

CEPPS Quarterly Report: October 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014

NEPAL: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes (SPPELP)
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IFES: Total budget: \$11,282,000 Expenses to date: \$7,844,151

First Quarter Expenses: \$314,996

NDI: Total budget: \$15,222,000 Expenses to date: \$11,217,189

First Quarter Expenses: \$959,685

Total budget: \$26,504,000 Expenses to date: \$19,061,340

First Quarter Expenses: \$1,274,681

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Problem Statement

As Nepal undergoes the process of drafting its constitution, with significant implications for its electoral system, the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) partners continue to provide technical expertise aimed at solidifying democratic gains and institutionalizing inclusive electoral, political, and legislative mechanisms. With the deadline of the constitution completion fast approaching on January 22, 2015, political parties, Constituent Assembly (CA) members, and government officials face numerous challenges, including the potential of popular unrest and instability, if parties do not reach an agreement on the most contentious issues in the constitution.

The internal factionalism, missed deadlines, and empty promises have turned a once optimistic public against the political parties. Although the election of the Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) signaled a shift to a more moderate national leadership, political parties continue to focus on maneuvering for political power rather than working toward solving the country's problems. They lack the willingness or ability to settle disagreements over a wide range of issues. To combat this, CEPPS/NDI has continued its work with political party partners to strengthen internal party capacity and leadership structures and promote inclusion of marginalized groups, such as youth and women.

The CA-Legislature Parliament (CA/LP) has struggled to find consensus and pave a way forward in drafting the new constitution and proceeding with its legislative responsibilities. Delays continue to plague the CA/LP and little optimism remains that the constitution will be promulgated by its original January 22, 2015 deadline. Despite these challenges, CEPPS/NDI is working with members of parliament (MPs) and the LP Secretariat staff to train MPs on topics including effective committee processes, constituent outreach, and solicitation of public and interest groups' input on important legislation.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) is preparing to hold local elections, which were last held in 1998. Structural problems remain; many marginalized populations remain unable to obtain the necessary citizenship documents to register. If marginalized communities, particularly women and youth, increase their electoral participation, they can play a crucial role in shaping Nepal's future. In order to help the ECN meet the challenges of planning and delivering local elections, CEPPS/IFES will continue to provide support to the ECN by building on the Commission's professional and technical development through targeted efforts in the areas of election planning and management, strategic planning, out-of-country registration and voting, political campaign financing and electoral dispute resolution mechanisms.

The upcoming months provide an opportunity for Nepal to promulgate its long-awaited constitution, hold local elections, and move toward a more peaceful and democratic Nepal. CEPPS partners will lead efforts to improve the political participation of marginalized groups, increase citizen outreach and voter registration through targeted campaigns, and enhance the capacity of government officials to carry out their duties.

Theory of Change and Critical Assumptions

Having recently undergone a dramatic political transformation, distrust of the government remains a challenge to Nepal's political development. Added to this, Nepal is a country fragmented by ethnic, linguistic, caste and geographic divides. Active participation in both national and local electoral processes is essential to strengthening a common national identity, government legitimacy and belief in the political process.

If political parties improve their internal structures and become more inclusive, representative organizations, then the citizens of Nepal will be better able to have their voices heard and set local and nationwide political agendas. To that end, CEPPS/NDI continues to build on its positive working relationships with its political party partners to promote and strengthen parties' internal structures, training capacities, and inclusion of marginalized groups. This work focuses on both single-party and multi-party activities, and requires CEPPS/NDI to coordinate closely with parties to identify and assess each party's specific needs.

The work of the CA/LP – to draft a new constitution and fulfill legislative duties – is slow, as party leaders and government officials remain divided in their legislative priorities and constitution-drafting agendas. To combat this, CEPPS/NDI is providing training to youth and women MPs to better prepare them for their roles as legislators. CEPPS/NDI is also working with MPs to draft reforms and recommendations for currently tabled bills in an effort to improve the laws so they work more effectively for Nepali citizens. Lastly, to highlight the importance of

constituent relations, CEPPS/NDI has organized constituency outreach activities aimed at connecting lawmakers with residents of their home districts and bridging the gap between local concerns and the national political agenda. These activities are critical opportunities for lawmakers to acknowledge their mandates and deliver on their legislative duties.

If the ECN is empowered with the professional and technical capacity to adjust to new constitutional provisions, advance consensus-based electoral and political party laws and assume effective leadership of local elections, then it will further institutionalize its role as the implementer of stable and transparent elections. The ECN has a critical opportunity to promote principles of gender equality and citizen inclusion, advancing an electoral environment where citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms are protected.

In addition, if civil society members, including minority women, youth, Dalits and other marginalized groups, are empowered to participate actively in the electoral process through voter registration, civic outreach and civil society capacity building, then they will hold elected leaders accountable to the local priorities of Nepal's diverse population. Holding leaders accountable will not only advance electoral resilience and transparency, it will also improve service delivery and help solidify post-conflict peace by addressing divisions that have stymied Nepal's development. Both CEPPS partners will continue their work with civil society organizations (CSOs) and marginalized groups to increase awareness of local elections; promote voter education and registration; and create an informed, active citizenry.

There are a number of underlying assumptions that influence the nature, scope and aim of the program. The key assumptions for the program are listed below.

- The security situation remains stable and CEPPS can successfully conduct its programming without disruption.
- The CA moves towards finalizing the new constitution with public input and feedback.
- There is broad political consensus on the legitimacy of institutions of government and on any further electoral events, including the date for local government elections and the framework for such elections, to include a consistent and determined basis for eligibility to register as a voter.
- Local elections are held in year five of the program. If, by the end of April 2015, a date for the elections has not been announced, CEPPS will revise its workplan and budget to support increased civic education activities with partner civil society organizations (CSOs), broaden its geographic scope and scale up activities that not contingent on the organization of local government elections. If CEPPS' add-on proposal is approved, the workplan will be adjusted accordingly.
- The ECN continues to be receptive to assistance and cooperation with CEPPS, to include broad electoral education outreach and community-level programs focused on marginalized communities, is active in seeking solutions to challenges that arise under its purview, and will support electoral reform initiatives.

- The ECN is adequately staffed on a consistent basis to work with CEPPS/IFES on program activities and has the overall financial resources to conduct ongoing electoral operations.
- Parliamentary committees are interested and willing to organize committee hearings, field visits and public consultations.
- MPs are interested and willing to engage in constituency outreach activities, and MPs who have constituency offices are interested in receiving assistance to further strengthen their offices.
- MPs make effective use of the fellows they are assigned and use the latter's research and analysis to enhance their visibility and increase their impact in parliament.
- Civic groups and the business community remain interested in participating in policy dialogues with youth MPs, and vice-versa.
- Journalists have access to the internet at the district level to contribute to the electoral news website: <http://www.nepalelectionchannel.org/nepali/>.

Objectives

CEPPS Objective 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

- Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organization structures and operations.
- Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties.

CEPPS/IFES Objective 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants.

- Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthened democratic legal framework for elections.
- Sub-Objective 2.C: Strengthened electoral management capacity of ECN.
- Sub-Objective 2.D: Expanded and improved delivery of voter education.

CEPPS/NDI Objective 2: Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes.

- Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections.
- Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process.

CEPPS Objective 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions.

- Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the legislature.
- Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents.

CEPPS Objective 4: International assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes.

Political Update Relevant to Program Implementation¹

During this quarter, Nepal did not achieve any significant progress in its constitution drafting process. Political uncertainty resurfaced after the ruling NC and CPN-UML put forward a joint proposal on contentious issues at the Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee (PDCC). The proposal, which recommends a seven province model of federalism and a reformed parliamentary form of government and electoral system, faced strong resistance from the opposition parties, including the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), and Madhesh-based and Janajati parties. Despite the ruling parties' assurances that they would work to forge consensus on these issues, MPs continued to debate the proposal, while the opposition demanded to return the proposal to the PDCC again for further discussion and consensus. Although civil society and the general public had remained relatively quiet, suggesting disengagement from the process, protests picked up as it became increasingly likely that a constitution would not be delivered before the January 22 deadline. There are now growing concerns that the lack of constitutional progress could fuel unrest.

In October, the PDCC invited the ECN to present its own position paper to the PDCC. The ECN proposed a mixed-member proportional system using a single ballot and single vote. It also requested a zipper priority list where male and female candidates alternate (women in odd numbered lines, men in even), with the stipulation that positions on the list could not be altered from the initial order submitted to the ECN. The ECN also recommended that it be granted autonomy to announce election dates in consultation with the Government of Nepal and other provincial and local offices as needed. The constitutional outcome will affect both the ECN's structure and election operations.

Meanwhile, the LP's International Relations and Labor Committee directed the government to take necessary steps to "tighten the noose" around international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) operating in Nepal. After a meeting with officials of the Social Welfare Council (SWC), the committee chair said INGOs were operating as a monopoly due to lack of monitoring and supervision from regulatory authorities. The committee directed the Ministry of Women,

¹ The reporting period for this quarterly is October 1-December 31, 2014. Because of this, political updates that occurred in January – especially related to the constitutional drafting process – will be addressed next quarter.

Children, and Social Welfare (MOCSW) and SWC to ensure regular monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of all INGO activities and financial transactions. Similarly, the LP's committee on women, children, senior citizens, and social welfare held a meeting with the Association of International NGOs (AIN) to discuss how to establish an effective legal framework that would monitor, facilitate, and create a supportive environment for INGOs and NGOs in Nepal. The Ministry of Finance, in its December 2014 directive, said INGOs must consult sectoral ministries to finalize projects even after approval from the inter-ministerial project analysis and facilitation committee of the MOCSW. These developments should be watched closely, as they appear to be a concerted effort to limit the space and pace within and at which international organizations and their donors can operate.

Key Activities this Quarter

- CEPPS/IFES provided technical expertise to the ECN to prepare recommendations to the CA constitutional drafting committee on election systems and the role and mission of the ECN in the new constitution.
- CEPPS/IFES' support to strengthen the electoral management capacity of the ECN included developing training materials and an implementation strategy for the ECN's nationwide voter registration drive; training 15,000 voter educators, registration staff, and District Election Officials through cascade trainings; sending ECN Chief Commissioner Neel Uprety and Commissioner Ila Sharma to IFES' U.S. Election Program (USEP) in Washington, D.C.; and providing technical support to the ECN to host the Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) in Kathmandu.
- CEPPS/IFES' voter education and civil society outreach activities included: working with partners to conduct four BRIDGE workshops; collaborating with CSO partners to complete and disseminate the fourth mini-survey focused on local government elections; collaborating with CSO partners, District Administration Offices (DAOs) and District Election Offices (DEOs) to organize and support the citizenship certificate and voter registration joint mobile service camps; preparing CSOs to set up village election networks and district election networks; and working with the National Federation for the Disabled Nepal (NFDN) to contribute accessibility and inclusion-focused provisions to the ECN's five-year strategic plan.
- CEPPS/IFES printed and disseminated several electoral resources including Nepali versions of *Equal Access: How to include persons with disabilities in elections and political processes* and *Gender Equality and Election Management Bodies: A best practices guide*. CEPPS/IFES also finalized the contents of the *Citizenship Certificate Procedures' Guidebook* (in Nepali and English), which was distributed to CSOs for immediate use in the field, and published the *Disability Election Access Monitoring (DEAM)* report, disseminating findings to relevant stakeholders.
- CEPPS/NDI's political party work included: organizing five single party regional trainings with Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal (RPP-N) and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) in the western, mid-western, and far-western regions; holding five regional youth

wing trainings for the UCPN-M's Young Communist League (YCL) and Madheshi Janadhikar Forum Nepal-Democratic's (MJFN-D's) Madheshi Youth Forum Nepal-Democratic (MYFN-D); and implementing a series of workshops for six political parties (NC, CPN-UML, UCPN-M, MJFN-D, RPP-N and RPP) with visiting international expert Bjarte Tora, Special Advisor to the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights.

- CEPPS/NDI also held several multi-party meetings with senior leaders from six major party partners on political party law, federalism, and party re-structuring; organized trainings and meetings for the women's wings of the six major political parties to help identify a common agenda related to political party law and electoral system; and organized several workshops for its Future Leadership Academy (FLA) members to equip them with practical knowledge to develop policies related to youth policy and ways to effectively lobby relevant officials.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee Internews and its partner Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA) completed the third and final round of national opinion polls, which focused on local governance issues, public perception of political parties, and media consumption behaviors. Internews and IDA shared the media findings from its third round of national polls with 25 representatives from key media organizations, including Association of Community Broadcasters in Nepal, Broadcasting Association of Nepal, Equal Access Nepal, BBC Media Action, Antenna Foundation Nepal, Communication Corner, BBC Nepali, Nepal TV and Freedom Forum.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF continued to work with Interface Nepal to produce and broadcast a weekly 30-minute radio program called *Hamro Kanoon*. The program, which aired on over 30 different FM radio stations across Nepal this quarter, included 13 episodes on various bills. TAF and the Citizen's Campaign to Right to Information (CCRI) launched the Interaction Program, designed to share information on MP activities via the website www.parliamentwatch.org.np. TAF and its partners completed the 17th wave of public consultations and continued their legislative audits, auditing five bills this quarter and disseminating the findings and recommendations of the audits through print media. In addition, TAF and its partners organized two roundtable discussions with key MPs and seven sharing workshops with political parties on three pieces of pending legislation.
- CEPPS/NDI's parliamentary program this quarter supported the LP's Environmental Protection Committee with a field visit and a series of activities in Kailali district to address environmental issues resulting from land degradation and repeated flooding; organized, in collaboration with the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), a policy dialogue with youth parliamentarians and politicians on current status of the Nepali economy and the role of youth parliamentarians and politicians in the country's economic development; and organized, in collaboration with the parliamentary Development Committee, a two-day workshop on effective committee functioning for committee members and secretariat staff.

Key Results/Achievements

- CEPPS/IFES supported the ECN to develop and finalize the procedures and methodology used to carry out the cascade trainings for electoral officials, voter educators and IT operators.
- CEPPS/IFES trained 34 electoral officials (12 women), including through a BRIDGE training on Election Administration and Management for incoming ECN staff and a BRIDGE training on Access to Electoral Processes for ECN and civil society representatives.
- CEPPS/IFES and its partner CSOs reached a total of 55,534 people (30,927 women and 1,855 persons with disabilities) through voter education events. This outreach enabled a total of 14,509 people (6,255 women and 121 persons with disabilities) to obtain their citizenship certificate and 24,493 people (10,501 women and 242 persons with disabilities) to register to vote.
- CEPPS/IFES' five CSO partners coordinated with DEOs to organize 347 formal and informal meetings focused on increasing voter registration rates within the program's targeted areas.
- As a result of CEPPS/NDI's multi-party meetings, political parties identified the need for parties to discuss and understand the adjustments parties would have to make when a new federal structure is implemented.
- CEPPS/NDI trained 190 party officials from RPP-N and RPP on issues related to party ideology, party internal policy, leadership, communication, local election planning and party outreach, membership development, and responsibilities of local party branches. Following these trainings, both RPP and RPP-N conducted replicate trainings at the grassroots level utilizing their own resources.
- Following trainings with the women's wings of CEPPS/NDI's six political party partners, the women's wings formed a working committee to provide a united platform for women leaders to coordinate efforts, share experiences, and lobby relevant officials.
- CEPPS/NDI, in collaboration with Rooster Logic, completed the impact survey report on its voter registration information campaign (VRIC). According to the report, a majority of respondents said they now value the importance of voter registration and understand the importance of voting including eligibility requirements, where and when to register, and materials needed to register.
- Following onsite visits, consultations with constituents, and a public stakeholders' discussion in Kailali district, members of the LP's environmental protection committee

presented a set of directives to the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation on ways to prevent the adverse effects of environment degradation in Kailali district.

- This quarter, CEPPS, through its public consultation implementing partners, reached out to numerous MPs representing various political parties to share the synthesized public opinion and recommendations of the bills discussed in the public consultations across 45 districts. The increased interaction with MPs enhanced the quality of legislative debate and provided a platform for the citizens to make demands on political accountability.

