

REPORT

Final evaluation of the Citizens in Governance Project

Client: Search for Common Ground Sri Lanka

This evaluation is supported and guided by the European Commission and presented by Nucleus Foundation on behalf of Search for Common Ground, Sri Lanka. The report does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the European Commission.



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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACLG	Assistant Commissioner of Local Government
CIG	Citizens In Governance
CLG	Commissioner of Local Government
CPA	Centre for Policy Alternatives
CRM	Complaint Referral Mechanism
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LAPDP	Local Authority Participatory Development Plan
LARM	Local Authority Redress Mechanism
LGA	Local Government Authority
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum Of Understanding
NELSIP	North-East Local Service Improvement Project
NF	Nucleus Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSA	Non State Actors
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee principles
PPA	Participatory Planning Approach
PS	Pradeshiya Sabha
RDS	Rural Development Society
SFCG	Search For Common Ground
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TOR	Terms of Reference
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society

Executive Summary

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is implementing a two year European Union funded project titled “*Citizens in Governance: Promoting Collaboration in Local Governance*” in the six Districts of Ampara, Batticaloa, Vavuniya, Mannar, Kandy, and Nuwara-Eliya. The overall objective of this project was to improve local service delivery through increased cooperation between Pradeshiya Sabhas and Non State Actors (NSAs). Specific objectives include: 1) Bolstering the ability of NSAs to engage with PSs to advocate for better policies and delivery of services to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups; 2) Improving the policies and operations of PSs in delivering services to vulnerable and marginalised groups; and 3) Increasing collaborative efforts between PSs and local NSAs to deliver services more effectively to vulnerable and marginalised groups in the targeted divisions.

SFCG commissioned the final evaluation of the above project to Nucleus Foundation. The evaluation was conducted in March 2016 and included FGD and KIIs with key stakeholders of the project, including government officials, elected members, PS officials and community representatives. The focus of the evaluation was based on the criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact. The sample included 88 government officials, 22 elected members, 172 PS and ACLG officials and 124 community representatives. Separate questionnaires and guidelines were developed for the different categories of stakeholders, based on the indicators of the project.

The Citizens In Governance (CIG) project was implemented from January 2013 to March 2016. This was a critical period in post conflict development in the country, especially in the context of working in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The Pradeshiya Sabhas were introduced to Sri Lanka through the 13th amendment to the constitution in 1987, as a means of devolving power.. Local government in Sri Lanka consists of Municipal Councils, Urban Councils and Pradeshiya Sabhas. PSs are governed by the PS Act no. 15 of 1987. Local authorities are responsible for providing a variety of local public services including roads, sanitation, drainage, housing, libraries, public parks and recreational facilities. As of January 2011 there were 335 local authorities (23 municipal councils, 41 urban councils and 271 divisional councils). In May 2015, a majority of the PSs were dissolved. At the time of compiling this report, there were no incumbent elected members in most of the PSs. Elections for the new PSs are scheduled to be held later in 2016.

The project built on the experiences of SFCG in Sri Lanka that identified promotion of cooperation between local authorities and the community as a crucial element in promoting good governance within the system. The implementation of the project followed a *Common Ground* approach, which promoted collaboration and cross participation of all stakeholders. In implementing the project, SFCG signed an MOU with the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government to encourage the same. Even at a time when NGOs were viewed with scepticism, SFCG has been recognised as an important stakeholder, and the Commissioners of Local Government (CLGs) interviewed during the course of this survey have indicated their support for the project and expressed appreciation for the interventions carried out.

The overall objective of the project was to **improve local service delivery through increased co-operation between Pradeshiya Sabhas**: Findings indicate that consultative committees are more active and function better as compared to pre-project levels. Community members in 16 of the FGDs (80 percent) said that they have functioning consultative committees, others may not have been aware of the existence of consultative committees. FGDs with PS officials indicate that

all PSs have consultative committees. In KIIs with government officials, 83 percent said there were functioning consultative committees while 90.9 percent of the elected officials said the same. Community members expressed satisfaction with services provided and agree that service provision has improved in recent times.

The first specific objective was: **Bolstering the ability of NSAs to engage with PSs to advocate for better policies and delivery of services, to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups:** The project has carried out many interventions to improve the service delivery of PSs. 22 training sessions have been conducted with the participation of 515 stakeholders (396 men, 119 women). 3 exchange visits have been conducted with the participation of 128 stakeholders (99 men, 29 women). 573 budget proposals have been forwarded by community groups in the 6 districts. All of these sessions have contributed to developing the capacity of PSs to better deliver their services and advocate for more desirable policies.

FGDs with community and PS officials indicate that service delivery has improved; they highly appreciate the exchange visits and resulting learning outcomes as well as the capacity development conducted by the project. Community members indicate an increased awareness about the activities of the PS. PS officials say that the community has a better understanding of the services offered by them. 88.6 percent of Government officials and 86.4 percent of elected members said that community knowledge of the PS act has improved. Community members said that they were consulted when preparing budgets. All of the elected members said that their knowledge of budgets and income generation activities has improved; 86.4 percent have also participated in preparing the budgets. PS officials, especially those who had participated in the participatory needs assessment, indicate that they formulate budgets based on community needs. 79.5 percent of government officials said budgeting within the PS has improved.

Responses provided by the stakeholders of the project indicate that the planned result 1 - **PSs and NSAs are better able to work together to deliver more effective local services to marginalised and vulnerable local populations by the end of the project;** has been achieved to a great extent. The PSs and NSAs indicate that they are working together more than before and service delivery of the PSs has improved as a result of project interventions. The outreach towards marginalised and vulnerable groups has also improved from pre-project levels.

Specific objective 2 was **Improving the policies and operations of PSs in delivering services to vulnerable and marginalised groups:** 18 of the 20 supported PSs have initiated by-laws. Only the Vavuniya South Sinhala PS and Musali PS did not initiate any new by-laws. In total, the project has supported the development of 48 new by-laws. 45 of these by-laws have been reviewed and passed. 10,200 local citizen budgets have been developed in total. Documents available in Tamil have been disseminated among the PSs as they did not have them. The complaints referral system had been introduced and was operational in 12 PSs. Community members participating in the FGDs were aware of the complaint system within their PSs; as opposed to their lack of awareness during a baseline survey conducted at the inception of the project. Community members were aware that they can contribute to decision-making and development of budgets within the PS.

FGDs with community and PS officials indicate that a consultative process is followed in formulating budgets. This was affirmed by 90.9 percent of government officials and 90.9 percent of elected members interviewed. Most community members and PS officials said citizens are able to identify local citizen budgets. 79.5 percent of government officials and 68.2 percent of elected members said the same. Findings indicate that the project has achieved

planned result 2 - **Enhanced co-operation between target communities, NSAs and PSs to promote improved governance and equitable access to resources and services (e.g. citizen welfare and poverty reduction schemes).** Community members and PS officials are co-operating more often, and following consultative processes in the activities of the PS.

The third specific objective was **increasing collaborative efforts between PSs and local NSAs to deliver services more effectively to vulnerable and marginalised groups in the targeted divisions:** Many project activities have contributed to increasing collaboration between PSs and the community. 35 meetings were held including collaborative action plan development meetings, advisory committee meetings and budget proposal meetings. Community members in 12 out of 20 FGDs mentioned that they have been to such PS meetings. Four master plans have been developed, supported by the project. These 4 PSs have conducted joint participatory needs assessments to develop their welfare plans; PS officials mentioned this was the first time they had engaged with the community. They further mentioned that issues brought up by the community at these participatory planning workshops have been incorporated in the budgets for the following year. As requested by PSs in the Northern province, training programmes on proposal development have been conducted; these PSs had then developed proposals as an outcome of the training.

Findings indicate that planned result 3 - **Marginalised groups and individuals in targeted communities are able to contribute to PSs processes that affect service delivery by the end of the project,** has been achieved to a certain extent. The involvement of marginalised groups remained low. However, their engagement was found to be growing and at the writing of this report, was higher than rates that prevailed before the project. Marginalised groups including the elderly, women, and persons who have been displaced, are increasingly represented in the consultative committees, especially in newly formed consultative committees in the North. Stakeholders agree that the issues of marginalised groups should be taken up and addressed by the PSs.

The planned results and actual achievements of these results as discussed above, indicate that the project has achieved its targets.

Conclusions

Improving services delivery including those towards marginalised groups: Findings from the evaluation indicate that service delivery within the PS has improved since 2013. However, service delivery towards marginalised groups remains low even though respondents agree that there needs to be more attention paid to developing increased services to such groups. Functioning of consultative committees has improved from pre-project levels. This has improved community engagement in PS activities. Participatory approaches followed in identification of issues, and inclusion of community ideas in the planning processes, has developed the credibility of PSs among the public. PS officials maintain that the public can directly approach them and bring up issues through the complaint referral system instead of going through elected members, as was done before.

Improving policies and operations: Project activities had contributed to improving policies and operations within the supported PSs, including formulation and passing of by-laws, increasing community participation in the development of annual budgets, and community awareness about the local citizen budget. Awareness among the community, government officials and elected members about policies and operation of a PS, has improved as a result of activities conducted by the project. Community members know they can now participate in the decision making process, government officials know they have to be accountable to the public, and

elected members have been made aware of the need for a consultative process in budgeting and formulating development plans for the PS. By-laws have been developed and forwarded, and even though many are still to be approved, the capacity of PSs in formulating and forwarding by-laws has improved due to project interventions.

Increasing collaboration between Pradeshiya Sabha and civil society: There has been increased participation from the community in development planning within the PS. All stakeholders agree that the functioning of consultative committees has improved and become more efficient since implementation of the project. The participatory needs assessment training conducted had contributed to engaging with the community, and PSs are reporting that increasing numbers of proposals are entertained and included in their planning processes. Community members who are involved in the consultative committees play an important role in bringing the needs of their villages to the attention of officials and elected members, compelling them to address these needs. All stakeholders state that increased collaboration between the PS and civil society is one of the most important outcomes of the project.

Improved knowledge on PS act, budget and related procedures: Stakeholders had increased knowledge and awareness about the PS act and budget procedures. Community engagement within the functioning of PSs had increased as a result. It is very important to create awareness amongst stakeholders about the rules, regulations, and limitations of the given framework. Knowledge about the PS act, budget, and related procedures, had improved among all actors. Compared to baseline levels the increase in knowledge with regard to the above was significant.

Some areas showed lower impact than initially planned. This includes the inclusion of marginalised groups and their issues into the decision making and service delivery processes. However, the process has been initiated and is an improvement from the pre-project situation. Respondents mentioned that support provided should have been homogeneous, with all supported PSs having the opportunity to participate in as many activities as possible. It was significant that provision of infrastructure (computers, furniture) was not seen to be a significant aspect of the activities; respondents focused instead on the less tangible outcomes such as improved relationships between the PS and community. This is surprising given that beneficiaries often perceive development projects as “effective” only if they provide grants, equipment, furniture etc. Appreciation of respondents towards the tools and approaches that have been introduced, rather than more tangible provisions like equipment and furniture indicates changes in attitude, practice and performance. This also indicates that development of relationships hoped for by the project have been achieved.

In addition to the above, there was a good cooperation between the project and the government of Sri Lanka, further solidified by the MOU signed between the two parties. Even though the project was initiated when the political situation was such that INGOs were looked at suspiciously, SFCG managed to maintain cordial relationships with all stakeholders. This has contributed to smooth functioning of the project despite some delays during the initial stages. The overall perception of stakeholders towards the project was positive, and they appreciated improvements that the project contributed to, especially in the context of an improved relationship between the community and PS.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) has been working in Sri Lanka since 2010 to improve engagement between government and citizens through dialogue and activities, supporting the process of building a peaceful culture through media programming, dialogue, outreach activities, and capacity strengthening.

SFCG is implementing a two year European Union funded project titled “*Citizens in Governance: Promoting Collaboration in Local Governance*” in the 6 districts of Ampara, Batticaloa, Vavuniya, Mannar, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya. The aim of this project is to improve services to marginalised communities through capacity development of elected officials and civil society organisations, and to create opportunities for increased collaboration among Non State Actors and Government Officers from the *Pradeshiya Sabhas* (PS), with a view to finding solutions to ongoing issues in their communities.

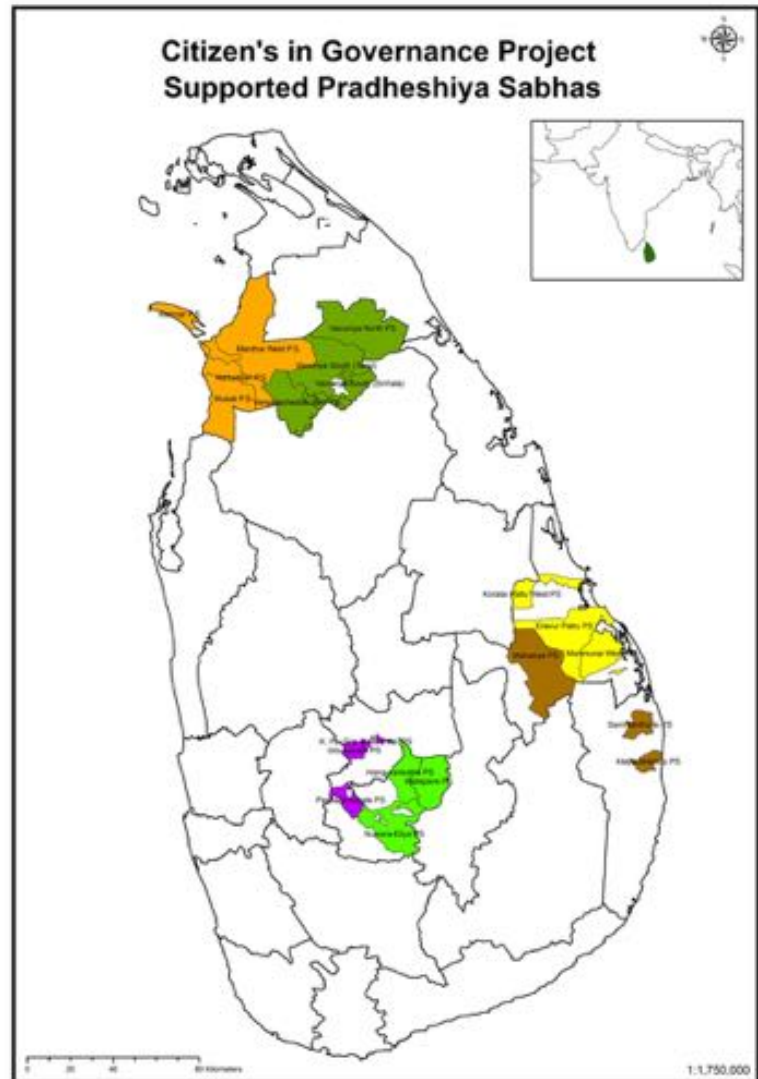


Figure 1: CIG project area

1.2. Objectives

The overall objective of this project was to improve local service delivery through increased cooperation between Pradeshiya Sabhas and Non State Actors - NSAs (civil society groups and individuals).

Specific objectives include:

1. Bolstering the ability of NSAs to engage with PSs to advocate for better policies and delivery of services to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups;
2. Improving the policies and operations of PSs in delivering services to vulnerable and marginalised groups; and
3. Increasing collaborative efforts between PSs and local NSAs to deliver services more effectively to vulnerable and marginalised groups in the targeted divisions.

1.3. Expected results

It was expected that the project would achieve the following results:

1. PSs and NSAs are better able to work together to deliver more effective local services to marginalised and vulnerable local populations by the end of the project;

2. Enhanced cooperation between target communities, NSAs, and PSs to promote improved governance and equitable access to resources and services (e.g. citizen welfare and poverty reduction schemes); and
3. Marginalised groups and individuals in targeted communities are able to contribute to PS processes that affect service delivery by the end of the project.

1.4. Methodology followed

The following tasks were carried out in conducting the evaluation in close consultation and collaboration with the SFCG team.

1. Collating and reviewing project documents, reports, baseline data

The documents reviewed included:

1. Full proposal submitted to the EU
2. Indicator tracking sheet
3. Contact list for Northern and Eastern provinces
4. Project log-frame
5. CPA training reports
6. Pre-assessment report
7. Baseline study report
8. Project statistics up to December 2015
9. Training needs assessment
10. Final report
11. Interim report – January to June 2015
12. Interim report – 2014

2. Identification of key stakeholder segments and relevant survey methods developed and implemented

1. Focus Group Discussions with beneficiaries of the project including ACLG staff, PS officials and community members
2. Key Informant Interviews with current and former elected PS members and government stakeholders
3. Interviews with regional director of SFCG, CPA (technical partner) and Janathakshan (capacity development partner).

3. Research design

A suitable research and sampling methodology was developed in consultation with the client as per the TOR, and participants for FGDs and KIIs were identified based on contact lists provided by SFCG.

