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NEPAL GOVERNMENT CITIZEN PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (NGCPP)

YEAR 2 ANNUAL REPORT
OCTOBER 2009–SEPTEMBER 2010



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ACRONYMS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
APM	All Party Mechanism
CA	Constituent Assembly
CDF	Community Development Forum
CEDPA	Centre for Development and Population Activities
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSP	Community Service Project
DDC	District Development Committee
DIDC	District Information and Documentation Center of DDC
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GON	Government of Nepal
HURDEC	Human Resource Development Centre
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IPC	Integrated Planning Committees
LDO	Local Development Officer
LG	Local Government
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Programme
LPC	Local Peace Committees
LSGA	Nepal Local Self Governance Act
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoLD	Ministry of Local Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBS	Nari Bikas Sangh
NEC	Nepal Electoral Commission
NGCPP	Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Project
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission

NW	New World
PMC	Project Management Committee
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PP	Pro Public
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RFTOP	Request for Task Order Proposal
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SIDC	Society Improvement Development Centre
SMC	School Management Committee
SN	Sahayog Nepal
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCF	Ward Citizen Forum
WDO	Women Development Office
WEL	Water Environment and Livelihood
YAN	Youth Action Nepal

VIEWS FROM THE FIELD



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nepal's transition from a monarchy to a secular democracy after an 11-year civil war is faltering, and the citizens of Nepal are struggling with a peace process that has not been fully implemented. This peace process faces severe tests at the local level, especially in the regions of the eastern Terai. Despite the well-observed ceasefire, the state of public security and rule of law is tenuous at best, particularly in central and eastern Terai districts. Some of the root causes of the conflict are social exclusion, marginalization of identified ethnic groups, and political fractionalization based on lack of access to state services. Service delivery in the Terai, as in other areas within Nepal, has been inadequate; the poor and marginalized are often denied equal access to social, economic, and political resources. Nepalese citizens are experiencing a crisis of confidence in their government and its ability to protect them and provide for their basic needs, including security, infrastructure, and public services. The Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Project (NGCPP) works to link citizens with local government and to build community confidence in the Government of Nepal (GON). NGCPP is a 24-month initiative funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), created to provide support for local governance, local-level peace initiatives, and transparent and inclusive development planning at the Village Development Council (VDC) and District Development Council (DDC) levels. The program is implemented by Tetra Tech ARD, in partnership with CARE, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), Search for Common Ground (SFCG), and local Terai-based organizations.

The overarching goal of NGCPP is to help the GON reestablish legitimate and effective governance to combat the potential for a fractured Nepal. The core strategic objectives of the NGCPP are to: (1) support strengthened governance to restore citizen confidence in public institutions; (2) implement quick impact activities that ensure the public reaps the peace dividend, encourage job creation, and assist with reintegration; and (3) ensure marginalized populations feel connected to the national-level peace process. Social inclusion was a key principle in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that brought an end to the violent conflict in Nepal. NGCPP supports the CPA by directly focusing on social exclusion as both a root cause of conflict in the Terai, as well as a symptom of poor governance and weak national-level support for marginalized groups. NGCPP utilizes guidance of a 1207 approach by coordinating closely with the interagency and implementing partners, by designing approaches that address the transitional needs for improved security for local government services, and creating an enabling environment for longer-term approaches. NGCPP is working with 12 target VDCs, providing district-level training and technical support to increase interaction and trust between GON officials and citizens in Morang District. NGCPP is working in these 12 districts to create a model approach that can be replicated by other VDCs and DDCs to ensure that access to governance and information relevant to the peace process is available to marginalized groups and areas historically neglected by national decision makers and the major political parties.

NGCPP takes a hybrid approach, focusing on both transition as well as creation of forums for citizen and government engagement that can sustain this period in post-conflict Nepal. NGCPP received a 90-day, no-cost extension for this project, and the new end date is February 25, 2010. This report covers the second year of project performance and highlights the accomplishments, challenges, and lessons learned. During this period, NGCPP continued to support stability in the Terai through the provision of training and technical assistance focused on transitional mechanisms for local governance that increased access to governance services, and options for conflict mitigation at the local level that strengthened the relationship between citizens and their local government. NGCPP piloted Ward Citizen Forums (WCF), watchdog groups that help to increase access to services and decision making for marginalized groups. This is done by providing a direct forum for citizen engagement with GON officials as well as political parties, known at the VDC and DDC levels as the All Party Mechanism (APM). Post-CPA, APM provides an essential platform for decision making at the DDC and VDC levels. It provides credibility to local-level decision making for the GON, as most VDC secretaries are not locally elected and have little local credibility in the Terai. The APM is meant to

provide a platform for smaller parties left out of the CPA and to ensure that pre-election needs are met by directly addressing political inclusion, often synonymous in Nepal with social inclusion. NGCPP provides technical assistance and training to citizens, APM members, and GON officials to increase the capacity of citizens to engage with local government, and for GON officials to mitigate local-level tensions and conflicts that exist around access to resources and decision making.

During NGCPP's 24 months in the Terai, many lessons have been learned. Nepal is still deep in transition, and all local governance training programs must encourage increased knowledge about local governance practices and information to both GON officials and new citizens and populations historically marginalized in direct decision making. NGCPP has created a model that seeks to link citizens with the GON by creating more space for governance practices that encourage transparency and mitigate local-level conflict. Community-driven projects were designed in collaboration with local government systems that link the GON with citizens that have felt the most marginalized from the implementation of the peace process. NGCPP has increased communication between citizens and local government officials, utilizing the planning process as a tool to improve citizen and government relationships. NGCPP has built the capacity of citizens and local institutions to take an active part in local governance. Infrastructure projects were prioritized in coordination with local communities and government with an emphasis on public accountability and planning that promotes social cohesion and minimizes conflict. Current local governance tools mandated by the Ministry of Local Development (MoLD) were taught to local communities and GON officials; capacity was built by strengthening GON officials' and citizens' knowledge of the Nepal Local Self Governance Act (LSGA). This practice assured that all NGCPP activities were developed to not only support the transition, but also to assure host country ownership of governance activities.

NGCPP works during the transition in Nepal to:

- Target technical assistance and core training to civil society organizations that work to deter social and political conflicts and protect civic and human rights of disadvantaged groups;
- Enlarge the areas of relief and rehabilitation by including the victims of social and political discrimination in the development process, linking citizens with local government planning;
- Work at the local level to rehabilitate and build new infrastructure and service facilities as required under the affirmative action policy of the government that provide services for previously excluded groups; and
- Target disadvantaged groups as the primary beneficiaries in line with government policies during the transition.

NGCPP components include:

- Supporting local governance through village-level training for DDCs, VDCs, and the APM in governance, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), development planning, and conflict mitigation for marginalized communities;
- Investing in rehabilitated and improved community driven infrastructure in selected VDCs in the eastern Terai;
- Increasing the capacity of local-based leadership to mitigate conflict by strengthening the capacity of local citizens and community based efforts that promote peaceful resolution to community based conflict; and
- Providing outreach and awareness campaigns on national- and Terai-based issues relevant and meaningful to the Nepal peace process.

NGCPP activities include:

- Strengthen and restore the capacities of GON local institutions, including district line offices, local governments, village development councils, service providers, and civil society and community-based organizations to respond to citizen-based priorities;
- Strengthen the capacity of GON local institutions to incorporate social inclusion principles into development planning and prioritization;
- Develop the core capacities of Terai-based civil society organizations or other institutions to mitigate conflict and respond to insecurity in the regions of the Terai;
- Support community-driven, small-scale reconstruction/rehabilitation that targets and supports the peace process in Nepal; and
- Incorporate strategic synergies with other USAID Nepal programs and partners of 1207 funding.

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN YEAR TWO

Component One—Support to Local Government Institutions

- Training of 2,206 citizens in conflict sensitive development, GESI, project planning and management, appreciative inquiry, media communications, peace journalism, consensus building, earthquake-resistant building construction, and peace building and conflict analysis.
- Improved professional capacities of 45 GON officials as a result of NGCPP training and direct technical assistance. This includes VDC secretaries, DDC officials, MoLD staff, APM members, and Ministry line offices.
- Completion of 12 annual VDC development plans with minority participation and specific GESI plans developed in cooperation with citizens and GON officials.
- Orientation of 2,778 WCF members (40 percent men, 60 percent women) from 108 wards in 12 VDCs on local planning and development. Among them, 649 people trained for its effective support to local government officials.
- Establishment of 12 VDC-Level Citizen Forums, for the first time in the nation, as recommended by MoLD.
- Formation and training of 12 Integrated Planning Committees (IPCs), as mandated by the MoLD, to increase political and ethnic cooperation in development planning. These transitional mechanisms mitigate political and ethnic tensions around development resource access.
- Organization of 12 public planning dialogues held in cooperation with VDC leadership, political parties, and communities.
- Formation and training of 57 project management committees for the selected projects in the VDCs on local government development policies and procedures including project management, local resource mobilization, and monitoring skills.
- Completion of village profiles in all 12 VDCs—a new GON-mandated planning tool piloted by NGCPP in Morang, incorporating a biophysical database, field collection, database entry of socio-economic data

for each household, updated satellite imagery for the 12 VDCs, and 260 village-level enumerators trained on village profiling work.

Component Two—Small-Scale Community-Driven Infrastructure

- Completion of 35 small-scale infrastructure projects; 14 projects on-going.
- Completion of 14 small community service infrastructure projects by youth groups.
- Formation of 57 Project Management Committees (PMCs) across caste and ethnic lines. This directly supports the LSGA as PMCs are the same as user committees and are based on MoLD guidance.
- Training of 505 people (primarily women, youth, and marginalized group members) in community-based project management, with direct NGCPP support and technical assistance.
- Creation of cash-for-work program that generated 20,075 days of employment targeting women, youth, and marginalized citizens.
- Facilitation of 10 days of semi-skill vocational training for to 550 trainees in the skill of their choice: masonry (382 trainees), electrical wiring (57), plumbing (57), and carpentry (54); many of these are now working on NGCPP infrastructure projects, while others joined private businesses or have started individual business enterprises.
- Training of 31 community mobilizers, 3 engineers, and 12 sub-engineers; they are now working for NGCPP at the VDC level from three local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).
- Training of 28 engineers and sub-engineers in a three-day earthquake-resistant design and construction workshop.

Component Three—Support for Peace Initiatives at the Local Level

- Training of 825 people to date on conflict mitigation and resolution skills.
- Facilitation of 12 community dialogues in the VDCs to build local-level consensus among the populations on critical issues relevant to GESI, the CPA, and the current status of the peace process.
- Establishment of 12 VDC-level Mediation Centres in VDCs.
- Provision of training for 12 master trainers of Community Mediation at the district level available for Morang VDC support services.
- Training of 324 community mediators working in 12 VDCs (27 per VDC). Of these, 108 are women and over 40 percent are youth. Over 89 percent are members of marginalized groups.
- Registration processes begun for 316 mediators with the Morang District Courts, allowing them to serve multiple VDCs and to be legally recognized as mediators with the Nepal judicial system.
- Establishment of DDC-level Endowment Fund for the sustainability of community mediation.
- Formation of 12 inter-ethnic youth groups working for peace initiatives in their respective VDCs (14 CSPs completed).
- Generation of over 2,150 days of employment with youth and marginalized citizens in 14 community service projects (CSPs).

- Training of 207 VDC employees, DDC staff, and Terai-based journalist/media professionals on the role of peace and journalism in the Terai.
- Coordination of 26 FM stations with the local traffic police to provide daily five-minute updates on the *bandhs* and access issues in the Terai. These updates, done with support from NGCPP, now reach approximately 1.3 million people daily; three other FM radio stations in Biratnagar are supported for youth, women, and local governance issues, respectively.
- Production and broadcasting of 120 minutes of weekly programming that highlights information on the peace process, the work of the Constituent Assembly (CA), local governance issues, and peace building issues relevant to the Terai.

WHAT IS A 1207 PROJECT?

According to the National Defense Authorization Act, 1207 programs are designed to involve greater interagency (State, USAID, and Defense Department) collaboration in planning, strategic coordination, and implementation. Goals of 1207 programs are directed at the stability of key areas and regions that are deemed a national security issue for the U.S. These projects require a hybrid approach to development. Quick impact projects are meant to influence the perception of local government in the eyes of its citizens, and to create greater transparency between the government and its citizens. The NGCPP is a 1207 project that seeks not only to strengthen local government in the Terai, but also to build demand among citizens, local leaders, and politicians for increased stability and greater trust in development planning and implementation of basic services.

The following should be done in 1207 programs:

- Advance U.S. security interests by promoting regional stability and/or building governance capacity of foreign partners to address conflict, instability, and sources of terrorism;
- Address urgent or emergent threats or opportunities that conventional foreign assistance activities cannot address in the required time frame;
- Seek to achieve short-term security, stabilization, or reconstruction objectives that are coordinated with longer-term development efforts and are expected to be sustained by the host government, international organizations, or other forms of U.S. foreign assistance; and
- Address stability, security, and development goals from a holistic perspective, integrating initiatives across multiple sectors.

