



Awardee Name: Save the Children
Country: Nepal
Program Name: Sabal Community Resilience Program
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Program Overview:

<p><i>Geographic Focus</i></p> <p>Six districts of Nepal (three from Central Development Region: Sindhuli, Ramechhap and Makawanpur; three from Eastern Development Region: Khotang, Okhaldhunga and Udayapur).</p>
<p><i>Program Goal:</i> Targeted vulnerable population in Nepal are more resilient</p> <p>Purpose 1: Livelihoods strengthened and diversified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">SP1.1: Household Income is Increased.SP 1.2 Household Capacity to cope with shocks is increased.SP 1.3 Integration of vulnerable households into value chain is strengthened.SP 1.4 Women’s control over productive resource is increased. <p>Purpose 2: Health and nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women, children under five and their families is improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">SP 2.1 Household health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition behaviors are improved.SP 2.2 Access to diverse and nutritious food and to WASH product is increased.SP 2.3 Use of quality health services by women and children is increased.SP 2.4 National, regional and district mechanisms for combating malnutrition are effective. <p>Purpose 3: Ability of households and communities to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses is strengthened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">SP 3.1 Communities and local authorities implement integrated Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) plansSP 3.2 Vulnerable households utilize information on natural hazards and climate change in their decision making.SP 3.3 Local disaster early warning systems are effective.SP 3.4 National, regional and district mechanisms for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction planning are established.
<p><i>Cross Cutting Themes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gender equality and social inclusion• Learning, knowledge sharing and capacity building
<p><i>Target Beneficiaries</i> (Disaggregated by Program Element1 and by Fiscal Year (FY)):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">SP 1: 204,009 beneficiariesSP 2: 847,669 beneficiariesSP 3: 36297 beneficiaries <p>Total Beneficiaries: 1,087,975 for all five years’ project periods</p>
<p><i>Roles and Responsibilities</i></p> <p><u>Geographic Responsibility:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Save the Children: Sindhuli, Udayapur and KhotangHellen Keller International: Makwanpur, Okhaldhunga and Ramechhap <p><u>Intervention Responsibility:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Save the Children, LIBIRD, Alliance, DEPROSC: LivelihoodsHellen Keller International: Health and NutritionCARE: Climate Change Adaption and Disaster and Risk ManagementNEWAH and NTAG: (WASH) Water and SanitationAFE: Market Systems

1. Introduction

Save the Children (SC) was awarded the 5-year USAID Food for Peace (FFP) Nepal Community Resilience program, Sabal (which loosely translate to “stable, resilient, self-sufficient in Nepali) in October 2014. The project’s Theory of Change (ToC) envisions innovation at three levels: *absorptive*, *adaptive* and *transformational*. **Absorptive innovations** include changes in investment, economic practices, or public policies that reduce the exposure of households and communities to impacts from natural and unforeseen hazards, and enhance HHs ability to cope with these shocks. **Adaptive innovations** will help to adjust major trends such as climate change or the expansion of markets into rural areas. **Transformational change** will entail implementation of innovations as drivers of lasting, measurable and upwardly-scalable improvement in people’s lives.

Program Goal. The Sabal program aims to improve resilience and food security among target populations in six districts of Central and Eastern Mid-hills. Three program purposes contribute to this overarching goal:

1. Livelihoods strengthened and diversified
2. Improve health and nutrition status of pregnant and lactating women, children U5 and their families
3. Strengthen the ability of households and communities to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stressors.

Implementation of these objectives by Sabal will introduce, test, adapt, and scale approaches resulting in lasting change, especially for those most marginalized.

2. Progress during Q2 reporting period

a. Technical & Planning Program Activities

Initial Environment Examination (IEE) and Environment Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP): The Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) and the Environment Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) for Sabal were submitted in January 2015. The EMMP will help inform the design of environmentally friendly interventions and also mitigate potentially negative impacts and effects of project activities on the environment. The plan has identified measures to ensure reduced or zero adverse environmental effect ensuing from project activities. SC is awaiting feedback and/or approval of the IEE from the USAID BEO.

VDC selection process: Though it is clearly mentioned in the project proposal that altogether 164 most vulnerable VDCs will be selected based on the DAG category IV and 3B, some district-level stakeholders including the Local Development Officer suggest to revisit the selection criteria because DAG ranking was done around 10 years ago and over the period, the district's and VDC's situation has experienced significant change. Based on the suggestion of district stakeholders, the program will revisit the VDC selection criteria and also fine tune the selection process. In addition to DAG ranking, other indicator criteria such as household population number, percentage of poor and vulnerable populations, literacy level percentage, risk level of natural disaster etc. are being

added. A simple tool has also been developed to measure and score the indicators of individual VDC and based on the score VDCs will be ranked. According to the ranking, required number of VDCs will be indicated in a district map and proposed to DDC for further discussion and finalization.