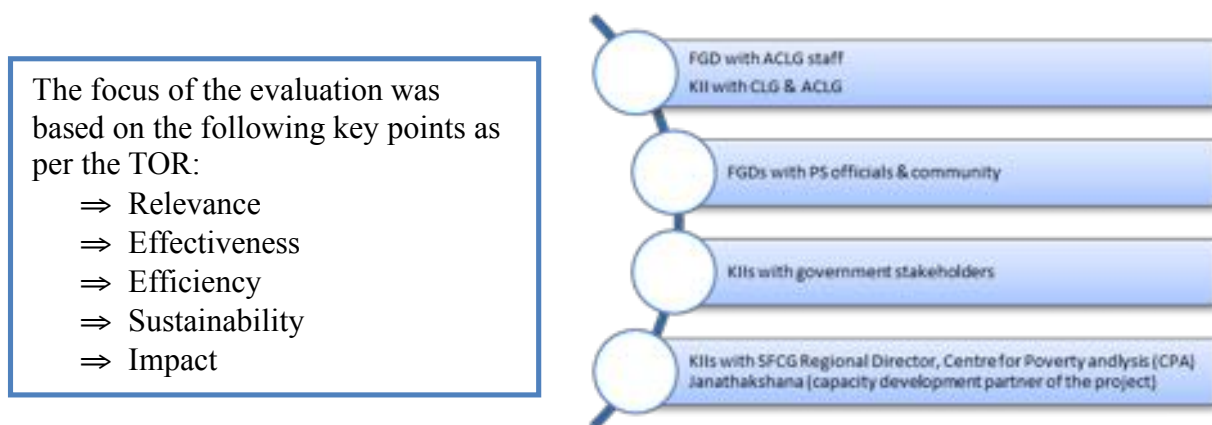


Figure 2: Research Design

4. Field interviews and completing questionnaires

The survey team were trained and commissioned to collect necessary data based on questionnaires provided. Field interviews were conducted in Tamil or Sinhala based on language competencies of the interviewees. Trained and experienced researchers were engaged to carry out field work in the Districts. Members of NF management accompanied the survey team during some of the FGDs and KIIs.

Project process evaluation Implementation of the survey was constantly evaluated in terms of management of operations and efficiency. Regular communication was maintained with SFCG to report on progress and take action related to points raised.

5. Compiling and Analysing data

A database was developed using SPSS software to enter and analyse data from KIIs. Data collected from field surveys were translated into English and entered into the database. Data was checked regularly to ensure that quality standards were maintained.

6. Reporting

The report is based on the proposed EU guidelines and includes all points mentioned therein.

2. Answered questions/ Findings

As mentioned above FGDs and KIIs were conducted with all the main stakeholders of the project, including elected members of the PS, officials of the PS, members of the community, government representatives, and staff of the ACLG offices. The sample included the following:

Table 1: Sample

District	Number of FGDs			Number of KIIs	
	Planned	Completed	No of participants	Planned	Completed
Ampara	6	6	46	15	17
Batticaloa	6	6	48	15	16
Kandy	6	6	49	15	19
Nuwara Eliya	6	6	44	15	17
Mannar *	8	9	46	20	24
Vavuniya **	8	8	63	20	17
Other ***	0	0	00	00	03
Total	40	41	296	100	113

*in Mannar an additional FGD was conducted with ACLG staff

**in Vavuniya, FGDs with Vavuniya South Sinhala PS could not take place as there were no participants, an additional FGD was conducted with ACLG office staff

*** KIIs were also conducted with the SFCG regional director, representative from CPA and representative from Jathakshan, the training partner for the project

Customised questionnaires and guidelines were developed for different stakeholders:

1. Guidelines for FGD with PS officials
2. Guidelines for FGD with community members
3. Questionnaires for KII with elected members
4. Questionnaire for KII with government officials

Please see **Annexe 2** for questionnaires used.

The evaluation did not include a survey of community members; however, feedback was obtained from community members who participated in FGDs, some of whom were also members of the consultative committees. Since there was no survey of community members, findings could be compared with baseline levels only in relation to PS officials and elected members. As the number of elected members is less (22) district-wise analysis was not possible. Whenever applicable, district-wise analysis has been provided for government stakeholders who were interviewed.

2.1. Relevance - Problems and needs

This chapter of the report focuses on the relevance of the project in the context of:

1. To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?
2. Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
3. Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects? To what extent is the project logic valid?

The Citizens In Governance (CIG) project was implemented from 2013 to 2016. This is a critical period in post conflict development in the country, especially in the context of working in the Northern and Eastern provinces. During the project a change in government took place, changing the political environment in Sri Lanka which also had implications for project activities. A majority of PSs were dissolved in May 2015 by the newly elected government that came into power after the January 2015 Presidential election. At the time of conducting the evaluation, there were no elected members in most of the PSs. Local government elections had been postponed by the government while the electoral system was under review. Elections are expected to be held later in 2016 under a mixed electoral system.

The **Pradeshiya Sabhas** were introduced to Sri Lanka as a means of devolving power through the 13th amendment to the constitution in 1987. The local government consists of Municipal Councils, Urban Councils and Pradeshiya Sabhas. PSs are governed by the PS Act no.15 of 1987. Local authorities are responsible for providing a variety of local public services including roads, sanitation, drainage, housing, libraries, public parks and recreational facilities.

As of January 2011 there were 335 local authorities (23 municipal councils, 41 urban councils and 271 divisional councils). All local authorities are elected for 4 year terms using the proportional representation system.

In May 2015, the majority of PSs were dissolved. At the time of compiling this report there were no elected members in most PSs. Elections for new PSs are expected to take place in 2016 after appeals from political parties and the public regarding delimitation of local government wards. The government has announced that local government elections will be held under a mixed electoral system.

Although the Pradeshiya Sabhas (PSs) were introduced to the country in 1987 as a means to devolve power, elections of members to PSs in the North have only been held after the end of the civil war. During a baseline survey conducted at the inception of the project the following key findings emerged:

1. Community members showed very low knowledge and understanding of the PS act; or understanding of the PS budget and income generation process. Knowledge and understanding of the PS Act amongst PS members and PS officers was low and a large percentage (47 percent) of PS members had been elected for the first time, with only a basic understanding of the PS Act or functions of the PS.
2. There was confusion and lack of clarity with regard to by-laws.
3. Community members were not very satisfied with the services provided by their PS.
4. There was limited space for community participation at the PS level. Consultative committees were not functioning well and did not have special provisions for marginalised groups.
5. Majority of PSs did not have a properly established complaint mechanism. Relationship between community and the PS was weak due to lack of connectivity between the PS and their constituency. In addition, there was a high degree of distrust amongst the community towards the PS system.

The above findings from the baseline survey validate the need for a project like CIG, which focused on *improving local service delivery through increased cooperation between PSs and NSAs (civil society groups and individuals)*.

The PS system, more than other local government entities, engages closely with constituents and provides a variety of services including roads, sanitation, housing, libraries, public parks and recreational facilities. The project worked in 3 Provinces, 6 Districts and 20 PSs. In the Northern Province (Mannar and Vavuniya) elections had taken place only once since the PS system was introduced 25 years ago. In the Eastern province (Ampara and Batticaloa) even though the PS remains functional, it lacked the capacity to address the development needs of war affected communities in the region. In the Central Province (Kandy and Nuwara Eliya) PSs have limited access to plantation communities who are often marginalised from mainstream services. In all regions, civil society actors including the community are unaware of the services available for them through the PS system.

The Overall and Specific objectives of the proposal, together with the relevant indicators (see below) have been formulated to address issues identified in the analysis above.

Table 2: Objectives and Indicators

Overall Objectives	
To improve local service delivery through increased cooperation between Pradeshiya Sabhas and their communities	1. At least 50% of supported PSs have functioning consultative committees with participation of citizens including at least one member from a marginalised community. 2. % of citizens surveyed at project end indicate satisfaction with services provided by their PSs
Specific Objectives	
Obj 1. Bolstering the ability of NSAs to engage with PSs to advocate for better policies and delivery of services, to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups	1.1 At least 75% of NSAs and local authorities surveyed, feel their role in ensuring delivery of services has been strengthened as a result of the training/exchange visits 1.2 An increased number of citizens in the targeted areas indicate improved knowledge of provisions in the PS Act 1.3 At least 75% of elected officers in supported PSs have increased knowledge on PS budget process and income generation activities
Obj 2. Improving the policies and operations of PSs in delivering services to vulnerable and marginalised groups	2.1 At least 50% of selected PSs have initiated a by-law to address the needs of vulnerable groups 2.2 At least 75% of selected PSs have initiated consultative processes in the formulation of annual budgets 2.3 At least 15% of citizens can identify aspects of the local citizen budget
Obj 3. Increasing collaborative efforts between PSs and local NSAs to deliver services more effectively to vulnerable and marginalised groups in the targeted divisions	3.1 Of the 10 PSs selected, at least 75% have initiated complaint mechanisms or the development of welfare plans for marginalised groups 3.2 An increased number of marginalised groups in the targeted areas have been involved in the decision making process

The project built on the experiences of SFCG in Sri Lanka, which identified promotion of cooperation between local authorities and the community as a crucial element in promoting good governance within the system. SFCG's other projects also focus on improving dialogue among stakeholders and increasing participation of marginalised groups in the mainstream development processes. Partner for the project, Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), had conducted trainings in 75 PS divisions as part of an earlier initiative focusing on PSs, which was carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government, and regional partner organisations, titled "Capacity Building in Local Authority Financial Transparency and Accountability".. The CIG project built on such experiences and utilised existing networks in target areas.

Based on their experience working in conflict transformation and peace building, SFCG developed this programme as they identified the need to promote awareness about the PS system amongst the community, foster the relationship between the community and PSs, especially to enable delivery of services to marginalised groups, and encourage participation of the community in formulating policies and programmes implemented by local government authorities (LGAs). These activities have been designed based on the identified gaps, such as lack of awareness about current systems, lack of networking between community and local government authorities, and lack of citizen participation in the affairs of LGAs.

Improving service delivery by local authorities, especially to be able to address the needs of marginalised communities is a real need, especially in the war affected region where services have not reached the community due to a prolonged period of conflict. All questions in the conducted survey were directly related to indicators in the project log frame.

Supporting cooperation between the PS system and NSAs is in line with the second objective of the EU country strategy for Sri Lanka, which has 3 main objectives: 1) reconstruction and stabilisation of the North and East; 2) support to good governance, and 3) conflict resolution, and development through trade programmes². The EU recognises the importance of institutional strengthening for local government authorities in its National Indicative Programme. One of the main lines of action put forward in the agenda for change includes good governance³.

The *Pura Naguma* local government enhancement project, implemented by the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government with support from ADB, also supports capacity building and service delivery improvement of PSs in the 7 provinces excluding the North and East. The North-East Local Service Improvement Project (NELSIP) does the same in the Northern and Eastern Provinces⁴. These projects and programmes have complemented the activities of the Citizens In Governance (CIG) project.

Stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation, lauded the relevance and timeliness of the interventions. FGDs and KIIs indicated that the issues dealt with through the project were relevant and necessary. Planned activities had been adapted to suit the requirements of stakeholders. For example, when it was identified that bringing all stakeholder groups together (elected members, PS officials and NSAs/community members) would be more effective than a solitary focus on training; exchange visits and other forums were employed. In addition, when some PSs in the North requested project proposal development training instead of developing welfare development plans, their requests were entertained and the activities amended accordingly. The change of government in January 2015 and dissolution of many PSs that followed, had implications for planned activities involving elected members. However, activities planned with the participation of LGAs and NSAs continued as planned.

No major changes were made to the project plan. A project component built around using media, underwent minor modification, as some key stakeholders such as the District Secretaries were not in favour of such a component. Instead, alternative activities such as training programs on website development and developing power point presentations had been carried out for PS staff. These activities had been decided and developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders based on their needs, as identified by the needs assessments conducted during the initial stages of the project. For example, since the PSs in the North had already developed LAPDPs (Local Authority Participatory Development Plans) they opted for training on proposal development instead of developing master plans. The majority of requests made by these stakeholders had been taken into account and incorporated into project activities. Feedback from stakeholders indicates they appreciate the needs-based support provided, and the willingness of project staff to adapt and address the requirements of stakeholders.

2 EU Sri Lanka Country Strategy Paper 2007 to 2013

3 Multi Annual Indicative program (MIP) 2014 – 2020 for Sri Lanka

4 <http://www.lgpc.gov.lk>

The target group of the action included the following segments of society:

Table 3: Target Groups

Target group	Problems identified to be addressed by the project
Elected members of the PS	Elected members lacked capacity to plan and implement development activities, including special activities for marginalised groups
Officials of the PS	Officials working in LGAs had to deal with bureaucracy and limited resources, they lacked motivation and resources to improve service delivery
NSAs – civil society actors and community members	Community members were not aware of the services offered by LGAs and did not realise their role in contributing to policy formulation and development action of LGAs
Marginalised groups and individuals	Marginalised groups were unaware of special service packages available to them, and did not know how to approach LGAs to make use of these services.

These stakeholders have been consulted in designing the project from inception and during the development of the project proposal. For day-to-day implementation of project activities, regular meetings were held with partners after each activity in order to modify and adapt activities to suit the local context. In addition, all major stakeholders, such as the ACLG of each district were regularly consulted and kept informed as the activities were implemented.

Stakeholders, especially government authorities, were consulted during the design and implementation of each project activity. 18 meetings were held during the implementation of the project. Secretaries of Local Government of Provincial Councils, Commissioner of local government of the respective province, Assistant Commissioner of Local Government of the local government of Mannar, Vavuniya, Ampara, Batticaloa, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya, Commissioners of Local Governments, Secretaries to the Ministry of Local Government, and the Chief Secretaries of the respective provinces were consulted when necessary during the project implementation period. Implementation of the project followed a *Common Ground* approach that promoted collaboration and cross participation of all stakeholders. This included:

1. Civic Inclusiveness: Increased contribution of civil society groups and improved participation of marginalised demographic groups.
2. Cross Participation and Mutual Understanding: Utilisation of numerous tools to improve the co-operation between PSs, civil society groups and individuals (NSAs).
3. Collaboration Effectiveness: Improved delivery of services to all members from target communities and in particular, marginalised groups such as women, children, people living with disabilities and the elderly.
4. Participatory Positions: Demand driven action using a joint collaboration approach, ensuring adaptable and appropriate delivery of services and assistance to a wide range of NSAs.
5. Gender and Rights: With respect to NSA participation, the action targeted fifty percent female participation and sought to emphasise the role of women's organisations. In meetings, training programmes and other project activities, the participation of women was higher than thirty percent. Women's representation in consultative committees also increased due to project interventions.
6. Conflict-Sensitive Methodology: A commitment to peaceful conflict resolution through increased communication and community engagement.

In implementing the project, SFCG signed an MOU with the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government. Even at a time when NGOs were viewed with scepticism, SFCG was recognised as an important stakeholder. The Commissioners of Local Government (CLGs) interviewed during the course of this survey indicated their support for the project and expressed appreciation for interventions carried out.

The resources required a comprehensive risk analysis. In this regard, appropriate M & E arrangements were made when developing the CIG project. As implementation began, it was realised that SFCG had underestimated the time and effort needed to work in all these districts with a single project manager. Obtaining approvals and signatures from different entities took up a significant portion of time and the situation was exacerbated by large distances between Districts. To mitigate this, field assistants based in target locations were employed for the Northern and Central provinces. Resource allocation was managed accordingly and the contingency budget line was used to reallocate resources across several other lines, in consultation with the EU.

The risk assessment conducted at the onset of the project and mitigation measures planned, were effective in ensuring smooth functioning of the project. A positive relationship was maintained with provincial councils and other local government authorities. An MOU signed with the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government ensured that SFCG would benefit from the co-operation of government stakeholders at all levels. This was apparent in the Key Informant Interviews with the CLGs and ACLGs, where they spoke positively about the project and its activities. In addition to signing an MOU with the Central Ministry, MOUs were also signed with the Chief Secretary of Central and Northern provinces to further facilitate smooth execution of the project.

SFCG worked with the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) in implementing the project. A Key Informant Interview was conducted with CPA to ascertain their views on implementation and impact of the project. In addition to conducting 20 needs assessments for the supported PSs, CPA had also been involved in capacity building for PSs, local politicians and officials; capacity building and networking with NSAs; drafting of thirty by-laws; and dissemination of by-laws to local government bodies, drafting of Citizen Budgets, printing and distribution of ten thousand copies of these budgets to the public, and working with marginalised groups (women, persons with disabilities, low-caste communities). During the KII some dissatisfaction was expressed by CPA about their relationship with SFCG. Issues expressed; included misunderstandings related to the contract between CPA and SFCG, dissatisfaction about delays in reimbursements during the project, lack of understanding from project staff and not being acknowledged as a partner during project activities. The issues brought up by CPA were discussed with SFCG management and their explanation provided was:

1. It had been agreed by both parties (CPA and SFCG) at the time of developing the project, that the project would be presented as a SFCG project with CPA as a service provider.
2. Whenever there were publications (for example, by-laws and citizen budgets) where CPA took the lead, they were always acknowledged and their logos included.
3. During the initial stages all decisions related to project activities were made jointly.
4. Delays in payment and reimbursements had arisen due to the need to follow proper accounting procedures and getting the supporting documentations in order.

This difference of opinion between CPA and SFCG has not affected project implementation adversely since most of the planned activities have been completed and the expected outcome had been achieved successfully.

Originally it was planned to develop 10 welfare master plans. However, in response to a request made by the CLG of Northern Province this plan was amended. Since the selected PSs in the North have already developed Local Authority Participatory Development Plans (LAPDP), and because several PS officials lacked knowledge and skill in proposal development, the CLG of that region requested that they be provided a capacity development in proposal development instead.

Accordingly SFCG provided technical support for developing 4 welfare plans and 6 project proposals based on needs identified together with the respective PSs. As per the amended plan, welfare master plan development was carried out in 04 PSs -Walapana, Udunuwara and Pasbage in the Central Province and Mahaoya in the Ampara district. For the proposal development capacity building training, 4 PSs in the North, namely Musali and Nanattan (Mannar District), Cheddikkulam and Vavuniya North (Vavuniya District) and Chenkalady (Batticaloa), Alayadivembu (Ampara) were selected.

