CIVIL SOCIETY: MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT
Quarterly Progress Report

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIN	Association of International NGOs in Nepal
AMO	Advocacy and Monitoring Outreach
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
ARI	Advocacy Readiness Index
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CA	Common Assembly
CAG	Content Advisory Group
CAR	Community Action Researcher
CDC	Community Development Center
CDJMC	Central Department of Journalism and Mass Communications
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CS:MAP	Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project
DAO	District Administration Office
DEC	Development Exchange Center
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FNJ	Federation of Nepali Journalists
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GGB	Good Governance Barometer
GoGo	Good Governance Foundation
GoN	Government of Nepal
HEAD	Health, Education, Agriculture and Disaster Risk Reduction
HRPLSC	Human Right Protection and Legal Services Center
HURADEC	Human Right Awareness and Development Center
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICNL	International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IHRICON	Institute of Human Right Communication Nepal
IIP	Institutional Improvement Plan
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Center
IRDC	Indreni Rural Development Center

IRDS	Integrated Rural Development Society
ISO	Intermediary Service Organization
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
KII	Key Informant Interview
KLL	Kathmandu Living Labs
LDAG	Listening Discussion and Action Group
MAG	Media Advocacy Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MITRA Samaj	Measures for Intervention Training Research and Action Samaj
MoFAGA	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoIC	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWCSC	Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens
NASC	Nepal Administrative Staff College
NEOC	National Election Observation Committee
NEPAN	Nepal Participatory Action Network
NFN	NGO Federation of Nepal
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NNSWA	Nepal National Social Welfare Association
NRA	National Reconstruction Authority
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PEAR	Participatory and Evidence-based Action Research
PET/s	Public Expenditure Tracking System
PMO	Office of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers
PPWG	Public-Private Working Group
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PSB	Public Services Broadcasting
RTI	Right to Information
RWDC	Rural Women Development Center
SAP-Nepal	South Asia Partnership Nepal
SBC	*Sajha Boli Chautari*

SMS	Short Message Service
SOCH	Society for Humanism Nepal
SSMK	*Saathi Sanga Manka Kura*
SWC	Social Welfare Council
TA	Technical Assistance
ToT	Training of Trainers
TU	Tribhuvan University
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

National-level achievements

During this reporting period, April 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018, events that have unfolded in Nepal have caused increased concern for civil society and media freedoms and the enabling environment necessary for these sectors to advance the public interest. For example, this quarter, the government brought out a draft National Integrity Policy. Civil society and media organizations have expressed concerns that the proposed policy will curtail citizens' freedoms of association and expression. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) issued a directive banning public gatherings and demonstrations in certain public areas. Additionally, a long-running television show was shut down for allegedly posing probing questions to a government official and a television host was questioned about his citizenship. While government officials say they understand the need for civic oversight and talk about zero tolerance to corruption and irregularities, some of the policies being introduced are not well-received by the civil society as favorable to the sector.

In light of these events, this quarter CS:MAP and its partners intensified their advocacy and engagement with the government, political leaders and all stakeholders to advocate for and improve the enabling environment for CSOs and media. As a result of our efforts, the Government of Nepal (GoN) has withdrawn its circular that all District Administration Offices (DAOs) obtain the property details of non-government organization (NGO) personnel and limit NGO interventions to only one specific theme. Additionally, the draft National Integrity Policy 2074 has been sent for inter-ministerial discussion after the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) showed commitment to improve this as per the demand of civil society. CS:MAP partner NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) formed and coordinated a joint task force that is engaging with the PMO and other stakeholders regarding the restrictive provisions of this policy.

More than 50 different government agencies have improved the implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) legislation by posting the contact information for Public Information Officers (PIOs) in their offices and websites; implementing pro-active disclosure guidelines of RTI; and allocating separate budgets for information management and PIO capacity building on RTI. This is a result of the trainings a CS:MAP national partner provided to PIOs in the earlier quarter.

Through its continuous engagement with Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC), CS:MAP has been able to include an integrated session on civil society in the regular courses for government under-secretaries. CS:MAP developed a sample course and facilitated two separate sessions in May 2018 as part of the month-long "Advanced Course on Governance and State Management," which under-secretaries must complete before being promoted to the joint secretary level.

NFN has prepared a draft of minimum standards for CSOs' internal governance and self-regulation and shared them with its members. The document will be shared with civil society coalition for wider ownership in the subsequent quarters. NFN has also started monitoring how their members implement the code of conduct.

District-level achievements

To promote a transparent government, CS:MAP through its partner Kathmandu Living Labs (KLL) supported Neelakantha Municipality, Dhading and Nepalgunj sub-metropolitan city, Banke to develop an Open Local Government web portal and a specific mobile application (app). The portal and app were launched in formal programs in Dhading and Banke, and are now owned by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA). CS:MAP is providing technical support to MoFAGA in rolling out this portal and app in the remaining 751 local units

of Nepal. To facilitate the process, CS:MAP has developed a handbook on *Information Communications and Technology (ICT) for Advocacy and Oversight of Public Service Delivery,* which will be an important resource for the users of these ICT tools as well as CS:MAP partners and other civil society organizations.

The *gaunpalikas* and municipalities where CS:MAP has focused it works, have now started conducting public hearings. As of the end of this reporting period, 18 public hearings have been conducted by four *gaunpalikas* and two municipalities in Ramechhap district. Khadadevi *gaunpalika* in Ramechhap, has conducted nine public hearings at ward level with CS:MAP technical support. Human Right Awareness and Development Center (HURADEC) in Dolakha provided facilitation support to public hearing organized by Sailung *gaunpalika.* Good Governance Barometer (GGB) action plans are being implemented in Gulmi, Rukum and Sindhupalchowk districts. Results from participating *gaunpalikas* include:

- Preparing annual educational calendars and distributing them to schools;
- Including in draft education policies- a provision for annual performance evaluations of head teacher;
- Setting up complaint boxes at schools and forming grievance redressal committees
- *Gaunpalikas* in Rukum have formed a monitoring committee;
- Deploying full-time staff in the health post, setting up a complaint box in the health post, and holding a free health camp;
- Designating a Public Information Officer to provide information to citizens; and
- Initiating a process of seeking budget from *gaunpalika* and other sources to construct structures that are accessible to people with disabilities.

To increase community engagement with the local government, CS:MAP held 42 Common Assembly (CA) meetings and 11 Public Private Working Group (PPWG) meetings held in this quarter, The meetings resolved long-standing issues that local government units did not view as priorities. For example:

- The Gauriganga municipality in Kailali is now paying the salary of locally hired teachers instead of charging parents for that expense;
- A complaint box will remain in the ward office in Achham, Nuwakot, Makwanpur districts;
- Birthing centers have been established in Nuwakot and Kapilvastu;
- Agrovets in Dhading started selling quality seeds and controlled the selling of harmful pesticides;
- The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) in Nuwakot and Rasuwa responded to the grievances collected from earthquake affected people within ten days; and
- The Dipayal-Silgadhi municipality allocated NRs. two million (subjected to be approved from the municipal council) for screening and further treatment of the women affected by uterus prolapse in the municipality.

CS:MAP provided 33 Community Action Researchers (CARs) with refresher training. These CARs will lead research initiatives on selected community challenges related to school enrolment and high drop-out rates and the situation of health facilities in communities, among other topics. A CAR in Dang is conducting research on the ineffectiveness of scholarship to Kamlaharies. CARs are being hosted by local CSOs and are working in coordination with the local CSO staff.

Ten investigative stories were published this quarter resulting from the investigative journalism training and study visit (at the Center for Investigative Journalism) CS:MAP carried out for journalists in the previous quarter.

Advocacy Monitoring and Oversight training participants published eight stories on issues related to marginalized communities, local development, education, disaster risk management and local governance issues. These stories were published either in national dailies, online news portals and/or in *MeroReport*.

Fourteen local CSO partners developed organizational strategic communication guidelines that were endorsed by their respective board of directors this quarter.

CS:MAP local CSO partners have started to use ICT to gather issues and evidence for advocacy. Rural Women Development Center (RWDC) and Development Exchange Center (DEC) Nepal have prepared a list of issues analyzing the issues registered in *Sajha Sabha* app and handed over to the local Government. Registered issues concerned to CS:MAP working local units are discussed in CA meetings.

Media accomplishments

TV debate about the role and importance of civil society reached more than 12 thousand people through the television show *Sarokar* of Kantipur Television (KTV). The program had wide broadcast and was shared in the social media mainly on Interface, Facebook and Twitter. The program had 6.2K views by July 8, 2018 on YouTube. Similarly, the live program had 7.3K views and 34 Shares.

CS:MAP Partner the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) has drafted the alternative National Mass Communication Act and shared it with parliamentarians and Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MoIC). The government's committee had previously prepared a draft that included provisions to decrease the standards of freedom of expression. MoIC has agreed to consider the FNJ's alternative draft while developing new draft. To further internal governance and self-regulation of media houses, FNJ has finalized the Media Self-Assessment Toolkit. Media houses have agreed to implement the toolkit with the support from FNJ.

Additionally, 342 people participated in three public hearings aimed at understanding stakeholders' concerns about media and address those through different programs of FNJ. Findings of these public hearings and previously organized media missions are documented in FNJ's bulletin *'Patrakarita,'* which will be published for further circulation.

The Central Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (CDJMC) at Tribhuvan University (TU) has finalized the research report on S*elf-regulation Mechanisms in the Media and Its Interlinkages with Credibility*. Key recommendations from the research include:

- Adopting a definite editorial policy that takes into account election reporting;
- Ensuring more balance in news and views reporting;
- Designing and adopting a communication policy and strategy for the dissemination of election results;
- Adopting measures for ongoing improvement; and
- Ensuring that election reporting covers social, economic and public interest angles as opposed to political angles alone.

CDJMC has shared the findings with media owners, editors, political leaders and journalists., and has agreed to use the research report as a course reference material for their mass communication and journalism students.

A total of 1,344 callers participated in *Sajha Boli Chautari* (SBC) after the production and broadcast of 66 episodes of the *Sajha Boli* radio series. The radio listeners inspired various community actions, with Listening Discussion and Action Groups (LDAGs) participating in joint initiatives towards establishment of Ward offices, pressuring Ward offices to install Citizen Charters and oversight of public resource use and public service delivery. Listeners of three episodes of the popular youth radio program *Saathi Sanga Manka Kura* (SSMK) produced this quarter, have reported increased knowledge on issues such as local level planning process, budget allocation, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and social accountability tools, among others.

This quarter CS:MAP held 21 Content Advisory Group (CAG) meetings that engaged 251 participants and identified content and messaging priorities for the radio programs, providing a platform for fruitful engagement between government stakeholders and relevant stakeholders. This quarter CS:MAP partner Equal Access produced and broadcast 26 public service announcements (PSAs) on accountable journalism and oversight of local service delivery. PSA assessments will be reported in the next quarter. The fourth SMS My Voice (SMV) (May – September 2018) with the title 'म भाग लिन्छु,' which translates to "I Will Participate," launched this quarter. The campaign encourages youth to use SMS messaging to share their concerns and participate local level planning processes, which concluded this quarter. The aim of the campaign was to encourage and engage youth in discussions related to local level plans and programs that they saw as priority for this year's planning process. As of June 2018, almost 1,000 youth have participated in this fourth campaign. Responses show young participants' eagerness and commitment to participate in the planning process and their willingness to encourage more female participation in the process.

Sustainability and local ownership

Organization Capacity Assessment (OCA) of 14 CSOs conducted in this reporting period, showed a total 20% increment in FY 2018 compared to the baseline of OCA in FY 2017. This has contributed to a total of 21 new funding (including seven from Government) to eleven CSOs between October 2017- June 2018. The CSO partners have internalized the necessity to practice self-regulation and institutional governance. This has also been discussed with Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN) for further consideration.

Challenges and Lessons

Challenges in GESI: Getting men and boys to recognize the importance of involving women in meetings and program activities has been particularly challenging. In general, male participants are reluctant to allow women to share their opinions, and women, even women leaders, are often hesitant to speak up. The implications of not providing girls with equal voices, choices, and opportunities affect not just their lives, but the future of development. Efforts to promote inclusive sustainable development and justice are inextricably linked. When we engage with the local structures, for example, with the common assembly, they are the product of this same society with the same set of biases that they bring along. It is relatively easier to incorporate GESI in terms of numbers, of women and marginalized groups, representing in a particular structure. However, the most challenging part is to incorporate GESI in the issues being discussed in the groups and apply GESI lens in the general issues being discussed. For example, the structure may take up issues

directly related to women, such as, establishing birthing centers in their particular *gaunpalikas* but to look at neutral issue, such as education, from a GESI lens is a challenge.

Technical challenges related to radio coverage: Some geographic areas, such as Musuriya in Kailali, and Roshi in Kavre, fall outside of the broadcast range for our radio programs. In those cases, Listening, discussion, and action groups (LDAGs) can listen to the centrally produced version via Radio Nepal or some groups have downloaded episodes from *MeroReport*. Equal Access provides memory sticks to all LDAGs to ensure that the groups have access to the radio programs.

Multi-stakeholder engagement for policy advocacy at national, provincial and sub national level: With the joint effort of CSO and media coalitions, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) withdrew the MoHA circular related to NGOs and the government was ready to revise the National Integrity Policy. The CSOs presented as one voice, and media regularly covered the issue, which helped disseminate the information and apply pressure to the government. As a result, we learned that CSOs advocacy and media dissemination must occur at the national, provincial and sub-national level to be effective. Such engagement will create vibrancy among citizens and concerned stakeholders and create pressure on all tiers of government to develop civil society policies that are on par with international standards.

Motivation for self-regulation and internal governance: Although CS:MAP has held a series of trainings and orientations for CSO leaders and NGO activists about self-regulation and internal governance, still there seems to be a lack of commitment by the concerned stakeholders. As a result, self-regulation and internal governance should be linked to a strong motivational factor, such as the funding requirement for the project, financial and technical support and participation in cross learning activities. To that end, CS:MAP has been collaborating with AIN to make self-regulation and international governance a partnership criteria. The goal is for CSOs to internalize and implement self-regulation and internal governance moving forward.

1. Context

National Context:

A strong federal government led by the left alliance was formed in Kathmandu on February 15, 2018, following federal and provincial elections held in November and December 2017. With the merger in May 2018 of the two left parties in the alliance – the Community Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN UML) and Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Center (CPN MC), and with a few other political parties supporting it, the current federal government has a significant two-third majority in Parliament. The formation of a strong government at the center came as a welcome development for the people, given Nepal's long-standing history of frequently changing governments and the resulting instability. This was further enhanced by the government's announcement of economic development, prosperity and zero tolerance to corruption, as major priorities within its plans and policies. The annual budget that followed the government's plans and policies prioritized economic development including improvements in education and health.

The parliament is yet to draft a number of laws to enable the provincial governments to function effectively. The chief ministers of all the provinces have complained that they have not got enough authority from the central government. The provincial governments and local level government are still struggling to shape their relationship in terms of practical modality of engagement between the two tiers. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Commission on Disappearances have not been able to perform well due to limitation on existing laws. The conflict victims have shown their dissatisfaction over the functioning and mandate of the commissions. Some of the recent events have given cause for concern to the civil society and media with relation to the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the constitution, namely, the freedoms of expression and association. Any level of restriction on these basic liberties can have serious consequences on the enabling environment necessary for CSOs and media to operate in order to advance the public interest. In April, the government brought out a draft National Integrity Policy which was opposed by the larger civil society, donor community, diplomatic missions, and international organizations in Nepal for clauses that curtail fundamental freedoms, primarily, that of association. In June, the government issued a directive banning public gathering and demonstrations in certain public areas in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur. This move was widely opposed, being seen as an impingement upon citizen's right to assembly guaranteed by the constitution.

These moves by the government to limit civil liberties and the civic space for public oversight goes against its principle of zero tolerance towards corruption and good governance. CS:MAP and its partners will continue to engage closely with the government, political leaders and all stakeholders to advocate for and improve the enabling environment for CSOs and media.

Context in Earthquake-Affected Districts:

April 25th and May 12th, two very significant dates falling under this quarter, marked three years since the devastating earthquakes in 2015. With politics and the quest for political power perennially taking center-stage in Nepal's social, economic and political developments, the post-earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation task has not been an easy or smooth one. According to media reports, a large number of victims are poised to spend their fourth monsoon in makeshift tents, about 20,000 of them, in the Sindhupalchok district alone.

According to the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) June 2018 report, 718,581 (93.6%) households had signed beneficiary agreements with the government, of the 767,705 households deemed eligible for housing grants. Again, from those deemed eligible, 709,525 (92.4%) had received the first tranche of the housing grant worth NPR 50,000; 392,384 (51.11%) had availed of the second tranche worth NPR 150,000; and only 133,218 (17.35%) had received the third and final tranche of NPR 100,000. It was a relief for victims when the government changed the deadline it set in 2017, requiring all housing reconstruction to be complete by July 2018. As per the revised deadline, they are now required to build up to the plinth-level by mid-July 2018 and up to the roof line by mid-January 2019. While this has been a relief, it also has people scrambling to meet deadlines in order to receive the full housing grant, with nearly two-thirds of them taking out reconstruction loans, according to a recent study done by the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office.

Despite slow progress, project partners in the earthquake affected districts have continued to advocate for improving and expediting services to victims. In Dolakha, the CS:MAP partner HURADEC carried out evidence-based research and advocacy aimed at proving that 64 Thami community households in the Bhimeshwor municipality Ward 2 are landless and hence, excluded from any kind of government facilities. As a result, the landless Thami households have begun to advocate for the provision of land where they can build their houses. HURADEC has supported the formation of a 15-member pressure group, oriented the group on related policy matters, on how to conduct a door-to-door campaign to sensitize their community, and to attain certification from the district land revenue office to provide legal evidence of their landless status.

Context in the Western Districts:

The national environment including the circular from MoHA has affected the civil society environment in the western districts as well. Though there is no direct restriction on civil society works, but it can be felt that the environment is not civil society friendly. As CS:MAP has been engaging with the local elected representatives since the beginning, CS:MAP local CSO partners are able to continue their work even in this situation. For example, the Triveni *gaunpalika* trusted the CS:MAP local CSO partner Rukum there so much that they requested that the CS:MAP local CSO partner facilitate a public hearing.

In addition, CSOs in this region are under tax regulations, which is being strict and need approval from a local authority for conducting activities, sometimes on case-by-case basis. However, in general local government units have given some space to media organizations and are more often using media platforms to share their plans, policies and activities, especially those that relate to RTI.

This reporting period coincided with the local-level planning process as well. The new seven-step planning process seems shorter compared to the previous 14-step planning process. However, the earlier structures such as Ward Citizen Forums and Citizens Awareness Centers are not in existence, so the new process was as difficult to understand as compared to the new laws. To some extent, through CS:MAP, local structures and other mechanisms in the districts, people are engaged in the planning process, but the priorities of people were not consistently incorporated in the plan. Local government units have focused mostly on developing infrastructure in the current plan. In addition, the need-based budgeting could not prioritize the needs of women, marginalized, Dalits and children. CS:MAP will continue advocating for citizen engagement in local-level planning process and continue to monitor the implementation process.

Local government units have started to prepare and pass different laws, rules and guidelines. The numbers vary from 12 to 31. For example, the Gauriganga municipality in Kailali and the Sanfebagar municipality in Achham have drafted laws to govern the municipality including education rules, agriculture promotion acts, disaster risk reduction (DRR) guidelines. Still citizen engagement in drafting the laws was limited. In Dang, except in Ghorahi and Tulsipur sub-metropolitan cities, other local government units have not drafted any laws related to health, education, agriculture and disaster risk reduction, though the local units claim these sectors as their priority sectors. CS:MAP is expediting its engagement with the Health, Education, Agriculture and DRR (HEAD) coalitions in the districts to promote citizen engagement and advocate for these laws.

2. Progress against targets per objective

CS:MAP activities achieved the following immediate outputs and outcomes during this reporting period.

Objective 1: Strengthened enabling environment for civil society and media

Result 1.1 Improved legal and policy framework based on international standards that leads to a better operating environment and strengthened capacity for civil society.

- The Government of Nepal has withdrawn its circular directing all District Administration Offices (DAOs) to seek the property details of NGO personnel, and limit their interventions to only one specific sector. This was made possible with the joint advocacy efforts of CS:MAP's civil society coalition led by the NFN.
- The GoN placed on hold the implementation of draft National Integrity Policy 2074, which could have negative impacts on freedoms of expression and association. PMO has shown commitment to improve this as per the demand of civil society. CS:MAP partner NFN formed and coordinated a joint task force to engage with the PMO and other stakeholders to change its restrictive provisions of this policy.
- FNJ has drafted the alternative National Mass Communication Act and shared it with parliamentarians and Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MoIC). A government-formed committee had also prepared a draft earlier which had many provisions that were against the standards of freedom of expression. MOIC has agreed to consider the FNJ's alternative draft while developing new draft.
- After trainings to Public Information Officers, more than 50 different government agencies have improved the implementation of RTI by displaying contact information for PIOs; implementation of pro-active disclosure guideline of RTI; and allocation of separate budget for information management and capacity building on RTI.

Result 1.2 Improved public understanding and confidence in the role of CSOs and media.

- CS:MAP completed the production of a video drama on civil society and media. Pre-test feedback was incorporated to create a clear message about civil society and media.

- TV debate about the role and importance of civil society was broadcast on the television show *Sarokar* of Kantipur Television and reached to more than 12 thousand people.

- Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) has integrated a training session on civil society within their regular courses for government under-secretaries. CS:MAP developed a sample course and facilitated two separate sessions on May 9 and May 16, 2018 as part

of the month-long "Advanced Course on Governance and State Management," which under-secretaries must complete to be promoted to the joint secretary level.