Constraints/Challenges/Lessons Learned

- Due to the ECN's busy schedule and the arrival of new senior officials, CEPPS/IFES has had to invest additional time building relationships with the new officials. This included a CEPPS/IFES presentation of its year five CEPPS program on December 26, 2014 to an assembly of relevant officials, including the secretary, joint secretaries, and under secretaries working in CEPPS/IFES' areas of engagement. The meeting provided a forum for constructive feedback, recommendations and ECN ownership over some of CEPPS/IFES' program goals.
- Communication among the ECN secretariat, commissioners, and headquarter and district offices requires strengthening, as this can hinder the flow of information on CEPPS/IFES' activities, especially related to the work of partner CSOs in the field. A planned voter registration mobile camp on November 3 at the Caspian College in Lalitpur, initiated by Youth Initiative (YI), was cancelled when an ECN secretary learned of it informally rather than through the DEO. CEPPS/IFES will work closely with its CSO partners to ensure that the ECN gets all the necessary information in a timely manner rather than relying on DEO-headquarter channels of communication. CEPPS/IFES will also concentrate more effort on building the capacity of the ECN to improve both its internal and external communication.
- Addressing the ECN's last minute requests remains a challenge. For example, the ECN's request to support an impromptu three-month long nationwide voter registration drive to be conducted early in the next quarter has implications for CEPPS/IFES' ability to develop high quality training materials and deliver effective support while complying with IFES' and USAID's procedures. CEPPS/IFES continues to rely on its strong staff with highly diverse skill sets to respond quickly to the ECN's requests.
- CEPPS/NDI continued to experience delays and disruptions in its work with political party partners due to internal factions and centralized decision-making processes.
- CEPPS encountered an under-representation of women in trainings and other electoral management initiatives due to women's low representation across Nepal's civil service.
- CEPPS needs to expand civil society's capacity to take on a more active role in strengthening Nepal's electoral democracy through engaging in nonpartisan advocacy

and lobbying at the local and national level, especially with regards to monitoring the various processes in the current political transition.

II. ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

Activities

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

Intermediate Result 1.1: Political parties are more representative of Nepali citizens.

Intermediate Result 1.2: Political parties in Nepal more effectively implement competitive electoral campaigns.

Intermediate Result 1.3: Citizens have more information and analysis on the policy differences across political parties in Nepal.

Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organization structures and operations.

Sub-Objective 1.A.1: Effective Party Organizing and Outreach

Training for Political Party Youth Wings

This quarter, CEPPS/NDI supported the youth wings of two party partners in organizing a series of regional workshops for 309 youth leaders from across the five regions of Nepal (*see Table 1*). In the trainings for the UCPN-M's Young Communist League (YCL), former UCPN-M and YCL leaders encouraged members to play a more proactive role in the party organization. Training topics included: YCL's organizational outreach, women's leadership, roles and functions of youth wings, youth and local elections, and the role of a youth movement in politics. Following the training, the YCL established coordination committees in all five regions to increase youth involvement in politics at the local level. The coordination committee will analyze the needs of the party at the local level and plan activities targeting women.



YCL Chairman Hon. Ganesh Man Pun, center, at a training session.

During the regional training for MJFN-D's youth wing, the MYFN-D, MJFN-leadership encouraged participants to focus on the rights of the Madheshi people. Topics included: how to increase youth participation at all stages of local government and decision making process; role of youth in transparency and accountability, candidate selection, nomination, long term election

campaign planning, and lobbying; the relationship between youth and senior leaders; present political situation and challenges for youth; leadership for positive change; and youth empowerment and strategies to strengthen youth.

The participants identified some practical steps youth from political parties can take in preparation for future elections. In addition, the discussion focused on identifying issues that youth in their respective districts are concerned about and ways of presenting such findings to the party. The participants identified qualities of a good candidate – clean image, selfless character, ability to deliver on promises.

Table 1: Political Party Youth Wing Trainings, October-December 2014

Date	Region	Political Party/Youth Wing	Participants	
			Total	Women
October 14-15	Mid-Western, Dang	UCPN-M/YCL	61	43
November 7-8	Eastern, Jhapa	UCPN-M/YCL	63	30
November 20-21	Far-Western, Kailali	UCPN-M/YCL	60	20
December 12-13	Eastern, Morang	MJFN-D/MYFN-D	77	9
December 14-15	Far-Western, Bajhang	UCPN-M/YCL	48	3
Total			309	105

Single Party Training

CEPPS/NDI supported two of its political party partners, RPP-N and RPP, this quarter to conduct trainings for a total of 190 party cadres representing the western, mid-western and far-western regions of Nepal (*See Table 2*).



Participants at RPP-N training

The training topics during the RPP-N workshops included sessions on party ideology, party internal policy and programs, membership development, leadership, internal and external communications, local election planning, roles and responsibilities of the party at the local level. These sessions were facilitated by NDI trained master trainers and resource persons from within the party. Following the regional workshops, the party will conduct cascade trainings at the constituency and ward levels, reaching out to all 240 constituencies. As of the end of the reporting period, RPP-N had completed trainings for 320

participants in eight districts: Banke, Jhapa, Kapilbastu, Kaski, Makwanpur, Morang, Sarlahi, and Siraha.

The topics covered at the RPP workshops included: party ideology, party internal policy, leadership, internal and external communication, local election planning, party office

management and party outreach. Following NDI-supported trainings, RPP organized district level workshops for 147 party members in seven districts: Achham, Bajura, Dadeldhura, Darchula, Kailai, Kalikot, and Kanchanpur.

During both the trainings with RPP-N and RPP, each participant was trained on the use of email and internet for internal party communication. A new account for each district president and secretary was created.



Participants open district email accounts in a bid to enhance internal communication.

Table 2: RRP-N and RRP Single Party Training, October-December 2014

Date	Region	Political Party	Participants	
			Total	Women
October 17-19	Western, Kaski	RPP	35	5
November 12-14	Mid-Western, Salyan	RPP-N	42	7
November 16-18	Far-Western, Dadeldhura	RPP-N	42	4
November 24-26	Far-Western, Dadeldhura	RPP	35	9
December 20-22	Mid-Western, Banke	RPP	36	5
Total			190	30

Following the CEPPS/NDI supported training for both RPP and RPP-N, party officials who participated in the trainings reported an increase in inter-district communication, with party officials sharing information on the party's work as well as the challenges faced. In addition, the use of email as a medium to communicate has led to enhanced and efficient communication between the central and local party branches.

Another positive outcome is the need identified by the parties to constitute to a full capacity the local branch executive committees. In many of the party executive committees, including the women and youth wings, only the chairperson has been appointed. RPP is now in a process of naming and appointing the office bearers in the districts. This will strengthen the local branches and help the party prepare for local elections. In addition, the local branches have a better understanding of the contributions local branches play in ensuring that a party remains unique in comparison to other parties. This provides the critical foundation before any party can initiate the process of developing local policies.

CEPPS/NDI will hold a specific reflection session with the party and identify further steps the party can take to build on results from the regional trainings to strengthen the party organization and continue to improve internal communication and inclusion of local branches.

Consultative Meetings with Partner Political Parties

CEPPS/NDI, held a series of meetings this quarter with its political parties partners (*see Table 3*) to discuss the needs of each individual party and NDI's technical support to address these needs.

Table 3: Consultative Meetings with Political Parties, October-December 2014

Date	Party	Topics Discussed
October 8	CPN-UML	- Briefing and discussions on CEPPS/NDI programs.
October 20	UCNP-M	- Discussion on the parties program for local level trainings and how CEPPS/NDI can support the party to strengthen party district branches.
November 12	RPP	- Discussion on agenda and content for regional party trainings.
December 1	NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building the capacity of the local party branches to enable them to play a more active role, such as questioning decisions made at the national level by identifying relevant issues to be raised at the central level. - Ways the party could improve its policy development processes to better address the needs of citizens, especially in the context of local elections. - NDI contribution of relevant documents and publications to NC's new resource center.

Single Party Consultations on Political Party Law

As a follow up to CEPPS/NDI and CEPPS/IFES facilitated election reform dialogues in August and September 2014, CEPPS/NDI coordinated with the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights to organize a series of single party meetings in November 2014. The topic focused on how political parties in Nepal can prepare for the upcoming changes in the legal framework. Once the new constitution is promulgated, the ECN will start working on a new political party law, or revise the political party law of 2002. For political parties to be better prepared for this eventuality, Special Advisor Bjarte Tora from the Oslo Center shared comparative examples of political party laws from other countries as well as international trends with regard to legal regulations of political parties (*See Table 4*). Participants in these consultations included senior leaders and central committee members.

These consultative meetings provided an opportunity to political parties to better acquaint themselves with political party legislation and the impact it would have on the operation of political parties. It also enabled the parties to identify topics they would like to be included in the

new political party law. Additionally, the meetings enabled political parties to prepare themselves for the consultations the ECN will initiate once the new legislation is enacted.

Table 4: Consultation/Workshops on the Political Party Law, November 2014

Date	Program/Topics	Party	# of participants
November 2	Consultation with Central Committee Member - impact and implication of a political party law - issues related to strengthening the party's internal rules as a means for promoting party development. - challenges encountered by reform-minded party members - the federal system and its implications	UCPN-M	1
November 5	Workshop on Role of Political Party Law - internal democratic processes - party registration, de-registration - state funding and delimitation of political parties - importance of party law in regulating and improving the political party system in Nepal - identifying potential topics the party should focus on in preparation of the implementation of the party law	RPP	19
November 5	Workshop on Role of Political Party Law - international examples of what a political party law normally would include and its effect on the operation of political parties - financial issues related to funding of political parties, accountability and transparency	RPP-N	13
November 6	Workshop on Strengthening the Party Organization and Role of the Political Party Law - how a political party could structure its work to secure better inclusion and representation, i.e. internal democracy - development of party identity by focusing on policy, organizational structure and internal party processes - party constitutions	MJFN-D	13
November 9	Workshop on Political Party Law - internal party processes - party registration, de-registration - state funding	NC	18

	- delimitation of political parties - internal dispute mechanism		
Total			64

Future Leadership Academy (FLA)

Meetings with FLA Ad Hoc Committees

To build on the previous work with FLA, CEPPS/NDI held a series of meetings in December 2014 with the FLA ad hoc working committee on policy and national conference preparation and the ad hoc working committee on advocacy and lobbying (*Table 5*). The formation of these two ad hoc committees was based on a decision made by the youth after a CEPPS/NDI facilitated workshop on policy development and lobby. At these meetings, participants reviewed draft policy papers on youth employment, education, health, youth representation, drug addiction and crime, and constitutional protection of youth. The FLA participants decided to prepare an in-depth literature review related to these policies, which will be followed by expert consultations. The work of FLA continues to be based on findings from the youth survey FLA conducted during regional trainings earlier in 2014.

The lobby and advocacy ad hoc committee began a discussion on how youth from political parties can become more effective in their lobbying efforts targeted at party leaders, members of the CA, and the wider society. The committee has developed a youth petition that will be presented to party leaders. CEPPS/NDI will continue to assist FLA in organizing specific lobbying activities.

Table 5: Meetings with the FLA Ad Hoc Working Committees, December 2014

Date	FLA Ad Hoc Committee	# of FLA participants
December 3	Policy and National Conference preparation	10
December 4	Advocacy and Lobbying	9
December 8	Policy and National Conference Preparation	8
December 16	Policy and National Conference Preparation	7
December 17	Advocacy and Lobbying	9

FLA Youth Engage in Lobbying on “Youth Vision 2025”

On December 24, NDI organized an interactive meeting with members of the FLA and the task force formed by Ministry of Youth and Sports with responsibility for revising the Nepal Youth Policy 2011 and drafting a “Youth Vision 2025.”

Sixteen (16) FLA youth, representing eight political parties (CPN-UML, MJFN, MJFN-D, National Madhesh Socialist Party (NMSP), NC, RPP, Terai Madhesh Democratic Party (TMDP), and UCPN-M), and three members of the task force,



FLA members engaging with Government of Nepal task force members on the National Youth Policy and Nepal Youth Vision 2015.

engaged in a discussion on the focus of the new youth policy. The meeting started with FLA members presenting the findings of the FLA youth survey conducted across five regions of the country. The presentation focused mainly on the challenges identified and how youth could play a more substantial role in decision-making processes. Key points in the discussion included those outlined below.

- The need to ensure that youth from all political parties, especially from the Madhesh-based parties, are involved in the development of the youth policy.
- The youth policy should target specific age groups and not address youth issues generally for those between the ages of 18-40.
- The new youth policy and youth vision will have to address the lack of youth representation in decision-making processes.
- The government should focus on creating jobs and secure quality education for youth to avoid youth leaving the country in masses.
- Different ideas on youth representation were discussed, such as the establishment of a youth parliament at the national and local level to involve more youth in politics and also to create a platform for youth to discuss their challenges.

Once the draft Youth Vision 2025 is prepared, NDI will facilitate further meetings for FLA members to provide them an opportunity to comment and provide input to Ministry of Youth and Sports task force members.

Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties.

Multi-Party Consultations and Meetings

In November and December 2014, CEPPS/NDI held a series of multi-party consultations and workshops with senior party leaders and women’s wings (*see Table 6*). These meetings resulted in the formation of the women’s wings working committee, comprising women wings of six political parties who would meet on a regular basis to discuss common political issues, including strategizing ways to enhance women political participation. The working committee would be particularly focused on the work to secure a women-friendly electoral system and a political party law that will address the long-standing exclusion of women in political parties and secure women’s inclusion in party decision-making structures and processes. CEPPS/NDI will continue working with the women wings’ working committee to assist the women within the six partner parties to identify issues on how to secure better women representation.

Table 6: Multi-Party Meetings, November-December 2014

Date	Program	Parties	# of Participants
November 3	Multi-party consultation on political party law and role of	CPN-UML, MJFN-D, NC, RPP, and RPP-N	17

	political parties		
November 3	Multi-party workshop on the political party law with party women's wings	CPN-UML, MJFN-D, NC, RPP, RPP-N, and UCPN-M	30
November 7	Multi-party workshop on the political party law	CPN-UML, MJFN-D, NC, RPP, RPP-N, and UCPN-M	17
November 7	Multi-party roundtable discussion on the role of political parties in a federal system	CPN-M, CPN-UML, MJFN, MJFN-D, NC, RPP-N, RPP, and UCPN-M	17
November 8	Multi-party workshop with political party women's wings	CPN-UML, MJFN-D, NC, RPP, RPP-N, and UCPN-M	29
November 9	Consultation with FLA members	CPN-UML, MJFN, MJFN-D, NC, NMSP, RPP, TMDP, and UCPN-M	12
December 23	Multi-party workshop on the electoral system and women's representation	CPN-UML, MJFN-D, NC, RPP, RPP-N, and UCPN-M	40
Total			128

Political Party Law and Role of Political Parties

On November 3, CEPPS/NDI organized a multi-party meeting where Tora from the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights shared international experiences on political party law and role of political parties with 17 senior party leaders and central committee members from five parties. The consultation focused on the process of preparation for the political party law and how political parties can work together during the drafting and implementation of the political party law/framework. Issues covered included the importance of political party law, guiding principles for political party law, and issues related to registration, political party funding, transparency, and inclusion. The discussion highlighted the need for political parties to be involved in the development of the legal framework that will impact the registration, operation, and development of political parties. This was the first multi-party discussion on the political party law and the participants requested a second meeting to further discuss more in detail what the political parties in Nepal should lobby for in the new legislation.

This second meeting took place on November 7, in the form of a workshop in which 17 representatives from six parties (UCPN-M joined the parties represented in the first meeting) participated. Workshop participants identified topics that could be main areas for political parties to commonly pursue in the new political party legislation; the topics identified are listed below.

- 1) Inclusivity of women and marginalized groups, and quotas for under-represented groups could be one measure.
- 2) Funding of political parties with a focus on state funding and clear regulations on what political parties can and cannot do with money given by the government, including reporting and auditing of such funds.

- 3) A party needs to secure between 3-5 percent in elections to be eligible for state funding.
- 4) The registration process of political parties should be able to control the number of political parties and ensure the parties registered are genuine. One suggestion was to introduce a two-step registration process, where political parties need to get a provisional registration before they can get the final registration.
- 5) Clearly spelled out roles and responsibilities of members of political parties.
- 6) Criteria for political parties to ensure or encourage internal democratic processes.

CEPPS/NDI will continue to work with the parties in a multi-party setting to help them develop a common understanding on what Nepal's political party law should focus on and prepare them for the new legal framework before it is implemented.

Meetings with Women's Wing Representatives

On November 3, CEPPS/NDI held a workshop for 30 members of the women's wings of its six political party partners on how the political party law can be used as a potential opportunity to secure women's representation. Facilitated by Tora from the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights, the workshop focused on examples from other countries on ways the political party law had enabled women to secure better representation by including clauses for women representation.

