DRG Learning, Evaluation, and Research Activity:

MID-TERM EVALUATION FOR SAJHEDARI BIKAAS PROJECT

MARCH 2016

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Final Report

March 2016

Photo: Members of Local Youth Group, Radio Listening Group, and Women's Employment Group (WORTH) meeting at Kamdi VDC, Banke District, 23 August 2015.

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADDCN	Association of District Development Committees Nepal
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
BASE	Backward Society Education
CA	Constituent Assembly
CAC	Citizen Awareness Center
CBO	Community-based Organization
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CeLRRd	Center for Legal Research and Resource Development (national level NGO)
CMC	Community Mediation Center
CMU	Community Management Unit
CPS	Citizen Perception Survey
DDC	District Development Committee
DfID	Department for International Development
DG	Democracy and Governance
DIDC	District information and Development Center
DPMAS	District Poverty Monitoring and Analysis Centre
EA	Equal Access (International NGO)
EOP	End of Project
EW	Empowerment Worker (for WORTH groups)
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation)
GON	Government of Nepal
IFPC	Integrated Plan Formulation Committee
IPC	Implementing Partner Committee
ISO	Intermediate support organization
KISAN	Knowledge-based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition (Project)
LDF	Local Development Fund
LDO	Local Development Officer
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Programme
LOP	Life of Project
LSGA	Local Self-Governance Act (1999)
LYG	Local Youth Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCPM	Minimum Condition for Performance Measurement
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGCPP	Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Project
NTI	Nepal Transition Initiative
NAVIN	National Association of Village Development Committees
OPI	Organizational Performance Index

PDDP	Participatory District Development Program
PDDP	Periodic District Development Plan
PMC	Project Monitoring Committee
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PVDP	Periodic Village Development Plan
RLG	Radio Listeners Group
SB	Sajhedari Bikaas
SDC	Swiss Development Corporation
SM	Social Mobilizer (for SB)
SOW	Statement of work (sometimes Scope of work)
TA	Technical assistance
TMJA	Terai/Madhesi/Janajati/Adhibasi
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
VSMC	Village Supervision and Monitoring Committee
WCF	Ward Citizen Forum
WEG	Women's Empowerment Group (same as WORTH group)
YI	Youth Initiative (National level NGO)

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This mid-term evaluation of USAID/Nepal's Sajhedari Bikaas (SB) project has been undertaken not to examine progress toward the project's explicit objectives (the usual purpose of mid-term assessments), but rather to answer five questions focusing on key dimensions: (1) integration among the project's components and with other development actors; (2) inclusion of marginalized groups (3) institutionalization and sustainability of components; (4) relations with Government of Nepal (GON) systems; and (5) capacity to learn from experience. Thus the evaluation team has looked at *how* SB is functioning, rather than *what* it is doing in its work.

Over its five-year (2012-2017) lifetime and with its initial US$ 25 million budget, SB has been implemented by Pact of Washington, DC and has operated in six Terai districts located in Nepal's Mid-West and Far West regions (in 2015 SB expanded to cover six additional earthquake recovery districts, but this evaluation focuses only on the original six). SB began its work in a Phase 1 covering 58 Village Development Committees (VDCs, which are Nepal's basic local governance units), and in FY 2016 is expanding to 48 more in a Phase 2, for a total of 50% of all VDCs in its project area. The project is a complex one, comprising six VDC-level organizational mechanisms created by SB itself and four more created by the state. In addition to its overall management by Pact, SB is being implemented by four national-level and international-level NGOs and twelve local-level NGOs.

A number of local decentralization projects preceded SB, supported by various donors including USAID as well as GON, with the largest by far being the Local Governance and Community Development Project (LGCDP), covering the entire country and now in its second phase with a US$ 1.36 billion budget. SB in many ways constitutes an experiment building on and deepening LGCDP's impact in its original six-district area.

Originally planned for April 2015, this evaluation had to be postponed in the wake of the devastating earthquake that struck Nepal in that month. Rescheduled for August 2015, the team encountered the protests and bandhs then taking place with a particular concentration in SB's project area, preventing any project visit sites save for one very short foray to a VDC adjacent to project headquarters in Nepalgunj. Fortunately, two team members were able to return briefly to SB's project area in October to make one-day visits to three VDCs, so that in the end, the evaluation has field data from what amounts to 3+ VDCs and extended meetings with project staff in Nepalgunj, plus interviews in Kathmandu.

The substantive portion of the report consists of five sections, one devoted to each evaluation question. Altogether, this report offers 38 recommendations, of which only those deemed most important are included in this executive summary.

1. Integration

The evaluation team found a high level of integration between SB components at the project headquarters in Nepalgunj, a function in large part of good leadership but also in significant part stemming from SB's location in Nepalgunj, where almost all the professional staff lived away from their Kathmandu-based families. The isolation meant increased interaction among project staff, but also meant high staff turnover in SB's early days (it has declined under present leadership). And it has meant decreased opportunity for senior staff to interact with the

Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD), other donors and NGOs in the capital.

The ten VDC-level mechanisms also showed a significant degree of interconnectedness, particularly in the form of overlapping memberships that can strengthen the impact of the overall SB impact and contribute to post-project sustainability. This potential for sustainability must be balanced by the risk that the overlappers will be the same elites that have controlled village life in the past.   But we believe the prospect of a lasting SB legacy is worth the tradeoff. We also found evidence of collaboration between SB and other USAID sectoral programs, one in agriculture and the other in public health.

The evaluation team's principal recommendations here are to (1) encourage more overlapping memberships, in particular between the Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs, which are the key planning groups at the base) and other SB bodies, and (2) utilize Local Youth Groups (LYGs) as the main intermediaries between other SB groups and the citizenry, which would help cultivate future community leaders.

2. Inclusion

Mainly through its work in the field with its SMs, SB has created a supportive environment for members of socially excluded groups to enter and engage at the local level in planning and development processes in its project area, though achievement to date are in some cases not uniform. Among the statutory mechanisms, women in particular of all ethnicities are participating in significant numbers in lower level mechanisms like the Citizen Awareness Centers (CACs) but their presence thins at progressively higher VDC levels like the WCFs and Integrated Plan Formulation Committees (IPFCs) where Hill Brahmins and Chhetris continue to be overrepresented as members and especially in leadership roles. For instance, Terai/Madhesi/Janajati/Adhibasis (TMJAs) constitute 27% of WCF members in the project area, which shows an impressive gain, but only 7% of leadership positions.

Within the mechanisms created by SB, excluded groups have also gained significant representation, most notably in the Community Mediation Centers (CMCs), which are the most important among these bodies. Here the TMJAs amount to 30% of the members and as coordinators occupy 15 of 59 or about a quarter of the leadership positions, a noteworthy achievement. Among the Women's Empowerment Groups (WEGs, also known as WORTH groups), TMJAs form 30% of the members and occupy 207 of 740 or 28% of the leadership slots, while Hill Dalits register at 137 of 740 or 18.5% respectively, again impressive attainments.   As with the statutory mechanisms, much has been accomplished, but there is still more to do in working toward GESI goals.

The evaluation team's principal recommendations here are: (1) Continue investing to build GESI sensitivity, capacity and skills of both the statutory and SB-created institutions at VDC and DDC level; (2) Intensify the SM's attention to the more disadvantaged communities such as ultra-poor (especially Dalit women), Badis, Muslims; and (3) Encourage SB's M&E section to further disaggregate its data gathering by gender and ethnic community (at present too many communities are aggregated in its database, especially the TMJA category), making analysis unnecessarily difficult.

3. Institutionalization and Sustainability

"Institutionalization" may be taken to refer to new behaviors becoming established procedures in an organization during SB's project lifetime, while "sustainability" indicates a capacity to carry on new behaviors after SB comes to an end. The first is prerequisite to but does not necessarily lead to the second; SB has to work on both.

Among the ten CBOs and statutory mechanisms, it is especially interesting to note that SB has in its work with the CMCs) in effect has resurrected and institutionalized what had become to a significant degree an abandoned alternative dispute resolution structure. WEGs have proliferated, now averaging 3.5 groups per VDC. Local Youth Groups (LYGs) and Radio Listening Groups (RLGs) have likewise grown in number and activities.   Arguably the key mechanism in SB's portfolio has been the WCF, which is charged with originating the VDC's annual planning exercise in a 14-step process that has been the core focus of activity for SB's Social Mobilizer.

In general, while there are good indications of institutionalization and some impressive signs that SB is <u>promoting</u> sustainability, the prospects for real sustainability are uncertain. The 24-month timeframe for SB's Phases 1 and 2 are just very short to instill new practices into VDCs, especially given the jolt that the new Constitution will surely engender when it gets translated into a new local government system for Nepal. Even so, in comparing SB with USAID projects elsewhere, its devotion to sustainability issues has been exemplary.

The evaluation's principal recommendations are to (1) pursue USAID Mission efforts to work more closely with MoFALD at national level and LGCDP at local level, for it is GON rather than donors that must promote local governance in the end; (2) develop ways to maintain and sustain the excellent SB database after the project ends, for if inclusion objectives are to be realized on a wide base, some tracking mechanisms will be needed; and (3) capacitate SB's local NGO partners as "intermediary support organizations" that would provide post-project expertise on demand to DDCs and VDCs in SB's project area and beyond.

4. Relations with the Government of Nepal

The SB's and GON coordination and collaboration is dense and thick at the local level. It gets thinner as it moves higher. At the time of writing this report, the national level exhibits little linkage and limited collaboration and coordination. SB supports multiple activities at the VDC level to make governance more effective and accountable, largely through the SM, who works with the VDC and the statutory mechanisms supported by SB.

The evaluation found that SB has created a strong network of working relationships and interdependencies between and among the various parts of the project and the GON. This has been especially valuable, given the constraints faced by the VDC in terms of small permanent staff and limited capacity, exacerbated by frequent transfers, particularly of VDC secretaries. At the district level, SB has supported the District Development Council (DDC), particularly in preparing its Periodic District Development (i.e., 5-year) Plan.

At the national level, SB communicates with MoFALD (the line ministry for local government levels) on a regular basis, though the latter would clearly prefer to deal with USAID directly through some kind of formal linkage such as a Memorandum of Understanding. We understand that both sides are currently working on a suitable arrangement in this regard. In the meantime, the thick-bottom-and-thin-top profile has been advantageous in placing SB close to

its beneficiaries but has hindered intimate connections and scope for policy dialogue between senior SB management and GOB at the national level.

The evaluation's principal recommendations are to (1) pursue efforts to reach a formal understanding between USAID and either MoFALD or National Planning Commission; (2) help build VDC secretariat capacity so that it can sustain the progress made with SB's support; and (3) arrange for SB's senior management to spend a certain time period in Kathmandu each month to establish stronger links with GON through which it can disseminate its innovations and engage in policy dialogue.

5. Learning

SB is involved in two types of learning. Within the project itself, continuous feedback from the field as well as cross fertilization between program components should lead to successive internal adjustments in implementation. Secondly, SB should be generating innovations and best practices that can be disseminated externally to the Government of Nepal, other donors and their projects, and the international donor community more generally.

The evaluation found extensive use of the internal adjustment model, first within the project staff in Nepalgunj in its interactions, and secondly through the focus groups that formed part of Citizen Perception Surveys (CPSs) and led to changes in program implementation. In a quantitative dimension, the two CPSs undertaken thus far have provided a picture of people's response to SB's work, while the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team's data collection and analysis effort has enabled SB to discern gender and ethnic participation in its programs. Thus far, though, these analyses have not attempted to gauge change over time.

SB has performed well in learning from its own experience and making appropriate adjustments in its programs. In the absence of a randomized control trial analysis, however, it is not possible to determine how exactly these changes contributed to project outcomes. But SB has developed an impressive stock of knowledge about local governance, which should be most useful for whatever local government system GON devises under its new Constitution.

The principal recommendations here are (1) actively disseminate SB's innovations to GON, other donors in Nepal, and the international development community; (2) assemble a compendium of lessons learned by SB for future use by others; and (3) use the baseline and citizen perception surveys to gauge interim program outcomes.

The evaluation closes with one overall recommendation, stemming from what is presented throughout this report: promote SB's innovations to GON in a "development marketing" effort to bring them into the planning process that will determine the nature of local governance under the country's new Constitution.

II. INTRODUCTION: EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The central purpose of this mid-term evaluation of USAID/Nepal's Sajhedari Bikaas (SB) project is to provide an assessment of how the project is functioning along five distinct (though overlapping) dimensions, rather than to gauge its progress toward its key objectives, as is more

generally the case with mid-term evaluations.   Thus whereas SB's four key objectives deal with (a) mitigating conflict, (b) accessing development resources, (c) implementing inclusive local development projects, and (d) capacitating effective local government units, the five evaluation questions focus on (1) integration internally among project components and externally with other development actors inside and outside USAID, (2) inclusion of marginalized groups in SB's components (as opposed to implementing inclusive project activities), (3) institutionalization and sustainability of SB's components, (4) relations with Government of Nepal (GON) systems, and (5) SB's capacity to learn from its own experience.

In shorthand terms, this evaluation's central query looks at questions of *how* SB is doing its work rather than *what* it is doing in its work.   To put it another way, the evaluation team is looking at SB's *processes*, not its *achievements* in meeting project objectives.

With a life of project (LOP) running from December 2012 to November 2017 and a budget initially projected at US$25 million, SB is the largest project in USAID/Nepal's Democracy and Governance (DG) portfolio.   Implemented by Pact of Washington, DC, SB operates in six contiguous districts located in Nepal's Mid-west and Far-west regions (Kanchanpur, Kailali, Bardia, Banke, Dang and Surkhet) chosen to coincide with ongoing USAID projects in other sectors in order to maximize integration across the Agency's activities.[1]. Sajhedari's geographic scope began with a Phase 1 including 58 Village Development Committees (VDCs, which are the basic unit of local governance of Nepal), augmented in late 2015 with 48 more VDCs in a Phase 2, for a total of 106 or 50% of the total VDCs in the project area[2]. SB's headquarters is located in Nepalgunj, the district headquarters of Banke District.

As noted above, this evaluation focuses on five key questions, which are set out in the evaluation's Statement of Work (SOW) as follows:

1. *Integration*– The project has numerous components, which seek to align such that the sum is greater than the parts. Ensuring strategic integration/coordination across these internal project components, as well as externally (with other USAID, donor, government, and privately operated programs in the targeted geographic area) is challenging.

    o   What are key lessons that can be taken from Sajhedari for internal integration/coordination, mainly across components and amongst sub-partners to consolidate efforts towards anticipated outcome results?

    o   How effective are Sajhedari approaches to ensure external integration/coordination, mainly with other USAID activities, GON, other donor-funded activities and private sector efforts to advance progress toward anticipated outcome results of the project and/or CDCS?

2. *Inclusion* – GESI and youth are integral components of the project implementation approach.

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[1] After the devastating earthquakes in April/May 2015, SB was expanded to focus on recovery and rehabilitation in three and then six new districts in the Western and Central regions of the country, with a budget increased by US$ 10 million.   The present evaluation is confined to the original six districts in Nepal's southwest, however.

[2] SB's Year 3 Work Plan.

o What approaches have been most effective at maximizing engagement of women, youth, dalits, and other marginalized groups to advance local community inclusion in decision-making and leadership positions? What strategically prioritized measures could be taken to improve upon the representation of marginalized groups including women in the planning, implementation, and reporting processes supported under the project? Are there any unintended results from the engagement by Pact partners of historically marginalized communities?

3. *Institutionalization and Sustainability* – A fundamental element of Sajhedari is to make every effort for institutionalization and sustainability of the results.

o Given project work to date in planning, initiating, and phasing out activities to ensure to the extent possible sustainability of the contractor's efforts, how should Sajhedari proceed at this point in time to maximize the potentials for sustainability of targeted components of the project?

4. *Working with GON Systems* – Sajhedari is working closely with local government bodies in districts and also coordinating with MOFALD at the central level.

o How effective is Sajhedari's approach for coordination and collaboration with GON at the local and central levels to advance project and CDCS objectives?

5. *Learning* – Learning is built throughout the Sajhedari contract – particularly through various assessments and surveys, in addition to an internal knowledge management system.

o To what extent do the learning mechanisms/tools contribute to the project's outcome results? How can the lessons learned be strategically maximized into programmatic responses to advance those outcomes (with a particular lens on themes of GESI, youth, conflict, capacity building, and coordination)?

After this introduction, this report moves to short sections on SB's background/organization and on evaluation methodology/limitations. The bulk of the report will be devoted to answering in successive sections the five questions posed just above. Each of these sections will present its own findings, conclusions and recommendations, rather than offering the recommendations in one section all by themselves at the end as is often done in USAID evaluations. Finally, attached to the report are a number of annexes providing the SOW, references, interviewees, etc.

III.   PROJECT BACKGROUND

In its origins, Sajhedari Bikaas follows a double path. The first path was laid down by a pilot project called the Participatory District Development Program (PDDP) with Village Development Committees (VDCs) in six districts in the 1990s, implemented by the National Planning Commission and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The program focused on participatory local government planning and improving local

government capacity to deliver services. Many of the tools currently used for strengthening local governance including the 14 step planning process were designed during this period of PDDP. This process has become legally required for local bodies and continues. The current institutions related to local governance including Association of District Development Committees (ADDCN), Municipal Association of Nepal (MUAN), National Association of Village Development Committees (NAVIN), were all formed during the PDDP phase, which pushed for decentralized governance in Nepal.

Over time the initiative grew to become the Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP), implemented by what is presently the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD), covering all of Nepal's 75 districts, its municipalities and its VDCs collectively numbering more than 3500. LGCDP funded an annual block grant to each unit at all three levels. To give guidance and direction, the program also provided a social mobilizer for every VDC and municipality. One of the main reasons for the success of PDDP is its ownership and leadership taken by some national level agency of the GON. From the very beginning of the project National Planning Commission and later Ministry of Local Development provided leadership and support. Other development partners joined hands in different phases of the program. UNDP continuously provided technical leadership.

LGCDP I ran from 2008 to 2013 and has been succeeded by LGCDP II, a four-year program ending in 2017 and anticipated to spend the equivalent of US$ 1.36 billion over its lifetime. Of that amount, a coalition of donors (including ADB, the World Bank, UNDP, DfID, GIZ, and SDC) will collectively contribute about one-seventh and the GON the remainder.[3] Thus SB with its US$ 26.5 million budget over five years in a six-district area can in a sense be described as an experiment building on and deepening in its catchment area the impact of LGCDP.

The second path was cut by earlier USAID projects in Nepal. Historically, one could look back to the Rapti Zone Project of the 1980s and early 1990s, which covered some of the same area as SB (Mellor et al. 1995), but the more proximate lineage traces to two projects of the last decade. The Nepal Transition Initiative (NTI) began just after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ending the civil war in 2006 and ended in 2009. Given the needs of the time, NTI focused on conflict resolution and engaging citizens in the peace process at local level, concentrating on the Eastern and Central Terai (USAID 2009).

Another USAID project, overlapping with NTI was the Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Project (NGCPP), a two-year effort ending in September 2010. NGCPP was an experimental initiative, concentrating on one district in the Eastern Terai and within that district on just 12 VDCs. Among other things, NGCPP developed a village profiling process to assemble databases at VDC level, piloted the ward citizen forums (WCFs) as the originating engine in the 14-step annual planning process, and established VDC-level mediation centers (USAID 2010). All three of these initiatives became central components of SB later on.

Sajhedari Bikaas had been intended to support local governance in Nepal as part of USAID's overall DG assistance under the country's new Constitution that was expected to be enacted after the Constituent Assembly (CA) began its deliberations in 2009. But the discussions kept getting extended without a Constitution emerging, and USAID decided to go ahead with the project, so SB began in the late fall of 2012. Its catchment area, originally intended to include

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[3] LGCDP II is explained in some detail in GON (2013).

several Terai districts in Nepal's Eastern region, instead came to be six Terai and Inner Terai districts in the Mid-West and Far West regions, in order to coincide with and cross-fertilize ongoing USAID projects in the health, agriculture, and conflict mitigation sectors.

Of SB's four key objectives, conflict mitigation proved to be less challenging than predicted, as tensions from the civil war appeared to have dissipated by the time SB had gotten under way. Accordingly, after the first year, conflict mediation became less important as a project objective, though the component was retained as a lower order focus on enabling environment and community mediation, and SB was able to concentrate mainly on its other three objectives: access to resources, inclusive development, and effective local bodies. By the time of this midterm evaluation, SB had built relations with and was supporting four VDC mechanisms created by the GON and had created six new organizations of its own, as shown in Table 1. Altogether, SB was supporting almost 1300 groups with over 27 thousand members. It is these mechanisms, along with SBs relations with the GON at local and national levels that will be the principal focus of this evaluation.

IV. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This evaluation followed the customary qualitative methodology employed for assessing USAID projects, i.e., perusing documents, conducting key informant interviews, and making field visits to project sites. In the quantitative dimension, the ambitious database assembled by SB's M&E team and the three opinion surveys conducted thus far offered valuable sources of information.

