



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**SAJHEDARI BIKAAS:  
Partnership for Local Development**

Quarterly Report #7, January –  
March 2015

Produced by Pact

(Contract No: AID-367-C-13-00003)

Program Areas/Program Elements: A06/A025, A08/A036, A06/A026,  
A08/A025, A08/A036, A18/A074

Submitted to

**THE DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE OFFICE  
THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)  
NEPAL MISSION**

**Maharajgunj, Kathmandu, Nepal**

Submitted to USAID  
March, 2015

Contracting Officer Representative  
Meghan T. Nalbo

Submitted to the DEC by

**Nick Langton, Chief of Party, Sajhedari Bikaas Program**  
PACT Inc. Nepal  
Sushma Niwas,  
Sallaghari, Bansbari, House No 589  
Budhanilkantha Sadad, Kathmandu, Ward No 3  
Post Box No. 24200,  
Kathmandu, Nepal

*This report was produced and converted to pdf format using Microsoft Word 2010. The images included in the report are jpg files. The language of the document is English.*

# SAJHEDARI BIKAAS: Partnership for Local Development

Quarterly Report #7, January – March 2015

AID-367-C-13-00003



# CONTENTS

CONTENTS .....	i
TABLES.....	iii
FIGURES.....	iv
KEY ACRONYMS.....	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
<b>1.0 POLITICAL &amp; DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 NATIONAL TRENDS .....	4
1.2 OPERATIONAL SPACE .....	4
<b>2.0 ACTUAL VS. PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION .....	6
2.1.1 Quarterly planning and review workshop.....	6
2.1.2 Performance Based Monitoring System (PBMS) and DevResults .....	6
2.1.3 Organizational Performance Index (OPI).....	7
2.1.4 Assessment and orientation on knowledge management.....	7
2.1.5 Multi-stakeholders sharing meeting .....	8
2.1.6 Revision of program strategies based on monitoring findings .....	8
2.1.7 Learning review.....	9
2.2 OBJECTIVE A: ESTABLISH AND IMPROVE THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT .....	9
2.2.1 Result 1 – Early Responses that Address the Causes and Consequences of Instability are Institutionalized .....	9
2.2.2 Result 2 – Enduring solutions to the problems that drive conflict are adopted ....	12
2.3 OBJECTIVE B: IMPROVE COMMUNITIES’ ABILITY TO ACCESS RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT .....	18
2.3.1 Result 1: Inclusive Community Strategic Planning Processes Established .....	18
2.3.2 Result 2: Strategic Community Development Plans Established.....	19
2.3.3 Result 3: CBOs advocate for needed resources for financial, technical and commodity support .....	19
2.4 OBJECTIVE C: IMPROVE COMMUNITIES’ ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS .....	20
2.4.1 Result 1: Mechanisms for Transparent Administration of Funds Institutionalized	20
2.4.2 Result 2: Inclusive Management Systems Adopted .....	22
2.4.3 Result 3: Systems for Sustainability Established .....	22
2.5 OBJECTIVE D: INCREASE THE ABILITY OF EXISTING AND NEW GOVERNMENT UNITS TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY .....	22
2.5.1 Result 1: Local government Officials Effectively Carry Out Their Mandate.....	22
2.5.2 Result 2: Local Government Units and CBOs/CSOs Collaborate to Identify Local Development Priorities .....	22
2.5.3 Result 3: Communities Engage in Local Government Budget and Planning Process .....	23

**3.0 CHALLENGES AND CONSTAINTS–INTERNAL ..... 24**  
3.1 INTEGRATION OF ACTIVITIES AND PARTNERS..... 24

**4.0 CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS–EXTERNAL ..... 25**  
4.1 POLITICAL DISTURBANCES..... 25  
4.2 ALIGNMENT WITH MOFALD AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS ..... 25

**5.0 FINANCIAL REPORT ..... 26**  
5.1 MAJOR CATEGORY EXPENDITURES..... 26  
5.2 STATUS OF EXPENDITURE FUNDS TOWARDS M&E PURPOSE ..... 27  
5.3 LOE UTILIZATION SUMMARY STATUS..... 27  
5.4 STAFFING MATRIX ..... 28

**Annex 1: PMEP MATRIX ..... 29**  
**Annex 2: ADDITIONAL TABLES AND FIGURES..... 40**  
**Annex 3: SUCCESS STORIES ..... 45**  
**Annex 4: PROGRESS AGAINST WORK PLAN ..... 49**  
**Annex 5: LEARNING REVIEW ..... 55**

# TABLES

Table 1 Types of conflict reported BY SMS and their intensity ..... 9

Table 2: Q2 FY 2015 Financial Report Summary per Invoice Categories ..... 26

Table 3: M&E Expenditures..... 27

Table 4: LOE Utilization for Q1 FY 2015 ..... 27

Table 5: STAFF RECRUITMENT MATRIX ..... 28

# FIGURES

<b>Figure 1</b> Partners' OPI scores this quarter against baseline .....	7
<b>Figure 2</b> Mosaic online partner sharing site .....	8
<b>Figure 3</b> Total incidences of conflicted reported by SMS by month.....	10
<b>Figure 4</b> Ethnic/caste breakdown of participants in Basic Mediation Training for replacement CMs	40
<b>Figure 5</b> How disputant parties LEARNED out about CMCS .....	41
<b>Figure 6</b> Ethnic/caste breakdown of participants in Basic Mediation Training for new CMs .....	41
<b>Figure 7</b> Ethnic/caste breakdown of WORTH groups in Phase I VDCs .....	42
<b>Figure 8</b> Ethnic/caste breakdown of youth participation in the local planning process .....	42
<b>Figure 9</b> Ethnic/caste breakdown of RLG membership .....	43
<b>Figure 10</b> Ethnic/caste breakdown of participants at VDC council meetings in Phase I VDCs .....	43
<b>Figure 11</b> Ethnic/caste breakdown of IPFC/WCF members that PARTICIPATED IN SB-facilitated Ilaka-level meetings .....	44
<b>Figure 12</b> Ethnic/caste breakdown of participants in IPC/PMC trainings.....	44

# KEY ACRONYMS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
BASE	Backward Society Education
CA	Constituent Assembly
CAC	Citizen Awareness Center
CAG	Content Advisory Group
CAR	Community Action Researcher
CBO	Community Based Organization
CeLRRd	Center for Legal Research and Resource Development
CM	Community Mediator
CMC	Community Mediation Center
CMU	Community Management Unit
CR	Community Reporter
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDC	District Development Committee
DYN	District Youth Network
EA	Equal Access
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNGO	Governance Non-governmental Organization
GoN	Government of Nepal
I/NGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IVR	Integrated Voice Response
IP	Implementing Partner
IPFC	Integrated Planning Formulation Committee
IRAP	Internal Revenue Assessment and Projections
LGCDP	Local Governance Community Development Program
LNGO	Local NGO
LDRMP	Local Disaster Risk Management Plans
LYG	Local Youth Group
MCT	Management Committee Training
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NN	<i>Naya Nepal</i>
OPI	Organizational Performance Index
PDDP	Participatory District Development Plans
PMP	Performance Management and Evaluation Plan
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PVDP	Periodic Village Development Plan
RMMP	Resource Mapping and Development Plans
RLG	Radio Listeners' Group
RMC	Resource Mobilization Committees
R-SAC	Radio – Strategic Advisory Committee
SB	Sajhedari Bikaas
SSMK	<i>Saathi Sanga Manka Kura</i>
TAF	The Asia Foundation
ToT	Training of Trainers
UCPN (M)	Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCF	Ward Citizens Forum
YI	Youth Initiative

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sajhedari Bikaas (SB) is pleased to share its second quarterly report for Fiscal Year 2015. This reporting period covers activities performed from January-March 2015. Highlights include the following:

- DevResults was made operational in March. On March 19-21, SB conducted a two-day training workshop for district and regional partners to gain a clearer understanding of how to properly report and upload data to DevResults using the new cloud-based software. A similar workshop was conducted on March 23-24 for national partners.
- SB continued to implement its SMS conflict mapping system, with a total of 684 conflict incidents reported via SMS during the quarter. Among these, the most common type was interpersonal conflict (49%) followed by gender based violence (29%). The Center for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRd) followed up on the most serious cases, alerting partners and government offices.
- Community Mediation Centers' (CMC) capacity to deal with cases of gender-based violence (GBV) improved, with 81% of GBV cases registered during the previous quarter resolved. After finding that some women failed to attend sessions after registering cases at CMCs, mediators began to hold sessions outside the CMC office, providing a more comfortable/private venue for the parties.
- WORTH groups<sup>1</sup> saved a total of Rs. 893,451 through a combination of mandatory savings, voluntary savings, interest, group income, and fines and penalties. This is approximately double the total savings reported last quarter (Rs. 445,180). WORTH groups issued a total of 1,076 loans to 1,015 members this quarter, as compared to 570 loans given last quarter. Members used loans for a variety of purposes, including animal husbandry, mushroom farming, and snack production. A total of 201 small businesses were started.
- District Youth Networks (DYNs) facilitated 19 Youth Dialogue Series (YDS), which were attended by a total of 591 youth. These two-hour sessions served to develop dialogue and civic leadership skills among participants.
- SB continued to support 100 Radio Listener Groups (RLGs), which held a total of 561 meetings this quarter, attended by 10,047 people. Through RLGs, SB engages marginalized groups in discussion and participatory action around the issues raised in radio programming. In total, 66% of radio listener group (RLG) members are women and 80% come from non-Hill Brahmin/Chhettri groups, including 48% who are Terai/Madheshi Janajati Adivasi, 14% who are Hill Dalit and 2% who are Terai/Madheshi Dalit.
- All 41 Periodic Village Development Plans (PVDP) and Village Profiles developed with SB assistance were approved by Village Councils in January 2015. One remaining Village Development Committee (VDC) in Kailali district will prepare its PVDP next quarter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Women's savings, credit, and literacy groups based on Pact's WORTH model developed in Nepal during the USAID-funded Women's Empowerment Program in 1997-2001.

- Using a community contracting mechanism, SB is providing support valued at up to USD \$5,000/award for development initiatives prioritized in VDC plans. A total of 174 micro-project requests for infrastructure projects were received during Year 2, of which 26 were signed this quarter.
- SB organized 88 *Sajhedari Chautari* meetings that were attended by 2,103 people, including community members, SB partners and VDC level stakeholders. SB partners presented their progress from the last month, plans for the next month, and solicited feedback. They also used the meetings to encourage community members to participate in the planning process, and to raise awareness about CMCs. Inspired by SB's meetings as a model, the VDC office in Thapapur, Kailali decided to conduct a quarterly review meeting, inviting all stakeholders working within the VDC to discuss better coordination and integration of programs.
- Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) and SB jointly organized a Regional Training of Trainers (ToT) on VDC accounting software in March for administrative and finance officials from District Development Committees (DDCs) and governance non-governmental organizations (G-NGOs) from the six SB districts. The ToT, which included practical sessions, prepared 23 local trainers (including 5 females) to conduct seven-day VDC Accounting Software and Vital Events Registration Software Trainings for VDC Secretaries and other VDC staff in the project districts.

In March-April 2015, SB carried out an internal learning review in order to critically examine interventions in four defined areas of programming: local-level planning; youth engagement; women's empowerment; and media programming. The review was driven by a desire to better understand SB's impact to date and future directions in these core intervention areas. As SB is nearing its mid-point and the start of "Phase 2" programming, which will extend the project's approach into other target VDCs, the management team felt that it was an especially strategic moment to reflect on key accomplishments, challenges, opportunities and areas for recalibration.

The observations and recommendations included as part of the review were based on project data, iterative discussions with project staff and partners, as well as targeted discussions with beneficiaries, including members of Ward Citizen Forums (WCF), Local Youth Groups (LYG), Radio Listener Groups (RLG), and WORTH groups. The final product of the learning review takes the form of four "learning briefs" that are presented as **Annex 5** of this report, along with a series of recommendations that will be discussed with USAID and partners in the coming quarter. Key recommendations include:

#### Local Planning

- Target communities based on an analysis of who remains excluded from resource flows
- Develop tools that help the project team gauge the quality of participation in planning processes

#### Youth Engagement

- Better understand the extent to which LYGs are networked
- Leverage LYGs and their networks to enhance outreach related to local planning and, in particular, better target marginalized communities

#### Women's Empowerment

- Extend capacity building around rights, responsibilities and advocacy to WORTH groups
- Build the capacity of WORTH group members who are members of WCFs

## Media

- Adjust programming to boost listenership
- Support in-depth journalism tied to local governance processes

# 1.0 POLITICAL & DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT

## 1.1 NATIONAL TRENDS

The Constituent Assembly (CA) was unable to write a constitution by its self-imposed deadline of January 22, 2015. The failure was due to the inability of major parties to reach consensus on key contentious issues, especially the delineation of states in a new federal set up. Immediately after the constitution writing deadline was passed, the Congress-led coalition government decided to continue the CA process by voting on contentious issues, while the opposition alliance led by the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN-M) – demanded a “constitution through consensus and not voting.” As of March, meetings between the ruling coalition and opposition had failed to forge a consensus.

Turmoil within the CA was reflected in numerous street protests. Prior to the constitutional deadline, on January 13, the UCPN-M and their allies called a national *bandh* that brought the country to a halt. This was followed by another successful shutdown on January 20. On February 28 in Kathmandu, the alliance organized a protest rally and mass gathering during which 40 demonstrators were injured in clashes with the police. Various protests continued in the following month, including a program in Kaski district on March 25 in which the Finance Minister’s vehicle was pelted with stones. Despite these incidents, compared to the spring quarter in previous years, demonstrations and shutdowns were relatively few, with minimal disruption to transportation, commerce, or government services.

In January, the Supreme Court struck down Article 26(2) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act stating that the commission should not seek grounds to grant amnesty in cases of grave human rights violations on the basis that such grounds do not exist. While the decision was applauded by civil society groups and the international community, it remains controversial among parties to the conflict and could prolong the process of reaching consensus on the constitution.

On February 18, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare-proposed Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Elimination) Act, 2015 came into force. The Act includes a provision whereby a victim can file a complaint against the perpetrator with a Chief District Officer if no action is taken by the organization within 15 days of registration of a sexual harassment complaint. Any person found guilty of committing sexual harassment can be jailed for six months and/or fined NRs. 500,000.

## 1.2 OPERATIONAL SPACE

Despite the power tussle at the national level, SB’s operational space was not affected significantly during the reporting period by *bandhs* or political demonstrations. The sporadic

extortion threats that surfaced in the Mid and Far Western regions during the first quarter of 2015 subsided as SB entered the second quarter. Nationwide strikes were announced for early April, but it is yet to be seen how disruptive they will prove. Citizens and the business community have frequently opposed such strikes, and the opposition alliance will watch closely to see how citizens react before deciding whether to continue or intensify them.

In February, the Government of Nepal (GoN) established health desks along the Indo-Nepal border in the wake of reported cases of swine flu in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts. Health authorities mobilized additional personnel in VDCs along the border and placed them on high alert. Although mobility across and along the border was not affected, there remains a low possibility of disruption in the future.

Also in February, the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) collected documents of more than 190 I/NGOs from the Social Welfare Council (SWC) to investigate allegations of irregularities. The CIAA contends the SWC is not monitoring activities of I/NGOs effectively. While there is public support for improved regulation of I/NGOs, uncertainty prevails regarding bureaucratic initiatives and the GoN's strategic vision for the role of I/NGOs. Depending on the course of debate, new regulations could have a future impact on SB and its NGO partners.

# 2.0 ACTUAL VS. PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS<sup>2</sup>

## 2.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

During this reporting period, SB conducted a quarterly planning and review workshop, a multi-stakeholders sharing meeting, an orientation on knowledge management, and trainings on its Performance Based Monitoring System (PBMS), DevResults, and Organizational Performance Index (OPI). SB also conducted internal learning reviews of local planning, youth, media, and WORTH interventions (See **Annex 5**).

### 2.1.1 Quarterly planning and review workshop

SB organized a three-day quarterly planning and review workshop for its partners to discuss progress, identify challenges, and adjust planned activities to strengthen impact. Specific topics included the following:

- The revised PMEP indicators and Year 3 targets were discussed with all Implementing Partners (IPs) to build a common understanding. Quarterly targets were fixed based on the discussions.
- Participants discussed coordination with Grants and Contracts personnel to expedite the implementation of micro-grants. As a result, SB was able to sign 26 micro-grants this quarter.
- Strategies for the documentation of success stories were discussed, and an action plan was prepared for disseminating the stories to stakeholders.
- SB and partners discussed the implementation of Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategies during the Ward Citizen Forum (WCF) reformation process. Although SB had reformed WCFs according to MoFALD's GESI guidelines in the past, a more strategic action will be taken to promote greater inclusion in WCFs upon completion of SB's GESI review in April.

### 2.1.2 Performance Based Monitoring System (PBMS) and DevResults

On January 18-23, SB organized a Performance Based Monitoring System Workshop attended by 16 M&E staff (7 female, 9 male) from partner organizations. The workshop reviewed database operations and methods and tools for measuring results that partners will use to improve their database systems, and for reports and presentations.

DevResults was made operational during March. On March 19-21, SB conducted a two-day training workshop for district and regional partners where participants gained a clearer understanding of how to properly report and upload data using the new cloud-based software. A similar workshop was conducted on March 23-24 for national partners. Moving forward, each organization's project coordinator will regularly review data entered by his/her M&E officer and upload it to the DevResults system for review and approval by the SB Point of Contact.

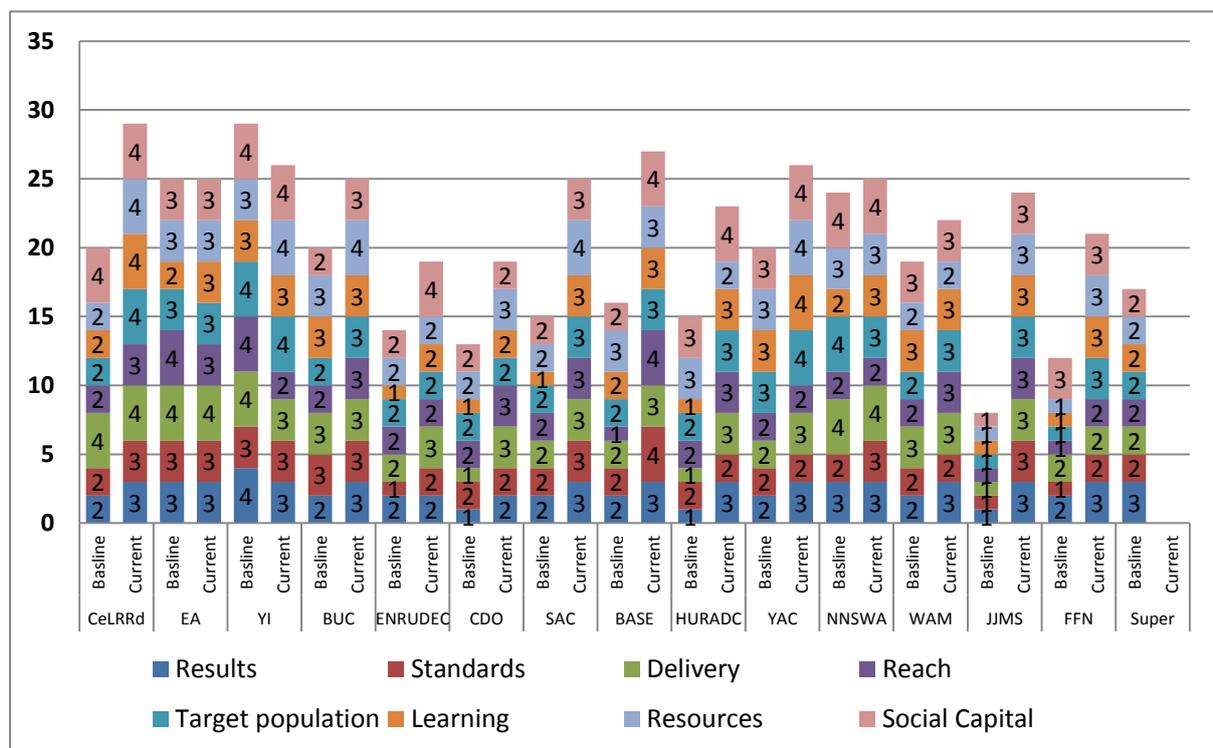
---

<sup>2</sup> Also see Annex 4: Progress Against Work Plan.

### 2.1.3 Organizational Performance Index (OPI)

On January 4-5, SB facilitated training on its Organizational Performance Index (OPI) to assist partners in measuring organizational performance and effectiveness. The index is built upon the Capacity Development Outcomes Framework, which identifies four domains of organizational performance – Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance and Sustainability – each with two sub-domains. As shown in the chart below, the partners’ overall average score per sub-domain was 3, compared to last year’s baseline of 2.2 (on a scale from 1 to 4), indicating that most partners have improved their internal systems, skills and policies of organization, networks, and external performance. SB will continue to assess partners’ performance and effectiveness in upcoming quarters and help them to strengthen their institutional performance in areas of weakness.

FIGURE 1 PARTNERS’ OPI SCORES THIS QUARTER AGAINST BASELINE



### 2.1.4 Assessment and orientation on knowledge management

From January-February, Pact’s Director of Knowledge Management, Sara Teitelman, and Mosaic Community Manager, Pamela Hobbs, visited Nepal to assess SB’s knowledge management systems and make recommendations to improve practices. They provided an orientation to staff on the use of Pact’s knowledge management tool, Mosaic. In addition, they discussed common barriers to knowledge sharing and strategies to overcome them, including specific ways to make the best use of quantitative and qualitative M&E data. Mosaic is now serving as a common platform for information sharing and exchange among partner organizations.

FIGURE 2 MOSAIC ONLINE PARTNER SHARING SITE



### 2.1.5 Multi-stakeholders sharing meeting

On January 6 in Kailali, SB organized a one-day multi-stakeholder sharing meeting with 62 participants (20 female, 42 male) representing the Department of Women and Children, District Agriculture Development Office, District Livestock Services Office, District Public Health Office, and SB partners. During the meeting, SB shared its activities, accomplishments, and results from the Perception Survey II report. Government representatives emphasized the need for increased coordination among stakeholders and downward accountability to citizens. As a result of this meeting and other briefing visits, government offices are more knowledgeable of SB activities and responsive to partner requests.

### 2.1.6 Revision of program strategies based on monitoring findings

During this quarter, SB conducted a thematic assessment of settled mediation cases in three VDCs in each district. The assessment revealed that some of the disputant parties are not following the agreements developed through the community mediation process. In order to improve this situation, SB plans to strengthen training and increase mentoring for mediators so they will be better equipped to assist disputants in reaching sustainable resolutions. It was also suggested that SB partner the Center for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRd) increase case registration through better social marketing. As a

result, SB partner Equal Access (EA) is preparing new public service announcements (PSAs) on community mediation to be aired in SB districts during the next quarter.

### 2.1.7 Learning review

In March-April 2015, SB carried out an internal learning review to critically examine interventions in four defined areas of programming: local-level planning; youth engagement; women’s empowerment; and media programming. The review was driven by a desire to better understand SB’s impact to date and future directions in these core intervention areas. However, the learning review was not a formal project evaluation. Rather, it was an attempt to consolidate key lessons, with a particular emphasis on lessons identified by project and partner staff. The observations and recommendations included as part of the review are based on project data, iterative discussions with project staff and partners, as well as targeted discussions with beneficiaries, including members of WCF, LYG, Radio Listener Groups, and WORTH groups. The final product of the learning review takes the form of four “learning briefs” that are presented in **Annex 5** of this report, along with a series of recommendations that will be discussed with USAID and partners in the coming quarter.

## 2.2 OBJECTIVE A: ESTABLISH AND IMPROVE THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### 2.2.1 Result 1 – Early Responses that Address the Causes and Consequences of Instability are Institutionalized

#### SMS-based conflict mapping

SB continued to implement its SMS conflict mapping system. The system allows conflict incidents reported by 515 trained reporters to be qualified by type, intensity, and recurrence. Once transmitted to the system’s server, the reports are integrated into the geographic information system (GIS). This enables SB to track trends and prepare response strategies before conflicts escalate. During this quarter, CeLRRd followed up on the most serious cases, alerting partners and government offices.

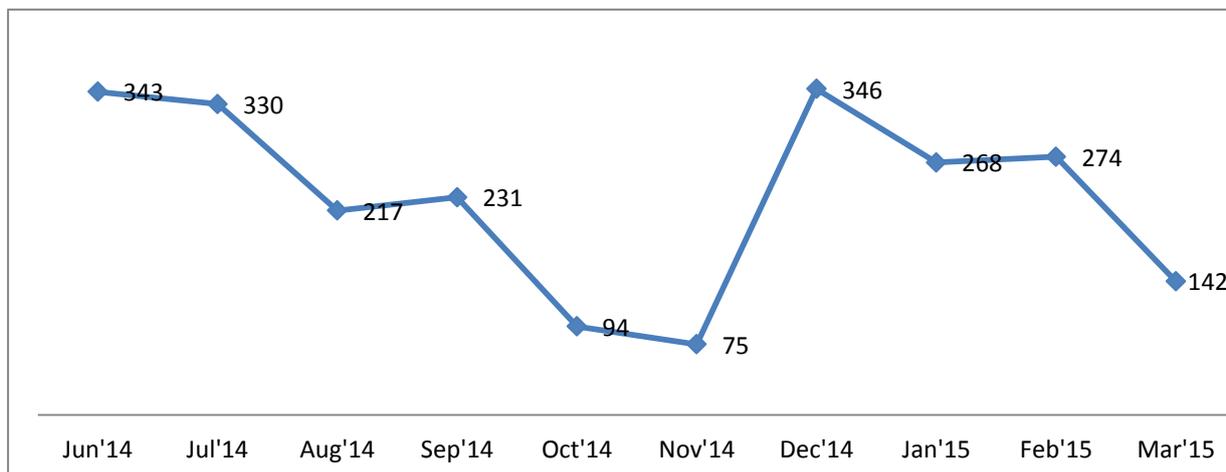
A total of 684 conflict incidents were reported via SMS during the quarter. Among these, the most common type was interpersonal conflict (49%) followed by gender based violence (29%). It is notable that the large majority of conflicts registered at SB-supported Community Mediation Centers (CMC) were interpersonal conflicts, whereas these types of conflicts only made up about half of those reported by SMS. Although differences may be partly due to different classification methods used by SMS reporters and CMCs, the data also reflect CMCs’ specialization in interpersonal conflict and suggest that there is a need for resolution mechanisms for other types of disputes.

