



Be the change

FY14 IRMI ANNUAL REPORT

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFO	Area Forest Office
BASE	Backward Society Education
CA	Constituent Assembly
CDO	Chief District Officer
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
DEO	District Education Officer
DFO	District Forest Officer
DPAC	District Project Advisory Committee
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forest User Group
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FNRM	Forum for Natural Resource Management
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
IRMI	Inclusive Resource Management Initiative
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Program
MC	Mercy Corps
NRMF	Natural Resource Management Forum (NRMF)
SS	Sahakarmi Samaj
TAF	The Asia Foundation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCO	Women and Children's Office

1. Program Overview/Activities

Since June 2013, Mercy Corps and two local partners – Backward Society Education (BASE) and Saharkarmi Samaj (SS) – continue to implement a two-year USAID-funded “Inclusive Resource Management Initiative (IRMI)” to support Nepal’s transition to a more peaceful, equitable society. The overarching goal remains to enhance stability through natural resource conflict resolution and inclusive natural resource management to implement program activities targeting 20 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in four districts of the western Terai, including Kailali, Bardiya, Banke and Dang Districts. The expected program beneficiaries are approximately 237,000 people living in the target areas. Out of these, the program has thus far reached 7,557 households and 45,066 family members (22,783 male and 22,283 female).

Throughout this program, Mercy Corps and partners maintain a holistic and people-to-people approach in all our implementation activities, all of which:

- Facilitates the resolution of resource-based conflicts;
- Promotes inclusive decision-making related to natural resource use and management; and
- Reduces natural resource competition through joint environmental and economic initiatives.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The program facilitates natural resource-based conflict resolution, promotes inclusive management, and reduces natural resource competition through joint environmental and economic initiatives through the following activities:

- Map natural resource conflicts;
- Conduct joint training for key stakeholders in conflict analysis;
- Facilitate the development of conflict resolution agreements;
- Strengthen community user groups’ internal governance;
- Raise awareness on natural resources rights and responsibilities;
- Support community participation in local government;
- Facilitate community peace building forums;
- Create joint natural resource management initiatives; and
- Support environmentally sustainable economic initiatives.

II. Overview of first year achievements/Highlights

Highlights

During the past one-year period, Mercy Corps and its partners achieved the following with regards to IRMI.

- Conducted a baseline survey alongside conflict resource mapping exercise in the 20 CFUGs.
- Conducted organization capacity assessments for two of the implementing partners (BASE and SS) to determine capacity gaps.
- The stakeholders against the target of 20 have identified some 58 NRM conflicts/disputes.
- The two partners (BASE and SS) also conducted CFUGs organizational capacity assessments to determine internal governance gaps.
- Mercy Corps and partners conducted 20 program kick-start orientation sessions in the 20 VDCs, targeting district leaders, CFUGs, women and youth.
- 421 IRMI stakeholders (185 female and 236 male) were identified and orientated on IRMI goals and objectives and their role to sustain community-endorsed activities.
- Mercy Corps conducted two rounds of capacity building trainings for partner staff (TOTs) on mediation, negotiation and multi-stakeholder dialogue skills. The first training was for 10 days and the second was for 5 days. The latter was facilitated by two national independent consultants and with active support from USAID's Democracy and Governance Specialist, Ms. Reshma Thapa.
- Facilitated tree plantation of some 28,106 different species in Banke, Bardia, Dang and Kailali Districts.
- Conducted 20 training sessions on good governance and advocacy training for 421 IRMI stakeholders. Prior to this, 20 staff members from partners' staff were trained for five days on basic skills on good governance and advocacy issues.
- Mercy Corps participated in two of USAID's CMM partners coordination meeting in Butwal and Nepalgunj.
- Conducted 20 participatory meetings with community people to identify environmentally sustainable economic initiatives.
- Conducted 19 community sessions to raise awareness on rights and responsibilities related to natural resources and management with CFUG members in the four districts.
- Monitored regular development of conflict resolution agreements by key stakeholders.

- Regular coordination meetings with governmental and non-governmental line agencies.
- Many of the 421 stakeholders trained in negotiation and dialogue quickly put their skills into practice in order to tackle both intra- and inter-community disputes. 23 community disputes related to NRM have been resolved thus far.
- Sahakarmi Samaj and some IRMI program stakeholders joined the rest of the world in celebrating "International Peace Day" on 21st September 2014 in their working VDCs' CFUGs area. Some 55 IRMI stakeholders initiated the peace rally with over 7,000 people joining to observe the program. Messages were centered on this year's theme: "*Right of Peoples to Peace*" and around IRMI program messages, stressing the need for CFUGs and local people to build peace, stop violence, save lives, heal and rebuild shattered communities.
- Finally, following the recent USAID and Mercy Corps Nepal's modification agreement of the IRMI program, Mercy Corps conducted a rapid assessment in the program districts to determine communities' Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) relating to DRR issues.

III. Program update by objectives

Objective 1: Strengthen the ability of key stakeholders to resolve community-level natural resource conflicts in an inclusive, sustainable manner.

Activity 1.1: Map natural resource conflicts.

Status: This activity was supposed to have been implemented in **June and July 2013**. **This activity is complete as per the IRMI work plan.**

Update: This activity was delayed due to in-country political transitional activities and cultural festivals in the first program quarter of 2013. Due to this late kick-start, this activity was conducted from **December 2013 to February 2014**. The participatory mapping exercise identified 20 VDCs where the program is being implemented, as well as the core conflicts that the program aims to resolve. Mercy Corps designed the mapping tools and supervised the exercise, while BASE and Sahakarmi Samaj conducted the exercise. IRMI's selection process adhered to enough flexibility to allow for the inclusion of single or multiple user groups in target VDCs depending on the specific nature of the identified conflict (i.e. inter or intra CFUG).

