



Report on
**Midterm Evaluation of
Resilient, Inclusive and Innovative Cities
in Bangladesh (RIICB)' Project**

SUBMITTED BY



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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATION

AD Plan	: Annual Development Plan
BILS	: Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies
DAC	: Development Assistance Committee
DSK	: Dustho Sastho Kendro
DW	: Domestic Workers
DWRN	: Domestic Workers Rights Network
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
FSM	: Faecal Sludge Management
FSTT	: Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant
IDI	: In Depth Interview
KII	: Key Informant Interview
MCC	: Mymensingh City Corporation
MP	: Member of the Parliament
NDWCC	: National Domestic Worker Coordination Committee
NGO Forum	: NGO Forum for Public Health
NM	: Nari Maitree
OECD	: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OiBD	: Oxfam in Bangladesh
RIICB	: Resilient, Inclusive & Innovative Cities in Bangladesh
RMG	: Ready Made Garment
SoD	: Standing Order on Disasters
SWM	: Solid Waste Management
TNA	: Training Needs Assessment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “Resilient, Inclusive and Innovative Cities (RIICB)” Project aimed to support vulnerable urban communities, particularly women, youth, people with disabilities in Dhaka and Mymensingh to become more resilient to social, economic and climate shocks and stresses by 2023 (recently the project has been extended by 2 years). Therefore, initiatives were taken to conduct midterm evaluation to review the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency of project interventions. Moreover, this mid-term evaluation tried to provide an opportunity for accountability towards the project stakeholders, as well as important learnings for the project teams and partners.

The evaluation applied mixed method approach for collecting empirical data from different stakeholders. Due to Covid 19, representative survey could not be accomplished in all of its project areas, but rigorous process was followed to conduct household survey (353), FGD with community (6), IDI with project beneficiary (8) and KII with key stakeholders (11).

The findings of the report have been structured following the OECD criteria. It covers relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the project. Even though there are scopes to improve further, particularly in the areas of effectiveness and impact, the overall performance of the project is high.

The **first section** of the evaluation findings presents relevance of the project. The project has been found as highly relevant for its target population. There is huge demand for expansion of its coverage. The evaluation has found that rapid expansion of the city has created huge demand for WASH related services. The FSM Plant is very needful and timely intervention. MCC being a new City Corporation does not have the ability to provide all required services. Therefore, it was appropriate to intervene. Similarly, engaging urban youth in community led disaster risk reduction activities was right and appropriate.

The **second section** of the evaluation findings present effectiveness of the project., The effectiveness of the project has been found at high level. The level of engagement of MCC and contribution of 44 decimals of land by the MCC evident that key stakeholders of the project were effectively engaged and managed. However, Number of limitations have been noticed which could have been minimized. For example, coverage of the project was very limited against the needs of the people (also to draw some lessons) and selection of the wards for the intervention could have been done more carefully by engaging counsellors. Selection of training participants could also have been better. There were some participants whose motivation was not aligned with what was provided. Conducting study on an issue which has adequate publicly available knowledge and information is not justified.

The **third section** of the evaluation findings describes efficiency of the project. The project design and delivery mechanism has been found highly efficient. These can be inferred from some reasons which include the budget which was efficiently spent over project periods, HR cost has remained less than 20% in first 3 years of the project, there has been a sudden rise noticed in year 4, audit recommendations have been taken seriously. Required measures have been taken by NGO Forum to be more compliant with standard practice and procedures.

The **fourth section** of the evaluation findings explains the impact of the project. There are three specific reasons why impact of this project has been leveled as high. The reasons include – establishment of the

FSM Plant and putting its efforts for building awareness among community has been impactful and WaSH related impact was high, however there was scope to get more financial contribution from MCC. DRR and youth development related impact was average. Components of social protection and empowerment of domestic workers were less impactful. NDWCC was formed and its meetings were also held. However, there were lack in evidence to demonstrate that the study conducted by BILS was used for program development. In addition, DSK also used the fund for humanitarian purposes (which was needed but achieved different outcome).

Lessons learned through the project

The evaluation team has captured some learning which are as follows:

- I) Flexible plan (AD Plan) allows more inclusive development support to people in need.
- II) Training Needs Assessment (TNA) is essential for training-based intervention.
- III) Training without startup/job placement support unlikely to be effective.
- IV) Assess ability to respond & feasibility of the contents before raising awareness.
- V) Considering key features and limitations of the city, customized technology and transport for FSM & SWM services in Mymensingh is required.
- VI) Identification of knowledge or information gap is important before conducting any research.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of different aspects and progress of the project, the following recommendations have been made.

1. Capitalize relationship with MCC to engage further/co-invest in some areas such as ensuring safe drinking water in low-income communities.
2. Engaging MCC, particularly counselors, to select project locations to avoid any grievance.
3. Appropriate size and number of vacutug, waste collection truck is required for the city where the roads are very narrow.
4. Startup support for skilled trainee is essential to ensure knowledge and skills are not lost due to lack of support.
5. More equipment for demonstrations during training is required. This is very important for any kind of skills training for any adult group.
6. More allocation for DRR related activities is required considering its potential and need for intervention in a city like Mymensingh.
7. An action plan against M&E Recommendations would help to track progress with the recommendations.

RICB is very useful and needful for vulnerable communities such as women, youth and people with disabilities in Dhaka and Mymensingh. More coverage of the project could have been more beneficial for people in similar contexts.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh's urban population of 42 million is one of the largest in the world. Cities like Dhaka and Mymensingh are experiencing exceptional urban growth rates, coupled with rising inequality and poverty. Both cities struggle with inadequate infrastructure, limited social services (particularly health, sanitation and waste management) and rapid environmental degradation. Both cities are also highly vulnerable to natural disasters. The emerging urban economy in Bangladesh mostly relies on the growing informal sector where conditions for workers are poor, exacerbating inequality is created and disproportionately impacts women, un-skilled youth and ethnic minorities.

A1. Project Details

The project was designed to address the above challenges, and to build on the successes of Oxfam in Bangladesh's (OiBD) Rural (REE-CALL) and Urban Resilience Project (PRG503—PRJ05). The project is based on the OiBD 'Urban Resilience Strategy' (2018-2021) and has been revised in line with the OiBD Country Strategy 2020-2026. The project has been extended until 2023 which will enable sufficient time for the Mymensingh City Corporation to take over operation of the Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant constructed by the project in line with GoB Institutional Regulatory Framework of FSM and for local Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) to fulfil their roles and responsibilities outlined in the 2019 revised Standing Order on Disasters (SoD). These national policies and guidelines are new initiatives that required the support from Oxfam to implement at local levels.

With such a backdrop, the "Resilient, Inclusive and Innovative Cities" Project aimed to support vulnerable urban communities, particularly women, youth, people with disabilities in Dhaka and Mymensingh to become more resilient to social, economic and climate shocks and stresses by 2023.

The project has 4 outcomes. These are described below:

Outcome 1: Models for resilient urban WASH that include marginalized communities, are demonstrated in Mymensingh and used to strengthen policy and practice (municipal, national).

- One sustainable, innovative FSM system that engages Government, private sector, academia and community is tested and demonstrated. 80% of population (total: 134,400) access services.
- Community-led, public urban WASH facility with inclusive features (for pregnant and lactating women, persons with disabilities) demonstrated. 70% of population (400 daily - traders, shoppers) can access safe WaSH.

Outcome 2: Urban disaster preparedness and response based on active citizenship, strategic alliances (Government, private sector) and improved risk governance is demonstrated in Mymensingh and used to strengthen policy and practice (municipal, national).

- Activate and support 6 Disaster Management Committees and 6 Emergency Response Coordination Groups, at ward and city corporation levels in line with the 2019 revised Standing Order on Disaster (SOD).

- Disaster management committees (5 wards; 4 schools) and Emergency Response Coordination Groups can respond to disasters and influence municipal policy and practices.

Outcome 3: Urban youth (male and female) in marginalised communities in Mymensingh empowered as change agents and increase their access to decent work.

- A model to increase youth employment, through linkages with services and employers, is demonstrated.
- Youth master trainers (target: 20) conduct peer-to-peer learning (life skills) and mobilise collective action on urban resilience.

Outcome 4: Women workers empowered to fulfill rights to decent work and social protection.

- A domestic workers' leadership platform (62 women representing 2,875 members) empowered to influence decision-makers.
- The Domestic Workers Rights Network is strengthened to support the Government to implement Domestic Workers Bill 2015.
- 200 domestic workers improve work skills, access support services and are matched to decent work opportunities (target: 50% success rate) by 2 social enterprises.
- An entrepreneurial model for deploying skilled domestic workers is scaled up.

However, in the 2020-21 AD Plan, the project will no longer include Outcome 4 which focused on support to women workers in Dhaka and Gazipur because Oxfam has secured funding from the John Lewis Foundation to fund these activities in 2020 and is also exploring additional funding opportunities from Global Affairs Canada. As a result, Oxfam will no longer partner with Dustha Shasthya Kendra (DSK), and activities in Gazipur will no longer be a part of this AD plan.

A 2. Objectives of the Evaluation

General Objective

To review the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency of project interventions. Moreover, this mid-term evaluation will provide the opportunity for accountability towards the project stakeholders, as well as important learning for the project teams and partners.

Specific Objectives

1. Assessment of the contribution towards the outcomes achieved by the project so far, highlighting any unintended outcomes.
2. Review of the results against project aims, and objectives based on the indicators of the Project log-frame.
3. Generate learning on best practices for improving the influencing/advocacy strategy of the project, considering the context and the external factors affecting the project environment.
4. Provide recommendations as to how the quality and process of activities can be improved to build towards sustainability of the project outcomes.

5. Review of the impact of COVID-19 on the project and make realistic recommendations on adjusting project activities to minimize negative impact.

Evaluation questions

The Midterm evaluation will be based on the following set of evaluative questions.

1. How effective and efficient the processes of Project's efforts are in achieving the project objectives?
2. How effectively and appropriately is the project team working with others and involved them in relevant stages through the process (partners, alliances, private sector, policy makers, media, etc.)?
3. How has Oxfam contributed to a collaborative process with other actors? How effective a partner has Oxfam been?
4. What are the capacity and the current gaps in human capacity (Oxfam staff and partners), accountability mechanisms, monitoring & evaluation systems and learning outcomes? (Review the team competence and level of engagement for realization of the deliverables within the project lifetime)
5. What is the current progress towards the Project outcomes (based on project indicators)? What are the reasons?
6. What is Oxfam's contribution in this process vs. other complementary programs of Oxfam and other organizations?
7. What are the unintended positive and negative results of the Project? How has the external socio-economic and political factors effected this process, constraints and contributing external factors?

A3. Structure of the Report

The Mid-term evaluation report contains three Chapters. The **First one** presents introduction of the report which has sections on background, objectives and methodology of the evaluation and limitations of the evaluation. The **Second Chapter** is on findings of the evaluation. The findings Chapter has been structured following the OECD/DAC Criteria (global standard for evaluating any development assistance/project). The Chapter starts with the introduction then highlights some demographic information of the respondents of the evaluation. Afterwards, it has sections on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact. The Chapter ends with highlighting overall performance of the project. **Chapter Three** has two broad sections. The first one is on challenges and learning. The second section is on recommendations for future actions. The report concludes with reflection of the team and concluding remarks.

A4. Evaluation Methodology

The final evaluation used both quantitative and qualitative methods and approaches for data collection and analysis. The project related available and relevant documents including project proposal, baseline study report, AD Plans, and monitoring report were reviewed and analyzed. Detailed Project Implementation Plan, Progress/monitoring reports, strategic documents, and relevant other study reports, periodical program reports, photograph, publications, and other online and offline data source etc. were also reviewed as a part of secondary data sources. Three types of Questionnaire Survey, Focus Group

Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview (KII) and In-depth Interview (IDI) and observation were applied for primary data collection. Triangulation and data quality assessment were followed strictly before data analysis and report generation.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size Calculation

The sample size had been calculated based on project beneficiaries in different locations. Considering directly trained trainees as the population of the assessment, the sample size calculation was done as below:

Step 1: Calculating the sample size for the study

What margin of error can you accept? 5% is a common choice	<input type="text" value="5"/> %
at confidence level do you need? Typical choices are 90%, 95%, or 99%	<input type="text" value="95"/> %
What is the population size? If you don't know, use 20000	<input type="text" value="68000"/>
What is the response distribution? Leave this as 50%	<input type="text" value="50"/> %
Your recommended sample size is	382

The sample size had been drawn from total targeted beneficiaries to apply simple random sampling and stratified sampling techniques. The total estimated sample was 400. The survey data was collected from only one partner's project location (Mymensingh) using Kobo Apps since the other partners do not have close communication with their project beneficiaries. In addition, the type of support they provided were more awareness and advocacy related.

Step 2: Contingency

The sample will be further increased by 5% to account for contingencies such as non-response or recording error.

The estimated sample will be $n + 5\% = 382 + 19 = 401$ (The rounded number is 400).