- The US Ambassador to Nepal, a Senior Anti-Corruption Advisor for USAID, and an Open Government Partnership (OGP) board member joined with representatives from civil society, media and government to discuss the concept of OGP and the value of implementing it in Nepal.

- 342 people participated in a media public hearing, the goal of which was to gain a better understanding of citizens' concerns about media and design solutions to address them through FNJ programs.

Result 1.3 Improved self-regulation of the sector and internal governance of CSOs and media.

- Civil society coalition lead NFN has prepared minimum standards for CSOs' internal governance and self-regulation and shared them with its members. Monitoring of code of conduct of NFN has also been started. This document will be taken into discussion with the civil society coalition for wider ownership in the subsequent quarters.

- FNJ has finalized the Media Self-Assessment Toolkit to enhance internal governance and self-regulation of media houses. Media houses have agreed to implement it with the support from FNJ.

- Tribhuvan University (TU) has agreed to add the research report on *Self-Regulation Mechanisms in the Media and Its Interlinkages with Credibility* as course reference material for their mass communication and journalism students. The Central Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (CDJMC) at TU has finalized the research report and shared their findings with media owners, editors, political leaders and journalists. Key findings of the research are to adopt a definite editorial policy that takes into account election reporting; ensure more balance in news and views reporting; design and adopt a communication policy and strategy for the dissemination of election results; adopt measures for ongoing improvement; and ensure the election reporting from social, economic and public interest angles as opposed to political angles alone.

Application of strategic approach and relevance of critical assumption

CS:MAP's Year III workplan made a critical assumption that as the GoN has begun developing laws and policies under the new constitution, CS:MAP would have the opportunity to support CSOs' efforts to constructively engage with lawmakers to strengthen the enabling environment. This assumption proved to be valid. The law-making process at the national and sub-national level was started as a part of the implementation of the new constitution, and all levels of government have started creating laws related to civil society and media. In response, during this quarter, both civil society and media coalitions have effectively coordinated their advocacy efforts.

For example, to advocate for improving laws and policies related to freedoms of association, assembly and expression, the coalitions organized frequent formal and informal meetings with GoN, parliamentarians, policy makers, civil society, and media. Additionally, NFN and FNJ have engaged non-members in policy advocacy through civil society and media coalitions. Some of the proposed policies for civil society and media with restrictive provisions also forced diverse stakeholders to come together to advocate for expanding spaces for civic engagement.

To increase legitimacy and accountability in the civil society sector, the coalitions organized open discussions on internal governance and self-regulation with a wide range of actors and stakeholders. This proactive and coordinated policy advocacy with continuous technical guidance from CS:MAP has contributed to the repeal of policies that were not favorable for civil society and media. Likewise, analysis of proposed policies and provisions with the lens of international standards, international laws and international best practices has empowered CSOs to effectively engage with law makers.

In addition, civil society, media and government actors came together in Open Government Partnership (OGP) roundtables to foster collaboration for increasing participation, inclusion, transparency, and accountability of both civil society and the government. OGP roundtables at the national and sub-national levels helped stakeholders understand the role and importance of civil society in strengthening democracy and addressing public interest.

Challenges and CS:MAP mitigation measures adapted

There is still an environment of mistrust between GoN and CSOs. The government's willingness to initiate open discussions and public consultations during law-making processes, was weak. However, joint advocacy of civil society actors and their proactive engagement with the Prime Minister, ministers and other lawmakers helped to integrate citizen inputs in the policies. Similarly, policy analysis and recommendations based on international standards, international best practices and international laws were very effective evidence for civil society and media coalitions to interact with the government.

It was also a challenge to show the value of self-regulation within civil society and media and develop and implement internal governance within the sectors. Government and political leaders expressed the need of self-regulation and internal governance within civil society and media in different dialogues organized by CS:MAP. It was, in a way, a protection mechanism for civil society and media from restrictive legal and policy provisions. Likewise, CS:MAP has initiated discussions with Association of International (AIN) NGOs in Nepal to consider these basic aspects while selecting their local partners. These motivations and needs have created an environment that encourages the development and implementation of guidelines and promotes the benefits of voluntarily adhering to institutional governance/self-regulation standards.

Objective 2: Improved civil society and media capacity for effective policy advocacy and government engagement.

Result 2.1 Strengthened CSO initiatives to coordinate with the Government of Nepal (GoN) and to implement constructive advocacy strategies.

- CS:MAP local CSOs partners working in 34 program districts have identified 68 different issues for advocacy. Among the issues, twelve issues are related to health, thirteen issues related to education, six related to agriculture and three related to DRR. CSOs are finalizing reports on the community action research conducted for the ten issues. To conduct evidence-based research of the 24 remaining issues, CSOs have initiated preliminary process such as developing questionnaires, finalizing sample numbers, and selecting participants.

- The regular orientations conducted by the local CSOs, helped the public-private working groups (PPWGs) and CAs understand the use and effectiveness of the *Sajha Sabha* app for governance strengthening. In addition, the Community Development Center (CDC) in

Nuwakot, DEC in Dhading and Makwanpur, and Integrated Rural Development Society (IRDS) in Gulmi and Arghakhanchi conducted an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) orientation in the community and helped citizens upload local issues to the application. RWDC in Dang, and DEC Nepal in Dhading and Makwanpur prepared a list of issues and handed them over to the local government. Issues relevant to CS:MAP working local units were discussed in CA as well.

- Community engagement with the local government increased as a result of the 42 CA meetings that were held in this quarter. These CA meetings resolved longstanding issues that were not a priority for the local government units. For example: the salary of the locally hired teachers in Gauriganga municipality in Kailali is now paid by the municipality instead of parents; complaint boxes have been kept in ward offices in Achham, Nuwakot, Makwanpur districts; and birthing centers have been established in Nuwakot and Kapilvastu.

- The 11 PPWGs held in this quarter focused on solving issues that require attention and commitment from the elected bodies, concerned Government offices, private sectors and CSOs. For example, due to the PPWG discussions and actions taken after that, Agrovets in Dhading started selling quality seeds and controlled the selling of harmful pesticides; NRA in Nuwakot and Rasuwa responded to the grievances collected from earthquake affected people within ten days; and Dipayal-Silgadhi municipality allocated NRs. two million (subjected to be approved from the municipal council) for screening and further treatment of the women affecting from uterus prolapse in the municipality.

- Two provincial legislators and one federal legislator attended three *Sajha Sabhas* held in the districts of Lalitpur, Surkhet and Okhaldhunga. Additionally, eight other *Sajha S*abhas were held in which four mayors, one deputy mayor, two chairs and one vice chairs of working local government units were invited for their commitment as most of local resources are managed by local units.

Result 2.2 Improved coalition-building between local and national CSOs, and between CSOs and the media, that leads to joint actions undertaken on selected policy priorities across sectors.

- HEAD coalitions in all 34 program districts are becoming a common platform for CSOs to discuss advocacy issues raised by CSOs, validate advocacy plans, discuss issues that disproportionately affect marginalized communities in public services and resources. For example: HEAD coalition in Makwanpur discussed about the ineffectiveness of health insurance of the Government and unsatisfactory services from the hospitals. The coalition submitted a memorandum to the District Health Office in May 2018 for addressed the concerns. The coalition in Dang discussed about the ineffectiveness of scholarship to Kamlaharies, prepared advocacy plan and asked RWDC to conduct evidence-based research for that. The research findings will be shared with the coalition, which will then work on action steps for advocacy. The coalition in Dolakha created pressure for participatory planning process.

- With the addition of one *Shreejanshil Shakha* in Bardiya, CS:MAP is now supporting 32 *Shreejanshil Shakhas* in its working districts. As these *Shreejanshil Shakhas* are mostly located in rural areas, close to CA and LDAG, these spaces are providing opportunities to the marginalized communities for accessing information focused on public service delivery

and resources, process to access the government services (citizen charter), discuss on local issues among local civil society including CA and LDAG.

Result 2.3 Improved CSO and media capacity to conduct participatory and evidence-based research on issues, policy, and enforcement

- CS:MAP media partner Equal Access continued to work collaboratively with CS:MAP Intermediary Service Organizations (ISOs) Measures for Intervention Training Research and Action (MITRA) Samaj, Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN) and Nepal National Social Welfare Association (NNSWA) to support CSOs in conducting Participatory and Evidence-based Action Research (PEAR). Thirty-Three Community Action Researchers (CARs) provided with refresher training this quarter will lead to research initiatives on selected community challenges related to school enrolment and high drop-out rates; and the situation of health facilities in communities, among others. Measures have also been taken to ensure that research results are documented and reported upon. CARs are being hosted by local CSOs and are working in coordination with the local CSO staff.

- Journalists who previously participated in the training and study visit at the Center for Investigative Journalism published ten investigative stories this quarter. These stories focused on issues of concern to marginalized groups, women's empowerment, foreign employment, social protection, misuse of power, women's health and related issues. Similarly, Advocacy Monitoring and Oversight training participants published eight stories on marginalized communities, local development, education, disaster risk management and local governance. These stories were published either in national dailies, online news portals and/ or in *MeroReport*.

- Following training by Equal Access in the previous quarter, fourteen CSO partners developed organizational strategic communication guidelines and had them endorsed by their respective board of directors this quarter.

Application of strategic approach and relevance of critical assumption:

As anticipated in its Annual Work Plan (AWP), CS:MAP did not have to deviate much in terms of its strategic approach. However, project staff made necessary revisions in the content and modality of the training, extending the duration of the training to accommodate sessions on local governance, budget allocation and policy making. CS:MAP provided necessary technical inputs to ISOs for equipping them to support CARs and CSOs on evidence-based action research to generate evidence for advocacy. Panel discussions in the trainings, action plan and follow up mechanisms were helpful modalities. ISOs provided support on research tools, techniques and development of forms and formats for Key Informants Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) based on their advocacy issues. CS:MAP prepared the training plan in consultation with ISOs and CSOs and sequenced the trainings.

The critical assumptions made in the AWP were valid. Local-level elected representatives were engaged in CS:MAP structures and participated in major events such as *Sajha Sabhas* and orientation on SA tools at district and local levels. PPWGs are chaired by District Coordination Committee chairs or deputy chairs whereas ward chairs and other elected members are invited for

CA meetings. They coordinated with CSOs through participation in joint monitoring and collaboration with other wards and *gaunpalika*/municipality level.

Challenges and CS:MAP mitigation measures adapted

CSOs are working with district-level HEAD coalitions for their support and cooperation on their efforts to engage governments and provide oversight of public services. The CSOs expect feedback from the coalitions on the advocacy plans and to work with them on advocacy efforts. However, the coalitions have experienced challenges in successfully working with the CSOs because of their limited advocacy capacity, frequent changes in participants from the same CSO, and difficulties linking with the national HEAD coalition.

To mitigate the challenges, CSOs are visiting coalition members individually, sharing project information in different fora and sharing the importance of working together to provide oversight of public services and engage government units. CS:MAP ISOs NEPAN and MITRA SAMAJ have planned to explore national HEAD coalitions to link CSOs HEAD issues and advocacy issues to the advocacy priorities of national or provincial HEAD coalitions. Likewise, NNSWA is coordinating with CSOs working on Dalit issues and activists in provinces 5, 6 and 7 to develop joint actions for Dalit rights and link with national advocacy priorities. In addition, CS:MAP partner Equal Access is working for maximum use of radio programs and *MeroReport* platform, to link trained journalists to the sub-national CSOs and FM radio station partners to ensure more coordinated and effective advocacy efforts. The collaboration among local CSO partners and trained journalists will be prioritized and will be reinforced during field visits. CS:MAP plans to hold coordination meetings with its ISOs and share details of the training curriculum and method, as well as contact details of the trained journalists for effective collaboration on advocacy efforts.

Objective 3: More coordinated and effective civil society and media oversight of public resource use and public service delivery.

Result 3.1 Improved capacity of local CSOs, media, and community-based organizations to monitor and report on cross-sectoral public service delivery, based on common standards applicable to each sector.

- Pataria, Ward No. 1 of Suddhodhan *gaunpalika* in Kapilvastu district has been selected for piloting the Good Governance Barometer. To improve the local government's ownership in the initiative, meetings with District Coordination Committee and respective *gaunpalika* were held to seek approval for conducting GGB. Indreni Rural Development Center (IRDC) Nepal has received a letter of approval from the *gaunpalika* to conduct GGB. Preparatory meetings have taken place to orient elected officials on GGB's importance, its rationale and their respective roles in the GGB process. IRDC is preparing to conduct small-stakeholder workshop to discuss issues and identify one major issue for conducting GGB. Further progress will be reported in the next quarter.

- GGB action plans are being implemented in Gulmi, Rukum and Sindhupalchowk districts. As per their GGB action plan, the Gulmi Durbar *gaunpalika* has prepared annual educational calendars and distributed them to schools. Similarly, a provision for an annual performance evaluation of the head teacher has been included in *gaunpalika*'s draft education policy. As committed in GGB action plan, three community schools set up complaint boxes within school premises and have formed grievance redressal committees. A grievance redressal committee has been formed at Mahendra Pratap Secondary School,

Dhuskun, Tripurasundari *gaunpalika*. Community schools located in Ward 6 of Sunkoshi *gaunpalika* have also posted complaint/grievance boxes at schools and have jointly agreed to open the complaint boxes every last day of the month. In Rukum, following the GGB action plan, a monitoring committee has been formed and a complaint box has been set up at a health post of Triveni *gaunpalika*. The monitoring committee has been regularly checking the services provided by the health post. Health Post has also conducted a free health camp as agreed in the action plan. Similarly, Triveni *gaunpalika* has deployed full staffs at the health post and a Public Information Officer has also been designated to provide information to citizens. It has also initiated the process of seeking budget from *gaunpalika* and other sources to construct the disable-friendly structures as agreed in the GGB action plan.

- The uptake of *MeroReport* as a platform for monitoring and reporting on cross-cutting issues has been relatively slow. However, from observing the trend of participation, especially in the last two quarters, CS:MAP partner Equal Access will continue its efforts with all CS:MAP partners to promote *MeroReport* as an interactive platform for CSOs, journalists and general users to engage in discussions related to social accountability, good governance, public service oversight and related issues. At the end of the last quarter, ten groups engaged in discussions on disaster management, gender equality, social inclusion, health services and agricultural services. Two additional groups were formed this quarter, however, with the merging of one group with an existing one, 11 thematic groups are now active on the platform. As outlined above, increased monitoring and reporting on cross-sectoral public service delivery will be further strengthened by encouraging new membership as well as by facilitating more engaging discussions within and across these groups. Even as growing membership on the platform can be considered an encouraging trend, CS:MAP will continue to put efforts in engendering increased discussions and sharing within and across groups.

Result 3.2: Improved bottom-up coordination between community, district, and national formal and informal CSOs engaged in public service oversight.

- 14 coalition meetings were conducted in this quarter. Discussion items included the joint actions on CSOs' advocacy plan and issues, an evidence-based action research, and the findings from the use of SA tools (PET/s, public hearing). For example, DRR network in Dolakha jointly pushed for the reconstruction of houses for the landless people (Thami community) in Bhimeshwor municipality- 2 Fulapa and submitted a memorandum to the local authority; HEAD coalition in Kathmandu used RTI to ask for budget spent in luxurious things by Kageshwori Manohara municipality.

- CS:MAP brought in all its partners including the international partners in a two-day review, reflection and planning meeting to provide direction for CS:MAP's Year IV workplan. This platform was also used in advancing CS:MAP concept and strategies.

Result 3.3 Improved citizen awareness and use of available GoN social accountability mechanisms.

- Due to the trainings provided to CSOs through CS:MAP's ISOs partners, CSOs have been able to advocate for mandatory provisions of Social Audit, Public Audit and Public Hearing to *gaunpalikas* and municipalities. The *gaunpalikas* and municipalities CS:MAP has focused it works, have now started conducting public hearings. As of this report, 15 Public

Hearings have been conducted by five *gaunpalikas*: Myagang in Nuwakot, Sailung in Dolakha, Tinau in Palpa, Triveni in Rukum and Khadadevi in Ramechhap (nine wards of Khadadevi *gaunpalika* conducted public hearings in technical support from CS:MAP local CSO partner in coordination with a local NGO) and two municipalities Manthali in Ramechhap, and Bheriganga in Surkhet. CS:MAP's local CSO partners facilitated these public hearings.

- A total of 1,344 callers participated in *Sajha Boli Chautari* (SBC) after the production and broadcast of 66 episodes of the *Sajha Boli* radio series. The radio listenership inspired various community actions, with LDAGs participating in joint initiatives towards establishment of ward offices, pressuring ward offices to install Citizen Charters and oversight of public resource use and public service delivery.

- Three episodes of the popular youth radio program *Saathi Sanga Manka Kura* (SSMK) were produced this quarter and covered issues ranging from women's empowerment and GESI, agriculture issues and entrepreneurship. These episodes were broadcast throughout the country by various radio stations including Radio Nepal. Listeners have reported increased knowledge on issues such as local level planning processes, budget allocation, GESI and social accountability tools, among others.

- The outcomes from *Sajha Boli* and SSMK radio programs are mostly observed in LDAG activities and from feedback shared by the general audience. These outcomes can be traced as a cyclic process starting from awareness and leading to some form of action. CS:MAP will work with CSOs to assess the subsequent impacts of these LDAG initiated activities..

- Twenty-one CAG meetings held in this Quarter, engaged a total of 251 participants (23 at the central CAG and 228 at the local CAG meetings) and identified content and messaging priorities for the radio programs. These meetings provided a platform for fruitful engagement between government representatives and relevant stakeholders.

- A total of 26 PSAs on accountable journalism and oversight of local service delivery were produced and broadcast this quarter. These PSAs were produced in Nepali as well as in 7 local languages/dialects, namely, Magar, Newari, Awadhi, Tamang, Sherpa, Tharu and Doteli. All partner radio stations broadcast these PSAs at least 10 times each day for 10 days from June 1-10, 2018. Additionally, the PSAs were included in both local and central versions of the *Sajha Boli* radio programs. Though PSAs are produced and broadcast on a quarterly basis, the assessment is planned on a semi-annual basis. Hence, PSA assessments will be conducted in the next quarter.

Result 3.4 Improved citizen engagement in media and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools to strengthen public participation and oversight.

- CS:MAP supported local government efforts to share their annual budget and plans through the open local government portal and mobile application in Neelakantha municipality in Dhading and Nepalgunj sub-metropolitan city in Banke. The formal launch in both the local units have been held. MoFAGA has owned the tool and is implementing the tool in rest of 751 local units with the technical support from CS:MAP.

- A handbook on *ICT for Advocacy and Oversight of Public Service Delivery* (*Annex 1*) was developed. This will be an important resource for CS:MAP partners and other civil society organizations.

- CS:MAP conducted three campaigns on SMS My Voice in the past which were widely promoted through *Sajha Boli* and SSMK radio programs, and through CS:MAP outreach activities. More than 4,000 youth have participated in these campaigns. Some of the exemplary actions taken by youth include collaboration with elected local representatives to ensure transparency and accountability at the local level and community level awareness programs against corruption. The major outcomes from these campaigns are evident in two areas: (1) increased discussion among youth on issues such as governance, social accountability, public service oversight; and (2) increasing use of ICT tools by youth to engage in discussion about such issues. While efforts to sustain these outcomes will be continued, CS:MAP partner Equal Access is working on the reports from the campaigns to make them available to the concerned stakeholders so that further actions can be influenced.

- The fourth SMV campaign (May – September 2018) with the title 'म भाग लिन्छु,' which translates to "I Will Participate," encouraged youth to participate in the just concluded local level planning process that spanned this quarter and share their concerns. The aim was to encourage and engage youth in discussions related to local level plans and programs they saw as priority for this year's planning process. As of June 2018, almost 1,000 youth have participated in this fourth campaign. Responses received show young participants' eagerness and commitment to participate in the planning process, and also their willingness to encourage more female participation in the process.

Application of strategic approach and relevance of critical assumption

The critical assumptions made in the AWP helped CS:MAP team implement its strategic approach for coordinated and effective civil society and media oversight of public resource use and public services delivery. CS:MAP partners have embraced the principle of collaborative governance approach in implementing social accountability tools including the Good Governance Barometer (GGB). Ownership and engagement of local elected representatives in the GGB process starts from joint consultations with the local governments to promote buy-in of the tool on where to implement and what issue to cover through the GGB. Continuous coordination and active participation of elected representatives in the entire process of GGB implementation right from selection of the stakeholders and module to identifying major issue through multi-stakeholder approach has boosted ownership and engagement of local government representatives in the GGB process. This shows that assumptions made on engagement of elected representatives in the work plan were validated because they were active and open to participate in the GGB process in different levels. Implementation of GGB action plans by the local governments is also indicative of their ownership of the tool.

As GGB is being piloted in only in seven local units of four districts, CS:MAP is using Common Assemblies and PPWGs for improving governance in other working districts. In addition, CS:MAP has started to engage with representatives from government ministries and agencies (at central level) and local level representatives (at the sub-national level) through CAG meetings. This has helped the radio production team ensure that content for radio episodes reflect the government priorities, plans and policies and understand the most recent updates related to government's policies, plans and programs. Strategically, these meetings also allow the project team to seek commitment from government stakeholders to listen to the radio program and engage further. Even at the local CAG meetings, the producers have used this platform to interact with their local representatives and listen to their feedback on the radio program. The presence of LDAG

members in these meetings also allows for more engaging discussion on the radio programs and LDAG activities. Hence, CAG meetings, though primarily organized for content generation, has served as a platform for fruitful engagement between government and community stakeholders.

