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Sajhedari Bikaas Project
Partnership for Local Development
Local Governance Perception Survey III

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Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA) would, however, like to emphatically state that none of the individuals mentioned above and their organizations are responsible in any way for the content of this report, the analyses therein or its conclusions and recommendations, nor should they be seen even in partial or full agreement with them. These analyses, conclusions, and recommendations are exclusively those of the IDA study team's alone.

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ACRONYMS

ASC	Agricultural Service Center
CAC	Citizen Awareness Center
CBO	Community Based Organization
CeLRRd	Center for Legal Research and Resource Development
CDP	Community Development Project
CMC	Community Mediation Center
CMU	Community Management Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAT	Data Abstraction Tool
DDC	District Development Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoN	Government of Nepal
GPS	Geographic Positioning System
IDA	Interdisciplinary Analysts
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPFC	Integrated Plan Formulation Committee
KAP	Knowledge Attitude Practice
KII	Key Informant Interview
LDO	Local Development Officer
LGCDP	Local Governance Community Development Program
LNGO	Local NGO

LSC	Livestock Service Center
LSGA	Local Self Governance Act
LYG	Local Youth Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCPM	Minimum Conditions and Performance Measure
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
Ms Excel	Microsoft Excel
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPTF	Nepal Peace Trust Fund
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPS	Probability Proportional to Size
RLG	Radio Listeners Group
SB	Sajhedari Bikaas
SOW	Statement of Work
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TOR	Terms of Reference
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCF	Ward Citizen Forum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sajhedari Bikaas (SB) is a five-year local governance and community development project implemented from December 2012 onwards in partnership with local, national and international organizations and funded by USAID. Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA) was commissioned by SB to undertake Perception Survey III. The survey was conducted in six districts namely Dang, Banke, Bardiya, and Surkhet in the Mid-western region and Kailali and Kanchanpur in the Far-western region from June to November 2015. The purpose of the perception survey was to monitor the demand and supply sides of local governance and community development, as well as the status of some of the indicators of SB. For this purpose, a mixed method approach that included both quantitative and qualitative, were followed.

Methods and procedures

The qualitative portion was based on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Altogether, 15 FGDs and 54 KIIs were held with the stakeholders of the six districts. A total of 127 participants (of whom 97 were males and 30 were females) took part in the FGDs¹. The average number of participants per FGD was around 8 persons. All of the 15 FGDs were held at the VDC level, and more often than not, in VDC office. So as to be able to complete the work on time, two teams were deployed to conduct the FGDs and KIIs. The fieldwork for the FGDs and KIIs took place between July 10 and July 26, 2015. The IDA experts were involved in the fieldwork.

The household survey comprised of structured questionnaire, which was administered face-to-face with the respondents. A total of 2,880 respondents (1,440 males and 1,440 females) living in the Sajhedari Bikaas project area, namely the districts of Kanchanpur, Kailali, Bardiya, Banke, Surkhet and Dang were sampled for the interview. VDCs were selected both from Phase I VDCs and Phase II VDCs. A small number of control VDCs was also selected.

For sampling purposes phase I VDCs were labeled as Group 1, phase II VDCs were labeled as Group 2 and control VDCs as Group 3. The sample sizes for the three groups were 1,200, 1,200 and 480 for phase I, phase II and control respectively. Altogether 113 VDCs were covered. The DAT survey was conducted in the same 108 VDCs and 5 VDCs were left due to the agitation by the Tharus in the southern districts of western Nepal.

However, due to the difficulty in comparing the data from Phase I with those from Phase II and control groups, the data from Phase I of Perception Survey III is compared with the data of Phase I of baseline, but also with the data from Perception Survey I where applicable.

¹ FGDs were conducted with WCFs, MCs, IPFCs and Miscellaneous Groups (consisting primarily of WORTH groups, RLGs and LYGs). The participants in the FGDs, including the male-female ratio, reflected the membership of these forums. For instance an IPFC is a 15 member body where only 3 members tend to be women. For a detailed list of the membership of these bodies, refer to Annex 10.

The Data Abstraction Tool (DAT) survey work was challenging. DAT format was revised considerably taking into cognizance the actual forms available with the VDC office. For the purpose of finalizing the DAT format, IDA undertook two DAT related pre-tests.

Key Findings

The key findings of the survey are highlighted below:

Survey Findings

- The awareness about Community Development Organizations was overall moderate to low. While Agricultural Service Center (ASC) was the institution most people (69%) were aware of, only 5% respondents were aware of WORTH (women's economic empowerment) groups, and only 12% were aware of Radio Listener Groups.
- Overall, there is an increment in the awareness of people about the Community Development Projects (CDPs) since Perception Survey I.
- In the survey, 43% respondents shared that they have heard of the CDPs. Of those who have heard of the CDPs, 87% of them are aware about the roles and responsibilities of the CDPs, and 77% are beneficiaries of the CDPs in the last one year. Of the 43% who have heard about the CDPs, 39% have participated in their meetings. Among those who participated, 65% shared they voiced their suggestions. Out of those who voiced their opinion, 70% felt that the meeting representatives heard their suggestions.
- Only 17% of the respondents say that the VDC funds are transparent. This is the same percentage as the baseline survey. Respondents attributed transparency of VDC funds to public audits and public hearings. However, how the respondents grasp the concept of 'transparency' is important to be understood. Mostly, for them transparency was more than just the awareness of how the funds were spent, but also the awareness about the implementation and monitoring processes. In general, respondents deemed the CDPs more transparent as VDCs.
- Although more than half (56%) of the respondents said they did not receive any service from VDC in past one year, those who got services were for obtaining birth certificates, recommendation for citizenship certificate and Social security allowance. 71 percent people found the VDC services to be either effective or very effective. The top reason why the respondents felt the VDC services were not effective (10%) was the delay in providing services. The other reasons were the non-responsive attitude of the VDC personnel and the political influence in the services provided.
- On the question of experiencing conflict, 92% of the respondents said they did not face any kind of conflicts/disputes during the last one year. Among the 8% who faced conflicts/disputes, the most recurring issues were dispute over land (28%) and dispute over property and belongings (25%).

- Only 63 percent of respondents reported visiting organizations that have been classified as 'peaceful means' to resolve the conflict, while others did not visit any organization to resolve the conflict. The FGDs revealed that many conflicting parties prefer that their opponents should be physically punished instead of resorting to mediation. They preferred to go the police where they believe that this can be done.
- Majority (58%) of the WCF members said they have participated in the annual planning process in the fiscal year 2071-72 for the Village Development Plan. An overwhelming majority (84%) said they asked questions or made suggestions in the meeting. Among them, 75% believed the meeting representatives heard their suggestions.
- In relation to GBV related questions, an overwhelming majority (85 percent) agrees or strongly agrees that a woman's income should be given to her husband. However, 78 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that a woman does not need her husband's permission to do paid work. The survey results also show that 49 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that if a wife does not obey her husband, the husband has the right to punish her indicating patriarchal attitudes of both men and women.

Findings from DAT

- DAT reveals that most of the budgeted VDC projects (94%) were fully implemented/finalized within the previous planning cycle (BS 2070/71). FGDs and KIIs reveal that the selection of the projects is a difficult process.
- The proportion of ward citizen forums (WCFs) with GESI strategies in place is 62 percent.
- The proportion of village development plans that include a fund raising plan is 98 percent. However, FGDs and KIIs show that there are no explicitly formulated strategies formed by the VDC for fundraising.
- The proportion of community projects that are allocated to women, youth or marginalized groups is 31 percent. FGDs and KIIs reveal that the budget for the target groups is being spent on road and other development works, as women, youth and marginalized do not know about the guidelines.
- The proportion of projects at VDC level that were budgeted in the previous planning cycle, that were in the top 5 priority list of WCFs is 34 percent.

Conclusion

- Awareness of rights has increased without proper procedures established to address new issues created out of increased awareness.
- Though public hearings are taking place, these in many instances seem to be mere formality. Local political leaders also participate, but their participation is limited to

speeches without giving the public to question them. The marginalized continue to opine that the actual hearings are carried out in a manner that shuts them out.

- Though the management capacity of WCFs is being built, WCFs face difficulties associated with built-in procedures of frequent/annual changes that are required of ward leaders and WCF coordinators.
- Serious questions are emerging about the voluntary nature of the work of WCF coordinators. The load of ward officers of the Ward Citizens' Forum is so high that volunteerism alone cannot sustain it as it impinges negatively on their livelihoods, and this contradiction remains an anomaly as well as a major danger to sustainability of the WCFs.
- The impact of the current increase in the number of newly declared municipalities, along with the policy of VDC mergers, is uncertain, and therefore, sustainability and new governance system under the new constitution is in question.

Recommendations

- On the whole people seem to prefer government mechanism or locally important persons or conventional practices for the conflict resolution. Hence, local ownership and trust-building have to be increased along-side social marketing of CMCs. There is a need to link CMCs with other institutions that people go to such as the police, VDC and *Badghar/Mataw/Bhalmansa* so that more people would avail of its services.
- Findings reveal that community members are aware of GESI policies, and that GESI guidelines should be followed during budget allocation, but this is done only at a superficial level by fulfilling minimum requirements of representation of marginalized groups. There needs to be more awareness training on why GESI is important.
- In order to implement inclusive development projects, capacity development programs are important. Educating Monitoring Committees, WCF and IPFC of their roles and responsibilities, and providing them the skills to identify and effectively implement criteria to monitor and select community development projects are crucial. The general public also highlighted the lack of the capacity to effectively identify community needs and write proposals to demand the budget for marginalized groups.
- The Perception III Survey GBV questions are limiting and do not reflect GBV issues fully given that 'gender' implies both women and men. These questions were not sufficient to measure gender attitudes towards GBV. There should be additional questions to gauge people's perception of violence against men and gender attitudes pertaining to men as well.
- Given the implementation of the new constitution becoming the primary focus of good governance, the nature and mandates of local governance mechanisms will be the most challenging task ahead. SB might need to devote significant time and resources at the national and local levels in helping define that local governance structure.

1. Introduction

1.1. Sajhedari Bikaas

Commissioned by Sajhedari Bikaas (SB) and implemented by Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA), the Perception Survey III was conducted in six districts from June to November 2015. Funded by USAID, SB is a five-year local governance and community development project implemented from 2012 onwards in partnership with local, national and international organizations. Although SB is currently implemented in 12 districts—Dang, Banke, Bardiya, and Surkhet (Mid-western region), Kailali and Kanchanpur (Far-western region), Lamjung, Gorkha (Western region), Dhading, Dolakha, Ramechhap, and Makwanpur (Central region)—this Perception Survey only covered six districts of Mid-western and Far-western regions. They are the ‘original’ Sajhedari districts. The six districts from the Central and Western regions were added to Sajhedari project in August 2015 in the aftermath of two devastating earthquakes in April and May 2015. Sajhedari in these districts seeks to support Government of Nepal’s recovery efforts through capacity building, reconstruction, and social mobilization.

The purpose of the bi-annual perception survey is to capture data on general socio-political trends and project progress. The third and fourth perception surveys are awarded to IDA (as had been the first and second perception surveys including the baseline).

The Perception Survey III constitutes both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Quantitative part of the study comprises of household survey and Data Abstraction Tool (DAT). Qualitative part of the study involved Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII).

1.1.1 Project Objectives

Sajhedari Bikaas’ approach combines strategic interventions with four key objectives:

- **Objective A:** An enabling environment for community development is established
- **Objective B:** Communities will access resources for development
- **Objective C:** Communities will implement inclusive development projects effectively
- **Objective D:** New local government units will function more effectively

Four key principles guide the project: 1) Social inclusion, inclusive governance, and inclusive local development; 2) Flexibility in program approaches to address the changing socio-political dynamics; 3) Community based participation; and 4) Promoting local accountability. Under these guiding principles, the program implements the following strategic interventions and approaches including:

1. Sustainability through building on existing resources
2. People-to-people peace building
3. Capacity building and skill transfer
4. Focus on women, youth, and marginalized groups.
5. Utilization of media, especially local radio stations.

Pact works in partnership with three national partners: Youth Initiative for youth and development; CeLRRd for community mediation; Equal Access for media and development components; and 15 local NGOs for governance and women's economic empowerment components.

2. Methods and procedures

2.1 Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key-Informant Interviews (KIIs) were administered at VDC level in order to provide a qualitative foundation to the perception survey. This section outlines the details of the qualitative methods and techniques used as well as the process of formulating the checklist for FGDs and KIIs. It describes the pre-field work planning, fieldwork logistics and details, and some challenges that the research team faced during this process.

2.1.1 Overview

Altogether, 15 FGDs and 54 KIIs were held with stakeholders of the six districts. A total 127 participants (of whom 97 were males and 30 were females) took part in the 15 FGDs. The average number of participant per FGD was 8 persons. All of the 15 FGDs were at the VDC-level. All sessions were ensured to be participatory, where all participants would have an opportunity to voice how they perceive things and to voice their opinions.

2.2.2 Formulation of the checklist

The IDA team responsible for FGDs conducted a desk study and held several brainstorming sessions for formulating the checklist. The checklist/questions went through series of iterations where the team focused on creating questions that fulfilled the objectives of the project. These questions were formulated in a way so as to provide deeper understanding of the social and political contexts of the district and VDCs. There were four sets of questionnaires prepared as per the agreement in the meeting that was conducted with Pact in Nepalgunj. The four sets of checklist were prepared for specifically targeting members of Ward Citizens Forums, members of Integrated Plan and Formulation Committee, members of Monitoring Committee, and

members of other groups such as Radio Listener Group, etc. in the VDC. This was done with the aim to better understand the issues at the VDC and the planning processes (All of the four different FGD checklists are provided in Annex 3, while Annex 4 provides the transcript of the proceeding, including the list of participants for all of the 15 FGDs).

The questions were first formulated in English by the IDA team which was subsequently sent to the Pact team for review and feedback. After receiving comments from Pact, the questions were revised. The Nepali version of the checklist was used for administering the FGDs in the field.

No specific checklist was prepared in the case of KIIs. Questions were improvised depending on who was being interviewed. Some of the questions in the FGD checklists were also profusely borrowed in KIIs.

2.2.3 Field work

Two teams were deployed to conduct the FGDs. They were formed in order to work concurrently so as to reduce the time required for completing the fieldwork. Team A had a FGD expert, a FGD associate and GESI expert, who was later on replaced by the Team Leader. Team B had a FGD expert, a Governance Expert and a Conflict Mediation expert. Each team was responsible for three districts. Provisions had been made for the experts to be involved in the fieldwork since this would give them a first-hand experience of the situation in the ground.

The fieldwork for the FGDs and KIIs took place between July 10 and 26, 2015. Though the experts were actively involved in the FGDs and KIIs, the facilitation of the FGDs was done by FGD experts in the team.

A local resource person was hired in each district for the KIIs. These resource persons helped in fixing appointments with suitable informants. For facilitating FGDs in the VDCs, inputs of the VDC secretaries were sought. The VDC secretaries helped in identifying the key stakeholders and inviting them to the FGDs. The FGDs and KIIs sessions were held in a nonpartisan, fair and participatory manner where all were able to voice their opinion on the various issues that were discussed.

2.2.4 Challenges and how they were resolved

The team faced challenges during the implementation of the fieldwork. The challenges in carrying out the fieldwork had more to do with what was going on in the districts during the time of the fieldwork more than anything else. Some of the issues were as follows:

1. Since the survey was conducted during the monsoon season, participants were busy with paddy plantation. The FGD participants were informed about the FGDs beforehand and managed their time accordingly.

