

4th Quarterly Report



Community Initiatives for Common Understanding

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1. Introduction

Saferworld, in collaboration with Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) and Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), is implementing a 3-year project entitled ‘Community Initiatives for Common Understanding’ (CICU), funded by USAID. Based on the assumption that constructive interaction and cooperation at the community level for peace and development can bridge political, ethnic and ideological divides, the project aims to contribute to an environment that is shaped by trust and strong social ties between communities, including conflicting groups and local authorities, which makes them resilient to social divides, insecurity and conflict.

The project has three expected results:

- **Result 1:** *Barriers to peaceful dialogue are broken down and mutual understanding and appreciation of grievances between conflicting groups increased.*
- **Result 2:** *Conflicting groups are able and willing to identify activities for development and reconciliation and collaborate toward their implementation*
- **Result 3:** *State actors at district and national level are better aware of and willing to integrate lessons learnt into conflict sensitive development and rehabilitation programming.*

While the project follows a community-based approach, it mainly focuses on 9,000 hard-to-reach and at-risk young people, including former ex-combatants. Secondary audiences for this project are government stakeholders and decision makers at the district and national level. The project is implemented in 5 districts of Nepal: Kailali, Surkhet, Banke and Bardiya in the Mid- and Far West; and Sunsari in the East. It targets 3 VDCs in each district.

2. Context Update

There have been positive developments in the Constitution drafting process, which started with the adoption of rules of procedures, followed by the formation of five committees to move forward the drafting process. This development showed that the political parties have been able to forge consensus on issues of national importance. Despite this progress however, six months after the CA election, 26 appointed members of the Constituent Assembly (CA) are yet to be nominated.

The appointment of Supreme Court judges drew national attention and sharp criticism from the Nepal BAR Association, among others, as some of the nominated judges had controversial past. Despite the criticism, the final eight judges nominated by the Judicial Council were appointed as Supreme Court judges after a parliamentary hearing.

This quarter also witnessed strong intra party conflicts within UCPN-M and CPN-UML. It reached a peak within UCPN-M as senior leader Baburam Bhattarai walked out of the party's general convention in Biratnagar. Additionally, the rifts between the Madhav Kumar Nepal and KP Oli factions within CPN-UML grew stronger as both sides have been contesting for the party chairperson position.

The political parties have been quite active in the working districts either for the preparation of their general conventions (UCPN-M and CPN-UML), location elections, or for by-elections in Bardiya and Kailali that is scheduled for June. However, there has been no report of clashes or violence between different parties or between factions within the same party.

The landslide victory of Narendra Modi led Bharatiya Janta Party in India has been viewed as a positive outcome for Nepal; many Nepali citizens believe that he is keen to build cordial relationship with his neighbours and is positively disposed towards funding development projects in Nepal.

There has been significant coverage of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) incidences in the newspapers, including cases of killings of women for dowry, gang rape, etc. A media monitoring study carried out by IHRICON shows 31 incidences of violence against women and girls (VAWG), including 10 deaths, over the period between mid-May and mid-June 2014. The Reconciliation and Development Forum (RDF) and youth group members in the CICU working VDCs also identified VAWG as a significant problem in their VDCs and perceive that such incidences are increasing.

3. Accomplishments

This progress report covers the fourth quarter (Q4) of the CICU project. During this period, activities under Milestones 4, 7, and 20 were completed and the work has progressed in achieving Milestones 10, 13, and 23.

The following activities were completed this quarter:

a) Milestones 4, Output 4.1 Outreach and trust-building strategy developed/ refined according to the context

The activities to develop the outreach and trust-building strategy were implemented in all the working VDCs this quarter. Through individual or group discussions, this activity promoted a wider consultation with community members. Alongside RDF and youth group members, more than 200 community members from each VDC also participated in the consultations. Furthermore, more than 3,600 community members observed and participated in trust building activities in the working VDCs. The trust building activities included street drama, sporting events, and oratory competitions, among others, which introduced the project to a wider community while at the same time raising community awareness on relevant community issues. For example, in Kailali the project staff, with support from RDF and youth group members, organised a street drama on *Chaupadi*¹, child marriage and youth's involvement in drug abuse. The strategy is being finalised and will be submitted to USAID in July 2014 (MOV 4.4.1).