The team was composed of three members. Harry Blair, the team leader, is presently Visiting Fellow in Political Science at Yale University. He has long experience as an academic and development practitioner, focusing in particular on South Asia, with a specialty in decentralization and local governance. Jagadish Pokharel, the team's local governance expert, is a former member and vice-chair of the Nepal's National Planning Commission and has served on several GON bodies concerned with local governance. Among his many consultancies, he headed an evaluation of UNV support to the LGCDP in 2012. Rajju Malla-Dhakal, the team's gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) expert, is the Executive Director of South Asia Center for Policy Studies. She has focused on this topic in consultancies for UNDP, International IDEA, and the Asia Foundation. She brings experiences of GESI mainstreaming as the head of Enabling State Program/UKaid and Chief of Party for the Ministry of Women's Affairs Initiative for Strengthening Policy and Advocacy Project in Afghanistan, among others. While this evaluation was in progress, her monograph on gender issues in the 2013 national election appeared in print.

The evaluation, initially scheduled for April 2015, had to be postponed in the wake of the devastating earthquake that struck Nepal on 25 April. Thus the evaluation's in-country work as a complete team took place over a three-week period from 15 August to 5 September 2015.

Even before starting the formal evaluation, the evaluation team realized that, while the team would be able to absorb sufficient background and recent history from SB's written records, and to meet directly with key informants in the USAID Mission, the GON, the donor community, SB's national-level NGO partners, and SB headquarters itself in Nepalgunj, it would not be possible to visit anything like an adequate sample of project sites, i.e., the 58 VDCs that

formed SB's Phase 1. Ideally, a proper sample would include "treatment" (i.e., inclusion in SB's Phase 1) and "control" (exclusion from both SB phases) VDCs from each of SB's six districts, VDCs with high, medium and low track records so far, VDCs dominated numerically by different ethnics groups (specifically by Pahadi elites, by Dalits, by Muslims, by Hill Janajatis, by Madhesis, and by Madhesi Adivasis[4]), VDCs situated in the Terai (where the vast majority of SB's project area lay) as well as in the Inner Terai, and VDCs located at varying distances from each district headquarters. Obviously, in the limited time available for field visits, we would have to settle for a sample considerably smaller than ideal.

Given all the project's field activities listed in Table 1, it seemed clear that it would take a whole day to interview citizens involved in each mechanism separately, plus the SB social mobilizer, the WORTH empowerment worker, and the LGCDP mobilizer. Moreover, the evaluation team would have to be able to travel to each VDC, conduct individual and group interviews, and travel back to lodging within a single day, which would exclude more remote sites. And finally, the team would have to depend on SB's staff to select a sample, as there was no way from afar to obtain the necessary information about the VDC sites to choose a sample.

Accordingly, the evaluation team asked SB to select a dozen VDCs varied district location, ethnic dominance and SB performance to date. From such a list it was planned to select five or six, which would be a reasonable number to visit within the time available. It was not feasible to include a "control" sample of VDCs.

SB did provide such a list, which included VDCs from all six project districts, VDCs dominated variously by Hill elites, Madhesis, Muslims, Tharus and Magars, and VDCs that had shown high, medium and low progress in the project thus far. This left open the possibility of selection bias, even unintended, but under the circumstances, the team assessed the list to be a good starting point. The evaluation team intended to pick five or six from the list after assembling in Nepal and conducting some initial data gathering. Although the small sample would not be statistically valid, the team believed it could be sufficiently illustrative to provide a good picture of SB's field activities.

Unfortunately, just as the in-country evaluation work was beginning, a continuing series of protests, demonstrations and agitations emerged throughout the Terai in general and within SB's project area in particular, energized by discontent from several ethnic groups concerning the delineation of the units that would be created in Nepal's new Constitution, which was in the final stages of being drawn up. By the time the evaluation team reached SB's headquarters in Nepalgunj on 20 August, protesters throughout the project area were preventing any movement of four-wheeled vehicles, thus precluding any VDC visits by the team. The team managed to navigate around the town itself for interviews by electric rickshaws, and in the end were able to visit very briefly by motorcycle one project VDC on the town's outskirts for a two-and-a-half hour meeting with some 30 citizens representing five project organizations all at one sitting, but that proved to be the extent of team contact with VDCs.

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[4] Nepal's decennial census provides data on ethnicity down to the VDC level, so it is quite easy to find the numerical strength of each community. Of course numbers do not necessarily determine dominance, but these data do provide a basis for selecting different ethnic mixes.

Luckily for the evaluation, the agitation had tapered off by the end of September, and the two Nepali team members were able to return briefly to the SB project area[5] in early October for one-day visits to VDCs in three districts: Hekuli in Dang District, Sonpur in Banke District, and Ghumkhahare in Surkhet District, which are dominated by Tharus, Muslims and Hill Brahmins/Chhetris respectively. Thus the evaluation is able to present field-based findings in this written report – not to the extent originally intended, for one-day visits with two team members to each of three VDCs could not make up for the much more ambitious set of visits initially planned, but the evaluators believe they are at least reflective of what Sajhedari Bikaas has been doing during its first three years of operation.

As to quantitative analysis, the team was able to draw on the extensive work undertaken by the M&E team, which has constructed a detailed profile of each project VDC. Their database provided much of the information we report in answering Evaluation Question #2 on Inclusion. In addition, the three opinion surveys – a baseline and two more on citizen perception of SB proved valuable in dealing with Evaluation Question #5 on Learning. An additional citizen perception survey was conducted in the summer of 2015, but analysis had not yet been completed by the time of the in-country work in August-September.

One last limitation concerns the breadth of the SB project. As should be clear from a glance at Table 1, in addition to its activities at the headquarters in Nepalgunj, the project comprises some ten organizational mechanisms, six of them created by the project itself and four more created by the state. In the short time allocated for field visits, it would not have been possible to devote enough time to look into each of the ten mechanisms thoroughly, and within the truncated time span actually available for field visits, the team's ability to undertake such analysis was even further constricted. Even so, the team believes they were able to gain sufficient understanding of SB's activities to provide adequate answers to the five evaluation questions assigned.

V.   EVALUATION QUESTION 1: INTEGRATION

The question – The project has numerous components, which seek to align such that the sum is greater than the parts. Ensuring strategic integration/coordination across these internal project components, as well as externally (with other USAID, donor, government, and privately operated programs in the targeted geographic area) is challenging.

- What key lessons can be taken from Sajhedari for internal integration/coordination, mainly across components and amongst sub-partners to consolidate efforts towards anticipated outcome results?

- How effective are Sajhedari approaches to ensure external integration/coordination, mainly with other USAID activities, GON, other donor-funded activities and private sector efforts to advance progress toward anticipated outcome results of the project and/or CDCS?

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[5] The team leader had to return to the United States in early September, at the end of the evaluation's original in-country work.

The question asks us to assess integration at two levels: internally within SB itself; and externally with other organizations.   We can refine the two levels as follows:

- Internal integration:
    - Structurally and procedurally at SB headquarters in Nepalgunj and among its staff and partner NGOs working at VDC level;
    - Among participants/beneficiaries in the various SB programs.
- External integration:
    - Between SB and other USAID programs in project's 6-district region
    - With other donors;
    - With GON bodies at national and local level.

External integration with GON bodies is considered in the discussion of Question #4 on Relations with GON and so will not be considered in this section of this report.

Findings

During the team's visit to Nepalgunj, the team was able to get a fair idea of integration at SB's headquarters, but the unrest and agitation that prevented visits to VDCs (with the one exception of a very brief outing to a nearby VDC) precluded any real opportunity to look into integration at the field level.

At SB headquarters, the relatively small number of program managers and isolation in Nepalgunj meant they spent a great deal of time with each other, both in regular staff meetings and informally. Consequently they appeared (admittedly on the basis of a few days observing them) to display more cooperation and even synergy and less compartmentalization than might be the case in a USAID project of this kind. Because with only one exception, the professional staff members are outsiders from Kathmandu or other districts, in effect "camping out" in Nepalgunj, they are not "distracted" by family life and cultural opportunities to be found in the capital city.   They are also much closer to actual field personnel and their activities than would be the case with donor projects in which the headquarters is located in a distant metropolis and its professional staff can only visit project sites intermittently.   On the other hand, as these professionals are cut off from home and family, SB suffered from high rate of staff turnover in its early days, a problem now significantly ameliorated under the leadership of the current Chief of Party, who seems to have spent much effort in maintaining morale among his program managers.

Another problem stemming from SB's location in Nepalgunj appears more difficult to manage, however: the reduced scope for senior staff to interact with MoFALD, other donors, and national-level NGOs in Kathmandu. To date, this has limited integration across those lines and opportunities to influence decision-making in the capital city.

One further source of integration within SB's professional staff is the function of the GESI program manager, whose basic job is to promote the GESI agenda with all of SB's programs. By embedding GESI within the other programs, in effect she ensures a certain degree of additional integration among them.

The evaluation team directly observed some integration among SB field staff; for example, the team met with a Social Mobilizer and a WORTH Empowerment Worker who were assigned to

the same VDC and were clearly not only familiar with each other's programs but often worked together on site.[6]

There is interaction in the form of monthly meetings with SB's national NGOs and separately its local NGOs at the district level. The evaluation team met jointly with district managers for CeLRRd, YI and EA, during which YI reported a suggestion from their LYGs that they would like some relations with CMC members (whose organization is more important at VDC level) and CeLRRd seemed to view the idea as an opportunity to publicize CMCs services to a larger audience.   The 12 local NGOs contracted by SB to implement its programs exchange experiences and discuss progress at their meetings. As one local NGO manager reported, the 12 have adopted a "common platform" as a result of these interchanges.

Important membership overlaps across VDC mechanisms and CBOs are beginning to happen. SB quarterly report 7 mentions some 245 youth taking part in the WCF planning process and 234 WORTH group members who are also members of WCF. This latter pattern was confirmed by what we learned from the Fatima Foundation and the Ghumkhahare VDC. As per SB data, in Banke alone, 69 out of 1,118 WEG members were participating in WCF, and 14 members were also members of CMC.

We learned of considerable overlap in membership among SB's CBOs and between the CBOs and the VDC statutory bodies. Thus WEG members belonged to RLGs, LYG members were recruited into the CMUs, CMC members served on WCFs, etc. In one interesting example, some 222 WORTH group members were reported to be WCF members also.[7] The Fatima Foundation (SB's local partner in Banke District) confirmed this pattern, telling us that 69 of the 1,118 WEG members in the district had participated in WCF meetings and 14 WEG members were also CMC members). In the three VDCs visited in October, we observed the same pattern, and also an overlap between WEG and CAC group memberships. Ghumkhahare VDC exhibited a similar pattern in conversations with the evaluation team. This kind of overlap not only encourages cross-fertilization, but in providing insight into how more than one institution functions, it provides valuable lessons in civic culture and nurtures future local leaders.

In Banke district (where Nepalgunj is located), we found two other USAID programs to be active: KISAN, which is an agricultural initiative managed by Winrock International; and the Health4Life program focusing on public health.[8]   KISAN has collaborated with SB in two of the latter's micro-grant projects, both in the VDC that we visited: a shallow tube well irrigation system and a vegetable marketing center. In both efforts, SB's work with the local planning process facilitated the identification of the projects and provided funding as well as monitoring for them, while KISAN furnished the TA. We were unable to contact the Health4Life district representative for the district. In Dang district Backward Society Education (BASE) implements both SB and USAID's Conflict Mitigation and Management (CMM) project being implemented

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[6] Integration between SB (particularly the SM) and the LGCDP's SM were very important, but inasmuch as the latter's SM is seen locally to be a GON official (LGCDP is a GON program, even though the SM is hired on contract with an NGO), discussion of integration between the two SMs will be taken up in Question 4.
[7] SB, Quarterly Report #7, pages 10, 21.
[8] We gather that CARE is implementing a fourth USAID project in SB's 6-district region, but Banke district is not one of its working areas, so the evaluation team did not meet with them. Among the three VDCs visited in October, none had other USAID programs active in their areas.

by Mercy Corps.[9] Although there's not much formal integration, BASE has borrowed good ideas across the two projects, bringing the social audit concept to SB and integrating Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) into VDC mechanisms.

In a meeting with Health4Life staff in Kathmandu, the team learned that there has been substantial cooperation between it and SB at the regional level, culminating in an initiative to develop joint district-level plans.   The USAID Mission drafted a memorandum[10] in early 2015 outlining the proposed collaboration, but the spring earthquakes occurring soon afterward diverted the attentions of all actors, and the idea has been put on hold for the time being.

The evaluation team found one other donor active in Banke district: Helvetas, a European NGO supporting local governance with a program quite similar to SB's. Beginning in 2009, it has worked with some 250 VDCs in the Midwest and Far West regions, including 15 recently in Banke district with 7 more taken up this year (Banke is the only district where Helvetas and SB overlap).   Because it had considerable experience on the ground before SB began its own work, Helvetas was able to provide guidance and even some training to the SB programs to help get things started.   In return, SB was in a position to hire some of the "graduates" of Helvetas who became available when its programs phased out of other VDCs.

The other donor active in local governance with its own program in Nepal has been the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), though it is not working in SB's catchment area.   The evaluation team tried many times to arrange a meeting with DfID in Kathmandu to get their perspective on supporting local governance, but were unable to do so, perhaps in part because the DfID minister was visiting from London while we were in Kathmandu and the local office was understandably preoccupied with his outing to Nepal.

UNDP originated the local governance support project for VDCs that eventually expanded to become the Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) now operated by MoFALD, and it is currently one of the donors contributing to LGCDP, but it does not have any stand-alone initiative in the local governance sector. UNDP has met with USAID on the topic, has had mutual briefings with SB, and has visited SB's field sites, but is not actively involved with SB, according to a UNDP representative.[11]

Conclusions

SB appears to have achieved substantial integration among its staff in Nepalgunj, though at the cost of their isolation in Nepalgunj, which continues to be an issue, albeit a much less serious one than earlier in the project when staff turnovers were frequent.   SB's field staff and its NGOs also displayed a high degree of integration.

Overlapping membership among the CBOs and local statutory bodies strengthens the impact of SB's initiatives, increasing the chances that its approaches will continue to be followed after EOP.   There is of course a concomitant cost in that the greater the overlap the fewer will be

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[9] The Inclusive Resource Management Initiative (IRMI) Project

[10] USAID/Nepal, "Sub-national coordination: Concept for improving development impact and efficiency of USAID programs and local capacity to govern," n.d.

[11] It could be argued that there has been a good deal of fertilization from UNDP's earlier work supporting local governance in that SB hired one its professional staff to become its senior field director.

the total number of citizens involved in SB's programs; in other words, more concentration necessarily means less spread.

It also opens the possibility that the overlappers will be the same local elites that have dominated local affairs in the past to the exclusion of marginal groups. But the evaluation team believes on balance that the tradeoff is worth it, in that a reinforced core of SB participants will increase the likelihood of a lasting legacy. Especially important are overlaps between the WCFs (which are required to replace one-third of their members every year) as the primary avenue for citizen participation in actual governance and the other bodies receiving SB support.

In general, any deep integration among SB's field components – both CBOs and statutory mechanisms – must be seen as an evolving process, not one that can be imposed or instituted in such a short time as a year or two. At most such an evolution can be launched during an LOP like SB's; it cannot be expected to be completed. In this respect, SB has done well in the time expended so far.

The one example (KISAN) of SB collaboration with another USAID program that the evaluation team observed was impressive, but we wish we could have looked at more instances. The collaboration with Helvetas was considerably more extensive (including an MOU signed between Helvetas and SB), to the extent that it could provide a model of how USAID programs could cooperate with other donors in their field activities without any formal agreements between them.

Recommendations in priority order

- Encourage more overlapping memberships, especially between the WCFs and other SB bodies. Serving as a WCF member would be an ideal way for these potential future leaders to gain experience at real governing.
- Utilize LYGs as intermediaries between other SB programs and the citizenry. Publicizing these other activities would involve LYG members more deeply in civic affairs and help cultivate their future leadership potential.
- If social audits and/or citizen report cards are introduced by SB, capacitate LYG, RLG and WEG members as enumerators. This would be another path to involve them in civic affairs.

VI. EVALUATION QUESTION 2: INCLUSION

The question – GESI and youth are integral components of the project implementation approach.

- What approaches have been most effective at maximizing engagement of women, youth, Dalits, and other marginalized groups to advance local community inclusion in decision-making and leadership positions?

- What strategically prioritized measures could be taken to improve upon the representation of marginalized groups including women in the planning, implementation, and reporting processes supported under the project?

- Are there any unintended results from the engagement by Pact partners of historically marginalized communities?

SB's Inclusion Goal

Gender, caste, and ethnic exclusion overlap in Nepal limiting choices for many individuals and groups. [12] Exclusion is both cause and effect of unequal development (UNDP 2009). SB is designed to improve local governance by increasing engagement of traditionally excluded groups and enhancing their inclusion in decision making and leadership positions. In order to achieve this goal SB has integrated gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) as a cross-cutting issue across all components of the project. SB identifies women, youth, Dalits, Madhesis (including Muslims), Adivasis/Janajatis, persons with disabilities, and people below poverty line as excluded groups.

SB is using two key approaches (although SB has not articulated them as "approaches") to create enabling environment for traditionally excluded groups and to improve their inclusion in decision-making and leadership positions. The first approach involves working through the existing statutory institutions already in place at VDCs as part of the GON local governance structure (WCFs, IPCs, IPFCs and CACs) to improve the excluded groups' inclusion in planning and decision-making. The second is working through the CBOs strategically formed by SB (WEGs, CMCs, CMUs, LYGs and RLGs) to create enabling environment for excluded groups to participate in planning and decision-making positions.

Findings:

The engagement of traditionally excluded groups is higher at the local planning statutory institution but lower at the decision making ones. The engagement of excluded groups in decision-making and leadership positions is improving in aggregate. However the quality and quantity of participation differs between groups mostly with higher representation of Hill Brahmin/Chhetri group.

Engagement of excluded groups at the statutory institutions (WCF, CAC and IPFC)

MoFALD's GESI policy 2066 mandates all statutory institutions (CAC, WCF, IPFC, etc.) to be inclusive with representation of traditionally excluded groups and has provision for at least 33% representation of women in these institutions. [13] Although this provides opportunities to traditionally excluded groups to enter and engage in local planning and decision-making processes, VDCs have not been able to implement this properly due to inadequate capacity, human and physical. In this context, SB's support to VDCs in the project area to make the local statutory institutions inclusive in terms of gender and representation of traditionally excluded groups has proved valuable.

SB's support to the VDCs is primarily through social mobilizers (SMs). It was observed that SB SMs who mostly work in coordination with their LGCDP counterpart are proving to be a valuable resource to the VDC Secretaries, particularly in the area of improving inclusion.

The SB's SMs are creating a supportive environment for members of socially excluded groups to enter and engage at the local level in planning and development processes in the project

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[12] Women and youth can thus be doubly excluded if they are members of traditionally excluded groups – first for being Dalit, etc. and second for being female or too young to be included. Obviously, a young female Dalit would be liable to be triply excluded.
[13] Local Self Governance Act, 1999 and GESI Policy 2066

area. The targeted awareness raising of and reaching out to these communities have resulted into increased representation of women and excluded groups. SB project managers affirmed the improved representation of excluded groups in the statutory institutions, particularly WCFs after the SB intervention.[14] This was also the perception of participants of the meetings in the three VDCs (Sonpur, Ghumkhahare and Hekuli) visited by the team.

There is no doubt that SMs play a crucial role in improving representation of excluded groups. However, the team's observation of and interaction with the SMs in the three VDCs showed how the capacity and working modality of individual SMs can impact the GESI implementation at the community level. The three SMs were noted to be operating at different levels. The SMs in Sonpur and Hekuli worked in close coordination with their LGCDP counterpart and VDC secretary. Hence SB SMs were able to concentrate more on outreach and awareness raising activities. However the SM in Ghumkhahare was struggling to get all things done alone. The improvement in representation of traditionally excluded groups is not uniform across the statutory institutions. Women of all ethnicities including Dalits are participating in significant numbers at the lower level mechanism like CAC (SB data shows 95% of all CAC members in the project area are women[15]), but their presence gradually thins as they move up from CAC to WCF, and IPFC.[16] This trend appeared in all three VDCs the team visited, although the VDCs differ in terms of ethnic composition and geography. For example, Ghumkhahare's Ward 7 has all women CAC with majority Dalits, but there are only four Dalit women in the WCF. Participants from Dang claimed that representation of the ultra-poor and most marginalized like Badi women is still very rare across all statutory institutions.

From the ethnic and caste perspective, representation of Hill Brahmins/Chhetris is highest and their percentage increases steadily from WCF to IPFC and above. However the representation of Terai/Madhesi Janajati/Adhibasi (the second largest group across most SB mechanisms) decreases from WCF to IPFC and above. A large gap between Hill Brahmins/Chhetris and the traditionally excluded groups including Terai/Madhesi Janajati/Adhibasi was noted particularly at IPFC and VDC MC (Table 2 in Annex A and an excerpt from that table below).

Excerpt from Table 2: Comparison of Membership in Local Government Mechanisms for ethnicity and caste group		
Group	Hill Brahmin / Chettri	Terai/Madhesi/Janajati/Adhibasi
CAC	17.7%	26.6%
WCF	32.2%	30.4%
IPFC	50.5%	28.8%
VSMC	59.0%	13.9%
% of Total Population[17]	33.7%	34.2%

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[14] Expressed during the initial interaction and presentation of initial findings at USAID office
[15] Community Awareness Centers (CACs) aim to link women and marginalized groups with the local governance and services
[16] See Annex A, Table 2 (data received from SB M&E)
[17] Figures in this row indicate each group's percentage of the total population within the 58 VDCs included in SB's Phase 1.

