



# Urban Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh: The UPPR Experience

Documentation of UPPR Learning and Good Practices

Abridged Version



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Local partner in Bangladesh

paraa

Published by  
**United Nations Development Program (UNDP)**  
[Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project]



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[Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project]

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## CURRENCY CORRESPONDENCES [BDT–EUR]

**BDT** Bangladesh currency = Taka

**EUR** European currency = Euro

**Taka–Euro** 1 EUR = 82,22 BDT [5<sup>th</sup> March 2016]

**Lakh–Euro** 1 Lakh = 100,000 BDT = 1,162 EUR [5<sup>th</sup> March 2016]

**Crore–Euro** 1 Crore = 1,000,000 BDT = 11,628 EUR [5<sup>th</sup> March 2016]

## ACRONYMS

ACHR	Asian Coalition of Housing Rights
BDT	Bangladesh Taka (currency)
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Services and Trust
BUF	Bangladesh Urban Forum
CAP	Community Action Plan
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDC	Community Development Committee
CFs	Community Facilitators
CHDF	Community Housing Development Fund
Crore	1 crore = 1,000,000 BDT =
CUP	Coalition for the Urban Poor
CUS	Centre for Urban Studies
DFID	Department For International Development, UK
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
JAP	Joint Action Plan
Lakh	1 lakh = 100,000 BDT
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department, Bangladesh
LGI	Local Government Institutions
LGRD	Local Government & Rural Development
LPUPAP	Local Partnership for Urban Poverty Reduction Project
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDBUS	Nagar Daridra Basteebashir Unnayan Sangstha
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PIP	Participatory Identification of the Poor
PWD	Public Works Department
RECAP	Updating and continuity of CAP
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEF	Socio-Economic Fund
SIF	Settlement Improvement Funds
SLM	Settlement Land Mapping
TLCC	Town Level Coordination Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WASA	Water and Sanitation Agency





EXECUTIVE

SUMMARY



## **1. Scope and limitations of the study**

The Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project –UPPR – started in March 2008 and completed in August 2015 and was the single largest urban poverty reduction programme in Bangladesh. It supported the improvement of living conditions and livelihoods of 3 million poor and extreme poor, especially women and girls of 23 towns and cities (City Corporations) and Municipalities. Funds were provided by UKaid, UNDP, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and the beneficiary communities.

The present report results from a 50 person/days study commissioned by UNDP/ UPPR Project to document and disseminate key successes and lessons of the project and support sustainability of the achievements by Local Governments Institutions and communities. Spora Synergies and its local partner Paraa, in close coordination with UPPR partners, conducted it over 4 months only, from December 2015 to March 2016.

An intense set of complementary activities were implemented over the period: extensive literature review; interviews of 21 key institutional informants mirroring the multiplicity of actors involved; interviews of 100 community leaders and members from each of the 23 cities; focus groups, meetings and community visits in seven cities and towns; three inter-cities workshops with participants from 12 cities; national learning and exchange workshop with communities, Local Governments officials and UPPR ex-Town Managers from all UPPR cities. A regional exchange workshop hold on in Dhaka concludes the study [March 20 and 21, 2016].

## **2. Good strategies and practices and least successful ones [from different actors]**

### **Good strategies and practices**

Communities. Out of the 21 strategies developed by UPPR, the communities clearly ranked two as most successful: [1] Community saving and credit; [2] Mobilization of urban poor communities and extremely poor groups; and three others at a third level [3] Access to healthy and secure living environments; [4] Settlements Improvement Fund, SIF and [5] Support to improvement of housing conditions.

Perception of key informants, by and large coincide with those from communities with some nuances. Community saving and credits [1] is clearly the “star” of the program, along with [2] women empowerment and ownership, [3] construction of partnership and good governance in a human right approach and [4] improvement of living conditions and settlements.

One important finding is that good practices are city specific [and the ranking per city varies] and time bound [practices that started at a later stage might be felt less successful]

### **Least successful strategies and practices**

Communities. The least successful strategies were ranked as follows by communities but varied from city to city: [1] Support to improvement of housing conditions; [2] Security of tenure; [3] Access to healthy and secure living environments; [4] Access to local employment opportunities and [5] Settlements Improvement Fund, SIF.

Perception of key informants was quite different: [1] Supporting local and national level pro-poor urban policy development; [2] Support to entrepreneurs; [3] Town poverty reduction action plans and economic development strategies; [4] Sustainable funding for urban poverty reduction; [5] Urban and peri-urban food production.

This difference of perceptions between poor communities that highlighted housing, security of land tenure, health, jobs and settlements in general and institutional key informants that raised issues more related to policies, management and longer terms preoccupations are quite complementary to sketch the limits of UPPR and the horizon for future improvements.

It raises important dilemmas for the next project to address, primarily in relation to the tools and methods required in encouraging communities' participation at the city scale.

### **Isolated good practices**

The study identified successful "isolated" practices that happened locally with much less frequency. These are quite important as they can nurture a city-to-city exchange. They addressed sometimes complex issues that were not generally considered successful such as: [1] Positive solutions to forced evictions and displacements respectively in Gopalganj and Sirajganj; [2] Influencing municipal budget in a pro-poor perspective in a few cities or some livelihoods activities such as apiculture in Hobiganj.

### **3. Lessons learned (from the practices ranking, from the reality checks, from the inter-cities and national workshops)**

The three inter-cities workshops were a key learning moment and the following intertwined lessons emerged that complemented the quantitative based ranking: [1] Community Savings and Credits was a strong and solid practice implemented across the board; [2] City visits act as a main transferability strategy; [3] The relation between the Local Government and the CDC is one of the main aspects explaining the success of the activities in many cities; [4] This sort of workshops allows to better identify isolated cases; [5] a few CDCs developed activities as self-initiatives such as the development of a disaster management fund in Sirajganj, a Day Care Centre in Mymensingh or catfish cultivation in Comilla; [6] Understanding and adopting a practice by the community may take a longer time in specific contexts and this element was insufficiently appreciated. This was the case for example in Sylhet where communities were not fully able to comprehend the project or in Khulna's where the last contract was not implemented; [7] Social awareness campaigns were common across the board and they were felt to be crucial. [8] Investment in the individual opportunities of poor and extreme poor women and girls increased the standards of living of their families. [9] Empowerment of women and girls rather came as a result of the strengthening of their collective voice and sense of sorority

The one-day national workshop consolidated the lessons already learned and very usefully localised where the most successful practices took place, based on a collective appreciation. Out of the 44 that were presented by the 22 participating cities, the top five ranked were: [1] Women leadership, Khulna; [2] Savings and credits, Dinajpur; [3] Savings and credits, Chittagong; [4] Linkage and partnerships, Barisal and [5] Women empowerment in Gopalganj.

Key lessons learned from the one-day workshop enriched the ones already accumulated: [1] Local government requires more information / support to help urban poor communities and this was somehow a new issue raised; [2] Savings and credits, and Women Leadership good practices dominated across the cities; [3] Isolated innovative cases were much clearer to identify in the presence of all cities and much less common than perhaps anticipated; [4] Community Housing Development Fund (CHDF) was perceived as a true 'peoples' innovation versus other processes that were implemented in a top down fashion such as the CDC Federations [5] Transferability scored the lowest in general across the board and became an important issue that is discussed further down; [6] NDBUS, as an unique urban poor people led NGO with a strong partnership with UPPR, became strong enough to purchase land for housing in Savar; [7] Collective actions such as the National Learning and Exchange Workshop itself was perceived as a powerful tool for the transferability of good practices and processes among the UPPR cities that participated.

#### **4. Illustrative UPPR good practices**

On the basis of the lessons learned from the various activities and interviews, 11 practices were selected to illustrate the diversity and wealth of the UPPR project. Even if practices such as savings and credits or women empowerment and mobilisation of urban communities could have been selected in a large number of cities, the choice was to get a wider spectrum of identified good practices in a broad spectrum of cities. The eleven following cases are the tip of an iceberg and were documented using the same method along three dimensions: innovation, sustainability and transferability. They are compiled in a booklet published separately in both Bangla and English and refer to: Savings and credits [case 1] and Women empowerment [2] in Rajshahi; The third case is CHDF in Gopalganj [3], even if other cities primarily Sirajganj, Rajshahi and Chittagong are quite interesting as well; Water and sanitation access in Comilla [4] and Khulna [5] are a good example of a practice implemented across all UPPR towns and cities; Creation of a new fund for disaster management in Sirajganj [6] that reached the extreme poor; Health and apprenticeship in Tangail [7] as an interesting case highlighting positive outcomes from partnerships and linkages between actors; [8] Health awareness and services in Hobiganj; [9] Improved child security and enabling employment of mothers in Mymensingh; [10] School attendance improvement in Tangail, Gazipur and Narayanganj; [11] Apprenticeships and skill development in Naogaon.

#### **5. Good processes and tools**

In addition to practices, UPPR has been quite innovative in introducing various specific planning tools, working methods and governance mechanisms that were probably one of its most significant contributions. This is a key finding for the study. A specific set of limited interviews with local authorities, UPPR ex-Town Managers and community representatives allowed to rank those considered “more essential for the sustainability and the transferability of the project”: [1] CAP, Community Action Planning; [2] CDC Federation; [3] PIP, Participatory Identification of Poor; [4] SLM, Settlement Land Mapping; [5] CHDF, Community Housing Developing Fund; [6] CC (Community Contracting); [7] RECAP, continuing of CAP; [8] TLCC, Town Level Coordination Committee and [9] Joint Action Plan.

#### **Lessons learned**

The actors brought clear insights on why these tools were essential, highlighted some of their limits and how they could be improved. These limits are keys to be considered for the subsequent urban poverty reduction program in its inception phase.

A first observation is that most of these tools were considered essentials for the sustainability of UPPR practices. A second observation is that the triad of Community Action Planning associated with Participatory Identification of the Poor and with Settlement Land Mapping is an extremely powerful combination of planning tools. These were probably one of the key contributions of UPPR and one of its greatest successes. A third observation is that the CDC Federation model coupled with the Community Development Housing Fund (CDHF) constitutes another powerful combination that explains greatly the unique delivery capacities of services and concrete improvements that UPPR made in a relatively short period of time.

#### **6. Lessons on Innovation, transferability and sustainability**

##### ***Innovation***

An overall finding from the study is that UPPR has been hugely and broadly innovative. These innovations refer to a number of fields much beyond the “practices and processes” that were the starting point of the study. Three conclusions are made that highlight as well some limits:

- UPPR design is itself innovative, and one achievement is that most UPPR strategies have been informed as innovative –with great variations among them– with a noticeable exception on the strategies related to the 4th UPPR output, and concretely the following: [18] Town poverty reduction

action plans and economic development strategies; [19] Capacity building of local government for poverty reduction; [20] Sustainable funding for urban poverty reduction; [21] Supporting local and national level pro-poor urban policy development.

- UPPR has been unable to monitor and document the broad innovative fields that it opened, along with its partners at community, city and national levels. As a result, knowledge and key lessons have been lost, probably forever.

- A third consideration is that globally very few of the actors involved in UPPR are trained and empowered to transform their unique knowledge and experience into training tools, and transferable knowledge that were necessary to scale up and to disseminate the huge accumulated UPPR experience.

### ***Sustainability***

One of the conclusions of the study is that by and large most of the activities that were implemented in UPPR consolidated through time, including the most innovative ones. Now, the key issues at this stage, after the closing of UPPR in August 2015, is [a] whether or not they are going to sustain in 2016 and beyond and [b] what should be done to reduce the risks of closing down of the various successful approaches. The opinions gathered through the interviews and the various activities raised some concerns.

It would therefore be extremely valuable, for the sake of sustainability of unique innovations to “finish the job” in UPPR cities in order to strengthen what was the 4th output of the program: Pro-poor urban policy environment delivering benefits for the poor. This sensitive issue will be expanded in the Guidance Notes, under separate cover.

#### ***Some key ingredients towards successful sustainability of innovative practices***

Opinions from key informants and ex-Town Managers converged on three issues that are effectively central for the sustainability of the practices beyond then end of UPPR: [1] Women, empowerment and democratic process; [2] CDC dynamics and capacities leading to a program that matches the needs of the extreme poor; [3] Local Governments and their relations with communities: The importance of a good governance model. Comments clearly raised the overarching issue of good and democratic governance being one of the key ingredients for a sustainable approach, during and after UPPR.

### ***Transferability***

When comparing the scoring of the practices by the communities on innovation, sustainability and transferability, it is interesting to note that transferability scored lower. However, various noticeable exceptions to learn from were identified during the interviews. A first one refers to Community contracting that brings transparency as the funds are directed to community development. According to the UPPR coordinators, corruption resulted extremely low, and absolutely not significant at all. A second one is to bring in the private sector and a third is peer-to-peer learning, not only as a learning and exposure exercise, but also at the same time an opportunity to build good relations –or improve them– among the different actors traveling together [mayors, grassroots, women, men, civil servants] in a perspective of good governance. This last recommendation refers back to a deficit of governance coming from an insufficient involvement of Local Governments, as explained below.