Some of the common strategies to reach out to hard-to-reach youth and other at risks groups include the following:

- **Mobilising youth to reach out to target groups and putting them in the 'driving seat'** by involving them in both the design and implementation of the outreach activities. At the beginning of the quarter, an inclusive youth group has been formed in each VDC and they have been actively participating in all of the youth focused activities. There are altogether 168 members – between 9 to 13 members in each VDC – of which almost 50% are female and two belong to sexual and gender minorities; it is also a diverse mix of youth from different castes and ethnicities (Janajati 29%, Chhetri 27%, Dalit, Pahadi 17%, Brahmin 13%, Madhesi 11%, Dalit, Madhesi 2%, and others 1%).
- **Getting buy-in of influential community members or guardians to reach out to certain groups.** For example, working with the relevant political party members and influential social leaders to reach out to ex-combatants. Some of the leaders are ex-

¹ Chaupadi is a traditional practice among some Hindu families from mid and far west of Nepal that prohibits women and girls from participating in normal family and social activities during their menstruation period. The women and girls are prohibited from entering the house and are kept in cow-shed.

combatants themselves and are also a part of the inclusive youth group formed in the VDCs. Similarly, working with parents and community leaders, such as *pandits* and *maulanas*, Hindu and Muslim religious leaders, to reach out to *Madhesi* and Muslim females. Due to certain circumstances, either traditions or recent social or political events, members of these groups do not openly participate in NGOs activities. The project believes that outreach activities developed after incorporating suggestion and feedback of people who are very important in the lives of these individuals will be more effective. There is also a possibility that outreach activities that do not have the buy-in of the community, might further hinder the participation of some groups, particularly that of Muslim and *Madhesi* women and girls.

b) Milestone 4, Output 4.2 200 at-risk youth and individuals from other at-risk groups identified in each VDC (200 x 15 =3,000)

Approximately 200 hard-to-reach youth and individuals from other at-risk groups have been identified in each VDC. The hard-to-reach youth include former combatants, Verified Minors and Late Recruits (VLMR)², children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAFAAG), and VDC specific groups such as *Madhesi* and Muslim women and girls, sexual and gender minorities (SGM), members of ethnic groups who are in the verge of extinction such as *Raji* group, and at risk youth including drug abusers, alcoholics, SGBV victims, married children, the ultra-poor who depend on daily wages for food, disabled youth, and youth at risk of illegal migration, among other groups. A detailed report that includes VDC data disaggregation of these groups will be submitted to USAID in July 2014 (MOV 4.2.1).

c) Milestones 4, Output 4.3 In each VDC, at least one initial interaction conducted between youth and other at-risk groups and RDFs

The interactions between RDF, youth and other at risk groups were organised in all of the 15 working VDCs between April and early May 2014. The objective of these meetings was to bring hard-to-reach youth and other at-risk youth and RDF members together to discuss local conflict issues, especially those related to youth, and their potential solutions.

² 4008 Maoists combatants were verified as minors and late recruits by the UN verification team as they were found to be either recruited when they were minors or after the cease fire agreement between the Maoists and the Government of Nepal.

In Bharaul VDC of Siraha district, the topic of the interaction was ‘How to make the Siruwa festival’ peaceful. Approximately 56 people participated in the interaction including hard-to-reach youth, at risk groups, youth group and RDF members and wider community members representing different ethnic groups and some authorities including the local police. The interaction was held just before Siruwa festival, a *Tharu* festival organised in the grounds of the temple, which is attended by community members from different caste and ethnic groups. Almost every year, and certainly for the last few years, the festival has been disrupted by violent clashes between youth groups of different villages as a result of alcoholism or teasing of women and girls. The interaction meeting encouraged discussion on the causes of these clashes, which were not pre-mediated or linked with any communal or identity issues but random cases of violence between youth groups of mixed caste and ethnicity usually formed on the basis of geographical proximity, and encouraged stakeholders, including youth, to take responsibility to avoid such incidences in the upcoming festival. There was no violence in Siruwa festival in Bharaul VDC that year, an outcome to which this activity may have contributed. The detailed report on these interactions will be submitted to USAID in July 2014 (MOV 4.3.1).

