Practice of Social Accountability for Development Outcomes:

Experiences of PRAN Action Learning Grants in Nepal

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND COOPERATION

CECI

PRAN
Program for
Accountability in Nepal

Practice of Social Accountability for Development Outcomes:

Experiences of PRAN Action Learning Grants in Nepal

Madhab Karkee
Manna Sainju
Pranav Bhattarai

Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI)

December 2013

Copyright

Foreword

It is well recognized that accountability of the government agencies to the citizens lies in its intention to serve them which is crucial for the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. Furthermore, various social accountability approaches and mechanisms have been being practiced in various parts of the world as a means of promoting more accountable, honest, transparent and responsive government agencies delivering quality services. To promote such activities towards improvement of governance and accountability from the demand side, the World Bank implemented Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN). The program aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to use social accountability approaches and tools effectively. Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI), the executing partner of the World Bank, was competitively selected and assigned the role of managing competitive grants to Nepali Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to practice and pilot various social accountability (SAc) tools in three thematic areas of PRAN: a) Public Financial Management; b) Municipal Governance; and, c) Public Service Delivery.

Twenty-nine sub-grantee CSOs who received large grants and small grants in two batches, implemented 14 different SAc tools in various combinations (ranging from 2 to 4) over the course of the project. While the capacity of these CSOs on application of such SAc tools have been developed, the sub-grantee CSOs' interventions have benefitted the poor and the disadvantaged groups including marginalized citizens of the municipalities and VDCs. Their generating awareness among target citizens played instrumental role in improving their participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of development activities at the local level.

Lack of awareness among citizens about their entitlements and rights regarding public services is often referred to as a factor for poor service delivery. Piloting of various SA tools by the CSOs under Grant Making for Action Learning has to some extent addressed the lapses in service delivery by empowering the citizens in the project areas. These campaigns by the sub-grantee CSOs have enhanced capacities of citizens to articulate their needs and priorities to the service providers, and created greater demand for better public service delivery, municipal governance and public financial management.

The CSOs' interventions have created a social capital and a critical mass of SAc practitioners on the one hand and initiated a process of constructive engagement with service providers through application of SAc tools and initiatives. The practice of SAc tools was being taken as intimidating by the service providers on most occasions but grants support to CSOs under PRAN initiated constructive engagement for good governance through effective use of social accountability approaches. It has become successful in setting the environment and boosting the confidence among citizens and service providers that issues of poor service delivery can be resolved amicably through direct feedback mechanisms provided by SAc tools.

Increased confidence was built on a momentum given to SAc campaign by successful implementation of PRAN. With this momentum, concept of SAc has been mainstreamed into governance discourse and owned by other development partners

working in Nepal as well. Increasing buy-in of social accountability theme by the media and coverage of governance issues can be taken as encouraging sign of greater ownership and assimilation of the social accountability issue into the development discourse. This is not the end but a beginning which needs to be taken further ahead with more vigor and enthusiasm.

In this backdrop, CECI as one of the partners of PRAN implementation would like to extend sincere thanks to the World Bank for entrusting CECI for the execution of this important project. The kind and continuous support from the PCU of PRAN is acknowledged with much appreciation. We would, likewise, like to extend our sincere thanks to the Grant Management Committee for their valuable contribution in the sub-grant selection process including their inputs in several guidelines. Similarly, the collaborations of Pro-Public, TMS and SAP-Nepal as program partners in successfully implementing the program are acknowledged. The valuable inputs provided by the mentors to the SAc Practitioners in course of practicing SAc tools are likewise acknowledged. Above all, the hard work and dedication of the CSOs and their SAc Practitioners in completing the grant funded projects and generating the results that have been synthesized in this report are highly acknowledged.

Finally we would like to thank the entire PRAN team at CECI led by Madhab Karkee, and consisting of Sushma Shrestha, Gitika Chhetri Lama and Manna Sainju, for their untiring efforts, hard work and dedication in the execution of the project in most diligent and professional manner. Thanks are also due to the authors for bringing this report in this form.

Keshava Koirala
Country Representative
December 2013

Acronyms

ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
CECI	Center for International Studies and Cooperation
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSC	Community Score Card
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DADO	District Agriculture Development Office
DAG	Disadvantaged Groups
DDC	District Development Committee
GMA	Grant Making Agency
HWEPC	Human Welfare and Environment Protection Centre
LB	Local Bodies
LBRMMP	Local Bodies Resource Mobilization and Management Procedure
LRO	Land Revenue Office
MG	Municipal Governance
NCBI	National Capacity Building Institute
NCSA	National Center For Social Accountability
NRI	National Research Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Public Audit
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
PFM	Public Financial Management
PGRM	Public Grievance Redress Mechanism
PH	Public Hearing
PRAN	Program for Accountability in Nepal
PSD	Public Service Delivery
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
RRAFDC	Rural Region and Agro-forestry Development Center
SA	Social Audit
SAc	Social Accountability
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee

Executive Summary

The Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN) is a program of the World Bank implemented in agreement with the Government of Nepal. Financed by the State and Peace-building Fund (SPBF), a Trust Fund financed from the World Bank's administrative budget including the governments of The Netherlands and Norway. PRAN aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations and other non-state organizations, and that of the government officials, for constructive engagement for good governance through the effective use of social accountability (SAc) approaches and tools in three themes: a) Public Financial Management; b) Municipal Governance; and, c) Public Service Delivery.

Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI), a partner of PRAN implementation, was selected competitively for managing grants to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Under the PRAN, CECI made grants to Nepali CSOs for action learning projects through two grant categories: a) large grants for piloting social accountability initiatives and, b) small grants for undertaking action research on development and testing of social accountability tools. Action learning grants were made to 30 CSOs in 2 batches of which 29 CSOs completed their project activities in October 2012 while one was dropped from the program early on. The sub-grantee CSOs implemented 14 different SAc tools during project period. Some practiced a solo SAc tool while others practiced from 2 to 4 tools with varying waits. The sub-grantees were selected on a competitive basis from among the eligible CSOs who applied for grants. The sub-grantee CSOs worked in 33 districts which include 7 mountain districts, 15 hill districts and 11 Terai districts in all five development regions of Nepal. Altogether 29 sub-grantee CSOs (coming from 25 districts) implemented sub-grant projects in 2 batches which comprised of 10 large grants and 19 small grants. The Action Learning projects reached more than 60,000 citizens directly of which, 39% were female and 61% male. On an average 20% of total direct beneficiaries were from Dalit communities and more than 30% were from Janajati communities.

Nepali CSOs have been carrying out some SAc initiatives since long. Some of these SAc tools include public hearing and public audit which are also a part of government activity as required by Local Self Governance Act-1999, Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act-2008 and Local Bodies Resource Mobilization and Management Procedure-2012. In addition to what government rules and laws have provisions on SAc tools, the World Bank funded PRAN substantially intensified the practice of SAc tools and lent momentum to social accountability campaign in Nepal. This resulted in formation of a critical mass of SAc practitioners at the local level and initiated process of constructive engagement between service providers and citizens for demanding better service delivery and public goods.

CECI's effective management of PRAN Action Learning Grants contributed to giving further momentum for piloting of various SAc tools. Given the complex social structure, geographical diversity and varying levels of literacy in project districts, the results achieved by PRAN sub-grantee CSOs have been substantial in terms of reaching greater number of citizen beneficiaries and in creating a common platform for service users and providers to work together for better service delivery.

Sub-grantee CSOs became primary agents to catalyze changes by practicing SAc tools and mechanisms. They proved their mettle in being movers and shakers of civic campaigns and advocacy on social accountability. These CSOs were able to reach wider sections of the vulnerable and marginalized groups through information campaigns, mobilization of existing community networks and formation of local groups. This has enhanced active grassroots participation in decision making process and in monitoring of public service delivery and local budget expenditures. Also, by using different SAc tools such as public hearings and PGRM, CSOs have succeeded in channelizing citizens' voices to hold public service providers transparent and accountable.

The outcomes and results achieved by CSOs under Grant Making for Action Learning can be counted as encouraging. The results that have emerged from the practice of different SAc tools by the 29 CSOs and their respective SAc practitioners out of the proceeds of PRAN grants facility can be summarized to be of the nature of promotional, attitudinal, empowering and holding the service providers to account. The practice has resulted in creation of a critical mass of capacitated CSOs, sensitized and functional community groups/organizations, empowered citizenry and enhanced client power and atmosphere for constructive engagement. This was possible due to strategic application of SAc tools by the sub-grantee CSOs.

But the sustainability of these initiatives is still in question. Therefore, policy advocacy for institutionalizing these tools must be carried out simultaneously alongside application of SAc tools by the CSOs. This can help ultimately promote sustained application of SAc tools and promote transparency and accountability in public services, municipal governance, public financial management and other spheres of public service delivery. Implementation of PRAN has set a step further in social accountability campaign in Nepal which also needs to be carried out further by local CSOs, development partners and stakeholders collectively in years to come.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Accountability is defined as an obligation of those holding power to take responsibility for their behavior and actions with intent to improve service delivery to people. However, social accountability (SAc) is an approach towards ensuring accountability through engagement of citizens and their groups who participate in exacting accountability. The concept of SAc includes a wide range of mechanisms which are used by citizens, communities, media and civil society organizations to hold office bearers to account for their actions and behaviors.

All office bearers are obliged to be accountable toward people for decisions they make, for actions they take and for services they deliver. But, most of them exhibit poor governance and accountability in delivering public services goods. Thus, establishing SAc mechanisms offer huge potential for improving service delivery and governance through empowering citizens. Through the Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN)[1], an attempt has been made to establish the social accountability mechanisms as means to enhance transparency, equity and democratic governance in Nepal.

1.2 The program

The PRAN is a program of the World Bank implemented in agreement with the Government of Nepal. Financed by the State and Peace-building Fund (SPBF), a Trust Fund financed from the World Bank's administrative budget and the governments of The Netherlands and Norway, this program was initially designed for three years until October 2012; but later had been extended until December 2013. Its purpose was to improve governance and institutional performance in Nepal by promoting more accountable, honest, transparent and responsive government agencies delivering quality services. To this end, the PRAN aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and other non-state organizations, and that of the government officials, for constructive engagement for good governance through the effective use of social accountability approaches and tools.

PRAN had five components designed to direct support towards knowledge and skill development in social accountability; piloting innovative social accountability initiatives and developing tools; networking of social accountability practitioners; monitoring and evaluating social accountability approaches and conducting research for learning; and program leadership and administration. The PRAN supported social accountability under three themes: a) Public Financial Management; b) Municipal Governance; and, c) Public Service Delivery.

PRAN's Component 2 is a recipient-executed independent Grant Making for Action Learning facility. The Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) was selected, through a competitive process, to perform the role of Grant Management Agency. CECI entered into agreement with the World Bank in January 24, 2011 and will continue until December 2013.

CECI made grants to Nepali CSOs for action learning projects through two grant categories: a) large grants (of up to USD 50,000) for piloting social accountability initiatives and,

---

1   The program was initially known as the Program to Promote Demand for Good Governance in Nepal

b) small grants (of up to USD 15,000) for undertaking action research on development and testing of social accountability tools.

1.3 Objective of the report and the layout

In the original phase, CECI made grants to 30 CSOs in 2 batches during 2011 and 2012. Of these 30 CSOs, 29 completed their project activities in October 2012 while one was dropped from the program early on. The objective of this report is to synthesize the key outcomes of these 29 action learning projects and to document key lessons and experiences. Section 2 sketches out the context of social accountability in Nepal while section 3 gives a brief description of project information and coverage. Section 4 is devoted to describing the diversity of project beneficiaries followed by a synthesis of results in section 5. Section 6, summarizes challenges faced, lessons learnt and recommendations made by the CSOs. The summary and conclusion follow in section 7 while strategic recommendations have been stated in Section 8.

1.4 Limitations

Project Completion Reports submitted to CECI by its sub-grantee CSOs constitute the main source of information for this report. Besides desk review and analysis of these CSO reports, no other means of data collection such as field visits, Focus Group Discussions, consultation or interviews were carried out. Thus, this report is exclusively based on CSOs' reports and this puts a limitation to the reliability of information sourced in the report.

2. Social Accountability Context in Nepal

Global experiences suggest that SAc mechanisms are very effective in triggering development outcomes by enhancing accountability and transparency. But behind the stories of success of accountability interventions globally, an enabling environment has always remained a key enabling factor. Thus, the local context appears to be a driving force in lending further momentum to successful implementation of social accountability tools as it involves engagement of civil society organizations, citizens, media, elected representatives and government agencies, among others. Vibrant democratic institutions, space for civic participation, political will for reforms and proactive character of government to take the initiatives forward are some of the fundamental requisites for effective application of SAc mechanisms.

Mostly, social accountability practices and approaches in countries with favorable and enabling context have become more effective and yielded positive outcomes. Practice of SAc is more likely to bring tangible development outcomes where strong government commitment to social accountability reform prevails. But, SAc interventions are less likely to be effective in contexts with little or no government will to implement SAc reforms. Therefore, not all social accountability mechanisms can be equally applicable or suited in all country contexts. For example, in countries with strong governance, policy-making and open budgeting, application of SAc tools tends to be more effective than others.