At the time of writing this report, four welfare plans had been developed for Mahaoya, Pasbage, Udunuwara, and Walapane. The final plans for Udunuwara, Mahaoya and Pasbage have officially been handed over to the respective PSs. In Walapane, a draft plan is available and is currently under review.

SFCG has worked with Janathakshan (formerly Practical Action) in implementing participatory needs assessments for selected PSs. A KII was conducted with a representative of Janathakshan, to discuss their experiences in implementing the project at field level. Janathakshan provided training on proposal development in the Northern and Eastern provinces. 6 proposals had been developed based on this training. According to Janathakshan representative, since the NELSIP project was implemented only in the North and East, there was little attention paid to this in the Central province. Hence the project's inclusion of the Central Province was found to be very important. The Central province is often ignored by other donors and projects. This experience in the Central Province is unique due to its varied geography and diverse ethnic groups.

Issues identified during project implementation and changes made, have been reported in the two interim reports submitted to EU.

2.2. Effectiveness - Achievement of purpose

The chapter on effectiveness will focus on the following aspects as per the TOR:

1. To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
2. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
3. To what extent were the project activities effective in achieving the three expected outcomes and the objectives set at the beginning of the project?

Findings are organised under each planned indicator and under each category of respondents.

The planned results and actual achievements of these results are given in the table below:

Table 4: Planned results and status of achievement

Planned results	Indicators	Status
PSs and NSAs are better able to work together to deliver more effective local services to marginalised and vulnerable local populations by the end of the project	1.1 # of training sessions conducted 1.2 # Exchange visits conducted 1.3 # of budget proposals forwarded by community groups	22 training sessions have been conducted with the participation of 515 stakeholders, including 399 men and 119 women. 3 exchange visits have been conducted with the participation of 128 stakeholders, including 99 men and 29 women 573 budget proposal have been forwarded by community groups in the 6 districts. Some of the PSs developed a large number of proposals, making the overall number high.
Enhanced cooperation between target communities, NSAs and PSs to promote improved governance and equitable access to resources and services (e.g. citizen welfare and poverty reduction schemes)	2.1 # of local citizen budgets created 2.2 # of documents translated into Tamil 2.3 Citizens are aware of how a complaint and referral mechanism functions 2.4 Citizens have access to simplified information on budgets	10,200 local citizen budgets have been developed. Documents were available in Tamil and were disseminated among PSs as they did not have them. Complaint referral systems are operational in 12 PSs. Community members participating in FGDs were aware of the complaint system within their PS. Community members were aware that they can be involved in decision making and development of budgets within their PS.
Marginalised groups and individuals in targeted communities are able to contribute to PSs processes that affect service delivery by the end of the project	3.1 : # of joint meetings held between the PS and citizens including marginalised groups, 3.2 # of citizens and NSA representatives participating in Public forums 3.3 # of welfare development plans created 3.4 Number of PSs have conducted joint participatory needs assessments to develop welfare plans	35 meetings were held, including collaborative action plan development meetings, advisory committee meeting and budget proposal meetings Community members in 12 out of 20 FGDs mentioned that they had been to PS meetings 4 master plans and 6 proposals have been developed 4 PSs have conducted joint participatory needs assessments to develop welfare plans

The following training sessions have been conducted by the project:

Table 5: Training sessions conducted

Type of Training	Male	Female
Elected members Training	21	0
Elected members Training	24	0
Elected members Training	21	0
Elected members Training	22	0
GoSL officers Training	26	0
GoSL officers Training	22	0
Orientation training for NSA	13	10
Orientation training for NSA	17	3
Orientation training for NSA	7	12
Training on By laws and budget process	12	10
Training on By- laws and budget process	14	6
Orientation training for NSA	22	6
Orientation training for Project Assistant	2	0
Proposal writing workshop	24	3
Master Plan Development	14	13
Orientation training for NSA	44	18
Training on CRM	9	7
Master Plan Development	11	8
Master plan development	24	3
Training on public relation materials production	7	9
Awareness training for Advisory Committee	40	11
Total	396	119

A breakdown of the budget proposals forwarded by community members is given below:

Table 6: Budget proposals forwarded by community

District	Pradeshiya Sabah	No of Budget Proposal
Mannar	Nanattan PS	03
	Mannar PS	04
	Musali	07
	Manthai West	06
Vavuniya	Vengalcheddikulam (Cheddikulam)	05
	Vavuniya south Tamil	04
	Vavuniya south Sinhala	10
	Vavuniya North	05
Ampara	Mahaoya	08
	Alayadivembu	04
	Sammanthurai	05

Batticaloa	Oddamavadi	08
	Eravur Pattu (Chenkalady)	03
	Vavunatheevu	04
Kandy	Pasbage	369
Nuwara Eliya	NuwaraEliya	18
	Hanguranketha	40
	Walapane	70
TOTAL		573

During the baseline survey only 3.5 percent of respondents from the community said they had forwarded their proposals for preparation of the budget, while a staggering 96.5 percent stated they had never submitted proposals. In light of the situation that existed at the beginning of the project, the above submission of 573 budget proposals by community members is a significant achievement.

When the project was originally developed, partners identified the lack of official documents in Tamil, as an issue to be addressed. However once the project was underway, it was found that the required documents were available in Tamil but the PSs didn't have them. Therefore, copies of all the following documents, in all languages were given to PS members and staff.

- The Pradeshiya Sabha Act No.15 of 1987
- Financial Regulations
- Gazette notifications of meeting procedures
- Annual Budget Calendar recommended by the Presidential Inquiry Commission appointed in 1999
- An article on how to enhance good governance through the participation of people
- An analysis on local budget process
- An analysis on roles and responsibilities of Chairman, Secretary and Elected Members
- The National Policy on Local Government
- Application formats designed to file cases against persons who avoid paying taxes
- Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) ACT, No. 22 of 2012

Complaint mechanisms are functional in all 20 PSs.

The project had supported 12 PSs (see below), with a software and computer based system to record and analyse complaints (Complaint Referral Mechanism). The system can analyse complaints under the categories of land, housing, road, water, and sanitation. The label can be changed according to the needs of the PS if needed. Hence, submitted complaints can be forwarded to the relevant department within the PS's purview or to an external party as necessary. In the first stage this method was tested amongst a few PSs which already had systems in place with the necessary resources, such as staff capable of using the software.

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Sammanthurai | 6. Vavuniya South | 12. Gangawate Koral |
| 2. Mahaoya | (Sinhala) | |
| 3. Vavunathivu | 7. Mannar | |
| 4. Oddamavadi | 8. Manthai West | |
| 5. Vavuniya South | 9. Nuwara Eliya | |
| Tamil | 10. Hanguranketha | |
| | 11. Pasbage | |

Introduction of a computer based complaint recording mechanism was new to some of the regions (Central province) while it helped develop existing systems in others. For example, the Local Authority Redress Mechanism (LARG) introduced by GIZ in the North, has been further strengthened by this project.

Officials of the ACLG office in Vavuniya mentioned that the system was appreciated and should have been introduced to all PSs in the North. The system makes it possible for users to define issues and categories based on complaints brought up by the community. The label can be changed according to the needs of the PS. Hence, submitted complaints can be forwarded to the relevant department within the PS or channelled to a relevant authority if it is outside the purview of the PS. During the initial stage the system was tested amongst a few PSs which already had functional systems in place. The PS for introducing this system was selected based on certain prerequisites such as, having necessary resources including staff capable of using the software. In addition, staff of the PS had been provided with training and coaching on how to effectively use the software. Individual visits had been made to resolve system issues and monitor progress of the system within each PS.

Four welfare master plans have been developed in Walapane, Pasbage, Udunuwara and Mahaoya PSs. The participating PSs collected information from the public and PS officials. In addition to identifying community needs, this exercise also developed the capacity of PS officials to conduct needs assessments, hold public forums and obtain community input from members of the public.

PSs who attended the training have initiated needs assessment meetings with villages in their District. At these meetings, PS officers explain the purpose of the welfare master plan and ask community members to present pressing issues in their communities. Once members present their issues, there is an open discussion, after which they are invited to prioritise their issues. The information is collected by PS members, who compile and use it to develop the master welfare plan. - Excerpt from SFCG interim report to EU, January to June 2015.

Six proposal development workshops have been conducted in Alayadivembu, Chenkalady, Cheddikulam, Vavuniya North, Nanattan and Musali PSs. As a result, staff of the PS mention that they have developed their capacities in identifying and developing proposals. They have been able to use these skills to identify the needs of their communities and develop proposals to address these needs.

The following section of the report describes outcomes of the Focus Group Discussions with community members and PS officials; and the Key Informant Interviews with elected members of PSs and government officers, with regards to their experiences with the project. The section begins from the overall objective, followed by the 3 specific objectives and the relevant indicators for each of them.

Overall objective: To improve local service delivery through increased cooperation between Pradeshiya Sabhas

Indicator 1: At least 50 percent of the supported PSs have functioning consultative committees with participation of citizens with at least one member being from marginalised communities.

Consultative committees can be established by each PS for functions such as finance and policy formulation, housing and community development, technical services and environmental facilities. Members comprise PS elected members, officials, and community representatives proficient in matters pertaining to a particular committee. An elected member holds the post of chairperson while the PS secretary holds the post of secretary. Committees usually meet once a month. Decisions taken at these committees are tabled at PS meetings for approval.

The project has supported consultative committees in 12 of the selected PSs, 5 of them have been reorganised during the project period as part of its interventions, while 7 consultative committees have been newly formed:

Reorganised committees

1. Nuwara Eliya,
2. Hanguranketha,
3. Pasbage,
4. Eravurpattu (Chenkalady)
5. Mahaoya.

Newly formed committees

6. Vengalcheddikulam PS
7. Vavuniya North PS
8. Pesalai
9. Musali
10. Manthai West
11. Nanattan
12. Alayadivembu

The Pasbage Committee had been active but was reorganised to include wider representation of community members.

Government officials: the responses provided by government officials in response to the question *are/were there consultative committees / advisory groups functioning in your PS?* is provided in the table below:

Table 7: Functioning of consultative committees as perceived by govt. officials

	BEFORE 2013 (Percent)	AFTER 2013 (Percent)
Yes, there were/are functioning committees	44 (50.0)	73 (83.0)
No, there were/are no functioning committees	13 (14.8)	4 (4.5)
I am not aware	7 (8.0)	4 (4.5)
Not Responded	24 (27.3)	7 (8.0)
Total	88 (100)	88 (100)

Fifty percent said they had consultative committees before 2013 while 83 percent said they had consultative committees after 2013, indicating a rise of 33 percent in the functioning of consultative committees after implementation of the project. Those who said there were no

consultative committees in their PS had reduced by 10.3 percent after 2013. There appears to be a significant rise in the existence of functioning consultative committees after implementation of the project. 33 percent of interviewed government officials were members of these committees.

The representation of marginalised groups in consultative committees as indicated by government officials is give in table 8 below:

Table 8: Marginalised groups in consultative committees

Marginalised group	No. of respondents indicating Yes	Percent of respondents
Elderly (above 60)	63	71.6
Women	62	70.5
Displaced	34	38.7
Plantation workers	19	21.6
War Widows	15	17.0
Disabilities	15	17.0
None	15	17.0
Ex combatants	9	10.2

The marginalised groups mentioned by government officials included 71.6 percent elderly, 70.5 percent women 38.7 percent displaced persons, 21.6 percent plantation workers, 17 percent war widows, 17 percent persons with disabilities and 10.2 percent ex-combatants. There was significant improvement in the participation of marginalised groups in consultative committees as opposed to the baseline situation, where it was found that: *The consultative committees are not functioning well and do not have special provisions for marginalised groups. 65% of community members did not know or were not certain whether consultative committees were operating at their councils.* (source: Baseline survey report)

Government officials mostly expressed positive feedback about their experiences with the project, with 65 percent of them citing the Participatory Planning Approach (PPA) experience as one of the most positive.

Elected Members: At the time of writing this report, many PSs have been dissolved; hence the KIIs took place with former elected members⁵. Responses provided by these elected members in response to the question *are there consultative committees functioning in your PS?* is provided in the table below:

Table 9: Functioning of consultative committees as perceived by elected members

	BEFORE 2013	AFTER 2013
Yes, there were/are functioning committees	9 (40.9Percent)	20 (90.9Percent)
No, there were/are no functioning committees	1 (4.5Percent)	0
I am not aware	5 (22.7Percent)	0
Not responded	7 (31.8Percent)	2 (9.1Percent)
Total	22 (100Percent)	22 (100Percent)

⁵ Elected members as mentioned in this report, include former elected members - as many PSs have been dissolved

Only 40.9 percent of the elected members said that there were consultative committees in their PS before 2013. After 2013 the number of elected members that said that there were consultative committees in their PS had risen to 90.9 percent, an increase of 50 percent. 81.8 percent of elected members said they were members of these consultative committees. Inclusion of marginalised groups in consultative committees is as indicated in table 10 below:

Table 10: Marginalised groups in consultative committees as indicated by elected members

Marginalised group	No. of respondents indicating Yes	Percent of respondents
Elderly (above 60)	18	81.8
Displaced	16	72.8
Women	13	59.1
Ex combatants	4	18.2
Plantation workers	4	18.2
War Widows	2	9.1
Disabilities	2	9.1
None	0	0

Marginalised groups mentioned by the elected members included the elderly (81.8 percent), displaced persons (72.8 percent), women (59.1 percent) ex-combatants (18.2 percent), plantation workers (18.2 percent), war widows (9.1 percent) and persons with disabilities (9.1 percent). Special programmes for these groups included mobile health clinics, special programmes for IDPs and disability-friendly public areas.

PS Officials: FGDs with PS officials in these locations confirms they did have consultative committees. PSs in the North (Mannar and Vavuniya) had IDPs and widows represented in their consultative committees. In the consultative committees of other regions, marginalised groups represented included the elderly and women.

The Vavuniya South Sinhala PS officials said that their consultative committee was not active. All 3 PSs in the Nuwara Eliya district said that community involvement should increase. Officials of PSs in which consultative committees were functioning, said that solving problems had become easier due to the involvement of the community. PSs in the North had IDPs and widows represented. In Ampara, none of the PSs had marginalised groups represented, however, they stated that the issues of marginalised groups were taken up and addressed.

With regard to the main functions of the PSs, officials mentioned the following:

Mannar – taxes, infrastructure development, deed and land issues, health, water, roads, street lights, libraries, children's parks, playgrounds, internal roads, wells, toilets, public markets, bus halts

Vavuniya - Health services, welfare services, water supply, cemetery development, waste disposal, income generation, land valuation, sanitation, permission for buildings, maintenance of public infrastructure, local taxes

Ampara - Providing welfare services, more care on health, providing infrastructure facilities, looking at all kinds of general planning needs of the PS, garbage collection, dealing with the human-elephant conflict, transportation of proper drinking water

Batticaloa - Proper service to the public in all departments; health, social acts, infrastructure, garbage disposal, tax collection

Kandy - serving the community, health, sanitation, common utilities and other services, physical development, environmental aspects, welfare activities, library services, pre-schools, crematoriums

Nuwara Eliya – waste management, health, sanitation, awareness on diseases.

Community members: FGDs with community members confirms that almost all of the PSs in Mannar, Vavuniya, Ampara and Batticaloa have functioning consultative committees. Community members of 2 of the PSs in Kandy (Gangawate Korale and Udunuwara) and 2 PSs in Nuwara Eliya (Hanguranketha and Walapane) were not aware of such consultative committees. However, PS officials confirmed that these PSs did have consultative committees even though the community members that participated at the FGDs may not have been aware of them. Compared to the PS officials, other government officials and elected members from the community were less aware of the CIG project and activities.

When asked if they had been to PS meetings, community members in all but the Kandy and Nuwara Eliya PSs responded in the affirmative.

Summary and achievement of indicator

A baseline study commissioned by SFCG at the beginning of the project indicted that *consultative committees do not seem to be functioning effectively and most are not convened regularly* (source: Baseline survey report). During this evaluation Government officials, elected members and PS officials agree that consultative committees are functioning in the PS system. Community members seemed less aware about the functioning of these committees. Marginalised groups represented in the committees include mostly the elderly, followed by women, and displaced (in the Northern province). The representation of persons with disabilities was comparatively low. SFCG has supported 12 (60 percent of the supported PSs) to streamline the functioning of their consultative committees. Committees are functioning in all 20 supported PSs as indicated by FGDs with PS officials.

In some of the PSs (i.e. Pasbage) committees were functioning very effectively and were highly engaged, while in some other PSs (i.e. Vavuniya South Sinhala) community engagement was low. Since the FGD with Vavuniya South PS community could not take place, the perception of community members could not be ascertained. However, discussions with PS officials indicated that community members in this area had many urgent needs, such as the lack of proper drinking water, which they had brought up repeatedly but had not been addressed. The lack of community engagement in this PS may be due to disillusionment felt by community members who felt their needs were not being addressed. On the other hand, in PSs where community engagement was high (i.e. Pasbage) the community members felt that their needs were being identified and addressed. They expressed a sense of ownership and participation in the activities of the PS.

Marginalised groups represented in the committee included the elderly and women while PSs in the North also included those who had been displaced. All (100 percent) of supported PSs have consultative committees, hence the indicator of 50 percent has been met and surpassed by a significant amount.