This quarter, CS:MAP intensified its work in promoting Open Government Partnership (OGP). CS:MAP has made local government units open to the concept of OGP and has sensitized political leadership at federal level through roundtable discussions and enhancing citizen participation through interactive mobile applications including web portals for local governments. CS:MAP through its ISO partner Kathmandu Living Labs` (KLL) has developed an interactive mobile application as well as a web portal for local government units, which helps to disclose budget, plan, expenditure and other important public information. The application and portal have already been adopted by two municipalities (Nilkantha municipality of Dhading District and Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City of Banke) and have started updating various information for the public consumption and access. Considering the importance of the application and portal, the MoFAGA has also begun a process to replicate this application and portal in all 753 local government units.

Challenges and CS:MAP mitigation measures adapted

CS:MAP anticipated some challenges in working with the elected representatives while implementing social accountability (SA) tools including GGB. However the collaborative and participatory approach in implementing SA tools proved to be a key to foster trust between the project and local government representatives in smoothly implementing GGB. Elected people's representatives were consulted right from the issue selection to completion of the GGB process led to successful conduct of GGB process in selected *gaunpalikas*. Similarly, some *gaunpalikas* and municipalities have approached the CS:MAP implementing partners in Ramechhap, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk and Rukum for technical support in facilitating public hearings. This has become possible because of the trust and confidence between CS:MAP implementing partners and local elected representatives.

CS:MAP understands the need of stronger collaboration among partners to maximize the use of *MeroReport* and SMV Campaign, which were emphasized during the bi-annual summit held in March. CS:MAP is also working on an outreach management strategy that will be finalized in the next few weeks with an action plan to ensure better linkages with activities being implemented by CSO partners and the radio.

Objective 4: Strengthen organizational capacity and sustainability of CSOs working in USAID priority sectors to advance local solutions.

Result 4.1 Improved institutional governance of selected CSOs and media organizations.

- OCA assessment of 14 CSOs conducted in this reporting period, showed 20% increment in overall score compared to baseline in FY 2017. The CSOs have developed five-year strategic plan, other policies and guidelines, reviewed and updated personal and financial policies, developed GESI, communication and resource mobilization guidelines which contributed CSOs to operate systematically and in their direction as outlined in their vision. CSOs have improved their capacity mainly in systematic and transparent staff recruitment (formation of recruitment committee, reference check), developed organizational structures, amended the constitution and conducted a general assembly within three months of the completion of fiscal year, developed procurement plans and reformed their procurement committees, ensured GESI in their policies and implementations, and meeting donor compliances.

- CS:MAP in coordination with ISO partners initiated and drafted a minimum standard for internal governance of CSOs. The minimum standard covered the areas of participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic direction with indicators to ensure its implementation. ISOs now stand ready to roll out and support CSOs to apply the standards in quarter 4. Progress in this will be reported in a subsequent reporting period.

Result 4.2: Improved capacity of select CSOs and media organizations to mobilize social and financial resources for sustainability.

- As a result of the training held in September 2017 on financial sustainability, participating CSOs have, with technical support from the ISOs, developed resource mobilization guidelines, which were then endorsed by their board or general assembly. All CSOs now stand ready with their resources mobilization committees and an action plan for resources mobilization. Between October 2017 and June 2018, 11 CSOs received a total of 21 new funding sources (including seven from government agencies).

- After the training on Participatory and Evidence-based Action Research (PEAR) in Q2 FY 2018, CSOs have hosted CARs and mobilized them for generating evidence-based research on their advocacy issues. As of June 2018, 27 trained CARs are working on evidence-based action research.

Result 4.3: Improved capacity of CSOs and media organizations to advance local solutions on priority development issues across sectors and to promote peer-learning opportunities.

- CSOs are coordinating with each other to exchange their learning and guidance on implementation of project activities such as conducting PET/s, orientation on SA tools district and local level which enable them to create learning practices among themselves. A peer learning event is planned in Q4 FY 2018 by NNSWA and MITRA Samaj. Furthermore, CSOs will also participate and present their best practices in CS:MAP bi-annual summit in Q4 FY 2018.

Application of strategic approach and relevance of critical assumption

CS:MAP's capacity building team worked with three ISOs (NEPAN, NNSWA and MITRA Samaj) revised the ISOs mobilization strategies for a more effective and comprehensive capacity building to the CSOs. Based on CS:MAP capacity strengthening model- formal training, one-on-one technical assistance, coaching and mentoring, online resources and support and peer exchange has been continued. ISOs have been collaborating with each other, conducting regular meetings to discuss on learnings and challenges to support CSOs and plan to mitigate those challenges. Effectiveness of ISOs support has increased through need-based support to CSOs in implementation of program activities focusing on advocacy and government engagement.

ISOs are assigned the responsibilities based on geographical coverage. Based on new approaches-NEPAN will support four CSOs, NNSWA will support five and MITRA Samaj will support another five CSOs. CS:MAP reviewed the area of expertise of ISOs and assigned the responsibilities accordingly. However, CS:MAP and its in-house resources, short term technical assistance (STTA) and the international partners will stand ready for specific support to the ISOs and CSOs (financial sustainability, advocacy, Government engagement etc.). CSOs have also started to realize their specific needs in terms of requiring technical support and have started to

coordinate with ISOs. CS:MAP's capacity strengthening model is appreciated by the CSO leadership and board members.

Anticipated challenges and CS:MAP mitigation measures

Engaging CSO board members after the training to strengthen the role of CSOs in the district and work for governance strengthening is found challenging as they are engaged in their regular work besides being civil society leaders. In addition, coordination with government line agencies and local units on project implementation and strengthening CSOs' role in the district is also challenging. Managing the time of ISOs for direct support to CSOs is another challenge for the project. To mitigate these challenges, CS:MAP and its ISOs are ensuring the participation of board members of CSOs prior to their travel. ISOs are working closely with the coordinators, who are now assigned as focal person in project related activities of their OCA-IIP and ARI-CB plan.

3. Activity Progress

3.1 Development and submission of deliverables

Narrative and Financial Reports:

Second Quarterly Progress Report for Year 3 (January 1- March 31, 2018): The quarterly progress report for the second quarter of Year 3 was submitted to the USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) on April 30, 2018. The team received comments and suggestions for improvement on May 31, 2018. The team submitted the revised version of the report with the comments and suggestions incorporated on June 22, 2018 and received approval from the AOR on June 25, 2018.

Financial Report for Quarter III Year III: CS:MAP submitted the third quarterly financial report (SF425) for Year 3 on July 30, 2018.

Short-Term Consultant Reports, Technical Briefs/Reports, Special and External Reports: In consultation with the AOR, and to ensure direct communications regarding consultants' focus and findings, CS:MAP has convened a debriefing meeting with its AOR for consultants who travel and work under CS:MAP at the end of their visits. Suggestions and recommendations from the AOR have been incorporated into the deliverables.

Monthly calendar and updates: CS:MAP is providing a monthly calendar to the AOR on the last day of every month for the upcoming month. At the same time, the CS:MAP team has been sharing updates on the previous month's activities with USAID. In addition, CS:MAP is holding monthly meetings with the AOR.

Development Experience Clearinghouse submission: CS:MAP has submitted reports and knowledge products to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx). As of this report, 19 documents have been uploaded to the Development Experience Clearinghouse.

3.2 Progress Achieved toward Project Objectives

Objective 1: Strengthened enabling environment for civil society and media.

Result: 1.1: Improved legal and policy framework, based on international standards that leads to better operating environment and strengthened capacity for civil society.

Activity 1.1.1: Implement advocacy action plans on regulatory reform issues on CSOs and media.

Building on Year 2 activities involving regulatory framework assessments and stakeholder consultations that informed advocacy action planning, CS:MAP and its partners undertook the advocacy efforts below to improve the enabling environment for CSOs and media.

1.1.1.1 Policy work
During this quarter, the Government of Nepal (GoN) presented two documents that would have a significant, negative impact to the legal environment for CSOs. First, in April 2018, the GON presented a draft National Integrity Policy (Policy). Sections 9.2.3 and 9.2.4 of the Policy directly affect the functioning, operations and activities of Nepali NGOs and International NGOs (INGOs). These sections suggest that the Policy's primary aim is to monitor, restrict and control NGOs and INGOs—rather than empower them or broader civil society. CS:MAP's international partner ICNL initially provided a bullet-point legal analysis of each section's articles, highlighting the article's contravention of international legal principles. After this rapid assessment, CS:MAP partner ICNL produced a more fulsome, complete legal analysis by summarizing relevant international law and then highlighted the main concerns. CS:MAP shared these documents with partners, and advocacy at the domestic and international levels is continuing based on these legal analyses.

NFN organized a coalition meeting with 24 participants on April 13, 2018 to discuss the effects of the proposed National Integrity Policy 2074 on the working space for civil society organizations. The discussion focused on the rationale and structure of the policy, especially on the 13 provisions under section 9.2.3 directly applicable to NGOs. The meeting decided to submit a 'concern paper' to the government to change provisions restricting CSO working environment. A similar discussion was held within members of the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN) about the provisions of the policy. Facilitated by CS:MAP, the two umbrella entities met on April 20, 2018 representing 10 stakeholders to discuss collective action, as provisions within the policy implied similar consequences for the operation of NGOs and INGOs in Nepal. This group decided to hold periodic meetings, share information, and form a joint task force to initiate advocacy efforts aimed at addressing problematic provisions in the policy.

Second, in June 2018, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a "Notice regarding registration and renewal of organizations/institutions" (Notice). The Notice directed all District Administration Offices to require all organizations registered under the Association Registration Act, 2034 to submit three additional documents in order for their registration to be renewed and requires the District Administration Office to not renew any association's registration if it has not been renewed for 3 consecutive years. The additional documents required were: (1) Property details of board members and staff; (2) Selection of only one working area (this would also require proof that association's founding documents, like its constitution or charter, are amended); and (3) progress reports submitted every four (4) months. In order to be responsive to domestic and international partners, CS:MAP partner ICNL produced an initial analysis within eight hours of the Notice being made public. This initial analysis noted that the Notice's provisions were beyond the requirements of the Associations Registration Act, and therefore are unlikely to meet the "prescribed by law" standard in Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The initial analysis also highlighted how the Notice's four additional requirements did not meet international law. The following-day, ICNL produced a more formal legal analysis that CS:MAP shared with its national and international partners.

NFN called an urgent coalition meeting on June 14, 2018. Sixty-two participants from different federations, alliances, CSO coalition networks, prominent civil society leaders as well as NFN's central executive members argued that the circular was against the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal. Following this meeting, NFN issued a press release condemning the government circular; civil society leaders met with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Home Affairs, and the Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare; and NFN district chapters handed over notes of dissent to their respective District Administration Offices. While the government has withdrawn two of the four provisions in the circular, NFN and other national advocacy partners are continuing advocacy efforts to repeal other regressive provisions as well.

The focus of the advocacy in this quarter was on National Mass Communication Act. A dialogue with 17 senior journalists focusing on the draft law prepared by FNJ was organized on June 10, 2018. FNJ presented the draft media law at the meeting and collected inputs from participants. Inputs and concerns of the participants were incorporated by FNJ in the draft law. Similarly, FNJ conducted one-on-one meetings with different policy makers to advocate for improved media laws. ICNL provided initial feedback to specific provisions being contemplated in the FNJ's "model" Mass Communications Act and its Media Self-Assessment Tool Kit. The model act is in its final stage of drafting, and FNJ plans to share a copy with ICNL as soon as it is drafted, likely in July or August 2018. As per FNJ's request, ICNL will provide a legal analysis of the draft model law.

1.1.1.2 Training
CS:MAP collaborated with the Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) to design and integrate a civil society component within their regular training courses for government under-secretaries. Additionally, CS:MAP facilitated two separate sessions on May 9 and May 16, 2018 as part of the month-long "Advanced Course on Governance and State Management," which is mandatory for promotion to the joint secretary level. The key contents of the civil society component were: the concept of civil society in democracy; strength of civil society in Nepal; self-regulation as a means of fostering trust and confidence for civil society; the role and importance of civil society in Nepal's changed socio-political context; and collaboration between civil society and government. As a pioneer national level training institution for government employees, NASC will use the same resource material to facilitate a session on civil society for future course participants. CS:MAP will also collaborate with NASC to integrate this content in relevant courses for other levels.

FNJ organized two trainings on media advocacy on May 5, 2018 and June 22, 2018 in Kathmandu for newly elected presidents of different FNJ chapters and was attended by 24 and 16 participants respectively. These trainings were focused on roles of the provincial committees in ensuring media friendly policies and laws at the provincial level; and developing specific advocacy strategies and engagement with politicians, parliamentarians and government officials for improving media related laws and policies. The trained FNJ representatives are expected to work with provincial and local government to develop media friendly laws and policies.

1.1.1.3 Dissemination of Findings

ICNL reviewed the National Mass Communication Act, the draft National Integrity Policy and MoHA's Directive for Civil Society regulation with international standards, which was shared with NFN, FNJ, AIN and other partners. Those partners used the analyses as evidence and incorporated the main findings in their advocacy documents. Similarly, NFN used these analyses in recommendations they shared with the PMO, MoHA and MoWCSW.

Activity 1.1.2: Generate evidence on CSOs' contributions to Nepal's development in support of enabling environment advocacy efforts.

CS:MAP's national advocacy partner, South Asia Partnership Nepal (SAP Nepal) shared the key findings of the CSOs' contributions to Nepal's development with wider stakeholders. The event highlighted the contribution of CSO in Nepal since 1990 in Nepal's development which induced the participants to realize the contribution in different sectors. Two sharing events were organized with political parties, CSO and government representatives. The sharing events were utilized to build wider understanding and role of different CSOs. The goal of the events was to help participants see the issue from holistic prospective rather in isolation.

Activity 1.1.3: Hold policy discussions and commission research studies to produce policy analysis and policy briefs.

1.1.3.1 Policy dialogues:

CS:MAP actively engaged in advocacy against the National Integrity Policy through its national advocacy partners. The draft policy came into public access in April 2018 which was drafted limiting the working scope of civil society and imposing additionally administrative hurdles.

- The NGO Federation of Nepal organized a coalition meeting on April 13, 2018 to discuss the effects of the proposed National Integrity Policy 2074 on the working space for civil society organizations. The discussion focused on the rationale and structure of the policy. The meeting decided to submit a 'concern paper' to the government to change provisions restricting CSO working environment.

- CS:MAP initiated meetings between Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN) and NFN to build common advocacy agenda against certain provisions of National Integrity Policy on April 20, 2018. Later, NFN and AIN submitted their concerns as a memorandum to Prime Minister Office on the Draft Policy on May 7, 2018.

- NFN, Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) and AIN attended the consultation meeting along with different government officials and clearly presented their concerns about certain provisions of Integrity Policy.

NFN leadership met with Political Advisor of Prime Minister Bishnu Rimal, Minister of Finance Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada and influential political leaders of ruling parties and shared their concerns about proposed National Integrity Policy 2074. Additionally, they demanded not to push forward the Policy without necessary changes.**1.1.3.2 Research:**

The Central Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (CDJMC), TU shared the findings of research on S*elf-regulation Mechanisms in the Media and its Interlinkages with Credibility* with media owners, editors, political leaders and journalists. The research was based on an analysis of content published in 10 major mainstream print dailies over a period of one week, prior to each phase of the national and provincial elections held on November 26 and December 7, 2017 respectively. The analysis explored the extent to which election reporting adhered to journalistic best practices, media self-regulation and ethics, and election code of conduct. Some key recommendations put forth by this study include: the need to establish accurate, balanced and practical professional working guidelines for journalists, with a section dedicated to election reporting; the development and practice of self-regulatory mechanisms; and building compatible behavioral practices that are based on universally accepted principles and credible practices. TU will use this research as resource material for their teaching and learning activities.

Activity 1.1.4: Provide ongoing TA to civil society stakeholders on legislation processes.

CS:MAP provided technical assistance to FNJ in drafting the Mass Communication Act to be submitted to MoIC. ICNL and CS:MAP constantly engaged with FNJ and provided resources and knowledge on international laws, standards, best practice to make draft media friendly.

CS:MAP engaged with the National Information Commission (NIC) and provided inputs on the draft policy on Right to Information shared by the Commission on May 9 , 2018. The NIC is planning to make necessary amendment on Right to Information Laws.

Activity 1.1.5: Engaging GoN and Parliament stakeholders around legislative drafting.

CS:MAP's implementing partners FNJ, NFN, INSEC and Freedom Forum engaged with government officials, ministers, parliamentarians and political leaders advocating CSO friendly laws and policies. In total, 19 meetings were organized and focused mainly on the improvement of National Mass Communication Act, National Integrity Policy, directive issued by Ministry of Home Affairs. These meetings were attended by 115 participants of different concerned offices and CSOs. The engagement helped to create awareness, educate and update them on freedoms of association and expression. The Ministry of Home Affairs revoked its directive after the continuous engagement. Similarly, the meeting with Minister of Information and Communication Technology was very useful to push FNJ's draft of National Mass Communication Policy in the process. There is assurance from the Minister to provide ample space for the draft submitted by FNJ.

Good Governance (GoGo) Foundation organized a workshop with Parliamentarians o*n CSOs Enabling Environment* on May 25, 2018 in the presence of 46 participants including parliamentarians, CSO and media leaders in Kathmandu. Parliamentarians of the ruling parties expressed that the government was not intended to be regressive towards CSOs. They further said that proper management, regulation and governance of CSOs was essential. Workshop was attended by parliamentarians, Ram Narayan Bidari, Yagya Sunuwar, Rajendra Kumar Rai, Rekha Kumari Jha, Gopal Bam, and Narayan Prasad Khatiwada of Nepal Communist Party; Pushpa Bhusal and Kishore Singh Rathore of Nepali Congress; and Anil Kumar Jha of Rastriya Janata Party. Similarly, National Planning Commission members, Social Welfare Council Vice-chairperson, AIN and other civil society organizations also attended the program.*Activity 1.1.6: Training of Public Information Officers.*

Freedom Forum organized a three-day provincial-level training workshop on RTI for Public Information Officers (PIOs) from April 21-23, 2018 in Dang and from May 24-26, 2018 in Bhaktapur. A total of 45 participants (4 female) from different local levels were trained on the importance of the RTI Act's policies and provisions for maintaining transparency and accountability in the public agencies through these 2 slots of trainings. The Chief Information Commissioner along with the experts from Freedom Forum facilitated the training which covered the concept, meaning, principles, rights and duties of Information Officers, importance and utility of RTI, proactive disclosure mandated by law, process of handling information requests, and RTI as a tool for promoting good governance in local governments. Sixty percent of the participants represented local governments and the remaining represented District Administrative Office, District Coordination Committee, District Health Office, District Postal Service and District Election Commission Office from Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Dhading, Gorkha, Rasuwa and Nuwakot districts.

In addition, Freedom Forum followed up with the participants who competed the RTI trainings in the previous quarters and found that they made the following changes in the course of institutionalizing RTI:

- More than 50 Information Officers from different government offices changed the procedure for RTI application requests and registration. General practices like stamping, seeking orders from the seniors before registration of the request were discontinued.

- More than 60 offices posted visible nameplates and contact details of PIOs and maintained separate register of RTI. Similarly, around 60 agencies followed the proactive disclosure guideline of RTI and updated basic information in every three-month interval.

- At least 30 public offices allocated separate budget for information management and capacity building on RTI.

Result 1.2. Improved public understanding and confidence in the role of CSOs and media.

Activity 1.2.1: Launch outreach campaign to improve public understanding and confidence in CSOs and media.

CS:MAP's Public Outreach Campaign (POC) is being implemented and aims to improve the public's perception of civil society and the media. Major activities under the POC are:

- Completed production of two video dramas on civil society and media. Post-production work of editing the filmed footage was processed and the draft of the two videos was reviewed at various phases. Feedback and inputs have been incorporated in the videos, which will be tested again with the community people and stakeholders. Prior to this, the script for the two video dramas were finalized and shared with the lead artists Suntali-Dhurmush (Kunjana Ghimire-Sitaram Kattel) so that the language and the message of the content could be modified and edited in a drama format that brings in the essence of the lead artist after which production was planned for the two video dramas.

- The TV debate for building better understanding and improving public perception on CSOs and Media was broadcasted on Sarokar of Kantipur Television (KTV) with four expertise representing and inclusive of media, CSOs and the academic sector. The TV program team and the host were briefed on the key issues to be covered to achieve the expected outcome. Tentative questions and reference materials were also shared with the TV program team for their better understanding of the issue. The program was broadcasted and shared widely on social media mainly on Interface Facebook and Twitter. The program had 6.2K views by July 8, 2018 on YouTube. Similarly, the live program had 7.3K views and 34 Shares.

- The civil society documentary production on broader perspective of CSOs in Nepal is in process. Interviews with seven experts with diverse background are being conducted and processed at the studio. Planning and coordination has been done for filming further interviews.

- Social Media has been used for POC as one of the key media tools utilized to promote all the activities outlined in the POC. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts of Interface Nepal are used for dissemination of information/messages and to promote viewers engagement on the issue. To build up the views, likes, followers and for audience engagement Interface initiated *#MaNagarikSamaj* campaign and related posts were shared. The TV program on Sarokar, Kantipur TV was the first activity shared through the

Facebook page and twitter. Other related contents were also developed and shared and while some key posts were promoted organically through activities like: tagging people; sharing content and posting to relevant individuals and networks; and sharing posts in personal pages. Social media monitoring shows that there are 3,344 likes Facebook users and approximately 2,700 Facebook users see the post per day through post-paid boost.

