends more systematically, and use driving forces in the country's context?

How to link "good" practices and adapt their replication to the variety of contexts in Bangladesh?

How to integrate core values of development work (such as inclusion, gender equality, promotion of democracy, poverty reduction) into the promotion of "good" practices (in the sense of do no harm)?

With regard to the design of the learning process

How to clarify the goals and outcomes of the learning process? How to get an idea on who should be learning what to which purpose?

How to improve the design of learning processes with a view to bring forward more of the potential of appreciation and connectedness? How can critique be framed as a learning chance and be perceived as a necessary and constructive part of dialogue?

How to improve the design of the learning process in order to go beyond factual learning and imitating blue-print solution, to become a learning about process design and management, and problem-solving? How can implicit learning messages be regularly evaluated with regard to the objectives?

How can different knowledge frames (from external sources) be integrated into the development of practices with a view to enhance innovative capacity and improve the link to existing quality standards, norms etc.?

How can context factors and available resources be assessed and the assessment integrated to successfully adapt experience to different realities?

How to profit more from the potential of HLP approach with regard to the learning of “soft skills” and process-management? How to create more argumentative depth in the discussions on practice?

How to coordinate and develop a shared attitude and common understanding of principles and methodology among the various HLP facilitators? How to build a solid basis for necessary knowledge for these facilitators?

How to develop and communicate clear criteria for selecting and targeting participants at different steps of the learning process?

How to clarify roles in the HLP process with respect to different functions and capacities?

How to plan, prepare and follow-up in a way that events are focused, interrelated parts of learning process, keeping actors attached to the process?

How can targeted feedback loops for learning, progress and innovations be designed? How can feedback loops be established with a view to make the process as a whole profit from the participants’ experience?

With regard to improve the prospects of sustainability

How can UP ownership be enhanced in order to build motivation and capacity to become gradually independent of the partner system for their learning process?

How to decrease the dependency on individuals’ engagement, capacities, and availability and how to increase institutionalization within the HLP system?

How can the learning be transferred from individual learning of UP-chairmen to institutional learning within the UP?

How can the links with government entities be further developed with a view to become more independent from individuals?

How can UPs be strengthened to use their learning for policy influence in an increasingly decentralized set-up? How to develop chances for policy impact?

How to strengthen processes of exchange and networking among stakeholders – instead of heavily investing in the organization of a series of events?

How can the risk of a hasty expansion be mitigated and space and time for reflection be created?

Annex 1: Glossary - Background information on terms and concepts

A1.1. Background information on “learning” and related concepts

Learning process and individual learning

Learning, in principle, is permanently taking place, at least implicitly. We say an individual learns when s/he integrates new knowledge into existing one, evaluates it as compatible with her/his experience and orientates himself accordingly in future actions and interactions.

Learning can be described through different stages²⁸. Key ideas are that people are capable of adaptive change and learning must be dealt with at the level of context and relationship and cannot be reduced to an individual level. This concept of stages offers a valuable analytical framework to assess learning processes, in particular the distinction between what we learn and how we learn. At the moment a lot of different approaches and many open questions persist in the field of learning theories concerning e.g., integrating micro learning activities into organizational forms and macro-level societal institutions; the influence of culture, power structures and process dynamics including conflict; a systematic characterization of differences in a process through the lens of systems characteristics (a network is different from an hierarchical organization).

Learning is hindered by anxiousness, insecurity, pressure and lack of transparency. Due to the inherited functioning of the human brain, people tend to be more « stupid » if they experience fear or insecurity. Therefore it is necessary to establish an atmosphere of appreciation, support, playfulness and security to optimize task oriented learning processes. Security includes knowing about the belonging to a system, forming an identity, orientation about own role and possibilities to contribute as well as consequences of participation or at least transparency about those issues in the case that this is fluctuant.

An important misunderstanding prevails in learning, namely that an increase of motivation enhances the effectiveness of learning. The “Yerkes-Dodson” curve, approximately an “U” turned by 180° with motivation on the horizontal and effectiveness on the vertical axis, shows that systemically thinking the interplay of motivation and effectiveness is depending on the context: there are contexts where an increase of motivation leads to more effectiveness, however there are contexts,

²⁸ Gregory Bateson (1985) defines zero to fourth order learning: zero order learning being the application of acquired patterns of response in the same situation again; first order learning being the knowledge about tools and steps of how to do x, second order learning takes place when essential connections and perspectives are build and changed, it can be adapted in new contexts in practical application and as well “learn to learn” which includes reflective processes about conditions of learning; third order learning includes reflection about how the process of learning can be steered, the context can be shaped; under helpful conditions creativity emerges; forth order learning touches on the spiritual sphere, which cannot be activated by an individual or social system.

were exactly the contrary is true. The highest effectiveness is reached with a “middle range” motivation, which is closer to a relaxed attentiveness.

Organizational and institutional learning

In systems that are characterized by their orientation to fulfilling specific tasks (organizations, institutions etc.), learning needs to be focused around these tasks. Individual learning is different from the learning of larger social systems. The complexity of social systems brings additional challenges into the process.

Learning should answer to the question of how organizations and institutions can be equipped with the capacity to fulfil their task, anticipate changes, react accordingly and bring forward change from within. Learning on an institutional / organizational level focuses at three levels

- Specific organizational processes have to be established that allow to focus and stimulate learning processes that are directed towards a defined purpose;
- An enabling environment has to be created in a way that the competences of stakeholders are activated and utilized.
- Feedback processes with the larger environment have to be established, since the organization is in constant exchange with its environment - e.g. influenced by the incentives to and the requirements for changing behavior coming from outside the institution.

The well-known, however still evolving model by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, based on Batesons approach, distinguishes between learning (individually or collectively) on three different levels: single-loop learning, double-loop learning and learning about the context of learning (Deutero learning).

Learning to adapt (single-loop-learning) is based on gauging the deviation of the current state (status quo) with an improved state: The discrepancy is bridged through measures to adapt or correct, eradication of mistakes without questioning the targeted improved state (objectives, values, norms) itself.

Double-loop learning introduces generative learning. The question is not only to apply a methodology correctly, but also questions objectives, norms and values which might need to change. Such a process needs to compare with and integrate new knowledge: Confronted with a new knowledge frame what is done up to now and has been considered as “right” is questioned (comparing different “improved states”). If there are differences, a new version of an improved state is developed. Part of double loop learning is a continuous improvement of knowledge management.

Learning about the influence of the context is mostly done implicitly and unconsciously, it tends to escape explicit steering and it does not necessarily lead to improvement. At the moment this is a field of open scientific development.

Explicit and tacit knowledge

In the field of learning theories it is argued that the distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge is important and the interaction between the two forms of knowledge is essential for the creation of new knowledge²⁹. Attention needs to be directed towards social and interactive nature of learning, and the context, which allows mobilizing that knowledge.

Explicit knowledge can be formulated, abstracted and transferred across time and space independently of the knowing subjects. The assumption is that useful knowledge can be generated through logical deduction and acquired by studying the subject. Codified and categorized knowledge can help to identify important interrelationships between different types of (complementary) knowledge; it can be discussed, challenged, tested, transferred and improved independently from individuals.

Tacit knowledge emphasizes the idea that a large part of human knowledge, in particular operational skills, techniques and know-how, and routines, cannot be easily articulated or communicated in codified forms. The assumptions are that this kind of knowledge is experience based, intuitive and un-formalized; and transfer occurs through practice in a particular context and through social networks requiring close interaction, shared understanding and trust among learning partners. A tacit knowledge approach is likely to foster valuation of individuals and cooperation through the implicit appreciation of individual experiences in a field.

Key questions considering the two approaches are therefore:

- What constitutes the explicit knowledge base and how is it developed further (aggregation, standardization, coordination, role of expertise)?
- How can the transfer process for tacit knowledge be described in the social system (who knows about what; deal with gaps of knowledge and claims of knowledge which are not met; evolution of knowledge over time; exchange of practice between individual experts and in collectives; how is knowledge “moved”: by moving people or by making it explicit (efficiency, reach in a certain period of time, dependency on individuals)?; overlapping of fields of knowledge; types of interactions, relationships and trust, acceptance, giving and taking, values)?
- How can the interaction of explicit and tacit learning be assessed (e.g. acceptance and status of those two types of knowledge), what are the key-features of that interaction (e.g. dealing with evolving knowledge) and how is the context influencing that interaction? Both approaches are important – however, the need particular attention in their combination, otherwise disadvantages of one or the other take over.
- How are the organic and flexible learning processes linked to the stability of a structured, bureaucratic environment? Experience shows that constructive

²⁹ Lam Alice (2000)

approaches need mutual adaption, an artful switching between contexts of individuals; flexible sub-systems, groups, cross-functional teams as a bridge between individuals and environment, transfer mechanisms like rotation for spreading knowledge beyond a certain period of time when a group cooperates

Relation between knowledge and learning

Knowledge is a resource, which is acquired through learning processes.

Learning can be opposed to existing knowledge, it represents the change, knowledge refers to what already exists. Learning or change does not take place if the balance between stimulation and integration of the new is not maintained through valuation and appreciation of the existing competences. If the balance is lost, learning is perceived as threatening and the system reacts with tensions and refusal of the new. In particular, an assessment of the integration of the “new” into the “existing” has to look at³⁰:

- How are the boundaries of the learning systems (who is learning what) defined and by whom? Because anchoring or extending new elements can be perceived as a threat to higher levels of a hierarchy within the system or by a powerful environment.
- What has to be “un-learned” to allow new patterns to be integrated?
- How the culture of dealing with “mistakes” can be described, since mistakes are an essential ingredient for learning?

Another critical point is the capacity for innovation. Innovation needs open, permeable boundaries to transfer knowledge from the outside into the system but also open and permeable boundaries within the system between different collectives involved in learning processes. Furthermore people “on the boundary” who migrate in and out of the system as well as individuals who think radically different are needed.

Collective processes with a tendency to behave as closed society and too strong a focus on tacit knowledge enhance the risk of reproducing only knowledge already existing within the system.

The dynamics of integration and innovation call for different processes within a system. Both dynamics need to be integrated to create sustainable learning processes

A1.2. Appreciative Inquiry and its challenges

In order to assess HLP’s appreciative approach, it is necessary to bring forward the working principles of the AI and SF approach.

³⁰ In SDC those ideas are translated for example into the 8 dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (creating a supportive culture, gathering internal experiences, accessing external learning, communication systems, mechanisms for drawing conclusions, developing an organizational memory, integrating learning into strategy and policy, applying the learning)

From the many approaches to change processes “Appreciative Inquiry” (AI) and the “Solution-Focused Approach” (SF) emerged prominently. They share important common principles of systems thinking and focus on a certain goal that a system should evolve to and the collective use of language, which plays a key role in the construction of social meaning. AI and the SF perceive Human beings and social groups not only as individuals or entities, which respond to stimuli, but they are seen as actors who, consciously or not, are forming images of the future, take responsibilities, act according to choices and preferences through symbolic and mental processes. They base themselves on a systemic and dynamic view of people, language and behaviour.

AI and SF both do not negate problems, but they have a different approach to deal with them. Sensitivity regarding the differences between AI and SF bring opportunities to improve practice of AI. The basic condition for the AI approach (and for SF approach) to work well is that there is a heart-felt need for change leading to a voluntary and future oriented process. If this is not the case, a pre-phase must establish that condition.

Instead of trying to "solve problems", AI aspires to generate a collective agreement about what people want to improve or enhance, and what they want to do together.

In the extensive literature on AI four propositions are mentioned that underlay the practice. In the following those propositions are directly transformed and linked to the underlying theoretical concept taken up by SF as well. Why does it work?

1. Two important dimensions for change are linked – the presence of resources and focus on solutions; if there is only a concentration on solutions, some people feel frustrated because they perceive the solution as illusionary and for them unattainable, a focus only on resources, capacities and strengths does not provide orientation towards a goal. This shifts the focus from problem trance to solution seeking through the stimulation of different mental processes, creating reality “in the moment”. Reality is understood as being constructed by language in a social system. Transformation in communities happens through the act of dialogue, it resides in the collective interaction. Alterations in linguistic practices hold profound implications for change in social practice.
2. Research and learning theories indicate strongly that two main features are necessary for behaviour change
 - It needs a change of attitude first and then a bridge to create an action from that changed attitude. Attitude change alone does not necessarily mean a change in behaviour. This bridge can be built by behaving “as if” the progress (the solution) was already there.
 - Feedback loops to create an attitude change, strong enough to allow our brains to create new pathways.
3. Distinguish between data and information – only data, which are relevant to an actor become information; information is a difference which makes a

difference; information has the potential to change a system, data will not be taken up (autopoiesis).