d) Milestones 7, Output 7.1 Five Pilot peace rooms established in 5 VDCs (one per district)

A total of 12 peace rooms have been established in May 2014, 5 of which are part of milestone 7, output 7.1 (the other 7 peace-rooms are part of milestone 8, output 8.1, see below). The locations of the peace rooms were selected based on consultation with youth group and RDF members and some key stakeholders from the community including VDC secretaries. One of the peace rooms is housed in a local VDC office, while another is based in a college; after consultations among the different stakeholders, including the VDC secretary, it was decided that the 10 remaining peace rooms should be located in rented rooms of private owners. A lease agreement will stipulate that the peace rooms will be solely used to promote CICU’s objectives, that no one will be barred from entering the room based on their identity, and that it will not be used to promote any kind of political, or identity based tensions or conflicts. The most important criteria used for the selection of the peace rooms included strategic location for easy access and safety of the participants involved. As the establishment process involved wider community members from the start, the community were very supported of this activity and they helped negotiate peace rooms either for free of rent, in case of VDC office and the Campus, or for a nominal rent amount, in case of

individual house owners. The detail report on the establishment of peace rooms will be submitted to USAID in July 2014 (MOV 7.1.1).

e) Milestones 20, Objective 20.1 M&E draft framework developed based on baseline findings

The CICU project's M&E framework has been developed based on baseline findings and shared with USAID; feedback has been received.

f) Milestones 20, Objective 20.2 M&E framework refined and baseline indicators adapted

The CICU M&E framework has been refined and baseline indicators adapted, incorporating feedback from the M&E focal person at USAID. The refined framework, along with performance indicator reference sheet for each indicator, will be submitted to USAID in July 2014 (MOV 20.2.1).

g) Milestones 20, Objective 20.3 At least 1 training for project staff and RDFs on M&E

The M&E training was organised for the project staff and RDF members in Sauraha between 22 and 25 April 2014. The training focused on general principles of M&E and the exercises and examples were drawn from the originally submitted M&E framework. The three and a half day long training was attended by district coordinators from INSEC and CWIN from all five districts, their central-level project coordinators, and 33 community members from all the working VDCs. The first two days of the training were dedicated to project staff members only who were trained on impact, outcome, and output level changes and on developing output and outcome level indicators. The community members joined the latter half of the training during which participants identified changes that they would like to see in the coming years within the framework of this project's work and discussed how those changes could be measured.

The refined M&E framework will be shared with the partners. Saferworld's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Coordinator, who will start his work from the third week of July, will provide support and mentor partners and community beneficiaries whenever required. A detail report on this activity will be submitted to USAID in July 2014 (MOV 20.3.1).

h) Milestones 23, Objective 23.1 Technical training in Do No Harm, participatory conflict analysis, and DDR training for project partners completed

Three-day training on Do No Harm, Participatory Conflict/Context Analysis and DDR was organised from 4-6 June 2014 for INSEC and CWIN project staff. There were 13 participants in total, including the partner organisations' district coordinators from the five working districts and their central-level project coordinators. USAID's AORs and the Asia Regional Coordinator from the Centre of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance also attended some sessions. The objective of the training was to help the project staff members apply DNH and conflict sensitivity principles in the design and implementation of project activities, practice participatory conflict analysis tools, and understand the concept of DDR and identifying challenges and opportunities related to gender sensitive rehabilitation and reintegration. The training discussed these principles and practiced some conflict analysis tools such as conflict tree, actor mapping and onion using participatory approach including lectures, open floor discussion, sharing from the district project staff members, and group work. A detailed report on the training will be submitted to USAID in July 2014 (MOV 23.1.1).

