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# IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF CHILD FRIENDLY LOCAL GOVERNANCE (CFLG) PROJECT

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and Save the Children

## Acknowledgement

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Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) comprises a rights-based child programming approach and a set of social accountability initiatives that, in concert, work to facilitate, promote and institutionalize the empowerment and participation of children and adolescents in the governance arrangements at the local level. CFLG places children and adolescents at the centre of the development agenda of local government. It facilitates their inclusion in institutional mandates such as ward shovas and open budget sessions as well as building their understanding and capacity to effectively influence decision-making process and to monitor services and resources. Since 2014 Breaking the Silence (BTS) and Social and Economic Enhancement Programme (SEEP) are implementing CFLG project at Satkhira and Dhaka district with the support from Save the Children. To understand the impact of the project an Impact assessment study has been conducted by Partha Hefaz Shaikh as lead consultant. I would like express my gratitude for his contribution which will add value to the journey of the CFLG project.

I would like to thank all the participants of the Impact Assessment (IA) process, especially the children who gave their valuable time and I acknowledge their valuable first hand insights on the process, activities and impact of the CFLG project.

I would also like show my gratitude to the Key Informants who also gave their time and shared their thoughts on the CFLG project.

I would like to thank for a joint effort of BTS, SEEP and SCiB in implementing Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) project taking to develop the children as empowered citizen of Bangladesh. I am indebted to them for their overall support and cooperation.

Roksana Sultana  
Executive Director  
Breaking the Silence (BTS)

## Acronyms

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BTS	Breaking the Silence
CFLG	Child Friendly Local Governance
CG	Child Group
CRM	Complaint and Response Mechanism
DNCC	Dhaka North City Corporation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LG	Local Government
LGD	Local Government Division
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoLGRD&C	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
SCIB	Save the Children in Bangladesh
SEEP	Social and Economic Enhancement Programme
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCRC/CRC	United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Children
WCRMC	Ward Complaints and Response Mechanism Committee
WCRMRC	Ward Child Rights Monitoring and Response Committee

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgement .....	i
Acronyms.....	ii
Executive Summary.....	iv
1. Introduction.....	8
2. Objective of the Impact Assessment.....	8
3. Proposed Methodology .....	9
3.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD).....	9
3.3 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) .....	9
3.4 Quantitative surveys (through multistage random sampling).....	10
4. Findings of the Impact Assessment Process.....	11
4.1 Child participation in public decision making .....	11
4.2 Empowerment of children and the communities.....	12
4.3 Change in the capacity of the children and the community to engage.....	13
4.4 Change in the capacity of civil society organizations to facilitate the engagement of children and the community in public decision making process.....	15
4.5 Child friendliness of the local government authorities and resources allocated for children ...	17
4.6 Outcome of the interaction and real impact in the lives of children.....	19
5. Policy related gains of CFLG Project.....	21
6. Conclusion and Recommendations.....	23

## Executive Summary

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Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) project is built on the premise that local government institutions, being situated at the grassroots, are best placed to interact with the children and contribute most meaningfully to realize their rights. The CFLG project thus believes that strengthening the local governance framework has the potential to benefit all children across the country, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged through better participatory planning and investments. As CFLG Project nears its implementation phase, an impact assessment was needed to measure the impact of the project on promoting and institutionalizing participation of children and adolescents. The Impact Assessment process collected information from multiple sources via Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews and Quantitative Survey. Summary of the findings are stated below.

### ***Child Participation in the public decision making***

At the Union Parishad level, IA understands that there is evidence of child participation at the Ward Shava and Open Budget session and the children have been able to influence the Union Parishad to include their needs and demand in the annual planning and budgets. This has been possible as a result of CFLG project's support to the children in developing their own forums at the Ward and Union level from where they are able to engage the elected representatives.

At the Paurashava and Dhaka City Corporation level, in the absence of formal process the complaint response mechanism developed by CFLG project has opened a channel for dialogue between children and Paurashava or City Corporation representatives, where children's demands and needs are placed for actions to be taken. The mechanism of having Ward Child Rights Monitoring and Response Committee (WCRMRC) has had its benefits as it has representation from all strata of people of the Ward. In cases where it is difficult for children to act, this committee takes the responsibility to engage the elected representatives or solve the issue(s) by themselves

### ***Empowerment of children and the communities***

The support provided by the CFLG project to the children is well acknowledged by the children and communities. It is evident from the various discussions with the children that they are now capable to interact within the public sphere. Most of the children have stated that they feel more empowered in the sense that they now know that they can speak and have an opinion in matters that relate to them. They do not shy away from voicing/putting forward their opinion. All the children who were consulted have stated that the process which was maintained by CFLG project to interact with them was the main 'driver of change' within them, as it made them feel valued and understood that their opinion mattered. The process has instilled in them a belief that they can do things as CFLG project has given them responsibilities and opportunities that were not given by anyone else or their parents. They also acknowledged that while they were new at accomplishing these tasks the hand-holding, coaching and mentoring process which was maintained and the respect that was given by CFLG project staff really motivated them to do better and be better at the things that they do.

In Paurashava and City Corporation where there were operational Ward Complaint and Response Mechanism Committee (WCRMRC) the community were more involved than where there was no WCRMRC. Understanding this, IA felt the need for greater involvement with the parents by CFLG project which would have resulted in greater involvement of the community in advocating with the local government institution and especially in the planning and budgeting process.

### ***Change in the capacity of the children and the community to engage***

The IA understands that there had been a sustained effort to develop children's capacity at the early stages CFLG project, which has resulted in developing the children's capacity who have now formed the core of the youth forum of the project. IA feels that more impetus is needed to harness the learning of the 'graduated children' so that the older children are able to transfer their knowledge better to their younger sisters and brothers. IA has found that as a result of this capacity development the children have acquired the skills and knowledge to engage the local government institutions and place their demands to them. IA also acknowledges that it is also the result of the formal relationship established with the local government institutions by the CFLG project. The engagement with local government institutions by the children is the combined result of these two processes.

While interacting with the parents of the children forum it was clear that the parents and guardians were very happy with what the children have learnt from the engagement with CFLG project. One of the mothers had categorically said her daughter have become much sharper in handling difficult situations and were able to

influence the LGI Chairman and Members. Most of the parents also stated that their children are much more attuned to what is going on around them in the society and responds to the situation according to the need. IA understands that more effort needed to be given to building up relationships with the community to have a greater impact and influence the LGIs.

***Change in the capacity of civil society organizations to facilitate the engagement of children and the community in public decision making process***

The CFLG supported Non-Government Organizations have gained significant knowledge, skills and confidence to facilitate the engagement of children with the Local Government Institutions. IA also had the opportunity to interact with other NGOs working in the CFLG implementation areas and have seen that the CFLG implementation partners have tried to establish a working relationship with them which is beneficial to both the organizations and the children get more opportunity to engage with the civil society and LGIs and also creating an opportunity to learn.

CFLG project has also established strategic partnerships with other NGOs to scale up CFLG project in 123 Union Parishads of six districts. Also the learnings of the CFLG project has been disseminated to other SCiB projects in Bangladesh. IA has also been informed that Horizontal Learning Platform (HLP) has taken child participation as a good learning which can be taken onboard by other Union Parishads.