Indicator 2: X Percent of citizens surveyed at project end indicate satisfaction with the services provided by their PSs

Services provided by the PS include regulating public thoroughfares, public health and public utility services to protect and promote the comfort, convenience and welfare of the people. In addition, PSs are also assigned the development functions of maternity and child welfare programmes, establishment of primary health centres, housing schemes, construction and maintenance of village works, employment programmes within their areas, rural women's programmes and integrated development of selected villages. Proposals are presented and debated before implementation to assess suitability for the community.

Since a survey of citizens was not carried out as part of this evaluation, one cannot determine the perceptions of the community about services provided by the PS. However, other stakeholders were questioned about their level of satisfaction with the functioning of PSs.

Government officials: Eighty eight percent of the government officials agreed that project activities had helped improve the relationship between the PS and society. The activities listed by the government officials are provided in the table below:

Table 11: Activities of the project, govt. officials

	Frequency	Percent
Participatory Planning Approach experience	49	55.7
Good experience	12	13.6
Gained experience from SFCG	5	5.7
Able to identify community problems properly	1	1.1
Gained more skills	1	1.1
Identify community issues directly	1	1.1
Improved knowledge	1	1.1
New PS	1	1.1
SFCG a very successful project	1	1.1
Systematic work setup	1	1.1
Team work	1	1.1
Work with people	1	1.1

The activity most credited with supporting this process was the participatory planning approach used.

When asked about their level of satisfaction with services provided by the PS, 61.4 percent said it was effective, while 14.8 percent said it was very effective. 21.6 percent said the service was only average, while 1.1 percent (1 person) said it was ineffective (see figure 3).

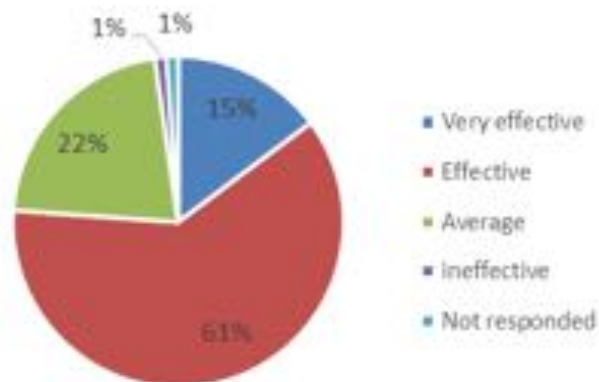


Figure 3: Satisfaction with PS services, govt. officials

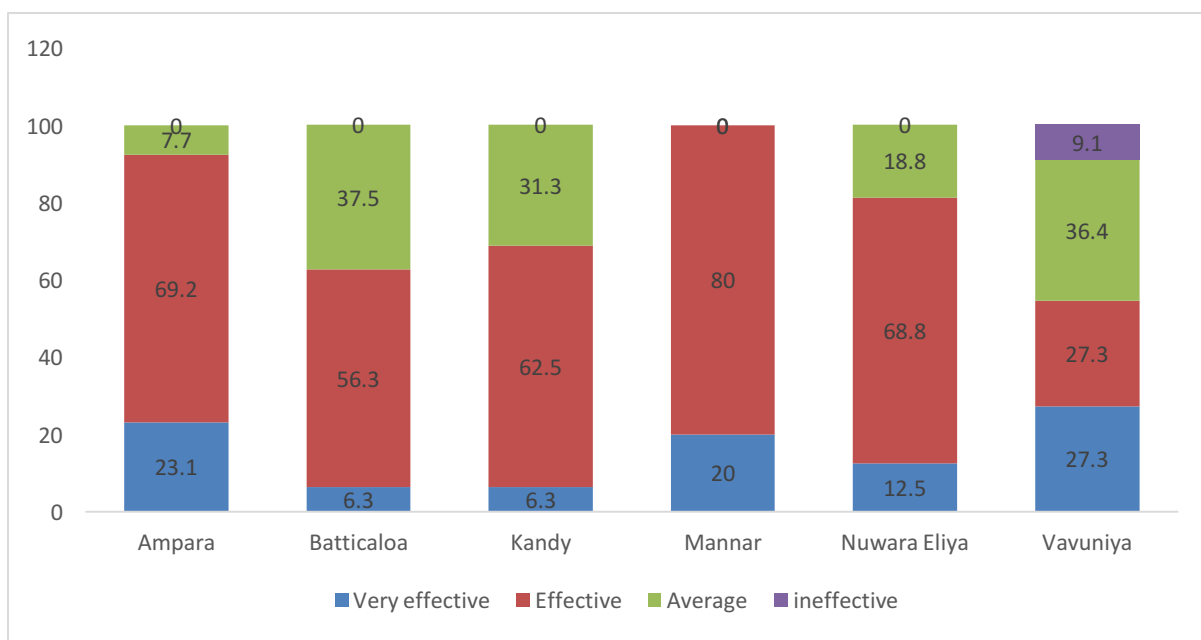


Figure 4: Satisfaction with PS services – govt. officials per district

The highest level of satisfaction was expressed by officials in the Mannar District, followed by Ampara and Nuwara Eliya. The lowest level of satisfaction was in the Batticaloa and Vavuniya districts.

Elected members: Eighty six percent of the elected members said activities of the project had helped improve the relationship between the PS and society. They mentioned that more people now visit the PS. The elected members mentioned the following activities as those that illustrate this improved relationship, or have contributed to the same:

Table 12: Improved activities in PS - elected members

Activity	Frequency	Percentage
More people visit the PS office	7	31.8
Exposure visits	4	18.2
Developed infrastructure	3	13.6
Public complaints are answered	2	9.1
Training	2	9.1
Appreciation	1	4.5
Awareness programs	1	4.5
Collaborative work	1	4.5
Developing many basic facilities	1	4.5
Identifying need and developing plans	1	4.5
Increased public service	1	4.5
People voluntarily pay taxes	1	4.5

PS officials: PS staff who participated in FGDs agreed that the project activities had helped them improve service provision and performance, and enabled them to develop better relationships with the communities they serve. Especially appreciated were the exchange visits, through which they learned many good practices that they planned to replicate at their PSs. Staff also mentioned increased public awareness, functioning of advisory groups, community participation in budget preparation, and decision making, as supporting this process. The following are some comments made at FGDs with PS officials:

1. *We have a proper system maintained in our PS for getting the public complaints; and then try to respond as quickly as possible to fulfil them.* – FGD at Sammanthurai on 23.02.2016
2. *More awareness of civil society, public participation in proceedings (public gallery) and more commitment to work from PS officials* – FGD at Koralaipattu west (Oddamavadi) on 08.03.2016
3. *There is a clear development in the relationship. People are more aware about services provided by the PS than before. Even today when five persons were invited, an even greater number came for the meeting, because of this relationship; this can be attributed to the project* – FGD at Pasbage on 19.02.2016
4. *At the beginning we had to find out the public's requirements, but now the public are aware of what they want and what is urgent. The PS has connected with people to carry out development activities such as roads, street lights, library, children park and water supply. The Search For Common Ground (SFCG) programme was very useful.* – FGD at Manthai West on 17.02.2016
5. *The Advisory committee increased interpersonal relationships between PS, community centres and civil society. People's contributions have increased, and planning has improved.* – FGD at Cheddikulam on 03.03.2016

Community members: The community members agreed that services provided by their PS were satisfactory. Community members in all PSs agree that services of the PS have improved in the last 2-3 years. Members who had been involved with SFCG supported activities expressed a higher level of satisfaction with service provision than those who had not.

Community members provided the following details of services they were most or least satisfied with:

Table 13: Service most and least satisfied with - community members

	PS	Services most satisfied with	Services least satisfied with
1	Sammanthurai	Garbage collection and cleanliness	No proper drainage system for water
2	Alayadivembu	Garbage collection, water distribution	Drainage system
3	Mahaoya	Garbage collection and cleanliness	Vehicles of the PS are not used effectively
4	Manmunai West	Water supply, garbage collections and cleanness	Use and ownership of public grounds
5	Eravurpattu	Water supply and drainage system (in some areas)	Poor management of water supply
6	Koralaipattu west	Dengue prevention, garbage collection, cleanliness	Maintenance of children's parks and public play ground
7	Gangawate Korale	Roads, social welfare, nutrition clinics, garbage collection	Garbage collection can be further improved
8	Udunuwara	Land rights, street lamps, nutrition, maintenance of cemeteries, community centres, equipment for persons with disabilities	Some areas the roads are not cleaned, no proper waste disposal system
9	Pasbage	Road development, water supply cleaning the towns, garbage disposal, cleanliness is maintained	None
10	Musali	Education, water supply, housing project, medical (Dengue elimination program) street lights and road developments	Political interferences
11	Pesalai	Education, water supply, housing project, medical (Dengue elimination programme) street lights and road developments	Political interferences
12	Manthai West	Not satisfied with services	Roads and by laws, because PS doesn't have mechanism to charge the assessment tax. Political influence is a major problem

13	Nanattan	Garbage disposal, office functioning of the PS	Lack of community centres, roads not developed, political interferences,
14	Nuwara Eliya	Waste management, introduction of new technology, improved complaint address system	Road construction, communication, plantation women cannot access services due to their working hours
15	Hanguranketha	Waste disposal, clean environment, quicker delivery of services	None
16	Walapane	Provision of drinking water	Water needs to be purified, less participation of estate communities, lack of awareness about available services
17	Vavuniya South Tamil	Road development	Water supply, waste dumping, land issues
18	Vavuniya North	Nothing specific was mentioned	Road development, tube well fitting, street lamps
19	Vengalcheddikulam	Somewhat satisfied with services	PS lacks adequate resources
20	Vavuniya South Sinhala	Community members were not present for the FGD	

The level of satisfaction varied between PSs. In Mannar, community members brought up the issue of political interference in the decision making process, while in Vavuniya they mentioned that there should be improvements in waste disposal, road development and financial planning. In Ampara, community members mentioned the need for improved facilities such as children's parks and more effective use of PS vehicles. In Batticaloa they mentioned poor water management and garbage disposal. In the PSs in Kandy there was general agreement that PSs are doing as much as they could with the limited resources allocated to them. Community members in Pasbage spoke very highly of services provided by their PS. In Nuwara Eliya it was mentioned that those in the plantation sector could not access PS services due to their working hours, in this area too, political interference was mentioned as an issue. Those in Walapane PS said they were satisfied with the services provided by their PS up to 70 percent. They especially appreciated the initiative to provide drinking water to the entire area covered by this PS; however they brought up the issue that the water provided was not purified.

In the baseline survey nearly half of the respondents (49 percent) from the community felt that PS members do not provide an effective service to their villages. 44 percent rated the services provided by their PS as average. A respondent made a comment that the functioning of the PS is made ineffective due to political interference. Political interference was constantly brought up as an issue in many of the PSs (Mannar, Nuwara Eliya). At the Gangawate Korale FGD with PS officials, the Secretary mentioned that

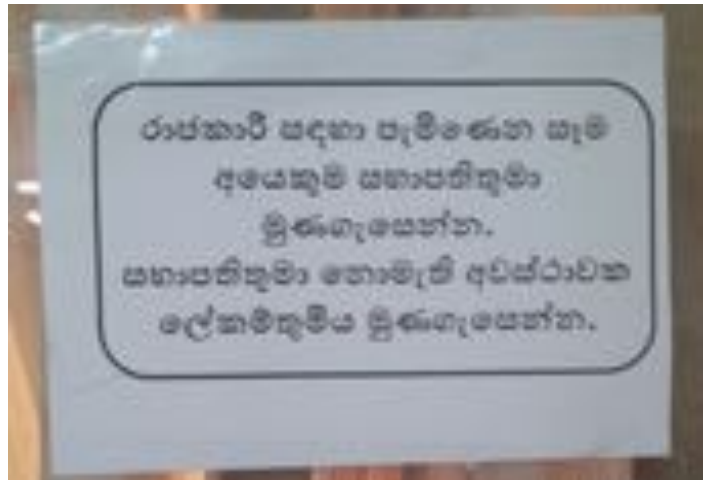


Photo 1: Picture from Gangawate Korale PS office

community members feel that they always have to bring up their issues through elected members instead of approaching the PS directly. Community members also mentioned that whenever they have an issue, they talk to elected members. According to the Secretary, if community members approach the PS directly, their problems could be addressed more quickly. It was believed that elected members did not want to lose control of their constituents, as that would reduce their standing in the eyes of their electorate (those who vote for them). In the Gangawate Korale PS there was a notice displayed, saying that all those who come to the PS on official matters should approach the Chairman, and should only approach the Secretary⁶ when the chairman is unavailable. See photo 1. It should be noted that this PS had not been dissolved and the elected members were still functioning in their roles.

Summary and achievement of indicator

Eighty eight percent of Government officials and 86.4 percent of elected members acknowledge that the project had contributed to an improved relationship between the PS and community. FGDs with PS officials also provided many examples of how project activities (complaint mechanisms, capacity building, participatory approach used) have resulted in improvement of service delivery. Community members also expressed their appreciation of services provided, and while they do bring up some areas that require further attention, they agree that the relationship has improved and they are more aware of the services offered through the PS. All interviewed stakeholders responded that the service delivery within PSs had improved, the public was more aware of the services they could receive from the PS, and that officials had improved their service delivery. This is an improvement from the level of satisfaction expressed during the baseline.

6 The chairman is an elected representative while the secretary is a government official in charge of each PS

Specific objective 1: Bolstering the ability of NSAs to engage with PSs to advocate for better policies and delivery of services to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups

Indicator 1.1: At least 75 percent of NSAs and local authorities surveyed feel their role in ensuring delivery of services has been strengthened as a result of the training / exchange visits

Service delivery by PSs include services such as water supply, garbage disposal, tax collection, health services, road construction and maintenance, maintenance of libraries etc. During the baseline survey, it was revealed that community members felt the PS did not provide effective services. They also indicated that political interferences were common and that the PS officials were sometimes unable to carry out their tasks due to political influences.

Government officers: Ninety-two percent of the government officials said their role in providing services has been strengthened due to project activities. Exposure visits were ranked highly by these officials and they appreciated the opportunity to learn from better functioning PSs they had visited. FGDs with ACLG staff in Mannar showed they had learned how to handle issues raised by the public at these visits. As a result, public involvement has improved and elected members’ positive involvement has also increased. They further stated that staff attitudes have changed towards the public and they had become more service oriented. ACLG staff in Vavuniya expressed similar sentiments and said the consultative committees were functioning better after project interventions. Capacity building programmes on project proposal writing, exposure visits, and training programmes on presentation methods were appreciated by the ACLG officers of Vavuniya.

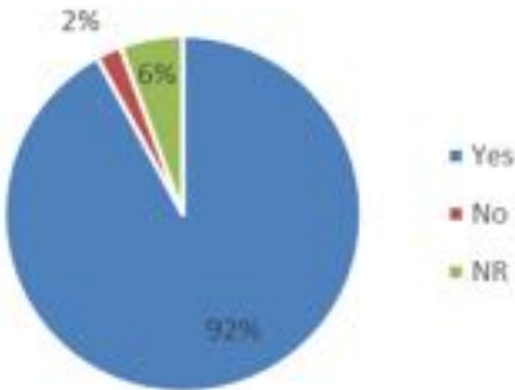


Figure 5: Strengthening of role in providing services - gov. officials

Elected members: All elected members interviewed said their role in providing services had been strengthened as a result of project activities. Some members said that more members of the public now visit the PS. They also mentioned that public awareness about the services offered by the PS has increased, as has their involvement in the activities of the PS.

PS officials: PS officials appreciated the capacity development support provided to them by the project. Budget preparation training, proposal development training, computer related training, software for developing the complaint mechanism, movie maker and web design training, and the participatory needs assessment exercises were mentioned by them as effective activities that would improve their performance within the PS.

“As development officers and other staff we were confined to the office; through this programme we were able to go to the community and obtain their ideas about the development needs of the villages, a 4-year plan was developed based on this. We were able to identify a variety of issues and prioritise them so that the most important issues could be addressed first with the limited resources available to the PS... This is a good opportunity for government service providers, the lessons learned and know-how will be used to help the community through our work. We have developed cordial relationships with community members and worked closely with them, and learned how to develop and implement participatory tools in our work.” – FGD with PS officials in Pasbage, 19.02.2016

The exposure visits to well-functioning PSs was mentioned by many PS officials as one of the most effective learning outcomes amongst the project supported activities. They had observed and learned of many useful activities that they planned to replicate within their own PSs.

The exposure field visit is very useful for staff to improve their self-empathy; there was a lot of learning from the PSs of other Districts. Even though these PSs have very little income they deliver marvelous services to the public. – FGD with PS officials in Nanattan, 17.02.2016

Through exposure visit to the Central Province we observed their front office system which we too will introduce when our new PS building is completed. There will be separate cubicles for management functions. We learned these systems from the visit. This was the first time we visited. – FGD with PS officials in Vavuniya South Sinhala PS, 15.02.2016

This project has contributed in numerous ways to the Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabah's operation; for example, making the community aware about the PS's operations and involving their participation in the decision making process, was a good highlight of the project. – FGD with PS officials in Nuwara Eliya PS on 02.03.2016.

Community members: FGDs with community members indicate that service delivery of the PS had improved in the last 2-3 years. They primarily appreciated the learning experience generated by exchange visits and participatory needs assessment conducted at village level, to identify development needs in their community. Community members who had not participated in project activities from the Central Province could not respond to this. Community members in Mannar, and 2 PSs in Vavuniya and Batticaloa, were not aware of specific services for marginalised groups. Those in one PS in Vavuniya mentioned they had special toilet facilities for persons with disabilities (PWDs) within their PS; communities in Ampara said there was an allowance provided to persons with disabilities; those in the Central Province mentioned that their PS provided assistive devices (i.e. wheel chairs, crutches) to PWDs.