Activity 1.2: Conduct joint training for key stakeholders in conflict analysis and resolution.

Status: During the first year, Mercy Corps and partners completed the identification, orientation and training of 421 program stakeholders in the target VDCs. The two partners identified the stakeholders following selection criteria developed and previously discussed in community consultative meetings. Prior to this, Mercy Corps and the two partners conducted 20 rounds of stakeholder orientation sessions in the 20 target VDCs, reaching out to some 421 participants altogether. Of these, 185 were female and 236 male. The purpose was to introduce IRMI program aims and objectives and also to discuss their expected roles and responsibilities in the program. The stakeholders were very positive about the strategies and promised to work with Mercy Corps and partners to lay solid foundations for resource-based conflict resolution, and management.

Seven stages/steps of interest-based mediation

- I. Introduction, welcome and orientation on mediation processes. Emphasis on maintaining confidentiality
- II. Ground rules/norm setting in consensus with the disputing parties
- III. Listening to disputes/stories one by one and then in plenary session.
- IV. Disputing parties begin understanding each other.
- V. Caucus; Listening to both parties one after the other/separately, especially to identify hidden interests.
- VI. Generating options for each issue, one issue at a time.
- VII. Reaching agreements, generating agreement letters

Update: Since these trainings, Mercy Corps has successfully provided two capacity building training sessions to 21 partners' staff of BASE and SS in May and September 2014, respectively. They in turn have provided similar trainings to the 421 stakeholders in the four target districts. This activity is on going.

Mr. Hari Prasad Pandi, a freelance national facilitator on Community Mediation provided the first round of training. In the second round, Dr. Dinesh Prasain and Hari Prasad Pandi facilitated the training. The topic was specifically multi-stakeholders dialogue skills in a bid to enhance natural resource-based conflict management strategies, building on previous conflict analysis and interest-based mediation and negotiation skills. Ms. Reshma Thapa, USAID's Democracy and Governance Specialist also provided useful sessions and information on Legal Awareness-Local Governance and Mediation Acts.

Drawing on technical expertise in natural resource management, Mercy Corps continues to strengthen and introduce new skills on natural resource management activities into partners' peacebuilding strategies. Together, the tailored trainings, the implementation responsibilities allocated to the partners, and the technical guidance provided by Mercy Corps will continue to enhance the partners' capacity in evidence-based planning, organizational management and integrated NRM peacebuilding approaches.

Activity 1.3 Facilitate the development of conflict resolution agreements by key stakeholders.

Status: The 421 trained IRMI stakeholders have renamed themselves as “*Natural Resource Management Forum (NRMF)*” as they continue to champion the development of conflict resolution agreements with their newfound skills in multi-stakeholder dialogue and negotiation. Stakeholders have completed setting up conflict mitigation centers that would facilitate them to address issues that could possibly lead into violent confrontation between forest user group members. This will enable stakeholders to start developing conflict resolution agreements. The agreement will include a plan to support its sustainability through environmental and economic initiatives related to objective three.

Update: In this reporting period, IRMI partners conducted a series of joint meetings with key stakeholders in the 20 CFUG locations following the first 10 days of community mediation and negotiation trainings to the stakeholders in June 2014. Issues discussed included how and where the stakeholders could resolve community conflicts and what names should be given to these groups handling NRM issues. The stakeholders have resolved 23 crucial cases in Bardiya, Banke, Kailali and Dang Districts. Most of the cases are around ownership of forestland, land encroachment, wood distribution, open grazing land control, firewood distribution, and irrigation water distribution. This activity is ongoing as per the work plan and log frame target.



Second round IRMI TOT Training September 2014

The CFUGs have also been involved in the identification of activities that would support joint implementation as a way to bridge lines of division between and amongst diverse CFUGs members

and community residents. So far, over 35 sustainable economic activities have been identified, out of which 20 viable ones shall be implemented. It is hoped that these activities would consolidate the conflict resolution agreements as they jointly implement the activities.

Objective 2: Increase inclusive and participatory resource-related decision-making among community and government bodies.

Activity 2.1: Strengthen internal governance of community user groups.

Status: In April 2014, the IRMI program team facilitated community user group’s self-capacity assessment. The assessment was built on five main indicators: 1. Resource availability, 2. Organizational capacity of CFUGs, 3. Inclusion of the poor and the excluded communities, 4. Forest management, and 5. Coordination and collaboration between groups/bodies. During these sessions, the user groups identified their gaps, some of which include lack of transparency, low participation of group members in meetings, exclusion of marginalized groups, internal leadership and coordination issues with and between like-minded organization/bodies, no financial accountability system in place, and poor service delivery, to name a few. Based on these organizational self-assessment gaps identified, IRMI continues to design capacity building program for each user group, being implemented by BASE and Sahakarmi Samaj with oversight by the Mercy Corps team. This included trainings on participatory facilitation and gender sensitivity, resource mapping, development of a strategic plan to improve internal governance targets for increased transparency, inclusion, and conflict management, advocacy and governance workshops, and ongoing mentoring through the implementation of this plan. Mercy Corps will continue to employ enough flexibility in structuring these forums at the VDC and/or DDC levels to optimize stakeholder learning and information sharing opportunities.