***Child friendliness of the local government authorities and resources allocated for children***

IA has found that local government institutions with which CFLG project is working with has supported children's demands and actually reflected that in their yearly budget. During the various discussions the LGI representatives have stated that they now have established processes for engaging children during the Ward Shova (Local level Planning meeting), open budget session, monthly meetings and dialogue sessions. At the DNCC Ward level and Satkhira Paurashava the complaint response mechanism has given the LGIs an opportunity to understand the needs and demands of the children in their constituency. LGI representatives have said that there are some issues which come up does not need financial resources but rather need their personal time to solve those issues. In all the areas where the CFLG works the IA has found that the children have direct engagements with the Union Parishad Chairman or Ward Councilor or Mayor, which assists in quick response to problems and issues. It was interesting to listen to the LGI representatives state that making their institutions child friendly does not always necessary need funds/money, it is also about the willingness and mentality of the elected members that matters most in issues related to children. This shows that their needs to be an 'inner-urge' of the elected officials to serve the children of their community.

IA has found that the LGIs are not only allocating the resources but spending the allocation and is monitoring it regularly. This monitoring is being done by the local government institutions as well as the children especially at the Union Parishad level. This type of transparency and accountability of the local government institutions to their constituents in Bangladesh is new and IA appreciates and acknowledges the change in mindset of the local government representatives to make this change happen. This needs to be shared with other LGIs especially with Union Parishads so that they are also encouraged to do the same in their constituency. IA feels that the changes at the local government level is an 'act of benevolence' rather than being an organic process evolving out of necessity. This eventually begs the question what happens if there is change in the elected representatives of the local government institution and while the IA delved into the question had found an interesting answer that has the potential to sustain the activities of local government institutions at least at the Union Parishad level.

***Outcome of the interaction and real impact in the lives of children***

IA has seen some really encouraging changes which gives a positive vibe that the children who are part of the journey of CFLG has really made a difference in their personal lives. When a child speaks of being 'self-confident' and being able to talk to people, especially with the LGI representatives about their needs without fear shows how far CFLG project has assisted the children to be thoughtful, responsible and made them aware of their rights and responsibilities not only a child but making them the 'active citizen' that they need to be to make a better Bangladesh.

IA understands that the impact of CFLG project has been on more than one avenue. The project not only has changed how the local government institutions work towards the betterment of children's lives but as a result of the empowerment of the children they (the children) have done other interesting things that they did not even comprehend to be possible. Adults has stated that if they were given the responsibility of making demands they probably would recommend things that would have benefited them, but when children were given the responsibility they chose things that benefited the whole community. Children who were consulted have said

they are more self-confident and they feel and sense of accomplishment as they have been able to assist the community and other less fortunate than them. These 'wins' has given them the confidence to demand greater things from the local government institutions and these the IA denotes as the main impact of the project as the children becomes '**Active Citizen**' of the country. Some examples are repairing roads, stopping sexual harassments (eve teasing), installing deep tubewell for school, opening up park/play-ground, creating better access to health care facilities etc.

The IA would have the observation that the project was intended to change the local government institutions to be child friendly and cater to the needs and demands of the children of their constituency, but as it has been seen that the children have taken the lead and has influenced change within the community as a whole which goes beyond the local government institutions.

#### ***Policy related gains of CFLG Project***

Child Friendly Local Governance Project has endeavored to influence at the policy level to make the local government institution, especially the Union Parishad, Paurashava and City Corporation child friendly. The laws that govern the local government institutions has not specifically provided scope for children to be part of the planning process but on the other hand has not negated their participation. Understanding the deficit of policies that explicitly states the involvement of children in the planning and budgeting process of the local government institutions CFLG project has tried to influence the relevant local government institutions i.e Union Parishad, Paurashava and City Corporation to develop their own mechanism to include children's voices into the planning and budgeting process and the CFLG project has supported the development of these processes.

At the LGI level CFLG project has developed the Child Forum at the Ward level and Union level Child committee to interact with the Union Parishad elected Members and the Chairman. The children committee also meets the Chairman on a quarterly basis to directly have discussion with him and to know the progress of the issues raised on earlier meetings. These processes have ensured the participation of Children in the decision making process at the Union Parishad level at the 'behest' of Union Parishad Chairman and Members as they wanted to involve the voices of Children in their planning and budgeting process with assistance from CFLG project. CFLG project was able to influence government officials at the Upazilla level to issues letters in support of children participation in the LGI planning and budgeting process which assisted in greater uptake of CFLG process by other LGIs. CFLG project has also been able to influence local government division of MoLGRD&C to issues letters to Upazilla level officers to influence LGIs to allocate resources for children based on their needs and demands.

These small 'Wins' at the policy level would need to be harnessed and local government division needs to be influenced to introduce child friendly planning and budgeting process at the LGI level to take forward the good work done by CFLG project. It is recommended that the project initiate advocacy with Local Government Division to develop the Rules and Regulation of 2009/2010 Union Parishad Act and also the other Local Government Acts.

#### ***Conclusion and Recommendations***

Overall the Impact Assessment assignment has found that the Child Friendly Local Governance Project has positively impacted the lives of the children it has worked with. It was also encouraging to see the positive attitude of the local government elected representatives towards addressing the needs of the children of their constituency. The local government institutions not only allocated budget based on the needs and demands of the children but monitored its expenditure along with the children creating a transparent accountable environment and local governance mechanism.

CFLG project was able to ignite the inner force of the children to do good for the society and also for their friends who are in need for support. The children have been very active and strait forward in stating their change with pride as a result of the interaction with CFLG project. Their actions resulted in many 'wins' from the local government institutions and other entities especially health care support institutions and this has given the children self confidence that they would not have gained otherwise. IA considers the actions that the children undertook are vital to the overall development of the society and they have become "active citizens" in the process of engaging with CFLG project. The efforts of children have contributed to making more an egalitarian society. Understanding these positives CFLG project would need to concentrate on the following for continuing the headway made with empowering the children and changing the mindset of the local government institutions:

- Strengthen the process of children participation with the local government institutions at the rural and urban level and endeavor to formally established a process so that all LGIs are able to do child friendly planning and budgets.
- CFLG project needs to find ways to engage with the parents and guardians of the children of CFLG project Children and youth forum.
- CFLG project needs to find ways to transfer the knowledge and skills acquired by the older children (youth group) who were involved with the project from the beginning as they have the most understanding of how the process operates.
- CFLG project needs to document and share the learnings of the project with other non-participating local government institutions so that they can also have an understanding of what they do to be more accountable and transparent in terms children’s need and demand.
- CFLG project need to engage with the Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives to implement the two directive letters initiated by them. Also CFLG project needs to take initiatives to publicize these two letters to the concerned stakeholders so that they can take advantage of these letters and advocate for children’s participation in the local government decision making process.



## 1. Introduction

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Child Friendly Local Governance project is built on the premise that local government institutions, being situated at the grassroots, are best placed to interact with the children and contribute most meaningfully to realize their rights. The CFLG project thus believes that strengthening the local governance framework has the potential to benefit all children across the country, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged through better participatory planning and investments.

Even though a number of organizations have contributed to local government strengthening in the country, engagement of non-government agencies in addressing the space between local government and children has been insignificant. The resultant non-participation by children and the lack of accountability has hindered access of children to essential health, education, sanitation, social protection and other services and caused inefficiency in the service delivery system. These issues severely hamper the development opportunities for children of all age.

The Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) project seeks to address this gap by promoting responsiveness of local government institutions to children's issues through facilitating constructive dialogue between all stakeholder groups. Such an environment enables the children to participate in local government's planning and decision making processes, including resource allocations to respond to children's needs. Currently, the project is being implemented directly in 19 Union Parishads, 1 Paurashava and 2 Upazilla Parishads of Satkhira district and 5 wards of Dhaka North City Corporation.

## 2. Objective of the Impact Assessment

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The objective of the assignment is to measure the impact of the project on promoting and institutionalizing participation of children and adolescents in the governance arrangements at the local level (in direct implementation areas) to ensure better services and improve accountability of local government for the rights of the children. Specifically, the study will measure five dimensions of change:

- Changes in equity and non-discrimination of children and young people
- Changes in Policies and practice affecting children and young people's rights
- Changes in children and young people's participation and active citizenship
- Changes in civil society and communities' capacity to support children and young peoples' rights
- Changes in the realization of children and young people's rights

More specifically, the Impact Assessment will measure, keeping the above five dimensions in mind and both in qualitative and quantitative terms, the followings:

- Child participation in public decision making
- Empowerment of children and the communities
- Change in the capacity of the children and the community to engage
- Change in the capacity of civil society organizations to facilitate the engagement of children and the community in public decision making process
- Child friendliness of the local government authorities and resources allocated for children
- Improvements in services for children
- Outcome of the interaction and real impact in the lives of children

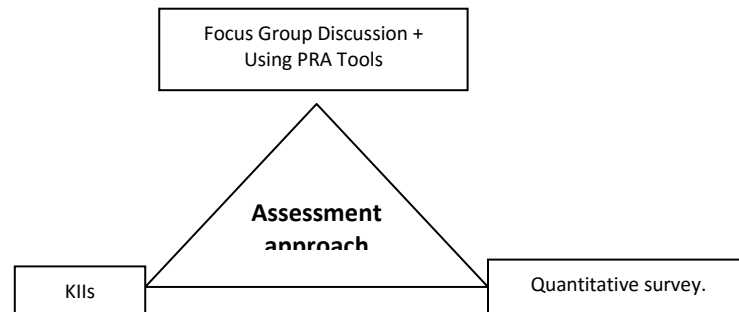
The 'specific tasks' section of the ToR has clearly stated requirements for the impact assessment. The consultant will follow the guideline set in this section of the ToR. The reporting structure for the

impact assessment has been clearly stated in the ToR. The consultant will follow the reporting structure and add section as deemed necessary.

### 3. Proposed Methodology

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The consultant will apply participatory approaches to conduct the Impact Assessment as stated in the ToR. The consultant will rely on three distinct sources of information to triangulate, compare and verify the information gathered from the various stakeholders. The three distinct sources of information are i. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**, ii. **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** and iii. **Quantitative Survey**.



The consultant will also rely on Project M&E information/Information from other sources and review case studies developed by the project.

#### 3.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Appropriate FGD checklist will be developed in consultation with BTS CFLG project staff. The FGD guideline will accommodate any nuances in project delivery mechanisms in the two areas. In each of the two areas at least three FGDs will be conducted (Two with children and one with parents). The FGDs with children will be more focused on to assess how they have been impacted by the project. FGDs will look into how well the CFLG framework has worked in the three broad areas of:

- Children empowerment citizenship
- Child focused plan and budget of LGIs
- Civil society engagement for child rights

The FGDs will also delve into the five dimensions of change that is envisaged in the CFLG impact assessment framework.

The consultant would use PRA tools to assess before/after project comparison to understand the progress in terms of their rights and other issues related to the project. It is expected that the FGD session would be around 1.5 hours and would be conducted with 12-14 children (equal number of boys and girls).

The FGD with the others will mainly focus on how they have seen the development of the children after being involved with the CFLG project. Other questions of interest will be around how they have seen the LG respond to the project activities, what are changes needed to achieve sustained results, where do they think the challenges and opportunities are. These are tentative issues and will be finalized with inputs from CFLG project staff.

#### 3.3 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

In each of the two project areas a number of KIIs will be conducted with various project stakeholders. The consultant proposes the following as per his understanding of reading the ToR.

- Union Parishad Chairman, Members and Secretary, Municipal Mayor/City Corporation's responsible staff for the project.
- Government officials, Civil society, Lawyers, Law enforcement agencies (police)
- Project implementation NGO staff (Satkhira, Dhaka)
- Youth, Community leaders, Religious leaders, Service providers.

- Local Members of Parliament and Officials of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD&C).

The consultant will also endeavor to collect information for the local government institutions on issues related to this project. Especially the consultant would endeavor to get information related to what has been the change in the delivery mechanism to safeguard the rights of the children, how have they been able to involve children in the overall planning process, what changes has been made in the budgetary allocation to address rights of the children and what steps have they taken to sustain the project activities and be more responsive to rights of the children.

The interviews with the implementing partners will focus on trying to understand how the implementation of the project was done, what were the positives and bottlenecks of the project implementation process, what would be needed (in their view) for sustainability of the activities etc.

The consultant will provide special emphasis to understand the capacity building process and how effective the process was in terms of delivering the results it was intended. The consultant would inquire on this issue with the local government stakeholders (Elected members and staff), partner staff, children and also with other people that the consultant will interact.

The interview with the school teachers would focus on the performance of the students (children) who are part of the project, how have they improved as a human being as a result of being part of the project, how have they been able to disseminate their learning to the fellow students, what in their view would be needed to sustain the activities of the project and retention of the knowledge gained by the students.

The interviews with the local people, community leaders, religious leaders, youth and service providers would be to understand how they have seen the involvement of the children in the project activities and how they have assisted (or not assisted) in the implementation of the project activities. The consultant would also try to understand their point of view about the project and how in their view LG can be made more accountable and responsive in terms of addressing the rights of the children.

Furthermore, the consultant will hold interviews with BTS and SEEP staff (Youth Volunteers, UPz facilitators who are related to this project to understand their views.

### 3.4 Quantitative surveys (through multistage random sampling)

Quantitative survey of individual children will be focused on understanding of issues of impact on their own life and experiences. The consultant had requested to BTS and SEEP to provide updated list of children who are the direct beneficiaries of the project in each area. The consultant applied the systematic random sampling method to identify children and administer a survey with children. The final sample size was 175 which is greater than the needed sample size of 166 at 99% confidence level with a 10% error level. The following is the approximate sample size required to estimate change in large populations.

Response distribution	Confidence level: 90%			95%			99%		
	Tolerable error			Tolerable error			Tolerable error		
	10%	5%	1%	10%	5%	1%	10%	5%	1%
10%	24	97	2435	35	138	3457	60	239	5971
20%	43	173	4329	61	246	6147	106	425	10616
30%	57	227	5682	81	323	8067	139	557	13933
40%	65	260	6494	92	369	9220	159	637	15923

50%	68	271	6764	96	384	9604	166	663	16587
60%	65	260	6494	92	369	9220	159	637	15923
70%	57	227	5682	81	323	8067	139	557	13933
80%	43	173	4329	61	246	6147	106	425	10616
90%	24	97	2435	35	138	3457	60	239	5971

The samples (children) will be purposely divided among the project intervention areas in Satkhira and Dhaka. So, the following will be the sample from the each areas:

Areas	Total Sample
Satkhira	110
Debhata	20
DNCC	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>

BTS and SEEP has assisted the consultant to identify the enumerators from the pool of youth volunteers who are experienced data collectors and have worked in various project of BTS/SEEP/SCiB for data collection. The consultant had given the enumerators a through orientation on the data collection process and held a mock data collection session with them to demonstrate how the data collection should be done. A feedback session was held after the mock session to clarify any issues. Finally for the overall analysis the new Wards (6 and 7) in DNCC were not considered and two people denied to be part of the survey. Brining the sample to 163.

