Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Report on the Assessment of the Contribution of Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) to/from JICA Projects in Bangladesh

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAN	Asia Arsenic Network
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
AIRP	Arsenic Iron Removal Plant
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BRDB	Bangladesh Rural Development Board
CmSS	Community Support System
DAM	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DASCOH	Development Association for Self-Reliance, Communication and Health
DDLG	Deputy Director, Local Government
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering
EmOC	Emergency Obstetric Care
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HLC	Horizontal Learning Center
HLCC	Horizontal Learning in Community Clinic
HLP	Horizontal Learning Program
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LGD	Local Government Division
LGI	Local Government Institution
LGRD&C	Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
LGSPII	Local Governance Support Project Phase II
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MoLGRD&C	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
NBD	National Building Department
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGO Forum	NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
PSF	Pond Sand Filter
PRDP	Participatory Rural Development Project
SAMILGS	Sustainable Arsenic Mitigation Under the Integrated Local Government System
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SMPP	Safe Motherhood Promotion Project
TOR	Terms of Reference
TTL	Task Team Leader
UCCM	Union Coordination Committee Meeting
UDCC	Union Development Coordination Committee
UDO	Union Development Officer
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer (Sub-District Executive Officer)
UP	Union Parishad (Union Council)
VC	Village Committee
WSP	Water and Sanitation Program

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INTRODUCTION

Background

1.   Bangladesh Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) was launched in November 2007 initially as a one-year pilot scheme with a focus on the identification of water and sanitation related good practices by Union Council (Union Parishad: UP), which was then followed by exposure visits to communities where these practices were exercised to learn how they could be replicated in other communities. It was facilitated by Local Government Division (LGD) of Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C) with support from Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) in collaboration with Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), WaterAid, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, and Plan Bangladesh.

2.   In July 2011, a two-day strategic workshop was held for HLP's key stakeholders to develop a new framework of HLP activities. In this workshop, the concept and scaling up strategies of HLP were discussed and agreed. The strategic document *Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh: The Program Framework*[1] published after the workshop states:

- **The overall goal of the HLP** is to contribute to the reform of the relations of accountability between consumers and providers, citizens and local governments, local and central governments, projects and partners to ensure improved local services.

- **The program objective** is to enhance the capacity and accountability of local government institutions.

3.   The document also underlines that HLP partners are expected to participate in,

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[1] Uddin Ahmed, S. and Lahiri, S. *Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh: The Program Framework, November 1, 2011 to October 31, 2015* in Scaling-up of the HLP in Bangladesh on July 23–24, 2011: Dhaka, Bangladesh.

through access to compiled good practices of HLP, and to contribute to, through the utilization of this platform, the dissemination of good practices for potential replication at scale. The HLP Working Team is a think tank at the national level, and its monthly meeting functions as the forum for HLP partners to coordinate, inform, and participate in the HLP activities.

4.   As an active partner since 2007, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Bangladesh has a track record of collaboration with HLP. Its technical cooperation project, Participatory Rural Development Project 2 (PRDP-2)[2], pioneered in developing relationship with HLP through its evolution, and came to involve other JICA projects such as Sustainable Arsenic Mitigation Under the Integrated Local Government System (SAMILGS)[3] and Safe Motherhood Promotion Project (SMPP)[4] into the forum. Through the association, it became evident o JICA's concerned parties that these JICA projects recognized the benefits of HLP for expanding their good practices to the wider scale, they did not have a common understanding of what HLP is and what it has been doing to JICA's interventions.

5.   In order to strengthen JICA's relationship with HLP and achieve maximum leverage out of the relationship, it is important to take stock of what has been the relationship and synergy created through JICA's association with HLP. Such assessment is expected to lead to a more strategic relationship building through targeted collaboration for JICA with HLP. This study is thus expected to help JICA to better understand HLP and the contributions that HLP can provide for JICA to most effectively support the development goals of Bangladesh, which is sustainable growth with equity.

Objective of the Study

6.   The objective of this study was to conduct and present structured and

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[2] Implemented from 2005 to 2010.
[3] Implemented from 2005 to 2008 in collaboration with Asia Arsenic Network (AAN).
[4] Phase 1 was from 2006 to 2011. Currently its Phase 2 is running from 2011 through 2016.

systematic analysis of HLP and its association with JICA projects in Bangladesh to date. The study was envisaged to extract where and how HLP has been effective for sharing and replication of good practices that have come out of JICA projects as well as where challenges lie in those domains to inform JICA's onward collaboration planning with HLP. This study was organized to primarily serve for JICA's planning needs. Thus, the research and analysis that followed were conducted from particular angles to inform this bilateral development cooperation agency with implementation arms.

Scope of the Study

7.   The study was structured into a three part analytical work out of which the result is presented in the form of a final report that consists of the following sections:

Part I: Based on the information gathered through desk review and complementary hearing with concerned parties at central and local government bodies, development partners[5], a comprehensive yet succinct picture of HLP was formed as presented in the chapter, HORIZONTAL LEARNING PROGRAM (HLP): EVOLUTION, CURRENT STATUS, AND PROSPECTS.

Part II: Based on the information gathered through Part I, complemented by that obtained through field visits, exemplary cases of HLP application for replication of JICA projects produced good practices were reviewed and compiled into case studies. This part of the study led to the chapter, JICA'S HLP EXPERIENCES THROUGH ITS PROJECTS.

Part III: Based on the analysis of data obtained through Part I and II above, findings were compiled into the chapter titled, FINDINGS.

Part IV: The findings in Part III guided RECOMMENDATIONS TO JICA ON THE

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[5] Development partner hearings were conducted by the national consultant, and the information obtained was compiled into "Results of the hearing from Horizontal Partner Program (HLP) partners conducted to inform: Assessment of the contribution of Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) to/from JICA projects in Bangladesh" as a companion report to this final report.

WAY FORWARD.

Methodology

8. The study, consisting of (1) desk review, (2) visits to HLP related organizations and to JICA projects, (3) analysis, (4) workshop to share preliminary findings and to receive feedback on them, and (5) final report preparation, was carried out by a team consisting of a Japanese consultant (Maki I. TSUMAGARI, PhD, MBA, 32 working days) and a national consultant (Salim Hossain BHUIYAN, 40 working days) who provided support to the Japanese consultant in preliminary information collection as well as in logistical coordination. Analytical work and final report writing were carried out by the Japanese consultant, and thus the responsibility to their contents rests on her. Names as well as institutions from whom/which valuable information was received to support the findings of the report are acknowledged with appreciation in Appendix A: Meetings in Dhaka or Via Audio, and Appendix B: Field Visit Schedule.

Timeline

9. Below were the milestones set and adhered for the study.

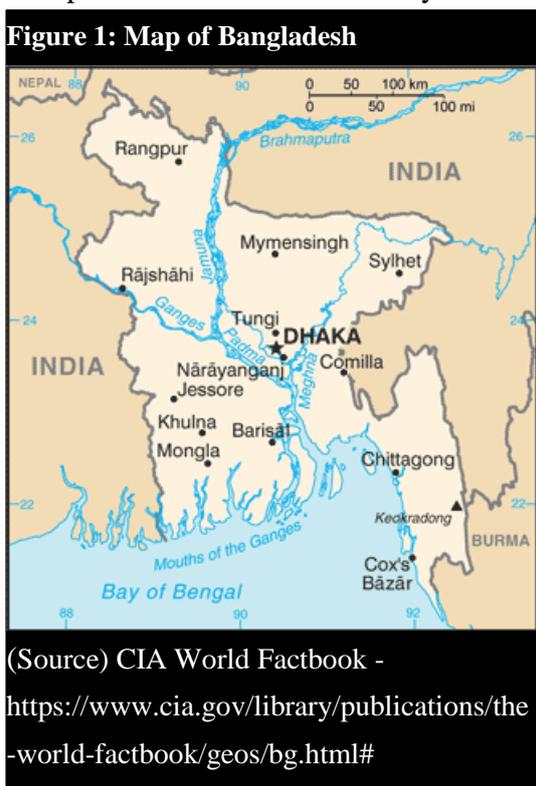|	
Early February:	Preliminary work by the local consultant
Mid February:	Desk review and hearing
Mid February – Early March[6]:	Field visits, followed by analysis
March 11:	Workshop to share the preliminary findings
March 20:	Final report due

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[6] Due to unexpected in-country situation caused by a series of nationwide strikes, numerous iterations of rescheduling were deemed necessary. Yet, the milestone dates were kept intact.

HORIZONTAL LEARNING PROGRAM (HLP):
EVOLUTION, CURRENT STATUS, AND PROSPECTS

Contextual background of HLP's birthplace

10.   People's Republic of Bangladesh is in South Asia, largely surrounded by India except the coastline on the Bay of Bengal, as well as those sections bordering with

Figure 1: Map of Bangladesh

(Source) CIA World Factbook - https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html#

Myanmar in the southeast. It is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with close to 150 million at the time of 2011 census (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Bangladesh has two tiers of government: National and local. In recent years, with the aim of reducing centralized nature of the public sector, a series of local governance decentralization measures have been taken. Local Government Ordinances promulgated since 2008 provide the main legislative texts. Although the current government led by Awami League who came to the office in 2009 reversed the landscape of associated reforms to some extent, the agenda of strengthening local governments and local governance continues to be one of the central focuses of the country (Boex, Lahiri, & Thévoz, 2012).