TABLE 1 TYPES OF CONFLICT REPORTED BY SMS AND THEIR INTENSITY

Conflict Type	Low	Medium	High	Total	%
Interpersonal Conflict	59	142	133	334	49%
Gender Based Violence	48	98	50	196	29%
Resource Based Conflict	30	30	24	84	12%
Identity Based Conflict	4	15	9	28	4%
Caste Based Violence	4	15	6	25	4%
Political Violence	6	5	6	17	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>100%</b>
%	22%	45%	33%	100%	

There were 33% (169 incidences) more conflicts reported this quarter than last quarter. Rather than indicating an increase in conflict, the reporting variations may illustrate the importance of providing mobile recharge cards to SMS reporters to pay for SMS fees. Reporters were provided with cards in June and again in December 2014. The number of reports spiked during both of these months. As a result, SB is providing continued assistance to reporters for SMS fees.

FIGURE 3 TOTAL INCIDENCES OF CONFLICTED REPORTED BY SMS BY MONTH



### Quarterly conflict assessments

During this quarter, SB submitted the findings of its Fourth and Fifth Quarterly Conflict Assessments to USAID examining the public perceptions of local development initiatives and the social impact of migration in SB project areas, respectively. Once approved by USAID, the reports will be posted on SB's Mosaic website and disseminated to local and national stakeholders.

SB also finalized the methodology and collected data for the Sixth Quarterly Conflict Assessment, which tracks key conflict trends that were identified and explored in the Rapid Conflict Assessment that was conducted in February-March 2013. Preliminary findings of the assessment include:

- The debate over ethnic-based federalism, as reported in previous quarterly conflict assessments, was still a bone of contention for many respondents, particularly among male respondents.
- Crime was perceived to be higher in all SB districts except Dang, where respondents felt that it had decreased in the past six months due to proactive policing. People cited drug abuse and lack of employment for youth as key contributors to illegal activities.
- Rape and sex trafficking of women and girls was found to be a key security concern. Respondents from Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur said that women and girls from their districts are being trafficked.
- Compared to previous assessments, tensions related to resources were reportedly higher in Banke and Surkhet. These cases were usually related to community forests, sand and stones, and access to water for drinking and irrigation.

SB is addressing issues identified by the assessments. For example, Youth Initiative (YI) is helping members of its youth groups find employment and constructively engage in local development and planning processes. In addition, negative public perceptions of youth are being discussed in a Youth Dialogue Series (see **Youth in development** below). With regards to resource-related tensions, SB has trained community mediators on group

mediation, and this quarter a CMC successfully resolved a group dispute related to water (see **Alternative dispute resolution** below). SB is also seeking avenues for collaboration with USAID's Inclusive Resource Management Initiative, which specializes in this field. SB plans to engage WORTH groups in addressing the problems of rape and sex trafficking through training on GBV as part of the peace promotion training package, facilitating discussions on the issue during weekly meetings, and coordinating with other women's groups and networks to conduct awareness-raising activities during 16 days of Activism against GBV and International Women's Day.

### **Alternative dispute resolution**

This quarter, CeLRRd continued its community mediation program in Phase 1 VDCs, providing a mechanism for the peaceful resolution of disputes and thus contributing to an enabling environment for development. In addition, it began consultations and training for establishing CMCs in Phase 2 VDCs.

#### *Disputes Mediated*

A total of 950 new cases were registered during this quarter, against a target of 1,000. The most common types of cases were interpersonal conflict (77%), gender-based violence (12%) and resource-based conflict (10%). This pattern is consistent with previous quarters.

As the result of group mediation training offered during the previous quarter, the CMC in Latikoili VDC, Surkhet successfully resolved a group conflict referred to it by the District Administration Office. The dispute involved the construction of a flood embankment by one community on government land which had been occupied by another community of landless people. Through mediation, the parties agreed to construct the embankment in a way that benefits both parties.

CMCs' capacity to deal with cases of GBV is improving, with 81% of GBV cases registered during the previous quarter resolved. After finding that some women failed to attend sessions after registering cases at CMCs, mediators began to hold sessions outside the CMC office, providing a more comfortable/private venue for the parties.

#### *Coordination with Other Stakeholders*

As a result of SB's successful outreach activities, CMCs continue to receive case referrals from local stakeholders. This quarter, 15 cases were referred by the police, five by political parties, 10 by traditional leaders, and nine by VDCs.

#### *Social Marketing of Community Mediation Services*

CMCs installed 58 new billboards explaining the benefits of community mediation in all Phase 1 VDCs. The billboards are in new locations and are larger than the 58 billboards installed last year in order to be more visible in areas where case registration was low. In addition, in January, CMs in Chailahi, Dang manned a stall at the Industrial and Agricultural Fair to disseminate information on mediation, human rights, the Mediation Act of 2068, and human trafficking. They talked with hundreds of people and distributed 1,200 pamphlets and posters. CeLRRd worked with EA to create a radio show episode on the Community Mediation Act and success stories (see **Media in development** below). Moreover, community mediators reached out to local WORTH groups, explaining to members about the community mediation process and benefits. Together with additional social marketing campaigns that will follow in the next quarter, including during integrated mobile service camps, these activities are expected to increase the number of new cases registered at CMCs.

For information on how disputant parties came to know about CMC services, see **Annex 2, Figure 5**.

### *Phase 2 Consultation Meetings*

On February 13, CeLRRd held a district level consultation meeting in Dang. The meeting provided an opportunity to share the purpose and accomplishments of SB's mediation program, solicit feedback for implementation in Phase 2 VDCs, and build better coordination with district level stakeholders. The meeting was attended by the district judge, as well as representatives from the district police office, district development office, government attorney office, and the district bar association. Additionally, seven consultations were held with stakeholders in Phase 2 VDCs, including government officials, political leaders, WCF members, and teachers. The consultations were important in fostering support to establish and sustain new CMCs.

### *Basic Mediation Training and Establishment of a New CMCs*

CeLRRd conducted Basic Mediation Training (BMT) for 165 new mediators who will be available to replace CMs as needed when there are vacancies in Phase 1 VDCs. In addition, BMT was conducted for 132 mediators who will start new CMCs in Phase 2 VDCs. Fifty percent of participants in the first training and 42% in the second training were female. On March 26, one new CMC was established in Saudiyar VDC, Dang (a Phase 2 VDC).

### *Protocols and training on gender-based violence (GBV) cases*

In the previous quarter, SB, through its sub-contractor The Asia Foundation (TAF), drafted *Guidelines for Community Mediators – Addressing Gender Based Violence through Community Mediation*. This quarter, it translated the guidelines into Nepali. SB is awaiting USAID approval of the guidelines, after which they will be published, and is in the process of translating the *Training Manual on Gender Based Violence for Community Mediators and Service Providers*. Based on the draft guidelines and training manual, SB held ToTs on gender and mediation for 26 female and 52 male district trainers in March.

## **2.2.2 Result 2 – Enduring solutions to the problems that drive conflict are adopted**

### **Women's economic groups (WORTH)<sup>3</sup>**

SB has continued to support women's economic groups utilizing Pact's WORTH model, an integrated literacy-led approach for women's empowerment.

#### *Community orientation and group reformation*

WORTH empowerment workers held community orientations at the ward/settlement level in all Phase 1 VDCs targeting disadvantaged community members, including Community Awareness Center (CAC) members. As a result, 32 groups were reformed. Combined with the 127 groups previously reported, 159 women's economic groups have been formed or reformed by the project. For ethnic/caste breakdown of WORTH groups, see **Annex 2, Figure 7**.

#### *Savings and loan activities*

WORTH groups saved a total of Rs. 893,451 through a combination of mandatory savings, voluntary savings, interest, group income, and fines and penalties. This is approximately double the total savings reported last quarter (Rs. 445,180). WORTH groups issued a total of 1,076 loans to 1,015 members this quarter, as compared to 570 loans given last quarter. Members used loans for a variety of purposes, including animal husbandry, mushroom farming, and snack production. A total of 201 small businesses were started.

#### *Literacy classes*

Empowerment workers and literacy volunteers facilitated 3-4 classes per month for each group, which were attended by 1,136 group members. Some groups have started using the

---

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the impact and potential of SB's WORTH activities, see **Annex 5, WORTH – Strengthening Women's Participation through Economic Empowerment**.

second book in the curriculum, *Selling Made Simple*, but most groups are still working on the alphabet and counting skills. Relevant concepts about 'village banks' and small business management are integrated into the literacy curriculum.

#### *Micro-Enterprise Training, Skill Building Packages, and Materials Support*

Partners in Kailali, Kanchanpur and Surkhet organized 43 business and micro-enterprise trainings that were attended by 1,048 WORTH group members. The trainings covered methods for identifying business opportunities, risk analysis, business concept planning, marketing, pricing, and salesmanship. As a practical compliment to these trainings, partners also organized 58 skill-building packages for 1,544 participants. Specific skills included animal husbandry, mushroom farming, sweets and snacks making, bee keeping, *nanglo* making, and vegetable farming. At the end of the trainings, women formed small enterprise groups and each WORTH group prioritized certain areas for materials support. Based on this prioritization, SB has provided materials support to 18 groups in Banke and Bardiya for up to Rs. 50,000. SB plans to provide materials support to all WORTH groups, and will follow up with participants to determine the impact of the trainings and material support.

#### *Other training to WORTH groups*

Three Management Committee Trainings (MCTs) were conducted this quarter for 74 WORTH group committee members. All Phase 1 WORTH groups have now received this training. The trainings focused on the roles and responsibilities of group positions and knowledge of village bank management and accounting systems. After completing the training, participants were able to use accounting forms, determine dividends, check loan and collection status, and conduct village bank health checks.

In Banke, SB partner Fatima Foundation Nepal (FFN) provided a Peace Promotion Training to 41 WORTH members. The training focused on countering violence against women, rights to equal access to local resources and opportunities, and community conflict mediation. FFN also organized several capacity building trainings on leadership, group management and conflict management skills, and GESI and violence against women. The leadership training aimed to equip women to raise their voices effectively about women's issues and the group management training had a combined total of 670 participants. These skills are important for women in order to participate in the local planning and development processes. (For examples of WORTH group participation in the planning process, see **Objective B, WORTH groups, LYGs, and RLGs in planning and local development**).

#### *Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) workshops*

SB conducted 25 OCA workshops for 632 WORTH group members to enable them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their groups. While the OCA found that WORTH group activities are largely running effectively, areas for improvement include increased loan mobilization, increased support to women to use loans productively, and more regular literacy classes. During these workshops, groups developed their own 100-day work plans. With SB backstopping and support for the work plan implementation, WORTH groups have formulated their by-laws, norms and values. This has assisted in encouraging members to attend weekly meetings and literacy classes regularly. With the completion of at least one loan cycle, members have started to become accustomed to paying their weekly loan installments.

#### *Review and reflection meetings*

WORTH NGOs conducted quarterly district level review and reflection meetings in Bardiya, Kanchanpur, and Surkhet with officials from the District Development Committee (DDC), Federation of Nepali Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), District Agriculture Development Office, District Education Office, and Small Cottage Industry Development Board. Following these meetings, government line agencies met with WORTH group members and shared information on the processes for accessing services. For example,

based on this information, Nita Khadka, a WORTH group member in Latikoili VDC in Surkhet district, was able to register her poultry farming business with the Small Cottage Industry office. WORTH NGOs also conducted VDC level semi-annual review and reflection meetings with stakeholders in Banke, Bardiya, and Kanchanpur. At both sets of the meetings, WORTH NGO staff discussed achievements, lessons learned, and challenges, and sought feedback from other stakeholders.

#### *International Women's Day Activities*

WORTH NGOs held five district level and 28 VDC level events for International Women's Day. For example, FFN organized an interaction program on violence against women and trafficking in Nepalgunj. Chief guests at the program included Muslim religious leaders, the Banke Chief District Officer, representatives from the Women and Children Office and the National Human Rights Commission, and the Superintendent of Police. At the local level, WORTH groups held various activities such as awareness rallies, discussions, sports competitions, and quiz competitions for students related to women's empowerment themes.

#### **Youth in development<sup>4</sup>**

During this reporting period, SB's partner Youth Initiative continued to carry out activities to promote youth participation in local development and governance processes.

#### *Youth Dialogue Series (YDS)<sup>5</sup>*

District Youth Networks (DYNs) facilitated 19 YDS, which were attended by a total of 591 youth (221 female, 370 male). These two-hour sessions served to develop dialogue and civic leadership skills among participants. In January, each District Youth Network (DYN) held a YDS on Youth Vision 2025, a policy document that is being prepared by a committee appointed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. During the sessions, youth drafted proposals for submission to the committee, which included securing the participation of youth in the planning process and community development activities and mainstreaming youth in national priorities via inclusion of earmarked funds for youth in local budgets.

#### *Youth employment*

To better understand the impact of previous programming to help youth gain vocational skills and find local employment, YI followed up with participants from the Entrepreneurship Development Training carried out in September 2014. Nine additional participants started a business this quarter, bringing the total to 162 (53 female, 109 male) or 40.5% of the 400 participants trained in September. Types of businesses that the new entrepreneurs started ranged from retail activities to farming of either livestock or agricultural products.<sup>6</sup>

Local Youth Groups (LYGs) also promoted youth employment. Using minimal funding from SB and with support from the District Agriculture Development Office and the District Administration Office, six LYGs in Surkhet organized a one-day training on mushroom farming that was attended by 126 youth of which 56% were female. Those who received training plan to begin farming mushrooms next quarter. Similarly, the LYG in Kunathari VDC, Surkhet organized a field visit for 20 youth to a vegetable farm to learn tunnel farming technology. In addition, the LYG in Dharapani, Surkhet organized an interaction program on

---

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the impact and potential of SB's youth in development activities, see **Annex 5, 3. Youth Engagement**.

<sup>5</sup> Previous reports used the term 'Youth discussion series.'

<sup>6</sup> Except the regular LYG/DYN meetings and discussion series, YI's activities were on hold during Q2 while they revised their workplan. Follow-up activities from the LYG/DYN meetings will be reported in the Q3 report.

entrepreneurship. YI will follow up with participants from these events to monitor the impact on youth employment/ entrepreneurship.

#### *Community Development Activities (CDAs) and Participatory Action*

After identifying pressing issues in their community and designing activities, YLGs conducted 178 CDAs, supported by SB, involving 5,928 local people (including 50% female participants) this quarter. CDAs included support for an Open Defecation Free campaign, public toilet construction, a water tank cleaning program, awareness-raising campaigns about swine flu (in coordination with government health posts), and maintenance of local roads and taps. In an effort to promote local government transparency, the YLG in Gobardiha VDC, Dang, for example, provided a public information board for the VDC office, and the YLG in Mehelkuna VDC of Surkhet formed a committee to monitor a road construction project.

LYGs also engaged in participatory action. YLGs in Ganapur, Banke and Tarigaun, Dang organized programs to encourage the government to issue the constitution on time, including a song competition and an SMS-sending campaign to members of the Constituent Assembly (CA). Additionally, the YLG of Pokharikanda, Surkhet organized a workshop on social accountability.

Inspired by these activities, YI has proposed to strengthen CDAs by building linkages with other SB components to identify issues of common interest to youth. Possibilities include CDAs on the promotion of local issues in the media, support to WORTH groups, the promotion of social accountability, and the usefulness of community mediation. Through constructively channeling youth activities, YI aims to counteract the involvement of youth in destructive behaviors, such as mobilization by political parties to inflame strikes and create roadblocks.

#### *Group Meetings*

A total of 163 YLG monthly meetings were held. Meetings focused on discussion of the planning process as well as organizing for community development activities. Additionally, eight CMUs conducted their quarterly meetings this quarter. CMUs encouraged YLGs to take part in WCFs, CACs, Integrated Planning Formulation Committees (IPFCs), and resource users groups, as well as to coordinate their activities with VDCs and other government institutions. (For a discussion of YLG participation in the planning process, see **Objective B, WORTH groups, YLGs, and RLGs in planning and local development.**)

#### **Media and development<sup>7</sup>**

During this reporting period, Equal Access (EA) and its partner stations continued to produce and broadcast central and local level radio programming and engage listeners, primarily through Radio Listeners' Groups (RLGs), in discussion and participatory action around project themes.

#### *Central-level Radio Programming*

EA produced nine *Naya Nepal* (NN) and two *Saathi Sanga Manka Kura* (SSMK) episodes this quarter, which were broadcast by 16 local partner FM Stations and Radio Nepal. The Radio Nepal broadcasts can be heard in all 75 districts of Nepal. NN shows covered a variety of topics, including newly announced municipalities and their functions; political deadlock and the constitution making process; participation of women, youth and

---

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the impact and potential of SB's media in development activities, see **Annex 5, 5. Media Engagement.**

marginalized groups in resource users' groups; and grants for youth entrepreneurship from government line agencies. SSMK featured such topics as child marriage and a special episode for International Women's Day with a discussion of inappropriate touching.

Three NN episodes were community outdoor productions, meaning that they were recorded and produced in the field. The productions provided an opportunity to interact with local partners, promote dialogue and create more ownership over content. In addition, NN initiated 'guest producer' segments this quarter. Producers from local partner stations worked one-on-one with EA lead-producers to create these segments, providing opportunities for knowledge and information sharing. A recent guest producer from Radio Gurbaba produced a segment on local partner activities in Bardiya.

As always, NN and SSMK included voices of community members from the project areas, collected by EA's network of 15 Community Reporters and through the listener call-in system, Integrated Voice Response (IVR). Listener feedback was collected by EA's network of 17 Community Action Researchers (CARs), who regularly visit Radio Listeners Groups (RLG), and directly from listeners through IVRs and SMS. Listener feedback included requests for more inclusivity/diversity of voices, inclusion of drama, more production in local languages, and inclusion of particular topics such as women trafficking, youth employment, and child rights. Feedback was reviewed by the program team and discussed during two Content Advisory Group (CAG) meetings, which selected topics for upcoming episodes.

One critical listening feedback session (CLFS) was held, in which SB partner representatives, local radio producers and EA staff evaluated the technical and programmatic quality of one recent episode of NN. The participants discussed the episode's interviews with women activists, and helped identify gaps in information presented on the program. The episode received a score of 80%, roughly the same as the CLFS conducted the previous quarter. Scoring is conducted using a rubric that covers content, format, presentation, topic, balance, educational value, and other aspects. EA will draw on this feedback while producing future radio programs.

#### *Local-level Radio Programming*

Local production partners produced 104 episodes of the show *Sajhedari*, which were broadcast by 16 partner stations. Fifteen of the episodes were produced in the Tharu language, and segments within other episodes were in local languages such as Awadi and Doteli. Episodes covered similar topics as the NN and SSMK episodes, but with more locally-specific information and reporting by station staff.

*Sajhedari* episodes incorporated feedback from listeners obtained through RLGs and CARs, and their content was guided by 16 local-level CAGs held during the quarter and attended by a total of 180 producers, SB partners, and other stakeholders. SB governance and WORTH NGO partner representatives played a key role in the CAG meetings, selecting topics for upcoming episodes.

CLFS were conducted at all eight production partner stations and were attended by a total of 69 people, including community members, SB partner representatives, radio producers and RLG members. Each CLFS evaluated one randomly selected *Sajhedari* episode. Participants suggested improvements for future programming, and scored the episodes. Three stations scored higher than the previous quarter, while five stations' scores remained constant. On average, the production partners scored 86%, compared to 59% at the baseline (conducted in 2013).

#### *PSAs and Social Media Campaigns*

From February 26-March 4, EA conducted a PSA campaign to provide information to beneficiaries about a notice issued by the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction regarding

the registration of conflict-affected victims. The PSA was produced in Nepali by EA and broadcast by EA's 16 partner stations 96 times throughout SB districts. In addition, independent bloggers posted new articles on the citizen journalism and social networking platform *Mero Report*, which is maintained by EA. A total of 18 new blog-posts were sent from SB districts this quarter on topics ranging from swine flu prevention to budgets for road repairs.

#### *Coordination and Collaboration with Other SB Partners*

This quarter, EA and CeLRRd collaborated to produce an NN episode on the Community Mediation Act and its impact at the local level, and they have created a plan to produce further episodes as well as conduct roundtable discussions on community mediation. Similarly, local production partners collaborated with G-NGO and WORTH NGO partners to produce eight episodes of the *Sajhedari* show about events held on International Women's Day (March 8). In addition, implementing partners participated in local and central level CAG meetings and a Radio – Strategic Advisory Committee (R-SAC) meeting in order to provide input and guidance for upcoming programming. EA also encouraged SB partners to submit success stories for inclusion in programming and shared broadcast schedules, CAG meeting dates and other important information with partners.

#### *Radio Listener Groups (RLGs)*

SB continued to support 100 RLGs, which held a total of 561 meetings this quarter, attended by 10,047 people. Through RLGs, SB engages citizens, especially those from marginalized groups in discussion and participatory action around the issues raised in radio programming, such as citizen charters, the participatory planning process and youth, women and marginalized communities in local development, services provided by the VDC office, right to information, and gender-based violence. In total, 66% of RLG members are women and 80% come from non-Hill Brahmin/Chhettri groups, including 48% who are Terai/Madheshi Janajati Adivasi, 14% who are Hill Dalit and 2% who are Terai/Madheshi Dalit. (See **Annex 2, Figure 9**).

EA started a micro-grants initiative to provide seed-funding for RLGs up to USD \$500 in order to encourage participatory action. It expects that the process and experience of handling these micro-grants will enable RLGs to undertake and manage more of their own projects in future. Of the 75 proposals received in Year 2, 24 grants were implemented this quarter. Most micro-grants were completed within the agreed upon timeframe. As part of the micro-grants initiative, RLGs coordinated with VDC offices, local NGOs, and SB partners who provided facilities and expertise to enhance the quality of the micro-grant-funded events. Among other things, grants were used for workshops on how to exercise one's Right to Information, 14-step planning process awareness programs, social accountability tools workshops, and programs on countering GBV.

In addition to micro-grant activities, some RLGs participated in the 14-step planning process by submitting proposals for projects (for further discussion, see **Objective B. WORTH groups, LYGs, and RLGs in planning and local development**).

## 2.3 OBJECTIVE B: IMPROVE COMMUNITIES' ABILITY TO ACCESS RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT<sup>8</sup>

### 2.3.1 Result 1: Inclusive Community Strategic Planning Processes Established

#### Support to conduct Integrated Plan Formulation Committee (IPFC) meetings

SB and Local Governance Community Development Program (LGCDP) social mobilizers (SMs) organized IPFC orientations at the beginning of the planning process, and supported VDCs to facilitate IPFC meetings in all Phase 1 VDCs. IPFC meetings are held prior to the Village Council Meetings in order to screen and prioritize the projects demanded by WCFs. Previously, the meetings often did not follow MoFALD guidelines. SMs emphasized the need to prioritize projects originating from WCFs rather than pet projects of local power holders.

#### Village Council Meetings

Village Council meetings were held from January 2-14, and were attended by community leaders representing citizen institutions such as WCFs, CACs and IPFCs along with representatives of political parties. As a result of SB orientations to IPFCs, WCFs and CACs, Village Council meetings were held on time and there was consensus regarding the selection of projects by following MoFALD guidelines. Village Councils endorsed 1,854 projects demanded by WCFs, which is 29% of the total number of projects demanded by WCFs and 83% of the 2,242 projects that the Councils approved. Projects that do not originate from WCFs include larger projects that involve more than one ward. Village Councils are gradually addressing more of the projects demanded by WCFs, which means in the absence of local elected bodies a more representative and inclusive process is available to decide on development projects and the utilization of scarce local resources.

SB's orientations also helped to increase the representation of women and marginalized groups in Village Council meetings. This quarter, 1,869 (32%) of participants were female (5,822 total participants), and 54% belonged to disadvantaged caste/ethnic groups (see **Annex 2, Figure 8**). These figures provide a baseline against which to measure GESI gains in the future. In addition to attendance rates, it is important to pay attention to the quality of participation. Pursuant to its recent learning review (see **Annex 5, 2. Facilitation/Support of the Local Planning Process**) SB will consider developing a "participation scoring index" or similar tool that allows enumerators to capture the extent to which women and participants from marginalized groups speak up at events.

#### Support to Ilaka-level planning workshops

During this quarter, Ilaka-level planning workshops were held to discuss and select projects that involve multiple VDCs. Often, they are conducted as a formality, without inclusive representation of stakeholders and government offices. This quarter, GNGOs arranged transportation and logistics for 333 WCF and IPFC members to participate in the Ilaka-level participatory planning workshops. At the meetings, participants were able to advocate for their projects and ask questions about why specific decisions were made. SMs sought to promote selection of worthy projects prioritized by VDCs, and to include more women and marginalized caste/ethnic groups in the workshops. Of the IPFC and WCF members who attended the Ilaka-level workshops, 91 (27%) were women, and 42% came from disadvantaged caste/ethnic groups (for an ethnic/ caste breakdown, see **Annex 2, Figure 11**). As with Village Council meetings, GESI-responsiveness of the projects presented at the Ilaka-level needs to be built in the coming years of the project. At the same time, SB will

---

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the impact and potential of SB's local planning activities, see **Annex 5, 2. Facilitation/Support of the Local Planning Process**

support women and marginalized groups to develop the confidence and practice the skills necessary to be able to participate more meaningfully.