2. Public hearings of the draft of the constitution (*sambidhan ko masyaуда*) coincided with the time, the FGDs were being held. Since the VDC secretary was the official responsible for fixing the FGDs upon request by the IDA and also the responsible for fixing public hearings for the discussion on the draft of the constitution, the VDC secretaries were very busy. However, since VDC secretaries were only asked to fix the FGD meetings, and not necessarily to participate in them, it was possible to hold the FGDs.
3. In some locations as the FGDs and KIIs were being held at the end of the Nepali Fiscal Year, the VDC officials were busy. Nevertheless the VDC secretaries cooperated with the IDA team to help coordinate the FGDs.
4. The fieldwork period for this third perception survey happened to be mid-monsoon. Rainfall led to landslide in Surkhet district and flooding in some Tarai districts and thereby affected the schedule to some extent. However, no cluster or scheduled interviews were left out due to this.
5. Data Abstraction Tool (DAT) could not be done in some of the VDCs in the southern districts, due to the agitation by the Tharus in the southern districts of western Nepal.

2.2 Survey

2.2.1 Sampling Design for the Sajhedari Bikaas Perception Survey-III

Sajhedari Bikaas project is implementing its activities in 58 VDCs in six districts in the first phase (i.e. for the first 2.5 years).²

Household Survey

The primary sampling units were wards. 180 clusters were selected randomly through systematic probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling. These 180 clusters were spread out across 113 VDCs. As the systematic PPS sampling method is based on the population size of wards, more than one cluster was selected in some of the wards with large population, while all nine wards had been left in few VDCs with small population. Within each sample cluster, 16 households were randomly selected using the random-walk method³. This made the total sample size of 2,880 households (i.e. 180×16 households). (For a detailed list of sampled VDCs and wards refer to Annex 7).

² During the past year or so, some of the VDCs have been converted to municipalities. Such VDCs have been excluded from the sampling frame.

³ The starting points for the random-walk method are recognizable locations such as schools, crossroads, chautaras, bazaars, temples, mosques etc. At first, interviewers start to walk towards any direction randomly (using Spin-the-bottle technique) from a starting point counting number of households on the right hand side of his/her route at the same time. Based on the number of households available there and number of interviews to be conducted, he/she will select the households by skipping a certain number of households (which is called systematic sampling).

From the sampled households, one member, either male or female, was selected for interview leading to total of 2,800 respondents. If there were more than one male member and female member in the selected households, one male member and one female member was selected randomly using the Kish grid. This method ensures the equal chance of being selected in the sample.

For sampling purposes phase I VDCs were labeled as Group 1, phase II VDCs were labeled as Group 2 and control VDCs as Group 3. The sample sizes for the three groups were 1,200, 1,200 and 480 for phase I, phase II and control respectively. Altogether 113 VDCs were covered. The DAT survey was conducted in the same 108 VDCs and left 5 VDCs due to the agitation by the Tharus in the southern districts of western Nepal.

Data from Phase I of Perception Survey III is compared primarily with the data of Phase I of baseline. Where available, it is also compared with Phase I of Perception Survey I and II.

Data Abstraction Tool (DAT)

Data Abstraction Tool (DAT), which entails collecting information from documents and filled-up forms at the VDC office, was conducted in the same 108 VDCs. Data Abstraction Tool (DAT) could not be done in some of the VDCs in the southern districts, due to the Madhesh agitation.

The DAT work was challenging. DAT format was revised considerably taking into cognizance the actual forms available at the VDC office. For this purpose, IDA team undertook two pre-tests. The first pre-test was conducted in Udharapur and Bankatuwa VDCs of Banke district on July 20, 2015. This provided some idea of the types of documents that are actually available in the VDCs as well as the extent to which these documents are actually filled up. The DAT format was revised with inputs from the SB team, namely Amleshwar Singh, Sudan Shivakoti and Mahesh Nepal. Attempt was made to administer the revised DAT format during the second pre-test, which was conducted on July 26, 2015 in Ganapur and Shamshergunj VDCs of Banke district. The second pre-test provided experience about the challenges in administering DAT. (The DAT form that was eventually developed and administered is in Annex 5.2).

2.2.2 Field work management

The pre-test of the survey questionnaire was undertaken on July 20, 2015 in Sonapur and Udharapur VDCs of Banke district. The questionnaire was prepared with the aim of addressing the indicators. The pre-test helped to fix the errors in the questionnaire, and to prepare for the android platform. Software for the platform as well as platform for real-time monitoring of survey was provided by Syntegrate, a software company based in Kathmandu. (The household questionnaire is in Annex 5.1).

In order to collect quality data from the field, 24 enumerators, six supervisors, and six DAT supervisors were carefully selected considering various factors including their language proficiency, education, sex, survey knowledge, caste/ethnic background and capability. (The list of the field team, including their sex and caste/ethnic background, is provided in Annex 2).

After the recruitment of the field personnel, paper-based and android-based training were conducted from July 22 to July 26, 2015. The training for the DAT supervisors took place on July 27.

On July 27, 30 field personnel were deployed to the field. The ratio of enumerators to field supervisors was 3:1 for some teams and 4:1 for others. The fieldwork, which commenced on July 27, was completed on August 26.

The fieldwork for DAT commenced on July 28 and continued up to September 9 – several days longer than anticipated. The fieldwork period was prolonged because of the movement of the Tharus, who were protesting against the delineation of the provinces/states in the constitution, at the time of the fieldwork. As a result, DAT fieldwork had to be suspended for a few days – and work could resume only after the political unrest quietened.

2.2.3 Challenges

A total of 39 persons were recruited for the fieldwork among which 3 were monitors, 6 were DAT supervisors, 6 were survey supervisors and 24 were enumerators. In an attempt to be inclusive, the survey field team members were recruited from various caste/ethnic backgrounds. There were 12 hill upper caste males, 7 hill upper caste females, 7 Tarai-Janajati males, 7 Tarai-Janajati females, 2 Muslim males and 4 Muslim females. (For a detailed list of the fieldwork personnel refer to Annex 2).

The enumerators faced numerous challenges after they reached their respective district/cluster and started collecting data through the sampling method. In this perception survey, the number of Muslim field workers was increased so as to make the field team more inclusive and to make it easier to approach respondents of their community. The performance of the new Muslim recruits with one exception, however, was not satisfactory despite intensive enumerator training. Some difficulties encountered were due to their reluctance in working outside their home district. They did not want to spend nights away from their homes as required by the survey. Moreover, they were not open to interacting with those outside their community. They were not thorough in filling up the survey forms. Since they were not willing to work together with other team members, the supervisor had to closely monitor their work which was unnecessarily time-consuming.

Lack of expected outputs from the Muslim enumerators, who were recruited because of their minority status, created problems in the fieldwork. While two of the female Muslim enumerators

dropped out at the time when the fieldwork was going on, two male Muslim enumerators continued albeit with poor output. One Muslim field worker who had been with IDA since the past 5 years continued and another new Muslim recruit from Kailali continued. The less than expected output on the part of the new Muslim enumerators could also be due to other factors such as relatively conservative attitudes when it comes to mobility of women, lack of experience and previous opportunities in survey research. Such experience points to the necessity of providing capacity development opportunities to Muslim communities. Similar problems did not occur with the rest of the survey field team members.

Getting to the field sites was a problem because of political unrest. It was difficult for the enumerators to get to their destination on time. This was more problematic for enumerators who had been deployed to the Far Western Development Region. It was difficult for them to move in the field due to Tharu protests, strikes and curfews that were called in the region. As a result, the enumerators had to work under difficult conditions, which induced undue mental stress, besides making physical mobility very daunting.

It was a challenge to capture DAT information since the team had to visit VDC office and interact with VDC secretary and other personnel a few times. The field teams felt that it was more difficult this time than during previous perception surveys in spite of the letters from SB office and the DDC office.

There were some questions in the DAT form, for which the field teams needed to meet the Ward Citizen Forum's coordinator. Meeting the WCF coordinator for obtaining data was mostly a cumbersome process because of the difficulties in getting hold of the coordinator (who in turn tended to be busy because it was the plantation season and because of ongoing Tharu agitation). Despite these difficulties, the senior supervisors were able to get the necessary data because of their experience in dealing with difficult situations and through sheer hard work. Due to the protests in the Mid-western and Far-western development regions, the fieldwork had to be suspended for many days during the fieldwork period.

2.2.4 FGD Limitations

The teams conducting FGDs faced a few challenges. Although the team attempted to ensure participation from women and marginalized groups, equal representation and participation was challenging. For instance, most FGDs had one or two women and few Dalits, fulfilling only minimum Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) requirements of representation. There was a tendency for men and dominant caste/ethnic groups to dominate discussions. FGDs with Monitoring Committees also posed challenges. Since the VDC secretary chairs the Monitoring Committee, other Monitoring Committee members felt uncomfortable with the presence of VDC secretary and did not open up during the FGDs. In such cases, the VDC secretary was interviewed separately. In some VDCs, members of the monitoring committees were interviewed

separately to ensure an open discussion. In the case of IPFC, some members were not aware that they were members and they did not have a clear idea of the roles and responsibilities except for the politically ambitious and active ones. In situations where members were not aware, the VDC secretary had to clarify that they were indeed the members of IPFC.

3. Findings and Analysis

3.1 Demographics

This section presents a brief overview of the demographics of 1,200 sampled respondents spread across six project districts of SB⁴. It also provides an overview of the key variables. The variables - district, age, gender, caste/ethnicity, and education level - were taken as independent variables in this study. These independent variables have also been disaggregated with the purpose of examining how the variation differs across the independent variables. Due to space constraints, with a few exceptions, the disaggregated findings of the survey are not presented in the main report. (They had been submitted as Annex 6.2 during the submission of the second draft report on November 8, 2015).

Of the total sampled respondents, 28 percent are aged 16 to 26 years, 31 percent aged 27 to 40, and the remaining belongs to age groups of 40 and above. Regardless of the gender of the respondents, those between 16 and 26 are considered as youth. Male and female respondents are equally distributed in the sample.

Table 1: Age Group of Respondents [A5, Base = 1200]

	Frequency	Percent
16 - 26	334	27.8
27 - 40	373	31.1
Above 40	493	41.1
Total	1200	100.0

Table 2: Gender of Respondents [A6, Base = 1200]

	Frequency	Percent
Male	600	50.0
Female	600	50.0
Total	1200	100.0

⁴ For sampling purposes phase I VDCs were labeled as Group 1, phase II VDCs were labeled as Group 2 and control VDCs as Group 3. The sample sizes for the three groups were 1,200, 1,200 and 480 for phase I, phase II and control respectively. Since the purpose was to compare between the baseline and perception survey III in the VDCs where SB had been involved in, only the demographics of phase I VDCs or Group 1 have been discussed.

In terms of education, a high proportion reported being illiterate (32 percent), 20 percent reported that they were literate, and remaining reported having some years of formal education.

Though one quarter of the respondents reported being illiterate, this did not affect their response since the interview was conducted orally. In other words, the fact that they were illiterate did not reduce their chances of responding. Most of the questions were geared toward the opinions and experiences of the respondents – not about their understanding i.e., knowledge related questions. Illiterate people are as capable of literate or educated individuals, about sharing their experiences or perceptions.

Table 3: Educational Status of Respondents [A8, Base = 1200]

	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	388	32.3
Literate but no formal education	237	19.8
Primary Level	165	13.8
Lower Secondary Level	164	13.7
Secondary Level	174	14.5
SLC Pass	8	0.7
+2/Intermediate Level	39	3.3
Bachelor Level	16	1.3
Master and Above	9	0.8
Total	1200	100.0

When the sample is disaggregated in terms of caste/ethnicity, it is seen that roughly 38 percent of the sample identify themselves as Tarai/Madhesi Janajatis (the main Tarai/Madhesi Janajati in the region is the Tharu community) and roughly 31 percent identify themselves as hill Brahmin/Chhetri. Hill Dalits and Hill/mountain Janajati constitute 10 percent and 7 percent respectively. About 5 percent of the sample constitutes Muslims.

Table 4: Ethnicity of Respondents [A9, Base= 1200]

	Frequency	Percent
Hill Brahmin/ Chhetri	370	30.8
Hill/ Mountain Janajati	89	7.4
Newar	1	0.1
Hill Dalit	119	9.9
Tarai/ Madhesi Brahmin/ Rajput	34	2.8
Tarai/ Madhesi Janajati/ Adivasi	451	37.6

Tarai / Madhesi other castes	29	2.4
Tarai / Madhesi Dalit	42	3.5
Muslim	65	5.4
Total	1200	100.0

With regards to their main occupation, the majority of the respondents, 59 percent cited agriculture as their main occupation, followed by housewife/ home-maker (16 percent), labor (8 percent), student (7 percent), industry/ business (4 percent) and service (4 percent).

Table 5: Occupation of Respondents [A10, Base = 1200]

	Frequency	Percent
Agriculture	713	59.4
Housewife/home-maker	52	16.1
Labor	46	7.5
Student	90	6.6
Industry/Business	79	4.3
Service	193	3.8
Unemployed	5	1.8
Retired	22	0.4
Total	1200	100.0

The report sections are organized according to the indicators. The value of the indicators constitutes the main findings. First the indicators derived from the household survey are presented and then towards the end of the report, the indicators from DAT. After the value from the indicator is presented either from the survey or from DAT, the findings related to it from FGD and KII are presented, which help in contextualizing and interpreting the figures.

3.2 Awareness of Community Groups' Roles and Responsibilities

Respondents were asked about various community groups. This question was asked so as to document the level of awareness about the roles and responsibilities of these groups. Majority of the people (69 percent) knew about the roles and responsibilities of Agricultural Service Center (ASC) followed by Livestock Service Center (65 percent), Community Mediation Center (59 percent), VDC Council (47 percent) and Local youth groups (34 percent). Twenty seven percent of people knew the roles and responsibilities of Ward Citizen Forums (WCF), 18 percent knew about Citizen's Awareness Center (CAC), 18 percent knew about Project Monitoring Committee, and 16 percent were aware about the roles and responsibilities of the Project Management committee. Relatively less number of people knew about the roles and responsibilities of Radio Listeners Group (RLG) (12 percent), IPFC (9 percent) and WORTH group (5 percent). This is summarized in the table below.

Table 6: Distribution of sample by awareness of roles and responsibility about community groups (Q. A11, Base = 1200)

Community Group	Phase I
WCF	27
CAC	18
VDC Council	47
Local Youths Groups	34
Radio Listeners Groups	12
Community Management Unit	18
Community Mediation Center (CMC)	59
Worth Group	5
Agricultural Service Center	69
Livestock Service Center	65
Integrated Plan Formulation Committee (IPFC)	9
Project Management Committee	16
Project Monitoring Committee	18

FGDs and KIIs reveal that very few WCF members discuss about their roles and responsibilities with other family members. In some cases, even the wives of the WCF members were found unaware about their husband's involvement in the WCF.

In case of Citizen's Awareness Center (CAC), it is established among marginalized people of the VDCs; people belonging to other castes and ethnic groups could be unaware about it and its functions. Most of the representatives from marginalized committees, in FGDs and KIIs, shared that they were aware of the CAC. Since the survey was administered to all respondents – irrespective of whether or not they belonged to the marginalized communities - 18% reporting to be aware of CAC is significant.