Following the restoration of multiparty democracy in early 1990s, the non-profit sector gained further momentum in Nepal. Taking advantage of the newly established democratic politics and space, they have gained increasing influence over the national policy and priority as being an ally of the government, and the socio-political environment in which CSOs are operating has also changed significantly over the last two decades. Role of CSOs in Nepal has come to be more vibrant, assertive and prominent across a broad spectrum of interventions. From building social capital through SAc interventions, advocacy and civic campaigns to development of infrastructures, the CSOs have markedly contributed to enhance peoples' capacity to bargain with the state, make it accountable and transparent for its actions and awareness on governance polity and program.

The CSOs in Nepal have been carrying out SAc initiatives such as public hearing, public audit, social audit, citizen report card, community score card, public expenditure tracking survey, community monitoring and right to information, among many others. Some of the SAc tools such as public hearing, social audit and public audit are also a part of legal mandate as required by Local Self Governance Act-1999, Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act-2008 and Local Bodies Resource Mobilization and Management Procedure-2012. These social accountability interventions and mechanisms pursued by the CSOs have become successful and drawn much appreciation and ownership from the government agencies as well. Government laws and directives with mandatory provisions for Public Hearing (PH), Public Audit (PA), Social Audit (SA) and Citizen Charter, among others, can be taken as proactive initiatives from the government to institutionalize these tools due to success and effectiveness of CSO interventions on SAc in recent decade.

In addition to what government rules and laws have provisions on SAc tools, the World Bank funded Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN) has furthered the practice and

piloting of many other new SAc tools in the context of Nepal in the last few years. This resulted in formation of a critical mass of SAc tools practitioners at the local level and initiated process of constructive engagement between service providers and citizens for demanding better service delivery and public goods.

Given a wide range of formal structures and legal frameworks in place, Nepal has a fertile ground for practicing various social accountability tools. Misallocation and irregularity in the use of development funds at the local level is being exposed by the use of various social accountability tools. Existing laws and frameworks are being used to hold the service providers accountable and transparent even during protracted political transition. Wide range of SAc tools are piloted and practiced in different sectors in Nepal under Grant Making for Action Learning component-2 of PRAN which has been managed by Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI).

Given the complex social structure, geographical diversity and varying levels of literacy in project districts, the results achieved by PRAN sub-grantee CSOs have been substantial in terms of reaching greater number of citizen beneficiaries and in creating a common platform for service users and providers to work together for better service delivery.

3. Project Information and Coverage

3.1 Implementation arrangement

Implementation arrangement for the social accountability practice by the sub-grantee CSOs has been depicted in the self-explanatory figure 1. CECI awarded competitive grants to CSOs with wining proposals evaluated by an independent multi-stakeholder Grant Making Committee (GMC)[2]. The sub-grantee CSOs practiced the SAc tools involving service recipient citizens and service provider public agencies. CECI coordinated with PCU and other component partners of PRAN in channeling necessary technical supports to the sub-grantees.

Figure 1: Implementation arrangement

---
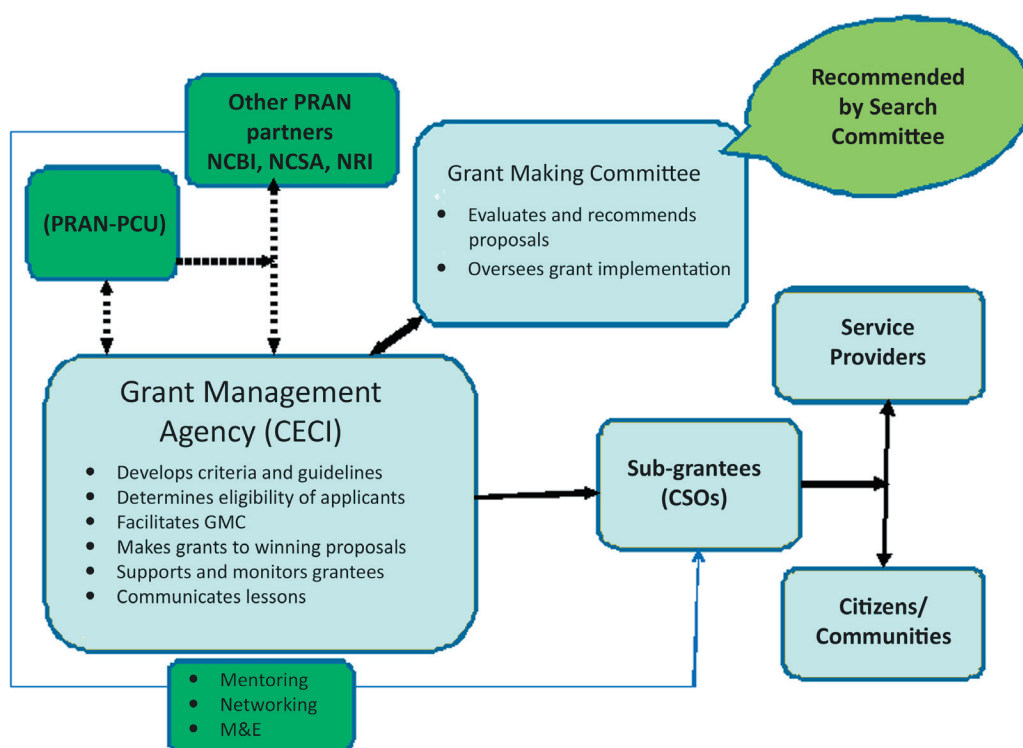
2   It is important that the recipients of grants are selected in an objective, transparent, impartial and merit-based manner. In order to ensure this a multi-stakeholder, independent GMC had been constituted. The GMC was composed of members representing civil society, sector specialists and the Government of Nepal (the list of members of the GMC has been presented in Annex 1). The members of the GMC were identified and recommended by a multi-stakeholder Search Committee (composed of representatives from civil society organizations, Government of Nepal and the donors).

3.2 Sub-project districts and themes

The sub-grantees were selected on a competitive basis from among the eligible CSOs who applied for grants. The sub-grantee CSOs worked in 33 districts which include 7 mountain districts, 15 hill districts and 11 Terai districts in all five development regions of Nepal (See Map 1 below). Altogether 29 sub-grantee CSOs (coming from 25 districts) implemented sub-grant projects in 2 batches which comprised of 10 large grants and 19 small grants (list given in Annex 2).

Map 1: PRAN GRANT MAKING

Districts of Sub-Grant Projects Implementation
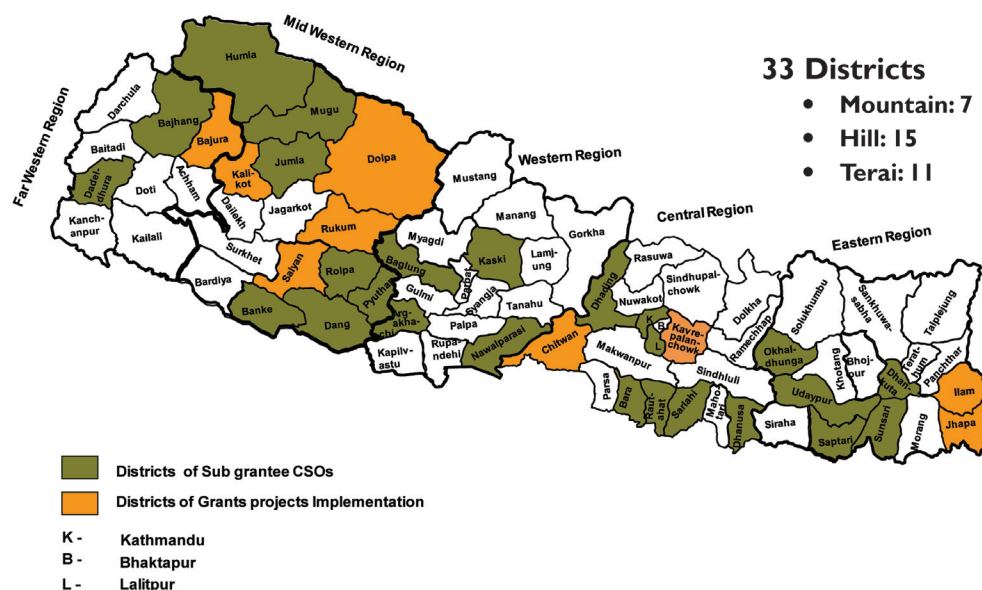
Twenty-nine sub-projects were completed successfully with one being dropped from the program due to unfortunate circumstances.

The grants were implemented under three themes as shown in the following graph.

Figure 2: Number of grants under each theme
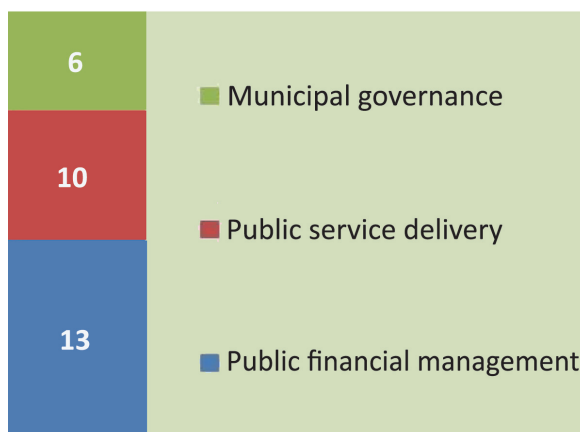
3.3 Sub-project duration and grant size

The first batch had a time frame of 10-11 months while the second batch worked for 5-6 months. All the projects were completed by September 30, 2012. The average grant sizes in both categories are given below.

Table 1: Average grant size

Grant Size	US Dollar
Large Grant	40,673.00
Small Grant	10,323.00

3.4 Overview of social accountability tools practiced

The sub-grantee CSOs implemented 14 different SAc tools in various combinations over the course of the project. Some practiced a solo SAc tool while others practiced various combinations ranging from 2 to 4 SAc tools with varying waits. The SAc tools practiced by the 29 CSOs are presented in the following figure.

Figure 3: Types of SAc tools practiced

4. Diversity of Project Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of PRAN were poor and disadvantaged groups (DAG) in project districts and marginalized citizens of municipalities and VDCs. Awareness among the DAGs was raised through information campaigns (brochures, booklets, community radios, jingles etc.) for improving their participation in local planning processes. The beneficiaries of the program were also capacitated through SAc tools Public Hearing, Social Audit, Community Score Card (CSC), Citizen Report Card (CRC), Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) etc. which ensured continuous public engagement for monitoring of public services. For a majority of the beneficiaries, it was the first time they had participated in governance related activities for their own development.

The Action Learning projects reached more than 60,000 citizens directly and an estimated over one million people indirectly. Among the direct beneficiaries, 39% were female and 61% male. On an average 20% of total direct beneficiaries were from Dalit communities and more than 30% were from Janajati communities. One of the key mechanisms to reach target beneficiaries was through formation and mobilization of inclusive community groups and committees with members from poor, Dalit, and Janajati households.

Such committees linked beneficiaries with service providers and also worked as feedback channels between the two entities.

5. Thematic Social Accountability Initiatives and Outcomes

5.1 Municipal Governance

Municipal governance is one of the three thematic areas of PRAN. CECI awarded grants to six CSOs to pilot five social accountability tools under this theme. The practiced tools were Public Grievance Redress Mechanism, Citizen Charter, Participatory Budgeting, and Participatory Planning. The CSOs covered 9 districts of mid hill and Terai regions. These tools remained successful in creating demand for improved municipal governance on the one hand and enhanced vertical accountability in delivering public goods and services.

Citizens' groups, in which ordinary citizens could participate directly or indirectly in holding municipal staff accountable, have acted as mechanisms and channels to capture citizens' voices and expectations of community by the government agencies. The concerns, grievances and needs of the service seekers are being addressed positively as a part of the municipal obligation towards the service users. Citizen Councils established under project interventions in municipalities have become effective in following up on commitments made by municipal officials during implementation of the SAc tools.

> Under municipal governance theme, communities were mobilized through Citizen Council, Joint Monitoring Team, Citizen Concern Group and Citizen Awareness Groups

One of the reasons behind poor service delivery is the lack of awareness among citizens about their entitlements and rights regarding services. To address this lapse in service delivery, awareness building campaigns through local media, especially community radios, proved to be highly successful in empowering the masses. Such campaigns have enhanced the capacities of citizens to articulate their needs and priorities to the service providers, and created public demand for better municipal governance.

Toward making municipal service delivery system effective, efficient and citizen-friendly, municipalities designated nodal officers as a part of their obligation to address public grievances through a redress mechanism called Public Grievance Redress Mechanism. Use of this approach including other SAc mechanisms have helped improve municipal governance to an extent and secure commitments from municipal staff on ensuring meaningful and constructive participation of citizens at various stages of program planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

5.1.1 Outcomes

Abhiyan Nepal piloted SAc tools Citizen Charter, PH, CSC, Citizen Council and Joint Monitoring Team. Public hearings in Dhankuta Municipality resulted in establishment of help desk in the municipality office. A total of 250 citizens benefitted in 4 months. Similarly, PHs in Itahari Municipality resulted in shifting Social Security Desk to the ground floor in response to the voice of disabled citizens raised during public hearing program. For cleanliness of the municipal area, Mechinagar municipality started collecting garbage on daily basis. Joint monitoring teams were formed and recognized by the municipalities. The joint monitoring teams were formed with the participation of local level political parties' leaders, citizen council members and municipality officials. To institutionalize such practice, Mechinagar municipality incorporated PH in its annual program for fiscal year 2069/070.