Partner NGO selection process: Sabal developed a comprehensive guideline with transparent criteria and a robust process of partner selection. The selection process starts from the EOI notice publication to signing of the final sub-award agreement. The guideline provides for a proposed independent committee with representation from the DDC and other major district line agencies. The committee will shortlist potential NGOs after assessing the EOI and concept note based on the given criteria such as legal status, experience of working with INGO and bilateral organizations; coverage of poor and vulnerable households and geography; volume of budget turnover, expertise of working on livelihood, health, nutrition, DRR and climate change; NGO governance and the GESI perspective, etc. After the recommendation, SMT will select the NGO for partnership.

Theory of Change: The Sabal team and partner organizations, reviewed the Theory of Change drawn from the Sabal technical proposal during the M&E workshop and ensuing technical assistance sessions. The team identified a total of 3 purposes, 9 sub-purposes, 29 immediate outcomes, 53 sub-immediate outcomes and several activities to achieve the abovementioned goal, all depicted in the diagram the team put together using the MIND MAP software to show linkages. The team also identified several assumptions necessary to carry out activities, as well as possible risks and mitigation measures. The team made sure to address cross cutting issues such as gender equity and social inclusion, behavior change communication and social mobilization processes, and developed the ToC taking into account current Government of Nepal (GoN) policies, lessons learnt from existing governmental and non-governmental organizations' experiences and available literature on Sabal's major planned interventions and taking into account other program stakeholders. The project team in collaboration with headquarter (HQ) staff at SC and TANGO have addressed suggestions from the USAID Nepal mission and the FFP HQ technical team and submitted a revised ToC narrative, structural diagram, logframe and Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT).

IPTT and Logframe: The Sabal team revised the indicators developed during proposal stage in collaboration with the project's partners., integrating FFP and project-specific indicators. All project indicators are disaggregated by sex, ages and ethnicity and segregated for baseline and end-line surveys and annual monitoring, with targets to be achieved annually and over the life of the project. The IPTT incorporated 95 performance indicators comprising EMMP, FFP, Mission and SABAL specific sources. The number of performance indicators for baseline/end-line and annual performance monitoring are 34 and 61 indicators, respectively.

Number of performance indicators

Indicator Source	Annual monitoring	Baseline/End-line Survey	Total
EMMP	6		6
FFP	25	32	57
Mission	4		4
SABAL	26	2	28
Total	61	34	95

IPTT accommodated 13 integrated environmental indicators which are being reviewed by component leads. After receiving comments from FFP and USAID Sabal team is updating these documents for final submission.

Work plan: Sabal made substantial inroads toward developing a draft work plan for the life of the project. The draft work plan is being shared with the implementing partners and the GoN counterparts before finalization. In addition, the technical teams are working on activity details with breakdown by year and district specific target.

FFP Baseline Study: Ten Sabal staff attended a 4-day workshop organized by ICF aiming at getting feedback on the baseline survey they prepared for the SABAL and PAHAL projects. The workshop went over survey design, sampling frame, sample selection process, household survey indicators and questionnaires and qualitative research. It helped ICF to understand the local context and finalize the survey methods and questionnaires for baseline survey. Sabal drafted two project specific indicators "Coping Strategy Index (CSI)" and "Percent of farmers using climate information" and requested that they are in the population-based baseline survey.

b. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Food for Peace (FFP) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Workshop: From January 28 to February 6, new DFAP awardees participated in an M&E workshop in Kathmandu. The workshop, organized by the USAID Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III project (FANTA) implemented by FHI360, began with a two-day introductory session on FFP's M&E requirements throughout the life of the program. The introductory sessions were followed by additional private TA sessions focused on building the capacity of the project staff to enable them to develop a comprehensive Theory of Change (ToC) and logframe for the project. During the workshop, USAID, TANGO and FFP discussed with the team the project's baseline end-line and annual monitoring indicators as well as the need for global harmonization with Food for Peace program indicators. There was wide participation across the SABAL consortium. Additionally, Save the Children's US-based Senior M&E Specialist and Associate Director for Food Security were also in attendance.

Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS): The Sabal team drafted PIRS for all project indicators following the FFP format.

Beneficiary registration form: The Sabal team drafted a beneficiary registration form and shared among the technical team and will finalize with the team's input. The beneficiary registration form includes a household identification number to capture the number of beneficiary households.