In general the consultant endeavored to gather information from the implementing partners (NGOs), Paurashava and City Corporation on issues related to this project. These will mostly be quantitative information which will complement the qualitative information gathered through participatory methods.

## 4. Findings of the Impact Assessment Process

The following sections describe the findings of the Impact Assessment according to the sections stated in the terms of reference.

### 4.1 Child participation in public decision making

At the beginning of the assignment the consultant had a detail discussion with SCiB, BTS and SEEP to clarify the understanding of the project in terms of what it means by 'public decision making'. It was defined as the various established processes that the local government institutions have to develop their planning and budgeting process.

At the Union Parishad level the formal process are Ward Shova and Open Budget sessions. In addition the processes developed by CFLG project at the Union Parishad level i.e three monthly dialogue sessions and monthly meeting of complaint response mechanisms are the main touch points where the LGI members and the children engage in a constructive dialogue to discuss children's needs and demands.

Even though at the Paurashava/City Corporation level there is no formal process but the complaint response mechanism developed by CFLG project has opened a channel for dialogue between children and Paurashava or City Corporation representatives, where children' demands and needs are placed for actions to be taken.

Children of the Union Parishad have stated that they (or their representatives) do participate in the Ward Shova and Open Budget session. They also have established a process through which they gather their demands and needs to be placed at these meetings with the local government institution. The children at the Ward level forums discuss the needs and then it is taken at the Union Level children's forum of CFLG. The demands are consolidated at the Union level children forum and then their representatives take these to the Ward Shova for placing these to the representatives of the local government institution. In addition a written copy is handed over to the Union Parishad Chairman at a later date so that the children's demand is documented by the Union Parishad and they can have it at hand when the meeting for resource allocation is being held.

At the Paurashava and/or City Corporation level absence of formal process has not hampered the participation of children in the planning process as the complaint response mechanism has established a process whereby children can have their say and place their demands to the Paurashava or City Corporation via their respective Counselors. This mechanism of having Ward Child Rights Monitoring and Response Committee (WCRMRC) has had its benefits as it has representation from all strata of people of the Ward. In cases where it is difficult for children to act, this committee takes the responsibility to engage the elected representatives or solve the issue(s) by themselves.

## 4.2 Empowerment of children and the communities

It is evident from the various discussions with the children that they are now capable to interact within the public sphere. Most of the children have stated that they feel more empowered in the sense that they now know that they can speak and have an opinion in matters that relate to them. They do not shy away from voicing/putting forward their opinion.



*Child led monitoring at Brahmarazpur Union, Satkhira Sadar, Satkhira*

All the children who were consulted have stated that the process which was maintained by CFLG project to interact with them was the main 'driver of change' within them, as it made them feel valued and understood that their opinion mattered. The process has instilled in them a belief that they can do things as CFLG project has given them responsibilities and opportunities that were not given by anyone else or their parents. They also acknowledged that while they were new at accomplishing these tasks the hand-holding, coaching and mentoring process which was maintained and the respect that was given by CFLG project staff really motivated them to do better and be better at the things that they do.

During the consultation process with the children they have stated phrases like 'more self-confidence', 'feeling valued', 'being responsible' etc, which was a clear indication that they have gone through a process which was not only empowering for them but also speaks highly of the process (of empowerment) itself being effective.

While discussing with the parents and other representatives of the community it was understood that at the City Corporation level where the WCRMRC is operational they were much more active as a community to respond to the needs of the children than in areas where WCRMRC has not been established i.e Union Parishad. Parents at the Union Parishad stated that as their children are directly engaging the Union Parishad representatives and discussing their needs and placing their demands,

they do not have to get involved, but provide support to their children so that they are able to interact with the local government representatives. Understanding this, IA felt the need for greater involvement with the parents by CFLG project which would have resulted in greater involvement of the community in advocating with the local government institution and especially in the planning and budgeting process.

IA has found that the children are much more active at the family level. This was also stated by their parents and guardians. The parents and guardians have stated that the children are much more responsible now as they know their rights. At the community level their societal interactions are pronounced and proactive as they feel less inhibited to speak up. According to the parents and guardians the children are now much more active in the society as they discuss among themselves and try to solve societal problems via their interaction with the local government institution.

In general, it is the opinion of the IA that there has been inadequate interaction with the community in regards to Union Parishad as there were no formal process and or activity implemented by the CFLG project. This can be seen as a 'missed opportunity' for a greater engagement of the 'citizens of the Union Parishad' with the Union Parishad as they are the 'first port of call' for demands made to the state/government by the rural grassroots people. IA felt that some of the parents/guardians were not fully aware of what is being discussed with their children while they are at various events of the CFLG project especially when it is held out-side of the their area i.e at the office of the implementing NGOs or at the Upazilla. CFLG project needs to establish a process through which they can interact with the parents/guardians of the children and make them aware of what goes on within the project and what is expected of the children and also bring the parents/guardians into a forum of their own to be a 'pressure group' which can interact with the local government institution especially at the Union Parishad level.

One of the main elements of empowerment for the children was their knowledge of various issues that supported their activities at the grassroots level. IA wanted to look at the retention of various knowledge provided to them by the CFLG project. A survey was conducted the following results is based on the respondents answer to various quotes that has implication on the CFLG project:

**Table: Knowledge retention of children beneficiary of CFLG project**

Quote	Fully agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Fully Disagree
I know child rights from CFLG Project	88.6	9.8	0.6	-	-
I know LGI plan and budget from CFLG project	44.8	47.9	3.1	4.3	-
I know LGI budget and expenditure from CFLG project	26.4	52.8	12.9	7.4	0.6
I have received (or know someone) education support from LGI because of CFLG project	31.3	39.3	11.0	16.6	1.8
I can influence LGI budget	26.4	38.0	19.0	14.1	2.5
We can inform our demands to LGI	84.0	12.3	1.8	1.8	-
My family assists me to negotiate with LGI	47.2	36.2	9.2	6.1	1.2
I know of child protection because of CFLG project	81.0	17.8	-	1.2	-
I can monitor LGI budget	33.1	42.3	8.0	14.7	1.8
I can influence family decision	31.3	29.4	27.6	10.4	1.2

Source: Impact Assessment field survey 2018

Analyzing the above table we see that in general children acknowledge that they have learned a lot from the CFLG project .