- A newspaper notice was published in Kantipur Daily calling for submissions of short videos of up to 3 minutes with the deadline June 29, 2018. The call was open to all interested civil society members and media persons. The same notice was also shared through the social media using various networks, through emails, Viber messages and copies of print out were made and shared. The call was also shared to a number of on-line media who included it in their news reports. The call for submission, terms and conditions and the submission registration form were included on the Interface Nepal website and was shared on the social media. Per participants' request, the submission deadline was extended to July 16, 2018. Further support was provided to individual participants on the theme, concept as well as presentation.

Activity 1.2.2: Building public understanding on the broad concept of CSOs.

In the presence of the US Ambassador to Nepal, Alaina B. Teplitz and Senior Anti-corruption Advisor for USAID and OGP Board Member Victoria Ayer, CS:MAP organized a roundtable among major stakeholders in Nepalgunj, to discuss the concept of Open Government Partnership (OGP) on May 15, 2018. The concepts of accountability and transparency, the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) and citizen oversight of governance, and importance of collaboration among major stakeholders were discussed as the basic pillars of OGP in promoting open and effective local governance. Representatives of CSOs, media, business community, youth, Muslim community, LGBTI community, lawyers and other stakeholders attended the program. Similar interactions were held in Badhaiyatal *gaunpalika* of Bardiya District, Kohalpur municipality of Banke District and in Kathmandu on May 15, 16 and 18, 2018 respectively.

Similarly, NGO Federation of Nepal convened a first *Provincial Civil Society Conference* in all 7 Provinces. As changed in the national structure, NFN also modified its structure from regional chapters to provinces. The conference was organized to sensitize Provincial government on the role and importance of civil society. The Chief Ministers of Province 3 and 4, and that of Karnali Province (earlier named as Province 6) inaugurated the conference and in other provinces (1, 2, 5 and 7) respective Social Development Ministers inaugurated the conferences. They all praised CSOs contribution from establishment of democracy.

In addition, GoGo Foundation produced the second issue of the periodic '*Mutual Accountability Bulletin*' focused on the civil society organization's contribution in governance and development, social accountability, women's empowerment and Gender-based Violence. One thousand copy of the bulletin were disseminated to the concerned stakeholders including the implementing partners of CS:MAP and the community at national and sub national level and was used to raise the awareness of the community and government official on CSOs. This bulletin helped civil society actors, the community and government officials understand the role civil society organizations have played in the nation-building process.

Activity 1.2.3: Strengthen community and CSOs ties through community consultation and soliciting citizen inputs.

After 14 consultation meetings in CS:MAP project districts, findings on Social Accountability (SA) tools were shared during an event with champion leaders of CSOs, government officials and political party leaders. These tools for soliciting citizen inputs will be shared with civil society coalition leads so that these will be part of civil CSOs' regular practice for strengthening their ties with communities.

Activity 1.2.4: Foster media and CSO collaboration through dialogue and joint actions.

GoGo Foundation organized a dialogue on media and CSO collaboration on June 4, 2018 with the objective of strengthening media and CSO relations and reducing the trust deficit between them so that they both work jointly for strengthening the enabling environment. Forty-five participants representing media and CSOs discussed the media's and CSO's perception towards each other, the importance of collaboration between media and CSO, media's role for strong civil society, critical role of media in democracy and the current context for both media and civil society. The participants shared that CSO and media are viewed as key components for vibrant democratic society and both has played crucial role during the time of adversity in the nation. Though there has been a gap between media and civil society, they have complemented each other during past historic changes in the country.

Former FNJ presidents Shiva Gaunle and Taranath Dahal, National Information Commission's Chief Commissioner Krishna Hari Baskota, senior journalist Yubaraj Ghimire, INSEC president, Subodh Raj Pyakurel, FNJ President Govinda Acharya and NGO Federation's Executive Director Daya Sagar Shrestha along with other prominent delegates stressed the importance of a healthy relationship between media and civil society. The participants also expressed their commitment to boost the relationship between them and build a positive working environment. They further maintained that despite complying with the formalities of the regulatory authorities, CSOs have been accused of defying laws and often come under the scrutiny.

Activity 1.2.5: Improve public perception of the media through public hearings and implementation of media mission and implementation of findings.

FNJ organized three public hearings in this quarter with 342 participants from the media sector, media users and government officials. The purpose of these hearings was to understand the concerns from stakeholders about media and address those through different programs of FNJ. Similarly, eight public hearings were organized in the previous quarters. Findings of these public hearings and previously organized media missions are documented in FNJ's bulletin *'Patrakarita'* which is shared with FHI 360 for approval for the publishing.

Activity 1.2.6: Conduct community scorecards and social auditing to improve CSO and media transparency and accountability.

This activity was not planned in the reporting period.

Activity 1.2.7: Provide support for people's participation in elections.

National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) convened an interaction on 'voter role, citizenship and external voting process" on May 31, 2018 in Kathmandu. The event had over 60 participants (18 female), including electoral experts, parliamentarians, civil society leaders, rights activists, academicians, researchers, resource partners, Electoral Observation Coordination Group (EOCG) members and journalists. The interaction chaired by NEOC's chairperson – Surya Prasad Shrestha and with the honorable Chief Election Commissioner – Dr. Ayodhi Prasad Yadav as the chief guest, aimed to improve the electoral legal and administrative framework to guarantee

universal equal suffrage to all Nepali citizens, living within and abroad. Constitutional expert – Kashi Raj Dahal, and former Chief Election Commissioner – Bhojraj Pokharel and other speakers emphasized the need, importance, complexities, feasibilities and associated pros and cons of oversees registration and voting, given that a significant portion of the Nepali population live abroad for a variety of reasons.

Through this event, participants were informed about the importance and process of out of country electoral process. Significantly, Chief Election Commissioner, Dr. Ayodhi Prasad Yadav committed to take ahead the out-country electoral process within his tenure.

Result 1.3: Improved self-regulation of the sector and internal governance of CSOs and media.

Activity 1.3.1: Identify institutional governance and self-regulation best practices among CSOs and media in Nepal.

NFN has started to collect institutional governance and self-regulation best practices from its members and other civil society organizations. NFN and its member organizations are obliged to follow its code of conduct. The code of conduct has been widely disseminated across its 6000 plus members organization across the country. Seven sample districts are selected for initial monitoring of the code of conduct and collection of best practices, which will cover one in each province. The review was completed in the Province 1 (Udaypur) district in the reporting period. This review has helped to overview the gaps, challenges and area of improvement of code of conduct. During the review meeting, participants shared their experience in implementing the NFN code of conduct in changed context. They too have suggested that they develop specific indicators for its effective implementation.

Activity 1.3.2: Capacity building of CSOs and media on developing and implementing self-regulation and internal governance.

To sensitize the media on governance and the implementation of the Self-Assessment Toolkit, FNJ organized a meeting with editors, editorial staff, news chiefs of different newspapers and televisions on April 29, 2018. The president of Press Council Nepal (PCN), President of MWFC, members of PCH and lawyers were also in the meeting. Dr. Mahendra Bista presented the preliminary draft of the self-assessment toolkit for discussion and the participants further discussed on the content of the toolkit. FNJ president Govinda Acharya informed about FNJ's plan to share it with the media management for its implementation. The meeting also discussed the status of Code of Journalistic Ethics and role of Press Council Nepal. CS:MAP's international partner ICNL provided suggestions on methods to ensure the greatest number of responses and explored ways to use the data from the toolkit to feed into a sector-wide self-regulation mechanism. FNJ noted that it had not thought of the best ways to link the toolkit with a planned self-regulation mechanism, though they plan to do so with ICNL's assistance. The FNJ also asked CS:MAP, via ICNL, to deliver trainings on international FOE principles to their provincial chapters because (a) their provincial chapters and members lack this knowledge, and (b) the provincial chapters will be doing most of the upcoming advocacy on new, provincial-level laws.

Activity 1.3.3: Develop and implement minimum standards of internal governance and self-regulation for civil society in a participatory way.

In the previous quarter, NFN produced a draft document on minimum standards for CSOs' internal governance and self-regulation. A civil society coalition meeting was organized by NFN to finalize the draft. Seventy-three (73) coalition members agreed that the standard with 34 distinct indicators

is useful for improving civil society governance. They further suggested to make more measurable standards in the in the area of operational management, leadership development, human resource management, financial management, strategic planning, GESI and cross-cutting agenda. NFN has also shared its members through district and provincial chapters. Further, this framework will be shared with AIN requesting them to consider it while providing funds to civil society organization.

Activity 1.3.4: Develop institutional governance self-assessment toolkit for media and implement in five media houses.

FNJ has developed a Self-Assessment Toolkit to enhance media houses' internal governance and self-regulation. As a part of sensitization and implementation, FNJ organized two workshops with different stakeholders including FNJ representatives, government officials and media owners to collect feedback and to increase the ownership for the implementation of the toolkit. In addition, Media Advocacy Group (MAG) also organized a consultation with different stakeholders to collect GESI input on the draft toolkit and shared the findings with FNJ. FNJ has also organized seven meetings with media owners about the application of this document. The application of this toolkit will begin in the next quarter.

Activity 1.3.5: Interactions with major stakeholders, including government agencies, on self-regulation and internal good governance of CSOs.

GoGo Foundation organized two interactions on internal governance and self -regulation during the reporting quarter. The first was held at Union House in Anamnagar on May 3, 2018 while the second was held at Indreni Complex, New Baneshwor on June 25, 2018. In both events, fundamental of CSO and its internal governance, international standards, internal governance and self -regulation was discussed. It also emphasized legal frameworks and existing legislation such as RTI, accountability and transparency. Moreover, the discussion was on the issues pertinent to internal governance and self -regulatory practice in changed context. Altogether 65 participants from 29 organizations took part in the two events. The participants actively discussed various issues and challenges faced by the civil society organizations in Nepal. They expressed that the government was trying to impose its rule on CSOs in the name of regulation. Out of 29 organizations, 23 have shown their commitment to revising their internal governance standards and reviewing the implementation of their own self-regulation mechanisms.

Activity 1.3.6: Workshops with media owners, editors and journalists on institutional governance and self-regulation within media outlets.

On June 22, 2018, Central Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (CDJMC), TU organized a dialogue on self-regulation mechanisms in the media and its inter-linkages with credibility, Academics, media leaders, media editors and senior journalists participated in this dialogue forum where CDJMC presented the findings of research they carried out in collaboration with CS:MAP, on media self-regulation practices. The analysis explored the extent to which election reporting adhered to journalistic best practices, media self-regulation and ethics, and election code of conduct. Some key recommendations put forth by this study include:

- The need to establish accurate, balanced and practical professional working guidelines for journalists, with a section dedicated to election reporting;
- The development and practice of self- regulatory mechanisms; and
- Building compatible behavioral practices that are based on universally accepted principles and credible practices.

Participants expressed agreement with study's recommendations, which stressed the importance of such issues as:

- The difference between a press release and news;
- The importance of a by-line or source of news for credibility;
- Fact-checking as opposed to emotional reporting; and
- Balanced coverage of party manifestos prior to elections.

Participants also recommended that media outlets and newspapers adopt a definite editorial policy that takes into account election reporting: ensure more balance in news and views reporting; design and adopt a communication policy and strategy for the dissemination of election results; adopt measures for ongoing improvement; and that election reporting dwell on issues from social, economic and public interest angles as opposed to political angles alone.

Objective 2: Improved civil society and media capacity for effective policy advocacy and government engagement

Result 2.1: Strengthened CSO initiatives to coordinate with the GoN and to implement constructive advocacy strategies.

Activity 2.1.1: Strengthen advocacy and government engagement capacity of 14 district-based CSOs and media organizations.

Activity 2.1.1.1: Continue coaching ISOs in providing advocacy and government engagement capacity building to partner CSOs and media organizations:

During this reporting period, CS:MAP's ISO partners (NEPAN, NNSWA and MITRA Samaj) conducted coaching and mentoring visits to all 14 CSOs and 34 district officers. Coaching support was provided to orient CAR and District Officers on tools and process of data collection, development of recording forms and formats, sample selection for FGD and KII and evidence analysis process. As a result, data collection for evidence-based research was completed in six CSOs (in 10 districts). Remaining districts are still working on this. HURADEC in Dolakha, Ramechhap and Sindhuli, RWDC in Dang, CDC in Nuwakot and Rasuwa, DEC in Dhading and Makwanpur, IRDC in Palpa and IRDS in Gulmi are analyzing data and preparing a draft report. Once the analysis is complete, CSOs will share key findings with district level coalition and stakeholders and use findings as evidence for advocacy. ISOs have planned to make follow-up visits to each district in Q4 FY 2018 to complete the research and draft reports.

Activity 2.1.1.2: ISOs design and implement advocacy and government-engagement coaching and training based on CSO and media organizations' needs:

CSOs have selected 68 advocacy issues in line with HEAD, i.e. 16 for Health, 28 for Education, 12 for Agriculture and another 12 on DRR. Out of total 68 selected issues, 34 issues (Health: 12, Education: 13, Agriculture: 6, DRR: 3) have been included in the first phase of evidence-based action research. ISOs have conducted second round of advocacy readiness index (ARI) assessment of all 14 CSOs in this reporting period and supported to prepare and adjust ARI capacity building plan. As ISOs have focused on ARI assessments, support on evidence-based action research to CAR and district officers, refresher training on advocacy to 34 district officers is rescheduled for Q4 FY 2018. The CS:MAP capacity building team has planned to incorporate lessons learned, progress and challenges of evidence-based action research, support to carry out

advocacy plans, and issues for the second phase of evidence-based action research. Sharing of this information will help widen their research capacity and use findings on advocacy.

Activity 2.1.1.3: Development of handbook and guidelines on ICT for policy advocacy, good governance and oversight of public service delivery:

Kathmandu Living Labs has finalized the content of the handbook on ICT for advocacy and oversight of public service delivery. This handbook includes the introduction to ICT and governance, ICT penetration in Nepal, citizens' participation in governance, a comparative study of ICT tools in governance, ICT tools developed and their application. CS:MAP's governance advisor also reviewed the handbook and provided inputs. KLL is incorporating the suggested changes into the handbook. Consequently, this handbook is now in the final design phase and its layout and graphics are being completed. This will be shared with CS:MAP partners during ICT trainings to support them in using technology for policy advocacy, good governance and oversight of public service delivery.
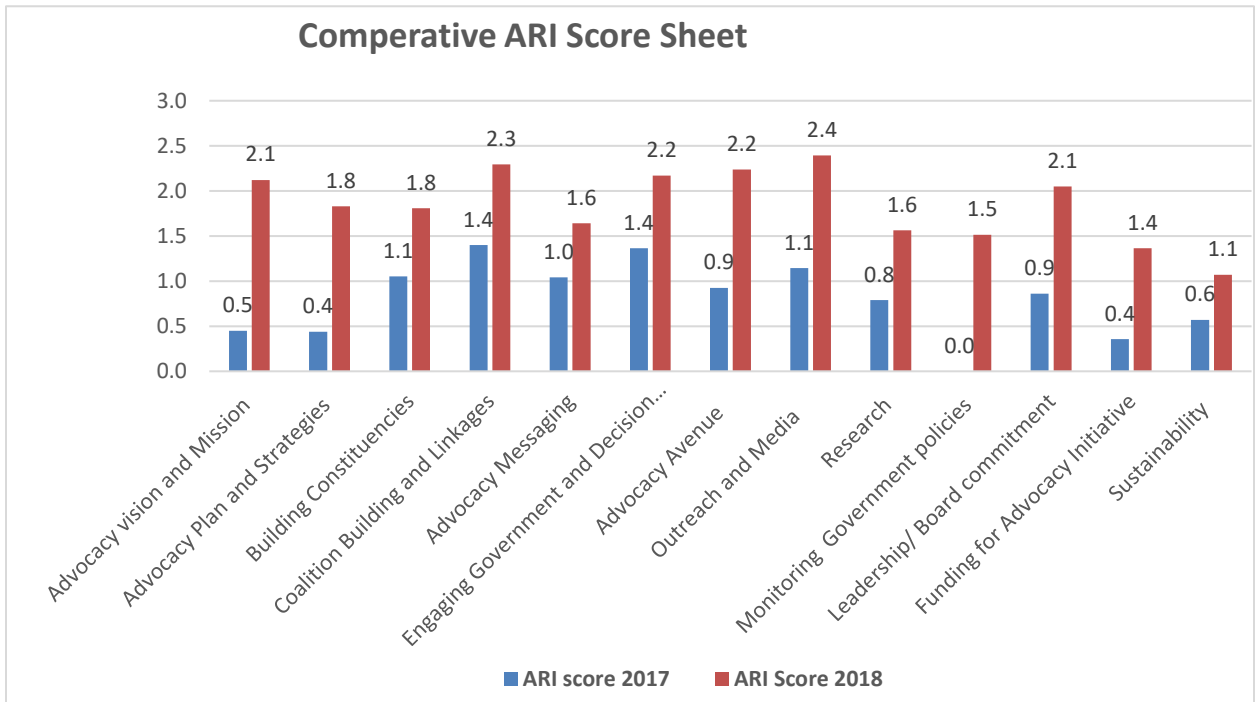
Activity 2.1.1.4: Training for Trainers (TOT) on ICT for policy advocacy, good governance and public service delivery:

Based on the findings of diagnostic study on ICT, cluster based specific trainings are found more important than blanket ToT for all CSO partners. Thus, CS:MAP partner KLL has planned to organize trainings on ICT for policy advocacy, good governance and public service delivery in three clusters based on the geographical spread of the CSOs. These trainings are planned for next quarter and will help CSOs make their internal operation and governance more efficient. Similarly, these three-day trainings will include the content how ICT can be used to generate evidence for advocacy and strengthen governance.

***Sajha Sabha* HelpDesk:** This quarter, KLL established and started operating the *Sajha Sabha* HelpDesk. The associated phone number has been distributed to CSOs with the necessary instructions. The phone number will be disseminated to citizens when they go out on *Sajha Sabha* uptake events in their respective implementation areas. HelpDesk was conceptualized to increase CSOs' capacity to use the *Sajha Sabha* tools, and also to help them promote *Sajha Sabha* tools to citizens.

Activity 2.1.1.5: Conduct refresher training/orientation or review meeting with selected ISOs on usage of Advocacy Readiness Index (ARI):

For effective advocacy in the districts, CS:MAP team decided to conduct the second round of ARI in quarter 3 instead of quarter 4. To prepare, the review meeting with selected ISOs was conducted last quarter and reported accordingly. This quarter the ISOs conducted a second round of ARI assessment of all 14 CSOs and supported to prepare and adjust their ARI capacity building plan. Advocacy capacity was measured from 0 to 5 in increasing scale. Compared to FY 2017, the ARI score has increased significantly in FY 2018. The increment has been possible through institutionalized advocacy issues into strategic documents, promoted government engagement through SA mechanism, enhanced capacity on advocacy, evidence-based action research and increased commitment of board and management of CSOs. Overall advocacy capacity is increased in all CSOs as illustrated in below chart.

Comperative ARI Score Sheet

Category	ARI score 2017	ARI Score 2018
Advocacy vision and Mission	0.5	2.1
Advocacy Plan and Strategies	0.4	1.8
Building Constituencies	1.1	1.8
Coalition Building and Linkages	1.4	2.3
Advocacy Messaging	1.0	1.6
Engaging Government and Decision...	1.4	2.2
Advocacy Avenue	0.9	2.2
Outreach and Media	1.1	2.4
Research	0.8	1.6
Monitoring Government policies	0.0	1.5
Leadership/ Board commitment	0.9	2.1
Funding for Advocacy Initiative	0.4	1.4
Sustainability	0.6	1.1

Activity 2.1.2: Form Public-Private Working Groups (PPWGs) and Common Assemblies (CAs) and conduct PPWG and CA meetings.

The regular orientations conducted by the local CSOs, helped the public-private working groups (PPWGs) and CAs understand the use and effectiveness of the *Sajha Sabha* app for governance strengthening. In addition, the Community Development Center (CDC) in Nuwakot, DEC in Dhading and Makwanpur, and Integrated Rural Development Society (IRDS) in Gulmi and Arghakhanchi conducted an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) orientation in the community and helped citizens upload local issues to the application. RWDC in Dang, and DEC Nepal in Dhading and Makwanpur prepared a list of issues and handed them over to the local government. Issues relevant to CS:MAP working local units were discussed in CA as well.

Community engagement with the local government increased as a result of the 42 CA meetings that were held in this quarter. These CA meetings resolved longstanding issues that were not a priority for the local government units. For example: the salary of the locally hired teachers in Gauriganga municipality in Kailali is now paid by the municipality instead of parents; complaint boxes have been kept in ward offices in Achham, Nuwakot, Makwanpur districts; and birthing centers have been established in Nuwakot and Kapilvastu.

The 11 PPWGs held in this quarter focused on solving issues that require attention and commitment from the elected bodies, concerned Government offices, private sectors and CSOs. For example, due to the PPWG discussions and actions taken after that, Agrovets in Dhading started selling quality seeds and controlled the selling of harmful pesticides; NRA in Nuwakot and Rasuwa responded to the grievances collected from earthquake affected people within ten days; and Dipayal-Silgadhi municipality allocated NRs. two million (subjected to be approved from the municipal council) for screening and further treatment of the women affecting from uterus prolapse in the municipality.

Activity 2.1.3: Conduct Sajha Sabhas, or Public Forums.