Hill Brahmins/Chhetris continue to occupy key decision-making and leadership positions (Table 3). Although the other ethnic and caste groups – particularly the Terai/Madhesi Janajati/Adhibasi groups – have achieved some measure of representation, as can be seen in Table 2, they would need more rapid progress to reach parity.

It must be noted that the category "Terai/Madhesi/Janajati/Adibhasi" employed by SB in its data includes a number of distinct groups, some of whom like Madhesis and Tharus are numerically quite prominent in the project area. This collective grouping makes it difficult to determine from SB's M&E data whether particular groups are reaching greater gender and social inclusion or not. Moreover, the fact that data on caste/ethnic and gender representation are reported separately makes it impossible to assess how well women vs. men are progressing within different caste/ethnic groups. For example, how many Hill Dalits in WCFs are women as opposed to men? It appears that in general, representation of women in key decision positions has made very little progress, but just which women in which ethnic groups? This is difficult to tell from the SB M&E data (Table 2 and 3).

Overall there are indications of qualitative and quantitative improvement in the empowerment[18] and engagement of excluded groups, particularly women.[19] Officials of BASE[20] described how marginalized Tharu women brought the issue of "reduction of project activity [for women]"[21] to a public hearing, which was unusual in the past. They said that women are more aware of their rights and confident to speak in meetings than in the past. However, they thought, the gains are

> *Hekuli Dang*
> *During the interaction with the team a Tharu woman, member of WCF, claimed that only smarter women get the opportunity to speak. However a local politician (a HBC man) present in the meeting refuted her claim and said "if a woman cannot speak – she is of little use in the meeting".*

uneven between the ethnic, caste and gender groups. They felt ultra- poor Dalit and Tharu women still remain excluded from any meaningful participation. The poorest ones, even when they participate, are not able to express their views well. In Sonpur women belonging to Madhesi, Muslim and Tharu communities self-identify that they do not participate much owing to socio-cultural obligations.[22]

The evaluation team's conversations with members of WCF, IPFC and VDC Secretaries in all three VDCs indicated that SB raised awareness and interest of all local groups, empowered women and traditionally excluded groups through the 14-step planning process. They proudly shared how the VDC annual plan is formulated transparently by local people with little influence of political parties. They felt the use of objective criteria have reduced the project selection time as opposed to 10-day long IPFC meetings in the past. This condition is more gender friendly given the daily work burden of women. More importantly, members of

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[18] "Empowerment is achieved when disadvantaged individuals acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society" SB's GESI Strategy, p.15.

[19] This is an area that would be worth further exploration through data collection with beneficiaries, which was not possible for this evaluation due to time constraints.

[20] BASE is SB's partner NGO in Dang District.

[21] According to BASE part of the project activity focused on women was reduced by SB.

[22] Participants cited household chores, care giving, reproductive responsibilities, increased work burden as a result of male outmigration, etc. as women's obligation. Mobility of women are also limited by rigid social norms about what women and girls can or cannot do.

excluded groups appreciated SB's support which, they feel, has transformed relationship between local citizens, particularly women and members of the marginalized groups, and VDCs which was perceived as a male domain.

Women's representation in CAC and WCF exceed 33% prescribed by MoFALD with a significant margin while the same for IPFC is less than the minimum. It is reasonable to assume that the extent to which women and members of traditionally excluded groups have been included in WCF have been enhanced by SB's work as their focus is more on these two local statutory institutions (Table 2). However, the role of VDCs is crucial to sustain these gains and take it forward to a higher level, particularly after the end of project.

Engagement of traditionally excluded groups in local CBOs created by SB

SB has made a commendable effort to improve inclusive community development by creating new or strengthening existing CBOs to build capacities of these traditionally excluded groups to participate in local decision making positions and processes.

The CMCs are the quasi-official institutions mandated by the GoN's Mediation Act, 2068 (even though none existed in SB's catchment area before the project began).[23] Although mediation is traditionally a male-dominated sector, women and other members of excluded groups are involved in significant numbers in the CMCs (see Table 4). CeLRRd feels that CMC is becoming a tool for empowerment as it provides the members of excluded groups an opportunity to be part of an important local process.

The representation of women in the CMCs in the three VDCs is low compared to over 42% aggregate for all CMCs in the phase I VDCs.[24]In Sonpur, only seven out of 27 mediators are women compared to 12 out of 27 in Ghumkhahare and nine out of 27 in Dang.[25] On average, each CMC has handled about 200+ cases with male mediators handling the most cases. In Sonpur only 20 out of 200 cases were mediated by the women mediators. Not all mediators get the opportunity to mediate cases equally. It must be noted that one mediator is assigned by the CMC and one each is picked by the disputing parties in a typical dispute mediation. Participants thought the disputing parties tend to choose those perceived as more likely to be competent even though the mediators do not take sides in the mediation. If true, this is likely to marginalize some mediators (presumably women of marginalized group) based on their social standing and perceived capacity. According to the CMC coordinator of Ghumkhahare VDC, most of the cases solved by their CMC involved people of lower economic and social status. Elites in her VDC tend to go to police and other formal agencies to seek justice.

The Terai/Madhesi/Janajati/Adivasi group also includes Tharus, who are present in significant numbers in the project Districts, particularly Dang, where indigenous ARD mechanisms like 'Bhalmansa' continue to function even today. Some stakeholders in Hekuli VDC, Dang asked the rationale for establishing a new CMC mechanism which they see as a duplication. It is noted that SB is already addressing this issue in Dang and other districts where indigenous ARDs are still functional by conducting orientations on facilitated interest-based mediation to traditional justice practitioners.

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[23] For this reason, CMCs are treated as SB-created mechanisms in this evaluation rather than as statutory bodies.
[24] See Annex A, Table 4
[25] The total average number of mediators per CMC is 27.

Women and other members of excluded groups are beginning to assume key positions in the CBOs. SB data showed that a significant percentage of women are CMC coordinators (i.e., leader of CMCs), a majority are Hill Brahmins/Chhetris. The evaluation team noted that both men and women belonging to some excluded groups are still absent from leadership positions in the CMCs.[26]

Youth in Nepal are the untapped resources. Although they have the potential to be change agents for nation building, a majority of them are unemployed and frustrated. Cognizant of this fact, SB aimed to build the capacity of local youth to promote their participation in local governance processes and development. SB, through its implementing partner, has created/strengthened LYGs in all VDCs.

Youth are not a homogenous group – they are as diverse as the Nepalese society. In Sonpur the LYG is a 25-member group with only four women. The meeting with the team was attended by eight male members only. It was learnt that young women are mostly absent in the group's regular meetings. Participants thought it is because of restrictions from the family.[27] In Hekuli women members outnumbered men but leadership position are all occupied by men. The eighth quarterly report of SB also indicates that regular participation of women and marginalized caste/ethnic group in the LYGs is an issue. SB is already addressing this.[28]

Although the three LYGs demonstrated varied capacity they all are focused on the three areas – youth involvement in VDC processes, youth and income generating activities, and youth mobilization for creating social harmony. However, the LYGs in Sonpur and Ghumkhahare seemed relatively inactive except in few social issues. Hekuli LYG is active, especially in exploring alternate employment opportunities to curb labor out- migration of youth. They were also taking interest on local planning and monitoring of VDCs development activities. Hekuli example demonstrated good potential of integrating youth in local governance and development processes.

One of the objectives of the SB's GESI Strategy is "to advance the equal participation of women with men as decision makers in shaping sustainable program impact". Traditionally women of Nepal have been excluded from opportunities, local processes and decision-making positions. The WORTH program seems to address the capacity deficit of women that prevent them from exercising their rights. WORTH groups are about women regardless of their caste and ethnicity, which is duly reflected in the rich heterogeneity of the groups.

The aggregate project data for Phase 1 VDCs showed that percentage of Terai/Madhesi/

Terai/Madhesi/Janajati/Adhibasi is the largest (29.5%) in WORTH groups while that of the Terai/Madhesi/Dalits is the smallest (5 %)[29] and the other groups somewhere between the two, as can be seen in Table 4. However the WORTH group in Ghumkhahare VDC is predominantly Dalit and is also a CAC. The double membership has improved their access to VDC information and projects. They have successfully accessed two community development projects, drinking water and irrigation, which benefited the whole Dalit community. There was no WORTH group in Hekuli, so the team visited one in nearby Bijouri VDC. It is a mixed

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[26] See Annex A, Table 5
[27] Discriminatory social norms and ideologies affect women of some caste and ethnicity disproportionately in Terai
[28] SB's Quarterly Report #8, GESI in Youth Program, page13
[29] See Annex A, Table 4

group of Janajati/Adivasi (Hill and Terai) and Dalit. The group is a recently regrouped one and is still in the early stage of development. However its chairperson, though new, appeared to be aware of and enthusiastic to participate in the VDC planning process.

Unlike the other CBOs, the majority of the WORTH groups in the project area are being led by Terai/Madhesi Janajati/Adhibasi women followed by Hill Brahmins/ Chhetris and Hill Dalit women respectively.[30] However, as noted above, "Terai/Madhesi Janajati/Adhibasi" is not a homogenous group. A further disaggregation of the group can reveal which groups actually make up the majority leaders.

WORTH group is strengthening women's capacity to participate in VDC processes. Members of WORTH group are also beginning to join statutory institutions, some in key decisions making positions. According to Fatima Foundation (SB's local partner in Banke) 69 members of 42 WORTH groups are members of WCFs in Kamdi VDC. The seventh quarterly report of SB also reports that 234 WORTH group members are members of the WCF in the project area.

Participation of Excluded Groups in Decisions Relating to Community Development Projects

The team noted that most projects selected for funding through micro grant programs are infrastructure related, such as road, electricity and irrigation, which do not target disadvantaged groups in particular, though at the same time such projects do not exclude such groups. Although women and other members of excluded groups are increasingly participating, they are still a minority in terms of numbers and influence. Accordingly, project selection tends to reflect the attitude of community elites who still dominate the decision making mechanisms. As an example of this pattern, the team visited Kharayo Chour irrigation project in Ghumkhahare. According to the members of user group the project benefits about 150 households. Although the VDC claimed that all ethnic and caste groups benefit from the project, a relatively small area of irrigated land belonged to Dalits owing to their small land holding.

The SB's data on micro-grant project beneficiaries by caste and ethnicity (see Figure 1) showed a significant stream of benefits going to previously excluded groups. For example, Hill/Mountain Janajatis, while constituting 8.1% of total population in the Phase 1 VDCs, numbered almost 20% of all beneficiaries. And contrary to what might have been expected in the past, Hill Brahmin/Chhetris, who amounted to about one-third of the population, were only 28% of the beneficiaries. Not all excluded groups did so well, though. For example, Religious Minorities (3.6% of population) came to just one percent of beneficiaries. However, this is not to claim that the minorities do not benefit from such projects. They do, especially learning about the grant processes and gaining valuable lessons on project implementation.

GESI sensitive implementation and monitoring

SB is supported by a GESI strategy to mainstream GESI across the program and project. GESI sensitivity among the SB management is high however it is not perceived to be uniform across the team. The SB team, particularly the field managers, seemed to be making rapid progress in addressing gaps with the appointment of a fulltime GESI advisor in December 2014.

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[30] See Annex A, Table 5

The evaluation team had opportunities to interact with the field staff of SB's implementing partners during the field visits. The field staff in Sonpur and Ghumkhahare appeared enthusiastic and committed but seemed to lack understanding how they can improve the participation of traditionally excluded groups (particularly the difficult to reach groups) in terms of quality and quantity. SB's eighth quarterly report (challenges and constraints – internal) also discusses the capacity of implementing partners in terms of promoting meaningful participation of women and marginalized communities as challenges.[31] SB is making various efforts to build GESI implementation capacity of the partners especially after the appointment of a fulltime GESI advisor in December 2014. [32]

Conclusions

> The M&E team is collecting data according to the SB definition of excluded group by ethnicity and caste groups. However, the project disaggregated data are compiled and presented with more emphasis on marginalized groups without the necessary emphasis on gender equality within the various caste and ethnic groups.   The data by gender is compiled separately and is not reported in a single format of excluded ethnic/caste group by gender. A more detailed disaggregation would enable managers to see what percentage of women belonging to which excluded group still remained excluded This is important in the changing trend of increasing female-headed households in Nepal due to the outmigration of men for employment.

The SB's two approaches aimed at increasing engagement of traditionally excluded groups in decision-making and leadership positions are not mutually exclusive but are complementary. SB's work through the existing statutory institutions improves the inclusion of excluded groups in local planning and decision-making directly. Hence this approach is likely to maximize the engagement of the excluded groups in terms of number. However, SB's work through the CBOs capacitates the excluded groups to participate in planning and decision-making positions. It can be argued that as a result of the focused capacity improvement members of excluded groups participating in planning and decision making through the CBOs would be able to participate more meaningfully as a result of their increased agency.

- SMs play a crucial role in increasing and sustaining participation of excluded groups in the local statutory institutions until VDCs are able to assume such roles themselves or an alternate mechanism exists. However, their varied working capacity, individual style and motivation can prove both an opportunity and a risk given the fact that although they work under VDCs, they are not formally accountable to these officials.
- LYGs have good potential to be a long term success if youth are capacitated to participate in the local development and governance processes in a meaningful way. A more focused program aimed at enabling them to realize their full potential would help develop their respective communities and hence the nation (in the long run).
- Women mediators of CMCs representing marginalized communities run the risk of under-selection owing to their perceived social standing. Social standing may be improved with better performance which can be improved with experience. Unless they get the opportunities to mediate the disputes they are not likely to get better at

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[31] See Institutional capacity of SB partners, SB quarterly report #8
[32] SB's GESI Strategy emphasizes on GESI capacity of the project management team, implementing partners and stakeholders at VDC for positive GESI outcome.

what they do. This will not help greater acceptance and assimilation of members of excluded groups, particularly women in the society and at the institutions as equal citizens.

- Positive GESI outcome requires strong GESI capacity of management team, implementing partners and stakeholders at the VDC. The role of field staff is crucial as they play important roles in creating "level playing field" for excluded groups particularly for the difficult-to-reach groups.

- Effective monitoring and evaluation of gender and inclusion objectives/targets are key for improving inclusion of excluded groups especially the difficult to reach groups. Identifying GESI gaps (ethnic/caste and gender) at VDC, ward and community level will help address the gap more effectively.

Recommendations in priority order

- Invest in activities to build the GESI sensitivity, capacity and skills of statutory institutions like WCFs and IPFCs to hear and respond to the voices, preferences and priorities of marginalized persons and groups. SB has helped them become more inclusive in their membership, however excluded groups still face problems to get their voices heard (it will also sustain the gains of SB).

- Expand the coverage of SMs to more disadvantaged communities (ultra-poor, Badi women and poor women of Dalit, Muslim communities, etc.) who still remain under represented in local processes. They can be motivated to engage by linking them with the services and programs provided by local governance, such as, capital resources targeted at disadvantaged groups for improving livelihoods, MoFALD's blended block grant (targeted at marginalized people), etc. Capacitate implementing partners to play important roles in creating "level playing field" for excluded groups particularly for the difficult to reach groups.

- Capacitate M&E for greater disaggregation of data, measurement and reporting of GESI dimensions of SB's activities, enabling the unit to combine and capture more accurately gender and ethnicity data in greater detail regarding participation and benefits.

- Develop WCF as an independent citizens' watchdog to sustain the gains including inclusion if it becomes redundant after a local election takes place under the New Constitution. As it now stands, WCF is a transitional mechanism created for promoting inclusive planning in the absence of elected government. Such an effort as this would require an extension of SB's SOW.

- Consider increasing greater competencies of all mediators in general and women of excluded groups in particular through retraining (based on evaluation of their performance) as mediation will evolve in response to changing circumstances. CMCs' assigned mediators should be recommended from the pool of mediators who usually do not get to mediate disputes. Women in general and women from excluded groups in particular may not get to be involved in mediation.

- CBO members, particularly women and other excluded groups, should continue to be encouraged to overlap membership and influence decisions of VDC mechanisms in their favor. Members of WORTH groups participating in planning and decision making processes are able to participate more meaningfully as a result of their increased capacity.

- Encourage forming network of CBOs created by SB to build a critical mass of GESI thinking at the local level. SB can float the idea and facilitate discussion based on the potential advantage for all.
- Standardize social mobilization methodology and maintain quality as quality of services provided by SMs seemed to vary based on their personal motivation and working style.

Unintended results from the engagement

- 'Creamy layers' of Janajati/Adhibasi group and Hill Brahmin/Chhettri Women benefit more from the GESI program interventions often at the cost of other less empowered ones within the excluded groups.

VII. EVALUATION QUESTION 3: INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

The question – A fundamental element of Sajhedari is to make every effort for institutionalization and sustainability of the results.

- Given project work to date in planning, initiating, and phasing out activities to ensure to the extent possible sustainability of the contractor's efforts, how should Sajhedari proceed at this point in time to maximize the potentials for sustainability of targeted components of the project?

Definitions

Institutionalization and Sustainability are similar concepts, but they are not the same. "Institutionalization" the evaluation team takes to refer to new behaviors that become established procedure within an organization during the life of the project or LOP (e.g., RLGs develop a new way to exchange information between VDC chapters). "Sustainability" we take to indicate the capacity of a new organization or new behaviors within an existing organization to carry on after the end of a project or EOP (e.g., WEGs continuing to be active after SB shuts down in 2017). It follows, then, that institutionalization during Sajhedari's LOP, however impressive at the time, doesn't necessarily lead to sustainability after EOP. Thus SB has to work on both.

"Sustainability" as a concept can also apply to local leadership, which must be continually reproduced in succeeding population cohorts (not just generations). Of course, some kind of leaders will emerge in all VDCs to replace present ones, irrespective of SB's presence; the challenge to SB is to create conditions that will make it more likely that future leadership cohorts will be more inclusive and more open to citizen participation in governance than has been the case in the past.

And finally, "sustainability" can be thought of in individual terms, as people absorb not just new behavior patterns but new internal norms guiding their conduct.

SB goals

Although they are not specifically articulated as such, Sajhedari can be considered to have two distinct goals regarding institutionalization and sustainability, as emerged in the team's discussion with SB management staff:

- Short & medium term – change system behavior such that new institutional behavior patterns will endure after EOP; this would be "sustainability" according to the definitions above.
- Long term – change individual behavior and mind-sets such that new norms replace old ones; this would be a kind of "transformation" of outlook. Such changes might at first seem utopian, but they can occur quite rapidly. We could consider American attitudes toward the lesbian-gay-bisexual-transsexual community, which have turned virtually 180 degrees in the past 15 years or so.   Then again, of course, US attitudes towards civil rights have taken many decades and even centuries to alter.

Findings

SB has been working intensively with two kinds of local governance institutions. It has created some itself as part of the project (WEGs, CMCs, CMUs, LYGs and RLGs), which it refers to as community-based organizations (CBOs).   The second type falls within the statutory institutions already in place as part of the GON local governance structure (WCFs, IPCs, IPFCs, and CACs). These latter bodies will continue in place whatever happens to the CBOs set up by SB.[33]

Given that SB is endeavoring to institutionalize new practices in both types of bodies, the principal questions for this evaluation are:

- Will the CBOs accept and internalize the new practices, and if so will they be able to carry on after EOP with the new behaviors?
- The statutory bodies in some fashion will probably remain in place under the new Constitution, but will they carry on the new practices they have picked up from SB?

The most interesting body here is the CMC, which actually is (or rather is likely to become) something of a hybrid between the two types of institutions supported by SB, in that the Local Self Governance Act of 1999 (Chapter 5) requires that alternative dispute resolution (ADR) bodies be set up in each VDC. These organizations were intended by GoN to offer mainly arbitration rather than mediation, and evidently the Act was unevenly implemented such that in many cases VDC-level dispute resolution bodies were either non-existent or had fallen into decay or in some cases had been in effect superseded by "people's courts" set up by the Maoists during the insurrection.   Even so, each VDC is required to support an ADR system, and in addition the Community Mediation Act of 2068 asserts the need for mediation systems,[34] so the CMCs should be ideally positioned to survive SB's EOP.

The CMCs have been active, registering an average of more than 20 cases each over the last four quarters. Virtually all the VDCs have provided office quarters for the CMC in their centers, and a majority of VDCs (34 of the 58 in Phase 1) have pledged to provide some funding support to their CMC after SB's EOP.   At the VDC meeting in Banke, the several CMC

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[33] Dependent of course of what turns out to be the structure of local government under Nepal's new Constitution.

[34] As noted in SB, Quarterly Report #7, p.22.

members present showed much interest in continuing to serve after EOP.   And in Sonpur, the VDC has already provided Rs 15,000 to their CMC for furniture.

