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List of abbreviations and acronyms

CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CfW	Cash for Work
CMAM	Community based Management of Acute Malnutrition
DADO	District Agriculture Development Office
DDC	District Development Committee
DDRC	District Disaster Relief Committee
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
DLSA	District Support Lead Agency
DPRP	Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EHA	Essential Hygiene Action
EHFP	Enhanced Homestead Food Production
ENA	Essential Nutrition Action
EoI	Expression of Interest
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GON	Government of Nepal
HH	Household
HHs	Households
IPCC	Inter-Personal Communication and Counselling
IVA	Integrated Vulnerability Assessment
IYCF-E	Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices during Emergency
KM	Kilo-Meter
LAPA	Local Adaptation Plan of Action
LDMC	Local Disaster Management Committee
LDO	Local Development Officer
LDRMP	Local Disaster Risk Management Plan
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning
MHI	Micro-Health Insurance
MIS	Management Information System
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MTOT	Master Trainer of Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OPMIS	Online Program Management System
PDNA	Post Disaster Need Assessment

PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PNGO	Partner Non-Governmental Organization
PREP	Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal
Sabal	Sustainable Action for Resilience and Food Security
SBCC	Social Behaviour Change and Communication
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
VDC	Village Development Committee
VMF	Village Model Farm
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WCF	Ward Citizen Forum

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1. Introduction

Save the Children (SC) was awarded the 5-year USAID Food for Peace (FFP)-funded 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 households’ (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.

Transformative 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 under age 5 (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.

The third quarter of FY15 (April to June 2015) was marked by devastating earthquakes on April 25th (7.9 magnitude) and May 12th (7.3), followed by numerous aftershocks, landslides and avalanches. The earthquakes severely affected 24 of Nepal’s 75 districts, including 4 Sabal intervention districts. As of June 29, the Nepali government reported 8,844 deaths, 22,307 injured, 595,728 houses destroyed and an additional 279,828 houses damaged. Though the earthquakes impacted Sabal’s implementation timeline, the program did make headway. This report highlights the progress made during the quarter and discusses the strategic changes and challenges faced by the program as a result of the disasters.

2. Major Achievements/ Progress

a. Technical & Planning Program Activities

Work plan development: In Q3, Sabal staff continued to refine the program workplan for the remainder of FY15 and FY16. Save the Children's Washington, D.C.-based Program Manager and Livelihoods Advisor travelled to Kathmandu to support the development of a detailed implementation plan and budget realignment in light of the earthquake and in preparation for the upcoming pipeline and resource estimate proposal (PREP). The program partners and thematic leads worked together to develop activities, targets, and identify budget needs. In addition, health and nutrition related activities were discussed with the thematic leads of SUAAHARA project in an effort to incorporate their lessons learned and experience.

Program learning visit: Two members of the Sabal health and nutrition team participated in the district consultative and planning meeting organized by SUAAHARA project in Banke (April 21-23, 2015) and Dang (April 11-13, 2015) districts. The exposure will be useful to implement Sabal activities given the similarity of health and nutrition activities between two projects.

Capacity building of program staffs: The Integrated Nutrition Program Manager participated in a 4-day (May10-13, 2015) master training of trainers (MTOT) on community based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) program organized by Action Contre le Faim (ACF). The training focused on the management of severely malnourished children post-earthquake and counseling mothers' on infant and young child feeding practices during emergencies (IYCF-E). The knowledge and facilitation skills gleaned on CMAM will be useful for the efficient implementation of Sabal's integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) program.

Sabal staff participated in a number of internal, sector-specific and cross-cutting review and reflection workshops focusing on Disaster Risk Reduction/Climate Change Adaptation (DRR/CCA) and Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) interventions facilitated by the program DRR/CCA theme leader to increase staff capacity and share information. In light of the earthquakes, the team agreed that mainstreaming of DRR and CCA has emerged as a priority nationally and programmatically. The team agreed to schedule the national level workshop on DRR/CCA strategies ahead of the originally planned time and to place greater focus on disaster preparedness and mitigation measures.

Sabal organized a one-day GESI workshop for the Kathmandu project team. The objective of the workshop was to generate common understanding on undertaking GESI as cross cutting issue for Sabal team and how it is to be mainstreamed. Additionally, all Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) team members attended a one-day (June 12th) program planning meeting organized by Sabal attended by all consortium partners to gain a better

understanding of their roles and responsibilities, the program components, and discuss appropriate data collection systems.