Regarding IPFC, this is a high level committee and people were confused because most of the members in IPFC were found from political parties and people considered it for all practical purposes as the All Party Mechanism. The respondents of FGDs and KIIs shared that the process of prioritizing and recommending is highly influenced by the local political leaders. Thus though the people are aware of the process, they consider the process to be influenced by political leaders rather IPFC. In few villages, even the IPFC members were unaware of their membership in that body.

The nature of WORTH group seems that they are mostly busy in intra-group activities. Due to this, other people might not be aware of its roles and responsibilities.

In case of Radio Listeners Group, the FGD team revealed that the RLG is not widespread throughout villages. Even if they include members from different locations, they do not participate equally and are not equally active. Although some RLGs are very active, it does not apply equally in case of their members.

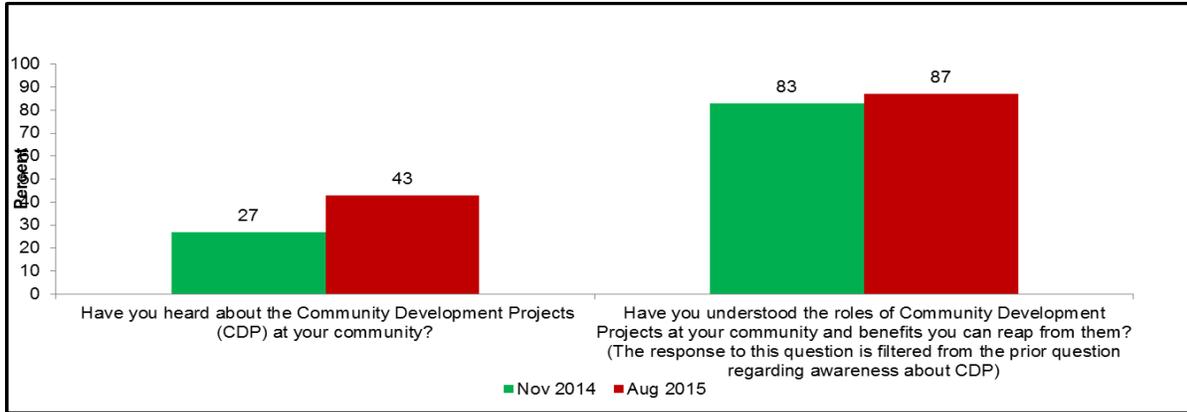
Only 5 percent were WCF members out of which 54 percent comprised of males and 46 percent comprised of females. Similarly, only 1 percent reported that one of the members in their household was a member of WCF explaining why awareness of WCF is low. In the case of WORTH group, there seemed to be a confusion in understanding what WORTH meant since it was also referred to as WEG sometimes. FGDs also revealed that there is a significant overlap of members of PMC, IPFC and WCF who have small representations at the household level. This also explains why there is low awareness of these groups.

3.3 Participation in VDC Community Development Projects [Indicator 23]

In general participation in community development projects are determined as early as planning stage through community meetings (mainly settlement meetings, Ward meetings, IPFC meetings and Village council meetings), implementation stage through users and monitoring committees, and ultimately during the social audits that evaluate projects.

One of the objectives of the SB is to enable the environment for community development at the local level by increasing active and inclusive participation of the people in identification, selection, implementation, and monitoring of the CDPs in the community. In this regard, series of questions about participation of the public in the selection, implementation, and monitoring of CDPs was asked in the survey. The first question asked was: “Have you heard about the community development projects (CDP) in your community?” 43 percent reported having heard of CDPs. While the fieldwork for Perception Survey I happened in November 2014, the fieldwork for Perception Survey III happened in August 2015. The chart below shows an increment of 16 percent regarding having heard about CDPs.

Figure 1: Awareness, understanding of roles and responsibilities and beneficiaries percentage of CDP)



Of the people (43 percent) who reported having heard of CDPs, an overwhelming majority of them, 87 percent, reported having understood the roles and responsibilities of CDPs. This is also a slight increase from the responses in Perception Survey I, where 83 percent of the respondents shared they were aware about the roles and benefits of the CDPs active in their community. Of the people (43 percent) who reported having heard of CDPs, 77 percent said they had been a beneficiary of the CDPs at their community in the past one year.

Of the people (43 percent) who reported having heard of CDPs, thirty nine percent reported having participated in the meetings related to CDPs. This is an increment from 31 percent in Perception Survey I. To those who participated in the meetings related to CDP, a follow-up question about whether or not they voiced their opinion during those meetings was asked. Sixty five percent responded saying they have voiced their suggestions.

Figure 2: Participation in CDP

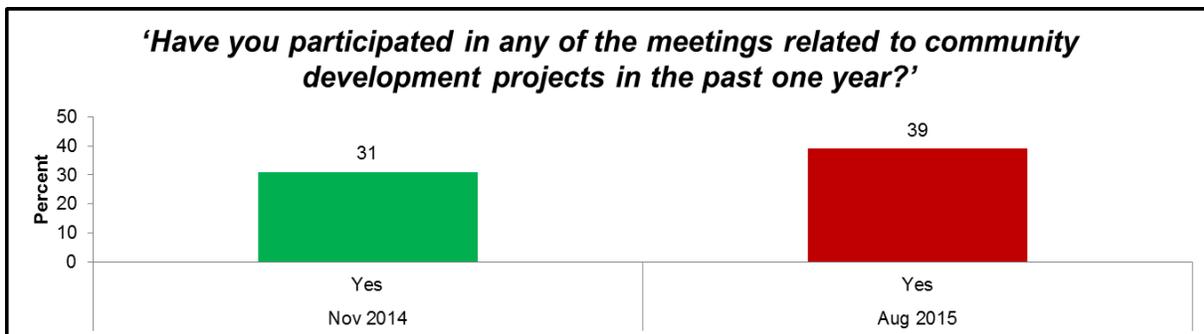
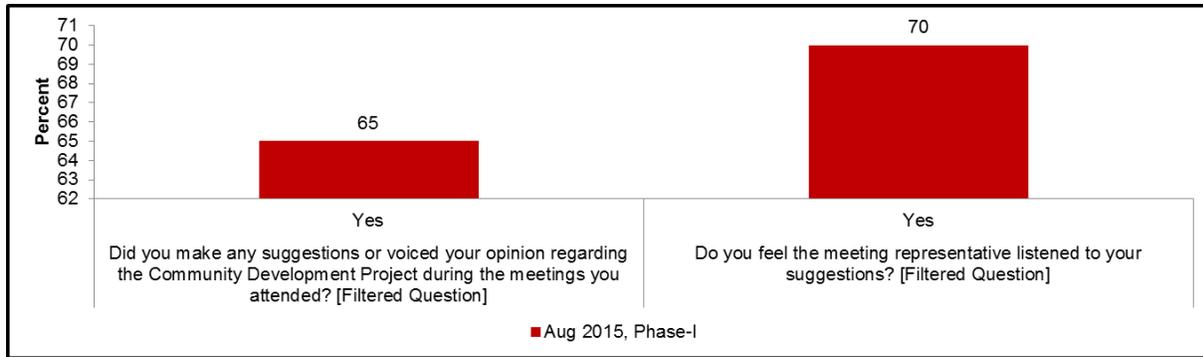


Figure 3: Suggestions during CDP meetings, and if they feel the representatives listened to them



Furthermore, a question about whether or not they think the meeting representatives heard their suggestions was asked to these 65 percent. Among them, 70 percent felt that the meeting representatives heard their suggestions.

The participation of the people in CDP is on a voluntary basis. They are not compensated in any way for the time they spend in the meetings. FGD showed that because participating in the meetings related to CDP requires voluntary participation of the people, they need to set aside a considerable amount of time for the meetings. The survey finding indicates that the participation of the people is high (41 percent). From FGD it may be inferred that though the people participate, with no compensation, they will not be able to participate in such meetings for long. This becomes especially pertinent for meetings of WCF members, including in CDPs. Some of the WCF members are selected from marginal communities. For those members from marginal communities a day in the meeting of WCF means a loss of a day’s wages. Voluntary participation of members becomes untenable for members who come from poor households.

Respondents in FGDs and KIIs shared that they became interested to take part in the CDP process because of its benefits. Some responses were not related to direct benefit but to social work. Those who had the motivation for social work or who were seeking their career in local politics did not miss the chance to participate throughout the process. Others seemed less interested in participating in the process. The majority of marginalized people and participants linked economic aspect for their participation. They have to go for their work to earn their livelihoods and they shared that they can’t be part of CDP process even if they wish to.

Calculation of the Indicator-23 (Proportion of citizens who indicate that they actively participate in decisions around VDC community development projects) is based on positive response to the question B5, which is filtered based on only those who said that they were the beneficiaries of CDPs. The survey shows that 28 percent of the people living in the phase-I VDCs think that they actively participate in decisions around CDPs. One of the participants in the FGD involving WCF members shared that all people are informed about the CDPs, but only those who are interested participate in the project. In some cases, people hold the perception that one person of ward is adequate to represent the whole ward. Time management is another factor. According to a social mobilizer, women seemed overburdened with housework and childcare to be able to

participate. She further noted that it has taken a lot of encouragement and capacity development trainings to show women that their voices are important and that they should participate.

Table 7: Proportion of citizens who indicate that they actively participate in decisions around VDC community development projects (Indicator 23)

Phase-I
28

Note: This indicator is not comparable with that of the baseline of 2013⁵. The indicator is calculated based on only those who said that they were the beneficiaries of CDPs.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator reveals that Bardiya (44 percent) has the highest proportion of such people in the phase-I VDCs. Proportion of such people is lowest in Kailali (18 percent) in the phase-I VDCs. Some reasons for low participation given during FGDS and KIIS were frustration that the efforts of the community in formulating proposals for the CDPS will not be fruitful as their proposals may not be selected and low budget available for projects. Many people get frustrated quickly as they actively collect many demands from settlement level, which adds up to almost 50-60 demands from each ward. Then, they are allocated only about 1.5 million rupees to undertake these activities whereas if all the demands from each ward were to be cumulated it would need 40-50 million rupees to complete. In comparison to demand collection, the resource allocation is very complicated. According to a young Dalit member of WCF, “It’s really difficult. If people from other caste group agree on what should be the priority, and we oppose, we are in minority and we are scolded for opposing their proposal. So, we have no choice but to agree to the more well off people in the WCF.” In spite of some dissenting opinions, overall, most of the participants agreed that there is public participation in the community development projects’ planning process.

In FGD deliberations the participants also said that though in principle they follow the GESI strategy, and though there is a participation of women and the youth, their participation is not truly meaningful. In other words, participants are well aware that there are GESI guidelines, mostly in terms of how much budget should be allocated to marginalized groups. However, they are not able to explain why GESI is important to the community. Sometimes the inclusion of the minimum number of participants such as women and those of marginalized groups are fulfilled in programs to ensure their representation.

The FGDs and KIIs revealed that one of the de-motivating factors for active participation as a member of the WCF was unpaid and voluntary service. This was voiced by many of the FGD participants. For instance, social mobilizer of Ganapur VDC of Banke district said, “The guideline says we have to include and give more priority to poor, marginalized and backward

⁵ It is not possible to compare the perception survey with baseline since the baseline asks for whether they actively participate in the VDC planning process (while perception survey III asks for active participation in VDC community development projects).

group. But there is a problem. Most of them rely on daily wage for their livelihood. There was one rickshaw-puller who became WCF chair. He facilitated many meetings. But this WCF chair who is a rickshaw-puller is totally landless and has to rely on daily wages to sustain himself and his family. One day in the meeting means one days’ daily wage gone. WCF is voluntary job and one needs to give a lot of time. For the marginalized people, they have to pay high cost by leaving their daily work to be empowered through voluntary work at WCF.”

In some of the FGDs it was revealed that in some situations IPFC prioritizes projects other than those demanded by WCFs through active participation. So, even if people actively participate in selection, sometimes, they feel their voice is not sufficiently heard and respected. For instance, FGD participants in Fulbari VDC of Dang district said, they had prioritized a bridge maintenance which was not listed among the projects demanded. IPFC members tried to justify that that bridge in the village was damaged by flood and its needs to be repaired. So, VDC allocated budget and gave it first priority even if it had not been prioritized in the WCF list. There are also few other such cases. The FGDs also revealed that some budget is collected from internal sources such as land tax but that this budget is generally spent for internal staff management, office administration cost, fuel, and meeting expenses.

Few of the respondents also said they are frustrated because they cannot contribute anything, or rather, their voices are not heard in favor of some dominant people. So, they shared they did not want to waste their time by just going and listening to these powerful people.

Table 8: Proportion of citizens who indicate that they actively participate in decisions around VDC community development projects By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	19%
Banke	28%
Bardiya	44%
Surkhet	43%
Kailali	18%
Kanchanpur	39%
Total	28%

The proportion of males who reply to this question in the affirmative is higher than the females. As mentioned earlier, women suffer from time poverty dealing with the burden of housework and child care and there are fewer women who are members of MCs. IPFCS and WCF in general.

Most of the female respondents shared they understand very little about the process, compared to the male counterparts. On the other hand, they have the feeling that they are less consulted during decision-making. Most of the women respondents hesitated to answer directly that they are ignored in the decision-making process and few dominant people influence the entire process. But it can be inferred from their response that the primary hindrance for the active participation is lack of experience and understanding of process. They have the hope that this will be improved in coming days as they are being more experienced each year.

Table 9: Proportion of citizens who indicate that they actively participate in decisions around VDC community development projects By Sex

Sex	Phase-I
Male	31%
Female	22%
Total	28%

Going by caste/ethnicity, Muslims (50 percent) have the highest proportion of such people in the phase-I VDCs. Madhesi Dalit (14 percent) have the lowest in the phase-I VDCs.

Table 10: Proportion of citizens who indicate that they actively participate in decisions around VDC community development projects By Caste/Ethnicity

Caste/ethnicity	Phase-I
Hill Brahmin/ Chettri	34%
Hill/ Mountain Janjati	33%
Newar	NA
Hill Dalits	32%
Terai/ Madhesi Brahmins/ Rajputs	0%
Terai/ Madhesi Janajati/ Adivasis	19%
Terai / Madhesi other castes	25%
Terai /Madhesis Dalit	14%
Muslim	50%
Total	28%

Across the age groups, it is found that more people in higher age group report actively participating in the decisions compared to the people in younger age group.

Table 11: Proportion of citizens who indicate that they actively participate in decisions around VDC community development projects By Age Group

Age group	Phase-I
16-26	20%
27-40	23%
Above 40	38%
Total	28%

3.4 Effective implementation of community development projects [Indicator 30]

The FGDs that were targeted to Monitoring Committee members showed that the members could not say exactly what their job description entails. Some of the MC members tried to define the roles and job description of Monitoring Committee according to what they thought it was. Their understanding was that the Monitoring Committee was a mechanism developed to track the budget for the projects and to supervise the implementation process of the projects. They were of opinion that the Monitoring Committee does observation and supervision but without the technical know-how. They mentioned that they do not have the technical capacity to measure the length, width and volume of the roads or any other construction related projects.

Although the new provision has made Monitoring Committee a strong mechanism to ensure the effective implementation of the community development projects and that no project will be considered complete and get final installment before monitoring committee approves that project, it is still without technical expertise. Despite that, most of the members of monitoring committee, when they were asked during the FGD, feel the level of work has been improved and so has the monitoring process itself but they still require capacity development training.