4. Appreciate “what is working well” helps to reframe the room for own actions and creates thereby motivation. The experience of self-effectiveness is key for achieving goals.
5. Link process and content closely, with and between individuals and groups. Particular for AI is the notion that power through the connectedness in collective, rather than an individual pathway to solutions is important. A common shared objective – something one can only achieve as a group – allows to go beyond individual aspirations. This is for some people the spiritual dimension of interconnectedness of humans; manager would rather speak of the multitude of capacities, the capital of human resources orientated towards the common objectives.

The basic process of AI

David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva developed AI in the 1980-ies from their experience in organizations, viewing the latter as centres of infinite human capacity. The core of AI is a specifically structured interview with two people involved and it was further developed for working in large groups throughout the 90-ies in many different forms. Often narratives are used as carriers of resources, experience and knowledge.

Shared between all forms is the concept that is usually described as the 4-Ds model based on the five AI principles³¹ to elicit narratives of success and positive (i.e. wished for) aspects about the organization and the culture in which it is embedded. The process involves learning about the organization, its relationships, and its environment. Sometimes a fifth “D” is set in the beginning for the “Definition” of the process’s objectives.

Discover	Appreciating, valuing the “Best of What Is”: linking individual resources with the resources of the organization; identifying organizational processes that work well; the organization’s potentials for in the future to define the “Positive Change Core”
Dream	Envisioning what might be: strong, explicitly developed, attractive pictures of the future
Design	Engaging in dialogue about what should be: planning and prioritizing all kinds of organizational processes that would work well, starting from affirmative statements or a “leitmotiv”.
Destiny (or: Deliver)	Innovating, what will be: the implementation of the proposed design in concrete action plans and a design of the future steps in the process which is agreed upon

³¹ Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros (2003)

Difference between HLP and the original AI

HLP does neither use the process steps of the usual 4-D (or 5-D) approach, nor the interview-part on resources.

Communication between stakeholders follows a certain set of principles in the AI approach. In the key-phrase of AI “appreciate what is”, any evaluation is deliberately excluded. Whatever resource is mentioned is taken, independent of the usefulness for another stakeholder. Collecting resources demands a high level of perceptiveness in others to be able to observe and name resources without evaluation for themselves. With this approach a qualification about “good” or “best” is suspended, to avoid the de-valuing side of if there is “good”, there is “bad” and “worse”. The appreciative language and expression of compliments in the discovery of resources (i.e. specific strengths and capacities) is a very difficult part as it is often not easy to avoid that they are perceived as superficial or manipulating (and opening up the issues of power). Often this is conducted as interviews since it facilitates authentic exchange rather than a group discussion. The ideas of non-violent communication provide valuable guidelines as well as the concepts on the power of language.

The term “appreciative” in HLP has works with success stories and has the merit to the change of perspective from problem to solution, however leaves out the discovery of specific capacities and strengths, which led to success and would permit to realize future successes. In practice working with success stories poses the challenge that group dynamics might not lead to a selection of the success stories but to a presentation of practices influenced by different interests.

Furthermore the connotation of HLP with UP’s success stories (i.e. good practices) is that the criteria for success is the recognition by somebody else as valuable for himself. It is considerably less or not at all understood in the sense that in pluralism everybody has valuable strengths and capacities, which help a collective to achieve common goals. The original pluralism would be (ideally) only present for the initial stage of input from the UP.

The empowering logic that everybody contributes to a shared goal from AI is replaced by a logic of judging (“good”) and a logic of win-lose through competition. There is no doubt that competition can be highly attractive and the incentives cited by UP chairmen show clearly the reasoning behind. However, installing the logic of competition is not following the change theory of AI and appreciation of any kind is flawed if fairness criteria (e.g. for the selection of UPs, the selection of practices within the UPs and by the UPs) are not transparent.

The practices as a benefit for the UPs should feasible now, and not in a far future, therefore the visioning part is not part of the process, the vision for the impact of practices in the UP is being left to the UP-chairman to form for his UP outside the HLP-process.

Therefore a second powerful dimension of AI, i.e. achieving a shared goal through the connectedness in this particular group, is left aside. The connectedness is such

reduced to a peer-group atmosphere at a specific event. The shared benefit for the particular peer-community could emerge with regards to UPs' joint role in decentralization.

Critical issues of appreciative approaches

Appreciative approaches (AI as well as HLP's appreciative approach) have to be careful not to become dogmatic. "Positive thinking" implies that there is "negative" thinking and negative emotions to be avoided. This is paradox for a resource-oriented approach since it excludes so-called negative emotions as valuable input for a process and makes it difficult to deal with resistances, which are coming up frequently.

Controversy and conflict are sometimes not perceived as constructive or helpful in the appreciative approaches. This general assumption might not be shared by all stakeholders and might lead to conflicts. Furthermore it creates a blind spot for useful resources in critique. Organizations with this behaviour often show "cold" conflicts.

Positive thinking may have a pejorative connotation in some cultures (also organizational cultures). The focus on the "positive" inherently devaluates the unsuccessful attempts and efforts to find solutions to problems in the past. In particular in situation of crisis and conflict people need acknowledgement that the problems they face are serious, and they need appreciation for their efforts and failures to develop a solution. An exclusive focus on the future is often not accepted by all stakeholders.

Since "positive" is a social construction depending on the perspective and subjective interpretations, it is important to look at the question who finds what "positive". Much of the direction in AI depended on the intentions of the leaders and the facilitators at the initiation of the process. Furthermore, intentions could be hidden behind managerial language and positions of power. Meaning and power could therefore run counter appreciative inquiry intentions.

Implicitly, appreciative approaches are based on an exchange between people who consider themselves in the particular context as "equals" in terms of expertise and institutional hierarchy. Working with appreciative approaches in organizations aspires (more or less openly) to decrease the influence of hierarchy, with many advantages linked to that. At the same time, power – in particular in the sense of constructive, creative power – comes back through questions such as: Who sets the goals of the process? How are decision-making processes designed? Who is learning what with which purpose? What is the accepted knowledge? How does a group exactly perceive tacit knowledge, since it cannot be codified and evaluated easily? And how does expertise and knowledge impact on the status within a group, how does it influence group dynamics?

A certain tendency is observed in appreciative approaches that the context does not get enough explicit attention. The stricter logical approach of the SF can provide some guidance in this respect. Related to that is the question of system boundaries

for the learning processes: Continuous reflection is needed on the definition of the boundaries and their permeability (see also innovation capacity), otherwise the process risks losing relevance.

The way of constructing or de-constructing a problem is a crucial part in working towards a solution. The distinction between objectives and goals/outcomes/purpose is crucial with respect to quality and sustainability of solutions. Ideas from the SF might nurture the appreciative approaches and avoid a blind spot here.

Appreciative approaches rely heavily on stories as the primary data source – too heavily for critical observers. A serious problem with using uncorroborated stories as data is the assumption that the individual telling the story is honest and does not manipulate the reality to mislead or redirect the focus. Furthermore, appreciative approaches do not address an understanding of the background of social relationships or social conflict.

When Michelangelo was asked how he sculptured his famous “David”, he said “ I chopped off the unnecessary parts of the marble block.” This metaphor is valid for sculpturing a learning process, in particular a highly demanding one based on appreciative principles – artfully designed and implemented all its beauty emerges, if not you end up in heap of marble chunks.

A1.3. Peer learning

Peer Learning is commonly defined as “the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions. It involves similar social groupings who are not professional teachers (experts) helping others to learn and learning themselves by so doing.” Social and emotional gains attract as much interest as cognitive gains. Research on peer learning processes in different contexts show typically very good results if the set-up and implementation of the process is well reflected (with respect to e.g., context, objectives, systems boundaries, learning field, monitoring, evaluation, feedback loops etc.). Peer learning builds on the explicit, intentional and strategic cognitive side of learning and an implicit self-attribution and self-esteem side through trusting relationships. Both partners learn, the “helper” and the “learner” in a trusting and loyal relationship, which facilitates self-disclosure of ignorance or misconception, increases motivation and competences. Peer learning in groups needs to deal carefully with group dynamics that can be very complex.

The key questions arises around what does “equal” mean exactly and how are groups defined as “similar”?

A1.4. Capacity Building for Facilitators

Facilitators have an important role in any learning processes in general, the appreciate approaches relies very strongly on their capacity to only to follow a set of process steps but to create of process flow which brings forward the potential of the approach. This task is even more demanding in a setting of large groups, interwoven with different types of interaction between stakeholders.

General Knowledge

- Process-Design for multi-level, multi-stakeholder interventions in parallel processes; and linkage of parallel processes
- Design WS according to objectives, linking the selection of participants, resources and methodology)
- Knowing about the influence of facilitators' role, attitude, emotions and perception on process
- Shaping relationship with participants
- Basics of Systemic thinking

Knowledge on and practice in:

- Learning processes and change processes (appreciation, resource orientation, solution focused approach, ...)
- Group Dynamics in different group sizes
- Conflict resolution
- Methodologies / creative interventions
- Communication with different stakeholders, communication in dialogue as opposed to discussion or debate

A1.5. Organizational development

Stages of development for organizations

To differentiate between stages of development in organizations it is helpful to clarify what “development” means in this context. Glasl³² described it as the phenomenon which occur, if growth within a certain structure (model) is continued until it reaches a boundary, after which the existing model cannot handle the larger quantity anymore and reacts either with disintegration or with (discontinuous) transition to a higher level of order (i.e. higher complexity and more differentiation).

Development takes place in different stages; each stage has certain characteristics. In every stage an adequate form of steering and management is developed. One is, that in every stage different subsystems for steering/managing the process are necessary.

First stage – founding of an organization, pioneer phase – is characterized by a strong engagement and commitment of individuals, charismatic leadership, high flexibility, informal and spontaneous decision making. Transparency and the capacity to manage the system are challenges. They become a central problem as soon as

³² Glasl et al (2010)

the system grows beyond certain boundaries and the “old” ways are not longer applicable.

The second phase, the phase of differentiation, tries to bring order into the system and make it better manageable. Processes become standardized, specialized and coordinated between different entities within the organization.

The third phase is triggered by the challenges in relationships which suffered through the concentration on standardization and leads to a more integrated system, becoming more flexible through mixing formal and informal structures and focus on self-organization and empowerment and a clear vision.

A metaphor for the forth phase would be a biotope, describing a system with permeable boundaries for networking and overcoming thereby the challenge of connection with the organizations environment at the end of the third phase. The crisis of the fourth phase could be the development of centres of power in competition with other power structures.

Seven linked Sub-processes in Organizational Development

A practical concept developed more than 10 years ago by Glasl and others allows to structure change processes in organizations and to deal with their complexity. The concept divides the whole change process into seven basic sub-processes. The most recurrent misunderstanding is that those are phases or steps, which have to be followed up. However, the sub-processes describe linked processes or interventions and the crux is to artfully interlink them in a given system, in a special context at a given time. To describe the inter-linkage a diamond graph is used, placing the management process in the centre, the other processes on the corners, their names shaped to fit HLP:

Management process

This process includes the governance and planning of a change process, e.g., the linking and prioritizing of the other parallel processes, the project lead and steering, coordination with stakeholders, the management of resources, development of roles etc.

Future-design processes

Creating visions, future scenarios, objectives, strategies, and statements on values to achieve a common notion of where to orientate the purpose of the organization. Future-design processes focus people’s energy towards a desirable future.

Diagnosis & Monitoring process

Collection of information and interpretation, and analytical steps help to develop a common understanding and awareness of the status quo. During the change process this process is typically called monitoring.

Reflection process

Knowledge management, organizing pilots for improvement, innovations and learning about learning for individual, groups and on an organizational level to care for the creation of skills and integration of new knowledge.

Cooperation, interaction, dealing with tensions (psycho-social process)

Dealing with emotional change, old and new patterns of interaction, motivations, understanding roles, dealing with conflicts, participation in different forms is essential to live the change.

Communication process

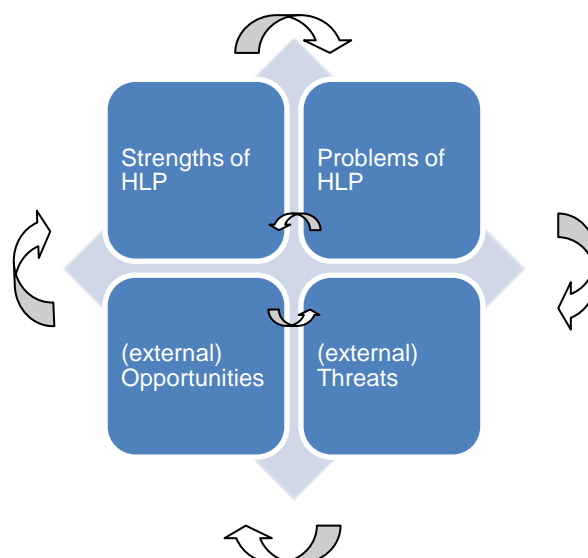
Feedback loops within the organization and with the outside to enhance transparency, raise awareness what is happening in the change process need to be flexibly introduced, carefully integrating sub-systems in the loops.