Data Collection Matrix

Name of Method	Total Number	Stakeholder wise Distribution of the FGD	Additional Notes
Sample survey	353	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 types of Questionnaire survey Household Survey- Youth Survey- Sanitation Worker Survey- 	It was conducted through Kobo Collect Apps
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	6	With community, youth group, volunteer group and sanitation workers	Total 55 people participated. (21 Male & 34 Female)

Key Informant Interview (KII)	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key and relevant GoB officials in Mymensingh • Key partners' staff • Community members • HBW-2, DW-3, Waste Collectors-4, FSM Network Members, and relevant stakeholders. 	The number is flexible. KII will be continued until data saturation point is reached.
In-Depth Interview (IDI)	08	On different aspects of the project support and impacts on individuals	The method has captured individual level change and challenge.
Document Review	As provided by Oxfam	Relevant project documents, baseline reports and periodical program reports, photograph, publications, and other online & offline data sources.	As per provided by Oxfam and its partner organizations or collected by CRD

Process of Data Collection

All three types of survey data were collected through an interview by using a questionnaire and the questionnaire was transferred into Kobo Apps in Android mobile. The qualitative data was managed and analyzed manually and purposive sampling was applied to collect respondents of FGD. Notes were taken during discussions. Recording (with the permission of participants) was done as well to keep the original data set unchanged and manipulation free. Standard ethical practices around social science (or development) research study such as the codification of the participants' identity, seeking permission before asking to be participants, not giving any promises, validating documented responses, etc. were followed throughout the entire evaluation.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative data was imported into MS Excel format from the Kobo Apps and primary data analysis was done using MS Excel. Findings obtained through qualitative methods were analyzed with a thematic data analysis approach. Previous relevant reports and study findings were reviewed as well for generating secondary data which was mainly desk based. The following matrix was applied for triangulating and compiling the findings collected from different methods and project areas. Findings of FGD, KII & IDI were analyzed with thematic data analysis approach.

Steps of the Field Study

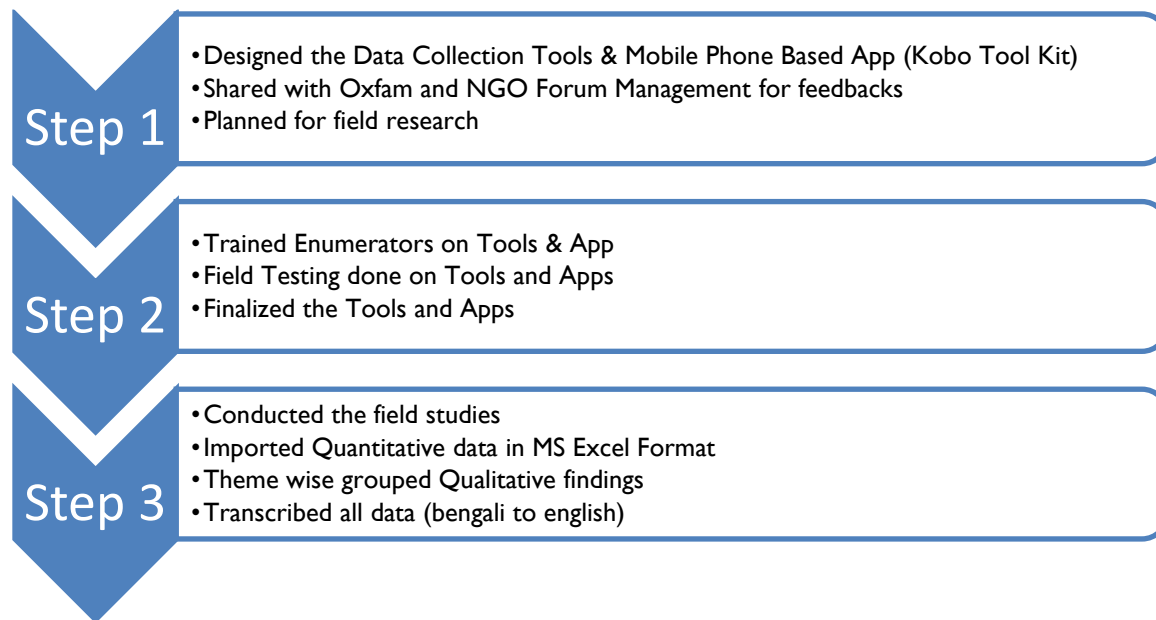


Figure 1: Steps and processes of the evaluation

Ethical Measures

For overall data management and ensuring the quality of the collected data, the following steps were taken,

1. **Spot Revisited:** For ensuring the quality of the data, some selective spots were revisited, and data was checked. If any discrepancy was found, applying an investigative approach, actual data were collected and updated with the original one.
2. **Recorded the discussion:** With the permission of the respondents (parents/guardians: in case of girl child workers and entrepreneurs), the discussions were recorded to avoid missing any important data and information.
3. **Shared key findings:** Taking adequate measures to maintain anonymity, when it was necessary and when there was no risk to participants found, key findings were shared.
4. **Took part in field research by the researcher team:** To understand the context better, the core members of the evaluation team visited different fields and conducted IDI, FGD & KII by themselves.
5. **Collected Individual Observation report:** All field researchers were trained and advised to take note for writing individual observation report based on his/her field research experiences.
6. **Randomly listened to recorded discussion to check with the synthesis report:** Some of the recorded discussions were randomly listened to and checked with the synthesis report. In case significant discrepancy was found, all records and reports of that particular field researcher were checked and verified.

Besides the above, for ethical consideration, the following steps were taken

1. Informed consent before interviewing/discussion

2. Preserved consent forms
3. Ensured anonymity of the respondents
4. All the data set, documents have been handed over to both Oxfam and NGO Forum.

A5. Limitations of the Mid-term Evaluation:

The evaluation has the following limitations.

1. Survey could not be conducted in Gazipur and Dhaka

The project was implemented in 3 different locations of Dhaka, Gazipur and Mymensingh. One of the components of the project which is related to social protection and empowerment of domestic workers was implemented in Dhaka and Gazipur by the partner organizations Dustho Sastha Kendra (DSK), Nari Matiree (NM) and Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies (BILS). Since the partners do not have any database of the people they supported, nor do they have any communication with them, it was not possible to listen to beneficiaries of this component.

2. There was no Logframe or Theory of Change

The project did not follow any Logframe or Theory of Change (ToC) which is very common in any development project. In contrast, it had AD (Annual Development) Plan which is dynamic and allows partners to accommodate most current needs of the target community. However, that type of flexibility makes it difficult to track changes over time.

3. Limited data in baseline report to allow for comparison

Normally mid-term or final evaluation aims to compare the current situation with the baseline situation and understand the contribution of the project. If baseline data is not available, then it is problematic to understand the contribution. In the case of Mymensingh, baseline data of many indicators were not available. Thus, the evaluation team applied “recall” method to collect the required information. It should be noted that recall method has its own limitations.

4. Inadequate data to draw conclusion against performance of outcome 4

Since outcome 4 has been discontinued from this project (current phase), and there was no beneficiary database maintained; therefore, it was not possible to reach some beneficiaries to get their reflections on the project performance. This has resulted in the evaluation team to be depended only on KII and secondary reports to draw conclusion about the performance of outcome 4.

5. Limited number of KII from 3 Partners (BILS, NM and DSK)

While there were limitations to conduct surveys for outcome 4 (in Dhaka & Gazipur locations), it was required to conduct more KIIs and IDIs. But the evaluation team could only conduct KII with only one person from BILS and one person from DSK. However, no response was received from NM regarding the KII.

6. Single assignment but dual evaluations

This is a single project which has 4 outcomes. The assignment is to conduct the mid-term evaluation. However, outcome 4 has been discontinued from this project (and tagged with another funding). Therefore, performance of this outcome has been evaluated following final evaluation approach while the rest of the 3 outcomes have remained under mid-term evaluation. This has sometimes become an issue regarding style of writing.

CHAPTER TWO: FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

Introduction

Chapter Two presents findings of the evaluation. This Chapter has been structured following the OECD/DAC Criteria (global standard for evaluating any development assistance/project). The Chapter starts with introduction then highlights some demographic information of the respondents of the evaluation. Afterwards, it has sections on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact. The Chapter ends with highlighting overall performance of the project.

Section A: Demographic Information

Through different methods of data collection, 423 respondents participated in the evaluation. Out of the total respondents of the evaluation 60% are women. Among the total respondents 82% of the respondents participated in the different kinds of survey (household survey, sanitation workers survey and youth survey). Details are given in table 7 in the Annex.

Details of the survey respondents are presented in the below Bar graph.

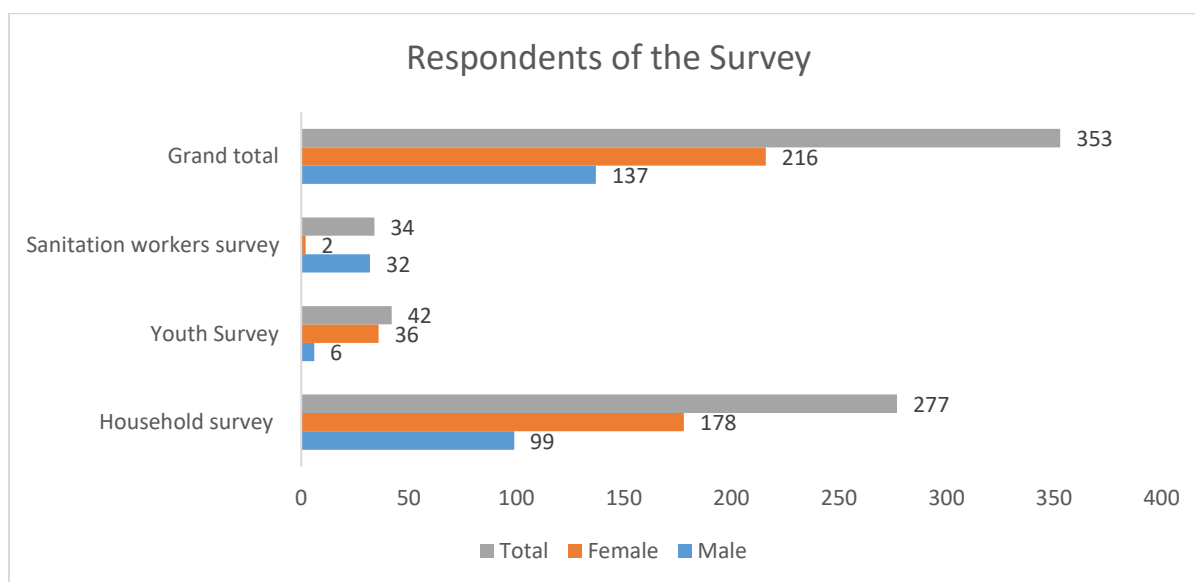


Figure 2: Respondents of the survey

Disability was one of the important aspects which secured highest emphasis during data collection. In the surveys (all three), 22 respondents (6% among of the total survey respondents) mentioned that they have disability concerns in their family. As demonstrated in the table below, walking and climbing steps was mostly found as difficulties among the respondents. Similarly, it is also seen that out of the 22 households who have disability concerns, it was mostly women family members with the disability concern in the case of 17 households.

Table 1: Disability of the respondent (survey only)

Types of disability	Total	Male	Female
Hearing, even if using a hearing aid	1		1
Remembering or concentrating	4		4
Seeing, even if wearing glasses	3	1	2
Walking or climbing steps	10	2	8
With self-care such as washing all over or dressing	4	2	2
Grand Total	22	5	17

Section B: Relevance of the Intervention

Mymensingh was one of the districts under Dhaka Division till 2015. In September 2015, it was declared as the 8th Division of Bangladesh. Mymensingh city which is situated on the bank of Brahmaputra River is the district headquarter as well. Similarly, Mymensingh Municipality was upgraded to a **City Corporation** in April 2018. For both of these reasons, the city has become a destination for people from surrounding districts for many reasons which has caused rapid expansion of the city in recent times. However, this also requires capacity to respond to the rising needs of the people. However, it was not possible for Mymensingh City Corporation to provide all kinds of services required by the inhabitants due to a number of reasons. Thus, support from development partners felt necessary. Considering this context, the project was designed and implemented. Therefore, the interventions were highly relevant. One of the KII respondents, during the field research stated as below;

We understand that NGO Forum has donor guidelines which it needs to stay within. There are about 2-2.5 lac slum communities in the Mymensingh city. City Corporation mostly works for the betterment of the larger community, cannot cover all needs mainly for the small communities. Thus, supporting partners like NGO Forum are extremely helpful in that aspect (MCC, Government Officer, Male).

Apart from the above contextual background, the below sections on different project specific outcomes and activities demonstrate why and how the project interventions have been found relevant for its target population.

I. Improved Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH)

Relevance of the water, sanitation and hygiene related activities has been understood by looking at the need for FSM plant and its services, primary sources of drinking water, disposal of waste management after emptying pit/septic tank and type of awareness received by the sanitation worker.

Firstly, the mid-term evaluation has found that the project has been contributing since 2014, NGO Forum has been carrying out different interventions in 6 wards of the Mymensingh City Corporation. The main focuses of the interventions have been on Disaster Risk Reduction, Solid waste and Hygiene. This long

lasting presence in the city enabled NGO Forum to explore sustainable solutions for one of the key problems city dwellers have been facing which is FSM. One of the report produced by the organization cites the same need;

The city has no sewerage system, onsite sanitation system of this city corporation (CC) mostly comprises of septic tank and pit latrines. The usual practice of managing faecal sludge (FS) of this CC involves manual emptying and discharging FS into the open environment and water bodies when pits and septic tanks become full. Moreover, a large number of the toilets are illegally connected to open drains and surface water bodies (FSM Flyer; P1).

Likewise, another study (Baseline Survey on FSM in Mymensingh City Corporation) identifies similar needs of the MCC. It explains,

About 96% of the household have emptied their pit/septic tank by private sweepers through manual emptying processes. Only 3% of the surveyed household have received emptying service from municipality (P-4).

Similarly, it has been found that due to having vacutag for waste transportation , service by MCC has very fast. One of the IDI respondents in an interview with evaluation team highlighted that this is an very important and needful intervention for both the NGO Forum and Mymensingh City Corporation. As he said;

The vacutug was provided to the City Corporation by NGO Forum. The capacity of vacutag is 1000 L. Presently, picking up waste in a 1000 L vacutug takes 5 to 6 minutes. As a result, we need less time to pick up waste than before. The waste is easily transferred into the vacutag through a pipe which makes cleaning waste much easier(Vacutag driver, MCC).