During this reporting period, two provincial legislators and one federal legislator attended three *Sajha Sabhas* held in the districts of Lalitpur, Surkhet and Okhaldhunga. Additionally, eight other *Sajha S*abhas were held in which four mayors, one deputy mayor, two chairs and one vice chairs of working local government units were invited for their commitment as most of local resources are managed by local units. While going through details, in April 2018, *Sajha Sabhas* (Public Forums) were conducted in Rukum by HRPLSC and in Kanchanpur by Sanjeevani Nepal (2 events); in May 2018, SOCH Nepal, CDC, IHRICON, FMDC, Sanjeevani Nepal, IRDS and HRPLSC conducted *Sajha Sabhas* in Okhaldhunga, Nuwakot, Lalitput, Doti, Achham, Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Gulmi and Rolpa districts respectively (9 events); and in June 2018, Sundar Nepal Sanstha conducted *Sajha Sabhas* in Dailekh and Jajarkot districts (2 events). In addition to this, CS:MAP held 11 PPWG meetings in its working districts.

Activity 2.1.4: Provide training and mentoring to CA, PPWG and Sajha Sabha facilitators.

This activity was conducted in quarter one and quarter two of this fiscal year 2018 and reported accordingly.

Result 2.2: Improved coalition-building between local and national CSOs, and between CSOs and the media, that leads to joint actions undertaken on selected policy priorities across sectors.

Activity 2.2.1: Strengthen coalitions and networks to undertake joint advocacy actions on policy priorities across sectors.

HEAD coalitions in all 34 program districts are becoming a common platform for CSOs to discuss advocacy issues raised by CSOs, validate advocacy plans, discuss issues that disproportionately affect marginalized communities in public services and resources. For example: HEAD coalition in Makwanpur discussed about the ineffectiveness of health insurance of the Government and unsatisfactory services from the hospitals. The coalition submitted a memorandum to the District Health Office in May 2018 for addressed the concerns. The coalition in Dang discussed about the ineffectiveness of scholarship to Kamlaharies, prepared advocacy plan and asked RWDC to conduct evidence-based research for that. The research findings will be shared with the coalition, which will then work on action steps for advocacy. The coalition in Dolakha created pressure for participatory planning process.

14 coalition meetings were conducted in this quarter. Discussion items included the joint actions on CSOs' advocacy plan and issues, an evidence-based action research, and the findings from the use of SA tools (PET/s, public hearing). For example, DRR network in Dolakha jointly pushed for the reconstruction of houses for the landless people (Thami community) in Bhimeshwor municipality- 2 Fulapa and submitted a memorandum to the local authority; HEAD coalition in Kathmandu used RTI to ask for budget spent in luxurious things by Kageshwori Manohara municipality.

Activity 2.2.2: Identify Shreejanshil Shakhas (innovation hubs) to serve as CSO -media collaboration hubs.

With the addition of *Shreejanshil Shakha* in Bardiya, CS:MAP is now supporting 32 such *Shakhas* in its working districts. *Shreejanshil Shakhas* are being used to increase marginalized communities' access to information focused on public service delivery and resources, access to government services (citizen charter), and to discuss local issues among local CSOs including CA

and LDAG. As the *Shreejanshil Shakhas* are located far from district headquarters and nearby CA and LDAG, these are being used for discussion about the effectiveness of public services and resources use rather than discussion between district level CSOs and media. People are using internet to download and read government policies and provisions, rules and regulations, process for services from local government etc. In some cases, youth and LDAG members are using to access national updates including news.

Additional activities to improve coordination and collaboration between local and national CSOs as well as media and CSOs are described under Activity 3.2.2 and Activity 3.4.3.

Result 2.3: Improved CSO and media capacity to conduct participatory and evidence-based action research on issues, policy, and enforcement in order to benefit marginalized groups.

Activity 2.3.1: Build research capacity for CSOs and media organizations.

CS:MAP through its partner Equal Access continued to collaborate with ISOs MITRA Samaj, NEPAN and NNSWA to ensure regular support to the CSOs and assess progress on the PEAR activities. The CARs, trained in the last quarter, have initiated research activities under the supervision of CSOs who are supported by the ISOs. During the bi-annual review, reflection and work planning meeting held in June, CS:MAP discussed the PEAR action plans with ISOs . Similarly, the senior M&E manager from Equal Access discussed with the CSOs about the CARs' role in PEAR as well as in Outcome Harvesting (OH) process. A separate session on OH was conducted during the Financial Management Training to the CSOs from the earthquake-affected districts, and the ISO participants. CS:MAP partner Equal Access is in regular communications about this and ensures further support during the field visits. The CAR from Dang has identified the issue of *Kamalari*[1] girls and challenges related to access to education as her research issue. Under the guidance of the program coordinator from the CSO, the CAR has started meeting *Kamalari* girls, school teachers and parents to collect more information for her research. Likewise, CARs from other districts have identified issues such as community health facilities, increasing drop-out from community schools and others. CS:MAP will continue tracking the PEAR activities and report accordingly.

Activity 2.3.2: Organize study visit for media partners in Kathmandu for investigative journalism

This activity was not planned for the reporting period.

Activity 2.3.3: Provide research fellowship for CSO partners

As mentioned in CS:MAP year 3 work plan, CS:MAP local CSO partners are hosting the research fellows (understood as Community Action Researchers, or CARs) in their program offices. CS:MAP is continuously providing research capacity support through its ISOs and Equal Access to the CARs. Please refer to *Activity 2.3.1* for the details on research capacity support to CSOs.

Additional activities to enhance media capacity at the national and sub-national levels for advocacy, oversight and monitoring.

Activity 2.3.4: Conduct Advocacy and Monitoring/Oversight Training for media organizations.

On June 14-30, 2018, CS:MAP partner Equal Access organized two five-day training on advocacy, monitoring and oversight for Nepali media professionals in Kathmandu. A total of 43 media

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[1] *Kamalaris* were former bonded laborers in the exploitive bonded labor system practiced in the western Terai of Nepal. Unable to pay debts, young girls from poor families were made to work for rich landlords. Though this system was abolished in 2006, there is lack of proper rehabilitation programs for the freed *Kamalaris*.

professionals (35% female, 95% youth and one person with a disability) participated in the training, representing various media platforms including online platforms: (10), print media (16), local radio stations (11), local TV (3) and youth bloggers (3). The trainings were interactive with a range of topics such as the new state structure, policy jurisdiction, policy process and cycle at the local government level, public service mandate and state accountability. A panel discussion was also organized with policy experts in the areas of health, education, agriculture and disaster risk reduction, highlighting the status of policies, current practices and the gaps within those areas. In addition, the participants were introduced to various tools for media advocacy and oversight, including the social accountability tools, such as public hearing, social audit and citizen charter board. The trainings helped to strengthen media initiatives to coordinate with the local government in the CS:MAP districts. The training built the capacity of the media professionals for conducting evidence-based advocacy to bring about reforms to address the identified gaps and challenges by engaging constructively with public service providers. Participants have been following their action plans after the training and more than 10 articles and news stories have been published by these participants in newspapers, online news and the *MeroReport* platform. These news and articles have highlighted the policy provisions and existing gaps with HEAD thematic areas, including current priority issues of their districts such as communities at risk due to flood and landslides, delay of concessional reconstruction loan scheme and its impact to earthquake victims, importance of model school approaches and the gaps local schools need to address. The results of the pre- and post- training assessment showed an increment of 13.5% knowledge among the participants after the training. The assessment covered areas such as knowledge on thematic issues, knowledge about media advocacy and writing skills. The participants were also asked to rank the training in three areas: overall effectiveness, skill and knowledge development and interactive-ness of the training, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the highest score. At least 60% of the participants ranked the training at the highest score for all three areas. When asked if the training had met their expectations, 63% said all of their expectations were met, 29% said some of their expectations were met and 8% preferred not to answer this question.

Activity 2.3.5: Conduct Investigative Journalism Training for media organizations.

Two 4-day trainings on investigative journalism were held during April 14-28, 2018, in Nepalgunj and Kathmandu for 41 media professionals (37% female) from the CS:MAP districts. In attendance were 24 journalists from districts USAID lists in its Country Development Cooperation Strategy and 17 from the earthquake-affected districts. An open announcement was made encouraging interested journalists to apply for the training and the participants were selected based on their commitment towards the training program.

The training focused on the scope of investigative journalism and how it can be used for the oversight on public resource use and service delivery mechanisms. A wide range of topics were covered by the training including RTI Act, the code of conduct for the media professionals, importance of GESI and conflict sensitivity. The issue of media professional's safety and security while doing investigative journalism was also emphasized during the training session. The trainers provided technical guidance on the process/steps of investigative journalism which include techniques to identify the issues, tips on researching and writing/producing the stories, transitions and use of words in the story, ways to observe/interview people and the national & international practices in the investigative journalism sector. The sessions were not just theory based and were designed in an interactive and practical way to make the learning most effective for the participants. The importance of establishing linkages and working in coordination with local CSOs and practitioners from similar sectors was also emphasized during the training.

> *"This is the most important training in my ten years long journalism career. I realize now that I have been writing news just for the sake of writing and that I need to study more and be open to learning. I used to report what I saw only, but now I will do my research to understand all perspectives and will be reporting based on evidence only" Kapil Koirala, Kavrepalanchowk District Reporter/ The Karobar National Daily.*

The training evaluation showed an average increment of 3.5% in the knowledge of the participants after the training. Many participants were confused by questions that asked them to use their judgment in situations that might face while they conduct investigative study. The findings were shared to the training facilitators after the first round of training. These areas were given more focus in the second round of the training. As a result, the average knowledge change increased in the second round where it reached 10%. The assessment of various aspects of the training shows that over 50% of the participants felt that the training was highly relevant, very effective for their knowledge and was interactive. Similarly, 27% stated that all of their expectations were met by the training.

As a follow up to this activity, EA will be organizing an exposure visit to Kathmandu for selected participants in the next quarter, which will be designed to provide an opportunity for the participants to observe and learn how different experts and organizations produce investigative reports. Through this visit, they will also get a chance to visit different media houses and connect with the more experienced media professionals in Kathmandu. The participants will also be provided with a fellowship to produce investigative stories on HEAD thematic areas once they go back to their districts.

This investigative journalism training is the second batch of training conducted by EA for Nepali media professionals. Forty-five journalists were trained last year as part of the same series, out of which 10 selected individuals were provided with a fellowship to carry out in-depth investigative reporting on selected topics within the priority themes of CS:MAP. These journalists have been working closely with the mentors from Equal Access since that time and have published 10 investigative stories to date (eight stories published in this quarter, two in the last quarter) which highlighted the important issues regarding civic rights, the use of natural resources, foreign migration and women rights. Most importantly, these stories have been used to highlight weak state of law, gaps that lies within the existing systems and have accentuated the negative cultural practices that hinder the effective implementation of the existing policies, reinforcing the need for the local level government to focus on these gaps addressing the fundamental rights of people and obligations of the government.

Activity 2.3.6: Conduct Journalist Safety and Security Training for media organizations.

This activity was not planned for the reporting period.

Activity 2.3.7: Public Interest Reporting training and fellowship.

This activity was conducted in the last quarter and reported accordingly.

Activity 2.3.8: Strategic Communications Training for CS:MAP CSO partners.

This activity was conducted in the earlier quarter and reported accordingly.

Objective 3: More coordinated and effective civil society and media oversight of public resource use and public service delivery

Result 3.1: Improved capacity of local CSOs, media, and community-based organizations to monitor and report on cross-sectoral public service delivery, based on common standards applicable to each sector.

Activity 3.1.1 Good Governance Barometer (GGB).

Activity 3.1.1.1: Identify potential gaunpalikas/local communities in the Tarai region to pilot the GGB:

CS:MAP has added a district for GGB implementation as per the Year 3 work plan. Following an approach to Suddodhan *gaunpalika* in Kapilvastu by CS:MAP partner IRDC, the *gaunpalika* has provided an approval letter allowing CS:MAP to implement the GGB in Patariya, Ward 1. Preparatory meetings have taken place to sensitize elected representatives about GGB process and their roles in different levels of GGB implementation. Consultations are underway to identify a small multi-stakeholder group which will select the issue for GGB through participatory manner.

Activity 3.1.1.2: Hold preliminary meetings with pilot local line agencies to introduce the GGB:

Preparatory meetings with the local government officials in Suddodhan *gaunpalika* were held. Identifying small and larger multi-stakeholders, issue selection and GGP modeling in Suddodhan *gaunpalika* will be completed in the next quarter.

Activity 3.1.1.3: Build capacity of CSO partner to facilitate the GGB:

The CS:MAP Governance Advisor and GGB Expert provided inputs to finalize the maximum and minimum reference values for the GGB process in Gulmi, Rukum and Sindhupalchowk. CS:MAP has provided orientation to IRDC staff on GGB facilitation in Suddodhan *gaunpalika*.

Activity 3.1.1.4: GGB Implementation

CS:MAP partners HRPLSC*,* IRDS and Samudayik Sarathi undertook the following activities to pilot the GGB in their communities (Triveni and Bafikot *gaunpalikas* in the Rukum district*,* Gulmi Durbar and Chhatrakot *gaunpalikas* in the Gulmi district and Tripurasundari and Sunkoshi *gaunpalikas* in the Sindhupalchok district):

a. *Issue and stakeholder mapping:* CS:MAP GGB implementing partners conducted their GGB workshops in previous reporting quarter and completed mapping of the issue and stakeholders.

b. *GGB Modeling:* As reported in the previous quarter, CS:MAP completed GGB modeling workshops in three previously identified districts (six *gaunpalikas*). Gulmi identified a need to improve community school physical infrastructure to promote quality education, and also to increase agricultural productivity and marketing of products. Rukum decided to focus on the availability of free medicine and quality services through the health center, as well as improvements in the community school's physical infrastructure to promote quality education. Sindhupalchowk elected to measure improvements to the community school's physical infrastructure to promote quality education. The groups also developed sub-sub criteria and indicators for measuring change in each of the identified issue areas. In an earlier quarter, CS:MAP

GGB Expert and Governance Advisor worked together with GGB implementing partners in developing detailed sub-sub criteria and indicators.

c. *Setting values of reference:* In an earlier quarter, CS:MAP local CSO partners conducted a second round of modeling and scoring workshops, followed by a workshop to set up the values of reference: 0 - no vision; 50 - existence of a vision but not shared; 75 - very good; and 100 - excellent.

d. *Data collection and validation:*

    To validate the values scored by community members, partner CSOs conducted a data collection and analysis workshop in the earlier quarter.

e. *Analyze data, set targets for cross-sector service delivery improvement, develop action plans and form GGB Technical Monitoring Groups*:

    After the data collection and validation, GGB implementers conducted the next round of workshops to review the scores, analyze the indicators, and identify the main reasons for the minimum value. GGB Technical Monitoring Group has already been formed.

f. *Implement action plans:*

    The final GGB workshop was held in March 2018 in all GGB districts to develop improvement plans. The plan was shared with all stakeholders. Upon completion of entire GGB process in these three districts, a consolidated report has been prepared from each district.
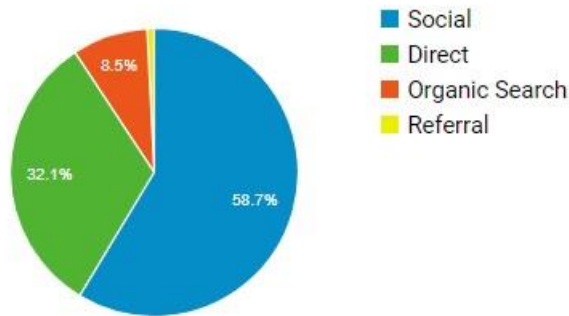
g. *Measuring end lines:*

    A GGB Technical Monitoring Committee is monitoring the implementation of action plans. Progresses have been reported in earlier section of this quarterly report.

Activity 3.1.1.5: Utilize online collaboration platform (MeroReport) to monitor and report on cross-cutting issues:

MeroReport serves as a platform for resource sharing, learning, monitoring, reporting on cross-cutting issues, discussion forums and networking focused on the issues related to HEAD and other areas. From the last quarter onwards, the platform has seen significant rise in the number of members, page views, blog posts and discussion groups. This has to be credited to the strong emphasis on promotion of the platform and its utility. In this quarter, there were dedicated sessions for *MeroReport* within trainings organized by Equal Access and bi-annual meetings.

The platform is gaining wide popularity among the users which is evident in the increasing number of new members joining the platform. More than 100 members joined the platform this quarter compared to only 65 new members who joined in the last quarter. The total number of members in the platform has now crossed 2,000. Similarly, there is a significant increase in number of people visiting the page: 1,332 page views in the last quarter to 29,717 page views in this quarter, with a daily average of almost 1,000 page views. The social media pages of the platform allow wider reach among the users. Selected content is shared through Facebook and Twitter. As of this quarter, there are 1,765 fans (19% female) of the Facebook page and 3,718 followers (7% female) of the Twitter page. The majority of the fans and the followers of the social media pages are youth between 25-34 years of age.
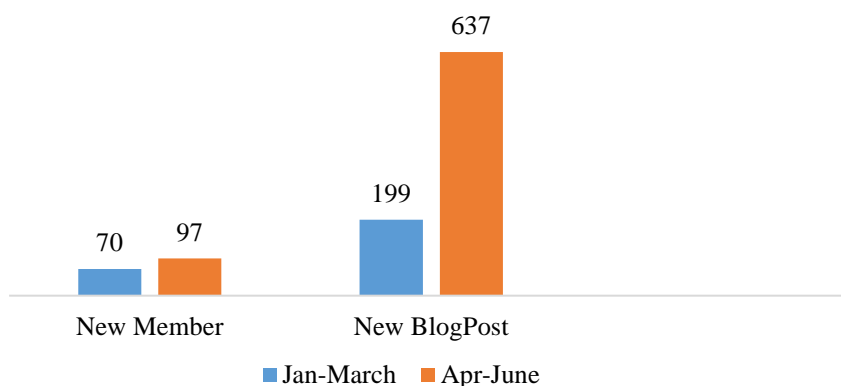
Top Channels

Top channels used by the visitors of *MeroReport*

There has also been significant increase in the number of blog posts:, 637 new blog posts this quarter as compared to 199 blog posts in the previous quarter. Likewise, there are now 96 more members in the discussion forum compared to last quarter. The resources section of the platform allows users to access various documents related to the thematic areas of the project. It currently allows the users to view or download documents related to local level planning process, draft and existing rules, policies and laws.
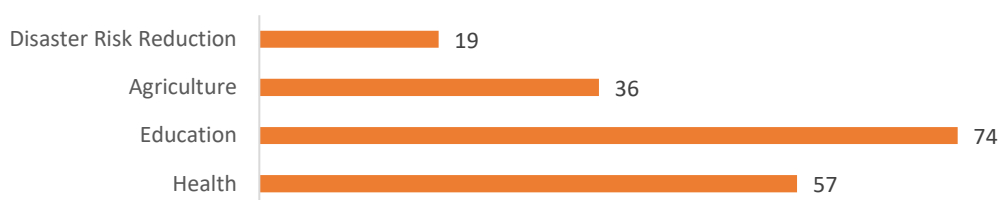

Membership in *MeroReport* groups

New members and blog posts in *MeroReport*

Thematic categorization of the blog posts

The blog posts in the platform are mostly related to good governance, social accountability, right to information, health, education, agriculture, and disaster risk reduction. Bloggers discuss the situation of public service delivery, challenges and required reforms. Other blog posts are related to current affairs such as local level planning process, and local level budget. At least 23 blog posts highlight and share how project activities have contributed to ensuring good governance and social accountability. Community reporters have also been active in sharing about the project activities including LDAG activities, common assembly meetings, *Shreejanshil Shakhas* and others.

Thematic categorization of the blog posts in *MeroReport*

Activity 3.1.2 Commission research studies to produce policy analysis and policy briefs.

The draft report was completed in last quarter and is being reviewed. The development on this will be reported in quarter 4.

Result 3.2: Improved bottom-up coordination between community, district, and national formal and informal CSOs engaged in public service oversight.

Activity 3.2.1: Strengthen coalition and networks for public service oversight.

All total 14 coalition meeting conducted and discussed for the joint actions on CSOs advocacy plan and issues, evidence-based action research, findings of the use of social accountability tools (PET/s, public hearing) etc. HEAD coalition in Kathmandu used RTI to ask for budget spent on luxury items Kageshwori Manohara municipality. The coalition in Okhaldhunga discussed the government's delay in the reconstruction process and its affect on earthquake affected people in the district. The coalition in Makwanpur discussed the effectiveness of insurance and challenges to access services from assigned hospitals. In Dhading, the coalition discussion the GoN admission

campaign for out of school children. The issue of farmers' identity cards was discussed in Surkhet, and in Dolakha the coalition discussed fair allocation of budget in the planning process as demanded public.

Activity 3.2.2: Hold Bi-annual Summits

This activity was conducted in last quarter and reported accordingly.

Result 3.3: Improved citizen awareness and use of available GoN social accountability mechanisms.

Activity 3.3.1: Conduct Refresher Training on Social Accountability Tools

June 21-24, 2018, CS:MAP ISO NEPAN organized a refresher training in Kathmandu for CSOs of 34 districts. District coordinators and officers of 34 districts were trained on public hearing, public audit, social audit, community score card, public expenditure tracking survey, exist poll and citizen report card survey. At the end of the training, 14 CSOs developed action plans to implement social accountability tools in coordination with the local government units. The CSOs have agreed in the action plan to conduct a Community Score Card and a Public Expenditure Survey in each district including providing technical support to local governments in conducting public audit, public hearing and social audit. CSOs also planned to orient their CAR on social accountability tools with the support from ISOs in Q4 of FY 2018. In addition to the refresher training on social accountability tools, ISOs have extended their support to CSOs during coaching and mentoring visits. NEPAN supported Sundar Nepal in Surkhet, for RTI campaign, Samudayik Sarathi for PET/s of health post in Sindhupalchok and Institute of Human Right Communication Nepal (IHRICON) for PET/s in education. Similarly, NNSWA supported social accountability tools orientation in Banke and supported to conduct PET/s in Dang. MITRA Samaj supported IRDC to conduct social accountability tools orientation to coalition members and HURADEC to conduct public hearing of *gaunpalika*.