Core peer-exchange process (implementation process)

Doing what is planned, anchor through structures and methodologies, realizing small wins, introducing routines and rituals, create a supportive frame to practice and reinforce objectives.

A1.6. SPOT-Analysis

We are using the approach of a SPOT analysis (**S**trengths, **P**roblems/challenges, **O**pportunities, **T**hreats) to facilitate a quick understanding and resume of our thinking process. In the following, the SPOT analysis is organized in a matrix. Elements concerning strengths and problems respectively are understood as “internal” elements, in our case in the HLP-study the internal HLP-system. Strengths and Problems are depicted in the two cases in the upper half of the matrix. Two types of “external” elements (Opportunities and Threats) are included in the two cases in the lower half of the matrix. These are basically a summary of trends influencing the “internal” elements. It has already been said that a SPOT analysis does not represent an objective view. The SPOT matrix mirrors our (admittedly subjective) summary of perceptions. A SPOT analysis is static – it brings forward perceptions at a certain point of time. To include the dimension of evolvement in time an exchange process between stakeholders with different perspectives is organized in practice.



A1.7. Social movements and networks

Social movements can be described as collective challenges to elites, authorities, other groups or cultural codes by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities. They are large informal groupings of individuals or organizations, which focus on specific political or social issues. In other words, they carry out, resist or undo a social change. Social movements are based on shared values and mobilize around a (created) conflictual issue. They use different forms of protest.

Scholars specifically distinguish social movements from political parties and advocacy groups.

Movements can be distinguished for example with regards to their scope (e.g., changing norms or fundamental values), they might want to preserve or change, target individuals, groups or society as a whole, be active internationally, nationally or locally.

In a traditional view movements were often perceived as amorphous phenomena, chaotic and disorganized, treating activism as a threat to social order. Today models are introduced to understand the organizational and structural powers embedded in social movements.

With regards to movements, insiders and outsiders, supporters and antagonist may each have their own purpose and agenda in characterizing or mischaracterizing the movement.

Social movements have a life cycle: they are created, they grow, they achieve successes or failures and eventually, they dissolve and cease to exist.

Many social movements are created and organized around some charismatic leader. Typically social movement organizations are like “command posts” trying to routinize a flow of people or attempting to speak on behalf of many loosely connected people.

It is still an open question if the ignition of a movement can be organized or if it happens as a coincidence if key factors play together at a given moment.

After the ignition phase of a social movement, there are two likely phases of recruitment. The first phase will gather the people deeply interested in the primary goal and ideal of the movement. The second phase, which will usually come after the given movement had some successes and is trendy. People who join in this second phase will likely be the first to leave when the movement suffers any setbacks and failures.

Eventually, the social crisis can be encouraged by outside elements, like opposition from government or other movements.

A **social network** is a theoretical construct of a social structure to study (formal and informal) relationships between a set of social actors (such as individuals or organizations) and a complex set of the dyadic ties between these actors. A network is an arrangement of “nodes and connections”, the nodes being agents like people or organizations, the connections are relationships. Individual agents act autonomously

and use simple rules to make decisions based on information in their immediate environment.

The social structure is determined by such interactions. Structures are moderately dense and flexible connections between agents that allow them to communicate and create larger structures, but also to rapidly reorganize. The study of these structures uses social network analysis to identify local and global patterns, locate influential entities, and examine network dynamics.

In general, social networks are described as complex adaptive systems where coherent patterns appear from the local interaction of the elements that make up the system. These patterns become more apparent as network size increases. Networks have an underlying coherence that provides structure and continuity; between rigid and chaotic; are free enough to change, but stable enough to stay recognizable, temporarily stable.

The potential in the networks lies in their work “edge of chaos”: A quality of dynamic stability characterized by rapid and unpredictable shifts in size, shape and direction, they bring together novel combinations of people and reaching across bridges to other networks, nodes quickly reorganize around disruptions or bottlenecks, and they have the ability to rapidly exploit solutions when one is found.

In a network social capital exists where people have an advantage because of their location in a network. Contacts in a network provide information, opportunities and perspectives that can be beneficial to the central player or “nodes” in the network or the network as a whole. Most social structures tend to be characterized by dense clusters of strong connections. Depending on the purpose of a network it develops a structure, often a vine and cluster structure, providing access to and bridging between many different clusters can be observed.

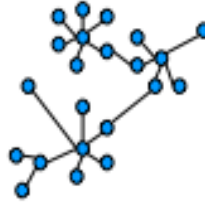
Networks need managing: dissemination of information, coordination of members and of action, steering and a minimal set of rules. The support structures and processes of a network as well as the questions of network governance are tightly linked to the purpose (e.g. learning or aligning different points of view or advocacy) a network defines for itself. Relationships in networks build on trust, openness, reciprocity, diversity and complementarities. Networks suffer from in-fighting and leadership fatigue, and lack of common orientation, which make them ineffective over time.

It is more difficult to support the process of networking than establishing a network.

Some Possible Network Structures



Network embedded within and between organizations. (e.g. SDC)



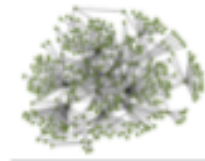
Branching / Multi-hub network. A series of clusters are connected to each other through spokes



Hub and Spoke. Many nodes connect to a single central hub.



Dense Cluster. A number of nodes are all tightly knit, connected to each other.



Network of networks. (e.g. Wikipedia, facebook)



Many Channels. Many nodes connect to each other in a variety of configurations.

A1.8. Systems thinking

In the second half of the twentieth century scientist developed a fundamentally new world perspective in different fields of science: quantum physics, chaos theory and complexity theory, cybernetics and information theory, theories on social development, self-organization and learning, philosophy, neurobiology and psychology. At the beginning of the twenty first century thinking in "systems" challenges the traditional "mechanical" view of change, which is based on an objective, linear, incremental and predictable cause – effect chain. Systems thinking is emphasizing subjectivity, interconnectivity, and non-linearity. Systems theories are neutral, aspiring to describe and analyze how a system works and evolves. They do not distinguish between "good" or "bad" outcomes, this evaluation is done with regards to an evaluation of a goal (something one actor might describe as "good" another might find "bad"). Change or resilience is per se neither good nor bad, they describe a system.

Systems thinking is a concept of thinking/reasoning and problem solving. It starts from the recognition of system properties in a given problem: how things influence one another within a whole by examining the linkages and interactions between the elements that compose the entirety of the system.

It is based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be described in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. Systems thinking focuses on circular interactions rather than linear cause-

effect chains. Acknowledging that an improvement in one area of a system can adversely affect another area of the system, it promotes organizational communication at all levels.

Why do we use systems thinking?

- We hope that we can develop ideas on appropriate interventions when we study the way the elements of system and events within a system are interconnected.
- We hope to develop solutions or ways forward, which are responding adequately to the complexity of the problem.

Examples of areas in which systems thinking has proven its value include:

- Complex problems that involve helping many actors see the "big picture" and not just their part of it
- Recurring problems or those that have been made worse by past attempts to fix them
- Issues where an action affects (or is affected by) the environment surrounding the issue
- Problems whose solutions are not obvious: approaches to progress and new interpretive frameworks
- In order to deal with complexity to navigate between intuition and innovation

System means a configuration of parts connected and joined together by a web of relationships. Organizations are viewed as systems of interacting components such as subsystems, which are carriers of numerous complex processes and organizational structures.

The scientific research field (systems theory, cybernetics, dynamical systems and complex systems) studies the general properties of systems: concepts and principles that are independent of the specific domain, substance, type, or temporal scales of existence.

Systems range from simple to complex. There are numerous types of systems. Social systems (for example, groups, supply and demand and also friendship) are complex systems and are comprised of numerous subsystems.

Some characteristics of systems

Boundaries

The concept of system only makes sense in building a difference to an environment. Who and what is inside or outside the system is depending on the perspective; borders define "belonging" and the environment; boundaries are permeable. Where a boundary is defined is a subjective decision.

Interdependence

Systems have interconnectivity: the various parts of a system have functional as well as structural relationships between each other (dynamic of a mobile, circular

causality). Features that can be observed are not characteristics of a person but characteristics of the relational structures of the system. Then it does not make sense to say somebody “is like that”. His behaviour, which can be observed, is due to an interaction with others.

Rules and patterns

Systems have common patterns, behaviours and properties that can be understood and used to develop greater insight into the behaviour of complex phenomena. Links of interaction, which is repeated (following Rules) leads to patterns. Rules are not necessarily written down. An important part of patterns is the way communication is done and feed-back loops are established. Typical patterns are: who belongs to us – who is not? How do we divide within our group into sub-groups? How are those sub-groups coordinated and connected? How are goals and objectives developed and communicated? How do we deal with topics like appreciation and recognition, motivation, development, roles, decision making, hierarchy, conflicts, are connections to the out-side world? Minimum rules can only be specified through various descriptions of the dynamics of local circumstances and actors. The rules governing (the local context) are likely to be only partially and inadequately understood by the outside actor. The role of grand designer should be avoided in favour of the role of facilitation, orchestration and creating enabling environments.

Self-organization & emergence

Systems have the capacity of systems to pass different stages of complexity without external influence. Self-organization describes the capacity. Some development leads to chaos or disequilibrium. In social systems it is new, emerging patterns that help solve old problems. The system cycles through order and disorder and is described as being on the edge of chaos and at this point is full of innovation. Systems then have a quality of dynamic stability that is characterized by occasional rapid and unpredictable shifts in shape and direction. They can react to small changes in big and surprising ways (rumours fly like lightning; a mob forms; the market crashes; the hive swarms). Such systems can communicate almost instantaneously, experiment with dozens of possible responses if they encounter a roadblock, and rapidly exploit solutions when one is found.

In systems, which encompass many parts, and under certain circumstances simple rules can lead to a flow of non-repeating emergent patterns, a collective behaviour. The shortest definition of emergence is “more is different”. Simple examples are the solidity of a rock, the liquidity of water, the temperature of air. The collective behaviour is different from the characteristics we know from the parts.

Subjective reality & perception

Reality is constructed together through the differences we notice, the designation we attribute, how we explain things and how we evaluate; there is no objective reality; observation (an adviser) changes what he observes; the observer is responsible for his choice of perspective. In the choice of our focus we have the power to influence the way we experience and the way we react to our environment. Perception is an inner, autonomous, selective process – we cannot force anybody externally to experience in a certain way.

Context

Meaning is created only when we set something in a specific context (a situation). If the context is not explained a description is generalizing and certain phenomena do not make sense any more.³³ To describe phenomena we need to connect them with the context as well as with the possible goals (what is this behaviour useful for?)

Impulse

Information is developed through the generation of differences. Social systems can be stimulated by new information³⁴ from the outside if this information makes a difference for the system (Bateson). Therefore to change something in a system we try change the way of describing phenomena, which constitute the experienced reality; when we describe a problem as a consequence of patterns, then we try to offer different patterns (a different behaviour in the same situation, a different intention, change of sequencing or locations,...)

Complexity science gives additional weight to calls for re-thinking five key areas

1. The tools and techniques for planning, monitoring, learning from and evaluating development work
2. The nature of the processes utilized in development work
3. The dynamics of change triggered by development work
4. The role of partner organizations and beneficiaries in development work
5. The wider contexts and the real influence of development work

Traditional Approach vs. Complexity & Systems Thinking

Assumptions	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal project / program / organization • Environment is outside the organization (evolves separately until program is implemented, finished) • Analysis on a single or few, relatively independent levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems approach – multiple perspective & interconnected subsystems; interaction between organization and environment • Nature of change: non-linear, unexpected, work with dynamics – changes of context / framework, matching to wider system • People, motivations, relationships – patterns, incentives, interactions

³³ E.g. it is perfectly normal to dance at a wedding, in a meeting it might be an awkward experience.

³⁴ The concept of autopoiesis by biologist Maturana and Varela (1991) and transferred by Luhmann into Social Science. Autopoiesis is the process by which a system regenerates itself through the self-reproduction of its own elements and of the network of interactions that characterize them. An autopoietic system renews, repairs, and replicates or reproduces itself. The system focuses on the inner coherency and is relatively immune against impulses from the outside – directive interventions do not help. Interventions in organisation seek to find the sensitive points of the system – Wilke 1994. Analogies from biological systems can not be transferred directly to social systems. Not all social systems try to “survive” – a project group for example has per definition a “limited life span”.