### ***Insufficient Local Government involvement***

One of the lessons from the study is that by and large, Local Governments have been insufficiently involved in UPPR as a whole, and such a limited involvement greatly explains the low appropriation of the project by the political sphere. Various interviews insisted on the necessity to “work with and sensitize local officials”. This is quite important, as one of the key for success and sustainability clearly underlined all through the study relates centrally to the willingness and the capacities of local governments.

*Recommendations*: This lesson leads to four recommendations. A first policy recommendation is that there is a clear need to strengthen and deepen the decentralization process and local democracy in Bangladesh. A second recommendation is that the new program at inception phase should increase its incidence on local pro-poor strategy through a set of clear actions and a precise and permanent monitoring of this incidence. A third recommendation is to involve the Municipal Association of Bangladesh and the National Union Parishad Forum that were established in 2003. They could contribute to increase the leverage and the dissemination of the lessons learned of the program and its good practices. A fourth recommendation is to shift from neighbourhoods and communities, to city scale that was not part of UPPR approach. As a result, the various outputs and strategies were less attractive to city mayors and councillors that are in charge of the city as a whole.

## **7. Concluding remarks [overall learning] and looking forward recommendations**

UPPR has developed a unique level of assets and primarily: [1] Women empowerment and women led initiatives; [2] Community saving and credit funds, [3] Communities to Communities peer Exchange, [4] A package of innovative tools and devices that are key drivers for explaining why innovative practices consolidated through time and [5] UPPR has been a laboratory for generation of more democratic local governance. They are, without any shadow of doubt, a strong signal of hope for communities in Bangladesh, as well as an asset for all those striving for eliminating poverty.

At the same time, the study has identified some issues that might need further consideration and that are summarized below. They are part of a Guidance Note under separate cover: [1] Limits of existing static approach on “extremely poor” as defined through the PIP; [2] Need to set up a strong Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism well connected to a powerful Knowledge Management Strategy. [3] Improvement of the overall Governance of the program and inclusion within vertical and horizontal existing Governance in Bangladesh; [3] Necessary shift from neighbourhood and slums to City scale; [4] Increasing secure land and housing tenure as well as urban food security; [5] Shifting from program approach to policy incidence; [6] Closer consideration of the financial dimension of the program, linking better the local funds to a wider city financial system; [7] Addressing spatial justice and spatial inequities at city level; [8] Shift from project approach to process approach; [9] Issues related to training, training of trainers, capacity building; [10] Increase UNDP advocacy role towards pro-poor urban planning and policies.

## **8. UNDP added value**

Important lessons were learned from cross-referencing UPPR's holistic approach to reduce poverty through multiple strategies with the newly established Sustainable Development Goals. The choice of using SDGs instead of MDGs was dictated by a forward-looking vision and the desire to extract lessons for future poverty reduction programs.

UPPR contributed significantly to SDG1 [end poverty] and this was to be expected, but its impact was even greater on SDG 4 [ensure inclusive and equitable quality education], SDG 5 [Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls]. Its impact was significant as well on SDG 8 [... Promote full and productive employment and decent work for all] and to a lesser extent on SDG 11 [Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable].

The added value of UNDP was to make this multiple impacts possible and act upon the urban poverty as a system where education, productive employment, gender equality or empowering women and girls need to remain hand in hand. They are means, when taken together, to curve down massively poverty. Not being specialized in one sector allowed UNDP to mobilize human resources and specialized inputs when and where necessary. Its institutional position facilitated the building of strong partnerships with multiple actors from different sectors coming from community, city and national levels. UPPR and probably the new poverty reduction program to be implemented in Bangladesh is a living laboratory for attaining SDGs at community, municipal and city levels.





# 1. CHAPTER ONE

## PRESENTATION

## 1.1. The study

Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project –UPPR– started in March 2008 and terminated in August 2015 and was the single largest urban poverty reduction programme in Bangladesh. It supported the improvement of living conditions and livelihoods of 3 million poor and extreme poor, especially women and girls of 23 cities (City corporations) and Municipalities. Funds were provided by UKaid, UNDP, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and the beneficiary communities.

The present report results from a study commissioned by UPPR Project to document and disseminate key successes and lessons of the project and support sustainability of the achievements by Local Governments Institutions and communities. Spora Sinergies and its local partner Paraa, in close coordination with UPPR partners, conducted it over 4 months only, from December 2015 to march 2016.

An intense set of complementary activities were implemented over the period: extensive literature review; interviews of 21 key institutional informants mirroring the multiplicity of actors involved; interviews of 100 community leaders and members from each one of the 23 cities; focus groups, meetings and community visits in seven cities and towns; three inter-cities workshops with participants from 12 cities; national learning and exchange workshop with communities and city managers from 22 of UPPR cities. A regional exchange workshop concludes the study.

### Illustrative UPPR good practices

On the basis of the lessons learned from the various activities and interviews, 11 practices were selected as illustrative of the diversity and the wealth of UPPR practices. Even if practices such as credits and savings or women empowerment and mobilisation of urban communities could have been selected in a large number of cities, the choice was to get a wider spectrum of identified good practices in a broad spectrum of cities. The eleven following cases are the tip of an iceberg and were documented using the same method along three dimensions: innovation, sustainability and transferability.

They are compiled in a booklet published separately in both Bangla and English and refer to: Savings and credits [case 1] and Women empowerment [2] in Rajshahi; The third case is CHDF in Gopalganj [3], even if other cities primarily Sirajganj, Rajshahi and Chittagong are quite interesting as well; Water sanitation access in Comilla [4] and in Khulna [5]; Creation of a new fund for disaster management in Sirajganj [6] that reached the extreme poor; Health and apprenticeship in Tangail [7] as an interesting case highlighting positive outcomes from partnerships and linkages between actors; [8] Health awareness and services in Hobiganj; [9] Improved child security and enabling employment of mothers in Mymensingh; [10] School attendance improvement in Tangail, Gazipur and Narayanganj; [11] Apprenticeship and skill building in Naogaon.

### Good processes and tools

In addition to practices, UPPR has been quite innovative in introducing various specific planning tools, working methods and governance mechanisms that are probably one of the most significant contributions of UPPR. This is a key finding for the study. A specific set of limited interviews with local authorities, city managers and community representatives allowed to rank those considered “more essential for the sustainability and the transferability of the project”: [1] CAP, Community Action Planning; [2] CDC Federation; [3] PIP, Participatory Identification of Poor; [4] SLM, Settlement Land Mapping; [5] CHDF, Community Housing Developing Fund; [6] CC (Community Contracting); [7] RECAP, continuing of CAP; [8] TLCC, Town Level Coordination Committee and [9] Joint Action Plan.

## 1.2. The Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project

### 1.2.1. The approach and conceptual frameworks

The study is focused in the identification and analysis of the main following items:

- **UPPR strategies.** The UPPR defines four main outputs to be achieved with its action:<sup>1</sup> [Output 1] Urban poor communities mobilised to form representative and inclusive groups and prepare community action plans; [Output 2] Poor urban communities have healthy and secure living environments; [Output 3] Urban poor

<sup>1</sup> See the full UPPR Outputs and Strategies list in Appendix 1.

families acquire resources, knowledge and skills to increase their incomes and assets; [Output 4] Pro-poor urban policy environment delivering benefits for the poor. These 4 outputs are concretized through 21 strategies, as proposed by UNDP, and 3 cross cutting dimension. These 21 strategies are one of the main formats used all along this study.

- o Example: "Access to local employment opportunities".

- **UPPR practices.** The CDCs deploy a multiplicity of practices that respond to the different strategies defined by the UPPR. The practices are referred here to the concrete implementation of the more conceptual strategies.

- o Example: "Improve child security and enabling employment of mothers in Mymensingh"

- **UPPR tools.** The UPPR project has created a series of instruments addressed to help the CDCs to better manage their day-to-day and to put into operation the different challenges to be achieved.

- o Example: Participatory Identification of the Poor [PIP]

- **UPPR processes.** The UPPR has developed several processes addressed to the communities involved. These processes are conceived as a set of actions aimed at putting the project in place.

- o Example: Community Development Committee [CDC]

All through Chapter 2, these four elements are analysed, and some overall lessons are extracted and presented from each of them. Finally, out of the several lessons learnt, Chapter 3 presents a crosscutting analysis through these three frameworks.

### **Framework 1: Innovation + Sustainability of innovative processes + Transferability**

One of the challenges of the present study was to identify not only isolated and common best practices in different fields, but at the same time to understand which have been the key factors that allowed them to consolidate through time. In order to do so, a format was designed drawing not only from UNDP own format, but from three other methods that some of the team members were quite familiar with: [a] The UN Habitat best practice award format; [b] The Guangzhou award for Urban Innovation and [c] the UN habitat Award, technically documented by the Housing and Building Social Foundation. This latter was particularly adapted, as its three key pillars are innovation, sustainability and transferability. This format—called Tool 2— was applied for in-depth documentation of eleven illustrative cases compiled in a booklet. They address the four following issues: [1] The extent to which the practice or the process are innovative; [2] The extent to which it is sustainable [environmentally, socially and financially]; [3] The extent to which it is transferable and/or has been transferred locally or nationally [4] The Key reasons explaining its sustainability and transferability.

#### **Concepts clarifications:**

**Innovation.** It is understood as a positive and substantial change in the existing practices, technologies or processes that might bring to significant improvements in the life quality of the poor or extreme poor groups of the communities.

**Sustainability.** It is identified in those projects that allow to achieve a long-term change, both tackling the impact on the way of living and empowering and allowing people to assume a bigger control of their lives, or establishing long-term mechanisms that help to grow and to develop the community.

**Transferability.** The concept of transferability is understood in the following ways:

- [a] The first one is transferability towards slum dwellers and communities outside CDC area/ UPPR within the same city. It refers to scaling up through multiplication and dissemination at neighbourhood levels. And it refers not only to the practices but to the processes as well; for instance, the reproduction of the CDC model in other parts of the same city.
- [b] The second dimension refers to dissemination in other cities, and if it happened, it will be essential to get a sense of how it happened, and through which channels.
- [c] A third dimension of transferability refers more to scaling up through policy level incidence, exploring those UPPR practices, programs or policies that became part of local or national policies, and that, as a result of this policy incidence, became mainstreamed. Given the scale and time of the work, this dimension should be narrowed down at local government level.

## **Framework 2: Sustainable Development Goals**

This second framework of analysis addresses one of the key issues raised within the TORs related to UNDP niche. The central argument here is that even if poverty is the focus, the sustainability of innovative processes to eliminate poverty depends largely on their capacity to interact with other dimensions of urban poverty in a systemic approach. Therefore, when referring to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one cannot assess the success of UPPR considering its impact on poverty reduction. It is important to explore on the one hand, which were the different dimensions that explain why an innovative practice was successful and second how a particular entry; for instance, building latrines, or setting up a community fund impacted on other dimensions of poverty.

Lessons learned from those strategies and practices tested and consolidated all through UPPR years are of prime importance in the context of the SDGs recently approved, and primarily of its first goal “end poverty in all its form everywhere” [Goal 1]. However, various of the processes and the multiple strategies implemented through the program are contributing as well to attaining other major goals, for instance “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” [Goal 5] or “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” [Goal 11]. A table of incidence of UPPR strategies on SDGs has been built, based on the desk literature review and already gives an interesting vision of its intertwined relation.

## **Framework 3: Pro-poor urban policies and good governance**

One of the challenges of the past and most probably of the future UPPR program is to become part of the overall city development policy and not to be limited to a sectorial or free standing contribution in a particular field. In order to address this challenge, the present report explores and presents how the good practices, processes and tools have been developed and tested all through UPPR program, and how could they mainstream in existing and future development plans, at neighbourhood, city, and metropolitan levels. Another challenge that the study addressed was to identify the various models of governance and multi-stakeholders relations that were conducive to sustainability and high impact.

## **1.3. Method and activities**

The method developed includes several techniques, briefly explained below:

### **[A] Desk review and literature review**

As a first step, relevant literature was explored. The UPPR team compiled a list of project documents and provided it to the team. This list included the project’s annual reviews, internal evaluations (among other with DfID, the main donor), studies prepared by external consultants as well as news reports. This list of initial documents was complemented by a review of the academic literature and further individual files sent by interview partners (either from UPPR or other organizations).

### **[B] Interviews to key informants and community participants**

Next to the field visits and the interaction with the beneficiaries the team conducted a series of interviews with different informants covering the whole spectrum of UPPR knowledge carriers. A majority of the interviews followed a structured interview guideline. The other followed a semi-structured approach. Finally, another set of interviews was conducted during the national exchange workshop using a third tool [guidelines for the interview on tools and processes].