Not surprisingly, given the success of Pact's WORTH model for women's empowerment groups elsewhere, the WEGs have expanded throughout the SB project area, with some 200 groups now active, an average of almost 3.5 per VDC.   The program provides one "empowerment worker" for every two VDCs, while total membership averages 27 women per group.   Collectively, WEG members have saved more than Rs 3.5 million and made loans averaging Rs 2,850 (about US$ 28.50) to about 20 percent of the membership.   The high ratio of empowerment workers to VDCs allows for quite intense training, coaching and guidance in the various efforts in literacy, micro-enterprise management, organizational capacity and the like.   In the group meeting at the Kamdi VDC, the half-dozen WEG members present were most enthusiastic about continuing their program, with one women telling us emphatically that "We have learned so much, we will run this [after EOP] by ourselves!"

Pact itself exhibits optimism about the WEGs' prospects for post-EOP sustainability, citing a study showing that in its previous WORTH programs in Nepal, two years training and mentoring was sufficient to enable up to 60 percent of the groups trained to sustain themselves even six years after program completion.[35]   This certainly constitutes a high bar to emulate; even three years would seem a remarkable achievement for a women's group to sustain itself without outside support.

Guided by Youth Initiative (YI) as one of SB's national–level NGO partners, Local Youth Groups (LYGs) have been active in each VDC with an average of 15 members in each chapter. Of interest in the sustainability context has been YI's emphasis on network building, at the district and the national level.   YI's goal here, according to its national leaders in interview, is to create a self-sustaining alliance of youth organizations to act in an advocacy capacity for youth concerns. Pursuing a different dimension of sustainability are the Community Management Units (CMUs) organized by YI, which consist of five LYG members and 10 local non-youth leaders like school principals and VDC members.   The CMUs' primary function is to engage the LYG members with how local institutions work and how leadership is exercised. Their role in creating future local leaders could be truly significant.   Whatever happens at the local level, leaders of one sort or another will emerge, but the CMUs have the potential to nurture a better quality of leadership and thus sustain village society at a higher level than would otherwise likely be the case.

SB has mounted an ambitious radio project, including three widely syndicated series (some in more than one language),[36] thousands of public service announcements, and Radio Listening Groups (RLGs).   The latter have become quite popular, building to 101 groups among the 58 Phase 1 VDCs and approximately 2,150 members by August 2015.   The evaluation team was able to meet staffers from Equal Access (EA, which is another SB national NGO partner), FM station personnel, program producers and several RLG members in Banke and Dang districts. The project has gained a wide audience, undertaken some investigative journalism, developed a feedback mechanism from listeners to improve its programming, and encouraged the RLGs toward civic engagement.   The fact that FM broadcasts reach the entire six-district area means

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[35] See SB's Year 3 Work Plan, page 25 footnote.

[36] Though RLG members in Dang district told us that the FM station there broadcasts only in Nepali, not in their own Tharu language.

that SB's programming has already covered Phase 2 VDCs as well as those in Phase 1, so the earlier VDCs will in a sense be covered in Phase 2, but direct support for the Phase 1 RLGs will end.   SB notes, however, that some of the present RLGs had been established by other donor programs before Phase 1 got underway and that accordingly there is good prospect for them to continue after Phase 2 shuts down.[37]

Among the statutory bodies supported by SB, the Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs) and the annual 14-step planning process are far and away the most important in the project's portfolio, taking much more of SB's energy and commitment than the other three mechanisms (the IPFCs,[38] CACs, and VSMCs).   In addition to the annual plan, VDCs are charged with composing a "periodical[39]" or 5-year plan.   Requirements for both plans are laid out in Local Self-Governance Act 2055, enacted in 1999 but not strictly followed given the suspension of elected VDCs in 2002 and the general disruption created in the ten-year civil war. As a result, energizing and capacitating the 14-step process has taken much effort, and not surprisingly SB's SMs have spent the bulk of their time with the 14-step sequence and building the capacity to follow it through.

Conclusions

In general, while the evaluation team found good indications of new practices and behaviors becoming institutionalized, and we found some impressive signs that SB is diligently promoting sustainability, we are unsure of prospects for the latter.

- **Short LOP.**   The 24-month timeframe for Phases 1 and 2 is very short, given the hopes for sustainability that SB has set out.   The slight overlap between the phases and SB's intent to provide some degree of guidance to the Phase 1 VDCs while Phase 2 progresses will be helpful, but will probably have to be minimal, given SB's new commitment to supporting earthquake rehabilitation in six new districts.   Two years is just too brief a period to instill what are fundamentally new ways of doing business into VDCs, especially considering that the new Constitution will deliver a sharp jolt in the form of elected councils and likely new jurisdictional boundaries as well.   Though the VDC support pledged to the CMCs will surely be helpful, the same fate may well befall this institution that is attempting to bring a new civic culture into being.

- **Comparative decentralization.**   Despite the pessimistic paragraph just above, when we compare SB with USAID projects we have seen in other countries, SB's devotion to sustainability issues is exemplary.   In general, local governance projects over the past couple of decades have virtually always demanded dedication to post-project sustainability, but with very few exceptions such requirements have been ignored or given only lip service. And because the programs close down at EOP, staff departs, records are destroyed or at best rendered inaccessible, and USAID management's attention span moves to new projects, everyone involved knows there will be no accountability if all traces of the project soon disappear. By comparison, the effort SB has put into sustainability is admirable.

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[37] SB, Year 3 Work Plan, p. 19.

[38] The IPFC's scrutiny constitutes two critical steps of the 14, as this body sorts and prioritizes the proposals emerging from the WCFs, and accordingly the social mobilizer must spend significant time addressing these steps.

[39] The 5-year plans are referred to as "periodic" or "periodical" plans.

- **Primary education in leadership.** The many opportunities SB's various programs offer to nurture local leadership create a different kind of sustainability: new cohorts of leaders created at the local level. Tocqueville's oft-quoted observation from *Democracy in America* would be appropriate here:

> Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the people's reach, they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it.[40]

Recommendations in priority order

Pursue USAID Mission efforts to work more closely with MoFALD and its local-level operating agency, LGCDP, remembering that in the end it is not donors but GON that must promote better local governance. Donors may do great work with short-term, one-off projects in small areas, but the GON has to carry the long-term load for the entire country. If SB's innovations are to endure, it will have to be because GON has adopted them (more on this in this report's section on GON relations).

- Develop ways to maintain the SB database, including the several opinion surveys sponsored by SB. This outstanding resource will be lost after EOP unless strong efforts are made to carry it on, perhaps through TA for VDC assistants combined with phase-out grants to DDCs, which could keep the database preserved and continued at district level. If inclusion objectives are to be realized on a wider basis after SB ends, some tracking mechanism will be needed, and SB's database would make an excellent model for this purpose.

- Capacitate local NGO partners as "intermediary support organizations" (ISOs) that would become knowledge generators regarding local governance and provide expertise on demand to DDCs, VDCs, and even other NGOs. USAID created many such organizations during the 1990s in the ENE region, mainly providing support to civil society organizations,[41] but the same approach could be used to support local governance expertise, which VDCs or DDCs could purchase as consultancies with their discretionary funds.[42] (SB advised us after this recommendation was written that it has been engaged in just this kind of activity, though we did not observe it in our field visits. We leave this recommendation to serve as a reinforcement of SB's efforts.)

- Encourage more overlapping memberships in SB mechanisms as an element of the SM's duties (which in many ways they are already undertaking); such reinforcement of experience would help nurture future leadership.

- Consider ways to conduct a retrospective survey of SBs achievements two or three years after EOP, which would provide a most valuable understanding of which SB

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[40] Tocqueville (1835: vol. I, part 1, chapter 5).

[41] See Biddle et al. (1999). Closer to Nepal, the GOLD project in the Philippines during the 1990s capacitated a number of ISOs, some of which were still active more than a decade later (personal communication in June 2014 with a USAID staffer working from the 1990s onward).

[42] After this report had been completed, SB advised us that it has been engaged in just this kind of activity, though we did not observe it in our field visits. We leave this recommendation to serve as a reinforcement of SB's efforts.

practices proved to be sustainable and which did not. Such ex-post evaluations are recommended in USAID's current framework for supporting sustained development in local systems,[43] and SB could make a genuine contribution to the team's knowledge of local governance here.

- Urge CMCs to form networks at district level (*a la* LYGs). They would have a lot to learn from each other, and the network could act as an advocacy alliance.   Could this be extended to national level (assuming CMC can expand to other regions), as YI wants to do with the LYGs? Cultural differences between districts would surely be reflected in their CMCs, which might make a national network problematic.
- Provide "allowances" or "stipends" to CMC coordinators that would supplement the pledges now being made by VDCs (which we gather would be helpful in retaining the coordinators, but likely not sufficient to do so). Finding a sustainable source of funds for these allowances will require some thought, but under the present setup, they are being asked to undertake a great deal of work pro bono, which it is unlikely they will continue to perform gratis indefinitely.
- Use the Organizational Performance Index (OPI) as a tool to gauge sustainability of SB's CBOs and the GON statutory bodies. This instrument has been employed to assess SB's partner NGOs at national level, as shown in Annex F, and also at local level (as in Quarterly Report #7, page 7), where it uses two of OPI's eight measures (Resources and Social Capital) to check organizational sustainability. The evaluation team learned from SB that compiling the OPI is quite cumbersome, but as an experiment it might be tried with a single project component. The WORTH groups might comprise a good case here.

VIII.   EVALUATION QUESTION 4: RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL

The question – Sajhedari is working closely with local government bodies in districts and also coordinating with MoFALD at the central level.

How effective is Sajhedari's approach for coordination and collaboration with GON at the local and central levels to advance project and CDCS objectives?

Sajhedari's overall aim is to improve local governance in Nepal. It seeks to strengthen the relationship between Nepalis and their government officials, and to improve transparency, accountability, and responsiveness at the local level. It supports, adds value to, and complements the work of GON, especially the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD), which is mandated to improve and strengthen decentralized governance in the country. To achieve these goals Sajhedari is working closely with local government bodies—District Development Committees (DDC) and Village Development Committees (VDC) at the local level and also coordinating with MoFALD at the central level.

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[43] See USAID, Local Systems (2014, pages 14-15).

SB's different components and numerous activities support directly and indirectly effective operationalization of Local Self Governance Act 2055.

Definition

Coordination can be taken as managing relations and interdependencies, while collaboration is a working practice whereby institutions work together to a common purpose to achieve intended results.   Three questions, therefore are relevant to explore the issue-- how well does SB manage its interdependency with the GON? Do GON relevant agencies and SB work together to achieve the common purpose of improving local governance? Does this exercise help change governance landscape at different levels?

Findings

The SB's and GON coordination and collaboration is dense and thick at the local level. It gets thinner as it moves higher. At the time of writing this report, the national level it exhibits little linkage and limited collaboration and coordination.

The Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) requires DDCs and VDCs to deliver certain services and execute development activities. SB has been helping project VDCs to carry out those services more effectively.

SB supports multiple activities at the VDC level to make governance more effective and accountable. It is actively engaged through the Social Mobilizer to do survey, data collection, nurturing CBOs and local statutory bodies, and completing the required steps for participatory planning process. Moreover, the data collected for the periodic planning of VDC (which is required by Local Self Governance Act 2055) is valuable for resource mapping and increasing revenue. Given that VDCs are ill-equipped, both in terms of human resources and physical capacity, SB's social mobilizers' support is valuable. The SB social mobilizer and LGCDP social mobilizer work together to conduct the activities of VDC. Depending on the SM's leadership quality, in some VDCs the SB mobilizer seems to lead while in other places it is the LGCDP mobilizer who takes the lead.   For instance, in Sonpur VDC the LGCDP mobilizer was more active and took the lead, while in Ghumkhahare VDC the SB mobilizer seemed to take the lead.

SB's engagement at this level through technical support has created a strong network of working relationships and interdependencies between and among the various parts of project – WEGs, CMCs, CMUs, LYGs and RLGs on the one hand and the statutory institutions already in place as part of the GON local governance structure – WCFs, IPCs, IPFCs, and CACs on the other. Clearly these collaborations and coordinated activities increase interdependencies between the SB and Government structure at this level. The presence and support of the SB social mobilizer at VDC Secretariat, the location of the CMC and its activities at the VDC premises strengthen these relationships.

This enmeshing of relationships at the local level requires strong coordination by the VDC Secretary. Some Secretaries have managed this relationship well while others seem to simply do what is required of them. For example, the Secretary of Sonpur seems comfortable with the way numerous supporting hands provided to him as social mobilizer, facilitator, advisor, empowerment worker, Community Action Research (CAR) and others by different NGOs partners of SB and other donor-supported projects including LGCDP. He was aware that various groups were active but it was beyond his capacity to coordinate or manage all of them. He said, "Their institutions assign them different tasks and they carry out those activities. They

do not really coordinate with VDC but they do come to us when they have problems." He is aware that as long as the projects continue he will get these supports, but permanently he has to rely on his limited manpower in the secretariat that includes himself, one junior staff and one office assistant. He seems to have adjusted to this reality. In other cases like Ghumkhahare VDC, the Secretary seems to be very poorly informed about what is going on around his VDC and what groups are doing. He was relying on the SB Social Mobilizer to answer the evaluation team's questions.

The case of Hekuli VDC Secretary was quite different. He appeared to be updated on SB components and activities including CMC, Radio Listeners Group, Youth Initiative and their contribution to the regular activities like WCF meetings and integrated planning of VDC. These differences among VDC Secretaries largely reflect their personal interests and their professional capacity. The VDCs are clearly constrained by the shortage of permanent staff, and limited internal capacity to manage their regular works and the support provided through various programs helps them meet these gaps. The evaluation team noted visible signs in the VDCs visited that the lack of adequate permanent regular staff has prevented VDCs from taking full benefit of the resources and support provided by the GON and different donor-funded projects. These included underutilized hardware (e.g., computers lying idle), piles of papers on the tables awaiting the attention of the secretary, and the evidently very busy secretary, who was answering phones and signing papers while meeting with the evaluation team. The secretary also said directly "*Ke garne hajur staff nai pugdaina..*" ("What to do, sir, we do not have adequate staff to do regular work").

The Social Mobilizer plays an important role in local level capacity building, networking among stakeholders and linking with the government system. His/her role is critical in carrying out legally required governance activities at the VDC, such as WCF bi-monthly meetings and WCF/ CAC orientations, coordination and other activities. In most SB program VDCs, there are several other mobilizers with different names assigned by their agencies to implement their programs. The LGCDP, SB (governance), WASH, one from government poverty reduction programs (Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF)/BP with Poor / Local Development Fund) all have one social mobilizer each. In addition, in most cases there are SB's four component leaders (Youth Coordinator, CMC Coordinator, WEW, and RLG Coordinator) which the VDC Secretary has to coordinate or work with. In Sonpur VDC, for example, at the time of review, there were four SMs and four coordinators of SB components. The governance SMs work in coordination with the LGCDP's SM while others work independently. The VDC Secretary is expected to coordinate and oversee all of them as the local government head – clearly a great management challenge.

SB's support has mostly helped educate WCF members about their role in planning process. The SB social mobilizer informs and does the follow up activities about the role and responsibilities of the WCF members and the opportunities to influence the resource allocation through their active participation in the decision making process. To judge from our interviews, this exercise has made the members more interested, informed and assertive in influencing the project prioritization and resource allocation, making the process more transparent. SB's support to the WCF to complete the legally required 14-step planning process systematically has helped mobilize additional resources for the VDCs. In Ghumkhahare VDC, for example, the WCF Members and others present in the meeting proudly declared that while their VDC had been twice penalized by MoFALD for failing to meet the legally required Minimum

Condition for Performance Measure (MCPM)[44] to receive a grant, after SB's support they not only met the conditions but ranked among the highest performing VDC in Surkhet District. Similar confidence was expressed in Hekuli VDC of Dang. They declared that in two years they will become the best performing VDC in Dang district. Though we did not triangulate with VDC data, we can conclude that SB support has made the planning process more informed, transparent and systematic. It has improved the quality of development governance in these VDCs. The WCF members and VDC secretaries, in Hekuli, however are concerned about sustaining this achievement.   They feel that they will have to exercise the process for 1-2 years more to fully internalize and confidently continue the process on their own in the future.

Longer term governance improvement at the local level along the lines supported by SB requires both formal and informal relations between the program and the VDC secretaries over a long period. Depending on the capacity of the VDCs this period can require 4-5 years to cover three to four annual planning cycles.   Frequent changes or transfer of government officials, especially of VDC Secretaries, makes it difficult for the project staff and Social Mobilizers to achieve their stated targets on time. As most new these officials   are not aware of the project details and expected role, the project staff have to start all over again to educate, motivate and bring them on board. The evaluation team witnessed this difficulty at DDC Dang where a new LDO had been newly appointed and he had been trying to understand the concepts and processes of various activities in his district supported by SB but we could see that he would need some time to fully understand and internalize the project in its spirit and underlying nuances.

The next level of government that SB comes in contact with is the District Development Committee (DDC) and District level Line Ministries' Offices. The LDO and Program Officers at the DDC, and especially the Governance Program Officers and senior management of SB come in regular contact in meetings.   The two DDCs—Banke and Dang--that we visited show that DDC appreciate SB's support, and there are plenty of opportunities and rooms for further strengthening of these relationships.

At the DDC level the SB activities are more selective and fewer than at the VDC level. It supports the DDC in preparing and publishing district profiles, resource mapping and preparing Periodic District Development Plans (PDDP). Preparing a PDDP is an important activity of DDC which is generally done every five years. The SB program is listed as its regular District Annual Program, approved by the District Development Council. It has also helped DDC indirectly by supporting VDC Periodic Planning, completion of the 14-step annual planning, mobilization of public for government campaigns in literacy, environmental protection campaign, violence against women and others. Radio Listeners Groups, Youth groups, Women Empowerment Groups, among others are very helpful in such campaigns. Another activity supported by SB is the analysis of VDC's internal sources of revenue and ways to increase it, which has been highly appreciated by DDCs and VDCs. Such studies and popular campaigns strengthen relationships of SB with local and national governments.

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[44] Minimum Conditions Performance Measure (MCPM) is a system MOFALD uses to measure the performance of local bodies – specifically on accountability, transparency and responsiveness – on the basis of certain set standards in order to be eligible for block grants and revenue sharing. (Source: website of the Local Bodies Fiscal Commission, http://lbfc.gov.np/manuals.)

The most important contribution of SB support which eventually helps DDC's planning and governance is in getting the WCF to follow a systematic planning and prioritization of development projects. This systematic planning exercise has eliminated the political interference and political horse-trading in selecting projects, which often used to prolong the Village Council meet for several days in the past. With the introduction of the system the Village Council meet is completed within a day or two. As one WCF member told us in Ghumkhahare —"Before we used to quarrel at the settlement level. Sometimes we quarreled for 10-12 days and still remained undecided. Now we do not. We use various formula and we select project on consensus basis."

In addition to the cooperation with the DDC, SB is trying to cultivate links to GON at the local level. The groups created under different components of SB – WORTH, LYG, RLG – have tried to establish working relations with VDCs and the district level Government line ministries offices. These offices include Women and Children Development Office, District Cooperatives Office, and District Agriculture Development Office and their service centers, Cottage and Small Industries Office. SB groups often invite officials from these offices as resource persons in their training programs.

SB has facilitated the groups it has created such as WORTH and CMCs to interact and link with local government offices. It has helped community mediators to attend bi-monthly WCF meetings to orient community members on the mediation process. Likewise, SB encouraged SMs to attend monthly CMC meetings to orient mediators on local governance processes. LYGs are also playing a role in helping local government to deliver their duties better and improve their governance skills by increasing transparency of local government in their communities. SB encourages its groups to use MoFALD guidelines in administering micro-projects, which are funded through a community contracting mechanism. The projects are monitored by PMCs, which include members from the WCFs, CACs, Governance NGOs and VDCs. In previous quarters, SB facilitated the formation of IPCs and PMCs in Phase 1 VDCs.

At the national level SB communicates with MoFALD, the line Ministry for the local governments. Though coordination meetings and communication are regularly taking place at this level the SB managers and DDC and VDC secretaries think that a "more formal" and closer coordination at the Ministry level would make it easier for them to implement the project and internalize the project lessons and outcomes. The evaluators believe this was referring to some kind of "agreement" or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that could be signed between the Ministry and USAID. The officials at the Ministry suggest that a "better" linkage at the national level with USAID directly would help coordinate and "internalize" the SB activities and achievements. They expressed less willingness to communicate with a "third party" (PACT in this case) and clearly desired more "formal" communication with USAID. Though there have been discussions in the past between USAID and MoFALD, and USAID consistently attends LGCDP coordination meetings to which it is invited, there has yet to be any breakthrough in *productive* coordination or collaboration that has a vertical impact upward from and downward to the project.

SB is helping the Department of Vital Registration with training the VDC assistants on software use in Kailali and Dang districts. The data base thus created and regularly updated could be useful for WCF's planning, Social Security need calculation and distribution. It could also be used for NGO coordination, and to update data on voters by Election Commission. This is an

area where SB could scale up its support. There is "verbal understanding" which the MoFALD official believes might end up in a formal understanding. He is hopeful that some formal understanding could be made below Ministerial level – between the Department and SB to avoid the complexities of a government-to-government agreement.