Database: As performance indicators are being finalized, the project is currently developing a database and collaborating with the Save the Children Nobo Jibon project in Bangladesh to explore the use of proven-efficacious MCAID mobile management platform. Meetings were held with the Nobo Jibon and SUAAHARA program staff. In this endeavor, consultation is currently underway to incorporate SABAL's database into OPMIS database system of SC Nepal.

c. Operational Activities and Progress

Staff Recruitment: The project focused its efforts on recruitment and team building, and the following positions were filled during the reporting period: Human Resources and Administration Manager, Water Sanitation and Health Manager, Environment Compliance Officer, Sr. Technical Advisor Employment & Enterprise, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Officer, Sr. Coordinator Health Services Promotion, Disaster Risk Reduction/Climate Change Adaptation Sr. Technical Manager, Grants Coordinator, Finance & Administration Officer, Social Behavior Change Communication Manager, Integrated Nutrition Program Manager, Disaster Risk Reduction/Climate Change Adaptation Manager, Grants/Sub awards Manager, Sr. Program Integration & Social Mobilization Manager, Sr. EHFP Coordinator and Sr. Technical Advisor - Financial Services, were recruited. SC, HKI and Alliance also launched recruitment for district-level positions, selected hired 14 new positions for on-boarding in April/May. Remaining positions will be recruited during the next quarter.

The Sabal project office became fully functional in March 2015, and is located within the premises of the Save the Children Nepal country office. The project submitted an approval request to procure vehicles and hope to purchase trucks and motorcycles by the end of Q3.

d. Coordination, Sharing and Learning

Review meetings: The Health and Nutrition team participated in the Eastern Regional Nutrition Review meeting organized by the Nutrition Section, Child Health Division, MoHP. The review meeting focused on reviewing nutritional activities, indicators and reporting status in the districts from eastern developmental region. The team met extensively with the Child Health Division, Eastern Regional Health Directorate, District health offices, and the DHO from each district, UNICEF, Micronutrient Initiative, Save the Children and SUAAHARA project participated in the review sessions. The learning from the review process and networking with stakeholders working in nutrition will be very useful for the SABAL project to design and implement nutritional interventions.

Annual review meeting of SUAAHARA project: The Sabal staff participated in the annual review meeting of the central cluster of SUAAHARA project. The participation has increased our knowledge on SUAAHARA's lessons learned during field implementation of nutritional

interventions. These learnings will be very useful for Sabal's Health and Nutrition interventions the complementarity with the SUAAHARA project delivery mechanisms.

Networking and sharing learning: In March, the Sabal DRR team participated in a national workshop organized by National Planning Commission (NPC) where DRR and CCA mainstreaming mechanisms was discussed in detail. Sabal senior management also participated in a meeting organized by Practical Action South Asia, Institute of Global Environment Strategies (IGES) and Ibaraki University (ICAS) for *developing guidelines for ensuring effective adaptation to climate change*.

Asia Regional Knowledge Sharing meeting, Dhaka: A three-member team from Sabal including the Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party-Programs and Senior MEAL Manager attended the Technical Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Asia Regional Knowledge Sharing meeting held during March 3-5, 2015 in Dhaka. The meeting entitled "Learning from the Past, Shaping the Future" aimed at capturing lessons learned from three ending food aid programs in Bangladesh Nobo Jibon, the Program for Strengthening Household Access to Resources (PROSHAR) implemented by ACDI/VOCA, and Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities II (SHOUHARDO II) implemented by CARE. This knowledge sharing meeting provided an opportunity to learn from these projects' programmatic successes and challenges. The meeting established mutual collaborative environment among the participants. The Sabal team also had an opportunity to observe mobile data transfer technology (McAID) developed by SC in Bangladesh.

TOPS Theory of Change Workshop, Dhaka: The DCOP-Programs and Senior MEAL Manager attended the five-day (March 8-12, 2015) ToC workshop organized by TANGO in Dhaka. The workshop focused on situation analysis, causal analysis and problem analysis from the case studies of the Bangladesh Nobo Jibon project. The workshop provided practical experience to the participants in developing problem and solution trees and theory of change diagram. Outcomes were prioritized on the basis of domain of change and thereby intervention areas were identified.

Review meeting with implementing partners (IPs): The Environment Compliance Officer from the Sabal MEAL team participated in a quarterly review meeting with Feed the Future implementing partners (FTF) IPs on 19 March 2015. The main objectives of the review meeting were to share project status focusing on M&E and review data collection tools. Update on the Sabal project was shared with the participants.

Coordination with the stakeholders: During the reporting period, a first round of informal courtesy visits was made to National Health Education, Information and Communication Center (NHEICC). NHEICC officials were briefed on the Sabal project, its SBCC activities. There will be further discussion on future collaboration and synergy creation between SABAL activities and Nepal's Government priority.

Coordination and networking with USAID's funded projects: Gender and Social Inclusion manager has been included now as a member of the USAID funded project GESI network that meets regularly as a platform for knowledge sharing and learning.