I.0 NGCPP MODEL

I.1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Project (NGCPP) is working in 12 target Village Development Committees (VDCs), providing district-level training and technical support to increase interaction and trust between Government of Nepal (GON) officials and citizens in the Morang District. NGCPP provides targeted technical assistance, training, and commodity support to local government officials at the District Development Committee (DDC) and VDC levels to enhance their ability to: (1) provide conflict-sensitive and socially inclusive development planning that includes marginalized citizens in a participatory process, and (2) implement community-driven infrastructure projects that demonstrate enhanced GON will to respond to immediate citizen needs. NGCPP targets instability in the Terai by linking the government to citizens and creating channels for improved communication as a means to enhance trust among marginalized groups. NGCPP addresses these issues directly by focusing on social exclusion as both a root cause of the conflict in the Terai and as a symptom of poor governance and weak national-level support for marginalized groups.

NGCPP focuses on the following approaches to ensure that NGCPP objectives are addressed:

- **Local governance issues that fuel conflict.** Coordination between citizens and GON officials at the VDC and DDC levels ensures that current local conflict issues are addressed in all component activities, and that both parties are aware of their roles and responsibility in local governance.
- **Gender and social inclusion (GESI).** Work with target populations to stress the cooperation between ethnic and political groups and improve cooperation between local government officials and citizens.
- **Community-driven approaches.** Community-driven approaches in project identification target local priorities and support legitimate authorities by adhering to current laws and government processes that stress gender and social inclusion.
- **Leadership by marginalized groups.** Training is provided to youth and members of marginalized groups in vocational skills, leadership, conflict mitigation, and project management to ensure ownership and engagement between the target groups and local officials within the GON.
- **Information access.** Outreach and awareness campaigns are designed to disseminate information on national and Terai-based issues that increase citizen access to information about the peace process, governance issues, and current conflict and security conditions.

NGCPP activity components include:

1. Supporting local governance through village-level training for DDCs, VDCs, village councils, and All Party Mechanisms (APMs) in governance; GESI; development planning; and conflict mitigation for marginalized communities.
2. Investing in rehabilitated and improved community driven infrastructure in selected VDCs in Morang District.
3. Increasing the capacity of citizens to mitigate conflict by building the capacity of community-based leadership to resolve conflict.

NGCPP works with several national and Terai-based organizations and NGOs. The following table presents the details of NGCPP's local partners.

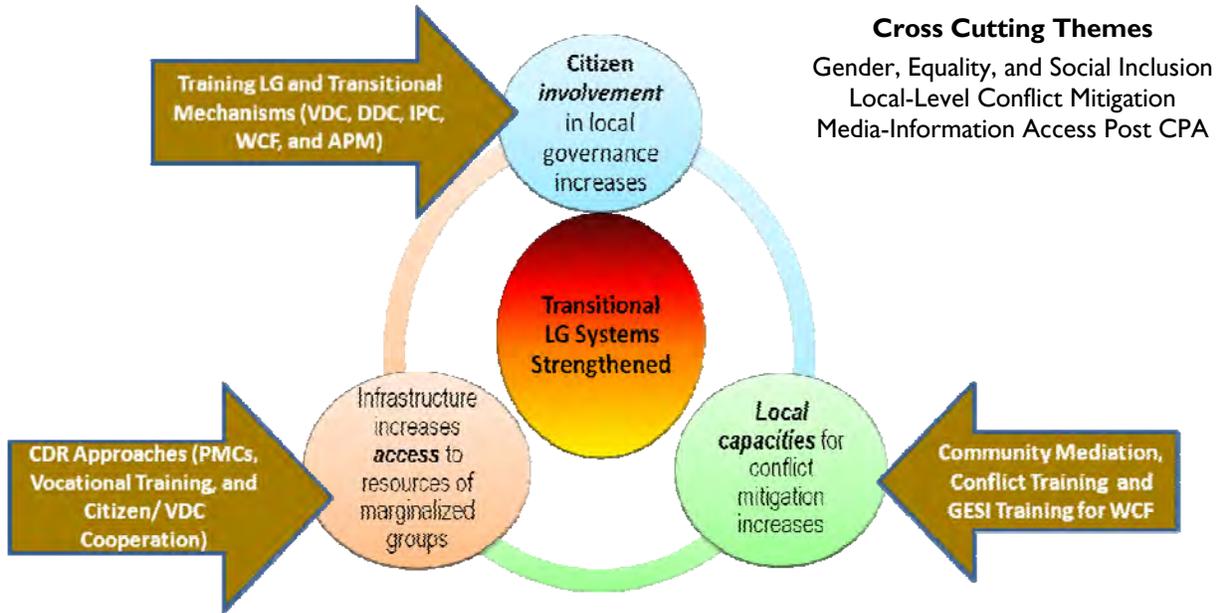
**Table 1.1:
NGCPP local Partners**

Local NGOs and Associations	Component Area
Human Resource Development Centre (HURDEC)	GESI training for APM, DDC, and VDC officials; provided initial support and training to local NGO partners of NGCPP.
Pro Public (PP)	Community mediation activities, public dialogues, and social audit support
Youth Action Nepal (YAN)	Developing youth network and mobilization
Nari Bikash Sangh (NBS)	Social mobilization and Ward Citizen Forum (WCF) formation
Water Environment and Livelihood (WEL)	Social mobilization and technical support for vocational training as well as Project Management Committee members
Sahayog Nepal (SN)	Social mobilization and technical support for vocational training as well as Project Management Committee members
Community Development Forum (CDF)	Social mobilization and technical support for vocational training as well as Project Management Committee members; supported WCF formation in Ramite Khola and Warangi VDCs
New World (NW)	Media campaign support
Society Improvement Development Centre (SIDC)	Data collection for Village Profile

1.1.1 NGCPP Theory of Change

NGCPP is a conflict mitigation project that focuses on building trust between citizens and local government. Nepal is in a time of transition. Insecurity is a serious problem in the Terai. Donation drives, kidnappings, threats, and extortion are a part of daily life for most VDC officials. As a result of the conflict, few VDC secretaries live in the VDCs, but instead operate from nearby municipalities; some may seldom be seen within the settlements of these VDCs. NGCPP has learned about the role of local governance and the limitations and realities of Nepal post-conflict. As a result of political instability, the constitution has not been finalized, the peace process has not been fully implemented, and local elections may be three to five years away. During this time, Nepal will face many changes in local government practices, and GON officials will constantly need to be aware of changes in local policies and transition practices, and must be able to manage multiple political needs and concerns. APM is extremely important at the local level. In the Terai, APM works most directly with GON officials at the VDC and DDC levels. NGCPP has developed a Theory of Change to support how we have programmed conflict mitigation activities. The model shown below (Figure 1) represents what NGCPP has learned about designing activities that help strengthen the relationship between citizens and the GON in a time of transition.

**Figure I.1:
NGCPP Theory of Change**



I.2 NGCPP ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT THE APPROACH

NGCPP’s approach is designed to address the three project goals by providing forums for greater citizen participation in development implementation and planning to address local-level needs for inclusion that are impacting the conflict in the Terai. NGCPP is implemented through three interrelated components:

Component One Activities: Support to Local Government Institutions

- Training for DDC, VDC, and APM officials to strengthen their ability to address directly social inclusion and conflict mitigation needs critical to engaging citizen participation in planning and development services in underserved and conflict-affected VDCs.
- Training of WCF members and citizens from each VDC to serve as a bridge between the community and the government, including APM representatives, to facilitate a participatory planning process. This training develops the capacity to provide responsive technical assistance on gender, social inclusion, and peace building to local-level groups and citizens, including women, the poor, and excluded groups.
- Village profiling provided valuable information post-conflict and NGCPP piloted a model that is now ready for replication. This model includes biophysical data as well as precise settlement locations and mapping information to ensure that all



Bhajnathpur VDC Secretary, the only female secretary out of 65 VDCs in Morang District, meets with PMC President and PMC treasurer to discuss the role of women in community leadership.

VDC resources and services are transparent to citizens and GON officials. This model based on the Ministry of Local Development (MoLD)-approved guidance provides substantive data and methods to enhance grassroots level data relevant to not only MoLD, but also to the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the Nepal Electoral Commission (NEC).

- Commodity inputs to DDC/VDC offices and the Women Development Office (WDO) to improve efficiency and quality of service delivery to communities. These commodities include office equipment, furniture, and computer equipment as assistance to move toward e-governance—a priority of GON. This assistance is also geared to improve communication of key services at the VDC and DDC levels.
- Selected technical assistance in key areas of the DDC in Morang and project VDCs to improve GON responsiveness to citizen need, with an emphasis on accountability and transparency at the local level to enhance citizen confidence in GON service delivery.

Component Two Activities: Small-Scale Community Driven Infrastructure

- In order to strengthen links that directly allow citizens to take part in decision making that impacts local development, collaborate with communities and VDC and APM representatives to identify and implement small-scale community infrastructure projects. This not only allows communities to participate in decision making, but also creates public space for local governments to interface directly with community members for increased ability to ensure that local development is more inclusive and accountable.
- Provide funding for Community Support Projects (CSPs) to enable youth to undertake projects within their capacity that will be of benefit to their communities. Most of these are small-scale infrastructure projects; other activities, such as vocational training and community-based management training, are undertaken to encourage and enable greater participation of women and underrepresented members of a VDC and community.
- Semi-skilled vocational training in masonry, carpentry, plumbing, and electrical wiring installation provided to local VDC residents. Some of these trainees gain work experience and income on NGCPP community-driven rehabilitation projects in their community.
- Cash-for-work approaches are used to provide immediate access to labor and training for community members, to increase ownership, and use local resources.

Component Three Activities: Support for Peace Initiatives at the Local Level

- Provide training of community mediators for each VDC to serve as resource persons to enhance the potential for local-level mediation appropriate at the VDC and ward levels.
- Strengthen the capacity of local youth to be more engaged in productive development and community-level planning, and to act as agents who support peaceful change during the transition and political crisis period in Nepal.
- Carry out a strategic approach to media and public forums throughout all three components that will provide targeted populations with conducting access to such information as: how the VDC-level development planning process works; how youth, women, and marginalized groups can meaningfully participate in decision making processes (from planning to action) at the local level; promotion of cooperation between government and local people; news about NGCPP field activities; interviews with local people where infrastructure projects were underway; and comments by the Morang Local Development Officer (LDO).

- Support peace-making forums and other related events that promote understanding and cooperation among competing interests in the district and enable marginalized populations to feel connected to the national-level peace process.

I.3 GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

NGCPP originally planned to expand in Year 2 from Morang District to neighboring districts selected from six districts in eastern Nepal—Ilam, Jhapa, Dhankuta, Sunsari, Saptari, and Siraha. In December 2009, USAID requested that NGCPP focus on developing the model in Morang District. For this reason, most of NGCPP’s activities have been limited to Morang District. Media outreach activities, however, are being conducted in all seven districts. NGCPP has targeted 12 VDCs in Morang District. These VDCs were selected using a combination of approaches as recommended by USAID and GON partners. The primary method was a consultative process with the GON and All Party Mechanism Members in Morang District. This information was then compared with the Conflict Affected Map developed by United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) that shows the VDCs most impacted by lack of local governance. NGCPP also took account category 4 and 3b VDCs that had the highest concentration of marginalized groups in the district.

The table below illustrates the diversity of the NGCPP project VDCs, an important aspect of social inclusion and conflict mitigation.

**Table 1.2:
NGCPP VDC Demographics**

Source: Morang DDC Profile 2009

VDC		Brahman-Chhetri	Dalit	Janjati	Muslim	Yadav	Others	Total	
1	Buddhanagar	4	35	2,058	3,129	832	2484	3,532	12,070
2	Bhatigachha	4	92	3,063	4,101	536	287	3,197	11,276
3	Bhaudaha	4	228	4513	979	0	0	478	6,198
4	Baijnathpur	4	211	2,342	1,127	28	0	790	4,498
5	Dainiya	3b	105	863	3,647	4247	213	3,012	12,087
6	Majhare	4	358	2,616	2,635	346	270	2,685	8,910
7	Ramitekhole	4	26	197	2,870	0	0	91	3,184
8	Sisbani Jahada	4	15	1,258	2,773	14	66	3,020	7,146
9	Thalaha	4	977	2,840	1,552	11	48	2,131	7,559
10	Warangi	4	61	53	3,006	0	0	64	3,184
11	Hattimudha	3a	977	2,840	2,068	1119	47	1,335	7,776
12	Siswani Badahara	3b	61	53	4,053	7	79	302	4,777
	Total	4	3,366	21,153	31,940	7,140	3,494	20,637	88,665

2.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND NGCPP

2.1 PROGRESS PER THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING PLAN

NGCPP has made good progress toward achieving the established Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) targets as training approaches developed in Year 1 and implemented in Year 2 started to take hold and citizens became more engaged in decision making. There is indicator evidence and qualitative data that shows that the results are being achieved are based on program goals. Citizens are feeling more connected to local government and GON officials who would rarely visit the VDC before NGCPP are now participating in public forums and collaborating on community interventions, as well as serving on advisory committees and collaborating regularly with PMCs. The Community Program for NGCPP has also created advisory committees at the VDC level. These committees are made up of VDC secretaries, APM members, and WCF members. Component activities of NGCPP are closely linked to achieve the overall objective of NGCPP, but it takes time to build trust and to increase citizen confidence in local government services. In Year 2, NGCPP focused on strengthening and piloting local government approaches that increased citizen participation in decision making and facilitated collaboration among citizens, GON officials, and APM members at the VDC and DDC levels.