Sabal expansion: Upon discussions with USAID, SC submitted a concept note to expand the Sabal program into 5 districts severely affected by the earthquake. The program will utilize the same primary approaches proposed in Sabal adapted to address the initial disruption and damage in these areas and layer customized value chain and vocational training interventions on top of immediate post-earthquake recovery responses for long term rehabilitation and resilience to future shocks.

Initiated District-level NGO selection process: During the reporting period, Sabal invited interested local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to submit an expression of interest (EOI) with a concept note on the implementation of program activities in their district through national and local newspaper based on the statement of work provided in the ad.

Sabal conducted a half-day orientation for all interested district based NGOs to brief them on the program as well as the partner selection process. The District NGO Federation was requested to invite all active NGOs working in the program districts to participate in an effort to engage stakeholders and make the process transparent. Altogether, 75 NGOs submitted EOIs for the current program districts. SC expects to finalize the selection process in fourth quarter of FY15.

Table 1. Number of EOIs submitted by per district		
SN	District	No. of EOI submitted by NGOs
1	Khotang	11
2	Okhaldhunga	12
3	Udayapur	16
4	Ramechhap	13
5	Sindhuli	12
6	Makwanpur	11
	Total	75

Village Development Committee (VDC) selection: During the reporting period, together with district stakeholders including district line agencies, civil societies and political parties, Sabal selected 164 of the most vulnerable VDCs to implement Sabal's livelihood related activities. General health and nutrition activities including Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) and Essential Health Actions (EHA) and Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) activities will be implemented in all the VDCs. However, focused activities such as Enhanced Homestead Food Production (EHFP) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) will be implemented in select

VDCs. Criteria such as household size, percentage of poor and vulnerable populations, literacy rate, natural disaster risk level, remoteness, the presence of similar development programming were used to draft the VDC selection guideline. The draft VDC selection guideline was shared and finalized in collaboration with district stakeholders. The district stakeholders (District Development Committees (DDCs), representatives of major political parties, government line agencies and other civil society organizations) were fully engaged throughout the selection process.

Table 2. Number of VDCs selected per district		
SN	District	Number of Selected VDCs
1	Khotang	23
2	Okhaldhunga	32
3	Udayapur	36
4	Ramechhap	23
5	Sindhuli	21
6	Makwanpur	29
	Total	164

Program Technical Activities

Purpose 1: Livelihoods strengthened and diversified

To support recovery efforts in Sabal intervention districts, the program implemented a short-term Cash-for-Work (CfW) from May 20 – June 30, 2015.

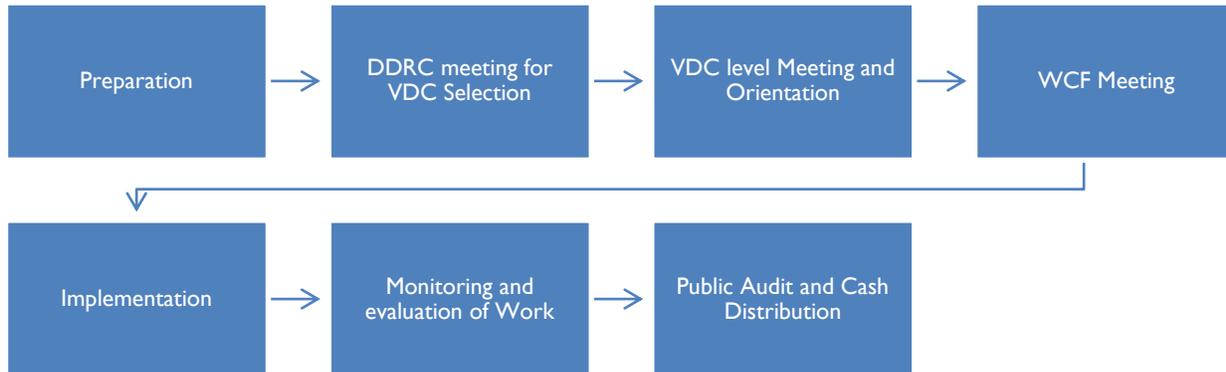
Originally planned in year 3, this activity provided temporary employment for the most vulnerable segments of the population to rehabilitate community assets such as repairing roads, clearing debris or repairing irrigation infrastructures. Before implementation of these projects, environmental screening of all the projects was completed and a programmatic environmental assessment was not deemed necessary. This intervention helped those who participated in CfW to recover from shock and stresses



that would impede Sabal’s long term development objectives. Sabal closely worked with the local government including the District Disaster Reduction Committee (DDRC) to secure buy-in and collaboration from local authorities.