Activity 3.3.2: Conduct Right to Information (RTI) Campaign

CS:MAP local CSO partner FMDC conducted a RTI Caravan on May 11-14, 2018. The caravan covered Kailali, Doti and Achham districts and disseminated information on RTI, its process, legal provisions and clarified the public concerns in different spots. FMDC disseminated RTI related IEC materials developed and provided by National Information Commission. FMDC has conducted short meetings with journalists, CSOs and public on the situation of RTI and Government response in each districts.

The Institute of Human Rights Communication Nepal conducted a Video Van Campaign on June 29- 30, 2018 in Godawari Municipality and Konjosom *gaunpalika* in Lalitpur, and Suryabinayak municipality and Nagarkot, Changunarayan municipalities in Bhaktapur. The campaign covered RTI as the theme of the campaign and made information on HEAD a priority. The video van was decorated with messages of RTI and it aireddifferent slogans and audio messages. Street drama teams also performed with the theme of RTI and distributed the IEC materials for wider information.

IHRC in Banke filed a total 20 RTIs (12 in Banke and 8 in Bardiya) in different local units in Banke and Bardiya requesting information on the program status and budget, procedure etc. Out of 20 only two RTIs responded within timeline. Likewise, IHRC conducted six RTI events to public, local CSO leaders, teachers and elected bodies..

As part of RTI, CDC supported Meghang *gaunpalika* in Nuwakot and Uttargaya *gaunpalika* in Rasuwa for installing citizen charter in their ward offices. The charter included the information of services of wards, its process and expected time for those services from the ward. CDC supported to print and place the citizen charter in Meghang - 5 and Uttargaya - 4, accordingly.

Activity 3.3.3: Select volunteers (selected as per the technical assistance provided under 4.2.3) and orient them on GoN SA mechanisms and tools.

CS:MAP ISOs provided one-on-one support to the volunteers (Community Action Researchers) during their field visits. But for better understanding on SA tools, CS:MAP is planning to conduct a separate orientation to CARs on SA tools. The orientations will be led by CSOs with necessary support from ISOs.

Activity 3.3.4: Institutionalize regular social audits and public hearings at a fixed venue in selected gaunpalikas.

CDC Nepal facilitated Public Hearing of Myagang *gaunpalika* in Nuwakot on June 22, 2018. A MoU was signed between CDC and Myagang *gaunpalika* with clear roles and responsibility. CDC Nepal used the Citizen Report Card and Exit Poll tools for collecting citizen's satisfaction and complaint record and prepared the report accordingly.

On May 19, 2018, HURADEC worked with the Manthali municipality to conduct a public hearing about reconstruction efforts after the earthquake. Likewise, Sundar Nepal supported Bheriganga municipality in Surkhet and HRPLSC supported Triveni *gaunpalika* in Rukum. IRDC in Palpa supported Tinau *gaunpalika* in Palpa to conduct public hearing resulting from the SA tools orientation to the elected bodies from CS:MAP. In addition, Tinau *gaunpalika* also placed a citizen charter in *gaunpalika* office premises.

Shailung *gaunpalika* in Dolakha committed to institutionalize Public Hearing after the successfully completion of Public Hearing on April 25, 2018 with the support from HURADEC in Dolakha. HURADEC has signed MoU with the *gaunpalika* and supported accordingly.

As part of their efforts to promote social accountability at the local level, CS:MAP partners HURADEC and RWDC conducted Public Expenditure Tracking Systems (PETSs) in four municipalities. They worked in Dolakha on the RCC bridge and community learning center, in Dang on scholarships for Kamlaharies, and in Phikkal *gaunpalika* in Sindhuli district on budget and incentives for a health post After completing the PETSs, the respective CSOs shared their key findings with concerned stakeholders.

Activity 3.3.5: Radio programming to raise citizen awareness of SA mechanisms.

Activity 3.3.5.1: Hold Content Advisory Group (CAG) meetings:

CAG meetings are aimed at generating content for the radio programs through discussion among the participants who come from various professional backgrounds. In addition, these meetings allow the production team to engage in fruitful discussion to gather feedback on the radio program. The central production team conducted one CAG meeting on June 4, 2018 at the FHI 360 office in Kathmandu and the local production partners conducted 2 CAG meetings each.

The central level CAG meeting in this quarter included participants from USAID, FHI 360, the Undersecretary of MoFAGA, the Deputy Mayor of Kageshwori Municipality, CSOs and national partners of CS:MAP. Among the total 23 participants (50% female), there were 11 participants belonging to Hill Brahmin/Chhettris, 5 Newars, 1

Terai/Madhesi Aadivasis/Janajatis and 1 from a religious minority. The local level CAG meetings included 228 participants (52% female) which included 61 government officials, 86 CSO participants and 82 media professionals.

As discussed in Section 2 of this report, the CAG meetings provide multiple platforms. While it is mostly aimed at generating content and engaging participants on the relevance and significance of it, these meetings also engage the production team with government stakeholders, journalists, civil society members among others. Based on the discussions from the central CAG meeting, the production team agrees on at least seven topics for the upcoming radio programs. These topics include social accountability at the local level, budget allocation and utilization at various levels, public participation in these processes, participatory local level planning process and others. The local level CAG meetings also covered these topics. However, the discussions mostly revolved around the context in each participant's own community. Both at central and local level CAG meetings, there were suggestions to give more priority to GESI in the contents.

Activity 3.3.5.2: Conduct refresher training on local content production for Sajha Boli local production partners:

This activity was conducted in earlier quarter and reported accordingly.

Activity 3.3.5.2.1 Meeting with senior management staff of radio partners:

This activity was conducted in earlier quarter and reported accordingly.

Activity 3.3.5.3: Carry out Sajha Boli Program production, broadcast and audience interactivity:

Sajha Boli radio programs are produced bi-monthly by both the central and the local production teams. A total of 66 episodes of Sajha Boli radio programs were produced and broadcast in this quarter, 6 episodes by the central production team and 6 each by the 10 local production partners. The central version is broadcast by 40 radio stations which includes Radio Nepal and 39 radio partners whereas the local versions broadcast by 39 partners only. The total number of broadcast of the central version and the local version were 240 and 234 respectively, summing up to a total of 464 broadcast in this quarter. Most of the episodes this quarter focused on the local level planning process to suit the time period of the planning process. All production partners produced a dedicated episode on the local level planning process. The radio programs also serve as a platform for promotion and dissemination of information related to campaigns such as SMV. In addition, the audience interactivity with the radio program is ensured through *Sajha Boli Chautari* IVR system, and CR reports of the LDAG activities.

Sajha Boli (Central version)

The episodes in this quarter focused on public service delivery in the areas of HEAD at local, provincial and federal government level ranging from local level planning process to ensuring social accountability at the local level.

Episode	Broadcast date	Theme
35	April 15	Local level planning process

36	April 29	Local level budget: use and frugality
37	May 13	Health services delivery, and local, provincial and federal government
38	May 27	Common rights of local, provincial and federal government
39	June 10	Public-private partnership for sustainable development
40	June 24	Social accountability of local level after implementing plan and third- party oversight

Sajha Boli (Local Version)

The local version of the radio programs focused on the same major areas covered by the central version radio programs, but emphasized how the issues were relevant in their target districts. The central production team holds a monthly Skype call followed by regular email communications to ensure that all local producers are well informed about their roles and responsibilities. These mechanisms help the central production team identify any areas where the producers need more support.

Audience interactivity

Through the IVR system and outreach activities such as LDAG visits, CS:MAP partner Equal Access ensures strong audience interactivity with the radio programs. *Sajha Boli Chautari*, the IVR system platform for the radio program, records an average of 3,000 calls from the audience on quarterly basis. In addition to leaving feedback for the radio program, the callers can also participate in a poll, listen to informative audio and participate in contests. This quarter, *Sajha Boli Chautari* recorded 1,344 calls.

Production and Broadcast of Public Service Announcements

PSAs are an important media component to augment the dissemination information related to CS:MAP's thematic areas. Along with the radio programs, PSAs contribute to promoting awareness among the general audience. This quarter, a total of 26 PSAs were produced on accountable journalism and local governance and service delivery oversight. Produced in eight different languages, these PSAs were broadcast for at least 10 times each day from June 1-10, 2018.

Activity 3.3.6: Listening, Discussion and Action Groups (LDAGs) to engage citizens in social accountability:

LDAGs listen to the *Sajha Boli* radio programs, discuss the contents within their groups, and provide feedback. In the last quarter, Equal Access trained 62 LDAG facilitators and is working to ensure engagement with the LDAGs through the IVR system as well as through outreach activities. The 34 community reporters visit at least one LDAG every month, and share their findings on LDAG activities in their monthly report. Through the IVR system, the LDAG members can directly send their feedback. The IVR system also allows the LDAG facilitators to provide information on their planned activities and their observation of the activities. In addition, CS:MAP team during their field visits meet the LDAG facilitators and members and provide technical support for increasing their effectivity.

Activity 3.3.7: Engage youth in social accountability:

Three episodes of youth-targeted *SSMK* radio programs on CS:MAP thematic areas were produced and broadcast in this quarter. The SSMK radio program targets youth audiences and has a wide reach among the youth population. According to the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2016, *SSMK* radio programs are listened to by 24% of the youth population (22%-female and 25% male) belonging to age-group 15-49 years. Apart from the audience interactivity through IVR and Voice of Youth (VOY) system, the *SSMK* team during their field visits in various parts of the country interact with the local youths to discuss about the contents of the radio program as well as collect their feedback.

The three episodes in this quarter focused on women's empowerment, agriculture and entrepreneurship, and role of youth in local budget utilization. The 876th episode focused on the need to encourage female participation in the ongoing planning process at the local level. The 881st episode highlighted issues related to agriculture and focused on the agricultural grants and opportunities in the field. This episode also included an interview about agricultural grants with the Senior Officer of District Agriculture Development Office, Sindhupalchok. The final episode of *SSMK* for this quarter was about how youth can contribute in ensuring proper utilization of budget at the local level. Through the medium of a short drama among the members of youth clubs, the episodes encourage youth to be vigilant and active in the ongoing budget allocation process at the local level. The same episode includes an interview with the Mayor of Dhangadhi sub-metropolitan city, and it focused on information about types of budgets, sources and plans specific to the city. This episode also features the winner of *SMV* winner from Banke who recites a poem about nationalism and youth role. The upcoming episodes of the *SSMK* will include a segment on the activities conducted by the SMV winners from the previous campaigns.

Episode	Month	Issue	Audience responses
876	April 21, 2018	Women's Empowerment (GESI)	255
881	May 26, 2018	Agriculture and Entrepreneurship	133
886	June 30, 2018	Role of Youth in Local budget utilization	Will be included in the next QPR

Feedback on Sathi Sanga Manka Kura episodes

A total of 388 responses were received from the audience for the episodes 876 and 881 in this quarter. The audience responses for the final episode will be included in the next quarterly report as the information is not available as of the reporting time. Among 98 callers who provided information about their gender, 70% were female and 30% were female. Most of the callers were less than 29 years of age.

Some of the representative feedback shared by the callers after listening to the radio programs include:

> *"We were not aware about the agricultural grants available from our rural municipality. Likewise, we got inspired to discuss how to utilize budget for development of agricultural activities in our community" (A female caller, Bhojpur)*

"We did not know about the agricultural grants as well as agriculture-related trainings provided by our rural municipality" (A female caller, Dhankuta)

"I agree that women should be given opportunities for participation in local level planning process including in the budget allocation process" (A male caller, Bardiya)

Result 3.4: Improved citizen engagement in media and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools to strengthen public participation and oversight.

Activity 3.4.1: Conduct SMS My Voice campaigns.

Follow-up with the winners from the previous campaigns

The third SMS My Voice (SMV) campaign (November 2017-March 2018) called for youth action aimed at curbing corruption and engaging youth in oversight of public resource use and public service delivery. Three winners from Banke, Bardiya and Sindhupalchok districts were selected based on the relevance and the feasibility of their proposed activities. While the winner from Banke has already conducted awareness programs such as street dramas, the other two are preparing. Despite being visually impaired, the winner from Banke has successfully collaborated with the local youth group and other relevant stakeholders in organizing the activity. All three winners were provided opportunity to participate in the Advocacy Monitoring and Oversight training held this quarter in Kathmandu.

Activities proposed by other participants:

"We collaborated with Prithvi Youth Club to organize a felicitation program for the elected local representatives where we ensured that they abide by all the commitments they made during the election campaigns. We also requestedthat the ward chairperson make all information about the budget transparent." ((Listening Discussion and Action Group (LDAG) facilitator, Pragatisheel LDAG, Bardiya)

"I am Haridatta Sharma. In order to stop locally elected representatives from engaging in corruption, I can interact with them, invite them for discussion program where youths like us can ask them for their commitments to remain transparent and accountable."

"If local representatives from our community are engaged in corruption, we youth should take action. We have been meeting them when we go to the ward offices, and ensure that they are aware that we watch them." (Manisha Joshi, Kanchanpur)

Launch of the fourth SMV campaign

The fourth SMV campaign with the title 'म भाग लिन्छु' (I Will Participate) encouraged youth to participate in the ongoing local level planning process and share concerns related to it. The aim was to understand what kind of plans and programs youth find important to be included in the planning process to enhance women's skills, economic opportunities and empowerment. As of June 2018, 979 youth have participated in this fourth campaign. The responses to this campaign show youth commitment to participate in the planning process, and also their willingness to encourage more female participation in it. This campaign will conclude in September 2018.

Promotional image of SMV campaign

"We from the Digo Bikash Youth Club have asked for women's skill development programs to be included in the current local level planning process including a facilitators training for women, and preparatory classes for public service commission examination."
- Sunita Tharu from Badaiyataal rural municipality, Bardiya

"By participating in the ongoing local level planning process, our women's group has demanded budget for a community building in our locality."- Chandrakala Budhathoki from Sidhakumar rural municipality

Activity 3.4.2: Organize Public Service Delivery Photo Exhibit.

This activity was not planned for the reporting period.

Activity 3.4.3: Update online collaboration platform (MeroReport).

This activity is described above under Activity 3.1.1.5.

Activity 3.4.4: Opening local-level units' (municipality/gaunpalika) annual budget and plans to the public.

In this quarter, KLL completed the development of Open Local Government Digital System (OLGDS) for Neelakantha municipality in Dhading and Nepalgunj sub-metropolitan city in Banke. KLL also added asset disclosure feature as defined in open government partnership. On April 15, Neelakantha municipality officially demonstrated the OLGDS web portal and formally launched the OLGDS mobile app named 'Mero Neelakantha Mero Mobile'. On May 16, the Nepalgunj sub-metropolitan also launched OLGDS web portal and mobile app. CS:MAP will work on necessary aspect to transfer the technical skills to the municipalities for effective roll out of the application.

Objective 4: Strengthen organizational capacity and sustainability of CSOs working in USAID priority sectors to advance local solutions

Result 4.1: Improved institutional governance of selected CSOs and media organizations.

Activity 4.1.1: Train and provide technical assistance and coaching to partner CSOs and media organizations
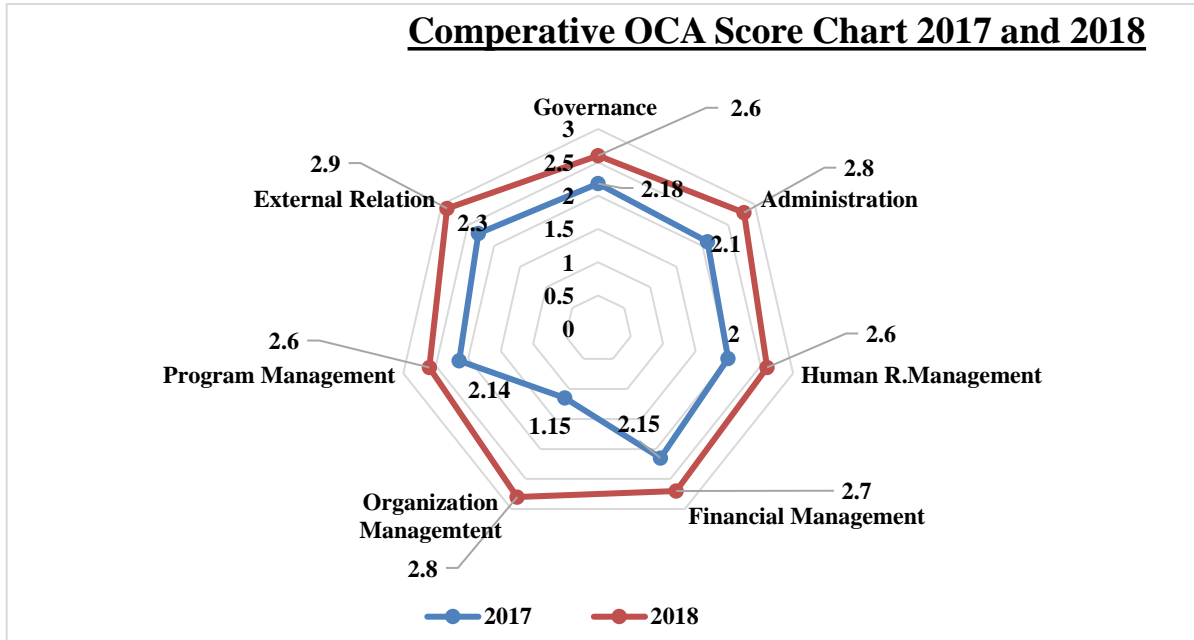
During the reporting period, CS:MAP ISO partners carried out a second round of OCA and ARI assessments and adjusted OCA-Institutional Improvement Plan (IIP) and ARI capacity building plans based on findings from the second assessment, which include: need for developing and finalizing M&E guidelines; financial software for better financial management and second line leadership within organization; limited capacity of sub-committees (procurement and recruitment committee) in CSOs to deliver, institutionalize internal control system within organization; and implementing revised statute, policies and newly developed guidelines and strategies to sustain the changes. CSOs also lack skills on human resources management, staff performance appraisal, capacity building. ISOs plan to support these areas through on-site visits, distance support, and coaching. CS:MAP's capacity building team is also developing reference for CSOs.

In addition to OCA and ARI support, CS:MAP's ISO partners have also drafted a set of minimum standards for internal governance of CSOs. The standards cover the areas of participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic direction with indicators to ensure its implementation. The standards will be tested in Q4 FY 2018 and progress will be reported in a subsequent reporting period.

Activity 4.1.2: Conduct annual organizational capacity assessments with partner organizations, and adjust IIPs.

CS:MAP ISO partners (MITRA Samaj, NEPAN and NNSWA) completed a second round of OCA assessments of 14 CSOs in April and May 2018. The assessments covered seven domains (Governance, Administration, Human Resources Management, Financial Management, Organization Management, Program Management and External Relations) and 39 sub-domains including a new sub-domain on Conflict Sensitivity and Do No Harm. This round of assessments aimed to compare findings that emerged from the first round OCA conducted from April to June 2017.

CSOs prepared OCA-IIPs and ISO partners supported the implementation of the plans through regular coaching and mentoring. ISOs support and commitment from CSOs' management and board members helped CSOs achieve plan goals in one year. After the second-round of assessment, all CSOs adjusted their IIPs and continued their efforts to improve institutional governance. As a result of this joint effort and CS:MAP's support, CSOs improved by 20% in FY 2018 compare to baseline of OCA in FY 2017. Significant improvement is noted in administration, human resource management, financial management, organizational management and external relations. IIPs were adjusted to address the new gaps and ISOs plan to support IIPs accordingly.

Comperative OCA Score Chart 2017 and 2018

Legend: ● 2017 ● 2018

Governance: 2.6 (2018), 2.18 (2017)
Administration: 2.8 (2018), 2.1 (2017)
Human R.Management: 2.6 (2018), 2 (2017)
Financial Management: 2.7 (2018), 2.15 (2017)
Organization Managemtent: 2.8 (2018), 1.15 (2017)
Program Management: 2.6 (2018), 2.14 (2017)
External Relation: 2.9 (2018), 2.3 (2017)

Result 4.2: Improved capacity of select CSOs and media organizations to mobilize social and financial resources for sustainability.

Activity 4.2.1: Develop Financial Sustainability Plans.

All 14 CSOs completed the CS:MAP financial revenue form in this quarter. CS:MAP ISO partner NEPAN has started to analyze the forms. NEPAN will prepare the training content based on the findings. A four-day training is planned in Q4 using *FHI 360 - Going the Distance: Fostering Step by Step Strategies to Support NGO Sustainability Training Guide*.

Following the financial sustainability and resources mobilization training in Q4 FY 2017, all CSOs have finalized their resource-mobilization guidelines and have had them approved by their boards or general assemblies. The CSOs have also formed resource-mobilization committees and developed action plans for resources mobilization. The training has helped the CSOs increase funding opportunities. One CSO received 21 new funding opportunities, including 7 from the government, between October 2017- June 2018.

Activity 4.2.2: Conduct bi-annual group trainings in financial sustainability

This activity was not planned for this quarter.

Activity 4.2.3: Provide technical assistance on volunteer engagement.

CS:MAP ISO partners are providing necessary guidance to CSOs on volunteer (CAR) engagement. CARs are now housed in CSOs.

Activity 4.2.4: Conduct open houses to expose CS:MAP partners to new donors.