2.2 CONFLICT SENSITIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND NGCPP

In Year 2, all staff of NGCPP were trained in *Conflict Sensitive M&E* (Monitoring and Evaluation), as some new staff and partners had joined the program. All program staff were actively engaged in program monitoring; this has made a difference in analyzing and assessing the impact and improvements necessary for a local governance strengthening program in post-conflict Nepal. Table 2.1 on page 9 presents detailed information on the status of PMP indicator targets, the strong progress made, and where targets have been met or exceeded. Year 2 NGCPP staff conducted an extensive end use survey in August and September as a follow on to the baseline conducted in Year 1 and is in the process of compiling the data to assess knowledge and behavior change that will illustrate the outcome of some of NGCPP's interventions. This data will be used to compile the final report for NGCPP in March of 2011.

2.3 MONITORING FOR IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

Results indicators will be assessed at the end of the project after the end-use survey is analyzed and dates verified. The methodology for the end-use survey was similar to the original baseline conducted in Year 1 for NGCPP. A stratified sampling model was chosen to assure that participants of focus groups and survey questions were similar in capacity and function to the original baseline respondents. As NGCPP is both a conflict mitigation as well as a local government support program, it was essential that Ward Citizen Forum (WCF) members, APM members, GON officials, and community members be asked to respond to see what impact NGCPP training, technical assistance, and interventions had in the project VDCs. It was important to

capture not just the statistical data, but also some of the qualitative comments and insights from GON officials and community members.

NGCPP is planning a series of lessons learned workshops to assess the impact of NGCPP interventions with multiple stakeholders. In September and October 2010, NGCPP met with international nongovernmental organizations (INGO) partners, local partners, APM members, VDC secretaries, and DDC staff. At these meetings, NGCPP and received input for the Year 2 Annual Report, as well as some suggestions for comprehensive lessons learned sessions on some of the key component areas including GESI, community mediation, and citizen engagement mechanisms. These sessions will be held prior to the end of the project. The NEC period will assist NGCPP in ensuring that all these lessons are fully documents for USAID and GON stakeholders such as MoLD and LGCDP. Some initial field lessons are detailed in **Appendix B**. Table 2.1 presents detailed information on the status of PMP indicator targets.

The PMP was revised the end of Year 1 to reflect the geographic focus of NGCPP on only one district in the Terai. Targets were adjusted to reflect this change in geographic scope. NGCPP created a demand-driven training approach based on some of the needs in the field. APM members needed more training than anticipated; and based on the political problems associating with LPC formation in Morang District and in Nepal in general, a Community Mediation program was developed and subsequent training needs addressed. The capacity of GON officials was also weaker than anticipated and changes during the political transitions in key GON staff necessitated increased training and exposure. Based on these conditions, some of the targets were exceeded in Year 2.

NGCPP developed a “training for transition” approach; tiered training conducted in phases in Year 2 causes significant increases in the targets during Q2, Q3 and Q4 of Year 2. In addition, some of the increases in target and data collected towards the end of Year 2 reflect the culmination of a strategy for training of GON officials and APM staff, as well as adjustments based on some program design changes. For example, it was assumed that the LPC would eventually be a mechanism that NGCPP could engage with; but based on political conflict, it was determined that the most appropriate way to address conflict at the local level would be to initiate more direct conflict mitigation programs through the NGCPP-sponsored community mediation program. This necessitated additional training needs in conflict mitigation for all community mediators, as well as local citizens targeted for local-level mitigation.

In Year 2, NGCPP exceeded many of its targets as a result of improved implementation, data management, and beneficiary targeting. The following shows specific PMP details:

- Indicators R1, R2, and 3.2 will be assessed based on the final survey developed to manage and analyze impact on baseline data methods.
- Indicator 1.1 targets were increased to reflect additional training for APM and VDC officials. Improved capacities are measured based on end use surveys and interviews conducted to show impact of multiple trainings provided by NGCPP to improve GON capacities.
- Indicator 1.3 reflects the total number of GON VDC plans that will be influenced as a result of NGCPP inputs.
- Indicator 1.4 exceeded the target based on the way mechanisms were counted at the VDC level. It was deemed important to count individual Community Mediation mechanisms, youth networks, and women’s networks to ensure that sustainability was tracked per final impact of NGCPP.
- Indicator 1.5 targets were exceeded as training needs were underestimated based on the low capacity uncovered in the Terai of GON officials and citizen groups. WCF and VCF member training increased these figures as well in Year 2.

- Indicator 2.1 exceeded targets based on the increase in community mediation mechanisms introduced at the VDC level in Year 2 to compensate for the inability of NGCPP to work with Local Peace Committees (LPCs) per the established work plan.
- Indicator 2.2 exceeded targets based on the number of PMC and infrastructure projects identified and completed in Year 2. The addition of CSP projects (youth driven) and their success added to this increase. NGCPP also focused on infrastructure projects that were most labor-intensive to ensure a cash-for-work approach could be used in these conflict-affected and marginalized VDCs.

**Table 2.1:
PMP Status Year 2 (Cumulative with Y1 and Y2)**

#	Indicator	Baselines and Targets				Achieved						Total Y1+Y2
		Y1	Y2	Total	Y1	Y2 Q1	Y2 Q2	Y2 Q3	Y2 Q4	Y2		
R1	Citizen confidence in local public institutions	47.4%	10% above baseline	20% above baseline	20% above baseline	Final Report	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Final Report
R2	Marginalized populations being better informed and connected to national-level peace process	58.7%	10% above baseline	20% above baseline	20% above baseline	Final Report	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Final Report
1.1	Number of GON officials with improved professional capacities	0	20	45	65	0	28	0	17	0	45	45
1.2	Number of village development plans produced as a result of consultative, participatory process	0	7	5	12	0	0	12	0	0	12	24
1.3	Local government financial resources leveraged	0	NA	NA	NA	0	0	\$ 7,967	\$2,797	\$71,699	\$82,463	\$82,463
1.4	Number of local mechanisms supported with United States Government (USG) assistance for citizens to engage their sub-national government	0	20	40	60	5	5	7	57	24	93	98
1.5	Number of individuals who received USG-assisted training, including management skills and fiscal management, to strengthen local government and/or decentralization	0	120	240	360	30	291	172	115	1,628	2,206	2,236
2.1	Number of community-based reconciliation projects completed with USG assistance	0	10	15	25	4	2	4	17	21	44	48
2.2	Increase employment	0	2,250	4,500	6,750	1,664	1,692	4,334	8,396	5,653	20,075	21,739
2.3	Community contributions toward small-scale infrastructure projects (US\$10,000)		\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$2,047	\$907	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Final Report
3.1	Number of people trained in conflict mitigation/resolution skills with USG assistance	0	120	200	320	89	287	30	0	508	825	914
3.2	Community members being better informed of the tenants of the CPA and other GON negotiated agreements	60.4%	0	35% above baseline	35% above baseline	Final Report	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Final Report

2.4 PROGRESS TOWARDS THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE OF I207

During Year 2, the three broad project goals of NGCPP—strengthening Nepalese local governance, implementing small-scale infrastructure projects, and ensuring marginalized district populations feel connected to the national-level peace process and democratic transformation—have begun to take hold in the target VDCs, and more and more citizens in these areas are now engaged in NGCPP activities. Citizens are more directly engaged in VDC governance issues and are more aware of their roles, as well as of the roles and responsibilities of local government. This engagement will contribute to achieving the overall strategic goal of this I207 project: more effective, legitimate Government of Nepal presence at the local level.

NGCPP is working with the Morang DDC and with 12 VDCs to implement the three interrelated components discussed in Section 1.2.

NGCPP targets instability in the Terai by implementing activities that:

- Link government to citizens and creating forums that enhance trust with marginalized groups;
- Provide “quick impact” infrastructure activities that are community-driven and require collaboration between citizens and local government officials;
- Look at encouraging alternative methods to the *bandhs*, build the capacity and legitimacy of local groups, and locate initiatives seeking peaceful transition in the Terai; and
- Increase public information on the status of the peace process in the most volatile and poorest areas of the Morang District.

Supporting I207 Approaches

- NGCPP focuses on governance in the Terai, not just activities that strengthen local government.
- The NGCPP implements “quick impact” approaches that encourage greater collaboration between citizens and local government.
- Projects target the socially excluded and provide immediate opportunities for local employment and/or the involvement of traditionally marginalized groups (women, Dalits, youth, etc.) in local decision making.
- Small-scale infrastructure is community-driven and has direct impacts on the communities affected by the conflict in the Terai.

NGCPP works with citizens and GON officials at the local level to identify community-driven infrastructure projects that will demonstrate an enhanced political will to respond to immediate citizen need. NGCPP targets instability in the Terai by linking government to citizens and creating forums that enhance trust with marginalized groups. NGCPP links these groups with public information about the transition as well as tangible opportunities to engage these groups in local-level governance services to increase access and public perceptions of GON response to their needs. NGCPP provides targeted technical assistance, training, and commodity support to local government officials at the DDC and VDC levels to enhance their ability to provide conflict-sensitive and socially inclusive development planning that includes marginalized citizens in a participatory process. During the conflict, almost all the VDC structures in the Terai were targeted and now VDCs have no center of governance and little public space to air grievances, complete planning processes, and promote and advocate for change within their communities. Conflict between political parties and citizens is common; insecurity regarding government officials severely limits the space for local government service. Section 3.0 lists the achievements that have been made in achieving NGCPP goals in Year 2.

3.0 RESULTS ACHIEVED IN YEAR TWO

In May 2009, the Maoist Prime Minister resigned; despite having majority representation in the Constituent Assembly (CA), this action forced an uncomfortable political paralysis at the national level. Since then, the three major parties (in addition to other smaller political and ethnically based parties) have alternately protested and collaborated, based on political needs for representation in the pending development of the new Nepal Constitution. Despite political and social pressure, the national deadline for the finalization of Nepal's new Constitution (May 28, 2010) was not met. After much deliberation and conflict, the term of the CA was extended for a year. This delay in adopting a constitution has caused a serious interruption in the peace process; combined with the conflict over the formation of a consensus government and the delay in reintegration, the result has been increased mistrust between political parties and ordinary citizens. As the transition in Nepal continues, conflict has become more politically motivated and the front lines often are the VDCs, where governance is weak and legitimacy questionable. Politically and ethnically motivated groups continue to target local officials that have weak legitimacy and skill in governance and conflict mitigation. A recent campaign to extort funds from VDC secretaries to support political imperatives is an example of the political manipulation evident in many parts of the Terai and in Morang District.

3.1 SUPPORT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Local governance and the provision of services in Nepal were severely disrupted during the conflict. Although the framework for the Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) of 1999 is in place, the political and practical decision-making apparatus has been severely weakened at the local level. During the conflict, the 2002 local elections were suspended and the VDC members elected in 1997 left office, leaving VDC secretaries in charge. The VDC secretaries are civil servants who administer the VDC budget for services and development. Today, many VDC secretaries still live in the urban centers of the districts and rarely visit the VDCs for which they are responsible. On May 14, 2008, a MoLD directive was issued so that the APM would be expanded to allow the major political parties as elected in the April 2008 elections to appoint their representatives to the VDCs and to the DDCs. The APM now works very closely at the VDC and DDC level to ensure that political representation is considered in local and district level governance activities. The creation of the APM has added another layer of decision making and potential political conflict into the development planning process. The importance of effective local governance, social inclusion, and citizen cooperation is even more essential today.

NGCPP approaches applied in Year 2:

- NGCPP technical assistance (TA) and training to strengthen the formation of WCF, VDC Citizen Forums, and the APM to assist the VDC Executive Committee to be more effective in engaging local citizens.

- NGCPP provided support for public forums that encouraged engagement between citizens and local GON officials such as WCF, VDC Citizen Forums, Public Hearings and Social Audits, VDC Interaction Forums, Community Dialogues, and Community Mediation Services.
- NGCPP provided training and technical support to targeted sections of the DDC and VDC to manage, plan, and implement effectively small-scale infrastructure projects that enhance inclusion and citizen accountability.
- NGCPP provided training for community mobilization that encouraged rights-based participation in development planning. This targeted out-of-school youth, women, Dalits, and other marginalized groups.

“We have had no significant women’s participation in VDC level political decision making body i.e. ‘All Party Mechanism’, however, after the VDC interaction and GESI training, we had several rounds of discussion on how to increase women’s participation in the All Party Mechanism. Now we decided to have at least one woman in the Mechanism, since women’s participation in politics is very low, it is difficult to get women’s participation in decision making at the local level. These kinds of programs bring focus to increasing women’s political participation in VDC level political structures.”

Shiva Ram Thandar, All Party Mechanism member from UCPN (Maoists) Baijnathpur VDC

3.1.1 NGCPP Impact Data for Component One

Support to Local Government Institutions:

- Training of 2,206 citizens in conflict-sensitive development, GESI, project planning and management, appreciative inquiry, media communications, peace journalism, consensus building, earthquake-resistant building construction, and peace building and conflict analysis.
- Improved professional capacities of 45 GON officials as a result of NGCPP training and direct technical assistance. This includes VDC secretaries, DDC officials, MoLD staff, APM members, and Ministry line offices.
- Completion of 12 annual VDC development plans with minority participation and with specific GESI plans developed in cooperation with citizens and GON officials.
- Orientation of 2,778 WCF members (40 percent men, 60 percent women) from 108 wards in 12 VDCs on local planning and development.
- Development and training of 108 WCFs by NGCPP. From these forums, 619 members received intensive training and support to form Executive Councils to ensure VDC capacity to take part in planning during the Nepal transition.
- Establishment of 12 VDC-level Citizen Forums for the first time in the nation, as recommended by MoLD. Among them, 649 people trained for its effective support to local government officials.
- Conduction of 12 VDC-level interaction forums to share with VDC and WCF members’ information about the CA, domestic violence laws, and new policies and regulations relating to GESI. Over 1,800 attended

“VDC interaction program is amazing, we never had such a meeting before where all the ethnic groups, minority, Dalits and Women came together at VDC level for discussion on VDC problems and a way out for solution. I think this kind of program should happen in each ward. This is just a first step, but we should continue this for some years so that we can build this system in all VDCs.”