### 4.3 Change in the capacity of the children and the community to engage

CFLG Project has maintained a process to build capacity of the children and develop their understanding of local government institutions. For this CFLG has conducted following training for the children:

Training provided to children on	Issues discussed during forum meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local government</li> <li>Local government roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Ward Shova and LGI (Union Parishad) budget</li> <li>Complaint response mechanism</li> <li>Child Friendly Local Governance</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Life skills</li> <li>Stakeholders' responsibilities for stopping child marriage</li> <li>Understanding of consequences of Child Marriage</li> <li>Child rights monitoring</li> <li>Leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difference of work between men and women in family and society</li> <li>Understanding of gender and gender inequality</li> <li>Equality and equity: why gender equality is needed</li> <li>Women and girl child violence and how it can be stopped</li> <li>Child marriage</li> <li>Adolescent/ reproductive health</li> </ul>
Orientation for Ward child forum and Union child forum	Training for Ward child forum and Union child forum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Governance</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Complaint Response Mechanisms (CRM)</li> <li>Early Marriage Prevention</li> <li>Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP)</li> <li>Leadership</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Body Boundary</li> <li>Budget monitoring, Child right Monitoring &amp; Service Monitoring.</li> <li>Hygiene</li> <li>Child abuse prevention</li> <li>Disability Rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNCRC</li> <li>Gender</li> <li>Life skill</li> </ul>

The quantitative survey revealed that around 98 percent of the children have received child rights training from CFLG project. The other trainings received by children were the following:

**Table 1: Percentages of children stating receiving various training from CFLG Project<sup>1</sup>**

Name of training	% of children stated receiving the training
Child rights	98.8
Leadership development	75.5
Negotiation skills training	31.9
Child Forum Organization/Management skill training	35.6
Service Monitoring training	56.4
LGI Plan and Budget training	79.1
Child Rights Monitoring training	25.8
CFLG Framework	38.0
Gender training	59.5
Budget tracking	42.9

Source: Impact assessment field survey 2018.

The IA has understood that there had been a sustained effort to develop children's capacity at the early stages CFLG project, which has resulted in developing the children's capacity who have now formed the core of the youth forum of the project. By the design of the project as the children become older and gradually move into the role of youth, new children are enrolled into the project and they are supported to build their capacity like a 'conveyor belt' which keeps on welcoming 'new entries' to the project. On the other hand, the 'graduated children' of the youth forum is supporting the capacity building initiative of the 'new entries' and transfers their knowledge and experience to these 'new entries'. This model in general seems to be working, but IA feels that more impetus is

<sup>1</sup> Please see Annex 1 for details.

needed to harness the learning of the ‘graduated children’ so that they are able to transfer their knowledge better to their younger sisters and brothers.

During the discussion with the youth forum members it was clear that even though they are involved with the activities of the CFLG project in some form, it is sometimes difficult for them to engage fully with the project activities as they now have other responsibilities, especially studies, which take much of their time. The CFLG project needs to find a way to have a formal process of engagement between the ‘graduated children’ and the children of the ‘children forum’ so that the experiences and learnings can be shared with them and when these children in turn will graduate they can do the same for their younger sisters and brothers like a ‘*baton of CFLG learning and experiences*’ can be handed over to the new entries in a formal manner.

IA has found that as a result of this capacity development the children have acquired the skills and knowledge to engage the local government institutions and place their demands to them. IA also acknowledges that it is also the result of the formal relationship established with the local government institutions by the CFLG project. The engagement with local government institutions by the children is the combined result of these two processes.

While interacting with the parents of the children forum it was clear that the parents and guardians were very happy with what the children have learnt from the engagement with CFLG project. One of the mothers had categorically said her daughter have become much *sharper*<sup>2</sup> in handling difficult situations and were able to influence the LGI Chairman and Members while she does not have this ability to interact with the LGI Chairman and Members. Most of the parents also stated that their children are much more attuned to what is going on around them in the society and responds to the situation according to the need. The parents stated that the children have now a better idea of what is better for the society and that they (ie the children) have a role to play for improving the society in general.

IA has observed that CFLG project has not invested in building the relationship with the community as they have done with the children especially at the Union Parishad level. Discussions with parents and representatives from the community have revealed that there were few instances where CFLG project has endeavored to interact with the community members and or parents. According to the CFLG project at Satkhira area they have one meeting per year with the parents of the children’s forum and do not have any other activities planned for interacting with the community to develop their capacity in general. As stated in the earlier section, this adhoc type of engagement with the community has led to CFLG missing an opportunity to motivate the community to engage with the local government institution especially the Union Parishad bring about greater accountability and transparency of the LGI<sup>3</sup>.

#### 4.4 Change in the capacity of civil society organizations to facilitate the engagement of children and the community in public decision making process

Civil Society Organizations mainly Non-Government Organizations that Save the Children in Bangladesh has supported (i.e BTS, SEEP) to implement the CFLG project have gained significant knowledge, skills and confidence to facilitate the engagement of children with the Local Government Institutions as evidenced by the fact that children with whom the IA had interacted with have unequivocally stated that these organization (BTS, SEEP) has supported their engagement with the local government institutions. Save the Children in Bangladesh has supported the capacity building of

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<sup>2</sup> The word used was ‘*Chalu*’ in Bangla.

<sup>3</sup> CFLG project during the draft report presentation and in writing does not agree to this comment of the IA, but IA recommends greater engagement of the community in the project activities to have a larger impact and influence on the Local Government Institutions.



the staff of BTS and SEEP in various issues that are relevant for the implementation of CFLG project and those trainings and orientation has enhanced the knowledge and skills of the staff of BTS and SEEP to implement the programme better at the grassroots. The following table has some example of the trainings and orientation provided to the BTS and SEEP staff.

Training for Staff	Orientation for staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child friendly local Governance</li> <li>• UNCRC</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• MEAL</li> <li>• Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP)</li> <li>• Complaint Response Mechanisms(CRM)</li> <li>• Child participation</li> <li>• Child protection</li> <li>• Compliance (Financial, Programmatic)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Life skill</li> <li>• Body Boundary</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Social Accountability</li> <li>• Budget monitoring,</li> <li>• Child rights monitoring and service monitoring.</li> <li>• Case story</li> <li>• Reporting</li> </ul>

IA has also understood from the statements of the children, youth and other respondents that the process maintained by BTS and SEEP staff in the implementation was very much empowering and respectful to the children and the field staff gave their time to motivate the children and build up their capacity and especially their confidence to take on the activities of CFLG project.

IA also had the opportunity to interact with other NGOs working in the same areas and has found that no other NGOs are specifically working with children to provide opportunity for to interact and influence local government institutions. During the discussion with other NGOs (other than NGOs that are implementing CFLG) it was found that they have a cordial relationship with the NGO that is implementing CFLG and they have a very good working relationship. IA understands that BTS/SEEP interacts with these NGOs and tries to find ways to provide opportunities to children to be engaged with these NGOs.

This is not only creating an opportunity for the children to interact with the larger society but also creating an opportunity for the children to learn and experience various events. For example, BTS in Satkhira has jointly implemented various programmes with Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) such as arranging the Ward shova, pre budget meeting, Right to Information day observation and fair, anti-corruption day observation etc. Also with Bangladesh Mohila Parishad BTS has jointly organized Human chain for stopping child abuse, Children’s rights week and various day observation related to children.

IA has understood that CFLG project at the Satkhira Upazilla level has given formal orientation to NGOs and at the DNCC level three monthly coordination meeting of NGOs CFLG implementing partner updates all other NGOs on the CFLG activities. Thus other NGOs operating in the CFLG areas have a general awareness of the CFLG project to some extent and this has also created opportunity for the children to get involved in the programmes of other NGOs. CFLG project has also established strategic partnerships with other NGOs to scale up CFLG project in 123 Union Parishads of six districts. Also the learnings of the CFLG project has been disseminated to other SCiB projects in Bangladesh. IA has also been informed that Horizontal Learning Platform (HLP) has taken child participation as a good learning which can be taken onboard by other Union Parishads.