Secondly, the below graph presents that 56% of the respondents indicate that “mini pipe water supply” is the main source of their drinking water, while it is the “tube well” for 41% of the respondents and only 20% of the respondents pointed out that their primary source of drinking water is “city corporation standpoint/tap”. There is no baseline data to compare with, however, present situation itself indicates that this kind of support is required for its target population.

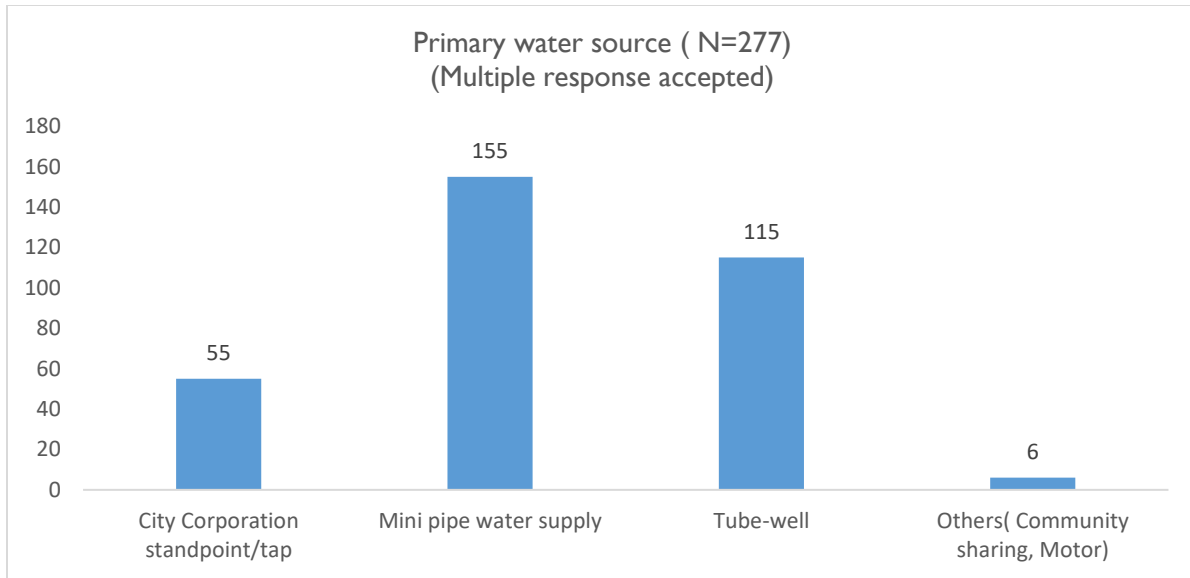


Figure 3: Primary sources of Water

Besides supporting the community at the ground level, the project took an approach to engage MCC. This helped to build their capacity so that MCC can take better and more initiatives for its inhabitants. One of the respondents of the KIIs mentioned as below;

I have gone for a training programs overseas to Thailand and Nepal for the Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant. MCC Engineer jointly designed the plant with MCC Engineers. Some activities are in co-finance with City Corporation. City Corporation land on which Treatment Plant has been built. MCC will also pay for the construction of the road leading to the dumping site for the truck (MCC Staff, Male).

The field research also found that there has been significant progress in hand washing facility. At the beginning of the project, 77% of the respondents reported that they did not have any hand washing facility which has been reduced to 34% over the project period. This data demonstrate that it was a relevant intervention and there are more to be done on this.

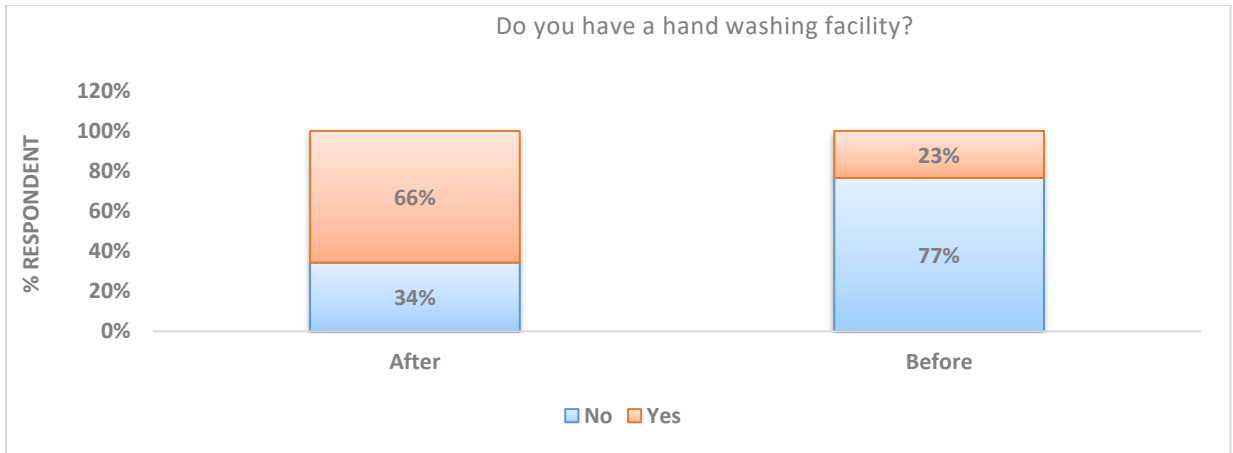


Figure 4: Change in hand washing facility

Survey with sanitation workers¹ indicate that in 2018 when the project started, after emptying the pit or septic tank, the waste was disposed mostly into the drain (35%) which has drastically decreased to 6% over the project period. Similarly, the project has contributed to increasing underground disposal (59% from 27%). Also, carrying wastes using appropriate vehicles from further distances has increased to 50% (from 23%).

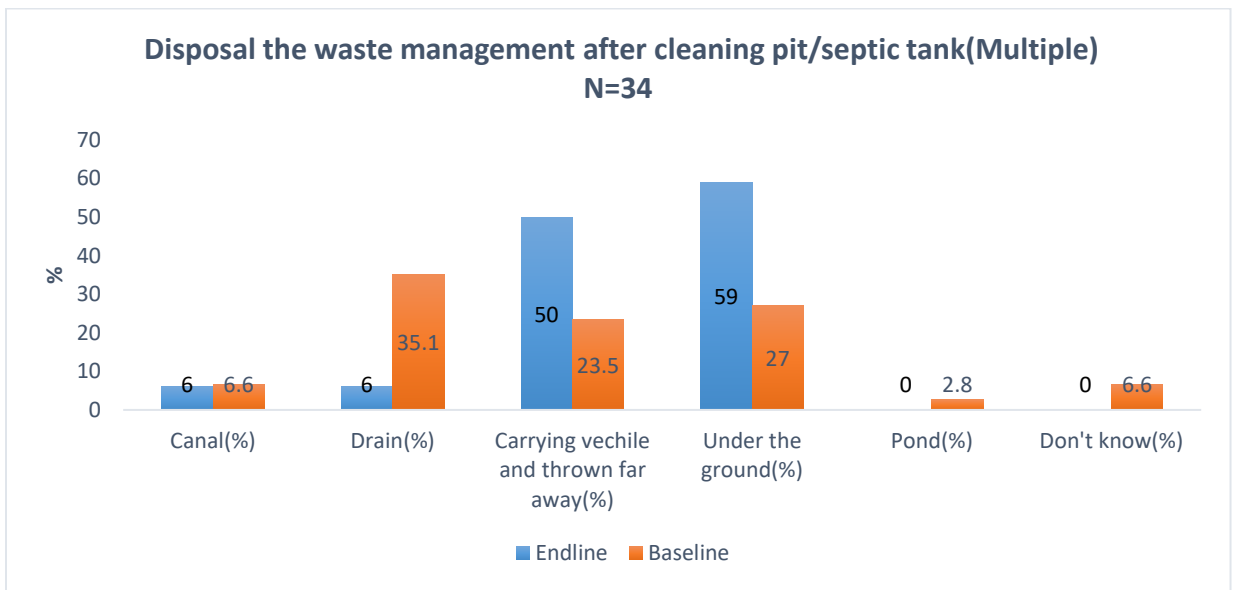


Figure 5: Disposal of the waste management

¹ Sweeper, Drain cleaners, Pit emptier and Solid waste collector.

Sanitation workers were one of the most important stakeholders as well as beneficiaries of this project. Therefore, their awareness on different hygiene related issues is a very critical health concern, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The field research findings presented in the below table indicate that 100% of the sanitation workers received/participated in awareness sessions on hand washing techniques – which is critically important for people like them during COVID-19 pandemic situation.

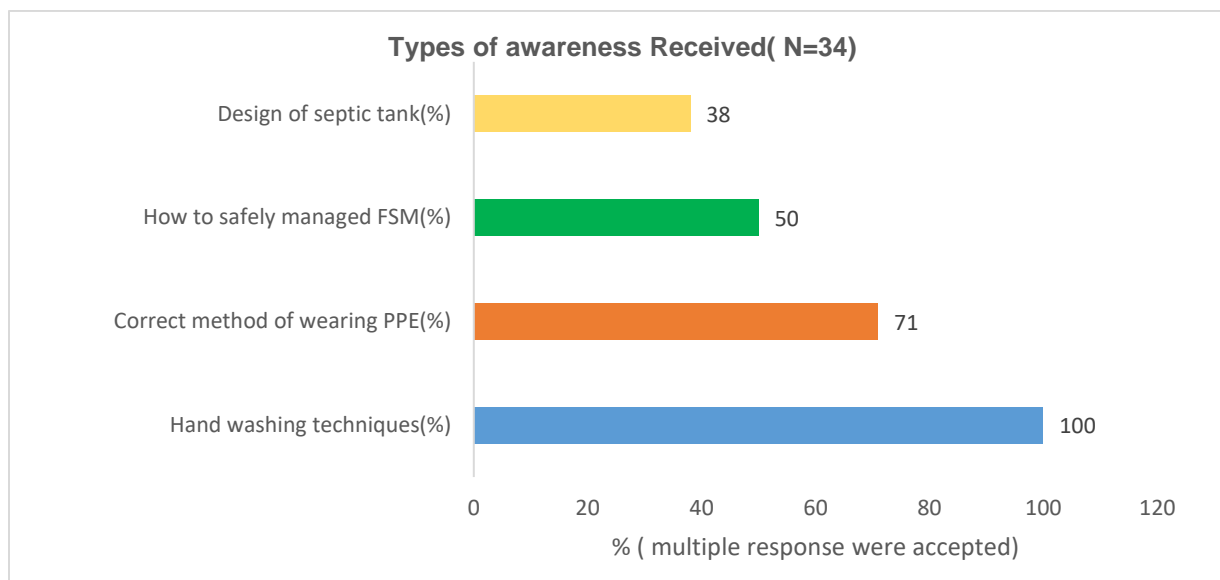


Figure 6: Type of awareness received by sanitation workers

Similarly, IDI with Sanitation workers revealed that support provided to them for their safety during COVID-19 pandemic was extremely needful. In an interview with one of the beneficiaries, he mentioned the following;

During the Covid pandemic, 90 families were given 1 packet mask, 5-10 piece soap, 5 packet wheel powder, 1 bucket, 1 mug, and 8 piece salu cloth for women to keep them clean. These were very much needed for people like us. We have just learnt about hygienic practice in the time of girl's menstrual period, hand washing after toilet, household waste management.

2. Urban DRR, Youth Leadership Development and Employment Opportunity

This component has been found very relevant to its target population. There are a number of evidence which support this argument.

Firstly, NGO Forum has supported 42 youth volunteers to enhance their capacity not only for earning an income but also to support their community in case of any disaster or crisis. A city like Mymensingh always encounters different kinds of crisis and disasters. It is proven that community members are the first responders in any crisis or disasters. Government authority or other actors come much later to provide support. Therefore, building capacity of a group of urban youth to support community during

disaster is extremely relevant. This has been found in a group discussion with beneficiary in Thana Ghat. One of the respondents mentioned,

When caught fire in Ganginarpar our 8no. "Emergency Response Group" participated in direct firefighting and rescue work. Moreover, in the time of fetching Zakat in "Choto Bazar" last year, many people were crushed to death during which time we worked directly to help them.

Secondly, engaging community to reduce disaster risk in urban areas like in Mymensingh was required to move beyond the traditional approach. Targeting urban youth for this job was perfectly appropriate in this context. One of the officials of MCC rightly echoed this. He mentioned:

DRR activities and training have been an innovative approach. NGO Forum was one of the first to bring up disaster related exercises. Recently other NGOs are taking it up (MCC Staff, Male).

Thirdly, the below graph (figure 7) also indicates that skills development for urban youth is required intervention. In the mid line survey, it has been found 50% of the respondents pointed out they have not received any skills development related training yet. This demonstrates that there is still need and demand for similar work with same target group in Mymensingh City.