### **2.3.2 Result 2: Strategic Community Development Plans Established**

#### **Village Profiles and Periodic Village Development Plans**

During the previous quarter, SB recruited two consultants to develop drafts of Village Profiles and Periodic Village Development Plans (PVDP) for 41 VDCs (51 VDCs began work on PVDPs, but some stopped because they were merged into municipalities where SB is not supporting periodic planning). The consultants cleared up inconsistencies and redundancies among documents, and ensured the plans adhere to MoFALD guidelines. All 41 Village Profiles and PVDPs developed with SB assistance were approved by Village Councils in January 2015. One remaining VDC in Kailali district will prepare its PVDP next quarter.

#### **Periodic District Development Plan**

SB has provided consultants to help develop Periodic District Development Plans (PDDP) in three program districts: Banke, Surkhet and Kailali. The documents were prepared as per the guidelines prescribed by MoFALD. Surkhet had never prepared a PDDP before, while Banke's and Kailali's previous PDDPs had expired. The PDDPs for Surkhet and Kailali were endorsed at District Council meetings, and the PDDP in Banke is in the final stage of preparation. SB will also support the printing of 800 Nepali and 200 English copies of the PDDP for each district, which will be given to DDCs and VDCs so that they can distribute them to members of the public, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

#### **Other Strategic VDC Plans**

Previously, SB provided support to VDCs to produce Resource Mapping and Management Plans (RMMPs), Internal Revenue Assessment and Projections (IRAPs), and Local Disaster Risk Management Plans (LDRMPs). RMMPs provide an outline of the political leadership, commercial interests and resources, and public-private partnerships that exist in a community. IRAPs depict the total internal revenue of VDCs, identify the strength of fiscal and human resources, and the gaps VDCs may have in technical expertise or infrastructure for service delivery. LDRMPs map natural disaster risks through participatory community vulnerability assumptions, and identify how VDCs can prepare for disasters and cope with them should they occur. This quarter, 45 VDCs endorsed their IRAPs and RMMPs (57 VDCs' plans were prepared, but 12 Phase 1 VDCs were merged into municipalities). Seven of the nine high risk VDCs that received support for drafting LDRMPs endorsed the LDRMPs.

### **2.3.3 Result 3: Community-based organizations (CBOs) advocate for needed resources for financial, technical and commodity support**

#### **WORTH groups, LYGs, and RLGs in Planning and Local Development**

Last quarter, WORTH NGOs' empowerment workers<sup>9</sup> and interns conducted orientation for WORTH groups on the 14-step planning process. A total of 234 WORTH group members (out of a total of 3,368) are members of WCFs. Of these, 12 women are in key positions, such as Coordinator, Secretary, or Joint Secretary of their WCF. Many women are new to WCFs, and it will take time for them to develop the skills and confidence to become more active participants within these bodies. However, some WORTH members have put forward demands and raised their voices against unequal budgets and power divisions. Examples of their participation in the planning process are that women in Binauna and Kamdi VDCs of Banke successfully advocated for road construction projects. Likewise, two WORTH groups from Belhari VDC negotiated with their VDC about the repair of a broken bridge. In Kamdi

---

<sup>9</sup> Empowerment Workers are employed by WORTH NGOs and responsible for facilitating WORTH activities at the group level.

and Indrapur VDCs of Banke, WORTH members were appointed to users' committees to oversee local road construction projects.

One of the main thrusts of the project is to promote participation of youth groups in the local planning process and help engage them in economic activities. This quarter, 245 youth took part in the planning process at the settlement, ward, VDC, and/or DDC/llaka-level. Among these youth, 31% were female and 68% came from disadvantaged caste/ethnic groups<sup>10</sup> (see **Annex 2, Figure 8**). All 58 LYGs participated in the VDC level planning process (compared to 84% the previous year), following team discussions in which they developed agendas. At meetings, they raised issues such as establishing youth resource centers, vocational and technical trainings, investment in the sports sector, and subsidies for agro-based entrepreneurship. During this year's planning process, VDCs allocated budgets under the heading of youth for 49 projects with the combined value of NRs. 1,828,000.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, DYNs participated in DDC council meetings in all six SB districts. In Bardiya, the DYN and YI established good rapport with the DDC and played a major role in developing the district's periodic plan. In Dang, the DDC allocated a budget of Rs.400,000 for youth. The DDC in Surkhet included a provision to form a youth coordination committee against drug use and other unproductive behavior in its yearly plan.

RLGs also submitted proposals for projects during the local planning process. Proposals from four RLGs (Narayanpur VDC in Kailali, and Ramghat, Latikoili, and Lekhparajul VDCs in Surkhet) were approved for construction of community buildings and for women's and children's empowerment programs.

### **Micro-Grants/Sub-Contracts through the Community Contracting Mechanism**

Using a community contracting mechanism, SB is providing support valued at up to USD \$5,000/award for development initiatives prioritized in VDC plans. A total of 174 micro-project requests for infrastructure projects were received during Year 2, of which 26 were signed as of March 30. These include small-scale infrastructure projects such as the construction of culverts, market sheds, or latrines. Some projects are in the design phase, while others are under construction and one has been completed. Likewise, SB has received 20 proposals from VDCs for equipment to be provided to birthing centers, and SB is consulting with USAID-funded Health for Life project in selecting them. Additionally, SB has hired F-Skill to provide technical direction and implementation assistance for 58 vocational trainings using the community contracting mechanism. These are expected to reach a total 406 individual beneficiaries in six districts. More discussion of the implementation of projects, including civic oversight efforts such as public audits, through the community contracting mechanism is included under **Objective C**.

## **2.4 OBJECTIVE C: IMPROVE COMMUNITIES' ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

### **2.4.1 Result 1: Mechanisms for Transparent Administration of Funds Institutionalized**

#### **Transparent administration of grants through community contracting mechanism**

As required by MoFALD, projects funded through the community contracting mechanism are managed by Implementing Partner Committees (IPCs), which are each composed of 7-11 members including 50% women and at least one woman in a key leadership role. The projects are monitored by Project Monitoring Committees (PMCs), which include members

---

<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this report, all non-Hill Brahmin/Chhettri groups are considered 'disadvantaged groups.' The usefulness of this distinction is questioned in SB's forthcoming GESI review.

<sup>11</sup> This rupee amount is based on only 40 projects for which data has been collected thus far.

from the WCFs, CACs, GNGOs and VDCs. During this quarter, SB formed IPCs for each of its infrastructure projects and vocational skills projects (IPCs for the social initiative micro-projects have yet to be formed). One PMC was formed in each of the Phase 1 VDCs in order to monitor SB-funded micro-projects (including those related to infrastructure, social initiatives and vocational trainings).

SB conducted project management training for 493 members of PMCs and IPCs of infrastructure projects. The trainings covered micro-project management, public audit and fiscal skills, and anti-corruption measures. Aimed to strengthen community capacity for transparent and effective project management at the local level, the trainings received good feedback. As a result, Durgauli VDC, Kailali organized a project management training for other user groups using its own budget.

### ***Sajhedari Chautari meetings***

SB organized 88 *Sajhedari Chautari* meetings that were attended by 2,103 people, including community members, SB partners and VDC level stakeholders. SB partners presented their progress from the last month and plans for the next month, and solicited feedback. They also used the meetings to encourage community members to participate in the planning process, and to raise awareness about CMCs. Community members requested that micro-projects for infrastructure, social initiatives and vocational trainings be expedited. Inspired by SB's meetings as a model, the VDC office in Thapapur, Kailali decided to conduct a quarterly review meeting, inviting all stakeholders working within the VDC to discuss better coordination and integration of programs.

### **Orientation to VDC Monitoring Committees**

SB partners facilitated one-day orientation meetings for VDC Monitoring Committees to familiarize them with social accountability tools and to conduct monitoring. The meetings were conducted in 22 VDCs and were attended by 357 committee members; the remaining VDC Monitoring Committees will be oriented in upcoming quarters. VDC Monitoring Committees are similar to the PMCs, except that they conduct monitoring for all projects carried out in the VDC (not just the SB-funded projects). However, the committees were often non-functional, so orientations were deemed appropriate. Participants developed monitoring plans and checklists, and have started to write reports on monitoring visits.

### **Public hearings**

This quarter, SB's partner Social Awareness Center (SAC) helped to organize one public hearing in Sahare VDC of Surkhet. A total of 92 service receivers, including 20 women, participated in the program. Participants raised concerns and queries and demanded clarifications from the concerned development partners and service providers. SB is supporting VDCs to conduct public hearings twice annually throughout project areas according to MoFALD guidelines. SB will formulate a combined strategy to strengthen the implementation of various social accountability tools, including citizen charters, public audits, public hearings, and social audits during the next quarter.

### **Public audits**

SB promotes public audits as a social accountability tool of the micro-project program. Three public audits were implemented in Taratal and Sanosree VDCs, Bardiya (culvert and road), and Phattepur VDC, Banke (community market center) this quarter. As 39 more micro-projects will be completed or nearing completion in the next quarter, more public audits will be conducted. Implementing Partners' Committee (IPC), the main organizer in each VDC, disseminated the procurement and expenditure details related to the funded projects. The Project Monitoring Committees (PMC) endorsed the expenses. In total, 218 people (70 female, 148 male) from user committees, local communities, WCFs and other stakeholders attended the events. Community members appreciated the process and the project information boards at the project sites. They objected to the IPC's failure to disclose

information on in-kind community contributions. The IPC promised to do so at the beginning of all subsequent public audits. SB will work with VDCs to adapt this model for other projects.

#### **2.4.2 Result 2: Inclusive Management Systems Adopted**

##### **Inclusive PMCs and IPCs for micro-projects through community contracting mechanism**

SB has worked to build inclusive IPCs and PMCs for projects using the community contracting mechanism. GESI considerations are integrated into the PMC/IPC trainings. Of the 493 members of PMCs and IPCs of infrastructure projects who received project management training, 209 (42%) were female, and 52% belonged to disadvantaged groups (see *Annex 2, Figure 12*).

#### **2.4.3 Result 3: Systems for Sustainability Established**

##### **VDC support for Community Mediation Centers (CMCs)**

Local funding of CMCs is important for these institutions' long-term sustainability. In the last quarter, CeLRRd focused on increasing coordination efforts with local stakeholders, including WCFs, VDCs, and political party representatives, to prioritize budgets for CMC operating costs before handing over of the CMCs to VDCs. As a result, 34 Phase 1 VDCs (or 59% of total Phase 1 VDCs) allocated funding for CMCs during the recent planning process. Across the six districts, VDCs allocated Rs. 863,899 for CMCs, and many prioritized CMCs in their five-year Periodic Village Development Plans. Furthermore, many VDCs provide facilities free-of-cost for the CMCs. These developments indicate a growing sense of local ownership over CMCs, as well as the influence of the Community Mediation Act of 2068, which stated the need for CMCs (although it did not stipulate that VDCs must fund them). Continued effort is needed to bring the remaining VDCs on board to ensure sustainability. Such efforts could take a bottom-up approach (e.g., WCF advocacy for CMC budgets) and/or a top-down approach (coordination with MoFALD for prioritization of community mediation). While VDC handover of Phase 1 CMCs was originally planned for July-November, SB is considering continuing some form of support beyond this time.

### **2.5 OBJECTIVE D: INCREASE THE ABILITY OF EXISTING AND NEW GOVERNMENT UNITS TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY**

#### **2.5.1 Result 1: Local government Officials Effectively Carry Out Their Mandate**

##### **Training of Trainers (ToT) on VDC accounting software**

MoFALD and SB jointly organized a Regional ToT on VDC accounting software in March for administrative and finance officials from DDCs and GNGOs from the six SB districts. The ToT, which included practical sessions, prepared 23 local trainers (including 5 females<sup>12</sup>) to conduct seven-day VDC Accounting Software and Vital Events Registration Software Trainings for VDC Secretaries and other VDC staff in the project districts. The district-level training will be implemented in April, contingent upon USAID approval, and will enable VDC personnel to improve overall VDC performance by effectively tracking financial flows and expenditure as well as improving the information management.

#### **2.5.2 Result 2: Local Government Units and CBOs/ Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Collaborate to Identify Local Development Priorities**

---

<sup>12</sup> The ToT required participants to have a background in accounting. Given the dearth of women in the DDC and G-NGOs with this specific background, it was not possible to ensure 50% female participation.

### **Mobile service camps**

Mobile service camps are proving to be an effective mechanism to address gaps in service delivery. GNGO partners (Backward Society Education) BASE and SAC supported District Administration Offices (DAO) to conduct a total of six integrated service camps at the VDC level in Dang and Surkhet. In Dang, four service camps were held for the registration of vital events, benefitting 623 people. At two integrated mobile service camps in Surkhet, citizens were able to access agriculture, livestock and health services and apply for citizenship cards and voter IDs. A total of 131 persons (73 female, 58 male) received citizenship cards in Salkot VDC in Surkhet district and 252 persons (147 female, 105 male) from Salkot VDC and Ramghat VDCs in Surkhet district received voter ID cards. BASE and SAC circulated information about the camps at the local level by mobilizing WCFs and CACs, and provided logistical support to the DAOs.

### **2.5.3 Result 3: Communities Engage in Local Government Budget and Planning Process**

#### **Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS)**

During March, SB received eight proposals from national and international organizations to design and implement a PETS project to track MoFALD block grants to SB districts, as well as CA member funds. Among the sub-categories of block grants, some applicants suggested tracking expenditures under the headings of women, children and excluded communities. The final decision of a contractor will be made in April, with implementation starting in May.

# 3.0 CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS–INTERNAL

## 3.1 INTEGRATION OF ACTIVITIES AND PARTNERS

SB works across multiple sectors and has more than 20 partners and subcontractors working under the leadership of project staff based in Nepalgunj. Given these partners' discrete program responsibilities and the geographic spread of their activities, coordination and integration are ongoing challenges. Having established the basic institutional architecture through which project activities are carried out, the SB team is now at a point where it is better able to focus on addressing these challenges.

During this quarter, SB took two important steps towards greater coordination and integration. In January-February, Pact's Director of Knowledge Management, Sara Teitelman, and Mosaic Community Manager, Pamela Hobbs, visited Nepal to assess SB's knowledge management systems and make recommendations to improve practices. They held workshops with staff and partners to discuss common barriers to knowledge sharing and strategies to overcome them. One of the outcomes of their visit was a Mosaic website that now serves as a common platform for information sharing and exchange among SB partner organizations.

In March-April 2015, SB carried out an internal learning review in order to critically examine interventions in four defined areas of programming: local-level planning; youth engagement; women's empowerment; and media programming (see **Annex 5: Learning Review**). Part of the exercise was to assess the scope for deepening integration across programming areas. The review resulted in several recommendations that SB will pursue in the coming months. For example, the social capital generated through WORTH groups and LYGs will be leveraged more strategically to engage targeted communities in key processes related to local planning and social accountability. Similarly, GNGOs and other project partners will be increasingly engaged in influencing radio content to support their interventions.

# 4.0 CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS—EXTERNAL

## 4.1 POLITICAL DISTURBANCES

Despite the power tussle at the national level, SB's operational space was not affected significantly during the reporting period by *bandhs* or political demonstrations. The sporadic extortion threats that surfaced in the Mid and Far Western region during the first quarter of 2015 subsided as SB entered the second quarter. Nationwide strikes were announced for early April, but it is yet to be seen how disruptive they will prove. Citizens and the business community have frequently opposed such strikes, and the opposition alliance will watch closely to see how citizens react before deciding whether to continue or intensify them.

## 4.2 ALIGNMENT WITH MOFALD AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS

Although SB was designed to cover 50% of the VDCs in its six target districts, MoFALD's policy is to ensure 100% VDC coverage in each district so no VDC is "left behind." Through discussions with MoFALD and USAID, SB has proposed utilizing savings from its existing budget to provide partial support to the "other 50%" of VDCs that are not part of SB's current project areas. Beginning in Quarter 3, SB plans to support the development of three strategic documents—Periodic Village Development Plans (PVDP), Village Profiles, and Revenue Projection Assessments—in 75 VDCs not currently receiving SB support. It also will provide training on MoFALD accounting and Vital Events Registration System (VERS) software for 42 VDCs that are not currently covered by SB and already have computers. This training will be combined with SB's existing Phase 1 and Phase 2 VDCs providing economies of scale and thereby reducing the total cost.

Twenty-one VDCs in SB project areas have recently been merged with 13 municipalities. This significantly reduces SB's project VDCs, while creating the imperative to design new activities addressing municipalities. SB is currently in discussions with MoFALD and USAID about how best to address this situation.

# 5.0 FINANCIAL REPORT

## 5.1 MAJOR CATEGORY EXPENDITURES

TABLE 2: Q2 FY 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY PER INVOICE CATEGORIES

Item	Jan-15	Feb-15	March-15	Q2 FY2015 Total	Targets Q2 FY2015	%
<b>Personnel</b>	49,271.85	59,163.01	62,120.90	170,555.76	161,237.02	106%
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>	14,056.77	18,098.37	32,832.69	64,987.83	65,648.89	99%
<b>Consultants</b>	8,580.00	16,342.50	12,085.51	37,008.01	46,200.00	80%
<b>Travel</b>	11,880.36	12,914.36	17,697.60	42,492.32	55,668.05	76%
<b>Allowances</b>	4,987.82	3,335.69	3,709.88	12,033.39	19,886.80	61%
<b>Equipment &amp; Supplies</b>	7,703.40	8,981.40	5,490.03	22,174.83	11,675.00	190%
<b>Contractual</b>	206,426.10	258,580.66	265,935.39	730,942.15	1,005,188.87	73%
<b>Other Direct Costs</b>	21,597.22	29,025.81	19,035.07	69,658.10	85,539.41	81%
<b>Indirect Costs</b>	44,712.40	55,994.47	57,858.60	158,565.47	179,034.64	89%
<b>Fixed Fee</b>	13,439.52	15,009.33	15,537.55	43,986.40	49,127.46	90%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>382,655.44</b>	<b>477,445.60</b>	<b>492,303.22</b>	<b>1,352,404.25</b>	<b>1,679,206.14</b>	<b>81%</b>

## 5.2 STATUS OF EXPENDITURE FUNDS TOWARDS M&E PURPOSE

During this quarter the M&E expenditure rate was 81% of target as compared to 74% of target during the first quarter. The rate is projected to increase in coming months due to increased partner activity, as well as implementation of contracts for PETS, vocational training, and micro-projects.

Table 3: M&E Expenditures

Direct Costs	Amount	Targets	%
Personnel	13,012.43	5% of total Q1 budget	
Fringe Benefits	4,977.72		
Consultants	404.39		
Travel	2,682.23		
Equipment & Supplies	78.29		
Contractual	5,676.52		
Other Direct	16,529.71		
Indirect Costs	11,560.87		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54,922.16</b>	<b>83,960.03</b>	<b>65.41%</b>

## 5.3 LOE UTILIZATION SUMMARY STATUS

A total of 1,480.44 days were utilized against the 1,320 days projected during this reporting period. At the end of FY15 Quarter 2, 41% of the total approved LOE for the project had been utilized.

TABLE 4: LOE UTILIZATION FOR Q1 FY 2015

Position	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Q2 FY2015 Total LOE	Total Budgeted LOE	Total Remaining LOE
LTTA – Key Personnel	85.00	86.81	100.25	272.06	5,887.00	<b>3,711.25</b>
LTTA – Professional & Support	242.00	270.63	269.25	781.88	14,486.00	<b>8,888.56</b>
STTA	125.16	147.81	153.53	426.50	1,727.00	<b>494.24</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>452.16</b>	<b>505.25</b>	<b>523.03</b>	<b>1,480.44</b>	<b>22,100.00</b>	<b>13,094.05</b>

## 5.4 STAFFING MATRIX

The Operations Manager, Senior Field Director and Director of Finance positions were filled during this quarter, and SB is in the final stages of filling the vacant Procurement Officer position.<sup>13</sup>

TABLE 5: STAFF RECRUITMENT MATRIX

Position	Target Start Date	Recruit Status	Name
Chief of Party	11/22/13	Hired	Nick Langton
Deputy Chief of Party	11/17/14	Hired	Basanta Pokhrel
Senior Field Director	03/09/15	Hired	Mahesh Nepal
Senior Regional Program Manager	08/21/14	Hired	Shyam Mandal
Operations Manager	02/17/15	Hired	Howard Weston
Director of Grants & Contracts	07/17/14	Hired	Kumar Kafle
Director of Finance	02/16/15	Hired	Ram Chandra Paudel
Director of M&E	05/15/14	Hired	Amlshwar Singh
M&E Manager	04/10/13	Hired	Sudan Shivakoti
Finance Manager	03/18/13	Hired	Surya Upadhyaya
WORTH Manager	02/25/14	Hired	Reena Chaudhary
Office Manager - Kathmandu	10/17/13	Hired	Ananta Sharma
HR Manager	11/11/13	Hired	Anju Lamichhane
Conflict Manager	03/10/14	Hired	Geeta Pradhan
Administrative Manager	08/25/14	Hired	Adarsha Shrestha
Governance Manager -	07/07/14	Hired	Ram Prasad Dahal
Governance Manager	10/30/14	Hired	Ram Achal Yadav
G&C Manager	10/31/14	Hired	Suresh Sarki
GESI Manager	12/08/14	Hired	Srijana Chhetri
Senior GIS Officer	01/13/14	Hired	Nim Bahadur Thapa Regmi
Grants Specialist	10/23/13	Hired	Birendra Chaudhary
Grants Specialist		Vacant	
IT Officer	10/25/13	Hired	Bal Kumar Khatri
Procurement Officer		Vacant	
Administrative & Logistic Officer	01/23/14	Hired	Ameeruddin Ansari
Worth Field Coordinator	07/01/14	Hired	Birendra Thapa
Finance Assistant	05/06/13	Hired	Rita Diwan
M&E Associate	02/19/14	Hired	Radhika K.C.
Procurement Assistant	07/07/14	Hired	Lok Bahadur Khadka
Receptionist	07/08/13	Hired	Swechcha Shrestha
Residence Security and Maintenance Coordinator	01/09/14	Hired	Ram Kumar Lama
Office and Ground Maintenance Coordinator	11/18/13	Hired	Chitra Bhandari
Driver	05/10/13	Hired	Dulari Tharu
Driver	08/01/13	Hired	Karna Bahadur Lopchan
Driver	08/26/13	Hired	Tika Ram Sunar
Driver	08/01/13	Hired	Rajendra B.K.
Driver	07/07/14	Hired	Shib Kumar Thapa
Driver	07/21/14	Hired	Lal Bahadur Chand
Cleaner/Cook	08/01/13	Hired	Nanda Gharti Magar
Cleaner	08/01/13	Hired	Sunita Tharu
Cleaner	06/02/14	Hired	Chandra Kumari Thapa
Cleaner/ Cook	07/17/14	Hired	Rubina Damai

<sup>13</sup> Bishal Raj Shrestha was hired as Procurement Officer beginning April 9, 2015.

# ANNEX 1 : PMEP MATRIX

Indicator	Type	Source/ Method	Disaggregation	Geo-enabled reporting	Responsible	Frequency	Target Yr. 3	Q2 Target	Q2 Results	Remarks
<b>Goal: Targeted Communities are empowered to better direct their own local development</b>										
<b>Objective A: Enabling environment for community development established</b>										
<b>IR A1: early responses that address the causes and consequences of instability are institutionalized</b>										
Proportion of all mediation cases opened during the quarter preceding the period that were settled within 3 months	Outcome	Routine data collection CeLRRd - monthly reports	Ward, district, gender, ethnicity**	No	CeLRRd	Qrtly	80%	80%	81%	Total cases registered 950; total cases settled 774
Proportion of project VDCs that provide a budget in the current financial year that covers the operating costs of the CMC (rental, stipend of mediator, other office costs, transport)	Outcome	Baseline, midterm and endline surveys	District	Yes	Pact/ CeLRRd	Baseline, midterm and endline surveys	40%	40%	59%	34 out of 58 VDCs allocated budgets for the operating cost of CMCs, which SB attributes to CeLRRd's advocacy efforts with VDCs. SB will track the amounts allocated and received.