A higher level attempt to create a more formal linkage occurred in early 2015, when SB, the USAID-supported project Health for Life (H4L) and MoFALD developed a joint district plan whereby SB and H4L would undertake a series of one-day workshops in four of the SB districts aiming to integrate H4L's work with that of the district health office. An operational document (USAID 2015) was composed at the USAID Mission and the plan was set to launch, but the April 2015 earthquake sidelined the idea for the indefinite future. [45]

The thin-top-and-thick-bottom profile of the SB-GON relationship has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that SB can be close to the real beneficiaries of the program and build a stronger base. It can help its management to focus on program implementation and timely completion of a project without being distracted by distant issues. The disadvantage of this profile is that USAID and SB will have to make special effort to maximize the opportunity to get recognized at the national level and use its lessons into the national system and affect the policies for larger scale impact. The risk is that its lessons are all too likely to get lost after the project is completed. Past experience suggests that those programs with a stronger link to GON agencies at national level have succeeded to affect government policies, as for example LGCDP.

Conclusions

- The many links between CBOs and statutory bodies created by SB's SMs and their overlapping memberships has begun to thicken networks of social capital. It would probably not be too much to conclude that the pool of active and potential leadership has been broadened and deepened to include citizens who previously would not have been involved, specifically the excluded groups that are the target audience for GESI. More along these lines needs to be done, but the attainment thus far is noteworthy.
- SB has helped make the 14-step local planning process function better (and in some cases helped it to function at all), by facilitating involvement of a broader spectrum of citizens in the process. As with the point just above, more should be done here, but the progress so far has been impressive.
- Attempts to establish deeper and wider links with GON have mostly been unsuccessful at the higher levels, despite efforts from USAID/Nepal to promote this (e.g., the SB-H4L-GON initiative in early 2015 sidelined by the April earthquake). Informal arrangements at lower level have had some success. [46]
- While the decision to locate SB's headquarters in the field has clearly had a positive effect on local project effectiveness by bringing managers closer to implementers and beneficiaries, there has been a serious cost in terms of diminished opportunity to influence policy at the national level.

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[45] Learned from interview with H4L and the operational document cited.
[46] Learned from interviews with LDOs and VDCs, and the Department of Vital Registration, as noted elsewhere in this section.

Recommendations in priority order

- Reach a formal umbrella understanding (or other form) either with National Planning Commission or with MoFALD.[47] Such understanding, for which efforts are underway, will make it easier to expand programs in other districts and also in influencing policies for and mainstreaming the knowledge based on the first phase exercise. Use the first phase of work as "pilot" or "action research" when it comes to linking with NPC or MoFALD. This has been done in the past. The Participatory District Development Program (PDDP) is such an example. We understand that discussions on this matter are already underway with GON, but we wish to underline its importance by emphasizing it here.

- Assist in building capacity of the VDC secretariat so that it can internalize and sustain the governance process initiated by SB. SB's multiple links at VDC level government is useful to strengthen local governance. Without such support they cannot manage and internalize multiple activities successfully conducted during project period. Some backstopping during transitional stage can ensure such integration. For this a capacity assessment of the VDCs should be done before the closing of the SB.

- Arrange for the management of SB to be in Kathmandu certain time of month as a part of the project or organize occasional dissemination workshops and seminars to develop rapport with opinion builders and policy makers and international partners and cross fertilize the activities. This may be complemented by arranging for the central level team to visit the field on occasion. This will allow the project to establish stronger formal and informal linkages with major stakeholders including GON officials like the one established with officers of MoFALD's Vital Registration Department.

- SB can safely and usefully internalize the information and monitoring system into the program DDC system. For this it will have to train the DDC staff on data management skill, data collection and updating skills and smoothly transfer the already created database to District Documentation and Information Center (DIDC). It can also be linked with District Poverty Monitoring Analysis System (DPMAS) which is established in all DDCs and is linked with National Planning Commission's monitoring system. At the national level it can be linked with the GIS system of planning and monitoring at the MOFALD. This will, certainly, require increase the level of support it has been providing so far to the DIDC. It can do so by supporting "information volunteer" for a year or two to related DDC staff like the one provided by NPC. As per Dang DDC information officer Mr. K. C. some initiative in this direction was taken in Dang, but it did not move any further. The Social Development Officer and Information Officers in program DDCs can become a useful link to safe land the data base and some of the practices SB has supported.

- Establish stronger connection of different groups SB has created—WORTH, Youth Group, Radio Listeners Group, and other with relevant line ministries' offices. They can develop programs and seek funding from the line ministries district offices. They can develop partnership relationship. For example, youth groups can access literacy campaign fund, environ-mental funds and others. To establish such links, these groups need information about the district budget and program, which requires programmatic link with the district offices at least once. The WORTH NGOs, Youth Initiatives, and other groups can facilitate

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[47] This effort is apparently already underway as this report was being finalized.

this process. The best time for increasing such links is immediately after the programs are approved from NPC.

- Since VDCs are the most critical actors in SB model of cooperation with the government, develop a program jointly with the GON to support VDC's durable capacity enhancement to enable them to manage increasing number of actors and increased resources that they are likely to receive in the days to come. The trend for increased responsibility and resource to VDCs is likely to grow once Nepal moves ahead with the implementation of its new Constitution presenting opportunities to affect policies based on SB experience. The Nepal Constitution 2072 recognizes three tiers of government Federal, Provincial and Local. The local level government is where SB experience and lessons will be most useful.

- Increase the interdependencies with government agencies where appropriate. The example of MoFALD Department of Vital Registration is an interesting one. Possibilities of developing similar links with Election Commission, Ministry of Women Children And Social Welfare and SB will help multiply impact and sustain some of the activities initiated at the local level.

- Participate in or help set up one multi donor forum for local governance within the framework of "Implementation of Federal Governance System" and use the lessons from SB and other places for effective Governance. Though this is out of scope of SB, it clearly shows opportunity to better engage with the Government to support in strengthening local government and deepen democracy while implementing federal system.

- Look for opportunities to introduce new good governance practices. This recommendation is directed at both SB and USAID. Placing the SB activities and achievements in larger national perspective, makes it possible to appreciate the unprecedented changes taking place in Nepal in terms of governance system and process and prepare for using the knowledge and skills generated from SB. Although even the outlines (to say nothing of the details) of local governance in Nepal are yet to be determined, the new Constitution and the restructuring of the state with significant power devolved to the provinces and local governments is likely to create an unprecedented opportunity to introduce and upscale tested good governance practices that have worked to strengthen decentralization and democracy. The context is likely to be more demanding and challenging for local governments than we saw in the post 1990s era.

IX. EVALUATION QUESTION 5: LEARNING

The question – Learning is built throughout the Sajhedari contract – particularly through various assessments and surveys, in addition to an internal knowledge management system.

- To what extent do the learning mechanisms/tools contribute to the project's outcome results? How can the lessons learned be strategically maximized into programmatic responses to advance those outcomes (with a particular lens on themes of GESI, youth, conflict, capacity building, and coordination)?

Learning models in Sajhedari Bikaas

Although SB's legacy is not one of its key objectives, in the medium term its lasting impact will probably be reckoned in terms of what value it contributed to the much larger LGCDP

initiative being run by MoFALD, and in the longer run it will most likely be remembered for what it added to the team's understanding of how best to support local governance generally in Nepal, particularly as the country embarks on the restructuring and will hopefully take best practices that are existing and carry them forward. Much of what SB does leave is being crafted in the learning model within the project that is illustrated in Figure 2 as its "internal adjustment model." Input comes from a variety of sources: issues raised in SB staff meetings or by individual staff members; feedback from staff, CBO members and GON statutory bodies like the WCF; data from M&E analyses. SB staff then analyzes the suggestions/complaints, makes recommendations, and adjusts ongoing programs as needed. After program modifications have been introduced, outcomes should improve and impact will be enhanced.

A second type of learning is illustrated as an "external knowledge dissemination model" in Figure 2. Here SB distills what it has learned from its work and "markets" its innovations to other donors in Nepal and GON. In addition, SB publicizes these innovations to USAID/Washington and the international donor community in general, as Pact has done with its WORTH program.

Findings

SB has made extensive use of the internal adjustment model. We learned of several examples in team interviews:

- Feedback from the CMC program in some Tharu-dominated VDCs revealed complaints that traditional alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (ADRs) were not being taken into account in introducing the CMCs. SB adjusted its program to engage and exchange ideas with the ADR practitioners.
- RLGs picked up complaints from listeners that while the SB program series were informative, they offered little entertainment value. In response, SB introduced some drama segments into its programming.
- Focus groups employed in the Citizen Perception Surveys revealed that CMC caseloads were low in some VDCs, leading SB to include some social marketing outreach efforts to increase awareness of the CMCs.

Further findings emerged in documents the team scrutinized:

- Feedback from its work has led SB to adjust its approaches many times. The chart in Annex H shows some 66 changes of this nature.
- The quantitative Baseline Survey (conducted in November-December 2013) and the two CPSs undertaken thus far (March-April 2014 and September-October 2014),[48] along with the qualitative focus group surveys done in conjunction with the CPSs, provides a wide-spectrum picture of people's perception of local governance and SB's work at different times. As yet, though, little inquiry has been done concerning change over time. Each survey has looked into different issues, thereby precluding any analysis across time. Given the short time span of these first three surveys (less than a year), however, little change could have been expected anyway.
- The M&E team's data gathering and analysis has enabled SB to discern which ethnic groups have benefited to what extent from its various programs, as is clear in Figure

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[48] A third CPS had gathered responses and was being analyzed at the time of this evaluation.

3. Here, for example, we find that Hill Dalits constitute 19% of WORTH group members while they amount to only 13% of the population in SB's Phase 1 VDCs – a positive difference of 6%. Brahmins/Chetris, on the other hand, formed 34% of the population but only 24% of WORTH members, showing that the program was making some headway in benefiting marginalized groups.

Conclusions

SB has performed well in learning from its experience and making appropriate adjustments in its programs. To determine with certainty the extent to which these changes have contributed to SB's outcome results, as posed in the evaluation question, however, would be extremely difficult, since outcome measures would have to be taken before a change was implemented and then again after it was implemented, and in addition some kind of control group of Phase 1 VDCs would be required to measure what would have occurred if the program had proceeded without the change – a tall order indeed and one that would be very hard for SB to fill as it is now set up. Moreover, we would argue that such a complex design would likely not be worth the effort to construct and put it into action.

As SB progressed, it has developed an impressive stock of knowledge about supporting local governance, much of which should be most useful for whatever system Nepal sets up under its new Constitution. The recommendations build on this experience and suggest ways in which it can be deepened and extended.

Recommendations in priority order

- **Actively disseminate SB's innovations to GON, other donors in Nepal, and the international development community.** Well before EOP, SB will have developed innovative practices and approaches that a wider audience would benefit from knowing about. Its work with the CMCs, the LYGs combined with the CMUs, and the participatory aspects of the 14-step planning process would appear to be good prospects for publicizing to this audience, and there may be others as well. Pact as an organization has much valuable experience in creating the WORTH model and propagating it as an "industry standard" in the micro-credit field; it should apply that experience with SB.

- **Assemble a compendium of lessons learned by SB.** As should be clear from this evaluation, we believe that a great deal of what SB has learned about supporting local governance is not only an impressive achievement but one worth harvesting and making available to a wider audience. A compendium gathering together that knowledge should be a high priority in the project's final year.

- **Use the baseline and citizen perception surveys to gauge interim program outcomes.** The baseline survey (2500 respondents in each SB Phase and a control group of 2500) and the third CPS (2400 respondents in the two Phases and 480 in the control group) were large enough to permit analysis at both project and district level. Using a "difference in differences" statistical technique as described in Annex G, it would be fairly straightforward to assess effects using questions common to both surveys, such as "How effective do you think your VDC office has been in providing services in the past one year?"

- **Use the M&E database to assess GESI progress at district level.** Figure 2 will illustrate the idea. It shows that across all 6 SB districts, Hill Brahmins and Chhetris are underrepresented among WORTH group members by some 8 percent in comparison with their proportion of population, while Hill Dalits are overrepresented by 6 percent.

This is as it should be, inasmuch as the program is aimed at marginal communities. On the other hand, the "Terai/Madheshi/Adibashi/Janajati" category is underrepresented by 4 percentage points; even though their participation may well have increased during SB's LOP so far, there is more to be done to attain parity. Because altogether WORTH group members number more than 5,000, the data here can easily be disaggregated by district to give a more detailed picture of how well the program is reaching out to particular ethnic groups and just where more recruiting effort should be directed.

- **Use more consistent survey questions and continue including control groups.** Unfortunately, the example given just above was one of only six (possibly seven) questions included in both the baseline survey and the third CPS, though it is good to note that four questions included in the third CPS are also outcome indicators that are part of the PMEP matrix, as shown in Table MM, thus providing a comprehensive learning tool that can be employed to explain the SB project in the many formats it is required to present.
  The practice of changing survey questions (which in part apparently resulted from staff turnover in the M&E section) may have proved useful in addressing particular concerns, but makes it impossible to assess change over time. And to assess impact or attribution requires repeated use of control groups. Expanding the number of replicated questions would make for an excellent learning tool as well as supporting the PMEP reporting requirements.

- **Publicize SB innovations through national local government associations.** These associations include all DDCs and VDCs, which are required by GON to belong, and they act (potentially at least) as collectors of best practices and as knowledge generators. Thus they would serve as ideal vehicles to spread SB's innovations to a wider audience.

- **Set up a 6-district VDC network as knowledge generator.** The collective experience of the six districts comprising SB should be gathered, preserved and expanded as a body of applied knowledge that will be both useful to the DDCs and VDCs themselves as well as to future efforts to replicate SB practices elsewhere.

- **Add social audits and/or citizen report cards to the M&E repertoire.** MoFALD has established a requirement for social audits at district level, and we understand that SB is actively considering using these mechanisms in its own programs, so the evaluation team supports this idea. Social audits have been employed largely to follow specific delivery institutions like employment schemes or health care, and they include public meetings, while citizen report card initiatives are used to track a range of public service delivery systems. Either or both mechanisms could be adapted to SB's programs.

- **Make available SB's M&E database and its survey data files as a research and learning tool.** The general practice with USAID projects has been that after EOP, databases are discarded or at best retained by the prime contractor for storage and essentially made inaccessible. Survey data files are kept by the firm hired to conduct the surveys, which either discard them or keep them as proprietary information. But legally, all this information belongs to USAID and thus belongs in the public domain, accessible to anyone. It would also be most useful to future USAID projects and research efforts, as well as to other agencies in the international donor community and

to academic researchers in Nepal or elsewhere. It should be made available to all these groups.

- **Consider bringing back Saferworld to provide guidance in resolving ethnic tensions arising from the federal boundary agitations experienced in summer 2015.** As SB moved through its first years, the conflicts occasioned by the 1996-2006 civil war receded in importance, and accordingly Saferworld's usefulness to the overall project also declined. But the events of summer 2015 (which affected this evaluation's data gathering efforts so negatively) have brought a different kind of conflict to SB's operational area. Saferworld's long experience in conflict mediation and resolution could be most useful to SB, once the boundary issues have been settled (or even if they continue to fester after the adoption of the new federal system).

A final recommendation

- Promote SB's innovations to GON in a "development marketing" effort to bring them to the planning process that will determine the nature of local governance under the country's new Constitution. Doing so calls for more than an EOP workshop; it means a serious ongoing effort, probably extending over the final year of the project.

At the end of this midterm assessment, it is appropriate to ask what the ultimate purpose of USAID's Sajhedari Bikaas project is. In the end, SB will have covered six of Nepal's 75 districts and 106 of the country's 3,276 VDCs. While SB may well be doing good work (and we believe it is), its footprint will be a small one and at best it will illustrate a number of ways in which local governance in Nepal can do better at public service delivery while being more inclusive and more accountable to its citizens. But its legacy would be much more significant if these improvements could be sustainable and rolled out at a larger scale.

SB has done more to promote sustainability of its innovations than most local governance projects with which team members are acquainted, and its practices may well extend for some time after EOP in 2017, but without commitment from GON, these new behaviors may not continue in place for very long. SB will have been a noteworthy demonstration and showcase, but it could be much more than that

If SB's innovations are to have wider acceptance, GON will have to adopt them, as it has done with the LGCDP model originated with UNDP support. We would urge USAID/Nepal to consider enlarging SB's mission to include promoting its innovations to GON not only through workshops and informal collaborations like the one with the Vital Events Department, but through more formal arrangements like the one arranged between SB, H4L and GON but suspended after the April earthquake, and even MOUs between USAID and MoFALD rather than using Pact as intermediary. In addition, we would encourage USAID and SB together to engage in what might be called "development marketing" with GON to interest it in adopting SB's best practices as its own. In these ways, Sajhedari Bikaas could add significantly to what we know about how to do local governance in Nepal and in the world beyond as well. At the very least, SB has some valuable lessons that would be most useful to GON as it deals with the local governance systems that will emerge from the country's new Constitution as it gets translated into new legislation.

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ANNEX A. Tables

Table 1.
Local governance mechanisms included in the Sajhedari Bikaas project
(Data as of August 2015)
Community-Based Organizations created by Sajhedari Bikaas

Name	Number of groups	Total members	Average group size
WORTH-Women's Empowerment Groups (WEGs)	200	5328	26
Community Mediation Centers (CMCs)	81	2164	27
Community Management Units (CMUs)	58	872	15
Local Youth Groups (LYGs)	58	873	15
Radio Listener Groups (RLGs)	101	2150	21
Implementing Partner Committees (IPCs)	60	604	10
Total	**558**	**11991**	**19**

Statutory local mechanisms created by the Government of Nepal

Name	Number of groups	Total members	Average group size
Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs)	508	12258	24
Integrated Plan Formulation Committees (IPFCs)	37	773	21
Citizen Awareness Centers (CACs)	49	1248	25
Village Supervision and Monitoring Committees (VSMC)	54	598	11
Total	**648**	**14877**	**20**

Grand total	**1206**	**26868**	**22**

Table 2: Percent Membership in VDC Level Government mechanism by ethnicity and caste group(aggregate for project)

Group	HBC	HMJ	HD	TMJA	TMO	TMD	RM	TMBR	Newar	Others	Total by Gender (%)	
CAC	17.7%	12.7	41.1	26.6	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	Female	5
											Male	95
WCF	32.2%	9.3	14.7	30.4	6.2	2.8	3.8	0.3	0.2	0.0	Female	56
											Male	44
IPFC	50.5%	5.6	10.2	28.8	3.4	0.1	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.0	Female	77
											Male	23
VSMC	59.0%	12.9	11.9	13.9	1.3	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.0	Female	78
											Male	22
% of Total Pop[49]	33.7%	8.1%	13.1%	34.2%	3.4%	2.5%	3.6%	0.03%	0.04%	0.4%		

Key to tables 2-5
HBC = Hill Brahmin/Chettri
HMJ = Hill/Mountain Janataji
HD = Hill Dalit
TMJA = Terai/Madhesi/Janajati/Adhibasi
TMD = Terai/Madhesi Dalit
TMO = Terai/Madhesi Other Castes
RM = Religious Minorities (mainly Muslims)
TMBR = Terai/Madhesi Brahmin/Rajput

Source for Tables 2-5: Data provided by SB's M&E office

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[49] Figures in this row indicate each group's percentage of the total population within the 58 VDCs included in SB's Phase 1.

Table-3: Representation of excluded groups and the VDC level decision making and leadership position by ethnicity and caste groups(aggregate for project)

Group	HBC	HMJ	HD	TMJA	TMO	TMD	RM	TMBR	Newar
WCF%	43.6	6.8	10.2	28.7	5.2	1.1	3.5	0.5	0.5
IPFC%	87.8	2.4	2.4	7.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 4: Membership in local mechanism(CBOs) created by SB by ethnicity and caste group(aggregate for project)

Groups	HBC %	HMJ %	HD %	TMJA %	TMO %	TMD %	RM %	TMBR %	Total by Gender (%)	
CMC	38.7	9.8	10.2	30.1	6.1	1.6	2.5	0.6	Female	42.3
									Male	57.7
LYG	40.9	7.7	12.8	25.8	5.0	2.6	1.8	2.6	Female	39.6
									Male	60.4
RLG	21.5	7.5	15.1	46.4	3.8	1.9	2.5	1.2	Female	64.0
									Male	36
WORTH	23.7	13.5	18.8	29.5	3.2	5.0	4.2	1.7	Female	100.0
									Male	0.0
% of Total Pop[50]	33.7	8.1	13.1	34.2	3.4	2.5	3.6	0.03		

Table 5: Representation of excluded group at leadership position of the local mechanism (CBOs) created by SB by caste/ethnicity and gender(aggregate for project

Groups	Gen-der	HBC	HMJ	HD	TMJA	TMO	TMD	RM	TMBR	Newar	Total
CMC	F	10	2	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	**17**
	M	19	2	6	11	3	0	1	0	0	**42**
	M+F	29	4	6	15	4	0	1	0	0	**59**
LYG	F	11	4	2	7	1	0	0	1	0	**26**
	M	34	4	7	9	4	0	0	3	0	**61**
	M+F	45	8	0	16	5	0	0	4	0	**87**

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[50] See previous footnote.

RLG	F	12	3	10	25	0	0	1	2	0	**53**
	M	11	2	6	20	4	0	1	3	0	**47**
	M+F	23	5	16	45	4	0	2	5	0	**100**
WOR TH	F	187	92	137	207	27	29	37	19	5	**740**
	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	M+F	187	92	137	207	27	29	37	19	5	**740**
TOT AL	M+F	284	109	168	283	40	29	40	28	5	**986**

Table 6.
Questions included in the baseline survey, the third citizen perception survey, and the PMEP matrix.