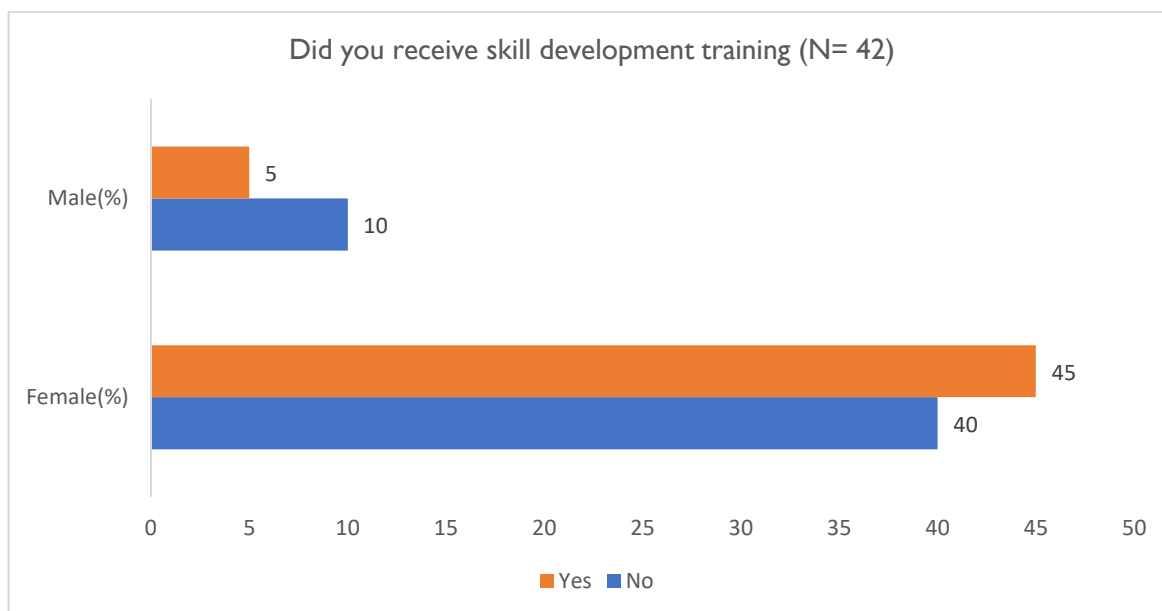


Figure 7: Skills development training

3. Social Protection and Empowerment of Domestic Workers

All activities under this component of the project have ended thus evaluation of this part would be the final evaluation. Since there were no surveys conducted in Gazipur and Dhaka under this component, this section of the report has been written based on the findings of the report review and conducting some KIIs with key stakeholders. The findings indicate that this component of the project has demonstrated very high potential. The reasons are explained in below paragraphs.

Firstly, in discussion with key stakeholders of the project, it has been found that the project was co-designed with its partner organizations. Oxfam had been very open to engage its implementing partners to identify priorities of the communities. Respective partner organizations also had consultation with communities to find areas most in need of the interventions. Therefore, undoubtedly the project and this component has been found very relevant to its target community.

Secondly, the evaluation found that the project has been built on the lessons of urban resilience project. Lessons of the former project suggested to engage youth group for this kind of activities which was implemented in this project. Engaging youth group with some skills development activities was well-thought. It was necessitating and relevant.

Thirdly, the project has partnered with specialized local organizations who are leading in their respective sectors. For example, WASH & DRR related activities in MCC, the project has partnered with NGO Forum for Public Health who has been working in MCC for quite a long time and are a pioneer organization for WASH related activities. Similarly, DSK & Nari Maitree were best fit for the work related to domestic workers. Likewise, there was also a partnership with BILS which led some important studies to identify areas of intervention in the RMG sector for uplifting rights of RMG workers.

Lastly, partnership with MCC and engagement of the MCC at different levels of the project delivery was highly essential. Investment of the FSM was instrumental to receive support from MCC and for setting up the stones for the work around FSM and SWM.

4. Case Studies on Relevance of the Project

Shapla Akter, working as volunteer to raise awareness

Shapla Akter (23) lives in the slum area of Thanar Ghat under Mymensingh district. She is working as a health and DRR volunteer for “NGOF” for 3 years. Her family consists of 6 members, and she is the 2nd daughter. Despite



Caption: Community meeting photo Credit: farzana

having many obstacles, she is continuing her studies and is now a honors 4th year student. The economic condition of her family is very poor. Her father grows vegetables by the side of the river and sells them in the local market and her two younger brothers work as a day labor in a shop.

3 years ago she came to know about “NGO Forum” through the ward councilor. As a volunteer for NGO Forum, she received training on Health, Hygiene and DRR Management. She has been selected as a volunteer for her sincerity and responsiveness. After receiving these training sessions, she along with other volunteers in the ward continue imparting their knowledge and creating

awareness for the people in the community through several successful initiatives to improve community health and hygiene conditions. They visit door to door and hold meetings with poor people in the community to raise awareness on how to maintain good health, how to keep surrounding area neat and clean and how to maintain good hygienic practices, etc.

She received training on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). She is also part of the established “Emergency Response Group” for the ward. The members of this group rush to any disaster-prone area as soon as they get the news. She said to us that “few months ago a fire broke out in Ganginarpar area of Mymensingh, 10 volunteers including her had worked directly in that area”.



Caption: Delivering necessary hygienic products photo credit: Farzana

Awareness about hygienic use of toilets was very minimum 3 years before when project had not started yet. They used to defecate in open places or on the banks of the river and used to throw their household waste in the river or drain. This was a serious risk and health hazard for the local people. Without NGO Forum and their training sessions the poor people would

not be aware about wearing masks, washing their hands, and maintaining social distance which are very easy way to prevent Covid-19. Shapla and her team are working to create awareness in more people about these issues and is trying to keep the people in her area happy and healthy.

Figure 8: Case study 1: Relevance of the project

Section C: Effectiveness of the Intervention

Effectiveness of the interventions has been assessed based on the effectiveness of its 3 major components. In precise, how effectively those components were delivered was considered. Similar to relevance, this section also reviewed project delivery mechanism around the activities related to improve WaSH, Urban DRR, Youth Development and Employment Opportunities, the last component is social protection and empowerment of the domestic workers. In addition, there were some crosscutting issues which were also considered to understand effectiveness of the project. The cross-cutting issues include M&E functions and mechanisms, AD Plan and its application, community feedback mechanism and Gender.

I. Improved Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH)

It has been found in the evaluation that from the very beginning of the project period, MCC is heavily engaged in different steps of the project implementation. Some of the MCC staffs were engaged with the project to design it jointly. One of the staffs of the MCC mentioned as below;

[I have] gone for training programs in overseas- Thailand and Nepal for the Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant. MCC Engineer jointly designed the plant with NGO Forum. Some of the activities are co-financed by Mymensingh City Corporation (KII respondent, Male, MCC Staff).

This engagement indicates ownership of the MCC over the FSM Plant which is very essential for sustainable functionality. Similarly, there are evidences that demonstrate there were thorough process followed before establishing the plant , for example conducting baseline study and understanding perception and needs of the people. It has also been found that MCC also contributed 40 decimals of land for the FSM Plant . This is one of the important and effective approach for any sustainable project.

This study [baseline] was conducted to establish a comprehensive, integrated faecal sludge management system; the MCC played the part of an advisor and also provided support in conducting the study. Between January and March of the same year, the land requirement for the FSM plant was determined. Being a co-contributor in the project, MCC allotted 40 shotangsho land in Akua area of the city for construction of a sewage treatment plant and co-compost plant for smooth implementation of faecal sludge management activities. In the same year, a master plan including the design, drawing and estimates of an integrated faecal sludge treatment plant was chalked up. (FSM Flyer, P-2.

The project has rightly identified issues to be intervened. The partner selection has also been done effectively. However, setting the target against such a huge need was not performed in the most effective way. There was huge investment for FSM Plant – it is assumed that the investment on FSM Plant will certainly have a positive impact on being able to safely manage sanitation in near future. However, other

important activities such as awareness raising and skills development of urban youth (both from income perspective and from the perspective of community first responders) had inadequate budget. This has been reflected while having a KII with one of the key stakeholders of the project.

Not easy to choose only 3– 5 wards for the NGO Forum project activities. Leaves most other councilors unhappy. NGO Forum has helped to make this a smoother transformation. It is still essential to increase the coverage of their work.

Effectiveness of the improved WaSH can also be understood by looking at how inclusive the services are. In the graph below (figure 9), it has been presented that in the baseline study it was found that only 36% of the respondents mentioned that the available toilets can be accessed by PwD, children and elderly people. In the mid line survey it was found that 84% of the respondents thought that their toilets are now accessible by the same groups of people. Thus, a change in accessibility by 48% indicates a great achievement of the project. However, it needs to be noted that 16% of the people still feel the toilets are not accessible by PwD, children and elderly people.

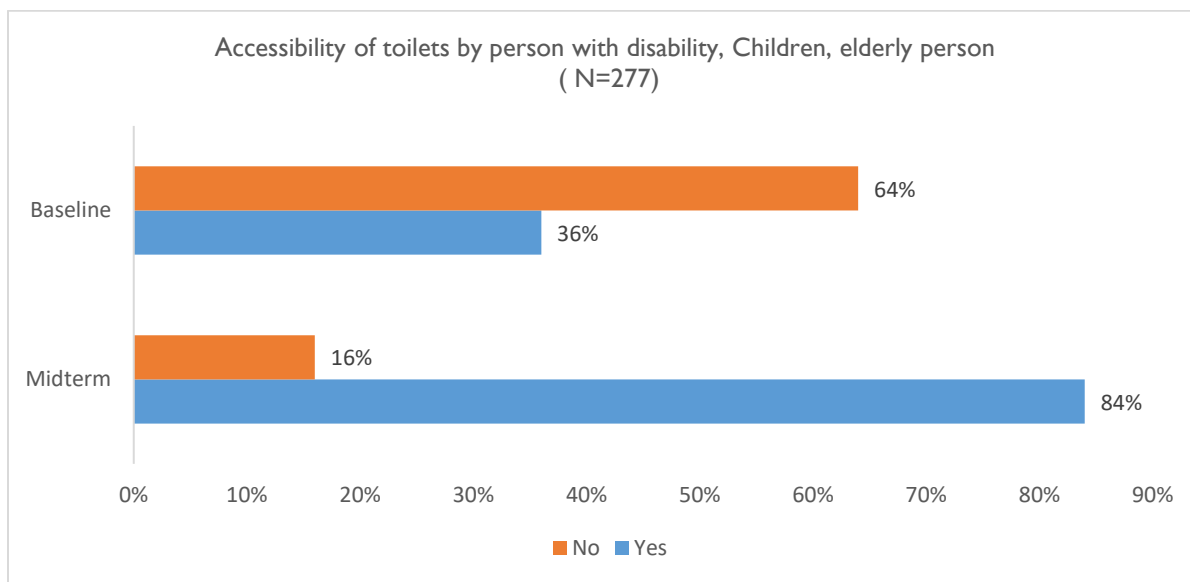


Figure 9: Accessibility of toilets by person with disability, children and elderly person

After inclusivity, privacy and safety services is very important to understand the effectiveness of the activity. The project has contributed to improve privacy and safety to the toilet users as over the project period it has been increased by 48%. Please follow figure 10 for the details.

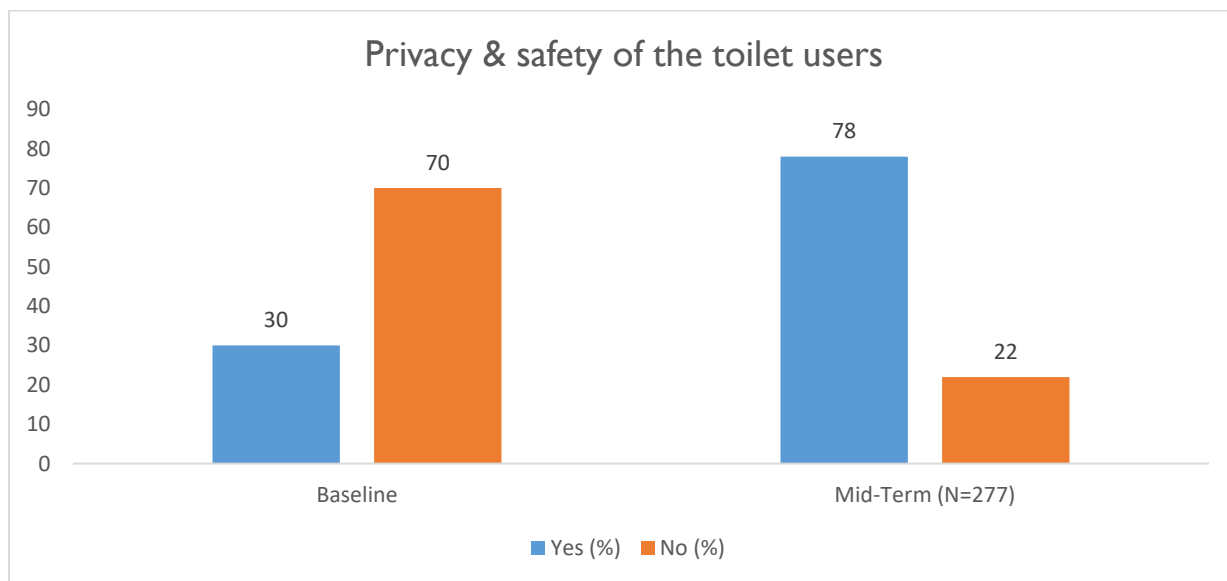


Figure 10: Privacy and safety of the toilet users

2. Urban DRR, Youth Leadership Development and Employment Opportunity

While it was mentioned that engaging youth has been found highly relevant but the ways they were engaged requires revision. While women have found the stitching training relevant for them, they have also pointed out that there were limitations in terms of number of sewing machines against the participants. Similarly, for the male participants training for electrical wiring was organized. But these trainings were not preferred by the target male population of the project. This has been reflected in the end line survey as well. Only 43% of the respondents have found the training contents to be highly relevant.