11.   Bangladesh has seven administrative divisions, each with a government office headed by a divisional commissioner, who is a senior civil servant. These divisions deal with central government initiatives in their areas. The Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD&C) is the cabinet member with overall responsibility for local government, local government finance and inspection. The Local Government Division (LGD) within the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C) deals with administration and legal

issues relating to local government institutions.

12.   Local government is divided into urban and rural, and the latter is further drilled down to four tiered local governance structure as follows:

- District Council (Zila Parishad)
- Sub-District Council (Upazila Parishad)
- Union Council (UP: Upazila Parishad)
- Gram sarkar (village government)

13.   Sub-District Council (Upazila Parishad) is the upper part of the bottom two-tiers of rural local government body, and in the country there are 486 Sub-District Councils (Upazila Parishad) led by elected representation[7]. Located below the Sub-District is the Union Council (UP) that holds 10-15 villages. UP is the lowest tier of the rural local government that is elected. There are 4,545 UPs in Bangladesh at the time of this study.

Evolution of HLP

14.   The official inauguration of HLP dates back to November 2007, when the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C), Government of Bangladesh, issued letters on the learning framework of the Program to its Deputy Commissioners, with copies to respective Sub-District Executive Officers (UNOs: Upazila Nirbahi Officers) under HLP. That described LGD as taking the lead role in providing national-level policy support to the HLP through its Deputy Secretary in charge of water supply as the HLP Focal Person, and WSP's South Asia Regional Program (WSP–SA) assigned for coordinating activities (MoLGRD&C/LGD & Water and Sanitation Program, 2008b).

15.   As described in the network workshop documents in early years, the initial engaging spirit was "horizontal learning for strengthening capacities of local

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[7] Although introduced initially as an elected body in 1983, it became under the administrative arm of the center until 2009 when elected representation was re-installed.

government institution(s) on improving water supply and sanitation services in Bangladesh". Then, seven different projects were running in different Sub-Districts (Upazilas) piloting own service delivery and management options for water supply, sanitation and hygiene. These projects were demonstrating many good practices, and thus systematically conducted mutual learning was considered to merit their own internalization as well as replication by other Union Councils (UP) (Lahiri, 2007). Thus, learning activities were framed within a pilot project implemented by Union Council (UP) Water Supply-Sanitation-Hygiene Network under LDG with coordination by WSP–SA[8]. Also collaborated were development partners including Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Plan Bangladesh, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), WaterAid and the World Bank (Ahmed & Lahiri, 2011).

16.   A series of Sub-District (Upazila) level workshops were organized to orient the relevant stakeholders about the Program and to also prepare action plans. In the commemorative first network workshop in December 2007 in Tangail, the participants identified 26 good practices and framed indicators to validate them. Through pre-visit discussion and validation visits that followed, 16 good practices were identified by 62 Unions for replication in the course of 2008-2009 (MoLGRD&C/LGD & Water and Sanitation Program, 2008b). The momentum was captured by other unions who heard about these exchanges and showed interest in the participation (Ahmed & Lahiri, 2011), and that led to the instituting of HLP, which by 2010, set up Horizontal Learning Center (HLC) as the program's secretariat, and in 2011 prepared a five year plan that runs through October 2015.

17.   This document, "Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh: The Program Framework November 1, 2011 to October 31, 2015" (Ahmed & Lahiri, 2011) clearly mentions HLP's focus has now enlarged, to more broadly address good governance, ranging from that on water and sanitation to other sectors such as education,

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[8] The Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) is a multi-donor partnership administered by the World Bank working in 25 countries through regional offices in Africa, East and South Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and in, Washington D.C. WSP-South Asia is one such regional team, without separate mandate or authorization capacity.

environment (climate change), health, gender. Growth in Union Council (UP) participation in HLP membership reflects this trend, whose rate grew from 44 initially to 383 (which accounts for 8.42% of the 4,545 total UPs) by the end of 2012 (Bhuiyan, 2013a). The expansion of HLP partnership is not only at the Union Council (UP) level, but encompassing the whole spectrum of the government bodies of Bangladesh, shown in Figure 2: HLP Reach and Membership. Here, distinction is made between reach and membership: HLP membership occurs at the lower tiers of the local government, by Sub-District Councils (Upazila Parishad) signing up in HLP on behalf of its Union Councils (UPs) underneath, while HLP is also approaching ministries, divisions, and districts to advocate their support and recognition for HLP's effectiveness in their line agencies/local bodies' effective work.

Figure 2: HLP Reach and Membership
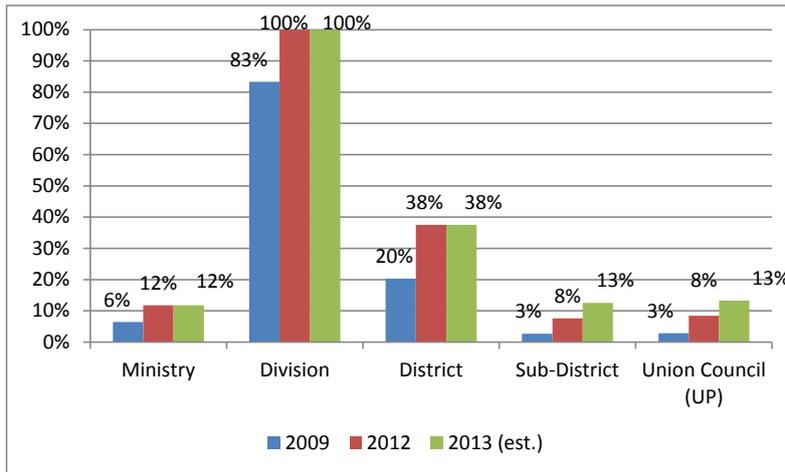
18. The expansion has occurred on the side of the development partners also, and the number of HLP development partners increased from the founding five to the present 32.

What HLP is and Who is Involved Why

19. According to the Program Framework (Ahmed & Lahiri, 2011), the on-going version of HLP definition states "HLP is a Union Parishad (UP: UP Council) led, outcome[9] based, peer-to-peer learning initiative facilitated by the Local Government Division (LGD), Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C) and supported by development partners" (p. 20). Under this program,

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[9] In HLP context, this outcome refers to the result that envisaged replicators see for replication, not the result that the replicator is expected to possess at the time of the exposure.

local governments connect with each other to identify, share, and replicate good practices of their peers. While development partners provide close facilitation, technical support, and strong handholding, the principle is that replication is not funded by them but through Union Councils' (UPs') own budget sources. The Horizontal Learning Centre (HLC), the secretariat for HLP located within the National Institute of Local Government (NILG), provides day-to-day support, while WSP's Bangladesh Country Team (WSP–Bangladesh)[10] provides back-up coordinating support. HLP is widely embraced by the development community of Bangladesh with the current partner composition consisting of 33 entities[11], whose list is found in Appendix C: Composition of HLP Partnership.

20.   The desk review complemented by hearing conducted as a part of this study (Bhuiyan, 2013b) illuminated that a variety of thinking seem to exist in the minds of concerned parties toward HLP depending on where they sit in the local governance landscape of Bangladesh, including the follows:

- HLP works effectively as a mobilization tool for people tasked with local governance, minimizing cost for service delivery. (Central government line ministry in charge of local governance)
- HLP serves as a mechanism to collect valuable information required to plan for informed training programs for the capacity development of government staff assigned for local governance. (Central government in charge of capacity building training of government staff assigned for local governance)
- HLP serves as a platform to learn about the country's most up-to-date local governance trends and lets the concerned parties to compare notes on how others

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[10] As already stated in footnote 8, WSP is a multi-donor partnership administered by the World Bank, and its Bangladesh Country Team reports to WSP Global Manager in Washington, D.C. through the Regional Team Leader in Delhi, India. Through the study, it seemed that concerned parties in the country might have seen WSP they encounter through HLP represents as the World Bank. It is not correct. Authorization as a World Bank decision only comes from that delegated from the World Bank President, and typically that is granted to the Bank's Director of the Vice Presidency under which WSP is housed. Thus, neither WSP as a Program or its Country Team has a separate legal authorization to represent the World Bank.
[11] Including LDG/MoLGRD&C, Focal Agency of HLP.

are working their part in different locations both in terms of physical locations, sectoral/thematic areas, and at different tiers of the local governance. (Partners)

- HLP offers opportunities to visually confirm how activities of interest to the party are conducted by other colleagues, thus enabling one to explore and craft their own applications. (Partners, as well as local government bodies charged with own governance)

- HLP opened an avenue for collaboration among those who traditionally did not come to the same table to jointly plans for local governance issues. (Local government bodies charged with own governance, as well as representatives of the communities.)

21.   Remarks such as those presented above suggest that different stakeholders justify their association with HLP <u>because it serves their own purposes</u>. Many allocate a part of their program/project budget so that information that is channeled through HLP can be utilized for their own program/project/activity planning and/or implementation. (See companion piece of this report, "Results of the hearing from Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) partners conducted to inform: Assessment of the contribution of Horizontal Learning Program (HLP) to/from JICA projects in Bangladesh" by Bhuiyan, S. H.). Local leaders are thrilled to learn about possible solutions/countermeasures to their problems from others who are tackling with similar problems and who are open to share their experiences. Development agencies that are good at creating models have a way to have their models picked up by others for the rollout outside their target areas, with the possibility of influencing national level policy making. Thus, in the minds of those who have already benefitted, HLP is a valid mechanism to multiply the effect of their undertakings through mainstreaming.