Bageshwori Asal Sasan Club implemented Public Grievance Redress Mechanism in Nepalgunj municipality. Complaint Hearing Officer has been designated. To make the mechanism more effective, the municipality has assigned telephone and mobile numbers which can also be used by citizens to register their grievances. During implementation of this project, a total of 1901 complaints had been registered at different departments in the municipality. Similarly, of the 138 complaints registered in administrative department 80 complaints have been addressed, 50 are in the process and 8 were unrelated complaints.

A total of 609 grievances were registered in the project planning department. Most of these complaints were related to demand for goods, services, or small projects. As such, the department decided to submit these demands as proposals in the next municipal council meeting. Based on some of the demands, eight water taps have been installed. As a result of awareness raising campaigns, citizens now have information about goods and services they are entitled to receive. Also, citizens are able to voice their grievances in the concerned department.

Participants of social accountability training program conducted by Human Welfare and Environment Protection Center in Dang

Human Welfare and Protection Centre (HWPC) implemented SAc tools Citizen Charter and Citizen Concern Group in Dang. Ghorahi municipality updated its Citizen Charter which remained without updated for the last 10 years. During the project, HWPC mobilized the citizens and municipality officials to review the citizen charter and necessary amendments were made by the municipality. The updated citizen charter has been published as a booklet and distributed amongst the citizens. This has allowed citizens to easily access information related to service delivery of municipality. Furthermore, the Ghorahi municipality has agreed to update the citizen charter annually.

For monitoring purposes, a 21-member Citizen Concern Group has been constituted. The group is entrusted with the responsibility to regularly monitor the services provided by the municipality. It also provides suggestions and feedback to the municipality for improvement of its services. There was also lack of mechanism in Ghorahi municipality to lodge complaints by service users. As a result of project intervention, Ghorahi municipality designated one of its staffs as Complaints Hearing Officer. This has improved municipality's grievance management system. Municipality has also introduced token system to provide service on first come first served basis. Additionally, a telephone intercom system has been installed in the municipality office. Because of this arrangement, people can now directly contact the concerned municipal staff and contact the Complaints Hearing Officer through telephone.

Disseminating citizen charter innovatively was instrumental in creating people's access to services. Radio Chinnamasta FM in Saptari district campaigned for making citizen charter more accessible to people by translating it into local languages. As a result, citizen charter in Rajbiraj municipality was translated into local language Maithali to enable local citizens to easily understand the processes. In addition, the project also initiated audio citizen charters. The charters allowed citizens to prepare themselves for receiving services. The municipality has also set up a grievance redress mechanism to collect complaints from service users. It has appointed a nodal officer to record public grievances relating to municipal services.

Citizen Awareness Groups with members from local community have been formed in Rajbiraj municipality. These committed groups have helped bridge the gap between citizens

and municipal office. The task force meets with municipal officials and pushes municipal officials to address community priorities, which has allowed the group to cultivate good relationship with the municipality. The municipality has committed to ensure participation of Citizen Awareness Groups during planning and decision making process.

Women Development Society's piloting of Public Complaint Hearing Mechanism increased citizens' awareness on services provided by the municipality. They are eager to access goods and services that they are entitled to receive. For example, widowed and single women have started receiving social security benefits that are allocated by the government. In addition, the citizens now raise questions and register complaints if they do not receive goods and services.

Human Rights, Social Awareness Development Centre piloted CRC survey in services provided by Village Development Committees (VDCs) related to drinking water supply, sanitation, community building and roads. These report cards provided people with information about citizen satisfaction with public service. Consequently, VDCs committed to increase participation of community people in decision making processes. Citizen Support Councils were formed in target VDCs. The Councils worked to highlight community priorities and also followed up on commitments made by local government agencies to make them accountable.

5.2 Public Financial Management

Public Financial Management (PFM) is the second thematic area of intervention under PRAN. Reforms in PFM are central to effective management of resources and grants for public good. PFM builds on development of government agencies and local bodies' efforts to strengthen their capacity to better manage public finances and get the best value of public money. This can be realized only when accountability is strengthened in the PFM system of government down to the local level. Strong PFM systems are considered vital for effective and sustainable economic management and public service delivery. Government bodies and agencies will be effective and accountable when they are underpinned by good PFM systems.

Under public financial management theme, community mobilization was done through Citizen Watch Groups, Citizen Juries and Civil Forum Network

Thus, to promote effective and sound PFM systems, CECI awarded small and large grants to thirteen sub-grantee CSOs to practice social accountability tools in 14 districts of mountain, mid-hills and Terai regions. The social accountability tools practiced in the thematic category of PFM have remained successful in improving efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in the management and utilization of public financial resources at the local level.

Piloting of 11 different SAc tools exposed extent of leakages, misappropriation of resources, information on percentage of funds spent on development programs and funds that were taken away from skills development of target groups. Anomalies and shortfalls were observed in preparation of budget plans, finalization of programs and release of budgets. In some cases, it was also found that the District Development Committee (DDC) released budget few weeks prior to the expiry of fiscal year deadline which left the Local Bodies (LBs) to hastily make decisions and expenditures in few weeks. In these hastily called Council Meetings, needs and priorities of the disadvantaged groups get mostly unheard of and largely left out of the planning processes. It is generally the local political leaders and the elites who take part and influence decision-making processes which has been a victim of 'elite capture'. Because of distorted management of public financial resources, chunk of public money lands up in the pockets of local political elites and staffs of the local bodies with little or no development output.

With the use of diverse SAc tools such as Participatory Budget Analysis, PETS and Public Audits, among others, CSOs were able to enhance the capacity of citizens to demand effective use of public finances and grants. CSOs widely disseminated results of PETS and findings of other SAc tools among the concerned stakeholders that were used as evidence-based tools to hold local bodies accountable. Disabled people and senior citizens in some districts started demanding for their social security allowances; and target groups such as women in Kaski district mounted pressure on government officials to make proper allocation and utilization of public finances. The local government officials have also started disclosing budgetary information to the public. The development project sites now have display boards with details of total project cost, start and end dates, and members of concerned User's Committee. The display boards can be used as a tool for monitoring by all stakeholders.

Compliance with Local Bodies Resource Management and Mobilization Procedure-2012 (LBRMMP) has increased in allocation and expenditure of budget for the target groups. For instance, in Argakhanchi, conducting the expenditure survey exposed that the budget allocated for target groups was being misappropriated for construction of roads. Following information campaigns and PETS results dissemination, the Dalit women were able to demand their entitlement. They received a total of Rs. 62,829 for goat farming enterprises. Likewise, women groups in Bajhang received Rs. 1,92,000 for skill development trainings. To make these interventions sustainable, the CSOs have formed and/or mobilized citizen groups such as Citizen Support Council, Citizen Juries, and Civil Forum Network. Among other things, these groups work to ensure that local level budget preparation is need-based and that priorities of various marginalized groups are included during budget finalization.

5.2.1 Outcomes

Deepjyoti Youth Club in Balung district implemented PETS to improve public financial management of Baglung municipality. Awareness campaigns helped inform citizens, thereby building their capacities to use information for influencing service delivery. With access to information on social security allowance for disabled through SAc mechanisms including radio programs, people are raising voices for the delivery of such entitlements on time. Demand for entitlements has mounted pressure on local governments to be accountable and transparent in distribution of social security allowances.

Local media such as community radios have played a role in empowering people by disseminating information widely. Besides disseminating findings and achievements of SAc tools, use of social accountability as a thematic issue by local media has also increased. Bye-in for social accountability by local media can also be considered as an important achievement.

Baglung municipality has committed to open bank accounts for senior citizens in which their social security allowance could be directly deposited. This was welcomed by senior citizens, many of whom had to walk for more than an hour to receive the allowances.

As a result of PETS and dissemination of its findings, people from different wards in the municipality have demanded that the budget allocation and expenditure process be transparent. The municipal authority has committed to share all information regarding developmental projects such as construction of roads and buildings. The municipality has also committed to have representation of people from all wards and all target groups in its annual planning and budget development process from the next fiscal year.

Janaki Women Awareness Society in Janakpur district piloted PETS and Citizen Juries to improve social accountability of district and VDC-level service providers. PETS conducted

in Dhanusha revealed gaps and budgetary leakages at district and VDC levels. The PETS report was widely distributed amongst stakeholders and disseminated through the media. The citizens were made aware of malpractices in the government agencies and were encouraged to check such practices to hold government officials accountable. Members of Citizen Juries in Dhanusha are being involved in awareness raising campaigns at the VDC level on planning, budgeting and expenditure processes. They are working towards better management of resources allocated for local development. The Citizen Juries are monitoring development activities being implemented by local bodies. Forging coordination with DDC and VDCs, jury members as they come from the local communities are able to understand local context of each village and can guide community members to identify needs and priorities.

Rural Region and Agro-forestry Development Centre in Bara district practiced PH and PA. Public Hearings conducted in DDC, Kalaiya Municipality and select VDCs of Bara district were effective in addressing public grievances and harmonizing relations between demand and supply sides. As an impact of PH and PA, VDC Secretaries started disclosing details of VDC budget through notice boards and meetings. Even the Chief of Kalaiya Municipality agreed to publicize all municipal plans and programs by displaying them in notice boards for greater transparency and accountability towards the people. After the public hearing, Dalits and marginalized groups could participate in local level planning process for the first time in Chatawa VDC of Bara district.

A citizen of Buniyad VDC raises questions during public hearing program conducted by RRAFDC in Bara

Likewise, Sahara Nepal in Bajhang district piloted Participatory Budget Analysis and PETS in Kanda and Rilu VDCs. Women groups in Kanda VDC received Rs. 1,92,000 for skills development program. Even senior citizens received a total of Rs, 72,000 as pending social security allowances that they were entitled to receive. Through PETS, it was found that these amounts had been spent on other headings because community members did not know much about such grants. Disadvantaged and marginalized groups have been empowered because SAc tools have empowered them about their entitlements, VDC budget and budget planning cycle, among others.

Local people are sensitized on local level planning and expenditure tracking in Dhading district. They have realized that it is their right to inquire and receive information about VDC budget, planning process and how expenditures are made. There has been a shift in attitude and perception of service providers as well. Political parties and VDCs have in writing agreed to ensure participation of disadvantaged groups and women in VDC activities and programs. After the project intervention, VDC offices are regularly opening. In the absence of VDC Secretary, the Technical Assistant is available to provide services to people. Toward greater transparency, some VDCs have disclosed financial audit reports and posted them on notice boards.

Conduct of PETS in Argakhanchi district led to increase in budget allocation to the target groups as per the local bodies' guidelines. Fifteen Dalit women received a total of Rs. 62,829 for goat farming enterprise. Budget for the target groups was decided to be used in the construction of road. When marginalized groups were empowered about the mandatory allocation of 35 percent budget as per the procedure, they demanded that allocation

be made to them as per the law. Similarly, budget meant for child development has been spent accordingly. Students of four community schools benefitted from expenditure of Rs. 1,62,829 on scholarships, furniture and uniforms. Previously, the amount was allocated under children development heading but was spent on teachers' salary. For transparency and inclusion, local government officials have expressed commitments to ensure participation of disadvantaged groups in program selection process and formation of user's committees.

Community Communication Centre (CCC) in Kaski district implemented PETS in Lekhnath municipality. Use of PETS has increased awareness among women. They are now getting aware of their responsibility to monitor financial resources available in government agencies that are meant for local development. Women are taking interest in monitoring if the municipal budget is being released as per allocation and if programs are being implemented as planned. As such, women's capacity and skill to track public expenditure has increased.

Women leaders in the municipality (women political leaders, leaders of women committees) have begun to implement programs under municipal budget in a transparent way. Municipal officials have formulated plans for effective implementation of programs under women's budget. The skill development trainings used to be conducted during June or July when the women would be extremely busy in agriculture work. After they raised this issue, municipality has scheduled the trainings for winter season when the women have relatively free time.

It was identified that although budget for 16 rice mortars had been released before the end of fiscal year, none of the rice mortars were found to be installed in the municipality. This compelled the municipality to increase the monitoring and complete the work. The project has succeeded in making service providers alert on the misuse of resources due to lack of proper monitoring mechanisms.

The service providers have awareness now that service users will not remain silent if the allocated budget is not spent accordingly. For instance, Lekhnath municipality in Kaski had allocated budget for installing water tanks for collecting rainwater in areas where water was scarce. However, the water tanks were bought using women's budget and were distributed in areas where water supply was already in place. The women from ward 4 of the municipality, after having known about this misuse, took a 1500 liter tank under their control and placed in the much needed upper area of ward 4. The women have made arrangements for the tank to be used by the public.

5.3 Public Service Delivery

Nepal has fallen prey to unsatisfactory and often dysfunctional governance systems including rent seeking culture, malfeasance, misallocation of resources, ineffective revenue systems and weak delivery of vital public services. This poor status of governance has led to poor outcomes in access to public services by the poor and other disadvantaged groups or members of Nepali society such as women, Dalits, Janajatis and minorities. To make the services workable for the poor and the deprived, citizens must be in a position to use various SAc tools to demand greater accountability and transparency in public service delivery.