	Question number or Intermediate Result number								
Baseline Survey	7.2	7.5	7.6	8.10	8.14	8.16	10.2		
3rd Citizen Perception Survey	E1	E2	E3	C6	C2	C4	D1	B5	B10
Intermediate Result in PMEP Matrix in Quarterly Report #8				C1, 1st row	D1, 3rd row			C2, 1st row	D2, 2nd row

ANNEX B. Figures

Figure 1.
Micro-grant project beneficiaries by caste and ethnicity for Phase 1 VDCs in aggregate, as of July 2015
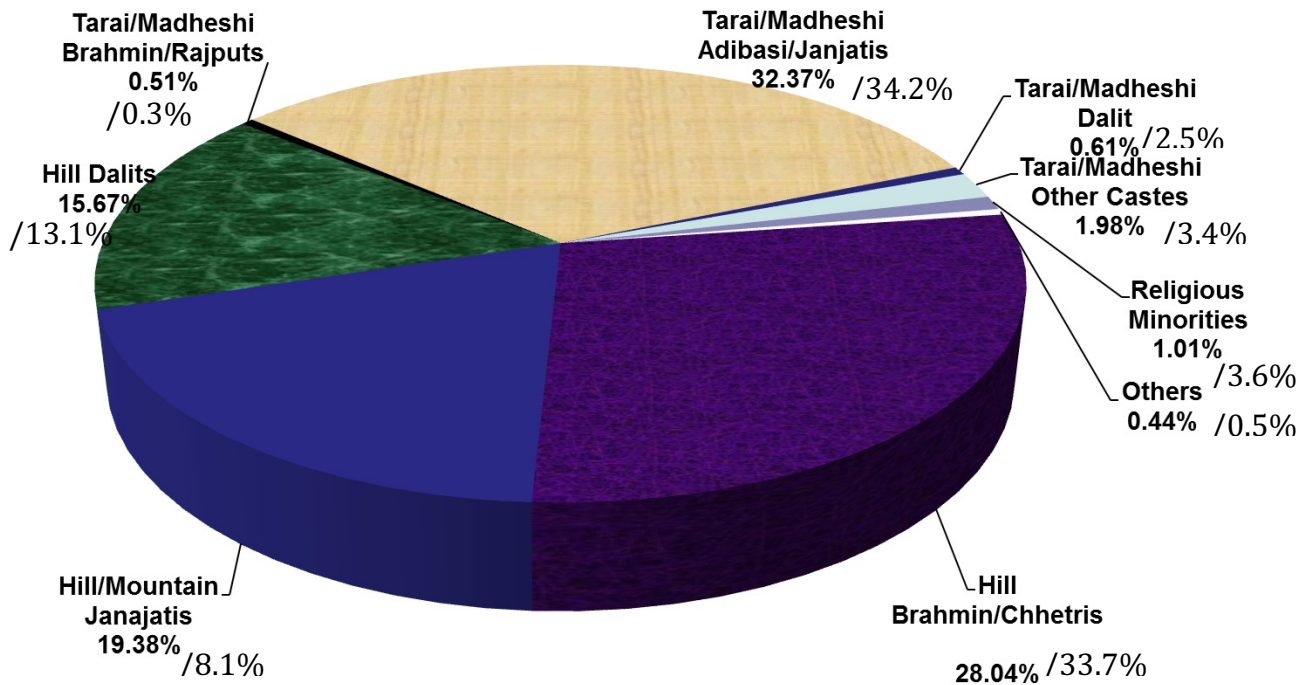
NOTE: First figure denotes group members as percentage of beneficiaries in aggregate, while second figure denotes groups percentage of total population in Phase 1 VDCs. Thus on upper left, Terai/Madheshi Brahmin/Rajputs amounted to 0.51% of all micro-grant project beneficiaries while forming 0.3% of the total population in all Phase 1 VDCs.

Figure 2.

The SB learning models

1. Internal adjustment model

Input from M&E, SB programs, staff mtgs, etc. ➡ SB analysis ➡ Recommendations ➡ Program adjustments ➡ Better outcomes ➡ Enhanced impact

2. External knowledge dissemination model

Distilling SB's innovations

Market to GoN, other donors in Nepal

Publicize to international donor community
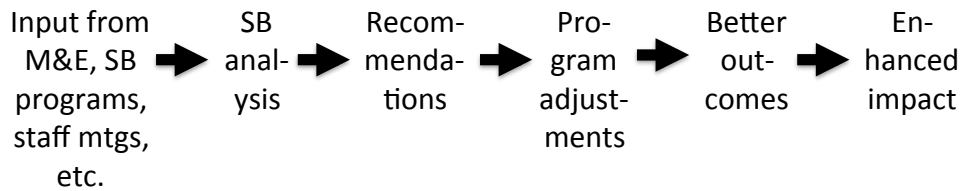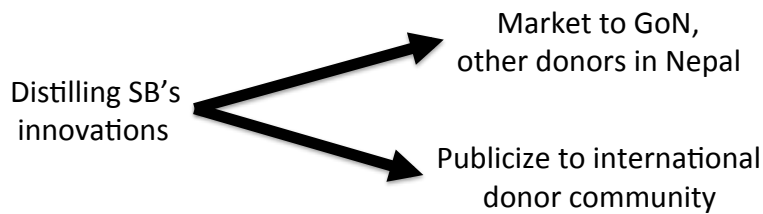
33

Figure 3.

• Using M&E data to make program adjustments

FIGURE 5 ETHNIC/CASTE BREAKDOWN OF WORTH GROUP MEMBERS
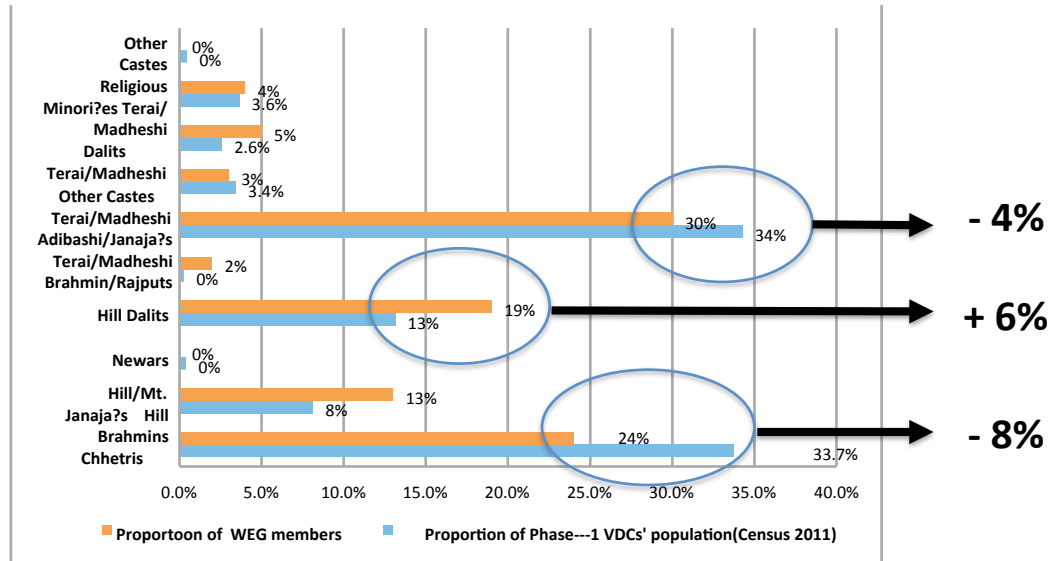
Source: Sajhedari Bikas Quarterly Report #8, April-June 2015, p. 39

ANNEX C. Statement of Work

STATEMENT OF WORK (SOW)
Mid Term Evaluation for USAID/Nepal
Sajhedari Bikaas: Partnership for Local Development

Introduction

This statement of work (SOW) is for a mid-term evaluation for USAID Nepal's Sajhedari Bikaas (Partnership for Local Development) project implemented by Pact, Inc. USAID/Nepal seeks the services of a qualified, international organization or individual with expertise in monitoring and evaluating development projects to conduct a mid-term evaluation (April-May 2015) for USAID/Nepal's Sajhedari project implemented by Pact, Inc.

Sajhedari Identification Data
Project Title: Sajhedari Bikaas
Contract No: AID-367-C-13-00003
Life of Project: December 2012 – November 2017
Implementing partner: Pact, Inc.
Project Funding: $25,069,500
Contract Officer's Representative: Meghan Nalbo

Sajhedari's aim is to improve local governance in Nepal through four principal objectives: 1) Establish and improve the enabling environment for community development; 2) Improve communities' ability to access resources for development; 3) Improve communities' ability to effectively implement inclusive development projects; and 4) Increase the ability of existing and new government units to function effectively.

The evaluation will focus on activities implemented during the first half of the current Contract (December 2012 – May 2015) to: measure the effectiveness of Pact's technical assistance, material support and training in achieving the project's objectives, results, and outcomes related to Objectives A) Establish and improve the enabling environment for community development; B) Improve communities' ability to access resources for development; C) Improve communities' ability to effectively implement inclusive development projects; and D) Increase the ability of existing and new government units to function effectively. The premise of the evaluation is that while many key components of the project are performing well, more information is needed on how the various components contribute to cross-cutting themes and how future activities can build on current progress. Areas to explore include: 1) Integration, 2) Inclusion, 3) Institutionalization and Sustainability, 4) Working with GON Systems, and 5) Project Learning. Findings should emphasize synthesizing results to date, generating learning, and identifying strategic opportunities moving forward. Based on the findings, the evaluation will also include relevant recommendations for improvements/adjustments that can be made to the program to maximize effectiveness of the primary and secondary objectives with the aim of ensuring sustainability of the project components. The contractor will be conversant on local governance, Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI), and sustainability to provide additional context to the questions being raised.

Project Background

Nepal's local government bodies – District and Village Development Committees and Municipalities – are the main contact points for most Nepalis to interact with and seek services from their government. Despite the lack of local elections, these bodies remain functional and continue to be responsible for the provision of basic government services. As the Government of Nepal (GON) moves towards state restructuring, and continues to decentralize critical government functions to sub-national units, the U.S. Government supports Nepal in achieving a peaceful transition.

USAID's Partnership for Local Development (Sajhedari) is a five-year $25 million project, which aims to strengthen the relationship between Nepalis and their government officials, and to improve transparency, accountability, and responsiveness at the local level. Sajhedari is implemented in six districts – Dang, Banke, Bardiya and Surkhet (Mid-West), and Kailali and Kanchanpur (Far-West) – all of them are in the USAID/Nepal's CDCS priority zone of influence and share many common socio-economic, demographic and geo-spatial features. Sajhedari's scope is planned to include 50% of the Village Development Committees (VDCs) in each district - with the first 25% already underway and the second 25% commencing this year (third year of the project). The remaining 50% of the VDCs will be included at a minimal level in the project activities per request of the GON beginning in Year 3 (2014-15).

Sajhedari contributes to improve the demand and supply sides of governance and development, and strengthen the ability of target communities - especially women, youth and historically marginalized people - to guide allocation of resources, address local conflicts, and play an active role in decision-making, planning, and conflict mediation at the local level. In order to achieve this goal, Sajhedari and its partners support target communities to gain knowledge, skills and abilities to plan, fund and manage local development activities the communities have identified in an inclusive and participatory manner. The project also provides access to appropriate community stabilization initiatives, which address the drivers of conflict and establish an enabling environment for community development by supporting local governance actors.

Sajhedari incorporates the lessons learned from two prior USAID projects – the Nepal Transition Initiative (executed through USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives) and the Nepal Government Citizen Partnership Project. In this way, Sajhedari serves as an Agency example for how to bridge transition initiative programming to traditional DRG development in a post-conflict environment. It also compliments the work of the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MOFALD) and other donor programs.

The project's four key objectives are as follows:

Objective A (Conflict Mitigation) - Establish and improve the enabling environment for community development. Strengthening community stabilization, conflict mitigation, and dispute resolution at the local level are key interventions for this objective.

Objective B (Access to Resources) - Improve communities' ability to access resources for development. To achieve this objective, Sajhedari supports communities for developing strategic plans that prioritize their needs, and facilitates better access to resources.

Objective C (Inclusive Development) - Improve communities' ability to effectively implement inclusive development projects. This objective focuses on developing community skills in inclusive planning processes so that village development plans are more strategic, transparent and equitable.

Objective D (Effective Local Bodies) - Increase the ability of existing and new government units to function effectively. Supporting local governments in targeted areas to assume their new roles, promote good governance in management, increase accountability to citizens, and enhance service delivery are key interventions to meet this objective.

In order to achieve these objectives, Sajhedari provides technical assistance and limited material and financial support to targeted local government bodies, building their capacity to identify and implement projects that address community priorities. Sajhedari facilitates the development of inclusive annual and periodic (3-5 years) VDC plans and periodic DDC plans that reflect the demands of the broader community, including historically marginalized populations. Project-supported activities are built on the principle of sustainability and implemented in collaboration with civil society and the GON to ensure broad-based participation from implementation to operations and maintenance.

Project implementation approach

Project implementation occurs in three forms: (1) Technical assistance from Pact, Inc., USAID's primary partner; (2) A grants program to district and local-level Nepali organizations; and (3) Sub-contracts to local and international organizations to provide specific services and support. Pact's technical assistance focuses on building the capacity of local organizations and government bodies to function more independently and effectively.

The grants program is the major mechanism of support to community development efforts that provides an opportunity to exercise skills learned through capacity building technical assistance. The sub-contracts complement locally available community development resources and allow for on-going planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

Additionally, Sajhedari is a project designed to have robust "learning" throughout the project, including 9 conflict surveys, impact evaluation/counterfactual, regular population surveys, etc.

Sajhedari currently has four national partners implementing activities under Objective A, and 12 district-based sub-partners which are generally divided into Governance NGOs implementing components B-D. Given the number of sub-partners and the importance of cross-fertilizing amongst those partners, Sajhedari recently established an internal knowledge management web portal - Mosaic. Additionally, as governance is a cross-cutting area for USAID, Sajhedari plays a central role in contributing to USAID's efforts for mainstreaming governance across all portfolios, including by feeding into USAID's knowledge base.

The Evaluation: Purpose, Audience & Use

Purpose and Intended Use

This external evaluation will come at the chronological mid-point of the Sajhedari project and prior to the full implementation of Phase II during which the second half of VDCs will receive Sajhedari programming. The Mid-term Evaluation's purpose is to synthesize evidences for results so far, identify strategic opportunities, document lessons learned, and provide

recommendations for improvement in the remaining two and a half years of the project. The premise of the evaluation questions is that at this key point in the life of the project, many key components of the project are meeting contractual requirements and on target to achieve desired results; at this point, the key information needed is that of cross-cutting themes, as reflected in the proposed questions. Findings and recommendations should similarly reflect this understanding to the degree appropriate.

This evaluation will assess the priority themes and principles of the project, as well as generate internal project learning to best adapt and make strategic decisions towards achieving the project outcomes. The Mission intends to use the evaluation findings in order to better understand what is working most effectively over what has yielded fewer outcome-level results to date, and how the project is contributing to the governance landscape of Nepal, against the backdrop of USAID/Nepal's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective (DO) 1: More Inclusive and Effective Governance.[51]

The findings of the evaluation will be used to inform decisions for promoting best practices, strengthening implementation approaches, and re-aligning the project's strategic focus, which may potentially require project modifications. The evaluation will provide an evidence base for practical directions that should improve achievement of results and reduce potential risks of any unintended consequences.

The evaluation team will also need to consider the external operating environment, project methodology, and the escalation of activities when assessing opportunities and threats. The focus of the evaluation is defined by the evaluation questions below.

Audience

The main audience of this evaluation report will be USAID/Nepal's Front Office, Office of Acquisitions, Program Office, and the Democracy and Governance Office. A secondary audience of key importance is the Pact, Inc. team. USAID/Nepal may also share the report and/or relevant sections/findings/recommendations with USAID/Washington's Asia Bureau and Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) Bureau, as well as other DO Teams and State Department colleagues. An executive summary and recommendations will be provided to the GON's Local Government and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) counterparts and related donor group.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation design must be framed in order to answer key evaluation questions listed below. As stated above, the premise of the evaluation questions is that at this key point in the life of the project, many components of the project are meeting contractual requirements and on target to achieve desired results; at this point, the key information needed is that of cross-cutting themes, as reflected in the proposed questions. Findings and recommendations should similarly reflect this understanding to the degree appropriate.

- *Integration* – The project has numerous components, which seek to align such that the sum is greater than the parts. Ensuring strategic integration/coordination across these

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[51] Development hypothesis of DO 1: Investment in Nepal's peace process, accountable democratic institutions, civic participation and improved governance capacity will result in more effective governance and increased political inclusion.

internal project components, as well as externally (with other USAID, donor, government, and privately operated programs in the targeted geographic area) is challenging.

> o What are key lessons we can take from Sajhedari for internal integration/coordination, mainly across components and amongst sub-partners to consolidate efforts towards anticipated outcome results?
>
> o How effective are Sajhedari approaches to ensure external integration/coordination, mainly with other USAID activities, GON, other donor-funded activities and private sector efforts to advance progress toward anticipated outcome results of the project and/or CDCS?

- *Inclusion* – GESI and youth are integral components of the project implementation approach.

> o What approaches have been most effective at maximizing engagement of women, youth, dalits, and other marginalized groups to advance local community inclusion in decision-making and leadership positions? What strategically prioritized measures could be taken to improve upon the representation of marginalized groups including women in the planning, implementation, and reporting processes supported under the project? Are there any unintended results from the engagement by Pact partners of historically marginalized communities?

- *Institutionalization and Sustainability* – A fundamental element of Sajhedari is to make every effort for institutionalization and sustainability of the results.

> o Given project work to date in planning, initiating, and phasing out activities to ensure to the extent possible sustainability of the contractor's efforts, how should Sajhedari proceed at this point in time to maximize the potentials for sustainability of targeted components of the project?

- *Working with GON Systems* – Sajhedari is working closely with local government bodies in districts and also coordinating with MOFALD at the central level.

> o How effective is Sajhedari's approach for coordination and collaboration with GON at the local and central levels to advance project and CDCS objectives?

- *Learning* – Learning is built throughout the Sajhedari contract – particularly through various assessments and surveys, in addition to an internal knowledge management system.

> o To what extent do the learning mechanisms/tools contribute to the project's outcome results? How can the lessons learned be strategically maximized into programmatic responses to advance those outcomes (with a particular lens on themes of GESI, youth, conflict, capacity building, and coordination)?

Evaluation Method

The Sajhedari mid-term evaluation will employ social science research best practices and a participatory approach (between USAID, implementing partners and beneficiaries) to objectively select interview subjects and the field sites for interview and research. The contractor is encouraged to use a wide range of scientifically sound methods and approaches for collecting and analyzing the information required to assess the evaluation objectives and answer the questions presented above. Report findings should state the evidence base for that finding. For each evaluation question the contractor must develop a methodology that outlines the data that would be collected, the sources of the data, the method of data collection and analysis using a design matrix. Information can be collected through a review and analysis of secondary information paired with collection and analysis of primary information. Triangulation of findings will be required to address inherent bias. The evaluation team should also be prepared to conduct interviews with key informants, as well as conducting site visits and team planning meetings. The evaluation team must present its evaluation methodology to the Democracy and Governance Office (DGO) technical team and USAID/Nepal Program Office and the members of the Mission wide Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Team (IMET) before finalizing the methodology.

The contractor must build upon existing research and is encouraged to rely upon recent internal Pact review (Spring 2015) related to many of these questions. Focus should be placed upon external to Pact interviews and data collection (though not exclusively). Where possible, replicating data collection methods from the baseline could allow for comparison data. The contractor can work with Pact to ensure understanding of the baseline approach to determine feasibility and relevance of replicating any baseline elements.

The contractor is encouraged to present the team it thinks most suitable to complete the task. It is anticipated that the evaluation team leader will be assisted by at least two members – one focusing on GESI and another on governance, capacity building and other components relevant to the assessment themes. At least one of the team members is expected to be a woman. The contractor is strongly encouraged to consider local expertise in pulling together a team with the range of skills and knowledge necessary to conduct the mid-term evaluation.

Upon arrival of the evaluation team in country, there will be a meeting with USAID/Nepal's focal person from the Program Office and DGO staff to review the following items:

- Provide evaluation team initial background on the program and context;

- Review evaluation questions and USAID needs for the evaluation;

- Review data collection plans and tools with USAID;

- Review and clarify any logistical and administrative procedures for the assignment; and

- Develop a preliminary draft outline of the team's report.

Collection of primary data must emphasize a participatory approach with stakeholders and direct beneficiaries. Semi-structured interviews with focus groups and key informants can be interspersed for flexibility and efficiency. Roundtables and short workshops might also be appropriate for assessment and learning with USAID staff, implementing partners, NGOs,

relevant donors and Government of Nepal. The contractor should rely on a number of sources and techniques to answer the evaluation questions. The contractor should select the sites and activities independently.

Data Collection Methods and Sources

Sajhedari evaluation team will:

- Review Sajhedari project documents, work plans, M&E plan, annual and semi-annual reports, performance monitoring plan, project-produced assessments/surveys, and other related technical documents and studies.