The team developed implementation guidelines for CfW that included criteria for beneficiary selection, wage rates, payment mechanisms, implementation timelines, and monitoring and evaluation. The process is illustrated in the graphic below.

Figure 1: CfW Implementation



Based on the guidelines, the district teams were assigned to implement CfW activities, organize meetings with DDRCs, and district food clusters. DDRCs endorsed the selected VDCs for CfW based on the severity of the earthquakes’ impact. Specific CfW projects were identified and selected during Ward level meetings. In addition, a VDC-level coordination and monitoring committee, with Sabal representation, chaired by the VDC secretary was formed to ensure transparency and resolve potential disputes. Once the CfW activities were completed in piloted VDCs, the activities were expanded to additional VDCs. During the implementation of CfW activities, one Sabal district staff member was assigned for each VDC to be responsible for overseeing and monitoring all activities for that particular VDC. At the end of each project, a team of staff visited each VDC and delivered payments to beneficiaries. Post distribution monitoring took place in the form a public auditing event organized in the VDC that verified the details of the work and the payments received by the beneficiaries.

Purpose 2: Improve health and nutrition status of pregnant and lactating women, children under age 5 (U5) and their families

To prevent deteriorating nutritional status and support the “1000-days” approach and assist pregnant and lactation women and children under two in the recovery process, Sabal initiated vegetable seed distribution and counseling on IYCF-E in four program districts. Five most earthquake-affected Sabal program VDCs were identified in coordination with the district emergency food cluster and DDRC. The altitude details of each VDC were obtained from district

agriculture development office. Based on the altitude criteria, composite packet containing 8-10 varieties of vegetable seeds for rainy season were purchased by Helen Keller International (from a non-Sabal funding source) from a GoN approved vegetable seed supplier. These vegetable seeds will be distributed to 1000-day mothers in five VDCs of Makwanpur, Ramechhap, Okhaldhunga and Khotang districts. A total of 6005 mothers will directly benefited from this activity.

Purpose 3: Strengthen the ability of households and communities to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stressors

Rapid assessment: The DRR and CCA team was deployed to conduct rapid assessments of earthquake affected communities in order to assist in the design of CfW interventions in select VDCs. The team also support revisions to annual district plan taking into account exigencies arising from the earthquake. Sabal staff will be engaged in assessing post-disaster need assessments (PDNAs) with DDRCs, DDCs and sectoral government offices at each district. The DRR and CCA team will likewise adopt earthquake related preparedness measures, and mitigation and adaptation practices while implementing DRR/CCA interventions.

Disaster preparedness and response plan update: Consultation meetings were held with DDRCs in each district to revise and update district disaster preparedness and response plans (DPRPs). Sabal developed a brief concept note including a detailed procedure of DPRP in consultation with the district support lead agency (DSLAs). As suggested by district stakeholders after the earthquake, the DPRP revision and update should be more action-oriented rather than just a plan.

b. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Resilience indicator development: Sabal participated in the USAID/FFP planning for identification of indicators measuring resilience at the baseline workshop and USAID assigned a technical team to lead this assessment as a part of the instrument framework. While the fieldwork, was ultimately disrupted by the earthquake, the assessment team now has come up with defined indicators for baseline and end line study purposes. The indicators are classified into four categories measuring well-being, shock and stress, resilience capacities, and response. The Baseline Study is scheduled to be conducted in October 2015.

Forms and templates: A draft of the beneficiary registration form was developed in consultation with program staff and partners. The MEAL team is continuing work on further refinement. The beneficiary registration form was revised to make it suitable for the “Cash for

Work” activities and the form was used to record the results data as well. A template to record training participants’ information was prepared and shared with the program team for their feedback. The sheet captures training and workshop events for 11 annual performance indicators. Until a software-based data collection and management system is identified, an Excel based tool has been developed to enter data of cash for work activities. The template has all possible validation rules set into it to minimize possibility human error during data entry.