22.   However, by and large, funding for HLP's engine (i.e. secretariat) is drawn from a single source, that is a multi-year trust fund based grant from SDC that is channeled through WSP–SA. And this funding basis has been and is to continue to be a question for near future sustainability of the Program as a whole, on to which some degrees Bangladesh' local governance and its public service delivery has been already principled. In other words, as the HLP evolution (or movement) involves more parties

with instrumental roles for the country's local governance, it involves more parties sitting on the fragile foundation of HLP, which is still to date, a time bound program funded predominantly by one donor. At the moment, partners are willing to share the cost only to the extent that it will be justifiable for the scale of merit they receive for their own work.

How HLP operates: Identification, validation, and replication through HLP defined appreciative inquiry

23. The stylized HLP procedure defined by the Program Framework includes the following steps:

- Union Councils (UPs) are encouraged to identify their good practices (with indicators) that are shared at the Sub-District (Upazila) level workshops.
- Union Councils (UPs) select the good practices they wish to visit, to learn from their peers and appreciate their context and achievements.
- Union Councils (UPs) prioritize, discuss with citizens, and integrate appropriate good practices into their annual plan and budget.
- Union Councils (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.

(The full chain of activities from the activities to the impact is presented in Appendix D: Logical Steps of HLP.)

24. A quick glance at this process makes one ask if this is an independently initiated process by the learners, that are Union Councils (UPs), who then carry out the exposure visits, reflect the learning, and replicate the practices. A deeper look at what is involved for the whole process to seamlessly occur so that replication is derived, we understand the careful wording of the role of partners who are expected to play "catalytic" (Ahmed & Lahiri, 2011, p. 27) roles for the replication of good practices to happen. Site visits conducted for this study confirmed that significant roles are played

by NGOs in supporting Union Councils (UPs) in the replication of good practices that require technical and facilitation input. To start with, significant amount of exposure visits are sponsored by entities external to Union Councils (UPs), and one should factor that in when understanding the whole mechanism of HLP process.

25.   People associated with HLP unanimously point out that its appreciative inquiry provides a big thrust to drive HLP process. According to HLP interpretation, its appreciative inquiry "focuses on positive factors and helps to identify, acknowledge, and appreciate achievements" (MoLGRD&C/LGD & Water and Sanitation Program, 2008a, p. 18). Initially devised as a tool for organizational change with foundational credit to Case Western University's Department of Organizational Behavior (OB), Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as an action research method spread widely to be applied to many situations beyond organizational development. Through the course, AI came to also draw questions including if it creates a "possibility that a focus on positive stories and experiences during the discovery phase will invalidate the negative organizational experiences of participants and repress potentially important and meaningful conversations that need to take place." (Bushe, 2011, p. 17).

26.   HLP's seemingly blind appreciation of what are presented in front of them has not gone through a rigorous discussion on this point, by asking if it is not missing any critical information for learning from the observed practices that is "not good as a good practice" but "good as a practice to learn from". Thus, framing the whole context of on what basis HLP parties are discussing good practices through the lens of appreciative inquiry should be re-visited. As a part of that discussion, "constructive criticism" or more softly, "constructive commenting for better replication" can open a way to enlarge the scope of appreciation.

Prospects of HLP

27.   HLP has evolved rather swiftly in a matter of several years; its fame has

reached far and wide, even to the other side of the world[12]. Such a rapid expansion, on the other hand, came with a cost. It seems that concerned parties did not have the luxury of pondering and ironing out some foundational and fundamental questions that require answers in the not too distant future. The top concern widely expressed by the different parties who shared their view independently and separately during the study relates to the future existence of the Program. In other words, what is the fate of the HLC as the engine that runs the mechanism?

28.   There is a view that HLP is already established under the umbrella of the central government body as it is headed by LGD. However, it does not mean that HLP itself governs the local governance process. Rather, HLP helps facilitate the necessary discussion based on evidences that are extracted through its learning/sharing/replicating processes. HLP's institutionalization question is then left to be answered. The institutionalization question is best tackled by looking at the funding arrangement of the Program that is required to sustain its existence. For the implementation of the Program Framework running up to 2015, there seems to be sufficient funding basis to run the Program. However, as some interviewed for this study remarked it as "time bound, project type of financing arrangement", organizational framework based on which partners and believers of HLP can feel assured that it will be there if they require HLP's expertise beyond 2015 is lacking.

29.   To take HLP to the next stage, efforts are already being made, including the local level collaboration with a large scale local governance capacity development project[13] that channels a part of the project resources directly to Union Councils (UPs) for the training needs identified by them. This catchment area seems to be a particularly fitting one for HLP's strength, as a responsive utilization of UP budget allocated from this project by addressing the needs of the communities can be crafted through the HLP facilitated dialogue of the stakeholders.

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[12] HLP is now on call for beyond Bangladesh engagements such as those in Pakistan, Iran, and Tanzania.

[13] Local Governance Support Project II (LGSP) funded by the World Bank (Project ID: P124514, US$290M, 2011 to 2017).

30. Regarding own effort by the Program, a move to note is the aspiration of decentralizing the HLP learning mechanism down to district levels with the concept, "District Hubs (Figure 3: Decentralization based Scale up)", where district level becomes the coordinating level for peer-learning guided and facilitated by District

Figure 3: Decentralization based Scale up
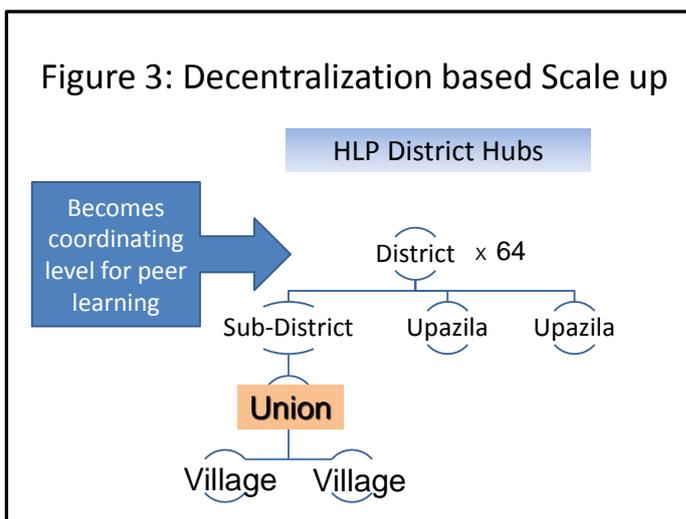
Working Team, consisting of local partners with Deputy Director, Local Government (DDLG) [14] as the chair. This initiative came out of the consensus achieved at the conference in October 11, 2011, where UPs, LGD, NILG and HLP Partners discussed on "scaling up" [15] HLP in all 64 districts in all 7 divisions of the country.

31. These District Hubs are envisaged to be supported by various agencies. For example, JICA's Safe Motherhood Promotion Project Phase 2 (SMPP-2) has already stepped in to take co-charge together with WSP–Bangladesh of Satkhira District Hub management, including some financial contribution. Plan Bangladesh is planning to adopt Kurigram/Khanshama. Out of the remaining five Districts, Chapai Nawabganj, Tangail and Moulavi Bazar are already on board with WSP–Bangladesh. Interests are already raised by other partners also, including Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) [16], DASCOH and Helvetas Intercooperation to collectively adopting Rajshahi District to create its District Hub, while Chapai Nawanganj District Hub in Rajshahi Division is also slated for District Hub establishment with a partner to

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[14] District representative of LGD

[15] "Scaling up" has been used as a common terminology by the concerned parties. To more narrowly define the move being envisioned, it is the effort by HLP to "reach out" to those who have not become familiar with HLP, as ultimately the decision for membership or association with HLP is a voluntary choice of those who are exposed to the Program.
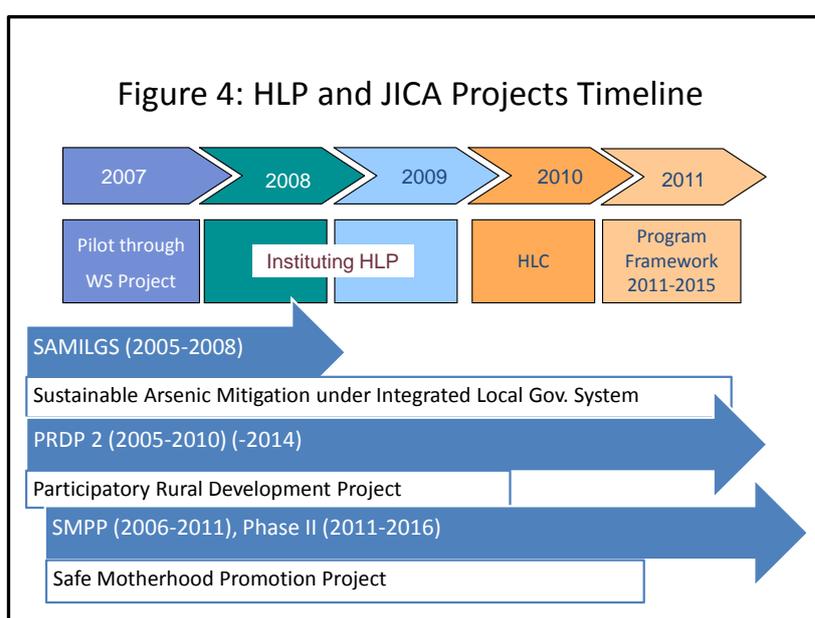
[16] Not yet officially a member of HLP, though GIZ has joined in two separate, urban focused workshops (Rongpur and Chapai Nawabganj) and well informed of HLP.

be selected based on recommendations from the sub-districts.