The list of interviewees includes:

- 11 key stakeholders on the national level including UPPR using Tool 1.
- An additional 10 key stakeholders on the national level in semi-structured in-depth interviews.
- 18 of the (ex-) UPPR town managers in semi-structured interviews.
- 100 beneficiaries across the 7 cities visited during the reality check using Tool\_1.
- An additional 6 key informants on tools and processes.



### **[C] Actors' view on UPPR strategies**

The UPPR project has 4 core outputs with further strategies that are interlinked to help realise them.<sup>2</sup> These outputs represent the theory of change that UNDP, DFID and LGRD believe are the core mechanisms to reduce urban poverty. These outputs have been refined across time as well, so a continual process of revision has also occurred. The list of UPPR strategies, summing 21 in total was provided by UPPR and was used across the entirety of the study, to articulate the UPPR project to all interviewees. This list was also used as a ranking framework for successful and least successful practices.

### **[D] Reality check and community visits**

In addition to asking the key people involved, the impacts of the project were checked through other means, such as visiting different cities and communities and interacting with them. Seven cities and towns were visited—Comilla, Sirajganj, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Sylhet, and Chittagong—<sup>3</sup>, in which four activities were conducted:

1. Focus group with about 15 members from the CDC Federation and the CHDF.
2. Meeting and focus group discussion with LGI (Ward Councillors).
3. Visits to 4 CDCs with different levels of success in order to get a broad perception of UPPR in practice
4. Observational participation and conversation in each of the communities.

### **[E] The Inter-cities workshops**

The Inter-cities workshops aimed to engage with regional cities in one place, to collate using Tool 2 through a rigorous discussion amongst the groups on the practices or processes they thought were the most successful in their cities. Bogra, Khulna and Gazipur were selected as host cities due to their proximity and exposure to the nearby cities. The team worked closely with the members of each city to document the innovation, sustainability and transferability of their chosen practice. The first workshop took place in Bogra with the participants from Rangpur, Rajshahi and Sirajganj. A second was hosted in Khulna with participants from Gopalganj, Jessore, Barisal and the last one took place in Gazipur with Tangail, Hobiganj, Comilla as participating towns.

### **[F] National learning and exchange workshop**

The team consolidated knowledge from the remaining cities not visited during the Reality Check or Inter-cities workshops by inviting them, along with two ex-Town Managers and two local government officials (Rajshahi / Sirajganj) to a national workshop held in UBINIG, Pathrail, Tangail. 22 UPPR towns and cities were represented. This allowed the team to select from all the cities and participants the practices or processes they deemed the most successful in their respective city. The day was structured using a pre-designed format for documentation of good practices [Tool 2] as a framework for all the presentations, all actors were asked to make a presentation for 5 minutes each with critical feedback from the audiences. Feedback was also provided by some of the UPPR steering committee members (UNDP / DFID) along with presentations by the architect Abdullah Lizu & the Dhaka-based urban-poor led local NGO NDBUS.

**The exchange workshop also enabled for further interviews to be conducted using Tool 1.** The lessons learned were presented to obtain further feedback from the different stakeholders on these preliminary findings. At the same time this one-day workshop allowed for the exchange on the best practices and gauge their transferability.

### **[G] Identification and documentation of good strategies, practices, tools and processes**

The good strategies, practices, tools and processes were identified from multiple sources: Literature review [around 10]; Key informants Tool 1 interviews [11 in total]; Key informants Non-Tool 1 interviews [10 in total]; Reality check interviews [100 in total]; Work with CDC Federation which identified through a mapping exercise among the most innovative processes and practices; Inter-cities workshops [24 in total]; One-day national seminar [44 in total + best practice from ex-Town Managers (x2) and NDBUS (x2) and urban planners (x2)]. In summary, the team worked with 211 direct informants, in addition to the CDC Federation mapping and the literature review.

**Illustrative list of 11 practices.** Out of this kind of long list of innovative practices, 11 were selected for in-depth documentation. Two complementary approaches were used: the Reality Check visits and Inter-cities workshops,

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<sup>2</sup> See the list of UPPR strategies in the Appendix 1.

<sup>3</sup> The Location map of the cities visited is attached in Section 2.1. of this report.



along with the key informant interviews, allowed to identify practices and processes that were common to various cities and at the same time pinpointed some isolated one, that occurred less frequently. During the inter-cities workshop was used to further probe into the practice along the veins of innovation, sustainability and transferability. A second method for narrowing down the number of case that could be illustrative of good practices happened when UPPR city representatives at the National Workshop presented two practices they considered the most interesting and also vote on the presentations given by their colleagues from other cities using the framework of innovation / sustainability / transferability to give each practice, under the three criteria a score out of 5. The cases that were selected for in-depth are essentially illustrative of UPPR diversity of good practices spread in the 23 cities.

### [H] Regional exchange workshop

Held in Dhaka over one and half days (20th–21st March 2016), the **Regional Exchange Workshop on urban poverty reduction in Bangladesh the UPPR experience** is placed at the very end of the UPPR learning and good practices documentation process in order to establish a dialogue between UNDP, a selection of international experts, the consultant team leading the documentation, and CDC members of the cities involved. It aimed to validate the multiple lessons learned through an intense set of community-based activities, interviews of key informants and inter-cities exchange seminars.

Its key objectives are threefold: [a] dissemination of UPPR best strategies, practices, tools and processes nationally and internationally in order to increase its visibility and impact; [b] Lessons learned that are presented not only by the team, but also by the Community Development Committee [CDC] member participants, contributing to their empowerment and [c] promoting critical debates and key learning in order to enrich the national, Asia region and international urban development current debates.



**UPPR 2008-2015**

**REGIONAL EXCHANGE ON URBAN POVERTY REDUCTION IN BANGLADESH The UPPR Experience**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is pleased to invite you that a regional workshop to share the lessons learned from the Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction (UPPR) that will take place on 20-21 March 2016 at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The workshop will feature the findings from the "Documentation of UPPR Learning and Good Practices Study" through presentation of learning and good practices in order to facilitate dialogue between urban stakeholders, a selection of international experts, and community members of the cities involved.

We will be extremely pleased if you mark your calendar for the Workshop. We will follow up with details of the programme schedule and invitation soon.

**20-21 March 2016 BICC, Dhaka**

**tentative programme**

**DAY 1 (Sunday): 20 March 2016**

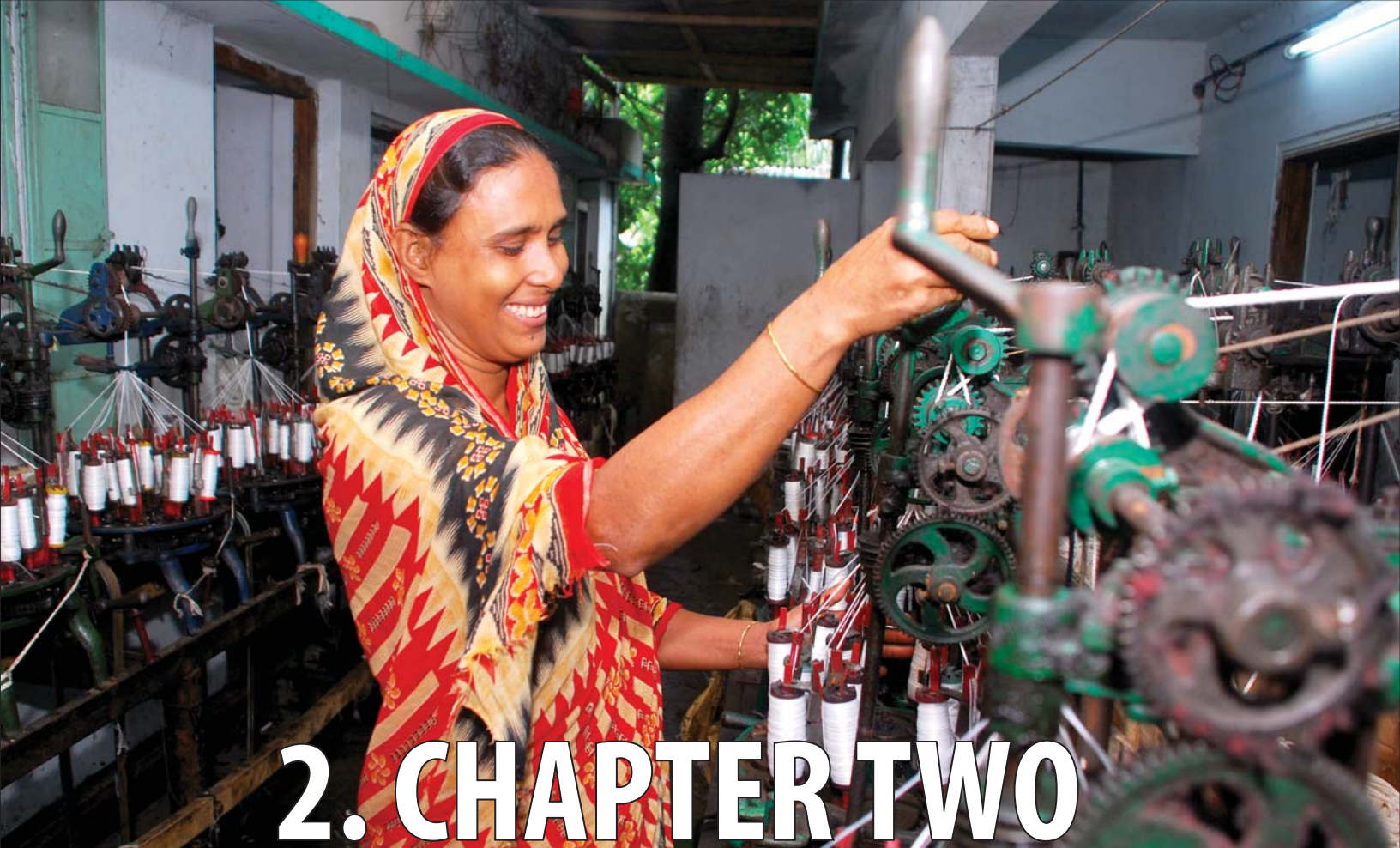
09:00 - OPENING SESSION  
11:00 - 13:00 SESSION 2  
Innovation within UPPR Practices - The importance of collective saving, mobilizing, and tenure security  
14:00 - 16:00 SESSION 3  
The Importance of People-led Processes - Developing processes to integrate a more inclusive urban fabric

**DAY 2 (Monday): 21 March 2016**

09:00 - 11:00 SESSION 4  
The Tools for an Inclusive, Pro-poor Urban Development - Learning by doing work at different scales of the city  
11:30 - 13:00 SESSION 5  
Working Collectively Towards Habitat 3  
13:00 Closing Comments

Logos: UNDP, UKaid, UN Women

The following sections present some questions raised in the different visits activities (2.1.), followed by the identification and positive and negative prioritisation of these strategies (2.2.), practices(2.3.) and tools (2.4.) according to those interviewed. The first intention was to limit the study, as requested by the TORs to “good practices and processes” but during the research it was felt that it could be interesting to identify as well those that had not been successful. Again this double approach even if more complex resulted quite enlightening.