Following request by the women's wings, a more in-depth workshop was held on November 8, on women's representation and political party legislation. Tora discussed different aspects of political party law and identified areas where women representation could be addressed and the sections where it would be imperative for women to ensure that their interests were included. Workshop participants identified what the women should focus on in their joint effort to secure a woman friendly new political party law, specifically:

- the law should outline how political parties structure their organization;
- the law should contain registration criteria for political parties related to women's representation in governing bodies of the party, at national and local level;
- the law should focus on securing inclusive participation of women in party decision-making processes;
- the law should require party finances and state funding to prioritize activities to secure women inclusion and also build capacity of women members; and
- the law's enforcement body (ECN) should ensure the parties are implementing the political party law with a special focus on women's representation.

Role of Political Parties in a Federal System

On November 7, CEPPS/NDI in coordination with the Nepal Institute for Policy Studies (NIPS), organized an informal roundtable discussion with a select group of leaders from eight political party leaders to discuss the federal structure and its implications for political parties. The discussion was facilitated by Bjarte Tora from the Oslo Center. It was the first time political parties discussed this issue in a multi-party setting. The meeting highlighted a lack of understanding of what the new federal structure will entail for political parties and the challenges parties will have to address in order to align their party organization to a new governance structure.

The meeting brought to the forefront the need to continue working with political parties on this topic by providing more information and examples on how other countries have organized political parties under a federal system. CEPPS/NDI and NIPS, together with senior party leaders, will continue working on developing resource materials and organizing informal multi-party consultations to help political parties prepare their own internal party processes once the constitution is promulgated and the federal structure is identified.

Meeting with FLA Members

On November 9, FLA members met with Oslo Center Special Advisor Mr. Bjarte Tora. This discussion focused on advocacy and lobby strategies and how youth can work effectively. Tora shared experiences from his work in and with political parties globally, and the FLA members picked up tips that formed their lobbying strategy. FLA will develop its youth policies, including targeted lobby efforts toward party leadership. Additionally, the discussion also focused on how the new political party law could be an instrument to include youth in political parties and to ensure a meaningful participation of youth in internal party decision making processes.

Workshop on Electoral System and Women's Representation

On December 23, NDI organized a multi-party workshop for political party women's wing on the electoral system and women's representation for a total of 40 women CA members, central committee members, women's wings members, and influential women leaders from the six partner political parties.



A working group discussion and presentation on women and the electoral system

A former chief election commissioner facilitated the session on the different electoral systems, presenting pros and cons of each system, while CA members from participating parties, including party whips, provided their parties' views on the presentation. During the working sessions, women leaders identified common issues and solutions and developed strategies to pressure political leaders, including:

- the formation of a small working team;
- lobbying strongly within their own political parties within 10 days; and,
- a strong nationwide movement, if required.

National Opinion Poll

The third nationwide public opinion poll was carried out in September 2014 by IDA, with support from Internews and CEPPS/NDI. The third wave of polls sought to provide deeper insight into local governance issues, public perception of political parties, and media consumption behaviors. A total of 4,021 participants responded to the survey, which reached 44 districts, 183 VDCs, 28 municipalities, and 433 wards from all five development regions. In comparison to previous surveys, respondents' optimism over the country's direction has increased, while poverty and unemployment remain the two largest national issues. The survey also revealed respondents' lack of confidence in their MPs, with 83 percent reporting no communication with their representatives and only 17 percent responding that they think the constitution will be completed on time. (*See Appendix I for information on the methodology and key findings.*)

CEPPS/IFES OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants.

Intermediate Result 2B.1: Improved legal framework that ensures transparent electoral procedures that promote genuine and competitive elections.

Intermediate Result 2B.2: Legal framework is a product of inclusive, public dialogue.

Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthened democratic legal framework for elections.

Support to ECN's Input to the CA Constitutional Drafting Committee

On October 27, the ECN presented recommendations to the CA's PDCC on Nepal's new electoral system as well as the ECN's proposed structure and functions under the new constitution. CEPPS/IFES provided a national legal expert, Mr. Madhav Paudel, to offer technical guidance on the recommendations and help compile them into a position paper for the ECN. The ECN's position paper also reflected recommendations stemming from a nationwide Electoral Reform Dialogue (ERD) jointly conducted by CEPPS partners IFES and NDI.

The Regional and National Electoral Reform Dialogues Report

CEPPS partners IFES and NDI are currently finalizing the ERD report based on the series of five regional dialogues and a national forum conducted in August and September 2014, in consultation with the ECN. The report will be designed, published and disseminated in the upcoming quarter.

Intermediate Result 2C.1: Percentage of citizens reporting confidence in the integrity and capacity of the ECN.

Intermediate Result 2C.2: Number of benchmarks met in the implementation of the ECN's strategic plan.

Sub-Objective 2.C: Strengthened electoral management capacity of ECN.

Technical Assistance to the ECN on the Legal, Management and Technical Aspects of Elections

The Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Unit

The ECN's newly established GESI Unit provides a key opportunity to promote gender mainstreaming in voter registration, voter education, polling, dispute resolution, electoral law and other critical electoral areas. This quarter, CEPPS/IFES worked with the ECN to move the GESI Unit beyond its start-up phase. Key activities included integrating members of both the legal and accounting departments into the GESI Unit and establishing a timeline to complete the review of the GESI strategic plan and 2015 action plan by mid-January 2015. Once fully approved, CEPPS/IFES will work with UNDP-Electoral Support Program (UNDP-ESP) to support the full implementation of the strategic and action plans. CEPPS/IFES is working with the ECN to recruit and hire a full time GESI Unit coordinator, a process that it expects to finalize in the next quarter.

Voter Registration Activities

CEPPS/IFES conducted a series of meetings with ECN officials to develop a mechanism for removing deceased voters from the voter registry on a continuous basis. As a follow-up to these meetings, the ECN will coordinate with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, which is responsible for maintaining the civil registry, to introduce coordinated efforts toward this goal. CEPPS/IFES' investment in this process is part of its ongoing efforts to expand the ECN's capacity to administer elections, including timely maintenance of accurate voter lists.

Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Program

CEPPS/IFES provided financial, logistical, technical and facilitation support for three ECN BRIDGE workshops. These workshops covered: electoral administration and management in Kathmandu (October 9-21); gender, inclusion, and elections



(November 9-11); and access to the electoral process (December 17-19). CEPPS/IFES also provided technical support for the gender, inclusion, and elections workshop held in Baglung District during November 9-11, financed by UNDP-ESP. The table below provides further details on the four workshops conducted during this quarter.

Trainings	Training Districts	Training Dates	Number of participants				Number of facilitators			Pre-Post test results	
			Total	Male	Female	Participating Districts	Total	Male	Female	Pre test	Post test
BRIDGE workshop on Electoral Administration and Management	Kathmandu	19-21 Oct	22	18	4	Kathmandu, Taplejung, Doti, Bhojpur, Terathum, Saptari, Solukhumbu, Ramechhap, Dhanusha, Rasuwa, Nawalparasi, Rukum, Rolpa, Surkhet, Jumla, Kalikot, Darchula, Kaski	8	4	4	37.0%	81.2%
Workshop on Gender, Inclusion and Election	Surkhet	9-11 Nov	25 (6 persons with disabilities)	8	17	Dailekh, Banke, Jajarkot, Surkhet, Bardiya	5	3	2	29.8%	77.8%
Workshop on Gender, Inclusion and Election	Baglung	9-11 Nov	24	8	18	Baglung, Myagdi, Kaski, Parbat, Mustang	6	4	2	22.4%	70.4%
BRIDGE Workshop on Access to Electoral Process	Lalitpur	17-19 Dec	24 (11 persons with disabilities)	19	5	Kailali, Dadeldhura, Bardiya, Kanchanpur, Banke, Dang, Kathmandu	7	5	2	41.7%	91.7%

Study Trips

Complementing its ongoing in-country capacity building trainings for ECN officials, CEPPS/IFES sent Chief Election Commissioner Neel Uprety and Commissioner Ila Sharma to Washington, D.C. for the November 1-5 IFES U.S. Election Program (USEP). USEP brings together election officials, parliamentarians and diplomats from around the world to observe and learn about the U.S. electoral system and discuss elections and voting from comparative international perspectives. Uprety and Sharma participated in high-level meetings with Voice of America journalists and representatives from the State Department and USAID, and actively engaged with election officials from around the world. Both commissioners participated in a series of plenary and group sessions organized by IFES on a variety of topics including Erasing the Gender Gap; Expanding Political Rights; the Role of Candidate Debates in Political Discourse; How Public Interest Media Organizations are Keeping Elections Honest; and An

Introduction to the U.S. Election System(s). On the U.S.' Election Day, USEP participants toured polling stations in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia.

Organizational Capacity Building

CEPPS/IFES provided technical support to organize and host the November 29-30 FEMBoSA conference, which brought high-level election officials from across South Asia to meet in Kathmandu. This fifth FEMBoSA meeting marked the first time that Nepal hosted the regional dialogue. CEPPS/IFES provided a campaign/political finance specialist, Magnus Ohman, to prepare a background paper and presentation to inform the ECN's own presentation on political finance (*see Appendices II and III respectively*). CEPPS/IFES' Regional Director for Europe and Asia, Vasu Mohan, presented during the FEMBoSA meeting on mainstreaming gender and disability in elections. CEPPS/IFES also disseminated its most recent publications, including *Gender Equality and Election Management Bodies: A Best Practices Guide* and *Equal Access: How to Include Persons with Disabilities in Elections and Political Processes*, to the FEMBoSA delegates and participants (*see Appendices IV and V respectively*).

In addition to FEMBoSA conference events, CEPPS/IFES worked with the ECN to develop and design a brochure on the 2013 CA election and the 2014 By-election. This brochure contains information on the election system, the electoral process, and the candidates and results of the two elections. The brochure will be produced and disseminated by the ECN in the following quarter. CEPPS/IFES also continued the process of testing and finalizing the ECN's Training Management Information System (TMIS), a human resources database that will store all the names and contact information of those receiving training from the ECN. In the next quarter, CEPPS/IFES will hire data-entry interns to assist the ECN in entering more than 100,000 forms into the database.

Intermediate Result 2D.1: Percentage increase in citizens' knowledge about electoral processes following USG supported voter education.

Sub-Objective 2.D: Expanded and improved delivery of voter education.

Capacity Building Support to the ECN on Voter Education Campaigns

CEPPS/IFES continued to provide in-house capacity building to the ECN through CEPPS/IFES senior training adviser and two support staff working closely with the ECN's Electoral Education and Information Center (EEIC).

The ECN will implement a nationwide, three-month program beginning January 2015 to scale up its voter registration and education outreach. To prepare for this national initiative, CEPPS/IFES' technical experts worked with the ECN to develop training materials for cascade training of 15,000 voter educators, registration staff, and DEOs on voter registration and voter education. The first cascade trainings were launched at the EEIC on December 31, with a two-day training of master trainers for 25 ECN officials. CEPPS/IFES provided logistical support, resource development and facilitation for the trainings. These master trainers will facilitate regional level trainings in five different locations – Biratnagar, Kathmandu, Pokhara, Nepalgunj. and Dhangadi

– in January 2015, building the capacity of thousands of voter registration staff and voter educators to correct voter details, remove migrant and deceased voters from the lists, and register new voters in some of Nepal’s most marginalized districts.

Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

CEPPS/IFES continues to support the development and production of a number of products related to civic and voter education, voter registration, and the acquisition of citizenship certificates, working closely with the ECN and CEPPS/IFES CSO partners. This quarter, CEPPS/IFES printed and disseminated the following voter education materials:

- 1,500 copies of the IFES/NDI publication *Equal Access: How to Include Persons with Disabilities in Elections and Political Processes* (translated in Nepali);
- 650 copies of the *Disability Election Access Monitoring Report (DEAM)*; and,
- 600 copies of *Gender Equality and EMBs: A Best Practices Guide*.²

CEPPS/IFES’ BRIDGE workshop on access to the electoral process for the ECN and DEO officials and representatives of disabled persons’ organizations (DPOs), which was implemented for the first time in Nepal and only the fourth time in the world, was filmed with the objective of producing a documentary to promote political rights of persons with disabilities. This documentary could serve as a resource for training of other ECN and civil society representatives in Nepal. The documentary will be produced in January in Nepali, Nepali sign language, and English and is scheduled to be released during the next quarter.

CSO Subawardees Civic and Voter Education Activities

Training on the Process of Acquiring a Citizenship Certificate

Based on the results of its recent survey on the status of citizenship certificates among marginalized populations, CEPPS/IFES designed a training module for its partner CSOs to educate participants about the process for obtaining a citizenship certificate. CEPPS/IFES supported a total of five trainings to orient partner organizations on this module. From October 9-10, a two-day master training of trainers in Kathmandu trained 10 program managers, two from each of the five voter education-focused CSOs. In addition to CEPPS/IFES’ own expertise, representatives from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD) participated as facilitators and resource persons. Following the workshop, newly-trained master trainers travelled to their respective districts to train an additional 64 district coordinators and community facilitators (24 women) on the process of obtaining a citizenship certificate. Training was held in Dhangadi (October 13-14), Nepalgunj (October 16-17), Janakpur (October 31-November 1), Kathmandu (November 4-5), and Biratnagar (December 15-16). These training events strengthened the participants’ knowledge and provided guidelines for field-level implementation of the citizenship program.

² The Nepali version of this latter publication, which includes a foreword from the chief election commissioner, is currently under review at the ECN and is expected to be printed and distributed in the next quarter. It will provide a practical guide for election officials on how to integrate gender throughout electoral activities.

As part of the training, CEPPS/IFES continued to utilize its citizenship certificate guidebook for community facilitators. CEPPS/IFES postponed the actual publication of the guidebook as it is currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which has indicated it may use the guidebook for its own citizenship certificate outreach. While waiting for feedback from the Home Ministry, CEPPS/IFES continued to incorporate additional case stories and graphic design for the publication.

Citizenship Certificate Obtained through Mobile Service Camps

Following trainings, CEPPS/IFES' partner CSOs Dalit NGO Federation (DNF), Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO), and Nepal National Social Welfare Association (NNSWA) collaborated with the DAOs and the DEOs of Jajarkot, Bajura, Kanchanpur and Banke to organize the citizenship certificate and voter registration mobile service camps. The purpose of the camps was to provide services to the marginalized population residing in the most remote areas of these four districts. The coordination of these service camps, including collaboration with respective state health and social service initiatives, required extensive advocacy on the part of CSOs. Their efforts resulted in providing 1,431 people (767 women) with citizenship certificates and registering 1,415 eligible voters (667 women) on the voter list. An estimated two-thirds of these beneficiaries represented CEPPS/IFES' targeted marginalized communities under the SPPELP project. CSO facilitators also supported the mobile service camps by helping low-literate citizens collect and organize required official documents and complete the necessary forms on the day of the event. The CSOs' ability to leverage government resources to expand outreach to some of Nepal's most marginalized communities highlights CEPPS/IFES' and partners' commitment create synergies between electoral work and other health, poverty, and governance initiatives.



Citizenship Certificate Obtained through Individual Support

Drawing on data from household visits collected for the study on the status of citizenship certificates, CEPPS/IFES and local partners identified and reached 12,581 persons (5,321 women) from marginalized communities in need of individual support and resources to obtain their citizenship certificate and register on the voter list. Outreach activities conducted by CEPPS/IFES and local CSO partners included assisting citizens to prepare required documents for the completion of application forms from village development committees (VDC) offices; arranging travel to the DAOs; and providing resources to enable citizens to purchase application forms, photocopy necessary documents and acquire identity photographs. Citizens also were educated about the benefits of citizenship certificates, including applying for old age allowance, disability allowance, scholarships, and government services.

Fourth Mini-Survey Report

In November 2014, CEPPS/IFES shared its fourth mini-survey report on assessing knowledge, attitude, and perception of the marginalized population on local government elections with the ECN, USAID, and other electoral partner organizations (*see Appendix VI for a full survey report*). Key findings include:

- Only 56 percent of the total sample knew that there is a provision for local government elections (LGE) in the 2007 interim constitution;
- 60 percent believed that LGE should be held as soon as possible;
- Over 40 percent expressed that they face difficulties in the absence of elected local bodies, due largely to the perception that local representatives are unaccountable to citizens' need; and,
- 87 percent of the respondents intend to vote in the upcoming LGE.

VDC-Level Orientations and Awareness-Raising Group Sessions

Partner CSOs conducted 171 local level orientations and a total of 4,092 awareness raising group sessions and household visits on the topics of citizenship certificate and voter registration. These activities reached 27,838 people (15,293 women) across 230 VDCs. This outreach campaign targeted marginalized groups, including Dalits, women and freed Kamaiyas. The campaign focused on the importance of possessing a citizenship certificate; the procedures needed to obtain it; the importance of voting and registering to vote; and the electoral participation of marginalized communities. Community facilitators used flip-charts, produced by CEPPS/IFES in collaboration with CSOs, to educate targeted communities.