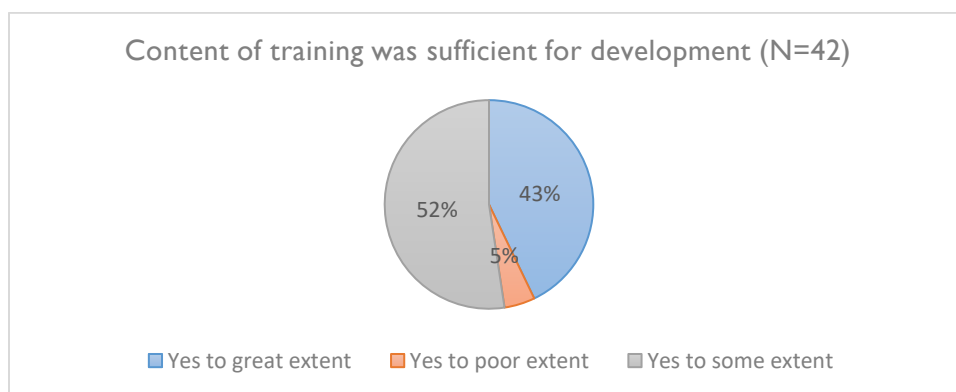


Figure 11: Contents of the training

3. Social Protection and Empowerment of Domestic Workers

Effectiveness of this component has been found as moderate. Some of the reasons are presented below.

Firstly, since the project did not follow any agreed logframe and it rather applied AD Plan, this has enabled the partners to accommodate current needs of the community specially when the pandemic hit in the middle of the project period. For example, DSK has provided relief support to 500 home-based worker families to survive during COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, NGO Forum also applied some of its fund to raise awareness on personal hygiene. Thus, the AD Plan was effective to accommodate emergency needs of the community.

Secondly, BILS has conducted scoping study for designing interventions for improving rights of RMG workers. However, evidence could not be found of the findings that were used for developing any project for the rights of the RMG workers. Moreover, a lot of work has already been done by different organizations and scholars on the same issue. The topic of the scoping studies and its objectives are very common – apart from scholarly work, there are also many journalistic reports which could be capitalized to develop such program. Thus, the study was not very effective since it could not contribute to any knowledge or information gap.

Thirdly, NM organized basic skills training and certificate courses for domestic workers (DW). The trainings were in three issues - a) use of home appliances and house governance, b) food preparation maintaining hygiene practices and c) caring for the elderly, disabled and children. NM organized 156 DW for the training and 12 participants dropped out during the training. Within 6 months of the training and with help from another organization (Bandhan), only 56 DWs got job placement. Given the need in the city and the resources spent, it indicates that the post training plan was not prepared appropriately. Therefore, job placement performance has become lower than the expectation.

4. From cross-cutting perspectives

Apart from the above thematic level of effectiveness, there are some crosscutting issues which are helpful to understand the level effectiveness of the project.

Firstly, the project did not follow any strict Logframe or Theory of Change and it rather followed the Annual Development (AD) Plan approach which allowed the project partners to accommodate the changed demand of the community and make the plan very adaptive.

Secondly, monitoring system and well-structured reporting format helps any project to capture different challenges and changes happening during the implementation stage. The midterm evaluation has found that the project team (from Oxfam) had monitoring visits on a quarterly basis. In the visit reporting format, recommendations were provided and those monitoring visits were accomplished with a team where technical team members also joined. Besides, the monitoring team met not only the community people but also important government stakeholders such as MCC and staff of the partner organizations. This has been very effective. This needs to be continued for rest of the project period as well.

Thirdly, the midterm evaluation has found that there was a community feedback mechanism which is a very important element for downward accountability of development interventions. However, this approach needs to be strengthened and functional. There should be a process which can document the feedbacks and what actions have been taken against the feedbacks.

Lastly but not the least, it was also been found that mainstreaming gender issues across the activities was prioritized in this project. This is very important for inclusive development. This needs to be continued for rest of the project as well.

5. Case Studies on Effectiveness of the Intervention

Iffat Ara, Former NGO Forum Volunteer continues social services to help people in her community

Iffat Ara (26) is a mother of two, one girl and a little boy. Her husband works in the Bhumi office and his income provides for the family. She is also pursuing her master's degree. She had worked with UNDP as a "elaka netri" a while back for a different project. NGO Forum came to know of her through City Corporation because of the UNDP project and contacted her to be a volunteer.

As a volunteer for NGO Forum, she had received trainings on several different things which included – health, psychosocial, hygiene, disaster, tailoring. NGO Forum had conducted training session for tailoring for 3 people in ward 19. After the tailoring sessions she went on to help the master trainer and train 9 other people in tailoring. And received about 1,000 takas from NGO Forum for the training. This is how NGO Forum passes on the work through volunteers. She had also received training to talk as a health trainer and have demonstrated good health practices in a meeting for about 20-25 people. She has also worked on a stage act to spread hygiene awareness about safe water. This initiative while taken by the volunteers, was motivated by NGO Forum, and had even provided them lessons on how to pull off.



While she was caring her baby (PC: Salam)
for a while, she was made a member of the committee even though they did not take anyone under 30.

Iffat Ara also used to help the Disaster Management Committee. Mostly older more experienced people were part of the DMC, but they seek help from the younger volunteers for reports on observation of risks around the neighborhood. After helping the committee

She also talks about the vacutug service awareness conducted by NGO Forum but says that this service is difficult



After interview (PC: Salam)

for the poorer people in her ward. The truck would not be able to get into the narrow and broken roads to get to the houses which are inside and this service is more expensive which most people might not be able to afford.

She had also worked as a health volunteer but had to let go of her responsibilities to take care of her baby. She appreciates what she has received from NGO Forum for the RIICB project. She was full of praise for NGO Forum's support and believes that NGO Forum "shomaj sheba r kaj korche, bhalo kaj korche". Even though she isn't a volunteer anymore, people still have that respect for her, and she is able to help her community with the tools provided to her by NGO Forum.

Figure 12: Case Study 2- Story of Iffat Ara to demonstrate effectiveness of the project

Section D: Efficiency of the Intervention

The efficiency of the intervention has been assessed based on three important aspects. These are;

- Assessment of budget plan versus spent.
- Findings of the audit and actions against the recommendations
- Value for money

I. Budget: Plan versus spent

The budget spent against the budget plan has been found to be very effective. The deviation is within 4% (101% to 95%). In figure 13, it can be seen that in year 1 it was 1% higher than what was planned. But the following year, (Year 2), it dropped to 97%. However, in the next two years, the figure indicates very static performance within the range 98-99 %. Details can be found in [table 5](#).

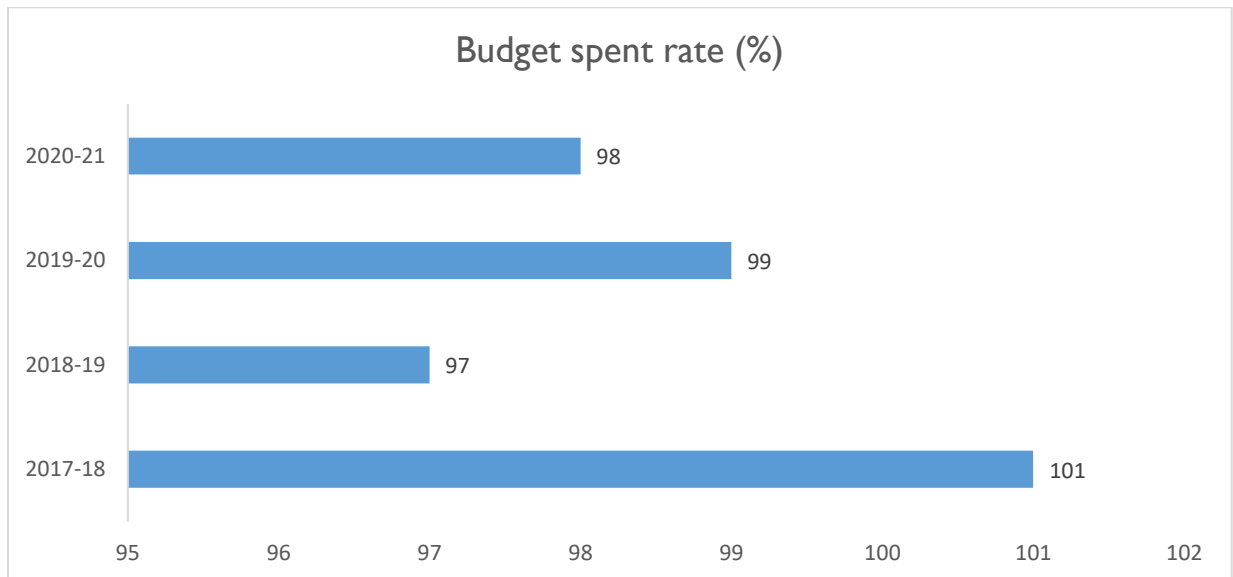


Figure 13: Year wise budget spent rate

Activity wise budget distribution is presented in the figure below demonstrates that the project had a high level of emphasis on Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) which consumed 70% of the project fund. FSM Plant is a technical infrastructure which requires a lot of maintenance and operation cost, though this structure would allow MCC to tackle FSM issues in a better equipped way. Building the FSM Plant and making it operational has been done through cost sharing approach with MCC. This has been evidently mentioned by one of the MCC staff. He has mentioned as below:

NGO Forum provided a vacutug. City Corporation provided training to the driver of the vacutug and also provides his salary. Different solid waste management trainings have been given to waste collectors by the MCC. (Male, Government Official, MCC).

However, still the budget allocation for youth development and DRR related activities were significantly low. These could have been a bit higher considering the focus of the project and need for the target community.

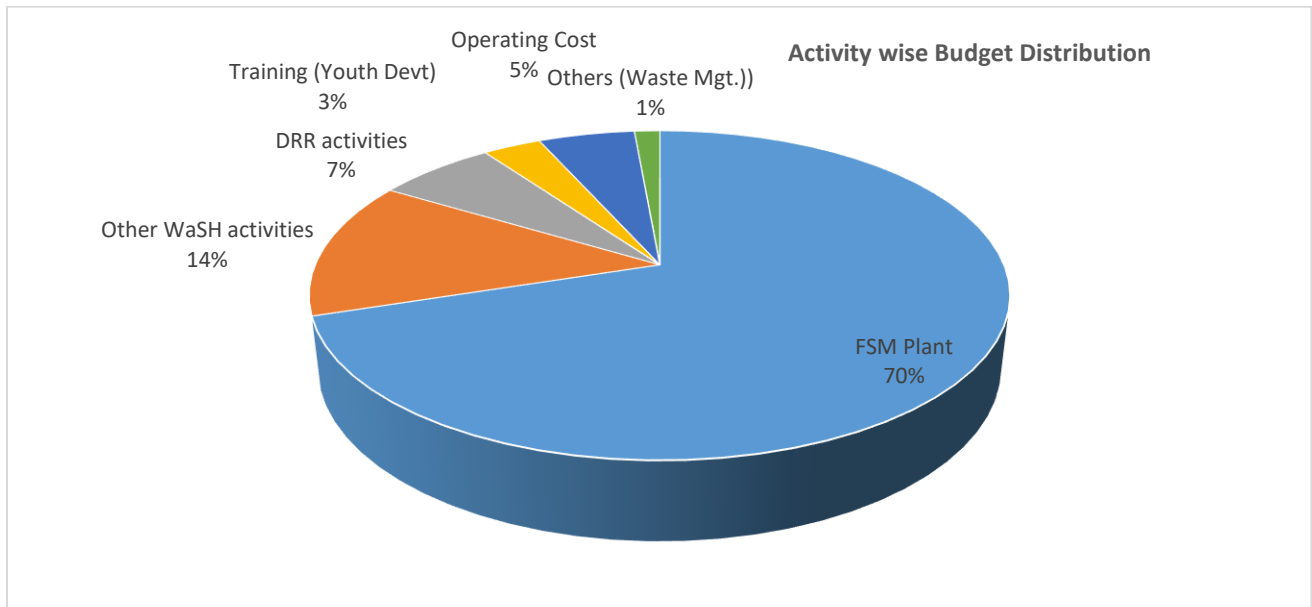


Figure 14: Activity wise budget Distribution

2. Addressing Audit Recommendations

In the last external audit which took place on 31 August 2020, there were 2 major audit observations,

- The first one was on keeping records of staff movement in the movement register.
- The second one was on overwriting on vouchers. One of the statements of the observations,

“While we were checking the cash payment voucher we observed that in some cases voucher are over written”

The midterm review revealed that the authority of NGO Forum has taken this recommendation seriously and instructed the concerned staff to maintain movement register properly. Similarly, it has been found to take appropriate action against overwriting in the voucher. Please see details in table 4 in the [Annex](#).

3. HR cost against activity budget

The VfM has been assessed considering one important aspect “how much it cost to reach out the service” in other wards – allocation for HR cost. The Midterm evaluation has found that the HR allocation was consistent in the first 3 years. This has remained at less than 20%. This has evidently demonstrated high efficiency of program delivery. However, in the 4th Year, it shows 11% rise – which could not be substantiated by looking at documented achievements of Year 4.