## 4.5 Child friendliness of the local government authorities and resources allocated for children

Various discussions with local government representatives and looking through the documents IA has found that local government institutions which CFLG project is working with has supported children's demands and actually reflected that in their yearly budget. During the various discussions the LGI representatives have stated that they now have established processes for engaging children during the Ward Shova (Local level Planning meeting), open budget session, monthly meetings and dialogue sessions. At the DNCC Ward level and Satkhira Paurashava the complaint response mechanism has given the LGIs an opportunity to understand the needs and demands of the children in their constituency.

The LGI representative have also stated that some of the issues that come up through the complaint response mechanism do not have a financial implication for the LGI but rather demands their personal time to solve issues such as 'eve teasing (Sexual Harassment)', 'family problems' etc. IA inquired into the issues which are urgent in nature and how the local government institutions are responding to those. It was stated by both the LGI representative and children that these urgent matters are generally communicated directly to the elected members of the LGI so that these can be solved immediately. Like when there is a case of child marriage it is generally informed to the councilor or member or UP Chairman over phone and they take immediate steps to stop the marriage from happening. In relations to this implementing partners stated that in cases they also informed the Upazilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO) about child marriage and S/he used his/her authority to stop the child marriage. Thus the local government representatives have stated that making their institutions child friendly does not always necessary need funds/money, it is also about the willingness and mentality of the elected members that matters most in issues related to children. This shows that their needs to be an 'inner-urge' of the elected officials to serve the children of their community.



*Opening complaint box with the presence of children at Kulia Union, Debhata, Satkhira*

Alipur Union Parishad, Satkhira		
Allocation for children in 2018-2019 budget		
Sl	Budget Head	Allocation (Tk)
1	Education	40,000
2	Sports and entertainment	10,000
3	Tree planting	20,000
4	Dialogue meeting	5,000
5	Child Rights	5,000
6	Child welfare fund	80,000
7	Birth registration	20,000
8	Allowance for CWD	15,000
9	Horizontal learning	35,000
10	Relief for children	10,000
11	Miscellaneous	30,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,70,000</b>

The discussions with the local government representatives revealed that they are endeavoring to address the demand of the children within the available resources. As the LGI operates under a resource constrained environment it is hard for them to allocate resources only for children as much as would like to as there are competing demands on the resources. Understanding this, all the LGI representatives that the IA has consulted has said that they are now more receptive to children's demands and allocates resources to meet their demands as much as possible. According to them this has been the positive change after engaging with the CFLG project and this is change that they (the LGI) have made

understanding the need of children as part of their constituent. The LGI representatives were also

happy to make this change as this enhances their status and popularity. While the representatives of the local government institutions understand that not all children of their constituency has been benefited through their initiatives, it is their intension to serve all the children in future and have shown interest in discussing this issue with the government entities and increase budget allocation to them for doing this.

The LGI representatives are not only allocating the resources but spending the allocation and this is being monitored regularly. This monitoring is being done by the local government institutions as well as the children especially at the Union Parishad level. The IA has seen the formats for the yearly budget plan and quarterly monitoring formats regarding children's budget allocation and expenditure by the local government institutions duly signed by the Secretary and Chairman of the Union Parishad. This type of transparency and accountability of the local government institutions to their constituents in Bangladesh is new and IA appreciates and acknowledges the change in mindset of the local government representatives to make this change happen. This needs to be shared with other LGIs especially with Union Parishads so that they are also encouraged to do the same in their constituency.

All the LGI representatives that the IA has consulted had stated that this change is mainly due to the fact that implementing partners of CFLG project has supported them in understanding the process of making their LGI child friendly and the positive change that this will bring to the children of their areas. As it has been seen and understood by the IA that all the local government institution representative consulted were very much encouraged to support the children and they themselves seems to be motivated and wanting to do something good for the children. Thus making the changes at the local government level an 'act of benevolence' rather than being an organic process evolving out of necessity. This eventually begs the question what happens if there is change in the elected representatives of the local government institution and while the IA delved into the question had found an interesting answer that has the potential to sustain the activities of local government institutions at least at the Union Parishad level. At Satkhira Sadar Upazilla CFLG project has motivated the UNO of Satkhira Sadar Upazilla (on 10 April 2018) to write a letter to all the Union Parishad Chairman of Satkhira Sadar Upazilla to keep special budget for the children's health, education, sports and culture according to the development planning manual. Subsequently similar letters were given by the Upazilla Chairman's office as well as the Deputy Commissioner's Office requesting the Union Parishad Chairmen to allocate budget for the betterment of the children. Have these type of letters from the government authorities which govern the Union Parishads is very helpful and has set a precedence for future elected Chairman and members of Satkhira Sadar Upazilla to carry on the example set by CFLG project. IA feels that even this to happen there needs to be a process in place for people to know that these types of letters has been send by the competent authority to the Union Parishads for keeping budgets for children. IA recommends that CFLG project takes adequate steps to publicize these letters and also bring on-board the parents and community people so that they also become part of the wider pressure group to advocate for budget allocation for children.

IA has been given documents relating to letters sent by the local government division to all the DDLG in all districts for the inclusion of children voices and recommendation in the decision making process of the local government institutions. This is very encouraging as it encourages the engagement of children and it also given scope for community people to advocate for inclusion of children in the decision making process of LGIs. CFLG project needs to make this letter know the various stakeholders so that they can take advantage of these letters and advocate for the inclusion of children in the local government decision making process.

CFLG project has also invested in capacity building of Union Parishad and in the light weight model of implementation<sup>4</sup> Union Parishad are taken the lead in implementing the project along with the children groups.

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<sup>4</sup> Light weight model defined by the fact that in some Union Parishads there is no direct staff of CFLG project and the activities are overseen by the Union Parishad itself.

## 4.6 Outcome of the interaction and real impact in the lives of children

Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) project started implementation in Satkhira with BTS from October 2013 and in DNCC with SEEP from January 2014. The findings of the IA of real impact at the field level covers what the children and partners have been able to do within this time span and the limited to the interaction the IA was able to do within the given timespan for the assessment.

IA has seen, heard and read some of the changes in the lives of children, which are really encouraging and gives a positive vibe that the children who were part of the journey of CFLG has really made a difference in their personal lives. When a child speaks of being 'self-confident' and being able to talk to people, especially with the LGI representatives about their needs without fear shows how far CFLG project has assisted the children to be thoughtful, responsible and made them aware of their rights and responsibilities not only a child but making them the '**active citizen**' that they need to be to make a better Bangladesh.

IA understands that the impact of CFLG project has been on more than one avenue. The project not only has changed how the local government institutions work towards the betterment of children's lives but as a result of the empowerment of the children they (the children) have done other interesting things that they did not even comprehend to be possible.

IA has found that all the stakeholders who have been consulted have talked about how the children have changed and influenced what the local government institute does. It is very encouraging to hear when most of the people who were consulted state that *"if it were an adult who were given the responsibility to recommend to the Union Parishad what needs to be done to improve the community/Union, he/she would have said something that would benefit him/her in the long run", but when children have recommended what needs to be done they have always recommended activities that would be beneficial to the whole community, not only for them.* They have also implied that there is something to be learned from this example of children.