> Under public service delivery, communities were mobilized through Joint Monitoring Committee, Children's Committee, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee & Citizen Watch Group, among other

Ten sub-grantee CSOs worked in 20 districts under the public service delivery theme to strengthen accountability mechanisms and foster citizen participation in key decision-making processes. The common problems in public service delivery theme identified include lack of transparency, frequent transfers for government officials, low capacity of citizens to demand their entitlements, and weak monitoring systems. In light of challenges in public

service delivery, the results achieved by the CSOs have the potential to bring about positive changes in the public service delivery at local levels in the long term.

The SAc mechanisms led to significant improvement in access to and quality of public services. For example, Public Help Desks have contributed to citizens accessing services from government offices with relative ease. This has also reduced the unethical practice of stealing citizens' money in the name of fees for services. Most of the government offices where Help Desks were established have institutionalized the system by appointing a Help Desk Official and designating a separate room for such services.

5.3.1 Outcomes

Vijay Development Resource Centre, a local CSO in Nawalparasi district, piloted Community Score Card (CSC) in 21 community schools of Nawalparasi. During the project implementation, 21 schools prepared School Improvement Plans (SIP) in active participation of teachers, students, parents, Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and SMC. Previously SIP was just the judgment of few teachers and SMC members. Monitoring Committee consisting of 5-7 members were formed in all schools to take stock of the progress made. Such concerted efforts in Nawalparasi resulted in increase in attendance rate by 90% and decrease in drop-out rate by 60%. The teachers and school management have become responsive to students' need. These interventions have also led to decrease in teacher absenteeism.

Parents preparing perfomance score card during CSC conducted by VDRC in Nawalparasi

Introduction of policies such as mandatory visit by parents to collect report cards has helped in reducing the gap between teachers as service providers and parents as service users. SMCs in schools of Nawalparasi district now ensure participation of students in key planning meetings regarding issues such as sanitation in schools and extracurricular activities. This has enhanced the motivation level of students and has helped reduce student absenteeism. Student representative as members to Joint Monitoring Committees boosted morale and confidence of students to voice their concerns on the quality of education. Compared to the practice of SAc tools in different sectors in South Asian Region, CSC has been used for the first time in community schools in Nepal.

Use of CSC by Pro Civic Society in schools of Dhading district also brought positive changes in the attitudes of teachers and students. Teachers are now accountable as they are more regular in taking classes than before. Scholarships are now awarded to deserving students in a transparent manner. Previously, the scholarships were distributed without informing concerned stakeholders. The schools have also prepared a Teaching Improvement Plan through participatory approaches. Suggestion box has been kept at schools for students and parents to raise grievances and concerns. Similarly, a Children's Committee has been formed to collect complaints and suggestions from students.

The CRC survey has been effective in reducing corruption in line agencies in Dhading district. The first CRC survey found that 17.8 percent service recipients had to pay extra money (bribe) to have services from these agencies. But this number reduced to 8.8 percent on the follow up CRC conducted in a gap of few months. For example, people complained that Land Revenue Office (LRO) was the most corrupt agency in the district. The

In light of challenges in public service delivery, the results achieved by the CSOs have the potential to bring about positive changes in the public service delivery at local levels in the long term.

first CRC survey showed that 69 percent service users said they had to pay extra money to get service from LRO. After few months only 28 percent of service users reported to have had to pay extra money to receive service from LRO.

CRC results put pressure on district line agencies to initiate reforms in public service delivery. District Agriculture Development Office (DADO) in Dhading initiated many activities to bring positive changes for farmers after CRC survey report was revealed. It started toll free telephone number to respond to the problems of farmers at anytime and from anywhere. A staff has been appointed to respond to calls. The Citizen Charter has been updated and repainted. The office also produced audio citizen charter for illiterate farmers. Additionally, DADO has initiated an innovative means of collecting complaints from farmers. After availing the service, the farmer can put either green (satisfied), yellow (average satisfied), or red (dissatisfied) cards inside the suggestion box to show their level of satisfaction with the service. This system has been popular with farmers with low levels of literacy.

The practice of CSC and CRC by various CSOs has led to validation of these SAc tools in the district and VDC level. CSC has been more effective at the local level, especially at the community or at the grassroots level whereas CRC has been more successful in brining improvements in service delivery by district line agencies, DDCs and municipalities at the district level.

Jalsrot Vikas Sanstha (JVS), Nepal implemented Citizen Report Card (CRC) survey in Drinking Water and Sanitation Sector of Banke, Chitwan, Dang, Dhanusha, and Kaski districts. Service providers accepted and appreciated the findings of the survey presented at interface meetings organized for the dissemination of survey findings. They realized the room for improvement obtained from the service users' feedback in various areas of service delivery relating to water and sanitation being provided by them and committed to improve the quality and effectiveness of services.

Water supply monitoring mechanism with a coordinator from water users was established in Janakpur. Service providers in other places also were found positive to set up such a mechanism to monitor their services under the service user's leadership. Understanding and knowledge of service providers, service users, media people, other relevant offices, and local civil society organizations on CRC increased and benefits of CRC was acknowledged by all.

Development Concern Society (DECOS) piloted SAc tools Help Desk, Citizen Charter and Citizen Watch Group in Rolpa district. Citizens are now aware about government services and processes involved in accessing goods and services from local agencies. An enabling environment has been created which allows citizens to put their views and concerns with government officials.

Citizen Watch Groups have been formed at district level in Rolpa district. The group monitors the services provided by government agencies and provides suggestions. Nine government offices have reviewed their Citizen Charters to put updated information. With increased awareness about public services among citizens, they are aware of government services and process involved in accessing services from line agencies. With improved social accountability situation, an enabling environment has been created which allows citizens to put their views and concerns with the government officials.

The local government agencies are now more accountable to citizens. There is decrease in malpractices amongst government staff. They are available at the office during office hours, and do not collect illegal fees. They have committed to continue having the help desk at

their offices. In addition, other government agencies have followed suit by setting up help desks and information centers at their respective offices in Rolpa district.

Service providers in Pyuthan district have improved quality of their service based on the feedback from citizens. There is an increase in the number of service users accessing services at local government agencies. Service users have also formed an inclusive monitoring committee to observe the services provided by local government agencies and provide suggestions for reforms accordingly.

The local sub-health post management committee is regularly monitoring the Vaccination Centers and village clinics in Pyuthan district. A list of free medicines available at the sub-health post is prepared and displayed on the public notice board. A waiting room is being constructed for the patients. The health post is working in collaboration with ward citizen forums, mothers' groups to raise awareness about health-related issues. Patients of poor families are now provided free services for laboratory tests at the primary health care center. Patients who travel long distances to reach the health center are given services even during off-hours. There have been significant improvements in the local community school where CSC was implemented. Students are provided with free learning materials that they are entitled to receive. Girl students are provided equal opportunities as boy students in sports.

The DDC, District Education Office and District Health Office in Jumla and Kalikot publicly broadcasted their annual program, budget, service provisions and processes through radio in all project districts. Many other line agencies in the districts have started making public their annual program, plan and budget through community radios. Awareness level of local communities has increased because of which they are now aware of social safety provisions, budget allocation of VDC and DDC, Right to Information Law, and process of registering grievances. The community members are now motivated to raise concerns and issues at concerned government agencies.

Women of Raya VDC in Jumla have benefitted from the services of Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANMs) in their local sub-health post after they raised their grievances on lack of ANMs in the health center. The expectant and new mothers get regular check-ups, and can now deliver babies in a relatively safe environment.

The elderly people complained about inefficient system of VDCs to distribute allowances to elderly citizens. Through the Complaint Hearing Mechanism, they were able to raise their voice. As a result, they are now receiving social security allowances as per their entitlements. There are positive changes in the attitudes and behavior of service providers. The District Health Office in Kalikot and Land Reform and Management Office in Jumla have transformed their work ethics. The officials at these offices are found to be providing quick services to the service users who previously took long hours and even days to get work done.

The practice of various SAc tools in the realm of public services has brought in significant and noticeable changes in improving public services and people's access to them. The change has been possible because of evolving critical mass of practitioners with knowledge and skills in social accountability mechanisms and tools to create demand for accountability from service providers through constructive engagement and deliberative governance. As there has evolved a critical mass of practitioners of SAc tools at the district and local level, there is enough room for sustainability and continuation of these tools. These trained and capacitated CSOs and individuals are in position of seeking and exploring additional funds from LBs, district line agencies and development partners to continue application of SAc tools in days ahead.

6. Challenges Faced, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations Made by CSOs

6.1 Challenges faced by CSOs

- Absence of elected people's representatives in Local Bodies (LBs) have weakened existing accountability chains there and messed up service delivery. Staff of LBs are facing overload which posed difficulty in arranging time for the programs. It was difficult to meet them during office hours.

- Frequent transfer of chief executives in service providing agencies posed problems to an extent in coordinating and making them understand the mandate of the project (twice transfer during six month project period in some cases).

- Lack of regular interaction and dialogue between citizens and agency staff created distance between them and use of SAc tool was perceived as a threat by the agency staff in the initial stage of program implementation.

- Political highhandedness and influence in disbursement of budgets still a challenge to agency staff which has made them fall short of fully complying with Local Bodies Grants' Management and Mobilization Procedures.

- Poor understanding on importance of SAc tools including thematic concept of municipal governance and public financial management among service providers.

- Geography and terrain posed difficult in coordination and mobility to project staff for implementing activities at VDCs;

- Inadequate coordination and dialogue with the Mentor in regard to project implementation;

- Over expectation of people from the project posed difficulty in making them understand the resource limit;

- Poor knowledge among staff of LBs on LBRMMP;

- The information available at the government offices was either incomplete or missing. Many VDCs lacked proper meeting minute records of ward level meetings, and other agencies such as schools, hospitals lacked audited financial reports. This prevented effective analysis of allocation and disbursement of funds at local level.

- Service providers at local level were a bit reluctant to support the practice of Social Accountability tools as they perceived threat thinking that this might uncover the weaknesses of their services and publicize them.

- In some places, service providers and service users expected monetary benefits from the project beyond its mandate. Its impact was noticed on the participation of service users during programs.

- Service providers and service users both wanted direct benefits from the project. They expected that all their problems be solved by the project. They were interested more in hardware-like things than software.

- The target groups of the program are marginalized and poor community members. They are therefore more inclined towards projects which increase their livelihoods. It was difficult for target beneficiaries to manage their time for workshops, meetings and other campaigns.

- The projects were designed for short time period which caused some challenges in meeting project goals for the CSOs. They had to work under pressure of completing proposed activities within the limited timeframes.

6.2 Lessons learnt by CSOs

- Regular coordination and meetings with staffs of Local Bodies (LBs) and line agencies can be very fruitful in improving quality of service delivery;

- Use of media to broadcast public grievances and civic monitoring over quality of services will have significant impact on improving service delivery;

- Orientation on social accountability to staffs of LBs and line agencies before the start of the

project can create conducive environment for project implementation.

- Consultations with government officials and community members prove to be useful when drafting questionnaires for citizen report card;

- Making community people sensitized on their rights and duties will lead service provider to be more accountable;

- Increased compliance with LBRMMP by LBs' staffs will lead to improved public financial management at the local bodies;

- It is important to raise awareness among vulnerable and marginalized groups on their rights, especially about budgetary information, for them to take active participation in monitoring public expenditures and allocations. This also encourages target groups to push local governments to action.

- The PETS has the potential to build capacities of service users, and to establish a culture of regular monitoring of public resources.

- The credibility of the institution and staffs of the project are very important to get necessary support from service users, service providers, and other relevant stakeholders;

- Media mobilization (newspaper and electronic media) is a key factor to successful project intervention. Community radios have proved to be effective in areas where readership is constrained by high levels of illiteracy;

- Journalists should be adequately oriented on good governance issues so that they can improve media coverage of corruption and poor service delivery;

- Mistrust between community people and government officials can be settled through interface meetings and other interactions;

- Close coordination with service providers promotes harmony and relationship between citizens and service providers

6.3 Recommendations made by CSOs

- Ward level institutions such as Ward Citizen Forum, Citizen Awareness Centre and Tole Bikash Sansthas should be empowered on social accountability to make SAc initiatives effective;

- Municipality should be encouraged to create Good Governance Unit within its organizational structure;

- Municipality should allocate a portion of regular budget for promotion of activities and programs related to good governance and social accountability;

- Participation of community people must be ensured in all steps of VDC planning process to minimize financial mismanagement;

- Staff of LBs should be adequately oriented and sensitized on provisions of LBRMMP for better public financial management at the local level;

- In addition to demand side strengthening, supply side also needs to be oriented on principles and practices of public financial management;

- Capacity building programs should be implemented to enhance the capacity of service users and civil society organizations to increase accountability;

- Citizens must be informed and empowered on their rights and entitlements to make the implementation of SAc tools effective;

- Use of SAc tools should be conducted in amicable environment so that it will not intimidate/threaten the service providers;

- Local community people should be encouraged for active participation in the use of SAc tools. This will create ownership and sustain SAc initiatives at the local level;

- Some SAc tools like CRC should be used to assess public services being provided at district and national levels by incorporating it in annual regular plan.