Sarita Shrestha, President, Women Network Siswani Jahada VDC

these events.

- Training of 75 APM members in consensus building. These trainees later conducted 12 community dialogues at the local level to address political and community concerns.
- Formation and training of 12 IPCs, as mandated by the MoLD, to increase political and ethnic cooperation in development planning. These transitional mechanisms work to mitigate political and ethnic tensions around development resource access.
- Conduction of 12 public hearing events in all 12 target VDCs. Through these hearings, NGCPP was able to provide all community members with clarifications about ongoing project activities and the opportunity to interact with leaders and local government staff in an open platform. The hearings were attended by members of the community, VDC secretaries and staff, local APM members, community mediators, youth network members, and WCF members.
- Formation and training of 57 PMCs for the selected projects in the VDCs on local government development policies and procedures, including project management, local resource mobilization, and monitoring skills.
- Completion of village profiles in all 12 VDCs—a new GON-mandated planning tool piloting by NGCPP in Morang, incorporating a biophysical database, field collection and database entry of socio-economic data for each household, updated satellite imagery for the 12 VDCs, and 260 village-level enumerators trained on village profiling work.
- Completion of the mobile registration campaign for the National Federation of Disabled in Nepal, in coordination with the WDO of Morang, in the 12 project VDCs to register disabled people and make them eligible to access government support. The registration activities were completed in May; a total of 900 cases were registered and are now receiving services that they did not have access to before, such as free school fees, food vouchers, cash disbursements, and school uniforms.

3.1.2 Training for Transition

NGCPP has developed a “Training for Transition” approach. Training and capacity building is essential in post-conflict Nepal. GON officials are not elected; their legitimacy is weak and their skill sets minimal. They are not well paid and the job can often be stressful and dangerous. Many public spaces were damaged during the conflict and many VDC government buildings were bombed or destroyed. During the conflict, VDC secretaries received little training; and as they are transferred often and rarely stay in one post long, their relationship with citizens living in the VDC is poor. By building the capacity of citizens and GON officials to engage with one another regarding community issues, planning, and decision making can NGCPP is helping to strengthen this fissure. This is the area where NGCPP focuses its training programs and capacity building activities. The following subnational and transition mechanisms were targets of training and technical assistance over the life of NGCPP:

- DDC officials, line officers, local development officers, planning officers, and staff from the WDO;
- VDC secretaries and staff;
- APM members at the DDC and VDC levels;
- Integrated Planning Committee (IPC) members: civil society representatives, as well as members of political parties serving year-long terms on an IPC;
- WCF members, citizens who live in a ward within a VDC;

- VDC Citizen Forum members, executive members from a ward within a VDC;
- District Education officers and officials;
- Former VDC chairpersons, as well as former political leaders influential in district and local decision making;
- District Inspector General and staff;
- Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) staff and partners; and
- DTO engineers and sub-engineers for earthquake-resistant design and construction training.



NGCPP also focused on district-level GESI training that would impact VDC level systems. The following training was conducted in 2010 and illustrates the governance approach to training of GESI principles:

- Training on GESI, peace-building, and good governance for 30 community facilitators in Morang District;
- Training on GESI, good governance, and peace-building for 116 VDC-level representatives, including VDC secretaries, APM members, and representatives from associations representing excluded groups;
- Training on GESI responsive planning and project management for 32 DDC-level APM and the inter-party women network of Morang district;
- Advance training on GESI responsive planning, project management, and social accountability mechanisms for 85 CFs and VDC representatives who were likely to be elected to IPC positions in Morang District; and
- Training on GESI for 35 representatives from district-based representative organizations in Morang advocating social inclusion policies.

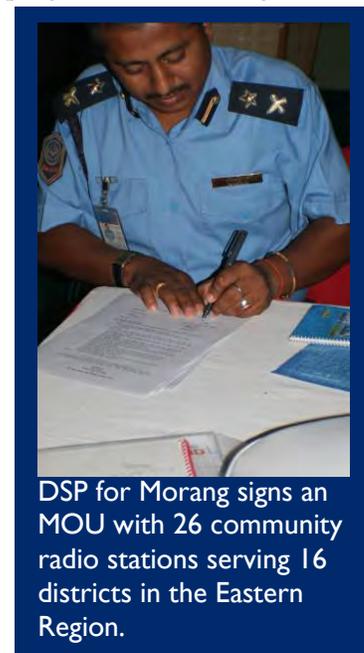
3.1.3 Commodity Assessment and Procurement

After receiving requests from the various local government institutions, NGCPP program field staff have visited the offices, schools, health posts, or other facilities to verify that the requests represent genuine needs. The largest request has been from schools for desks and benches. The second request is for equipment for improved communication between the DDC and VDCs (e.g., desktop computers, printers, and related furniture). NGCPP program staff reviewed the detailed requests from all VDCs with the Morang DDC Planning Officer and District Information and Documentation Center of DDC (DIDC) Information Officer. As of the end of September 2010, commodities valued at \$187,034 had been ordered, procured, or handed over to DDC and VDC offices.

3.1.4 Technical Assistance

NGCPP technical assistance provided to local government during the reporting period was focused in the following areas:

- **NGCPP Pilots.** NGCPP has supported two local-level pilots during Year 2 that are influencing national planning and implementation for development and local governance. One is village profiling, an essential system for VDC and DDC ranking, as well as a tool necessary to prepare for the national consensus and voter registration in Nepal. NGCPP has also piloted the first WCFs in the nation and is in the process of sharing lessons learned with LGCDP, MoLD, and other stakeholders.
 - **Village profiling.** Data collection, analysis, and presentation activities are being carried out in collaboration with the DDC LDO, Planning Officer, the DIDC Officer, and the 12 target VDC secretaries and staff. All data collected, database programs developed, and software and satellite data purchased will be given to the DIDC office that is responsible for leading village profiling at the district level. Village profiles were finalized in collaboration with the VDC secretaries who will use them in the coming year’s planning process. The village profile is an essential local government tool post-conflict, as current maps and data census information are outdated and contentious. As discussions on federalism evolve, updated information will provide more realistic information for planning purposes and will more effectively highlight the impact of the conflict on the composition of VDC populations.
 - **WCFs.** NGCPP has created 108 WCFs and 12 VDC-level Citizen Engagement Forums, impacting 2,778 marginalized citizens. NGCPP WCFs are made up of 60 percent women and 40 percent men and act as community watchdog associations at the ward and VDC levels to ensure inclusion and accountability regarding VDC planning and services. WCF members have received training on MoLD guidance; executive members have received additional training to ensure sustainability and participation for the upcoming planning year. LGCDP, MoLD, and other donors have approached NGCPP to conduct a lessons learned workshop on citizen engagement programs. This is being planned for November 2010.
- **Increasing Access to Information.** NGCPP supports many local radio stations in the Terai and provides over 120 minutes a week of information on governance, development planning, updates on the CA, and information on relevant peace process information for the Terai. NGCPP also supports an all-youth radio program and has provided training to its staff to enhance their ability to report on GON issues relevant to youth. These programs air in seven Terai districts and are estimated to reach about 1 million people weekly. Through the *Building Sustainability for Safe Movement in the Terai*, an initiative funded by NGCPP, and with support from USAID and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), 26 community FM stations are coordinating with the local traffic police to provide a daily traffic update aimed at facilitating safe movement throughout the districts in the conflict-prone south-eastern region of Nepal. This information reaches an estimated 1.3 million people daily. Information aired provides immediate reporting from the field on traffic obstructions, strikes, and kidnappings or other security incidents critical to local citizens. This highlights a unique model of partnership in a region that was heavily affected by the conflict.
- **GESI and Citizen Engagement.** NGCPP has supported GESI trainings for DDC officials and DDC-level APM members, VDC secretaries and staff, VDC-level community group leaders, community mediators, youth group leaders, and local NGO partners. In Year 2, GESI



DSP for Morang signs an MOU with 26 community radio stations serving 16 districts in the Eastern Region.

training in Morang District targeted GON officials, CSO representatives, and WCF members, with participation from local leaders and political party members. This training was conducted in partnership with a local Terai-based NGO, Nari Bikash Sangh, and Women ACT Morang. These are the first WCFs in Nepal, and for many, this was their first training in the new regulations, constitutional provisions, and inclusion statutes that impact marginalized group members pre-constitution. VDC-level interaction forums were held to support WCF trainings and to ensure that current information on the CA and relevant GESI policies were shared with citizens.

- **Public Hearings and Social Audits.** These activities have been underway since late in Year 1 of NGCPP. They continued in Year 2, in collaboration with the VDC secretaries and staff to improve their transparency, community participation, and usefulness as mechanisms to enhance communication between local governance and citizens. NGCPP partnered with Pro Public and Youth Action Nepal to provide public hearings and social audits in 12 VDCs in the Morang District. By the end of the project, 24 public hearings and social audits will be held, targeting the engagement of over 4,000 citizens, local officials, and political party members. These VDC-level hearings and social audits are an opportunity for local citizens to engage with Local Government (LG) officials and to hear about the progress and status of development planning in their respective communities. Youth Action is providing youth mobilization for these events; in each VDC, 250–350 citizens participated. Community mediators have been trained to facilitate these events and the impact has been tremendous, as they have been widely attended by citizens, VDC secretaries, and APM members.

3.2 SMALL-SCALE, COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Small-scale, community-driven infrastructure projects within NGCPP are usually short-term, small-scale initiatives that are designed to have an immediate impact contributing to post-conflict stabilization¹ or recovery. They may also have an impact on longer-term development by involving target populations of NGCPP (specifically marginalized groups, youth, and women). In Year 2, NGCPP held 12 public hearings in the target VDCs; for the first time since the conflict started, development planning and prioritization was held in the local VDCs and not in the municipal centers. NGCPP utilized the newly formed and trained IPCs and actively engaged IPC members, GON officials, and APM members in a public planning process that led to community-driven infrastructure projects being identified at the local level. This public planning process led to all project selections in Year 2. School rehabilitation, VDC repair, culverts, hill road embankment improvement, and community center construction were the priority projects for NGCPP. GON structures were prioritized



NGCPP Social Mobilizer meets with a member of Siswana Badahara VDC to discuss the progress of a vaccine center being built in their community by NGCPP in cooperation with local community members.

¹ Stabilization is support to countries emerging from violent conflict in: (i) preventing or reducing violence; (ii) protecting people and key institutions; (iii) promoting political processes which lead to greater stability; and (iv) preparing for longer term, non-violent politics and development.

as a way to increase enrollment in GON schools serving marginalized groups, enhancing space for local governance, and increasing citizen engagement with development planning and decision making.

NGCPP approaches applied in Year 2 include:

- DDC technical specialists, LDOs, and VDC secretaries were trained in improved development planning and community prioritization; NGCPP used infrastructure projects to promote downward accountability and to enhance opportunities to build trust between citizens and local government mechanisms.
- Communities in the targeted geographic areas benefited from repaired, rehabilitated, or newly rebuilt small-scale infrastructure, as selected by the community to improve economic and social conditions and community cohesion. All infrastructure projects were GON installations and several had been damaged during the conflict.
- Community members (particularly unemployed youth, women, and other marginalized groups) were targeted for employment in the small-scale infrastructure projects, thereby directly benefiting those individuals and indirectly benefiting the community as a whole by reducing the potential for conflict.
- Local construction contractors and community-based organizations benefited from experience gained in infrastructure repair; rehabilitation/construction; and operations, maintenance, and oversight of projects.



NGCPP Community Mediator, PMC Chairperson, and Youth APM Maoist Leader facilitating a Public Dialogue in Siswani Jahada VDC.

3.2.1 NGCPP Impact Data for Component Two

Component Two: Small-Scale, Community-Driven Infrastructure

- Completion of 35 small-scale infrastructure projects; 14 projects on-going.
- Completion of 14 small community service infrastructure projects by youth groups.
- Formation of 57 PMCs across caste and ethnic lines. This directly supports the LSGA, as PMCs are the same as user committees and are based on MoLD guidance.
- Training of 505 people (primarily women, youth, and marginalized group members) in community-based project management, with direct NGCPP support and technical assistance. Of these, 49 percent were women and 51 percent were men.
- Implementation of cash-for-work program that generated 20,075 days of employment targeting women, youth, and marginalized citizens.
- Provision of 10 days of semi-skill vocational education to 550 trainees in the skill of their choice—masonry (382), electrical wiring (57), plumbing (57), or carpentry (54). Many of these participants are now working on NGCPP infrastructure projects, while others joined private business or have started individual business enterprises.

- Training of 31 community mobilizers, 3 engineers, and 12 sub-engineers who now working for NGCPP in the VDC level from three local NGOs.
- Training of 28 engineers and sub-engineers at a three-day earthquake-resistant design and construction training.