As a result of the empowerment and capacity building of the children via the CFLG project one of the major impact and key change at their individual level has been increased '**self-confidence**' and understanding that their opinion matters. They now have better understanding of what the Local Government Institutions can do for them and how they can influence it to benefit not only them but the whole community. The children who were involved with CFLG project also feel a sense of '**accomplishment**' as they are now able to help other children who are less fortunate than them. Most of the children have stated that they now advocate for other children to be given benefits from the local government institution especially for education support, waiver of school fees etc. These advocacy 'wins' has given them the confidence to demand greater things from the local government institutions and these the IA denotes as the main impact of the project as the children becomes '**Active Citizen**' of the country. Some examples are:

- **Road repair in Agordari Union Parishad:** One of the children forum formally of Agordari Union complained to the Union Parishad to repair a road which was a vital link between the villages and nearby places as well as children used this road to go to the school. As people were suffering for the bad condition of the road children were encouraged to demand that this road needs to be repaired. During the monthly meeting where the complaints from the children are discussed at the Union Parishad this particular issues was discussed and the Chairman agreed to repair the road in the next fiscal year (20017-2018). The road is repaired and people are happy that they can now travel safely to places and the children can also go to school safely.
- **Stopping sexual harassment (eve-teasing):** Girls from Itagacha village of Satkhira Paurashava used a road which goes through a market to go to school. Some boys used to tease them while the passed through the market. The girls had a discussion about this problem and decided to inform the Ward Councilor about this. During the open discussion session (in

March 2017) with the Ward Councilor and Mayor, one of the girls spoke about the problem that they are facing on the way to school. The Mayor personally took the responsibility of looking into the matter. Now the girls do not face any problem to go to school and do not feel harassed while going through the market.

- **Deep Tube-Well for School:** Children of Shildanga Government Primary School of Shibpur Union, Satkhira had to go far to drink water during school time as there was no tube well in the school. The members of the Ward child forum decided to take the matter to the Union Parishad Chairman. Hearing the problem the Union Parishad Chairman decided to install a tube well by September 2017. He has kept his word and now the children of the Shildanga Government Primary School are happy as they now have a tube well and do not have to go far to drink water during school time.
- **Opening up a park/play ground:** Children of Bauniabadh of Ward 5, Dhaka North City Corporation had a park where they could play safely. During early 2015 some influential people started to use the park to store building materials and other things and as a result the children were deprived of the playground. This issue was brought to the notice of the Ward Councilor for Ward 5. He decided to open up the park to the children and requested SEEP to look after the park through a formal letter. Now the children are able to play in the park and they are happy that the complaint has been solved by the Ward Councilor.

Children of CFLG project has also been able to influence Government Community Clinics to improve services in Satkhira and also making health services friendly for adolescents of Bauniabadh. These are example of [improving services for children](#).

- **Creating access to healthcare services for adolescents in Bauniabadh:** Access to healthcare services for adolescents from Bauniabadh is a problem as they are from poor and marginalized families. This issue was discussed at the youth forum of Bauniabadh and they decided to take up the matter with the local Ward Councilor. With the support of ward Councilor, youth members mobilized the community people especially adolescent to receive health service within their community. Following the campaign, around 40 adolescent girls of Bauniabadh, received the health services including free medicine and suggestions. Health card for eye treatment was also another arrangement by the ward committee.
- **Healthcare access created in Goalpota, Brahmarajpur Union, Satkhira:** Goalpota village is in Brahmarajpur Union of Satkhira Sadar Upazilla. The Goalpota Community Clinic serve not only the people of Goalpota but also people of nearby villages as this is an isolated place. The children forum of the Goalpota Union had identified the problems of this Community Clinic through their monthly meeting and had informed Union Parishad Member and Women Member of the problems of the Community Clinic such as there is insufficient medicine, no toilet facilities and soap, not electricity and there is no fan for the patients, there is no ramp for the persons with disabilities, no place for the patient to wait and sit and even there were not proper seating arrangements for the Community Health Care Provider (CHCP) and also the doctor did not go there regularly. As they did not get the proper response and results from the Union Parishad Members, the Children Forum raised these issues with the Union Parishad Chairman during the quarterly dialogue session.

Hearing the complaint from the children, the UP Chairmen took steps to ensure that the medicine, CHCP and doctor come to the Clinic regularly to serve the children and the community people. The service of the Community Clinic has improved and all are getting benefit from it. The UP Chairman stated that he has taken the complaint from the children very seriously and will continue to monitor the service quality of the Community Clinic so that the service can continue to be good. IA wanted to understand from the children about what

support they have received as a result of CFLG project. The quantitative survey had revealed the following:

**Table: Status of various service received because of CFLG project by the children**

Service	Received	Not received
I have received health support	65.0	35.0
I have received education support	42.9	57.1
I have received recreational support	63.2	38.8
I have received social protection support	42.3	57.7

Source: Impact Assessment field survey 2018.

The IA would have the observation that the project was intended to change the local government institutions to be child friendly and cater to the needs and demands of the children of their constituency, but as it has been seen that the children have taken the lead and has influenced change within the community as a whole which goes beyond the local government institutions.

## 5. Policy related gains of CFLG Project

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Child Friendly Local Governance Project has endeavored to influence at the policy level to make the local government institution, especially the Union Parishad, Paurashava and City Corporation child friendly. The laws that govern the local government institutions has not specifically provided scope for children to be part of the planning process but on the other hand has not negated their participation. The following opportunities are there in the three local government Acts of the country for the general participation of the citizens.

- In the Local Government Union Parishad Act (2009/10) it has been specifically stated that the local level planning has to bottom up with the participation of the citizens i.e voters and has specified that Ward level meeting should be held to identify the needs of the people and lastly an Open Budget Session has to be held to let the people know what the plan is for the upcoming year. There is an opportunity to review the progress of the plan midyear which is generally held during the month of October/November.
- The Local Government Paurashava Act does not specially state the involvement of the citizens in its planning session but in the clause 57 it states that in the various meetings of the standing committee citizens can be present on request or if the committee feels that someone needs to attend can be invited to attend.
- The Local Government City Corporation Act has specified in its clause 53 that if a committee feels the need to consult anyone, s/he can be invited to the meeting but will not have voting power. Also Clause 54 states that unless a meeting is deemed as 'private' by the majority of the members all meetings of the city corporation will be open to public.

Understanding the deficit of policies that explicitly states the involvement of children in the planning and budgeting process of the local government institutions CFLG project has tried to influence the relevant local government institutions i.e Union Parishad, Paurashava and City Corporation to develop their own mechanism to include children's voices into the planning and budgeting process and the CFLG project has supported the development of these processes.

At the **Union Parishad** level CFLG project has developed the Child Forum at the Ward level and Union level Child committee to interact with the Union Parishad elected Members and the Chairman. Each month the Ward level Child Forum has their meeting to discuss various issues and if anything needs to be improved by the Union Parishad they send these issues to the Union Child Committee so that these can be forward to the Union Parishad. After the meeting of Union Level Children's Committee the issues that need the attention of the Union Parishad is sent to the Chairman for action. The

children committee also meets the Chairman on a quarterly basis to directly have discussion with him and to know the progress of the issues raised on earlier meetings.