Summary and achievement of indicator

Ninety two percent of government officials and all elected members said their role in providing services had been strengthened as a result of project activities such as exchange visits and training programmes. PS officials and ACLG staff appreciated the capacity building support provided. Community members participating in FGDs said service delivery had improved in recent times and they were more aware of what services they could obtain from the PS. This is an improvement from levels prevalent during the baseline survey where it was found that communities lack understanding of their entitlements and rights with respect to services provided.

Indicator 1.2: An increased number of citizens in the targeted areas indicate improved knowledge of the provisions of the PS Act

The PS Act states that it is: An act to provide the establishment of Pradeshiya Sabhas with a view to provide greater opportunities for the people to participate effectively in decision making processes relating to administrative and development activities at local level. Provisions are made to appoint committees with representatives of the public to deliberate and decide on activities for the PS. Services to be provided are demarcated and budgets are allocated for development of the locality. These development activities are supposed to take place in consultation with the community and in response to needs identified by them.

Government officials: Eighty-eight percent said that citizens of their area had improved their knowledge on provisions of the PS Act. In Mannar and Batticaloa, all government officials interviewed said that citizens in their areas had improved knowledge of the PS act. This number was 92.9 percent in Nuwara Eliya, 92.3 percent in Ampara, 86.7 percent in Kandy and 81.8 percent in Vavuniya.

Elected members: Eighty-six percent said that citizens in their area had improved their knowledge on provisions of the PS Act. 95.5 percent rated their understanding of the PS act as either good (59.1 percent) or very good (36.4 percent).

PS officials: PS officials said the community's awareness about PS activities had improved and they were more aware of services offered by the PS. Some officials mentioned that this had even resulted in more complaints, whilst also contributing to better ideas from community members.

Community members: Community members who participated in project activities said they had increased knowledge of the functioning of PSs and gained awareness about the services and activities of the PS. Those who had not engaged in project supported activities (Gangawate Korale, Udunuwara) were less aware of the activities of the PS than those who had participated (Pasbage).

Summary and achievement of indicator

According to the baseline survey findings, knowledge and understanding of the budget and income generation processes of PSs is very low. More than half the community members interviewed (52 percent) were not aware of the functions of PSs while 92 percent of respondents were not aware of the PS Act. Only 3.5 percent of respondents from the community said they had forwarded their proposals for preparation of the budget. According to the baseline survey, 47 percent of PS members interviewed had been elected for the first time and had only a basic understanding of the PS Act and functions of the PS. 47 percent of PS officers stated that their knowledge and understanding of the PS Act is average.

Community members who participated in the consultative committees indicated they are better aware about the functioning of PSs. Community members in the Northern districts mentioned that since the end of the war, after which PSs there had been established, they had come to have a better understanding about the PS system. This indicates that even

though knowledge of the community about the PS act may not be high, it had definitely improved since the advent of the project.

Indicator 1.3 At least 75 percent of the elected officers in the supported PS have increased knowledge on PS budget process and income generation activities

PS budget processes and income generation: The local government receives funds for development activities from the National government. They can also generate funds of their own through taxes, levies, service fees, issuance of licenses etc. The capacity of local government to provide services is dependent on their revenue. Community members can present their ideas on where resources should be allocated through the consultative committees on finance. The budget is formulated by the chairperson, supported by the secretary and presented to the council for review, amendment, and approval. The responsibility lies with the chairperson for executing the budget, overseeing the collection of revenue, and spending it as per approved allocation. The CIG project supported awareness-raising on these processes and introduction of new income generation activities for the PS.

Government officials: Eighty percent said that the knowledge and functioning of the PS in developing budgets and income generation activities has improved.

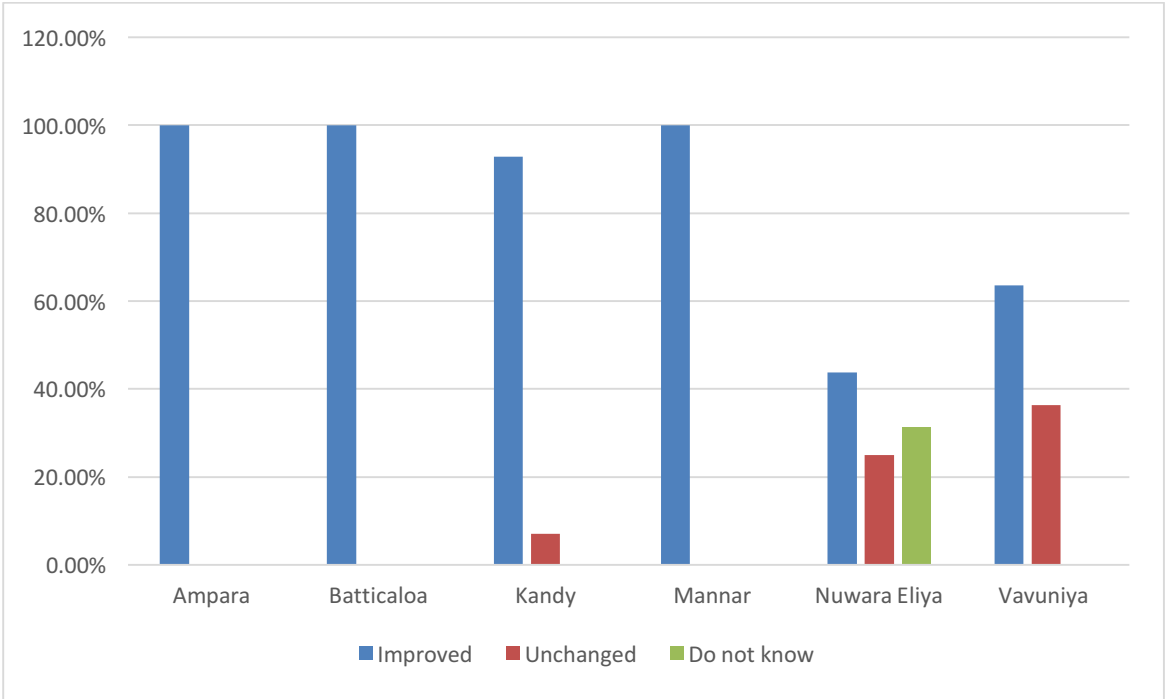


Figure 6: Improvement in budgeting & income generation – govt. officials

All respondents from Mannar, Batticaloa, and Ampara said that knowledge and functioning of the PS in developing budgets and income generation activities had improved. This amount was comparatively low in the Nuwara Eliya District where only 43.8 percent of the

government officials said that functioning of the PS had improved in budgeting and income generation.

Elected members: All elected members agreed that the functioning of PSs improved in developing budgets and income generation activities. When asked about whose responsibility it is to prepare the budgets; 40.9 percent said it was the chairperson’s; 40.9 percent said it was the responsibility of all members; and 13.6 percent said it was the responsibility of the Secretary. According to section 168-170 of the PS Act no 15 of 1987, the preparation and presentation of the budget for the ensuing year is the responsibility of the Chairman of the PS⁷. Findings indicate that 40.9 percent of elected members are aware of this.

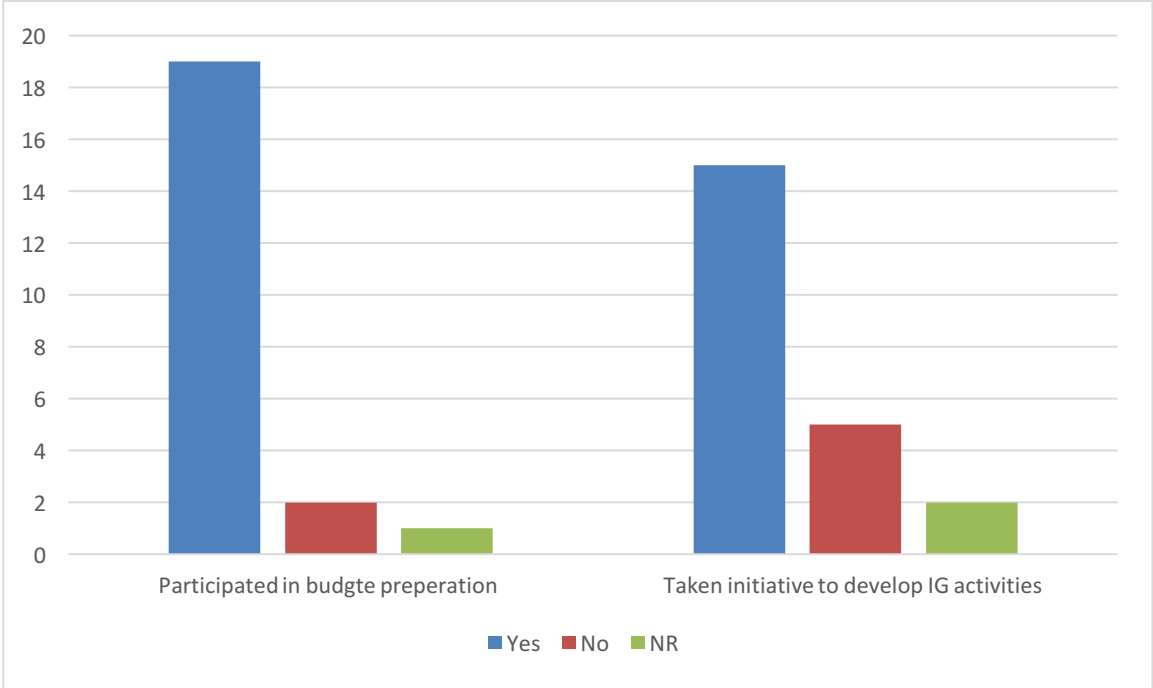


Figure 7: Budgeting & income generation – elected members

Eighty six percent of elected members had participated in preparing the budget. 68.2 percent of had participated in developing income generation activities for their PS.

PS officials: All PS officials mentioned that capacity development activities had contributed to the improvement in developing better relationships between the PS and the community; and they were seeing greater community participation. They also mentioned that they had identified the need to formulate new income generation activities and that through the consultative process they had managed to get the participation of the community into this process.

Community members: Communities were more aware of what services the PS and DS offices provide. 2 PSs in Mannar, 3 PSs in Vavuniya, 3 PSs in Ampara, 2 PSs in Batticaloa, and 1 PS in Kandy said they had put forward budget proposal that had been taken up by

⁷ See SFCG Baseline survey, page 25

their PS. Community members that participated in FGDs may not have been aware of the actual number of budget proposals forwarded by each PS. For example, all 4 PSs in Mannar had conducted budget proposal meetings with the community, and the community had submitted proposals to their respective PSs.

Summary and achievement of indicator

Baseline data indicated that knowledge of income generation methods and budget formulation process amongst PS members needed to be improved. 47 percent of PS members were of the opinion that responsibility for preparation and submission of the annual budget lies with the Chairman, which is accurate according to the PS act. During the final evaluation only 40.9 percent of the PS members said it was the responsibility of the chairman. This indicates that there remains a lack of clarity amongst elected members about the PS act. 86.4 percent of elected members had participated in budget preparation, a slight increase from the baseline level of 82 percent. All elected officials interviewed said the functioning of the PS had improved in budgeting and income generation.

Specific objective 2: Improving the policies and operations of PSs in delivering services to vulnerable and marginalised groups

Indicator 2.1: At least 50 percent of the selected PSs have initiated a by-law to address the needs of vulnerable groups.

By-laws are critical for basic operations of PSs and are a main function of the PS. By-laws are created to formalise the role, responsibilities, and other common necessities vested with local authorities, and to aid with administration and governance of these bodies. PSs have the power to draft by-laws to address issues arising in their locality.

Under the project, supported PSs received training on the development of by-laws and were provided with technical support for development of new by-laws. They collectively advocated with Provincial councils to clear the by-laws that had been pending for a long time. The list of by-laws initiated with support from the CIG project is provided in table 14 below:

Table 14: Development of by-laws per PS

No	PS	No. of By-Laws	Remarks
1	Gangawate Korale PS	06	Newly developed by-laws
2	Pasbage Korale PS	02	Newly developed by-laws
3	Udunuwara PS	02	Newly developed by-laws
4	Hanguranketha PS	05	Newly developed by-laws
5	Walapane PS	06	Newly developed by-laws
6	Nuwara Eliya PS	02	Newly developed by-laws
7	Vavuniya North PS	01	Newly developed by-laws
8	Vavuniya South Tamil PS	02	Newly developed by-laws
9	Vengalcheddikulam PS	01	Newly developed by-laws
10	Mannar PS	01	Newly developed by-laws
11	Manthai West PS	01	Newly developed by-laws

12	Nanattan PS	01	Newly developed by-laws
13	Common by-law for Vavuniya South Sinhala PS and Mannar on residential property development and blocking out of land for sale	01	Newly developed by-laws
14	Sammanthurai PS	03	Newly developed by-laws
15	Mahaoya PS	03	Newly developed by-laws
16	Alayadivembu PS	03	Newly developed by-laws
17	Chenkalady PS	03	Newly developed by-laws
18	Vavunatheevu PS	03	Newly developed by-laws
19	Oddamavadi PS	03	Newly developed by-laws
Total Newly developed by-laws		48	
Reviewed and passed by-laws			
20	Mahaoya	5	Approved and Gazetted
21	Sammanthurai	5	Approved and Gazetted
22	Alayadivembu	5	Approved and Gazetted
23	Chenkalady	5	Approved and Gazetted
24	Vavunatheevu	5	Approved and Gazetted
25	Oddamavadi	5	Approved and Gazetted
26	Pottuvil PS (out of targeted PS)	5	Approved and Gazetted
27	Ninthavur PS (out of targeted PS)	5	Approved and Gazetted
28	Batticaloa Municipal council (out of targeted PS)	5	Approved and Gazetted
Total By-laws reviewed		45	

It should be noted that by-laws developed under this project had not targeted vulnerable and marginalised groups, since PSs had no provision to target such groups. Formulated by-laws did not focus on vulnerable groups as these relatively new PSs lacked even basic by-laws. Therefore, the priority was formulating those by-laws, which were critical to their fundamental operation and revenue generation. However, income generated through these by-laws can be spent on projects for marginalised communities. The PSs had the power to follow this process under the 1987 PS Act 19 (vii).

Out of 20 targeted PSs, 18 PSs had formulated by-laws, except Vavuniya South (Sinhala) PS and Musali PS. However, even these PSs could use common by-laws (see point number 13 in table 14 above). The by-laws are based on community needs identified in the participatory needs assessment conducted by the Centre for Policy Alternatives at the initial stages of the project. Local authorities can pass by-laws to respond to community needs identified.

Government officials: Most government officials - 45.5 percent, said more than 5 by-laws had been initiated by their PS since 2013. It is significant that all officials in the Ampara District said their PSs initiated over 5 by-laws. However, 67 percent of the officials said that none of these by-laws had been formulated to address the needs of vulnerable groups. Formulation of by-laws to address the needs of vulnerable groups was zero in Ampara, Batticaloa and Vavuniya. Fifty eight percent in Kandy; 33.3 percent in Mannar; and 6.3 percent in Nuwara Eliya said their PSs had formulated by-laws to address the needs of vulnerable groups.

Elected members: Forty-seven percent of the elected members said their PS had initiated between 2 and 5 by laws since 2013.

PS officials: According to the PS officials in Pesalai, Mannar; 5 by-laws had been presented. In Vavuniya, 3 of the 4 PSs had presented by-laws. The three PSs in Ampara had presented 5 by-laws each. One of the PSs in Batticaloa had presented 14 by-laws and the other two had presented 5 each. Kandy and Nuwara Eliya PSs had presented by-laws even though the PS officials were not sure of the numbers. Many by-laws were yet to be approved, especially in the North.

Community members: This indicator is not applicable to community members.

Summary and achievement of indicator

During the baseline it was found that there was confusion and lack of clarity with regard to by-laws; interviews with PS members from the same PS generated contradictory responses in terms of the number of by-laws introduced, and functional areas addressed by the laws. Given this context, the initiation of by-laws especially in the former conflict areas of the North is a significant achievement for the CIG project. Ninety percent (18 out of 20) of the PSs had initiated by-laws; surpassing the indicator of 50 percent set at the onset of the project.

FGDs and some KIIs indicated that there was confusion amongst respondents in defining “marginalised” groups. Some respondents considered pregnant mothers as a marginalised group, and when questioned about specific programmes for marginalised groups, they mentioned maternal clinics and nutrition related activities. All those interviewed agreed that the needs of marginalised groups should be integrated into the plans of PSs.

Indicator 2.2: At least 75 percent of the selected PSs have initiated consultative processes in the formulation of annual budgets

Consultative processes in formulating budgets: In formulating budgets, PSs had to draw proposals from consultative committees, and the budget had to reflect the needs of the community. Citizen participation in the Finance committee is very important for a successful budget. Needs of the community are channelled through this consultative committee to the chairperson, who prepares and presents the budget. The project supported participatory budgeting processes by engaging the community and identifying their development needs.

Government officials: Ninety percent of the government officials said their PSs had initiated a consultative process in formulating annual budgets. 61.4 percent of them said these processes had been introduced after 2013; while only 30.7 percent said these processes had been present before 2013. An increase of 30 percent indicates the project had made a significant contribution to establishing a consultative process in the formulation of annual budgets.

Table 15: Consultative processes in budgeting - govt. officials

	Frequency	Percent
Before 2013	27	30.7
After 2013	54	61.4
Total	81	92.0
Not responded	7	8.0
Total	88	100.0

Elected members: Ninety percent of the elected members said they followed a consultative process in the formulation of annual budgets. 54.4 percent said these processes were introduced after 2013; an increase of 18 percent as 36.4 said they had been introduced before 2013.