3.2.2 Community-Based Project Management

The MoLD mandates that community projects all have user committees that are formed to support, implement, and manage community resources in order to comply with the LGSA of Nepal. NGCPP found that in this area of the Terai, especially in low-ranking and remote or unstable VDCs, user committee practices were weak. Often these committees were chosen by political party members and were accused of mismanagement of funds and resources. NGCPP developed a training approach based on MoLD guidance for community member selection and capacity building for PMCs. These PMCs were the same as user committees, but assured NGCPP that selection was based on LGSA norms such as participation of women and minority group members. NGCPP has formed and provided training to 53 PMCs, with a total membership of 505 (47 percent women and 53 percent men). These PMCs provide community-based management and oversight for all infrastructure activities, work directly to coordinate with GON officials and APM members, and provide support for community conflicts or issues that arise regarding resources at the local level. Many PMC members also received training as community mediators and are now serving multiple roles in their communities with their new skills. This demonstrates the synergy that exists across all components of NGCPP. It is common for PMC members to become community mediators or WCF members; some have even stated that they expect to be selected for APM representation in the upcoming year.

As of the end of this year (September 30, 2010), the status of infrastructure project implementation is as follows:

**Table 3.1:
Community Infrastructure Projects Status**

Designation	Number	Value
Completed projects	56	\$780,364
Projects underway	7	\$240,791
Youth Group Community Service Projects	14	\$40,433
Infrastructure Support Services (architecture and engineering firms, NGOs)	5	\$121,162
Total number of community infrastructure projects	63	\$1,182,750
VDC and community support	11%	
TOTAL		\$1,139,605

3.2.3 Vocational Training and NGCPP

NGCPP had proposed to develop a vocational training program for ex-combatants per the Request for Task Order Proposal (RFTOP); but as the peace process stalled on this point, the vocational program did not materialize. To accommodate for this, NGCPP developed on-the-job training. As several VDCs had multiple infrastructure projects and youth-led CSPs, many marginalized people, women, and youth received additional skills. As a result of working on larger and longer infrastructure projects, many citizens were able to gain employment and skills in bricklaying, electrical trades, plumbing, and carpentry. In March of 2010, a vocational training program was designed in collaboration with NGCPP, NGO partners, VDC secretaries, PMC, and APM members. From the 10 southern VDCs, 50 youth were chosen, and 25 each from the 2

northern VDCs. Extensive vocational training in plumbing, electrical work, or carpentry was provided to 550 youth, women, and marginalized citizens over the course of 10 days. At the end of the training, they were tested and given a complete tool kit to ply their trade within their VDCs. The selection and ownership of this program was tremendous. At the handover ceremony, hundreds of people were in attendance. Facilitation was provided by community mediators and APM members. The political cooperation in selection and support for this program was encouraging, and showed that community-driven approaches and access to livelihoods is an essential aspect of this component.

3.3 SUPPORT TO PEACE INITIATIVES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The peace process at the VDC level is sometimes irrelevant in poor and conflict-ridden VDCs. Citizens and even local GON officials are discouraged by the state of politics in Nepal. APM members and VDC and DDC staff work closely together to resolve local issues over resource access and development planning. Despite an improved Terms of Reference (TOR), the Morang LPC is not well endowed with funds or management structures that allow it to have an impact upon conflict mitigation at either the DDC or the VDC levels. NGCPP works directly with several members of the LPC, as they are also local members of NGCPP PMCs and some are community mediators. NGCPP regularly assesses the status of the Morang LPC, but it has proven more effective to create a VDC-level mechanism that can sustain itself beyond USAID/Nepal's assistance in the Terai. This is why NGCPP focuses on this component on local initiatives led by youth or political party members to ensure more local ownership and legitimacy of conflict mitigation interventions.

NGCPP approaches applied in Year 2 include:

- Provided training to community mediators for each VDC to serve as resource persons to enhance the potential for local-level mediation appropriate at the VDC and ward levels;
- Strengthened the capacity of local youth to be more engaged in productive development and community-level planning and to act as agents who support peaceful change during the transition and political crisis in Nepal;
- Carried out a strategic approach to media and public forums throughout all three components that will provide targeted populations with access to such information as how the VDC-level development planning process works; how youth, women, and marginalized groups meaningfully participate in decision-making processes (from planning to action) at the local level; promotion of cooperation between government and local people; news about NGCPP field activities; interviews with local people where infrastructure projects were underway; and comments by the Morang LDO; and
- Supported peace-making forums and other related events that promote understanding and cooperation among competing interests in the district and enable marginalized populations to feel connected to the national-level peace process.



NGCPP Staff Photo: Local participants of Bhatigaccha VDC celebrate with community members their new tool kits and skills in a public ceremony.

3.3.1 NGCPP Impact Data for Component Three

- Training of 825 people on conflict mitigation and resolution skills.
- Facilitation of 12 community dialogues in the VDCs to build local-level consensus among the populations on critical issues relevant to GESI, the CPA, and the current status of the peace process.
- Piloting of 10 Reflect Centers² in six VDCs with participation of 315 members, 90 percent of whom were women. These centers are informal meetings led by trained facilitators chosen by APM and WCF members and serve as education and advocacy spaces to discuss community-based issues and to encourage citizen engagement.
- Establishment of 12 VDC-level Mediation Centres in VDCs.
- Capacity building of 12 master trainers on community mediation skills at the district level.
- Training of 324 community mediators who are now working in 12 VDCs (27 per VDC). Of these, 108 are women and over 40 percent are youth. Over 89 percent are members of marginalized groups.
- Registration of 316 mediators with the Morang District Courts, allowing them to serve multiple VDCs and to be legally recognized as mediators with the Nepal judicial system.
- Establishment of the DDC-level Endowment Fund for the sustainability of community mediation.
- Formation of 12 inter-ethnic youth groups. These groups are now working for peace initiatives in their respective VDCs (14 CSPs completed).
- Generation of over 2,150 days of employment with youth and marginalized citizens from 14 CSPs.
- Training of 207 VDC staff, DDC staff, and Terai-based journalist/media professionals on the role of peace and journalism in the Terai.
- Implementation of 26 FM stations that coordinate with the local traffic police to provide daily five-minute updates on the *bandhs* and access issues in the Terai. These updates now reach approximately 1.3 million people daily; 3 other FM radio stations in Biratnagar are supported for youth, women, and local governance issues, respectively.
- Production and broadcasting of weekly 120 minutes of programming that highlights information on the peace process, the work of the CA, local governance issues, and peace building issues relevant to the Terai.

3.3.2 Technical Assistance and Training Programs for Component Three

Citizen Engagement. Conflict over inclusion issues and marginalization of locals by political parties and GON staff has weakened local government in VDCs. Conflict-sensitive GESI training has been detailed under Component One, but some of the training and activities also link Component Three to Component One activities. Citizen engagement is a big part of NGCPP; approaches have been developed to educate and create space for enhanced citizen coordination on community issues and to strengthen effective advocacy by marginalized group members in local decision making. Ten Reflect Centers were piloted in six VDCs with

² Reflect Centers are not physical centers, but gatherings of citizens engaged with WCF trained in Reflect methodologies. These are citizen engagement groups that are meant to be self-sustaining and support citizen-driven skill building relevant at the ward level.

participation of 315 members, 90 percent of whom were women. Training was provided on GESI principles, as well as information on services available to resolve local-level conflict over resource issues. These centers are open six days per week, but only have three to four meetings scheduled. At these meetings, community issues are discussed and information is shared with citizen members. WCF members can get additional information about decisions and issues pending within their VDC.

Youth Leadership and CSPs. YAN has provided youth programming and support for NGCPP. YAN is a national NGO with an extensive network of youth associations and organizations around the country. The NGO has assisted NGCPP in creating inter-ethnic youth networks at the VDC and DDC levels. These local networks provide ongoing support and propose and implement CSPs. These are not short-term community projects, but are substantive community engagement efforts and tend to average \$2,000–\$4,000 USD. To date, over 2,150 days of employment with youth and marginalized citizens has been generated from 14 CSPs. These CSPs work in close collaboration with School Management Committees (SMC), VDC secretaries, and APM members.

YAN has achieved the following impact within NGCPP:

- YAN partnered with Pro Public to provide support and social mobilization for public hearings and social audits for NGCPP.
- A DDC-level youth network established. This network works directly to increase the role of youth in development planning and in local governance decision making in Morang. The network took part in a national-level youth consultation with the CA in May of 2010, and has also sponsored a peace rally in Biratnagar that was attended by over 800 youth from Morang and surround Terai districts, as well as GON officials and APM members.
- Youth make up close to 30 percent of PMCs within NGCPP projects, and over 40 percent of community mediators.
- Youth leadership within the APMs has also been influenced by YAN interventions. Youth APM representatives are serving as PMC chairpersons, as well as serving as the President of the district-level Community Mediation Program in Morang.
- To date, over 2,150 days of employment with youth and marginalized citizens have been generated from 14 CSPs.

Increasing Access to Information. NGCPP supports many local radio stations in the Terai and provides over 120 minutes a week of information on governance, development planning, updates on the CA, and information on relevant peace processes for the Terai. NGCPP also supports an all-youth radio program and has provided training for them to enhance their ability to report on GON issues relevant for youth. These programs air in seven Terai districts and are estimated to reach about 1 million people weekly. Through the *Building Sustainability for Safe Movement in the Terai*, an initiative funded by NGCPP, and with support from USAID and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), 26 community FM stations are coordinating with the local traffic police to provide a daily traffic update. This is aimed at facilitating safe movement throughout seven districts in the conflict-prone south-eastern region of Nepal. This information reaches an estimated 1.3 million people daily. Information aired provides immediate reporting from the field on traffic obstructions, strikes, and kidnappings or other security incidents critical to local citizens. This highlights a unique model of partnership in a region that was heavily affected by the conflict.

Other media efforts include:

- **Monthly media and peace forums.** Forums with a focus on journalist training and more effective partnerships between the GON and the media to report on issues relevant to conflict mitigation, stability,

and the peace process were held at different venues throughout the NGCPP project area in Morang District.

PSA Campaign–NGCPP (2009–2010). NGCPP, in partnership with Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and New World (a local production and media organization in the Terai), has been producing PSAs for NGCPP since the second quarter of Year 1 (May 2009). Twelve public service announcements (PSAs) were developed and delivered in four phases; all were designed to respond to the political crisis, involve local citizens in local governance, and provide current information on the status of the peace process for citizens in the Terai. All PSA were broadcast in seven districts, as well as some in Kathmandu. The objectives of these PSAs were to:

- Enhance the culture of cooperation between local government official and citizens;
- Motivate citizens to get engaged in local governance;
- Motivate local government officials to engage with marginalized citizens in decision making; and
- Respond to current conflict and political dynamics on the community level in the Terai.

NGCPP media program reaches seven districts and 1.3 million listeners. The weekly radio programming consists of the following:

- The *Sajhedari* program and PSAs broadcast over seven FM stations, one in each of the seven NGCPP districts.
- The *Hamro Chaso* program on Purbanchal FM (a local woman-owned and -operated station in Morang) that supports issues of concern to local women and girls.
- The *Gann Gannma* program on B FM. Each episode of the radio program focuses on a specific VDC, covering the implementation of VDC decisions and development activities, mediation, and partnerships that will contribute to the peace process.
- The *Yuwa Aavaj* program on SKY FM that supports programming of interest to youth and youth issues related to government budget planning are aired on a weekly basis.

Community Mediation Program. The impact of community mediation continues to be positively reviewed by the LDO, VDC secretaries, and the local police. The impact of these services on the functioning of local government is important in these areas of the Terai. There were 12 VDC-level Mediation Centres established. In Year 2, 12 mediators completed Training of Trainers course and became master trainers through education and experience in supporting training courses. These master trainers were also educated on community mediation skills at the district level. To date, 324 community mediators have been trained and are working in 12 VDCs (27 per VDC). Of these, 108 are women and over 40 percent are youth. Over 89 percent are members of marginalized groups. It has also been noted that community mediators are being asked to fill other roles in the community, such as PMC members, WCF members, and members of SMCs within their VDCs.



- **Sustainability of Community Mediation.** In coordination with Pro Public, NGCPP has built in several approaches to this program that have been learned from years of experience conducting these programs in other districts. To ensure sustainability and ownership, the following measures were taken:
 - VDC secretaries have approved permanent spaces for the Community Mediation Program in the VDC offices or in assigned community spaces.
 - A DDC-level Endowment Fund has been established for the sustainability of community mediation.
 - Of these mediators, 316 are in the process of being registered with the Morang District Courts, allowing them to serve multiple VDCs and to be legally recognized as mediators with the Nepal judicial system.
 - A district-level network has been established and its members linked with the national-level network of community mediators.
 - An in-country tour of NGCPP-trained community mediators to observe other district and model programs for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and community mediation methods was completed in September 2010. The tour included VDC officials to ensure that this service is used as a local governance tool to resolve conflict at the VDC level.

**Table 3.2:
Year 2 Status of Community Mediation Cases–NGCPP**

Month	Registered Cases	Resolved Cases	In Process	Unsettled
October 2009	Training of Mediators Continues			
November ³	30	8	22	0
December	25	23	2	0
January 2010	34	29	5	0
February	34	32	4	1
March	41	36	2	3
April	32	30	0	0
May	28	30	0	1
June	32	32	0	0
July	28	26	0	2
August	25	25	0	0
September	23	23	0	0
Total	328	294	13	7

³ This was the first month of full mediation services in the VDCs post-community mediation training, district-level training, community sensitization campaign, and public information dissemination which took place August–October 2009.