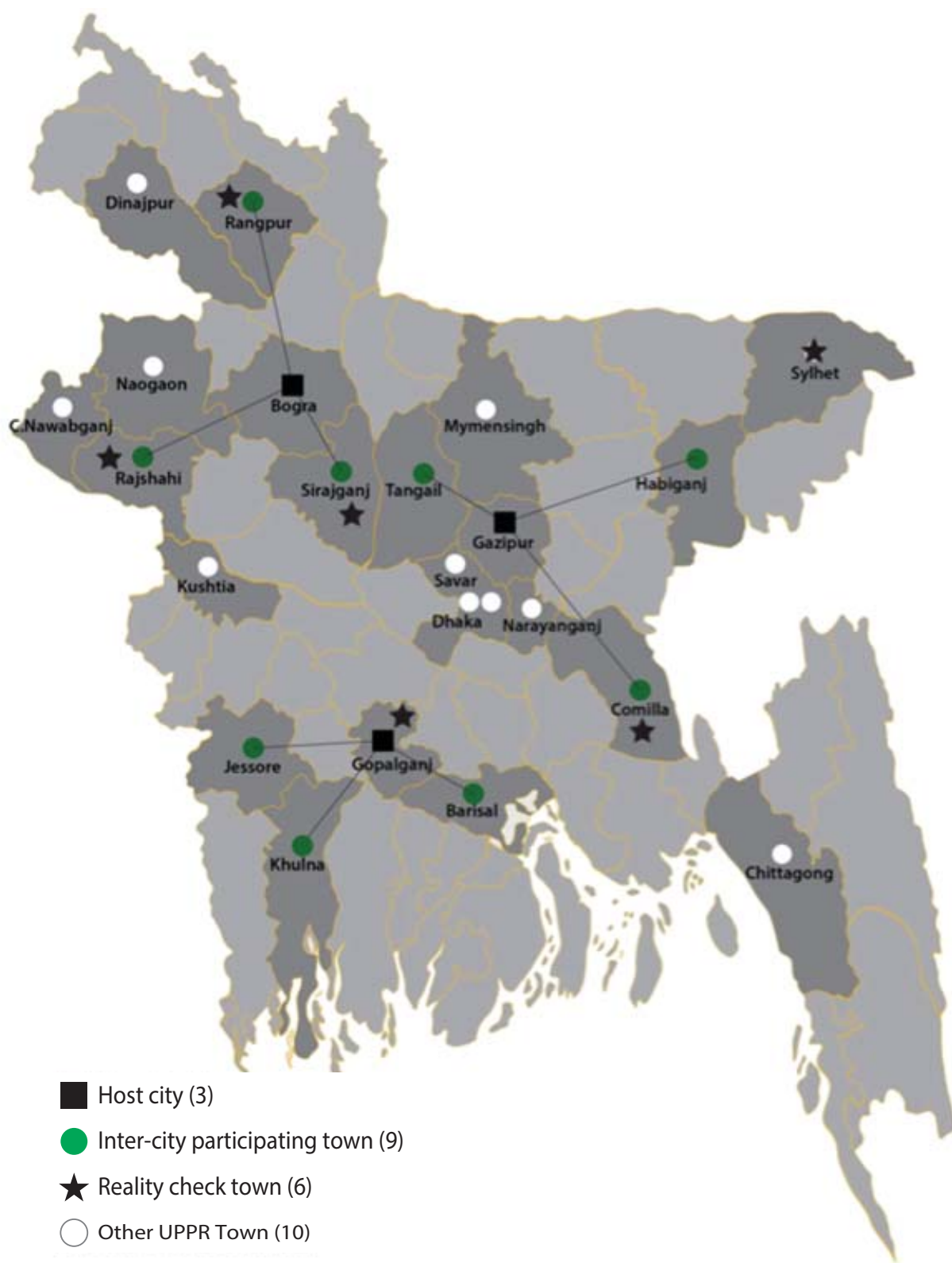


## 2. CHAPTER TWO

### IDENTIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF GOOD UPPR STRATEGIES PRACTICES AND TOOLS



**Map 1.** Location Map of Documentation activities



## 2.1. Some general findings from community visits

In order to identify and understand practices and processes, four communities were selected in each of the seven cities, and purposely two were considered as “good”, one moderately successful and one with limited results, by the participants from the focus groups. This was an exposure exercise, embracing each one of the seven cities as a whole where possible. The location map [Map 1. Location Map of Documentation activities] below allows identifying the seven cities where communities were visited; Comilla, Sirajganj, Chittagong, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, and Sylhet. A booklet<sup>4</sup> reports on each of these field visits and their main outcomes.

In the seven cities visited by the consultant team, several focus group discussions and interviews were held with the Local Government Institutions, by one side, and with the CDC and CHDF members of the different communities involved. These fundamental actors (LGI and community members and leaders) show some converging views on several topics, but of course they often manifest diverging and specific points of view on many others.

### ***Converging views from communities and Local Governments officials***

**Settlement Improvement Funds (SIF) was a real bonding strategy between all of the actors.** In general, CDCs, UPPR and the LGIs, as all claimed it as a great success. All the actors claim local level support for community development with regards to the SIF. Plus, with regards to infrastructure development, the several actors reveal that relationship among them, at the ward level, has been great.

**CDCs seem to be quite able to influence councillors.** There where there is a good relation between the CDC leaders and the councillors, the latter are more keen to put give an answer to the demands of the communities. A good example of that is found in the city of Sirajganj.

**Training and apprenticeship is a key issue for all.** When addressed to get or create employments, training and apprenticeship is considered as one of the key issues where both LGI and community members and leaders see important benefits. The awareness of the community on the need of training is also considered an important issue.

**Ability to build stronger linkages and partnerships across the town or city encouraged better general results.** The fact of transferring to the CDCs the responsibility of contacting and dealing with different service providers has increased the capacity of the community to better adjust the activities offered to the people with their expressed needs. A good example of it is found in Tangail.

**Integrated legal support to the CDCs is very useful for all parts.** Legal support is also a key issue that both the LGI and the community members and leaders consider helpful for the sustainability of the different activities developed. A good example of that is the BLAST in Rajshahi and Rangpur.

### ***Specific views from LGIs:***

**The weak degree of decentralization in Bangladesh limits the communities’ development.** The CDCs and its Federations try sometimes to influence local policy through their Local Governments. Nevertheless, the Local Governments are unable to influence central policy due to their lack of capacity of resources. Only in some selective pourashavas has local policy been influenced. E.g. Gopalganj, Sirajganj, Comilla.

**Some LGIs want to keep CDCs under their control without regulating their own autonomy.** Sometimes, Local Governments intend to keep the CDC activities under monitoring but do not want to institutionalize them properly, despite many years of working with the CDCs (some of them over 14 years now).

**CDC leaders might be a source of concern for the city councillors, as possible competitors in the field.** There is a sense of insecurity among the city councillors, as the CDC leaders are being seen as the ‘real’ mobilizers of their community. This was raised strongly in Rangpur, where councillors were made to look inadequate in comparison to the CDC leaders.

### ***Specific views from community members and leaders:***

**Election/ selection processes within CDCs are not always transparent or free of influence in many cities.** This concern emerges as a key issue, as far as it refers to the lack of mechanisms that enable the community to limit or control practices such as nepotism or corruption among the current CDC leaders.

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<sup>4</sup> 11 booklets have been developed as an additional product of the present consultancy.



**LGIs don't always offer a proper response to some CDCs demands on more policy design towards pro-poor urban.** The CDCs are often left dependent on the UPPR structure, especially the Town Manager and its team –so there is little need for the LGI. Now that the UPPR has ended, the relationships can become difficult to maintain, because the Town Manager was often the conduit between LGI and CDCs.

**Many CDCs require more energy and resources for proper implementation that is not supported by the LGIs.** Some of the communities refer specifically to the maintaining of the Community Savings and Credit activities. Managing the Savings and Credits is a challenge taken entirely now by the CDC Federation, with few instances of support from the LGI.

**Tenure security should be supported by CHDF.** Communities express their concerns on the CHDF needs for real collaboration with local and central government. Gopalganj and Sirajganj and Rajshahi are good examples, but are still isolated in comparison.

**The institutionalization of the CDC Federation limits their strength as an independent actor.** Acting as a pressure group upon the local Government can be difficult when they are based within the local government office. Independence is clearly desired at times, but collaboration with the LGI is still in infancy stages with most Federations.

**The CDCs highlight the value of developing a Joint Action Plan together with the LGIs.** This has not been developed in many cities yet, although there is indeed a Joint Action Plan with all LGIs where the CDC Federation is formally part of it.

## 2.2. Identification of UPPR strategies by different actors

The following section only presents the results related to the ranking of the strategies. The other questions (practices and tools) will be processed and introduced further ahead in this chapter.

### 2.2.1. Vision of key informants on the UPPR strategies

The team interviewed 21 key informants in order to grasp the different views, perspectives and opinions of different actors that have been involved in the UPPR project.<sup>5</sup> From these 21 key informants, we have developed semi-structured in-depth interviews with 11 of them, whereas with the other half the “Tool 1” has been used. The “Tool 1-respondents” had rank the 5 best and the 5 worst UPPR strategies among the 21 defined,<sup>6</sup> according the their degree of success and relevance. The following tables show the result of the combined ranking of all of the interviewees.

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<sup>5</sup> Those interviewed made part of: UPPR/UNDP staff (members of the Steering Committee, coordinators, urban planners, economic advisers); LGI staff (slum developer officer and UPPR executive engineer); Central Government (GoB); Local NGO (NDBUS) and civil society (CUP, CUS); INGO (Concern Universal); University (BUET); Bangladesh Urban Forum (BUF); Business sector; Donors (DFID).

<sup>6</sup> See the 21 UPPR strategies in the Appendix 2.

**Table 1. UPPR best strategies ranked by key informants**

Rank	Name of the strategy	Points
1	Community saving and credit	23
2	Mobilization of urban poor communities and extremely poor groups	23
3	Access to healthy and secure living environments	13
4	Settlements improvement fund	13
5	Support to improvement of housing conditions	13
6	Access to resources, knowledge and skills and participation in the local economy	12
7	Community participation in town poverty reduction action plans	11
8	Security of tenure	9
9	Improved educational opportunities for women and girls	8
10	Access to local employment opportunities	7
11	Support for access to affordable health facilities	4
12	Addressing community social problems	4
13	Socio-economic fund	4
14	Capacity building of local government for poverty reduction	4
15	Reaching the extreme poor	3
16	Town poverty reduction action plans and economic development strategies	2
17	Community action plans	1
18	Sustainable funding for urban poverty reduction	1

[Source: Spora Sinergies survey, 2016]

**Table 2. UPPR least successful strategies ranked by key informants**

Rank	Name of the strategy	Points
1	Supporting local and national level pro-poor urban policy development	22
2	Support to entrepreneurs	18
3	Town poverty reduction action plans and economic development strategies	16
4	Sustainable funding for urban poverty reduction	14
5	Urban and peri urban food production	12
6	Access to local employment opportunities	10
7	Capacity building of local government for poverty reduction	9
8	Settlements improvement fund	7
9	Socio-economic fund	6
10	Security of tenure	5
11	Addressing community social problems	5
12	Improved educational opportunities for women and girls	5
13	Mobilization of urban poor communities and extremely poor groups	4
14	Support to improvement of housing conditions	4
15	Support for access to affordable health facilities	4
16	Access to resources, knowledge and skills and participation in the local economy	2
17	Reaching the extreme poor	1

Source: Spora Sinergies survey, 2016

Table 1 indicates that two UPPR strategies are, by far perceived as the most successful. There is no controversy among the informants about the fact that community savings and credit, and community mobilization, are the most successful UPPR strategies developed across the board. Savings and credit was very successful in all cities, highlighting in cities like Rajshahi, Sirajganj, Bogra or Rangpur, and working no so good in Chittagong, Dhaka or Khulna. Mobilization of poor and extremely poor people is especially valued with regard to its capacity to reach women, and to the high level of ownership achieved among them. Again, it is considered as a big success all over, but it worked especially well in cities such as Shirajgonj, Rajshahi, Kushtia, Rangpur or Gopalganj. On the other hand, as indicated in Table 2, the key informants agreed that “supporting local and national urban policy development” was the least successful. The interviewees state that the project has not properly been involved with government policy level, especially at regional and national policy levels. Not enough was done to engage and influence national policies. A second agreed issue is UPPR limited “support to entrepreneurs”. While the access to local employment opportunities, and the work towards improved educational opportunities (especially for women and girls) are relatively well appreciated by the informants, they consider that a better work promoting entrepreneurship should be widely carried out.

### 2.2.2. Vision of community participants on the UPPR strategies

100 community participants from 7 different cities were interviewed through the Tool 1. This sample allowed building a ranking of the UPPR best strategies (Table 3), as well as a ranking of the UPPR least successful practices.

**Table 3. UPPR best strategies ranked by communities**

[Source: Spora Sinergies survey, 2016]

Rank	UPPR strategies	TOTAL 7 cities	Comilla	Chittagong	Sylhet	Rangpur	Dinajpur	Rajshahi	Sirajganj
1	Community saving and credit	221	71	14	40	43	10	7	36
2	Mobilization of urban poor communities and extremely poor groups	177	57	13	20	32	20	1	34
3	Improved educational opportunities for women and girls	169	40	14	40	53	2	2	18
4	Reaching the extreme poor	152	42	19	33	27	5	1	25
5	Access to local employment opportunities	112	27	17	32	20	1	4	11
6	Access to healthy and secure living environments	105	31	3	0	34	14	0	23
7	Security of tenure	81	17	11	12	20	3	0	18
8	Community participation in town poverty reduction action plans	72	22	9	0	10	15	5	11
9	Support for access to affordable health facilities	65	15	0	21	20	2	0	4
10	Access to resources, knowledge and skills and participation in local economy	63	22	5	12	11	4	3	9
11	Addressing community social problems	53	12	6	4	12	3	3	13
12	Community action plans	48	11	6	16	8	0	0	7
13	Settlements improvement fund (SIF)	38	7	0	12	11	4	0	4
14	Support to entrepreneurs	34	14	0	10	7	1	0	2
15	Socio-economic fund (SEF)	23	7	0	4	1	0	0	11
16	Town poverty reduction action plans and economic development strategies	23	15	0	3	5	0	0	0
17	Support to improvement of housing conditions	21	10	0	0	3	0	4	4
18	Sustainable funding for urban poverty reduction	19	8	0	9	2	0	0	0
19	Urban and peri urban food production	10	1	0	8	1	0	0	0
20	Capacity building of local government for poverty reduction	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	Supporting local and national level pro-poor urban policy development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 4. UPPR least successful strategies ranked by communities**

[Source: Spora Sinergies survey, 2016]