- Interview key stakeholders including donors, government counterparts, political parties, and civil society representatives.

- Interview Pact, Equal Access, Youth Initiative, CeLRRd and other key staff.

- Conduct specific field visits and observe the activities in actions.

- Review additional documents/reports made available by the DG Team.

Data Analysis Methods

Prior to the start of data collection, the evaluation team must develop and present, for USAID review and approval, a data analysis plan that details how stakeholder interviews will be transcribed and analyzed; what procedures will be used to analyze qualitative data from key stakeholder interviews; and how the evaluation will weigh and integrate qualitative data from these sources with quantitative data from project monitoring records to reach conclusions.

Timeline and Deliverables

Timeline for the evaluation

The timeline for this SOW is April 1- May 29, 2015. The following is a tentative schedule for the evaluation tasks. A detailed timeline will be developed during team planning meeting and as part of finalizing the evaluation plan.

Tasks	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
Review Background materials	▓								
Hold conference call with USAID/Nepal team	▓								
Conduct interviews with relevant POCs in Washington	▓								
Conduct an in-briefing		▓							
Conduct a team planning meeting with USAID and (Sajhedari team??)		▓							
Submit final evaluation plan		▓							
Collect evaluation data in Kathmandu and outside at the project districts and sites			▓	▓	▓				

Hold a listening session with beneficiaries and stakeholders in Nepalgunj								▓		
Analyze data, submit First Draft Evaluation Report to COR for review									▓	
Present preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations to USAID/Nepal Mission										▓
Incorporate Mission feedback and submit final report										▓
Facilitate a learning review from the evaluation findings and recommendations with Pact and USAID										▓
Submission of one electronic or hard copy of the Final Report to Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC)	No later than 30 days after completion									

Deliverables

To make the field time as efficient as possible, preparation must include completing a majority of the documentation review, establishing interview guides, developing team protocol and responsibilities, and establishing the evaluation schedule. Deliverables include two presentations and a final evaluation report with recommendations, as outlined below.

1. Presentation of evaluation methodology to USAID/Nepal before beginning the evaluation.

2. Detailed work plan for the entire period of the evaluation for approval by the COR.

3. A list of planned interviewees (the list of those actually interviewed should be included as an annex in the evaluation report).

4. Two Power Point Presentations on important findings and recommendations delivered to an audience of USAID/Nepal Mission, partners, donors, and GON as appropriate.

5. An electronic copy of evaluation report in both MS Word and PDF format.

6. The final report should contain a summary of best practices promoted by the project.

7. The raw data and records, both quantitative and qualitative (e.g. interview transcripts, survey responses etc.) in electronic form collected by the evaluation team separately from the report. All quantitative data collected should be in an easily readable format; organized and fully documented for use by those not fully familiar with the project or the evaluation; owned by USAID and made available to the public barring rare exceptions.

8. All instruments used for collecting data during the evaluation included as annexes in the report.

Composition of the Evaluation Team; Conflicts of Interest

The evaluation team must be made up of at least 2 non-USAID development professionals with expertise in democracy and governance. Amongst the team, relevant experience and knowledge should exist related to local governance, gender equality and social inclusion, post-

conflict environments, development sustainability, youth, and multi-sectoral development programming/integration.

Team Leader: The Team Leader must have a minimum of Master's degree, Ph.D. is preferable, in the areas of political science or social science or a related subject area. The Team Leader must have demonstrated leadership and team management skills. The team leader must have at least 10 years of relevant experience in program design, monitoring and evaluation. He/she must have broad technical experience with the function and operation of local governance, development sustainability, and gender equality and social inclusion. The Team Leader must have extensive analytical experience, which equips him/her to conduct high-quality and in-depth analysis of the political situation, preferably with specific knowledge of the critical issues in Nepal. Knowledge of Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) transition literature would be useful.

Team Members: Political or social scientists, having at least a master degree, Ph.D. is preferable, in the areas of political science or social science or a related subject area. At least 10 years of experience in design, monitoring and evaluation of democracy and governance projects. He/she must have broad technical experience with the function and operation of local governance, development sustainability, and gender equality and social inclusion. Specific and extensive Nepal knowledge is required. An ability to conduct interviews and discussions in Nepali and English is required. The GESI expert must have extensive experience in GESI assessment tools and approaches.

The offeror must disclose in its proposal any real or potential conflicts of interest, such as those identified in Attachment 4, on the part of the offeror or any member of the evaluation team.

Logistics and USAID participation

The evaluation team is responsible for managing all logistics required for completing the evaluation. This includes but is not limited to arranging for transportation, meeting venues and appointments for meetings. Pact or its sub-contractor staff may assist in organizing meetings. USAID/Nepal will provide key documents and background materials for reading and help arrange the in-briefing and debriefing. Exact participation of USAID/Nepal will be determined after the selection of the consultants, but someone from USAID/Nepal may accompany the contractor in key meetings with senior political leaders, GON officials and with selected stakeholders.

The USAID/Nepal staff will provide contacts for meetings and a list of the suggested site visits for the team to arrange meetings. Meghan Nalbo, the Contract Officer's Representative for Sajhedari, will work as the point of contact for this task.

Budget

The Offeror is expected to submit a proposed budget along with the proposed design. The items in the proposed budget should include consultancy fees, per diem, in-country airfare, vehicle rental, group accident insurance and other direct cost such as stationery, photocopy, utilities/venue rental, etc.

The group accident insurance is compulsory for the members and is the responsibility of the contractor. The Mission estimates the cost of the evaluation with be between $65-80,000, but

expects a full proposal from the Offeror against which the final budget and team composition will be finalized.

Reporting Requirements

USAID/Nepal requires that the team's submitted evaluation report meets USAID's *Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report,* which can be accessed online at: http://transition.usaid.gov/evaluation/USAIDEvaluationPolicy.pdf

As mentioned above, findings from the evaluation will be presented in a draft report at a full briefing with USAID/Nepal. At a minimum the evaluation report must include the following sections:

Acronyms

Executive Summary

Evaluation Purpose and Evaluation Questions

Project [or Program] Background

Evaluation Methods and Limitations

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Annexes

- Annex I: Acronyms

Evaluation Statement of Work

- Annex II: Evaluation Methods and Limitations

- Annex III: Data Collection Instruments

- Annex IV: Sources of Information

   o List of Persons Interviewed
   o Bibliography of Documents Reviewed
   o Databases
   o [etc]

- Annex V: Disclosure of Any Conflicts of Interest

- Annex VI: Statement of Differences [only if applicable]

- Annex VII: Raw data

The template can be amended based on the suggestion by the evaluation team.

The final report must be clear and grammatically correct to be accepted by USAID/Nepal. The report format must be restricted to Microsoft products and 12-point type font should be used throughout the body of the report, with page margins 1" top/bottom and left/right. The report should not exceed 30 pages, excluding references and annexes.

The evaluation team leader must also submit one electronic or hard copy of the Final Evaluations no later than 30 days after completion to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) with a cover sheet indicating the type of evaluation and the design. The DEC evaluation submission must also include a 3-5 pages summary of the purpose, background

of the project, main evaluation questions, methods, findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned (if applicable) from the evaluation.

Mailing address:

Document Acquisitions

USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC)

8403 Colesville Road, Suite 210

Silver Spring, MD 20910-6368

Telephone: 1-301-562-0641

Fax: 1-301-588-7787

Online (preferred): Send e-mail to docsubmit@dec.cdie.org

10. Source and Nationality Requirements for Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID

Foreign Assistance Act Section 604(a) authorizes procurement "from the United States, recipient country or developing countries," which is implemented by 22 CFR Part 228 and USAID's Automated Directives System Chapter 310 ("ADS 310"). The authorized source for this procurement is Geographic Code 937, as defined in ADS 310.

Suppliers with a nationality outside of the United States, the recipient country or developing countries will only be considered for this procurement if a waiver is authorized under 22 CFR Part 228 Subpart D.

ATTACHMENT 1: ACRONYMS

CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CeLRRd	Center for Legal Research and Resource Development
COR	Contract Officer's Representative
DDC	District Development Committee
DEC	USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse
DGO	Democracy and Governance Office
DO	Development Objective
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
GESI	Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion
GON	Government of Nepal
IMET	Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Team
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Program
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
SB	Sajhedari Bikaas
SoW	Statement of Work
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VDC	Village Development Committee

ANNEX D. Persons Interviewed

Date	Organization	Individuals present
17 Aug 15	USAID Mission, Kathmandu	Maria Barrón, Director, DG Office Meghan Nalbo, DG team Amanda Cats-Baril, DG team Ramesh Adhikari, DG team Simitra Manendhar, DG team Murari Adhikari, M&E office Prakash Gawali, M&E office
17 Aug 15	Sajhedari Bikaas team (in Kathmandu)	Nick Langton, Chief of Party Basanta Pokharel, Deputy Chief of Party Mahesh Nepal, Senior Field Director
17 Aug 15	Center for Legal Re–search & Resource Development (CeLRRd)	Sudeep Gautam, Director Rammani Gautam, Project Manager
17 Aug 15	Youth Initiative	Sarita Bartauna, President Riwaz Neutane, Secretary Dipesh Ghimire, Program Coordinator Rafael Paudel, Director
19 Aug 15	Ministry of Federal–ism and Local De–velopment (MoFALD)	Reshmi Raj Pandey, Joint Secretary Purusottam Nepal, Program Manager
19 Aug 15	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Yam Nath Sharma, Assistant Country Director
20 Aug 15	Sajhedari Bikaas office (in Nerpalgunj)	Nick Langton, Chief of Party Basanta Pokharel, Deputy Chief of Party Mahesh Nepal, Senior Field Director Amleshwar Singh, M&E Director Sudan Shivakoti, M&E Manager Geeta Pradhan, Conflict Mitigation Manager Srijana Chettri, GESI Manager Reena Chaudhary, Women's Employment Group Manager Santosh Kumar Karna, WORTH Field Coordinator Govinda Adhikari, Governance Manager Lok Bahadur Thapa, Governance Field Coordinator
21 Aug 15	Knowledge-based Integrated Sustain-	Rajendra Shahu, Senior Agricultural Production Manager

Date	Organization	Individuals present
	able Agriculture & Nutrition (KISAN) Project	Ram Lal Shrestha, Cluster Manager Ashok Boral, Irrigation Expert Laxmi Prasad Sharma, Senior Manager
21 Aug 15	Banke District Hedquarters	Jeevan Bhusel, Local Development Officer Min Bahadur Malla, LGCDP District Officer Sharad Kumar Paudyal, LGCDP Project Officer
22 Aug 15	ENRUDEC (SB local NGO)	Dharma Rokaya Suman Bishwakarma
22 Aug 15	Krishnasar FM radio station Equal Access (EA) NGO	Tula Adhikari, Chief Executive, radio station Sabateci Crilci, radio station staff Rakesh Mishra, Sajhedari Programme Producer Kavita Sapkota, Equal Access M&E Manager Niraj Pokharel, Equal Access
23 Aug 15	Local staff of EA, CeLRRd, YI	Niraj Pokharel, EA Binaya Guragain, EA Dy Program Director Chetraj Bhatta, CeLRRd Pushpanjal Malla, CeLRRd Padam Raj Paneni, YI Giriraj Adhikari, YI
23 Aug 15	Fatima Foundation (SB local NGO)	Sabnam Parveen, Secretary General Kaikasa Ansari, M&E officer Subeda Farheen, Treasurer Umesh K. Gupta, Program Coordinator Sapana Bhattarai, Secretary
23 Aug 15	Kamdi VDC	Manoj B.K., Kamdi 7 (Sajhaydari Bikaas) Sajjan Saddiqui, NPJ- 6 Anita Shreastha, NPJ-23 Bamdev Pokhrel, NPJ Banke DPC Ram Kumar Sonkar, Youth unity Subhadra Roka, Youth unity Farjana Saiyad, Youth unity Molahana Ebarahen, Youth unity Bel Bahadur Bohora, Kamdi 7 Hari Bahadur Deudy, Kamdi 6 Krishna Bahadur B.K., Co ordinator Ward Public Forum Shanti Giri, Kamdi 9-Secretary Laligurash Women's Group Geeta Bhandari, Kamdi 9- President Laligurash WG Hasma Bagwan, Kamdi 6- Gulsanay Mohhamdi WG Sanuma Bagwan, Kamdi 6- treasurer Gulsanay Mohhamdi. WG

Date	Organization	Individuals present
		Nurajaha Bagwan, Kamdi 6- member Gulsanay Mohhamdi WG
		Samsul Neesa Bagwan, Kamdi 6- controller Gulsanay Mohhamdi WG
		Kittabul Khan, Member Ward public forum
		Hema Thapa, Member- Shiva Radio Listeners Club
		Bhawani Bohara, Member- Jyott Mahila Sashaktikaran, Foundation
		Bhagirathi Chand, President - Shiva Radio Listeners' Club
		Ganesh Prasad Kalwohra, Co-ordinator- Community Mediation
		Prem Kumari Sahi, Community Mediator
		Samara Khan, Ward 6, WCF Member
		Bishnu Maya Neupanay, Saamara Ramba Ward 6- Community Mediator
24 Aug 15	Helvetas NGO	Yagya Prasad Pandey, Local Governance Coordinator
24 Aug 15	VDC, Khashkushna (met in hotel)	Krishna Bista, VDC Secretary
24 Aug 15	SB mobilizers	Anita Shreshta, women's empowerment worker, Kamdi VDC
		Sunil Chaudhury, SB social mobilizer, Belhari VDC
		Sangita Pandey, SB social mobilizer, Indrapur VDC
		Krishna Neupan, SB social mobilizer, Sonpur VDC
26 Aug 15	BASE NGO, (met in hotel)	Dilli Bahadur Chaudhary, BASE NGO, Director
28 Aug 15	Interdisciplinary Analysis (IDA)	Sudhindra Sharma, Executive Director
		Pranaya Sthapit
		Deelasha Rayauieyhi
		Shuneela Ghimiri
		Chandra K. C.
		Hiranya Baral
		Pawan Sen
		Sudhindra Sharma
31 Aug 15	Saferworld NGO	LaChelle Amos, Country Manager
		Chiran Jung Thapa, Regional Security & Justice Advisor
		Ramesh Shreshti
		Ojaswi
31 Aug 15	Health for Life (H4L)	Robert Timmons, Chief of Party

Date	Organization	Individuals present
		Dharpal Prasad Raman, Deputy Chief of Party
		Damodar Adhikari, Team Leader, Health Systems
		Ram Sedhain, Health Systems Advisor
1 Sep 15	MoFALD	Shankar Nepal, Under- secretary, Vital Events Registration

Ghumkhahare VDC

S.No.	Name	Position and organization
1.	Devi Lal Sunar	VDC Secretary
2.	Durga Gurung	CMC Coordinator Ward 9
3.	Jayanti Sunar	IPFC Member Ward 7
4.	Krishna Maya BK	CAC Member
5.	Mansara Oli	IPFC Member
6	Bhim Bahadur Chunara	"
7	Netra Khadaka	"
8.	Krishna Bdr. MAuja	WCF Member
9	Khim Bdr. Buda	RPP Chairman -9
10	Rajan B C	UML Chairman -9
11	Bhojraj Poudel	Teacher-9
12	Khagendra Pd. Upadhaya	IPF C
13	Sunita Tahapa	WAM
14	Anjali Chaudhary	W AM S W
15	Thaman Khatri	B NA M member
16	Madan Khatri	Farmer
17	Mahendra Chand	S A C , AFO
18.	Manju Rana Chetri	WAM member
19.	Shova Tiwari	S A C , treasure
20	Balkrishna Upadhyay	Farmer
21	Chandra Sunar	IPFC Member
22	Tham Kumari Lamichhane	WAM, Member
23	Prakash Subedi	SAC
24	Pabitra Subedi	SAC
25	Khim Bahadur Khatri	Youth Initiative- 9
26	Rishi Ram Poudel	SAC Social Mobilizer (gov)

WORTH Group, Ghumkhahare

S. No.	Name	Position and organization
1	Khima Devi Rana	Pragatishil Women Group -9
2	Mina Khatri	"
3	Sita K C	"
4	Putala Pariya	"
5	Tirsana Giri	"
6.	Sunita Giri	"
7.	Indra Bharati	"
8.	Saraswati Poudel	"
9.	Kamala Acharya	Hariyali Women Group
11	Suntali Oli	"
10	Pabitra Gharti	"
12	Shanti Thapa	"
13	Debi B.K	"
14	Shanti Thapa	"
15	Bhumisara B K	"
16	Baalkumari Oli	"
17	Balkumari Thapa	"
18	Rita Bhujel	"
19	Bhabi Sara Bhujel	"
20	Nirmala B K	"
21	Bhabisara BK	"
22	Gauri Oli	"
23	Nirak B K	"

S. No.	Name	Position and organization
1	Sitaram Harijan	Natioanal Manas Bikaas PVT. Ltd. BankeLGCDP, SM
2	Laxman K pathik	Melmilapkatra +S M (BUC)
3	Madhabi Yogi	Mahila Shaskti karan karykarta, Utharpur
4.	Nandalal Yadav	Melmilap karta + SM (BUC)
5	Krisna Kumara Neupane	SB Nepalgunj
6	Ramchandra Yadav	Sonpur VDC Level Coordinator -5
7	Sanjya kumar Misra	Youth club, LYG Mobilizer -8
8	Dharmaraj Yadav	Sonpur V D C , Kharidar

Youth Network (Hekuli)

S. No	Name	Position and organization
1	**Bharat bdr. Oli**	Member, youth Sanjal
2	Himsika Chaudhary	"
3	Sunita Chaudhary	"
4	Ramita Chaudhary	Treasure, Youth Sanjal
5	Santosh Chaudhary	Secretary, Youth Sanjal

WCF (Hekuli VDC)

S. No	Name	Position and organization
1	Khadga bir chaudhary	
2	Sunita chaudhary	
3	Ramita chaudhary	
4	Gita Regmi	
5	Sunita chaudhay	
6	Shubhali chaudhary	
7	Narayan Neupane	
8	Lok bahadur khadka	
9	Binod basnet	
10	Paras chaudhary	

IPFC Hekuli

S. No	Name	Position and organization
1	Netralal Neupane	Member Ward 7
2	Sanjaya Basnet	Ward 6
3	Sunita Chaudhary	Ward 1
4	Shreemani Neupane	Ward 7
5	Shubhadri Chaudhary	Ward 4
6	Paras Cahudhary	LGCPD, Social Mobilizer
7	Rajkumar Chaudhary	SB /Governance

Youth Initiative, Dang

S. No	Name	Position and organization
1	Amrita Chaudhary	District Youth Network (DYN),
2	Arun Panthi	DYN,
3	Ashok Acharya	Local Youth Group (LYG)
4	Y. Acharya	L Y G
5	Netra Sagar Chaudhaqry	MYN/Team Leader,
6	Nisha Sharma	L Y G ,
7	Anita Sunar	L Y G
8	Chanda Chaudhary	Youth initiative
9	Giriraj Adhikari	YI

DDC, Dang

S No	Name	Position and organization
1	Balkrishna Khanal	Social Dev Officer
2	Krishna K C	Information Officer
3	Rames Gautam	L D O
4	Bina Shrestha	Women Development Officer WDO
5	Shreedhar gyawali	District Agriculture Officer (DAO)

ANNEX E. References

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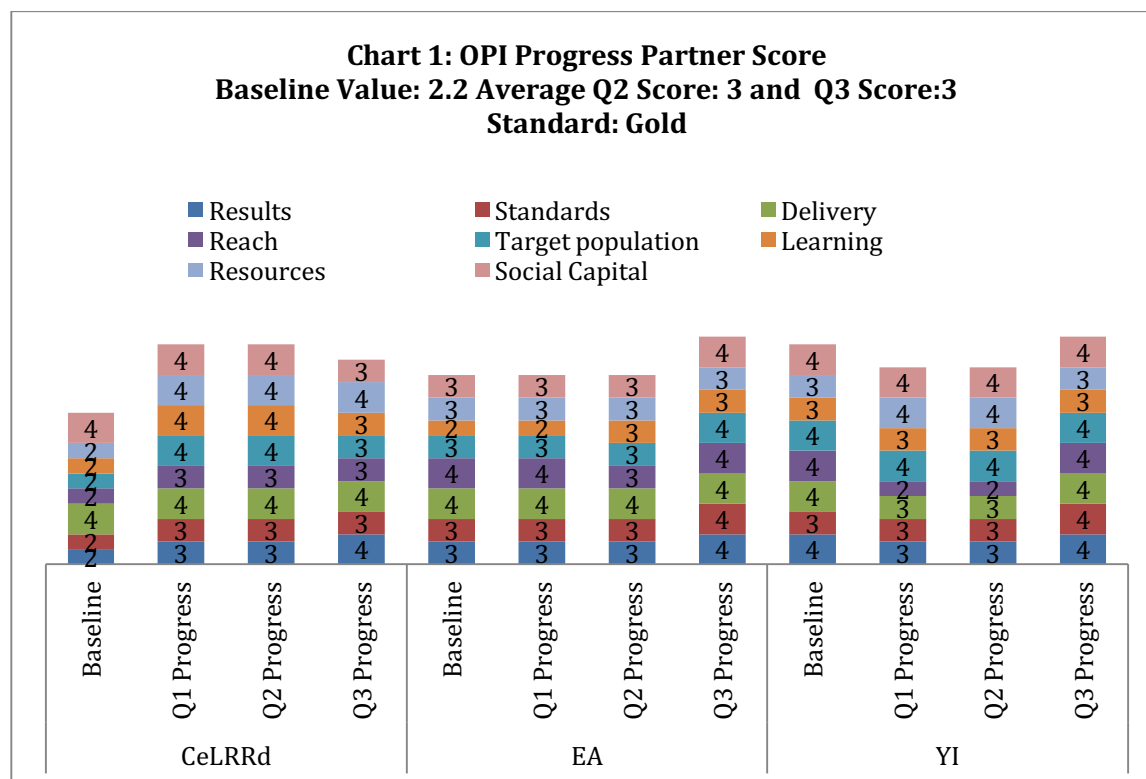
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ANNEX F. Data from Organizational Performance Index