The household survey asked a series of statements about the implementation, funds and accountability of the CDP processes. The responses are as follows.

Table 12: Respondents who agree (combination of agree and strongly agree) and disagree (combination of disagree and strongly disagree) with the given statements about CDPs. in 2013 and 2015

Statement	2013		2015	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
B7. "The CDPs are generally implemented by local user's group/ local companies/ beneficiaries".	72	11	73	14
B8. "The funds for CDPs are	41	26	44	35

transparently managed".				
B9. "In general, CDPs have public audit".	NA	NA	42	32
B10. "CDPs have helped our community a lot".	87	9	79	16
B11. "The contract for CDPs are generally publicly announced and procured".	48	24	41	34
B12. "In general the CDPs cost too much money".	35	24	35	35

Some 73 percent agree that CDPs are generally implemented via local user groups in 2015, which is almost same in 2013. About 44 percent agree that the funds for CDPs are transparently managed – this figure is lower in 2013 (41 percent). About 42 percent agree that the CDPs have public audit in 2015. This had not been asked in 2015 and so a comparison is not possible. An overwhelming majority of people agree (79 percent) that the CDPs have helped their community a lot in 2015, though the figure for this had been higher in 2013 (87 percent). Some 41 percent agree that the CDPs’ contracts are publicly procured and announced in 2015; some 48 percent had agreed to this statement in 2013. In 2015 some 35 percent agreed that the CDPs in general entail high investment costs, and are therefore expensive; in 2013 the same proportion that expressed this opinion.

Thirty five percent of the respondents, who believe that the investment cost of CDPs is high, were asked to state the types of projects where these were so. Large majority (76 percent) think that this is so for road construction projects in general.

Percentage improvement in positive citizen views on the effective implementation of community development projects [Indicator 30]

The percentage improvement in positive citizen views on the effective implementation of community development projects (considering positive citizen views on any four of the six questions at the least) is 48 percent in the Phase-I VDCs.

Table 13: Positive citizen views on the effective implementation of community development projects (Indicator 30)

	Phase I
Positive citizen views	48

Note: This indicator is not comparable with that of 2013 baseline. The indicator is calculated based on only those who said that they were the beneficiaries of CDPs.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator by districts reveals that Dang (53 percent) has the highest proportion of the people with positive views in the phase-I VDCs. Banke (38 percent) has the lowest in the phase-I VDCs. The reason given for effective implementation as evident from FGDs and KIIs, were that approved CDP projects directly or indirectly benefit the community. For example, women have benefitted from skill development projects that have led to their economic upliftment.

Table 14: Positive citizen views on the effective implementation of community development projects By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	53%
Banke	38%
Bardiya	50%
Surkhet	49%
Kailali	50%
Kanchanpur	44%
Total	48%

When compared for men and women, those who hold this view tend to be largely similar i.e., there is no major difference across the sexes.

Table 15: Positive citizen views on the effective implementation of community development projects By Sex

Sex	Phase-I
Male	48%
Female	47%
Total	48%

Going by ethnicity, hill Brahmin/Chhetri (54 percent) and hill Janajati (54 percent) have the highest proportion of the people with positive views in the phase-I VDCs. Hill Dalit (25 percent) and Madhesi other caste (25 percent) have the lowest.

Table 16: Positive citizen views on the effective implementation of community development projects By Ethnicity

Caste/ethnicity	Phase-I
Hill Brahmin/ Chettri	54%
Hill/ Mountain Janjati	54%

Newar	NA
Hill Dalits	25%
Terai/ Madhesi Brahmins/ Rajputs	29%
Terai/ Madhesi Janajati/ Adivasis	51%
Terai / Madhesi other castes	25%
Terai /Madhesis Dalit	29%
Muslim	40%
Total	48%

Across the age groups, it is found that almost equal proportions of people in all age groups have positive views on the effective implementation of CDPs in the phase-I VDCs.

Table 17: Positive citizen views on the effective implementation of community development projects By Age Group

Age group	Phase-I
16-26	48%
27-40	47%
Above 40	48%
Total	48%

Based on FGDs it is possible to say that among others, due to the ineffectiveness of the Monitoring Committee, the projects tend to be not implemented well. The FGDs also indicate that while in some VDCs the CDPs were being implemented and completed successfully, in others the projects were either partially implemented or incomplete. The issue that was mentioned earlier i.e., related to voluntary labour was seen to be an important asset in successful implementation of any CDPs. However, voluntary labour is difficult to come by in a number of CDPs.

One reason for the ineffective implementation of CDPs is unrealistic cost estimates. One participant said, “In one case that involved constructing a culvert, VDC allocated a certain budget which was not sufficient for that year and the project could not be completed. Again, another year, WCF prioritized this. More funds needed to be allocated to complete the work.” “Sometimes, because of wrong/improper cost estimation, it causes problems in implementing projects and leads to situation where the work is not completed.”

3.5 VDC Service Delivery [Indicator 25]

The VDC service delivery was recorded high throughout the three perception surveys. The combined percentage of respondents who said that the VDC office is either very effective, effective, or partially effective, was 77 percent in perception survey I, 86 percent in perception survey II, and 80 percent in perception survey III.

The indicator calculation of the percentage in positive citizen views (i.e. combination of very effective and somewhat effective) on VDC service delivery shows a significant improvement from 54 percent in the baseline survey 2013 to 71 percent in Perception Survey II 2014 (i.e., increase by 15 percent), but has remained the same (71 percent) in Perception Survey III as well. The change in between baseline and Perception Survey I was a remarkable increase. Only few people (10 percent) have negative views in this regard.

Table 18: Percentage improvement in positive citizen views on VDC service delivery (Indicator number 25)

2013	2015
54	71

Detailed breakdown of this indicator reveals that Kailali (78 percent) has the highest proportion of the people with positive views on VDC service delivery in the phase-I VDCs. Bardiya (54 percent) has the lowest value.

Table 19: Percentage improvement in positive citizen views on VDC service delivery By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	68%
Banke	74%
Bardiya	54%
Surkhet	66%
Kailali	78%
Kanchanpur	74%
Total	71%

A higher proportion of men have a positive view on VDC service delivery than women.

Table 20: Percentage improvement in positive citizen views on VDC service delivery By Sex

	Phase-I
Male	77%
Female	65%
Total	71%

Going by ethnicity, Madhesi Brahmin/Rajput (82 percent) have the highest proportion of the people with the positive views on VDC service delivery in the phase-I VDCs. Madhesi other caste (62 percent) and Madhesi Dalit (62 percent) have the lowest value in the phase-I VDCs.

Table 21: Percentage improvement in positive citizen views on VDC service delivery By Ethnicity

Caste/ethnicity	Phase-I
Hill Brahmin/ Chettri	73%
Hill/ Mountain Janjati	70%
Newar	0%
Hill Dalits	70%
Terai/ Madhesi Brahmins/ Rajputs	82%
Terai/ Madhesi Janajati/ Adivasis	71%
Terai / Madhesi other castes	62%
Terai /Madhesis Dalit	62%
Muslim	69%
Total	71%

Across the age groups, it is found that more people in younger age groups tend to have positive views about VDC service delivery than older age group i.e., aged 40 and above. However, the difference in the age groups is not substantial.

Table 22: Percentage improvement in positive citizen views on VDC service delivery By Age Group

Age group	Phase-I
16-26	72%
27-40	72%
Above 40	69%
Total	71%

The survey explored the types of VDC services received by the public, and examined how the public assesses the effectiveness of VDC in providing the services at the local level. People were asked to name the kinds of services they had received from VDC in the past one year. Although the majority of people (56 percent) received no service from VDC in past one year, services related to the obtaining of birth certificates (15 percent), recommendation for citizenship certificate (13 percent) and social security allowance (9 percent) seem to be the most used services.

Table 23: Services received from VDC in the past one year (Q. C1, Base = 1200)

	Phase I
None	56
Birth certificate	15
Recommendation for citizenship	13
Social Security Allowances (Single women, senior citizen, PLWD)	9

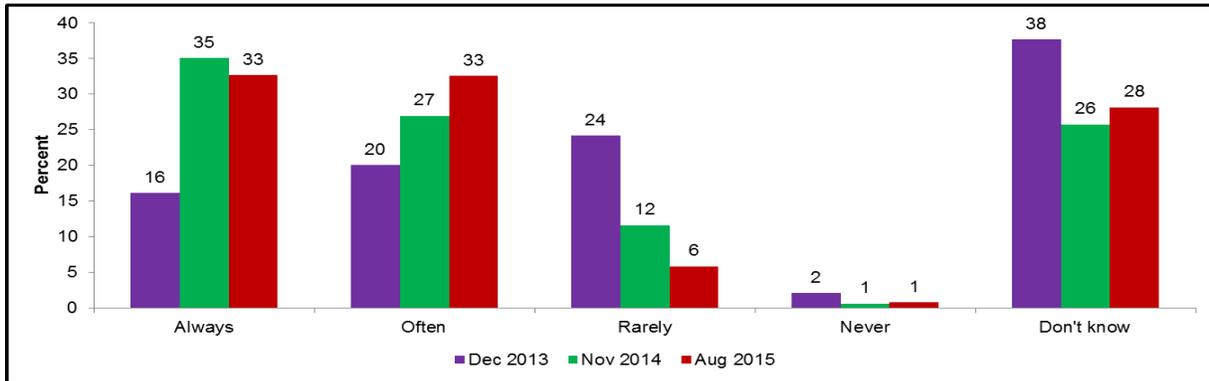
A follow-up question to those who said that the VDC has not been that effective in providing services in the past one year (10 percent of the respondents) was asked to identify the reason for their belief. Majority of them (53 percent) opined that the processes of providing such services were delayed by the VDC. About 26 percent were of the opinion that the ineffectiveness of VDC service delivery was because of the non-responsive attitude of the VDC officials and some 21 percent who stated that there was political influence. This result is similar to the results in Perception I survey, wherein a majority (53 percent) of the respondents pointed the ineffectiveness of the VDC office to the delay in providing services, and 30 percent attributed it to VDC official’s non-responsible attitude. However, there has been a sharp increase in the response that there is political influence in the services provided, from 9 percent in Perception Survey I, to 21% in Perception Survey III.

Table 24: ‘If you think your VDC office has been not that effective or not at all effective, why do you think so?’

	November 2014, Phase-I	August 2015, Phase-I
Delay in providing services	52	53
There is political influence in the services provided	9	21
VDC official's non responsible attitude	30	26
Don't know/Can't say	1	15
Bribery	5	12
Incapacity of VDC officials	-	4

A question of how often the VDC secretary is available at the VDC office was asked. The following chart juxtaposes the percentages of responses through the baseline, Perception Survey I, and Perception Survey III.

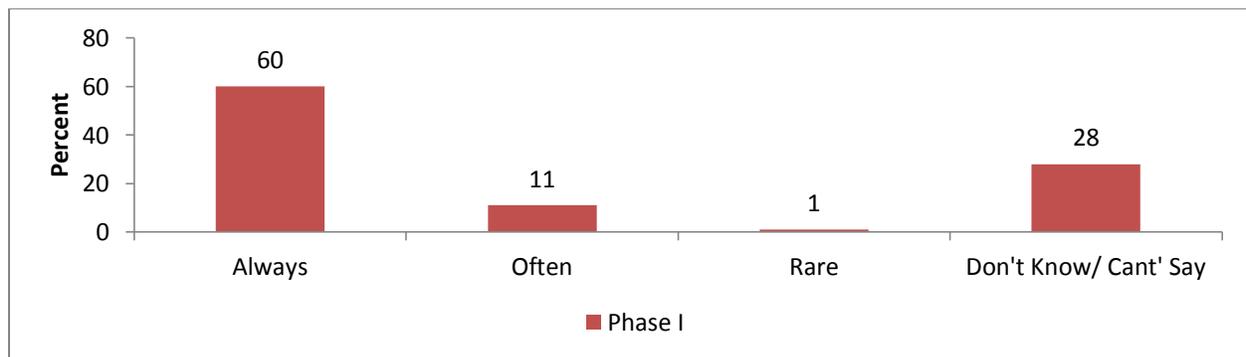
Figure 3: Over the past year, how often is VDC secretary available at the VDC office?



Most of the people shared that VDC secretary is available at the VDC office, with 33 percent saying that they are always available, followed by those who say they are available often (33 percent). Six percent are of the opinion that the VDC secretary is rarely available at the VDC office. Compared to the baseline survey, there is a positive change in the numbers. In the baseline survey, the responses that the VDC secretary is always in the VDC office, and is often in the VDC office, got 16 and 20 percent response, while a large portion of the respondents said they were rarely present (24 percent). The chart above compares the responses between the baseline (December 2013), Perception Survey I (November 2014) and Perception Survey III (August 2015).

Similarly, respondents were asked about the availability of VDC officials (i.e., other than the VDC secretary) in the VDC office, the response of which is explained in the below chart.

Figure 4: Over the past year, how often are VDC officials available at the VDC office? (Q.C5, Base = 1200)



Among the respondents, about 71 percent of the respondents (60 percent who say ‘always’ followed by the response of ‘often’ of 11 percent) say that the VDC officials are available at the VDC offices. While the percentage of people responding that the VDC officials are rarely available at office is only 1 percent, 28 percent were not able to respond to the question.

FGD respondents shared that one of the primary reasons for availability of the VDC secretary was because of the favorable work conditions. There are other factors that have led to greater availability of the VDC secretary. VDC officials other than the secretary are appointed from the same VDCs – this has made work more efficient in the VDCs. Moreover, there is provision of social mobilizers hired by the LGCDP and the implementation of the MCPM guidelines. These have helped in getting the work done. They also stated that the INGOs working in those districts and their projects have also helped pave a smoother way for availability of the VDC secretaries.

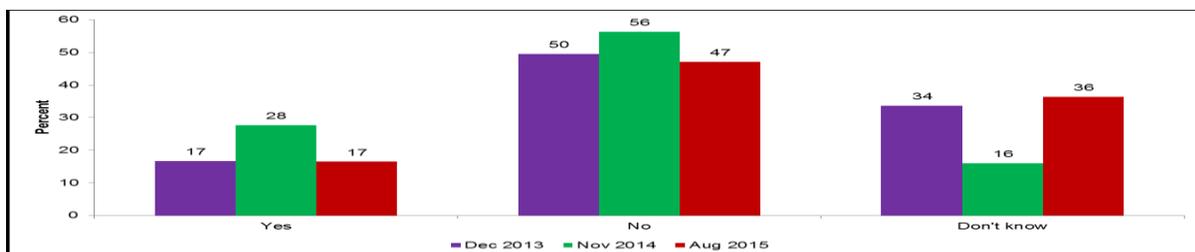
However, it is also possible to infer from the FGDs that the dependency towards the VDC secretary was extremely high. VDC secretaries of Pathariya VDC and Durgauli VDC of Kailali district expressed how overworked they were and how they tried their best to be available and perform their duties. KII with one of the local partners also supported this. The interviewee noted that VDC secretaries have to perform dual functions of an administrator as well as a development expert but that they lack sufficient experience and training to fulfill both roles.

3.6 Transparency of VDC Funds [Indicator 22]

The research team inferred from the field visit – mainly FGDs but also KIIs – that VDCs are organizing public audit, public hearing and other meetings to inform the relevant stakeholders and community people about the VDC community development fund. For instance, during public hearing process all income and expenditure of the village projects are announced. During the public audits and public hearing, journalists and representatives of different organizations also take part and, if and when needed, voice their suggestions. The public support these mechanisms, which they feel are very important to ensure transparency. However, these mechanisms in themselves have not led to a strong perception that VDC funds are transparent.