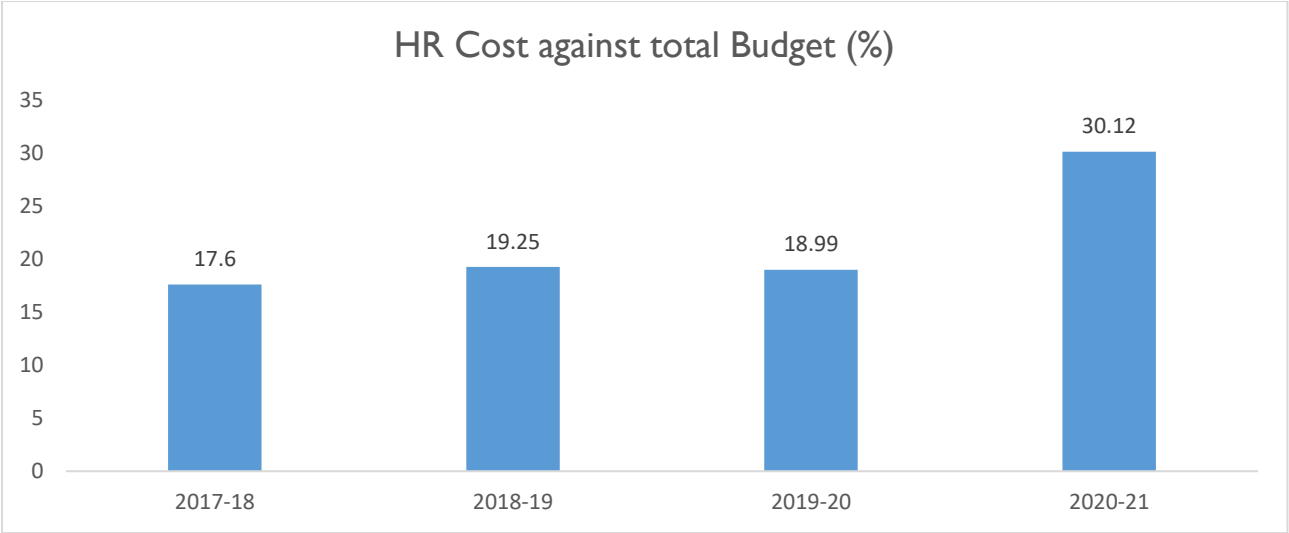


Figure 15: HR cost against total budget

In the previous page (figure 14) highlights that budget allocation skills development for youth group of the beneficiary was only 3% of the total budget. However, this allocation was efficiently spent to some individual who could have enhanced their skills and improved resilience of their livelihood. The below case explains efficiency of the program delivery and its impact at an individual level.

Sabina, gains economic strength through tailoring training

Sabina (25), a slum dweller in patgudam Bihari Camp, Mymensingh. She has been a Master trainer with "NGOF" since four months. Her family consists of only her and her mother. Despite



Photo: Sabina is working (PC: Partho)

numerous hurdles, she persists in her studies and is currently pursuing a master's in economics. Her family's financial situation is dire. Her mother teaches Arabic to little girls and boys and earns a very small honorarium through this. Which is around 3000-4000 tk per month.

Sabina knew about NGO Forum from the ward councilor office. She participated in tailoring training provided by NGO Forum. NGO Forum gave refresher training to three master trainers over the course of 8 days and Sabina was

one of them. A total of 16 people, including master trainers, have received training on tailoring work. Then every master trainer goes on to provide a 7 day training to another eight people. Now, she is an expert in Handicraft, block printing, and batik which she learned from NGO Forum training.

She said, *"I have got a sewing machine from NGO Forum. Every master trainers are delivered a sewing machine to conduct their training sessions. I also got 2000 tk training allowance from NGO Forum after the training. Now, I am orders for making various types of clothes. I can make salwar kamij, sew skirts, pajamas, shirts, and pants. I am earning 500-700 tk per month as extra income from this training. I can earn as high as 2000 to 3500 taka during EID festival through sewing jobs."*



Photo: Tailoring training class (PC: FarJana)

NGO Forum provided Sabina including two master trainers with 10-gauge wire garments, as well as shaping cards, scissors, tape, needle and thread, and chalk. Like other Master trainers Sabina got 2000 taka as training allowance whereas advisor got 1000 taka from the training. She also said that the training

provided by NGO Forum is beneficial to girls. Girls work as skilled trainers during their studies. Now, 11 individuals are employed in her area. Sabina is confident that their work with the skills they have earned will continue even when the project is finished. Sabina and her team who are working for their economic empowerment and girls' mobility will help her community to boost their economic strength.

Figure 16: Case Study: Sabina gains economic strength

Section E: Early Impact of the Intervention

This section of the report contains impact of the project on its target population. Like previous sections, this section also has 3 sub-sections. The first sub-section will explain how the project has been impacting its target population against the need of WaSH. The second sub-section explains how people have been impacted by the urban DRR and youth leadership development related activities. The last but not the least sub-section presents how the project has impacted domestic workers and their life.

I. Improved Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH)

Firstly, the evaluation revealed that there has been a change in the toilet management. In the baseline study, it was found that the most dominant type of toilet were public toilets and community toilets. Over the project period, it has been changed. In the Midterm survey it has been found that shared toilet has become very prominent which has been accessed by 48% (30% rise in comparison with baseline). Personal toilet and community toilet have remained almost same in comparison with the baseline.

This change indicates that the project has effectively managed to organize community people to maintain and use shared toilet, instead of going to public toilet which remains unhygienic most of the times.

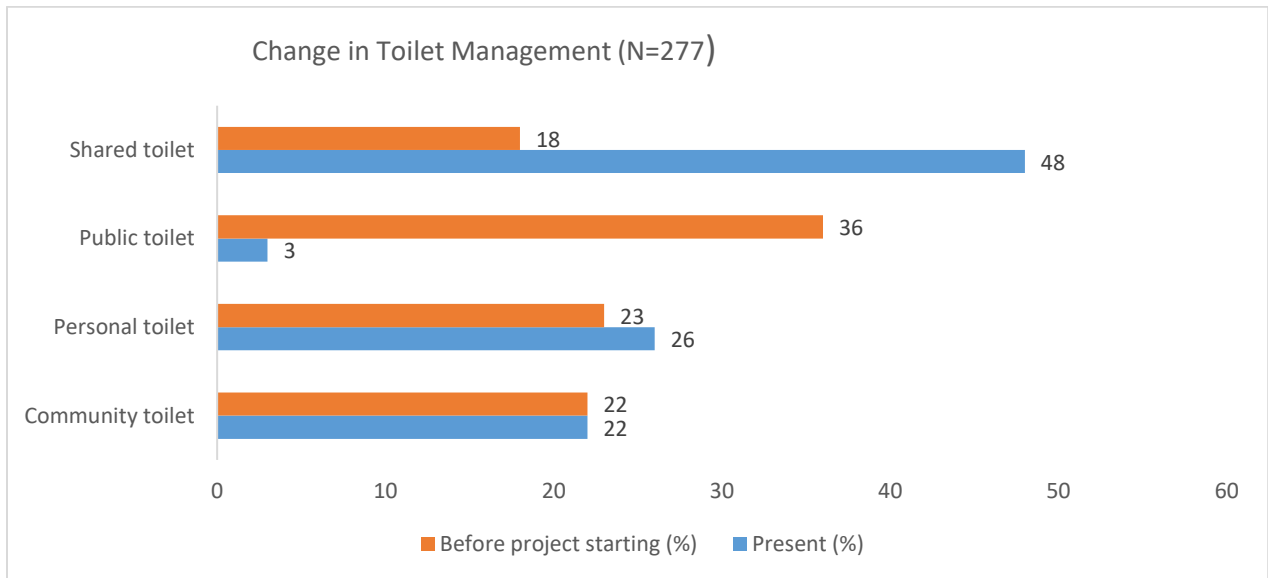


Figure 17: Change in Toilet Management

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Similarly, it has been found that the vacutug related services has been well accepted by the community since they have found it very smooth and quick and it does not affect the environment. For example, KII with one of the important stakeholders found it as an impactful intervention. As he states;

Hotline number was provided to people to call for vacutug services. NGO Forum are trying to raise people's awareness in terms of different aspects, one of the most important things is the personal hygiene issues. And this has been a timely initiative given the pandemic situation.

Secondly, the midterm evaluation has found that the project contributed to bring changes in hand washing facility which is important for personal hygiene. The midterm survey revealed that before the project intervention, only 23% of the community had access to a hand washing facility. Over the project period, this has been increased to 66%.

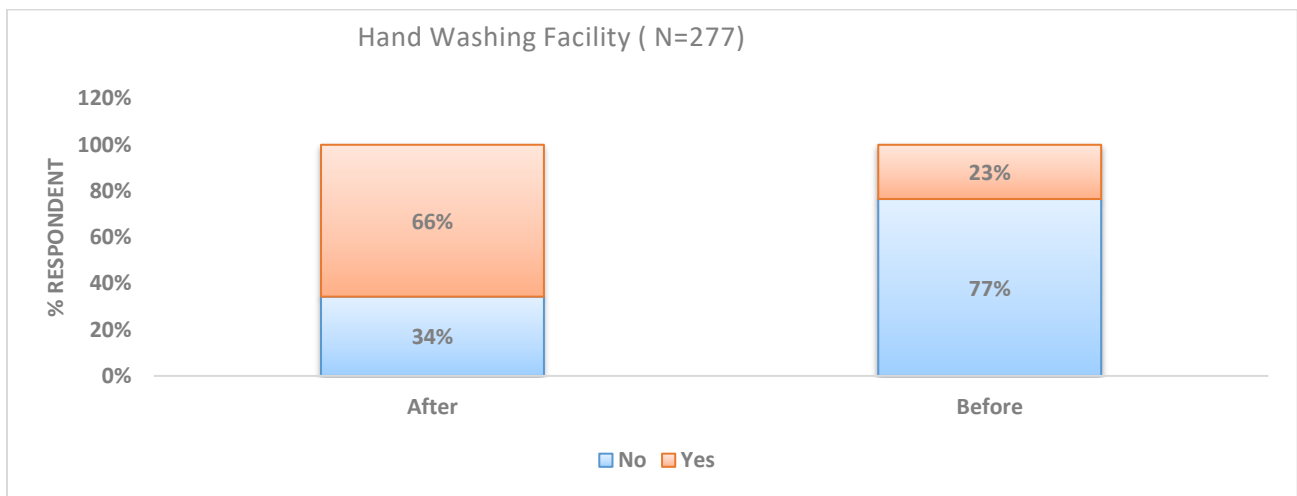


Figure 18: Change in Hand Washing Facility

This contribution was also found and recognized in one of the FGDs with project beneficiaries. One of the participants in an FGD in Islambagh mentioned as stated below:

NGO Forum held seven sessions on hygiene for adolescent girls and women. The sessions covered topics such as safe drinking water, womens' personal hygiene, housekeeping, and ensuring that all members of the household are clean. NGO Forum, in partnership with the City Corporation, hosted a quiz and a prize-giving ceremony!

Thirdly, it has been found that the project has contributed to make the toilets functional. While in the baseline, it was found that only 70% respondents pointed out that the toilets were functional. In this midterm, it has been found that 89% of the respondents consider it as functional. This means that to 19% of the respondents, there is an improvement in the project activities.

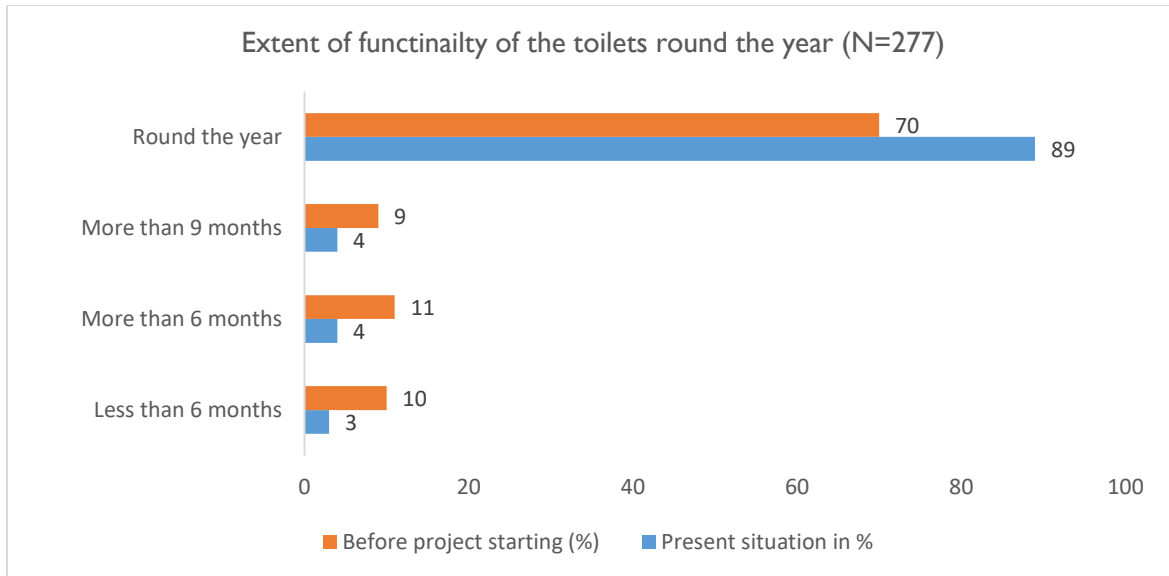


Figure 19: Functionality of the toilets

Fourthly, in association with and support of MCC, the project has established the Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP). It was not very easy task since it required some technical issues and awareness of nearby communities. However, the project has made it. Key stakeholders of the project consider it as one of the great achievements. However, the mid-term evaluation has found that there were some issues around FSM and FSTT which project encountered. These are as follows;

- a) The locals around the area objected to the FSM Plant before it had been established. But they have come to realize that there is not any smell from the FSTP polluting the surrounding. However, the locals are still skeptical about having an FSTP in their neighborhood.
- b) There were not much awareness amongst people that they would want to use the fertilizer that has been produced or even buy products made from that fertilizer.
- c) People is not fully aware that the fertilizer produced from this plant is actually environmentally friendly.
- d) Not enough workers are willing to work in an FSTP, which makes it difficult as a lot of manpower is required for the processing.