<p>Traditional planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predetermined goals – success → comparison • Objective: have a judgment of achieved / not achieved goals • Try to generalize findings across time & space • Creates fear of failure 	<p>Complexity oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals emerge and evolve – adapt monitoring • Learning and improvement as continuous process, steering change • Steer a specific system – context related • Creates motivation for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsider provides objective few – independent. • Control – locate failures; linear cause-effect logic • Accountability focused on hierarchy / external • 1 time effort at a certain stage; no process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team reflects on approaches – ongoing sharing, interpretation, learning process • Strategic respond to lack of control, learning to live with insecurity; emergent connections, dynamics • Accountability centred on fundamental values and commitments • Change process – organizational development, Adaption, innovation

Annex 2: Some background information on local governance in Bangladesh

A2.1 Recent trends in legislation and decentralization policy

The legal and political landscape with regard to decentralization and local governance has changed over the last decade. A number of legislative reforms have taken place since 2009:

- The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009
- The Local Government (Pourashava, amended) Act, 2010
- The Upazila Parishad (Amended) Act, 2011
- The Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2011

Both main parties seem to recognize in principle that there is a need for the existence of elected local bodies. In reality, they seem to have an interest in keeping all power with the Member of Parliament (MP). Moreover, the Ups do not have a strong forum to raise their voices to shape the decentralization policy, and BUPF is very weak to establish their voices.

Observers miss a coherent vision of roles and responsibilities of local government units. There is no policy at central level linking legal regulation with administrative and financial resources. Decentralization policy is confined to the Local Government Division LGD as a "steward" to local government units.

The current institutional set up involves various authorities at central, district, sub-district, and local level. The local institutions differ according to urban or rural settings.

Central government (ministries)		
Administrative divisions (6)		
Districts (Zila parishads, 64)		
<i>urban</i>		<i>rural</i>
Municipalities (Pourashavas, 309)	City corporations (6)	Upazila parishads (508)
		Union Parishads (4498)

Although there is no clear terminology used in Bangladesh, the 6 administrative divisions and the district (zila) level are seen as a de-concentrated level (under direct control of the central government and its ministries), while the pourshavas, city corporations, upazila and union parishads do have some features of political decentralization (elected political leadership) as well as administrative and fiscal decentralization (responsibilities and tasks with some scope for autonomous

decision-making, direct accountability to citizens, human and financial resources allocated).

In reality, however, the Local Government Division LGD is the authority for the local government institutions. LGD controls local government authorities. LGD guides and controls the activities of Upazilas and UPs through issuing circulars. LGD provides support in the development of rural water supply, sanitation and sewerage system. Construction and maintenance of all roads; growth centers and markets at villages, unions and Upazilas are under LGD. Moreover, the LGD is implementing various development and service-oriented activities for poverty reduction. The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Dhaka WASA, Chittagong WASA and NILG are the different units of the LGD. Through these institutions, LGD is working to mobilize local resources, establish good governance at the local level, providing civic/utility services to the citizen of municipalities and city corporations, rural and urban infrastructures, supply of safe drinking water, solid waste disposal and sanitation all over the country. LGD is also responsible for planning and implementation of development projects at local level, conducting survey/research regarding local governments and arranging training programmes for enhancing knowledge and efficiency of the elected representatives. DPHE has a set-up at Upazila level with an engineer and other support staff to serve people on water and sanitation issues in consultation with UPs and other development organizations.

The central government has constructed a building for each UP to provide office space for all government staff assigned at the UP level but no government field staff have ever established their office in these buildings.

A2.2 Distribution of roles and administrative competences for delivering local services

The new legislation devolved important functions and tasks in the areas of primary education, health care, fisheries and livestock, agriculture and social welfare to the Union Parishad level, but did not really tackle the issue of multi-level co-ordination and interaction needed between the different stakeholders in these various sectors.

This lack of clear distribution of tasks and resulting tensions are particularly visible at Upazila level. The UNO is responsible for local administration, while the MP is holding the major power in resource allocation and decision making. The Upazila Chairman is also an elected body but with no administrative power. UNO has to make liaison with MP and Upazila Chairman in performing all development activities. However, in taking almost all decisions the UNO depends in reality largely on the instruction of the MP. Although both show good cooperation and coordination to outsiders, a serious power crisis seems to be going on between the UNO and Upazila Chairman. In any case, the UPs always depend on the mercy of MP and UNO in allocating funds for different development projects and activities.

A2.3 The administrative and financial resources

The human and financial resources available at the level of local government do not correspond to the tasks transferred, particularly in rural areas where revenues from local sources are very limited. No coherent policy for implementing decentralisation, transfer of human and financial resources to the local level, which would correspond to the tasks allocated to local authorities. Current challenges are:

- Administrative structures are steered by the line ministries, with “unmotivated, unaccountable, underresourced” staff at Upazila and UP level;
- No transparency on financial resources budgeted for service delivery or infrastructure at Upazila level and at UP level as well. MoF does not break down budgets by Zila or Upazila. No financial reporting. Thus no financial accountability of local actors.
- Although some revenue sources for Upazila are assigned in the new act, no regulations were issued, so Upazilas do neither dispose of meaningful own nor transferred resources.
- Very limited administrative capacities at UP level (one UP Secretary plus one Village Policeman per ward),
- LGSP grants system is main funding system. A parallel system steered mainly by donors, not likely to be sustainable. GoB does contribute, but simultaneously reduced contributions to ADP.

ADP (Annual Development Program) block grant system goes mainly to vertically driven sectoral programmes under the control of the line ministries. Only a small share is transferred to UPs used for small-scale local infrastructure. ADP funds are allocated in four quarters per year. UP prepare their ADP based on the available funds and need of the community people through an open budget system. If any UP fails to utilize the allocated fund then allocation for the next year is reduced by the ministry. UPs are given block grants for development. Each UP will get around Tk. 12,00,000 in four quarters with a condition that if they fail to implement any activities in any quarter they unspent amount will be adjusted with next quarter. They also get LGSP grant of which they have spent 20% in Water and sanitation. Other allocations are made at the Upazila level by the UNO with MPs recommendation

A2.4 The political dimension: empowerment of local governments

Union Parishads, municipalities and city corporations have elected bodies consisting of a chair (elected by popular vote, last in 2011), one representative for each ward (elected by his/her constituency), and the three women members on the reserved seats (elected by popular vote). They are paid a small honorarium/salary.

More than for delivering public services themselves, the Union Parishads are perceived as important “to convene the community around its common needs and to achieve community participation and accountability in the monitoring of public services being delivered within their jurisdiction.” (SDC Portfolio Strategy Review, pg.

12). Due to its limited administrative capacities the UP Council focuses normally on identifying small infrastructure schemes that can be implemented by the community – and not on decentralized public service delivery within the framework of the State budget. Observers see a potential of using UP structures for oversight and co-ordination. A first step is the UP Development Co-ordination Committee meeting bringing together key Upazila and UP officials at the Union level to co-ordinate activities. Other institutions at local level (Standing Committees, Gram Adalat, Lok Morcha, Women Development Committees), have been foreseen and even established, but it is not clear what their role and impact is.

At the level of Upazila, the chair of the Upazila Council is elected by popular vote while the members of the council are the (elected) chairs of UPs. However, it is not yet clear what role and competences the council has in decision-making, administration of the Upazila, service delivery and oversight, since the prerogatives of the line ministries and the UNO (leading the administrative apparatus at Upazila level) continue as before. Moreover, at political level there is a certain competition with the MP who is elected by the same Upazila constituency. The MP continues to see himself as the representative of Upazila, with a certain influence on the distribution of the resources at the level of the central government.

Municipalities/city corporations seem to be more efficient and responsive in service delivery than UP/Upazilas in rural settings, and urban demand on services generally tend to be higher and is growing. There is a rapid population growth in urban areas due to migration, and municipalities increase in numbers. Usually, city mayors are politically well connected; they are not elected but appointed by the central government. Municipalities /city corporations tend to be better able to finance urban public services from own revenue sources, due to their greater economic base, and better position regarding human resources. However, situations are diverse, financial flows from government and donors are not transparent and fragmented, and no data is available about the real financial situation.

A2.5 UPs' internal processes and stakeholders

According to some observers, internal processes at UP level have become more transparent and participatory in the last years. Some transparency has been established with the introduction of Open budget processes with the participation of citizens in UP planning and implementing activities (e.g. CLTS, Arsenic mitigation).

The UP Chairman is elected by all people of the union, whereas Council (or: ward) members are elected by the ward concerned; so Chairman often does not care about the participation and influence of ward members and women members. Women members are the most neglected part of the UP bodies. They are elected by the citizens of three wards and often do not have the power and leverage in the decision making process and implementation of any development programs, and their influence on the Chair to allocate funds for any development activities is limited. This decreases their leverage and status even more. Women members are in some cases active but are not given the proper space to operate within the UP structure.

The Secretary is the staff of the UP employed by the LGD and usually recruited among the local habitants. It is a transferable job within the district. He is accountable to the DC (and not the UP chair). He/she maintains all documents and archives of the UP.

Thirteen standing committees are foreseen by law, each headed by a ward member. It includes one women member, and the UP Chair has an advisory role according to the manual of the UPs. Most of the UPs have formed Standing committees but those are mostly inactive as they are not accountable to anyone for their activities and they were not oriented on their roles and responsibilities.

The decision making process at UP level is not properly known by the citizens. Open budget process has to some extent made the citizens aware of the process but it is still largely driven by the chairman and council members. Recently some UPs have conducted sessions at ward level in developing action plans but the participation of community people are limited, only in the paper and mostly dictated by the ward members.

In general, government at central level itself and government departments are not really interested to increase the power of UPs, although in all government policies it is clearly mentioned that the UPs have a unique role in local development programs.

NGOs working in the UPs generally contact the UP bodies when starting their activities, but after this first contact they rarely involve UP bodies in any activities and normally do not share their performance outcome. Very few NGOs are working with the UP in different projects e.g. Watsan, arsenic mitigation, HYSAWA but they do not allow UP to play active role in program implementation. They tend to completely ignore standing committees and form separate committees for implementing their activities. Most of the UPs do even not really know about the activities of NGOs in their area.

Private sector has almost no contact with the UPs. In few projects e.g. HYSAWA some private sector actors are involved with UPs to provide technical and soft ware support.

A2.6 Capacity building and learning at the level of local governments

Decentralisation processes often suffer from unclear or contradicting perceptions of roles, both at local and at central level: Decentralised service delivery does neither mean that the line ministries continue to steer and finally decide on everything, nor should the central government completely disengage. There is a constant need of coordination between central and local governments, ensuring basic standards all over the country, equalizing human and financial resources according to needs, which can only be done at central level. Decentralization means an investment in multilevel co-ordination – and not in complete autonomy of isolated local units. Central government and line ministries, particularly their de-concentrated units have

to adapt and change their roles and responsibilities accordingly and learn how to behave in a decentralised setting - as much as the local governments.

A variety of initiatives for capacity building and learning at local level have been taken over the last years, particularly through the National Institute for Local Governance NILG, but also by donors and (international) NGOs, and possibly by line ministries (see PRIA Global Partnership, Case Study: Strengthening Local Governance through Participatory and Responsive Public Services Project: a Case Study from Bangladesh, 2012). The most recent NILG concept on capacity development plans for three pillars of capacity building for local governments: The traditional top-down oriented training by NILG, the horizontal learning from peers, and the capacity building selected and paid for by the local governments individually.

Annex 3: Terms of Reference

| June 2012

Terms of Reference

Study: potential for change of the Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) in Bangladesh

1 Background

1.1 Bangladesh and its local governments

The process of decentralization in Bangladesh has been changing over the last 50 years, with possibly an accelerated progress in the last 6 years. Different incentives have motivated policy makers and the bureaucracy in Bangladesh to shape, support or set back local level decision making over service delivery. In recent years, a “new generation” of decentralization theories have emerged defining decentralization as more than a mere shift over the control of funds, functions and functionaries from the central government to local governments. Decentralization is increasingly defined as a means to empower people to claim, obtain and monitor public service delivery at the local level. Decentralization thus defined is measured in the extent to which local authorities are able to ensure more efficient and accountable services to the local population, regardless of the source of funds or provider of the services. This model implies a changing relation between the services providers, the services users and the services ensures, and seems to be confirmed in the Bangladesh reality.

The pivotal role of the Union Parishad has been evidenced in the overwhelming success of the sanitation in the eradication of open defecation in Bangladesh. The sanitation movement in Bangladesh evolved from a small pilot supported by VERC and WaterAid that was built on the power of local collective action to eradicate open defecation. The replicability of this model is largely attributable to the role that Union Parishads played in spearheading coordination amongst NGOs, CBOs and line departments¹. The success of this movement was primarily a result of the positioning of the central government policy makers to facilitate this movement with the support of multiple partners².