Voter Education and Help-Desk Support for the Youth

CEPPS/IFES continued its outreach among young voters through subawardee Youth Initiative (YI). In this quarter, YI reached a total of 4,785 youth (2,303 female students) through outreach events at colleges, clubs and other similar venues.



Continuous Support to Voter Registration

CEPPS/IFES' local partners NNDSWO, NNSWA, and YI supported the DEOs in 22 of 23 project districts (excluding Kathmandu Valley) to set up help desks at the DAOs. The help desks ensured that people who wanted to obtain their citizenship certificates were routed to the voter registration desk at the DAO and supported those wanting to register on the voter list with information and assistance. During the period covered by this report, DNF, Janaki Women's Awareness Society (JWAS), NNDSWO, and NNSWA facilitated the registration of a total of 12,848 people (5,479 women) on the voter list by providing individual level support, mainly at the DAO and to a lesser degree at the DEO. Among those registered were 4,494 marginalized persons (1,966 women).

Election Networks

A district-level election stakeholder preparatory meeting was conducted in Bajura district this quarter to discuss the setting up of the district election network (DEN). Representatives from the DEO, DAO, district education office, media, and CSOs participated in the meetings and shared how they can support each other in voter education, electoral participation and democracy building. With a similar purpose, 231 VDC-level coordination meetings were held in 22 of 23 project districts (excluding



Kathmandu Valley), to discuss the possibility of creating a citizens' engagement forum/network. The VDC secretaries, volunteers, community leaders, and CSOs participated in VDC-level coordination meetings. CEPPS/IFES will meet with the new EEIC director at the ECN to discuss next steps for formally engaging these networks in upcoming elections.

Mobilizing Media Coverage of CSO Activities

To disseminate voter education information and messages, partner CSOs promoted their work through local media, mainly FM radio stations and local newspapers. During this quarter, there were 124 instances of media coverage of CSO events in newspaper articles, radio programs, and other related media.

Summary of CSO Subaward Activities (Q1 FY 2015)				
CSO/Activity	Total Beneficiaries	Male	Female	# of Events
DNF				
VDC-Level Election Network (Meetings)	585	372	213	49
Orientation And Sensitization	122	75	47	6
Awareness Raising Group Events	2,252	1,030	1,222	115
Individuals Supported For CC	1,351	840	511	-
Individuals Supported For VR	1,618	949	669	-
CC Obtained Through CC Camp (Joint Mobile Camp)	466	115	351	-
Voter Registration Through Voter Registration Camp	300	108	192	-
VR Through Help Desk Support At DAO	2,038	1,146	892	115
Total	8732	4635	4097	285
JWAS				
VDC-Level Election Network (Meetings)	476	326	150	30
Household Visit	5,774	2,621	3,153	3,168
Orientation And Sensitization	345	15	330	15
Awareness Raising Group Events	3,726	1,440	2,286	165
Individuals Supported For CC	2,212	1,277	935	-
Individuals Supported For VR	2,212	1,277	935	-
VR Through Help Desk Support At DAO	1,235	789	446	48

Total	15,980	7,745	8,235	3,426
NNSWA				
PSA Broadcast	-	-	-	63
VDC-Level Election Network (Meetings)	739	533	206	48
Orientation And Sensitization	698	331	367	29
Awareness Raising Group Events	2,248	908	1,340	107
Individuals Supported For CC	6,063	3,336	2,727	-
Individuals Supported For VR	6,063	3,336	2,727	-
CC Obtained Through CC Camp (Joint Mobile Camp)	412	246	166	2
Voter Registration Through Voter Registration Camp	455	269	186	2
VR Through Help Desk Support At DAO	1,221	593	628	24
Total	17,899	9,552	8,347	275
NNDSWO				
VDC-Level Election Network (Meetings)	1,539	1,061	478	231
Orientation And Sensitization	1,878	1,181	697	88
Awareness Raising Group Events	6,010	2,458	3,552	391
Individuals Supported For CC	2,955	1,807	1,148	-
Individuals Supported For VR	2,955	1,807	1,148	-
CC Obtained Through CC Camp (Joint Mobile Camp)	553	303	250	3
Voter Registration Through Voter Registration Camp	660	371	289	4
Help Desk Support In DAO	4,660	2,725	1,935	99
Den Meeting	23	19	4	1
Total	21,233	11,732	9,501	817
YI				
Orientation And Sensitization	665	331	334	33
Awareness Raising Group Events	4,120	2,155	1,965	146
PSA Broadcast	-	-	-	120
Total	4,785	2,486	2,299	299
Grand Total	68,629	36,150	32,479	5,102

Civic, Political, and Electoral Participation of Persons with Disabilities

120 community advocacy forums (CAFs) and six district advocacy forums (DAFs), supported by CEPPS/IFES subawardee NFDN and its six DPO partners, continued their advocacy and outreach work this quarter with formal and informal local governance organizations. CAF and DAF members regularly lobbied and advocated on disability issues such as inclusion in local government planning processes, access to government services and post-disaster relief measures. As a result, 420 persons with disabilities have now become members of the ward citizen forums, the most local level of government planning. Similarly, 12 persons with disabilities acquired citizenship certificates and 88 persons with disability received disability identification cards through support given during the disability card distribution mobile camps.

Based on data collected by CAFs and DPOs in Bardiya, Banke, and Dang districts, a total of 391 households with persons with disabilities were badly affected by the floods that occurred in mid-August 2014. Due to the CAFs' regular advocacy programs and coordination with relevant government stakeholders, 155 flood-affected victims with disabilities received relief materials such as non-perishables, utensils, garments, tricycles, and wheelchairs from the district disaster relief coordination committee and other local organizations working on disaster risk reduction. The CAFs and DAFs in these localities are maintaining lobbying efforts with relevant authorities and organizations to continue to provide flood rehabilitation support for these victims.

At the national level, NFDN has been advocating with the ECN to ensure that its five-year strategic plan, currently under development, is inclusive of persons with disabilities. Based on experiences and lessons learned from the 2013 CA election, NFDN compiled and delivered to the ECN a list of recommendations collected from 24 national and district level DPOs in November 2014. Similarly, NFDN organized an interaction program to raise awareness on disability issues at the South Asian



Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Citizens' Forum, which took place on November 23, two days prior to the 18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu. Over 100 people, including DPO members, individual citizens, students, human rights organizations and international disability activists, discussed the status of persons with disabilities in the political and electoral process in Nepal, disability mainstreaming and inclusive development, and the status of women and children with disabilities in the SAARC region. As a result of this event and persistent lobbying of the disability community in Nepal, the SAARC summit declaration included a clause addressing disability.

CEPPS/IFES' project on the civic, political, and electoral participation of persons with disabilities was selected by the Zero Project as one of the innovative practices in the world for promoting access to political participation of persons with disabilities. IFES Nepal has been invited to share the project with a wider audience at the Zero Project 2015 International Conference to be held in Vienna in February 2015.

CEPPS/NDI OBJECTIVE 2: Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes.

Intermediate Result 2.1: Non-partisan election monitoring efforts are more comprehensive and systematic.

Intermediate Result 2.2: Media are better informed to cover election related issues at the national and district levels.

Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections.

Sub-Objective 2.A.1: Technical Assistance to Domestic Monitoring Partner(s)

Voter Registration Information Campaign (VRIC)

This quarter, Rooster Logic, the survey software development firm that developed the android based baseline and impact survey for the campaign, submitted the VRIC impact survey report based on the findings of the survey conducted last quarter. According to the report, a majority of respondents said they now value the importance of voter registration and understand the importance of voting. They also said they have a better understanding of the voter registration process, including eligibility requirements, where and when to register, and materials needed to register. Overall, nearly all of the respondents said they found the program useful and that it should continue (See Appendix VII for the VIRC impact survey report).



Nepal voter community

Democracy and Elections Watch (DEW-Nepal) Audit

Based on proposals submitted by audit firms and reference checks carried out in the last quarter, DEW-Nepal signed the audit contract with the firm PP Pradhan & Co. on November 5, 2014. The audit was carried out in November and December 2014. Since DEW-Nepal no longer had a staff to help with the audit process, CEPPS/NDI contracted with former DEW-Nepal employees, as short term consultants to work on the audit. From November 20-22, the auditors and one CEPPS/NDI consultant traveled to Bara, Chitwan, Dhading, and Makwanpur districts to visit DEW-Nepal district committees and cross check financial records. During the audit period, the audit firm held several meetings with DEW-Nepal board members and CEPPS/NDI staff to ask questions related to DEW-Nepal's program. On December 22, the auditors submitted the draft audit report to DEW-Nepal for comments response. This report was reviewed by both CEPPS/NDI and DEW-Nepal and the comments are now being incorporated by the audit firm.

Election Observation Coordination Group (EOCG)

Monthly EOCG meetings

In this quarter, CEPPS/NDI continued its collaboration with the National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) to organize two EOCG meetings: October 31 and November 21. During these EOCG meetings, participating organizations (see Table 7) gave an update on their activities, discussed their organizational priorities and main areas of improvement, and decided to have a strategic meeting to discuss joint areas for EOCG programmatic intervention.



EOCG strategic planning meeting

Strategic Planning Meeting

On December 8, the six election observation organizations met for a strategic session organized by CEPPS/NDI to discuss areas for joint program intervention. Discussions took place on the strengths and weakness of the observation groups and prospective activities. Among the proposed activities were suggestions for political monitoring, greater coordination of election observations for future groups, standardized trainings for observers, and advocacy and lobbying with political parties and government bodies on the basis of past election observation recommendations.

Action Plan Meetings

Following the strategic planning meeting, representatives from the six EOCG organizations met twice, on December 19 and 26, to draft an action plan for future activities. The decision was made to focus on improving coordination among national and international election coordination groups by exploring various election coordination systems, political monitoring, and voter registration. The organizations requested that CEPPS/NDI to organize a two-day workshop on how to improve coordination and networking among national and international observation groups and to discuss the EOCG code of conduct.

Table 7: EOCG Attendance, Q1 FY2015

Domestic Election Observer Groups	Alliance for Election Observation Nepal (AEON) Constituent Assembly Election Observation Joint Forum (CAEOF) DEW-Nepal General Election Observation Committee (GEOC) National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) Sankalpa
International Implementing Agencies	NDI

Evaluation of CEPPS/NDI and DEW-Nepal Domestic Monitoring Project

CEPPS/NDI staff coordinated this quarter with the SWC evaluation team about the evaluation of the domestic monitoring program conducted by DEW-Nepal. The evaluation team, which consists by representatives from the MOCSW, SWC, and ECN, among others, was briefed both by CEPPS/NDI staff and by the DEW -Nepal board on the program. In addition, CEPPS/NDI provided necessary program documents and reports, a power point presentation, and made logistical arrangements for the evaluation team to travel to two districts; in addition to providing program and finance staff to travel with the SWC team to the field.



SWC evaluation team with DEW-Nepal Kaski District Committee members and local representatives of political parties.

From November 13-15, NDI program and finance staff traveled with the five-member SWC evaluation team to Kaski, Parbat, and Baglung districts; and from December 3-6, to Dhankuta, Jhapa, and Morang districts to meet with the chief district officers, district election officers, local political party representatives, and members of DEW-Nepal district committees to inquire about DEW-Nepal's work during the election observation. The evaluation team will submit the first draft report next quarter.

Electoral Reform Dialogues

This quarter, the ECN submitted its position paper on its role in the new constitution to the CA (*See Appendix VIII for an unofficial translation of ECN's position paper*). Last quarter, ERD task force members had met with ECN to share the recommendations from the regional ERDs conducted previously by CEPPS/NDI and CEPPS/IFES. Upon comparison of the ECN position paper with ERD recommendations, more than nine of the ECN's recommendations were based on ERD consultations, including the ones related to strengthening political party registration criteria, establishing a threshold for parties in elections, and enhancing ECN's autonomy.

CEPPS partners NDI and IFES worked this quarter to finalize the ERD report, which contains the recommendations collected from the ERDs that took place in the last quarter. Next quarter, the report will be printed and distributed amongst various stakeholders, including CSOs, the ECN, and political parties.

Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process.

Media Sharing Meeting

On December 24, 2014, Internews organized a meeting with media NGOs, researchers, and media outlets to share findings from the third wave of the national opinion survey. A total of 25 participants attended. The survey provides the most comprehensive data about media consumption in Nepal after 2008, including details about mobile, internet, and computer access and use in Nepal. Internews shared these findings through email and a website.³

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions.

Intermediate Result 3.1: CA/Legislature Parliament effectively reviews and deliberates bills under consideration.

³ The findings can be found at: <http://www.slideshare.net/madhu272/internewsida-media-survey-findingsnepal-pdf>.

Intermediate Result 3.2: MPs incorporate constituent input into legislative processes.

Intermediate Result 3.3: CA/Legislature Parliament proceedings are more transparent.

Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the CA/Parliament.

Sub-Objective 3.A.1: Strengthening the Legislative Drafting and Oversight Capacity of Parliament

Technical Support to Parliamentary Committees

From November 17-19, CEPPS/NDI supported the parliamentary Environment Protection Committee and Kailali district MPs with expert briefings, field visits, constituent outreach, and public consultations about environmental changes in the Chure range⁴ and the impact of floods on agriculture in Kailali. This series of activities started with the sharing of written information and expert briefings about the districts combined with firsthand exposure to the floods and interaction on site with constituents to listen to their stories, concerns and, suggestions, and ended with a structured public discussion with relevant stakeholders in Dhangadi.



MPs interact with constituents

A total of 11 MPs representing five political parties (CPN-UML, MJFN-D, NC, RPP-N, and UCPN-M), including six directly elected MPs from Kailali, five from the Environment Protection Committee, and two committee secretariat officials participated in all program activities. The program included visits to six constituencies where they directly interacted with affected communities, supported by expert staff and representatives from Care Nepal, CEPPS/NDI, and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The team led by the chair of the

Environment Protection Committee visited various floods affected areas in the banks of Kandra River, Machhali River, Khutiya River, Pathraiya River and Ghuraha River where hundreds of acres of arable land have been deserted because of recurrent floods. The delegation also found that there is massive degradation in the Chure range due to illegal human encroachment. Parliamentarians interacted with displaced and highly affected communities and gathered information about their loss. MPs assured communities of working together to put pressure on the concerned government agencies to mobilize available resources for a permanent solution.

The team also visited the Mohana Irrigation System at Godawari VDC and Bara Ban Community Forest in Chaumala VDC. The irrigation system was swept away by floods due to high exploitation in the Chure range. In Bara Ban Community Forest, local consumers are divided

⁴ The Chure range (also called Siwaliks) rises steeply from the Terai plains along the whole of its northern border. It is extended as a contiguous landscape from east to west in 33 districts. This is the first and lowest ridges of the Himalayan mountain system.

over the District Forest Office’s (DFO) scientific forest management program, under which DFO plans to cut old trees to replace them with new generations of trees.

“Through this effort, all six directly elected parliamentarians of Kailali district, for the first time, were able to jointly observe, discuss and plan together on two of the most challenging development issues; flood and Chure degradation/conservation. This has definitely given a positive message to the constituents of the district”.

- Hon. Puskar Nath Ojha, MP

Following site visits, CEPPS/NDI organized a debriefing and public consultation in Dhangadi, the district headquarters, with local stakeholders, including CSOs, flood victims, government officials, and political party and media representatives. A total of 64 participants attended the public consultation. Following the fact-finding mission, the committee prepared a detailed report (*see Appendix IX for an unofficial translation of the report*), which captures comments, concerns, and feedback of the affected communities and district stakeholders.



Scenes from the public discussion in Dhangadi

As a result of the fact-finding mission, the Environmental Protection Committee gave directives to the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation to immediately stop the felling of trees in the name of scientific forest management taking place across the country, including in the Bara Ban Community Forest of Kailali district. The committee gave directives to the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation and to the president of Chure Tarai Madhesh Conservation Development Committee to take necessary steps toward the immediate construction of embankments, as various rivers of Kailali district have washed away land and are poised to uproot human settlements.

Consultation Meetings with Parliamentary Committee Chairs

During this quarter, a CEPPS/NDI consultant and former member of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly, Canada visited Nepal from November 16 to December 12 for a series of consultations and peer-to-peer exchanges with parliamentary partners. During her visit, she met with the chair and secretary of five parliamentary committees: Development Committee; Environment Protection Committee; Women, Children, Senior Citizen and Social Welfare Committee; Public Accounts Committee; and Finance Committee. CEPPS/NDI offered to collaborate with parliamentary committees to provide tailored programs/trainings for members and committee secretariat staff. CEPPS/NDI’s consultant also met with the Minister for Energy to discuss bills and policies that emanate from the Ministry, and which can highlight the leadership role of the woman minister. During the meeting, Minister Gyawali asked CEPPS/NDI

to connect her to her counterpart in a relevant Canadian province to exchange views about energy efficiency.