Lastly but not the least, it has been found that Solid Waste Management (SWM) was a great challenge for the community where the project is being implemented. One of the respondents in a group discussion has highlighted a similar issue.

Ghorer moyla felte koshto hoye jay, nirdishtho jayga nai. Tai jekhane gorto ache okhane felano hoy (it is problematic to dump household waste since there is no dedicated place to dump the waste. So, wherever we find any hole, we dump our waste).

The study further reveals that the waste from households is usually dumped in the rail-line as there is no one from MCC to collect the waste and dump in an appropriate place. Drain gets clogged with the waste and doesn't allow for water to pass during heavy rains. Through the project activity, people are trained

to dump their wastes properly so that the drain does not get clogged again. However, FGD with sanitation workers revealed that there are significant changes happening regarding SWM. In response to a question whether they think there has been improvement in SWM in their community in the last 3 years, one of the respondents firmly mentioned as below:

Yes, there is a great change in Solid Waste Management. After collecting waste, we separate plastic bottles, glassware, and any other indigestible waste. Then the city corporation keep it for recycling.

The above findings demonstrate that there are changes happening which need further acceleration. The collaboration between MCC and the Project has been very impactful. That needs to be continued and strengthened further.

2. Urban DRR, Youth Leadership Development and Employment Opportunity

Firstly, under DRR and youth development activities, beneficiaries were provided training on number of issues which enabled them to improve their livelihood status. It was found that every ward received a sewing machine for two people. A total of 16 people, including master trainers have received training. Three of the trainees are currently working as trainers. Handicraft, block printing, and batik were taught to the trainees. This type of training is in high demand right now. Aside from that, individuals have low interest in electrical wiring. In this field, only one person has excelled. Each trainee was given 3000 takas for transportation. Scissors, tape, needle, and thread, as well as other *Nakshi* materials, are provided throughout the training. One of respondents in the discussion mentioned,

“We can earn 3000 to 3500 taka during EID festival through sewing jobs. Otherwise, we make 1000 to 1500 taka per month, as is customary. We now have the ability to sew our own garments.”

Tailoring has helped women beneficiaries of the project. But everyone does not earn a living after the tailoring training, but they have learned to start something. This has been reflected during a discussion (FGD) with community in *Duldul* Camp. One of the respondents in the discussion mentioned that:

“Nijeder cholar moto shikhechi. Nijer kapor shelaiyer khoroch beche jay (We just have learned to meet our own needs, now we can save the cost sewing our clothes.

In the survey, it has been found that 57% of the respondents reported to have increased their livelihood. It is notable to mention that 21% of the respondents mentioned that their income has been increased to a poor extent and 22% of respondents reported not to have an increase in income at all.

The findings indicate that the project has been a bit off track and has been inefficiently addressing community needs. Selection of training and its participants is one such example. Any training selection must be consistent with needs of the community and the right participants for the training should also be ensured.

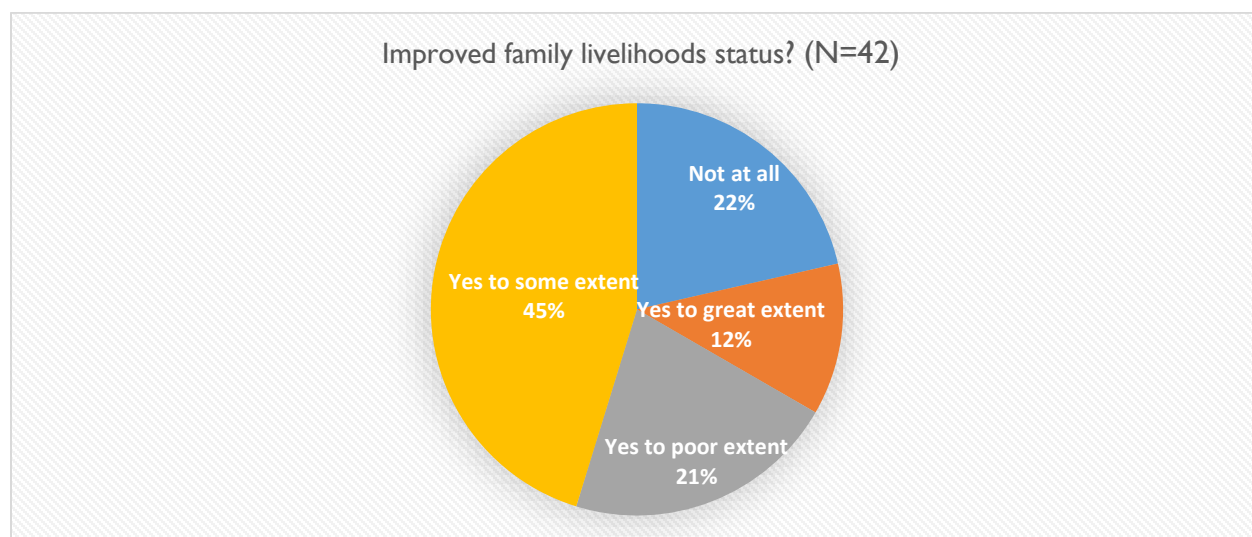


Figure 20: Improvement in livelihood status

Secondly, the project provided technical skills training to its target population which were very helpful for their practical life. In the graph below (figure 22) shows that 26% of the respondents felt that the trainings which were provided by the RIICB project was helpful to increase their income to a great extent. Whereas 48% of the respondents mentioned that it had an impact to some extent. However, significant number of the respondents (26%= 17+9) have found the training to be ineffective in increasing their knowledge and skills or poorly effective.

The training was supposed to increase their knowledge and skills for both DRR related responses and employment generation related initiatives. Findings indicate that changes around knowledge level is satisfactory. However, change in the skills level is yet to be demonstrated. For example, if there is a fire, what should they be doing – in response to this question, participants rightly demonstrated that their knowledge has been enhanced. One of the respondents in a FGD mentioned that “If there is a fire, it should be covered with sand or blanket”. But in terms of skills change around DRR issue there was no examples or incidents which can prove to what level their skills have been increased. In contrast, for the tailoring training, there are some indicative impacts. For example, one of the respondents in a FGD in Gublighat mentioned that;

My daughter took tailoring training for 7 days, now her monthly income is about 2500 taka.

These findings raise some concerns regarding effectiveness of the training since the project has been working there since the last 4 years. Therefore, expected changes are at a high level.

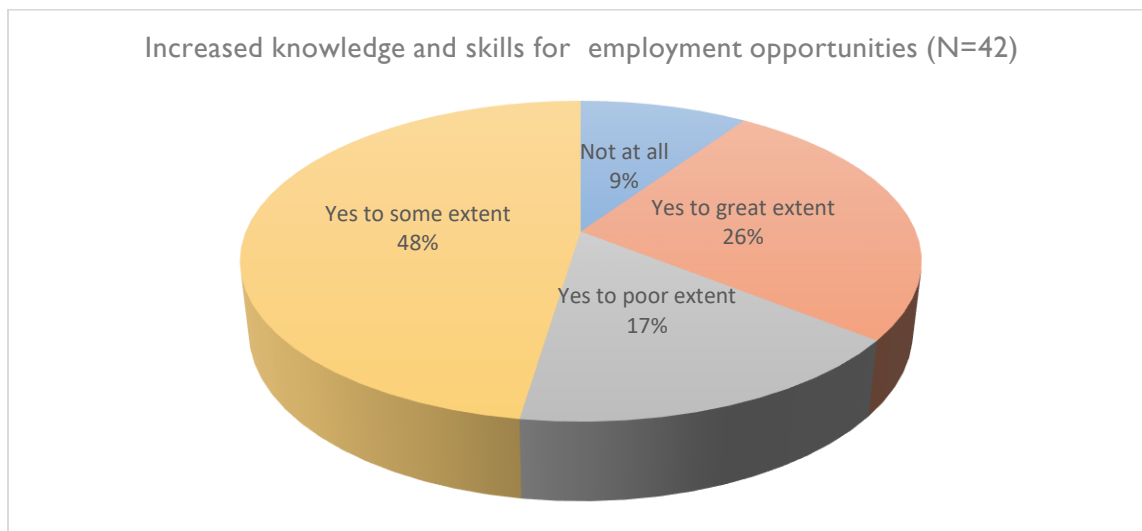


Figure 21: Change in Knowledge and skills

3. Social Protection and Empowerment of Domestic Workers

With the project funding, there were two important issues which were supported. The first one is social protection of domestic workers – this part was implemented by BILS. The second one is empowerment of home-based workers – which was implemented by DSK. Not only the target groups of these partners were different, but the focus of the intervention was also different.

For example, BILS used the budget to raise awareness on domestic workers' rights through establishing and making functional NDWCC. In addition, BILS also conducted a study to explore appropriate areas and approaches for the possible interventions for domestic workers. Their study also attempted to identify appropriate advocacy agenda which can be used to uplift rights of the RMG workers. On the otherhand, DSK utilized the budget to support its target beneficiaries to meet emergency needs. DSK supported 500 families whose income were severely impacted because of COVID-19 pandemic

The evaluation revealed that NDWCC was formed with the funding support from the budget. BILS rightly capitalized its associated 12 National Trade Union Federations to form this forum. Evidence show that DWRN & NDWCC jointly protested 11 incidents of torture against domestic workers. They also led mass campaign and submitted open letters to MP (Member of the Parliament) candidate (BILS, 2018: 2).

Similarly, it has been evident that COVID-19 pandemic has unevenly impacted life and livelihood of poor or low-income communities. One of the important target groups for this project was RMG workers and home-based workers (3000 in total).

Table 2: Emergency support to COVID-19 impacted home-based workers

Items	Amount	Remarks
Rice	20 Kg	These were given based on few mobile based consultations regarding needs of the people. However, the item pack has been considered as standard pack for relief distribution which applied many other agencies.
Dal	2 Kg	
Sugar	1 Kg	
Alo	2 Kg	
Onion	2 Kg	
Oil	2 Liter	

In addition to the above emergency support, through its 4 women’s empowerment learning centers DSK provided awareness sessions to RMG workers and home-based workers in Dhaka and Gazipur. They provided messages on health issues and how to get protection from the COVID-19 outbreak. Given the global crisis and public health need, it was very needful to provide support to its target beneficiaries.

4. Case Studies on Impact:

Mila, got dignity and economic prosperity



Mila is a housewife (35) lives in I I no. Ward, Mymensingh. There are 6 members in her family. And her husband is the only earning member. Mila couldn't continue her study after SSC, and she got married. Her husband works in a pharmaceutical company and earns 5000 tk per month. Which is not enough to maintain her large family. So, she always tried to help her husband financially. One day, she heard about NGO Forum livelihood training from their ward councilor. She participated in the livelihood training of NGO Forum. At first, she completed Tailoring Training which was for 7 days. It brought a great change in her life. After this training, she bought a Sewing Machine and started taking order from her neighbors. Now she earns about 1500 tk every month by this. She has also been selected as master trainer by NGO Forum. She has trained many more girls. Her husband is very happy for her contribution for the family.

After interview photograph was taken, (PC: Salam

Apart from this, Mila has participated in other training, like, healthcare training and DRR training. After completing these trainings she started her work as a community volunteer. She and other volunteers like her visit door to door of the community houses. They give many important information and advice about healthcare maintenance, hygienic practice, child nutrition and waste management. She also participated in many rallies, seminar, meetings which were arranged to raise awareness about different issues. As she said,

We give advice to the people not to throw waste in the road side or in drain, because these waste create waterlogging. And we also inform people about Vacutug services and its facilities. Vacutug is environment friendly and an easy way to clean latrine.

Mila enjoys this work, she attributes this work as her chance to do some good things for the people. She also said, “before I used to be afraid to talk to people. After receiving training from NGO Forum, my interpersonal skills has developed a lot. Now I can talk about our needs and problems to the dignitaries of the community”. Like me, so many people have benefited from NGO Forum’s activities.

Figure 22: Case Study on Impact of the project at individual level

Section F: Overall Performance of the Project

The below table presents summarized performance of the project. Overall performance of the project is high.

Table 3: Overall Performance of the Project

OECD/DAC Criteria	Project Performance	Justification
Relevance	Very High	<p>This is a highly relevant project. Reasons are:</p> <p>Firstly, FSM Plant for a rapidly expanding city like Mymensingh is highly timely intervention. Likewise, addressing rising needs of WaSH related services also indicate its appropriateness.</p> <p>Secondly, given the limitation of the MCC (being a new City Corporation), interventional support from development partners were required and appropriate.</p> <p>Thirdly, engaging urban youth in community led disaster risk reduction activities was right and appropriate.</p>
Effectiveness	High	<p>The effectiveness of the project is high. There are number of reasons why effectiveness of the project has been found high.</p> <p>Firstly, engagement and contribution of the MCC in designing and establishing the FSM Plant is remarkable.</p> <p>Secondly having a component of capacity building support for urban youth who also perform a DRR volunteer has been found very effective (even there are some issues regarding trainee selection).</p> <p>However, number of limitations have also been noticed which could have been minimized.</p> <p>Firstly, , selection of the wards for the intervention could be done more carefully by engaging counsellors.</p> <p>Thirdly, the subject of the research (which was carried out by is very widely studied, so a lot of the information are publicly available. Therefore, conducting a study on such issue is not well justified.</p>
Efficiency	High	<p>The project design and delivery mechanism has been found efficient. Some of the reasons include:</p> <p>Firstly, the budget was efficiently spent over project periods.</p> <p>Secondly, HR cost has remained less than 20 % in first 3 years of the project, even there is sudden rise noticed in the year 4.</p> <p>Thirdly, audit recommendations have been taken seriously. Required measures have been taken by NGO Forum to be more compliant with standard practice and procedures.</p>
Impact	High	<p>There are three specific reasons why impact of this project has been leveled as High;</p> <p>Firstly, establishing the FSTP is itself an achievement and impact of the project.</p>

		<p>Secondly, producing fertilizer from the waste is great achievement of th project, even there are scopes to raise awareness among community about use of the fertilizer.</p> <p>Thirdly, WaSH related impact was high, even there were more scope to get more financial contribution from MCC.</p> <p>However, components of social protection and empowerment of domestic workers were less impactful. NDWCC formed and meetings were also held but evidence could not be found that the study conducted by BILS was used for program developed. In addition, the DSK also used the fund for humanitarian purposes (which was needed but achieved different outcome).</p>
Overall	High	There are scopes to improve further particularly in the areas of effectiveness and impact, the overall performance of the project is high.