1.2 The Horizontal Learning Program

The Horizontal Learning Program is a Union Parishad (UP) led peer-to-peer learning initiative facilitated by the Government of Bangladesh and supported by development partners. Under this program, local governments connect with each other to identify, share and replicate the good practices of their peers.

¹ This role of union parishads in coordinating the supply and demand side of service delivery is also evident in the Link Model that has been developed in Bangladesh with the support of JICA.

² WSP with the support of SDC championed the advocacy for a role for local government in the sanitation movement.

HLP Principles **Appreciate:** to realize everyone's potential to overcome the limits that we impose on ourselves. **Connect:** To remove the distinctions that separate us and detract from our collective well being. **Adapt:** To start with what works and enable replication through exposure in the local context

HLP Process UPs are encouraged to **identify their good practices** (with indicators). UPs **select the good practices** they wish to visit in order to learn from their peers and appreciate their context / achievements. **UPs prioritize**, discuss with citizens and integrate appropriate good practices into their annual plan and budget. **UPs replicate good practices** with the support of their peers. Progress in replication is monitored through peer reviews and achievements recognized through the horizontal learning network.

HLP Value Added Horizontal Learning **complements top-down capacity building** by reinforcing the confidence of local practitioners as both teachers and learners in a collective process designed to build on the good practices of their peers.

HLP Results The replication of good practices encourages local adaption to refine good practices, reform policies and rebuild the institutions of governance from the bottom up.

HLP Limitations The key limitation of horizontal learning is that external agents cannot impose anything (i.e. best practices are determined by peers and policies are leveraged by the peer-to-peer collective).

1.3 The Challenge

Bangladesh has a highly centralized government system but at the same time its policy makers are also extremely well connected to their place of origin. This means that policy makers do not always lead the country but also position themselves to champion local level movements. This suggests a "theory of change" whereby the local can also leverage the central.

The "theory of action" underpinning programs such as HLP is that the creation of movements centred around local solutions can lead to changes at the policy level. The likelihood of success is maximised when such movements are championed by union parishads and when they deploy their social and legal authority to leverage the quality of services delivered by others. The very active informal networks and linkages that central policy makers have with the local governments, élites and authorities means that they are very quick to take the credit for any positive movements.

While HLP seems to fit within this "obscure yet simple" net of incentives and personal relations there are many aspects of HLP that seem to resist definition. In order to understand the potential successes (and or failures) of HLP and its relation to the particular context of Bangladesh it is essential to better understand the particular ingredients that 'make up' HLP.

2 Purpose of the Study

To provide the SDC and relevant partners with an **analysis** based on the **drivers, incentives and priorities of the HLP actors at large**. Ultimately, it is expected that the key ingredients that make (or don't make) HLP a "national movement" will be identified. This should seek to bring greater clarity to the "theory of change" and the "theory of action" that have been adopted by HLP.

3 Objectives:

1. **What is the HLP?** To define the HLP from its various different “angles” (i.e. knowledge sharing / knowledge management; learning paths; grass root movement, sociology of change)
2. **Does HLP Work?** To produce a reality check of the HLP to assess whether HLP is working at the Union Parishad level including the relative weight of facilitation at the GoB level and support of WSP and HLP partners.
3. **Why?** To outline the essential ingredients (institutions, peoples, actors) that make (or don't make) HLP work, thus confirming or rejecting the potential for substantive change through HLP.
4. **How will we know?** To assess the HLP' monitoring arrangements for tracking improvements in services and budgets, policies and mindsets including an appropriate breakdown of contribution from attribution. To review the HLP strategy and hypothesis for scaling-up and sustainability.
5. **What is actually HLP?** To assess the potential of HLP against the “theory of change” of improving development outcomes (poverty reduction) and reforming the institutions of service delivery.

4 The review questions

Basing on the objectives, the expectations expressed in this ToR and a first brainstorming session with SDC-Bangladesh and core HLP actors, the researcher(s) will provide an inception report including a proposed approach for the study and detailed methodologies for each sub-component. After the desk review stage, the review team will spend sufficient time in Bangladesh for in-loco information collection, both in Dhaka and particularly at Union Parishad level.

The proposed review components and core questions – as extrapolated from the study objectives, are as follows:

1. **What is the HLP?** Define the HLP from a particular select perspective or preferably several perspectives.
2. **Does HLP work?** Are the HLP' results claimed and results expected justified?
3. **Why?** Define the incentives and motivations, the ingredients and the secret recipe that seem to be the key HLP drivers. The contribution of WSP and the other HLP partners might also be “reviewed”, including from a sustainability perspective. The various structures that are being built to scale-up and sustain this process should also be assessed for their relevance.
4. **How will we know?** On the basis of the review of the justification of results recommendations should be provided on the monitoring system. In particular the contribution of the collective agencies UPs, GoB, NGOs, WSP and SDC to the overall results.
5. **What is actually HLP?** To address the bigger question of how the HLP program (as a whole) fits into the “theory of change” and “theory of action” underpinning HLP. This should also address the question of the potential of HLP to enable the institutions of governance to be reformed and absorbed from the bottom-up.

5 Deliverables

An **inception report** after the desk review/preparatory work outlining the methodology, information collection strategy and tools

A draft **structure of the report and preliminary results** to be presented in a debriefing meeting, towards the end of the field work in Bangladesh

A **draft report** (softcopy, max 30 pages excluding annexes) including an executive summary (3 pages) and recommendations in English shall be submitted to SDC for comments

A **final report** (softcopy, max 30 pages excluding annexes) including an executive summary (3 pages) and recommendations in English

A **short publication** template, (5 pages) to be used for the wider public, both in Bangladesh and over the web.

6 Modalities and period of the study

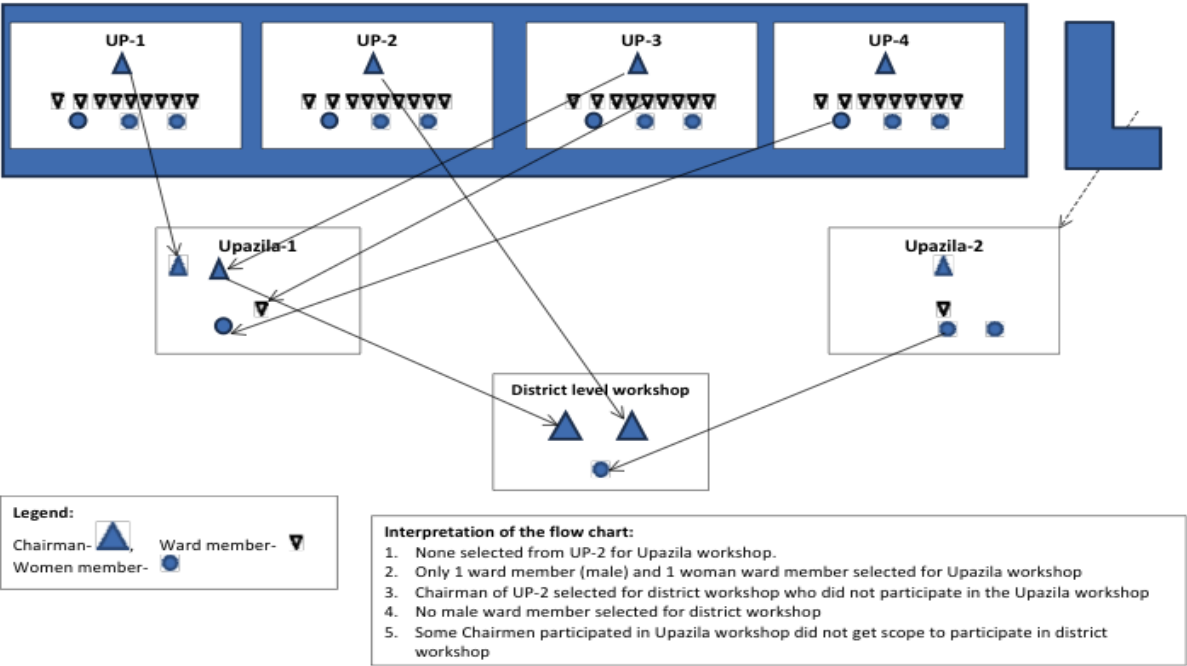
A **technical proposal** shall be submitted to SDC two week after reception of this ToRs, ideally by end of July 2012. The technical proposal shall include the overall (draft) methodological approach; the profile(s) of the researcher(s); an indicative work-plan; preliminary comments to this ToRs (if any); and a financial proposal. A contract with SDC shall be negotiated right after.

The **field work** shall be planned in September/October 2012, with a preliminary draft report to be ready by mid-October at the latest.

7 Budget

SDC rules and procedures will apply.

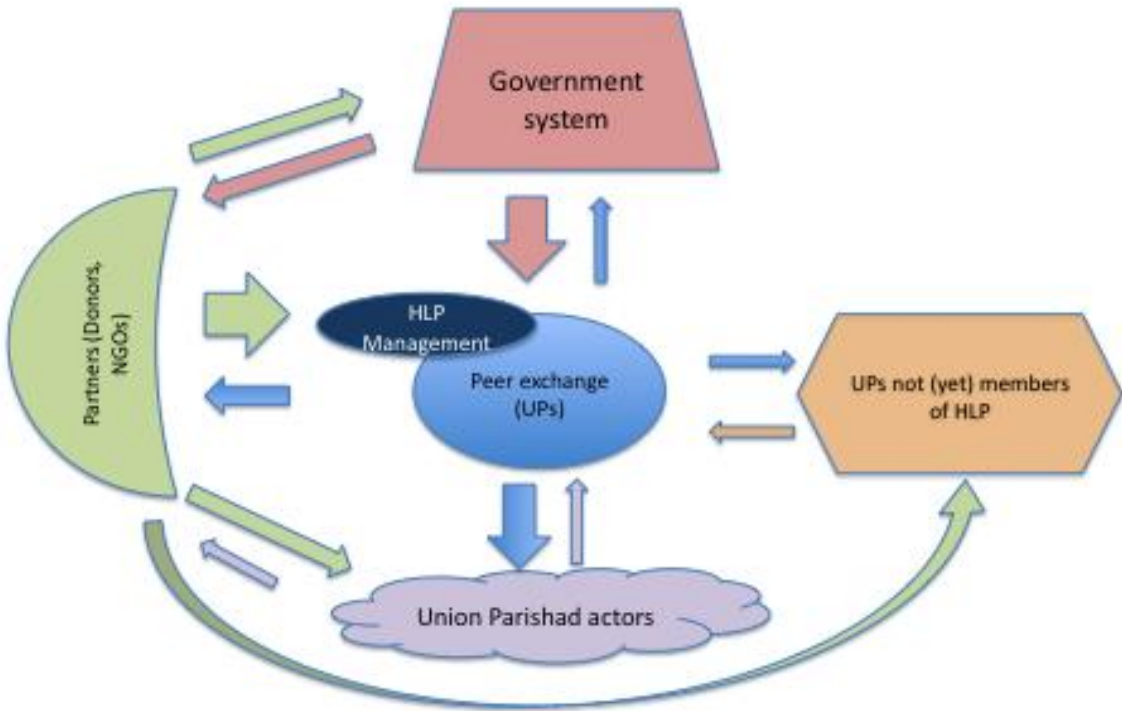
Annex 4: Diagram for selection process of UP participants for exposure visits and workshops



Annex 5: Stakeholder groups and list of interlocutors

Groups	Name of stakeholders	Consulted
Local Govt.	Union Parishads of HLP working area	Many consulted (about 45)
	Municipalities (included later on voluntarily)	Not consulted
Central government	Ministry of Local Government (LGD)	Consulted
	NILG	Consulted
	Ministry of Health and Family Planning	Consulted
	Ministry of Education	Consulted
	Ministry of Public Administration (one person)	Consulted
	BRDB	Not Consulted
	BARD, Comilla	Not Consulted
	RDA, Bogra	Not Consulted
Development partners	JICA (SMPP, Rural development, Partnership, Asia Arsenic Network)	Consulted
	SDC Dhaka	Consulted
	World Bank, Dhaka	Consulted
	WSP	Consulted
INGOs	CAE Bangladesh	Consulted
	HELVITAS/ Swiss Intercooperation/ Sharique	Consulted
	Plan Bangladesh	Not Consulted
	VSO Bangladesh	Consulted
	WaterAid	Not Consulted
National NGOs	BASA	Not Consulted
	BNNRC	Consulted
	DAM	Consulted
	DASCOH	Consulted
	GAT	Consulted
	Green Hill	Not Consulted
	JASUS	Not Consulted
	MJF	Not Consulted
	MJSKS	Not Consulted
	MMC	Consulted
	NGO Forum	Not Consulted
	NRDS	Consulted
	PRIP Trust	Consulted
	RDRS	Consulted
	SHUSHILON	Consulted
	TMSS	Not Consulted
VERC	Consulted	
Commercial organization	IRDG	Consulted