F: Number of new groups or initiatives created through USG funding, dedicated to resolving conflict or the drivers of the conflict	Output	Count of number of new community mediation centers established using CeLLRd reports	VDC, District	No	CeLRRd	Qtrly	57	1	1	1 Phase 2 CMC in Dang, Saudiyar VDC, has been established
F: Number of groups trained in conflict mitigation/resolution skills or consensus building techniques with USG assistance	Output	Training reports	District, VDC, gender, age, ethnicity	No	CeLRRd	Qtrly	57	5	5	5 BMT for Phase 2 VDCs were conducted
Number of new cases of individual/group conflict mediations opened during the reporting period	Output	Routine data collection CeLLRd - monthly reports	Ward, district, nature of dispute	No	CeLRRd	Qtrly	4000	1000	950	Total Cases Registered 950. Types of cases- Gender Based Violence: 12%, Resource Based Conflict: 10%, identity Based Conflict: 1%, Interpersonal Conflict: 77%
F: Number of conflict/fragility early warning systems, conflict assessment or response mechanisms supported by USG assistance	Output	Count of number of systems in place and number of conflict assessments done		Yes	Pact/ Saferworld/ CeLRRd	Qtrly	5	2	2	1 SMS Conflict Reporting System in place and findings from 1 Saferworld conflict assessment shared. Submitted the findings of the 4th and 5th Quarterly Conflict Assessments; the reports are currently

										awaiting sign-off from USAID. SB also finalized the methodology and collected data for the 6th Quarterly Conflict Assessment.
<b>IR A2: enduring solutions to the problems that drive conflict are adopted</b>										
Proportion of supported economic groups that provide more than 5 loans per year to their members	Outcome	Routine data collection WORTH LNGOs - monthly reports	District	Yes	WORTH LNGOs, Pact	Yearly	50%	50%	93%	64 groups had already issued at least 5 loans as of last quarter. This quarter, an additional 32 groups provided at least 5 loans, totaling 96 out of 103 groups (excluding 24 groups in Dang, where WORTH activities were suspended). The loan cycle is completed in six months during which time all members receive a loan; hence the target of 50% was set too low.
Proportions of DNGOs that have an improved Organizational Performance Index (OPI) score	Outcome	OPI tool	n/a	No	Pact	Yearly	85%	85%	86%	Out of 14 partners, 12 improved their OPI scores from baseline conducted in June

										2014. The greatest improvement was of JJMS, from 1 to 3. Partners' combined average OPI was 3 this quarter vs. 2.2 at baseline.
Number of youth who have started a business or found a job through the YI activities	Outcome	Routine data collection Youth Initiative - monthly reports	District	No	Youth Initiative	Yearly	TBD	TBD	9	Of 400 participants given entrepreneurship development training in September 2014, an additional 9 participants started a business this quarter, bringing the total up to 162 (40.5% of training participants). Target is being set by YI in consultation with SB.
Proportion of supported FM radio stations that produce quality radio programs that address issues on local government, youth, women, disadvantaged groups	Outcome	Tool to measure quality (EA) score card	District	Yes	Equal Access	Qtrly	80%	80%	86%	8 local partner FM radio stations have been producing local episodes of Sajhedari. To measure the quality of the program, quarterly Critical listening

										Feedback Sessions (CLFSs) were organized. In this quarter average score achieved was 86%.
Number of individuals who received USG-assisted training on inclusion (GESI charter) and the understanding of the root causes of the conflict	Output	Training reports	VDC, District, gender, ethnicity, type of training, age category	No	Pact/ LNGOs	Qtrly	6000			Not planned in this quarter
Number of new/existing women's economic groups formed during the reporting period	Output	Routine data collection WORTH LNGOs - monthly reports	District	Yes	WORTH LNGOs/ Pact	Qtrly	170	48	32	Failure to meet target will be made up in next quarter as new groups will be added beginning in April 2015
Number of economic group participants who received training on business and accounting	Output	WORTH LNGO reports	VDC, district, gender, ethnicity*, type of training, age category	No	Pact	Qtrly	1200	600	1122	1048 WORTH group members received micro enterprise business training, and 74 received Management Committee Training. 32 additional new groups were formed in Phase 1 VDCs. These groups had not been planned when the targets were set, thus the overachievement.

Number of Youth Groups and CMUs that have been established/revived/operational in the reporting period	Output	Youth Initiative reporting system			Youth Initiative	Qtrly	TBD	TBD	0	Youth group, CMU, DYN and RYN formation process completed in 58 VDCs in Y1 and Y2 (Total: 123, 58 LYGs, 58 CMUs, 6 DYNs, 1 RYN are functional).
Number of people who have been trained on the different YI training programs	Output	Youth Initiative training reports	VDC, district, gender, ethnicity, type of training age group	No	Youth Initiative	Qtrly	TBD	TBD	0	No training program organized while awaiting approval by USAID of Youth Initiative Y3 work plan
Proportion of VDCs that have youth groups/CMU that participate in the VDC planning process	Outcome	VDC meeting reports/files	District	Yes	Youth Initiative	Yearly	TBD	TBD	100%	All 58 VDCs had youth group participation. In total 245 youth took part in the recent planning process. No target has been set.
F: Number of media stories disseminated with USG support to facilitate the advancement of reconciliation or peace processes	Output	National broadcast episodes plus local FM station broadcasts episodes	National or local FM broadcast	No	Equal Access	Qtrly	1500	375	115	The total number of radio episodes was 115 (central level: 11 and local level: 104). Central level episodes were broadcast 148 times and local episodes were broadcast 1664 times, for a total of 1812. .

F: Number of non-state news outlets assisted by USG	Output	Progress report	District, type of FM stations	Yes	Equal Access	Qtrly	16	16	16	16 FM partners. One dropped out, but was replaced in March.
F: Number of USG supported events, trainings, or activities designed to build support for peace or reconciliation among key actors of conflict	Output	Training reports/ event reports, activity progress reports from IPs and LNGOs	District, VDCs, type of events, type of participants	No	Pact	Qtrly	75	14	14	5 BMTs were conducted in 5 districts for Phase 2 VDCs. 6 BMTs were conducted for Phase 1 VDCs. 3 trainings on GBV and mediation were facilitated by TAF.
Number of new listener clubs established	Output	EA reports	District	Yes	Equal Access	Qtrly	75			Targeted for Phase 2 VDCs
<b>Objective B: Communities access resources for development</b>										
<b>IR B1: Inclusive community strategic planning process are established</b>										
Number of local key stakeholders (community leaders, local government officials), trained in inclusive participatory planning	Output	Training records	District, VDC, gender, type of training		GNGOs/ Pact	Qtrly	2000			Training not planned in Q2. Trainings for the next planning process will be conducted in Q3-Q4.
<b>IR B2: Community development plans are established</b>										
Proportion of village development plans with a functional sustainability plan that adheres to locally agreed standards	Outcome	Review of village development plans	District	Yes	GNGOs/ Pact	Yearly	100 %	50%	N/A	Assessment by M&E is ongoing, will be reported next quarter

Number of WCF meetings that review the VDC plan to ensure equitable distribution of local resources	Output	Meeting reports	VDC, District	No	GNGOs/ Pact	Qtrly	57	25	N/A	SB is facilitating bi-monthly meetings of WCFs on different issues (such as GESI, local level planning process, roles and responsibilities of WCF). Recent meetings were focused on reviewing the VDC plans approved by Village Councils. Assessment of the # of meetings that have reviewed the equitable distribution of resources is ongoing and will be reported in next quarter
F: Number of awards made directly to local organizations (cross-cutting indicators)	Output	Progress reports	Type of award, District, NGO		GNGOs/ Pact	Qtrly	85	36	37	26 micro-grants to IPCs/ PMCs and 11 awards to district partners
<b>IR B3: Community based organizations advocate for needed resources for financial, technical and commodity support</b>										
Proportion of VDC plans that include a fundraising plan	Outcome	Review of VDC plans	District	Yes	GNGOs/ Pact	Yearly	65%	32%	N/A	Assessment ongoing, will be reported next quarter

Number of micro grants provided for community development	Output	Review of grants reports/ GMIS	VDC, District	Yes	GNGOs/ Pact	Qtrly	70	25	26	26 micro-grants were signed as of March 31; 13 have started implementation, of which one has completed implementation.
<b>Objective C: Communities implement inclusive development policies effectively</b>										
<b>IR C1: Mechanisms for transparent administration of funds is institutionalized</b>										
Number of individuals that received USG assisted training, including management and fiscal skills	Output	Training reports	District, VDC, gender, ethnicity, age group	No	WORTH-NGOs/ Pact	Qtrly	1200	300	493	493 members of IPC and PMC trained on management and fiscal skills
F: Number of people affiliated with NGOs receiving USG supported anti-corruption training	Output	Training report	District, VDC, gender, ethnicity, age group	No	PACT	Qtrly	30			Planned for upcoming quarter
Proportion of community projects that are allocated to women, youth or marginalized groups	Outcome	Review of community project funding allocation	District	Yes	GNGOs/ Pact	Yearly	60%			YI reported that 49 VDCs supported youth related projects. Assessment is necessary to confirm this. M&E will determine the exact number of projects for youth, marginalized groups and women, and the criteria used for classifying projects for these

										groups. The assessment will be carried out in the next quarter.
<b>IR C3: systems for sustainability are established</b>										
Proportion of user groups that improve their organizational capacity	Outcome	OPI adapted to user groups/ CBOs	District	Yes	GNGOs/ Pact	Yearly	70%	N/A		No target set for this quarter
<b>Objective D: Local government units function effectively</b>										
<b>IR D1: Local government officials effective carry out their mandate</b>										
F: Number of sub-national entities receiving USG assistance that improve their performance (government OPI)	Outcome	Baseline, mid-term and endline surveys	District, VDC	Yes	Pact	Baseline, mid-term, endline	30			Indicator will be revised
Proportion of VDCs that have run the local government barometer as a self-assessment tool	Output	Social audit reports	District	Yes	Pact	Yearly	0			Indicator removed in the revised PMP
Number of VDC officials trained and/or mentored in public administration, inclusive management, planning and implementation of VDC plans	Output	Training/ mentoring reports	District, gender, ethnicity, age groups	No	GNGOs/ Pact	Qtrly	1000	TBD	23	23 VDC officials were provided TOT in VDC accounting software (public administration). District-level training will follow as soon as USAID approves SB's proposal on capacity building training on accounting software and

										VERS (other training will follow in the next quarter)
<b>IR D2: Local government units and CBOs/CSOs collaborate to identify local development priorities</b>										
Number of times technical assistance is provided to local government ministries	Output	Reports			GNGOs/ Pact		TBD	TBD		Indicator will be revised
Proportion of Ward Citizen Forums (UGs/CBOs, CSOs) that have tracked their budget allocation	Outcome	Baseline, mid-term and endline surveys	District	No	PACT/external evaluator	Baseline, mid-term, endline	80%	20%		Assessment ongoing, will be reported in the next quarter
<b>Cross-Cutting Indicators</b>										
F: Proportion of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)	Output	WORTH reports	District, age	Yes	WORTH NGOs/ GNGOs/ Pact	Qtrly	100%	100%	100%	All activities of WEG LNGOs are designed for females, hence the proportion of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources is 100%.
<b>Updated on April 9, 2015</b>										

# ANNEX 2: ADDITIONAL TABLES AND FIGURES

FIGURE 4 ETHNIC/CASTE BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS IN BASIC MEDIATION TRAINING FOR REPLACEMENT CMS