According to the survey, most of the people (47 percent) feel that the use of VDC funds in their community is not transparent as compared to 17 percent who say that the fund is transparent.

Figure 5: ‘Do you feel that the use of VDC funds in your community is transparent (all know how they are being used?)’



As it can be seen, when the value of this indicator is compared with the baseline figures, what is revealed is that positive attitude of the public view toward transparency of VDC funds is almost same between 2013 and 2015 (17 percent in the both years).

Even though only 17 percent people say the fund is transparent, almost all respondents in FGDs and KIIs agree that public audit is good component to ensure the accountability. Though there are lots of malpractices, people have the hope that public audits are strengthening transparency process, and it is better than not having any public audit. In their perception, the feeling of the VDC fund not being transparent is one thing, but the public audit process really gives them the chance to know about it.

It is important to note their understanding of what transparency is. For them, transparency is not only about how the funds were spent but also the awareness about the implementation and monitoring processes. Therefore, even if they agreed that they heard about the income and expenditure regarding the use of the VDC funds, they took it as not transparent.

In the FGD in Fulabari VDC of Dang district, a participant said that “In the past, our secretary probably used the total amount of the budget for personal benefit. After we were unable to track the budget, we reported the case to DDC and a new VDC secretary was appointed. Now, the situation has improved.” This situation shows that people are being more demanding for transparency. If people do not know how the funds are mobilized, they consider it as the misuse of the fund. That is a good indication of the awareness about transparency, and this evidence is also directly linked with active participation. This indicates that the issue of transparency is helping to increase the active participation and vice versa.

Table 25: Proportion of citizens who feel that the administration of funds in the VDC is transparent in 2013 and 2015 (Indicator 22)

Dec 2013	Nov 2014	Aug 2015
17	28	17
50	56	47
34	16	36

It is worth-mentioning here that 44 percent of the respondents agree that funds for CDPs are transparently managed (see Table 13). It appears a higher proportion of people are of the opinion that CDPs funds are transparent compared to those who think that VDC funds are transparent. The main reason why the respondents felt the CDP funds are more transparent than the VDC funds is because of the awareness about the implementation process of the CDP, and because they feel more ownership in the CDP process compared to the VDC fund channeling process.

An FGD participant in Surkhet district said that in one year, budget for CDPs was spent on buying land. “Up to last year, we focused on ward level development projects. This year we spent 16 lakh to buy land for the VDC office. We convinced all target groups about this, and they all agreed to spend money for the land. Out of the target group fund, around 6 lakh was spent for that land and the remaining of around 5 lakh was spent for their empowerment and other projects.”

In this case, all the respondents in FGDs and KIIs agreed that they know how and where the funds mobilized. But there was a disagreement among the respondents to use the term ‘transparency’ for their VDC fund mobilization process. Few marginalized voices shared that they were not heard during the decision-making and they were compelled to accept the decision. Hence, they do not consider the fund mobilization process is transparent because they were not aware of how the funds were spent. The respondents were focusing more on ‘right process’ and ‘understanding of the whole process’ rather than just hearing how much amount was spent.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator by districts reveals that Dang has the highest proportion of such people in the phase-I VDCs (25 percent). Proportions of such people in Banke and Bardiya are lowest (9 percent in each).

Table 26: Proportion of citizens who feel that the administration of funds in the VDC is transparent By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	25%
Banke	9%
Bardiya	9%
Surkhet	19%
Kailali	19%
Kanchanpur	17%
Total	17%

On the whole, more men than women think that the administration of funds in the VDC is transparent. This discrepancy is accredited to the higher and more active participation of men compared to women. Moreover, they also have more influence in the meetings. Therefore, they were more confident to claim that VDC funds administration is more transparent.

Table 27: Proportion of citizens who feel that the administration of funds in the VDC is transparent By Sex

Sex	Phase-I
Male	21%
Female	12%

Total	17%
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Going by caste/ethnic community, hill Brahmin/ Chhetri (22 percent) have the highest proportion of such people in the phase-I VDC. Madhesi Brahmin/ Rajput (3 percent) have the lowest proportion of such people in the phase-I VDCs. The rest are somewhere in between.

Table 28: Proportion of citizens who feel that the administration of funds in the VDC is transparent By Caste/Ethnicity

Caste/ethnicity	Phase-I
Hill Brahmin/ Chettri	22%
Hill/ Mountain Janjati	18%
Newar	0%
Hill Dalits	12%
Terai/ Madhesi Brahmins/ Rajputs	3%
Terai/ Madhesi Janajati/ Adivasis	16%
Terai / Madhesi other castes	0%
Terai /Madhesis Dalit	19%
Muslim	6%
Total	17%

There is no major variation across the age groups as is revealed in the table below.

Table 29: Proportion of citizens who feel that the administration of funds in the VDC is transparent By Age Group

Age group	Phase-I
16-26	16%
27-40	16%
Above 40	17%
Total	17%

One of the FGD participants stated that they generally knew the sources of the funds for the projects to be implemented in the VDCs. And that if they weren't satisfied with any component they were free to ask questions and make suggestions. However, this participant also mentioned that the local level leaders and other political leaders who chair the sessions leave right after their speech ends and aren't available to answer the questions that were directed to them.

On a positive note, the response on how they believe the funds are transparent in the CDPs complimented the data of the survey. Both the method concluded that public hearing is an important mechanism in ensuring the transparency of the funds for CDPs.

When the 17 percent who said that the VDC fund is transparent were asked why they think so, a majority of them (66 percent) said they believe so because there is public hearing. Another 24 percent said they believe the use of VDC fund is transparent because information is available in the VDC notice board followed by a significant number who say they believe so because the VDC has regular social audit (18 percent) and public audit (15 percent) respectively. What these underscore is that public hearing, information being available in the VDC notice board, social audits and public audits are the measures through which the public thinks that the transparency of VDC funds is being furthered.

Table 30: ‘If yes, what source do you refer to in order to gather information on transparency of VDC funds?’ (Q.C7, Base = 198)

	Phase I
Public hearing	66
VDC notice board	24
Social Audit	18
Public audit	15

Instances of speculation for corruption also give rise to the perception that VDC funds are not transparent. For example, a FGD participant from Fulabari VDC of Dang district stated, “In the past, our secretary probably used the total amount of the budget for personal benefit. After we were unable to track the budget, we reported the case to DDC and a new VDC secretary was appointed. Now, the situation has improved.”

Not all the experience of FGD participants has been good. One FGD participant said, “Although there was public hearing, most of the chairs of users’ group were absent. There were so many questions raised regarding projects but there was no concerned official to respond to those questions. Moreover, though the hearing has been documented, there was no practical follow-up.” At the same time, one person who identified himself as a Dalit said that sometimes public hearings tend to be conducted in the wrong time. He said, “Public hearing was a *be-mausami baja* (“music played in the wrong time”) because it was the plantation season and people were in the field working. They could not come to attend the meeting. Despite our request the meeting was not postponed and hence I ended up not attending.” One FGD participant in Dang district and FGD participants in Kailali district even raised transparency issue related to SB and its partner NGOs. They alleged that Pact’s partner NGOs provided them less than a half million rupees whereas earlier they had been asked to identify a project worth 1 million rupees project. They blamed the concerned official of the NGO and alleged that either this individual did not

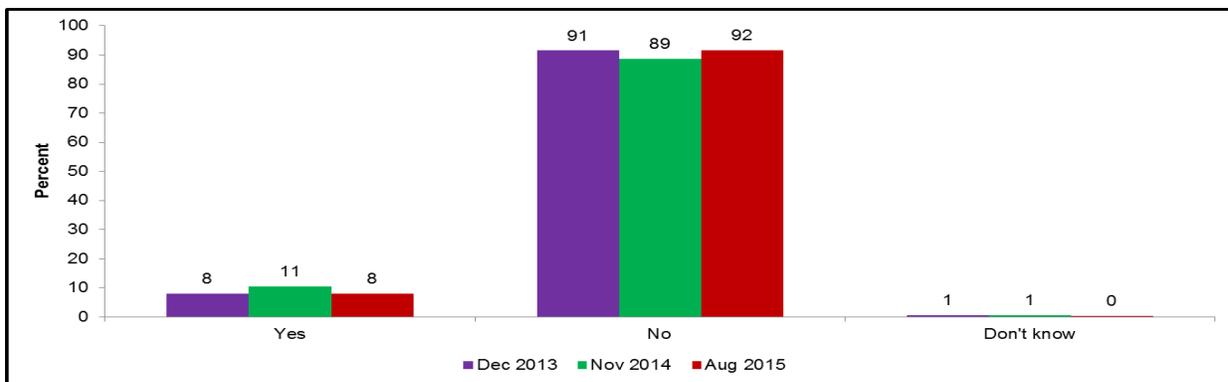
inform them properly or had maleficent intensions. FGD participants of Pathariya VDC in Kailali were angry that their effort in identifying the project and working on the details of the project was in vain and wished that they knew that they would receive only half a million. KIIs with local partners at Kailali confirmed that there had been confusion and misunderstanding that SB would provide 1 million for the project.

3.7 Conflict and Mediation [Indicator 2]

The perception survey sought to document the information on the types of conflict and violence that people have experienced in the past one year. It also studied the means used to solve the conflict that was being experienced. It did so by asking a series of questions. The first question that was asked was: ‘In the past one year (July 2014 to now), have you or your household members experienced any kind of conflicts/disputes?’

The chart below reveals the response to this question between the baseline (December 2013), Perception Survey I (November 2014) and Perception Survey III (August 2015).

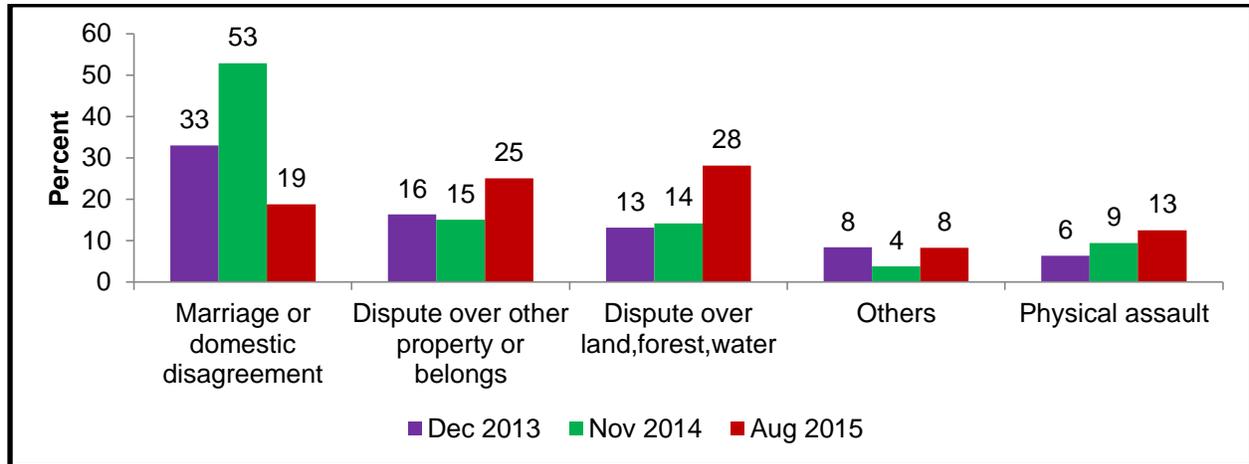
Figure 6: People who have experienced conflict in past one year (July 2014 onwards)



Overwhelming majority of the respondents (92 percent) in perception survey III reported that neither they nor any member of their household had experienced in any conflict. Eight percent reported that they or their household members had experienced conflicts/disputes. In comparison to the past perception surveys, the change is not noteworthy; in baseline survey, 8 percent of the respondents said they experienced conflict in the past one year, as opposed to 91 percent who said they did not face any conflict; and similarly, in Perception Survey I, 11 percent respondents said they experienced conflict, compared to 89 percent who said they did not.

Those who said they or their family faced conflict in the past one year were asked the type of conflict or problem they faced. The following chart explains the responses between the baseline, Perception Survey I, and Perception Survey III.

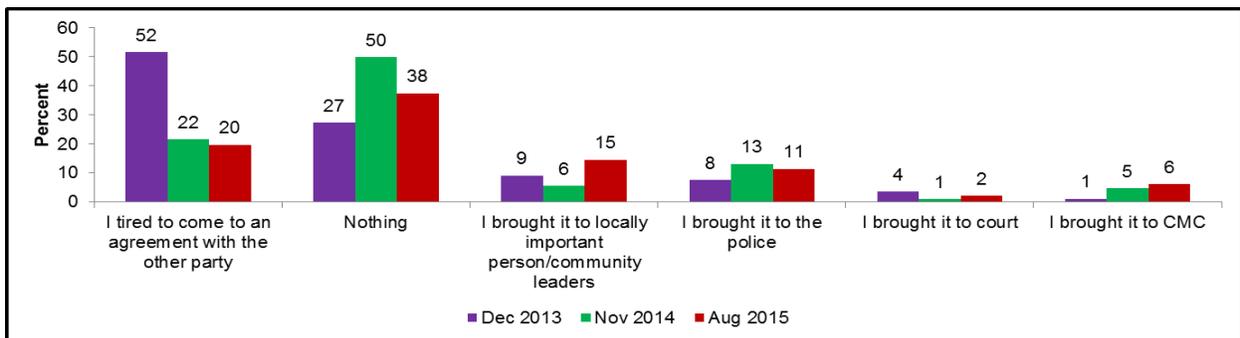
Figure 7: ‘In the past year (July 2014 to now), what is the kind of conflict or problem that have been in your family or in your home?’ (Based on multiple responses)



As it can be seen, 25 percent reported that the disputes were related to property and belongings, 28 percent were related to disputes over land, forest and water, followed by 19 percent of conflict cases regarding marriage or domestic disagreement. 13 percent reported experience related to physical assault. This is due to the decline in the responses in Perception Survey III pointing out to marriage and domestic disagreement as compared to the earlier surveys in which it was the majority response.

Those who said they faced some form of conflict were asked how they managed the conflict by naming the organizations and entities they visited to resolve the conflict. The chart below juxtaposes the responses in baseline, Perception Survey I, and Perception Survey III.

Figure 8: ‘What did you do to manage the conflict?’ 2015 (Based on multiple responses)



In Perception Survey III, while 38 percent did ‘nothing’, followed by 20 percent who tried to come to an agreement with other parties to resolve the conflict, some 15 percent and 11 percent reported taking the cases to ‘locally important persons/leaders’ and police respectively. Six percent brought their cases to CMCs while some five percent of the respondents reported the cases to Badghar/Bhalmansa (i.e. informal mechanism or social practice). As can be seen in Table 35, the percentage of responses that they tried to come to an agreement with the other party has decreased from 52 percent during the baseline survey, to 20 percent in Perception Survey III.

Proportion of those who used peaceful means⁶ to resolve the conflict was 74 percent in 2013 while this proportion is only 63 percent in 2015 (This is the value for Indicator-2). At a superficial glance, it appears that the proportion of people who used peaceful means has declined in 2015 compared to 2013. The reality is somewhat different in that this is so because proportion of those who did nothing or did not report going anywhere is higher in 2015 (37 percent) than in 2013 (24 percent). These people might be those who had experienced conflicts but did not report to anywhere because intensity of conflict they have experienced was low. If the proportion of those who reported ‘Did nothing’ is excluded from the analysis, the proportion of those who used peaceful means to resolve the conflicts becomes 97 percent in 2013 and 100 percent in 2015 – in other words an increase in 3 percent in 2015 compared to 2013.