7. Summary and Conclusion

The results that have emerged from the practice of different SAc tools by the 29 CSOs and their respective SA practitioners out of the proceeds of PRAN grants facility can be summarized as follows:

- Promotional: The power and advantage of SAc tools are being gradually recognized. There are indications of mainstreaming of such social accountability tools into their works.

- Attitudinal: The supply side, little reluctant in the beginning, has been willing to cooperate and participate with CSOs.

- Empowering: Citizens are now beginning to work through community entities/ groups and generate and hold more evidences. Information and consciousness have the empowering effect among the citizenry. It has increased dialogue and constructive engagement between people and local government.

- Holding service providers to account: In course of the practice of SAc tools by the sub-grantees there have occurred restitution of resources to the intended rights holders in addition to exposition of falsehood and initiation of and/or promise for correction measures. Improvement in the performance of public service organizations has also improved where SAc tools have been practiced.

This has resulted in following outcomes:

- A critical mass of capacitated CSOs: 29 CSOs had the opportunity to put 'hands on' SAc tools practice backed up with on-the-job mentoring. They are now capable of doing more. (Of the 29 sub-grantee practitioners, 19 were trained by PRAN on SAc tools prior to providing the grant). CSOs successfully practiced some new SAc tools such as Public Expenditure Tracking (PET), Community Score Card (CSC) and Citizen Report Card (CRC). In the process, many SAc assistants got learning opportunity. Similarly, over 100 local volunteers were mobilized on social accountability and data collection.

- Sensitized and functional community groups/organizations; Several types of community groups and/or forums were created and/or activated. Examples range from Citizen Watch Groups and their district networks working in Humla and Dolpa (reported by HCDA); Complaints Forum (Gunaso Chautati) of Women in Lekhnath Municipality of Kaski (reported by CCC); Citizen Jury in selected VDCs of Dhanusha (reported by JWAS); Citizen Councils together with Joint Monitoring Committees in Illam municipality (reported by Abhiyan Nepal) to several others. Besides, use of local media to inform citizens on entitlement, and the process to access them through, have been effective.

- Empowered Citizenry and client power: Sensitized citizens working collectively and equipped with information/knowledge with high spirits have been able to make their voices heard and addressed. People with disablity in Baglung Municipality aware of their entitlements have been able to access allowances (reported by DYC). As demanded by citizens during public hearing, Social Security Desk in Itahari Municipality was moved to locate downstairs making it friendly to people with disability while Mechinagar Municipality started managing garbage collection in Dhulabari (reported by Abhiyan Nepal). Likewise, VDC has disclosed the Audit Report on VDC office notice board (reported by ICDC).

- Atmosphere for constructive engagement: Culture of working through generation of hard evidence and information has created opportunities for constructive engagements between service providers and civil society including citizen beneficiaries. Public hearings and other forms of interface meetings have created platforms where such hard evidence are shared and discussed. Besides, use of community radio has also proved promising in this regard.

The CSOs are the primary agents who can effectively realize good governance through social accountability mechanisms. They are the movers and shakers of civic campaigns and advocacy. Under the financial support of PRAN, sub-grantee CSOs have been able to reach wide sections of the vulnerable and marginalized groups through information campaigns, mobilization of existing community networks and formation of local groups. This has enhanced active grassroots participation in decision making process and in monitoring of public service delivery and local budget expenditures. Also, by using different SAc tools such as public hearings and PGRM, CSOs have channeled voice of local citizenry to hold local governments accountable.

Fostering and mobilizing local media in governance related issues has also helped strengthen capacity of citizens to demand for their entitlements and ensure implementation of policies. Community radios and local newspapers were essential in disseminating survey findings, and publicizing public grievances pushing local government to take action. The interventions under Action Learning Grant component has been effective in promoting good governance and in increasing access to public goods and services in the targeted communities. These pilot projects have created an ongoing dialogue between service users and providers which has enabled interactive discussions and feedback mechanisms for better delivery of public services and transparent management of public resources.

The sustainability and effectiveness of the social accountability mechanism can be realized only when it is owned by the government institutions and CSOs. This can happen when SAc mechanisms are institutionalized through integration into the laws and guidelines. Nepal's experiences of having implemented SAc tools in the local context dates two decades back when a large number of CSOs emerged as partners of the government in years after restoration of democracy in early 1990s. Though CSOs in Nepal have piloted, practiced and implemented some of the SAc tools widely since 1990s, their institutionalization process and sustainability scenario do not create a rosy picture to the level expected.

Nepal government has been showing its pro-active character in institutionalizing some of the SAc tools like Public Hearing, Public Audit and Social Audit by promulgating operation guidelines on them. Despite provisions for these SAc tools in government guidelines and laws, these tools are not happening at the grassroots to the level expected. Therefore, CSOs must keep vigil on government agencies and mount pressure on them to make use of these tools by joining hands with them for technical assistance and facilitation support. As application of SAc tools requires technical know-how and skills, CSOs must build on their own skills and capacity as well to work as third party facilitator in supporting government agencies to implement these SAc tools. This will ultimately contribute to the promotion and institutionalization of the SAc tools through promotion of collaborative governance in Nepal.

Sporadic efforts demanding accountability in Nepal has been done largely by civil society organizations. But there is need to build these processes and initiatives into governance framework as policies and procedures. Delivering services effectively as per the needs of the people requires a system of accountability backed by citizen-led direct feedback mechanisms where citizens have access to information and platforms through which they can monitor performance and articulate their grievances to service providers for betterment in public service delivery. Governments acting as agents of citizens should

also create incentives for performance and listen to people's feedback and assimilate them positively for better outcomes.

In an effort to provide direct feedback mechanisms, the PRAN pilot projects have strengthened dialogue between communities and government agencies through the use of SAc tools such as PETS, CRC, CSC, PH, PA, Citizen Charter, Participatory Planning, Independent Budget Analysis, Participatory Monitoring, among others. Government officials are now willing to listen peoples' feedback and adopt transparent approaches while delivering services. Some line agencies have institutionalized SAc tools such as PGRM, help desk and public hearings while other stakeholders have expressed commitment to use SAc mechanisms in days ahead. Some of the outcomes and results listed above indicate that these achievements have emerged due to strategic application of SAc tools by the CSOs. In course of achieving these remarkable and exemplary achievements, the CSOs have also faced challenges, learnt important lessons and doled out recommendations. These important learning and recommendations need to be taken care of by CECI and other like-minded development partners for strategic feedback and guidance to design social accountability projects and implement them more effectively in days ahead. The challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations by made by the CSOs do serve a strategic gateway to future outlook and perspective for social accountability campaigns and interventions.

8. Strategic Recommendations

Based on lessons learnt and challenges faced by the CSOs in course of piloting SAc tools, the following key strategic recommendations have been made. These strategic recommendations serve as a way forward to development partners, CSOs and other stakeholders to further the application of SAc mechanisms in days ahead.

- Some CSOs are found to have implemented SAc tools without knowing how they should be implemented. Therefore, harmonizing common understanding on methodological process of SAc tools among the CSOs is a key to success of social accountability initiatives.

- As CSOs lacked common understanding on the methodology of SAc tools, their technical capacity must be adequately built before the award of the project;

- CECI must take lead in harmonizing guidelines on some SAc tools so that CSOs can use them with uniformity. Wrong methodology in use of SAc tools can lead to distortion of development outcomes.

- Projects can't achieve results and make them sustainable when project period is comparatively short. Therefore, duration of the project at least must cover one full cycle of planning and implementation.

- As SAc initiatives and mechanisms can't sustain unless they are owned and institutionalized. Process of institutionalization is not a one-shot event but depends on long campaign and advocacy. Therefore, CECI must explore additional resources to support best performing CSOs to continue SAc initiatives for at least some time more.

- Citizen watch groups, Ward Citizen Forum, Citizen Awareness Centers and other community networks are important entry points for effective implementation of projects. These community groups have the capacity to sustain project achievements in the long run. As such, capacity building of such groups needs to be emphasized and further taken care of.

Annexes

Annex 1

Nine Member Grant Making Committee

S.N.	Name	Remarks
1	Mr. Basu Dev Neupane, Lalitpur	Freelance professional
2	Dr. Deep Swar, Achham	Former Secretary of Government of Nepal
3	Mr. Kapil Ghimire, Kathmandu	Former Joint Secretary of Government of Nepal
4	Mr. Madhav Dhakal, Kathmandu	Former Joint Secretary of Government of Nepal
5	Dr. Man Bahadur Bishwokarma, Palpa	Freelance professional and part time faculty in several colleges.
6	Mr. Mohan Das Manandhar, Kathmandu	Executive Director and Board Member, Niti Foundation.
7	Mr. Tilak Man Singh Bhandari, GoN Representative	Under Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal
	Tek Bahadur Khatry, Gon Representative	Under Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal
8	Dr. Usha Jha, Mahottari	CEO, Samjhauta Nepal
9	Ms. Yasho Kanti Bhattachan (Gauchan), Kaski	Secretary, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN)

Annex 2

Summary of 29 sub-grantees that completed CECI sub-grant projects in the initial phase of SPBF PRAN

Name of the Sub-grantee/ District	Name of SAc Practitioner	PRAN Theme/SAc Tool Practiced	Level of Government/Area Covered	Project Duration
Protection of Civic Concern Society (Pro Civic Society)/ **Kathmandu**	Mr. Bashanta Rai	**PSD/** Citizen Report Card; Community Score Card	Local government bodies at district and VDC levels targeting 6 district level offices and 8 VDCs at **Dhading district**.	11 months
Dalit Samaj Sewa Sangh (Dalit Society Service Organization)/ **Okhaldhunga**	Mr. Hem Bahadur B.K.	**PSD/** Citizen Report Card; Social Audit	Local government bodies at district and VDC levels targeting 6 district level offices and 3 VDCs at **Okhaldhunga district.**	10 months
Human Welfare & Environment Protection Centre (HWEPC)/ **Dang**	Mr. Shreeman Neupane	**MG/** Citizen Charter	Local government bodies at municipal level targeting Ghorahi Municipality of **Dang district**	5 months
Bageshwori Asal Shashan Club (BAS)/ **Banke**	Mr. Namaskar Shah	**MG/** Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism	Local government bodies at municipal level targeting Nepalgunj Municipality of **Banke district**	6 months
Radio Chinnamasta FM/ **Saptari**	Mr. Shiva Pratap Shah	**MG/** Citizen Charter; Public Hearing	Local government bodies at Municipal level targeting Rajbiraj Municipality of **Saptari district**	6 months
Rastriya Rojgar Prawardhan Kendra (RRPK)/ **Sarlahi**	Mr. Pankaj Kumar Shah	**MG/** Participatory Planning,; Participatory Budgeting.	Local government bodies at municipal level targeting Malangwa Municipality at **Sarlahi district.**	6 months
Woman Deliverance Society/ **Dadeldhura**	Ms. Savitri Panta	**MG/** Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism.	Local government bodies at municipal level targeting Amargadi Municipality at **Dadheldhura district**	6 months
Human Rights Social Awareness & Development Centre (HUSADEC)/ **Dhankuta**	Mr. Nirmal Chongwang	**PFM/** Citizen Report Card	Local government bodies at VDC level targeting 2 VDCs (Muga and Leguwa) of **Dhankuta district**	6 months
Janahit Good Governance Club/ **Dhankuta**	Mr. Modnath Trital	**PFM/** Public Expenditure Tracking Survey	Local government bodies at VDC level targeting 3 VDCs of **Dhankuta district**	6 months

Panchawati Rural Development Centre (PRDC-Nepal)/ **Udayapur**	Mr. Yuvraj Parajuli,	**PFM/** Public Expenditure Tracking Survey; Participatory Budget Analysis; Public Hearing	Local government bodies at VDC level targeting 1 VDCs (Sirise) and the Sub-Health Post at the VDC of **Udayapur district**	6 months
Mahuli Community Development Centre/ **Saptari**	Mr. Shyam Kant Chaudhary	**PFM/** Participatory Budget Analysis	Local government bodies at VDC level targeting 5 VDCs at **Saptari district**	6 months
Dalit Alliance for Natural Resources (DANAR-Nepal)/ **Kathmandu**	Mr. Bishnu Bahadur Nepali	**PFM/** Participatory Budgeting	Local government bodies at VDC level targeting 1 VDC (Puchulachi VDC) at **Kathmandu district**	6 months
Community Communication Centre (CCC) Gandaki TV/, **Kaski**	Mr. Ghanashyam Pandey	**PFM/** Public expenditure tracking survey	Local government bodies at Municipal level targeting Lekhnath Municipality at **Kaski district**	6 months
Integrated Community Development Campaign-Nepal/ **Dhading**	Mr. Madhav Raj Dahal	**PFM/** Public Expenditure Tracking Survey	Local government bodies at VDC level targeting 2 VDCs (Sunaulabazaar VDC and Muralibhanjyang VDC) at **Dhading district**.	6 months
Sahara Nepal/ **Bajhang**	Mr. Gyan Bahadur Bohara	**PFM/** Participatory Budget Analysis ; Public Expenditure Tracking Survey	Local government bodies at VDC level targeting 2 VDCs (Rilu VDC and Kanda VDC) at **Bajhang district**	5 months
Lumbini Social Development Centre (LSDC)/ **Argakhanchi**	Mr. Suraj Bahadur Saru	**PFM/** Public Expenditure Tracking Survey; Participatory Planning and Monitoring.	Local government bodies at VDC level targeting 2 VDCs (Maidan VDC and Dhatiwang VDC) at **Argakhanchi district**	5 months
Fulbari Ekikrit Gramin Bikas Sansthan/ **Pyuthan**	Mr. Lalmani Paudel	**PSD/** Community Score Card	Local government bodies at VDC level targeting one VDC (Bangesal VDC) at **Pyuthan district**	6 months
Environment and Child Development Council/ **Rautahat**	Mr. Birendra Patel	**PSD/** Citizen Report Card; Community Score Card	Local government bodies at district and VDC level targeting DDC for CRC and 6 VDCs for CSC at **Rautahat district**	6 months
Reconstruction & research Development Center (RRDC)/ **Mugu**	Mr. Dan Bahadur Karki	**PSD/** Participatory Planning; Participatory Budgeting,; Citizen Charter; Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism	Local government bodies at district and VDC level targeting DDC and VDCs at **Mugu district**	6 months
Abhiyan Nepal/ **Sunsari**	Mr. Bishnu Prashad Pokhrel	**MG/** Public Hearing; Community Score Card; Citizen Charter.	Local government bodies at municipal level targeting 4 Municipalities (one each) at **Sunsari, Jhapa, Ilam and Dhankuta districts**	10 months