CHAPTER THREE: CHALLENGES, LEARNING RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

This is the last chapter of the report which has two sections and one concluding section. The first section presents different challenges that the project encountered and the learnings which have been captured. The second section presents recommendations of the evaluation which can help the project management to revise some of the priorities for rest of the project period and accelerate the impacts of the project. The chapter and the report has ended with a concluding remark.

Section A: Challenges and Learning

The project has encountered the following challenges;

I. Challenges encountered by the project

- a) The first and foremost challenge faced by the project was the coverage issue which is too small for a municipality like Mymensingh. The project is being implemented in only 5 wards of MCC, because of this, some of the councilors were unhappy for being excluded from the project area.
- b) Mymensingh is one of the oldest cities in Bangladesh. It has been expanding rapidly but mostly in an unplanned and unstructured way. Therefore, expanding all the major roads are not possible. At the same time, because of the narrow roads, the vacutug cannot move to all areas where its needs to go.
- c) The plant is operational and 2 tons of fertilizer have already been produced. They have not received permission to sell as of yet. If the permission is not secured soon, this can be a problem.
- d) Youth volunteers have got skill-based training but they did not get training tools like sewing machine and electric wiring tools. After completion of the training, only master trainers received sewing machine while other trainers got raw materials like cloths, card shape, scissor, measuring tap etc. It has created some level of frustration among those who have not received any startup support.
- e) There was only one sewing machine used during the training on tailoring. It was difficult for both the trainer and trainees to make the training effective. Also, it is difficult to earn an income after the training without a sewing machine.
- f) Neither City Corporation nor NGO Forum have taken any steps for supplying pure drinking water in the project area. This is a very basic service that people living in low income settlements expect. The community do not have a required place to set up tube wells in their own houses. So, they have to collect water from others' houses by paying the owner of the house.

- g) FSM Plant in urban areas is a critical task to manage since Mymensingh is an overcrowded city. Thus, finding a suitable place and having it accepted by nearby community is not easy. The project has encountered this challenge.

2. Learning of the project

The midterm evaluation has captured the following learnings:

I) Flexible plan (AD Plan) allows more inclusive development support to people in need

Working for extremely vulnerable community requires flexibility in terms of project activities. Projects that follow a strict logframe and its agreed activities may not be much helpful during a sudden crisis in the project areas. But a flexible work plan like AD Plan in this case which is reported and developed on an annual basis can better accommodate needs of people and will be more inclusive.

II) Training Needs Assessment (TNA) is essential for training-based interventions

Without having any needs assessment before providing any skills training reduces the likelihood of the training to be much impactful. It is very important to have rigorous analysis on identified skills area and its employability or potentiality to be a means of livelihood for its target population.

III) Training without startup/job placement support unlikely to be effective

If training participants do not have any ability to invest in an income source for application of the skills learned from the training – for example buying a sewing machine – then project should have provision to provide startup capital or support by linking with other agencies who provide similar support. This is required otherwise the training may not be useful for them and amount to much.

IV) Assess ability & feasibility before raising awareness

Balance between service demand and supply needs to be maintained very efficiently, otherwise it may turn into a chaotic situation. There was a gap in terms of number of vacutug present. Because of increased awareness there were unmet needs which has created social unrest and can lead to future unacceptability of similar services.

V) Customize technology and transport for FSM & SWM services in Mymensingh

Since most of the roads within the communities in Mymensingh is very narrow, the vacutug could not travel inside the roads in most communities. And there is almost no possibility to expand the roads. Thus, it would be wise to explore alternative or smaller size vehicles.

VI) Identification of knowledge or information gap is important before conducting any research

Empirical study is not always required, particularly for over exhausted fields like gender issues in the RMG sector which has huge publicly available data and information. If a study is felt necessary, then it is important to identify the knowledge gap to be met by the study.

Section B: Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings and subsequent analysis, the evaluation team likes to propose the following recommendations;

1. Capitalize relationship with MCC to engage further/co-invest (Link to Outcome I)

Relationship between MCC and Oxfam and its partner organization – NGO Forum has been found to be sound. This can be further capitalized to mitigate some of the problems the urban poor community are facing. For example, access to safe drinking water is very limited in most of the low-income settlements. The MCC supply water is not accessible by most of the poor and marginalized communities.

2. Engaging MCC, particularly counselors to select project locations (link to all outcomes)

The running project has very low coverage (5 Wards against such a big Municipality). This is because of the size of the budget. Therefore, the project management needs to engage the MCC, particularly the counselors so that they also understand limitations of the project.

3. Appropriate size and number of Vacutug, Waste collection Truck (Link to Outcome I)

Considering road size and its affordability, the project can facilitate or advocate with MCC to introduce required number and appropriate size of the Vacutug and Waste collection truck.

4. Startup support for skills trainee (link to Outcome 3)

It is very unlikely that just having a training for poor people (who live on hands to mouth daily) will be able to apply those skills and gain something. Startup support is very important for them. The support does not necessarily have to be something material. It can be in the form of linking with other agencies who might have required services.

5. More equipment for demonstration during training (link to Outcome 3)

For effective training, adequate number of devices/machines are required. Paper based lessons are less impactful for adults. For example, there was one sewing machine during tailoring training – which was less than minimum for a group of training participants. More sewing machines needed to be provided during trainings.

6. More allocation for DRR related activities (Link to Outcome 2)

DRR related activities have been found impactful. However, budget allocation for DRR related activities was very less, and this needs to be increased significantly for the next period of the project.

7. Action plan against M&E visit Recommendations (link to all outcome)

There are recommendations placed in the M&E visit report. To know what happened with those recommendations (very important only), an action plan can be developed periodically. This needs to be updated bi-annually

Section C: Conclusion

The project is built on learning of previous projects (REE-CALL and Urban Resilience Project) which enhances its opportunity to design more relevant for projects for its target population. Following all rigorous processes, this midterm evaluation also found that this is a very relevant project considering its target community in Mymensingh – a city which is rapidly expanding.

Evidences also indicated that partnerships with local development organizations and MCC has been effectively managed. Similarly, resources of the project have also been used efficiently. The overall performance of the project is good.

The evaluation team has identified some learning which can be carefully looked at and utilized for enhancing the impact of the project. Similarly, there are few areas which can be further improved. It is highly important that the project management of both Oxfam GB part and its partner NGO Forum take these recommendations seriously since giving attention on identified areas (recommendations) can accelerate the impact for the rest of the period of the project.

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9. Oxfam Australia (2020). Project Narrative, ANCP Annual Development (AD) Plan Project (2019-2021).

ANNEXURE

I. All Tables

Table 4: Status of the Audit Response

Audit Feedback					Status of the feedback (as of 30 June 2021)	Analysis/ Reason																				
<p>While checking the movement register we observed that in some cases the return time was not maintained in the movement register. They are given below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name</th> <th>Date</th> <th>Designation</th> <th>Departure time</th> <th>Return time</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Biddut</td> <td>19.08.2020</td> <td>S.T.O</td> <td>10:30 AM</td> <td>Not found</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Biddut</td> <td>25.08.2020</td> <td>S.T.O</td> <td>10:30 AM</td> <td>Not found</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Didar</td> <td>31.08.2020</td> <td>P.O</td> <td>11:00 AM</td> <td>Not found</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Name	Date	Designation	Departure time	Return time	Biddut	19.08.2020	S.T.O	10:30 AM	Not found	Biddut	25.08.2020	S.T.O	10:30 AM	Not found	Didar	31.08.2020	P.O	11:00 AM	Not found	The movement register has been updated. For your kind information a copy of movement register is attached after updating.	Already Updated.
Name	Date	Designation	Departure time	Return time																						
Biddut	19.08.2020	S.T.O	10:30 AM	Not found																						
Biddut	25.08.2020	S.T.O	10:30 AM	Not found																						
Didar	31.08.2020	P.O	11:00 AM	Not found																						
<p>While checking the cash payment voucher we observed that in some cases voucher are over written</p>					Instruction has been given to the respective personnel not to overwrite on the documents and the recommendation will be followed strictly.	Inform and careful for not repeat.																				

Table 5: Year wise Budget Distribution

Budget	Head	Budget		
		Planned (in BDT)	Actual (in BDT)	%
2017-18	Activities	9634530	9832460	82.40629195
	Staff (HR)	2150235	2099226	17.59370805
	Total	11784765	11931686	101.2467028
2018-19	Activities	12762081	12379265	80.74010461
	Staff	2985430	2952973	19.25989539
	Total	15747511	15332238	97.36292929
2019-20	Activities	12045822	12045822	81.00994246
	Staff	2922559	2823738	18.99005754
	Total	14968381	14869560	99.33980168

2020-21	Activities	8750951	8625654	69.82369982
	Staff	3838519	3727822	30.17630018
	Total	12589470	12353476	98.12546517

Table 6: Activity wise budget Distribution

Broad Activities	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total	% of total activity budget
FSM Plan	6897529	9338741	6698834	5208834	28143938	69.91982903
Other WaSH activities	314606	1776237	1358779	2007051	5456673	13.55637023
DRR activities	1406608	497104	208441	516614	2628767	6.530818082
Training (Youth Development)	0	767183	165357	374205	1306745	3.246432215
Operating Cost	559432	548605	562926	475214	2146177	5.331888128
Any other major areas (Waste Management)	513717	0	55709	0	569426	1.414662318
Total	9691892	12927870	9050046	8581918	40251726	100

Table 7: Method wise respondents of the study

Tools and Techniques	Type/No	Total	Male	Female
Survey	Household	277	99	178
	Sanitation workers	34	32	2
	Youth	42	6	36
FGD(HH, Youth, volunteers, sanitation workers)	No. of FGD -6	55	21	34
KII	-	6	4	2
IDI		9	3	6
Total		423	165	258

Table 8: Survey type and respondents

Survey type	Male	Female	Total
Household survey	99	178	277
Youth Survey	6	36	42
Sanitation workers survey	32	2	34
Grand total	137	216	353

Table 9: Ward wise respondents of the HH survey

Respondent distribution by ward and by sex (HH Survey)			
Ward no.	Total	Male	Female

8	91	26	65
10	54	28	26
11	17	8	9
18	55	13	42
19	60	24	36
Total	277	99	178

2. List of the KII respondents

Sl no.	Name	Designation	Organization	Date of interview	Remarks
1.	Engr. Md. Rafiqul Islam Miah	Chief Engineer	Mymensingh City Corporation	17/06/2021	
2.	Umme Halima	Social Welfare and Slum Development	Mymensingh City Corporation	17/06/2021	
3.	Arifur Rahman	Chief Waste Management Officer	Mymensingh City Corporation	17/06/2021	
4.	Mohammad Anwer Hosen	CEO	Mymensingh City Corporation	17/06/2021	
5.	Sauda Sultana	Project Coordinator	NGO Forum	17/06/2021	
6.	Md. Farhad Alam	Councilor, Ward II	Mymensingh City Corporation	16/06/2021	
7.	Kamruzzaman	Finance Officer	NGO Forum for Public Health	29/06/2021	
8.	Sanjan Kumar Barua	Public Health Engineer	Oxfam GB	29/06/2021	
9.	Toriquil Islam	WaSH Specialist	NGO Forum for Public Health	27/06/2021	
10.	Ekramul Haque		DSK	28/06/2021	
11.	Nazma Yesmin	Director, Research & Planning	BILS	04/02/2021	

3. Details of the FGDs

Sl no.	Name of community/Group	Ward Number	Total Participants	
			Male	Female
1.	Sanitation workers	Covers all wards, 10 (mostly)	8	0
2.	Islambagh (Livelihood skill development)	18	2	6
3.	Duldul camp (Household survey)	19	0	10
4.	Noumohol (Household survey)	11	4	4
5.	Volunteer Group(Jubliyghat)	8	2	8
6.	Thana ghat(Household survey)	8	5	6
	Total		21	34

4. Details of IDI

Sl no.	Name	Gender	Ward no.	Name of Community	Remarks
1.	Shapla Akter	Female	8	Thanar ghat area	Volunteer for NGOF
2.	Rashedul Islam	Male	8	Thaner ghat area	Volunteer and beneficiary of NGOF
3.	Ifat Ara	Female	19	Abashon	Former NGOF Volunteer
4.	Rima Akhter	Female	19	Duldul Camp	Volunteer for NGOF
5.	Shujon	Male	10	City corporation	Manual Sanitation Worker
6.	Sabina Akter	Female	18	Islambagh	Volunteer and Livelihood Training beneficiary
7.	Raja Miah	Male	10	City corporation	Vacutug driver
8.	Mila	Female	11	Noumohol	NGOF Volunteer

5. All Data collection Tools

Separately attached.

6. Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Assignment

Separately attached.