Between May 31 and June 2, 2018, CS:MAP's CSO partner HURADEC facilitated a three-day CSO fair at the Dolakha Education Science, Technology and Cultural Festival, which was

organized by the Bhimeshwor municipality. During this festival, HURADEC shared information on CSOs' efforts to strengthen district governance and HURADEC's efforts to improve its own governance. HURADEC also distributed IEC materials related to RTI and public service delivery. This platform helped increase public understanding about CSOs' role and helped improve the public's perception of CSOs.

Result 4.3: Improved capacity of CSOs and media organizations to advance local solutions on priority development issues across sectors and to promote peer-learning opportunities.

Activity 4.3.1: Train and provide TA to selected CSO and media partners to improve technical and organizational development capacities

These activities are discussed under *Activities 4.1 and 4.2*.

Activity 4.3.2: Strengthen the local marketplace of capacity development services

This activity was not planned in the reporting period.

Activity 4.3.3: Facilitate peer learning among partner CSOs and media organizations

To facilitate peer learning this quarter, CS:MAP held a bi-annual HEAD Summit (Activity 3.2.2), effective use of *meroreport.net* meeting (Activity 3.1.1.6), bi-annual all partners' review and reflection meeting (as a part of monitoring, evaluation and learning plan), and monthly and quarterly review meetings (internal). The *Shreejanshil Shakhas* and CS:MAP monthly newsletter also helped CS:MAP's partners both at the national and sub-national level learn from each other. In addition, CSOs have started to coordinate with each other and exchange their lessons learned and guidance on implementing project activities, such as conducting PETSs and using social accountability tools at district and local level.

Two peer learning events are planned in Q4 FY 2018 by NNSWA and MITRA Samaj. The CS:MAP capacity building team will provide necessary technical support for this. In addition, CSOs are regularly participating and presenting their best practices and learning in CS:MAP bi-annual review and reflection meetings and bi-annual summits.

Activity 4.3.4: Refresher Training on CS:MAP concept and strategies in advancing local solutions and peer learning

On June 19 and 20 2018, CS:MAP conducted its all partners review, reflection and work plan meeting. CS:MAP used this forum to translate the CS:MAP concept and strategies in advancing local solutions and peer learning. This meeting helped CS:MAP and its partners understand the concept and strategies with better clarity.

4. Incorporation of Cross-Cutting Interventions

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

In response to a repressive bill proposed in parliament, FNJ drafted a media toolkit for media houses to ensure self-regulation. Their Self-Assessment Toolkit aims to strengthen internal-controlling mechanisms within media houses. CS:MAP has been engaging with FNJ to make GESI one of the main components of the toolkit. To solicit GESI inputs on this from experts, Media Advocacy Group and Samjhauta Nepal organized a panel discussion entitled 'Setting GESI Prerequisites in Self-Assessment for Media' among media experts, and CSO leaders on April 26, 2018. The panelists were the current president and former president of FNJ, president of Madhesh Media, vice president of FNJ, and a senior advocate. Recommendations from the experts and

suggestions from the participants were provided to the FNJ, and have been adapted in the revised draft of the toolkit and GESI is now one of the key components.

Nepal is rapidly progressing towards making new laws subsequent with the Constitution of Nepal, 2015 in line with the various international commitments it has made over time. With this focus, this quarter, CS:MAP shared 1,506 copies of the GESI policy checklist developed earlier to all 753 local bodies so that the local representatives can use this resource to develop respective laws. This checklist was designed to allow users to review laws and policies with a GESI lens. CS:MAP will track how well local bodies use this checklist as a reference while developing their laws and policies.

CS:MAP partner National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) held an expert consultation called, "Electoral Model and Representation Character in Nepal," on June 21 and 22 in Godavari, Lalitpur. During the event, architects of electioneering represented by members of parliament, current and former chief election commissioners, political scientists, election monitors, researchers and independent experts hand an intense but lively discussion about the electoral model and representation character in Nepal's context. Merits and demerits of current electoral model in terms of campaign finance, just and fair representation, intra-party democratic endeavor, sanctity of elections and key management aspects have been brought to spotlight for logical reforms. The discussion highlighted Nepal's electoral model and whether it has represented different sectors of the society. Several papers were presented that described Nepal's past and current electoral system. One paper showed how voter turnout has gradually increased over time (42.18% in 1959 to 70% in 2017) as literacy rate and infrastructure development increased. One presenter discussed the effect of Nepal's mixed model of electoral system, First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) and Proportional Representation (PR), on representation for women and marginalized communities. Under PR, parties that receive more than three percent of the vote have representation in Parliament. However, that policy has not resulted in equal representation for women and marginalized communities.

In an attempt to improve the coalition between CSOs and media to take joint actions, CS:MAP took the approach of addressing gender-based violence, as it is important to both sectors. This quarter, there were many heart-rendering news stores about sexual violence and rape followed by brutal murders of the victims. At the same time, there was little reaction from the CSOs in response to these atrocities. Believing that such issues can be a common platform for CSOs and media to initiate joint action, an program entitled "Role of CSOs and Media in Combating Sexual Violence" between CSOs and media was organized on June 13, 2018. The guest speakers in the program were Honorable Anjana Bisunkhe; Representative from the Nepal Police Women and Children Service Directorate Ins. Kopila Chudal; Advocate Kapil Chandra Pokhrel from the Supreme Bar; Bandana Rana, CEDAW Committee Member and Prakash Rimal, editor from the Himalayan Times Daily. The main objective of the program was to bring together diverse stakeholders from CSOs and media to reflect on their joint responsibility to advocate against sexual violence, especially amid increasing incidents of rapes in the country. The discussion was also a platform for CSOs and Media to act against cases of sexual violence together to improve the public confidence on their roles. The president of the Media Advocacy Group (MAG) presented findings from a study they conducted based on media monitoring of the news covered by media related to rape cases in recent month and also presented data of registered rape cases with Nepal police from 2064/65 to 2074/75 B.S. followed by a facilitated panel discussion. Due to the diversity in the panel, the panelists brought their unique perspectives from the media's side, CSOs, government, law enforcement agencies and the parliament. Honorable Anjana Bisunkhe shared that the civil society is well placed to voice the needs of the people and requested the CSOs and media to lobby
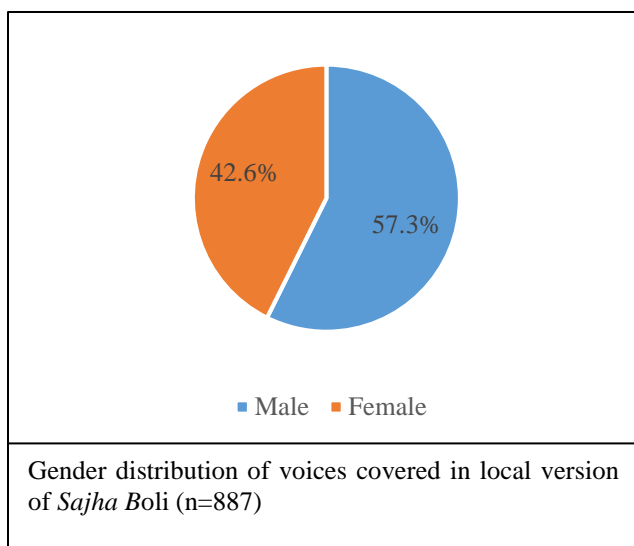
to form proper laws against sexual violence by suggesting, supporting and if needed, by forcing through movements. She suggested coordinating with women parliamentarians who are form a network regardless of the parties they belonged to pressure the government and the parliament to work on the issues of women. The discussion helped raise a voice for advocacy, create pressure for activism and express solidarity as a form of support for the cause against sexual violence.

Similarly, CS:MAP's local CSO partner IHRICON also led an interaction between locally elected leaders, media stakeholders and women's rights activists on the issue of gender-based violence on June 14, 2018 with the objective of identifying key challenges and finding appropriate avenues to provide improved services to the survivors of gender-based violence. Deputy Mayor of Mahalaxmisthan, Nirmala Thapa; Deputy Mayor of Godawari municipality Muna Adhikari; Honorable Anjana Bisunkhe together with rights activists, journalists and representatives from the government were present in the event. The Deputy Mayor of Godawari municipality said that it may take time to eradicate the root causes of gender-based violence from Nepali society because the roots are in the socialization process. She further added that journalists should not be constrained in their writing areas, they should bring the voice of voiceless and marginalized people whose voices have been silenced since decades.
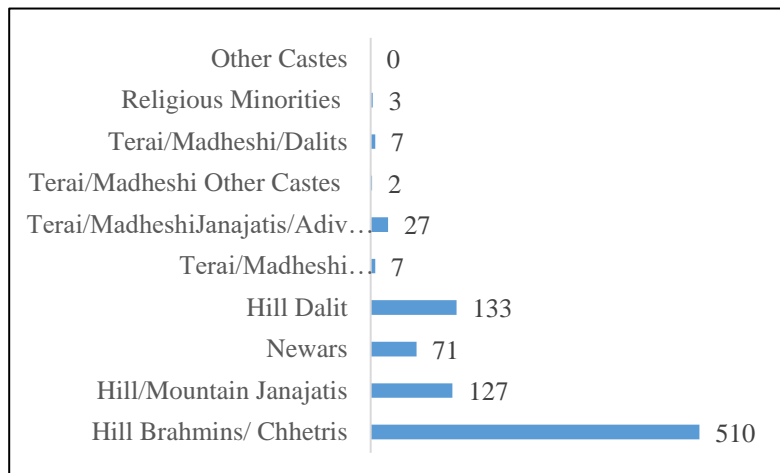
To build momentum on this issue, Samjhauta Nepal and MAG jointly organized a follow-up program entitled "Joint Voices of CSOs and Media in Combating Sexual Violence" on June 29, 2018. The key speakers of the program were Honorable Nabina Lama; Honorable Bina Devi Budhathoki; Honorable Laxmi Chaudhary; Honorable Krishna Bhakta Pokharel; Advocate Bishnu Maya Bhusal, National Bar Association and Dr. Usha Jha, Member National Planning Commission. This series of discussions also contributed to CS:MAP's *Ma Bolchhu*, or "I Will Speak Up," campaign, which called for individuals and groups to raise their voices for advocacy, create pressure for activism and express solidarity as a form of support against all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

The radio programs this quarter covered women's participation in the local-level planning process, gender responsive budgeting and other gender related issues. An SSMK episode was dedicated to women empowerment with women's participation in the local-level planning process being discussed in detail. Apart from the radio program, the SMV campaign encouraged youth to discuss the need for GESI in the ongoing local-level planning process. In order to ensure wider reach and coverage, the production of the radio programs and PSAs in are done in multiple languages and dialects namely, Nepali, Magar, Newari, Awadhi, Tamang, Sherpa, Tharu and Doteli. Similarly, the inclusion of marginalized within content is always given priority.

The *Sajha Boli* central version covered voices of 107 people in this quarter, of which approximately 61% were male and 39% female; 71 of the 107 voices belonged to Hill Brahmin/Chhetris followed by 12 who belonged to Hill Mountain Janajatis. There were 13 voices belonging to Newars, 4 to Hill Dalits, 1 to Terai/Madheshi Brahmins/Rajputs, 1 to
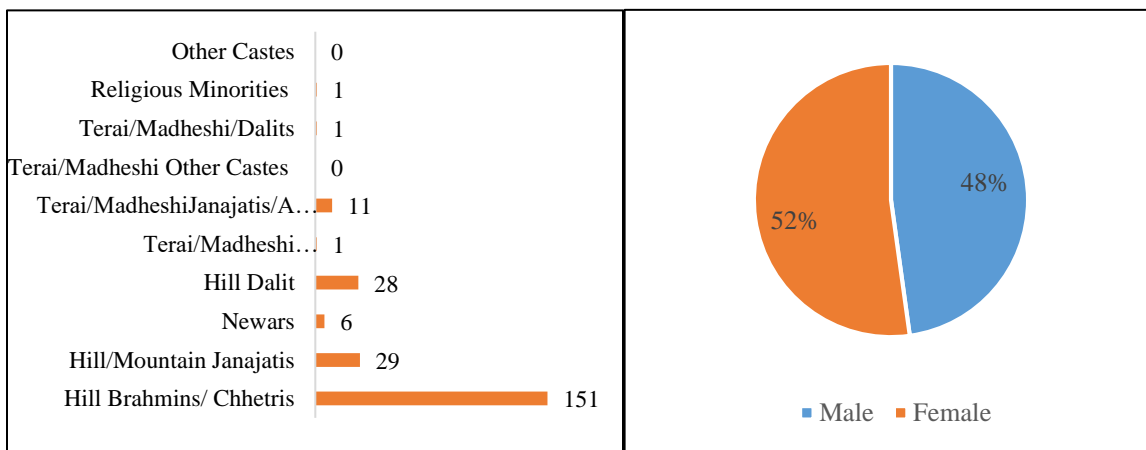

Gender distribution of voices covered in local version of *Sajha B*oli (n=887)

Terai/Madheshi Aadivasis/Janajatis, 1 belonged to Terai/Madheshi and other castes.

Caste/ethnicity of voices covered in local version of *Sajha Boli* (n=887)

Other Castes	0
Religious Minorities	3
Terai/Madheshi/Dalits	7
Terai/Madheshi Other Castes	2
Terai/MadheshiJanajatis/Adiv…	27
Terai/Madheshi…	7
Hill Dalit	133
Newars	71
Hill/Mountain Janajatis	127
Hill Brahmins/ Chhetris	510

CS:MAP ensured GESI in media content this quarter whilst dedicating equal efforts to make sure that the activities such as trainings and meetings have participants from marginalized groups. Among the total 41 participants in Advocacy Monitoring and Oversight training, 35% were female. Similarly, among the total 41 participants in the Investigative Journalism training, 37% of them were female. In both the trainings, majority of the participants were between 15-29 years, 81% in Investigative Journalism training and 98% in Advocacy Monitoring and Oversight training. Among the 10 investigative stories the trained journalists produced, 6 were about women and marginalized groups. One such story on the *Haliya*[2] community in Baitadi district focused on the present condition of *Haliyas* in the district and emphasized on the need for effective programs to uplift their status. Other stories highlighted the issues of increased mobility of women in public and private space as a result of women taking initiatives in breaking the traditional restrictive social norms, and issues related to health impacts of early child marriage and female reproductive health.

Other Castes	0
Religious Minorities	1
Terai/Madheshi/Dalits	1
Terai/Madheshi Other Castes	0
Terai/MadheshiJanajatis/A…	11
Terai/Madheshi…	1
Hill Dalit	28
Newars	6
Hill/Mountain Janajatis	29
Hill Brahmins/ Chhetris	151

Male 48% Female 52%

This quarter, ISO partner Shtrii

Caste/ethnicity and composition of participants in local CAG meetings (n=228)

CS:MAP's Shakti

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[2] The *Haliya* is a bonded labor system that existed in Nepal until it was abolished by law in 2008.

prepared a GESI analysis of the local structures where the disaggregated data was categorized to examine the status of members in the Common Assembly, Public Private Working Groups and Listening, Discussion and Action Group from a GESI lens. In addition to the gender of the members other supporting factors like age category, caste and ethnicity, along with their geographical representation and position in the three structures was analysis and cross tabulated. The findings of the review will be shared with those units in the upcoming quarter and support will be provided to them to integrate these into their structures. The minutes of the meetings of these groups have also been reviewed to assess what GESI issues have been raised and discussed during the meetings of the local structures.

Shtrii Shakti also prepared a handbook, *GESI in Advocacy,* which provides guidelines on conducting advocacy work with a GESI lens. The handbook is in its second draft form and feedback from FHI 360 is being incorporated. The final printable version will be shared in the next quarter.

Youth Engagement

Youth engagement in social accountability and public service oversight was ensured in all activities through youth-focused radio programs and audience interactivity, campaigns targeted at youth populations, and LDAG activities.

Youth-focused radio programs and audience interactivity:

Three episodes of SSMK radio programs, specially targeted to the youth audience, were produced and broadcasted in this quarter. One of the episodes was dedicated to youth participation in local level budget utilization. This episode called for youth engagement in budget planning process and monitoring of budget utilization in their community.

Youth from LDAGs continue to engage in public services oversight:

As is evident in news stories published in MeroReport and CS:MAP newsletters, various activities initiated by LDAGs have proved the effectiveness of youth engagement in ensuring social accountability and public service oversight at the local level. With majority of youth members, these LDAGs listen to the radio programs, discuss about the issues in groups and participate in Common Assembly (CA) meetings. In many occasions, these LDAGs have established themselves as watchdogs of public service providers such as community health post, ward offices and community schools by ensuring regularity and quality in their services. LDAG activities have been summarized as annex to this report.

Youth participation in campaigns:

The youth who participated in previous SMV campaigns have initiated activities aimed at controlling corruption in their communities. As part of the ongoing campaign, youth have participated in the local-level planning process and have demanded for programs targeted at women empowerment.

5. Coordination and Collaboration

During this reporting period, the CS:MAP team coordinated with various stakeholders as explained below.

***Government of Nepal*:** Throughout this quarter, CS:MAP held several meetings with MoFAGA as they decided to own the CS:MAP-designed portal on local government. CS:MAP partner FNJ has coordinated with MoIC to ensure that the model media law drafted by FNJ is owned by the concerned ministry and that ministry's draft does not move ahead without FNJ and stakeholders' feedback. Similarly, FNJ also worked with National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to speed up the process of Freedom of Expression Safety Mechanist at NHRC. To ensure that GESI in the media related laws and policy, Samjhauta and MAG engaged with various parliamentarians, Nepal Police, CEDAW Starring Committee member and the officials of National planning Commission. INSEC coordinating with MoIC, MoLJPA, HLRC and Nepal Law Commission to discuss on the policy requirements at per with international standards. NFN met with the provincial Social Development Ministers of except Province 3 and 7 to discuss the civil society related laws. GoGo Foundation also worked with the lawmakers and discussed on CSOs issues particularly the legal and operational.

USAID and CS:MAP joint visit to CS:MAP districts: USAID and CS:MAP team for a joint visit to Banke and Bardiya on May 2018 coinciding with the visit of US Ambassador to Nepal and Senior Anti-corruption Advisor. The visit focused on imparting information on open government partnerships.

***USAID implementers*:** Freedom Forum, NGO Federation and FHI 360 jointly organized the workshop on OGP and discussed on the prospect of open government partnership in Nepal and possibility of Nepal joining the forum. USAID Anti-corruption Advisor and OGP Board Member Victoria Ayer focused on the importance of OGP and shared various examples where countries are benefiting with it. Participants form leading CSOs, government and USAID partners attended the event. Freedom Forum also coordinated with the local CSOs and with their help selected the participants for Public Information Officer (PIOs) training.

CS:MAP participated in joint planning meeting of USAID Democracy and Governance (DG) Office implementing partners for better collaboration and coordination in the upcoming workplan. The meeting was coordinated by USAID DG office.

Monthly/Quarterly review and reflections: This reporting period, CS:MAP conducted two quarterly review and reflection meetings with its national advocacy and ISO partners (one with each set of partnership) in order to monitor the activities planned in the Year 3 work plan, and draw lessons learned from past activities. During these events, CS:MAP partners presented their progress, the plan for the upcoming quarter, implementation strategies and challenges faced. In response, CS:MAP team members provided feedback. Program leads from CS:MAP also participated in monthly and quarterly reviews and reflection meetings conducted by CS:MAP partners in order to see the differences that the activities and interventions have made at the ground and, if needed, make the necessary changes in the upcoming month.

For this quarter, CS:MAP convened the joint review, reflection and planning meeting on June 19-20, 2018, where all the 31 national, local CSO partners and international partners of CS:MAP came together to review the works, strategic approaches, reflected the lessons learnt and worked on priorities for year 4.

The CS:MAP team also held monthly meetings with the USAID AOR/AAOR to keep USAID/Nepal updated on programmatic progress and to increase the effectiveness of activities.
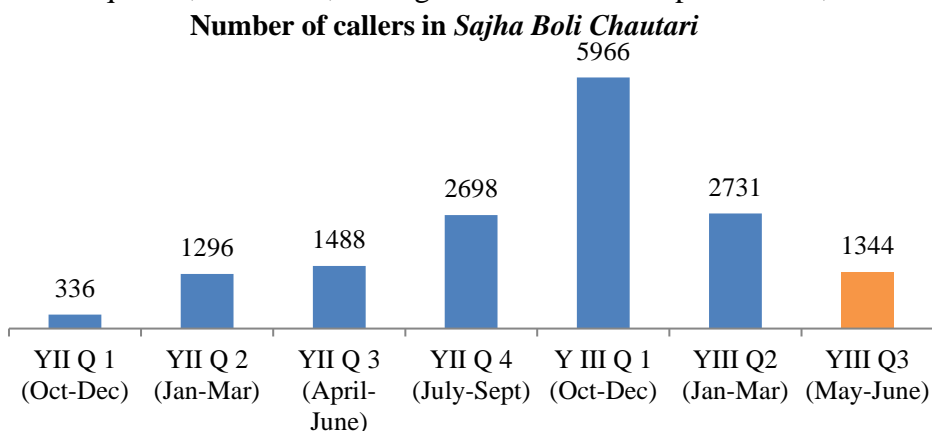
Monthly CS:MAP bulletin: As per the approved Year 3 Annual Work Plan, CS:MAP released a monthly bulletin during the first week of every month for project partners and other stakeholders.

The bulletin detailed stories and activities from the previous map, and documented CS:MAP and partner successes.

6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

CS:MAP has ensured a robust monitoring system on its all activities using multiple tools, including periodic progress review and reflection meetings, field visits, surveys, re-orienting CSO partners about the CS:MAP database management system and how it is linked to partner activities and indicators; with an anticipation of providing continual feedback and technical support to the partners. CS:MAP also continued producing a monthly newsletter - a peer-learning document that is distributed to partners, USAID/Nepal and other relevant stakeholders.