Table 16: Consultative processes in budgeting - elected members

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	20	90.9
No	1	4.5
Total	21	95.5
Not responded	1	4.5
Total	22	100.0

PS officials: All PSs followed a more consultative process when formulating budgets, when compared to before project interventions. PSs that had been supported to identify the needs of communities through a participatory needs assessment (Udunuwara, Pasbage) said their budgets for the year had been developed incorporating the ideas generated by these sessions. In the North and East, officials said people's ideas were incorporated into the budgeting process. In Nuwara Eliya it was mentioned that CBO leaders and community members were consulted when developing budgets.

Community members: Almost all PSs consult their community when formulating annual budgets. Community members who were less engaged in the project (Gangawata Korale, Nuwara Eliya) were less aware about these consultative processes. Those in Gangawata Korale said they present their needs through elected members. In areas where the participatory needs assessment had been done to identify development needs, community members felt a higher sense of ownership and participation in the process.

Summary and achievement of indicator

Respondents agree that PSs follow a consultative process in formulating annual budgets; they noted this has improved since inception of the project and its activities. PSs that have been supported to carry out participatory needs assessments with the involvement of communities, expressed a higher degree of attention to this approach. For example, in Pasbage it was mentioned that the budget for the next year had been developed incorporating ideas generated from the needs assessment exercise conducted with the community members.

Eighteen of twenty supported PSs (90 percent) had initiated budget proposal meetings and 573 proposals had been collected during the project. This was in contrast to the baseline situation where only 3.5 percent of respondents from the community said they forwarded proposals for preparation of the budget. Discussions with PS officials and community members indicate that all stakeholders appreciated the participatory approach introduced by the project when planning activities to be incorporated into the budget. The approach provided a voice for community members to bring up issues, and supported PS officials to identify such issues from ground level, thereby providing an opportunity for elected members to address the requirements of their constituents.

Indicator: 2.3 At least 15 percent of citizens can identify aspects of the local citizen budget

Local Citizen Budgets: The “citizen budget” is a simplified version of the current year’s budget (i.e. 2015) developed by the project to encourage more citizen participation in discussion with PS elected members and officials, in order to forward their own proposals for consideration.

Since a survey with community members was not carried out, it is difficult to determine if the above indicator had been achieved. Interviews and discussions with other stakeholders included questions on whether citizens in their locality are able to identify aspects of the local citizen budget.

Government officials: Seventy nine percent of the officials said citizens in their area can identify aspects of the local citizen budget.

Elected members: Sixty eight percent said citizens in their area can identify aspects of the local citizen budget.

PS officials: PS officials differed in their responses when asked if citizens in their area could identify aspects of the local citizen budgets. Those that responded in the affirmative included:

1. Mannar – Musali, Pesalai, Nanattan
2. Vavuniya – Vavuniya South Tamil, Vegalacheddikulam
3. Ampara – Sammanthurai, Alayadivembu, Mahaoya
4. Batticaloa – Manmunai West, Eravurpattu, Koralaipattu West
5. Kandy – Pasbage (others said the community was not aware)
6. Nuwara Eliya – Hanguranketha

Community members: Many of the community members appeared to have a good grasp of the local citizen budgets and income sources of their PS. Community members mentioned taxes, issuance of permits, registration of businesses, hiring vehicles and machines, rent from buildings, conducting weekly fairs and others as some of the sources of income. Some community members came up with innovative ideas for greater income generation. For example, communities in Pasbage said the PS should establish a sales outlet with medicines from the State Pharmaceutical Corporation (SPC) so those in the area can obtain quality

drugs at reasonable prices. In 10 out of 20 FGDs (50 percent) community members stated that citizens can identify aspects of the local citizen budget.

Summary and achievement of indicator

In 13 of 20 supported PSs, officials agreed that citizens are able to identify aspects of the local citizen budget. Discussions with community members through FGDs validated this statement. Community members in some of the PSs mentioned that PSs have to work within limited budgets and therefore cannot address all issues (Gangawata Korale, Musali). Some even said that taxes should be increased so that the PSs have more resources to address issues. This is in contrast to the situation at baseline where CBOs did not feel they were consulted on budget formulation.

Specific objective 3: Increasing collaborative efforts between PSs and local NSAs to deliver services more effectively to vulnerable and marginalised groups in the targeted divisions

Indicator 3.1: Of the 10 PSs selected at least 75 percent have initiated the development of welfare plans for marginalised groups or complaint mechanism

Welfare plans: The project supported 4 PS to conduct participatory needs assessments, define and prioritise key development issues, and analyse this information to create a master development plan that addresses the pressing needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups in their communities. The sessions enabled PSs to conduct needs assessments, hold public forums for community input, and create a comprehensive document.

Four welfare master plans had been developed in Walapane, Pasbage, Udunuwara, and Mahaoya PSs. PSs that had been supported by Janathakshan to develop their welfare master plan appreciated the participatory approach and community engagement promoted by the project. Some of them mentioned that this was the first time they had gone into the field and engaged with the community. Through such a participatory approach, they had been able to identify issues affecting each village, and also changed their attitudes, resulting in better service delivery to the public.

Since some of the PSs in the North requested for project proposal development training instead of developing welfare development plans, their requests were adhered to. Six proposal development workshops had been conducted in Alayadivembu, Chenkalady, Chettikulam, Vavuniya North, Nanattan and Musali PSs. Through these workshops, PS officials were capacitated to better identify issues affecting their communities, and develop interventions to address such issues.

Twelve of the PSs had been supported with institutionalising the Complaint Referral Mechanism (CRM), and are currently using the system to record the complaints. See table below:

Table 17: PSs supported with CRMs and number of complaints received

Name of PS	District	Total # of complaints
Vavuniya South Sinhala	Vavuniya	19
Vavuniya South Tamil	Vavuniya	224
Mahaoya	Ampara	43
Sammanthurai	Ampara	135
Koralaipattu - Oddamawadi	Batticaloa	34
Manmunai West - Vavunatheevu	Batticaloa	24
Hanguranketha	Kandy	24
Nuwara Eliya	Kandy	19
Gangawata Korale	Kandy	3
Pasbage	Kandy	125
Manthai West	Mannar	22
Mannar	Mannar	120
Total		792

Government officials: Sixty five percent of government officials had participated in the programme to develop welfare plans, while 19.8 percent had participated in proposal development training. 93.2 percent said their PS had a functioning system for recording complaints. 28 percent said the system had come into effect before 2013 whilst 66 percent said it had come into effect after 2013. See figure 8:

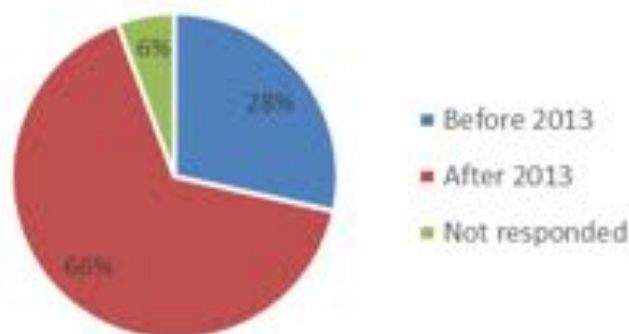


Figure 8: Existence of system for recording complaints - govt. officials

Commonly used tools included a complaint box (35.3 percent), complaint book (13.1 percent), phone call (9.8 percent) and e-complaints (9.2 percent). 65.9 percent said the system had come into place after 2013, while 29.5 percent said it had been in existence even before that. Respondents said the CRM helped PSs address complaints quickly, answer queries in a short time, engage more with people, and compel officers to visit communities and address these complaints.

Elected members: Sixty-three percent of the elected members had been involved in the development of a welfare plan whilst 37 percent participated in proposal development training. Impacts of the welfare development plans included development of infrastructure, mobile clinics for pregnant mothers and financial support for students. Impacts of the proposal development training included improved relationship between the public and PS staff, attitude changes amongst the public and staff, and following participatory systems.

Ninety percent of the elected members said their PS had a complaint recording mechanism. This includes complaint boxes (59 percent), phone calls (45.4 percent) and online systems (4.5 percent). Only 22.7 percent said the system had been in operation before 2013, whereas 63.6 percent said it had become functional only after 2013. 63 percent said the system had come into place only after 2013. See figure 9.

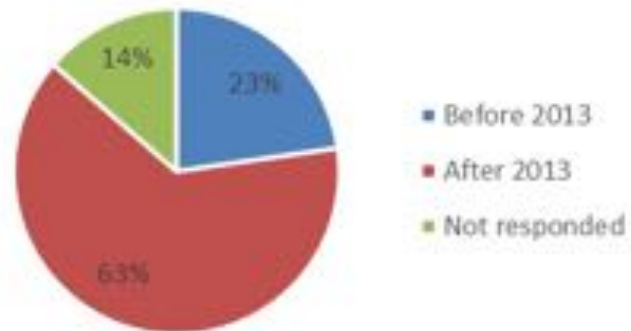


Figure 9: Existence of system for recording complaints – elected members

PS officials: Since welfare development plans were not carried out for PSs in the North (as they had been supported with proposal development training instead), when asked about the welfare development plans developed by each of their PSs, PS officials in the North were not aware of the number. However, they did cite examples of some welfare activities supported by their PS, including competitions to mark important occasions, provision of equipment to schools, support to cancer patients, health clinics, community centres, water supply, and establishment of libraries etc.

Some PSs are running complaint recording systems introduced by the CIG project. Discussions indicate that PS officials are more diligent in recording and responding to complaints. PS officials believed that project activities had supported them to become closer to the community. They also expressed how their own attitudes had changed after participating in activities and observing how the more successful PSs (they visited) operated. The Secretary of Gangawate Korale PS even commented that the number of complaints received had increased after implementing the CRM.

Community members: Community members from areas for which welfare development plans have been completed (Walapane, Pasbage, Udunuwara and Mahaoya PSs) said there are now more welfare programmes than before. This included the following:

Walapane - Organising festival functions, health camps

Pasbage – Sadana, dengue prevention programs, proper waste disposal

Udunuwara - Health camps, funeral arrangements for priests, provision of water, supporting funeral services when unexpected deaths occur, roofing sheets, food for displaced in times of floods etc.

Mahaoya – Labourers have the facility to clean themselves after their work, monthly grants made available for vulnerable groups.

Summary and achievement of indicator

All stakeholders agree that welfare activities are implemented by PSs for the benefit of the community, and that the complaint mechanism system is operational. Welfare activities take place as a normal part of the functioning of all PSs. Even though it is difficult to attribute these to project interventions, all stakeholders agree that delivery of these services, and awareness amongst the public had increased as a result of the project.

All PSs have a complaint mechanism ranging from complaint books, complaint boxes, complaints through phone calls, and complaints made through letters. During the baseline survey, 44 percent of respondents from the community did not know, or were not certain about the existence of a complaint mechanism at their PS. Currently, almost all respondents, including community members at the FGDs acknowledged they have access to a complaint mechanism.

Out of the 10 supported PSs, 4 have developed welfare development plans and 6 have developed proposals. Hence all (100 percent) supported PSs have either developed welfare development plans or proposals. 12 of the 20 supported PSs (60 percent) have a functioning complaint referral system.

Indicator 3.2: Increasing number of marginalised groups in the targeted areas who have been involved in the decision making process.

Decision making process: One of the main responsibilities of PSs is to develop annual development plans incorporating the development needs of their areas. It is important to engage community members in this process through the use of a participatory approach (as described in the previous section). Community members including those from marginalised groups can be involved in the decision making process through engagement in consultative committees and in participatory approaches used for identification of needs.

Government officials: According to the government officials, the involvement of citizens in decision making has increased since 2013. See figure below:

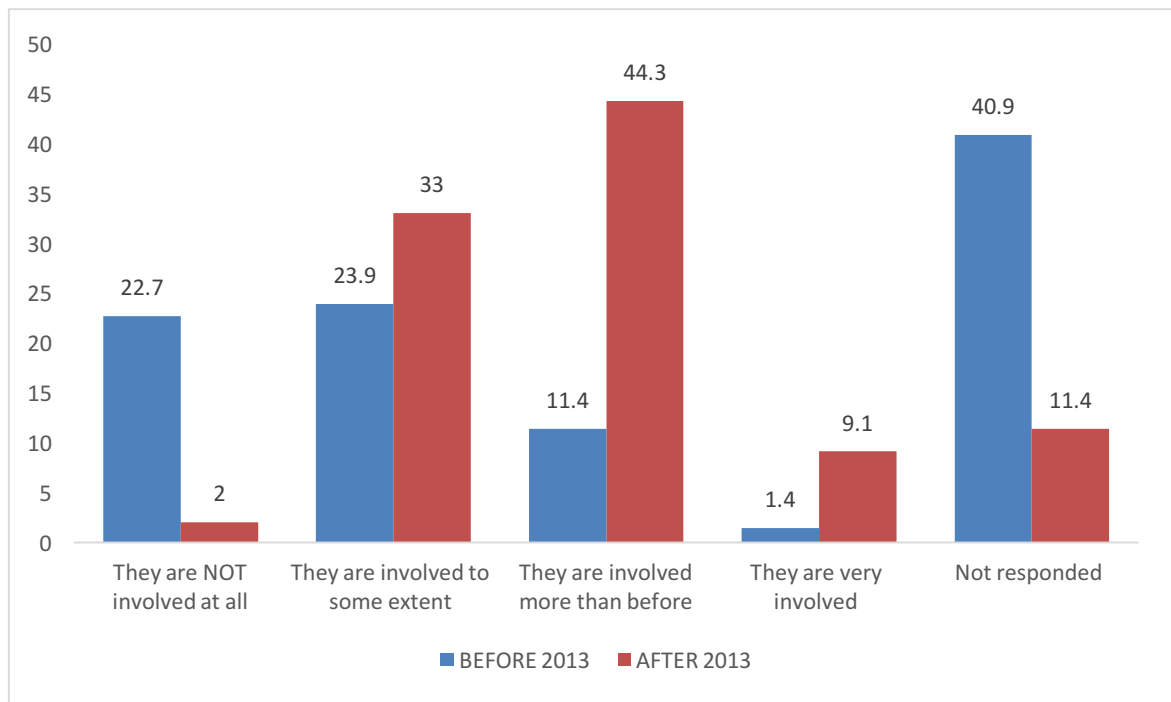


Figure 10: Citizens' involvement in decision making - govt. officials

The number of respondents who said citizens are more involved than they were before, had risen by 32.9 percent (from 1.4 before 2013 to 44.3 after 2013), indicating the project had contributed to the involvement of citizens in decision making. The number who said citizens are not involved had decreased to 2.3 percent after 2013, from 22.7 percent before 2013. This indicates a significant increase in citizen participation.

However, the involvement of vulnerable groups in decision making remains low even though it had increased from levels that prevailed before 2013. See figure 11 below:

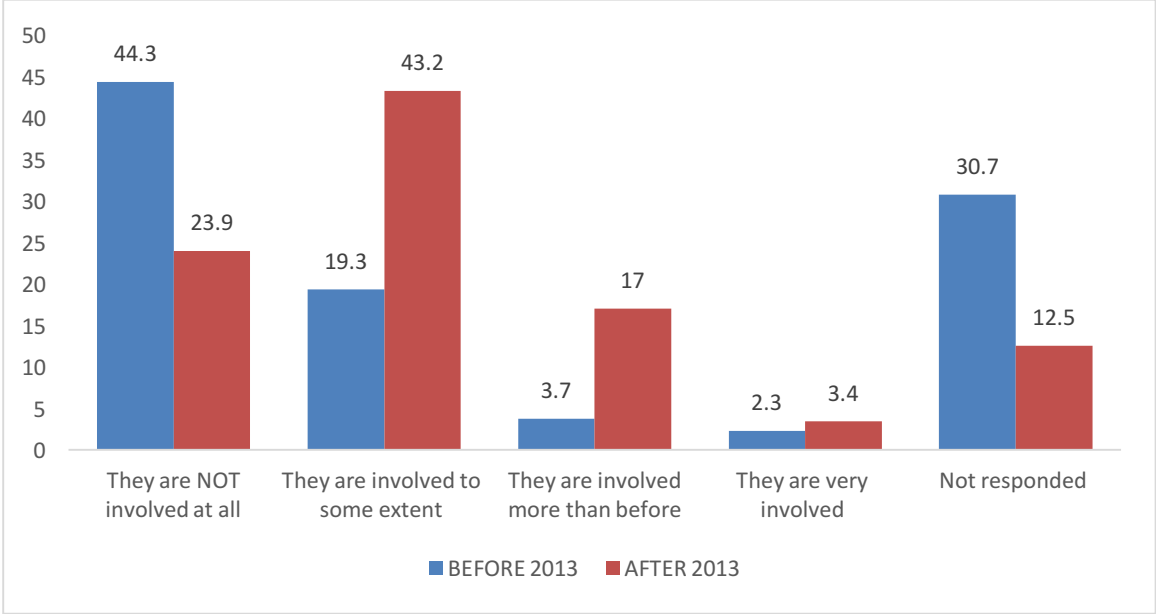


Figure 11: Involvement of vulnerable groups in decision making - govt. officials

Forty-three percent said that vulnerable groups are involved to some extent after 2013 (an increased from 19.3 percent before 2013), while 17 percent said they are more involved than previously (an increase from 3.7 percent before 2013). The number of respondents who said they were not involved at all, decreased from 44.3 percent before 2013, to 23.9 percent after 2013. Even though the number of vulnerable groups involved in decision making processes may be low, there is an improvement from even lower levels of involvement that prevailed, before the project began.