Work in Progress

a) Milestones 8, Output 8.1 10 Peace rooms established in 10 VDCs

Twelve of the 15 peace-rooms have been established in the fourth quarter; therefore, there has been a significant progress towards achieving this output.

b) Milestones 10, Output 10.1 Psychosocial strategy and directory developed

The district coordinators have started collecting information on local psychosocial service providers at the district and VDC level in order to prepare the directory of psychosocial service providers.

c) Milestones 13, Output 13.1 Phase I – Group A (5 communities) security needs identified and discussed in participatory manner and action plan developed

The development of these action plans involves a series of activities including problem (tensions/conflicts) identification, problem prioritisation, and identification of local solutions. The RDFs have already identified and prioritised issues that they would like to work on. For example, in Chaumala VDC in Kailali, SGBV has led to many problems including no

citizenship for women from certain communities, child marriage, and domestic violence. The RDF want to implement awareness raising and targeted advocacy activities to address this problem by bringing conflicting parties together and avoiding any escalation of tensions or conflicts from this issue. The action plan development training is organised to take place in the last week of June and the action plans are expected to be finalised in summer 2014. The discussions for problem identification and prioritisation included other community members in addition to RDF members. The available data from the district coordinators (attendance sheets) shows that they have reached out to approximately 600 additional community members from diverse caste, ethnicity and religious background in this process (43% female). RDF members were also encouraged to discuss community problems and solutions with their neighbours informally during their normal social interactions. As a result, the number of people indirectly reached in this process has been higher than anticipated.

d) Milestones 23, Output 23.2 CWIN and INSEC's capacity assessment and action plan developed

Capacity building priorities of CWIN and INSEC have been identified. They include areas such as M&E; documentation, report writing and research; conflict transformation; IT; and financial management. After the completion of the capacity building action plans, capacity building will begin, wherever possible not only providing capacity building to, but also transferring skills and expertise between partners.

e) Milestone 26, Output 26.1 Quarterly progress reports, quarterly meeting attendance and quarterly events calendars

The 4th quarterly progress report was submitted to USAID in June 2014, indicating the completion of Milestone 26. The next CMM meeting is being organised by CARE in Rupandehi on July 3 and 4 at which Saferworld Nepal Country Manager and Project Coordinator will attend.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learnt

There were no significant challenges faced in this quarter in terms of operational space and movement of the project staff members. However, there was a challenge at the project implementation level. It was difficult to reach out to marginalised community members such as *Muslim* and *Madhesi* women and girls. However, a strategy has been developed to reach

out to such hard-to-reach youth and other vulnerable groups. The strategy includes strong youth mobilisation through their active participation in the design and implementation of these activities and securing buy-in of guardians and community leaders among other things. The youth group members include seven women and girls from Muslim and Madhesi community which shows small but some tangible success in this regard.

The peace-room establishment work has reinforced that community led activities are more successful than those solely led by NGOs. Since the youth group and RDF members were actively involved in this process and a wider community consultation was also done, the community was very supportive of this endeavour. They helped find the rooms and also helped negotiate the rent down.

Saferworld found a discrepancy between the improved knowledge on M&E participants displayed in discussion during and after the M&E training and the results of the pre- and post-test. Saferworld will assess this discrepancy to improve future means to measure learning

5. Success Stories

The impacts of the project at the community level will start to emerge once the RDF and the youth group members start implementing their activities. However, there have been few successes already in terms of reaching out to the authorities and wider community members and some examples of these successes are explained below.