These meetings and consultations proved crucial in preparation for a workshop on ‘Effective Functioning of Parliamentary Committees’ for the members and staff of Development Committee, youth policy dialogues and roundtable discussion on the importance of constituent outreach/relations for the MPs and their staff. Of note is the fact that at direct request of the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Janardan Sharma, CEPPS/NDI organized a follow-up meeting with him and the committee secretary Som Bahadur Thapa to brief them on the work and procedures related to the Canadian PAC.

During meeting with Finance Committee, the CEPPS/NDI consultant shared and discussed the findings of the “Open Budget Survey 2012,” which measures the state of budget transparency, participation, and oversight in countries around the world. Nepal ranks 44 out of 100 index score. She informed the committee that 2014 survey is going to be published soon, in which Nepal is likely to go down in the index score compared to 2012. The government of Nepal has the potential to greatly expand budget transparency by producing and publishing a pre-budget statement and a citizen’s budget, and providing opportunities for public participation. As a result of this discussion, the Finance Committee has committed to work toward expanding budget transparency by holding public discussion on the pre-budget before the next budget session and might seek CEPPS/NDI assistance in this regard.

CEPPS/NDI and FNCCI Policy Dialogue

On November 19, 2014, CEPPS/NDI in collaboration with FNCCI organized a discussion with youth parliamentarians and politicians. Twenty-three participants (16 women), including 19 MPs and four FLA members attended the event. The objective was to provide an overview on Nepal’s economy and discuss the role of youth parliamentarians and politicians in the country’s economic development. FNCCI leadership attended and made a presentation on concerns and suggestions of the private sector. A CEPPS/NDI consultant (and former provincial MP from Canada) highlighted how youth MPs are well positioned to contribute to a serious debate and discussion about economic development initiatives for youth. She stressed the role that young MPs can play in parliament and in committees to review existing policies and programs, and identify and remedy deficiencies to make sure policies are conducive in enhancing economic development and creating jobs.



NDI-FNCCI policy dialogue with youth MPs

CEPPS/NDI and FNCCI will continue to hold policy dialogues next quarter focusing on topics identified by youth MPs. Some of the topics they have identified are the Labor Act, the National Youth Council Bill, the Industrial Enterprises Act, and foreign direct investment policy.

Workshop with the LP Development Committee

On November 21, 2014, CEPPS/NDI in collaboration with the LP Development Committee organized a two-day workshop on the effective functioning of parliamentary committees for 42 members and secretariat staff (eight women) of the Development Committee in Kathmandu. Led by the Development Committee chair, discussion focused on the development process and challenges, and the important oversight role the committee can play in this regard. Other speakers included the former vice chair of the National Planning Commission (NPC), the former Nepali ambassador to the United States (also a former NPC vice chair), and CEPP/NDI's consultant – a former Canadian provincial MP.

A former secretary general of the parliament gave a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of the chair, members, and staff for effective functioning of a committee. He discussed the constraints that hinder the effective functioning of parliamentary committees, and highlighted measures to be taken to enhance the performance of the parliamentary committees. The chair of the Development Committee shared examples and current practices of parliamentary committees and encouraged members to be well informed about their roles so that they can contribute to the committee's work.

Following expert recommendations during the NDI supported event in November, I was able to initiate a joint meeting of three committees lead by youth MPs: Development Committee; Finance Committee; and Agriculture and Water Resources Committee to discuss the overlapping issues of different committees and ways to increase the efficiency of the committee functioning”.

-- Chair, Development Committee



The former Canadian provincial MP discussed committee prerogatives in Nepal's rules of procedures, shared practical examples and best practices from working with MPs in 16 countries around the world, and highlighted the powers and functions of parliamentary committees, the characteristics of effective committee work, and factors that can limit the effectiveness of parliamentary committees. Of note was the emphasis put on engaging experts and the public with the work of the committee in contributing to responsive and representative policies and laws that have public support.

Public Discussion of Pending Legislation

On December 9, 2014, in support of the 16-day activism against gender-based violence (GBV), CEPPS/NDI partnered with DidiBahini to organize a public discussion on the “Bill made to amend some Nepal acts to ensure Gender Equality and end GBV,” currently under discussion in the parliamentary Legislative Committee. The discussion involved 48 participants (28 women) from the Legislative Committee, political parties, civil society, and the media – including the Minister for Women, Children, and Social Welfare and the chairperson of the National Women Commission. The bill as proposed calls for making several pieces of Nepali legislation, such as the Property and Civil Code Act, more gender-friendly and ensure that language used does not promote GBV and inequality. The Chair of the discussion, a member of the Legislative Committee, and the coordinator of the sub-committee on the bill, assured participants the



Committee will consider suggestions emanating from the discussion.⁵ Other panelists included a senior advocate and parliamentarian, a lawyer and director of the Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), the president of Sancharika Samuha, and CEPPS/NDI’s consultant and former provincial MP from Canada. The event was recorded and aired on Ujjyalo 90 Megahertz FM radio with coverage throughout Kathmandu valley, covered by Kantipur TV, and reported in the [Himalayan Time Daily](#). CEPPS/NDI will closely monitor the progress of discussions on the bill in committee to determine if any recommendations from this event are incorporated in the proposed legislation.

Consultations with the Coordinators of the Former Women CA Caucus

At their request, CEPPS/NDI held a meeting with the coordinators of the former women CA members’ caucus on November 4, 2014. Six former women caucus coordinators met with CEPPS/NDI at the suggestion of the CA/LP deputy speaker to discuss the Institute’s support and role in convening both former and current women MPs to strategize on how to advance women’s issues and interests inside and outside the CA. During the meeting, the following areas were identified for programmatic assistance and intervention: 1) bills that affect women, 2)

⁵ Some of the suggestions were: 1) reviewing all existing bills to make sure they are gender sensitive and do not use any terminology that might suggest inequality between the two genders; 2) using words that give prestige, dignity, and self-respect to women in different sections bills to make them gender friendly; 3) emphasizing equal rights of sons and daughters to parental property; 4) having a provision that does not give legal stature to polygamy; and, 5) widening the public discussion on the law making process.

government policies that impact women political and economic participation, and 3) monitoring the implementation and enforcement of existing laws. It was agreed that all support to the former women MPs caucus will include outreach to and participation of current women CA members in order for the two groups to combine their efforts for advancing women's issues in the CA/LP. The Institute shared the policy brief that came out of a roundtable discussion organized jointly by USAID, the National Women Commission, and NDI in December 2013. The recommendations in the policy brief will be taken into account in developing an assistance program with former and current women MPs.

Following November 4 meeting, CEPPS/NDI held two rounds of working sessions with former women caucus coordinators. During these meetings, it was decided that programmatic assistance would begin with capacity building workshops/trainings for newly elected women MPs; the first event is scheduled for early next quarter on effective parliamentary practices.

Sharing of NDI Publications on Committee Work and Operations

This quarter, CEPPS/NDI shared eight publications on the work of committees and the legislature with the chairs of the following committees: development, agriculture and water resources, finance, public accounts, and women, children and social welfare. Below is the list of NDI publications shared:

- 1) "Committees in Legislatures - A Division of Labor"
NDI publication (English and Nepali)
- 2) "Legislatures and the Budget Process"
NDI publication (English)
- 3) "Strengthening Legislative Capacity in Legislative-Executive Relations"
NDI publication (English)
- 4) "Analyzing Legislation"
NDI publication (English)
- 5) "Constituency Outreach Manual"
NDI publication (English and Nepali)
- 6) "Policy Development Manual"
NDI Publication (English)
- 7) "Legislative Public Outreach on Poverty Issues"
Joint NDI/UNDP Publication (English)
- 8) "Legislative-Executive Communication on Poverty Reduction Strategy"
Joint NDI/UNDP publication, (English)

Improving the Parliament Library

This quarter, the Parliament Secretariat informed CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF that they could not move forward with the refurbishment work on the library due to technical reasons. However, the Secretariat requested resources for a special reading room within a multi-purpose hall

accessible only to MPs. TAF will work with the Secretariat to procure a specialized collection for the reading room.

Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents.

Sub-Objective 3.B.1: Supporting Greater Public Awareness and Engagement in Work of Parliament

Roundtable Discussion on Constituency Outreach/Relations



CEPPS/NDI country director discussing the importance of constituent outreach

On December 5, 2014, CEPPS/NDI organized a roundtable discussion on constituent outreach and relations for 15 directly elected MPs (representing CPN-UML, MJFN-D, NC, and UCPN-M) and 22 staff of the MPs, several from outside Kathmandu, who are in charge of communication and coordination with constituents on behalf of the MPs. The event was split into two sessions. In the first session, CEPPS/NDI's country director discussed the importance of constituent relations in strengthening MPs understanding of citizens' concerns and translating them into responsive policies. The MPs shared their experience of constituency outreach. A CEPPS/NDI consultant, a former provincial MP from Canada, shared her experience and international best practices of constituency outreach. She highlighted the importance of creating a dialogue through engaging with citizens and providing services, and also outlined strategies of constituent relations.

In the second session, solely for the MPs' staff, a current Fulbright-Clinton fellow and former legislative assistant to a U.S. Senator shared constituency practices from the United States. After the CEPPS/NDI consultant led an interactive session to identify of areas for assistance to strengthen constituent relations, the discussion concluded with a baseline assessment of the constituent offices.



MPs' staff during the discussion on the importance of constituent outreach

Promoting Civic Awareness and Public Engagement on the Legislative Process

Support to the Parliament Secretariat

In this reporting period, CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF and the Writing Workshop Pvt. Ltd. (TWW) prepared a final draft of the accreditation policy for media representatives and forwarded it to the Secretariat for an approval. TWW continued to work with the joint spokesperson's office to support the Parliament Secretariat in disseminating *Sambidhan Sabha/Sansad Maa Aaja* ("Today in CA/Parliament"), a daily update of CA/LP activities, to the media and MPs. These updates began on July 15, 2014 and have been distributed regularly.

Radio Programming

TAF continued to work with Interface Nepal to produce and broadcast a weekly 30-minute radio program called *Hamro Kanoon*. The program, which aired on over 30 different FM radio stations across Nepal this quarter, included 13 episodes on various bills: offense and punishment, CA deadlock, adoption. *(For a complete listing of the episodes and guest speakers during this reporting period, please see Appendix X).*

Building CSO Capacity to Monitor the Legislative Process

Interaction Program

In this reporting period, TAF worked with Citizen's Campaign to Right to Information (CCRI) to launch a program sharing information on MP activities via its website (www.parliamentwatch.org.np). The first "Interaction Program" event was held on November 21, 2014 with a total of 27 participants. The CCRI report on the program included meeting observations, deliberations, decisions of the CA and the Parliament, and performance indicators, and it was later shared at the first "Meet the Press" program with 44 journalists in attendance (*see Appendix XI for a detailed program report*). The interaction program focused on the public access



Participants at the interaction program held by CCRI in Kathmandu on November 21, 2014

on functioning of CA and legislative parliament by discussing various aspect of public monitoring beyond periodic election and citizen voting rights. During the program, CCRI also held a moderated discussion on the draft Parliamentary Report Card (PRC) tool developed by CCRI for inputs and feedback. The PRC tool has specified indicators including performance within the Parliament, utilization of development funds, and perception/impression of voters that measures the parliamentarians' performance during their tenure.

Legislative Audits

CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF and Nepal Constitution Foundation (NCF) convened a coalition of five specific interest groups (Dalit, Madheshi, women, youth, and Janajati) this quarter to conduct legislative audits. Most of the representatives in this coalition have a legal background, which helps in the audit of bills to review compliance with international norms and standards, legal and statutory coherence, and other technical details. This quarter, NCF and the coalition audited bills on national and foreign adoption, debtor-creditor relationship, marriage and abortion, land partition, and offenses against state and public interest. Following each social audit, TAF coordinated with the New Spotlight Pvt. Ltd. to disseminate the findings and recommendations of the audits through three print media outlets – Spotlight (English), Nepal (Nepali), and Shichhyak (Nepali). *(A list of the eight bill review programs this quarter and a detailed review report are provided in Appendix XII and XIII respectively. The latter contains details on only the first two programs; a report on all eight programs will be available next quarter.)*

Public Consultations

In this reporting period, TAF and its partners Samudayik Sarathi (SS) and Women Act (WA) completed the 17th wave of public consultations in 45 urban locations throughout the country. In response to the public interest, the 17th wave of public consultations focused on issues related to the Contempt of Court Bill. In each of the public consultations, a brief presentation was followed by moderated discussions on four key questions pertaining to what practices were considered to contain contempt; provisions relating to proper punishment of the perpetrators; reconciliatory and protective measures required; and relevant stakeholders. The majority of participants of the public consultations agreed that there needs to be clarity on the definition of “contempt of court” and proper punishment mechanisms. Overall, 2,031 participants attended this wave of public consultations. The gender composition and ethnic demographics of the participants are presented in the table below.

Table 8: Demographic and Ethnic Profile of Participants in the 17th Wave of Consultations

Total	Gender			Age Group			Upper Caste		Adibasi/Janajati		Dalits		Un-identified	Muslims
	F	M	3rd	16-39	40-A	Not mentioned	Hill/Mtn	Terai/Madesh	Hill/Mtn	Terai/Madesh	Hill/Mtn	Terai/Madesh		
2,301	834	1197	-	1,292	698	41	1,157	131	343	68	102	117	101	12

On December 16, TAF partners SS and WA organized a press conference for the recommendations of the 17th wave of public consultations on the proposed contempt of court bill. The Parliament Secretariat’s secretary, a number of MPs, and various stakeholders from the media and the legal sector attended the event.

On October 16 and 21, 2014, TAF and its partners organized two roundtable discussions with key MPs on two bills – Local Election (Procedure) 2071 and Witchcraft (Crime and Punishment) 2071. The discussions drew participation by 23 and 30 CA members respectively. In December

2014, similar meetings were held to initiate conversation with the targeted MPs and share the public opinion on various bills deliberated in the public consultations, including the Social Security



Fund, 2071. TAF also held a series of 12 sharing workshops with various political parties on the three bills mentioned above. Separate sharing meetings were held with CA members from NC, UML, U-CPN Maoist and other smaller parties.

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 4: International assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes.

As local elections have yet to be announced, CEPPS activities under this objective during the reporting period were limited.

Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Electoral Process

Ongoing Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

CEPPS/IFES provided stakeholders with updates on ongoing events, such as the ECN's position paper to the CA on electoral reform; the briefing and adopted resolutions from the FEMBoSA meeting; and the amended LBEPA, 1992 – both in Nepali and in English. Monthly reports on program activities and analysis of the political and electoral environment were provided to U.S. embassy officials and USAID. CEPPS/IFES continued circulation of its monthly newsletter highlighting the activities of CSO partners and the ECN, to share best practices among implementing partners, encourage collaboration, and inform other stakeholders on CEPPS/IFES activities (*October, November and December CSO newsletters are included as Appendices XIV, XV and XVI respectively*). CEPPS/IFES also shared findings of its fourth mini-survey focused on local government elections with USAID, the ECN and other relevant stakeholders. CEPPS/IFES organized an open house at its offices to meet more directly with national and international stakeholders and share its most recent publications.

Provision of News Clipping Service

In this quarter, CEPPS/IFES revised and reformatted its daily news clippings and changed the delivery frequency. The news clipping content is now divided into specific thematic sections and is sent out three times a week to approximately 20 national and international partners and election stakeholders.

Social Welfare Council (SWC)

CEPPS/IFES organized and successfully completed the second bi-annual central project advisory committee (CPAC) meeting in compliance with SWC regulations. Per SWC's requirements, a financial audit was also completed on IFES Nepal financial activities. A financial audit report and an annual progress report will be submitted to SWC in January 2015.