Another reason for the variation could be the minor changes in the wording of the survey question. The question was slightly modified as “Have you or your household members experienced any conflict/disputes?” in perception survey 2015. The term “involved” was used in the baseline instead of “experienced”.

Table 31: Proportion of households that have experienced conflict in the past year that have used peaceful means to solve the conflict (Indicator 2)

	2013	2015
Used peaceful means to resolve the conflict/dispute	74	63
Not used peaceful means to resolve the conflict/dispute	2	0
Did nothing	24	37
Total	100	100

The FGDs clearly revealed that many conflicting parties prefer that their opponent should be physically punished and hence they want to go to the police where they believe this can be done. In contrast, the primary principle of the mediation center is to amicably try to solve the situation rather than punish the perpetrators. And this was precisely one of the major reasons for people choosing to go to the police station rather than a community mediation center. Secondary sources also reveal that Nepal Police is also adopting several measures to reach out to community people, providing easy access for people to go to police. Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF) website shows that Nepal Police has installed hundreds of police posts in villages throughout the country with the help of NPTF which also includes the project districts of SB. Armed Violence Reduction and

⁶ Only those people, who tried to come to an agreement, or brought their cases to courts, lawyers, police, CMCs, locally important persons/community leaders, human rights organizations, VDC offices, DDC offices, District Administration Offices or badghar/bhalmansa, were considered to be the people who used peaceful means and are included in the calculation of proportion of people who used peaceful means to resolve conflicts. For detailed information refer to the cross tab in Annex 6.2.

Strengthening Community Security Project (2014-2016) Report also states that Government of Nepal has re-installed most of the village police units at least in VDC level and Nepal Police has scaled community based awareness raising campaigns which also seems one of the attributable causes for the increase in the number of cases at police.

The survey results show that 53 percent of survey respondents say they are aware of community mediation center. It could be inferred from FGDs that the door to door marketing of CMC has made people more aware about the CMCs. An official from CeLRRd claims that “*As a result of social marketing, cases being registered are increasing gradually at CMCs*”. One unique case was found in a village where CMC also deals with disputes from other villages which do not have CMCs. People of adjacent villages came because they have heard about good role played by CMC in dispute resolution.

Although fewer people have accessed the services given by CMC, a large majority of people are either extremely satisfied or satisfied (17 and 33 percent) with the services given by the CMC. This positive perception towards CMC was evident through the FGDs as well as KIIs with local partners.

A big concern raised by FGD participants and Key Informants was the uncertainty of CMC once it is handed over to the government. They feel that the services may not be as good and there would be funding issues for running the CMC. One suggestion was to provide enough budget for smooth transition.

It is important to point out that a substantial number, 50 percent, are dissatisfied with CMCs’ services. This was primarily due to expectation of those who filed their cases with the CMCs. In the FGDs, they shared that they had expected some form of punishment to their opponents, since they felt that only having a dialogue and discussion cannot solve their issues of conflict. They shared their preference of visiting the police or some other mechanism due to the same reason. Therefore, those people who still believe that there should be some form of punitive treatment to their opponents are found more dissatisfied with the services of the CMCs than the others.

Table 32: ‘How satisfied are you with the services provided by the Community Mediation Center (CMC)?’ (Q.D4, Base = 6)

	Phase I
Extremely Satisfied	17
Satisfied	33
Dissatisfied	50
Total	100

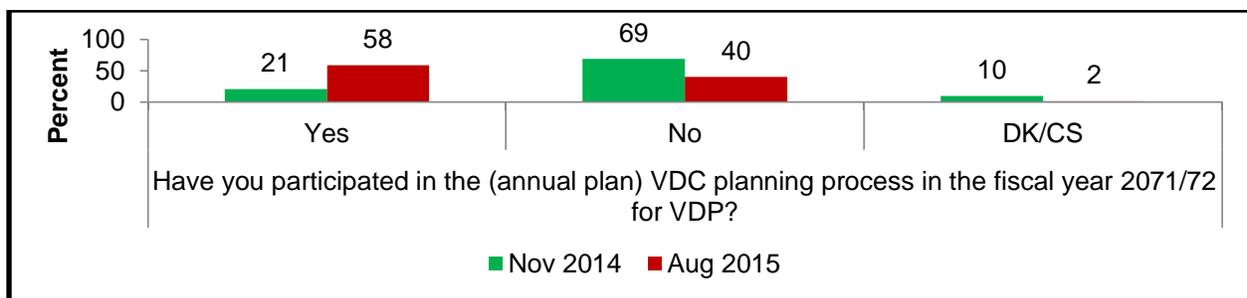
3.8 Ward Citizen Forum (WCF) in Planning Process [Indicator 20]

Ward Citizen Forum is understood by most of its members who took part in FGDs as a mechanism established by the Government of Nepal to fulfill the gap created in the VDC and local level due to the absence of locally elected bodies. An LGCDP Officer of one of the districts said, “Actually, there are no elected representatives at the moment in local level. The government formed WCFs to run the process of village development planning and make the situation easier to work in such a political vacuum.”

In this sense, the WCF and other institutions are seen as alternatives to locally elected bodies. The justifications by many individuals who were interviewed in KIIs had the following observation. Since local elections had not taken place since 2002, the absence of local government was widely felt. With the coming of Loktantra in 2006, local ‘all-party’ mechanisms were created where the main parties that led the peoples’ movement in 2005/2006 were represented. However, there were widespread allegations of corruption, lack of accountability, as well as not having inclusive representation in the ‘all-party’ mechanism. This led to the local development ministry as well as major donors to introduce the concept of WCF, which was more broad-based but had been conceived as a temporary measure till local elections could be held. However, given the decade long delay in holding local elections even after the emergence of Loktantra and after two national level CA elections, the WCF has continued and in one sense has been entrenched as a practice at the local level. Some see it as a good thing. However, its continued sustainability could be questioned in the absence of firmer and broad-based political understanding at the national level as well as commensurate legal provisions.

The perception survey tried to understand the awareness among people about the WCF. Alongside, it also tried to gauge the participation of people in WCF and WCF members’ participation in the VDC planning processes. To understand these, people with membership of WCF were asked a few questions. The first in the series was: ‘Have you participated in the annual planning process in the fiscal year 2071-72 for Village Development Plan (VDP)?’ The chart below explains the responses in Perception Survey I and Perception Survey III.

Figure 9: Participation of WCF members in VDC planning process in last one year



Majority of the respondents (58 percent) had participated, as opposed to 40 percent who had not participated. This illustrates a stark increase in the percentage of people who participate in ward citizen forums in the planning process, as compared to the perception I survey where only 21 percent had participated in the VDC planning process in the fiscal year 2071/72.

District level disaggregation reveals that Banke (75 percent) has the highest level of participation of WCF members in the VDC planning process in the phase-I VDCs. Level of participation is lowest in Bardiya (13 percent).

Table 33: Participation of WCF members in VDC planning process in last one year By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	50%
Banke	75%
Bardiya	13%
Surkhet	67%
Kailali	64%
Kanchanpur	50%
Total	58%

Those who report participating in VDC planning processes tend to be slightly lower among women compared to men.

Table 34: Participation of WCF members in VDC planning process in last one year By Sex

Sex	Phase-I
Male	60%
Female	57%
Total	58%

In terms of caste/ethnic groups, Madhesi Brahmin/Rajput (100 percent) and Muslim (100 percent) have the highest level of participation in the phase-I VDCs. WCF members from hill Janajati (43 percent) have the lowest level of participation.

Table 35: Participation of WCF members in VDC planning process in last one year By Ethnicity

Caste/ethnicity	Phase-I
Hill Brahmin/ Chettri	52%
Hill/ Mountain Janajati	43%
Newar	NA
Hill Dalits	63%
Terai/ Madhesi Brahmins/ Rajputs	100%
Terai/ Madhesi Janajati/ Adivasis	59%

Terai / Madhesi other castes	NA
Terai /Madhesis Dalit	67%
Muslim	100%
Total	58%

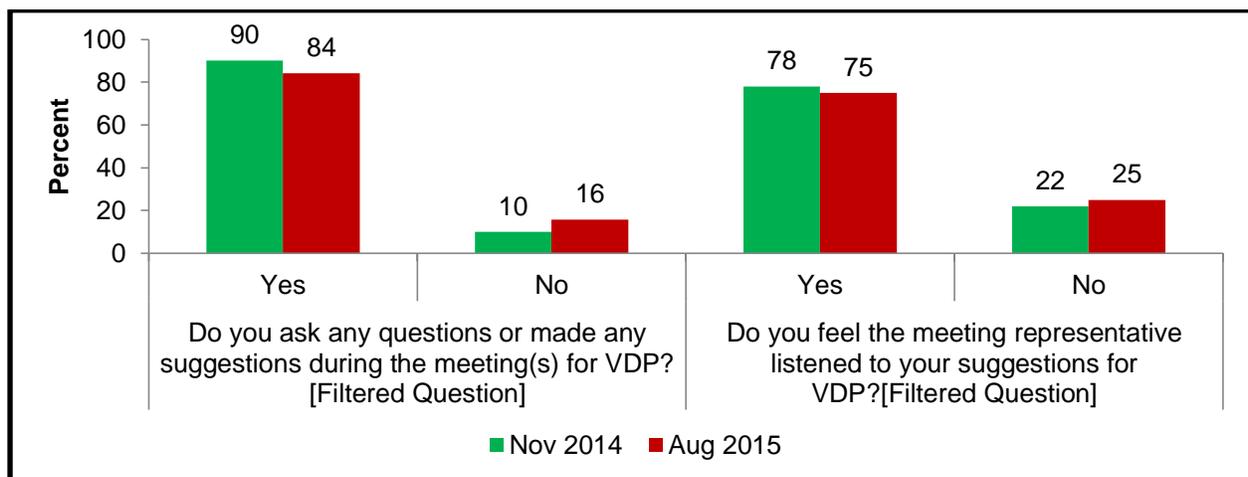
In terms of age groups, a higher proportion of young age group people who are members of WCF report participating in VDC planning process.

Table 36: Participation of WCF members in VDC planning process in last one year By Age Group

Age group	Phase-I
16-26	80%
27-40	55%
Above 40	55%
Total	58%

The WCF members who had participated in VDC planning process in last one year were asked if they asked questions or made suggestions in the meetings, and if they feel the meeting representative listened to their suggestions for VDP. The following chart juxtaposes their responses in Perception Survey I and Perception Survey III.

Figure 10: WCF members’ level of active participation in the VDC planning process



Among the respondents, a majority (84 percent) reported having asked questions or made suggestions in the meetings. However, this number is lesser than that of Perception Survey I, where 90 percent shared that they asked questions or made suggestions during the VDP meetings. Among the WCF members who had voiced their opinions, 75 percent believed that the meeting representatives heard their suggestion. This is also a decline in comparison to Perception Survey I, where 78 percent said they feel that their suggestions are heard.

The proportion of Ward Citizen Forum members who indicated that they could provide meaningful input to the village development plans is 37 percent in 2015. This was 23 percent in 2013. This is an increase in that the proportion who registers this has increased by 14 percent. WCF members who think that their suggestions have been heard in the VDC planning process meetings were considered as those who could provide meaningful input to the village development plans. Though there has been an increase in the perception of WCF members who say that they can provide meaningful input to village development plans in last 2 years, there is still room for improvement.

Table 37: Proportion of WCF members who indicate that they can provide meaningful input to the VDPs in 2013 and 2015 (Indicator 20)

2013	2015
23	37

Detailed breakdown of this indicator reveals that Kanchanpur (50 percent) has the highest proportion of such WCF members in the phase-I VDCs, while Bardiya has the lowest (13 percent).

Table 38: Proportion of WCF members who indicate that they can provide meaningful input to the VDPs By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	25%
Banke	40%
Bardiya	13%
Surkhet	42%
Kailali	45%
Kanchanpur	50%
Total	37%

When comparing between the men and women members of WCF members, a noticeable difference appears. While 40 percent male members of WCF indicate that they provide meaningful input to VDPs, 33 percent female members report this.

Table 39: Proportion of WCF members who indicate that they can provide meaningful input to the VDPs by Sex

Sex	Phase-I
Male	40%
Female	33%
Total	37%

Going by caste/ethnic group, Madhesi Dalit (67 percent) and Muslim (67 percent) have the highest proportion of such WCF members in the phase-I VDCs, while Hill Janajati (14 percent) have the lowest proportion of such WCF members.

Table 40: Proportion of WCF members who indicate that they can provide meaningful input to the VDPs by Caste/Ethnic Group

Caste/ethnicity	Phase-I
Hill Brahmin/ Chettri	40%
Hill/ Mountain Janjati	14%
Newar	NA
Hill Dalits	25%
Terai/ Madhesi Brahmins/ Rajputs	0%
Terai/ Madhesi Janajati/ Adivasis	41%
Terai / Madhesi other castes	NA
Terai /Madhesis Dalit	67%
Muslim	67%
Total	37%

Across the age groups, it is found that more WCF members at the age group of 16-26 (50 percent) report that they can provide meaningful input to VDPs compared to the WCF members at older age groups.

Table 41: Proportion of WCF members who indicate that they can provide meaningful input to the VDPs By Age Group

Age group	Phase-I
16-26	50%
27-40	32%
Above 40	36%
Total	37%

From the FGDs and KIIs it can be inferred that one reason for slow growth could be that WCF is based on the principle of volunteerism, which could be taxing to those who have to work to feed their families. This may be all right for those who have political ambitions and want to use it to develop their base. In such cases such a person would not give up his/her position to another person fearing that his/her political base would be threatened. The FGDs brought to the fore the fact that there is a general acceptance that the WCF is a good thing, but it might not last if there are local elections since the provision of WCFs is not anchored in an Act, or in the constitution. It is only anchored on a ministerial decision that could be overturned. Hence there is a need to either bring this into the constitution or into the Local Self Governance Act.

New WCF coordinator takes about six months to understand issues and is already out of the position six months later. This means that trainings and resource materials given to one person are squandered by next year, and the training has to be repeated all over again but there is hardly any budget for that. This therefore leaves much of the things at the mercy of the VDC secretary whose power is thus structurally more enhanced by this state of affairs.

Generally, WCF is seen as a loose, voluntary, citizen-led, non-political (at least not overtly party-based) forum with representatives in the absence of elected representatives in VDCs and wards. WCF is seen as a body that helps to facilitate local people to solve every-day public concerns. They work like people’s representatives for community development, bring issues to the VDC council, and coordinate with various organizations as elected local representatives had done in the past.

3.9 Violence against Women [Indicator 34]

Most of the key informants during discussions reported that fewer cases of GBV are registered. They pointed out that communities are hesitant to reveal about the disputes. Most of them do not know if the case if registered will be resolved. However, GBV is usually underreported. Research shows that GBV is prevalent in Nepal. The National Demographic and Health Survey (2011)⁷ provide evidence of domestic violence against women. According to a report released by the Nepal government in 2012, nearly half of the women respondents in the study have experienced violence in their life time. The study documented emotional violence, physical

⁷<http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR257/FR257%5B13April2012%5D.pdf>

violence, sexual violence and economic violence. Three quarters of the perpetrators were intimate partners including husbands.⁸

To explore the existing situation of violence against women in the community, a series of statements pertaining to gender attitudes and values and GBV such as women's right to income, work, child bearing, seeking community mediation, and a woman's need for permission to take part in social activities were asked to all the respondents to document public opinions as well as to measure the changes over time.