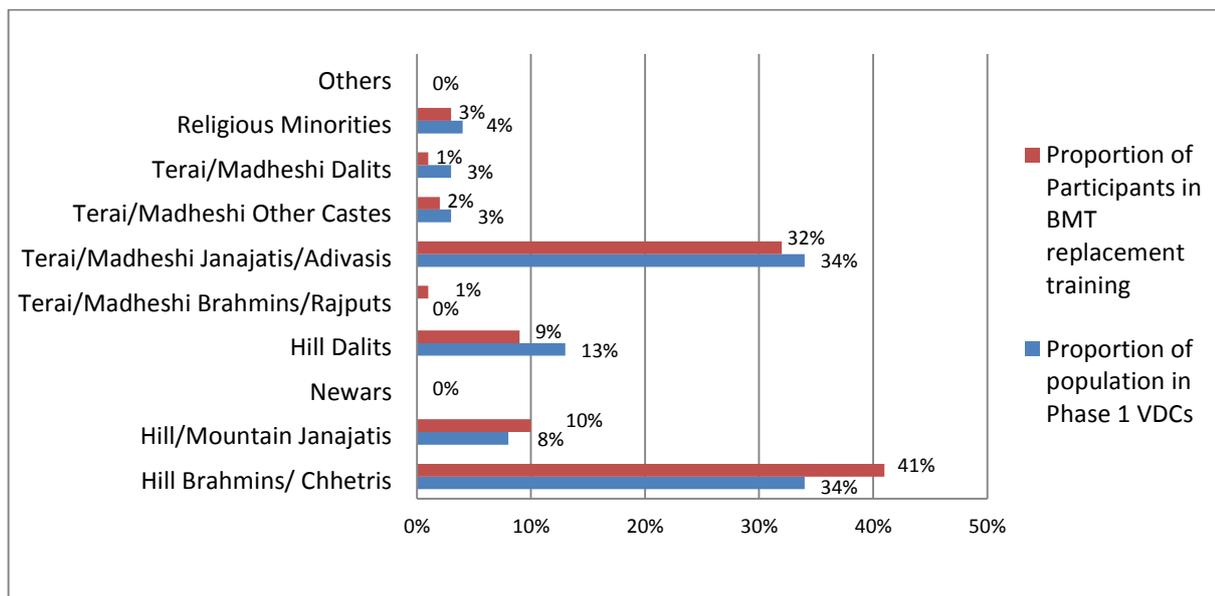


FIGURE 5 HOW DISPUTANT PARTIES LEARNED OUT ABOUT CMCS

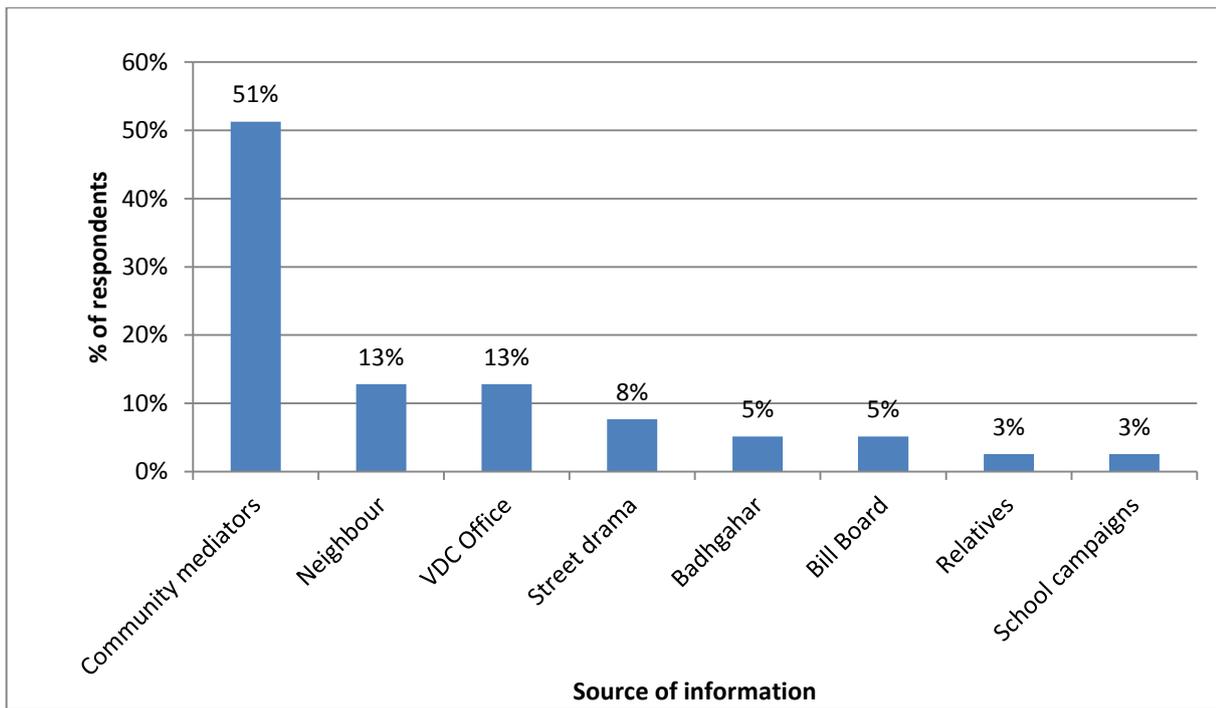


FIGURE 6 ETHNIC/CASTE BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS IN BASIC MEDIATION TRAINING FOR NEW CMS

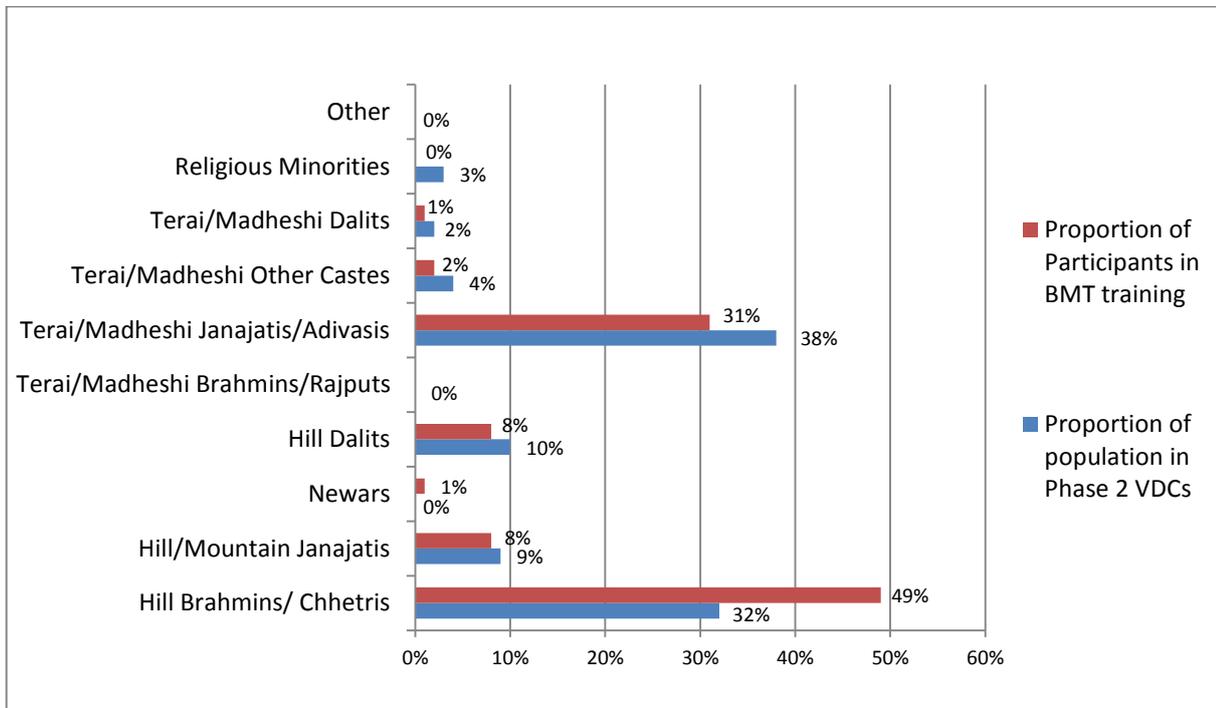


FIGURE 7 ETHNIC/CASTE BREAKDOWN OF WORTH GROUPS IN PHASE I VDCS

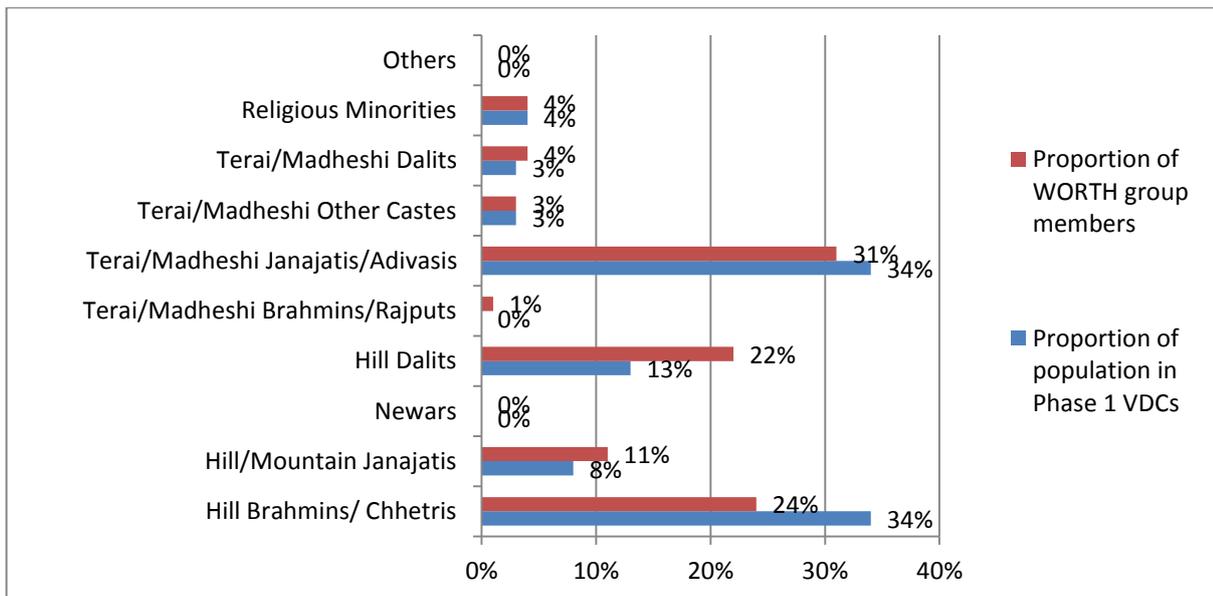


FIGURE 8 ETHNIC/CASTE BREAKDOWN OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE LOCAL PLANNING PROCESS

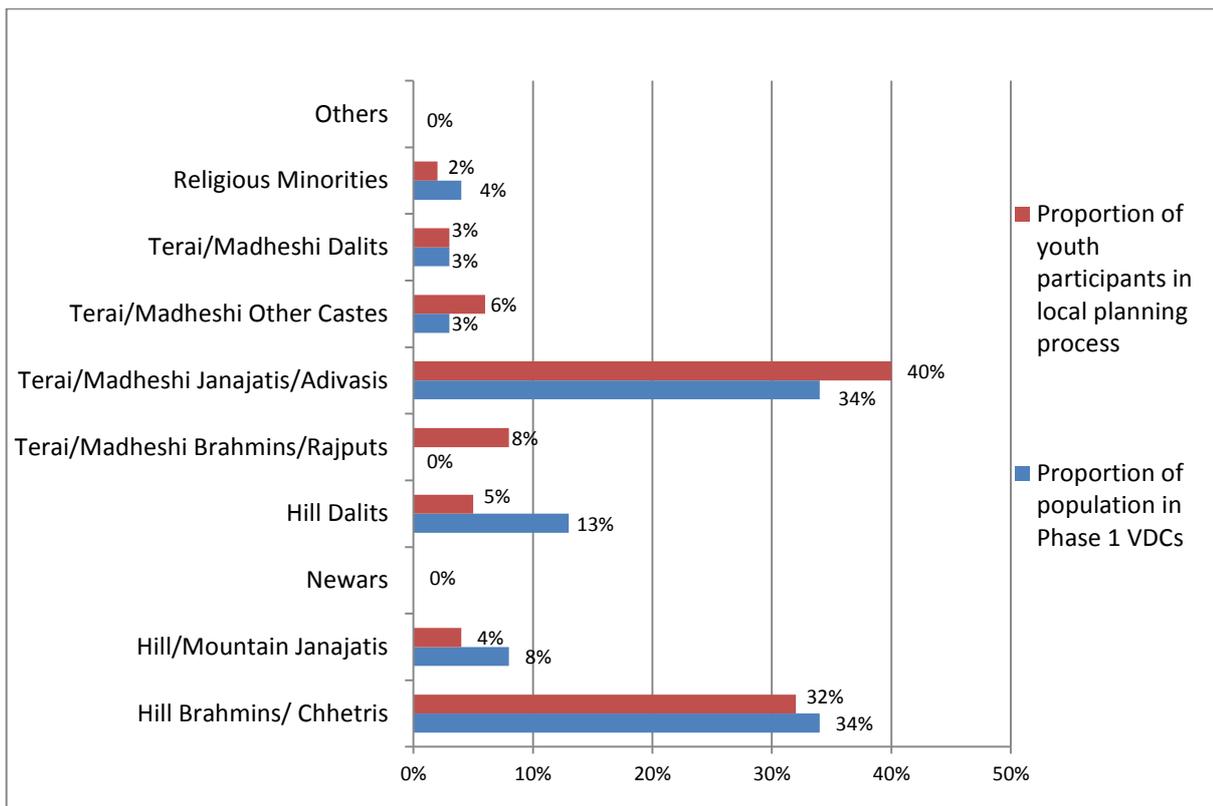


FIGURE 9 ETHNIC/CASTE BREAKDOWN OF RLG MEMBERSHIP

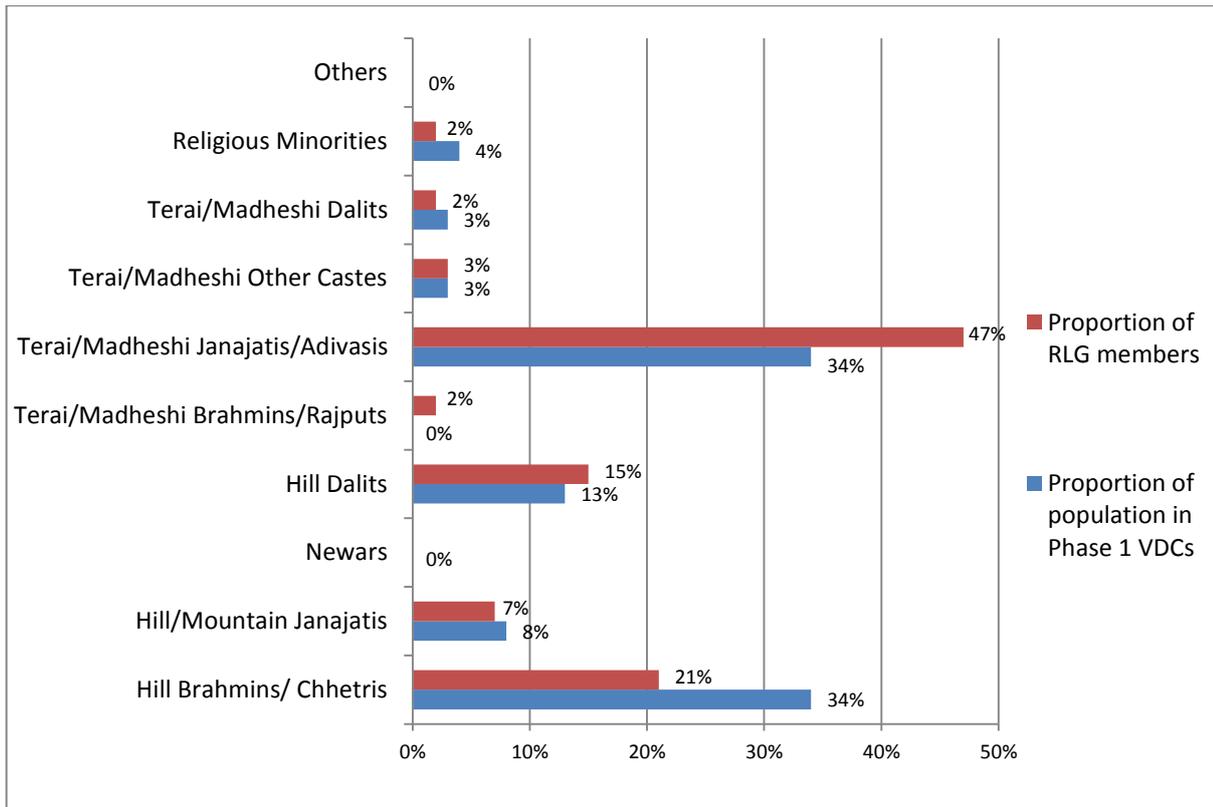


FIGURE 10 ETHNIC/CASTE BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS AT VDC COUNCIL MEETINGS IN PHASE I VDCS

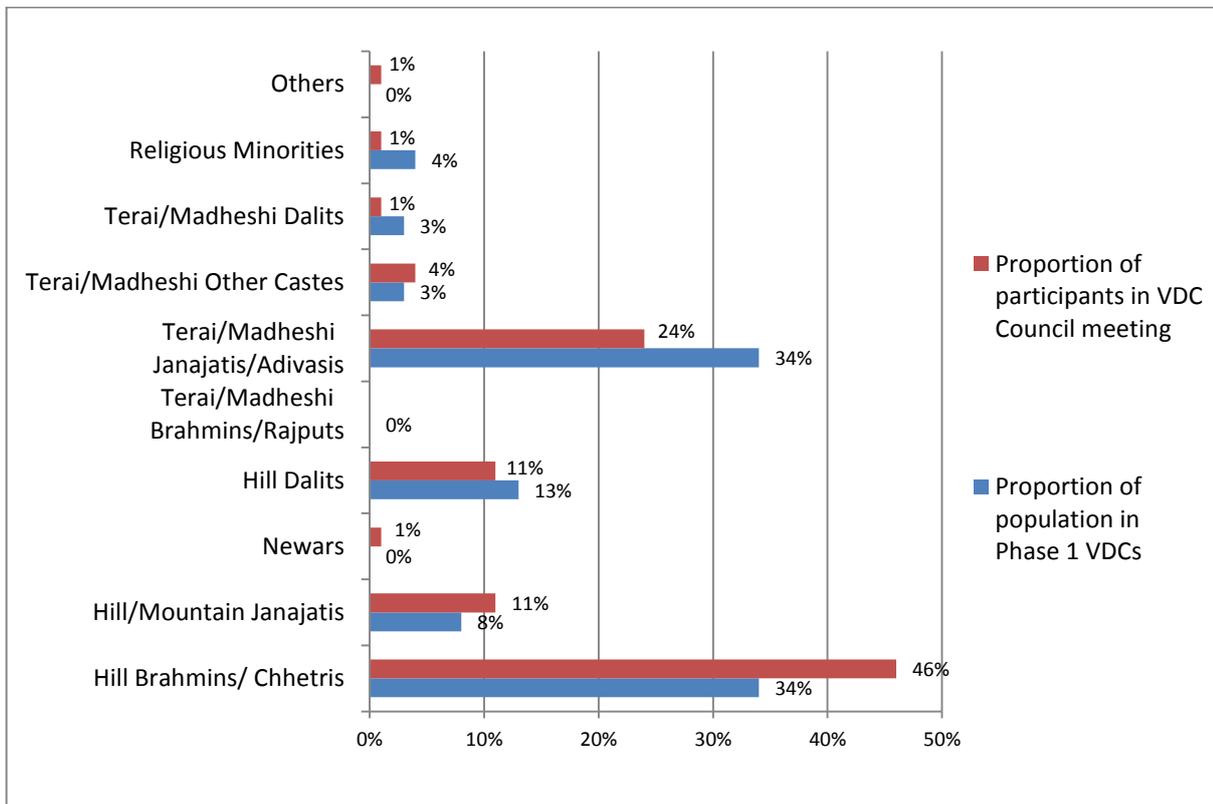


FIGURE 11 ETHNIC/CASTE BREAKDOWN OF IPFC/WCF MEMBERS THAT PARTICIPATED IN SB-FACILITATED ILAKA-LEVEL MEETINGS

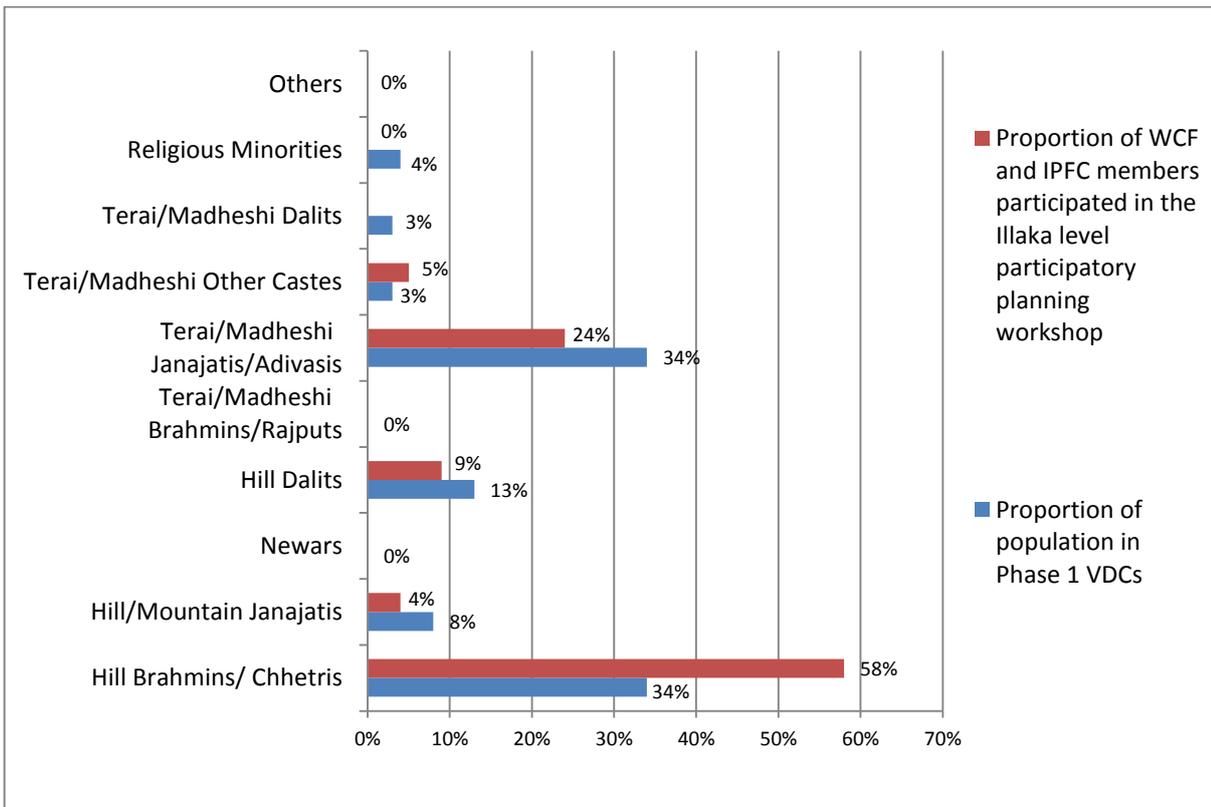
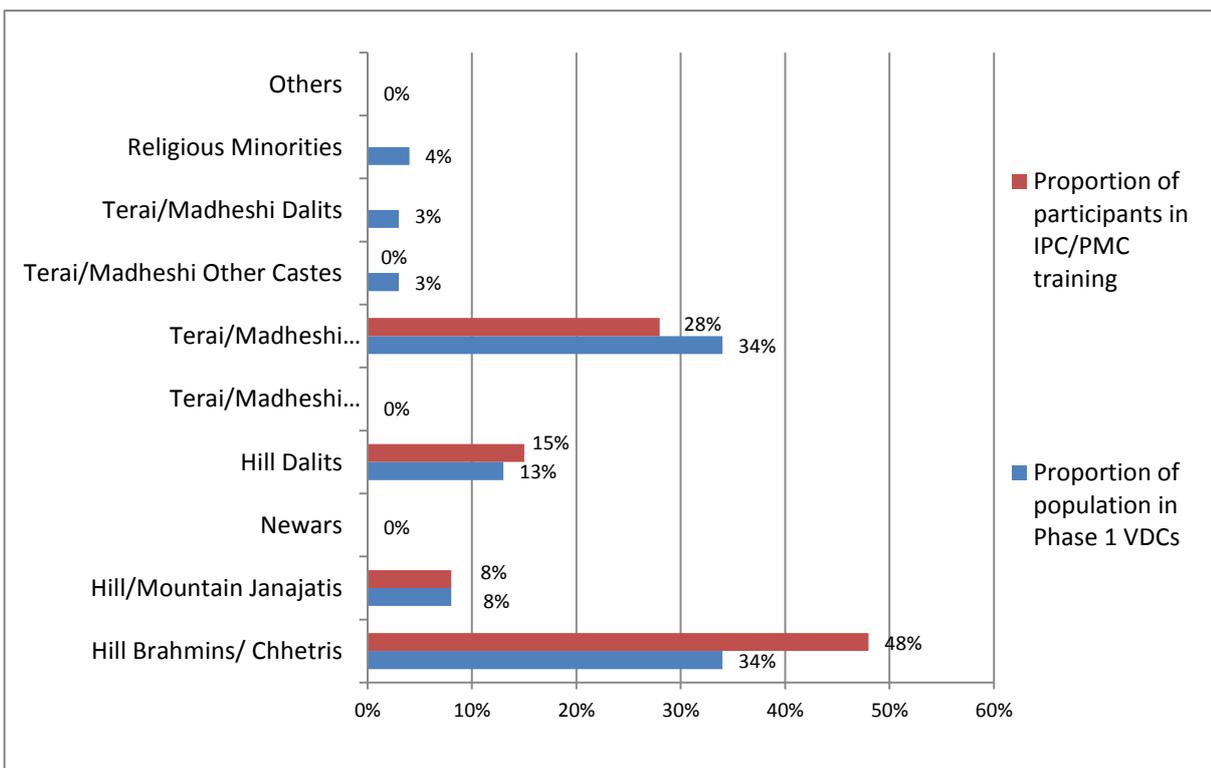


FIGURE 12 ETHNIC/CASTE BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS IN IPC/PMC TRAININGS



# ANNEX 3: SUCCESS STORIES



## Small Changes Support a Large Goal

Through literacy classes, women in a Madheshi community take steps toward more public roles.



*A WORTH literacy class*

Through small but important achievements, building literacy and a small degree of economic empowerment, Sajhedari Bikaas is able to reach its broader goals. By helping women gain the skills and confidence they need to play more active roles in public society, it hopes to engage women to meaningfully participate in governance processes.

In Farenda, Phattepur VDC, Ward No. 2 of Banke district, women in the Madheshi community spend the majority of their time on household chores. A woman's role is thought to be to look after her children, husband and family members, and women's work outside of the home is uncommon. WORTH activities carried out by Sajhedari Bikaas partner Fatima Foundation Nepal have led to changes to the status quo. Members of the WORTH group "Mahila Udwar Samuha" have begun to attend literacy classes and conduct savings and loan activities. At first, members of the group faced resistance from their husbands. Despite this hurdle, the women, continued to attend group meetings and were particularly dedicated to their literacy classes. Before beginning the literacy classes, only two group members out of 25 were able to write their names; the rest of the women signed documents using their fingerprints. With the support of the literacy volunteer, Manoj Pandey, a teacher from the local Gyan Jyoti Lower Secondary School, the women made great strides. Within two weeks after starting the classes, they were able to write their names and pronounce the alphabet in Nepali. Today, the women of this Madheshi community regularly attend meetings and literacy classes and are saving small amounts. They say that time flies during their classes and they always look forward to the next one.

## Radio Listeners' Groups Engagement in Governance and Development



*Ganga Magar and Meena Thapa sharing their experiences with their RLG*

***"We share the information acquired from radio programs with other fellow youths as well as villagers. The radio programs Sajhedari and Naya Nepal are useful for youth like us." - Meena Thapa (RLG member as well as coordinator of her local youth group)***



*Participants and audience of street drama on Child Marriage organized by Salghari RLG, Kunathari, Surkhet*

Sajhedari Bikaas works with 101 Rural Listening Groups (RLG) and their 2,152 members across six districts. The majority of RLG members are women and members of marginalized caste/ethnic groups. Sajhedari Bikaas works with these groups to engage listeners in discussion and participatory action, using the messages conveyed by radio as a starting point. Many RLGs have begun to take an active role in local governance and development processes, such as by advocating at VDC meetings, submitting projects to the VDC, and organizing awareness-raising events in their communities.

"We regularly listen to the radio programs *Sajhedari* and *Naya Nepal* (NN) and discuss the episode issues. We disseminate information received from the programs," says Geeta Ale, the facilitator of Salghari Rural Listening Group (RLG) in Kunathari VDC, Surkhet. Bimala Saru, an RLG member, adds "During the early days of formation we would wonder about the benefits of radio listening. Since radio programs *Sajhedari* and NN raise new issues and problems facing our villages, we regularly started listening to them and discussing the topics. We started sharing the information with other people too." Ale also notes that the RLG has built members' capacity for public engagement. "We can now express ourselves better regarding local development and social issues. We can also conduct and participate in social activities organized in our village." She says that group members recently won a street singing competition organized by the local health post, with a song about the hazards of child marriage.

"Recently, after listening to the PSA on violence against women, we organized a street drama against violence against women and child marriage" says Krishna Shrestha, RLG Secretary. He adds, "Had we not formed the RLG we would never have gathered to discuss social issues. Now that we are in the club, we have realized that we should take initiation for our development. We are able to inquire about the development process ongoing in our VDC too."



## LYG Member Sharmila Oli Participates in the IPFC

A new generation of community leaders joins in the local planning and development process.



*"I was completely unaware about the VDC planning process, I never thought that the VDC also allocates budget in different headings."*

*- Sharmila Oli*

Across SB districts, a total of 245 youth took part in the recent planning process at the settlement, ward, VDC, and/or DDC/Ilaka level. Among these youth, 31% were female and 68% came from disadvantaged caste/ ethnic groups. Youth Initiative and other SB governance partners are working to build youth participation in local planning and development processes.

One of these youth is Oli, a ninth grader at Janata Higher Secondary School. Most days she goes to school, completes her daily household chores (cooking, cleaning, tending the animals) and does her homework. However, she is also a member of the local youth group (LYG) and one of the youngest members of the VDC-level Integrated Planning Formulation Committee (IPFC) of Mahadevpuri VDC, Banke. In addition to the monthly LYG meetings, she is regularly involved in the group's community development activities, which she implements with zeal and has made a name for herself in her community.

Last year, Oli attended an orientation program on the planning process which was conducted by her LYG. It was at this time that she became a member of the IPFC, advocating for youth participation. During the recent planning process, she spoke on behalf of her LYG and advocated for a budget for youth. Subsequently, the Mahadevpuri VDC council allocated Rs. 70,000 for youth for the coming fiscal year.

She says that before joining the LYG, "I was completely unaware about the VDC planning process. I never thought that the VDC also allocates budget in different headings." She adds that Sajhedari Bikaas' youth empowerment program gave her a platform to develop to her fullest capacity. She feels proud to be an active member of her VDC's IPFC.

## Community Mediators Successfully Resolves a Group Conflict

Two communities resolve dispute and come together to build embankment.



Sajhedari Bikaas, through its partner the Center for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRd), has conducted group mediation training for mediators from each of its working VDCs. The training has conveyed skills and methodologies for mediating complex group cases, such as those involving community forests or water use, which were identified as having a high potential for escalation. Mediation of group disputes is an important part of creating an enabling environment for development, because the process fosters dialogue and consensus and results in greater social harmony. This mediation training was put into use when a dispute between two communities beside a river in Latikoili VDC began a heated conflict.

The dispute began when one community planned to construct an embankment on the river to protect an area of land from flooding. The other community objected, claiming ownership of the land on which the embankment was to be completed. The first community countered that the construction was on government land, which the second community was occupying and therefore could not object to the embankment or a bridge which had been constructed. Due to the dispute, construction was stalled.

The objecting party filed an application before the District Administration Office (DAO) of Surkhet on February 11, 2015. The DAO referred the case to the Community Mediation Center started by Sajhedari Bikaas and located in Latikoili. Over three sessions, the mediators were able to facilitate an agreement. In their agreement, both parties agreed to work together to build the embankment under a new, mutually beneficial plan and agreed to install a cement pipe to provide both communities with water from the river. It was agreed that if the cement bridge was an obstacle, it would be removed. All work would be carried out under the supervision of a technical expert. Since the mediation, the construction of embankment has begun with both parties' support.

# ANNEX 4: PROGRESS AGAINST WORK PLAN

Completed	
Ongoing	
Postponed	

Activity	15-Jan	15-Feb	15-Mar	Lead	Status	On Schedule?	Remarks
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>							
Conduct RDQA monitoring				Pact	Ongoing	Yes	
Review CDCS and adjust PMP indicators				Pact	Completed	Yes	Will be submitted in April. Final editing is underway.
Orient GNGOs on PBMS				Pact	Completed	Yes	
Train GNGOs on result-based monitoring and evaluation				Pact	Completed	Yes	
Convene quarterly progress review and planning workshops				Pact	Completed	Yes	















# ANNEX 5: LEARNING REVIEW

## SAJHEDARI BIKAAS LEARNING REVIEW

April 15, 2015

### 1. Introduction

In March-April 2015, the Sajhedari Bikaas (SB) project team carried out an internal learning review in order to critically examine interventions in four defined areas of programming: local-level planning; youth engagement; women's empowerment; and media programming. This learning review was driven by a desire to better understand SB's impact to date and future direction in these core intervention areas. As SB is nearing its mid-point and the start of "Phase 2" programming, which will extend the project's approach into other target VDCs, the management team felt that it was an especially strategic moment to reflect on key accomplishments, challenges, opportunities and areas for recalibration.

The learning review was not a formal project evaluation, but rather an attempt to consolidate key lessons, with a particular emphasis on lessons identified by project and partner staff. The observations and recommendations included as part of the review are based on project data, iterative discussions with project staff and partners, as well as targeted discussions with beneficiaries, including members of Ward Citizen Forums (WCF); Local Youth Groups (LYG); Radio Listeners' Groups (RLG); and WORTH groups. The final product of the learning review takes the form of four "learning briefs" which were developed as separate documents. While prepared by three different lead writers and structured somewhat differently, the briefs generally convey a similar set of information:

1. The learning briefs review the *intervention logic* that has evolved for each area of intervention. The logic sections attempt to make explicit the theories of change that underpin the project's work in these discrete areas. This involves situating interventions in specific components, such as youth engagement or media, within the larger context of the SB project.
2. The briefs outline the specific *interventions* through which the project attempts to bring about the change articulated in the intervention logic. This involves categorizing the types of activities included in each intervention area. Some of the briefs (such as the youth and women's empowerment sections) present general process-level indicators in the intervention section.
3. The briefs discuss *key results* achieved to date in each intervention area. In many cases, it remains too early to develop a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which the project is achieving desired intermediate results (IRs) and outcomes. To provide one example, local planning interventions did not begin in full until June 2014, meaning that the most recent perception survey conducted in November 2014 took place before the project had engaged in a full annual planning cycle. While IR and outcome-level data is often not available, the briefs attempt to discuss available process and output-level information in relation to IRs and outcomes in order to get a sense of project progress.

4. Most importantly, the briefs outline the *future direction* of the project, providing a set of general and specific recommendations that account for identifiable challenges and gaps in programming. Some of these recommendations could be implemented fairly easily by the SB project, while others would require further deliberation by the project management team and its USAID/Nepal counterparts.

The findings of the learning review confirm that the project has achieved some notable successes to date across each of the four areas of intervention examined through the learning briefs. There is evidence that it has strengthened or established various sets of institutions that foster robust engagement in both civic and economic spheres, including WCFs, LYGs, RLGs, and WORTH groups. The project has extended a range of targeted training and capacity development to individual members of these and other institutions. Available project data suggest that SB has helped to encourage broad participation in key civic processes, particularly local planning. Furthermore, there are early signs that women’s empowerment work conducted under the WORTH component is taking root and having impact.

While clear achievements exist in each of the four areas examined, there are also notable challenges and opportunities to meet. There is evidence that key components of the local planning process (as well as activities undertaken by LYGs and WORTH groups) have been broadly inclusive of marginalized groups. However, the project has limited data describing the *quality* and *depth* of that participation. For example, we know that women represented 45 percent of the 22,500 people participating in ward meetings aimed at prioritizing local development projects. But, we do not know the extent to which women actively participated in those meetings.

There also exists significant scope for *deepening integration* across the various intervention areas. For example, the social capital generated through WORTH groups and LYGs could be leveraged more strategically to engage targeted communities in key processes related to local planning and social accountability. Similarly, Governance Non-Governmental Organizations (GNGOs) and other project partners should be increasingly engaged in influencing radio content to support their interventions. Discussions with SB and partner staff suggest that establishing and strengthening the different institutions through which specific interventions are delivered (i.e. WCFs, LYGs, WORTH groups, etc.) has involved at times a narrow, “nuts and bolts” focus on key interventions as discrete components. Having established the basic institutional architecture through which project activities are carried out, the SB team is now at a point where it is better able to focus on integration.

Below is a summary of a few of the recommendations included under each intervention area:

### Local Planning

- *Target communities based on an analysis of who remains excluded from resource flows:* SB staff report qualitative observations that certain settlements and WCFs – especially communities with majority marginalized populations – continue to be under-represented in terms of receipt of development funds. Analysis of approved VDC plans (combined with information provided by social mobilizers) should provide SB and its GNGO partners with an understanding of which communities continue to lag behind. The project should do more to target these communities with discrete interventions aimed at helping them engage *effectively* in local planning processes.
- *Develop tools that help the project team gauge the quality of participation in planning processes:* As noted above, the project lacks data indicating the extent to which women and other excluded groups meaningfully participate in key events, such as settlement, WCF and VDC meetings. The project should develop simple, effective tools for gauging *who* is participating and *how* they are participating. SB may consider developing a “participation scoring index” or similar tool that allows enumerators to capture the extent to which women and participants from marginalized groups speak up at events.

## Youth Engagement

- *Better understand the extent to which LYGs are networked:* SB interventions clearly aim to create better connected youth groups and young people. While members of LYGs interact through District Youth Networks (DYNs) and a Regional Youth Network (RYN), the project has a limited understanding of the real strength of those networks. The SB project can consider using Pact's Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) to evaluate and track the structure and density of the networks over the remainder of the project.
- *Leverage LYGS and their networks to enhance outreach related to local planning and, in particular, better target marginalized communities:* LYGs are well positioned to drive outreach initiatives related to local planning, such as door-to-door campaigns, literature drops, street *bahas* and other activities. Effective engagement of LYGs, however, will require SB facilitating greater exchange of information between Youth Initiative (YI) and GNGO partners, as well as between social mobilizers and LYGs.

## Women's Empowerment

- *Extend capacity building around rights, responsibilities and advocacy to WORTH groups:* Earlier iterations of WORTH in Nepal have successfully combined economic empowerment with strengthened capacity around civic engagement. The SB project should update past curriculum used for building the civic skills of WORTH group members. A combination of literacy-led savings and credit groups with capacity building on advocacy would be strategic in enabling SB to truly support women fulfilling their capabilities as agents of change and development in their communities.
- *Build the capacity of WORTH group members who are members of WCFs:* A total of 222 WORTH members are also currently members of WCFs. These women leaders are well positioned to play substantive and forceful roles within WCFs. The SB project should provide discrete training and coaching to these women to engage to their fullest potential in key civic processes. This should include building connections and mutual lines of support within this peer group.

## Media

- *Adjust programming to boost listenership:* Available project data indicates a need to expand listenership for SB-supported programming. Led by its media partner, Equal Access (EA), the SB project should continue to recalibrate programming to respond to feedback from Content Advisory Groups (CAGs) indicating a desire for more radio dramas, as well as interactive programming (such as programs with quiz show formats). Additionally, EA may also try to scale up efforts at advertising programs as a means of expanding listenership.
- *Support in-depth journalism tied to local governance processes:* Support for more in-depth and data-driven stories by EA could produce more locally-relevant, impactful programming tied to key topics related to the project. In-depth stories could be one element of a larger package of content adjustments aimed at fostering expanded listenership. Furthermore, investments in in-depth journalism would support the development of a key skill too often in limited supply within the media sector in Nepal.

## **2. Facilitation/Support of the Local Planning Process**

### *2.1 Intervention Logic for Improved Local Planning*

The engagement of SB in the local-level planning process sits at the center of the project's effort to *empower communities to direct their own development*. Unequal access to development resources served as a root cause of Nepal's conflict and continues to represent a potential source of grievance. Furthermore, connections between community and local government structures remain nascent. The SB baseline survey found that only 7 percent of respondents had participated in the Village Development Committee (VDC) planning process over the previous year, with even lower levels of participation for women and youth. There exist pronounced barriers to equitable, broad-based engagement in local governance. Women and marginalized caste and ethnicity groups need to develop the skills and confidence to participate in processes from which they have been historically excluded. Similarly, formal and informal authorities in state institutions and community structures must broaden their view of who belongs "at the table." All of this must be nurtured by local state institutions that remain weak. For example, target VDCs have historically demonstrated limited capacity to complete medium to long-term planning to help guide strategic investments in local development.