32.   Going forward, one interviewee shared an opinion that there is also a possibility that HLP establishes itself as more of a technical service provider, like social business consultant facilitating peer-learning processes for a fee. Either way, expansion and footsteps HLP have created come with the responsibility to the society to iron out how to sustain. The beauty of HLP is its doctrine of "everybody participates". However, there are issues that can be addressed and responded only by those who have a grand view of the whole spectrum of how and based on what HLP operates, including the funding arrangement. Given the whole chain of HLP learning process does not occur at an optimal scale without the participation and support of the partner organizations, it is opportune to ascertain what level and kind of cost sharing seems amenable to those who are expected to step in beyond 2015, if necessary.

JICA'S HLP EXPERIENCES THROUGH ITS PROJECTS

33.   As a bilateral international development agency with strong field orientation[17], JICA's technical cooperation projects are, among its array of development assistance schemes[18], recognized as a strong pillar to meet the diverse needs of developing countries around the world. This study confirmed that such perception also permeates through the minds of the parties concerned in Bangladesh, and HLP has been, to the benefit of JICA, functioning to amplify such positive thinking toward JICA's project work in the country (Figure 4: HLP and JICA Projects Timeline).

Figure 4: HLP and JICA Projects Timeline

34.   The particular objective of case studies conducted as a part of the study was to take stock of HLP identified good practices out of JICA Projects. Emphasis was placed on delineating realities that occurred to each project as it came across with HLP, collaborated through the phase of project implementation, and how their relationship has guided the project activities.

35.   The study illuminated that JICA's engagement with HLP through its projects has developed into a relationship that has "bi-directional" benefit, as opposed to the assumption that it must be primarily JICA who reaps benefit while HLP offers such. Thus, to be precise, JICA's engagement with HLP should be understood as synergistic,

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17 http://www.jica.go.jp/english/about/index.html
18 Other schemes are: Official development assistance loans, grant aid, citizen participation, and emergency disaster relief. Details can be found at:
http://www.jica.go.jp/english/searchResults/index.html?q=array%20of

which from JICA's side thanks largely to the strategic efforts by its project concerned people, who internalized HLP offered opportunities to the workings of their own activities. Each case is discussed in the following sections. The project locations are pinned while HLP areas are shaded in Figure 5: HLP and JICA Project Interventions.

Figure 5: HLP and JICA Project Interventions

HLP: 385 UPs in 37 upazilas supported by 32 partners.

JICA: 3 Projects having connected with HLP.
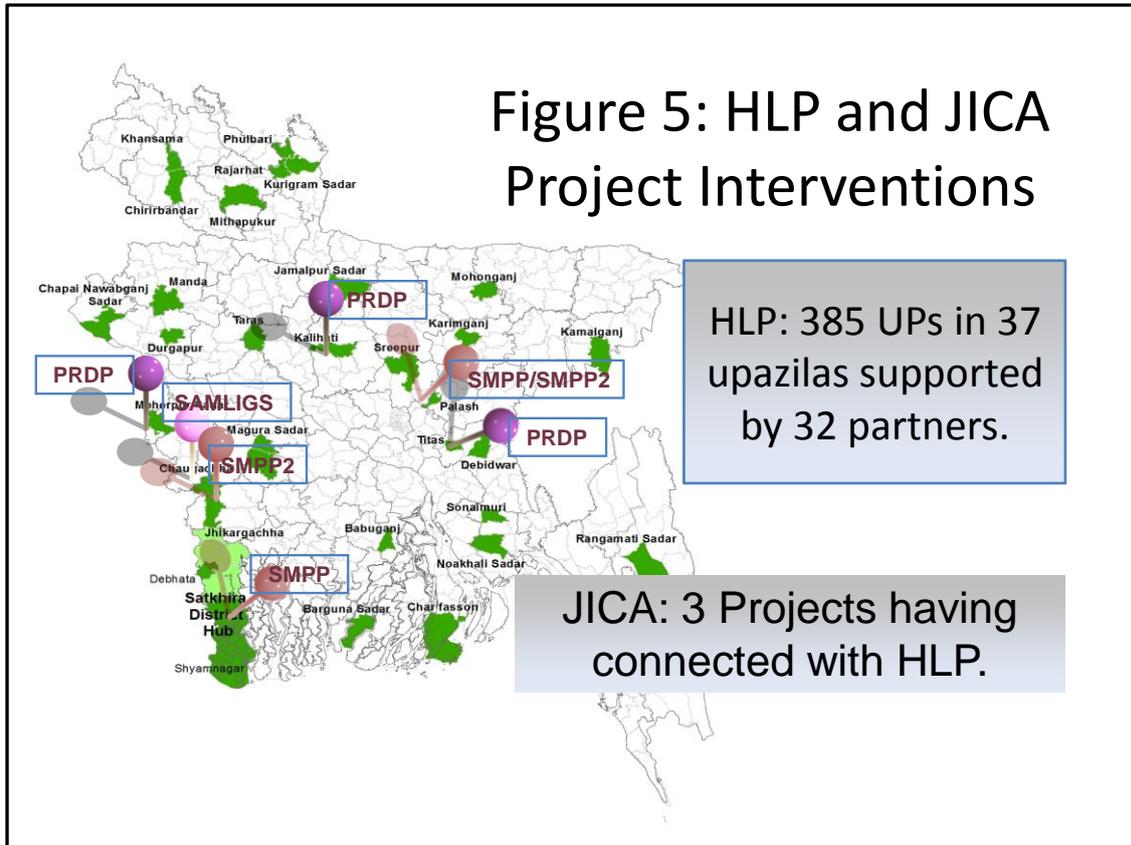
Sustainable Arsenic Mitigation under the Integrated Local Government System (SAMILGS): HLP's Pioneer Good Practice Case, Valued for its Innovative, Science Based Evidence

Project Profile

36. Arsenic contamination in groundwater has been a grave problem in Bangladesh. At the time of SAMILGS launch, 58% of the countries' sub-districts were supplying drinking water that contained arsenic exceeding national water quality standard. Thirty million people were estimated to be affected, making mitigation of arsenic contamination one of the top priority areas of the Government of Bangladesh.

37. Having supported the Government's arsenic mitigation efforts in the south-western part of the country, JICA was well informed of the needs for countermeasures, and thus in 2005 signed a three year technical cooperation project (2005-2008) on community led and government supported sustainable arsenic mitigation in two sub-districts in Jessore District (Shasha Sub-District and Chowgacha Sub-District). The implementation agency of the project was Local Government Division (LGD) Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development & Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C) with JICA's entrusted cooperator, Asian Arsenic Network (AAN), a Bangladesh specialist Japanese NGO who has vast experiences on arsenic mitigation, based on sound technical and science based expertise[19].

38. SAMILGS focused on 4 areas:

(1) Capacity development of villagers in conducting arsenic mitigation measurement
(2) Arsenic mitigation activities to be coordinated by Arsenic Mitigation Committees
(3) Technical support to the local line agency (Department of Health and Engineering: DPHE) on installations, maintenance, and operation of various alternative water devices

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[19] http://www.aan-bangladesh.org/

(4) Involvement of doctors and health workers for managing health conditions of arsenicosis patients

(5) Sharing of project accumulated knowledge on effective arsenic mitigation with stakeholders

39.　For the project mainstream activity under (5) above, HLP, initiated in November 2007, came in as a timely and effective platform, as the project was consolidating its achievements toward project termination in December 2008. SAMILGS quickly slotted into the HLP forum to spearheaded its knowledge dissemination part of the project activity. As described below, SAMILGS' legacies are carried on, expanded into other areas and other actors, and taken up to the next levels.

Project and HLP

40.　The commemorative first HLP workshop, organized by WSP–Bangladesh was held at SAMILGS Project site in Chowgacha Sub-District, on January 24-25, 2008. The exposure visits that succeeded included SAMILGS implemented arsenic mitigation activities, and resulted in its receiving attention for the project's visibly compelling procedure: Based on (small-fee) pay-for-use arsenic testing, safe wells are marked green while wells sourced from arsenic contaminated water is colored red, to alarm switching out from those sources. Upon this project activity being selected as a good practice, SAMILGS came to participate in four HLP workshops and six exposure programs by the end of the project completion. As a result, four UPs (Talash, Chapainawagbanj, Rajarhat, Shamnagor) replicated project introduced innovative arsenic mitigation measures, ranging from arsenic testing to proper management of Pond Sand Filter (PSF), local government budget allocation for medical expenses of arsenicosis patients.

41.　For the project, participation in HLP activities provided an opportunity to network with other players from beyond-project-target-sites, who learned and took on from SAMILGS experiences. One example is a HLP partner DASCOH, who replicated, modified, and is implementing its own arsenic mitigation activities in Rajshahi, which are "integrative response activities" as described below.

> Sample survey by HLC:
>
> *Replication of Good Practice on Arsenic Testing outside JICA Project area through HLP and others*
>
> In 7 sub-districts housing 72UPs, 14,569 water outlets have been screened, directly befitting 728,450 people (5 persons/household x 10 households/water outlet x 14,569 outlets tested).
>
> (Sample survey: Replication of good practice on arsenic screening outside JICA project area through HLP and others, 2013).