Some suggestions offered by the officials include - improving the relationship between PS members, officials, and civil society; including working together, conducting awareness programs, providing services quickly, findings ways of collecting taxes, provision of basic infrastructure, implementing community participatory approaches and identification of public needs. Major challenges identified by them included less revenue from taxes, political interference, difficulties in mobilizing the community and initial rejection by the community.

Elected members: See figure 12 below for elected members’ responses in relation to citizens’ involvement in decision making:

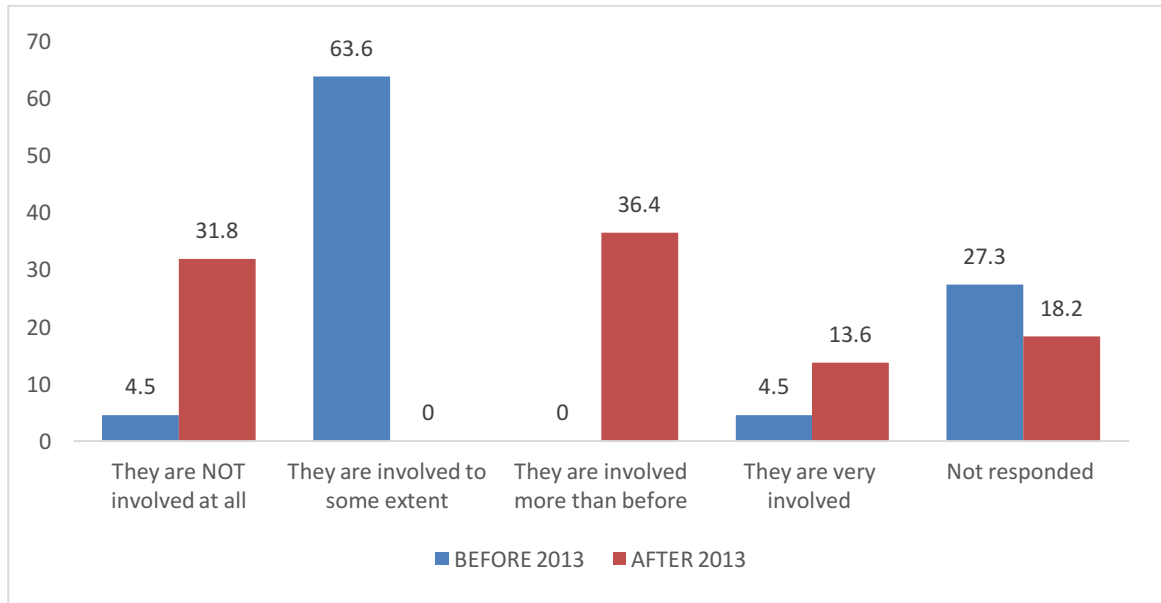


Figure 12: Citizens' involvement in decision making - elected members

Before 2013, a majority of elected members (63.6 percent) said citizens were involved in the decision making process to some extent. After 2013, 50 percent (36.4 plus 13.6) said they were either involved more than before, or very involved. This figure had been very low (4.5 percent) before the project, indicating that project activities had contributed to citizens’ involvement in decision making.

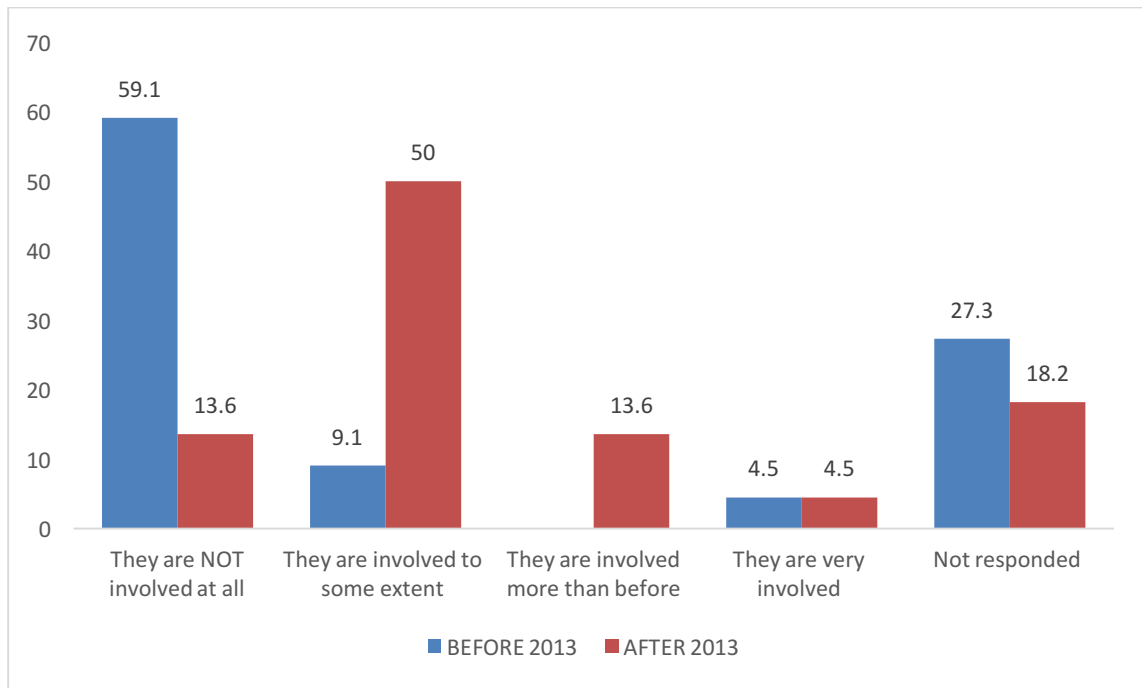


Figure 13: Involvement of vulnerable groups in decision making - elected members

When it came to the involvement of vulnerable groups in decision making before 2013, the majority of elected members (59.1 percent) said they were not involved at all. However, after 2013, 50 percent said they were involved to some extent, 13.6 percent said they were involved more than before, and 4.5 percent said they are very involved. This also indicates that the involvement of vulnerable groups in decision making had improved from pre-project levels.

PS officials: The participation of marginalised groups in the decision making process appeared to be low. None of the PSs gave examples of participation by marginalised groups in the decision making process. Only a few had specific services for marginalised groups; for example PSs in Kandy said they provide assistive devices, while those in Nuwara Eliya said the needs of plantation communities were taken into account when developing their plans. They mentioned that this was difficult as estates are considered private areas and PS officials are unable to approach such areas without consent from the management. In addition, respondents agreed there was a real need to integrate the needs of vulnerable groups with the activities of the PS. This change of mind-set shows increased awareness amongst PS officials as a result of their participation in project activities.

Community members: Community members could not identify situations where marginalised groups had been involved in the decision making process. However, they did identify some activities implemented for the benefit of marginalised groups - such as provision of assistive devices and improving access to new buildings, for persons with disabilities.

Summary and achievement of indicator

Overall responses provided by stakeholders indicate that even though public participation in decision making had improved, the participation of marginalised groups remained low. However, we should note that the definition of marginalised groups comes into effect here: For example, if women and the elderly are included as marginalised, their involvement in consultative committees and by extension, in decision making, may be high. Furthermore, in some areas of the Northern region (Musali) almost all community members had been displaced during the war, hence their involvement in the decision making process through the consultative committee is high. On the other hand, involvement of other marginalised groups - such as persons with disabilities and those living in the plantation sector in the Central Province remains low. We can conclude that the involvement of citizens in decision making has improved significantly from pre-project levels. The involvement of vulnerable groups in decision making remains low, but has improved from pre-project levels.

2.3. Efficiency - Sound management and value for money

This chapter includes the following elements:

1. Were activities cost-efficient?
2. Were objectives achieved on time?
3. Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

A majority of community members and PS officials who participated in the FGDs agreed that project resources had been used efficiently. 83.3 percent of government officials and 86.4 percent of elected members said the same. Stakeholders did not identify any issues related to missed deadlines or delays in implementation; with 80.8 percent of government officials and 54.4 percent of elected members stating that all agreed deadlines had been met.

Discussions with project management indicated that the planned budget had been adequate and the financial process was carried out effectively through regular review at monthly financial and programme meetings. Annual activity based budgets were developed, followed, and monitored closely. The finance team tracked monthly budgets against actuals and took remedial action as needed.

The M & E plan was closely monitored and followed up; and both qualitative and quantitative information collected frequently. This information has been incorporated into interim reports submitted to the EU.

There has been no partner/stakeholder contribution for cost sharing. SFCG has co-financed part of the project.

All reports have been submitted on time.

No unplanned outputs had arisen from activities carried out.

2.4. Impact - Achievement of wider effects

The impact section of the report includes the difference the project made in the lives of beneficiaries and the work of local government and its officials. These aspects are further elaborated in the chapter titled overall assessment.

The following table provides an overview of the project’s achievement of specific and overall objectives.

Table 18: Achievement of objectives at the end of the project

Overall Objectives		Status at end of project
To improve local service delivery through increased cooperation between Pradeshiya Sabhas	1. At least 50 percent of supported PSs have functioning consultative committees with participation of citizens - with at least one member from marginalised communities.	FGD with PS officials indicate that all PSs had consultative committees. FGDs with community members indicates that 16 of 20 PS (80 percent) had consultative committees, some community members who participated in FGDs appeared to be unaware of the consultative committees. In KIIs with

	<p>2. X percent of citizens surveyed at project end indicate satisfaction with services provided by their PSs</p>	<p>government officials, 83 percent said there were functioning consultative committees, and 90.9 percent of the elected members said the same.</p> <p>Even though a survey was not conducted amongst the community, community members who participated at FGDs expressed satisfaction with services and agree that service provision had improved in recent times.</p>
<p>Specific Objectives</p>		
<p>Obj 1. Bolstering the ability of NSAs to engage with PSs to advocate for better policies and delivery of services to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups;</p>	<p>1.1 At least 75 percent of NSAs and local authorities surveyed, feel their role in ensuring delivery of services has been strengthened as a result of the training / exchange visits</p> <p>1.2 An increased number of citizens in targeted areas indicate improved knowledge of the provisions of PSs Act</p> <p>1.3 At least 75 percent of the elected officers in the supported PS have increased knowledge on PS budget process and income generation activities</p>	<p>FGDs with community and PS officials indicate that service delivery had improved. They greatly appreciated the exchange visits and resulting learning outcomes and capacity development conducted by the project. 92 percent of government officials and all elected members stated that service delivery within their PS had improved.</p> <p>Community members indicated increased awareness about activities of the PS. PS officials stated that the community had a better understanding of services offered by the PS. 88.6 percent of Government officials and 86.4 percent of elected members said that community knowledge of the PS act had improved. Community members said they were consulted when preparing budgets.</p> <p>All of the elected members said their knowledge of budgets and income generation activities had improved. 86.4 percent had also participated in preparing the budgets. PS officials, especially those who participated in the participatory needs assessment indicated that they formulated budgets based on community needs. 79.5 percent of government officials said budgeting within the PS had improved.</p>

<p>Obj 2. Improving the policies and operations of PSs in delivering services to vulnerable and marginalised groups; and</p>	<p>2.1 At least 50 percent of the selected PSs have initiated a by-law to address the needs of vulnerable groups.</p> <p>2.2 At least 75 percent of the selected PSs have initiated consultative processes in the formulation of annual budgets</p> <p>2.3 At least 15 percent of citizens can identify aspects of the local citizen budget</p>	<p>90 percent (18 of 20) of supported PSs had initiated by-laws. The project had supported the development of 48 new by-laws. 45 by laws had been reviewed and passed. 43.5 percent of the government officials said more than 5 by laws had been passed in their PS. 40.9 percent of the elected members said they had initiated between 2 and 5 by-laws.</p> <p>FGDs with community and PS officials indicate that a consultative process was followed in formulating budgets. This was affirmed by 90.9 percent of government officials and 90.9 percent of elected members.</p> <p>Most community members and PS officials in the FGDs said citizens are able to identify local citizen budgets. 79.5 percent of government officials and 68.2 percent of elected members said the same.</p>
<p>Obj 3. Increasing collaborative efforts between PSs and local NSAs to deliver services more effectively to vulnerable and marginalised groups in the targeted divisions</p>	<p>3.1 Of the 20 PSs selected at least 75 percent have initiated the development of welfare plans for marginalised groups or complaint mechanism</p> <p>3.2 Increasing number of marginalised groups in the targeted areas have been involved in the decision making process.</p>	<p>Four welfare plans and six proposals had been developed and all PSs have functional complaint mechanisms. 12 of the PSs had been supported by the project to set up complaint referral systems.</p> <p>Involvement of marginalised groups remains low. However, their engagement is growing and is currently higher than the rates that prevailed before the project.</p>

Some challenges faced by PSs mentioned by government officials include, low revenue from taxes, political interferences, difficulty in mobilising the community, and lack of credibility in the eyes of community members. Formulation and speeding up the processes related to by-laws was important in overcoming these challenges.

When asked about challenges, lack of funding was the most critical challenge identified by the elected members. Other challenges included limited time and non-participation from civil society. Elected members mentioned more capacity building for advisory committees, more civil society involvement, building more community centres, conducting activities in pre-schools and more use of ICT as activities that should have been taken up by the project. They further mentioned that more tangible outputs would have been better received. According to elected officials, the major changes the project has contributed to include -

increased public awareness about PS services, increased public involvement in budget preparation, gaining more knowledge, building trust, efficiency in work, better facilities for the PS, and systematic work processes.

2.5. Sustainability - Likely continuation of achieved results

The chapter on sustainability explores:

1. What are the mechanisms in Place to sustain the initiatives of the project beyond the life of the project?
2. Is there any indication that the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased?

Most of the project supported activities such as by-law development, complaint mechanism and participatory planning of development had been carried out in a manner that allowed each PS to own the process and be committed to taking it forward. During FGDs with community members and PS officials, highlighted the following activities as those they would like to continue beyond the project period.

Community members

1. Mannar – Complaint mechanisms, awareness programs
2. Vavuniya – Development plans, advisory committee
3. Ampara – Advisory committee, development plans
4. Batticaloa – Participation of community in development, decisions making and budgeting
5. Kandy – Participatory approach to development
6. Nuwara Eliya – Participatory planning and development

PS Officials

1. Mannar – Development plans, advisory committee
2. Vavuniya – Complaint recording system, budget preparation, inclusion of marginalised groups, peoples gallery, consultative committee
3. Ampara – Participation of public, consultative committee, complaint system
4. Batticaloa – Complaint system, income generation, development plans
5. Kandy – Complaint system, participatory development planning, follow up and monitoring
6. Nuwara Eliya – Participatory decision making

Government officials

1. Consultative budget preparation
2. Incorporation of more vulnerable members to advisory boards
3. Consultative decision making
4. Advisory committees
5. Complaint systems
6. Online complaint system
7. Awareness programmes for the community
8. Exchange experiences
9. Expansion to other areas (other PS)
10. Public gallery

Elected members

1. Relationship with public
2. Participatory system
3. Common problem solving
4. Community activities
5. Find income generation activities
6. Identify needs and provide suitable solutions
7. Improve income
8. Initiate more by-laws
9. Obtain more civil society involvement
10. Carry out more exchange visits

When asked about their suggestions for improving the relationship between PS members, officials and the civil society, elected members proposed the following:

1. Dialog with public on common issues
2. Minimise political interference
3. Consultative Process in budget preparation
4. Support Income Generation Activities
5. Work together
6. Advisory body to sub-office
7. Awareness to public
8. Capacity building of staff
9. Develop infrastructure
10. Favouritism to selected groups must cease
11. Identify public need and provide services
12. Make aware of PS constitution
13. Minimise NP
14. Need the involvement of all parties
15. Provide good services
16. Provide infrastructure facilities

It is significant that elected members themselves have identified political interference as an issue and understood the need to minimise it. This had been identified as a problem in FGDs especially in PSs in the Northern Province and Nuwara Eliya. They also identified the need to work together and create awareness amongst the public.

As indicated by the above response, different stakeholders appear to understand the need to sustain the activities introduced and promoted by the project. As they value the improved relationship between PSs and the community, they are determined to continue such activities as participatory planning, engagement with civil society, functioning complaint systems and efficient delivery of services.

5. Visibility

All project activities have followed EU visibility guidelines. Equipment and tools provided had been branded and acknowledged as provided with support from the EU. Banners with EU branding are used at all public events, workshops and training programmes implemented by the project.

National and local partners had been briefed about the project and donor, through orientation programmes. Key stakeholders at national and District level were informed about project purpose, activities and were made aware of the EU using brochures and other material. Project beneficiaries were informed about the project and source of funding at each project supported intervention. The EU name and logo are mentioned clearly on all official project material.

Prior approval was obtained from the EU on use of logos for promotional items such as T-shirts and notebooks. Communication material such as press releases, newsletters and website articles clearly acknowledge support of the EU and include photographs that highlight action, results and support from the EU.

EU support for the project had been prominently acknowledged in all equipment handed over for CRM as well as forum development. In addition, a T-shirt was designed with the EU logo and shared amongst project participants during the exchange programme.



Photo 2: SFCG Brochure



Photo 3: Banners displayed at project events



Photo 4: Name boards about CRM at selected PSs



Photo 5: T-shirt with project logos



Photo 7: Citizen Budget, Sinhala



Photo 6: Citizen Budget, Tamil



Photo 8: Reception desk at a PS, with branding



Photo 9: Newspaper articles about the project

Newspaper articles had appeared in the publications *Valampuri*, and *Metro News* (see photos above), the articles carried the following descriptions:

1. Search for Common Grounds officials along with participation of the Assistant Commissioner of Local Government in Vavuniya District; handed over equipment to the secretaries of selected Pradeshiya Sabhas including Vavuniya North PS,

Vavuniya South Sinhalese PS, Vavuniya South Tamil PS and Vengalachettikulam PS; under the theme People of Good Governance. The financial assistance for the activity that was initiated to promote the interaction between the people and PS institutions was provided by the European Union.