Update: IRMI local partners continue to provide weekly meetings with CFUGs to discuss some of the gaps that do exist between them and provided follow-up mentoring to the groups. These include training on participatory facilitation and gender sensitivity skills, discussing strategic plans to improve internal governance targets for increased transparency, inclusion, and conflict management at the VDC, CFUG and DDC levels

Some of the topics addressed:

- Historical background and concept of CFUG emergence in Nepal.
- Generation-wise community forestry development regime in Nepal: i.e., first, second and third generation (in brief).
- Brief introduction on rules and regulations and guidelines regarding community forest.
- Some restrictions: i.e., dos and don’ts in community forest as per existing forest policy

to optimize stakeholder learning and information sharing opportunities. Some of

CFUGs have shown great improvements in their internal governance and financial management, and human resource management. This activity is ongoing as per the IRMI work plan.

Activity 2.2: Raise awareness of rights and responsibilities related to natural resources

Status: Following the training of IRMI program key stakeholder in May/June 2014 on resource-based conflict analysis, interest-based negotiation and dispute resolution skills, efforts have been made to gather some of the information education and communication (IEC) materials in a bid to support district and national based awareness raising campaigns on the rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use and management. Mercy Corps and partners have started coordinating with relevant District Development Committee (DDC), Village Development Committee (VDC), District Forest Officer (DFO), and District Land Reform Committee (DLRO) officials and user group networks to plan and execute an extension education program on government policies related to natural resources and the rights of various categories of Nepalis. The program includes mass media such as radio and SMS as well as community outreach meetings, with emphasis on reaching women and marginalized groups. This activity kicked-off in July 2014, is ongoing and will continue through May 2015 as per the revised work plan.

Update: During the reporting period, IRMI intensified its awareness raising campaigns involving CFUGs, DDC, VDC, DFO and DLRO relating to natural resources and their management. IRMI partners have been able to hold 19 sessions in the target VDCs since July 2014. These were conducted in each of the 20 CFUGs in Dang, Bardiya, Kailali, and Banke with the objectives to raise awareness of the rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use and management and to promote community participation in government decision-making processes related to natural resource use management at local levels. In total, some 1,019 (M 483 F 536) community people participated in the first round district-wide community awareness sessions. Technical resource persons were consulted from the District Forest Offices, and Sector Forest heads of the respective districts. Mercy Corps has also developed key information, education and communication (IEC) materials in a bid to launch district and national based awareness raising campaigns on the rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use and management.

Activity 2.3: Support community participation in government decision-making processes.

Status: Mercy Corps and partners are exploring opportunities to coordinate these activities with Local Governance and Community Development Programs (LGCDP's) Citizen Awareness Center and Ward Citizen Forums when appropriate.

This will build on the extension education program by ensuring that community members have the skills and opportunity to voice their concerns and propose solutions so that government plans are shaped by community priorities. BASE and Sahakarmi Samaj with oversight by Mercy Corps will work with user groups and community members, particularly women's groups and marginalized communities, in the 20 target sites to identify opportunities for participation in government planning processes, develop strategies for articulating their demands, and participate in government planning processes.

As per the revised IRMI work plan, this activity is slated for October through November 2014. Mercy Corps and partners are coordinating with the necessary bodies to formulate strategies on how government decision-making can filter down through community participation.

Updates: Mercy Corps and partners have had contacts with Local Governance and Community Development Program's (LGCDP's) Citizen Awareness Center and Ward Citizen Forums. The plan is to build on the extension education program by ensuring that community members have the skills and opportunity to voice their concerns and propose solutions so that government plans are shaped by community priorities. This will be reported in the next quarterly report when active implementation commences as indicated herein.

Objective 3: Enhance the sustainability of negotiated agreements by engaging communities in joint environmental and economic development initiatives.

Activity 3.1: Community peace building forums.

Status: Shortly after stakeholders' trainings in May/June 2014, trained members have started convening a series of forums in each target site to disseminate information about the conflict resolution agreement and to discuss how the agreement can be supported through changes in natural resource use and management and alternative economic opportunities. This activity is ongoing since July 2014 and will continue through October 2014 and April 2015 as per the revised work plan.

Updates: Community peacebuilding forums have been active since then with 20 CFUG community meetings shortly after stakeholders' trainings in June 2014. Trained members have started convening a series of fora in each target site to disseminate information about the conflict resolution agreement and to discuss how the agreement can be supported through changes in natural resource use and management and alternative economic opportunities. Some of these meetings culminated in the celebration of this year's International Peace Day on the 21st September 2014 and the identification of some joint natural resource management

initiatives. Mercy Corps' Natural Resource Technical Advisor, Mr. Dol Thanet, in collaboration with the Program Manager/Chief of Party, Mr. Samuel Konkofa Koroma, developed a checklist with the aim of providing guidelines for the establishment of IRMI's "Peace Center," henceforth called "*Natural Resource Management Forum*"(NRMF). These fora aim to enhance stability through natural resource based conflict resolution and inclusive natural resource management within CFUG premises. The objectives are to establish a Natural Resource Management Forum within the premises of the CFUG office, to institutionalize this forum in the CFUG regime for sustainability even after the IRMI intervention ends. The forum meets and coordinates with the CFUG executive committee to discuss the objectives of the peace fora.

Activity 3.2: Joint natural resource management initiatives.