42.   Ranihati Union Council (UP) in Rajshahi had been suffering from arsenic contaminated ground water. When its Chairman had the opportunity to visit Chowgacha SAMILGs activities through HLP, he saw the same social stigma (of arsenic patient females not being able to marry) existed in the visited community. Upon return, Chairman discussed his SAMILGS observations at his UP meeting, and with the facilitation, technical, and financial support by DASCO together with some cost contribution from the users, UP replicated the arsenic testing. Replication included 5,000 taka[20] allocation for the testing from Union budget as well as weekly free treatment for arsenic patients at the community clinic with special referral card prepared with the help of DASCOH. With increased confidence in their own practice, the UP further developed countermeasures for arsenic challenges. Currently[21], three pillar activities are conducted that are important for arsenic mitigation: (1) arsenic testing, (2) safe water provision for affected water source area residents through pipelines, (3) nutritious food program, all with DASCOH[22].

43.   Moreover, HLP elevated visibility of SAMILGS' practices. Stark example is UP initiated construction of Arsenic Iron Removal Plant (AIRP) designed by SAMILGS Project specification, accessing budget allocated from the World Bank's Local Government Support Project (LGSP). Project's terminal evaluation recorded that association with HLP made a positive impact on the project beneficiaries, too, in maintaining motivation with project activities (JICA, 2008).

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[20] Approx. US$62.5

[21] At the time of this study, March 2013.

[22] This good replication exercise, on the other hand, illuminates the significant handholding support provided by the partner organization for activities that require technical and material input.

Participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP):
Conscious Uptake of Project Implemented Local Governance Coordination
Mechanism with HLP as a Springboard

Project Profile

44.   PRDP is a two-phased technical cooperation project by JICA (1st phase in 2000-2003, 2nd phase in 2005-2010), implemented by Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB). In its 1st phase, informed by and based on two precursor studies that looked into the wastage and duplication of rural service delivery due to its centrally planned implementation[23] (JICA & BRDB, n.d.), PRDP piloted a mechanism to streamline such service delivery by linking village communities with union level administration. In four unions in Kalihati Sub-District, Tangail District, PRDP introduced and implemented "Link Model", a framework to incorporate the needs of rural population in the process of development by linking villages and local government institutions concerned with rural development. In the 2nd phase of PRDP, Link Model was expanded into 16 unions in three sub-districts with an eye for establishing a foundation for further extension.

45.   Link Model consists of three structures:

(1) Village Committee (VC[24]) at the village level, to coordinate and articulate common concerns of all the villagers;

(2) Project hired and trained Union Development Officers (UDOs), who facilitate the VC and UCC meetings (mentioned below);

(3) Union Coordination Committee Meeting (UCCM), as a monthly forum at union level that brings together all the stakeholders of rural development, and where issues are discussed and decisions made for implementation. UCCM is composed of Union Council (UP) Chairman and members, VC representatives, extension workers of

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[23] "Joint Study on Agriculture and Rural Development (JSARD) (1986-1990)" by Bangladesh Agricultural University with technical assistance from JICA, and "Joint Study on Rural Development Experiment (JSRDE) (1992-1995)" by Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) and Kyoto University.

[24] Later renamed as GC (Gram Committee).

National Building Departments (NBD)[25] and NGOs, as well as Union Development Officers (UDOs).

46.   By and large, PRDP is considered as one of the pioneer involvement by a donor in the local governance of Bangladesh (World Bank, 2011), and the Project-initiated collaboration platform is acknowledged as an innovation named "mini-parliament". To further spread the Link Model to areas not reached by the Project during the project period, PRDP implementing agency BRDB decided to continue the project activities to reach 200 unions in 83 sub-districts, 62 districts as extended PRDP2[26].

Project and HLP

47.   Armed with an empirically proved, solid model for informed local governance, PRDP joined HLP in 2008 with a targeted objective of promoting one of its structures, UCCM, to UPs located outside the Project sites[27]. This was the time when HLP, which initially started as a co-learning platform for water and sanitation sector issues, by the demands of the participating UPs, extended its coverage to address capacity strengthening of UP level governance. By the end of 2009, PRDP found itself playing a central role in this thematic area among HLP partners, having UCCM validated as a good practice. This validation invited many unions to visit PRDP sites out of which some even started own UCCM independently. UCCM is valued particularly for its cost effectiveness, as while it empowers people for openness of the forum, it also germinates sense of ownership, and for the UP Chairmen, serve as an information absorption mechanism; virtually it does not entail additional cost.

48.   Popularity of UCCM that spread through HLP did not just give the credibility required for the project developed model to self-promote for further replication. Another

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[25] Local level, line agency representatives.

[26] Japanese Government is supporting this effort through 2014 with Japan Debt Cancellation Fund (JDCF). For the Fund's details, refer to Bangladesh Ministry of Finance's Economics Relations Division (ERD) Japan Branch website at http://www.erd.gov.bd/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=150&Itemid=323http:// www.erd.gov.bd/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=150&Itemid=323

[27] It was a deliberate decision by the Project, to "de-link" the model, and to focus on a structure that has more potentiality of across the board replication.

dimension of this bidirectional benefit of PRDP-HLP synergy is the platform HLP offered to a partner like JICA who has an aspiration to inform policy out of its project work. This aspiration is shared by HLP, whose overall developmental goal is to contribute to reform efforts based on evidences on the ground, which can only come from the partners' crystalized good practices. For the power of the practice, institutionalization of UCCM became an attainable target, and interest and attention that were received from the HLP development partners gave encouragement to PRDP. One such colleague was SDC, who had been implementing local governance project – SHARIQUE[28] – in Rajsshahi and Sunamganj Districts, through which UP level collaborative mechanism of various stakeholders was also being practiced.

49. Such partnership geared for the uptake of a good practice on local governance to reflect on to the policy gained a momentum through HLP platform, and led to the organization of thematic workshop on UCCM as a HLP event in December 2010. It was organized by National Institute of Local Government (NILG) jointly supported by Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), JICA, and WSP. The workshop served as the inauguration of Horizontal Learning Center (HLC) also. Leveraging on the Local Government (UP) Ordinance 2009 which stipulated UPs' responsibility to coordinate union level coordination with line departments, the workshop concluded to recommend UCCM as an illustration to exercise such mandate.

Sample survey by HLC:

Replication of Good Practice on UDCC outside JICA Project area through HLP and others

In 7 sub-districts housing 72UPs, 54UDCCs have been installed, accounting for 75% of UPs.

(Sample survey: Replication of good practice on UDCC outside JICA project area through HLP and others, 2013).

50. The recommendation was submitted in a form of proposing a draft circular to be issued by Local Government Division (LGD) at the Ministry of Local Governance, Rural Development & Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C). In February 2011, the recommendation was responded by the issuance of circular stipulating formation and activity of Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC), which resembled UCCM, but without UDO, and the meeting frequency of bi-monthly instead of UCCM's monthly meetings. As of March 2013, the revised circular dated December 20, 2012, is in effect, giving PRDP-cultured good practice an institutional authority for nationwide replication.

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[28] Means 'partner' in Bengali.

Safe Motherhood Promotion Project (SMPP):
Portrayal of Horizontal AND Vertical Links for
Mainstreaming Effective Public Service Delivery

Project Profile

51.   SMPP was launched in July 2006 by Bangladesh Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) with technical cooperation by JICA with the aim of improving health status of pregnant and postpartum women and neonates by working both at the community and facility[29] levels in Narsingdi District. This was the time when the Government envisioned institutionalizing Community Clinics (CCs) at the village level to extend much needed primary health care "at the doorstep of the rural people all over Bangladesh" (MoHFW, 2013). As a matter of fact, CCs were not a new concept in the country. CC had already been constructed since 1998. However, with the change in hands, Government-led construction and operation were discontinued in 2001.

52.   It was in 2009, by the leadership of the current Government under "Revitalization of Community Health Care Initiatives in Bangladesh Project" (July 2009 - June 2014), nationwide CC establishment was re-launched so that even people in the remotest areas in the country can access one stop service center for primary health care with emphasis on maternal & neonatal health. The Government's emphasis on maternal and neonatal is drawn from the fact that the country is plagued with high malnutrition rate of newborns and prevalent postnatal complications among the mothers. Thus, it is easy to imagine that SMPP's project intervention at the community level – Community Support System (CmSS) – came to receive instant attention from both the Government and communities that either started or wanted to start their own CC.

53.   CmSS is a mechanism to mobilize community support by creating an enabling environment at the community and household levels to support pregnant women, especially poor women, in accessing maternal health services in a timely manner and to facilitate timely referral, if there are obstetric complications, to appropriate emergency obstetric care (EmOC) facilities. An impact study of CmSS confirmed that (1) increased

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[29] Hospital at the District level, as well as Health & Family Welfare Center, direct intake facility for Community Clinic referrals.

service utilization, particularly by the poorest women, (2) mobilization of resources, (3) registration of pregnant women, (4) improved local leadership for health promotion, (5) increased referrals and active involvement of the local government and health and family planning staff, resulted from the commitment of the communities by use of CmSS (CARE International, 2010). By the end of SMPP (i.e. 1st phase of the project that ran from 2006 through 2011), the number of CmSS that received its technical support counted 151.

54.   For the focus on health system strengthening that enables timely responses to maternal and neonatal needs of rural communities, SMPP's approach is characterized by its "interlinked" structure, where community mobilization activities go in tandem with improvement at hospital interventions for the recognition on and proactive support to by the local government in connecting these two leveled entities (SMPP-2, 2012). This structured approach was named "Narsingdi Model" for its successful maternal and neonatal health interventions for the communities in the project district.