Rank	UPPR strategies	TOTAL 7 cities	Comilla	Chittagong	Sylhet	Rangpur	Dinajpur	Rajshahi	Sirajganj
1	Support to improvement of housing conditions	201	61	3	36	50	17	3	31
2	Security of tenure	129	10	7	23	54	8	1	26
3	Access to healthy and secure living environments	115	13	15	42	35	5	0	5
4	Access to local employment opportunities	96	35	0	8	23	2	0	28
5	Settlements improvement fund (SIF)	75	16	16	24	9	4	0	6
6	Addressing community social problems	74	16	9	19	17	2	0	11
7	Improved educational opportunities for women and girls	61	27	11	9	7	3	0	15
8	Support to entrepreneurs	56	7	0	6	11	0	3	18
9	Supporting local and national level poor-urban policy development	50	9	5	3	13	2	0	18
10	Community participation in town poverty reduction action plans	44	13	0	10	10	4	0	7
11	Reaching the extreme poor	40	16	0	5	11	0	5	3
12	Urban and peri-urban food production	36	13	0	6	4	5	0	8
13	Town poverty reduction action plans and economic development strategies	32	20	1	4	0	0	0	7
14	Socio-economic fund (SEF)	31	6	5	0	12	0	0	8
15	Capacity building of local government for poverty reduction	27	12	0	2	2	1	0	10
16	Access to resources, knowledge and skills and participation in local economy	26	5	0	7	9	0	0	5
17	Community saving and credit	23	19	0	3	3	0	0	1
18	Support for access to affordable health facilities	22	9	0	0	0	0	2	8
19	Community action plans	16	10	0	0	2	0	0	4
20	Sustainable funding for urban poverty reduction	16	2	0	8	0	3	0	3
21	Mobilization of urban poor communities and extremely poor groups	10	2	0	0	3	5	0	0



The rankings of the tables 3 and 4 give us some interesting highlights. On one hand, both tables show that there are some differences among the several cities about the opinion generated by each of the strategies implemented. This fact suggests that some of the strategies themselves are not always necessarily well or badly implemented everywhere, because there might emerge some other factors that can influence in their success or in their failure. Nevertheless, the tables also show common and shared judgments on what are some of the best UPPR strategies, and some of the worst, here and there. This fact, on the other hand, clearly suggests that there are UPPR strategies that, indeed, are easily going to be successful in different cities, while others might not be generally achieved in mostly none of the cities. So, the strategies respond indeed to multidimensional factors that are always contextualized, but they also offer different degrees of success and adaptability to the different and transversal communities' reality.

The tables 3 and 4 allow us to observe these tensions, offering an interesting approach on both the general aspects of each UPPR strategy and their specific capacity to adapt to different urban realities. Thus, the upper part of both tables offers an interesting insight of what are the most generally successful UPPR strategies and the less achievable according to the members of several different urban communities. Let's see what strategies are on the top of the lists.

- **UPPR best strategies.** As for the UPPR best strategies, and according to the communities, there is a high degree of consensus in pointing at the "Community savings and credit" strategy as the most appreciated one. It is indeed the most valued in four of the seven cities, and it is 2nd, 3rd, and 4th in the other three. The community members, as the Table 1 shows, share the relevance of this strategy with the key informants interviewed. The second best UPPR strategy also generates consensus among the community members and the key informants: "Mobilization of urban poor communities and extremely poor groups".

- **UPPR least successful strategies.** Table 4 clearly indicates that "Support to improvement of housing conditions" is the strategy widely considered the least successful: In three of the seven cities it is considered as the less successful one, while in other three is considered as the secondless successful. A special case is Chittagong, where even if it is among the 8 less successful, there are many others that worked even worse than this one.

### **An example of discrepancy between overall results and cities [comparing with Sylhet]**

If we have a more detailed look on the differences between the seven cities we might see that not only Chittagong shows specificities on the strategies evaluation. Sylhet, for instance, shows a higher degree of satisfaction with the "Settlements improvement funds" (SIF) strategy. While the average leaves this strategy in the 13th position, in Sylhet it is among the 7 best. In this city there is a greater concern of the community members on sanitation issues, and the SIF was a key component allowing transforming the poor communities' living environment. As in other cities, an important investment was done in Sylhet on issues such as drainage, roads, tube wells and latrines.

*"UPPR project started a little late in Sylhet. First we surveyed and distinguished and identified poor and extreme poor and not poor in our community. Then we worked with poor and extreme poor. We investigated their needs and the first need was Sanitation. We started ensuring healthy latrines and tube wells for pure water. For 15 families, we provided one tube well, and one latrine for three families. Now the whole environment is much better, healthier. We have less diseases, and more savings."*

*Mahmuda Begum Sheuly [CHDF Chairperson, Sylhet]*

One key finding of the study, illustrated with this example is that good practices are **city specific and time bound**, and this could be considered common sense. However the literature revised is usually giving an overall picture that does not help to understand the local conditions of success or local specifics obstacles that need to be removed.

### **2.2.3. Lessons learned on the identification of good UPPR strategies**

Coming out of an overall analysis of the visions of the community on the UPPR strategies, several lessons emerge.

**[1] There is a consensus among the different actors on which are the two best strategies that UPPR put in place.** No controversy found among the several actors interviewed on the fact that these two strategies are those having the highest degree of success.

**[2] Community saving and credit.** This is the queen of the strategies and the most valuable of the practices, according to a significant majority of those interviewed. According to them, it has been a great success almost everywhere [being the very best Rajshahi, and also Sirajganj and Rangpur; not that good in Chittagong, Dhaka and Khulna]. The fact of gaining real financing power and muscle in within the community, and the fact of getting personal benefits and being able to grow together, are some key elements for understanding its success. The fact that effectively works is another basic element to understand its popularity.

**[3] Mobilization of urban poor communities and extremely poor groups.** The consensus over the value of this strategy clearly indicates that the communities themselves –but also any other person from outside the community who have been interviewed– strongly recognise the important role that the UPPR project has had in mobilizing the different levels of every community. This strategy has been successfully developed across all cities (with special success in cities like Sirajganj, Kushtia and Gopalganj). Community mobilisation makes the difference as it is at the base of many of the other activities to be wished, designed and executed, and its achievement is to be considered a general success.

**[4] The crosscutting gender strategy is in general not considered as good or bad; it is just not considered and probably not well understood.** The crosscutting character of the gender strategy is meant to be crucial in order to achieve women and girls empowerment, and nevertheless it seems to be very weak. Apparently, the gender perspective is just identified with those strategies that are clearly addressed towards women and girls. However, as a crosscutting variable, gender perspective seems not to be clearly developed in the rest of strategies. On the other hand, the gender variable might not always be fully understood, and many could think that it is only about including women in the definition of the several activities. Further training directed to key actors –CDC Federations and also to the several staff working in the project– about the wide meaning and scope of gender mainstreaming in all of the practices would be necessary in order to strengthen this important issue in future actions the develop.

**[5] Main controversy on the 5 best-considered practices among the key interviewed come from the civil society (members of NGOs, universities and private sector).** Some of the members of these sectors considered that even if a big effort might be done in the investment in issues such as housing conditions or access to knowledge and resources, it is clearly not enough. They consider that the impact is not so visible, and so it is low.

**[6] Controversy exists among an important amount of the strategies implemented, which appear both in the list of best and worst.** So the lists show that some of the strategies are clearly considered as best or worst according to the different voices. In some of the cases it might be related to the personal benefit of every actor interviewed. In other cases it might respond to the different degree of success and impact in the implementation of all of them in the different cities. In any case, it indicates that most of the practices developed by the UPPR project are very alive, and that they present some strengths and opportunities, and also some weaknesses and threatens, and so still margin to be improved.

**[7] Some practices in the list of the worst have to do with policy development and economic development strategies directed to poverty reduction.** Even though it is indeed seen as a controversial issue, some of the interviewees understand that there is no visible impact on global poverty reduction in the communities. There keep being poor and extreme poor members in the communities, and there is the belief that a bigger effort is needed in addressing different strategies that make the difference and promote a visible change on poverty reduction.

## 2.3. Best and less successful practices identified by different actors

### 2.3.1. Practices identified in the National learning and exchange workshop

The national learning and exchange workshop provided an intense set of exchanges between multiple actors involved in the UPPR. Over one and a half day, presentations, discussions and critiques were presented from the 23 UPPR towns. Along with this, ex-Town Managers, community architect, Local Government officials and the UPPR steering committee members were also invited to present their experiences of best practice. Lively debates took place on reflection of the various best practices and processes.

On the first evening, each city (minus Savar, whose representatives were unable to attend) was requested to present their 2 most successful practice or process, upon which the rest of the groups would provide a ranking of 1-5 for the innovation, sustainability and transferability dimensions. The list of 44 good practices and processes was then populated with their respective marks.

**Table 5. Ranking of good practices and processes as appreciated by the participants to the workshop**

Rank	City	Name of good practice	Points
1	Khulna	Women leadership	315
2	Dinajpur	Savings and credits	310
3	Chittagong	Savings and credits	306
4	Barisal	Linkage and partnership	300
5	Gopalganj	Women empowerment	283
6	Dinajpur	Women leaderships and empowerments	281
7	Rajshahi	Savings and credits	277
8	Naogaon	Savings and credits	276
9	Sirajganj	Housing development by CHDF	264
10	Comilla	Water Logging	263
11	Dhaka North	Women empowerment	261
12	Bogra	Apprenticeships and skill training	258
13	Barisal	Plinth raising and improvements	254
14	Chapainawabganj	Safe Drinking Water facilities	253
15	Dhaka South	Small business	252

Source: Spora Sinergies / Paraa survey 2016

Here are listed the 15 best ranked best practices out of the 44 that were presented by the participants from each one of the cities. The points at the right column correspond to the sum of the individual points [maximum 5, minimum 1], given by each one of the 41 voting participants for each one of the 3 dimensions [innovation, sustainability and transferability]. One should note the limits of the method, as people were invited to judge and rank presentations made by their colleague CDCs after 5 minutes presentations. However the concentration of results allow for some general conclusions.

Dinajpur and Barisal had both of their practices selected among the 15 first; but more interestingly, one can notice that good practices came from 13 cities, clearly indicating how widespread they are at a national level.

Saving and credits [4 out of 15] and Women leadership & empowerment [4 out of 15] emerged again as the most noticeable practices, well spread in diverse cities. Linkage and partnerships, Housing developments by CHDF, Water logging, Apprenticeships and skill training, Plinth raising and improvements, Safe Drinking Water facilities and small business, appeared as well as prominent good practices. It is important to note here the large number of UPPR strategies and outputs that they refer to. This point will be developed further in the report.

### 2.3.2. Lessons learned from National learning and exchange workshop

The National learning and exchange workshop allowed for a very rich exchange of opinions, visions and arguments among the community representatives of the 22 cities that attended the event. Seven new lessons came out of their discussions.

**[1] Local government requires more information / support to help urban poor communities.** More rigorous support from the LGI is necessary for true sustainability of the CDCs work. At the same time, their own capacity seems limited across the board to provide the relevant support. Bridging this gap is a potential role of the Federations, but this needs to be clearer. This has been expressed by many of the groups towards stronger working relationships but also support in capacity building of the Federation beyond savings and credits and towards more integrated working relations.

**[2] Savings and credits, and Women Leadership good practices dominated across the cities.** As a continuation of the learning of the UPPR experience and validation of the best aspects of the UPPR process, mobilization through savings and credits has been truly remarkable. At the same time, there needs to be now more focus on consolidating the learning from so many of the CDCs in the challenges of sustaining their SCG beyond the UPPR project cycle.

**[3] Isolated cases were much clearer to notice and much less than perhaps anticipated. This exposes the ownership capabilities / capacities of the CDC Federation of using their own resources for context specific projects / processes.** Learning from Sirajganj, Gopalganj, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, and a few others, outlines that once there is a sense of ownership of the process, and the leaders are clearer about the role of the CDC Federation or CHDFs. Collaboration, or partnerships with NGOs and Local Government in some cities were strong (Tangail, Sirajganj, Chittagong, Rajshahi) that has led to stronger relationships and service delivery outside of the community. In Comilla, the community has developed practices that are becoming embedded further in the city corporation structures – a MoU has been signed to support and oversee the Federations activities.

**[4] Community Housing Development Funds were perceived as a true ‘peoples’ innovation versus other processes that were implemented in a top down fashion such as CDC federations, etc.** The innovation of the CHDF, via the strength of peer-to-peer exchanges, is clear in this instance, and the ability to rely on other cities to lead by example, as well as international exposures to relevant projects enables catalytic shifts in the project. Cities are becoming aware of the need to address the issue of housing for the urban poor, and this is a good position to leap from. Gopalganj and Sirajganj, along with Rajshahi and Chittagong have begun the difficult task of activating the CHDF as a loaning mechanism, using the O&M funds to start. Crucial here is the institutional support to scale and replicate a very difficult structure dealing with urban land in Bangladesh.