Non HLP member organizations	Uttaran	Consulted
	WAVE Foundation	Consulted
	UNDP	Consulted
	BUPF	Consulted



A. Compiled status of people met and discussed in different events and through different means:

Types	Department/ Designation/ Status	Number of persons	Means of contact
1. GOVERNMENT			
UP participated in the HLP	Chairmen	15	Meeting/ Visits
	Ward Members	39	
	Women Members	20	
	Secretary	9	
	Tax collector/ Village Police	6	
UP not participated in the HLP	Chairmen	10	Contacted by cell phone & meeting
Upazila level	Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)	3	
	Departmental Officers	3	Meeting
National level	Administration	1	
	LGD	3	
	Other departments/ Ministries	9	
2. HLP Partners			
Central level	WSP, WB (National and regional)	5	
	SDC	4	
	JICA	6	
	HELVETAS	3	
Local Level	NGOs	18	
3. Other development Partners:			
National level	SDLG/ USAID	3	
	UNDP	2	
4. Non participating			
UP	UP Chairmen	10	
NGOs	NGO staff	10	
TOTAL:		179	

B. FIRST MISSION**Union Parishad participating in the HLP:**

S I. N o .	Name	Position/ Designation	Union	Upazila	District	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Md. Chomok Ali (#2)	Ward member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
2.	Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam (#3)	Ward member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
3.	Mr. Md. Ala uddin (#4)	Ward member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
4.	Mr. Md. Chandu Mondal (#5)	Ward member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
5.	Mr. Md. Fazlur Rahman (#6)	Ward member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
6.	Mr. Md. Rashidur Rahman (#7)	Ward member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
7.	Mr. Nurul Islam (#8)	Ward member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
8.	Mr. Bisarat Ali (#9)	Ward member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
9.	Mrs. Shaila Jesmin (#1,2,3)	Women member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
10.	Mrs. Jharna Begum (#4,5,6)	Women member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
11.	Mrs. Rashida Khatun (#7,8,9)	Women member	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
12.	Mr. AGM Mohosin Reza	Secretary	Patibala	Chowgacha	Jessore	Visit
13.	Mr. Abu Sayeed Khandaker	Chairman	Tarash Sadar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
14.	Mr. Nazrul Islam (#2)	Ward member	Tarash Sadar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
15.	Mr. Abu Taher (#6)	Ward member	Tarash Sadar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
16.	Mrs. Sufia Sultana (#1,2,3)	Women member	Tarash Sadar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
17.	Mrs. Aleya Khatun (#4,5,6)	Women member	Tarash Sadar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
18.	Mr. Md. Abu Sayed	Secretary	Tarash Sadar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
19.	Mr. Md. Saidur Rahman	Chairman	Madhainagar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
20.	Mr. Mokter Hossain (#1)	Ward member	Madhainagar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
21.	Mrs. Rupali Akhter (#3,8,9)	Women member	Madhainagar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
22.	Mrs. Lipi Sarker (#1,2,4)	Women member	Madhainagar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
23.	Mrs. Sandha Rani (#5,6,7)	Women member	Madhainagar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
24.	Mr. Md. Abdul Karim	Secretary	Madhainagar	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
25.	Mr. Md. Abdus Samad	Chairman	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
26.	Mr. Brojendra Nath Sarker (#1)	Ward member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
27.	Mr. Md. Azam Ali (#2)	Ward member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit

28.	Mr. Md. Kahbir Uddin (#3)	Ward member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
29.	Mr. Md. Abdur Razzak (#4)	Ward member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
30.	Mr. Md. Abdul Gafur (#5)	Ward member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
31.	Mr. Md. Azizul Haque (#7)	Ward member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
32.	Mr. Md. Abdur Razzak (#8)	Ward member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
33.	Mr. Md. Abdul Halim (#9)	Ward member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
34.	Mrs. Julekha Kahtun (#1,2,3)	Women member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
35.	Mrs. Bilkis Khatun (#4,5,6)	Women member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
36.	Mrs. Konica Rani (#7,8,9)	Women member	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
37.	Mr. Faridul Haque	Secretary	Desigram	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
38.	Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam	Chairman	Debata	Debhata	Satkhira	Visit
39.	Mr. Mohosin Ali	Secretary	Debata	Debhata	Satkhira	Visit
40.	Mr. Md. Mohabbat Ali	Chairman	Nagarghata	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
41.	Mr. Sheikh Liakat Ali	Chairman	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
42.	Mr. Nazrul Islam (#1)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
43.	Mr. Nabi Naz (#2)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
44.	Mr. Abdul Alim (#3)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
45.	Mr. Sk. Masudur Rahman (#3)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
46.	Dr. Subrata Chaterjee (#4)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
47.	Mr. Sk. Seraj (#5)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
48.	Mr. Md. Abdur Rashid (#6)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
49.	Mr. Sk. Nurul Islam (#7)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
50.	Mr. Md. Motahar Hossain (#8)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
51.	Mr. Sk. Aslam Uddin (#9)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
52.	Mrs. Shyamoli (#1,2,3)	Woman member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
53.	Mrs. Safura Begum (#1,2,3)	Women member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
54.	Mrs. Begum Latifa Rahman (#7,8,9)	Women member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
55.	Mr. G M Taimur Alam (#2)	Ward Member	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
56.	Mr. Ashim Kumar Ghosh	Secretary	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
57.	Mr. Kanchan Kumar Dey	Secretary	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
58.	Mr. Abdur Rahman	Tax Collector	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit
59.	Mr. Momtaj	Tax Collector	Shyamnagars	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Visit

HLP Facilitators:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Upazila	District	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Md. Abdul Kader	Facilitator	Chowgacha	Jessore	Meeting
2.	Mr. Mansur Rahman Bacchu	Facilitator	Tarash	Sirajganj	Visit
3.	Mr. G M Shahjahan Seraj	Facilitator	Shyamnagar	Satkhira	Meeting
4.	Mr. Limon	Facilitator	Shyamnagars	Satkhira	Visit

Government Officials (NILG):

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Department	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Kabir M Ashraf Alam	Director General	NILG	Meeting (20/02/2013)
2.	Mr. Nurul Islam	Deputy Director	NILG	Meeting (20/02/2013)
3.	Mrs. Shamim Faruque	Deputy Director	NILG	Meeting (20/02/2013)

HLP Partners:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Organization	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Mark Ellery	Regional Watsan Specialist	WSP, World Bank	Meeting
2.	Mr. Santanu Lahiri	Sr. Decentralization Specialist	WSP, World Bank	Meeting
3.	Mr. Md. Aowlad Hossain	Local Governance Specialist	WSP, World Bank	Meeting
4.	Mr. Salim Hossain Bhuiya	Data management Specialist	WSP, World Bank	Meeting
5.	Mr. Rahmat Ali	Communication Specialist	WSP, World Bank	Meeting
6.	Mr. Tommaso Tabet	Program Manager	SDC	Meeting
7.	Mr. Sohel Ibn Ali	Program Officer	SDC	Meeting
8.	Mrs. Liliya Tverdun	Director, SHARIQUE	SHARIQUE/ HELVETAS	Meeting
9.	Mr. AFM Amir Uddin	Regional Coordinator	SHARIQUE/ HELVETAS	Meeting
10.	Dr. Akira Munakata	Advisor, Local Govt.	JICA	Meeting
11.	Mr. AKM Mizanur Rahman	Master Facilitator	JICA, HLC	Meeting

Others:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Willy K Sabila	Advocacy, Networking and documentation Advisor/VSO, HLC	Visit & Meeting
2.	Dr. Hasina Banu	Research and Training Specialist, HLC	Meeting
3.	Mrs. Manila Khisa	Project Assistant, JICA	Meeting
4.	Mr. AKM Mizanur Rahman	Master Facilitator, SSWRDP, JICA	Meeting

HLP Non participating NGO:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Khondaker Selim Jahangir	Executive Director, GKS (NGO), Sirajganj	Meeting

C. MARCH 2013 (BETWEEN MISSIONS)**Union Parishad participating in the HLP:**

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Union	Upazila	District	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Md. Mofizul Haque	Chairman, UP	Kadakathi	Asasuni	Satkhira	Visit
2.	Mr. Md. Yakub Ali Begh (#1)	Ward Member	Kadakathi	Asasuni	Satkhira	Visit
3.	Mr. Abdul Hannan Sarder (#3)	Ward Member	Kadakathi	Asasuni	Satkhira	Visit
4.	Mr. Abdus Salam Sarder (#4)	Ward Member	Kadakathi	Asasuni	Satkhira	Visit
5.	Mr. Subash Chandra Mondol (#6)	Ward Member	Kadakathi	Asasuni	Satkhira	Visit
6.	Mrs. Taslima Akhter (# 7,8,9)	Women member	Kadakathi	Asasuni	Satkhira	Visit
7.	Mr. Mia Jan Moral	Chairman	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
8.	Mr. Md. Zulfiqul Ali Sheikh (#2)	Ward Member	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
9.	Mr. Aminul Islam (#3)	Ward Member	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
10.	Mr. Abul Kalam Azad (#4)	Ward Member	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
11.	Mr. Md. Razu Ahmad (#5)	Ward Member	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
12.	Mr. Mosharruf Hossain (#7)	Ward Member	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
13.	Mrs. Hasina Begum (#1,2,3)	Woman Member	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
14.	Mrs. Saleha Begum (#4,5,6)	Woman Member	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
15.	Mr. Nurul Islam	Secretary	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
16.	Mr. Jamal Uddin	Gram Police	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
17.	Mr. Mohammad Ali	Gram Police	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
18.	Mr. Abdur Rafique	Gram Police	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
19.	Mr. Abdul Karim	Gram Police	Tetulia	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
20.	Mr. S M Nazrul Islam	Chairman	Tala Sadar	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
21.	Mrs. Nasima Khatun (#1,2,3)	Woman Member	Tala Sadar	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
22.	Mrs. Sajeda Begum (#4,5,6)	Woman Member	Tala Sadar	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
23.	Mrs. Rebeca Begum (#7,8,9)	Woman Member	Tala Sadar	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
24.	Mrs. Rehana Khatun	Secretary	Tala Sadar	Tala	Satkhira	Visit
25.	Mr. Syed Mohammad Iqbal	Chairman	Danga	Polash	Narshingdi	Workshop
26.	Mr. Swapan Das	Chairman	Betagi	Fakirhat	Bagerhat	Workshop

Government Officials (UNO and others):

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Department	Upazila	Means of contact
1.	Mrs. Mossamat Momtaj Begum	UNO (newly joined)	Local admin.	Asasuni	Visit
2.	Mr. Md. Shamsul Alam	Livestock Officer	Livestock Dept.	Asasuni	Visit
3.	Mrs. Fatematuz Zohora	Women Affairs Officer	DOWA	Asasuni	Visit
4.	Mr. Md. Ariful Hasan	Project Implementation Officer (PIO)	LGRD	Asasuni	Visit

HLP Partners:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Organization	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Akramul Haque	Executive Director	DASCOH	Visit
2.	Mr. Md. Shariful Islam	Documentation & Advocacy Officer	DASCOH	Visit
3.	Mr. SM Fakhru Bashir	Head of Field Operation	DASCOH	Visit
4.	Mrs. Ishrat Jahan	Team Leader, Training	DASCOH	Visit
5.	Dr. Nazimul Quayyum	District Manager, Satkhira	JICA Satkhira	Workshop
6.	Mr. Md. Zakir Hossain	Sr. Admin. & Finance Officer	JICA Satkhira	Workshop
7.	Mrs. Aroma Dutta	Executive Director	PRIP Trust	Visit
8.	Mr. Partha Sarathi Sen	Program Director, HLP	PRIP Trust	Visit
9.	Mr. SM Shahidullah	Director, Training	PRIP Trust	Visit
10.	Mr. Yakub Hossain	Deputy Executive Director	VERC	Visit
11.	Mr. Subash Saha	Coordinator Training	VERC	Visit
12.	Mr. Quamrul Islam	Asst. Training Coordinator	VERC	Visit
13.	Mr. Md. Abdul Latif	Program Manager	IRG	Workshop
14.	Mr. Nur Mohammad	Program Manager	IRG	Workshop
15.	Md. Momtajul Islam	Program Manager	RDRS	Phone call
16.	Mr. Raha Naba Kumar	Program Officer	GAT, Noakhali	Phone call
17.	Mr. Anwarul Haque	Director, Rural Poverty Elim.	CARE Bangladesh	Phone call
18.	Mr. Md. Ferdous Alam	Director	CECRC	Phone call
19.	Mr. Md. Abdul Awal	Executive Director	NRDS, Noakhali	Phone call