- The VDC offices of Bharaul has allocated 60 thousand Nepali Rupees each for RDF and Youth Group related activity of the CICU project from its mutual fund. The fund will support the action plans developed by RDF and youth groups to solve community conflicts. The budget was allocated for the Nepali fiscal year 2071/72 (July 2013/ July 2014) during the VDC Council's yearly planning meeting held on 14 January 2014 at VDC office of Bharaul. The contribution of fund is significant because it shows VDC office's buy-in to the project. As the project aims to bring communities and authorities together to solve local tensions or conflicts, the fund contribution indicates a strong start towards achieving this goal.
- The project has been able to reach out to a wider community through its trust building and other project's activities. Approximately, 600 community members, in addition to RDF and youth group members were directly consulted in the different steps of RDF

action plan development process. More than 3,600 community members have observed or participated in the trust building activities. In some VDCs the project has been able to bring the conflicting parties together to solve local tensions. For example, in Bharaul VDC in Sunsari, they were able to bring youths, community members and authorities together to avoid clashes during *Siruwa* festival.

6. Quarterly Work Plan

Please see Annex A for a full overview of the Work Plan.

7. Monitoring & Evaluation Performance

The following activities were completed in the area of Monitoring and Evaluation: draft M&E framework developed based on baseline findings, M&E framework refined and performance indicator sheet developed for each indicator, and project and community members were trained on M&E (please refer Section 3 above for details).

8. List of Annexes

The Annexes included here are the following:

- A) Quarterly Work Plan

Annex A – Quarterly Work Plan

Milestone	Outputs/Activities Planned for this Quarter (March – May 2014)	Planned Timeline	Status (<i>Completed / On track / Not completed / Not on track</i>)
20. M&E framework developed and project partners and RDFs trained	20.1 M&E draft framework developed based on baseline findings	Q3	Completed, report will be submitted in July 2014
	20.2 M&E framework refined and baseline indicators adapted	Q3	Completed, report will be submitted in July 2014
	20.3 At least 1 training for project staff and RDFs on M&E	Q3	Completed, report will be submitted in July 2014
23. Partners technical and organization capacity assessed	23.1 Technical training in Do No Harm, participatory conflict analysis, and DDR training for project partners completed	Q3	Completed, report will be submitted in August 2014
	23.2 CWIN and INSEC's capacity assessment and action plan developed	Q4	To be completed in July, and report to be submitted in August 2014
4. Hard-to- reach youth and other at-risk groups and individuals identified and initial engagement taken place	4.1 Outreach and trust-building strategy developed/ refined according to the context	Q4	Completed, report will be submitted in July
	4.2 200 at-risk youth and individuals from other at-risk groups identified in each VDC (200 x 15 =3,000)	Q4	Completed, report will be submitted in July

	4.3 In each VDC, at least one initial interaction conducted between youth and other at-risk groups and RDFs	Q4	Completed, report will be submitted in July
7. At-risk youth and other at-risk groups engage constructively to create functional peace rooms in 5 target locations	7.1 Five Pilot peace rooms established in 5 VDCs (one per district)	Q4	Completed, report will be submitted in July
26. Documentation of project progress in year 1 on quarterly basis	26.1 Quarterly progress reports, quarterly meeting attendance and quarterly events calendars	Q4	Completed, Milestone will be submitted in June
Milestone	Output/Activities Planned for Fifth Quarter (June 2014 – August 2014)	Planned Timeline	Status (<i>Completed / On track / Not completed / Not on track</i>)
9. Communities' have better understanding of existing tensions through constructive engagement in conflict mapping	9.1 Preparation and training for conflict mapping	Q5	On track
	9.2 Conflict mapping conducted in the 5 districts	Q5	On track
	9.3 Validation Workshop carried out involving at least 5 key community representatives from each of the 5 districts	Q5	On track
12. RDFs have capacity to lead discussion and identifying communities' development needs and needs to prevent conflict	12.1 Fifteen (15) RDFs have participated in training to lead discussions and develop RDF Action Plans	Q5	On track
8. At-risk youth and other at-risk	8.1 10 Peace rooms established in 10 VDCs	Q5/6	On track

groups engage constructively to create functional peace rooms in 10 additional target locations			
27. Documentation of project progress in year 2 on quarterly basis	27.1 Quarterly progress reports, quarterly meeting attendance, and quarterly events calendars	Q5	On track