Database management system: Preliminary discussions for selecting the most appropriate MIS database system for the Sabal project is on-going. The Sabal MEAL team explored different options, including SC Nepal’s OPMIS, SC Bangladesh’s McAID, open source software: explicit review of CommCare and SC Guatemala’s SAMI. A system will be selected and adapted during the next quarter.

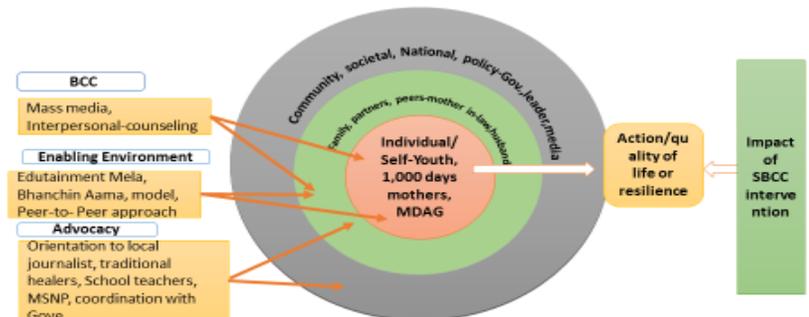
c. Cross cutting themes

Gender and social inclusion analysis plan: The Sabal GESI specialist with inputs from consortium partners finalized the GESI analysis scope of work to be submitted to USAID for approval. The GESI analysis will explore the state of gender inequalities and social inclusion as relevant for the program and possible interventions.

SBCC strategy: During the reporting period, a draft SBCC strategy for Sabal was prepared based on the proposed activities of all three purposes. Following the earthquakes, the strategy was revisited and some modifications were made focusing on emergency response and recovery messaging. The recovery strategy will provide communication needs of affected families through intensive behavior change communication and community mobilization activities.

The strategy is being designed based on a social ecological model which examines several layers of influence to provide insight on the cause of problems and find the triggering points for change. It is founded on three communication components: advocacy, social mobilization and behavior change communication. Sabal expects to blend these approaches into a social marketing initiative for implementation in Years 2-4.

SABAL SBCC Strategy



SBCC messages developed: In order to integrate SBCC in all three thematic areas, a messaging package was developed. Focused cross-cutting activity messages for VDCs and households were identified and as were messages for specific purposes. These will be piloted in several districts before wider replication. Based on the pilot results, the activity will be scaled up in other districts in subsequent years.

d. Operational Activities and Progress

The program is now fully staffed included district level offices and district staff have received orientation. Sabal’s COP travelled to Washington DC (June15-19) for his orientation and met with Dina Esposito, Mike Desisti and Nadira Kabir.

3. Challenges

- The implementation of CfW was very sensitive and involved considerable security risks particularly for handling and distribution of cash to beneficiaries in remote villages. There were no pre-existing reliable methods of transferring cash in remote areas in these districts. The formal financial institutions are all concentrated in district-central level headquarters. Sabal analyzed all the alternatives available at the local level for cash payment. In order to minimize the risk Sabal insured the cash in transit and arranged security to accompany for cash disbursement. In future, Sabal will explore other methods of cash transfers to minimize risks. “Hello paisa” may be a good alternative where bank agent takes the responsibility of payment and for the service bank charges 2% of the total transaction.

- Due to the lack of elected bodies in VDCs, it was very challenging to generate community contribution for such work. As a result of the earthquake, community expectations for support were enhanced which lead to difficulties in the identification of vulnerable beneficiary households for CfW participation. Inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups and women was difficult as well to coordinate. Poor communication systems, highly traumatized communities and difficult geographic terrain presented additional challenges in remote areas. The ward citizen fora were engaged to identify the HHs most in need. Citizens' fora used the wellbeing ranking, extent of livelihood asset damage and potential capacity to recover from shocks as criteria to identify the households.
- Post-earthquake, Saba experienced increased demand from GON and from DDCs for more “hardware” support rather than soft activities to address community demand for recovery and reconstruction efforts. Similarly, high demand of shelters from affected communities, which was not an explicit program activity. The program was, nevertheless, able to entertain some level of service restoration through the CfW interventions.
- Coordination with GON counterparts in the Department of Health Services was difficult because of their expectation of official launch of Sabal and formal communication from MOHP. On June 2nd, Sabal submitted a draft MOU to the MOHP that details the roles and expectations of Sabal and the MOHP. As of the close of the quarter there was no feedback in writing from the MOHP although we understand verbally that there are likely no significant issues. The matter will be pursued with increased vigor during the early part of the next quarter.