55.   After completion of the 5 year project, SMPP Phase 2 (SMPP-2) was launched from July 2011 to consolidate and expand the effective approaches to improve the quality and utilization of maternal and neonatal health services in the rest of Bangladesh. SMPP-2 is a five year project and works at the national policy level and in Satkhira, Jessore, and Narsingdi Districts.

56.   The strategy of SMPP-2 is the following:

(1) Strengthening health system and capacity development: by supporting <u>continuous process of enhancing the problem solving capacity</u> of the MoHFW and communities.
(2) Partnership with multiple stakeholders: by promoting <u>collaborative partnership building</u> of MoHF with other stakeholders including local government, other ministries, development partners, NGOs, private sector, and community.
(3) Community empowerment: through <u>community led initiatives</u>

Project and HLP

57.   SMPP's association with HLP dates back to 2010, when the Project hosted the first HLP workshop in Polash, the Project target Sub-District. That event opened an

Sample survey by HLC:

Replication of Good Practice on Community Clinics (CCs) outside JICA Project area through HLP and others

In 7 sub-districts, where 72 UPs house 215 CCs, 95% of those CCs (i.e. 204 CCs) are operating with sufficient functionality.

(Sample survey: Replication of good practice on community clinics (CCs) outside JICA project area through HLP and others, 2013).

opportunity to the workshop participants to see for themselves how communities can be motivated and feel ownership of their primary care outlet, and to the Project, to expand its visibility, by the validation of HLP good practices in multiple categories in health sector (CmSS, CCs, and safe motherhood care) (HLC, 2013). As the innovative public service delivery model in primary care to rural communities, SMPP's good practices informed not only other communities but also other organizations that support similar interventions. Such participants include representatives of NGOs who run health sector projects elsewhere in the country[30].

58.   While SMPP is known as the provider of good practices, it has also incorporated good practices of others, such as Union Development Coordination Committee Meeting (UCCM), that came out of a JICA colleague project, Participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP). This meeting platform has given to the health sector representative an avenue to place to UP body the collective voices that come from the community through CmSS.

59.   For SMPP, membership in HLP is seen as a way to vitalize local governance with the strengthening of its functionality (SMPP-2, 2012). As the stated scopes of Project's 2nd phase (as described under 57.) signifies, HLP's approach of shared learning is well aligned with the thrust of SMPP that underlines capacity building and partnership building with communities in the drivers' seat.

60.   SMPP's another area of leadership in HLP is found in Horizontal Learning in Community Clinic (HLCC) activities, for which SMPP has been assuming a coordinator role with funding support. This sub-group of HLP promotes CC related good practices and is functioning as a vibrant community of where good practices are brought in,

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[30] In the words of DASCOH staff (interviewed on February 27, 2013), observing Narshindhi Model gave them clarity on the image of a well running clinic. This is a case of partner organizations learning about a good practice of another partner.

shared, and extended. After the first workshop in February 2012, a collection of HLCC good practices[31] are already validated.

61. "Resonance" might be a word to describe SMPP's proactive role as HLP partner. In 2012, SMPP signed up to become the first partner to support the establishment of HLP's District Hub system in collaboration with WSP-Bangladesh. Through this mechanism, SMPP assists district level HLP activities, including financial support, in Satkhira, one of the three project districts, while WSP-Bangladesh provides likewise support for activities that are undertaken outside the district. The District Working Team is already functional with member roles defined, and uptake of HLP from sub-districts to district level is in place. SMPP's vertical thrust through its project experiences will definitely be a big plus for the further expansion of this District Hub model not only in Satkhira but also as HLP will further expand into other districts.

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[31] Over 25 good practices are documented as Fact Sheets.

FINDINGS

62.   Through the analysis, the following profile was illuminated to describe the current status of HLP:

63.   While everybody associated with HLP praises the Program as it works for their own purposes, be it provision of peer-to-peer learning opportunity (e.g. UP Chairmen), opportunity to be exposed to other organizations' practices (e.g. partner NGOs), mechanism to market own good practices to beyond project target areas/domains (e.g. JICA), because of <u>the restricted interest, involvement, and stake of each player</u>, only a <u>few people know what the Program is about "as a whole"</u>[32]. Yet, <u>articulation of it for outsiders to comprehend their thinking is still not available</u>. It is largely for the Program's organic nature (i.e. HLP has evolved so quickly and is evolving without constructing concrete descriptions/definitions objective enough for people outside the league can comprehend). However, the Program is already on the course of nationalization[33] and internationalization[34], and thus such articulation will be of merit to draw not only the attention but understanding of people who are to be exposed to this initiative.

64.   For the nationwide launch, HLP has adopted an approach of decentralizing its peer-to-peer learning coordination body to come closer to where the learning occurs, by establishing District Hubs as the core of coordination. Although the horizontal (i.e. peer-to-peer learning) activities can be decentralized, function for vertical (i.e. uptake of learning) coordination is expected to remain in the hands of development partners, and it is not still clear if HLP is planning to hand over and to entrust this role to regionally focused partners (primarily NGOs with project interventions in the particular areas) who might not have channels to uptake the learning to national level. With regard to the

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[32]   The author of this report used an analogy of a whole cake to describe HLP, when presenting her preliminary findings to HLP partners and closely associated parties in Dhaka. People are drawn to HLP for its effectiveness to meet their own organizational/project purposes. It does not mean they need to construct a full comprehension of the whole program structure, as far as they enjoy the benefit of what the Program offers. So she explained the situation as people are happy by eating pieces of a cake they want cut for their own taste, without necessarily baking or buying a whole cake.

[33]   At least within the boundary of local government sector.

[34]   Lately, HLP has been introduced overseas by its Program personnel through its partner introduction, such as to Iran and Tanzania.

international launching, it is premature to make any judgment, but reportedly there is a sizable interest for such possibilities.

65.   People concerned with the Program is well aware of <u>the fragility of its current "real" institutional set up</u>, primarily funded by a time bound trust fund to pay for one key partner's five year program implementation[35]. In order to go along with the current expansionary mode, a discussion on how to retain/maintain/sustain the working mechanism of the Program should start now already, eyeing on the end of the current funding period of 2015. However, at this stage, <u>partners seem to be content with their "limited partnership"</u>, by associating themselves with HLP for their identified specific benefits under which many have set aside a part of the program/project budget to pitch in for co-learning but not much to shoulder institutional funding needs.

66.   The situation is the same on the part of JICA. Although a HLP representative underlines that JICA has an institutional stake in HLP as an organization[36], the current partner working relationship is predominantly managed by JICA Project/Experts, whose given mandate/responsibility is to perform their duties within the boundaries of Project objectives and activities and/or their own Terms of References (TORs). Thus, their contribution to/association with HLP can only happen within the domain of their day-to-day business to the extent HLP will add values to their mandated work. <u>That leaves a question to JICA (inclusive of a question to whom this institutional question should be raised - JICA HQ, or JICA Country Office, and in either case, who is in a position to answer?) how it wants to engage with HLP as an institution</u> for going forward, to be discussed in the next section.

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[35] A close look at the "Horizontal Learning Program in Bangladesh: The program framework November 1, 2011 to October 31, 2015" explains that the fund that is supporting HLP's core existence was more narrowly defined to support water and sanitation related activities of WSP–Bangladesh.

[36] According to this representative, JICA is one of the donor signatories of "Bangladesh Capacity Building Framework" in which HLP is defined as one of the three pillars of the government's capacity development strategy. From this arrangement, this representative interprets that JICA has an organizational mandate to support HLP. As this information was supplied at the last day of the author's in-country work, further investigation and/or triangulation could not be conducted.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO JICA ON THE WAY FORWARD

67.   This study confirmed that everybody who has been exposed to HLP and has been introduced to JICA's work through the course values JICA's involvement in the Program, both for providing good lessons for <u>horizontal</u> dissemination and for guiding <u>vertical</u> uptake of good practices as models for national policy making and/or nationwide replication. Although JICA's strengths in and contributions to HLP are thus unquestionable, JICA's further involvement with HLP entails unconfirmed areas that need to be internally discussed and determined for prospective engagements. Therefore, the following recommendations are for JICA to address internally to determine the best engagement arrangement and scenarios, rather than providing prescriptive suggestions, since much of the determining factors come from its capacity at the country office level, and its ability and willingness must be judged by parties within.