Status: This activity began implementation in July-August 2014 and will continue through April 2015. The IRMI team has been holding a series of consultative meetings with CFUGs to identify joint initiatives for natural resource management to reduce resource demand, limit environmental degradation and promote cooperation. As of the end of August 2014, some 28,106 assorted



CFUGs Planting Trees

tree seedlings have been planted in Banke, Dang, Bardia and Kailali districts.

Updates: Mercy Corps and its partners' continue to focus on strengthening the internal governance of the Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) in the IRMI operational areas, following their self-capacity assessment exercises, and this is bearing dividends on a daily basis. To limit environmental degradation and promote cooperation, the program team has been monitoring both community members and CFUGs as they roll out massive tree planting activities in Banke, Bardia, Dang and Kailali districts. The activity is being implemented alongside the environmentally sustainable economic activities. To reinforce their current activities as a way to inform the general population, a slogan has been coined "*plant trees, not conflict*" in a bid to create awareness and mitigate localized conflicts associated with natural resource management. The tree planting exercise involves CFUG executive committee members, active users, advisory committee members, local leaders, women groups, and youth club members, to name a few. This is one of the key areas IRMI is

coordinating at the community level, especially where illegal settlements have created massive deforestation.

Activity 3.3: Support environmentally sustainable economic initiatives.

Status: This activity kicked off in July 2014. Since then, the program team has held 20 consultative meetings in the target CFUGs to identify and prioritize the activities based on an agreed selection criteria developed by the technical staff with support from Mercy Corps’ Market Development Specialists.

Update: During the latter portion of this first year, efforts have been made to identify over 35 environmentally economic activities through consultative meetings with CFUGs and key stakeholders in the four districts.



Assorted Tree seedlings planted

Screening processes to finalize the selection of the most viable 20 activities is near completion and active implementation kicks-off in October 2014 through April 2015. It is envisaged that these activities will continue to be implemented by the CFUGs even after the official end date of IRMI (though Mercy Corps has already stated its possible intention of requesting a No-Cost Extension). These activities will build on Mercy Corps’ value-chain development programming in Nepal, as well as previous programs like the USAID-funded *Business Development Services – Marketing, Production, and Service*.

IV. Contextual Update

Local residents in the Terai region continue to battle with resource-based conflicts, which Mercy Corps, partners and the trained IRMI stakeholders known as “*Natural Resource Management Forum*” (NRMF), Community Forest User groups and other like-minded partners are trying to address through environmentally sustainable, community-endorsed activities. In this context, there is a demand for Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR) to bring peace and harmony between and among rural communities conflicting over natural resources. From among the ADR approaches, community mediation and multi-stakeholder dialogue are among the most effective methods of dispute resolution conducted based on the interests of the disputants and settled using a democratic approach for both or all parties. In the latter portion of this first year, IRMI has involved district stakeholders and other like-minded organizations

to jointly identify issues and discuss them at district fora. This activity is gaining support on the ground from district leadership.

The Nepalese formal legal system is still far from reaching the poor, marginalized, women and religious minorities, especially in the project locations. As the legal system is costly and tardy, poor and marginalized people lack access to basic rights or have little to no opportunity to voice their concerns. In such a situation, the Natural Resource Management Forum (NRMF) being established at CFUG levels can play a crucial role in resolving disputes and can substantively contribute to bringing long-lasting peace in the affected communities in Banke, Bardiya, Dang and Kailali districts in partnership with the program's two local partners: Backward Society Education (BASE) and Sahakarmi Samaj (SS).

V. Challenges and Lessons Learned:

Challenges

- IRMI kick-start was delayed for six months partially due to Dashain and Tihar festivals in October 2013, and Constituent Assembly elections in November 2013. This affected conflict mapping and baseline activities.
- Mercy Corps' efforts to secure mediation and training materials developed in the Nepali context proved futile. However, Mercy Corps contacted PACT Inc., a like-minded organization, which willingly provided their training modules that fit within the IRMI program context. These materials have been used throughout the two trainings.
- Some of the target communities in Banke, Bardia, Dang and Kailali Districts were severely affected by heavy flooding in 2014, where household belongings and crops were swept away and houses and other infrastructure badly damaged. IRMI activities in these areas were adversely affected as staff couldn't access their displaced beneficiaries for weeks. With the new modification agreement provided by USAID, Mercy Corps has initiated a comprehensive study that would help to integrate DRR awareness raising activities into current IRMI activities with CFUGs and stakeholders. Mercy Corps is coordinating with its internal DRR Advisor to push this modification request to another level and is keen to pursue opportunities with USAID for real and substantive interventions in DRR within or concurrently with current IRMI activities as part of a considered resilience strategy.
- Nepal's national festive period also delayed stakeholders' trainings following the second-round TOT training in September 2014.
- Mercy Corps is incorporating some of the 'modification activities' costs into IRMI's budget for the benefit of the program.

- The expectations from some government officials for stipend payments. Despite advanced orientation during program kick-off meetings, some leaders challenged partners during and after every consultative meeting. To address this challenge, the Program Manager travelled to each participating VDC to discuss expectations around IRMI effectively and to remind them of their volunteerism and ownership to sustain the peacebuilding efforts.