SB's approach is to strengthen the implementation of the 14-step planning process developed by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD). Through support for the MoFALD process, SB invests in officially-sanctioned mechanisms that will persist beyond the life of the project, rather than building parallel structures for citizen-state engagement that are unsustainable. SB is built around an understanding that increased participation in local planning will help empower communities to also engage in social accountability processes, and that citizen involvement in local planning will increase public awareness of how and what resources are allocated, as well as provide communities with a greater stake in how those resources are used. The VDC planning process, therefore, offers a clear entry point for reducing the cognitive and material distance between society on the one hand and the state on the other.

The SB approach that has evolved recognizes that there are two critical players to local planning: the VDC and the *community*, represented most directly by the ward citizen forum (WCF). The project strengthens VDCs' ability to provide strategic and longer-term direction for local development through a range of technical assistance services and training. Similarly, SB seeks to increase the capacity of communities to engage in VDC planning. As is described below, a range of project interventions are used to encourage inclusive and meaningful participation in local governance. Importantly, the supply- and demand-side investments under SB are designed to foster mutual "buy in" of the planning process, as well as create opportunities for constructive engagement between VDC and community actors.

## *2.2 Key Interventions for Improved Local Planning*

The SB strategy for strengthening local planning includes a dual, interconnected focus on both long-term planning and annual VDC planning. The local planning process is supposed to be underpinned by a longer-term vision set by VDCs through a consultative process. This vision is captured most directly in Periodic Village Development Plans (PVDPs) prepared by VDCs, which are supported by a range of other strategic documents. PVDPs and related products are reflected in standards set by MoFALD in its Minimum Conditions Performance Measure (MCPM). In reality, however, VDCs rarely go through long-term planning processes, with 57 of 58 of SB's Phase 1 target VDCs lacking some or all strategic documents.

Strengthened longer-term planning directly feeds into the project's support for improved annual planning. The 14-step planning guidelines stipulate that MoFALD block grants should fund projects identified at the settlement level and selected through consultative processes by higher-level community and government bodies. SB focuses its interventions on steps 4-11 in the process, which cover the flow of projects identified at the settlement level up until integrated plans are delivered to the District Development Committee (DDC). Steps 1-3 represent Ministry-level planning and budget projecting and steps 12-14 are driven by DDCs after VDC plans are complete.

## 14-Step Local Planning Process<sup>14</sup>

<b>Step One</b> Directives from Nepal Planning Commission (NPC) and line ministries delivered to district	<b>Step Five</b> Settlement-level workshops aimed at identifying projects	<b>Step Nine</b> Ilaka level planning workshop aimed at prioritizing sectoral projects identified by VDCs to be forwarded to DDC	
<b>Step Two</b> Review of directives, policies and estimated budget at district level	<b>Step Six</b> Ward committee meeting aimed at prioritizing projects identified at settlement level	<b>Step Ten</b> Sectoral planning committee meeting to prioritize sectoral programs identified by VDCs	<b>Step 13</b> DDC reviews and approves District Development Plan
<b>Step Three</b> Planning workshop aimed at dissemination of policies, objectives, program resources, budget to VDCs	<b>Step Seven</b> VDC meeting aimed at preparing a list of prioritized projects received by WCFs	<b>Step Eleven</b> IPFC meeting to assess and analyze prioritized programs/projects from different sectors and to incorporate projects into different sectoral committees plans	<b>Step 14</b> Implementation of District Development Plan – Plan forwarded to MoFALD and NPC, as well as to sector ministries
<b>Step Four</b> VDC Meeting to analyze projects to be carried out at ward/settlement level	<b>Step Eight</b> Village council meeting aimed at formally approving project lists	<b>Step Twelve</b> DDC committee assesses the District Development Plan in relation to GoN/NPC instructions; prioritize projects on sectoral and geographic basis	

While some degree of local planning predates interventions in SB target VDCs, baseline and other project data indicate that the process tended to be insufficiently participatory. Qualitative discussions with key stakeholders suggest that key planning steps are followed inconsistently. A particularly weak link in the chain is the lack of settlement-level consultations (Step 4), which are designed to serve as the genesis of local plans. Rather than use settlements as the engines of project-identification, local elites (including political parties) commonly set the agenda at the level of the WCF and above.

SB provides a package of inputs and investments to both VDC and community structures designed to broaden and deepen participation in local planning. This package includes technical services to VDCs to facilitate the development of strategic and long-term plans. It also includes training for a range of key stakeholders to build their capacity to engage in planning. SB seeks to mobilize communities through improved outreach and networking. Furthermore, the project incentivizes robust planning through investments in small-scale infrastructure projects identified by settlements and prioritized by WCFs. Finally, the project is designed to leverage activities implemented under Objective A – including Local Youth Groups (LYGs), WORTH groups and radio programming – to reinforce the planning process. These and other investments are discussed in detail below.

### Technical Assistance to VDCs for Long-term Planning

Working through its district-based GNGO partners, SB provides technical assistance to VDCs to develop PVDPs, as well as a set of complementary documents, including the following:

<sup>14</sup> Steps in which the SB project intervenes are highlighted in grey.

- *VDC Profiles*: Documents that provide historical, cultural, geographic and socio-economic information. Importantly, the documents provide an overview of key assets and defining characteristics of VDCs.
- *Resource Mapping and Management Plans (RMMPs)*: RMMPs provide an overview of key assets, commercial interests and public-private partnerships that exist within VDCs. Resource maps are created with the participation of VDC officials and community leaders, including members of WCFs and Citizen Awareness Centers (CACs). The maps identify various natural resources, such as rivers, sand, gravel, forest, as well as human resources such as the presence of skilled tradespersons like carpenters and masons. They are used to help VDCs and other entities understand the extent to which certain communities, particularly marginalized communities, are able to tap into existing resources.
- *Internal Revenue Assessment and Projections (IRAPs)*: IRAPs are prepared by VDCs in order to outline existing and projected sources of revenue, in particular revenue generated through local taxation and service charges. They are designed to support more realistic development planning based on accurate projections of available financial resources.
- *Local Disaster Risk Management Plans (LDRMPs)*: LDRMPs are prepared by VDCs deemed highly or moderately vulnerable to natural disaster – including floods, landslides and earthquakes – as determined by surveys completed by development partners such as UNDP at the district level. The management plans identify specific risk mitigation and management strategies. This includes the development of alert systems, as well as seemingly small steps such as encouraging flood vulnerable households to hang essential documents from the ceiling.

The above-mentioned strategic documents all contribute to the development PVDPs, which articulate a VDC's five-year vision for local development. These periodic plans enable VDCs to set investment priorities that are informed by (and then disseminated to) community structures, most notably WCFs. PVDPs, therefore, allow for more rational and better-coordinated planning that fits within a broader framework for local development.

SB's strategy is to *facilitate* the process of developing these strategic plans. The critical obstacle to the preparation of the documents is the lack of human resources and technical expertise to draw together significant levels of data and information from local partners. For example, while the core of a PVDP consists of projects identified by VDCs and community stakeholders, the final document is typically 80-100 pages in length, including corollary elements such as a situation analysis, SWOT analysis, capacity development plan for the VDC and monitoring and evaluation plan. Through GNGOs, SB furnishes VDCs with local technical consultants who help facilitate a participatory design process with stakeholders at various levels, such as WCFs, CACs, Integrated Planning Finance Committees (IPFCs) and VDCs. Consultants then play the role of documenting information and planning developed through the process. Strategic documents are only final when approved by VDC councils, which include representatives from WCFs, CACs, IPFCs and political parties in the absence of elected councilors.

Technical assistance provided by GNGOs plays a critical role in enabling the completion of long term strategic planning documents. However, it should be noted that the heaviest lift for VDCs is the initial development of these products. There exists a greater probability that future updates or revisions of the plans can be managed more fully by VDCs themselves.

### Training and Capacity Development for Local Planning

The SB project provides training to a range of stakeholders at the community and VDC levels. Training focuses on ensuring that key institutions – including WCFs, CACs, IPFCs and VDCs – understand the planning process and, more specifically, their discrete role in local planning. Training is provided by GNGOs based on trainer of trainers (ToTs) given by consultants hired by the SB

project. The training is tailored to the specific needs of institutions, with separate two-day trainings on the local planning process delivered to WCFs, IPFCs and VDCs. Additionally, WCFs receive a separate one-day training on “roles and responsibilities,” which reviews basic processes and expectations for WCF operations. The roles and responsibilities training covers practical concepts such as meeting facilitation, social mobilization and operations guidelines for WCFs. Finally, SB delivers a separate, two-day training on social accountability tools at the VDC level, which covers mechanisms such as public forums, public audits, and right to information (RTI).

While the project designs specific trainings for different levels of institutions, it is important to note that trainings at the IPFC and VDC levels deliberately include participants from a range of bodies. Members of WCFs and CACs participate at all IPFC and VDC trainings, as do members of political parties and various social groups. This approach is designed to create opportunities for mutual dialogue, understanding and appreciation of key elements of the 14-step process. Furthermore, while essential content is delivered through formal trainings, GNGOs are expected to reinforce capacity development through various other activities. GNGO-facilitated monthly meetings among VDC-level stakeholders, *Sajhedari Chautari*, are used to review key concepts and coordinate activities related to local planning. As is described below, social mobilizers employed by GNGO partners provide follow up coaching on a formal and informal basis.

### Social Mobilization and Awareness-Raising

Social mobilization and awareness-raising is a critical aspect of the SB approach to expanding participation in local planning. Multiple interventions are designed to bring communities and individuals into the planning process. Trainings are designed to equip WCFs to play the lead role in reaching out to communities to participate in planning activities. Key activities under Objective A are designed to support mobilization efforts. For example, radio programming includes messaging around local planning and LYGs are trained to engage in the 14-step process.

Social mobilizers represent the primary interface between the SB project and community-level institutions and are uniquely placed to encourage equitable and quality participation from individuals involved in local planning. They attend WCF and CAC meetings, where they reinforce key messages from trainings. They also serve as networkers, connecting information between multiple structures, such as the WCFs and VDCs. As the member of one WCF explained, “before we had trouble getting information [from the VDC], but now we get important information from the social mobilizer.” In the words of one SB manager, there are “hundreds of things that they [social mobilizers] can do that can’t be defined as formal activities.” Importantly, effective social mobilizers understand local power structures and help communities navigate those structures.

### Micro Investments in Local Projects

SB is designed to reinforce the planning process through the provision of micro-grants (valued at up to \$5,000) to support WCF-prioritized projects originating from the settlement level. More importantly, the grants are designed to promote good practices related to the implementation and management of funded projects through citizen oversight. As established by MoFALD, projects funded by micro-grants are managed by an Implementing Partner Committee (IPC), which is composed of 11 project beneficiaries including 50 percent women and at least one woman in a key role. The projects are then monitored by a Project Monitoring Committee (PMC), which includes seven members from the WCF, CAC, GNGO and VDC. All projects will go through social audits organized by the IPC with participation from the PMC.

SB’s micro investments in local projects remain at an early stage of development, with 42 approved through March 2015 and 2 completed. These numbers will increase rapidly during the remainder of Year 3.

### 2.3 Results to Date in terms of Improved Local Planning

SB investments in the VDC planning process are directed at achieving Objective B of the project: *improved communities' ability to access resources for development*. Specifically, activities aimed at strengthening local planning contribute to all three intermediate results under Objective B:

- Result B.1: Inclusive community strategic planning processes established
- Result B.2: Strategic community development plans established
- Result B.3: CBOs advocate for needed resources for financial, technical and commodity

GNGO partners were only on-boarded in March 2014 and began implementation of core governance activities in June of the same year. The fact that investments in local planning are at an adolescent stage makes it difficult to demonstrate absolute progress against intermediate result and even outcome-level indicators. The second semi-annual perception survey was conducted in November 2014, just as the VDC planning process was beginning. This means that movement in key indicators related to local planning (both positive and negative movement) cannot be attributed to SB interventions at this time.

While it is difficult to point to clear-cut outcome-level impact, process and output indicators (combined with qualitative information from project stakeholders and staff) makes it possible to discuss progress toward the project's intended results. Given that the project has just completed its first local planning process cycle in Phase 1 VDCs, it is a strategic moment to reflect on progress to-date as lessons can help the project retool for the next round of planning. The next perception survey, due in June 2015, will provide the project with an understanding of the degree to which outputs described below are positively affecting public sentiment regarding local governance.

#### Improved Long-term Strategic Planning

Perhaps the clearest evidence of progress and "value-add" from SB interventions to date can be seen in the project's facilitation of longer-term strategic planning by VDCs. As is described above, there is little substantive evidence of strategic planning by VDCs prior to the commencement of SB activities. Indeed, only one of 58 Phase 1 VDCs was current on all of its strategic planning documents. Technical assistance from SB contributed to the remaining 57 VDCs completing village profiles, RMMPs and IRAPs. Nine disaster-prone VDCs were helped to develop LDRMPs. Furthermore, 41VDCs have completed PVDPs. Because the strategic documents were prepared concurrent to the previous VDC planning cycle, it is too early to evaluate their impact on annual planning. Moving forward, the project will want to assess the extent to which PVDPs and other documents inform the development of annual plans.

#### **Increased Adherence to Government Guidelines**

SB views one of the key early impacts of the project as increased compliance to government guidelines related to local planning and the management of local entities. This is especially evident in changes in the leadership composition of WCFs. MoFALD guidelines stipulating that WCF chairs should alternate between men and women year-to-year have rarely been followed. This is starting to change as is illustrated most dramatically in Sahare VDC, Surkhet, where all WCF chairs are now women as of this year.

#### Broad Participation in Local Planning

Project data suggest that there has been broad participation of communities in local planning processes. GNGO figures show that more than 22,500 people participated in ward meetings aimed at prioritizing projects identified at the settlement level, including more than 10,200 women (45 percent) and nearly 14,000 people from excluded caste or ethnic groups (61 percent). SB did not collect baseline figures that are directly equivalent to these measures. However, available data does suggest enhanced participation. As cited above, the SB baseline survey found that only seven percent of respondents participated in the planning process in the previous year. Furthermore, the baseline found

that just over 20 percent of respondents felt that they could provide meaningful input into village development plans.

Data from GNGO partners demonstrate that the development of PVDPs and related strategic documents involved consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. More than 18,200 people participated in ward-level meetings aimed at informing PVDPs, including over 8,000 women (44 percent) and 11,500 people from excluded caste or ethnic groups (63 percent).

### Influence over Development Plans and Resources

Project staff view the increased involvement of settlements in the planning process as highly significant, because it *potentially* marks a change from past practices in which settlements failed to play their mandated role and local elites played the lead role in setting priorities. Ultimately the project aims not only at increased participation in planning, but seeks to enable communities to increasingly influence and control local development resources. Initial analysis from the just-completed planning cycle suggests that higher-level bodies were generally respectful of projects identified by settlements and prioritized by WCFs. In Banke, for example, 93 percent of projects endorsed by VDCs came from projects vetted by WCFs and identified at the settlement level. Similarly, 100 percent of projects approved by VDCs in Dang were derived from WCFs. Project staff plan to extend analysis to all districts to understand the extent to which approved projects flowed from the official planning process.

#### *2.4 Investments in Local Planning Moving Forward*

Interventions to date provide a strong foundation in terms of strengthening and broadening the engagement of local communities in VDC planning. VDCs are now equipped with strategic documents that set a long-term vision of local development in their jurisdictions. Training and outreach activities have been used to build understanding among key stakeholders and communities regarding local planning. Furthermore, other project components such as WORTH and youth interventions are now fully operational and can be leveraged to promote participation in the planning process. The SB project is well positioned to focus increasingly not just on broadening participation, but on deepening it and developing more targeted support especially to marginalized communities.

##### *1. Target communities based on an analysis of who remains excluded from resource flows*

Project data demonstrate high numbers of individuals and communities participating in the local planning process. However, project staff only recently have the data to begin analyzing the extent to which: 1) WCFs based their prioritized project lists on settlement-identified projects and 2) VDC plans ultimately reflected the priorities of WCFs. SB staff report qualitative observations that certain settlements and WCFs – especially communities that are majority marginalized populations – are under-represented in finalized village development plans. SB staff stressed that the project and its GNGO partners can increasingly target outreach and messaging to known marginalized communities.

Analysis of recently completed VDC plans against settlement/WCF-level priorities provides a valuable opportunity to understand the extent to which certain types of communities (such as those disproportionately populated by disadvantaged groups) continue to have more marginal access to development resources. The information generated from this analysis can be used to help the project better target specific communities with messaging and support. For example, social mobilizers from GNGOs may amplify their engagement with WCFs and settlements failing to access VDC resources. This could involve reviewing the previous year's requests and working with community members to develop more strategic approaches to structuring and lobbying for future requests. The data could be used to help VDCs understand inequities in resource flows within their jurisdiction. Furthermore, the data will also be useful to USAID and its implementing partners in developing a textured understanding how local development resources are accessed and distributed.

## 2. *Help WCFs strategically engage in the planning process*

Through their engagement in VDC planning, whole communities are being asked to participate in decision-making processes over which they previously had little involvement. Engagement in local planning is a political act that requires certain political skills. SB training and coaching provides WCFs with a foundational understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and prepares them to define their development priorities. Project staff indicate that certain WCFs are more effective than others at presenting and lobbying on behalf of priorities. A visit to two adjacent WCFs in Banke district serves as a case-in-point. One WCF explained that they were disappointed that key priorities were not funded by the VDC, so they went to the Ilaka review meeting and successfully lobbied to have projects approved. By contrast, when a neighboring WCF reported that none of their requested priorities received funding, a quick review of their request showed that all of their listed projects were very high in value. That they might be unlikely to win approval for a number of expensive projects had not occurred to this particular VDC.

The understanding that it may be strategic to align WCF requests with VDC priorities, or include a mix of large and small projects on a request, or lobby the right people and institutions to promote a request must be learned and exercised over time. Social mobilizers play an essential role in reinforcing these and other skills that essentially represent political savvy. However, the project may consider additional, intentional ways of allowing stakeholders to build and practice these skills. These may include using formal trainings or mechanisms such as *Sajhedari Chautari* or WCF meetings to conduct hands-on simulations of key steps in the planning process, which may help stakeholders think through and role play strategy. As noted above, SB and its GNGO partners should extend targeted support to WCFs that have been less successful in the previous planning cycle.

## 3. *Strengthen the involvement of WORTH groups and YLGs in the local planning process*

There exists significant social capital within WORTH groups and YLGs that can be leveraged in order to support the local planning process. As is discussed in the learning brief on youth engagement, YLGs engaged in the planning process through the issuance of specific project requests. Additionally, YLGs have undertaken outreach and public education around local planning, but not to their full extent possible. WORTH groups have been less explicitly involved the planning process. However, they represent a platform for disseminating information to women.

WCF members who are also active in WORTH groups and YLGs represent a potential entry point for strengthening linkages between WORTH and youth activities under Objective A and core local planning interventions under Objective B. There are 222 WORTH group members who are currently members of WCFs. SB should similarly undertake a full inventory of YLG members that are members of WCFs. GNGOs could be encouraged to organize specific workshops or dialogue sessions with these individuals in order to explore opportunities for using the groups to support planning processes. Additionally, GNGOs and their social mobilizers can use YLGs to conduct targeted outreach activities aimed at increasing participation in key planning events, as well as social accountability activities. This will require greater levels of participation between GNGOs on the one hand and Youth Initiative (YI) and NGOs responsible for the implementation of WORTH activities on the other hand. At the VDC level, *Sajhedari Chautari* can serve as a key platform through which social mobilizers can help link women and youth activists to planning interventions.

## 4. *Engage traditional leaders*

SB project staff should explore the efficacy of engaging traditional leaders and linking them more directly to formal planning processes. In particular, Tharu leaders (*Barghars/Balmansas*) are often elected or selected through consensus, and are frequently authorities with legitimate mandates. The World Bank's Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN) has recently completed a study noting that Tharu leaders tend to be involved in local planning (as well as other governance processes) based on the "personal inclination of the VDC secretary or the immediate capacity of the individual

*Barghar*.<sup>15</sup> When capacitated and paired with receptive VDC officials, the World Bank study suggests that *Barghars* are able to play constructive roles in planning and help link their communities to the process. SB should investigate opportunities for facilitating dialogue between VDC officials and local leaders. The project should consider explicitly targeting *Barghars* and other traditional leaders with governance-related training.

### 5. *Focus on quality participation*

Key data presented in this brief provide evidence that important elements of the annual and longer-term planning processes have been broadly participatory. There exists less quantitative or qualitative information regarding the quality of that participation. In particular, the project should develop simple, effective tools for gauging *who* is participating in key events such as settlement, WCF and VDC meetings and *how* they are participating. SB may consider developing a “participation scoring index” or similar tool that allows enumerators to capture the extent to which women and participants from marginalized groups speak up at events. The tool might also use exit questionnaires to evaluate participant sentiment on questions such as the extent to which they felt listened to, or the likelihood that they would attend similar meetings in the future. SB staff and GNGO partners could use such a tool on an iterative basis at a sample of events in order to follow changes in terms of participation, as well as to identify key areas for growth.

## 3. Youth Engagement

### 3.1 *Intervention Logic for Youth Engagement*

Youth serve as the explicit target of key interventions under the SB project for multiple, interconnected reasons. On the one hand, engagement of youth is treated as an important end in its own right, given the extent to which the status of youth is tied to the overall social and political stability of Nepali society. On the other hand, youth are seen as playing a strategic role in advancing the goal of broader and deeper participation in key civic processes, particularly those related to local planning and social accountability. The intrinsic and instrumental values of youth engagement are explained below.

The inclusion of youth as a discrete target group stems in part from the understanding that the social exclusion of youth (as well as the exclusion of women and other marginalized groups) served as a key driver of civil conflict in Nepal. Existing social structures have historically made it difficult for youth to gain access to civic processes at both the local and national levels. Youth groups have tended to be unevenly distributed and parochial in focus, leaving many young people with insufficient access to effective civic platforms. When youth are engaged in political processes, it is often to play adversarial roles on behalf of political parties. Furthermore, youth struggle to find viable economic opportunities in the country. For example, a 2008 study found that only 10 percent of the 300,000 youth entering the workforce each year find jobs.<sup>16</sup>

Nepal’s experience demonstrates that youth represent *potential* and *actual* agents of change and, as such, are uniquely positioned to contribute to social instability or stabilization. Disaffected youth represented a disproportionate share of combatants during the armed conflict. Since 2006, young cadres have been a driving force within political “gangs,” which have had a destabilizing effect on Nepali society and politics. At the same time, youth groups and young civil society activists have been advocates for progressive social change. At the local level, youth are increasingly represented on bodies such as user committees, WCFs and IPFCs. At the national level, groups such as the Nepal

---

<sup>15</sup> World Bank, “Good Governance and the Role of Traditional Institutions: Promoting Social Accountability in the Mid Western Terai through Cooperation with Traditional Tharu Leaders,” May 2014, 27

<sup>16</sup> National Planning Commission (NPC) and Employment Promotion Commission (EPC), 2008

Transition to Peace report that young party activists have played a leading role in pushing for compromise in the face of protracted intransigence by the major parties.

While it is both a cliché and a truism, the engagement of youth is also driven by the reality that they represent the political future of Nepal. As is explained in the learning brief on local-level planning, civic participation must be approached as a *learned* practice that requires communities to develop new skills, as well as to develop new ideas about who has a role in key governance processes. Given that SB seeks to catalyze what will be a medium- to long-term evolution toward inclusive governance, it is important to invest in young people who will be at the center of power structures within a generation.

Beyond the clear value of youth engagement for its own sake, young people are uniquely positioned to help strengthen participatory political processes writ large. Youth are typically better educated than their parents and grandparents, offering literacy and numeracy skills that can support planning from the settlement level on up. They also frequently have the time to devote to community mobilization and social accountability activities that other community members more encumbered by work and family obligations lack. Young people are well placed, therefore, to undertake activities such as spreading awareness regarding local planning, identifying priority projects at the settlement level, lobbying VDC and district structures, participating in social audits and drafting right to information requests.

The SB approach is premised on the understanding that it is ineffective to directly plug individual youth into governance processes that offer limited scope for the participation of young people, or which push youth toward playing primarily oppositional roles, such as through the use of *bandas* as a primary means of political engagement. Instead, it is necessary to build social capital among youth and support their ability to engage more broadly in civic activities. For this reason, SB seeks to strengthen youth organizations as platforms for activism and give them the opportunity (and responsibility) to manage resources and contribute to their communities. The project then links those youth organizations to existing governance processes at the local level, such as local planning and social accountability mechanisms.

### 3.2 Key Interventions for Youth Engagement

The SB approach to youth engagement is aimed at establishing institutional structures through which young people can engage in key civic processes. SB supports Local Youth Groups (LYGs) as engines of civic activism. The project invests in training and capacity development for LYG members and supports the groups and their networks to host dialogue around issues related to young people. Importantly, SB couples training support with the provision of modest financing in order to catalyze activism and make youth groups responsible for financial resources.

#### Formation of Youth Groups and Community Management Units

The core of SB's approach to youth engagement has been to establish or reconstitute a network of youth groups throughout its intervention area. Prior to the start of the project, there existed various youth organizations at the sub-national level exhibiting different degrees of engagement on social and sport-related activities. These local groups tended to be either focused on fairly narrow, non-political issues, such as requesting funding for sports, or used as tools by political parties. They were also poorly networked within larger structures for sharing information or amplifying collective voice. Existing youth groups were not well-integrated into constructive civic processes, with less than 15 percent of the groups participating in the VDC planning process.<sup>17</sup>

Through YI, SB established or reformed LYGs in each of the project's 58 Phase 1 VDCs. Importantly, the LYGs are directly connected to existing local youth groups. Indeed, LYG members

---

<sup>17</sup> Youth Initiative, "Sajhedari Bikaas Project Youth Empowerment Program Youth Mapping Report 2013," May 2014, 20.

commonly hold membership in other groups operational at the VDC or ward level. YI also formed six District Youth Networks (DYNs) and one Regional Youth Network (RYN), which are aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and augmenting connections between youth organizations across the intervention area.