Meetings with Key GON Counterpart Agencies: The Sabal and Senior Management Team together with USAID had formal introductory meetings with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and Population, and National Planning Commission. Presentations of project interventions and objectives were made at each event and the Sabal management was able to engage directly with these key ministries in a purposeful dialogue. At all meetings endorsement was obtained from key ministerial representatives to support the Sabal and Pahal programs. Names and contacts of principle counterpart contact persons were provided.

Consultation with district stakeholders: The Sabal team visited all six project districts (January 11-15) to provide stakeholders with a preliminary orientation on the project. The purpose of the visit was to give brief introduction of the project and receive feedback from the stakeholders. There were feedback from the District Development Committees (DDCs) particularly on Village Development Committee (VDC) selection and partnership process. They suggested us to reconsider the criteria of Dis-Advantaged Group (DAG) ranking, given a general perception that assumptions and contexts for ranking have changed since the process was completed several years ago. The DDC also expressed concerns over the selection criteria and process of implementing partners (PNGO). The DDC would like to be engaged in finalization of criteria and process as well as be actively engaged in the selection, as there will be political jockeying to influence the selection. In the upcoming meetings with DDCs scheduled for mid-May, VDC selection and endorsement of partners' selection process will be undertaken, and submitted to USAID for concurrence.

Weekly Action Memo. The Sabal office submits a Weekly Action Memo to USAID, and circulates among partners, that details all scheduled meetings, visits, workshops, field trips and other events coming up that week as well as have been flagged for future attention.

e. Cross-cutting activities and themes

Gender analysis plan: The SABAL Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Specialist developed a draft action and concept plan for conducting the required Year 1 gender analysis. The plan is currently undergoing review for a July-August survey activity. The analysis plan focuses on gendered aspects of thematic areas which explore access to and control over productive resources (land, water, tools and technologies, inputs, financial and extension services) and services (healthcare, nutrition, climate information).

SABAL SBCC strategy: During the reporting period, Sabal drafted the project's SBCC strategy covering all three thematic areas and integrating learnings from the SUHAARA project. The review process consisted of collection of existing SBCC materials, identification of the gaps and recommendations for a comprehensive SBCC package customized for Sabal. Accuracy, consistency, comprehensiveness of the message, image appropriateness and gender and social inclusion prospective were considered as part of the review process. Based on the draft SBCC strategy, a draft of possible key SBCC activities has also been designed. The proposed SBCC activities primarily focus on improving behaviors to adopt Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA), Essential Nutrition Hygiene (ENH) and increasing consumption of nutritious dietary food intake.

The activities also integrate components of livelihood, disaster and climate change related issues targeting vulnerable individuals, households and communities to become more resilient and food secure.

3. Plan for next quarter (April-June): The following activities are planned for next quarter:

- Establishment of district Sabal project offices (Administration)
- Consultation with Sabal district stakeholders on VDC selection (Purposes 1-3)
- Sharing of draft partner selection criteria and process with district stakeholders and partner selection. (Purposes 1-3)
- Recruitment of district based staff and orientation to new staff. (Purposes 1-3)
- Orientation to partner organizations, at central and district levels. (Purposes 1-3)
- Preparation of detailed implementation plan of overall project and district level DIPs. (Administration)
- Support to USAID consulting team from TANGO to contextualize Nepal FFP resiliency indicators. (MEAL)
- Finalization of household and beneficiaries' group selection - tools and methodology (well-being ranking, social & resource mapping and group mapping to understand group dynamics). (MEAL)
- Preparation of implementation guide and orientation to district based staff and partners. (Purposes 1-3)
- Consolidation of specific training materials for all themes and/or develop materials as required. (Purpose 1)
- Establish coordination and linkages with department of Agriculture and Livestock; find out areas of coordination within ongoing dept. activities. Coordinate Nepal Agriculture Research Council (NARC) and draft MOU to implement Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS) and dissemination of new high yielding crop varieties, and technologies. (Purpose 1)
- Identification of vulnerable VDCs for DRR pilot project implementation (Purpose 3)
- Sabal gender analysis initiated. (GESI)
- Development of GESI orientation package for districts and VDCs. (GESI)
- Promulgation of Sabal Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. (MEAL)
- Development of work plan for five year period and completion of Year 1 detailed work plan for FY15. (MEAL)
- Training and orientation workshops conducted using training and SBCC materials (SBCC)
- Approval from USAID regarding procurement of commodities for health and nutrition activities (requiring approval from USAID AOR) (Purpose 2)
- Program learning visits to SUAAHARA, KISAN and Hariyo Ban project districts (Purposes 1-2)

4. Challenges:

The FFP prescriptive program start-up activities, i.e. development of ToC, PRS, IPTT, M&E Plan, etc. have been a major time-consuming process. The process, new to almost all the staff in Nepal, including USAID for the large part, has been challenging but also enlightening. It has led to better team-building through the iterative deliberation process and clarity and consistency of vision.