Lessons Learned

- IRMI appears to present a new program theme and methodology for subgrantees BASE and SS, neither of which have implemented natural resource based conflict mitigation programs in the past and each have articulated some degree of unfamiliarity with the program material through direct conversations with Mercy Corps field staff. BASE, the larger and more experienced NGO and SS have indeed demonstrated a constructive attitude and openness about making any program or operational adjustments suggested by Mercy Corps. With initial capacity assessment of both partners, Mercy Corps has provided special focus on BASE and SS's capacity development objectives relative to IRMI objectives and quality implementation of activities. Increasing the number and quality of local CSOs engaged in constructive and effective conflict mitigation is very much a net plus.
- Involvement of district leadership as IRMI stakeholders is facilitating identification of community endorsed activities and ownership at district and CFUG levels.
- CFUG internal governance restructuring, which has been one of IRMI's target activities, has led to significant tree planting initiatives in the target districts. With this relatively "easy" success, IRMI considers a good foundation laid for further such and more substantial such coordinated linking efforts, as target communities become more aware of the results to be achieved through cooperative and coordinated actions, particularly in regards to knowledge of and access to government services.

VI. Coordination Meetings

- Mercy Corps participated in the regional USAID CMM partners meeting in June 2014 in Butwal.
- Mercy Corps participated in the DPAC meeting in Kailali in September 2014, where the Local Development Officer (LDO) chaired the meeting. This is the first formation meeting since IRMI inception in June 2013. This committee will sit next meeting and plan for extensive monitoring and evaluation of the implemented projects.

- A program collaboration meeting was held with TAF on 21st March to seek their support of their resource materials to train IRMI program stakeholders.
- A Coordination meeting together with Pact Inc, Kisan and Health for Life was held at Hotel Sangrila on 7th March, 2014. The meeting was held to coordinate/collaborate among the programs and share experiences among USAID's grantees in the field.
- MC had two monthly meetings with USAID on the 19th February and 25th March, 2014 respectively to share IRMI monthly progress, challenges and plans for April.
- MC also participated in the monthly meeting with Democracy and Governance Office (DGO) partners at the US Embassy on 26th March 2014 and presented progress and plans for the next month.
- IRMI-DPM talked informally with Nick Langton (CoP-Pact) regarding the overlap with Pact in one community in Kailali District. The meeting was positive and concluded with agreement on strong coordination between both organizations.
- IRMI continues to strengthen good coordination links with other stakeholders in the program areas, a trend that will continue into the future.

VII. Monitoring and Evaluation

Mercy Corps continues to provide technical support to partner staff to conduct planned activities in an effective manner. Capacity building trainings for partner staff and checking the monitoring tools during and after every training has helped the IRMI team to remain focused. On-site coaching is also being used to steer project activities. Mercy Corps is documenting quarterly beneficiary data through partner activities. The Mercy Corps Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, together with the IRMI team, will continue to be an integral part of analyzing and reporting on data to the donor, stakeholders and, once relevant, project beneficiaries. IRMI program staff continues to analyze data on a monthly basis to inform project management decisions via USAID's TraiNet database. Monitoring focuses on reviewing project achievements/accomplishments versus targets, identifying issues and concerns affecting project implementation, and recommending corrective measures when necessary.

VIII. Conclusion

Mercy Corps continues to accelerate IRMI activities through close collaboration with IRMI partners and trained key stakeholders, who have taken over organizing community-led consultative meetings around natural resource management. As

mentioned earlier, following IRMI's modification agreements, Mercy Corps have conducted a rapid assessment survey to appraise the communities' knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) around DRR issues in IRMI target districts.

The findings of the survey points at the need for IRMI (and indeed other similar programs) to be expanded to embrace an integrated, relevant and well thought out DRR component in Bardiya, Banke, and Dang and Kailali districts. The findings show the need for the integration of natural resource management, DRR and income generation/market development activities. Current IRMI activities and future such integrated programming could contribute towards substantive resilience practice and sounder, more sustainable ecological systems. Ongoing activities and the assessed need for relevant DRR activities show an undeniable need to make considered linkages between DRR to prepare, warn and protect natural resources, sound natural resource management to strengthen and expand the resource base upon which rural livelihoods depend, and market systems development to help sustain, expand and energize community coping and resilience strategies. Conflict mitigation is a serious crosscutting issue that facilitates and enables both horizontal and vertical linkages, further strengthening the entire process. Without serious interventions in DRR, communities are seen to be less likely to invest longer-term in the consolidation, protection and expansion of their natural resource base out of fear of losing those investments due to natural and manmade disasters. Current IRMI programming focuses only on the manmade, i.e., conflict and unsustainable exploitation of the resource base, while the recent flooding of the summer monsoon season has shown the devastation possible from unchecked natural disasters on unprepared and unconnected communities.

While we remain cautious of potential challenges around the current political transformation that may impact program activities in ways that are difficult to predict, including the recent serious illness of the current Prime Minister of Nepal and the political implications thereof, Mercy Corps is well positioned to advance IRMI objectives and will accelerate program activities in the next quarter as outlined below. However, Mercy Corps and partners are currently developing a no-cost extension request to allow successful completion of all program activities.

IX. Upcoming activities

Project activities for the next quarter will include the following:

- Implement joint natural resource management initiatives in the target CFUGs;
- Support and implement environmentally sustainable economic initiatives;
- Incorporate some DRR activities into current IRMI activities;

- Support community peacebuilding forums;
- Support community participation in government decision-making processes;
- Continue to strengthen internal governance of CFUGs; and
- Monitor dispute resolution agreement.