68.   **Continue to utilize HLP platform for horizontal expansion of JICA project induced good practices**: HLP is an effective mechanism for project implementation agencies like JICA, whose model setting based approach can be augmented tremendously by HLP for the government's needs of mainstreaming JICA induced good practices in the rest of the country. From JICA projects' perspectives, HLP could have a comparative advantage over other, more traditional, sector working groups that tend to focus more on policy level discussions, as HLP platform has more inclusive participation from parties with direct association at the activity level. However, for this mechanism to work, availability of well-functioning HLP platform is a prerequisite, therefore, **for JICA to continue to enjoy this platform, it will eventually need to prepare an answer to a question – "to what extent JICA can contribute to the development and sustenance of HLP platform as a recognized and valued partner?"**

69.   **Be mindful of the capacity requirement for capitalizing on HLP as a mechanism to use it for vertical thrust**: The project cases covered under this study showed that all the three case projects fully made use of the platform HLP provides for wide replication and/or national level uptake of the on-the-ground good practices that were geminated in the course of project implementation. For such results, availability of expertise by project experts beyond that for project implementation, as well as their commitment in this body, which can be considered outside their domain of TOR, should not be overlooked. Particularly, it is evident that chief advisers have played instrumental

and critical roles for JICA's engagement with HLP, and to a large extent credit to JICA as committed partners has been earned for their abilities. Thus, for HLP's peer-to-peer learning to be brought up to the national level discussion, allocation of personnel who can navigate the vertical channel, including negotiating with HLP, other partners, and JICA Country Office (as required) at critical times, is indispensable. Without such personnel in the center of discussion, uptake of good practices is not deemed probable, and thus **for JICA to have this mechanism work in other settings, a question should be raised, "Are the right people to utilize HLP platform installed?"**

70. **Determine how to meet the practical needs for designated HLP liaison from JICA side**: During the course of this study, some glitches surfaced regarding perception of JICA's association with HLP. Currently, JICA side frontline representatives with engagement with HLP are JICA hired Experts who have been actively involved with HLP forum, including support to HLC, the secretariat of the Program, and hosting the first District Hub. They are associated with HLP where their work overlaps with or benefits from HLP. However, they do not represent JICA's institutional body with decision making authority. From HLP, however, this does not seem clear and has led to the understanding that HLP has received full institutional commitment from JICA, as JICA has signed into "Bangladesh Capacity Building Framework" in which HLP is defined as one of the three pillars of the government's capacity development strategy. Unlike WSP–Bangladesh, – the core of HLC –, who assumes there is always a task team leader (TTL) with the ultimate responsibility to make a judgment as to who to seek institutional judgment/clearance over tasked work programs[37], **where JICA's institutional responsibilities toward HLP rest needs to be clarified and communicated to HLP.**

71. **Consider how ready JICA is, if/when HLP is rolled out to other places/countries, inclusive of what to offer more than tested and proven good practices from project interventions.** From the perspectives of individual experts and/or projects, participation into HLP is a "limited partnership", out of expert/project budgets for the type/depth of association that merits the achievement of respective work domains. However, for the HLP to function there is a requirement for the HLP body to pre-exist. Availability of good practices and enlightened experts with skill sets to take on international partnership are not sufficient for HLP to also evolve in another country. As mentioned above in 71., since JICA in an institutional label, it is natural that

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[37] As per work arrangement of the World Bank, the administrative body of WSP.

partnership based collaboration such as HLP will assume JICA involvement as institutional commitment. Replication of HLP as a body to run the Program requires a whole set of components, such as host institution, funding to meet the running costs, decentralized governance system that put the local governments in the drivers' seat for peer-to-peer learning, partner organizations with activities in target areas so that exposures merit their needs also, etc. **JICA should do a thorough check on how it can engage with such a scheme from institutional setting if in other countries.**

CONCLUSION

72.   In the current context of Bangladesh, HLP seems to offer a fitting mechanism to promote peer-learning/co-working across different segments of concerned parties, whose collaboration is required for improving effectiveness in public service delivery. However, HLP's horizontal learning is essentially an approach that defines how leaning process occurs. Thus currently advocated argument on the use of HLP as a mandate for local government's capacity development seems rather out of context. It might make sense for a central government body to endorse a particular learning mechanism backed by successful evidences, however, use of particular learning approach, or in this case, "a particular brand of learning called Horizontal Learning Program", might not be a subject of governmental mandate.

73.   Rather, it is of a nature to be seen as one effective option of peer/co-learning by stakeholders for achieving results that merit each. Therefore, what should be promoted for official channels are the generic nature/characteristics of HLP (e.g. process, cycle, etc.) and not HLP as a brand name. Yet, in order to secure funding for HLP's operating cost, it does make sense to market it as a brand, so that associated processes (e.g. networking, facilitation, information gathering, etc.) can be shaped as fee based business to secure sustainability. For brand-for-business establishment, it will become important and meaningful to sketch out how much it costs for one to sponsor such learning for local governance bodies. Such information will be particularly valuable to those interested when HLP is launched in other countries.

74.   With regard to the uptake of good practices to reflect and/or inform policy decisions, to date, it is not simply a matter of how many good practices have been recorded/reported. Rather, who have capitalized the momentum to take the matters up to the central government is a critical part of the mechanism. Thus, while efforts for mainstreaming the use of HLP for the betterment of public service delivery by the like-minded partners are commendable, it is important to understand that the driver for affecting policies come from how to utilize and market HLP collected good practices rather than how many parties use HLP or how many good practices are counted. From that perspective, JICA has provided incomparable exemplary cases for vertical thrusts based on HLP endorsed good practices.

75. "HLP Movement in Bangladesh" is a phenomenon born and cultured by the like-minded people who have either seen or benefited first hand its value. For the concept to acquire recognition and acceptance from outside the forum, the concept requires articulation on what it is, so that interested parties will have clear ideas about what they are buying into.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Meetings in Dhaka or Via Audio

Name	Title	Organization
Abdul MOTALEB	Senior Water and Sanitation Specialist	Water and Sanitation Program (WSP)
Abdul Hamid BHUIYAN	Executive Director	Society for Social Service- SSS Mymensingh Road, Tangail
Akira MUNAKATA	Advisor, Local Governance	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives Local Government Division
Hisashi GOTO	Program Officer	Link Model Cell (LMC), Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB)/JICA
Hossein SHABHAZ	Director (Pilot Projects)	Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)
Kabir M. Ashraf AlAM	Director General	National Institute of Local Government-NILG
Kenji TANAKA	Representative (Health, Education and Social Relation)	JICA Bangladesh Office
Liaquat ALI	Program Unit Manager	Plan Bangladesh
M Shafiqul ISLAM	Additional Secretary (Immigration & Passport)	Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of Bangladesh
Mark ELLERY	Regional Water and Sanitation Specialist	Water and Sanitation Program (WSP)
Md. Abdul HALIM	Focal Points (FPs) of the PFMs	Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) in the Prime Minister's Office
Md. Aminur Rahman KHAN	Project Director and Director Training	Participatory Rural Development Project-PRDP-2, BRDB-Dhaka
Md. Anowarul HAQUE	Director (Extreme Poverty Program)	Care Bangladesh
Md. Zahirul ISLAM	Program Coordinator	Development Association For Self-Reliance, Communication and

		Health-DASCOH
Mohammad Atiqur RAHMAN	Senior Asst. Secretary	Ministry of Public Administration, Govt. of Bangladesh
Mohammad Mamunur RASHID	Program Development Officer	VSO Bangladesh
Mohammad Navid SAFIULLAH	Alternate Focal Points(AFPs) of the PFMs	Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) in the Prime Minister's Office
Naoki MATSUMURA	Adviser, Water/Disaster Management (ex-SAMILGS)	JICA Bangladesh Office
Ryuji KASAHARA	Adviser, Governance/Aid Coordination	JICA Bangladesh Office
Saha Dipak KUMAR	Manager, Advocacy and Information	NGO Forum for Public Health
Santanu LAHIRI	Sr. Decentralization Specialist	Water and Sanitation Program (WSP)
Shajeda BEGUM	Program Officer	Water Aid Bangladesh
Shams Uddin AHMED	Deputy Secretary (Water Supply) & Focal Person-HLP	Ministry of Local Govt., Rural Development & Cooperatives, Govt. of Bangladesh
Sohel Ibn ALI	Sr. Program Manager	The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Sultana YASMIN	Senior Asst. Secretary	Ministry of Local Govt., Rural Development & Cooperatives, Govt. of Bangladesh
Syed Nur-A-Alam SIDDIQUE	WATSAN Coordinator	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
Takashi SENDA	Programme Adviser (Health)	JICA Bangladesh Office
Tirtha Sarathi SIKDER	National Coordinator	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (Local Governance Programme-Sharique)
Yukie YOSHIMURA	Chief Advisor	Safe Motherhood Promotion Project Phase-2, JICA

Appendix B: Field Visit Schedule

Schedule for HLP Study Team Visit to Palash, Narsingdi (SMPP)
Date: Feb. 20, 2013

Date	Time	Activity	Place	Responsible person
20	07:30-09:00 am	Departure from Dhaka		
	09:30-10:30 am	Arrive at Santhanpara Community Clinic - Observe / Discussion with available Community Group Members	Santhanpara, Danga Union	Mr. Dukul
	11:00-12:00 pm	Visit Kenduabo Community Clinic - Observe / Discussion with available Community Group Members	Kenduabo, Danga Union	Mr. Dukul
	12:00- 01:30 pm	Visit Danga Health &Family Welfare Center, Danga Union, Palash Upazila Interview with SACMO/FWV	FWC,Danga Union	Mr. Dukul
	13.30-02:.00 pm	Visit Danga Union Parishad, Danga Union, Palash Upazila - Meeting and interview with Danga UP Chairman, Secretary and members	Danga UP	Mr. Dukul
	02:00- 02:30 pm	Move to Narsingdi		
	02:30- 03:00 pm	Lunch at Narsingdi		
	03:00- 04:30	De-briefing session at Narsingdi SMPP office	SMPP office	Mr. Dukul
	04:30---	Leave for Dhaka		