In a particular innovation of YI, SB supported the creation of Community Management Units (CMUs) in each VDC. CMUs are composed of 15 members, including 5 LYG members and 10 non-youth leaders. The CMU structure is based on an understanding that existing social and political norms serve as a significant obstacle to young people being able to influence civic processes. Non-youth CMU members commonly include respected figures, such as school principals, VDC officials, party leaders or other recognized community leaders. The CMU, therefore, provides youth with an entry point into prevailing power structures. It also expands the scope of non-youth leaders with an authentic interest in issues related to young people. One community in Bardiya reported that prior to SB the only people interested in youth were sports enthusiasts, drug dealers and political parties. Members of this community noted that a new set of local figures were now organized on behalf of youth. YI was able to cite multiple examples of cases where CMUs have served to advocate for the interests of youth. For example, in VDCs such as Kashkushma and Durgauli in Kailali, CMUs helped to lobby in support of budget requests by LYGs as part of the local planning process.

### Training and Capacity Development

YI extends a range of training services to LYGs and youth networks. Trainings are aimed at augmenting the individual and collective capacities of young people and youth groups to engage in key civic activities. One person from each LYG received training on key functions related to organizational management, covering topics such as financial management, documentation and meeting facilitation. YI provided nearly 600 youth with three-day *Life Skills* trainings, which cover topics such as public speaking, leadership, critical thinking, communications skills and the role of youth groups. Separately, the project provided three-day trainings on planning process to nearly 629 (309 female and 320 male) youth, introducing them to key governance and social accountability processes, such as the VDC planning process, social audits and right to information (RTI) requests. The training was aimed at providing LYGs with a practical understanding of how to participate in key political processes at the local level. Furthermore, YI extended a five-day *Civic Leadership School* (CLS) to 72 DYN members. This advanced course covers in greater details topics related to leadership, communications and governance. Importantly, the CLS also serves as a networking opportunity for LYG members throughout the SB intervention area.

Trainings provided by YI appear to have been effective at conveying to young people a wide range of information related to basic life skills, leadership and governance processes. Importantly, the trainings are provided in a manner that ensures that all LYG members participate in either the Life Skills or Government Planning Process training, with those receiving training being tasked with relating key lessons to the broader group. Conversations with youth group members suggest that trainings have been received with a high degree of enthusiasm. For example, at one consulted LYG in Banke, youth had returned from a recent Government Planning Process training excited to issue RTI requests for a local forestry group which they felt had questionable activities. The engagement exhibited by LYGs (discussed in greater detail below) builds support for project staff and YI's sense that trainings have supported civic activities by groups. At the same time, SB staff feel that there is a need for YI to reinforce trainings with practical assistance to LYGs to put key concepts into practice, particularly related to governance and accountability trainings. As is described below, YI can use platforms such as monthly dialogues and network meetings to help LYG members practice activities, such as drafting RTI requests.

### Promotion of Civic Dialogue on Issues Related to Youth

The SB project also seeks to engage youth and non-youth in constructive dialogue related to key issues facing young people. DYNs host a monthly discussion series that bring together LYG

members, as well as activists from other youth organizations. Past discussion topics have included Youth Vision 2025, the role of youth in RTI, women's empowerment, the role of WCFs in local planning and public security. To date, SB has included 72 public discussions attended by an average of 33 youth. Additionally, YI has organized *street bahas* (street discussions) on the local planning process. YI credits the monthly dialogue series with helping DYNs to contribute policy suggestions for the revision of the National Youth Policy (2010) and inputs in the Youth Vision 2025. Feedback based on six district-level interactions were compiled into a paper outlining recommendations specific to youth in SB's working districts and submitted to the Youth Vision 2025 working committee. Furthermore, it was used to foster youth participation in local planning. In establishing a Year 3 work plan for YI, SB staff have emphasized the need to create stronger linkages between dialogue sessions and practical interventions for which LYGs are mobilizing in the communities. This will involve establishing themes for dialogue session that are explored across the six DYNs. It will also involve creating platforms through which youth can share and get information related to their work around social accountability, local planning or other civic activities. For example, DYNs may use monthly dialogues to enable youth to discuss their experiences with social audits, and even simulate elements of an audit.

### Financial Investment for Community Development Activities

SB provides LYGs with modest financial resources to support community development activities. LYGs have received 2,500 rupees per month, or 30,000 rupees per year, which supports a range of sports and social programs (starting in Year 3, LYGs will receive 3,500 rupees per month). These funds help provide youth activists with basic resources needed to put lessons from key trainings into practice. While small in nature, the funds are also aimed at requiring LYGs to put into practice basic financial systems. These systems are especially important given that groups are set to receive funds through the VDC. Furthermore, LYGs have been able to compliment SB-provided investments with funds generated by the community. Although not mandated by LSGA (1999), LYGs were successful in having VDCs fund 49 youth projects, equivalent to NRs. 1,828,000.

### Economic Empowerment

Recognizing a link between the economic opportunity of youth and their ability to engage constructively in civic processes, YI has included interventions aimed at promoting economic empowerment for young people. Most notably, YI organized five-day entrepreneurship trainings for 400 youth in September 2014. These trainings covered practical issues such as writing a business plan, applying for financing, conducting *simple* market studies and completing legal requirements to start a business. The trainings were open to youth beyond LYGs. As part of their application process, youth presented their enterprise development plans. YI project data indicate that 40 percent of trainees have started and/or expanded businesses. SB leadership recognizes limitations regarding YI's ability to achieve impact at scale in terms of economic impact and the "Moving Forward" section reviews planned adjustments to this activity.

### *3.3 Key Results to Date in Terms of Youth Engagement*

Support for youth engagement is aimed at contributing directly to Objective A, *enabling environment for community development established*. More specifically, youth-focused interventions support Result A.2, "sustainable solutions to the problems that drive conflict are adopted." Youth interventions contribute to all three outcomes under Result A.2:

- Communities reinforce stability through local development activities
- Youth, women, and marginalized groups occupy key decision-making positions in community processes and activities
- Youth, women, and marginalized groups receive new and increased economic opportunities and resources

Key data referenced above point to some of the broad results to date, particularly in terms of supporting youth to “occupy key decision making positions.” Through YI, the project has established or reconstituted a network of 58 LYGs, six DYNs and one RYN. Through the establishment of 58 CMUs, youth groups have a structure through which they can access key influential people. There is evidence indicating that structures set up by the project have helped to foster better networked organizations, which are engaged on a wider range of topics. Consultations with young activists suggest that LYGs help bring together members of other youth groups operational at the VDC and sub-VDC level. Furthermore, the DYNs and RYNs have provided platforms for discussing topics that seem not to have been on the agendas of youth groups prior to SB, such as local planning and social accountability.

While the establishment of youth groups and networks represents an important institutional achievement, their relevance is best judged by the extent to which they foster civic activism and concrete engagement in key political processes. YI’s project data and consultations with LYGs suggest that the youth groups are involved in a wide range of interventions. YI reports that the groups organized 819 community activities reaching more than 28,000 youth. LYG-implemented activities include a number of topics, such as awareness events on topics such as early marriage and drug abuse, orientations on the role of youth in development, waste management projects and road renovation. It is difficult to determine whether some of these interventions would have been carried out by existing youth groups in the absence of SB. However, project investments in training, networking and financial support appear to have played a central role in catalyzing these activities.

SB interventions seem to have engaged youth groups more directly in local planning processes. Whereas less than 15 percent of preexisting youth groups were involved in local planning according to YI’s youth mapping, project records indicate that 100 percent of LYGs were engaged in the most recent annual planning process.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, data suggests that the groups’ involvement in the process paid off. Eighty-four percent of LYGs that engaged in the planning process were successful in lobbying for funds designated for youth projects. Youth projects averaged 37,306 rupees<sup>19</sup> in value for activities such as sports programs, awareness events, the establishment of youth information centers and vocational and skills training. While the sums are relatively modest, the allocations to youth programming set an important precedent in terms of VDC investment in priorities identified by youth that can be built upon in future planning cycles.

Progress towards involving youth in key decision making positions seems clear. However, it is early to evaluate the extent to which development activities led and demanded by youth “reinforce stability” and “increase [their] economic opportunities.” SB should work with YI to examine the impact of youth projects implemented by LYGs, or resulting from their advocacy. One strategy could be to capture data on LYGs’ reputation in communities through perception surveys.

### *3.4 Youth Engagement Moving Forward*

SB has made clear progress in terms of establishing and revitalizing youth groups and networks, as well as in supporting those organizations to engage in local activism. Importantly, the LYGs, DYNs and RYN provide structural platforms that can be used for further embedding young people in civic processes at the local level during the second half of the project. A review of project data, as well as discussion with SB and YI staff, suggests that there is a need to further invest in strengthening the networks of LYGs. There also exist key opportunities for more strategically linking the activities of LYGs to the aims of other project components, particularly local planning under Objective B.

---

<sup>18</sup> Youth Initiative, “Sajhedari Bikaas Project Youth Empowerment Program Youth Mapping Report 2013,” May 2014, 20

<sup>19</sup> This figure is adjusted to account for three VDCs in Surkhet (Jarbuta, Lalikoili and Ramghat) that were merged with other VDCs into municipalities. The youth budgets for these new municipalities were significantly larger than the average for VDCs. For example, Bheriganga Municipality (which incorporates Ramghat) has set a budget for youth and children at 2,410,000 rupees.

### 1. *Better understand the extent to which LYGs are networked*

The establishment of LYGs, DYNs and RYN is designed to increase connections between youth leaders and their organizations. There is evidence that in key ways the youth networks are serving their intended purpose. DYN-facilitated public dialogue help draw together LYG members throughout whole districts. Furthermore, LYGs themselves are composed of members who are active in various preexisting organizations. The fact that LYGs have carried out more than 800 community development activities suggests that coordinated action at the VDC level is occurring.

While evidence of collective action exists, project data does not give us a clear sense of the relative strength of youth networks. In particular, it is difficult to know the full extent to which LYG groups connect beyond activities facilitated by the project, such as trainings and the dialogue series. Furthermore, it is uncertain how DYN members are linked to youth and non-youth groups outside of their networks. The SB team may consider employing Pact's Organizational Network Assessment (ONA) in order to analyze the relative strength and complexity of its youth network. The ONA will identify the number of "nodes" (i.e. groups) within the network, the "density" of connections, as well as the direction of communication flows. The ONA could help the project team identify individual organizations that are not well-connected within the larger network. If completed in Year 3 and endline, it will also provide SB with an ability to follow changes to the network over the remainder of the project.

Through YI, the SB team also intends to extend 24 micro-grants (valued at no more than 50,000 rupees) to DYNs during Year 3. These funds will support priorities identified by youth through the local planning process, but not fully funded under VDC budgets. The grants, therefore, will help reinforce participation in the planning process. They will also help foster collaboration within DYNs as the networks take on the management of development projects. The grants, therefore, have the potential to create additional, authentic reasons for cross-LYG collaboration.

### 2. *Encourage more equitable representation in youth networks*

There exist concerns that certain processes and structures for youth engagement are insufficiently representative. A promising sign is found in the fact that, according to YI project data, 60 percent of LYG members are female and 68 percent of LYG members engaged in the local-level planning process were of caste and ethnicity groups other than Hill Brahmin/Chhetris. At the same time, however, only 31 percent of youth involved in local planning were women. Forty-one percent of LYG membership are Hill/Brahmins/Chhetris. Young men make up 59 percent of DYN membership, and Hill Brahmins/Chhetris compose 49 percent of that membership. Most concerning, the RYN is 72 percent male and 58 percent Hill Brahmin/Chhetris.

These data suggest that processes and structures for youth become less inclusive as they move up the chain. This is especially concerning because youth groups and networks represent structures through which the SB project hopes to inculcate new, inclusive norms regarding representation among the parents and leaders of tomorrow. SB and YI staff should explicitly investigate the factors contributing to the current demographics of DYNs and the RYN, and develop strategies for encouraging more equitable participation. This may include working with the networks themselves to self-critically reflect on their structures and possible steps for fostering inclusion. Additionally, the question of inclusion and participation in youth activities should feature in the Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) review during Year 3.

### 3. *Leverage LYGs and their networks to enhance outreach related to local planning and, in particular, better target marginalized communities*

There exist notable examples of LYGs and their networks being used to promote general participation in local planning. For example, *street bahas* have been employed by youth groups to raise public awareness regarding the 14-step planning process. Likewise, local planning has featured in discussion

forums organized by DYNs. Individual YLGs have also organized outreach activities to raise citizen awareness about planning meetings at the settlement, WCF and VDC levels.

While YLGs have been engaged in the planning process, SB staff feel that they can play a more targeted role in mobilizing public participation in local planning. As noted in the learning review brief on local planning, there is a need to better target marginalized communities that lag behind either in terms of participation, or in terms of receipt of funding from the VDC. YLGs are well positioned to drive outreach initiatives through door-to-door campaigns, literature drops, *street bahas* and other activities. This type of targeted action, however, will require higher degrees of collaboration between YI and GNGO partners, including through partners meetings and exchange of key documentation. Additionally, there is scope for greater collaboration and information sharing between GNGO-employed social mobilizers and YLGs. *Sajhedari Chautari* meetings can serve as a key platform at which social mobilizers and YLGs identify wards and settlements in need of targeted outreach. Finally, the DYN-led dialogue series can include timely sessions on community targeting in order to help foster enhanced outreach across the SB intervention area.

#### 4. *Increase guidance and support to CMUs*

The CMU structure is an innovation by YI based on the realistic assessment that existing power dynamics leave youth with limited entry points for influencing local policy processes. Importantly, the structures potentially expand the universe of influential non-youth community members with a mandated interest in issues related to young people. As noted above, there exist examples of CMU members playing a valuable role in advocating for project requests by youth during the planning cycle. At the same time, SB staff indicate that there is variation in terms of the level of engagement of CMU members. In particular, there is a need to standardize the orientation of CMUs to their role as advocates and mentors to youth. YI may consider documenting and disseminating particularly successful case studies of CMU engagement. Furthermore, YI could organize peer exchanges between CMUs, as well as use certain platforms such as the dialogue series to review the role of the CMU.

#### 5. *Increase focus on youth engagement in social accountability processes*

While YI has trained YLGs on the local planning process, YI acknowledges that the youth structures have yet to engage deeply in putting that training into action. The limited nature of YLG social accountability work to date is partially a function of timing and sequencing. SB has just completed its first full annual planning cycle. Furthermore, it has only recently begun issuing micro-grants for project supported development projects managed by IPCs. These projects will offer new opportunities for engaging youth in social accountability processes, such as social audits. YI should provide follow up support to youth groups through its network platforms to actively participate in accountability measures. Discussions with YLGs, SB staff and YI suggest that the need is *not* for additional formal training related to social accountability. The project should consider using existing project mechanisms to create *practical* opportunities for youth to engage in their applications. Governance NGO partners are responsible to implement the tools. YI has used the DYN dialogue series to discuss social accountability tools writ large. That platform could similarly be used to facilitate a hands-on session in which YLG discuss examples of RTI requests they have submitted and participants have an opportunity to begin drafting requests of their own. Similarly, the monthly dialogue series could be used to help YLG members role play participation in social audits.

YI can help to drive the engagement of YLGs in social accountability practices. However, more robust engagement around accountability also represents a renewed area of focus under Objective B. GNGOs should be encouraged to tap into YLGs as key resources in carrying out social accountability activities. Social mobilizers, PMCs and WCFs should be encouraged to push YLGs to participate (and encourage the participation of other community members) in social audits. *Sajhedari Chautari* meetings can serve as a platform for sharing information regarding planned social accountability activities.

## 6. *Limit investment in enterprise development activities*

The SB project supported YI to extend enterprise development training to 400 youth based on the sound premise that economic opportunity positively contributes to community stabilization and promotes the ability of young people to engage in civic activities. That said, SB staff expressed a concern that the project is not equipped to extend enterprise development training and support on a large enough scale to appreciably move the needle in terms of economic opportunity for youth. Additionally, business development (as compared to the promotion of civic participation and youth leadership) is not YI's area of comparative advantage. SB, therefore, will limit further investment in enterprise development in order to focus on core outcomes around participation in the political process. Future activities around business development will focus on providing follow up support to those that have already received training. This will include using an enterprise development consultant to review business plans developed by youth, as well as to help them link to existing services such as financing.

## 4. **WORTH – Strengthening Women's Participation through Economic Empowerment**

### 4.1 *Intervention Logic for WORTH*

SB includes a specific focus on ensuring the participation of women, youth and marginalized groups in local planning processes as an integral aspect of its larger effort to *empower communities to direct their own development*. One of the root causes of conflict that continues to hamper community development is unequal access to resources and development at the local level, especially for women, youth and marginalized communities. SB aims to create an enabling environment for community development through addressing local level conflict, promoting economic activities and strengthening women's participation in decision-making positions (along with youth and marginalized groups). Strengthening women's economic groups is a critical part of SB's support for increased economic opportunities and resources for women, and efforts to enable women to participate more fully and meaningfully in local planning processes.

A study by International Alert in Nepal concluded that community economic groups play an effective role in addressing local level conflict and advocating for peace.<sup>20</sup> Women's economic groups, in addition to providing women opportunities for income generation, also enhance their ability to act as agents of change and development in their communities. SB utilizes Pact's award-winning WORTH model, an integrated literacy-led approach for women's empowerment, to support women's economic groups. Pact first developed the WORTH program under USAID's Women's Empowerment Program in Nepal between 1999 and 2001, reaching 125,000 women in 6,000 economic groups across Nepal's southern Terai. The program has since been implemented in 13 countries in Asia and Africa. A post-evaluation of the first WORTH program in Nepal conducted in 2008 found that approximately two-thirds of the original 1,536 "village banks" were still active six years after Pact had ended its support.<sup>21</sup> Two-thirds of the groups were engaged in community action, half of the groups were involved in efforts to reduce gender discrimination in communities and women's self-confidence had increased significantly. A majority of the management committee members reported that they had become leaders in their families and communities. Based on these learnings, SB works with 127 women's economic groups in five districts.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Income Generation for Peacebuilding: Is it working? International Alert/Nepal, August 2010

<sup>21</sup> Women Ending Poverty: The WORTH program in Nepal, 1999-2007. Valley Action Research Group, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Worth groups (24) in Dang has been temporarily suspended due to management issues. Since groups in Dang are eager to resume activities, preparatory work is underway to ensure activities with groups will resume in Dang by late April.

## 4.2 Key Interventions for WORTH

The WORTH component of SB was launched in March 2014 with a six-day workshop for local district partners. The workshop, conducted by WORTH experts from Pact's Myanmar office, trained 17 staff and board members on organizing savings and credit groups and the principles of village banking. SB also held district and Village Development Committee (VDC)-level consultation meetings with government and other stakeholders to introduce the WORTH model. In April and May 2014, SB conducted a rapid assessment of existing economic groups in the six districts to determine whether to establish new women's economic groups or reform existing ones. A mapping identified 2,849 economic groups out of which 978 women's groups were randomly selected for the assessment. The assessment provided information on the types and status of existing groups. A group of 29 empowerment workers (EWs) was trained in June 2014 on mobilization skills, forming groups under the WORTH model, the appreciative planning and action approach and the WORTH accounting system. Based on results of the assessment, SB chose to strengthen existing groups to the extent possible resulting in the formation/reformation of a mix of 159 new and existing women's economic groups in the WORTH model.<sup>23</sup> This was followed by literacy training for 240 WORTH group members to serve as literacy volunteers in August and September 2014 to implement the 72-week literacy cycle integrated with lessons on business and entrepreneurship, accountability and transparency, networking and peace promotion.

Since the formation of the groups, SB has provided a range of training to various WORTH group members, including financial management and skill-building packages for self-management. A total of 411 participants from WORTH group management committees have received Management Committee Training (MCT) to learn about the roles and responsibilities of group positions, knowledge of village bank management and accounting systems including orientation on accounting forms, determining dividends, loan status and collection, and village bank health checks. Based on the needs of WORTH groups identified through SB's Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCAs), SB also organized a package of 15 tools to build technical and organizational management skills of group members on issues related to group management, business management and micro-entrepreneurship, market assessment and leadership. Through these 58 events, 1,497 women received capacity building training tailored to their individual group's needs. This training was augmented by 43 business and micro-enterprise skills training events, whereby 1,068 participants received training in various skills including *dalmuth* making, goat farming, mushroom farming and pig farming. These trainings responded to a need identified by women in the post-evaluation, where a quarter of the women said "to further increase their incomes, [they] would like training in crafts, agriculture, and animal husbandry."<sup>24</sup>

In addition to support for literacy and economic activities, SB has also supported WORTH group members to coordinate with WCFs, CACs and VDCs so that group members can access local resources more effectively. Prior to the last planning cycle, EWs provided an overview of the 14-step local planning process to WORTH members, and encouraged them to participate in the reformation of WCFs. In 14 VDCs, SB decided to support CACs as WORTH groups. The support SB provides these CACs complements the guidelines of Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) to build the capacity of CACs.

## 4.3 Key Results to Date for WORTH

SB's work with WORTH groups is an intervention aimed at achieving Objective A: *enabling environment for community development established* and, in particular, the intermediate A.2:

---

<sup>23</sup> Out of the 159 groups formed till March 2015, WORTH activities in 24 groups were temporarily stopped due to the suspension of NGO in Dang. Activities will resume in late April.

<sup>24</sup> Women Ending Poverty: The WORTH program in Nepal, 1999-2007. Valley Action Research Group, 2008.

*Sustainable solutions to the problems that drive conflict are adopted.* The achievements of WORTH groups contribute to the following outcomes:

- Youth, women and marginalized groups occupy key decision-making positions in community processes and activities
- Youth, women and marginalized groups receive new and increased economic opportunities and resources

Although the WORTH program was launched in March 2014, formation/reformation of WORTH groups only started in June 2014 after the WEG assessment. While there has been some movement towards outcome-level impact, WORTH groups will need to be able to complete at least one 72-week cycle before concrete progress at the outcome level can be documented. This review discusses the process and output-level indicators that mark progress towards outcome and impact-level results to date.

### Savings and Loan Facilitation

As a result of the investment outlined above, SB has been able to achieve the following in less than a year: formed/reformed 135 WORTH groups with 4,226 members (an average of 31 women per group), who have been trained in literacy, principles of village banking and peace promotion. Importantly, 100 percent of the groups have provided loans to their members. The WORTH group members encompass women from different caste and ethnic backgrounds: 31.5 percent are Terai/Madhesi Janajati, 23 percent are Hill Brahmins/Chhetris, and 22.03 percent are Hill Dalits. According to National Population and Housing Census 2011, 30 percent of the population in SB districts is Terai/Madhesi Janajati 38 percent is Hill Brahmins/Chhetri, and 12 percent are Hill Dalit. These data indicate that WORTH groups are inclusive in their composition and furthermore have created additional spaces for women from marginalized communities. Additionally, 4.2 percent of WORTH group members are religious minorities comparable with the 4 percent in the national census data.

At the end of March 2015, WORTH groups had a total capital of NRs. 1,904,754, including NRs. 1,369,881 in mandatory savings and NRs. 247,766 in voluntary savings. The groups had given 1,076 loans amounting to NRs 2,165,413 to 1,105 members. Members have used the loans for a variety of income-generating activities including fruit vending, butcher shops, cane and bamboo furniture making, chicken farming, *dalmuth* making, goat farming, small restaurants, pig farming and vegetable farming and selling. To provide one example, Tika Dangi, from Binauna VDC, Banke, shared that she is able to send her children to school with the profit she makes from running a shop that she started with a loan she received from her WORTH group. The loans have also supported 548 members to start their own micro-enterprises including animal husbandry (chicken, duck, goat and pig farming), supply of vegetable and fruits, mushroom farming, furniture construction and food preparation following the business and micro-enterprise skills training. These numbers directly contribute to Result A.2.3: *Youth, women, and marginalized groups receive new and increased economic opportunities and resources.*

<b>Capital of WORTH Groups (NRs) (March 2015)</b>	
Mandatory Savings	1,369,881
Voluntary Savings	247,766
Interest	81,604
Group Income	195,416
Fine and Penalty	10,087
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,904,754</b>

Members of the WORTH group in Gadhi VDC, Surkhet shared that after the MCT training they are now able to keep books and calculate profit on their own, without having to depend on “sirs and madams” from NGOs to hold meetings. They stated with confidence that with just some additional training they would be able to run the group independently. They also noted that their weekly meetings have helped them to practice their bookkeeping skills and that the WORTH style of accounting is more transparent than those used by other savings cooperatives.

## Self-Led Literacy

All WORTH groups are conducting weekly literacy group classes. During an M&E monitoring visit in January 2015, a review of attendance sheets of the last three months showed that there was an average attendance of 85 percent members in each weekly meeting (with attendance ranging from 76 percent to 94 percent). Women at various WORTH groups take pride in being able to write their name at the least; others talk about learning how to fill out their savings book or the things they have learned related to business skills from the specialized literacy books. The literacy classes are run by literate group members who volunteer their time to share their skills with other women in their group. At a WORTH group in Masuriya VDC, Kailali, the young literacy volunteers shared that they were happy that they could help other women in their group by volunteering their time to teach. The literacy classes also support the “Literate Nepal Mission,” a continuation of the National Literacy Campaign, the Government of Nepal’s effort to meet the Millennium Development Goal of eliminating illiteracy by 2015.

