

5th 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

Despite momentum behind the need for a new constitution, there has been little progress over the past quarter and a consensus on contentious issues, including on federalism model, has yet to be reached. The opposition parties including UCPN (M), CPN-M, and Madhesi parties’ demand for an all-party roundtable meeting to garner consensus on this issues has however gained momentum and a meeting was been called on 16 September 2014. Additionally, the 26 members of the Constituent Assembly (CA) who are nominated were put forwards, however only 18 out of the 26 were appointed as CA members by the government. The

government was also able to pass a full year budget for the Nepali fiscal year 2071/72 (2014/15) without any major obstacles.

The International Day against Torture, 26 June 2014, provided an opportunity for CSOs to advocate for an amendment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Act, which currently supports the amnesty of perpetrators without the consent of the victim. The Act itself is yet to be implemented and members of the TRC have yet to be appointed. On August 30th, The International Day of the Disappeared was marked in many parts of the country, with families of the disappeared expressing frustrations with the government, whom they feel has denied them justice by ignoring their cause.

The visit of the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, to Nepal was perceived as a very positive step towards India-Nepal relations by political parties and the government as well as the general population. During his visit Modi promised development support to Nepal, particularly support to hydropower, including a USD 1 billion unconditional development loan for Nepal.

Heavy rain and storms in August caused many parts of the country to suffer floods and landslides. Banke, Bardiya, and Surkhet, the working districts of the CICU project, were severely affected by flood and landslides. The disaster response from the government was slow and ineffective in most affected districts, including in Banke, Bardiya and Surkhet. The project staff, RDFs and Youth Group members have been involved in supporting the relief efforts coordinated by the government, however the damage to local communities will require time to repair. As a result of this, CICU activities in these districts has been delayed; please see Saferworld communications from late August for further detail on direct project impacts.

3. Accomplishments

This progress report covers the fifth quarter (Q5) of the CICU project. During this period, activities under Milestones 8 and 12 were completed and progress has been made in achieving Milestone 13. In addition, the reports for Milestones 4, 7, and 20 were also submitted to USAID in this quarter.

The following activities were completed this quarter:

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

All the 15 peace room have been established by this quarter. At the time of the 4th quarterly report, a total of 12 peace rooms had been established. The final three peace rooms have now been established, following a similar process for site selection. As noted through email correspondence in August, the flooding and landslides have had an impact on the project, including some damage to the already established peace rooms. In brief:

- **Surkhet** district was among the most affected districts with between 60-70 thousand people estimated as being directly affected. Of the three working VDCs, Hariharpur was the most affected, with all one neighbourhood being completely destroyed. The peace room in this VDC was established in one of only three houses that are still standing however the furniture and materials (approx. worth NPR 50,000) have been damaged. The full extent of damage is still unknown as access continues to be limited. The peace room in Hariharpur has been severely damaged by the flood and requires relocation. As people are still in shock from the disaster and the roads and bridges are damaged making many parts of the VDC inaccessible, the relocation work will start towards the end of October 2014. The peace room in Uttarganga remains intact.
- In **Bardiya** district 14,500 people were displaced, 850 houses completely destroyed, 9,365 houses moderately damaged, and 10, 787 houses partially damaged. Two of the working VDCs, Mahammadpur and Dhadhawar, were affected. The peace rooms in these VDCs remain intact.
- All of the working VDCs in **Banke** were affected by the flood, however the peace rooms in Binauna, Kachanapur and Baijapur remain intact.

As a result of the flooding and landslides, detailed reporting from the districts has been delayed; as such, the report on this milestone will be submitted to USAID by the end of November.

b) Milestones 12, Output 12.1 Fifteen (15) RDFs have participated in training to lead discussions and develop RDF Action Plans

The action plan development training was organised at the district levels in all five working districts and was completed in June 2014. A total of 30 participants attended the training in each district comprising of 5 RDFs and 5 Youth Group members from each of the three

VDCs. The training included a component on conflict and gender sensitivity, practice sessions on conflict analysis tools such as conflict tree and actor mapping, and sessions on developing activities and budgets. The participants represented youth, women and men from diverse caste and ethnicity backgrounds, all of whom actively participated in the trainings. The training helped carry forward action plan development work which will involve the identification of conflicts/problems, prioritisation of those problems, and the identification of local solutions. A detailed report on the milestone will be submitted to USAID by November 2014.