Schedule for HLP Study visit to Kalihati, Tangail (PRDP-2)
Date: Feb. 25-26 2013

Date	Time	Activity	Place	Responsible person
25	07.30-11.00 am	Travel to Tangail and observed GC training organized by LMTC,PRDP-2	LMTC Tangail	
	11.00-12.30 am	Observe the UCCM at Paikora UP and discussion with NBDs	Paikora UP	Mr. Zahidul
	12.30 -01:30 pm	Meeting with UP Chairman and Secretary members at Paikora UP	Paikora UP	Mr. Mizan
	01.30 -02:45 pm	- Move to Shahadebpur UP and interview with UP Chairman - Scheme visit to Mondail village Shahadebpur UP (Steel and wooden bridge) and discussion with villagers	Shahadebpur UP	Mr. Mizan
	02.45- 03.15 pm	Move to Kokdahara UP and Scheme Visit Kokdahara UP scheme (Wooden Bridge and communication system) and discussion with villagers		ExChairman
	03.15-05.00 pm	Lunch at Kokdahara Ex-UP Chairman home		
	05.00 - 06.00 pm	Move to Tangail SSS Rest House	Tangail town	
	07.00 - 08.30 pm	Meeting with Executive Director, SSS – Tangail on UDCC & night halt	SSS Office	Mr. Mizan
26	09.30-10.30 am	Move to Narandia UP, Kalihati and discussion on visit plan	SSS Rest House	Mr. Mizan
	10.30-01.10 pm	FGD with UP bodies and meeting with GCM at Poshna GC, Narandia UP	Poshna GC, Narandia UP	Mr. Mizan
	01.10.30-06.00 pm	Leave for Rajshahi followed by lunch at Hotel Aristocrat		

Schedule for HLP Study visit to Rajshahi & Chapai Nawabganj
(PRDP-2, DASCOH)
Date: Feb. 26-28, 2013

Date	Time	Activity	Place	Responsible person
26	01:10-06:00 pm	Travel to Rajshahi followed by Lunch at Hotel Aristocrate and night halt at DASCOH guest house	Rajshahi	Salim
27	08.30-10.50 am	Journey to Chapai Nawabganj Sadar. Visit Community Clinic activities: Observe /Discussion with Community Group Members and benificiaries	Char Anup Nagar UP	Md. Yousuf - Health Asst, CC
	11.50-12.10 pm	Meeting with UNO-Chapai Nawabganj Sadar Upazila	UNO - Chapai Sadar Upazila	Md. Zahirul PM-DASCOH
	12.10-12.30 pm	Move to Ranihati Union Parishad	Ranihati Union Parisha	Md. Zahirul PM-DASCOH & Mr.Razaur, UP Secretary
	12.30-01.40 pm	- Presentation on Arsenic screening and mechanics activities - FGD with UP bodies. - Water option registration and mechanics activities, - Pipe water supply system and overhead tank - visit School, college at same village		
	01.40 –02.40 pm	Lunch at Hotel Ala uddin, Chapai Nawabganj town	Chapai town	
	02.40 -04.10 pm	Move to Rajshahi DASCOH office	DASCOH-Rajshahi office	Md. Zahirul PM-DASCOH
	04.10 - 5.30 pm	Informal Meeting with DASCOH Officials & night halt (Mr. Salim Back to Dhaka afternoon due to Hartal)	Training Room	Israt Jahan, DASCOH
28	05.00-06.00 pm	Prepare draft report and departure for Dhaka (Ms. Maki)		Md. Zahirul PM-DASCOH

Schedule for HLP Study visit to Chowgachha & Jhikargachha Upazila, Jessore (SAMILGS)

Date: March 8-9, 2013

Date	Time	Activity	Place	Responsible person
8	11.10-11.45 PM	Move to Chowgacha Upazila Sharing the visit schedule with AAN staff	Chowgachha Upazila	AAN staff
	11.45-12.30 PM	Discuss with UP Chairman & Secretary on HLP	Shinghajhuli Union Parishad	AAN staff
	12.30-01.10 PM	Observe safe water device, constructed by union & using their own fund (LGSP)	Muktinagar village, Shinghajhuli UP	
	01.10-02.30 PM	Lunch & Prayer	Chowgachha Upazila	
	02.30-03.30 PM	Observe Pipe Water Supply System and discuss with User committee. (SAM-ILGS project activity)	Kustia village, Dhuliani Union	AAN staff
	03.30-04:30 PM	Meet and discuss with UP Chairman & Secretary	Dhuliani Union	
	04:30-06:00 PM	Move to Jessore for night halt	Hotel Hasan International, Jessore	
9	08.30-09.30 AM	Breakfast and move to Jhikargachha Union		
	09.30-10.30 AM	- Meet and discuss with UP Chairman & Secretary - Learning from HLP & Good practice of Jhikargachha	Jhikargachha sadar Union	
	10.30-12.30 PM	Observe Arsenic test, Safe Water Device, Union service for water supply & Para meeting with villagers (FGD)	Village level at Jhikargachha Upazila	AAN staff
	12.30-02.00 PM	Discuss with UP Chairman & Secretary on HLP	Gadkhali Union, Jhikargachha	

	02.00-03.00 PM	Refresh & Lunch	Jhikargachha Upazila	
	03.30-05.00 PM	Visit to AAN office and discuss on AAN activity	Arsenic Center, Pulerhat Jhikargachha, Jessore	Mr. Kazuyuki KAWAHARA, Program Manager/ Mr. Kichiji YAJIMA, Short-term Expert
	5.00PM--	Leave Jessore for Dhaka	Dhaka	

Appendix C: Composition of HLP Partnership

(as of March, 2013)

GoB – Focal Agency

1. Local Government Division, Ministry of LGRD&C

GoB – Other Agencies

2. Bangladesh Rural Development Board
3. National Institute of Local Government

Multi-laterals/Bi-laterals

4. AusAid
5. Japan International Cooperation Agency
6. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
7. World Bank
8. Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank

NGOs

9. Asia Arsenic Network
10. Center For Integrated Rural Development for Asia and Pacific (CIRDAP)
11. Community Eye Care & Research Center
12. Dhaka Ahsania Mission
13. Development Association for Self-Reliance, Communication and Health
14. Gandhi Ashram Trust
15. Green Hill
16. HELVITAS Swiss Intercooperation
17. Joutho Artho Samajik Unnyan Sangstha
18. Manusher Jonno Foundation
19. Mohideb Jubo Samaj Kallyan Somiti
20. Mass-Line Media Centre
21. NGO Forum for Public Health
22. Noakhali Rural Development Society
23. Plan Bangladesh
24. Private Rural Initiatives Program Trust
25. Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service
26. Shushilon

27. Village Education Resource Centre
28. Voluntary Service Overseas
29. WaterAid
30. Bangladesh NGO Network for Radio and Communications
31. CARE
32. BASA
33. TMSS

Appendix D: Logical Steps of HLP

Process	Activities	Output
Conceptualization (start-up of HLP)	1. Outline framework for HLP prepared with potential partners. 2. HLP Working Team established with potential partners and LGD. 3. HLP partners proposed upazilas for inclusion in HLP.	*HLP partnership agreement.*
Selection (self by UPs)	4. HLP Working Team asks upazila to identify a support agency. 5. LGD issues a letter to upazila regarding its inclusion in HLP. 6. Upazila plans workshop with support of HLP Working Team. 7. UPs self-select whether they will join HLP or not.	*Lead UPs identified.*
Initiation (upazila workshop)	8. Briefing for all UPs, upazilas and NGOs on AI and HLP. 9. UPs identify and present all of their good practices to all. 10. Participants vote to identify the top five good practices. 11. UPs propose the indicators to measure those good practices.	*UP good practices identified (with indicators).*
Validation (field review)	12. Partners conduct joint missions to validate good practices. 13. Validated practices are documented by partners (fact sheets). *14. Unvalidated practices are deemed just to require more time!*	*Good practice fact sheets prepared.*
Identification (network workshop)	15. UPs present their good practices (with indicators) to their peers. 16. UPs select the good practices they would like to visit. 17. Partners identify the visits that they can support.	*Learning matrix (who wants to go where to learn what).*
Exposure (cross visits)	18. UPs, upazila and NGOs together visit the good practices of peers. 19. UPs assess the good practices against indicators through AI. 20. UPs prepare a draft plan for the replication of good practices.	*BTOR: UP proposal for replication of practices.*
Planning (open budget)	21. UPs propose replication plan in the open budget sessions. 22. Detailed plan and funding for implementation developed. 23. Good practice and budget for replication earmarked in the ADP.	*UP budget book with citizen endorsement of budget for replication.*
Replication (implement)	24. UPs begin to implement good practices learned from peers. 25. UPs innovate to improve on these good practices.	*Compilation of data against the indicators.*
Support (peer review)	26. Replicating UPs are able to contact initiating UPs for advice. 27. Milestone achievements of UPs sent to all UPs via SMS. 28. Originating UPs are encouraged to spread their good practices. 29. Originators come to review the progress of replication.	*List prepared of support provided by UPs to peers.*
Dissemination (sharing)	30. Good practice fact sheets are printed and disseminated. 31. Yahoo group, website and Facebook hosted for sharing progress. 32. Dialogue with print/electronic media on good practices.	*Fact sheets, articles, and newsletters printed.*
Leverage	33. Practices replicated >50 times are identified as '**best practices**'.	*Thematic notes prepared*

(thematic workshops)	34. UPs identify the different elements of this best practice. 35. UPs present the key elements to policy makers and partners.	*on the best practices.*
Learning (from replication)	36. Partners collate the teachings of the UPs into learning notes. 37. These best practices are included in the LGTI training curriculum. 38. UP proponents used as resource persons for LGTI trainings.	*Learning notes;* *revised curriculum;* *UPs deliver training.*
Results (collating)	39. UP replication of best practices collated and shared. 40. UP replication of best practices validated by the UNO.	*Collated results of the* *best practices.*
Impact (interrogating)	41. Academic institutions are exposed to HLP best practices. 42. Academia prepares research proposals for potential funding.	*Research on lacunae in* *the best practices.*

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