## Leadership Development and Local Development

Membership in WORTH groups has brought about various levels of changes in members’ lives, especially in increasing the self-confidence of individual women. At the very basic level, women talk about being able to come together and start saving. Various WORTH group members in Kailali, Kanchanpur and Surkhet repeatedly spoke about having developed the confidence to speak in front of groups. Women who before had rarely stepped out of their houses now attend weekly meetings and even participate in WCF meetings. Sushma Shekh, from Indragaun, Banke speaks of being able to join the WCF with support from her WORTH group and being involved in social decision-making processes. Group members have also taken the initiative to share their knowledge with each other. For example, a female community health volunteer shares information on reproductive health with her fellow group members.

Weekly WORTH group meetings create an environment for members to work together to help each other and their communities. Women have started participating in and initiating various social and community development activities. Staff report that after the groups were formed members have started discussing various issues in the community, and that after being part of a group they are able to decide what to do and where to go. Members say “*bal milyo, bolna sajilo bhaee rakhe jasto lagchha*” (“we got the strength, it feels easier to speak now...”). The groups have started to initiate advocacy around various issues, including landlessness, child marriage, alcoholism and citizenship. WORTH group members have also participated in different instances of civic engagement and community activism. The WORTH group in Ramghat VDC, Surkhet saved money from celebrating *Bhaili* during *Tihar* to build a room for their group, while a group in Sahare VDC, Surkhet conducted a joint campaign with the local police to control alcohol consumption and gambling. Additionally, groups organized various activities to commemorate the “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.” For example, a WORTH group in Fattepur VDC, Banke coordinated with the VDC, Equal Access, Youth Initiative, NNSWA, National Youth Network, and Forum for Women Rights Network to organize *Hamro Abhiyaan* (“Our Initiative”), which included a rally and door-to-door program to identify and assist women who did not have citizenship and/or marriage certificates. The group was able to assist 13 women in obtaining their citizenship certificates. During International Women’s Day, a WORTH group in Ghumkahare VDC, Surkhet organized a signing competition on women’s rights. Staff observed that those groups that have members who are already empowered and have relatively more opportunities are often stronger groups, and at the same time it is easier for those groups to become stronger.

Similar to previous iterations of WEG, WORTH group members in SB districts have started becoming leaders in their communities. A total of 222 members of WORTH groups, representing various caste/ethnic groups, are also members of their WCFs and 10 of these women hold key positions: 7 Coordinators, 2 Secretaries and 1 Joint Secretary. The latter contributes to Result A.2.2:

*Youth, women and marginalized groups occupy key decision-making position in community processes and activities.*

Some WORTH groups have also taken the initiative to promote civic engagement for local development. For example, the WORTH group in Binauna VDC, Banke organized volunteers to construct a footpath in their community. In addition, EWs have provided orientation on the 14-step local planning process, following which many group members attended settlement and ward-level meetings. During a VDC interaction in Masuriya VDC, Kailali a WORTH member shared that although she attended a ward-level meeting this year, she did not say anything. However, she said she will actively participate during the meetings next year, because she was able to see how things happen and how people speak at these meetings.

Caste/ethnicity of WORTH members who are in WCF	# of WCF members	WCF members (%)	Pop. in SB districts, Census 2011 (%)
Hill Brahmins Chhetris	55	25	38
Hill/Mountain Janajatis	39	18	10
Hill Dalits	43	19	12
Terai/Madhese Brahmins/Rajputs	5	2	0
Terai/Madhese Adivasis/Janajatis	49	22	30
Terai/Madhese Other castes	8	4	4
Terai/Madhese Dalits	10	5	2
Religious Minorities	13	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### External Resources

WORTH NGOs have successfully coordinated with local government and non-government bodies to create linkages for group sustainability. WORTH NGOs have obtained commitments for support from the Women's and Children's Office and the District Agricultural Development Office (DADO). Coordination meetings focused on facilitating external resources for WORTH group members have also been successful in eliciting increased support and local resource allocation for member priorities. For example, at a coordination meeting in Birendranagar, Surkhet the United Nations Micro-enterprise Development Program committed to providing their trainers as resource persons, while the DADO agreed to provide free mushroom seeds, the Division Cooperative Office agreed to provide Pre-Cooperatives Education to WORTH group members and the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry committed to provide grants to members who developed a business plan. Representatives from the Department of Women and Children and the Department of Small and Cottage Industries were also present at the meeting.

#### *4.4 WORTH Moving Forward*

##### *1. Provide refresher training to WORTH groups*

WORTH group members share that the first round of MCT trainings have been very helpful, but that they would benefit from refresher training. Although EWs and NGO staff are available for questions, a short refresher training would be helpful in addressing common challenges that come up during the implementation of the savings and loan facilitation process, including accurately maintaining banking forms, calculating dividends, and preparing other group members for handover of management responsibilities.

##### *2. Integrate capacity building around rights, responsibilities, and advocacy into WORTH training*

The success of the initial WORTH program in Nepal appears to have stemmed from the integration of economic empowerment with capacity building around rights, responsibilities and advocacy. It is recommended that SB provide similar capacity building support in the form of trainings, workshops, mentorship by EWs and space for dialogue that is specifically focused on building women's knowledge and skills around their rights, responsibilities and advocacy. The earlier curriculum should be revisited and updated to reflect the current context of WORTH group members. Furthermore, groups should be encouraged to use part of the weekly meetings and discussions (at least once every month) to prepare

community development plans that they can implement together. This support should focus specifically on women from marginalized communities who have not had similar opportunities before. A combination of literacy-led savings and credit groups with capacity building on advocacy would be strategic in enabling SB to truly support women fulfilling their capabilities as agents of change and development in their communities. This would ensure that SB meets its targets for women under Result A.2.2: *Youth, women and marginalized groups occupy key decision-making position in community processes and activities.*

3. *Encourage WORTH group members' participation in WCFs*

In the absence of local elections, SB could encourage WORTH group members' participation in WCFs. SB should capitalize on the pool of literate, financial skill-savvy and civic-oriented women and support them to actively participate in WCFs in meaningful ways. SB could train a selected group of WORTH members (e.g. literacy volunteers and MCT members) on targeted skills around needs assessment techniques, proposal development and writing for development projects, and effective communication skills. At the same time, SB should be mindful of the burden on women's time as they are asked to participate in multiple activities. SB should support WORTH members to learn about and explore their options to participate in local level planning through orientation on the process and inclusion in settlement and ward level meetings facilitated by SB governance NGOs, and support those members who choose to engage in WCFs.

4. *Build the capacity of WORTH group members who are already WCF members*

In addition, SB should build the capacity of WORTH group members who are already WCF members, such that they are able to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities and eventually occupy key positions within the WCFs. Out of the 22 members in a WORTH group in Gadhi VDC, Surkhet, 4 women are WCF members. They have attended some ward level meetings, but said they did not have clear information on the local level planning process, VDC budget allocations and how to seek and understand information about local resource allocation. SB should train governance social mobilizers and EWs to work together to build the capacity of WORTH/WCF members, along with other women and members from marginalized communities, on topics such as the local planning process and their roles and responsibilities as WCF members, budget analysis and tracking, and needs assessment and prioritization. WORTH/WCF members could coordinate with VDC level women's network or committees to coordinate on identifying common needs of women in the VDC and advocate together for local resource allocation.

5. *Support interactions between WORTH/WCF members across wards and VDCs such that they learn from each other's experiences*

Building on the core philosophy of appreciative planning and action on which WORTH is based, SB should also support interactions between WORTH/WCF members across wards and VDCs such that they learn from each other's experiences. These deliberate interactions could be natural extensions of women supporting each other in WORTH groups. Quarterly meetings could be held where women share successes and challenges of advocating for local resource allocation, as well as discuss ways to more effectively participate in the local-level planning process and access resources for development.

6. *Support WORTH NGOs to coordinate with government and non-government stakeholders and get commitments for assistance for WORTH groups*

SB should continue to support WORTH NGOs to coordinate with government and non-government stakeholders and get commitments for assistance for WORTH groups such that they are more plugged into existing structures and are able to access local resources as envisaged by SB. These could be in the form of coordination meetings with stakeholders like the one in Surkhet described above. Verbal commitments at meetings should be followed up in writing such that there is documentation of the commitments and coordination. The coordination will be important in linking business and micro-enterprise training for group members with support for business counseling, credit facilitation and linkages, and identifying markets.

## 7. *Capitalize on the networks that WORTH group members already have*

SB should also capitalize on the networks that WORTH group members already have and use them as connectors to further services and resources for the women. One example is connecting WORTH group members who are WCFs to each other. Another is assisting women to think about how they can form bridges between the different groups of which they are members to achieve common goals. For instance, a member of a WORTH group in Gadhi VDC, Surkhet shared that she is also a member of a farmers' group under the USAID-funded KISAN project, but had never thought about possible ways for the WORTH groups members to coordinate with the farmers' group.

## 8. *Adjust support to WORTH groups based on performance data*

WORTH NGOs have completed data collection on an Impact Survey of the WORTH groups that includes information on household structure, economic status, social status, access to local resources of the group members and the changes in the members after their involvement in WORTH groups. Data from the survey should be analyzed to determine best practices and identify gaps such that support for WORTH groups can be adjusted accordingly.

## 5. Media Engagement

### 5.1 *Intervention Logic for Media Engagement*

Media activities, which are implemented by SB's partner Equal Access (EA), are an integral to the project's approach. Broadly speaking, these activities serve three primary purposes. The first is to amplify the SB's messaging aimed at key target groups. This involves using media to raise awareness and disseminate information so that citizens can better access resources and participate in governance and development processes. The second is to engage listeners, especially through Radio Listeners' Groups (RLGs), in discussion and participatory action using the issues raised by radio programs as a starting point for collective dialogue and initiative. The third is to strengthen the capacity of local-level media to report on governance-related issues and contribute to informed democratic discourse. This is based on an understanding that media can play an important role in shaping relationships between citizens and democratic processes by amplifying issues and citizen voice. Media activities directly contribute to SB's Objective A aimed at *establishing and improving the enabling environment for community development*. They also indirectly support Objectives B and C, namely *improving communities' ability to access resources for development* and *improving communities' ability to effectively implement inclusive development projects*.

SB's media activities are important also because they act as a bridge that connects various components of the project. SB's implementing partners collaborate to use media to disseminate information on the services they offer, such as through Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on community mediation services that were designed by EA in cooperation with the Center for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRd). Project partners also use media to report on success stories related to their activities, such as disputes resolved through community mediation and successful small businesses initiated through WORTH activities. Furthermore, SB-supported village level groups working with other SB partners – including WORTH groups, LYGs and Community Mediation Centers (CMCs) – represent consumers of SB media that can practically engage with the issues raised in the programming. Media activities also help build connections between the project and local government. Government officials are invited to take part in Content Advisory Group (CAG) meetings that guide the content of radio programs, and they are invited to provide information and views through radio interviews.

SB's media interventions focus on radio because it remains the most practical and popular medium for disseminating news and information in rural Nepal, with greater reach than newspapers, TV, or the internet. In the project districts, 66 percent of the population cites radio as their preferred source for

news and information.<sup>25</sup> Community radio is popular because it provides decentralized coverage on local issues and perspectives, in contrast to national level media, which tends to be Kathmandu-centric.<sup>26</sup> It is also an ideal medium for reaching illiterate people, who are disproportionately women and members of marginalized ethnic or caste groups. Furthermore, radio enjoys a high level of credibility in Nepal compared to other media sources. For example, a recent national survey found that radio is the most trusted medium for news and information.<sup>27</sup>

## *5.2 Results to Date in Terms of Media Engagement*

### Naya Nepal, Saathi Sanga Manka Kura, and Sajhedari Radio Programs

EA produces two central-level radio programs, *Naya Nepal* (NN) and *Saathi Sanga Manka Kura* (SSMK), which discuss and reflect on issues of governance and local development in SB project districts. EA also works with eight local production partners to produce local programs, called *Sajhedari*. It has also developed a network of 15 Community Reporters, who interview community members and stakeholders in order to include their voices in central-level programming. All programming is broadcast by 16 local stations, while NN and SSMK are also aired nationally on Radio Nepal. To date, 55 NN shows, 12 SSMK shows and 562 Sajhedari shows have been produced and broadcast under SB. Using a “magazine format,” the shows cover topics related to community development, good governance, youth, women and marginalized groups, as well as specific SB activities.

SB recognizes that in order for its programming to meaningfully address issues of marginalized groups and women, diversity within the production teams is important. Of the 15 community reporters (CRs), 10 are women and 12 come from non-Hill Brahmin/ Chhettri groups. Among the 24 producers and staff at the project’s production partner stations, 11 are women and 13 come from non-Hill Brahmin/ Chhettri groups.

SB is working to address the lack of local-language radio programming in Nepal.<sup>28</sup> Although the majority of shows are produced in Nepali, episodes include segments like interviews and “vox pop” in local languages. One station (Radio Naya Yug in Dang) has produced all 70 of its episodes in Tharu language, while another (Krishnasar FM in Banke) has produced one Tharu and one Awadhi episode. Furthermore, Gurbaba FM in Bardiya has produced one episode in Tharu and is expected to begin producing all episodes in Tharu this quarter.

### Feedback Systems and Quality Assessment

EA and its production partners have built several listener feedback mechanisms into their process for designing and producing programs.<sup>29</sup> Radio shows include instructions for listeners to send feedback through text messages (SMS) or by using Interactive Voice Response (IVR), a call-in system where listeners’ voices are recorded. To date, roughly 4,000 SMS and 700 IVR have been received, primarily for NN and SSMK. EA also utilizes a network of Community Action Researchers (CARs), who visit RLG meetings to collect technical and programmatic feedback and ideas for topics for

---

<sup>25</sup> Equal Access, *Sajhedari Bikaas Project Broadcast Audience Study 2014 (Draft)*.

<sup>26</sup> Kirsty Martin and Michael Willmore, “Local Voices on Community Radio: a study of ‘our Lumbini’ in Nepal,” *Development in Practice* 20 (2010): 869.

<sup>27</sup> Open Nepal, “Ten cool charts that will teach you about radio in Nepal,” last modified January 20, 2015, <http://www.opennepal.net/blog/ten-cool-charts-will-teach-you-about-radio-nepal>

<sup>28</sup> Ian Pringle and Bikram Subba, *Ten Years On: The State of Community Radio in Nepal* (New Delhi: UNESCO, 2007), 29.

<sup>29</sup> Watch a video of EA’s Binaya Guragain explaining the radio programming feedback system: <https://vimeo.com/122723398>

future programs. Significantly, of the 17 CARs, 12 are women and 15 come from non-Hill Brahmin/Chhettri groups.

Feedback from CARs, IVR and SMS is shared with EA's M&E team, as well as with CAGs. Each production partner has a CAG made up of SB partners, local government officials, sector experts and other stakeholders; CAGs meet regularly to guide the topics and content of programming. In addition to the CAGs, the central-level Radio-Strategic Advisory Committee (SAG), made up of representatives from SB's implementing partners and sector experts, ensures programming addresses the project's objectives.

Mechanisms for collecting and reviewing listener feedback (such as IVR, SMS, CARs, CAGs and SAG) have helped EA and producers to identify a number of areas for improvement and respond to listener demands. Feedback has indicated that listeners favor drama programs, programming in local languages and episodes on local resources and gender based violence. In consultation with CAGs, NN producers have begun to include more on-air skits, and EA is encouraging more Sajhedari production in local languages. For most of the local production partners, mechanisms for collecting and reviewing listener feedback are new.

The technical and programmatic quality of the radio programs is evaluated through critical listening feedback sessions (CLFSs), which are conducted every three months. EA staff, radio program producers and relevant stakeholders score the shows on a variety of criteria including content, format and presentation. They also suggest strategies for improvement. At a CLFS in the second quarter of Year 3, scores for Sajhedari shows were 26.9 percent higher than the baseline, reflecting a significant improvement since the beginning of the project in terms of content, style, topics, inclusion of voices, informational value, linkages between state and society, innovation and creativity. The CLFS participants suggested that producers strengthen the clarity and nuance in reporting on child marriage and that they include more success stories and dramatization of scripts.

#### Other Radio Content: PSAs and Round-Table Discussions

SB has produced 13 PSAs (broadcast well over 1,000 times each) that provide timely, useful information to citizens in the project districts. The PSAs are produced at the central level in Nepali and translated into local languages by local partner stations. One of the most successful PSAs informed citizens about a last-minute extension to the voter registration deadline in the lead-up to the Constituent Assembly elections in August 2013. EA quickly put together a PSA explaining the new deadline and instructions for registration. The announcement was aired on 30 different radio stations, up to 15 times daily, for three days. Another successful PSA campaign, developed in collaboration with CeLRRd, explained the roles of Community Mediation Centers (CMCs) and the procedures for registering a dispute. According to a rapid assessment conducted by EA, 54% of respondents either accessed a CMC for services or sought information about CMCs and 22% referred somebody to a CMC after listening to the PSA.

EA also organized, recorded and broadcast six roundtable discussions during Year 2 to engage government officials, civil society organizations and citizens in dialogue on local development and planning. These events included 260 participants across all of the project districts and were broadcast by the partner FM stations. The governance roundtables produced valuable discussions on transparency, inclusion and decentralization. They also helped build stronger connections between the project, local producers and government officials.

#### Radio Listener Groups (RLGs)

SB works with RLGs in order to engage listeners in discussion and participatory action, using the messages conveyed by radio as a starting point. To date, 101 RLGs have been formed, with 2,152 members meeting bi-monthly. A total of 66 percent of RLG members are women and 79 percent come from non-Hill Brahmin/Chhettri groups, including 47 percent who are Terai/Madheshi Janajati

Adivasi, 15 percent who are Hill Dalit and 2 percent who are Terai/ Madheshi Dalit. Through RLGs, SB can readily engage marginalized groups around the issues raised in radio programming.

RLGs have begun to take an active role in local governance and development processes, such as by advocating at VDC meetings, submitting projects to the VDC and organizing awareness-raising events in their communities. RLGs have organized rallies around gender-based violence and led volunteer-based efforts to construct community infrastructure. During second quarter of FY 2015, several RLGs submitted projects in the 14-step planning process, and four proposals (for construction of community buildings and for women's and children's empowerment programs) were approved. EA has also started a micro-grants initiative open to RLGs for seed-funding up to USD 500. Of the 75 proposals received in Year 2, 24 grants have been implemented. The main purpose of the micro-grants program is to foster RLG sustainability and encourage participatory action. Among other topics, grants have been awarded for workshops on how to exercise one's right to information, awareness programs on the 14-step planning process, women's and youth empowerment programs and a basic journalism workshop.

### Capacity Development

EA provides ongoing mentoring to all SB production partners. After producers write scripts for each episode based on topics prioritized by CAGs, EA reviews the scripts and provides feedback. EA has also given two annual production trainings to the 24 producers and staff from its partner stations, covering production skills, script writing and issue selection. It has also conducted two Local Governance and Media trainings for 17 station managers to build their capacity to address themes related to governance in programming. Likewise, 15 Community Reporters have received annual trainings on technical matters and interview techniques. EA has also trained 101 RLG facilitators to facilitate discussions and lead RLG groups.

Though EA's focus has been on radio, it has also worked with other local media actors. In Year 2, it provided capacity building training for 19 women journalists on reporting on GBV. Participants received fellowships to produce 34 case studies/stories addressing GBV which were then published or broadcast. Similarly, training was provided to 40 print media editors to build their capacity to develop stories regarding local governance and development, particularly focusing on marginalized groups. Another six workshops on utilizing social media were held in the project districts, attended by 174 youth participants. Participants were encouraged to use the citizen journalism and social networking platform *Mero Report*, which is maintained by EA. *Mero Report* is now receiving posts from the project districts, including 18 during the past quarter on topics ranging from swine flu prevention to budgets for road repairs to "maintaining dignity at public hearings." Finally, EA provided training to VDC and DDC officials on "Media as a Tool for Development and Change" in order to promote greater collaboration between local government and media actors. After the training, 14 VDC/ DDC officials utilized the NN show to disseminate information about newly declared municipalities, social security allowances, revenue generation and utilization by local governments, youth employment opportunities at local bodies and other subjects

### *5.3 Key Challenges for Media Engagement*

An ongoing challenge is to build listenership of SB programming. Encouragingly, EA's Broadcast Audience Survey in July-August 2014 found that 30.7 percent of respondents had listened to SSMK in the previous month, and six of the project's partner stations were listed among respondents' top three favorite stations for their district. However, only 13.5 percent had listened to NN and 13.9 percent had listed Sajhedari in the past month, of which 11.6 percent listened to the program on a regular basis. Challenges related to listenership are discussed in further detail below.

It is important to experiment with new strategies to increase the listenership of NN and Sajhedari especially. One strategy suggested by EA staff is to better advertise SB-supported radio shows. Advertising could take the form of on-air spots, as well as billboards or posters at VDC offices and

other strategic locations that inform potential listeners about the shows, their topics and times. A second strategy EA is pursuing is to incorporate more aspects of “entertainment shows” into SB’s programming. Possibilities for this include more drama segments (which are often requested by listeners) and call-in/SMS quiz competitions, in which callers answer questions related to governance or other SB themes for prizes. A third strategy is to increase the number of shows produced in non-Nepali languages. Non-Nepali language shows are uncommon in the project districts, despite demand for them as evidenced by listener feedback. One of SB’s partner stations, Gurbaba FM in Bardiya, is expected to begin producing shows in Tharu this quarter.

Another challenge is to ensure that RLGs listen to SB’s radio shows as a group. Some RLGs have been listening to the episodes individually rather than as a group, because SB’s radio shows are not aired at the same time as their meetings (shows are mostly aired in the evening, whereas meetings are mostly during the day). EA is weighing options to address this challenge. EA could adjust broadcast schedules to align with group meeting times, but finding times that work for all RLGs could be logistically difficult. In Phase II VDCs, EA plans to provide RLGs with radio receivers that are capable of playing content from memory sticks, so that they can listen to pre-recorded episodes as a group. (In Phase I VDCs, RLGs already received radios that are not capable of reading memory sticks. EA may provide new radios to those Phase I RLGs that have not been able to conduct group listening sessions.)

It remains a challenge to build better coordination with SB project partners to increase overall impact. At the beginning of the project, coordination was not as strong as desired, because partners were busy with start-up activities such as group formation, orientations and training. However, coordination has improved in Years 2 and 3, resulting in programming that better covers project activities, success stories and issues. For example, staff from partner NGOs and CMCs now take part in CAG meetings where they help guide program content, and CeLRRd and EA have worked closely to design an effective PSA campaign for CMCs. SB partners are also participating in on-air round table discussions, and CRs and local FM producers seek out information for episodes from WORTH and YLG groups. In addition, SB produces a monthly calendar detailing all the activities of various partners, which it shares with EA so that they can dispatch CRs to cover relevant events. SB’s Mosaic website established in January 2015 also provides a platform for sharing information among partners.

It will be important to continue building collaboration in the remaining years of the project. Implementing partners are expected to share more success stories with EA and radio producers for inclusion in radio shows. Similarly, more collaboration is planned with CeLRRd to produce PSAs and episodes to better advertise community mediation activities. Also, SB plans to incorporate radio listening sessions into YLGs and WORTH group meetings, which could provide more opportunities for collaboration and increase listenership. SB staff and EA are currently discussing how this should be done, keeping in mind the need to not over-burden the time schedules of YLG and WORTH group members.

#### *5.4 Moving Forward with Media Engagement*

The previous section described some adjustments to SB’s media activities in response to specific challenges faced. This section discusses broader strategies for consideration during Phase 2 of the project and issues related to the sustainability of the project’s approach.

##### *1. Invest in in-depth reporting*

Thus far, SB’s work with local producers has generally focused on the production of messages related to discrete project objectives and components. Importantly, producers, station staff and CRs have gained a deeper understanding of how local governance processes work. In order to build upon this work during Phase 2, the project could consider supporting local media to produce more in-depth and data-driven stories about local government processes and projects. This could allow media partners to play a role not merely as messengers, but also as watchdogs and leaders in building more transparent,

inclusive governance. Furthermore, in-depth stories could result in more interesting and locally relevant programming, which could potentially build listenership. In order to produce such stories, SB should consider various strategies ranging from small adjustments to currently planned trainings and mentorship activities to new trainings and/or fellowships.

## 2. *Plan for sustainability*

The provision of capacity development for local media professionals is one way that SB is ensuring sustainability. Trainings for local producers, radio staff and CRs have built their technical capacities and knowledge of governance processes so that they can produce quality programming beyond the duration of the project. Furthermore, EA provides ongoing mentorship to producers for Sajhedari episodes. It has also begun to invite local producers to create short segments as “guest producers” on NN. In providing mentorship, EA should continue to keep in mind the need to balance guidance with a certain degree of freedom for producers to experiment using their own ideas. By helping producers better develop their own ideas, EA will build their capacities to create locally relevant governance content on their own initiative, ensuring long-term impact.

It is also important to consider the financial sustainability of SB’s local partner stations, since funding is a major challenge for community radio nationally. Often, stations can earn more money by producing entertainment shows (music, etc.) or by accepting funding from the private sector or government.<sup>30</sup> However, these strategies can compromise the quality and integrity of content, and they call into question whether a station qualifies as ‘community radio.’ A UNESCO report on community radio in Nepal credits non-commercial sources of income and volunteerism as important factors in the success of community radio.<sup>31</sup> In designing future SB activities, it will be important to keep this constraint in mind, and to analyze options available to community radio stations to sustain their funding.

---

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO, *Assessment of Media Development in Nepal* (Kathmandu: UNESCO, 2013), 41-42.

<sup>31</sup> Pringle and Subba, *Ten Years On: The State of Community Radio in Nepal*.