X. Annex I. First Year IRMI achievements (PMP)

Result	Performance Indicator and Disaggregates	Type	Data Source	Frequency	Targets	YR1 Achieved
Goal: Enhance stability through natural resource conflict resolution and inclusive natural resource management.						
Reduced tensions over the use and management of natural resources	(G1) % change in the number of people who report conflict over natural resources in their community. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	MC	Community Survey, Key Informant Interviews	Program start/end	Baseline -20%	
More inclusive and equitable natural resource management	(G2) % change in # of people who report that natural resource use and management is equitable, transparent, and inclusive. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	MC	Community Survey, Key Informant Interviews	Program start/end	Baseline +25%	
Objective 1: Strengthen the ability of key stakeholders to resolve community-level natural resource conflicts in an inclusive, sustainable manner						
20 natural resource-based conflicts identified	(1.1) # of natural resource-based conflicts identified.	MC	Key Informant Interviews, Community Consultations	Program start	20	58

Result	Performance Indicator and Disaggregates	Type	Data Source	Frequency	Targets	YR1 Achieved
400 key stakeholders strengthen their conflict resolution skills	(1.2) # of people trained in conflict mitigation/resolution skills with USG assistance. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	USA ID	Program records	Quarterly	400	421
	(1.3) % change in program participants demonstrating increased confidence and willingness to use consensus-building/negotiation approaches to resolve conflicts. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	MC	Stakeholder Survey	Program start/end	Baseline +20%	
20 natural resource-based conflicts resolved	(1.4) # of natural resource-based conflicts resolved	MC	Dispute Resolution Agreement Form	Quarterly	20	23
	(1.5) % change in ability of community members to access natural resources. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, religion, and type of resource.	MC	Community Survey	Program start/end	Baseline +50%	

Result	Performance Indicator and Disaggregates	Type	Data Source	Frequency	Targets	YR1 Achieved
Collaborative relationships between key stakeholders enhanced	(1.6) % change in collaboration among key stakeholders around natural resource management and resource-based conflict resolution	MC	Stakeholder Survey	Program start/end	Baseline +20%	
Implementing local partners increase organizational capacity	(1.7) % change in organizational capacity scores	MC	Organizational Assessment	Program Start/end	Baseline +50%	
Objective 2: Increase inclusive and participatory resource-related decision among community and government bodies						
20 user groups exhibit more inclusive internal governance practices	(2.1) % of targeted user groups demonstrating more inclusive internal decision-making practices	MC	Organizational assessment	Program start/end	Baseline +50%	
	(2.2) % change in perceptions of community members that they can influence local natural resource management decisions. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	MC	Community Survey	Program start/end	Baseline +25%	

Result	Performance Indicator and Disaggregates	Type	Data Source	Frequency	Targets	YR1 Achieved
Increased community awareness of rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use and management	(2.3) # of outreach activities to raise awareness of government policies related to natural resource use and management.	MC	Program records	Quarterly	80	19
	(2.4) % change in awareness among community members about their rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use and management. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	MC	Community Survey	Program start/end	Baseline +25%	
Increased community participation in government decision-making related to natural resource use and management	(2.5) # of community members attending government fora, meetings, or planning sessions. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	MC	Program records	Quarterly	600	1,096(female 552, male 544)
	(2.6) % change in perceptions of community members that they can influence government planning and decision-making related to natural resource use and management. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	MC	Community Survey	Program start/end	Baseline +25%	

Result	Performance Indicator and Disaggregates	Type	Data Source	Frequency	Targets	YR1 Achieved
Objective 3: Enhance the sustainability of negotiated agreements by engaging communities in joint environmental and economic development initiatives						
1440 women and girls and 960 young men develop strategies for expanding their participation in peace building and natural resource management	(3.1) # Of people attending USG-assisted facilitated events that are geared toward strengthening understanding and mitigating conflict between groups. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	USA ID	Program records	Quarterly	2400	1,096(female552, male 544)
	(3.2) % change in perceptions of women and youth that they can influence decision-making processes related to natural resource management and community relationship-building. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	MC	Community Survey	Program start/end	Baseline +25%	

Result	Performance Indicator and Disaggregates	Type	Data Source	Frequency	Targets	YR1 Achieved
20 communities improve inclusive natural resource management and rebuild degraded resources	(3.3) # Of natural resource initiatives implemented. Disaggregate by type of project, # of people benefitted, and location.	MC	Program records	Quarterly	20	0
20 communities strengthen environmentally sustainable economic activities	(3.4) # Of sustainable economic initiatives implemented. Disaggregate by type of project, # of beneficiaries, and location.	MC	Program records	Quarterly	20	0
	(3.5) % Change in self-reported economic well being among participating community members. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste and religion.	MC	Community Survey	Program start/end	Baseline +20%	
Cooperative relationships between conflicting communities built	(3.6) % Change in number of people who believe that there is a tangible benefit to cooperation. Disaggregate by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion.	MC	Community Survey	Program start/end	Baseline +25%	

XI. Annex II: First Year Direct Beneficiaries targeted

S.N	Topic of event	Bardiya			Dang			Kailali			Banke			Total	Total	
		Total participant	Sex		Total participant	Sex		Total participant	Sex		Total participant	Sex			Female	Male
			Female	Male												
1	Organizational capacity Assessment													10	0	10
2	Land and Natural Resource Mapping Training to IRMI staff													18	7	11
3	Joint meeting on participatory market assessment													7	0	7
4	Baseline survey													404	141	263
5	District Level Inception Meeting	28	4	24	32	11	21	16	4	12	20	4	16	96	23	73
6	VDC level Consultation Meeting	152	20	132	100	24	76	136	45	91	110	17	93	498	106	392
7	Land & Natural Resource Mapping & FGD	233	117	116	243	73	170	224	97	127	120	95	25	820	382	438
8	Group Capacity Assessment	134	64	70	105	30	75	155	71	84	156	55	101	550	220	330
9	Stakeholder orientation	74	13	61	100	36	64	89	39	50				263	88	175
10	Community Mediation Training	105	36	69	106	46	60	103	42	61				314	124	190