Collaboration with Other USAID Projects or Other Donor Agencies

- In mid-November 2014, CEPPS/NDI took the lead to integrate the efforts of various local stakeholders in support of the Environmental Protection Committee's fact-finding mission to Kailali district. Partners in this activity included USAID's Presidential Initiative and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) partners – WWF and Care Nepal. WWF and Care Nepal briefed MPs prior to their field visit on environmental changes in the Chure range and the impact of floods on agriculture and accompanied them to Kailali district. The MPs visited all six constituencies where they met affected communities. The field visit combined firsthand exposure to flood and their adverse consequences with several constituent interactions with those impacted by climate change.
- CEPPS/IFES worked with PACT to engage its USAID-funded program, Saajhedari Bikaas, in the ECN voter registration drive. This collaboration expanded voter outreach through Saajhedari's existing radio programming.
- CEPPS/IFES and BRIDGE partners International IDEA and UNDP-ESP developed the BRIDGE training program for this quarter and next quarter. CEPPS/IFES and International IDEA also discussed an interaction with the Nepal Law Society to possibly collaborate with the constitutional information centers.
- CEPPS/IFES, as part of its Norwegian-funded program, "Building Electoral Capacity in Nepal," continued to work closely with election legal expert Kåre Volla to encourage electoral stakeholders to introduce inclusive practices and procedures in elections.
- The convening of the FEMBoSA meeting in Kathmandu provided CEPPS/IFES with an opportunity to address high level election officials from across South Asia, focusing in particular on the importance of including women and marginalized groups in electoral processes.

Activities Next Quarter

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

- CEPPS/NDI will continue single party regional trainings with its political party partners.
- CEPPS/NDI will provide technical support and regional trainings for the youth wings of political parties.

- CEPPS/NDI will hold a multi-party ToT for the women's wings of political parties and provide targeted assistance where feasible.
- CEPPS/NDI will continue meetings with FLA ad hoc working committees.
- CEPPS/NDI will hold multi-party discussions on political party law and continue working with the parties on political party and federal structure
- Internews will arrange for infographics data from the latest national opinion poll to be published through Setopati.com and possibly through *Kantipur* daily.
- Internews will organize live call-in shows to disseminate the third wave of the national opinion poll findings and broadcast the shows via a nationwide network of radio stations.

CEPPS/IFES OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants.

- CEPPS/IFES will provide a legal draftsman to deliver technical guidance to the ECN's legal department in finalizing the political party law. These efforts will complement those of the Quality AS legal reform specialist who is providing electoral legal advice with funding from the Norwegian embassy.
- CEPPS/IFES will facilitate interactive events between the ECN and other stakeholders to promote feedback on the draft political party law and consensus on an electoral legal framework for the local government elections.
- CEPPS/IFES will provide technical guidance to the ECN on developing policies, regulations and directives necessary to conduct local government elections as well as constitutional electoral law reforms as necessary.
- CEPPS/IFES will collaborate with CEPPS/NDI to finalize the ERD report and video documentary.
- CEPPS/IFES will work with the ECN to finalize the GESI strategic plan and 2015 action plan, including providing technical and financial assistance for the implementation of activities and hiring a local GESI expert to advance GESI Unit initiatives on a daily basis.
- CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN in finalizing the ECN strategic plan (2014-2019) and start activities in support of specific goals and objectives such as improving external communications and media outreach.
- CEPPS/IFES will contribute to two BRIDGE trainings: training the facilitators and political finance.
- CEPPS/IFES will produce a video documentary on the December 2014 access to electoral process BRIDGE workshop.

- CEPPS/IFES will work with the ECN and other government representatives to develop a mechanism to facilitate the removal of deceased voters from the voter registry.
- CEPPS/IFES will provide training materials, facilitators and other resources to carry out the ECN's social study teachers' training program.
- CEPPS/IFES will provide a media and communications specialist to support ongoing content management demands for the ECN website, e-library, Media center and press office, with an emphasis on building the ECN's capacity to maintain these resources on its own.
- CEPPS/IFES will provide personnel for data entry in the TMIS.
- CEPPS/IFES will collaborate with the ECN to plan a nationwide training on election dispute resolution mechanisms and the fundamentals of a democratic election system for cadres of political parties at both the national and grass roots level.
- CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN and CEPPS/IFES CSO partners in developing voter education radio magazine programs as well as new initiatives to include persons with intellectual disabilities in civic, political and electoral processes.
- CEPPS/IFES will finalize and publish the *Guidebook on the Process of Acquiring a Citizenship Certificate* in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- CEPPS/IFES will train ECN and DEO officials as well as local voter educators for the ECN's three-month long nationwide voter registration drive and voter education campaign, collaborating with NFDN and other partners to reach the program goal of registering 100 percent of people with disabilities on the voter list in 20 VDCs of two districts.
- CEPPS/IFES will disseminate guidebooks on electoral rights and the political participation of people with disabilities and provide technical assistance to update and develop the ECN's and EEIC's voter education materials, ensuring the successful implementation of social studies teacher trainings as well as other civic and voter education and outreach activities.
- CEPPS/IFES will train CSO partners on continuous voter registration, electoral support, community facilitation and cross-learning visit sessions among CSOs. CEPPS/IFES will also provide some needed equipment to the six CSOs, based on the needs assessment conducted in the last quarter.
- CEPPS/IFES will further develop the election network initiatives at the national and local levels.

- CEPPS/IFES will collaborate with CSO partners to provide voter registration help desk support to DEOs and DAOs as needed and coordinate with relevant stakeholders to plan and conduct joint mobile camps for citizenship certificate dissemination and voter registration for targeted marginalized communities.
- CEPPS/IFES will begin collaboration with CSOs and other electoral stakeholders on the development of the national voters forum, which aims to promote dialogue and action in support of periodic and credible elections in Nepal.

CEPPS/NDI OBJECTIVE 2: Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes.

- CEPPS partners NDI and IFES will jointly publish the consolidated recommendations and report drafted by the ERD Task Force and will organize a ceremony to deliver these recommendations to the ECN.
- CEPPS/NDI will facilitate a coalition-building workshop for EOCG partner organizations and provide ongoing technical assistance. CEPPS/NDI also will organize a training session on political process monitoring strategies for EOCG organizations.
- CEPPS partners NDI and IFES will coordinate on joint programming with EOCG partners on issue-based voter registration and education, with a particular focus on marginalized populations.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee DEW-Nepal's USAID-required audit report and CEPPS/NDI's SWC evaluation report will both be finalized next quarter.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee Internews will hold a media development conference.

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions.

- CEPPS/NDI will organize a media outreach training for youth MPs. CEPPS/NDI, in collaboration with FNCCI, will organize a policy dialogue with youth MPs and politicians on the Industrial Enterprises Act.
- CEPPS/NDI will continue to collaborate with women MPs to organize capacity building trainings and discussion on 1) bills that affect women; 2) government policies that impact women political and economic participation; and 3) monitoring of the implementation and enforcement of existing laws related to women.
- CEPPS/NDI will continue to collaborate and provide technical support to selected parliamentary committees such as finance; development; women, children, senior citizen, and social welfare; environment protection; legislative, and agriculture and water resources.

- CEPPS/NDI will issue a subgrant to Nepal Ko Yuwa (NYK), pending USAID approval, to implement the Dayitwa fellowship program which aims to bring together MPs and prospective Nepali fellows to strengthen the capacity and performance of MPs to address the needs of their constituencies, increase their parliamentary work performance, and prepare different strategies and policy research papers as requested.
- CEPPS/NDI will facilitate the two-week long visit of two joint secretaries of the LP Secretariat to the United States from January 19-30, 2015 to attend the U.S. House Democracy Partnership (HDP) exchange program.
- TAF will coordinate with the Secretariat to conduct trainings for sub-committee staff, complete refurbishment of the specialized reading room, and design a school visit program.
- TAF will continue to work CCRI to support its parliament watch effort that shares information about the attendance and contribution of the members of parliament through the website www.parliamentwatch.org.np. TAF and CCRI will initiate a radio program on increasing public access on the functioning of the CA.
- TAF and NCF will continue the legislative audit process. The consolidated opinions and recommendations will be shared with the CA members through newsletters and NCF reports. TAF will continue to coordinate with New Spotlight to ensure proper dissemination of the findings/recommendations of the interest group audits through print media.
- TAF will continue to work with Interface Nepal to produce and broadcast the weekly radio show *Hamro Kanoon*. In the coming quarter, Interface Nepal will conduct a series of capacity building trainings for the focal persons at the partner radio stations.
- Next quarter, TAF will conduct the 18th wave of moderators' training and public consultations in 45 locations on the Private Security Bill. After the completion of the public consultation, a press conference will be held with the relevant stakeholder to share the public opinion and recommendations.
- Next quarter, TAF and NCF will conduct the procedural audit based on the rules of procedures at the parliament.

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 4: International assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes

- CEPPS will continue to provide ongoing analysis to the U.S. Embassy, USAID and other stakeholders on preparations for local government elections, the constitution-writing environment and identification of key issues.

III. RESULTS

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

Intermediate Result 1.1: Political parties are more representative of Nepali citizens.

Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organization structures and operations

Indicator 1.F: Number of individuals who receive USG-assisted political party training

- A total of 309 youth leaders, including 105 women from the youth wings of the UCPN-M and MJFN-D received assistance and resources on organizational outreach, women leadership and current law, role of youth in local elections, roles and functions of youth wings, role of youth movement in politics, leadership for positive change, and youth empowerment.
- A total of 64 senior leaders and central committee members from CEPPS/NDI's six political party partners (CPN-UML, MJFN-D, NC, RPP, RPP-N and UCPN-M) received technical knowledge on the role of political party and party law, and strengthening internal communication.
- The women's wings of six political party parties (CPN-UML, MJFN-D, NC, RPP, RPP-N and UCPN-M) received technical knowledge from CEPPS/NDI on: ways to secure effective inclusion of women in decision making process, how political party and election laws could be used in securing better women representation, and elements of the party law that women should focus on to secure their representation in the new legal framework.
- A total of 190 officials (30 women) from RPP-N and RPP from western, mid-western and far-western regions of Nepal received technical knowledge from CEPPS/NDI on party ideology, party internal policy, leadership, internal and external communications, local election planning and party outreach, membership development, party office management and responsibilities of local party branches.
- A total of 53 FLA members from nine political parties (CPN-UML, MJF-N, MJFN-D, NC, NMSP, RPP, RPP-N, TMDP, and UCPN-M) received technical knowledge from CEPPS/NDI to review existing policies and draft policy papers on youth employment, education, and youth representation.

Intermediate Result 1.2: Political parties in Nepal more effectively implement competitive electoral campaigns.

Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties

- This quarter, CEPPS/NDI brought representatives from the major parties together to commonly identify topics that the parties think should be addressed in the new party law. This will help the parties to further work on issues that the parties should correct and can

assist in developing a political party law that can correct misconduct done by political parties in the past.

- This quarter, CEPPS/NDI brought together senior party leaders and elected CA members from six parties to start a discussion on how a federal structure can affect the way political parties are organized in Nepal. This was the first time political parties in a multi-party setting have been discussing these issues. The discussions revealed that no party has started internally preparing for this situation.
- CEPPS/NDI, through its work with women wings, supported an initiative of the women themselves to form a working committee with two representatives from each of the six political party partners. This is a result of several multi-party women meetings where the women have been advised that unity and a common agenda is the most effective way of working toward better women's representation in political decision-making processes

Intermediate Result 1.3: Citizens have more information and analysis on the policy differences across political parties in Nepal

- Internews and its local partners Antenna Foundation Nepal and IDA organized a meeting among media organizations and researchers to share the findings of the national opinion and media surveys. They produced and distributed the media data (infographics) via a booklet and through the online platform mediashare.net.

CEPPS/IFES OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants.

Sub-Objective 2B: Strengthened democratic legal framework for elections

Note: As the political focus this quarter was primarily on promulgation of the constitution, there were limited opportunities for CEPPS/IFES to contribute to legal framework provisions.

IR 2B.1: Improved legal framework that ensures transparent electoral procedures that promote genuine and competitive elections

Impact Indicator 2B.1: Degree to which legal framework meets international standards

- No new electoral laws or amendments were endorsed by the parliament this quarter. The legal framework of Nepal is still assessed at level C⁶, meaning it is an adequate framework that requires reform on some major issues to meet international electoral law standards.

⁶ CEPPS/IFES reviews the current electoral legal framework against the most current, widely accepted publication defining international standards for electoral law – International IDEA's "International Standards for Elections-Guidelines for Reviewing Legal Frameworks for Elections". A five point scale for evaluation of the legal framework has been established from most positive (A) to most critical (E)

Outcome Indicator 2B.1.1: Percentage of targeted stakeholders who believe that the legal framework provides a sound basis for the conduct of credible elections

To be reported in years 1, 3 and 5. A survey is planned for the end of year 5.

Output Indicator 2B.1.2: Number of Laws or Amendments to ensure credible elections drafted with USG technical assistance (F Indicator, GJD 3.2)

To be reported annually. No programmatic activities during this quarter.

Output Indicator 2B.1.3: Number of regulations to ensure credible elections drafted with USG technical assistance

To be reported annually. No programmatic activities during this quarter.

IR 2B.2: Legal framework is a product of inclusive, public dialogue

Impact Indicator 2B.2: Degree to which international and domestic election observers report that the legal framework provides a sound basis for the conduct of credible elections

Not applicable; no elections held during this quarter.

Outcome Indicator 2B.2.1: Percentage of relevant recommendations from USG-assisted stakeholder consultations that are incorporated into the legal framework

To be reported annually. No new laws or amendments endorsed during this quarter.

Output Indicator 2B.2.2: Number of USG assisted public sessions held regarding proposed changes to the country's legal framework (F indicator, GJD 1.1)

No programmatic activities during this quarter.

Output Indicator 2B.2.3: Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote electoral reform and/or improvements in the electoral system (F indicator, GJD 3.2)

No programmatic activities during this quarter.

Sub-Objective 2C: Strengthened electoral management capacity of ECN

IR 2C.1: Strengthened institutional capacity of the ECN to manage the electoral process

Impact Indicator 2C.1: Percentage of citizens reporting confidence in the integrity and capacity of the ECN

To be reported in years one, three, and five. No surveys were conducted during this quarter to assess this indicator.

Impact Indicator 2C.2: Number of benchmarks met in the implementation of the ECN's strategic plan

To be reported annually. The ECN's strategic plan was endorsed at the end of this quarter and will continue to be revised in January before being officially published.

Outcome Indicator 2C.1.1: Number of electoral administration procedures and systems strengthened with USG assistance (F Indicator, GJD 3.2)

- Procedures and methodology for the voter registration trainings were developed by the ECN this quarter with CEPPS/IFES technical support. These procedures will contribute to the effectiveness of the ECN's upcoming nationwide voter registration drive. Training topics included how to deal with new voters, voters with incorrect information, and the removal of the deceased and migrants from one locality to another.

IR 2C.2: Increased professionalism and competence of election officials

Outcome Indicator 2C.2.1: Percentage of ECN officials who effectively applied techniques and lessons learned from USG-assisted training/capacity-building initiatives in their job

To be reported annually. Will be included in the September 2015 annual report.

Outcome Indicator 2C.2.2: Degree to which international and domestic election observers report that temporary electoral workers conduct their duties in accordance with the law and procedures

Not applicable; no elections held during this quarter.

Outcome Indicator 2C.2.3: Number of electoral officials trained with USG assistance (F Indicator, GJD 3.2)

- A total of 34 electoral officials (12 women) were trained during this quarter. Pre- and post-tests given to the new ECN staff who participated in the BRIDGE workshop on electoral administration and management showed a 48 percent increase in their knowledge of the subject matter presented. Pre- and post-tests given during the BRIDGE workshop on access to electoral processes indicated a 50 percent knowledge increase. Pre- and post-tests given for the BRIDGE workshop on gender inclusion and elections indicated a 48 percent increase in knowledge.

Output Indicator 2C.2.4: Number of training materials for electoral officials developed with USG assistance

- Eight training materials were produced this quarter with technical assistance from CEPPS/IFES:
 - 1) Facilitators' handbooks for the BRIDGE workshop on electoral administration and management for new ECN staff

- 2) Participants' handbooks for the BRIDGE workshop on electoral administration and management for new ECN staff
- 3) Facilitators' handbooks for the BRIDGE workshop on access to electoral processes
- 4) Participants' handbooks for the BRIDGE workshop on access to electoral processes
- 5) Facilitators' handbooks for the BRIDGE workshop on gender, inclusion and election
- 6) Participants' handbooks for the BRIDGE workshop on gender, inclusion and election
- 7) Training manual for voter educators training (for the ECN's voter registration drive starting January 29, 2015)
- 8) Training manual for computer operators training (for the ECN's voter registration drive starting January 29, 2015)

IR 2C.3: Integration of gender issues in electoral management

Outcome Indicator 2C.3.1: Number of benchmarks met in the implementation of the ECN's Gender Strategy

To be reported annually. The ECN's gender and inclusion strategy not yet approved by the ECN.

Output Indicator 2C.3.2: Percentage of women serving as electoral officials

To be reported annually.

