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PUBLIC PROCUREMENT WATCH

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ENGAGING CITIZENS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PAYS OFF

— Mahan ul Haque

Engaging citizens in monitoring public procurement at implementation stage in 16 upazilas was a big challenge, particularly because of its bigger scope than before. But as BIGD went along the process, the challenges started to dissolve gradually. Citizens' active participation with Field Officers made it possible to commence work in all the 80 sites of 16 upazilas, fulfilling the target.

When the implementation began, 16 field officers met the Deputy Commissioners and concerned officers such as LGED Executive Engineers, Upazila Engineers, UNOs of their designated areas with



BIGD, Brac University
SK Centre, GP, JA/4, Mohakhali
Dhaka 1212



+88 02 5881 0306, 5881 0326



info@bigd.bracu.ac.bd



http://bigd.bracu.ac.bd



the letters from the Director General of CPTU. As per the program design, BIGD had to select 5 construction sites from various types of construction such as roads, primary schools, bridges etc. However, not all types of work were available at the same time. To select a variety of projects, BIGD had to wait.

A major challenge was to select motivated, responsible, and well-intended citizens for the monitoring group. Forming groups with women or bringing them in meetings was an acute problem in Sylhet. But the scenario was quite different in Barishal with more women present in the meetings than men. Besides, field officers had a hard time ensuring timely presence of LGED engineers in the site meetings.

Often, citizens had to wait for a long time for the engineers to arrive.

Tackling these challenges was difficult. But what kept the task going is mass people's interest in engaging to monitor implementation of public procurement. There were instances when citizens sent back 5 trucks of poor quality bricks in Dhunot, Bogura. In Shyamnagar, Satkhira farmers memorized the contact number of Upazila engineer written on the signboard. It appears citizen monitoring of public procurement is a need across the country, not only of in 48 upazilas.

KEEP CITIZEN

5th WORLD BANK MISSION MEETING

On 18th November 2019, Monday, BIGD participated in 5th World Bank Mission meeting held at CPTU conference room. The meeting was organized to sync the implementation of DIMAPPP and for all the related organizations (BIGD, BCCP and Dnet) to reach the same ground. Ishtiaq Siddique (Lead Procurement Specialist of World Bank), Ali Noor (Director General of CPTU), and all the team members of DIMAPPP from BIGD were present in the meeting. The team shared updates and future plans with everyone, and also noted down further suggestions and recommendations to carry out.





ENGAGEMENT FREE FROM ANY INFLUENCE

CHATTOGRAM DIVISIONAL WORKSHOP TOLD

On 31st October 2019, Thursday, the CPTU and BIGD organized a division-level workshop at the Conference Hall, Chattogram Circuit House, Chattogram. This was the 3rd such workshop organized under the CE subcomponent of DIMAPPP.

The event was followed by a question and answer session between the participants and guests, and group work. For the group work, the participants were divided into groups of government officials, tenderers, local government representative, general citizens, and citizen monitoring group. Participants shared their views on the advantages and disadvantages of citizen engagement and provided suggestions to address the challenges. Overall, there was a positive response regarding the initiative. They believed citizen engagement could increase transparency and accountability, and

eventually efficiency in the work process. Having a work environment free from political influence was a common demand from participants.

The Chief Guest of the event was Mr. Abul Mansur Md. Faizullah, ndc, Secretary, IME Division, Planning Ministry; and the special guests were Mr. Md. Ali Noor (Additional Secretary, CPTU) and Mr. Md. Habibur Rahman (Additional Divisional Commissioner, Joint Secretary, Chattogram). Mr. Md. Elias Hossain (Deputy Commissioner, Chattogram) presided over the event.





Citizen Monitoring can Enhance Efficiency in Public Procurement

The next divisional workshop took place in Sylhet on 26th December 2019, Thursday. Organized at the Conference Hall of Sylhet Circuit House, this was the 4th divisional workshop organized under the CE subcomponent of DIMAPPP.

At the workshop, series of discussions took place between the participants and guests. A separate group work session was held later. Participants provided many useful recommendations to further assist the initiative. In a positive note, participants said, with proper guidance, citizen engagement could increase efficiency in public procurement. All the participants agreed that awareness creation should intensify.

Mr. Abul Mansur Md. Faizullah, ndc, Secretary, IME Division, Planning Ministry, was the Chief Guest of the event and the Special Guests were Mr. Md. Ali Noor (Additional Secretary, CPTU) and Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman (PAA, Divisional Commissioner, Additional Secretary, Sylhet). Mr. M. Kazi Emdadul Islam, Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, chaired the event.



This is a case of Kalinagar village of Shyamnagar upazila in Shatkhira district. In the mid of the year, the road construction work from Dhankhali Madrasa road to Kalinagar Government Primary School saw some irregularities—the soil required to build the road was being dug out from the edge of the same road itself. Doing so can cause the road to break down in rain or when crashing waves.

A local citizen complained regarding this and the designated field officer verified the complaint. He then informed the relevant procuring entity with photographs and videos.

But there was no visit from the procuring entity. The next day, the workers continued to fill the road

with soil from the same source. The local citizens objected again. Then some local individuals threatened the citizen monitors. The field officer requested the procuring officer to visit the site and solve the problem. However, he still did not pay a visit. The citizens were then bound to complain to local MP. Eventually, MP's intervention solved the problem.

Citizen engagement activities at field: Quarterly update

Activities	Achieved till October 10, 2019
Contract list collection from LGED	80
Group formation	68
Group orientation	68
Site meetings	80
Grievances	74



Editor: Salina Aziz | Executive Editor: Evan Iqram
Content Editor: Insiya Khan | Visualisation: Md. Abdur Razzaque