S.N	Topic of event	Bardiya			Dang			Kailali			Banke			Total	Total	
		Total participant	Sex		Total participant	Sex		Total participant	Sex		Total participant	Sex			Total	Female
			Female	Male												
11	Good governance and advocacy training	109	63	46	104	52	52	113	50	63	134	40	94	460	205	255
12	Natural resource Education Session	501	264	237	131	52	79	269	158	111	195	78	117	1,096	552	544
13	Dialogue skill and mediation refresher training	19	9	10	42	17	25	36	17	19	25	20	5	122	63	59
14	Mentoring support to community leaders										81	29	52	81	29	52
15	Review meeting with trained key stakeholders										98	42	56	98	42	56
16	Good governance ToT to IRMI staff	4	2	2	8	4	4	4	1	3	7	3	4	23	10	13
17	Community mediation ToT to IRMI staff	4	2	2	6	2	4	4	1	3	7	3	4	21	8	13
18	Dialogue skill and mediation refresher training ToT	3	2	1	6	2	4	4	1	3	7	4	3	20	9	11
Total													4,901	2,009	2,892	

XII. Annex III. IRMI expected beneficiary figures by district

S.N	District	Name of VDC	Name of CFUG	Total Household	Family members		Total	
				Number	Male	Female		
1	Banke	Manikapur	Jaya Saraswati	410	1,223	1,306	2,529	
		Hirminiya	Hajrat	631	1,344	1,224	2,568	
		Kohalpur	Miteri	268	819	800	1,619	
		Rajhena	Jana Ekata Mahila	2,057	5,935	5,932	11,867	
		Naubasta	Sungava	722	1,960	1,984	3,944	
2	Bardia	Neulapur	Kopila	119	403	388	791	
		Bagnaha	Jharsaluwa	285	1,023	958	1,981	
		Dhodhari	Kotahi Women	184	613	550	1,163	
		Motipur	Ekata Samaj	394	1,397	1,388	2,785	
		Mainapokhar	Bhadohi Women	200	563	604	1,167	
3	Dang	Panchakule	Saatpokhari Hurum	412	1,256	1,186	2,442	
		Shantinagar	Srijana	227	654	662	1,316	
		Pawannagar	Vieudhar	252	703	666	1,369	
		Halwar	Jarayotakuri	184	507	515	1,022	
4		Purandhara	Devidanda	138	510	452	962	
		Kailali	Beladevipur	Sitaram	168	664	575	1,239
			Ratanpur	Shivashakti	73	233	204	437
	Shreepur		Suryodaya	382	1,322	1,291	2,613	
		Geta	Sahid Sanghari Bhim Dutta Pant	307	1,037	1,003	2,040	
		Hasuliya	Kamal Pokhari	144	617	595	1,212	
Total				7,557	22,783	22,283	45,066	

XIII. Annex IV. First Round IRMI TOT Training on Mediation and Negotiation Skills

SN	Name	Organization	Position / Designation	Address	Age	Sex	Caste/ ethnicity (B/C, Dalit, Janajati, Madheshi, Others)	Disability (Please state if you have any)
1	Laxman Chaudhary	BASE	Project Coordinator	Dang	36	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
2	Tilak Chaudhary	BASE	Information & Documentation Officer	Dang	36	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
3	Shanta Chaudhary	BASE	District Field Officer	Dang	37	F	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
4	Lokjan Chaudhary	BASE	District Field Officer	Kailali	49	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
5	Manoj Kumar Tharu	BASE	District Field Officer	Bardiya	30	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
6	Renuka Chaudhary	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Dang	30	F	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
7	Tak Bahadur Chaudhary	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Dang	42	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
8	Rama Chaudhary	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Bardiya	23	F	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
9	Laxmi Bhandari	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Bardiya	26	F	Bramhan	NA
10	Shova Kumari Thapa	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Kailali	27	F	Chhetri	NA
11	Jagdish Chaudhary	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Kailali	33	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
12	Anta Ram Chaudhary	BASE	District Vice President	Kailali	41	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
13	Rameshowar Tharu	BASE	Chairman Area No. -1	Bardiya	32	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
14	Hemanta Chaudhary	BASE	BASE District Committee Member	Dang	39	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA

SN	Name	Organization	Position / Designation	Address	Age	Sex	Caste/ ethnicity (B/C, Dalit, Janajati, Madhesi, Others)	Disability (Please state if you have any)
15	Man Bir Nepali	Sahakarmi Samaj	Team Leader	Banke	41	M	Dalit	NA
16	Tank Bahadur Pun	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	27	M	Janajati (Magar)	NA
17	Pratima Rana (Gharti)	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	38	F	Janajati (Magar)	NA
18	Geeta Budha	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	24	F	Chhetri	NA
19	Binita Chaudhary	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	22	F	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
20	Hem Raj Bhatta	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	27	M	Bramhan	NA
21	Rajaram Gupta	Sahakarmi Samaj	Sr Organization Development Facilitator	Banke	44	M	Madhesi	NA