This quarter, CS:MAP, through its international partner EA, continued the regular tracking of *Sajha Boli* audience engagement, and training and campaign evaluation. To ensure collaboration, the FHI 360 and EA M&E teams reviewed CSO reports for identifying and improving upon reporting gaps. While going through details of the audience interactivity in *Sajha Boli Chautari*,

Number of callers in *Sajha Boli Chautari*

Quarter	Value
YII Q 1 (Oct-Dec)	336
YII Q 2 (Jan-Mar)	1296
YII Q 3 (April-June)	1488
YII Q 4 (July-Sept)	2698
Y III Q 1 (Oct-Dec)	5966
YIII Q2 (Jan-Mar)	2731
YIII Q3 (May-June)	1344

number of callers in SBC is found to be dropped this quarter to a monthly average of 450 (with only 345 in June) in comparison to a monthly average of 1,000 calls in previous quarters. This may have been due to emphasis on promotion for the radio program in the previous quarters. The addition of new LDAGs also contributed to this rise, as seen from LDAG member participation in SBC. Upon analyzing caller interaction behavior, it was seen that the average IVR hang-up rate in the very first section of SBC had gone down from 15% in previous quarters to less than 10% this quarter. However, it must be noted that the number of IVR calls has dropped significantly.
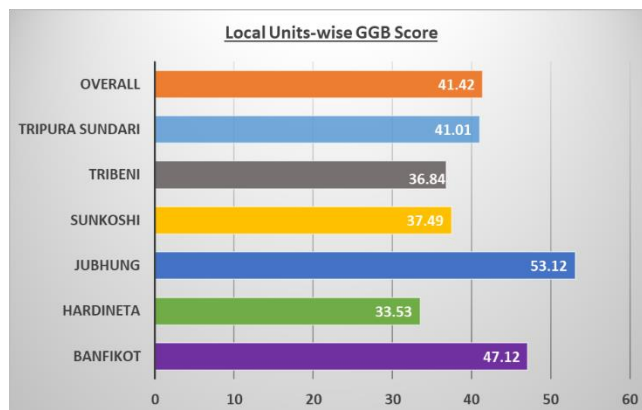
Impact of the radio programs. The radio programs have inspired government-media engagement in Rolpa municipality where the government officials listen to the radio program on a regular basis.

In Bheri municipality in Surkhet, members of the *Chautari* LDAG collaborated with Bheri FM and Sundar Nepal, CS:MAP CSO partner, to advocate with the Ward office (Ward No 13) for timely installation of Citizen Charter. The LDAG members were inspired to take this action after they listened to the 30th episode of *Sajha Boli* on social accountability tools. Despite delays, the Ward office installed the Citizen Charter on June 13, 2018.

In another exemplary case, members of the *Gram Sewa* LDAG of Myangang rural municipality of Nuwakot succeeded in pressurizing the Ward offices (Ward Nos 5 and 6) to establish a joint office. According to LDAG chair Milan Tamang, regular listenership to *Sajha Boli* made them aware about the restructuring process, local elections and the local government. As a result of continued lobbying, a joint Ward office for the two Wards was established. The Facebook page of *Sajha Boli* radio program now serves as a platform for social media users to access the online links to the radio programs, engage in discussion with the audience and generate feedback. Moreover, the page has been widely used for
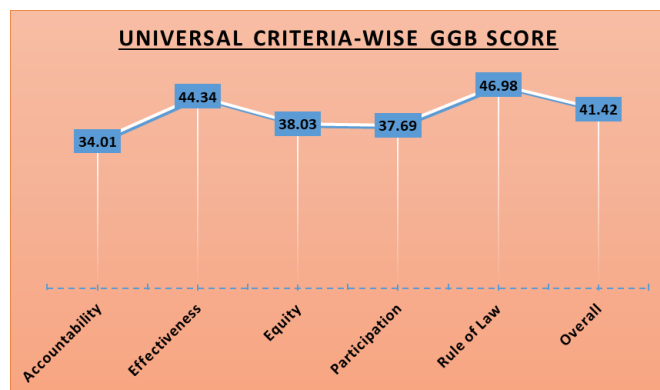
promotion of the project activities including the promotion of campaigns, PSA assessments and sharing of *MeroReport* links. The page has almost 15,000 fans which include 37% female fans. Compared to the last quarter, the number of fans has increased by 23%.

During this reporting period, the fourth SMV campaign was also launched in May 2018 and will continue till September 2018. Especially targeted to engage youth in social accountability and public service oversight activities, this campaign calls for youth to participate in the ongoing local level planning process. With almost 1,000 youth participating in the campaign so far, the campaign has exceeded the initial target of 600.

CS:MAP has also used multiple methods, tools, and techniques to establish baseline benchmarks for the project against which to measure the project's achieved results. In this quarter – after completing data collection from GGB Monitoring Committee, CS:MAP has calculated the composite value for Good Governance Barometer (GGB) Index score. GGB is being conducted in 6 local units from 3 districts where

health and education are the prime focuses. Based on data from these 6 local units, the composite value of GGB Index Score is 41.42. (refer to the local units-wise and universal criteria-wise GGB Score for more details).

Details of the other important activities performed this reporting quarter are included below.

Capacity building for the CS:MAP Data Management System

The CS:MAP MEL team continued to lead regular orientation sessions for partners to establish their understanding of key concepts and processes, and to enhance expertise around the data management system. These sessions were conducted through one-on-one meetings during partner visits; and other important events like the Review and Reflection Meetings and also during Financial Management Training. These sessions helped CS:MAP partners better understand the reporting time frame, align activities with the project goal, results and indicators; and expand their technical capacity to manage the database and update it periodically.

Conduct Data Quality Assessment (DQA) of CS:MAP partners

During last quarter of FY 2018, USAID/Nepal conducted Data Quality Assessments (DQAs), focusing on nine indicators out of the recently revised 39 indicators. The DQA assessed five aspects of data quality (validity, reliability, timeliness, precision and integrity) with customized checklists. Based on the findings and recommendations of USAID/Nepal, CS:MAP prepared action plans for increased program effectiveness.

Launch CS:MAP M&E database management system

This activity was already conducted in previous reporting quarters. As of now, the CS:MAP database management system is in operational stage.

Review and Reflections

Conduct Monthly/Quarterly meetings: This reporting period, CS:MAP conducted two quarterly review and reflection meetings with its national advocacy and ISO partners (one with each set of partnership) in order to monitor the activities planned in the Year 3 work plan, and draw lessons learned from past activities. During these events, CS:MAP partners presented their progress, the plan for the upcoming quarter, implementation strategies and challenges faced. In response, CS:MAP team members provided feedback. Program leads from CS:MAP also participated in monthly and quarterly reviews and reflection meetings conducted by CS:MAP partners in order to see the differences that the activities and interventions have made at the ground and, if needed, make the necessary changes in the upcoming month.

The CS:MAP team also held monthly meetings with the USAID AOR/AAOR to keep USAID/Nepal updated on programmatic progress and to increase the effectiveness of activities.

Mid-Term Review (MTR)

USAID/Nepal, through its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Activity – led by CAMRIS International, conducted Mid-Term Review (MTR) of CS:MAP in May and June 2018. MTR team had visited CS:MAP partners (entire set of partnerships – National Advocacy Partners, ISOs and Local CSOs), selected government agencies and other important CSOs and media leaders. This team also visited Kathmandu, Banke, Dang, Dhading, Dolakha, Kailali and Rukum districts. In overall, it conducted 38 key informant interviews (KIIs), 29 group interviews, 10 focus group discussions (FGDs), 11 mini-surveys and interviews with 216 total respondents (67 female).

Applying multiple methodologies for field level data collections and having frequent discussion meetings and CS:MAP technical documents review, the MTR team came up with preliminary findings and recommendations in June 2018. CS:MAP then discussed the findings and recommendations and has planned to incorporate most of the recommendations in its annual work plan. It has now started working on scope of work modifications of its partners to best align with work plan.

Apart from these activities, CS:MAP organized Annual Review, Reflections and Work Plan Workshop on June 2018 having some specific objectives such as:

1) Document and share annual accomplishments (outputs and outcomes) collectively;
2) Review and reflect on innovations and lessons from program implementation (successes and limitations);
3) Discuss and identify priorities for the next year work plan; and
4) Identify and agree on key result targets and build on lessons and innovations.

Reflective discussion sessions followed by visioning for FY 2019 were conducted to identify challenges and way forwards. This workshop has ultimately guided CS:MAP partners to review progress status and modify their scope of work to adapt in changed context and to adopt some key preliminary findings and recommendations from mid-term review of CS:MAP that was carried out by external team deployed by USAID/Nepal.

Please refer to Section 5, Coordination and Collaboration for more details.

Conduct bi-annual review/reflection workshops: This activity was already conducted in previous reporting quarter.

Conduct annual organizational capacity assessments with partners organizations and adjust IIPs: *Please refer to the Activity 4.1.2.*

7. Activity Progress Summary

CSMAP Year 3 QPR 3
Apr-Jun 2018_Activity

8. Priorities for Quarter 4 (July 1-September 30, 2018)

- Implement advocacy action plans on regulatory reform issues on CSOs and media
- Generate evidence on CSOs contributions to Nepal's development in support of enabling environment advocacy efforts
- Hold policy discussion and commission research studies to produce policy analysis and policy briefs
- Provide TA to civil society stakeholders on legislation processes
- Engaging GoN and parliament stakeholders around legislative drafting
- Launch outreach campaign to improve public understanding and confidence in CSOs and media
- Development and implement minimum standards of internal governance and self-regulation for civil society in a participatory way
- Develop self-assessment toolkit for media and implement in five media houses
- Strengthen advocacy and government engagement capacity of 14 district based CSOs and media organizations
- Coaching ISOs in providing advocacy and government engagement capacity building to partner CSOs and media organizations
- ISOs design and implement advocacy and government engagement coaching and training based on CSO and media organizations' needs
- Conduct *Sajha Sabhas* (Public Forums)
- Strengthen coalitions and networks to undertake joint advocacy actions on policy priorities across sectors
- Organize study visit for media partners in Kathmandu for investigative journalism
- Conduct journalist safety and security training to media organizations
- GGB implementation
- Utilize online collaboration platform (*MeroReport)* to monitor and report on cross-cutting issues
- Strengthen collation and networks for public services oversight
- Hold bi-annual summit
- Conduct RTI campaign
- Institutionalize and regularize *gaunpalikas* for organizing Social Audit and Public Hearing at a fixed venue
- Radio programming to raise citizen awareness on social accountability mechanisms

- Hold content advisory group meetings
- Carry out *Sajha Boli* program production, broadcast and audience interactivity
- Engage youth in social accountability
- Conduct SMS My Voice Campaign
- Organize public service delivery photo exhibit
- Update online collaboration platform (*MeroReport*)
- Provide TA for policy review of partner organizations
- Conduct training on financial sustainability
- Conduct open houses to expose CS:MAP grantees to new donors
- Train and provide TA to selected CSO and media organizations to improve technical and organizational capacities
- Facilitate peer learning among partner CSOs and media organizations

9. Success Story

Success Story 1: *Ma Bolchhu* Strengthening CSO-media relationship through development of common agenda of gender-based violence

Strengthening the relationship between two very different sectors such as CSOs and media can be a challenging task. This quarter, CS:MAP took the approach of bringing together the CSOs and media sectors on the issue of gender-based violence, which both sectors have a role in eliminating. In the past couple of months, there was an influx of news related to sexual violence and rape followed by brutal murders of the victims. At the same time, there was little response from civil society regarding such atrocities. The Nepali media merely reported such incidents, which was not an adequate response in the wake of such a crisis. In the neighboring India, the rape and murder of an eight-year-old child sparked a major political controversy. As a result media and civil society relentlessly followed up on it.

Building solidarity between the two sectors can start by jointly intervening in an agenda which both the sectors have a buy-in in. CS:MAP utilized this platform to initiate joint action by holding a series of discussions on how the media and CSOs can jointly work on this issue. A remarkable number of decision makers and influencers participated in these discussions including MP Anjana Bisunkhe; MP Nabina Lama; MP. Bina Debi Budhathoki; MP Laxmi Chaudhary; MP Krishna Bhakta Pokhrel; Advocate Bishnu Maya Bhusal, National Bar Association, Dr. Usha Jha, Member National Planning Commission, representatives from the Nepal Police Women and Children Service Directorate Inspector Kopila Chudal; Advocate Kapil Chandra Pokhrel from the Supreme Bar; Ms. Bandana Rana, CEDAW Committee Member & Mr. Prakash Rimal, editor from the Himalayan Times Daily. The main objective of the program was to bring together diverse stakeholders from CSOs and media to reflect on their joint responsibility to advocate against sexual violence, especially amid increasing incidents of rapes in the country. The discussion was also a platform for CSOs and media to act against cases of sexual violence together to improve the public confidence on their roles. There was a general consensus that the CSOs and media need to come together to lobby to form proper laws against sexual violence by suggesting, supporting and if needed, by forcing through movements. Also, the parliamentarians expressed their commitment to coordinate with other women parliamentarians to make a network in near future regardless of the parties they belonged to pressure the government and the parliament to work on the issues of women. The discussion helped raise a voice for advocacy, create pressure for activism and express

solidarity as a form of support for the cause against sexual violence and fed into CS:MAP's ongoing campaign against gender-based violence and discrimination against women, *Ma Bolchhu*.

Success Story 2: Joint civil society advocacy repealed restrictive policy

The Government of Nepal has withdrawn its circular directing all District Administration Offices (DAOs) to seek the property details of NGO personnel, and limit their interventions to only one specific sector. This was made possible with the joint advocacy efforts of CS:MAP's civil society coalition led by the NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN). The Ministry of Home Affairs circular called for:

- Nonprofit organizations to submit property details (of governing body e.g. board of directors, and staff) while registering or renewing;
- DAOs to allow NGOs to carry out their activities only in one particular field or sector;
- NGOs to submit financial and progress reports to DAO once every four months; and
- Organizations failing to renew for three years in a row to be closed.

In response, NFN called an urgent coalition meeting on June 14, 2018. Sixty-two participants from different federations, alliances, CSO coalition networks, prominent civil society leaders as well as NFN's central executive members argued that the circular was against the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal.

Similarly CS:MAP reviewed the provisions in the basis of international standards and international laws and shared the findings with civil society coalition members. This analysis provided evidence about why the policy should be repealed. The major findings of the CS:MAP analysis are: **requirement to submit property details** is overly burdensome and violates the principle that NGOs and the non-profit sector be treated in the same manner as other commercial and other legal entities; **requirement to select a single area of work** likely violates Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Article 17 of the Constitution of Nepal; and dissolution of **organizations not renewed for more than three** is the greatest penalty to a CSO and has a grave impact on the freedom of association.

Following this meeting, NFN issued a press release condemning the government circular; civil society leaders met with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Home Affairs, and the Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare; and NFN district chapters handed over notes of dissent to their respective District Administration Offices. While the government has rescinded two of the four provisions in the circular, NFN and other national advocacy partners are continuing advocacy efforts to repeal other regressive provisions.

Success story 3: Community Reporter an exemplary figure in the community

Chhamika Chaudhary conducting an interview for voice collection for Sajha Boli radio program

Chhamika Chaudhary is a 24-year-old female from Dharmapur of Janaki rural municipality-1 of Kailali district. Before working as a CR for CS:MAP, Chhamika had worked as LDAG facilitator for three years for *Sajhedari Bikaas* project. While working as the LDAG facilitator, she acquainted herself with radio programs, group facilitations and mobilizations that gradually developed her interests in issues such as governance, accountability, transparency and other related issues. Pursuing her interest in working at community level on similar issues, she joined CS:MAP as a CR. Since the first day of her work, she was very much interested to explore new avenues of the work. She participated in the trainings provided by EA and worked closely with the central production team as well as the local production team.

Today Chhamika is an exemplary youth in her community. She has been able to identify various issues such as representation of women and marginalized groups in local level planning process and other community level activities. As per requirement, she has been able to gather voices related to these stories and submit it to the radio stations to be included in the Sajha Boli radio programs. Her sincere dedication, hard-working nature and compassion has established herself as an inspiration among fellow CRs as well. Though she had experiences related to radio programs and LDAGs, the responsibilities as a CR were quite challenging for her in the initial days.

> *"In the initial days, I was afraid to talk to people. I was unsure how they would respond to my questions. So, it was quite challenging in those days. But gradually, I learnt those skills. Now, I ensure that I am fully prepared before going for an interview. I am confident that I can talk to people, identify issues, and explore various areas related to the issue."*

10.   Challenges and Mitigation Measures

Challenges in GESI: Gender equality is not just the concern of half of the world's population; it is a human right, a concern for us all, because no society can develop – economically, politically, or socially – when half of its population is marginalized. It is principally agreed that we must leave no one behind. It is critical that we continue to engage men and boys actively in the fight against gender-based discrimination and violence. However, buying ownership of boys, men and the relatively privileged population in the struggle for gaining gender equality and social inclusion is a definite challenge. The implications of not providing girls with equal voices, choices, and opportunities affect not just their lives, but the future of development. Efforts to promote inclusive sustainable development and justice are inextricably linked. Gender bias is still deeply embedded in cultures, economies, political and social institutions around the world and Nepal is no exception. Women and girls face unacceptable levels of discrimination and abuse, which is not only wrong, but also prevents them from playing a full part in society and decision-making. In this backdrop,

of the major challenges is to transform such deep-rooted problems through the limited intervention of the project. When we engage with the local structures, for example, with the common assembly, they are the product of this same society with the same set of biases that they bring along. It is relatively easier to incorporate GESI in terms of numbers, of women and marginalized groups, representing in a particular structure. However, the most challenging part is to incorporate GESI in the issues being discussed in the groups and apply GESI lens in the general issues being discussed. For example, the structure may take up issues directly related to women, such as, establishing birthing centers in their particular *gaunpalikas* but to look at neutral issue, such as education, from a GESI lens is a challenge. In the same example, what are the peculiar challenges that girls face in schools is something that needs to be looked at when education is being discussed. The transfer of this lens is the most challenging part of integrating GESI in all the work that we do. It will take sustained and untiring effort to transform the mindset of the people that we are working with to ensure that GESI is not just tokenistic, but it is internalized as a basic prerequisite of human development. Sustained mentoring is required to address unconscious biases.

There are some challenges in ensuring GESI in media related trainings as the number of applicants from a GESI standpoint has been poor despite several efforts. This quarter, despite an open announcement for the training and wide promotion, this remained a challenge. In some cases, there were no applicants from some districts.

Technical challenges related to radio stations and radio coverage: Radio Ramailo FM in Okhaldhunga, one of the broadcast partners, is closed since last two months due to damage in their transmission tower. Hence, the radio program hasn't been broadcast for two months. Since, there is no clear indication from the partner about the resuming of the broadcast, Equal Access is now working to select a new broadcast partner. There are some areas (Musuriya in Kailali, and Roshi in Kavre) that fall outside of the broadcast range for the radio programs. In those cases, LDAGs can listen to the centrally produced version via Radio Nepal or some groups have downloaded episodes from *MeroReport*. Equal Access provides memory sticks to all LDAGs to ensure that the groups have access to the radio programs.

11.   Lessons Learned

Continued engagement with the participants of SMV campaign

In this quarter, CS:MAP partner Equal Access met with the three winners from the previous rounds of SMV campaign. The winner from Banke had already conducted activities as per the plan, Equal Access team met him in Kohalpur to gain more information about the activity. All three winners were given the opportunity to participate in the AMO training to further strengthen their advocacy capacity. Similarly, the SSMK team interviewed all three winners, and reports on their activities and plans will be included in the SSMK radio programs with an objective to encourage more youths in such initiatives.

These engagements were fruitful in many ways. Firstly, they provided EA opportunity to assess about the activities planned by the winner. Based on the discussion with the winners, it is found that generating resources for the activities was the major challenge. However, the winners were using their own strategies to address this issue. The winner from Banke took support from a local youth-led organization to organize such activities. Equal Access discussed with the winners more strategies to generate resources and use social networks such as youth groups for the activities. Secondly, these engagements are the most suitable ways to remain in contact with the campaign participants and pledge their support in the ongoing campaigns as well. Furthermore, meeting

youth groups along with these winners has given Equal Access opportunity to promote the campaign and other project activities in larger groups. Hence, Equal Access will continue such engagements, and in the coming days such engagements will cover more youths not just the winners.

Multi-stakeholder engagement for policy advocacy at national, provincial and sub national level: With the joint effort of CSO and media coalitions, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) withdrew the regressive MoHA circular related to NGOs and the national integrity policy. The civil society organizations voiced jointly, and media regularly covered the issue and hence disseminated the information posing a pressure to the government. This has taught CS:MAP that the CSOs and media's engagement for policy advocacy at multiple layers-- national, provincial and sub national level--is essential and effective. Such engagement will create vibrancy among the citizens and the concerned stakeholders and pose pressure to all tiers of government to formulate policies in participation of civil society at par with the international standard.

Motivation for self-regulation and internal governance:

Although series of trainings and orientations have been imparted to the civil society leaders and NGO activists about the self-regulation and internal governance within their organization, still there seems lack of commitment by the concerned stakeholders. To comply with self-regulation and internal governance, it should also be linked to some motivational factor besides the ethical issue. Self-regulation and internal governance should be linked with the funding requirement for the project, financial and technical support and exposer and cross learning activities. For this, the CS:MAP has been collaborating with the AIN to make self-regulation and international governance as partnership criteria. Hence self-regulation and internal governance will be gradually internalized and implemented if this creates the value for the sector.

12.   Annex

Annex 1

Annex 1. Handbook on ICT.docx