Organization / District	Contact Person	Theme / Tool	Target	Duration
Vijaya Development Resource Centre (VDRC)/ **Nawalparasi**	Mr. Bir Bhadra Sapkota	**PSD/** Community Score Card	Public service agency at community level targeting 21 community schools at **Nawalparasi district**	10 months
Development Concern Society (DECOS)/ **Rolpa**	Ms. Lok Maya Pun	**PSD/** Public Help Desk; Citizen Charter	Local level government bodies at district level targeting government offices at 4 districts **(Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan and Pyuthan).**	10 months
Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC Nepal)/ **Jumla**	Mr. Min Shahi	**PSD/** Complaint Hearing Mechanism.	Local government bodies at district and VDC levels targeting government offices and VDCs at 5 districts **(Jumla, Humla, Mugu, Kalikot, Dolpa).**	10 months
Jalsrot Vikas Sanstha (JVS)/ **Kathmandu**	Mr. Bal Krishna Prasai	**PSD /** Citizen Report Card	Local level service providing units targeting drinking water supply schemes under alternative management modes in 4 districts **(Dang, Kaski, Chitwan and Dhanusha)**	10 months
Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO)/ **Lalitpur**	Mr. Hira Biswokarma	**PSD/** Public Service Tracking Focusing on Dalit and Marginalized Groups.	Local government agencies at district level targeting government line agencies at 4 districts **(Bajhang, Bajura, Kabhre, Dhanusha)**	10 months
Deep Jyoti Youth Club/ **Baglung**	Mr. Sewanta Kattel	**PFM/** Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS).	Local government bodies at municipal level targeting Baglung Municipality at **Baglung district**	6 months
Himalayan Conservation and Development Association (HCDA)/ **Humla**	Mr. Bharat Mani Subedi	**PFM/** Participatory Budgeting; Citizen Charter; Public Hearing; Citizen Watch Group.	Local bodies at VDC level targeting 10 VDCs at Humla and **Dolpa districts**	6 months
Rural Region and Agro Forestry Development Centre,/ **Bara**	Dr. Dhruba Raj Gautam	**PFM/** Public Audits; Public Hearing; Zero Corruption Campaign.	Local bodies at VDC and municipal level targeting 9 VDCs and 1 municipality at **Bara district .**	6 months
Janaki Women Awareness Society (JWAS)/ **Dhanusha**	Mr. Binod Karki	**PFM/** Public Expenditure Tracking Survey; Citizen Jury	Local bodies at district and VDC level targeting DDC, and 5 VDCs at **Dhanusha district**	6 months

MG: Municipal Governance   PFM: Public Finance Management

PSD: Public Service Delivery

Attachment

Selected Case Stories Prepared by SAc Practitioners working for CECI sub-grantees under PRAN

The sub-grantee CSOs had submitted about six dozen case stories generated during the application of diverse social accountability tools in three thematic areas of the PRAN project. All of the case stories were unique and informative in their own right given the thematic context in which those selected SAc tools were piloted and the impact they created as a basis for the case stories. It was indeed an uphill task to select a few case stories limiting them to a mere one dozen out of six dozens.

Given the limited space and other constraints, all of the case stories could not be included in the report. So far, only twelve case stories have been selected taking into account the content, gravity and newness from the perspective of three thematic areas. These case stories are just the representatives. For maintaining linguistic uniformity and ease, some of the case stories have been translated into English since they were originally written in Nepali language by the sub-grantee CSOs. Case stories presented in this report have been edited for clarity, precision and space; but the facts remain as reported.

Case Story 1

Accountability problem tackled

The right holders of Dhankuta municipality are taking benefit from the help desk that was established by Dhankuta municipality. It was possible while rights holders had given feedbacks to municipality to manage the helpdesk for general people in public hearing that was jointly organized by the municipality, Citizen Council Dhankuta and Abhiyan Nepal.

Actions taken

Respecting the rights holders' feedback and being accountable to their commitment in public hearing programmes, municipality established the help desk in Dhankuta municipality office. Though the municipality authority was committed to address the right holders' feedbacks to establish the help desk, citizen council also created pressure to establish the desk without any further delay. Finally, the desk was established from 7 June 2012 and citizens are receiving the service from the desk. There is a record system of service recipients. Until this report was prepared, 250 rights holders had received services from the help desk.

Constraints/challenges experienced

From the very beginning, there were middlemen working individually in the name of assisting citizens in their official works by charging them the fees they want. The right holders had been paying minimum Rs 50 even for a one page application. The middlemen took the establishment of help desk as against their earning and livelihood.

Outputs achieved

The distance between municipality and right holders is narrowing. The help desk has been providing free services to the citizens and they are benefiting from it. Around 250 citizens benefited from the services.

Recognition

Local people and even the municipality have widely acknowledged the service from the help desk. People are easily accessing the desk and receiving the services without having to pay anything.

Case story title:
Municipality Established
Help Desk

Sub-grant project title:
Enhancing Social
Accountability of
Municipalities through
Increased
State-Citizen Participation
in Municipal Processes

Place of intervention:
Dhankuta Municipality,
Dhankuta

PRAN thematic area:
Municipal Governance

Prepared by:
Bishnu Pokhrel/
Balkrishna Shrestha

Organization:
Abhiyan Nepal, Sunsari

Date: 10/08/2012

Case Story 2

Accountability problem tackled

Nepalgunj Municipality is being criticized by all for being dirty and littered with garbage. This appears to be true when municipality's laxity is observed in disposing waste and cleaning up the drainage. Bhrikutinagar chowk of Nepalgunj municipality has also been littered with heaps of waste. In an effort to clean drainage during rainy season, municipality heaped the garbage on the road leading to Paraspur from Bhrikutinagar, and left it undisposed for long. This created problems to the pedestrians walking down the road. The stinking garbage heaped on either sides of the road was compelling the pedestrians to cover up their mouth while walking. School going children were most affected by it.

Municipality's negligence had compelled the people to walk down the dirty road with stinking smell posing numerous health hazards. It was increasingly becoming a nuisance to all people living nearly-by. It felt to us that municipality was a mere spectator to this mess and was depriving the city dwellers of their right to quality life, proper sanitation and public health. If the situation would continue more, it would surely further mess up public life by posing hazards to public health. People had been venting their anger at the municipality for not properly disposing the waste emanating from drainage clearance.

Actions Taken

At a time when there was no solution in sight, establishing of Public Grievance Redress Mechanism by Bageshwori Asal Sasan Club became an effective tool to deal with this problem. After having known about the mechanism through civic education, Mr Mukunda Pokhrel, a resident of Bhrikutinagar-13, lodged a complaint asking the municipality to immediately dispose the waste. He had resorted to a method of lodging written application to resolve the problem. Lodging the complaint at complaint hearing unit, he had asked the municipality to resolve the problems emanating from waste collected from drainage.

Constraints/challenges experienced

A week after the complaint was lodged; his application was registered at serial No. 124. Municipality itself telephoned him and assured that the problem would be resolved soon. With establishment of complaint redress mechanism at municipality, culture of reciprocating the complainant has begun. But the municipality did not initiate the process even after weeks of filing the complaint. When the complainant enquired about it, municipality tried to evade saying that the garbage could not be relocated as it was wet and muddy. After finding that municipality was dilly-dallying under different pretexts, BAS initiated dialogue with municipal officials to begin hearing on the complaint. When BAS started mounting pressure on the municipality, garbage started being relocated.

Outputs achieved

It took two days for the municipality to clean the waste. The road got a new image of being clean and problem of getting submerged during rainy season because of clogged drainage was also no more. City dwellers and pedestrians were happy as they did not have to smell bad odor. The road was clean and even got wider for people to walk down. It has triggered a hope among people and they have started writing complaints to resolve problems.

Recognition

Problems get tougher and people face challenges if local bodies don't function accountably. Even people have to be aware and empowered to deal with problems if local bodies like municipality fail to perform tasks as per the mandate. The issue was disseminated and even municipality has become more accountable and responsive to such problems.

Case story title:
Disposal of Garbage after Lodging Complaint

Sub-grant project title:
Public Grievance Redress Mechanism

Place of intervention:
Nepalgunj Municipality, Banke

PRAN thematic area:
Municipal Governance

Prepared by:
Namaskar Shah

Organization:
Bageshwori Asal Sasan Club

Date: 10/08/2012

Quote by beneficiary

Mr Mukunda Pokhrel says "This has become a great learning for us. Things can be sorted out if people themselves get active and initiate some steps on their own rather than waiting for someone to do it for them."

Case Story 3

Accountability problem tackled
It was a long problem for Rajbiraj Municipality and vegetable businessmen to remove temporary small shops which were kept on the roadside illegally. It was a big problem for vegetable traders to bring vegetable loaded trucks to their designated place. Municipality authority tried to solve this problem several times in the past but to no avail. This problem was known to Community Alert Group (CAG) through group of vegetable businessmen. They also complained about costly and time consuming aspect of it while uploading and downloading the vegetables from the truck.

Actions taken
CAG organized meeting and discussed this problem with authority of Rajbiraj Municipality and vegetable businessman. In addition, the CAG also discussed this problem with shopkeepers who kept their small shops on roadside creating problem for trucks loaded with vegetables to reach the vegetable market. Municipality authority formed a group including representatives from municipality itself, vegetable businessmen and small shopkeepers and further asked the group to submit report with the best solution of the problem.

Constraints/challenges experienced
It was very difficult to make conducive environment where shopkeepers and vegetable businessman can sit together with municipality officials. It was difficult job for CAG to motivate small shopkeepers to remove their shops from the roadside. Municipality authority never communicated with the shopkeeper about replacement option for their shops in the past. Shopkeepers didn't want to leave the original business place without any alternatives at hand.

Outputs achieved
Small shopkeepers left occupied space of road and moved to new place provided by municipality. It helped them widen the road enough for vegetable loaded trucks to move in. The cost of uploading and downloading of vegetables from truck was minimized and was less time consuming.

Recognition
This is an example how a small effort on governance can make a change in the society. Local newspaper published and Radios did broadcast this success story. Municipality authority requested the formed group including representative of it, not to allow anyone to keep shops on roadside and at the same time, the group committed to do so.

Case story title:
Wider Road

Sub-grant project title:
Hamro Rajbiraj Sundar Rajbiraj ko Lagi Samajik Jawafdehita

Place of intervention:
Rajbiraj Municipality, Saptari

PRAN thematic area:
Municipal Governance

Prepared by:
Shiva Pratap Shah

Organization:
Radio Chhinnamasta, Saptari

Date: 13/10/2012

Quote by beneficiary:
All the vegetable businessmen are benefitted from this movement. Mr Shyam Das, a fruit seller said "We are going to save time and money both by removing small shops from the roadside which has made it possible to reach vegetable loaded truck to vegetable market".

Case Story 4

Accountability problem tackled:

In the Malangwa Municipality, all the planning and budgeting process is done by the municipality without following participatory approach. The process takes place without participation of stakeholders such as women, Dalit, Janajati etc. All development works are done only by political parties and expenses are not made properly. During the planning and budgeting process, community members, women groups and Dalit don't have idea which plan is approved and how much budget is being allocated for their wards. They are also deprived of their right to participate in planning process and local development affairs meant for them. Even if only a few of them know participatory approach, they don't have confidence on how and when to talk to municipal staffs and political leaders about the planning process and budgeting.

Actions taken

Two simulation events (one in each ward with one day for planning and the other day for budgeting) (participatory planning and budgeting) were conducted. These activities were conducted as ward level council. Participants were citizens of wards, Citizen Ward Forum (CWF), Citizen Awareness Center (CAC), representatives of municipality, local leaders, women, Dalit and indigenous groups. The program was focused on planning and budgeting process, criteria, provision of planning and budgeting and prioritization of plans right from ward-level. In this mock-planning activity, it was also practiced that how budgeting is done for the prioritized plan and how it should be taken up to municipality during municipal councils.