Sub-Objective 2D: Expanded and improved delivery of voter education

Impact Indicator 2D.1: Percentage increase in citizens knowledgeable about electoral processes following USG-supported voter education.

To be reported at the end of years one, three, and five.

IR 2D.1: Increased understanding of the electoral process among stakeholders and voters

Outcome Indicator 2D.1.1: Percentage of target stakeholders that understand the electoral system and electoral legislation

To be reported at the end of years one, three, and five.

Outcome Indicator 2D.1.2: Degree to which the understanding of target citizens of the electoral process is enhanced by voter education

- Marginalized citizens’ understanding of the electoral process was enhanced by an average of 37.1 percent (based on pre-test results of 56.1 percent and post-test results of 93.2 percent); the CEPPS/IFES-sponsored voter education events conducted by partner CSOs during this quarter drew 7,795 participants.

Output Indicator 2D.1.3: Number of people reached by USG-assisted voter education (F indicator, GJD 3.2)

- A total of 55,534 people (30,927 women and 1,855 persons with disabilities)⁷ were reached through voter education events conducted by partner CSOs. A total of 14,509 persons (6,255 women and 121 persons with disabilities) obtained their citizenship certificate with the direct support of CEPPS/IFES partner CSOs. A total of 24,493 persons (10,501 women and 242 persons with disabilities) registered on the voter list with the direct support of CEPPS/IFES partner CSOs.

IR 2D.2: Increased local capacity in providing voter education

Outcome indicator 2D.2.1: Degree to which local partners implement voter education strategies

To be reported annually.

Outcome indicator 2D.2.2: Degree to which ECN implements voter education strategies and programs

To be reported at the end of year 1, 3 & 5.

Output Indicator 2D.2.3: Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote political participation and voter education (F indicator, GJD 3.2)

- CEPPS/IFES engaged a total of 21 national level and/or local level CSOs to promote political participation and voter education in marginalized communities. 10 (two women) CSO program management staff at central level and 64 (24 women) district staff (coordinators and community facilitators) were trained on the process of obtaining citizenship certificate materials developed by CEPPS/IFES. These training events strengthened the participants’ knowledge on the legal processes for acquiring a citizenship certificate and provided clear guidelines for effective field-level implementation. CEPPS/IFES’ civic political and electoral participation of persons with disabilities” project was selected as one of the innovative practices by the Zero Project for promoting access to political participation of persons with disabilities.

CEPPS/NDI OBJECTIVE 2: Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes.

⁷ The total number presented here includes voter education outreach made during September 2014 that was not reported in Q4 FY2014 quarterly report; the compiled data from the field became available in October 2014. The total outreach numbers for September 2014 were 17,255 persons (9,487 women and 635 people with disabilities).

Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections

Intermediate Result 2.1: Non-partisan election monitoring efforts are more comprehensive and systematic

Indicator 2.1: Quality of domestic NGOs' published election monitoring reports

No results to report this quarter; the indicator relates to past activity.

Indicator 2.1.1: Quality of domestic NGOs' election monitoring methodology

No results to report this quarter; the indicator relates to past activity.

Indicator 2.1.2: Quality of domestic NGOs' election monitoring organizational capacity

No results to report this quarter; the indicator relates to past activity.

Indicator 2.1.3.1: Quality of domestic NGOs' election monitoring public information and analysis

No results to report this quarter; the indicator relates to past activity.

Intermediate Result 2D.1: Increased understanding of the electoral process among stakeholders and voters

Intermediate Result 2D.2: Increased local capacity in providing voter education

Output Indicator 2D.2.3: Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote political participation and voter education (F indicator, GJD 3.2)

Six CSOs participated in EOCG activities this quarter.

[new] GJD 2.3.2-12 Number of individuals receiving voter and civic education through USG-assisted programs

No results to report this quarter; the indicator relates to past activity.

Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process.

IR 2.2: Media are better informed to cover election related issues at the national and district levels

- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee Internews produced the findings from its third round of national opinion surveys, which can be found here: <http://www.slideshare.net/madhu272/internewsida-media-survey-findingsnepal-pdf>.

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions.

Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the CA/Parliament.

Indicator 3.F: Number of national legislators and national legislative staff attending USG sponsored training or educational events

- 19 MPs and four FLA members (16 women in all) attended the youth policy dialogue on Nepal's economy
- 30 MPs and 12 secretariat staff (eight women in all) from the Parliamentary Development Committee participated in CEPPS/NDI's capacity building training on effective functioning of parliamentary committees. As a result, the committee chair credited this workshop and ideas discussed in it for the initiative taken by three parliamentary committees (finance, development, and agriculture and water resources) to jointly question the Prime Minister and other ministers on December 23, 2014.
- 15 directly elected MPs and 22 staff from eight districts attended CEPPS/NDI's roundtable discussion on the importance of constituent outreach/relations. As a result, NC MP from Lalitpur Udaya Shamsar Rana reported that he established an advisory committee in his constituency inspired by a suggestion made during the workshop.
- 12 MPs from the Parliamentary Legislative Committee participated in CEPPS/NDI's discussion on the GBV bill.
- 11 MPs and/or staff participated in activities organized by CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF this quarter to relay information gathered at the public consultations.

Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents

Intermediate Result 3.2: MPs incorporate constituent input into legislative processes

Indicator 3.2.1.2: Number of public forums resulting from USG assistance in which national legislators and members of the public interact.

- 11 MPs interacted with citizens, interests groups and stakeholders in two forum as part of the CEPPS/NDI supported public discussion in Kailali and site visits in six constituencies.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF organized more than 20 forums that served ultimately to connect MPs with public opinion. After four public consultation meetings, TAF and its partners organized two advocacy meetings with targeted MPs and seven sharing meetings with MPs at which the members were presented synthesized public opinion and recommendations from the consultations. A press conference on the findings of the

public consultations boasted MP attendance. The eight bill review programs and the interaction program also served to gather and synthesize public opinion and make recommendations to MPs.

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 4: International assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes

As local elections have yet to be announced, CEPPS has no results to report this quarter.

IV. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE INDICATORS

Foreign Assistance Indicators	IFES	NDI	Quarter Total	FY11 Total	FY12 Total	FY13 Total	FY14 Total	FY15 Total	Award Total
Number of individuals who received USG-assisted political party training.	N/A	695	695	975	1,370	4,761	2,323	695	10,071
Number of domestic election observers and/or party agents trained with USG assistance.	N/A	0	0	0	0	1,256	432	0	1,688
Number of laws or amendments to ensure credible elections drafted with USG technical assistance	0	N/A	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Number of USG-assisted public sessions held regarding proposed changes to the country's legal framework	0	N/A	0	6	2	0	6	0	14
Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote electoral reform and/or improvements in the electoral system.	0	N/A	0	29	18	0	76	0	123
Number of electoral administration procedures and systems strengthened with USG assistance.	1	N/A	1	3	5	11	4	1	23
Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote political participation and voter education ⁸	21	N/A	21	18	21	23	22	21	23
Number of election officials trained with USG assistance	34	N/A	34	88,199	345	645	3,546	34	92,769

⁸ The grand total is the unique number of CSOs and not the sum of year-wise figures presented.

Number of national legislators and national legislative staff attending USG sponsored training or educational events.	N/A	125	125	273	134	136	734	125	1,402
Number of public forums resulting from USG assistance in which national legislators and members of the public interact.	N/A	2	2	22	15	5	15	25	59

V. SUCCESS STORIES

Environment Protection Committee Fact-Finding Mission to Kailali Results in Government Directives to Address Environmental Degradation

CEPPS/NDI supported the Environment Protection Committee to travel to Kailali to address environment issues resulting from degradation of land and repeated flooding. A total of 11 parliamentarians, six directly elected MPs from Kailali and five members of the Environment Protection Committee, made up the parliamentary delegation to Kailali, a district in the far-western region, which comprises one of the 33 districts that fall within the Chure range, the outermost range of the Himalayas. The Chure range is structurally weak and lies in a high volume precipitation zone. Landslides and floods that originate in the Chure range have taken a heavy toll on lives and property.



Despite efforts by relevant authorities and NGOs, most programs have failed to create a sustainable impact; an underlying reason is the absence of the participation and involvement of the people directly affected by climate change. CEPPS/NDI collaborated with USAID partners WWF and Care Nepal to connect the parliamentarians with local experts who briefed them on environmental changes in the Chure range. After the briefing, the parliamentarians visited all six constituencies of Kailali where they held several interactions with constituents adversely impacted by climate change.

In addition, the delegation engaged with relevant local authorities and stakeholders, including officials from the district forest and soil conservation departments.

Following on-site visits and interactions with affected communities, the delegation presented three directives to the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, outlined below.

- 1) To immediately stop felling trees in the name of scientific forest management.
- 2) To take necessary action for the development of embankment as the rivers of Kailali have washed away land.

- 3) To take necessary initiative to involve the government and the private sector to grow forests in the Chure range and on banks of the rivers.

These recommendations were captured in a report by the Committee, which was submitted and discussed with the relevant ministry. Additional actions that came out of the fact-finding mission include: 1) the Environment Protection Committee requesting the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation to engage in regular monitoring of the forest management process in Kailali and submit a quarterly report to the Committee; 2) Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation representatives visited Kailali district, talked to constituent and relevant interest groups in the district, and adjusted criteria for felling the trees; and 3) the Ministry held a stakeholders public discussion on January 4, 2015 with the Environment Protection Committee MPs and relevant stakeholders to discuss its 20-year forest management policy.

Leveraging Government Services to Maximize Citizen Benefits

Working with its local civil society partners DNF, JWAS, NNDSWO, NNSWA, and YI, CEPPS/IFES continued its efforts to help Nepalis obtain their citizenship certificates and register to vote. For citizens in CEPPS/IFES' target districts, many of whom lack access to the most basic resources, the benefits of these initiatives extend far beyond the right to vote. To maximize the impact of this work, CEPPS/IFES is leveraging opportunities to partner with government bodies through joint mobile camps – including social welfare and health bodies – in an effort to improve Nepalis' access to government benefits, income opportunities, education, and other services that are essential to poverty alleviation, robust social development, and an engaged citizenry.

Joint mobile camps provide an effective platform to assist Nepali citizens in obtaining registration documents and gaining access to government services. In December 2014, CEPPS/IFES' local partner NNSWA worked with the Kanchanpur DAO to conduct a two-day joint mobile camp. The DEO, District Health Office, District Agriculture Office, Family Planning Association, Red-Cross Society and Drinking Water Supply Office all participated in the camp. With such a wide array of partners, citizens were able not only to receive their citizenship certificates and register to vote, but also to receive free health check-ups, disability identity cards and counselling services and register for government benefits. In Jajarkot, DNF helped 105 year-old Tulsa travel to a joint mobile camp to obtain her citizenship certificate and register for Nepal's old age benefits.



CEPPS/IFES' efforts on citizenship certificate outreach also improves citizens' access to income opportunities. The Government of Nepal funds many training programs that aim to give citizens the skills they need to generate income, such as a local tailor training program for women. However, these programs often require applicants to submit a citizenship certificate before

enrolling. For some Nepalis, like 22-year old Pramila from Dang, poverty hinders their ability to pay the transportation, documentation, and processing fees required to obtain a certificate, while low literacy can limit citizens' understanding of the process. To address this challenge, NNSWA's community facilitators met with Pramila at a VDC project support meeting and helped her obtain a citizenship certificate application and support documents and travel to the DAO to register. After receiving her citizenship certificate, Pramila thanked NNSWA for its "profound" support. Newly enrolled in the government-funded tailor training program, Pramila has taken the first step in realizing her dream to become an independent entrepreneur.

The Government of Nepal continues to make concerted efforts to improve the access of Nepal's most marginalized citizens to government benefits and services. CEPPS/IFES is working with its partners to leverage these efforts, as improved access to income and educational opportunities, among other citizen benefits, can have a significant impact on public and electoral participation.

Improving Access to the Electoral Process for People with Disabilities

The limited access of people with disabilities to the electoral process is a concern to Nepal's electoral officials, yet governmental and civil society stakeholders are often unaware of the barriers to equal political participation or how to mitigate them. To address this challenge, CEPPS/IFES conducted trainings and worked with local CSO partners to strengthen the integration of disability access and inclusion in Nepal's electoral process.

To contribute to a standardized training module – one that could be adjusted and implemented for future trainings – CEPPS/IFES worked with the ECN to organize a three-day pilot BRIDGE training on access to electoral processes.



The BRIDGE training engaged 24 participants from the ECN and DPOs, including 11 people with disabilities, to increase their level of awareness and understanding of disability access issues within all phases of the electoral cycle. Key topics included common myths and misconceptions about disability; international human rights agreements on the political and electoral rights of people with disabilities; and the responsibility of electoral stakeholders to promote the engagement of all citizens in elections. The training also included an electoral access simulation, allowing participants to experience first-hand some of the barriers that people with disabilities can face when attempting to exercise their right to vote.

"I am very happy to participate in this training because it is different from the other trainings I have attended. In this training, I overheard people without disability say 'I didn't realize it is so difficult to be disabled.' I consider this realization one of the most successful parts of the workshop... Upon my return, I will utilize the knowledge gained on improving access of the people with disability not only in the electoral process but in all other sectors as well."

Krishna Raj Chaudhary, Independent Living Center, Technical Coordinator.

In addition to trainings, the 18th SAARC summit, which was hosted in Kathmandu, provided an opportunity for CEPPS/IFES' partner NFDN to elevate the issue of electoral access to a regional

focus. On November 23, 2014, as 2,500 activists representing over 150 organizations across South Asia gathered to participate in SAARC civil society events, NFDN led efforts to present on the status of political and electoral rights of people with disabilities as well as the status of women and children with disabilities in the SAARC region. Following NFDN's presentation, participants agreed on the need for a South Asian conference on disability and the establishment of a regional forum to raise disability issues. These recommendations were incorporated in the final SAARC declaration.

VI. ANALYSIS

Progress toward Achieving Objectives/Impact

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

Political parties can play a proactive role in the democratic reform process in Nepal. However, it is imperative that members and officials of political parties have a better understanding of what is required of them, and have tools and ideas to implement activities that will help them address citizen concerns. One of the main findings from the third poll is the disconnect between citizens and politicians and political parties. In NDI's consultations with the parties this has been raised and formed the basis for discussions on how the party better can strengthen its role in developing and strengthening local party branches and also interact more with citizens to get information on the concerns of the citizens and inform the relevant party organs on the same. In the ongoing consultations with the parties, party specific results from the survey will be shared so the parties can better understand citizens' perception of the party at the local level.

In the last quarter, CEPPS/NDI continued capacity building activities designed to give local-level party members an in-depth understanding on the roles parties can play and the potential opportunities it would present for them to enact their responsibilities to citizens. Political parties in Nepal operate on a "command and control" leadership style, which in many ways have prevented members, party officials, and to a certain level, junior CA members from actively taking initiatives and demanding more inclusion from senior party leaders. Additional training can equip these party members with knowledge and the skills and confidence to play a different role in their respective parties. For instance, the regional trainings have provided an effective forum for party leaders at the local level to interact with party officials, thereby encouraging party members to become more active. At the same time, political parties have set up email accounts for local party officials encouraging members to adopt internet as the modus operandi for internal communication.

The dialogue between the national and local level in political parties need to be strengthened. This was clear in the first imitative undertaken by CEPPS/NDI to bring party leaders to the same table to discuss the role political parties can play in a new federal structure. There is no clear vision of what a federal system will entail for political parties except it will change the way political parties will operate. For successful implementation of the new federal structure, continued dialogue between the national and federal level is required. The work CEPPS/NDI is currently doing will help the parties in this regard. There is a lack of knowledge on different

options parties can choose from, or get inspired by, when it comes to becoming more representative organizations. The discussion on federalism and political parties can be a catalyst for such a debate. Building capacity and ongoing consultations with key party leaders, both in individual and multi-party forums, will be useful to secure a debate focused on the positive role political parties can play compared to a discussion that will further promote a heavy centralized structure based on a “command and control” leadership philosophy.

These changes will not take place overnight. It will not be easy to change the traditional way parties have been functioning, but with continued focus on capacity building programs and providing forums where such issues can be discussed and inroads can be made.