4.0 WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

The following activities were approved for use of the Windows of Opportunity Funding and completed in Year 2:

- An in-country learning tour for 55 DDC/VDC/APM officials was conducted to expose the participants to improved local governance practices in other districts and enable them to share experiences with their counterparts. This gave them a better sense of how to implement improved local governance practices in Morang and to see the positive role that political cooperation can play in development planning and local governance programs and implementation. This learning tour allowed DDC officials and APM members to look at other district examples of development planning in collaboration with political parties in preparation for the upcoming budget and planning cycle. They also took part in interaction programs with the Chairman of the LDO association and visited Palpa district, which finished first this year in planning and development for all districts in Nepal.
 - Following the Windows of Opportunity, DDC staff and APM members briefed NGCPP staff and the VDC secretaries working with NGCPP on what they learned on their tour. APM members at the DDC level now regularly coordinate and engage with NGCPP and many have visited NGCPP field sites to learn more about the work that NGCPP has been doing with APM members at the VDC level. Coordination with VDC- and DDC-level political groups has helped NGCPP create more space for productive development planning and is a large part of the conflict mitigation approach used with the NGCPP model.
- An inter-district tour for community mediators enabled Pro Public to introduce some of the more capable and interested community mediators trained under NGCPP to established local dispute resolution practices in other districts. This tour also included VDC secretaries and was an opportunity for them to learn from other more established districts about the role that community mediation can play in local government.
 - Community mediators and VDC secretaries observed three other community mediation programs and were able to learn about ways to strengthen the role of advisory committees and services for the district courts. The impact of the Community Mediation Program has been praised by local officials who feel that the atmosphere and social conditions within the VDCs have changed because of these services. NGCPP mediators and secretaries briefed NGCPP staff, partners, and DDC officials as to what they learned from this tour.
- A cultural tour program for youth groups from 12 VDCs in Morang exposed the NGCPP youth group leaders trained by YAN to similar groups in other districts that have had a longer time to become established and define a beneficial role for themselves in their communities. Another purpose of this trip was for the groups to look at roles that youth have played in supporting local governance and peace initiatives in other districts.
 - Following the tour, YAN organized a peace rally as part of their NGCPP activities. Youth groups from other VDCs in Morang as well as from the Ilam, Jhapa, Udayapur, Saptari, Siraha, and Sunsari Districts. Over 2,000 youth participated in this youth peace festival, which featured a walkathon on August 12, International Youth Day.

5.0 LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

Experience gained from 24 months of implementation in the Terai working directly with GON officials has been applied to the development of these field lessons. Local-level conflict management mechanisms are very weak at the VDC level and within the GON, especially in the Terai. The delay in the formation of DDC- and VDC-level LPCs, the absence of VDC secretaries living in the VDCs, and the lack of local mechanisms to mitigate and address community conflict are serious impediments in the Terai. Community police services are weak and local government officials are largely absent from the VDCs. The CPA and the interim constitution have raised expectations of citizens for more effective local government service without the mechanisms in place to provide for these increased expectations.

- **Coordination with GON and USAID.** The NGCPP project objective and goals need to be understood by all local partners and clearly communicated formally to GON staff and partners. As MoLD is responsible for all local government programs, it is essential that close coordination be established with MoLD, the DDC, and VDCs. LGCDP is an important program to coordinate with; although it is slow to implement based on the management model, it is important to field pilot approaches during this volatile and unstable political period in Nepal. NGCPP was able to do this and this is a model that could be replicated to help support more effective local governance practices in a time of transition. NGCPP piloted several new MoLD programs in Morang; while these were well received by staff at MoLD, replication would have been more effective with closer coordination with the Ministry.
- **Phased Interventions.** The budget cycles, political process, and changes in local government practices require phasing in interventions and constantly assessing needs during the transition period. Phasing in interventions is essential and allows for more conflict analysis to be applied at specific points in the project that will ensure that current political and conflict conditions are addressed at the VDC and DDC levels. It also allows more direct synergy with existing programs and other USG programs working at the central level.
- **Conflict Analysis.** The original design of NGCPP was based on a conflict analysis provided by USAID at the start of this project. There is a need to hire senior and local staff that have conflict analysis skills and can train all NGCPP staff to apply this information to activity design, implementation, and monitoring. This should be a full-time position based in the main field office. This is very important in a local government program, as there is considerable instability that exists at the VDC level that impacts the presence of local government services.
- **Conflict Sensitive Training.** Due to high staff turnover that may occur, it is necessary that regular “in house” training be provided to staff and key local partners. Quarterly meetings with all partners included information on NGCPP objectives and current conflict analysis, but did not prove sufficient at the implementation level and necessitate dedicated staff with these skills. These skills are also needed in GON staff and political party members responsible for local-level coordination regarding development planning and resources. Often local political conflict cripples simple development planning that could be mitigated with some simple training and tools to address constructively these issues.
- **Training and Technical Assistance before Infrastructure.** In the initial phase of NGCPP, training and technical assistance should be targeted to government officials and community members to (1) determine the immediate needs of the communities; (2) explain the goals of and resources available from NGCPP; and (3) ensure that current conflict, political, and capacity analysis is applied. This will ensure that a community-driven approach is fully utilized in any infrastructure component activities. Only after

training and community-level project identification has occurred should small-scale infrastructure be started.

- **Training for Transition Settings.**⁴ During Years 1 and 2, NGCPP has developed core training models for DDC, VDC, APM, IPC, youth, and community members. Training should be done by core staff, and a training calendar designed that supports local government and citizen needs. As IPC, APM, and WCF members and GON staff may change, it is essential that local NGO trainers at the VDC and DDC levels are also trained.
- **Strengthen Local Governance Mechanisms that Encourage GESI.** VDC- and DDC-level mechanisms for local governance were strengthened to increase opportunities for GESI and the participation of youth. NGCPP supported mechanisms at the local level that increased local government capacity to mitigate local-level conflict (WCF, IPC, APM, and the VDC). This process ensures that there is interaction between communities, citizens and GON officials. By working directly with DDC, VDC, APM officials, and community leaders, tangible opportunities can be developed that build trust at the VDC and DDC levels.
- **Community Driven Approaches to Project Identification.** Once community and local government officials have discussed and come to consensus on communities' immediate needs, it is essential to work closely to ensure that budgets are made public and transparent and that the GON collaborates effectively from start to finish in a budget cycle. Many projects can be done by user committees or PMCs and utilize community-based mechanisms of public accountability (public/social audits, public hearings, and coordination with WCF members). This is consistent with the LSGA and creates more immediate and effective ownership at the local level.
- **CSPs vs. Small-Scale Infrastructure.** CSPs were short-term, small-scale initiatives that are designed to have an immediate impact contributing to post-conflict stabilization⁵ or recovery. Community members—particularly unemployed youth, conflict affected citizens, ex-combatants, and other marginalized groups—were targeted for employment and skills development and training. Projects should focus not on infrastructure completion, but equally on skills development and training opportunities that address income-generation issues. Clear local guidance should be developed for CSPs and should be followed when working with local communities and GON officials in identification of projects appropriate to support project goals.
- **Create Forums for Increased Interaction.** The government must be brought into dialogue with communities early and consistently. Public hearings should engage local government officials and VDC secretaries should be encouraged to work with communities in identifying priorities and managing expectations. Throughout the process, the government should be taking up more and more of the leadership role, with local partners facilitating only. Increasing awareness on roles and responsibilities involving government provision of services and community dialogue decreases local conflict. This process can also contribute to peace and stability at the local level by supporting community participation and government and citizen accountability.
- **Strengthening Trust between the GON and Marginalized Groups.** By being seen as a partner and collaborator in the identification, selection, and implementation of infrastructure projects, local GON institutions benefit from increased support and credibility from local communities. It begins the process

4 NGCPP experienced changes in APM composition, VDC secretaries, and DDC officials all within the short project time frame. This will continue until after local elections are held, which will be post-constitution drafting.

5 NGCPP Definition: "Stabilization" is support to countries emerging from violent conflict in; (i) preventing or reducing violence, (ii) protecting people and key institutions, (iii) promoting political processes which lead to greater stability; and (iv) preparing for longer term non-violent politics and development.

of reestablishing the GON's authority and legitimacy and the lost social cohesion, and it will contribute to stabilizing the communities in the aftermath of the conflict. Training, technical assistance, and project activities should promote dialogue, raise awareness, and encourage behavior change that mitigates old social patterns that produced the conflict in the first place.

6.0 CONCLUSION

In Year 2, NGCPP interventions and activities were able to demonstrate significant progress towards meeting the overall objective and contributing to the goals of NGCPP. Twenty-four months is a short time frame for a project with the objective and goals of NGCPP. The delay in implementation of the peace process, ongoing political instability, and three changes in government provided significant challenges to a local government program. NGCPP developed an approach for training and technical assistance that provided new skills to GON officials and local citizens, created forums for shared engagement between LG staff and communities, and provided substantive information and engagement on key national issues to marginalized groups and communities. Employment opportunities, vocational training, and newly refurbished GON buildings, schools, and health posts also provided a tangible impact that will be present for years to come in VDCs that had seen little if any development resources during the conflict. These impacts can be measured and are indications that linking citizens to their local government and improving access to services can change communities over time. Nepal is still in transition, but the LSGA provides a framework for change that can take hold even in some of the most conflict-affected areas of Nepal. NGCPP was a modest effort, but one that can be replicated. Training approaches and methods were designed based on MoLD norms and it is clear that this program is more nimble than larger donor programs such as LGCDP, which enables new mandates and pilots to be developed and implemented rapidly to ensure maximum citizen engagement in local government. Conflict mitigation at the local level is more effective with community-based approaches and allows communities to be more self-sufficient and responsive to individual citizen needs.

Some lessons learned in Year 2 from NGCPP are reflected below:

- **CDR is an effective tool** to create inter-ethnic cooperation and ownership, but LG support is also essential in communities where the concept of citizenship and governance are weak.
- **Local NGO partnerships** are essential to ensure sustainability and replication, and to engage effectively at the VDC level. The ethnic and political dimensions require strong local stakeholders who speak local languages and know the local political norms.
- **Interim local government mechanisms** are essential in a weak post-conflict environment. These can be engaged easily once supported and established. These mechanisms can reduce tensions between citizens and the GON (DDC and VDC levels).
- The **VDC-level planning process** is an important tool to increase social inclusion and is essential in this political transition period. This was at the heart of the conflict and is still a serious issue at most levels of governance.
- There is a need for communities to have **local mechanisms to resolve conflict** as currently LG representatives (VDC secretaries) act as de facto mediators with little skill or time to resolve these disputes.

NGCPP has learned much from 24 months of work on local governance and conflict mitigation in the Terai. Nepal is still deep in transition and delays in the constitution as well as a prolonged PM selection has crippled national movement of the CA and key elements of the peace process implementation. However, VDCs and DDCs still function and services are still delivered. Citizen engagement with local government is a good place to work on local-level conflict and to provide forums for national-level issues. NGCPP provided interventions that allowed citizens to engage with their subnational government; over time, this did shift the practices that had existed before.

MORE IMAGES FROM THE FIELD



APPENDIX A: NGCPP RESULTS FRAMEWORK

USG Foreign Policy Goal in Nepal

To help build & sustain a democratic, well-governed state that responds to the needs of its people, reduces widespread poverty & conducts itself responsibly in the international system.

Nepal Country Assistance Strategy 2009-2013

Successful transition completed toward an effective, responsive & democratic constitutional government. Government more effectively secures national territory, provides public safety, enforces the law & fulfills international commitments with full respect for human rights & subordination to civilian authority.

I 207 Program Overall Objective:

Improved legitimacy, security & governance at the district & village development level in targeted areas of Nepal

NGCPP Objective:

More effective, legitimate Government of Nepal (GoN) presence at the local level

Development Context

- New planning process and delayed GoN budget allocation make DDC and VDC development planning contentious
- Bandhas and strikes disrupt development activities and implementation
- Transitional government structures and frequent political changes
- Insecurity persists at the local level for GoN officials
- Criminality and local level conflict weakens local governance influence and capability

Critical Assumptions:

- Political and social unrest does not impede implementing project activities
- Development planning processes will allow for more inclusion based on supported local governance policies and norms
- Conflict-sensitive approaches will diminish tensions between VDC and APM members
- Security for local GoN officials will improve and armed groups be controlled

Intended Results/NGCPP Program Components

Intended Result 1: Citizens' confidence in public institutions restored.	Component 1: Support to Local Government Institutions	Intended Result 2: Local populations reap peace dividends	Component 2: Community Driven Reconstruction	Intended Result 3: Marginalized populations feel connected to the national level peace process	Component 3: Support of Peace Initiatives at the local level
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Activities / Performance Indicators

ACTIVITIES

- Training for Local Government officials, Political Party Members and citizens
- Commodity support for targeted local institutions
- TA on communication and public outreach to enhance local government roles and responsibilities

NGCPP INDICATORS

- I.1: # of GoN officials w/ improved professional capacities
- R1: Citizen confidence in local public institutions strengthened
- I.5: # of individuals who received USG-assisted training to strengthen LG and/or decentralization
- I.4: # of local mechanisms supported with USG assistance for citizens to engage their sub-national government

ACTIVITIES

- Construction of community-identified small-scale infrastructure projects (rehabilitation)
- Providing employment and training for citizens, especially marginalized members, women and youth in community based management.