**[5] Transferability scored the lowest in general across the board.** Across the scoring of the practices by the communities along innovation, sustainability and transferability, it is interesting to note, across the board, Transferability scored lower. This indicates also that from the community there have not been enough sharing and scaling of the practices in general, despite the reach of the project to the UPPR towns and CDC communities. It also highlights the importance of the project to focus now beyond the CDC communities and engage with other cities beyond UPPR, especially for true sustainability.

**[6] NDBUS, as a unique urban poor organization with a strong partnership with UPPR, became strong enough to purchase land in Savar** [TOOL 1 Interview also + their presentation]. This is beginning to show the shift of an organisation that UPPR supported to begin creating impact in the larger cities (Dhaka). A strategic decision in supporting and partnering up with NDBUS has led to a new urban group that can negotiate with the City Corporation, deal with mobilizing the community and also support its members. Further support and improving the capacity of NDBUS, would strengthen their advocacy. They are able to lead their own development and work with other organisations to lead on urban poor advocacy. The recent purchase of land in Savar for housing 150 families is interesting development that, if nurtured with further support, could create alternative models of housing for the poor.

**[7] Collective actions such as the National Learning and Exchange Workshop itself was perceived as a powerful tool for the transferability of good practices and processes among the 23 UPPR cities involved.** The one-day-and-a-half exchange workshop, organized and conducted by the Spora-Paraa team in Tangail became, by itself, a powerful tool of transferability, according to some of the attendants to the event. It was especially interesting the fact that all of the cities could explain the strengths of their collective work, together with some of the limits and obstacles that they found, and also with some of the solutions sought. This sort of inter-city congresses, focused on exchanging and learning from the others experiences have also an empowering effect on all of the CDC Federations members attending them, because positions them in a situations in which they must explain, defend, and in a way “sell”, their collective work.



## 2.4. Identification and documentation of innovative tools

### 2.4.1. Brief introduction to what is named tools

Beyond the initial design of questionnaires foreseen in the Inception Report, the team decided to widen the look beyond practices and processes and consider tools and methods designed and used by UPPR and that were regularly mentioned during the interviews and conversation. In order to develop further knowledge on that issue, additional guidelines for interviews were designed and used<sup>7</sup> with UPPR general coordinators, town managers and community leaders (two persons from each profile).

The long list below condenses a broad set of planning tools [such as the SLM, PIP or CAP], of working methods [for instance community contracting], governance mechanisms such as the Town Level Coordination Committee, TLCC and Financial formal institutional set-up as in the case of CHDF. It is quite clear that these categories should be refined in further research work, beyond the scope of this study, is highly recommended.

Through the literature, what is named here under the broad category of tools appears under multiple names, different according to the sources. It is recommended to deepen this conceptual and operational debate, as various of them were identified as essential for the sustainability of the program, and each one of them is quite innovative in its own right.

- SLM, Settlement Land Mapping
- PIP, Participatory Identification of the Poor
- CAP, Community Action Planning
- RECAP, Updating and continuity of CAP
- JAP, Joint Action Plan.
- Community Contracting
- Clustering
- CDC Federation
- TLCC, Town Level Coordination Committee
- CHDF, Community Housing Development Fund

### 2.4.2. Tools considered essential

*UPPR coordinators, Town Managers, and Community Leaders were asked to rank from one to five the tools within the list above they considered “were more essential for the sustainability and the transferability of the project”. The overall result of this ranking exercise is summarized in Table 8 below.*

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<sup>7</sup> The questionnaire was fully administered in the National learning and exchange workshop, held in UBINIG, Pathrail, Tangail in January the 30th, 2016.

**Table 8. Ranking of UPPR Tools**

Rank	Tools and devices	Points
1	CAP (Community Action Planning)	15
2	CDC Federation	14
3	PIP (Participatory Identification of Poor)	12
4	SLM (Settlement Land Mapping)	11
5	CHDF (Community Housing Developing Fund)	8
6	CC (Community Contracting)	7
7	RECAP (continuing of CAP)	3
8	TLCC (Town Level Coordination Committee)	3
9	JAP (Joint Action Plan)	2
10	Clustering	0

Source: Spora synergies direct survey, 2016.

**Three main observations can be made:**

- A first observation is that most of these “tools” were considered essentials for the sustainability of UPPR practices. Ranking was not easy and several of the interviewees had difficulty in selecting only some of them.
- A second observation is that the triad Community Action Planning associated with Participatory Identification of the Poor and with Settlement Land Planning is an extremely powerful combination of planning tools that is probably one of the key contribution of UPPR and one its greatest success.
- A third observation is that the CDC Federation model coupled with the Community Development Housing Fund constitutes another powerful combination that explains greatly the unique delivery capacities of services and concrete improvements that UPPR was able to make in a relatively short period of time.

One of the finding of the whole study is that they are an invisible aspect of UPPR, in the sense that they are not “brick and mortar”. The verbatim below, extracted from the interviews clearly indicate their distinctive benefits and point out their limits.

### 2.4.3. Actors’ voices: why are these tools essential for the sustainability or the transferability of UPPR ?

Very interesting answers were given to the question: *why are these tools essential for the sustainability or transferability of UPPR?*

#### **CAP, Community Action Planning**

*“This tool is key for running to direction the development. CAP is the first tool. It will continue, they put their need.”*

[Town manager]

*“Once the community are identified, it’s a tool that will give you more detail on the social, economic, infrastructure, and legal status of the community. The CAP will also make you know what are the problems or needs of the community. The CAP is a tool that will help to prioritise the needs. And then this tool helps community to solve their problems.”*

[UPPR staff]

*“It’s the second most important tool (after PIP) for planning and taking the investment decisions. CAP provides priority, the choice of the community. It was followed very religiously from the first day. PIP identifies the individuals, and CAP identify the collective.”*

[UNDP / UPPR]

#### **CDC Federation**

*“Overall committee coordination; [2] Doing monitoring, audits, visits at Cluster, CDC and PG levels.” [CHDF]*

*"Legal identity. They have administrative, HR responsibilities. Institutionalised. Do they keep active? Yes, they have strong partnerships and alliances. Ex Rangpur, even with private sector. They have record keeping, accountability, annual meeting..."* [Town Manager]

*"Working as a unitary body for all areas of a City and [2] Communications and coordination with LGI and other stakeholders."* [CDC Federation]

### **PIP, Participatory Identification of the Poor**

*"Good process to identify poor people. A strong aspect is that it allows for poor participation."*

[Town Manager]

*"It is targeting the individual. Among the 500 households of a community you need to know who is who. It helps to design services to the individual necessities"*

[UPPR / UNDP staff]

*"It's the key targeting strategy."*

*"Functioning of proper need based approaches, to reach extreme poor; Involvement of Community people"*

[CDC Federation]

### **SLM, Settlement Land Mapping**

*"[I] Without knowing the infrastructure and the conditions of the people you can't know the priority settlement, so this is the first step to start working; [II] You need to know the status of the services and the demographics; [III] Status on the land and tenure sheet. All this status knowledge will help you to set a plan."*

[UPPR / UNDP Staff]

### **CHDF, Community Housing Development Fund**

*"Without land tenure no sustainability, And CHDF collects the titles or land related documents. People got awareness that they need to upgrade the titles and land related papers. Some additional tools related to land tenure should be included under CHDF activities, but community would demand them"*

[Town Manager]

*"Security of Tenure; Help landless people; Housing with proper layout of utility facilities."* [CHDF]

### **RECAP, Updating and continuity of CAP**

*"Each year they need to review the plan to see the changes in the community. It can come with a new issue not detected in the first CAP. It has to happen regularly, maybe every year."*

[UNDP / UPPR]

### **JAP, Joint Action Plan**

*"The CAP is prepared at the community level, but the JAP has to be aligned with the local government. If the two plans (CAP and City Plan) are good together, then we have a Joint Action Plan. That helps to integrate, to liberate resources, and ownership from the very beginning."*

[UNDP/UPPR Staff]

## **2.4.4. Lessons learned on identified good practices**

**The most commonly identified good practices has been "Savings and credit".** Four key lessons can be highlighted:

- The poor and extremely poor communities have realized the importance of saving for their future. Savings groups are the most dedicated members in terms of adopting and managing a practice and they are benefitting a lot for personal, household as well as social improvement by taking small to medium sized loans. The aspects that stand out are the sense of ownership, transparency and profit sharing modalities to the successful adoption that is quite common across the cities notably Rajshahi, Naogaon, Rangpur, Chittagong, Sirajganj, Khulna, Gazipur, Mymensingh, Dinajpur and many others.
- The more innovative communities have been those that have had more time to understand the concepts of savings and credits at a larger, urban level (e.g. Rajshahi, Sirajganj, Gopalganj) and have moved on to develop a CHDF that can provide much needed housing loans.

**Effective and larger scale project implementation essentially requires cooperation between the CDC Federation and the municipality / city corporation.** The local councillors are important actors especially in infrastructure works at the community level. Being able to develop linkages with public service providers significantly improved the capacity of the CDCs, especially the leaders to secure the needs and services for the communities. Barisal, Hobiganj, Tangail, Sirajganj and Gopalganj have leaders that are vocal and represent the CDCs well. Dedicated slum development unit in the municipality of Sirajganj is one of the notable examples that demonstrates the importance and impact of LG participation along with Comilla City Corporation's MoU with the Federation to oversee the Savings and Credits scheme. Gopalganj, Sirajganj and Rajshahi have made remarkable and innovative developments in relation to the housing that other cities are keen to learn from.

**Economic empowerment through training and apprenticeships has been vital for employment and improve human asset of a community.** This has been appreciated across the board and re-affirms the ideas that grants are less effective than inclusive training and apprenticeships, the building of the partnership and linkage components with the private sector for job employment has been appreciated and needs further strengthening. Accessing to local economy not only improves one's capacity for better livelihood but also the socio economic status of the entire community. Many communities are yet to realize the true importance of skill building and prefer grants or funds.

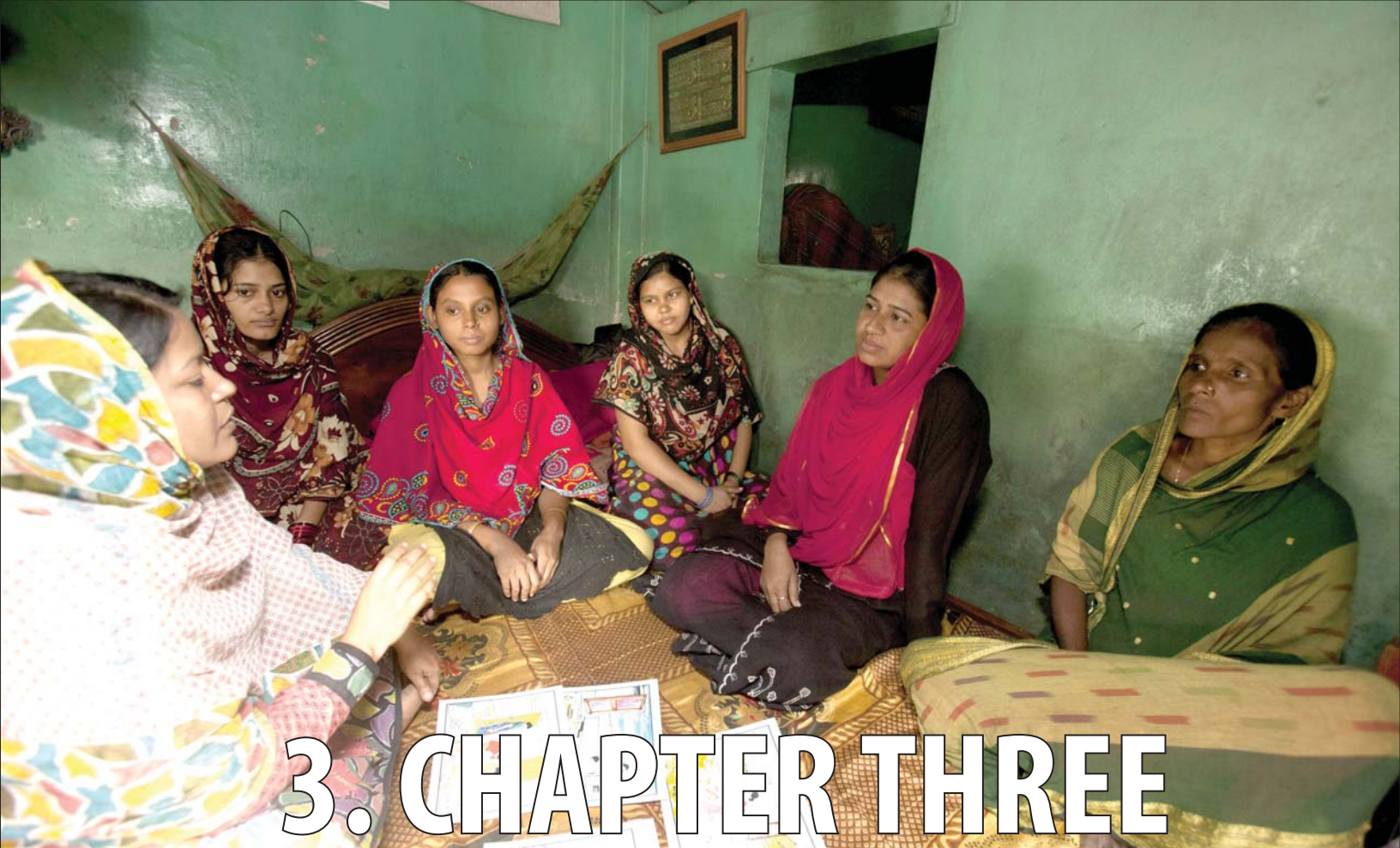
**Best practices can only have greater impact if the learning is exchanged and knowledge is transferred across.** Visiting successful cities have been the most effective strategy for better understanding and implementation of a practice. Waste management in Hobiganj and slum development in Sirajganj have been isolated practices despite their impacts in the CDCs, and could be transferred to the larger urban context. More international exposure also enables catalytic shifts [the Sirajganj experience were inspired by visits to Sri Lanka; and the Gopalganj teams benefited from working closely with ACCA].