Constraints/challenges experienced

During the implementation of simulation activity, we didn't get any kind of challenges but as we all knew that all the development activities are being implemented by political parties some of difficulties observed from them. They stayed out of the process. When we motivated citizens against the unfair activities from them, they came and participated in the simulation process. They understood about participatory planning and budgeting process of planning and budgeting and endorsement process of municipal council meeting.

Outputs achieved

After the end of simulation activity, community members, women groups, Dalit, CWF members, political parties, local level leaders and CAC members gained knowledge about provision for participatory approach, how and when to get their plans submitted in municipal councils. They were also empowered on prioritization of plans, budgeting, identification of needs, identification of beneficiaries, etc. Confidence level of participants was increased.

Recognition

Perception of municipal officials changed. After implementation of this activity, municipal officials said that no any organization has worked to promote social accountability tool of participatory planning and budgeting in the municipality. This was the first time that Rastriya Rojgar Prabardhan Kendra (RRPK) was working to promote participatory planning and budgeting by enhancing level of awareness and developing capacity of citizens through these simulation activities.

Case story title:
Two Simulation Events on Participatory Planning and Budgeting:

Sub-grant project title:
PROJECT TITLE:
Involvement of Citizens for Sustainable Municipal Good Governance

Place of intervention:
Malangwa Municipality, Sarlahi

PRAN thematic area:
Municipal Governance

Prepared by:
Pankaj Kumar Shah

Organization:
RRPK, Sarlahi

Date: 10/9/2012

Quote by beneficiary:

Motilal Jha coordinator/president of CWF of Ward No.10 said that the simulation activity was very useful to enhance their capacity. "We are in better position to put forward our plans in the municipal councils." He also added that "Program helped citizens to know about planning process of municipality and process of municipal councils".

Case Story 5

Accountability problem tackled

Women participation is very low in the local bodies' planning and programming in Dolpa district. The tendency for ignoring the voice of marginalized community in local planning is very high. The local planning has been formulated as per the willing of local elites, political parties and local authorities although there is a provision that local planning process should start right from settlement levels. The prioritized program have neglected and non-prioritized program has been selected under political influence or government authorities' intention. The practice has been widespread across VDCs in the district.

Actions taken

Planning process of the local bodies has been discussed in a interaction program which has held between public service providers and marginalized people for assurance of basic service and intensive training on local economic development planning, implementation and oversight processes. People actively participated in the program and questioned local bodies' representatives about the program formulation. The participatory planning at local level has been totally ignored and the DDC planning officer and secretaries of selected VDCs also agreed on the issue. Accountability tool for participatory planning has been used and the local bodies have committed to incorporate the genuine issue of participants.

Constraints/challenges experienced

The constraints of the participation of marginalized community and women were economic problem, patriarchal norms and values and domestic work burden for women. The challenge for the participatory planning in local bodies is poor participation of the marginalized groups because they are ignored and they themselves feel hesitant to participate in such programs. This is the key challenge which needs to be overcome through awareness campaign and providing them a forum for interaction with local authority directly.

Outputs achieved

Our action provided opportunity to the marginalized people like women, Dalit, Janjati to directly interact and discuss with the concerned authorities. Altogether 253 women (52 dalit, 61 Janjati and 140 other) participated in the training. Participation of people in local level program has also increased and their active participation is being observed. Now, it is yet remain to be see how much budget they will be able to get from the VDC in coming council meetings.

Recognition

Our activity has been broadcasted through local FM station. The planning officer of DDC Dolpa opined that the action really helped marginalized people to empower and make them active for raising their issues and demands. The program minutes and photos are some of the evidences of the recognition.

Quote by beneficiary:

Kalikosa Hirachan, 57, Liku-5, Dolpa is a housewife. She said, "This program helped me to raise my voice in the VDC planning process. I want to draw the attention of the government officers of the local bodies towards inconsistencies in planning and programming of local budget. She further added, "If we are not aware of programs, there will be no positive changes. I hope that marginalized people can assess local bodies' budget expenditure. I will also assess local bodies' program from perspective of target groups. "

Case story title:
Women's Participation Increased in Local Development Planning Process.

Sub-grant project title:
Strengthening Karnali People's Participation in Local Body Planning, Programming and Budgeting

Place of intervention:
Dunai, Dolpa

PRAN thematic area:
Public Financial Management

Prepared by:
Bharat Mani Subedi

Organization:
HCDA, Humla

Date: 23/8/2012

Accountability problem tackled

At the beginning of the project, Village Develop Committee (VDC) secretary of Sunaula Bazar was reluctant in showing all the VDC documents including VDC council minutes, decisions made by all party mechanism, recipients of social security allowance and other documents relating to finances and user's committees. Though the VDC secretary did not object from the beginning but he was never enthusiastic in showing confidential documents to public even if he was asked repeatedly. Nobody in the community had ever dared to ask for VDC documents previously. As a result, he was very upset and unexpected for him to show all the documents regarding VDC transactions and receipt-payment vouchers. It seemed that showing confidential documents of VDC to the public was against his professional ethics and would risk his job. It was a hassle for him to provide information and same to us in not receiving the information from the VDC.

Activities conducted to address the problem

ICDC conducted Village Orientation Program to inform community people about the program and to empower them about their right to know from government agencies including local bodies. Along with this, we talked with VDC secretary and informed him that it is the duty of service provider to respect right to information law which has ensured people's right of getting information from any public bodies. It took longer than expected for him to assure what we really want to know about projects and type of support we require from him. VDC secretary was invited to participate in interactions and was informed about it. After having participated in some of our activities, we requested him to provide information and documents on public expenditure details of the previous fiscal year of VDC including council documents. There was no hassle at this time in getting information from the VDC.

Achievement Received/ Result Seen

After execution of series of social accountability interventions, VDC secretary has seen U-turn in behaviour of dealing with public and downward accountability. For him, accomplishing the duty assigned by District Development Committee (DDC) was in high priority where the response to the community people drew very little attention. But it is because of the interventions carried out by the organization that we have seen great changes in the working modality and the perception of VDC secretary who provided us all relevant documents for further study afterwards. At the beginning, very little people knew that it was the responsibility of State to be accountable towards to its citizens. Most of the people including VDC secretary were unaware of it.

Impression

But mentoring, facilitation and proper counseling to VDC secretary by the organization has resulted in quick information release by the VDC. No one needs to face any obstacles to obtain VDC council documents and other information. Now anyone seeking public expenditure related documents from Sunaula Bazar VDC can get them easily. Citizen Charter has been posted in the VDC after it was raised to VDC secretary. Changing somebody's perception is very crucial but has great importance in long term.

Service Recipient's Remarks

"I am Binod Rijal, a resident of the VDC. Whenever we came to VDC office in the past, we had to ask either with the technical assistant, or Sachib (Secretary) of the VDC for the work to be done from it. Now, the VDC has posted Citizen Charter, nagarik badapatra, in a public place which is easily noticeable by people. Citizen charter has guided me how much I have to pay for obtaining a certificate of marriage registration without asking anybody. It is very helpful. It had to be placed at VDC long ago. Anyway, it's good start"

Case Story 7

Accountability problem tackled

Poor transparency and accountability in the local level development projects are common, particularly in Bara. The trend of social auditing development projects has vanished in the last 13 years due to the absence of elected government at the local level. Even though many projects are being implemented at village level development committee level, none of the projects is socially audited. As a result, rights holders do not trust projects implementers. Though people hear about their village development committee fund and other funds being directly channelized through different development projects, they have limited information about plans and budget. Consequently, social solidarity and trust among the duty bearers and right holders is eroding. In Rampur Tokni Village Development Committee, there were some rumours that the pond construction was not transparent. Many locals alleged that the books and accounts of the Pokharidil User Committee (UC) were fake. This led to a <u>bad blood</u> between the villagers and the UC members. Once the right holders united through social accountability programme, they started to demand detailed information about the pond construction (plans, budget and benefitted families). It was made possible through formal and informal interactions with duty bearers as well as sharing of the rationale of social auditing and legal mandate as developed by the government of Nepal.

Actions taken

In order to systematize the social auditing, a series of discussions were made with village development committee Secretary, former village development committee representative, members of the user committee and local political party representatives. To strengthen the advocacy of social auditing, its legal provisions were shared. Once all the stakeholders agreed to get involved in the social auditing exercise, date and venue was fixed. Based on the agreed structures (as facilitated by the social accountability project in Nepal), Pokharidil user committee shared the project's income and expenditure of NPR. 14,98,000 for the first time at the village development committee level.

It was shared that the pond construction project was selected by the people/local level stakeholders of six wards as this pond was considered one of the most important ponds in the VDC. It was recognized that utilizing VDC fund in the pond construction would not cause any dispute among the stakeholders because of its extremely high socio-cultural values (it is being used during Chhat festival for holy bathing). The role of Ward Citizens Forum was noteworthy during this selection. The social auditing revealed that inclusiveness was maintained and a socially recognized person was selected as a chairperson during the formation of the user committee. Even when the VDC didn't release budget on time during the construction of the project, because of the chairperson's social profile, the user committee managed interim money among themselves to complete the work.

Constraints/challenges experienced

Those who received indirect benefits from other projects were reluctant to go to social auditing and tried to hamper the process fearing that they would also have to do social auditing of their work. In the beginning, even the key local stakeholders refused social auditing by saying that once the work was over everything was over. They assumed that social auditing would mean unnecessary confrontation with the locals. Some local level political party leaders discouraged social auditing by stating that it was narrowing the community trust and harmony. Social audit of pond construction project was organised for the first time in Rampur Tokni village development committee. "As a social accountability program was being organized in the village development committee, I also got an opportunity to get my work approved by the local people. So, I prepared the total account with the help from Rural Region and Agro-forestry Development Centre staff and presented it in the public. It was appreciated a lot because villagers

were experiencing such level of transparency for the first time at the local level." said Mr Ishwori Prasad Shah, Chairperson, Pokharidil construction user committee.

In such a confusing scenario, Rural Region and Agro-forestry Development Centre Bara tactfully facilitated both right holders and duty bearers to have social auditing of the pond construction work to satisfy the general. Before the actual social auditing event, several round discussions were made with village development committee Secretary and user committee members about the structures of the presentation, procedures and modalities. To clarify pond construction related issues and concerns in an unbiased way, social auditing event was run in the chairpersonship of Mr. Ram Nepali (village development committee Secretary). In the program, Ishowori Prasad Shah (social leader), Mr. Ramdev Raybhar (Ex- village development committee Chairperson) and Mr. Raj Kishor Prasad (health post In-charge) were also involved. In their views, it has changed people's perspectives and mindset.

Outputs achieved
Social auditing has harmonized the relationship between the villagers (general users) and the user committee executive members. After the social auditing, it was found that no severe fund mishandling cases were raised by the general users. Local people were found to be happy with the budget and its management procedure shared by the user committee members. Since everything was disclosed to the general users, mistrust among the user committee members, general people and village development committee level stakeholders has reduced to a great extent.

Recognition
The issues of social auditing are largely covered by local Newspapers, including KREEPA. In its 7th September 2012 issue, it carefully summarizes how social auditing helped to join the broken relationship between right holders and duty bearers. Social auditing event was largely successful in clearing the suspicions of local people regarding what had happened during the construction of the pond.

Quote of the beneficiary
"I was born in this very village and having lived almost half of my life here, I have seen a lot of development activities. Before this project (social accountability project), it was so disheartening to see the misuse of grants received at village development committee that I used to pass my time thinking of ways to change this trend. Still, I didn't have the guts to come out and work as the situation was not right. But then, I decided to get this work done at any cost after it became a social problem and people turned a blind eye to it even though this was the only place for celebration of Chhathh, a grand Hindu festival. I wholeheartedly thank Rural Region and Agro-forestry Development Centre Bara for making social auditing of the pond construction project possible and clearing all"

Case Story 8

Accountability problem tackled

Every year VDC council of Kanda VDC has been allocating the budget for target group's development program but the target groups have never got them. Women, Dalit, children, senior citizens and marginalized groups are never consulted. They are denied of their right to participate in the public financial management cycle at the local level. They do not know how much funds have been allocated for what purpose in what heading. Service provider are not responsible to service recipient especially women, Dalit and senior citizens and service recipient are not aware about their entitlements. Public fund was being allocated and misused in this way. Sahara Nepal analyzed the VDC allocated budget and tracked it. We found that large amount of allocated budget for target and marginalized groups were misappropriated by service providers. It was found that Kanda VDC Council had allocated Rs. 72,000 for senior citizen and Rs. 1, 92,000 had been allocated on the title of women empowerment to give training in fiscal year 2068/069. But the target group had not got it.

Actions taken

Sahara Nepal team diagnosed situation of accountability and transparency of the budget in Kanda VDC by using the participatory budget analysis and public expenditure tracking survey tools.

We conducted focus groups discussions on entitlement and focused on efficiency, effectiveness, adequacy, transparency and accountability of the allocated budget of the VDC council. The information on budget provisions was shared. Community people actively participated in the group discussion and knew about the budget allocated for them and realized that such budget was not reaching them till now.

When everyone knew the misuse of the allocated public fund, they put pressure on the VDC Secretary as well as key persons of Kanda VDC for demystifying the budget. At the end of focus group discussion on the allocated budget and its effectiveness, VDC secretary and local politicians of Kanda VDC confessed that budget was being used differently and in non-transparent way.