4. Lessons Learned

In the past, the Disaster Management Act of Nepal was overshadowed and agencies working in the DRR sector had received only nominal attention from other government departments. However, the recent earthquake has reinforced the importance of having the Act in place along with its operational arms. Taking advantage of the changed context and the high relevance thereof, the advocacy activities that were planned for later years of the project (after the successful implementation of CCA/DRR integration in project areas) together with advocacy for a Disaster Management bill, were pushed forward for accelerated implementation as a high priority.

There are no major changes in overall Theory of Change (ToC) after earthquake, but there will be some minor modification made to the implementation strategy as following;

- The Sabal staff will be involved in post disaster need assessment (PDNA) along with the DDRC, DDC and sectorial government offices at each district.
- DRR and CCA components will adopt earthquake-related preparedness, mitigation and adaptation while implementing DRR/CCA interventions
- Community-based early warning systems will be adjusted to include vulnerability assessment with respect to landslides to identify landslide-prone areas under early warning (previously there had been more focus on flood prone areas and impacts)

The communication of implementation modalities, process of participation and selection of project by the community increases the level of ownership, and participation. The selection of needs-based projects for CfW by the beneficiaries reduces potential for conflict within the communities.

5. Plan for next Quarter (July- September)

General

- Contextual analyses for implementing resilience programming in severely affected districts
- VDC selection in 5 expansion districts
- Develop *Sabal Operational Guideline* with implementation guideline for all major activities in all three themes
- Complete planning process (PREP) for year 2 both for current program as well in expansion area.
- Develop detailed implementation plan (DIP) for all the districts.
- Complete district-level NGO partner selection process
- Social mobilization guidelines will be prepared
- Baseline will be conducted in current as well as expansion districts
- Recruitment of senior MEAL manager

Purpose 1: Livelihoods

- Mapping of existing farmers groups and assess group dynamics, leadership, decision-making and social inclusion
- Selection of target groups and household (HH) beneficiaries
- Development of program orientation package to key stakeholders
- District-level staff orientation & planning meetings with district project team including PNGO staff

- Development of program implementation guidelines
- Formative research on livelihoods assessment, feasibility study to promote location specific climate smart interventions
- Training need assessment for specific crops, livestock, NRM, irrigation and post-harvest interventions
- Collection of training materials and preparation of training outlines & modules
- Value chain analysis including sub-sector analysis of high value crops (vegetables, spices and fruits)
- Labor market assessment, curriculum development and deliver training for 600 youth on construction sector
- Material development for micro health insurance (MHI)/saving & credit/financial literacy packages

Purpose 2: Health and nutrition

- Organize program briefing meeting to GON stakeholders at national and district level
- Develop program implementation guideline for health and nutrition activities
- Develop training and SBCC materials for essential nutrition action/essential hygiene action training (ENA/EHA), water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), enhanced homestead food production (EHFP), village model farms (VMF)
- Print training modules, IPCC counseling tools, monitoring forms and formats for ENA/EHA, WASH, EHFP and VMF activities
- Train masons for toilet construction in selected VDCs (linked with livelihood component)

Purpose 3: Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

- DRR and CCA thematic orientation to district team and PNGO board and staffs
- Hold a two day inception workshop in each VDC (24 VDCs) to inform village and community stakeholders on project details, integrated DRR and CCA planning (24 events)
- Review and update disaster preparedness and response plans (DPRPs) (6 Nos)
- Conduct workshop to identify 24 highly vulnerable VDCs as demonstration with district and village stakeholders (6 events)
- Conduct participatory vulnerability, risk, and capacity assessments in 24 demonstration VDCs
- Strengthen existing or form new LDMC (VDC level) in vulnerable VDCs (24 VDCs)
- Organize district and national workshops/seminars on integrated CCA and DRR planning (1 event)

Gender equality and social inclusion

- Conduct GESI orientation for district teams
- Finalize SOW and identify consultant for submission and approval by USAID
- Prepare gender training manual.
- Prepare TOR for GESI working group.

**Save the Children Nepal
Sabal Community Resilience Program
FY15 Q3 Quarterly Report
Annex 1: *Map of the selected VDCs for Sabal districts.***