Cross-visits need further strengthening and deepening, not just as training sessions organised from the top, but genuine exchange sessions led by the communities themselves needs to be encouraged.

**Women leadership is a crucial tool for developing women and girls' empowerment in the community.** As exposed in the studies conducted by the UPPR on women empowerment, this has been a crucial tool for developing a leadership within communities. However, this still remains arguable. The definition of leadership varied among women across the cities and the understanding is not yet complete or even unclear to many. While many cities address their achievement, fewer have truly transformed the empowerment situation of their women. From decision making in the family to participate and mobilize community and to employment and lead, the extent of empowerment varies. The Leaders of Rajshahi, Khulna and a few others have developed a greater and more complete sense of leading and empowering themselves and are performing accordingly. The practice is truly implemented only when fully realized and in most of the cases that realization is limited to a few individuals: the CDC/Cluster leaders. On the other, hand most of the town managers being male, true practice of leadership and authority by women is certainly a controversy. With the recent Pourashava elections, CDC leaders also vied for councillor positions and there are now 11 female councillors from the CDC in their respective local governments.

**Change in authority might challenge sustainability of a potential practice as well as communication and approach.** There is an important impact on the project progression when the authorities change in local institutions. Rangpur could set more examples of successful practices under Pourashava due to the communication and cooperation it was offering, but currently it is struggling under the new City Corporation.

**Awareness is the key.** Social rights and responsibilities, health and nutrition, organization and collective contribution were the common learning, which helped overcoming initial challenges as well. PG/CDC/Cluster meetings, awareness programs and improving access to knowledge/education were essential and effective to motivate and develop awareness of addressing urban poverty as a whole.



# 3. CHAPTER THREE

## CONCLUSIONS AND LOOKING FORWARD COMMENTS



### 3.1. UPPR as a hugely innovative program, beyond practices and processes

One of the key findings from the current study is that UPPR has been highly and broadly innovative. These innovations refer to a number of fields much beyond the “practices and processes” that were the starting point of the study. There is a need to differentiate quite different aspects:

The first one refers to UPPR **combined strategies** and cross sectional dimensions. This design is innovative, and one achievement is that most strategies have been informed as innovative –with great variations among them– with a noticeable exception on the strategies related to the 4th output, and concretely the following: [18] Town poverty reduction action plans and economic development strategies; [19] Capacity building of local government for poverty reduction; [20] Sustainable funding for urban poverty reduction; [21] Supporting local and national level pro-poor urban policy development.

A second field refers to **specific practices**, either generalized and existing in multiple cities or to more isolated ones that existed in quite a limited number of cities or slums.

A third one refers to a **set of development planning tools** such as PIP [Participatory Identification of the Poor] or CAP [Community Action Planning] that were essential to explain the success of UPPR to curbing down poverty, to reach the extreme poor, to empower women and to improve significantly the living conditions in a large number of neighbourhoods in 23 cities in Bangladesh in a limited number of years.

A fourth one refers to a much more fuzzy set of innovations, much less tangible and documented. We mean here institutional devices, organizational set ups –CDC, CDC Federation...–, governance arrangements such as the “community contracting” that for instance formalize new relations that never existed before –and therefore highly innovative– in Bangladesh between community based organization that acquire an NGO status and international aid and public sector. This fourth sector would require a lot of attention for future developments.

A second key finding is that UPPR has largely been unable to monitor and document the broad innovative fields that it opened, along with its partners at community, city and national levels. As a result, knowledge and key lessons have been lost, probably forever. The outcomes of the present study, even if important to identify and document some of the lessons is quite limited in relation with what could and should have been done. The proposal to set up a strong M&E system, at the scale and in tune with the ambitions of the program, is an important move that will certainly help to increase the necessary advocacy needed to have an incidence at policy level, being it local and/or national.

A third finding is that globally very few of the actors involved in UPPR are trained and empowered to transform their unique knowledge and experience into training tools, and transferable knowledge that are necessary to scale up and to disseminate the huge accumulated UPPR experience. One of the working hypotheses for this study that was presented in the inception phase is that an indicator of true empowerment of communities was their capacities to produce knowledge on their experience and reflect upon it. One of the hopes was to document best practices and best processes along with communities in what is sometimes referred to as “social production of knowledge” or co-production of knowledge. This has not worked that well, beyond verbal testimonies.

Just as important has been the limited capacities of ex-town manager to answer one of the key question of one of the guidelines: What are the key ingredients that you think were essential to explain the success and the sustainability of the good practices that you identified? None of them clearly addressed this question, and such situation strongly suggests that there has been a training / capacity deficit towards them as well. They are most probably in a key situation to participate in the documentation of good practices and processes. However, they are only one important link within the knowledge management strategy for a vast program as UPPR. Our conclusion is that the whole knowledge chain is weak, and strengthening one actor will not solve the situation.

***Beyond these key findings there are other more concrete innovative aspects:***

**[1] The CAP and RECAP tools are a very innovative way to address the problems of the community, but it presents some limitations.** While the PIP tool identifies the individual differences, the CAP tool identifies the collective needs and prioritises them. Once the individualities of the community are identified, the CAP allows getting more detail on the social, economic, infrastructure, and legal status of the community. The CAP also informs on what are the problems and needs of the community, and help to prioritise them, being the community

itself who does it. This tool is key for running the development of the whole project. Some limits arise when the people in the community are not well informed it can cause biases in the CAP design.

Finally, the development of **community leadership** has enhanced their abilities and led to the making of a **Joint Action Plan** with the local government authority. They now have a platform from which they work collaboratively with other NGOs and donor agencies; for example, they developed an innovative way of waste management system with the assistance of JICA. They have emphasized on overall communication with local influential persons and councillors to make community initiatives more fruitful and efficient.

**[2] Increase of women leadership through the development of the CDC in the different communities has been a key to success and is a central field of innovation across the board.** Women's activities made possible to succeed in various sectors with time-to-time coordination with City Corporation. Community Facilitators and Town Manager monitored regularly in field level. Regular meeting in primary group acted as proper involvement of local people. These factors contributed to a certain scaling up of women's power (democratic bottom-up approach and dynamics). Compared to other programs, women's empowerment was not "forced upon", but was a natural consequence of employing the CDCs to execute the implementation on the ground. Their empowerment came from practical involvement with working with different stakeholders and partners.

**[3] Effective and larger scale project implementation essentially requires cooperation between the CDC Federation and the municipality / city corporation.** The local councillors are important actors especially in infrastructure works at the community level. Being able to develop linkages with public service providers significantly improved the capacity of the CDCs, especially the leaders to secure the needs and services for the communities. Barisal, Hobiganj, Tangail, Sirajganj and Gopalganj have leaders that are vocal and represent the CDCs well. Dedicated slum development unit in the municipality of Sirajganj is one of the notable examples that demonstrates the importance and impact of LG participation along with Comilla City Corporation's MoU with the Federation to oversee the Savings and Credits scheme. Gopalganj, Sirajganj and Rajshahi have made remarkable and innovative developments in relation to the housing that other cities are keen to learn from.

## 3.2. The sustainability of good practices & processes in question

The analysis offers some practical lessons in order to consolidate the work done once the UPPR is gone.

**[1] Legal development and consolidation of CDC Federations combined with higher ground participation is key to the sustainability of the activities.** CDC federations are working as community development platforms; they are now institutions of and for the poor and the community. Without further strengthening at that level, there will not be sustainability. In this sense, the generation of political strengths at the local level is key. 20 of the 23 CDC federations were able to receive their status as NGOs (i.e. in Hobiganj, the CDC federation managed to receive money from LGI to manage the solid waste city services). As a legal identity, they have administration and accountability responsibilities, and they may keep strong partnerships and alliances (i.e. in Rangpur, they have record keeping, accountability, annual meeting). The sustainability of these actions comes from these new organisations capabilities to showcase their own capacities, and from a narrow and trustful relation with the local authorities. But the on-going institutionalisation of the federations needs to fit with an increase of true ground participation. As it is noticed: "True participation at the city level is still missing – the organised local groups can be fundamental in steering urban development but there is a need for better, democratic federations." (Abdul Hamid Fakir, NDBUS).

### **Forward-looking recommendations:**

All of the CDCs and the federations need to become legal entities, fully operational and recognized by the LGI and by any other institutional actor. Registration of different committees (cluster, federation...) separately in a single city might be problematic, because it might confront them in the future. At the same time, stronger mechanisms have to be proposed in order to foster a wider and deeper participation in the CDC democratic system of more and more people from the community.

In order to strengthen the internal democratic quality and the external reliability of the system, a narrow relation and mutual monitoring should be periodically guaranteed among the CDC Federation, and all of its CDC, cluster and PG levels.

**[2] LGI's commitment and its complicity with the CDC federations are at the heart of the post-project survival of the activities. LGI must understand and perceive the whole CDC system as an appreciated ally rather than a threat.** Mayors of 11 cities have provided space for the CDC federations on their premise because they appreciated their work and actually wanted to keep them close to be able to consult with them quickly. A big success of the project comes from the fact that some of the LGI envision CDCs as natural and close agents that can execute the implementation of city projects on the ground. Mutual trust and a good relation between the CDC Federation and the LGI ensure the activities sustainability. Some problems arise here: On one hand, sometimes there is a flow of talented CDC leaders towards the local governments; this is a challenge for the CDC because they lose their assets. On the other hand, some local counsellors might be seeing some popular CDC leaders as their political enemies, as far as they might be more popular than themselves.

*Forward-looking recommendations:*

- Efforts should be kept in matching the CDCs with the existing LGIs at the different stages (CDC at the ward level, CDC federation at the city corporation level, etc.) as a way to leverage the CDCs' political voice, and to facilitate greater support from the LGI at all levels.
- Stronger mechanisms have to be established in order to make sure that the new members of the CDCs are not previously involved in local politics, or in any political party activity. Although it shouldn't be happening, and according to some interviewee, the classical political parties in the country might be penetrating some of the CDCs. A strong independence of the existing political party system from the starting point shall avoid potential clashes with the existing LGI teams, whatever might be their political option.
- A strengthening of the legal and efficient capacities of the CDC Federation and a work towards the recognition of its value by the LGI shall be addressed. The goal here is that local governments envision CDC Federations as assets that are useful in their whole urban strategy, and never as competitors in the field.

**[3] Women empowerment, when directed vertically and horizontally, is a key factor that strengthens the capacity of the whole community to sustain its own development.** According to Azahar Ali (UNDP), "98% of the leadership auditions were held by women; there has been a well-recognized acceptance in every city of their leadership, activities, contributions, etc. 16 women leaders were elected as local councillors in the 2011 and in the 2014 elections, and 13 women in the 2015 elections." The whole process of scaling-up of women's power has followed a democratic process (bottom-up), and it sustainably puts women from the different communities in interesting and influential government positions. Nevertheless, community women up-scaling might be a good move for the communities as a whole (and for the person herself), but not necessarily for the empowerment of the women of her community. According to the interviews done with women CDC leaders, the force for empowering women is rather coming from the collective actions that they (the CDC members) develop in within their communities, watching for their own rights as women and girls, but also for those of all of the members of the community.

*Forward-looking recommendations:*

- Deliver specialized training to all of the key people of the project on "gender perspective" for the transversalisation of this approach at all levels. Women empowerment is easier to address when a better knowledge is provided on the issue. Further training on gender perspective should be delivered to any actor of the future project (such as staff of the project, town managers, CDC members, clusters, etc.) in order to maximise the impact on this key development strategy.
- Addressing gender violence and early marriages are two key issues that must be strengthen in any future project. The design and implementation of the strategies to address these issues should be fully developed together with the CDC members, and directly managed by them.