Others:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Organization	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Md. Mohosin	Senior Program Officer	SDLG, Dhaka	Visit
2.	Mr. Saroj Biswas	PM Shiree Project	Uttaran (NGO)	Meeting
3.	Mr. Md. Mujibor Rahman	Shiree Project	Uttaran(NGO)	Meeting
4.	Mr. Bikas Biswas	Prog. Organizer	Education Program (BEP), BRAC	Meeting
5.	Mr. James Apurbo Sarder	PO, Sponsorship	World Vision (NGO)	Meeting
6.	Mr. Abdullah Al Rashed	PM, Climate Change	Rupantor (NGO)	Meeting
7.	Mr. Haider	Sundari project	Shushilon (NGO & HLP Partner)	Meeting
8.	Mr. Sachindra Dey	Journalists	Manob Kantha,	Meeting

	Roy		Gramer Kagoj	
9.	Mr. Ramesh Chamdra Basak	Journalists	Spondon	Meeting
10.	Mr. GM Mujinor Rahman	Journalists	Inkilab, Purbanchal, Kafela	Meeting
11.	Mr. Samir Roy	Journalists	Juger Barta	Meeting
12.	Mr. Akash Hossain	Journalists	Somoyer Khobor, Ajker Satkhira	Meeting
13.	Mr. Dilip Kumar Dev	Journalists	Bhorer Kagoj	Meeting
14.	Mr. SM Ahsan Habib	Journalists	Patradut, Loko Samaj	Meeting
15.	Mr. GM Al Faruk	Journalists	Bangladesh Somoy, Dristipath	Meeting

D. SECOND MISSION

Union Parishad participating in the HLP:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Union	Upazila	District	Means of contact
1.	Md. Mohiuddin Chowdhury	Chairman	East Char Motua		Noakhali	Phone call
2.	Md. Moniruzzaman	Chairman	Kashipur	Fulbari	Dinajur	Phone call
3.	Md. Baki Billah	Chairman	Kusundi	Magura	Magura	Phone call
4.	Md. Zahir Uddin	Chairman	Rajarhat	Kurigram	Kurigram	Phone call

UP not participated in the HLP:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Union	Upazila	District	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Md. Golam Mostafa	Chairman	Huzuri para	Poba	Rajshahi	Visit & Meeting
2.	Mr. Nazrul Islam	Chairman	Haripur	Poba	Rajshahi	
3.	Mr. Md. Moin Talukder	Chairman	Kewra	Jhalakati Sadar	Jhalakati	Discussion
4.	Mr. Hafizur Rahman Chowdhury Badsha	Chairman	Moricha	Birganj	Dinajpur	Contacted by cell phone
5.	Mr. Serajul Islam	Chairman	Mongalpur	Birganj	Dinajpur	
6.	Mr. Moslem Uddin	Chairman	Damuir	Birganj	Dinajpur	
7.	Mr. Nurul Islam	Chairman	Sujalpur	Birganj	Dinajpur	
8.	Mr. Mustafizur Rahman	Chairman	Sadar	Thakurgaon	Thakurgaon	
9.	Mr. Boni Amin	Chairman	Sadar	Thakurgaon	Thakurgaon	
10.	Mr. Goutom Roy	Chairman	Khosa Raniganj	Pirganj	Thakurgaon	

Upazila Parishad (UNO):

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Upazila	District	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Md. Rezzakul Islam	UNO	Poba	Rajshahi	Visit & meeting
2.	Mrs. Sufia Akter Rummy	UNO	Nachol	Chapai Nawabganj	

HLP Facilitators:

Sl. No.	Name	Position	Union	Upazila	District	
1.	Mr. Abdul latif	Ex Chairman	Ranihati	Chapai Nawabganj Sadar	Chapai Nawabganj	<i>Discussed during Upazila workshop at Nachol</i>
2.	Mr. Aszadur Rahman	Ex Chairman	Gobratola	Chapai Nawabganj Sadar	Chapai Nawabganj	

Government Officials:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Department	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Shafiqul Islam	Additional Secretary, MoH & Ex Focal person HLP	Ministry of Homes	Visit & Meeting
2.	Mr. Shams Uddin Ahmed	Deputy Secretary & Focal person HLP	Ministry of LGRD&C	Visit & Meeting
3.	Mr. Md. Shafiqul Islam Akand	Project Director, UGII-II	LGED	Visit & Meeting
4.	Dr. Mokhduma Nargis	Project Director, Community Clinic	Ministry of Health	Visit & Meeting
5.	Dr. Barendra Nath Mandal	Additional Project Director, Community Clinic		
6.	Mr. Atiqur Rahman	Assistant Secretary (involved with HLP) (Ex UNO, Khansama & Karimganj)	Ministry of Public Administration	Visit & Meeting

HLP Partners:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Organization	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Mark Ellary	Regional Watsan Specialist, WSP	World Bank	Meeting
2.	Mr. Santanu Lahiri	Sr. Decentralization Specialist WSP	World Bank	Meeting
3.	Mr. Md. Aowlad Hossain	Local Governance Specialist WSP	World Bank	Meeting
4.	Mr. Christopher Juan Costain	Regional Team Leader, WSP, New Delhi, India	World Bank	Meeting
5.	Mr. Md. Salim Hossain Bhuiya	Data Management & Monitoring Specialist, HLC	JICA	Meeting
6.	Dr. Cecep Effendi	Director General	CIRDAP	Visit & Meeting

7.	Mr. Hossein Shahbaz	Director (Pilot Project)	CIRDAP	Visit & Meeting
8.	Dr. Akira Munakata	Advisor, Local Governance	JICA	Visit & Meeting
9.	Mr. Naoki Matsumara		JICA	Visit & Meeting
10.	Mrs. Yukie Yoshimura	Chief Advisor	JICA	Visit & Meeting
11.	Mr. Subash Saha	Coordinator, Training and Communication	VERC	Meeting at HLC on 17/04/2013 (3:00-5:30 pm)
12.	Mr. Akhter Hossain	Asst. Coordinator, Training	VERC	
13.	Mr. Tritha Sarathi Sen	National Coordinator	HELVETAS	
14.	Mr. Amir Uddin	Regional Coordinator	HELVETAS	
15.	Mr. Tareque Mahmud	Director, Lokobetar	MMC	
16.	Mr. Anowarul Haque	Director, Rural Poverty Elimination	CARE	
17.	Mr. Zilani		CARE	
18.	Mrs. Shefali Begum	Deputy Director	PRIP Trust	
19.	Mr. SM Shahidullah	Director Training	PRIP Trust	
20.	Mrs. Ishrat Jahan	Team leader	DASCOH	
21.	Mr. Sukha Ranjan Suter	Director	IRG (hired)	

HLP Non-Partners (NGOs) working with UP:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Organization	Means of contact
1.	Mr. Akter Hossain	Project Manager DA	Uttaran	Meeting at HLC (9:00-11:00) on 18/04/2013
2.	Mr. Zakir Kibria	Consultant	Uttaran	
3.	Mr. Nazrul Islam	Coordinator, Activating Village Court	WAVE Foundation	
4.	Mr. Nirmal Das	Coordinator, Responsive Governance	WAVE Foundation	

Others:

Sl. No.	Name	Position/ Designation	Organization	Means of contact
1.	Dr. Tofail Ahmed	National Technical Advisor	UNDP	
2.	Mrs. Shahana Siddiqui	Community Facilitation Coordinator	UNDP	
3.	Mr. Kajal Chaterjee	Team Leader	SDLG	Visit
4.	Mr. Md. Azmal Hossain	Senior Program Coordinator	SDLG	Visit
5.	Mr. HM Akhteruzzaman	Director & Journalist	DUMAUS	Discussion

HLP Upazila level Meeting with UPs, Nachol Upazila, Chapai Nawabganj (April 20, 2013)

Position	Number attended	Remarks
UP Chairmen	4	Nachol Upazila has four unions and total members including Chairmen are 52 in the UP. Out of 52 members 45 attended and 7 were absent
Ward Members	29	
Women members	12	
Secretaries	4	
Ex UP Chairmen	2	
Journalist & Media	8	
DASCOH	3	Host NGO and HLP partner
NGO representative	5	
TOTAL:	67	

HLP Working Team Meeting (3:00-5:30 pm; April 28, 2013 at NILG Auditorium):

Types of organizations	Number of persons attended	Remarks
NILG (Deputy Directors)	5	
LGD	1	Focal person & Deputy Secretary
HLC	3	
WSP	3	
JICA	3	
CIRDAP	1	
NGOs	14	
UNESCO	3	Observer
Consulting firm (IRG)	1	Hired by HLP
TOTAL:	34	

Annex 6: Mission programs

A6.1 First Mission February 2013

Date	Meeting / location	Participants
14	Task clarification Meeting, Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC: Tommaso Tabet, Sohel Ibn Ali • World Bank / WSP: Marc Mellery, Md. Aowlad Hossain, Salim Hossain Bhuiyan • Local Consultant (SDC): Enamul Huda • Helvetas: Lilia Tverdun, AFM Amir Uddin • Ximpulse: Ursula König, Erika Schläppi
15	In-depth discussion on HLP, Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank / WSP: Marc Mellery, Auwlad Hossain, M. Rahmat Ali • CARE: Anowarul Haq • Helvetas: AFM Amir Uddin • Local Consultant (SDC): Enamul Huda • Ximpulse: Ursula König, Erika Schläppi
15	Team coordination meeting, Dhaka and Jessore	Combined Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ximpulse: Ursula König, Erika Schläppi • Local Consultant (SDC): Enamul Huda • Helvetas: AFM Amir Uddin
15	Travel to Jessore	Combined Team (4 Consultants)
16	Jessore / Chowgacha / Patibala	Combined Team (4 Consultants) split into two teams for the interviews of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council members, • Secretary (UP chairman was not present) • Women council members, • Facilitator and ex. UP Chairman of Pashapol UP Md. Abdul Kader
17	Satkhira / Debhata / Debhata Sadar	Team (2 Consultants): Ursula König, AFM Amir Uddin for the interviews of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UP chairman Md. Nazrul Islam and secretary, • Council members (men and women), NGOs, and media representatives, • Several line ministry representatives and teacher
18	Satkhira / Satkhira / Satkhira Debriefing Team (2 Consultants)	Team (2 Consultants): Ursula König, AFM Amir Uddin Travel restriction due to political unrest; interview with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UP-chairman Md. Mahabbat Ali from Satkhira / Tala / Nagarghata
19	Satkhira / Shyamnagar / Shyamnagar Travel to Jessore	Team (2 Consultants): Ursula König, AFM Amir Uddin for the interviews of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UP chairman Sheikh Liakat Ali, • Secretary, Council members, and several line ministry representatives, • Women council members, • Facilitator and ex. UP Chairman Shajahan Siraj
20	Travel to Dhaka	Team (2 Consultants): Ursula König, AFM Amir

	Debriefing Team (2 Consultants)	Uddin
17	Sirajganj / Tarash / Madhainagar	Team (2 Consultants): Erika Schläppi, Enamul Huda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UP-chairman Md. Saidur Rahman • UP Secretary Abdul Karim
18	Sirajganj / Tarash / Tarash Sadar	Team (2 Consultants): Erika Schläppi, Enamul Huda Travel restriction due to political unrest; interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UP-chairman Md. Abu Sayed Khandoker and Council members • Women council members • Mohammad Abu Sayeed, UP Secretary, • Monsur Rahman Bachhu, (Ex. UP Chairman)
19	Sirajganj / Tarash /Deshigram Travel to Dhaka	Team (2 Consultants): Erika Schläppi, Enamul Huda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UP-chairman Md. Abdus Samad • Md. Faridul Haque UP Secretary. • Council members, • Women council members
20	Debriefing Team (2 Consultants) Meeting in Dhaka	Team (2 Consultants): Erika Schläppi, Enamul Huda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NILG : Kabir M. Ashraf Alam, Additional Secretary of the GoB and Director General of the NILG • HLC: Md. Aowlad Hossain, Md. Mizanur Rahman, Willy K. Sabila, Nurul Islam (NILG, Newsletter HLP), Minala
21	Debriefing Combined Team Preparation of Debriefing Feb 22	Ximpulse Team (4 Consultants)
22	In-depth discussion on HLP, Horizontal Learning Centre, NILG, Dhaka Debriefing SDC, Horizontal Learning Centre, NILG, Dhaka	Team (3 Consultants) Ursula König, Erika Schläppi, Enamul Huda with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSP: Santanu Lahiri Debriefing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC: Sohel Ibn Ali, Program Manager • WSP: Santanu Lahiri, Senior Decentralization Specialist, Md. Aowlad Hossain, Local Governance Specialist • JICA: Akira Munakata, Advisor, Local Governance, Goto Hisashi, Program Officer, Md. Azizur Rahman Siddiqui, Consultant, Md. Mizanur Rahman • Team (4 Consultants)