CEPPS/NDI’s work with FLA is an example of how capacity building trainings and empowerment of party members can lead to more proactive engagement within an individual party and across parties. CEPPS/NDI has invested in 50 youth politicians by providing them with training and skills building sessions. Moreover, CEPP/NDI has provided these youth politicians a forum to solicit feedback on the youth agenda in Nepal. FLA members have identified what the youth want to see incorporated in the new constitution and within their respective parties. Armed with this information, FLA members have identified some potential policy areas youth can focus on. FLA members recognize the importance of sharing information with party officials and are currently engaged in lobbying with the government task force tasked with youth policy and a youth vision for 2025. Similar to the youth, women’s wings have come together across party lines, as a result of CEPPS/NDI programming, to form the women’s wing working committee. The working committee provides a united forum for women leaders to coordinate efforts, share experiences and lobby relevant government officials.

CEPPS/IFES OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants.

Despite delays in the constitutional process, CEPPS/IFES has identified opportunities to work with the ECN to strengthen the electoral legal framework outside of the constitutional process. CEPPS/IFES’ role in supporting the ECN in the preparation and presentation of electoral provisions to the PDCC enabled the ECN to identify and articulate its own post-constitution electoral priorities. This effort demonstrated CEPPS/IFES’ close advisory relationship with the ECN, as well as its commitment to building on past efforts, such as the joint ERD events with CEPPS/NDI, that encourage the ECN to incorporate and represent the priorities of a broad group of stakeholders. In the next quarter, it is widely expected that the ECN’s high-level election legislation drafting committee will focus its efforts on drafting the political party law, for which CEPPS/IFES will provide a local electoral legal reform specialist. Additionally, following the FEMBoSA meeting, CEPPS/IFES and the ECN identified both the urgent need and opportunity to strengthen knowledge among election officials on political/campaign finance. To support this opportunity, CEPPS/IFES will facilitate a BRIDGE workshop on this subject for senior election officials in February 2015.

In its provision of technical support to the ECN, CEPPS/IFES continues to balance the need to utilize international expertise to strengthen the ECN’s electoral management capacity with the ECN’s increasing desire to act autonomously, both from donor programs and the Government of

Nepal. As SPPELP enters its fifth year, CEPPS/IFES continues to emphasize the importance of building the managerial capacity of the ECN to meet the strategic objectives it has set for itself. CEPPS/IFES' has made strides in the current areas of focus listed below.

- **Communications:** CEPPS/IFES is planning to hire a senior communications expert who will work closely on reviving the ECN website and utilizing new social media outlets as well as strengthening both the media and press centers.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation, Focus on results Impact Management:** the ECN has indicated its interest in improving in this field, as proposed in the CEPPS/IFES workplan.
- **GESI Unit:** CEPPS/IFES can support the ECN in hiring a gender expert to assist the unit full-time, focusing on building staff's gender capacity and implementing the gender action and strategic plans.

Reports from household visits in the field, where citizens are often unaware of the importance of acquiring a citizenship certificate, reinforce the urgency for the ECN to expand voter education efforts. As demonstrated by the enthusiastic response to and success of CEPPS/IFES' citizenship certificate initiative, many citizens are eager to engage in the political process but lack the basic knowledge and resources to exercise their political rights. Although effective, CEPPS/IFES' people-to-people approach of working with CSO partners to carry out community-based events and door-to-door education currently covers only a small fraction of Nepal. More can be done to enable the ECN to scale up its own nationwide outreach. With this in mind, CEPPS/IFES has been working with the new director of the EEIC to expand outreach. With CEPPS/IFES support, the ECN is training and deploying over 5,400 civic educators for the upcoming voter registration drive. To reach more districts across Nepal, CEPPS/IFES will work with the ECN to find innovative ways to expand outreach through media platforms, including radio broadcasts in rural areas and social media targeting youth in urban areas, as well as establishing ECN's access to an e-library to reinforce archiving and management of publications, training tools, and other voter education related documents. In its effort to build the institutional memory of the EEIC, CEPPS/IFES' public information specialist is currently working on a Voter education tools and product guide. These and other initiatives focus on building on current initiatives to expand and sustain the ECN's voter education platforms to reach a truly national audience.

CEPPS/NDI OBJECTIVE 2: Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes.

The VRIC impact survey report conducted in collaboration with Rooster Logic both showed the success of the VRIC programs conducted in the last quarter and provided recommendations to develop improved voter registration and education campaigns in the future. A majority of respondents said they now value the importance of voter registration and understand the importance of voting including eligibility requirements, where and when to register, and materials needed to register. This increased understanding of the voter registration process and its importance will likely contribute to increase in registered voters in the future.

The DEW-Nepal audit was the first such project audit undertaken by the organization. The process helped familiarize DEW-Nepal with audit requirements. The draft audit report made several suggestions to DEW-Nepal leadership to help improve financial and other management processes.

The EOCG coordination meetings this quarter focused on exploring election observation coalitions amongst domestic election observation groups. The discussions covered lessons learned from the last election observation and how they can improve future election monitoring initiatives. These meetings are the start of post-election coordination and cooperation between observation groups and will help the organizations to streamline their programs in the future to ensure greater efficiency in election observations.

The ERD recommendations were drafted into a report this quarter. The report will be formally published next quarter. However, the recommendations have already made an impact on stakeholders as is evident by the fact that the ECN's position paper on electoral reforms, which was submitted to the CA, included several recommendations from the ERD.

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions.

While the CA continues to be busy with the constitution drafting process, a recent national public opinion research poll commissioned by CEPPS/NDI showed that social and economic development issues are the main priorities of citizens, including access to clean water, electricity, roads, jobs, and education. Citizens turned out in record numbers to vote in the last CA elections and have expectations from the new legislature with regards to responding to their concerns and taking concrete actions to improve citizens' welfare. A legislature can play an effective role in not only in understanding citizens' concerns and issues, but also championing them inside the Parliament, and working on ensuring that government actions, decisions, policies and laws are responsive to citizens' needs. At the heart of parliamentary work is the work that can be done by parliamentary committees.

This quarter, CEPPS/NDI worked closely with parliamentary committees to strengthen the capacity of the committee members and staff and share international best practices. The support took the form of workshops, targeted consultations on specific topics, field visits, constituency outreach, expert briefings, and public consultations with relevant stakeholders. The support provided by CEPPS/NDI to the Development Committee this quarter through a workshop on how to make committee work and operations effective, strong, and yield results, generated numerous ideas, including an imperative for committees to work together when needed to oversee government action. As a direct outcome of this workshop, the Development Committee, Finance Committee, and Agriculture and Water Resources Committee coordinated their action and unified their voice in grilling the Prime Minister and other government ministers in December 2014 on development issues.

CEPPS/NDI provided committees technical support via experts' briefings and analysis, and supplemented by reform recommendations on the bills presented in the respective committees. CEPPS/NDI's support to the Environment Protection Committee this quarter had noticeable

impact as seen by a series of actions taken both by this committee and by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation as a result of the committee's fact finding mission to Kailali. The most important of these actions being the agreement that the committee reached with the ministry requiring the latter to provide a quarterly progress report on the forest management process in the Kailali district, the follow-up visit by the ministry to Kailali to check on the felling of trees, and a discussion back in Kathmandu with the committee members and relevant stakeholders about the ministry's 20-year forest management policy.

During this quarter, CEPPS/NDI initiated discussions with a number of directly elected MPs and their constituency outreach staff about the importance of engaging with constituents. One of the NC MPs who attended this workshop was inspired by this workshop to establish an advisory committee on constituent relations in his district.

CEPPS/NDI's subgrantee TAF continues its work to enhance the capacity of the Secretariat. Regular communication and coordination with the Secretariat is ongoing to ensure that the activities planned meet the needs of the Secretariat. Furthermore, through its activities to promote more citizen participation in the legislative process through its weekly radio programs, social audits, and public consultations, TAF continues to provide a space for dialogue in support towards a stronger and more vibrant democratic process in Nepal. These activities ensure that voices of groups of people who have historically been marginalized are included in various legislative processes. TAF's activities complement each other in promoting a parliament that is more proactive in communicating directly with the public and a public that is also proactively engaged in the legislative process.

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 4: International assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes

As local elections have yet to be announced, CEPPS has no analysis this quarter.

Constraints/Challenges

Some challenges this quarter were:

- Citizenship certificate outreach is a politically sensitive matter and must be conducted in close collaboration with local authorities. Absences and competing government priorities at times slowed CSO activities. In Bardhya, for example, the two-month absence of both the assistant and chief district officer delayed decisions on and handover of administrative documents necessary to the citizenship certificate acquisition. In other cases, institutional lack of communication, especially between the ECN headquarters and district level offices, resulted in confusion about CEPPS/IFES CSO joint activities. CEPPS/IFES is seeking to mitigate some of these challenges by strengthening channels of communication on CSO activities with national and local ECN officials.
- Given its emphasis on building the electoral management capacity of the ECN, much of CEPPS/IFES' work relies on close collaboration with the ECN. Difficulties in organizing the workplan-sharing meeting between the ECN Secretariat and CEPPS/IFES, which was

finally held in late December 2014, stalled the implementation of some CEPPS/IFES activities, especially the establishment of the district-level election networks. Following the workplan meeting and subsequent exchanges with the ECN, CEPPS/IFES expects to move forward with this initiative in the next quarter.

- CEPPS/IFES continues to receive last-minute requests to support ECN activities, which, without necessary preparation time, can challenge the quality of CEPPS/IFES' support. One example is the impromptu three-month long, nationwide voter registration drive to be conducted by ECN from late January 2015. Due to the technical capacity of staff, CEPPS/IFES was able to produce high quality training materials and organize cascade trainings for over 15,000 people within the necessary timespan. To try to mitigate last-minute requests, CEPPS/IFES will continue to focus on regular communication with the ECN to identify upcoming priorities while also drawing on CEPPS/IFES' global resources and local partners' expertise to respond with high quality and timely support.
- CEPPS continues to encounter an under-representation of women in trainings and other electoral management initiatives due to women's low representation across Nepal's civil service. This is a serious challenge as CEPPS/IFES supports the ECN to mainstream gender throughout the institution.
- While CEPPS/NDI has achieved positive results from program activities, the work with political parties also faces some system challenges. First, the general instability of the political situation in Nepal makes it harder to get the attention of key leaders who are occupied by the ongoing discussions on the constitution. Leadership responsibilities are not delegated, and the same persons lead both the party organization and the parliamentary party. This lack of delegation can delay implementation of program activities. The traditional "command and control" management of political parties leaves little room for local initiatives or for initiatives from lower rank party members.
- Internal factions are a systematic problem in political parties, and an additional challenge for CEPPS/NDI. Party officials are sometimes too occupied with internal issues to focus on training, and party strengthening becomes secondary. Various factions try to complicate or sabotage CEPPS/NDI support with the legitimate faction of the party. To combat these challenges, in the face of internal party dissent, CEPPS/NDI either suspends or limits its activities until the party has resolved its differences, or ensures all party factions are represented in training and other events.
- The trainings for sub-committee staff of the parliament planned for this quarter could not take place due to the upcoming constitution drafting deadline of January 22, 2015. The Secretariat staff has been extremely busy supporting constitution-related meetings in the CA. TAF continues to work closely with the Secretariat to determine an appropriate time for the trainings of sub-committee staff. The imminent deadline for the drafting of the statute also delayed refurbishment of the specialized reading room.

Financial

In December 2014, CEPPS partners IFES and NDI submitted a proposal for a cost extension under the Leader Cooperative Agreement No. DFD-A-00-08-00350-00. If awarded, both CEPPS partners will extend their activities an extra year, until August 2016.

CEPPS/IFES underwent a one-year financial audit this quarter as required under its agreement with the SWX. The report is currently being finalized and will be handed over to the SWC CPAC Committee.

CEPPS/NDI has in agreement with the parties shared costs for regional trainings and for the youth party activities, resulting in cost savings to the CEPPS program. The parties have covered travel costs for the participants, while CEPPS/NDI covers for venue and other direct costs related to the activity.

The DEW-Nepal audit took place after CEPPS/NDI's subgrant to the organization had ended. As they had no other financial support, DEW-Nepal let go of their secretariat staff. In the absence of any such staff, it was a challenge when the auditors needed to coordinate with DEW-Nepal staff to ask questions regarding the audit. To address this gap, CEPPS/NDI contracted two consultants (former DEW-Nepal staff) to help prepare the final financial documents and to help answer the auditor's questions. The payments to these consultants were an unforeseen cost for CEPPS/NDI. In the future, for similar subgrants requiring an audit, it is advisable for the subgrant to cover the audit period.

Lessons Learned

Linking Income Generation to Electoral Participation

Through its door-to-door engagement with and survey of marginalized communities, CEPPS/IFES is increasingly aware that the challenging economic and living conditions of Nepali citizens, including those within the SPPELP program's target groups, limit their ability to engage actively in the electoral and political process. Improved political participation and citizen engagement often rely on simultaneous improvements in access to basic resources. During the next quarter, CEPPS/IFES plans to collaborate more closely with other international and national organizations involved in supporting small income generating activities, thereby linking economic, political, and social goals. This consideration will be taken into account as CEPPS/IFES intensifies its work on women's leadership during the next quarter.

Continued Need for Capacity Building

The work on the political party law and federalism and political party structure was a good lesson for CEPPS/NDI this quarter. Capacity building skills are needed for any change to take place within political parties. When skills are acquired and nurtured in the right way, confidence and courage to tackle challenges can take place. Without the basic level of skills and confidence, change will take longer to achieve. To link serious and complicated party processes to actual issues being debated is good way to introduce new ideas for political parties. The focus on the party law and federalism gave CEPPS/NDI a platform to continue bringing in new ways of thinking about the operation and role of political parties.

Gender Integration

During this quarter, CEPPS continued its efforts to ensure gender equality among program participants. There are often low levels of women's participation at the local level; and CEPPS/NDI strongly encourages political parties to include more women in trainings. The work with women wings will assist women in political parties to play a more active role in talking about women issues and their inclusion in decision-making processes.

A key focus of CEPPS/IFES programming continues to be the promotion of women's full and equal public participation as Nepali citizens. CEPPS/IFES' work with its CSO partners on citizenship certificate outreach and its ongoing work with the ECN, especially the GESI Unit, are two critical examples.

CEPPS/IFES continues to draw on the data from its survey on the status of citizenship certificates carried out during the last quarter. The survey data showed that of the female respondents, nearly one quarter had not acquired their certificate. This was due in part to the barriers that women face, including more limited access to economic resources, transportation, legal documentation and other resources necessary to register for a certificate. Throughout the period covered by this report, CEPPS/IFES' CSO partners continued to focus on providing targeted groups, especially women from more ethnically or economically marginalized areas, with the support they need to obtain their certificates and register to vote. In addition to outreach that directly targets women, CEPPS/IFES is working with its CSO partners to ensure that voter education messaging is delivered in formats – such as radio broadcasts, pictorial materials, and door-to-door visits – that are more easily accessible for some women.

CEPPS/IFES worked to further institutionalize gender mainstreaming efforts at the ECN. Development of the gender and elections best practices guide, for example, is providing the ECN with an opportunity to actively promote principles of gender equality across the district and municipal offices. Highlighting the international relevance of this resource, IFES' senior gender advisor publicly acknowledged the gender booklet and the ECN as a model example to an audience of election management officials from around the world during a gender panel at the USEP in Washington, DC. In more indirect ways, CEPPS/IFES continues to integrate gender throughout its technical support, including presenting on the importance of gender inclusion at the FEMBoSA meeting, identifying the different gender effects of political and campaign finance in CEPPS/IFES technical reports, and supporting the ECN in making gender-positive presentations and recommendations to the CA legal drafting committee. Finally, despite delays in the start-up of the GESI Unit, CEPPS/IFES will continue its GESI support to the ECN to encourage the implementation of regular concrete and sustainable actions aimed at increasing the integration of women and people with disabilities.

I. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Appendix I – Third Nationwide Public Opinion Poll, Methodology and Key Findings

Appendix II – FEMBoSA Political Finance Background Paper

Appendix III – FEMBoSA Political Finance PowerPoint Presentation

Appendix IV – Gender Equality and Election Management Bodies: A Best Practices Guide
Appendix V – Equal Access: How to Include Persons with Disabilities in Elections and Political Processes
Appendix VI - Fourth Mini Survey Report – Local Government Election
Appendix VII - VRIC Impact Survey Report
Appendix VIII - ECN Position Paper on the New Constitution (unofficial translation)
Appendix IX - Environment Protection Committee Fact-Finding Report (unofficial translation)
Appendix X - List of Hamro Kanoon Episodes and Guests
Appendix XI - CCRI Report on the Interaction Program
Appendix XII - List of Bills Subject to Legislative Audit
Appendix XIII - Detailed Report on the Legislative Audits, October-December 2014
Appendix XIV - October CSO newsletters
Appendix XV - November CSO newsletters
Appendix XVI - December CSO newsletters
Appendix XVII - DEAM Report