NGCPP INDICATORS

- 2.3: Community contributions towards small-scale infrastructure projects
- 2.1: Number of community-based projects completed
- 2.2: Increased employment

ACTIVITIES

- Training for VDC, DDC, Village Councils and APM on conflict mitigation, GESI and youth leadership
- Facilitate interactive Public Forums
- Provide Terai information campaigns that influence citizen perception of the peace process.

NGCPP INDICATORS

- 3.1: Number of people trained in conflict mitigation/resolution skills with USG assistance
- R2: Marginalized populations are better informed and connected to national-level peace process
- 3.2: Community members are better informed of the tenants of the CPA and other GoN-negotiated agreements

APPENDIX B: MEDIA PROGRAMS AND NGCPP

Public Service Announcement (PSA) Campaign–NGCPP (2009–2010)

SFCG and New World (a local production and media organization in the Terai) have been producing PSAs for NGCPP since the second quarter of Year 1 (May 2009).

Objectives

- To enhance the culture of cooperation between local government official and citizens;
- To motivate citizens to get engaged in local governance;
- To motivate local government officials to engage with marginalized citizens in decision making; and
- To respond to current conflict and political dynamics on the community level in the Terai.

PSA Campaign

Twelve PSAs were developed and delivered in four phases, all of which were designed to respond to the political crisis, involve local citizens in local governance, and provide current information on the status of the peace process for citizens in the Terai. All PSA were broadcast in seven districts as well as some in Kathmandu.

Phase One⁶–New World and SFCG produced five PSAs on issues surrounding the peace process, encouraging cooperation at the local level in a time when political division was rampant.

S.N	Local Voices for Peace	PSA Message	Language
1.	Jayabir Udin (Muslim leader of Morang, former VDC Chairperson and advocate for Dalit rights)	The importance of cooperation across religion and caste in order to work together for social development, equal rights, and social justice.	Nepali
2.	Kalananda Rajbanshi (Citizen who donated land to build a school to the VDC)	Land owner donating land for a school to support the needs of children in the new Nepal to be educated and be good citizens.	Maithili
3.	Udhab Timilasina (Local Development Officer of Morang)	Working to link citizens to good governance and basic development services during a time of transition in the Terai region.	Nepali
4.	Jaya Ka Devi Saheni (Dalit woman, PMC Member)	Dalit woman of Dainiya wants caste-based discrimination to be lessened in society, where she imagines peace and development will prosper.	Maithili
5.	Kapurni Devi Yadav (84-year-old woman and APM member)	A woman finding her place in the peace process, through citizenship rights, access to development services, and a having voice in the new Nepal.	Nepali/Maithili

⁶ These PSAs were broadcast on Kantipur FM nationally, and on eight local FM stations in the target area of the project.

Phase Two—The second phase targeted local government officials with key messages focused on consultation with local stakeholders. Two PSAs were produced. The PSAs highlighted the role that good governance can play in peace building and in more effective citizen and local government relationships.

S.N	Subject of PSA	PSA Message	Language
1.	The role of governance in peace building.	Good governance, citizen cooperation, and collective efforts are essential parts of the peace process.	Nepali
2.	Building cooperation between citizens and LG officials.	Good governance and cooperation are essential parts for peace in Nepal. Excluded community members need access to all levels of the state and local governance as well.	Nepali

Phase Three—Targeted local marginalized communities with key messages on the importance of participation. These PSAs were developed to demonstrate role models and provide information to stakeholders on the mechanisms they can use to engage with their local government officials and other key decision makers.

S.N	Subject of PSA	PSA Message	Language
1.	Public space for marginalized groups and the messages.	It is essential for all to work for more effective participation of marginalized people. There should be space in local decision making and at all levels for the voices of marginalized citizens to be heard.	Maithili
2.	The role that social inclusion in VDC planning can play in stability and peace.	The importance of women in development planning and the impact that this can have overall.	Maithili

Phase Four⁷—This final set of PSAs targeted all audiences, with a focus on cooperation. These highlighted examples from the field that show local government officials and local citizens working together to solve difficult problems. Focus was community-based conflict mitigation, social inclusion and access to decision making, and the negative impact that *bandhs* have on development and the peace process.

S.N	Subject of PSA	PSA Message	Language
1.	Community-based conflict and mediation.	The role that community mediation can play in resolving local-level conflict. Small arguments can be solved with community resources, skill, and initiative. Working locally is an essential part of the peace process and can be your contribution.	Nepali
2.	Community-driven development process.	Equal access to resources and involvement in development planning and implementation is a right of citizens in the new Nepal. Get involved at the local level.	Maithili
3.	Strikes, violence and the peace process.	Strikes and violence are harmful to the peace process. This should be reduced by us all and we all have a role to play.	Nepali

7 These PSA produced by New World were broadcasted from nine community-based FM stations in the eastern region.

APPENDIX C: SUCCESS STORIES



USAID | NEPAL

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

Community Driven Project Management



Figure 1: Tharu Women attend a public event highlighting the work of PMC members on a community driven reconstruction project in Siswani Badahara VDC.



Figure 2: Over 32% of PMC members are women on NGCPP Projects. This is the PMC Chairman for Siswani Jahada PMC and is working with NGCPP and the VDC Secretary in rebuilding a VDC building destroyed during the conflict.

The Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Project (NGCPP) works with Government of Nepal (GON) officials and citizens to identify community driven infrastructure projects that demonstrate an enhanced political will to respond to immediate citizen need. The Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) of Nepal provides a framework for self-governance at the local level. Support for the LSGA is essential during a post-conflict period to ensure that local-level systems support processes that are inclusive and responsive to the political problems that can beset local communities when engaging in development planning. In coordination with local citizens, VDC secretaries, and APM members, NGCPP has created and supported over 30 Project Management Committees (PMC) to manage, monitor, and support community driven infrastructure in Morang District. A PMC is a form of the *User Committee* as specified in the LSGA. These local structures provide transparency and accountability that enhance trust between citizens and local government entities in the Terai.

These socially inclusive committees are provided with training, ongoing technical support in conflict mediation, and project management training to ensure that these committees are providing direct support and management of all infrastructure activities. NGCPP has also formed some of the first PMCs in Morang District that include women, and it has even established an all-women PMC. NGCPP targets instability in the Terai by linking government to citizens and creating forums that enhance trust with marginalized groups. Staff and beneficiary partners at the community level seek alternative methods to conflict that have been plaguing the Terai by seeking local solutions to more inclusive planning processes at the VDC and DDC levels. NGCPP staff work to build the capacity and legitimacy of local groups and initiatives seeking peaceful transition in the Terai.

NGCPP links these groups with public information about the transition as well as tangible opportunities to engage these groups in local-level governance services to increase access and public perceptions of GON response to their needs. NGCPP also provides targeted technical assistance, training, and commodity support to local government officials at the DDC and VDC levels to enhance their ability to provide conflict-sensitive and socially inclusive development planning that includes marginalized citizens in a participatory process.



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SUCCESS STORY

Community Mediation and Local Conflict



Figure 1: A Master Trainer works with Community Mediators from Siswani Jahada in a public dialogue and event highlighting the impact of Community Mediation in resolving local-level conflict.



Figure 2: NGCPP has trained 324 Mediators. These mediators are playing a critical role in not only resolving local conflict, but also in facilitating and engaging in public meetings and events. A total of 312 Community Mediators are now registered with the District Courts; 108 mediators are women and over 40 percent are youth.

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Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is an essential component in a post-conflict environment. Districts in the Terai are beset by weak government systems and Village Development Committee (VDC) Secretaries that are often asked to settle local-level disputes have little training and no formal or informal judicial support. The Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Project (NGCPP) targets instability in the Terai by linking government to citizens and creating forums that enhance trust with marginalized groups. In coordination with Pro Public, NGCPP has provided 12 VDCs in Morang District with 324 Community Mediators and 12 District level Master trainers. NGCPP has also supported Community Mediation Centers in each of the 12 VDCs that provide a place for community based mediation and services.

Community Mediation is used as a tool to meet local-level needs for conflict mitigation. Community Mediators serve to support the VDC Secretary in resolving individual level-local disputes. The VDC Secretary and APM members are involved by serving as advisory members to support Community Mediation programs. Community members represent multi-ethnic and -caste dimensions, 108 of whose members are women. Local police are now referring local-level disputes to the Community Mediators, and VDC Secretaries can provide citizens with a local option for conflict mitigation. NGCPP is in the process of registering Community Mediators with the District Court and cases are being tracked for resolution and impact at the local level.

Since initiating this program, over 200 cases have been heard with an 86.4 percent success rate. This local-level mediation service is essential in communities where local government officials are often asked to engage in community disputes, preventing them from completing other essential functions. Since initiating the Community Mediation program, local-level officials have noted that it is easier for them to visit VDCs, and local police are now referring specified cases and disputes to the Mediation Centers directly. This activity linking ADR, local-level conflict, and governance has proved to be an important intervention post-conflict for local communities in Morang.



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SUCCESS STORY

The Nepal Constitution and Citizen Engagement



Figure 1: NGCPP, in partnership with INSEC, sponsored a public discussion with political leaders. This event attended by over 1800 people allowed citizens to engage with all the major political leaders and ask questions about the pending CA deadline.



Figure 2: This event was attended by 58 different civil society organizations concerned with the pace and progress of the new constitution. This event was covered by 23 local FM stations from the Terai and was widely covered in the Eastern Region, as well as in Kathmandu.

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January 2010 – While significant progress had been made during the last months of 2009, the peace process in Nepal still needs commitment and collective effort among different political actors in Nepal. Internal opposition within political parties, clashes between youth groups, talk of fresh confrontation, and land grabs by Maoists in the southern Terai belt continued to risk the peace process.

The top tasks for the principle political actors in Nepal is to promulgate a new constitution by May 28, 2010; integrate the Maoist combatants into the security forces; and share the peace dividend with local citizens waiting for an end to protracted conflict and political strife. The USAID/Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Project (NGCPP) supported a civil society network of more than 58 organizations focusing on human rights, peace, and democracy in eastern region to organize a one-day Commitment for Peace Forum on 8 January 2010 in Biratnagar, Morang. Local citizens organized a rally of thousands of participants that turned into mass gathering that sent a powerful message of peaceful advocacy.

Central leaders from U-Maoist; Puspa Kamal Dahal, UML; Jhalanath Khanal, Nepali Congress; Ram Chandra Paudel and Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF); and Upendra Yadav addressed the mass gathering. The leaders not only attempted to answer the people's queries about constraints to the peace process and challenges of constitution writing, but also signed a three-point commitment to build national consensus to bring the peace process to a logical end, and they renewed a commitment to support the rule of law, end impunity, and respect human rights.

The importance of the constitution and its role in inclusion, conflict mitigation, and governance for Nepal cannot be understated. This event provided a dialogue and a forum for citizens and political leaders to meet in support of the constitution, the process of peaceful dialogue and also provided a forum for voices to be raised that were positive, constructive, and moved beyond political rhetoric and influence.



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SUCCESS STORY

Building Sustainability for Safe Movement in the Terai



Figure 1: Eastern Region DIG and the Sunsari CDO take part in an event highlighting a partnership between traffic police and community FM stations reporting on security and access conditions in the Terai.



Figure 2: DSP for Morang signs an MOU with 26 community radio stations serving the Terai.

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On June 9, 2010 in Biratnagar, Morang District, over 60 participants attended an event to highlight a unique model of partnership in the Eastern Region of Nepal supported by USAID and the State Department. *“Building Sustainability for Safe Movement in the Terai”* is an initiative funded by USAID’s Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Program (NGCPP). With support from NGCPP & the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), 26 community FM stations are coordinating with the local traffic police to provide a daily traffic update aimed at facilitating safe movement through official information when there is a *bandh* in the Terai. This reporting reaches approximately 1.3 million people daily and spans seven districts in southeast Nepal. Called *“Breaking News,”* the information provides immediate field reports on traffic obstructions, *bandhs*, and kidnappings or critical security incidents to local citizens. NGCPP has been providing technical support and training for the FM stations as well as facilitating coordination meetings with traffic police and FM partners to ensure that information is aired that increases access and movement in the Eastern Terai.

This event was coordinated to facilitate a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Eastern Regional Command and the 26 community FM stations. Originally a three-party agreement (between NGCPP, the 26 FM stations, and the Eastern Regional Command) had been signed to improve community-based information on movement in the Terai. At this event, a new MOU was signed. NGCPP handed over this responsibility to the region and all 26 FM stations signed an agreement with the Eastern Region Traffic Police Superintendent to continue this initiative for an additional year, with the intention of improving and building upon this partnership for the benefit of increased information access and movement in the Terai. This ceremony provided a small commodity package from NGCPP to each of the 26 FM stations. The support of computer and recording equipment will make it possible for the participating stations to fulfill their commitment to continue this effort after the completion of NGCPP.

In attendance were members of USAID; State Department INL representative; Morang Chief Development Officer; Sunsari Chief Development Officer; Morang Local Development Officer; Traffic Police Superintendent; Mr. Bismal Basnet, the Head of the Eastern Region Police; traffic officers

from the region; station managers for the 26 community based FM stations; and national and regional news and media coverage.