Work in Progress

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

Work towards achieving this milestone has begun, facilitated by a training with 15 RDF groups in June 2014. The development of the action plans will the identification of issues, the prioritisation of issues, and the identification of local solutions to address those issues. In order to ensure the development of the plans is participatory and representative of the whole community, a number of meetings between RDF and Youth Group members and the project staff will need to take place. In this quarter the RDF and Youth Group from Chhinchu, Binauna, Dhadhawar, Phulwari, and Singiya VDCs of Surkhet, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, and Sunsari respectively have completed the first draft of their action plans. They will be finalised in the next quarter after incorporating feedback from the project team and other key district level stakeholders. More detail on the action plans themselves, and the issues identified, will be included in the Milestone 13 report. Preliminary action plans identified issues such as conflicts due to political polarisation, tensions between community members, ex-combatants and conflict victims, conflicts over access to resources such as the use of the community forest and property of a temple, human trafficking and gender based violence.

b) Milestone 27, Output 27.1 Quarterly progress reports, quarterly meeting attendance and quarterly events calendars

The 5th quarterly progress report was submitted to USAID in September 2014. The CMM meeting was organised by CARE in Rupandehi on July 3 and 4, to which Saferworld Nepal Country Manager and Project Coordinator attended.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The natural disaster severely affected the majority of the working VDCs of Banke, Bardiya, and Surkhet and the response from the government has been slow and ineffective. Thousands of people in these VDCs are still living in camps. In some of the CICU working VDCs, it may take several months before work can resume as normal. For example, Hariharapur VDC is still inaccessible as roads and bridges were swept away by the floods and landslides. The peace room in Hariharapur was severely damaged in this VDC and needs relocation to another building as the current one is unsafe from the damage.

Project staff from both INSEC and CWIN, Saferworld's implementing partners, and some RDF and youth group members supported the relief efforts in their local areas in coordination with the District Disaster Relief Committee. They assessed the relief efforts through a conflict sensitive lens by observing and also encouraging other members of the committee to be observant on who was receiving relief services, whether there were any cases of SGBV or other types of violence or harassment against certain groups of people such as women and children, , were there any tensions between different groups (caste, ethnicity and religion) of people regarding access to resources or were there signs of such tensions escalating in the near future.

In Hariharapur VDC, the District Forest Office had accused the Hariharapur flood victims of encroaching upon the forest, leading to rising tensions between the two groups. As a result of their involvement in the relief efforts project staff were able to reduce those tensions by negotiating their relocation from the forest – having found an alternative site for makeshift shelter outside of the forest area – and encouraging the revival of the stalled relief efforts. . Furthermore, they reached out to the victims through health camps under the leadership of District Health Office and/or Women and Children Office. In Bardiya, the project staff member from CWIN provided psychosocial counselling in such health camps. These actions generally reinforced with the communities that the CICU project aims to address the identified needs and concerns of the communities in which it works, consolidating trust and continuing to build sustainable relationships.

The recent flooding and landslides has highlighted the need for the RDF and Youth Group action plans from these VDCs to include some activities on disaster relief. For example, in

Banke they have decided to help communities to renew copies of valuable documents such as land ownership, birth and marriage certificates by advocating for easy access of the victims to these services with the relevant authorities; they are also supporting needy families with transportation expenses to visit these offices.

To keep up project momentum and ensure activities can proceed on track, the project District Coordinators remain in constant contact with the RDF and Youth Groups, with monthly meetings continuing as planned. While communities are understandably concerned with their immediate situations as a result of the floods, the RDFs and Youth Groups are continuing to finalise their Action Plans, and implementation will begin in all VDCs by November.

5. Success Stories

The impacts of the project at the community level will start to emerge once the RDF and youth group members begin implementing their activities. In this quarter project success was been reflected in the manner in which project staff, RDF and Youth Group members were able to peacefully negotiate the relocation of disaster victims in Hariharpur from a forest thereby avoiding any clashes between the District Forest Office staff and community members in Hariharpur VDC of Surkhet. In VDCs where CICU is not present there were reported clashes between communities and the DFO staff members.

6. Quarterly Work Plan

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

7. Monitoring & Evaluation Performance

The new M&E focal person was appointed in August 2014; they will contribute to the implementation of the M&E activities for the project. The M&E framework was finalised incorporating feedback from USAID, and the M&E focal person will be communicating the final framework highlighting any changes from the preliminary framework after the festival holidays.

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 (June – August 2014)	Planned Timeline	Status (<i>Completed / On track / Not completed / Not on track</i>)
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 November 2014 (revised from previous report)
	23.2 CWIN and INSEC's capacity assessment and action plan developed	Q4	To be completed in November, and report to be submitted in December 2014 (revised from previous report)
9. Communities' have better understanding of existing tensions through constructive engagement in conflict mapping	9.1 Preparation and training for conflict mapping	Q5	Delayed
	9.2 Conflict mapping conducted in the 5 districts	Q5	Delayed
	9.3 Validation Workshop carried out involving at least 5 key community representatives from each of the 5 districts	Q5	Delayed
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	Completed, Milestones report will be submitted in November
8. At-risk youth and other at-risk groups engage constructively to	8.1 10 Peace rooms established in 10 VDCs	Q5/6	Completed, Milestones report will be submitted in

create functional peace rooms in 10 additional target locations			November
27. Documentation of project progress in year 2 on quarterly basis	27.1 Quarterly progress reports, quarterly meeting attendance, and quarterly events calendars	Q5	Completed
Milestone	Output/Activities Planned for Sixth Quarter (September – November 2014)	Planned Timeline	Status (Completed / On track / Not completed / Not on track)
24. Partners technical and organization capacity needs built for year 2	24.1 CWIN and INSEC's capacity needs for year 2 addressed	Q6	Delayed