These processes have ensured the participation of Children in the decision making process at the Union Parishad level at the 'behest' of Union Parishad Chairman and Members as they wanted to involve the voices of Children in their planning and budgeting process with assistance from CFLG project i.e the implementing partner of SCiB. In addition to these changes at the Union Parishad level, the CFLG implementing partner has been able to influence the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) authorities in favor of promoting CFLG issues at the grassroots. Following are some concrete evidences of successes of advocacy with the GoB officials:

- CFLG project's implementing partner has been successful in building the positive understanding of the project by influencing the Upazilla Nirbahi Officer of Satkhira and she has circulated an office order to all Chairman of Union Parishad of Satkhira district to take up child friendly activities as per development planning manual of Union Parishad.
- Also the implementing partner has been able to influence the Upazilla Chairman of Satkhira Sadar to write an office letter to all Union Parishad Chariman of Satkhira Upazilla to take up activities related to making the Union Parishad child friendly.
- The Deputy Director – Local Government, Satkhira district has also given an office circular to all Union Parishad Chairman of Satkhira Upazilla to take up child friendly activities in the yearly planning and budget process.

Even before these significant gains at the grassroots level, CFLG project had been able to influence government officials at the central level and as a result the following letters have been circulated.

- Union Parishad Wing of Local Government Division at the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives has issued letter to Local Government Support Programme – 2 (LGSP 2) to take up activities of CFLG project through the LGSP 2 project.
- Following this letter another letter was issued to all Deputy Director – Local Government (DD-LG) of all districts to take up and promote child friendly activities at the Union Parishad. The letter also mentioned that LGSP 3 can also allocate budget for child friendly activities at the Union Parishad level.
- Recently CFLG project has also been able to influence the 'SWAPNO' project of Local Government Division and as a result, an official letter has been circulated to the National Project Director of SWAPNO Project to incorporate and promote CFLG related activities.

These letters 'in-lieu' of any formal policies have worked nicely as these were issued by a competent authority who has jurisdiction over the Union Parishad, thus the Union Parishad's were inclined follow their office memo. It is understood that some of the Union Parishad have kept separate budget for children based on these office memos but only a handful Union Parishads had actually talked to the children on a limited scale to know their needs and demands, which was very encouraging<sup>5</sup>.

Another substantial achievement (Which has policy implications) of CFLG project has been that some of the project activities has been incorporated as good practices in the Horizontal Learning Programme (HLP) of Local Government Division. The HLP was a forum of 658 Union Parishads where through a process the good practices of these Union Parishads were documented and disseminated to all the 658 Union Parishads. The project is also in discussion with National Institute of Local Government (NILG) to incorporate these good practices in the training manual of Union Parishad. If the good practices of the CFLG project can be incorporated in the training manual of Union Parishad

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<sup>5</sup> This information was gathered via the KIIs with project personnel and other stakeholders. The consultant was not able to gather actual evidence from anywhere else for this.

then it will be a significant step towards scaling up the project activities in all the Union Parishad of Bangladesh.

At the **Paurashava** level, CFLG project has worked with the Ward Councilors of Satkhira Paurashava and with the newly elected Mayor. The changes made in the processes of the Paurashava were done at the behest of the Councilors and Mayor in absence of any formal process of involving the children in the planning and budgeting process of the Paurashava. The CRMC process induced participation of the children in the planning and budgeting process is working in the Satkhira Paurashava and understandably will continue as long as the elected Members are in the office.

At the **City Corporation** level at Dhaka, the implementing partner has tried to engage the Ward Councilor and the Mayor to include children in their planning and budgeting process. The Ward level Children Forums are mainly active in identifying the issues and sending those to the WCRMC or directly through to the Ward Councilor if the issues are sensitive. The Dhaka North City Corporation has been very receptive to the needs of the children in the Wards that the CFLG project works and has implemented activities that were demanded by the children through the CRMC process. This process has established a system through which children can get their needs and demand to the Ward Councilor and thus to the Mayor as and when needed. CFLG project has faced some setback after the untimely death of the elected Mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and the changes at the policy front has been stalled due to this unfortunate event. The IA has understood that the process of involving children in the DNCC Wards that CFLG project works will continue as long as the present elected Councilors are in the office.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

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Overall the Impact Assessment assignment has found that the Child Friendly Local Governance Project has positively impacted the lives of the children it has worked with. It was also encouraging to see the positive attitude of the local government elected representatives towards addressing the needs of the children of their constituency. The local government institutions not only allocated budget based on the needs and demands of the children but monitored its expenditure along with the children creating a transparent accountable environment in the local governance mechanism. The space created via the monthly meeting and quarterly dialogue sessions with local government elected representatives were key to getting the message to them (LGIs) from the children forum, youth forum and the complaint response mechanism. In addition, in the Union Parishad level the Ward Shova and Open Budget sessions were vital engagement points for the children with the Union Parishad to demand their needs publicly. These opportunities created a space for the children to speak up, place their demands and also create scope for mutual accountability between them, the LGI and the Community. This is something very new in Bangladeshi society especially at the grassroots level with the children of poor and marginalized people.

Working with the children both BTS and SEEP, with assistance from SCiB, was able to ignite the inner force of the children to good for the society and also for their friends who are need for support. The children have been very active and strait forward in stating their change with pride as a result of the interaction with CFLG project. Their actions resulted in many 'wins' from the local government institutions and other entities especially health care support institutions and this has given the children self confidence that they would not have gained otherwise. IA considers the actions that the children undertook are vital to the overall development of the society and they have become "**active citizens**" in the process of engaging with CFLG project. The efforts of children have contributed to making more an egalitarian society.

Understanding these positives CFLG project would need to concentrate on the following for continuing the headway made with empowering the children and changing the mindset of the local government institutions:



- Strengthen the process of children participation with the local government institutions especially at the urban level taking the advantage of the Acts that govern Municipalities in Bangladesh i.e. by the Local Government Act (Paurashava), 2009. The Act has clearly mandated what the Paurashava can and cannot do. In the Second Chapter Clause 50 clearly describes the responsibilities of the Paurashava. A point to also consider is that in the Local Government Paurashava Act 2009 in Clause 115 there is provision for consultation with the citizens for taking their opinions on the services provided by the Paurashava. Furthermore in Clause 14 of the Act there is provision for establishing a 10 member Ward Committee to recommend/review activities in their respective Wards. CFLG may take advantage of the clause to strengthen the participation of children in the Municipalities.
  - CFLG project needs to find ways to engage with the parents and guardians of the children of CFLG project Children and youth forum. IA considers this as a missed opportunity for creating a greater unity among the citizens and develop into a pressure group to make the local government institutions transparent and accountable to the needs and demands of not only the children but for all its constituents.
  - CFLG project needs to find ways to transfer the knowledge and skills acquired by the older children (youth group) who were involved with the project from the beginning as they have the most understanding of how the process operates. IA has understood that this 'Handing over the Baton' has not happened properly. CFLG project needs to create scope for the older and 'new entries' children to interact so that knowledge, skills and experiences can be handed over the new entries. This would not only create a scope for the children who have 'graduated' from the project be involved with the project.
  - CFLG project needs to document and share the learnings of the project with other non-participating local government institutions so that they can also have an understanding of what they do to be more accountable and transparent in terms children's need and demand.
  - CFLG project need to engage with the Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives to implement the two directive letters initiated by them. Also CFLG project needs to take initiatives to publicize these two letters to the concerned stakeholders so that they can take advantage of these letters and advocate for children's participation in the local government decision making process.
  - IA recommends that CFLG project (and the implementing partners along with Save the Children) initiate a process to incorporate the good practices of CFLG project in the Training manual of Union Parishad through influencing NILG.
  - IA recommends that CFLG project should try to influence Local Government Division to start the process of developing Rules and Regulations for the 2010 Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, so that CFLG related activities can be incorporated in the Rules and Regulations of the 2009/2010 Act.
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