Distinguished Guests

- Chief Development Officer, Morang District
- Chief Development Officer, Sunsari District
- Traffic Police Superintendent–Mr. Bimal Basnet
- Head of the Eastern Region Police–DIG Bhisma Prasai
- 26 FM Station Managers from: Morang, Sunsari, Ilam, Jhapa, Sapatari, Siraha, and Dhankuta districts

National and Local Media Representation

- Morang District President of Federation of Nepalese Journalist–Shambhu Karki
- Kantipur Daily: Saraswoti Karki
- Rajdhani Daily: Binod Dhakal
- Udhgohs Daily: Bikram Luitel
- Nagarik and Republica Daily: Ajit Tiwari
- Avenews TV: Local correspondent
- Terai TV: Local correspondent
- Kantipur TV: Local correspondent
- National TV: Local correspondent
- News 24 TV: Local correspondent

APPENDIX D: CASE STUDIES



CASE STUDY

Mediating Community Conflict



Figure 1: Executive Director of Pro Public, Prakash Sharma, reviews the caseload of Community Mediators in Baudaha VDC.



Figure 2: Community Mediator from Dainiya VDC. This female mediator is also a PMC member for Dainiya VDC and represents one of NGCPP youth as well.

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Since 2009, Pro Public has been working with the Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Program (NGCPP) to provide trained community mediators to 12 of Morang District's Village Development Committee (VDCs). Pro Public's Community Mediation programs have been serving poor and excluded groups in Nepal's Terai belt for years by helping them resolve disputes and access justice outside the expensive and lengthy Nepali judicial process. Community mediation is important to the peace process in Nepal because it is an unbiased venue through which individuals and groups can claim grievances and find justice through local channels and trusted community members.

Through their mediation activities, Pro Public has established functional mediation centers in all 12 NGCPP VDCs and trained 324 mediators. These centers, with the help of community members of various backgrounds who were trained as mediators, have been providing mediation services to men, women, and members of socially excluded groups since October 2009. In each VDC, Pro Public has identified and trained 27 mediators and 1 mediator has been selected to work as a coordinator through participatory processes. Pro Public coordinates with District Development Councils (DDC) and VDC secretaries to select three community members per ward who fit the provided criteria. Possible mediators must be "first and foremost, trusted by the community," particularly in leadership positions; only one mediator per family is allowed; and mediators are expected to be literate. Once the possible mediators have been selected, they are assembled in one group of approximately 70–100 possible candidates, and the group comes to a consensus on which 27 should be the mediators based on the criteria provided by Pro Public.

In an effort to ensure equal participation from men, women, and socially excluded groups, Pro Public has been working with NGCPP to mainstream a gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) framework into their program. Since the Community Mediation program primarily targets excluded and marginalized groups, it is important to have mediators from those communities. According to the Pro Public Program Director, "we always think about those excluded groups. Upper castes and other wealthy people take their disputes to court. The other poor, excluded and women use mediation services because they don't want to work with lawyers; they don't have the money and knowledge." As part of its GESI

mainstreaming, Pro Public made exceptions to its mediator requirements to encourage participation from excluded groups. First, men and women are given different age restrictions: women must be over 20 years old, while men must be above 25 years of age. Second, Pro Public is flexible with their literacy rules. As long as mediators can speak well, they are included as possible candidates. Finally, Pro Public works with the VDC and DDC to identify areas with high concentrations of excluded groups. "We do surveys; we ask VDC and DDC secretaries to find out which wards are home to excluded groups. We go to excluded communities and select them." With these efforts, Pro Public is making progress toward including socially excluded groups. Based on discussions with NGCPP staff, Pro Public has set a goal of 50 percent female participation as mediators in its mediation centers in Morang.

Attaining equal participation of men and women as mediators has not been easy to achieve in Morang District. Choosing the mediators is up to the community; Pro Public can only make suggestions about who is selected as a mediator. Based on previous experiences in Sarlahi district, Pro Public knew it would be a challenge to find female mediators. With this in mind, Pro Public made a recommendation to the community to select female mediators as well as male mediators. The community members heeded the advice and are now more aware of gender equity when selecting mediators. "We wrote a letter to suggest the community choose at least 50 percent female mediators. The community now is even asking about female participation. They are looking to have one male and one female." With the guidance of Pro Public staff, the community sees the importance of selecting equal numbers of male and female mediators, although they have not quite achieved fifty percent female participation, yet. To date, Pro Public has 193 (60 percent) male mediators and 131 (40 percent) female mediators.

Lack of confidence, time, and permission from family members are often the reasons women give for not volunteering as community mediators. In the Terai, women are not generally in positions of authority or respect, nor do they speak in front of groups or give advice on important decisions. Even the trainer from Pro Public was initially scared to speak in front of an audience because she lacked confidence. "As a woman, I was even nervous to speak to the group. Culturally they are shy and lack confidence." According to Pro Public's Program Director, the lack of confidence is a barrier that comes up often in excuses for why more women are not mediators. "Women don't think they can speak properly, they don't know how to solve disputes, and they don't have time." Mediator training thus provides women with mediation skills, such as listening, paraphrasing, speaking, and asking appropriate questions, which gives women the confidence to put themselves in positions of authority. "With more and more training and building their confidence, we are seeing women mediators." Experience from mediation centers in other districts highlighted additional barriers women face to becoming mediators. Pro Public's Program Director said, "When I was in Sarlahi, I suggested they put female mediators into the program. I put females into the mediators' trainings, but after several meetings the women were not coming. I asked why they were not coming, and they said it was because [their] husband[s] wouldn't allow it. I went to the husbands and started talking to them about allowing their wives to attend." Now, during training sessions in Morang, Pro Public understands that to guarantee female participation, they must educate the husbands and men in the community to the importance of GESI as well.

Over time, Pro Public has noticed an increase in female participation and an increasing demand from the community for women mediators. Women will often select female mediators because they feel more comfortable talking to women. "Women's involvement is slowly increasing. In the community we have women mediators, because we [women] have to share our feelings, our problems and our grievances." Although men more often choose male mediators, they recognize that women are often easier to talk to because "females are better with empathy and sympathy." According to Pro Public, women are also more polite and put clients at ease, so men and women both welcome their advice on dispute settlement. There has been little negative reaction from men

regarding female mediators, and men are willing to take the advice of female mediators for the reasons mentioned above.

In addition to greater awareness of equal participation of men and women, people in Morang are also changing the way they see social inclusion. The most excluded group, the Terai Dalits, are becoming more vocal and ready to speak up in front of their communities about equal representation. According to Pro Public, “now during mediator selection processes we see Dalits standing up and speaking up for the Dalits—one Dalit woman in Buddhanada was asking why we [our community] are only choosing upper caste.” Community members are more aware of the importance of including representatives from all ethnic groups. “We see people starting to examine all these different groups by ethnic and caste and asking who is participating.” By mainstreaming GESI into all phases of the community mediation project, Pro Public and NGCPP are seeing community members shifting their perception of inclusion and community engagement, which is important particularly for conflict resolution and Nepal’s peace process.

Community mediation has changed the approach to dispute settlement in Morang because it relies on local community members from all backgrounds to meet the needs of their community and resolve local conflicts. “The mediation process is not biased. The people who seek mediation are all treated equally; that empowers the people and keeps everyone equal. All are treated neutrally.” Since November 2009, mediators have settled more than 200 disputes in Morang, and have developed a strong reputation for effective conflict resolution. Both the mediation process and the mediators themselves are well respected in the project communities:

“The police officers are now taking people on their bikes to the mediation center. When we heard it was a voluntary position, we didn’t think it was possible. Now [we see] it’s reaching the police; police are saying Namaste to mediators. There is respect in the community for mediators. It is changing the culture of dispute settlement.”—(Dainiya VDC, Community Mediator)

Inclusive community mediation has the possibility to change the way conflict is managed at the local level. For a country like Nepal, where ethnic and religious identities are deeply rooted (particularly in rural areas), sensitive dispute settlement is important for the peace process because it relies on community engagement and equal participation.



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CASE STUDY Creating Youth Leaders



Youth Network Members from Morang District gather in Biratnagar for Youth Leadership Training to prepare them for taking a more active role in decision making at the VDC level.



Figure 2: Youth Network Secretary discussing the role of youth in VDC planning.

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A growing movement to engage youth in policy making is an encouraging sign that politics will no longer be conducted as usual in Nepal. Today the youth of Nepal understand the importance of gender equity and social inclusion as a crucial element of policy and the broader peace process. Since 2009, Youth Action Nepal (YAN) has been working with the Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Program (NGCPP) to provide trained youth leaders to take a more active role for youth in community level planning and conflict mitigation. In the Eastern Terai region, YAN has been working with NGCPP to educate and mobilize youth volunteers who contribute to reducing conflict and engaging youth in the peace process through community service and mobilization of efforts in 12 of Morang district's Village Development Councils (VDCs).

Between October 2009 and April 2010, YAN created 12 Youth Networks in Morang District, with functioning secretariats composed of local youth (aged 15–30) from various backgrounds, ethnicities, and caste distinctions. YAN oriented communities and created a group of 12–15 youth in each VDC, who were then given training in organizational development, conflict mitigation, leadership, and youth management. YAN staff described the process:

“When we start, we contact local level leaders; key people to get support for the program. With their support we can start the local youth network. We discuss with the youth about their role in society and, the importance of leadership and active civic engagement, and then teach them how to organize themselves.”

Youth networks participate regularly in interaction sessions, attend local- and district-level trainings, and do community service projects in their VDCs. One of the main projects for each Youth Network is to organize community service projects in coordination with local VDC secretaries. Groups have engaged in school projects to repair classrooms, facilities, and have even helped to fix roads. As a result, communities have benefited through tangible changes to basic infrastructure and community members have begun to trust and respect the youth for their contributions to the development of the VDC. From the beginning, YAN planned to have equal gender participation among network members, and sought to have at least 33 percent female representation in secretariat positions. The program director and coordinators created a specific criterion

providing that when a male president is selected for a local youth network, at least one of the secretariat positions is held by a female. This is essential in ensuring that female leaders are trained and are directly involved in decision making. The fact that women are holding positions as treasurers is significant because it demonstrates that the network trusts and respects women's ability to take charge of financial matters. Additionally, each network has a bank account in the name of treasurer; this means that young women from each VDC have now been educated in banking procedures and financial management, which was something new to many young participants. Several women did not even have the documentation necessary to open a bank account and had to go to district offices to obtain their official citizenship papers in order to open a bank account and serve as the network's treasurer. With this heightened responsibility, these young women are gaining confidence and skills in how to manage finances, an important contribution to their future financial independence. Finally, YAN has guaranteed equal pay to men and women for their community service project stipend. Even in VDCs where men typically earned more than women, YAN has ensured that all youth network members receive the same amount of money for their contributions to the community.

Youth Action Nepal also set a goal of fifty percent representation of women and men in VDC-level activities, including orientations, trainings, and network memberships. Recently, YAN staff have found it relatively easy to engage young women at the VDC level in youth network activities. In fact, there are often more women participants than men because men tend to work, either locally or abroad, and women have more time to give to voluntary activities, such as organizing or training local youth. Figures from sharing sessions held in April and May 2010 show that more than fifty percent of participants were women: out of 358 youth participants, 182 were women (51 percent) and 14 percent were from Dalit groups (Hill and Terai). The majority were from Terai ethnic groups.¹ Early on, however, it was not as simple to achieve fifty percent female participation. In October 2009, 43 percent of the 186 participants in the youth group orientations were female. Over time, YAN field coordinators have noticed a change in the involvement of young women. According to one field coordinator from Bhatigachh:



Figure 3: Youth Network President conducts a training on PMC management to Tharu women and marginalized group members in Thalaha VDC.

“During the first phase of the project, we saw very few young women participating. Now we see them slowly joining. In the leadership roles, most of the young women are coming to the front, and speaking up. Before the program, women could not speak about anything, but since the program, they are better able to participate and speak up.”

Getting women to participate in district-level trainings remains a challenge for YAN. Female participation in the leadership and organizational development training in October 2009 was just 35 percent of the 48 participants (17 young women). These female participation rates in district-level training remain below 50 percent, usually because of traditional values and social norms. Leadership trainings are generally held in the district capital, Biratnagar, and participants are expected to travel to the site and stay overnight for one or two nights. Many families from the Terai region, particularly from remote villages and VDCs far from Biratnagar are reluctant or

¹ Terai ethnic groups include: Dhimal, Gangai, Jhangrad/Dhangad, Kisan, Koche, Meche, Munda, Kuswadiya, Rajbansi, Santhal/Satar, Tajpuriy and Tharu.

outright refuse to send their daughters to such trainings. They do not see the value of capacity building trainings for their daughters, and therefore forbid them to attend Youth Action's district-level sessions. It is particularly difficult for girls from Muslim families. According to YAN staff, "at the VDC level orientation they [Muslim women] are there, but at district level it is difficult. Their cultural values do not allow it..." Women from upper caste and wealthy families are often allowed to participate. YAN is trying to get more diverse participation by educating young women at the VDC-level Youth Network orientations and meetings. "Local level orientation and discussion programs help mobilize and organize the women. Now, many young women are able to convince their parents to allow them to participate in district level trainings."

Organizing youth in local networks is an important step in engaging youth in local decision making and policy creation that will benefit Nepal's on-going peace process. What's more, ensuring equal and quality participation from men and women, and all social groups, will promote equal rights and empower individuals who have habitually been excluded. YAN staff have noticed significant changes since the early phases of their program activities. As a result of the youth networks and their community service projects, the youth have been more engaged in VDC-level planning with government officials. Before the project, "political leaders were also reluctant to work with youth; they didn't trust them. Now the youth are engaged in budget planning and VDC level planning. Some youth are part of the VDC committee." Results are showing that youth can gain recognition and respect within their community; by ensuring gender equity and social inclusion among the active youth, the overall process is becoming more inclusive over time.

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