XIV. Annex V. Second Round IRMI TOT training on Mediation and Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue

SN	Name	Organization	Position / Designation	Address	Age	Sex	Caste/ ethnicity (B/C, Dalit, Janajati, Madheshi, Others)	Disability (Please state if you have any)
1	Laxman Chaudhary	BASE	Project Coordinator	Dang	36	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
2	Tilak Chaudhary	BASE	Information & Documentati on Officer	Dang	36	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
3	Shanta Chaudhary	BASE	District Field Officer	Dang	37	F	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
4	Lokjan Chaudhary	BASE	District Field Officer	Kailali	49	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
5	Manoj Kumar Tharu	BASE	District Field Officer	Bardiya	30	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
6	Renuka Chaudhary	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Dang	30	F	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
7	Tak Bahadur Chaudhary	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Dang	42	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
8	Rama Chaudhary	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Bardiya	23	F	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
9	Laxmi Bhandari	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Bardiya	26	F	Bramhan	NA
10	Shova Kumari Thapa	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Kailali	27	F	Chhetri	NA

SN	Name	Organization	Position / Designation	Address	Age	Sex	Caste/ ethnicity (B/C, Dalit, Janajati, Madheshi, Others)	Disability (Please state if you have any)
11	Jagdish Chaudhary	BASE	Social Mobilizer	Kailali	33	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
12	Anta Ram Chaudhary	BASE	District Vice President	Kailali	41	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
13	Rameshowar Tharu	BASE	Chairman Area No. -1	Bardiya	32	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
14	Hemanta Chaudhary	BASE	BASE District Committee Member	Dang	39	M	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
15	Man Bir Nepali	Sahakarmi Samaj	Team Leader	Banke	41	M	Dalit	NA
16	Tank Bahadur Pun	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	27	M	Janajati (Magar)	NA
17	Pratima Rana (Gharti)	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	38	F	Janajati (Magar)	NA
18	Geeta Budha	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	24	F	Chhetri	NA
19	Binita Chaudhary	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	22	F	Janajati (Tharu)	NA
20	Hem Raj Bhatta	Sahakarmi Samaj	Community Facilitator	Banke	27	M	Bramhan	NA

XV. Annex VI. IRMI Key stakeholders trained

SN	District	VDC	CFUG	Female	Male	Total
1	Banke	Kohalpur	Miteri CFUG	12	9	21
		Naubasta	Sungava CFUG	11	12	23
		Rajhena	Jana Ekata CFUG	13	8	21
		Manikapur	Jaya Saraswati CFUG	15	6	21
		Hirminiya	Hajrat CFUG	6	19	25
2	Bardiya	Dhodhari	Kotahi Women's CFUG	4	16	20
		Baganaha	Jharsaluwa CFUG	7	13	20
		Neulapur	Kopila CFUG	8	13	21
		Mainapokhar	Bhadohi CFUG	13	10	23
		Motipur	Ekta CFUG	8	13	21
3	Dang	Purandhara	Devidanda CFUG	8	12	20
		Panchakule	Satpokhari Hurum CFUG	7	15	22
		Shantinagar	Sirjana CFUG	8	12	20
		Pawannagar	Viewdaha CFUG	7	13	20
		Halawar	Jarayotakuri CFUG	10	10	20
4	Kailali	Hasuliya	Kamalpokhari CFUG	11	9	20
		Ratanpur	Shivashakti CFUG	7	14	21
		Shreepur	Suryodaya CFUG	9	12	21
		Beladevipur	Sitaram CFUG	8	13	21
		Geta	Sahid Sanghari Bhim Dutta Pant	13	7	20
Total	4	20	20	185	236	421

XVI. Some of the Voices of Trained IRMI Key Stakeholders

- ✦ "This mediation training is very important for us to resolve disputes in our communities and even in our homes." *Kalpana Thapa, Naubasta*
- ✦ "We are motivated to participate in the training because it is very essential and important for local leaders like us to resolve disputes, locally. It is essential because the process is cost-effective, easy to understand by disputants and less time consuming than legal procedures." *Subash Singh Thakur-Ex. VDC Secretary, Hirminiya*
- ✦ "We have learned so many new useful skills and knowledge to establish peace in the communities. We thank Mercy Corps and USAID for supporting this valuable idea to mitigate NRM conflicts." *Ram Pd. Rawal, Kohalpur*
- ✦ "The training is very useful to me. I used to make one-sided decisions before while mediating. Now I have learnt that the mediation process focuses on the best interests of the conflicting parties." *Keshav Prasad Khanal, Bagnaha VDC representative Bardiya*
- ✦ "Before this, we had no idea on position, interest and options in mediation. As a result, after getting resolved, the same dispute starts to emerge. Now, this training has helped me to resolve disputes permanently. I am confident that I can resolve disputes now systematically." *Lahanu Chaudhary, Coordinator, Ward Citizen Forum, Bardiya*
- ✦ "This training has compelled me to re-think past decisions made by mediators for compensations and punishment forcibly. As a result, I used to have one additional enemy in my every mediation sessions. In this training I have learned to mediate a dispute to a win-win situation." *Tek Bahadur Bhandari, President Nepali Congress Purandhara, Dang*
- ✦ "This training is very useful and crucial to promote peace and cohesive relationships in our community to resolve disputes on the one hand and, on the other, the period of this training is very short. In future, we are optimistic that this strand of mediations will provide additional capacities by this organization." *Dhani Ram Chaudhary, President of Civil Awareness Centre, Hasuliya, Kailali*