Various statements were read out and the views registered from respondents in 2015 compared with the views registered in 2013. The first statement that was read out in the survey was: a woman's income should be given to her husband. Some 85 percent agrees with this statement (in 2015). In contrast 79 percent had agreed with this statement in 2013. It shows that women's autonomy over her income is not fully recognized indicating patriarchal mindsets still prevalent. It would have been possible to get a truly gendered and in-depth perspective had the same question been posed for men, i.e., whether a man's income should be given to his wife.

Relatively liberal attitudes are revealed regarding women seeking permission to do paid work. Seventy eight percent of the respondents were of the opinion that a woman does not need her husband's permission to do paid work while less than one quarter said that a woman needs her husband's permission. These are the figures for 2015. This question had not been asked in 2013.

Half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that if a wife does not obey her husband, the husband has the right to punish her in 2015. In 2015, 49 percent registered agreement with the statement that "If a wife does not obey her husband, he has the right to punish her", while in 2013, 58 percent had registered agreement. Between 2013 and 2015 there seems to be a decrease in the proportion of those who think that the husband has right to punish his wife.

Those, who are of the opinion that under no circumstances should a man beat his wife, make up 75 percent in 2015 (almost same in 2013). It is a positive sign that majority do not support a man beating his wife.

Furthermore, majority of people (77 percent) believe that a woman should not be blamed if she is raped. However, a substantial number (19 percent) still believe that a woman is to be blamed if she is raped in 2015. In 2013, 15 percent were of the opinion that a woman is to be blamed if she is raped. This indicates that a lot more work needs to be done to overcome the stigma and stereotyping women who are raped.

⁸<http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2012/11/28/report-shows-gender-based-violence-prevalent-in-nepal-but-gov-response-improving/>

Table 42: Respondents who agree or disagree with the following gender based violence statements in 2013 and 2015

	Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. (Where Agree= Agree + Strongly Agree)								
	Dec 2013, Phase -I			Nov 2014, Phase-I			Aug 2015, Phase-I		
	Agree (%)			Agree (%)			Agree (%)		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
A woman's income should be given to her husband	79	77	80	81	81	81	85	84	86
A woman does not need her husband's permission to do paid work	29	32	27	25	28	22	21	20	21
If a wife does not obey her husband, he has the right to punish her	58	57	54	63	65	61	49	52	46
Under no circumstances should a man beat his wife	76	74	83	77	76	79	75	73	77
When a woman is raped she is to blame	15	17	15	25	27	24	20	21	18
Both women and men should decide together about important decisions that affect their family	97	97	98	98	99	98	98	99	97
A man should decide how many children his wife should bear	26	32	23	21	24	18	22	24	20
It is okay for a wife to seek community mediation if she has problems in the house.	49	49	52	68	67	69	78	78	77

Overwhelming majority (98 percent) agreed that both women and men should decide together about important decisions that affect their family in 2015. This is very similar to the figure of 2013.

About 77 percent disagreed with the statement that a man should decide how many children his wife should bear. The figure for 2013 was 72 percent. It is good that the proportion of people who disagreed with the statement increased by 5 percent between 2013 and 2015.

Seventy eight percent of the people believe that it is okay for a wife to seek help from community mediation if she faces problems in the house in 2015. Some 49 percent had agreed with this statement in 2013. A substantive increase in the proportion of those who think it is okay for a wife to seek help from community mediation indicates a positive orientation towards community mediation and that it is increasingly being recognized by local communities.

Regarding women's mobility, an overwhelming majority of people believe that a woman needs the permission of her family members/ husband to travel (95 percent) and to take part in social activities/events (87 percent). This finding is consistent with other studies in Nepal and South Asia where control over women's mobility usually under the pretext of safety is common. A social mobilizer of Shankarpur VDC of Kanchanpur, when interviewed for this study, noted how difficult it was for her to convince women and their families to allow them to attend trainings, meetings and public hearings due to conservative gender attitudes. This limits women's capacity building opportunities. She said it has taken years for some positive change to come about.

There is not much difference between men and women when the survey results of GBV statements are disaggregated by gender. In other words, women also internalize patriarchal and sexist gender attitudes. Hence, gender sensitization and empowerment programs and GBV awareness raising programs have to be targeted at both men and women. When the data is disaggregated by caste, ethnicity and educational level, there is little difference in responses between different caste/ethnic groups and respondents with different education levels indicating almost universal values when it comes to GBV in the six districts where the survey was conducted.

Percentage of the target population that views GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming [Indicator 34]

The percentage of target population that views GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming (considering positive citizen views on any five of the ten questions at the least) was 67 percent in 2015. This is also a composite indicator derived through the computation of various statements. Since all of these statements had not been asked in the

baseline, it is not possible to derive the value of this indicator for the baseline. Table 42 compares the response to the various statements between 2013 and 2015⁹.

Table 43: Percentage of target population that views GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming (Indicator 34)

	Phase I
GBV as less acceptable	67

Note: This indicator is not comparable with that of the baseline of 2013.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator reveals that Kanchanpur (77 percent) has the highest proportion of such people in the phase-I VDCs, while Surkhet has the lowest (55 percent).

Table 44: Percentage of target population that views GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	63%
Banke	75%
Bardiya	64%
Surkhet	55%
Kailali	64%
Kanchanpur	77%
Total	67%

There is only a minor difference between men and women in this regards as is revealed in the table below.

Table 45: Percentage of target population that views GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming By Sex

Sex	Phase-I
Male	65%
Female	69%
Total	67%

⁹ The figure was computed based on the percentage of respondents who have positive views in any 5 or more statements out of 10 regarding the Gender Based Violence (GBV). Since it is not known the proportion of the population that has been exposed to USG programming, it assumes all the beneficiaries of phase I VDCs have been exposed. And it assumes the impact to have come about through a more positive orientation towards dealing with the rights of women and issues regarding gender equality.

In terms of caste/ethnic group, hill Janajati (78 percent) have the highest proportion of such people in the phase-I VDCs, while Muslims (49 percent) have the lowest proportion of such people.

Table 46: Percentage of target population that views GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming By Ethnicity

Caste/ethnicity	Phase-I
Hill Brahmin/ Chettri	72%
Hill/ Mountain Janjati	78%
Newar	100%
Hill Dalits	61%
Terai/ Madhesi Brahmins/ Rajputs	50%
Terai/ Madhesi Janajati/ Adivasis	67%
Terai / Madhesi other castes	62%
Terai /Madhesis Dalit	64%
Muslim	49%
Total	67%

There is difference across age groups as well. More people at lower age group view GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming compared to the people at higher age groups.

Table 47: Percentage of target population that views GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming By Age Group

	Phase-I
16-26	75%
27-40	69%
Above 40	60%
Total	67%

Though the survey results show that there is a reduction in the percentage of those who became aware on the GBV, FGD deliberations revealed that participants were aware of GBV in their communities. The participants in the FGDs were WCF members, IPFC members, monitoring committee members and miscellaneous CBOs members. An opinion expressed by a participant in FGD in Fulbari VDC of Dang reflects understanding of GBV by male members of

community. He said, “Too many roles and duties are assigned to women because they are women. This is also a kind of violence because women are compelled to do too many things and thus they are exploited. The main problem lies when the women are put in the position of public authority and are unaware of their roles and responsibilities that come with it. They then become only a part of the formality of signing the document (*saachhi kinara basne*).” “In some cases, men are also suffering from violence (especially as those relating to remittances) but women are suffering because of the existing structures.” Such responses indicate a broader and sophisticated understanding of GBV.

There were also other opinions. FGD participants in Ganapur VDC Banke district said, “In many cases, women and other women are also responsible for the practice of violent behavior; it is not only men’s behavior.” They also gave examples of programs that could address women’s empowerment. “Mostly women are deprived of many rights in the Tarai region. We are spending certain amount for the trainings such as tailoring, agriculture/crops, improving kitchen and literacy, which are very important for their empowerment. At least, budget for women and other target groups are spent in that area.”

The FGD participants said that there is a need for GBV awareness programs. The punishment should be there, the law should be strong enough to stop GBV, and the victim should have easy access to justice. During the FGDs in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts, participants pointed out that stand-alone programs to address GBV were missing. Most awareness programs were general in nature or were small components of other programs. They felt that a targeted program to educate men and women about GBV would be very helpful.

However, some respondents also expressed that the USG is helping in the reduction of the GBV. One interesting example was shared by a field mobilizer of a CBO. Pointing to the complexities that arise when women challenge the status quo, she said, “Providing training on the rights of women is also causing disputes within communities. Those trained seem to want to go against traditions. Many husbands and family members as a result do not allow women to go out of the household to participate in such meetings. This has also become a cause of domestic conflict. Consequently, these days local NGOs have started the practice of including both husband and wife for trainings, to reduce family tensions and assure the husbands that their wives are doing the right thing.”

3.10 Proportion of budgeted VDC projects that were fully implemented/ finalized within the previous planning cycle [Indicator number 1 DAT]

According to DAT - if the budget for the fiscal year is spent, it is seen to be fully implemented and completed. DAT reveals that the proportion of budgeted VDC projects that were fully implemented/ finalized within the previous planning cycle (2070/71) is 94 percent in the Phase I VDCs.

Table 48: Proportion of budgeted VDC projects that were fully implemented/ finalized within the previous planning cycle (2070/71) (Indicator 1)

Phase-I
94%

This indicator cannot be compared with the baseline survey of 2013.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator by districts reveals that Bardiya (100 percent) has the highest value of this indicator in the phase-I VDCs.

Table 49: Proportion of budgeted VDC projects that were fully implemented/ finalized within the previous planning cycle (2070/71) By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	90%
Banke	94%
Bardiya	100%
Surkhet	98%
Kailali	94%
Kanchanpur	87%
Total	94%

FGDs and KIIs reveal that WCF and IPFC play an important role in the selection of projects but as every project has its own necessity and priority they face difficulty in selection process. Since the demands are formulated from the lowest settlement level, the selection process is considered as somewhat fair. The reasons for the incomplete projects are mainly due to insufficient budget and much more work than envisaged and planned.

3.11 Proportion of ward citizen forums (WCFs) with GESI strategies in place [Indicator number 17 DAT]

While calculating this indicator, ethnic and gender compositions of WCF members have been compared with those of respective ward populations recorded as per the 2011 national census. Population with more than 10 percent of the total ward population has been considered while examining proportional representation of particular ethnic group in WCFs. Then on the basis of the match, whether or not the GESI strategy is in place, has been inferred¹⁰.

¹⁰ It is not based on having a document known as a GESI strategy. In previous perception surveys, it was found out WCF members invariably say they have such a document while the composition of WCF membership as far as

DAT reveals that the proportion of ward citizen forums (WCFs) with GESI strategies in place is 62% in the Phase I VDCs.

Table 50: Proportion of ward citizen forums (WCFs) with GESI strategies in place (Indicator 17)

Phase-I
62%

This indicator cannot be compared with the baseline survey of 2013.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator reveals that Surkhet (100 percent) has the highest value of this indicator in the phase-I VDCs, while Dang has the lowest value (11 percent).

Table 51: Proportion of ward citizen forums (WCFs) with GESI strategies in place By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	11%
Banke	40%
Bardiya	70%
Surkhet	100%
Kailali	79%
Kanchanpur	73%
Total	62%

FGDs and KIIs reveal that the WCF member and general public are aware of the GESI concept and the fact that it should be present in every work that is carried out in the VDC. People are not able to explain why GESI is important from a holistic perspective, but they understand GESI is about ensuring participation on a gender basis and including people from different groups. It is seen more as a policy requirement.

3.12 Proportion of village development plans with a functional sustainability plan that adheres to locally agreed standards [Indicator number 18 DAT]

There is generally no sustainability strategy present in the VDC for projects and for this reason this indicator was not calculated. In principle this is mandated but in practice, it does not exist.

gender and social inclusion were concerned, would not be reflective of the gender and social inclusion demography of the ward. From perception survey III an attempt was made to compare the demographic composition of WCF with the demographic composition of the ward.

When FGDs sought to explore further about this issue, it was learned that the budget that VDCs receive is low in the first place so it is difficult to set aside a maintenance cost for any project.

3.13 Proportion of village development plans that include a fundraising plan [Indicator number 21 DAT]

DAT reveals that the proportion of village development plans that include a fund raising plan is 98% in the Phase I VDCs.

Table 52: Proportion of village development plans that include a fundraising plan (Indicator 21)

Phase-I
98%

This indicator cannot be compared with the baseline survey of 2013.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator reveals that most of the districts, except Dang (88 percent), have the value of 100 percent in the phase-I VDCs.

Table 53: Proportion of village development plans that include a fundraising plan By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	88%
Banke	100%
Bardiya	100%
Surkhet	100%
Kailali	100%
Kanchanpur	100%
Total	98%

This indicator cannot be compared with the baseline survey of 2013.

FGDs and KIIs show that there are no explicitly formulated strategies formed by the VDC for fundraising. In practice, however, almost all VDCs do raise funds. The internal source of income for the VDC is from land revenue (*mal-pot*), tax collection from various business and vehicles and charging fees for making documents for the public.

DAT reveals that the main source is land revenue (*mal-pot*) but the contribution of other sources i.e., private organizations, NGOs and other donors is low.

3.14 Proportion of community projects that are allocated to women, youth or marginalized groups [Indicator number 24 DAT]

Calculation of this indicator is based on the amount of budgets allocated for women, children, marginalized groups, youth and disables (not based on the number of concerned projects). DAT reveals that the proportion of community projects that are allocated to women, youth or marginalized groups is 31% in the Phase I VDCs. Here, it is worthwhile to mention that some of the community projects, which are identified as infrastructure projects, may be in fact for women, youth or other marginalized groups. These projects are excluded in the calculation of this particular indicator because of which value of the indicator is lower than the mandated 35 percent. Furthermore, in Kanchanpur in particular, since it has eight municipalities and four VDCs (as per the website of Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development), all other VDCs were merged to form new municipalities, and therefore, a low value of this indicator in the district.

Table 54: Proportion of community projects that are allocated to women, youth or marginalized groups (Indicator 24)

Phase-I
31%

This indicator cannot be compared with the baseline survey of 2013.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator reveals that Banke (39 percent) has the highest value of this indicator in the phase-I VDCs, while Kanchanpur has the lowest (22 percent). Interview NNSWA representatives in Kanchanpur revealed that VDCS such as Pipladi and Jhalari have become municipalities. This does not make them eligible for community development projects. This also limits them from SB projects.

Table 55: Proportion of community projects that are allocated to women, youth or marginalized groups By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	30%
Banke	39%
Bardiya	27%
Surkhet	31%
Kailali	29%
Kanchanpur	22%

Total	31%
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FGDs and KIIs reveal that the budget for the target groups is being spent on road and other development works, as they don't know about the guidelines. Many women and marginalized people responded that they don't know about guidelines. Due to many challenges, the target groups have not been provided with the budget. Women get skill development trainings but they are busy with domestic work so those who receive the skills may not make it into use.