**[4] Community day-by-day building of a sense of ownership of the whole project is key for its sustainability.** The activities developed are based on community initiatives, managed by the community, so its members own the project and its outcomes because they feel that the project is there because it is theirs; they have a sense of ownership. It allows the development of creative processes coming from the communities themselves. The members of the communities had a stake because they spent their own money and they managed the different projects.

*Forward-looking recommendations:*

- The sense of ownership has to be promoted at all levels of the project. The project must make sure that their entire staff knows how to transfer responsibilities and ownership to the community.
- Community Contracting should be further developed as a multi-tool that both empowers the CDCs and builds a sense of ownership of all the process and so, it is a powerful tool for the sustainability of the activities.

**[5] The different levels of skills and abilities presented by the project's staff are directly related to the higher or lower success of the project in the different cities.** While some of the interviewee might applause the work and the skills of some of the staff, other expressed concerns about it. There is something though where all of them agree: the success of the project in many of the cities depended on a great degree on the skills and professional qualities of the town manager. The key factor of success is pointed here at the quality of the staff.

*Forward-looking recommendations:*

- Requesting for higher profiles among the project's staff will provide better chances to maximize the impact of the project as a catalyser among CDCs and LGs. Innovation and management capacity, as well as social abilities, should be competences always expected a priori.
- M&E should provide input on what are the training needs that the staff will have to continuously address throughout the development of the project.

**[6] The innovative, sustainable and transferable components of the different outcomes, strategies and actions designed and carried out need further M&E to be fully understood by all stakeholders and have major policy incidence.** According to different interviewees (town managers, UNDP members, DFID members, and GoB members), a bigger investment on the M&E system would have been required. The desk review developed by the present consultant team also reveals this lack of a strong M&E system and the unavailability of data. This issue is a key factor that jeopardizes the project's sustainability. At a GoB level, they need to have data on the impact of the project as a whole, and of its several activities, before being able to evaluate their future role in it. According to the interviewees, media attention would have been better than it has been if an M&E system would have provided numbers on the progress of the project. Thus, while activities such as "Improved educational opportunities for women and girls" are quite appreciated in within the communities, it is hard to say what have its impacts and its effects really been due to a lack of data and monitoring on the issue. There are other highly popular practices among those interviewed, such as the "Mobilization of urban poor communities and extremely poor groups", whose success is nevertheless difficult to fully understand, partially due to a need of indicators on that issue. More particularly, the lack of quality baseline data makes it difficult to address the poverty reducing impact of the project once it has ended.

*Forward-looking recommendations:*

- The future project should develop a good monitoring framework in its inception phase. An intensive database study should be developed at the very beginning of the future project. Quality data on the current situation of the several issues to be monitored and evaluated throughout the project will be a key issue to guarantee it's future sustainability.
- A special regard on the study of the project's tools and methods, and further production of documentation on the processes and practices developed is required.

### 3.3. Exploring the impact of UPPR upon the newly established sustainable development goals

World leaders adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 as the new guiding principles for international sustainable development. Although the UPPR project was completed before the SDGs were even adopted, an analysis of the alignment of the UPPR project with the SDGs can still inform a new follow-up project of the UPPR.

The following lessons were learned.

**[1] UPPR contributed most to SDG 1 (poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (job creation) and SDG 10**

### **(reducing inequalities)**

This result is not too surprising considering the fact that the project main focus was to reduce poverty, and to do so effectively targeted predominantly women. Since this aspect was taken into consideration during the exercise, most of the goals of the SDG5 (gender equality) were being addressed by the UPPR project. Similarly, since the UPPR project addressed only people living in poor areas and had another level of poverty targeting (PIP), the project did much to benefit only the poorer segments of society. In that way, it contributed in reducing inequality in urban areas. The good impact on SDG 8 [job creation] needs to be highlighted and this relates to the activities implemented under the SEF that contributed either directly or indirectly to creating better jobs and to preparing women for integrating either formal or informal job markets.

### **[2] UPPR had a limited impact on SDG 11 [Sustainable urban development] and SDG 7 [Energy for all]**

The limited impact on SDG 7 [Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all] is not too surprising as UPPR did support individual CDCs and areas to negotiate legal access to electricity. However, beyond this positive impact, there were limited activities directly aimed at providing access to energy, specifically electricity. More surprising is the limited impact of UPPR on SDG 11 [Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable], as one could have expected to address urban challenges more directly. To be fair, the SDG 11 is extremely broad and also includes targets regarding natural and cultural heritage, for instance. The next section will cross reference UPPR strategies and SDG 11 targets.

### **[3] “Mobilization of the urban poor communities and extremely poor groups” and “Community and Savings groups” are the strategies that reached the highest impact across the selected SDGs.**

Mobilizing the urban poor and extreme poor is important for nearly all SDGs, as SDGs are poverty targeted. And if the poor mobilize and start gaining a political voice or address their own problems themselves, that is the most sustainable way to address most of the problems they face. Also, providing access to savings and credits is an extremely important measure to provide the poor with the ability to smooth their consumption in times of economic shocks as well as invest. Thus, access to those financial instruments is important to improve the financial resilience of the poor. Finally, as the project benefitted mostly women, it contributed much to women empowerment across many of its activities.

### ***Forward-looking recommendations:***

In order to monitor the impact of the new anti poverty program on the SDGs, it will be important to set up a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system. The first step should be to decide on a set of meaningful, yet measurable indicators related to each one of the targets. These indicators do exist already for some of the SDGs target. Then, proper baseline studies should be conducted across all indicators. Finally, the progress of the indicators over time should be closely monitored.

It might not always be necessary to collect new data through the project. Although there exists limited data in Bangladesh for policy making, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics collects some high quality data sets that can be disaggregated to a large degree. Two additional ones could be considered: [a] Household Income and Expenditure Survey, carried out every five years, and [b] health related data from the Demographic and Health Surveys, carried out every three years with the latest data set from 2014.. Although this data might not always be used for monitoring purposes, they might provide useful insights for implementing the new phase and building baseline-studies.

## **3.4. A deficit of governance perspective that largely explains a low impact on pro- [extreme] poor urban policies**

**Insufficient local government involvement.** One of the key lessons from the study is that by and large, Local governments have been insufficiently involved in UPPR as a whole, and such a limited involvement greatly explains the low appropriation of the project by the political sphere. Various interviews insisted on the necessity to “work with and sensitize local officials”. This is quite important, as one of the key for success and sustainability clearly underlined all through the study relates centrally to the willingness and the capacities of local governments.



### **Forward-looking recommendations:**

- A first policy recommendation is that there is a clear need to strengthen and deepen the decentralization process and local democracy in Bangladesh. Under current conditions, Local Governments even if they are genuinely committed to pro-poor strategies –and the study highlighted various of them - they have extremely limited financial capacities and limited human resources to significantly give continuity or expand what UPPR planted locally.
- A second recommendation is that the new program at inception phase should increase its incidence on local pro-poor strategy through a set of clear actions and a precise and permanent monitoring of this incidence. This seems to be quite a promising field that was at the core of various of the debates and conversations all through the various activities, meetings, focus groups and workshops
- A third recommendation is to involve the Municipal Association of Bangladesh and the National Union Parishad Forum that were established in 2003. They could contribute to increase the leverage and the dissemination of the lessons learned of the program and its good practices. At the same time, and just as importantly it could increase its power of advocacy and increase the level of incidence for pro-poor policies
- A fourth recommendation is to shift from neighbourhoods and communities; to city scale was not part of UPPR approach. As a result, the various outputs and strategies were less attractive to city mayors and councillors that are in charge of the city as a whole. The project under its current design was increasing inequities between the wards that benefitted from the project and those that were excluded, despite, most probably having, for some of them a similar situation.

**Tensions between “project” logic and “process” logic.** As most aided funded projects, UPPR is a program with a beginning and an end, which respond to the logic of the donor and to its time frame, and not necessarily to the diverse local processes themselves. The study suggests that in various communities and wards, practices and processes had not reach their full sustainability, or had not been transferred. This is a huge missed opportunity for increasing the programme impact, and increase its value for money impact, and at the end of the day, help more extreme poor to get out of extreme poverty.

### **Forward-looking recommendations:**

- One of the key looking forward recommendations based on the current study is shift from a conventional project approach to a process approach in which activities and resources are embedded in municipal political process, in existing social and economic dynamics and processes, and support them, at the rhythm they occur. In this sense ACCA approach developed in over 100 Asian cities could be a source of inspiration and information.
- The exit strategy, according to interviewees, was built too late [some interviewed city managers say that they were informed about it one and half year before the project ended]. It is suggested to in build the exit strategy from the very outset of the new program.

**Advocating Extreme Pro-poor Governance.** According to the empirical evidence and testimonies, the limited transfer of excellent practices and processes beyond the 23 cities that were part of UPPR and their quite limited dissemination in each one of the cities, beyond the communities involved relate to a central reason: the lack of building of a pro-poor governance primarily at city level. The observations and the comments below address this issue.

**TLCC should deserve a special attention** as they are a true multi-stakeholder’s device well established and that enjoys a formal status, beyond UPPR. “TLCC [Town level Coordination Committee] have been activated in various cities, and they have been successful and useful”. UPPR has influenced in some cities the way TLCC works, as it was influential to have people being part of the TLCC –and primarily poor people– and have their voices heard. This being said, various limitations were pointed out during the study.

One of them is that the natural counterpart of the UPPR city managers and communities are the Slum Upgrading Department that formally should exist in every city and town. However, this appointment is not always the case, and in addition their resources are quite limited, if existing at all. As a result, the continuity of UPPR actions [sustainability] or their expansion [up-scaling] has found structural limits. A dedicated Slum Development Unit in the municipality of Sirajganj is one of the notable examples that demonstrated the importance and impact of LG participation. Other examples are noticeable such as Comilla City Corporation’s that signed a MoU with the Federation to oversee the Savings and Credits scheme or Gopalganj, Sirajganj and Rajshahi that developed

remarkable and innovative actions in relation to housing. They all tend to suggest that formalization of relations between CDC, CHDF and people in general on the one hand and Local Governments are conducive to long term structural changes and positive impact on poor people's life.

Another limit, reported by various informants is that TLCC are appointed by the Mayor and are in most cases belong to his Political Party. As a result, if CDCs are of the same political colour as the one from the Mayor, CDC can find an important space to develop their activities and expand. This situation is fragile and is threatened in case another political party is elected.

### 3.5. Concluding remarks

Based on the findings of the study, a Guidance note, under separate cover, will highlight first the key assets developed by UPPR all through its years. PPR has developed a unique level of assets such as: [1] Women empowerment and women led initiatives; [2] Community saving and credit funds, [3] City to City peer Exchange, [4] A package of innovative tools and devices that are key drivers for explaining the innovative practices and their consolidation through time and [5] A laboratory for generation of more democratic local governance. They are, without any shadow of doubt, a strong signal of hope for communities in Bangladesh, as well as an asset for all those striving for eliminating poverty.

At the same time, the study has identified some issues that might need further consideration and that are summarized below. They are part of the guidance note as well: [1] Limits of existing static approach on "extremely poor" as defined through the PIP; [2] The need to set up a strong Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism. [3] Improvement of the overall Governance of the program and inclusion within vertical and horizontal existing Governance in Bangladesh; [3] Necessary shift from neighbourhood and slums to City scale; [4] Increasing secure land and housing tenure as well as urban food security; [5] Shifting from program approach to policy incidence; [6] closer consideration of the financial dimension of the program, linking better the local funds to a wider city financial system; [7] Addressing spatial justice and spatial inequities; [8] Shift from project approach to process approach; [9] Issues related to training, training of trainers, capacity building; [10] Increase UNDP advocacy role towards pro-poor urban planning and policies.



# 4. CHAPTER FOUR

## APPENDIX

## Appendix 1. UPPR Outputs and strategies

### **Output 1: Urban poor communities mobilised to form representative and inclusive groups and prepare community action plans**

1. Mobilization of urban poor communities and extremely poor groups
2. Community action plans
3. Community participation in town poverty reduction action plans
4. Access to healthy and secure living environments
5. Settlements improvement fund

### **Output 2: Poor urban communities have healthy and secure living environments**

6. Security of tenure
7. Support to improvement of housing conditions
8. Support for access to affordable health facilities

### **Output 3: Urban poor families acquire resources, knowledge and skills to increase their incomes and assets**

9. Community saving and credit
10. Reaching the extreme poor
11. Addressing community social problems
12. Access to resources, knowledge and skills and participation in the local economy
13. Access to local employment opportunities
14. Support to entrepreneurs
15. Urban and peri urban food production
16. Improved educational opportunities for women and girls
17. Socio-economic fund

### **Output 4: Pro-poor urban policy environment delivering benefits for the poor**

18. Town poverty reduction action plans and economic development strategies
19. Capacity building of local government for poverty reduction
20. Sustainable funding for urban poverty reduction
21. Supporting local and national level pro-poor urban policy development

## Appendix2. Extended consulted bibliography

We present here the extended consulted bibliography. In the Final Report will include the selected references, which will be also cited throughout the report.

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