A6.2 Second Mission April 2013

Date	Meeting / location	Participants
15	Team Meeting Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of team of consultants Ursula König, Enamul Huda and - translator Suraya, Yeasmin Jui

16	Briefing at SDC, Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDC: Tommaso Tabet, - World Bank / WSP: Marc Mellery, Md. Aowlad Hossain, Salim Hossain Bhuiyan - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda - Translator: Rabiul Hassan Arif -
16	4 Individual meetings at SDC and JICA, Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank / WSP: Marc Mellery, Auwlad Hossain, Salim Hossain Bhuiyan • JICA: Akira Munakata, Advisor Local Governance, Yukie Yoshimura, Chief Advisor, Naoki Matsumura, Adviser Water / Disaster Management • SDC: Tommaso Tabet, Sohel Ibn Ali • World Bank / WSP: Christopher Juan Costain, Regional Team Leader - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda
17	5 meetings at HLC, at HLC and UNDP, Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank / WSP: Marc Mellery • UNDP: Dr. Tofail Ahmed, National Technical Advisor • UNDP: Shahana Siddiqui, Communit Facilitation Coordinator (Solution Exchange) • HLC: Md. Azizur Rahman Siddiqui, National Expert on UDCC Implementation • NGOs and HLC: Anowarul Haq and Zilani (CARE), Tareq Mahamud, Director (Mass-line Media Centre), Sukharanjan Suter, Chairman (IRG Development Services), AFM Amir Uddin, Regional Coordinator, and Tirtha Sarathi Sikder, National Coordinator (HELVETAS), Israt Jaban, Team Leader (DASCOH), S.M. Shahidullah Director and Shafali Begum, DD (PRIP Trust), Subah Saha and Akhtar Hossain (VERC), Willy K. Sabila (HLC), Auwlad Hossain (HLC), Salim Hossain Bhuiyan, (HLC) - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda, in the afternoon joined by Rabiul Hassan Arif
18	3 meetings at HLC, Dhaka Travel to Rajshahi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO (not participating in HLP): Akhter Hossain, Project Manager and Zakir Kibira, Consultant (Uttaran), Nazrul Islam and Nirmal Das, CoordinatorsWAVE Foundation • NILG: Shamina Faruque, Deputy Director • Partner (not yet participating in HLP) and BUPF: SDLG: Azmal Hossain, SPO, and Kajal Charterjee; BUPF members - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda, Rabiul Hassan Arif

19	Meeting in Rajshahi Meeting of Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNO and UP chairmen (not included in HLP): Rezzakul Islam (UNO, Poba Upazila, Rajshahi), Md. Golam Mustafa, Huzuri Pava, Md. Nazrul Islam, Haripur - WSP: Md. Aowlad Hossain and - DASCOH: Israt Jaban, Team Leader - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda, Rabiul Hassan Arif - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda, Rabiul Hassan Arif
20	Travel to Chapai Nawabganj UZ Workshop at Chapai Nawabganj Travel back to Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in a HLP WS on selection of “good practices”
21	Consultants’ Team meeting 1 Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data compilation and analysis - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda - Translator: Rabiul Hassan Arif • SDC: Tommaso Tabet - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda - Translator: Rabiul Hassan Arif
22	Consultants’ Team meeting 3 meetings in Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - • CIRDAP: Dr. Cecep Effendi, Director General, and Hossein Shahbaz, Director (Pilot Projects) • GoB: Shams Uddin Ahmed, Focal person HLP and Deputy Secretary LGD of LGRD & Development • GoB: Shafiqul Islam, Additional Secretary Ministry of Home Affairs and Ex-focus person of HLP
23	Consultants’ Team meeting due to hartal 2 meetings in Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data compilation and analysis • JICA: Akira Munakata, Advisor Local Governance, Naoki Matsumura, Adviser Water / Disaster Management • BRAC University: Dr.Ferdous Jahan, Department of Public Administration

24	Internal Work due to hartal	- Data compilation and analysis
25	Audio call to UP-chairmen 2 meetings in Dhaka HLP working team meeting	UP-chairmen (new, not included): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGRD- LGED: Md. Shafique Islam Akanda, Project Director Urban Planning, UGII-II, LGED • WSP : Marc Mellery and Md. Aowlad Hossain - HLP working team meeting
26	Internal Work in Dhaka	Data compilation and analysis
27	Travel to Tangail cancelled due to road blocks around Dhaka Consultants' Team meeting Preparation of Debriefing Audio calls to UP-chairmen	Focus Group Discussion / Meeting with UPs of Kalihati Upazilla cancelled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda - Translator: Rabiul Hassan Arif <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Md. Baki Billah, Chairman, Kusundi UP, Magura • Mr. Md. Zahir Uddin, Ex Chairman Rajarhat UP, Kurigram • Mr. Md. Moniruzzaman, Chairman, Kashipur UP, Fulbari, Dinajpur • Mr. Md. Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Chairman, Motua UP, Noakhali
28	2 meetings in Dhaka Consultants' Team meeting Preparation of Debriefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Health / Primary Health Care: Dr. Barendra Nath Mandal, Additional Project Director, Dr. Mokhduma Nargis, Project Director, Community Clinic • Ex UNO Khansama and Karimganj: Mr. Atiqur Rahman Consultants' Team meeting Preparation of Debriefing
29	Debriefing SDC and WSP, Dhaka Consultants' Team meeting and data compilation for the mission report Audio calls	Debriefing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDC: Derek Müller, Head of Cooperation, Sohel Ibn Ali, Program Manager, Lubna - Team of Consultant: Ursula König, Enamul Huda - Translator: Rabiul Hassan Arif <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team of Consultants: Ursula König, Enamul Huda - Translator: Rabiul Hassan Arif
30	Consultants' Team meeting Preparation of final report, Dhaka	- Team of Consultant: Ursula König, Enamul Huda

		- Translator: Rabiul Hassan Arif
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Annex 7: Interview guidelines

A7.1. General questions for all interlocutors

- Describe situation & your function / role
- Changes and drivers of change in UPs in general
- What has changed in the last view years? “Prouds”, “worries”/ challenges, own behavioural changes.
- Compliments on the achievements and appreciation of the difficult situation
- Open questions from the side of our interlocutors..
- Closing question if anything could not be mentioned up to now in the talk, which is important.

A7.2. Focused questions for specific groups of interlocutors

Facilitator

- History of his involvement, previous roles in the UP
- Difference in the perspective in the “new” role as facilitator, comparison with UP-role
- Achievements of HLP
- Knowledge of “AI” as a concept

UP chairman and secretary

- Change through Exchange – which issues, what were benefits
- “Good Practice” – where did it come from, decision-making for selecting of “good practices”, sustainability of “good practice”
- Coordination / communication with different stakeholders (Council, citizens, media, line ministry, Upazila etc.)
- Role of the Local Government Associations (BUPF and BUPSA)
- Motivation of chair to participate in HL

Council members (general)

- Where does change come from?
- Knowledge about chairs activities in HLP and own involvement
- Communication with citizens
- Role of NGOs

Council members women

- What challenges do women council members face in particular?

Upazila chair / UNO involved in HLP

- Description of the current distribution of tasks, responsibilities and human/financial resources between central – Upazila – UP; trends / dynamics in the future
- Interests in and expectations towards decentralization – own view, view of political parties?
- Description of the process in general, history and recent development; Selection criteria for participants in different events
- Description of own participation in events, dynamics at events

- Description of the management and steering of the process, cooperation with other stakeholders, role of partners; Role of HLC
- What is HLP? (“leading”, “peers”, “learning”, “appreciative inquiry”)
- What results can be attributed to HLP? Influences on practices, standards, behaviours, policies and national level
- Role of NILG and the Cap-dev framework
- Own role in making it sustainable
- Own role in monitoring

UNO, Upazila chairmen, UP-chairmen not in HLP

- Where does the change come from and drivers of change
- Decentralization – role, function
- Relationship to donors / within government / amongst UPs (learning), cooperation with other stakeholders
- Knowledge about HLP
- Motivation to stay out of HLP / to get in?

District facilitators

- Role, function, current involvement with HLP
- Exchange between HLP events
- Knowledge about HLP
- Motivation to stay out of HLP / to get in?
- What is learned apart from “practices” (behavioural changes)?

UP-chairmen focus group participating in HLP / phone calls

- How could the study be made helpful for the UPs?
- What is learned apart from “practices” (behavioural changes)?
- Exchange between HLP events
- Steps of the process – changes in the last years (improvements/negative?) and link to the role of sustainability; role of LGD and NILG now and in the future
- Motivation to stay out of HLP / to stay in?
- Role of UNO and MP (selection of participants and good practices)
- Role of NGOs (influence of NGO programs; driving forces?)
- Gender issues in HLP
- How do you choose – which criteria?
- How do you proceed after selection (follow-up, implementation)

UP-chairmen focus group not participating in HLP

- Where does the change come from and drivers of change
- Decentralization – role, function
- Relationship to donors / within government / amongst UPs, cooperation with other stakeholders
- Knowledge about HLP
- Motivation to stay out of HLP / to get in?

Donors / NGOs involved in HLP

- Own behavioural change? (If there was a global budget provision for the UPs, would there be interest in HLP)?
- Description of the process in general, history and recent developments; History of own involvement, previous roles
- Description of own participation in events, dynamics at events
- What is HLP? (“leading”, “peers”, “learning”, “appreciative inquiry”)
- Working with the government and policy impact
- What results can be attributed to HLP? Influences on practices, standards, behaviours, policies and national level
- What is learned? (Behavioural changes)
- Selection process of good practices, implementation and follow-up of selected practices
- Own role in monitoring
- Own role in making it sustainable, Vision / future of HLP
- Similar initiatives

Donors / NGOs /consultant firm not in HLP

- Where does the change come from and drivers of change
- Decentralization – role, function in
- Relationship to donors other NGOs
- Knowledge about HLP
- Motivation to stay out of HLP / to get in?

LGD representative, ex-Focal point of HLP, NILG, line ministry, other government representatives

- Decentralization in Bangladesh
- Coordination and own involvement, role of NILG and LGD now, links to government tiers, cooperation with UP level
- Cap-Dev. Framework and links to HLP
- Influence on policy

- Description of the process in general, history and recent developments
- Description of own participation in events, dynamics at events
- Participation and knowledge about peer-exchange – who is peer
- What results can be attributed to HLP? Influences on practices, standards, behaviours, policies and national level; “bad practice”
- Difference between “training” and “learning”; role of TQM
- Experiences with HLP events
- Role of HLC
- Sustainability of the process, own role in the future
- Role of NILG in creating a knowledge base; knowledge management

Media

- Knowledge about peer-exchange

- What results can be attributed to HLP? Influences on practices, standards, behaviours, policies and national level
- Incentives to co-operate – and to NOT co-operate, “secret”?
- Vision / future of HLP in comparison to other development work

Academia

- Description of the current distribution of tasks, responsibilities and human/financial resources between central – Upazila – UP; trends / dynamics in the future
- Interests in and expectations towards decentralization – own view, view of political parties?
- What results can be attributed to HLP? Influences on practices, standards, behaviours, policies and national level
- Role of NILG and the Cap-dev framework
- Gender
- Vision / future of HLP in light of own involvement

Guidelines for semi-structured interviews with WSP, HLC

- What has changed in the last few years? “Prouds”, “worries”/ challenges
- Vision of HLP
- What is HLP? (“leading”, “peers”, “learning”, “appreciative inquiry”)
- Vision / future of HLP
- Description of the process in general, history and recent developments
- Description of own participation in events, dynamics at events
- What results can be attributed to HLP?
- Coordination with partners: meetings? Structures foreseen for cooperation set-up
- Process details: selection criteria for participation (and good practices)
- Gender

Guidelines for semi-structured interviews with HLC-Working Team

- Own behavioural change? (If there was a global budget provision for the UPs, would there be interest in HLP)?
- Gender ?
- Role of NILG / LGD / Cap-Dev framework
- Link of field to working team reflection process (only activities reporting?)
- capacity of self-observation and reflection, leadership, communication and bringing people into cooperation; teamwork
- Networking process of partner system (characteristics, how exactly dealt with contradictions, opposing view, no vision ...)

Annex 8: List of documents and literature consulted

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Jamie Boex, Santanu Lahiri, Laurent Thévoz, SDC Local Governance Portfolio Strategy Review: A Review of Local Governance in Bangladesh and Implications for SDC, May 2012

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