Constraints/challenges experienced

We invited VDC Secretary and other elites who participated in the VDC council as well as the target groups to attend focus group discussion with written letters. VDC Secretary and other elite people already knew the result that would come in the focus group discussion. They did not accept our invitation for the fear of getting exposed to their corrupt actions. It was very difficult for us to convince them and to control the people who were getting aggressive but, finally we managed the situation well and the discussion was completed successfully.

Outputs achieved

When we conducted focus group discussions and tracked allocated budget, the service provider confessed about their irresponsible behaviour and became ready to provide leaked amount to the target groups. After five days of action taken in Kanda VDC, the VDC secretary refunded the misused budget amounting to Rs 72,000 thousand rupees for the senior citizen and Rs. 1, 92,000 for the women empowerment training. Thus when this fund was searched and revealed to the target group through PETS then target groups became successful to get it.

At the end of this program community people especially women, Dalit, Janajati, senior citizens and other disadvantaged groups became very happy for this program and the service provider corrected their mistake and committed not to repeat it.

Case story title:
Misuse of VDC Budget for Target Group Development Programme

Sub-grant project title:
Participatory Budget Analysis(PBA) and Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) of Rilu and Kanda VDCs of Bajhang

Place of intervention:
Kanda VDC, Bajhang

PRAN thematic area:
Public financial management

Prepared by:
Gyan Bahadur Bohara

Organization:
Sahara Nepal

Date: 20/7/2012

Recognition

Saipal community radio FM broadcasted this news and District Administration Office sent letter to the various stakeholders of the Bajhang district for improving entitlement.

Case Story 9

Accountability problem tackled

Tukucha Nala is one of the VDCs adjoining to Banepa municipality of Kavre district. It is accessible by road and looks prosperous. It has fertile land and it grows all types of crops. But Dalits living in the VDC are poor as 50% of them do not have food sufficiency. Their access to local services provided by government institution is also not so good. The VDC receives about Rs 1.9 million rupees annually as grants of which Rs 1.5 million is allocated for development. Of this, 15% needs to be allocated for Dalits, Janjati, elderly, disables and other backward communities. Another 10% should be allocated for women and children. Dalit women claim their share from women and other targeted budget but as of now they have not done so. The allocation and expenditure of the VDC for fiscal year 2011/12 is as bellow

S.N.	Activities	Amount Rs.
1.	Damai Water supply scheme Ward No. 7	10,000
2	Byangdhunga Dalit Basti motorable road	15,000
3.	Construction of funeral place for Aadibasi	20,000
4.	Construction of funeral place for Janjatis	20,000
5.	Dudamukh Mahadevkhola Dalit basti road	30,000
6.	Senior Citizen society	114,767
7.	Home for disables	20,000
8.	For children activities	152,774
9.	Skill development and empowerment for women	300,000

The budget allocation table shows that budget meant for elderly people and women as well as disables have been spent for their benefit. But budget for Dalits has been spent more on water project which could also be done from other budget headings as target programme is mainly for human resource development either through education or skill development of the target groups

Actions taken

To tackle the problem, a public hearing programme was organized in July 29, 2012 in the premises of Mr. Gante Mijar, a local Dalit leader and social worker. In this public hearing, representatives of FEDO district chapters, VDC secretary Mr. Binod Sapkota and representatives of the then all-party mechanism (which is no longer existent) mainly from CPN-UML and UCPN (Maoist). There were about 40 participants mainly from pressure group formed by FEDO under the PRAN project. The Principal Social Accountability Practitioner presented the data derived from baseline study which helped set the scenario both for the members of pressure group and VDC officials. Upon knowing the food sufficiency situation of Dalits, VDC officials became serious. VDC secretary Mr. Sapkota talked about how the budgets allocated for targeted programme in the VDC was being spent. He said that VDC never received any demands from Dalit community under target groups programs. Mr. Gante Mijhar, a respected member of the society used to be present in all-party meetings but he never came up with any demands for project related to Dalits. Because of not having any demands from Dalits, budget for target groups was spent on water and road projects in and around Dalit settlements. Political party representatives and other members of the society who were in the Public Hearing explicitly said that if FEDO comes up with a good proposal, then they are ready to allocate sufficient budget for the upliftment of Dalits of the area.

Public heairng as a social accuntabiity tool proved effective in galvanizing the service providers, decision makers and service recipients in finding a solution through face-to-face discussion. Political party leaders, VDC secretary and members of the society collectively realized that they should be more alert and responsive in budget allocations to target groups during the planning process of the VDC.

Constraints/challenges experienced
- Lack of awareness among target groups
- Non-implementation of the policies and plans
- Frequent transfer of government officials
- Over politicization

Outputs achieved
- From this public hearing we can see three outputs
- Commitment of the VDC
- Realization at the both sides for more interaction
- Need of civic oversight

Recognition
The work of FEDO for the community has been recognized by VDC officials. The news of the event was broadcasted by local ABC FM radio situated at Banepa and also published in Kavre Times.

Quote by beneficiary
Gamala Magrati, a resident of Nala VDC, who is also the chairperson of the pressure group, stated "I did not know that VDC had a plan to make it open defecation free and has provisioned to provide some materials to construct toilet which we need to convey to our people." She further stated "Until now I was not aware of plans and programs which could benefit Dalits. Now onwards, we will ask VDC secretary and local politicians to allocate funds not just on water and road but for capacity development and empowerment of the target groups as well."

Case Story 10

Accountability problem tackled

The Water Supply and Sanitation Scheme in Kuirepani of Laxmipur VDC of Dang was initiated by women of the village. The water supply scheme is managed all by women. They have high level of enthusiasm and are actively managing the scheme. However actively they are working, service users have not got opportunity to share their grievances/complaints. The Kuirepani Water Supply and Sanitation User Committee has been in operation over two years but has not held any General Annual Meeting of all the users or other interaction meetings with service users, where they could share with the users the financial, technical and managerial status of the scheme, difficulties they have been facing, and the future plans. Inability to hold such meetings, in the long run could also develop an environment of distrust among members. The problem was identified through the Focused Group Discussion with the members of the Executive Committee and the service users.

Actions taken

The issue was raised to the committee members and users about the importance of holding such meetings regularly. They also realized the need for such meetings and they also expressed the difficulties they have faced in the past in organizing such meetings. However, they have assured that they will hold such meetings of users. In addition to discussion in the interface meeting, one informal meeting was also held with the users and committee members in the project site to discuss the different aspects of management. Discussions also focused on how to monitor the different aspects of service as reflected through Citizen Report Card.

Constraints/challenges experienced

The members of the Executive Committee expressed difficulties such as the lack of formal office, absentee households, and lack of interest among some households to participate in the project activities. However, the conditions have much improved since earlier time. The technical problems like low water pressure in some sections leading to poor water delivery has also detracted some users in project activities. But the committee members realized that holding such meeting would also help them to clarify to the users the difficulties they have been facing and relieving off some pressure.

Outputs achieved

It is too early to see what outputs the action taken will result as the members of the executive committee are yet to hold such annual meeting/interaction meetings. However, they have committed with enthusiasm to hold such meetings. And it is expected that it would enhance social accountability and help in better management of the water supply scheme for example, timely payment of the tariff and full ownership of the scheme by all the users.

Lessons learnt

Although a committee or a group of people might be highly enthusiastic in undertaking some initiatives, they should be helped in following key steps for effective management of the project. A checklist could be prepared of essential steps to be followed.

Recognition

The whole interface meeting about the Social Accountability was covered by the local media. A local FM also carried a detailed interview about the program with the Principal Social Accountability Practitioner. The User Committee and service users including media have recognized the benefits of holding such meetings.

Case Story 11

Accountability problem tackled
The people of Karnali are deprived of basic health services although health service centres are provisioned in the districts. Basically the problem of avaibality health personnel in health centres is much higher. In addition, people are more exploited by the local medical centres run by amateur medical workers. Quality of services, price of medicines and medical counseling are of poor standards.

When people knew about it through FM radio and VDC level interactions, people started filing complaints against poor services and constant absenteeism of staff. At first, people were unknown of filing complaints and even some were unable to write complaints but had great zeal of complaining. They were supported to write complaints by District Human Rights Network (DHRN) and Human Right and Peace Group (HRPG). A complaint against absenteeism of staff at District Health Office (DHO) was filed by people of Kalikot.

Actions taken
Among the eight complaints that were forwarded by DHRN, a complaint against absenteeism of DHO staff was discussed in the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) headed by Chief District Officer.

DHRN facilitated the entire process of information dissemination, collection of complaints, filing, dissemination and follow up. The process contributed to build pressure to convene meeting of district-level MEC on regular basis which has been provisioned by the Good Governance (Operation and Management) Act.

After meeting of MEC, an action plan was developed to monitor concerned offices based on eight different public complaints forwarded by DHRN. Then MEC started regularly visiting DHO. CDO observed and found the complaints valid as senior staff at DHO were absent for the last many days without notification. Right after his return from visit, he forwarded a letter to the concerned agency asking the staff to maintain regularity and punctuality; and again monitored at regular intervals which revealed that doctors and other staff being more regular and punctual in their duties.

Constraints/challenges experienced
In this event, major constraint was to make MEC functional and active regularly convening meetings with participation of concerned agencies. This took several efforts. It required strong facilitation from civil society organization. Another challenge is voluntary mobilization of DHRN and HRPG and they lack sufficient capacity to deal with accountability concerns.

Output achieved
In Kalikot, there are mainly three achievements. At first, the district level MEC of Kalikot monitored the office of government line agencies and issued decision for providing effective services to people. Secondly, two government offices broadcasted their annual programme with budget, processes and other services. And finally, participation of the district line agencies increased and regularity was maintained than before.

Lessons learnt
Social accountability tool is process oriented. For effective and efficient process, competency of facilitating organization is essential.

Recognition
Regularity of DHO personnel has been welcomed by all service holders. Previously, services were delayed and people had to wait for long to get the services. The situation has improved. This event has also put pressure on the district line agencies and District Development Committee where more than six lakh advances taken by staff are pending for more than eight months. In this regard, the DAO has forwarded letter to DDC for clarification after complaints received from people.

Case story title:
Establishing Complain Hearing Mechanism

Sub-grant project title:
Community Led Accountability Promotion Initiatives in Mid-west

Place of intervention:
Manma, Kalikot

PRAN thematic area:
Public Service Delivery

Prepared by:
Mani Raj Pandey

Organization:
KIRDARC, Jumla in collaboration with DHRN Kalikot

Date: 5/6/2012

Quote by beneficiary:
Ratna Bahadur Malla, a local resident said, "Due to the complaint hearing mechanism, today I received my wage for having worked in Dhaulagoha road construction which was pending for long. For me, MEC was a godsend".

Case Story 12

'Thanks to the secondary school students who took initiative to talk to the teachers, PTA and SMC.' the principal expressed his satisfaction; and many thanks to VDRC-Nepal who trained students to take actions without violence.

Mr. Radha Krishna Adhikari
Principal
During M&E visit mission in
September 2012

Accountability problem tackled

Parbati Sapkota knows very well that she should reach school before 10:00 AM but it has been long that she has not done so. The household chores or any other illness is not making her late for school rather she finds it hard to spend time if she went on time. 'I don't have teachers to teach the early periods of the day and 7 am forced to play outside,' she expressed her frustration. Our teachers won't come before 11:30 am so I manage my time accordingly. A large number of secondary level school teachers are busy taking classes at private college or higher secondary schools. Students have the execuse to came late at school.

'Besides coming late, teachers also used to gossip either on political or on their very personal issues and kept blaming students for not coming to school' on time. Dhana Prasad Chapagain, another secondary level student expressed his anger 'The Principal has always turned deaf ears to our demands to control both the students and the teachers.'

Action Taken

The discussion held during the Community Score Card had led Ruma Rijal, the Governance Facilitator, to a conclusion that the irregularity of students in the school is largely because of the teachers. She worked hard to highlight the issue during scoring of the indicators. Students reciprocated to the interest and committed to come to school in time if the teachers did the same.

During VDRC-Nepal's engagement at the school, the students and parents strongly raised the issue of irregularity of teachers. They not only suggested the SMC and school management for punctuality of teachers but also the assembly declared loud and clear the obligation of being punctual from the next day.

Constraints/challenges experienced

"The school management was still reluctant to improve the condition until the situation became worse and the students attempted to physically attack a teacher for his unruly behavior when asked to come to class on time'" said Mr. Khem Budathoki, a parent. Negotiation with higher secondary wing was made to release the teachers before 10:00. This arrangement resulted in timely arrival of teachers at schools.

Outputs Achieved

Now the situation is a lot better. The joint meeting of parents, students and teachers have agreed and committed that the school gate remains closed from 10:00 till 16:00 hours. As a result, teachers not only come on time but also run extra classes for weak students and for the days missed during bandhs (strikes). Students seemed to have improved their learning attitude as well.

Recognition

The principal of the school has expressed his happiness to honor the efforts made by VDRC-Nepal for not only improving punctuality of teachers but also creating a harmony between teachers and students without letting any violence getting into the school. Teachers are voluntarily taking extra classes for the needy students even during summer vacation have been an example to other schools of the area.