3.15 Number of sub-national entities receiving USG assistance that improve their performance on the Minimum Conditions and Performance Measure (MCPM) [Indicator number 26 DAT]

Since this survey did not look into this, Pact will report on this separately.

FGDs and KIIs reveal that most of the respondents have no clear understanding of MC-PM, but they are aware that the people from the district will come to the village and evaluate and mark their village as "Pass" or "Fail" which affects their budget. They do want to know the reasons for which VDC was black listed. MC PM is posing as a threat in reducing the budget has led to good paper work but there is still a lot of improvement needed for the transparency of the VDC. There has been training provided for audit and how to maintain a document to pass the MC PM.

3.16 Proportion of Ward Citizen Forums who have tracked their budget allocation [Indicator number 29 DAT]

Data needed for this indicator was collected from WCF meeting minutes. While going through the minutes, agendas discussed, conclusion and recommendations made at meetings were taken into account. Generally, a WCF meeting took place around 6 times a year. All the minutes of these meetings were examined as far as possible. If there were a mention or discussion of budget expenditure either in meeting agendas, or in meeting conclusions or recommendations in any one of the meetings, the respective WCF was considered as the one that had tracked its budget allocation.

DAT reveals that the proportion of WCFs that have tracked their budget allocation is 72% in the Phase-I VDCs.

Table 56: Proportion of Ward Citizen Forums who have tracked their budget allocation (Indicator 29)

Phase-I
72%

This indicator cannot be compared with the baseline survey of 2013.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator reveals that Kailali (100 percent) has the highest value of this indicator in the phase-I VDCs, while Bardiya has the lowest (50 percent).

Table 57: Proportion of Ward Citizen Forums who have tracked their budget allocation By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	63%
Banke	55%
Bardiya	50%
Surkhet	86%
Kailali	100%
Kanchanpur	75%
Total	72%

FGDs indicated that WCF conducts meetings twice a month if necessary during the planning process period. It gets help from Social Mobilizer in getting information about the budget. There is a meeting conducted by WCF and Social Mobilizer and then the budget received is discussed.

3.17 Proportion of projects at VDC level that were budgeted in the previous planning cycle and those that were at the top 5 priority list of ward citizen forums (WCFs) [Indicator number 31 DAT]

This indicator was calculated by dividing number of WCF recommended projects (from all the nine wards of a sampled VDC) which were approved by Village Council by total number of projects approved by Village Council. If all the nine WCFs recommended a same project which was approved by the respective Village Council, these projects were counted as nine (not as one) even though the Village Council approved them as one project. It was done so in order to make the indicator calculation logical (otherwise the indicator value may go up beyond 100%)¹¹.

DAT reveals that the proportion of projects at VDC level that were budgeted in the previous planning cycle, that were in the top 5 priorities list of community forums (WCFs) is 34% in the Phase-I VDCs.

¹¹ There were no top 5 priority projects as such. The first 5 projects of the list prepared by WCF were considered as top 5 priority projects. If a WCF had prepared a list of projects under different categories, the first project from every category taken and considered as top priority projects.

Table 58: Proportion of projects at VDC level that were budgeted in the previous planning cycle and those that were at the top 5 priority list of ward citizen forums (WCFs) (Indicator 31)

Phase-I
34%

This indicator cannot be compared with the baseline survey of 2013.

Detailed breakdown of this indicator reveals that Dang (43 percent) and Kanchanpur (43 percent) have the highest value of this indicator in the phase-I VDCs while Banke (28 percent) has the lowest value of this indicator.

Table 59: Proportion of projects at VDC level that were budgeted in the previous planning cycle and those that were at the top 5 priority list of ward citizen forums (WCFs) By District

District	Phase-I
Dang	43
Banke	28
Bardiya	32
Surkhet	38
Kailali	30
Kanchanpur	43
Total	34

It is worth-mentioning that calculation of this particular indicator was based on the decisions of Village Councils made on Poush 2071 BS for the fiscal year 2072/73. At that time, Sajhedari Bikaas Project had just been launched.

From FGDs it was learnt that participants in general know that the projects that are prioritized are for road, culvert, bridge, health post, school and agriculture related. Some of the priorities are irrigation project, electrification, and road construction.

4. Conclusions, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

Conclusions

Increased Awareness

The findings from the survey revealed that knowledge and awareness of rights, awareness of community development projects and awareness of VDC's public accountability mechanisms

has increased. The increase in turn was instrumental in strengthening local people's participation in CDPs and building a sense of local ownership toward them. However, these mechanisms that allow participation and increase awareness have not yet established procedures that could address new or emerging issues on their own.

Positive Perception of VDC Service Delivery and Transparency Mechanisms

Perception of service delivery has improved with majority of respondents. This is partly because of the availability of secretaries in VDCs for longer periods. Moreover, the recruitment of VDC assistants through VDC internal resources is supporting secretaries to a greater extent to complete the jobs in hand. These resources primarily constitute tax for land, vehicles, shops, etc. Data from FGDs and KIIs suggest that VDCs are organizing public audit, public hearing and other meetings to inform relevant stakeholders and community people about the VDC funds and projects. There is a strong public support for these mechanisms since people feel that they are very important to ensure transparency. However, these mechanisms in themselves have not led to a strong perception that VDC funds are transparent¹².

In the case of requirement for improving VDC performance, FGDs and KIIs reveal that most of the respondents have heard of MCPM but no clear understanding of what it actually is and what is required to get a good score. They just know that VDCs will be evaluated based on their performance and obtain a "Pass" or "Fail" rating which will affect the upcoming grant for VDC. A positive aspect of MCPM is that it has led many VDCs to meet documentation requirements that would help them to pass the MCPM. However, many respondents expressed that they are not aware of the reasons how would a VDC fail.

GESI

In general, FGDs and KIIs reveal that the WCF members and general public are aware of the GESI concept and applications of its principles in projects carried out at the VDC level. They understand GESI is about ensuring participation based on gender and involves including people from different marginalized groups. But people are not able to explain why GESI is important from a development perspective. It is seen more as "required by policy" and not so much as important tool to achieve distributive justice. In the case of budget allocation for different marginalized groups, FGDs and KIIs reveal that many women and marginalized groups do not know the guidelines about how budget should be spent. Therefore, budget for the target groups, in most cases, is being spent on roads and other development works.

¹² However, this could also have happened because of the way question was phrased to gauge transparency. There was only one question. In Perception Survey IV a series of questions will be developed to assess transparency.

Attitudes towards GBV

Some improvements were noted in people's attitudes toward GBV and other gender related issues but there still exists a degree of tolerance towards domestic violence. No major difference is noted between attitudes of men and women toward GBV, women's autonomy related to her income, women's reproductive rights, and women's mobility. Overall, there are restrictive attitudes when it comes to women's mobility since most believe women should seek permission to go out for security reasons. But in other areas such as deciding on the number of children, going to meditation centers, decision making in household matters, both genders have developed a very liberal attitude.

Maintenance and Sustainability Concerns

There is generally no sustainability strategy for development projects and that is why the progress for this indicator has not been obtained. FGDs and KIIs suggest that there is a lack of maintenance plans in projects although it is required in principle. People view that it is mostly because they don't have representative government and the will for sustainability and maintenance is not as strong.

The capacity building effort for WCF is not resulting in long-term support because of the frequent/annual change of membership that is required at WCF. While the motive for rotation and inclusiveness is praiseworthy, the disadvantage is that the frequent change in membership may not allow local formations to retain those members who have gone through trainings. VDCs rarely have budgets to re-train new members.

Future of CMC

People's awareness about CMC is increasing. The survey results show that 53 percent of respondents said they are aware of CMC. The survey, FGDs and KIIs revealed that those who use CMC services have somewhat positive perception of CMC and are generally satisfied with the services. However, CMCs cannot be said to be sustainable as they are currently operated by NGOs and without adequate back-up from a local government body's accepted procedures, they would face difficulty in the long run.

Future of WCF

Other than the frequent change in membership, serious questions were raised about the voluntary nature of WCF coordinators' work. Their workload is ever growing for them and it is doubtful that coordinators will be willing to put up their effort for free for too long.

4.1 Lessons learned on Survey Methods

- There are software companies in Nepal that are able to create software programs for android administered survey and are able to provide platforms for real time monitoring of data. Syntegrate, a Kathmandu based company, was assigned the task which it carried out well. (During perception survey I and II, this task had been assigned to Mobenzi, which is a South Africa based company).
- Data Abstraction Tool (DAT) is an effective tool and provides empirical evidence that complements the more perception-oriented survey. This information is primarily with the VDC office. Though it has been possible to get this information during perception survey III with letters of introduction from higher-up authorities, the VDC secretaries have increasingly begun asking why this information is necessary and what comes out of it. Though Sajhedari Bikaas needs this information for monitoring purposes, this rationale alone will not be sufficient to overcome the local officials' resistance when in the future the VDC secretaries will again have to be approached. Whether DAT needs to be included in each bi-annual perception survey needs to be re-thought. (IDA is of the opinion that it would suffice to administer DAT once a year. In fact undertaking DAT more than one times a year is redundant).
- This time around the FGD checklist had also been formulated around the indicators. Based on feedback from concerned experts at SB and with SB's partners, checklists that address specific indicators had been prepared for WCF generally, for monitoring committees, for IPFCs and various groups formed by SB. The FGD facilitations that were centered on the indicators and which were targeted to specific kinds of participants yielded good results. These have complemented the survey and DAT. We now have a better understanding of why the values of indicators are what they are. In other words these have helped us in interpreting the numbers.
- FGDs and KIIs were conducted before the survey thus limiting the teams to ask 'how' and 'why' questions that would have emerged from the surveys had the surveys been conducted prior to FGDs. A better approach in the future will be to conduct the surveys, first, run an initial analysis and then formulate the FGD and KII questions based on the survey findings. Although this will take more time, it will help in answering many questions and strengthen the analysis.
- With designated experts this time around i.e., GESI Expert, Conflict Mediation Expert, Governance Expert, etc. it takes a longer time to complete each process i.e., formulation of the questionnaire/checklist and report preparation. This is because the experts would have to go through it before questionnaire/checklist and report is finalized. Allocating greater time for the cycle would be necessary. Currently the perception survey cycle is envisaged for four months. With this arrangement it should be envisaged as a five-month cycle.

4.2 Recommendations

In informal discussions, SB/Pact officials have mentioned that, while SB was conceptualized and designed primarily as an awareness increasing project and not much as one to increase livelihood or income generation, there was some thinking emerging that a degree of ‘mild activism’ into the development field is warranted, especially in helping partners do what they think needs doing both beyond, and as a result of, all the awareness raising activities they have been engaged in. IDA recommendations below are based on this understanding.

Conflict

It was evidenced through perception survey, FGDs and KIIs that relatively less number of people accessed the services given by CMCs in last year even though most of them are aware about the existence and roles of CMCs in their villages. Of those that had approached CMCs a large majority report being satisfied with the services.

Nevertheless on the whole people seem to prefer government mechanism or locally important persons or conventional practices for the conflict resolution. Hence, local ownership and trust-building have to be increased along-side social marketing of CMCs. There is a need to link CMCs with other institutions that people go to such as the police, VDC and *Badghar/Matau/Bhalmansa* so that more people would avail of its services. For instance, local police units could refer cases to CMCs which comes under its jurisdiction. CMCs could be made accountable to village council rather than to NGOs; in this way, funds could even be channeled for CMCs through VDC. Likewise, there could be greater coordination with locally important persons/leaders and head of informal institutions such as *Badghar/Matau/Bhalmansa*.

GESI

There was an attempt to incorporate Pact GESI principles at all stages of the Perception III survey¹³. The four key objectives of *Sajhedari Bikaas* - an enabling environment for community development, communities' access of resources for development, community implementation of inclusive development projects and effective functioning of new local government units are possible only with proper incorporation and implementation of GESI strategies.

One positive aspect evident from the survey, DAT, FGDs and KIIs is that community members are aware of GESI policies. They know that budget allocation following GESI guidelines as given in the *nirdeshika* must be followed. Hence, the objective of inclusive governance through implementation of GESI guidelines is met in a sense but this is done more at a superficial level by only fulfilling minimum requirements of representation of marginalized groups (which more

¹³ Britt, Charla Danelle. 2013. *Sajhedari Bikaas Project Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy :Guidelines for Achieving GESI in Programming and Project Implementation*. USAID.

likely leads to tokenism) and allocating VDC budget to marginalized groups. There needs to be more awareness training on *why* GESI is important. Understanding the long term implications and benefits of implementing GESI policies will make local governance and service delivery more effective.

In order to implement inclusive development projects, capacity development programs are important. As the Pact GESI strategy states (pg. 8), 'capacity building on GESI must not be a one-time event. Project design and implementation should recognize that abilities, interests, and needs will vary and that these differences will require different responses for different groups.' The FGDs with the four groups and KIIs consistently show the need for capacity building/skill development opportunities whether it is in the form of educating Monitoring Committees, WCF and IPFC of their roles and responsibilities and providing them the skills to identify and effectively implement criteria to monitor and select community development projects. In fact, VDC secretaries also feel that they do not have enough capacity/ skill development opportunities.

FGDs with the general public highlighted the lack of the capacity to effectively identify community needs and write proposals to demand the budget for marginalized groups. Further, many participants suggested that livelihood training to women should also be given in non-traditional occupations, going beyond traditional female occupations such as tailoring. Men complained that there are few skill development and livelihood programs for men.

GBV: The Perception III Survey GBV questions are limiting and do not reflect GBV issues fully given that 'gender' implies both women and men. Although labeled GBV, the questions under the GBV section pertain mostly to Violence against Women (VAW). Some other questions relate to gender attitudes and perceptions regarding women's mobility and participation in social and economic activities. The workshop in Nepalgunj also revealed that these questions were not sufficient to measure gender attitudes towards GBV. There should be additional questions to gauge people's perception of violence against men and gender attitudes pertaining to men as well. IDA was limited in this regard as these questions were already decided in previous surveys and, if altered, the questions could not be used for comparative purposes for different years. These issues should be taken into consideration in the next survey.

The findings relating to GBV in this survey show similar responses for men and women and across caste/ethnic groups. When it comes to reporting conflict, most do nothing. Since identification of barriers is an important first step of a GESI strategy, more in-depth qualitative studies relating to the barriers involved in conflict/ GBV reporting and conflict resolution need to be conducted. Specific GBV-related programs in communities should be targeted to both men and women since stand-alone GBV programs are lacking. Moreover, this study has shown that women also have internalized patriarchal attitudes concerning GBV and attitudes towards

women's mobility, control over women's income, and decisions and participation in social and economic activities.

Governance

As stated in Objective D, local governance units do not exist. What exists are bureaucratic extensions of the Local Development Ministry with temporary arrangements ('till elections are held' – personal comments from the current Chief Secretary) of the WCF under the LCDGP. This arrangement is far from 'new' as stated in the Objective D, even though it has functioned much better and longer than expected initially despite its weak and temporary institutional foundation. Given that, with the implementation of the new constitution becoming the primary focus of good governance, the nature and mandates of local governance mechanisms will be the most challenging task ahead. Pact/SB might need to devote significant time and resources at the national and local levels in helping define that local governance structure. This becomes more pressing as many old VDCs in the project area have been converted into municipalities with very differing governance ethos. This aspect of good governance will also be critical in meeting Objectives A and C, in the latter case, as experience has shown, with 'inclusive development projects' mostly hijacked to serve road-building and other infrastructure needs.

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