2. Search for Common Grounds handed over equipment to the secretaries of selected Pradeshiya Sabhas including Vavuniya North PS, Vavuniya South Sinhalese PS, Vavuniya South Tamil PS and Vengalachettikulam PS, under the theme People of Good Governance. The activity was initiated to promote interaction between the people and PS institutions, and was funded by the European Union.

6. Overall assessment

There were 4 main components of the project:

1. Improving services delivery including those towards marginalised groups
2. Improving policies and operations
3. Increasing collaboration between Pradeshiya Sabha and civil society
4. Improved knowledge on PS act, budget and related procedures

The following section provides an overall assessment covering these four main components and their impacts and contributions towards achievement of the project's overall and specific objectives.

6.1. Improving services delivery including those toward marginalised groups

There was general agreement from stakeholders that service delivery within the PS had improved since 2013. Even though service delivery towards marginalised groups had improved from pre-project levels, it remains low. Respondents agree that there needs to be more attention paid to developing services for such groups.

A majority of the stakeholders admitted that participation of marginalised groups was low in the consultative committees and they acknowledged the need for more engagement with such groups. Officials maintained that even though participation of marginalised groups in the committees is low, their needs are identified and included into the planning process. Widows and IDPs were represented in committees in the Northern Province, but even their numbers were low.

According to PS officials, there are welfare programs for marginalised groups - such as providing assistive devices (crutches and wheel chairs for persons with disabilities). Some said they had made the environment within the PS friendlier towards persons with disabilities through easier access. All new buildings will have this accessibility. All stakeholders agreed that the activities of the project had improved the service delivery functions of PSs supported.

Four master plans and six proposals had been developed with support from the project. Even though the attention to issues faced by marginalised groups is still low, it is higher than the rates that prevailed before the project began; which augurs well for the future.

The project introduced participatory budgeting and it helped the grassroots level community members to take part in the planning and budgeting... We observed that there was a change in the perception of PS staff towards community issues. I would say the

SFCG project contributed to the positive thinking of PS staff. Also it attempted to include excluded community members such as widows, persons with disabilities etc. – Mr B H N Jayawickrama, Commissioner Local Government, Central Province.

6.2. Improving policies and operations

Project activities had contributed to improving policies and operations within the supported PS, including formulation and passing of by-laws, increasing community participation in the development of annual budgets, and community awareness about the local citizen budgets.

Representatives of local authorities including elected members and government officials said the exchange visits and training programmes had been very useful in developing their capacity. They especially mentioned the learning outcomes from exchange visits and how they had plans to replicate some of the successful practices they had seen at the PSs they visited in the central and southern regions.

The training was also appreciated and several of those who participated at training programmes provided examples of how they had gone back to their PS and implemented what they had learned, such as developing a website for their PS (Pasbage); compiling budget proposals based on participatory needs assessment (Udunuwara); conducting a public day at the PS (Alayadivembu); developing movie clips based on lessons learned (Gangawate Korale). Participants also mentioned several new ideas for income generation activities.

6.3. Increasing collaboration between Pradeshiya Sabha and civil society

There had been increased participation of the community in development planning within the PS. All stakeholders agree that the functioning of consultative committees had improved and become more efficient since implementation of the project.

The participatory needs assessment training conducted had contributed to increasing engagement with the community. PSs are reporting that increasing numbers of proposals are entertained and included in their planning processes.

At FGD with SCLG office staff in Vavuniya it was mentioned that even though consultative committees had been in existence even before the project, they had become more active during project implementation. During the baseline survey conducted at inception, it was identified that 65 percent of community members did not know, or were not certain whether consultative committees were operating at their councils. By the end of the project, community members in 16 of the 20 PSs were aware of consultative committees in their PSs.

The complaint mechanisms had been streamlined in all of supported PSs. Community members can now make complaints and make sure their issues are addressed without delay. In some PSs, community members still bring up their issues via the local elected representative however, PS staff were regularly creating awareness about how the public can bring their issues directly to the PS through various mechanisms, thereby ensuring their grievances are addressed. This included issues affecting marginalised groups.

6.4. Improved knowledge on PS act, budget and related procedures

Stakeholders had increased their knowledge and awareness about the PS act and budget procedures. Community engagement within the functioning of the PS had increased as a result.

According to the baseline survey: ... *knowledge and understanding of the PS Act and functions amongst community members is very low. Their knowledge and understanding of the budget and income generation process of PSs is also very low. More than half the community members interviewed (52 percent) were not aware of the functions of the PS, while 92 percent of respondents were not aware of the PS Act. Only 3.5 percent of respondents from the community said they had forwarded their proposals for preparation of the budget.*

All elected members said they had increased their knowledge about income generation activities and all except one of them said they had increased their knowledge of the PS act. A majority of government officials said that policies and operations had improved since their participation in project activities. Many new ideas for income generation based on lessons learned had been proposed by those interviewed. This can be contrasted with the baseline situation where it was identified that knowledge and understanding of the PS Act among PS members and PS officers was low.

Community members at FGDs mentioned that as a result of participating in project activities, they had increased awareness about PSs and what type of services the PS offers. For example, they now know when to approach the DS office and when to approach the PS. At the time of reporting, 573 budget proposals had been forwarded by community groups in the 6 Districts. PS officials and elected members also said that community members had increased awareness about budget processes and the PS act.

Stakeholders including government officials and elected members of the PS were invited to rate the “success” of the project based on the four components above. The rating was based on a Likert scale where they were asked to rate each component on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very unsuccessful and 5 being very successful. See figure 14 below:



Figure 14: Rating of outcomes - govt. officials

Improved knowledge on the PS act, budgets and related procedures was also rated as “successful”. Lower ratings were given in the areas of improving services to marginalised groups and improving policies and operations.

The same Likert scale was applied to interviews with the elected members. See figure 15 below:

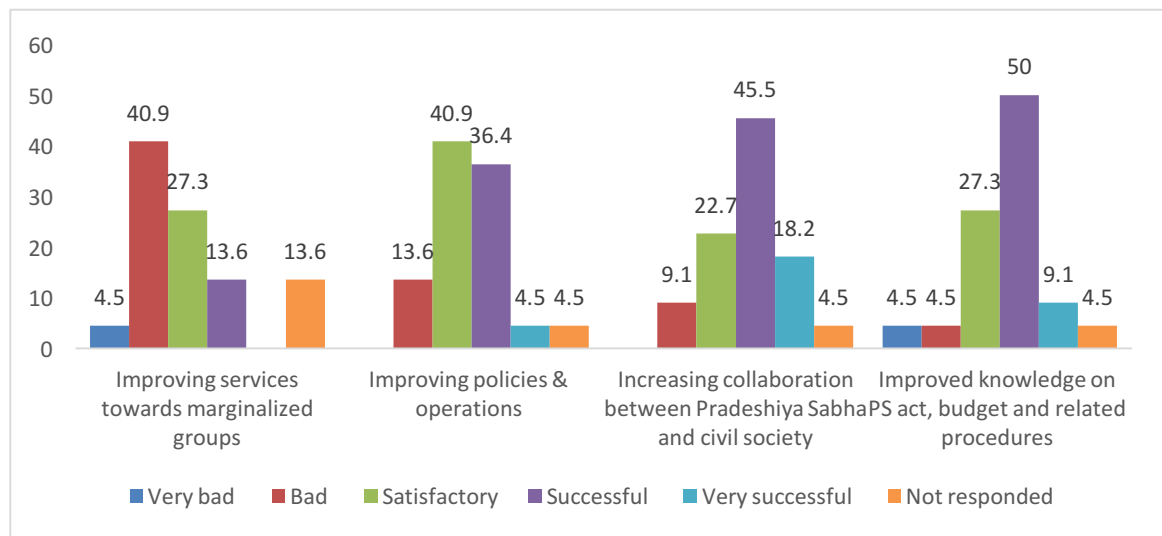


Figure 15: Rating of outcomes - elected members

The highest level of achievement among elected members was in improving their knowledge on the PS act, budget and related procedures. They also perceived success in terms of increased collaboration between PSs and civil society, and improving policies and procedures. Elected members rated improved services towards marginalised groups as low.

Technical partner of the project – CPA, was also asked about their perception of the project’s achievements against objectives on a similar Likert scale. They had rated improving services towards marginalised groups at 4.5, increasing collaboration between PS and society at 3.5, improved knowledge on PS act, budget and related procedures at 3 and improving policies and operations at 2. Some of the achievements of the project mentioned by CPA were:

1. Reach of information to communities (especially to marginalised groups - this was the first time some of them had heard of the PS’s role).
2. Reach of material to local officials (PSs), almost all PSs now had material in their hands and were exposed to model by-laws drafted by CPA. The by-laws were issue-based and customised to suite each PS.
3. Citizen galleries were reactivated and are now continuing.
4. CPA was able to share good practices via media documentaries.
5. Governing tools were now in place at all PSs and officials were made aware of them

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1. Conclusions

This section builds on learning from the previous section and is based on the four main component of the project. The conclusions are organised under two main sub-headings: 1) Main findings and 2) Issues requiring further thought.

Improving services delivery including those towards marginalised groups

Main findings: The functioning of consultative committees had improved from pre-project levels. This has improved community engagement in the activities of the PS. Participatory approaches employed in identification of issues, coupled with inclusion of community ideas in the planning processes, has developed the credibility of PSs amongst the public. PS officials maintain that the public can directly approach them and bring up issues through the complaint referral system, rather than going through elected members.

Issues requiring further thought: Engagement of marginalised groups and their issues remains low within the PS system. Their representation in consultative committees is also low. Only a few elected members and PS officials could identify the real issues affecting these groups, and what could be done to overcome such issues. Only the PS in the Central Province had special programmes for marginalised groups; and even these were limited to providing assistive devices to persons with disabilities.

Improving policies and operations

Main findings: Awareness amongst the community, government officials, and elected members, about policies and operations of a PS, had improved as a result of activities conducted by the project. Community members know that they can now participate in the decision making process, government officials know they had to be accountable to the public, and elected members were made aware of the need for a consultative process in budgeting and formulation of development plans for the PS.

Issues requiring further thought: Even though many by-laws had been developed and forwarded, many were still to be approved at the writing of this report. By-law approval in the Northern Province is at a virtual standstill due to the bureaucracy that exists within the government system. In some areas community engagement and participation has been low due to disinterest and lack of motivation, as their issues had not been addressed.

Increasing collaboration between Pradeshiya Sabha and civil society

Main findings: Collaboration had improved between PS officials and the community. Community members involved in consultative committees, play an important role in bringing the needs of their villages to the attention of officials and elected members, so they are compelled to address these needs. All stakeholders state that increased collaboration between the PS and civil society is one of the most important impacts of the project.

Issues requiring further thought: Since a survey of the community was not conducted (other than FGDs with a small representation of community members), the evaluation cannot make generalisations about the community at large. However, it was seen that in PSs where consultative committees were functioning at a lower level, community member awareness of the project and its activities was also low, and vice versa.

Improved knowledge on PS act, budget and related procedures

Main findings: It is very important to create awareness amongst stakeholders about the rules and regulations, and limitations of the given framework. Knowledge about the above had improved amongst all actors. Compared to baseline levels, the improvement in knowledge was significant.

Issues requiring further thought: Different stakeholders in different regions had received different types of support from the project. Some PSs had received equipment and furniture while others had received software support and training. Some of those interviewed mentioned that it would have been good to open out all activities for all supported PSs. Even though participants had tried to disseminate the lessons learned, they felt that more opportunities should have been provided for more persons.

In addition to the above, good cooperation between the project and the government of Sri Lanka was solidified with the MOU signed between the two. Even though the project commenced at a time when the political situation was such that INGOs were looked at suspiciously, SFCG managed to maintain cordial relationships all of which contributed to the smooth functioning of the project despite some delays during the initial stages. Activities deemed most effective and repeatedly mentioned by those interviewed, included exchange visits, the complaint referral system, the participatory needs identification and various training programmes. The CLGs and ACLGs interviewed during the course of this evaluation were very positive about the project and its activities.

Stakeholders at provincial level suggested that the CIG programme should have supported a prioritised project, decided based on the participatory needs identification.

When we conduct participatory planning and budgeting, generally the community also expects that a project will be undertaken to resolve identified issues. I would like to suggest that the community, SFCG, PS and the Provincial Council can implement a joint project identified by the community. – T K Gunatilake, Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Education, Central Provincial Council.

Some areas showed lower impact than initially expected.. Inclusion of marginalised groups and their issues into the decision making and service delivery processes was one such area. Respondents also mentioned that support provided should have been homogeneous, with all supported PSs having the opportunity to participate in as many activities as possible. It was significant that provision of infrastructure (computers, furniture) was not seen to be a significant aspect of the activities; respondents instead focused on less tangible outcomes such as the improved relationship between the PS and the community. This is surprising, given the context where most development projects are perceived to be “effective” only if they provide grants, equipment, furniture etc. The appreciation of respondents towards the tools and approaches that had been introduced, rather than the more tangible provisions like equipment and furniture indicates a change in attitudes, practice, and performance, through which the development of relationships hoped for by the project, had been achieved.

7.2. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the evaluation conducted, feedback obtained, and project documents reviewed.

As suggested by the project partner CPA, a **clearer orientation about the project and its activities among all stakeholders** at the onset of the project would have ensured that all actors were aware and responsive to project activities. This is especially true for community engagement carried out by the project. Even though some indicators of the project referred to awareness creation amongst communities (i.e. X percent of citizens surveyed at project end indicate satisfaction with the services provided by their PSs/ At least 15 percent of citizens can identify aspects of the local citizen budget) the project could not directly engage with the community to ensure that these indicators were met.

Findings indicated that community engagement in the project was lower than that of other stakeholders. If implementing a future initiative of a similar nature, there should be **more engagement and closer interaction with community**, not just via the consultative committees but also through other more direct mechanisms, Promoting a public awareness day at each PS, an activity implemented by some PSs where it had resulted in closer engagement of the community and increased awareness about PS services.

Participation of marginalised groups in consultative committees had not been significant. Stakeholders should **encourage more participation of marginalised groups in consultative committees**, carry out participatory needs assessments with their participation, and identify services required by them. Incorporating activities designed to address the needs of marginalised groups into the planning processes within PSs will ensure their engagement.

Bringing together the public, elected members and government officials is an effective means of resolving many issues. The public feel their voice is being heard, government officials can identify issues that need attention, and elected members can respond to the needs of their electorate. Stakeholders have expressed their intention of continuing some activities introduced by the project; these can be supported to increase engagement with the public and maintain the momentum kindled by the project.

More civil society organisations (rather than individuals) can be engaged so activities benefit more people, and lessons can be shared amongst a larger audience. Community organisations in villages often include respected community leaders; the support of these leaders and their organisations (Welfare societies, WRDS, RDS, Cooperatives) can be enlisted in increasing **awareness amongst the public about local government authorities**, the role they play and services they provide.

The project could consider developing material including handbooks, flyers, brochures, newsletters and other promotional material that can **disseminate the knowledge generated** amongst a wider audience of stakeholders. This will also contribute to sustaining the lesson learned. Limited resources mean that activities have to be limited by beneficiary numbers; however, development of tools to disseminate learning can be a way of mitigating this constraint.

The participatory budgeting system was deemed very useful, especially in obtaining the engagement of communities in the local development process. **Introduction of this participatory budgeting system** was suggested by many of the ACLGs and should be considered as one of the impacts that the project can introduce at national policy level.

SFCG can explore the possibility of introducing this as a policy through its relationship with the national ministry.

The project's selection criteria for identifying PSs to support should be disseminated amongst stakeholders so all actors are aware of these criteria. Some the government representatives including the Assistant Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government in the Central Province suggested that support interventions could have been more effective if the Ministry's was consulted in selecting PSs to support. In order to **obtain the support of all stakeholders**, especially at implementation level, it would be pertinent to coordinate more with those responsible for implementation at provincial and PS level. At national level this issue had been mitigated by entering into an MOU with the Ministry. Such coordination would ensure that resources can be shared and duplication avoided.

When designing similar projects and conducting participatory needs assessments or budget planning in the future, it would be more effective if a **model project for support could be incorporated into the design**. This would ensure at least one of the identified projects are supported in implementation. Some stakeholders felt that participatory planning had generated a great deal of expectation from community who assumed their ideas would be implemented immediately. According to PS and ACLG representatives, planned activities could not be implemented immediately as they needed to be integrated into budgets for the following year.

Follow up and monitoring support should be further enhanced within supported PSs. Some officers said that issues related to the software system for the complaint mechanism had not been addressed even though they were brought to the attention of project authorities. **Regular monitoring and follow up action** was also suggested by some PS Secretaries. Improved follow up and monitoring will ensure that project interventions are more effective, and issues and problems are addressed in a timely manner.

8. Annexes to the report

Annex 1 - Map of project area

Annex 2 - Questionnaires and guidelines used

Annex 3 - Summary of outcomes from FGDs

Annex 4 - Additional tables

 KIIs with elected members

 KIIs with government officers - List of persons/organisations consulted

Annex 5 - List of persons met for KIIs

 Elected members

 Government officials

Annex 6 - Number of persons who participated in FGDs