Organizational Performance Index for three SB NGOs, FY 2015 Quarter 3

Domains		Effectiveness		Efficiency		Relevance		Sustainability		Total	Aver-age
Partners		Re-sults	Stand-ards	Deliv-ery	Reach	Target popu-lation	Learn-ing	Re-sources	Social Capital		
CeLRRd	Baseline	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	4	20	2.5
	Q1 Progress	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	29	3.6
	Q2 Progress	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	29	3.6
	Q3 Progress	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	27	3.4
EA	Baseline	3	3	4	4	3	2	3	3	25	3.1
	Q1 Progress	3	3	4	4	3	2	3	3	25	3.1
	Q2 Progress	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	25	3.1
	Q3 Progress	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	30	3.8
YI	Baseline	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	29	3.6
	Q1 Progress	3	3	3	2	4	3	4	4	26	3.3
	Q2 Progress	3	3	3	2	4	3	4	4	26	3.3
	Q3 Progress	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	30	3.8

Chart 1: OPI Progress Partner Score
Baseline Value: 2.2 Average Q2 Score: 3 and Q3 Score:3
**Standard: Gold**

NOTE: Top 2 cells in each column are Re-sources & So-cial Capital

ANNEX G. Difference in Differences Technique

Difference in differences statistical technique
(from Wikipedia, 14 September 2015)

Difference in differences (DID) requires data measured at two or more different time periods. In the example pictured, the treatment group is represented by the line P and the control group is represented by the line S. Both groups are measured on the outcome (dependent) variable at Time 1 before either group has received the treatment (i.e., the independent or explanatory variable), represented by the points P_1 and S_1. The treatment group then receives or experiences the treatment and both groups are again measured after this at Time 2. Not all of the difference between the treatment and control groups at Time 2 (that is, the difference between P_2 and S_2) can be explained as being an effect of the treatment, because the treatment group and control group did not start out at the same point at Time 1. DID therefore calculates the "normal" difference in the outcome variable between the two groups (the difference that would still exist if neither group experienced the treatment), represented by the dotted line Q. (Notice that the slope from P_1 to Q is the same as the slope from S_1 to S_2.) The treatment effect is the difference between the observed outcome and the "normal" outcome (the difference between P_2 and Q).
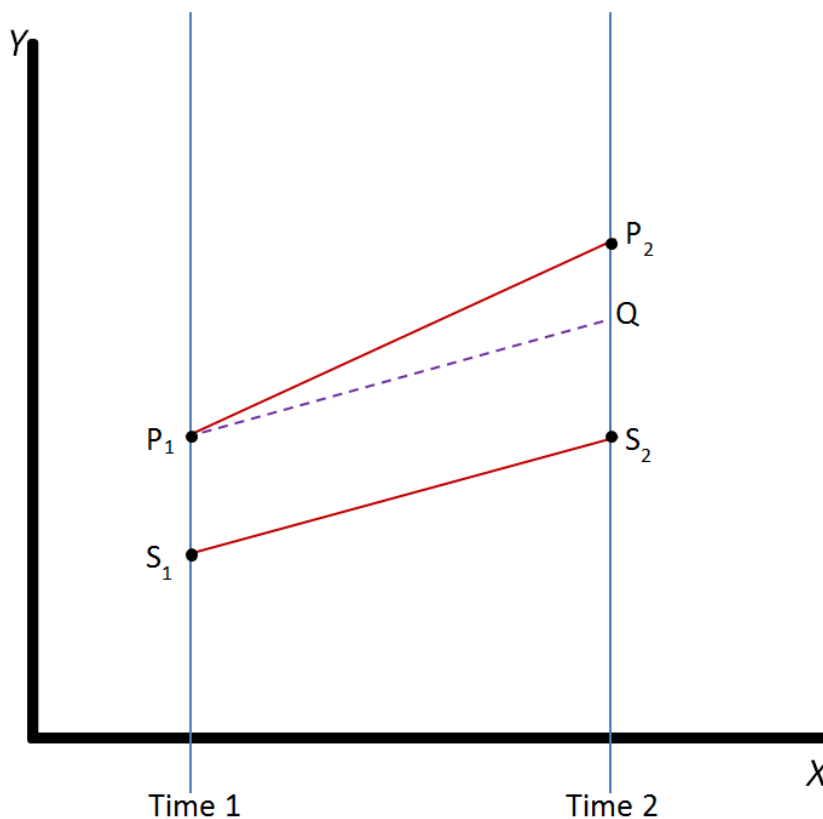
"Illustration of Difference in Differences" by Danni Ruthvan - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Commons -

IDA surveys for Sajhedari Bikaas

Survey	Date	Phase 1 respondents	Phase 2 respondents	Control respondents
Baseline survey	Nov-Dec 2013	2500 (P_1)	2500	2500 (S_1)
Citizen Perception Survey III	July 2015	1200 (P_2)	1200	480 (S_2)

Questions that could be compared:

Participation in VDC planning (Baseline survey question 7.2, CPS III question E1) – "Have you participated in the VDC planning process in the past fiscal year?"

VDC service delivery (Baseline survey question 8.14, CPS III question C2) –" How effective do you think your VDC office has been in providing services in he past one year?"

Determining the "Difference in Differences" for Phase 1 respondents and Control respondents (refer to the chart from Wikipedia):

$P_1 - S_1$ = difference (as measured along axis Y) between the two groups at baseline survey

$S_2 - S_1$ = change (as measured along axis Y) in Control group over the period $T_2 - T_1$

$S_2 - S_1 = Q - P_1$ = change that would be expected in both groups if they had progressed at the same pace over the period $T_2 - T_1$

$P_2 - Q$ = impact of the project over the period $T_2 - T_1$ (assuming *ceteris paribus*)

Similar analysis can be done in future Citizen Perception Surveys, with the added feature that the Phase 2 respondents can be entered as a second treatment group to be compared with the control group and also with the Phase 1 respondents.

ANNEX H. Changes Made Based on Findings from Monitoring

Changes made based on the findings of monitoring data analysis and observation made during monitoring visits including data quality assessment (DQA) and thematic outcome monitoring.

SN	Name of component / Implementer	What were the findings of monitoring/observation on results (outputs and outcomes)?	What were the changes made to improve?	What happened after the changes were implemented??
1	Governance/ LNGOs	Only two members from each WCF was trained. They were supposed to orient/share with other members of the WCF. But that did not happen.	Provision to provide training to all WCF members on their roles and responsivities.	Participation of WCFs increased in various activities/process/event such as tracking of VDC Budgeted Projects, Monitoring of CDPs being implementing in respective wards.
2	Governance/ LNGOs	As per guideline regularly meeting was not found conducted by WCFs. No any record on meeting attendees or agenda or decisions made were kept. In other words no meeting minute/register was found maintained by WCFs.	Stationary supports and mentoring for conducting bi-monthly meeting and keeping records in meeting minutes to the WCFs	Regularly meeting has been found conducted with proper records keeping in meeting minutes.
3	Governance/ LNGOs	WCFs members were not aware on VDC block grants including provision of 35% of total grant budget for target groups. No budget tracking was done by WCFs.	Provision to plan and implement activities to build capacity of WCFs to track VDC budget allocation as per guidelines.	WCF member are aware on VDC block grants budget and provision of 35% of total budget for target groups i.e., projects for women, children and marginalized groups. Now they are capable to track budget allocation by VDC as per guideline.

4	Governance/ LNGOs	No uniformity in contents to deliver by SMs at community meeting facilitation.	Developed and provided handouts to maintain the uniformity at community meeting facilitation by SMs	Uniformity on facilitation, clear massages have been provided to communities or WCFs/CACs.
5	Governance/ LNGOs	Weak coordination was found among SB partners for VDC level interventions.	Developed joint action plan at Sajhedari Chautari meeting.	Effective coordination has been established, resources have been shared, VDC level joint monitoring event has been organized quarterly.
6	Governance/ LNGOs	Monitoring of SB interventions has not been found done by executive board members frequently.	Executive Board has appointed point of contact /focal person of project to monitor and supervise the SB interventions.	Focal person has visited field quarterly bases and started to share findings of visit at board meeting. This practice has helps to develop formal or informal strategies based on findings to resolve the issues.
7	Governance/ LNGOs	There was no practice of monthly staffs meeting because of this sharing on progress and staffs experiences and learning was not done adequately. Therefore it was difficult to ensure the uniformity and quality of implemented activities.	Conduct monthly staffs meeting regularly to share progress made by staffs and their experiences and learning based on implementation of activities.	System of sharing on progress and plan is established and efficiency of staffs increased to maintain the uniformity and quality of implemented activities.
9	Governance/ LNGOs	Limited provision for review and planning event affected timely implementation of activity with expected quality of implementation.	Establish regular review and planning system with involvement of key staffs.	Started regular review and planning system with preparation of concept paper, detail course contents of each event that support to implement the planned activities in time with expected quality.
10	Governance/ LNGOs	Monitoring Committees (MCs) had not prepared their action plan and meetings were not regular and at the same time MCs had no any practice of review their progress.	Supported MCs to make decision to conduct their regular meetings.	MCs started to monitor VDC projects based on the action Plan and MCs made commitments to review the progress.

11	Governance/ LNGOs	SB partners meetings were organized for sharing on progress, learnings and plan only.	SB partners meeting suggested to develop joint integration plan to achieve synergy effects.	As a result of SB partners meeting initiated integration planning for activities implementation (i.e. jointly organize Sajhedari Chautari, involvement in CDA activities, involvement in WORTH group meeting etc.).
12	Governance/ LNGOs	Only field level staffs of SB partners represented at the Sajhedari Chautari and no any beneficiaries as a representative of WCFs, WEGs, CACs, LYGs and RLGs were required to participate at meeting of Sajhedari Chautari.	Sajhedari Chautari suggested to invite beneficiaries as a representative of WCFs, CACs, WEGs, LYGs, RLGs and IPs and VDC level service providers at Sajhedari Chautari to inform and get feedback from beneficiaries on SB activities implementation.	Sajhedari Chautri are organized with participation beneficiaries, SB Partners, VDC Personnel and other organizations working in the same VDC as a result of this the beneficiaries are well informed on information of all organizations including SB Partners.
13	Governance/ LNGOs	WCF had only proposed plans but not practiced to review the approved plans after village council	Suggested to support WCFs to review WCFs proposed plans vs approved plan by VDCs.	Reviewed the VDC annual plans at WCFs meeting. Identified no. and proportion of projects submitted by WCFs was approved by VDC. Analyzed what types of projects were approved and what types of projects were not approved.
15	Governance/ LNGOs	Some of the remote area of the VDCs people are deprived from the vital registration and social security. VDCs also recommend to conduct the service camp in the remote area so SB support to each VDC for conducting the service camp.	Added the # of Mobile Service Camp (Vital registration conducted in each VDC)	Total 1218 deprive people knew about the importance of vital registration received the service easily. Public trust increased towards the service providers and service providers knew the gap of services.

16	Governance/ LNGOs	In the beginning only the SB partners are involve in the Chautrai meeting. VDC stakeholder are unknown about the SB Sajhedari Bikaas activity and process. It seems essential to share all activity with the stakeholders. So the Massive Chautari meeting is needed.	Provision made to organized quarterly extended Sajhedari Chautari meeting	VDC level all stakeholders are well informed about the SB activities not only about the Governance but also of YI, EA, WEG and CMC. Become easy to coordinate with stakeholders and they assist to make social market of SB activities.
17	Governance/ LNGOs	Conducting meeting at the same place every time reduce the attendance of others partners at the meeting.	Suggested to arrange meeting at different places (mobile meeting)	All SB partners easily manage time for the meeting. SB partners have started to discuss and make finalize the content for Radio Program for Sajhedari Bikaas.
18	Governance/ LNGOs	Most of the VDCs used to conduct the public hearing program only for formality to make the document as evidence for MCPM. Citizen were remained unaware about the public hearing event. Eventually the public hearing was not effective and also not conducted according to the guideline (incompliance).	Suggested to support VDC to conducte public hearing according to guidelines using citizen report card (CRC) and exit pole in the public hearing (PH).	Public/Citizen aware on VDC services, service taking process, VDC's both aspect strength and weakness or improvement area. VDC officials make commitment to improve weakness and make the services efficient.
19	Governance/ LNGOs	Participation of female and marginalized community was low in SB activities including public hearing.	Suggested to orient SMs on GESI.	Participation of female and marginalized community increased in SB activities including public hearing.
20	Governance/ LNGOs	USAID field visit found that coordination and integration among the USAID partners are not at adequate level.	Suggested to organize meeting of USAID funded projects implementing partners at district level and SB partners' coordination meeting at each VDC.	Coordination among USAID organization increased and joint activities was done among the SB partners.

21	Governance/ LNGOs	Very limited questions was raised by public during public hearing	Suggested to display the progress of VDC and other local line agencies during public hearing.	Number of question increased and fruitful discussion was held.
22	Governance/ LNGOs	Poor GESI representation in SB activities such as trainings/orientations.	Suggested to provide GESI mainstreaming orientation/trainings.	Status of GESI improved in trainings/orientation such as training on social accountability tools and orientation to monitoring committee this status was found improved.
23	Governance/ LNGOs	Dominance of theoretical session in trainings/orientations was found such as training to monitoring committee and training on social accountability tools.	Changed in training/orientation methodologies by doing more groups works and use of picture and visual materials.	Effectiveness of training improved
24	Governance/ LNGOs	There was no provision to assess prior understanding on subject matter before training held	Suggested to use pre and post training test to assess the understanding of participants from training/orientation.	Training delivery methods was changed based on analysis of assessment results.
26	Governance/ LNGOs	About 50% members were from local political parties	Suggested to form IPFC as per guidelines (resource mobilization & management guidelines).	IPFC formed on the basis of guideline ensuring GESI.
27	Governance/ LNGOs	Poor record keeping, documentation and filing system at VDCs often resulted in missing records/document or having difficulties in finding these.	Suggested to provide computer system and training to operate system for updating records and documentation by VDC.	Now the records are properly being updated in computer by the VDC.
28	Governance/ LNGOs	Irregular meeting, lacking materials and awareness.	Strengthened the capacity of CAC	The CAC conduct regular meeting and decisions are properly updated due to provided materials support
29	Governance/ LNGOs	Poor coordination in development work	Suggested to coordinated with VDC for matching fund	Constructed 1650 meter road in Ganapur with 100,000 matching fund from VDC.

31	Governance/ LNGOs	Initially while implementing activities proportion of targeted participants were not attended so difficult to find out achievement related our objective.	SMs were oriented on SB targets groups and SB GESI strategies.	All SMs collected our target group's name list and details and as MQS they invited participants and implemented activity. Proportion of targeted group increased.
32	Governance/ LNGOs	Effective and quality M&E data, disaggregated data, narrative, learnings, issues and success stories were not submitted on report by SMs.	Orientation to SMs on how to write progress report	They are submitting report with including qualitative and quantitative M&E data with disaggregation, effective narrative.
34	WORTH/ LNGOs	The trainings were not effective due to hiring consultants from outside/district who did not know local language and participants have problems to understand Nepali language.	The consultants were hired locally who can speak and deliver training in local languages.	Thus, the trainings were conducted in local language that made WEG members easy to understand the delivered contents, knowledge and skills.
35	WORTH/ LNGOs	The trainings were disturbed because of trainees come to participate in the training along with their children without caretaker.	The participants' were informed to bring their children with caretakers	The trainees having children come along with child caretaker then she provided full time in training that increased the effectiveness of the training.
36	WORTH/ LNGOs	Organizing skill based training far from VDCs and not providing contingency expenses, that created family conflict among WEG members	The skill based training was organized at local venues considering easiness of participants	The participants were able to attend training events from their homes without staying at training venues that addressed the issues of family conflict.
37	WORTH/ LNGOs	There was no coordination of WEG with VDC level stakeholders	Conducted review & reflection meeting with VDC stakeholders.	WEG became well known among VDC stakeholders and coordination of WEG and VDC stakeholders was built.
38	WORTH/ LNGOs	Some of the participants couldn't give time because of being alone at their homes.	Skill based training was organized at their community.	100% participation and participants gave full time in the training

39	WORTH/ LNGOs	About 65% of participants in the training couldn't read and write.	Contents of capacity building training were delivered through group work, presentation using picture and Videos and other suitable IEC materials.	Participants easily understood the contents of the training making training effective.
40	WORTH/ LNGOs	The completed forms related to village banking were not filed properly or poor filing system was found at WEGs	WEGs were provided files for proper filing of documents/records/banking forms.	The banking forms/records are maintained properly
42	WORTH/ LNGOs	VDC stakeholders were unknown about the WEGs activities and changes made by WEG in the life of women of the communities after the intervention of SB.	Semi-annual review & reflection meetings were organized to share the progress of the WEGs.	Government line agencies has been involving women of the WEG groups at their different committees such as road construction committees & PBCs etc. This activity has assisted FFN to maintain transparency and accountability.
43	WORTH/ LNGOs	Poor/weak coordination found within the SB partners & relevant stakeholders at VDC/District level.	Organized mobile workshops involving SB partners' staffs and district stakeholders (cooperatives, micro-finance, DADO/DLSO and government officials, WCO/DEO, CSIDB, FNCCI)	Women of the WEGs are involving at WCF & CAC **[72 WCF & 36 CAC]**, cases of violence have been going to the CMC, women of the WEGs are participating in the different national level activities such as; open defication free (ODF) zone & school enrollment campaign to achieve national objective.
44	WORTH/ LNGOs	Despite of skills development training some WEG members didn't initiate any business because of risk in business and social and traditional barriers. The skills development training was inadeuate to make them	Micro-enterprises training conducted to make WEG members able to select business through market need assessment.	Now WEGs members are able to select business based on the demand of products and become successful in their business.

		able to select business as per market study for demand of their products.		
45	WORTH/ LNGOs	WEG members were involving in different community development activities, but didn't have budget to complete the activities effectively.	Made provision for WEG innovation activities planning.	WEGs have made innovative activities plans for community development and these are in process of implementation.
46	WORTH/ LNGOs	Women network Group was not established at some VDCs and the budget allocated for women was not properly used for activities benefiting women.	WEGs submitted request letters to VDCs for forming women networking at VDCs.	VDC secretaries have promised to establish Women Network and ask WEGs to lead.
47	WORTH/ LNGOs	It was found that Kunathari & Pokharikanda VDCs are potential for vegetables farming and Gadhi and Lekhgaun VDCs are potential for livestock farming but WEG members had limited knowledge and skills for the same.	Made provision to provide vegetable and grass farming training to WEG members of these VDCs.	Vegetable and grass farming training were provided to WEG members
48	WORTH/ LNGOs	However Dharapani VDC was found potential for hotel business there was no any hotel to serve food.	WEG members were suggested and encourage to start hotel business.	WEG members have started a hotel and a retail grocery shop.
49	WORTH/ LNGOs	Skill building trainings were provided to WEG members without analyzing the demand of skills and products they produced from these skills. Therefore utilization of skills was very limited.	Provided skills building training to WEG members based on the market study of skills and products produced by these skills.	On the basis of potential markets for skills and products now skills building trainings were delivered to WEG members.
50	WORTH/ LNGOs	Eight WEG members disclosed that they had been suffering from Uterus Prolapsed. This indicates that more	Coordinate with DHO for screening UP victims among WEG members	Coordination to DHO has began

		WEG members might have this problem.		
51	WORTH/ LNGOs	Child caretakers were under 16 and also differently abled people.	Suggested to hire child caretaker who is above 16 years old and also physically abled.	Above aged 16 and physically abled childcare taker were attended.
52	ADR/ CeLRRd	It was observed that, the skills of mediators in finding the hidden interest and writing the agreement paper was not sufficient, which has somehow negative effect in the agreement implementation process.	The Basic Mediation Training module has been slightly changed than it was done before. The participants are made to be focused on agreement writing and finding out the interest	Proper study has not been done yet to find out the results ,but as per the observation of mediation session has made, the skill of mediators have been changed in terms of finding out the hidden interest and the skill of drafting the agreement paper has been refined than it was before.
53	ADR/ CeLRRd	The female disputant parties of GBV feel less comfortable going to CMC in the presence of only male mediators (found during interaction with the disputant parties of GBV)	Arranging the female mediators /empowering the disputant parties to select the female mediators	The GBV disputes settlement ratio has been in increasing trend.
54	ADR/ CeLRRd	The bill boards are located only at VDC office premises, which is not sufficient to disseminate the information among the people living in other places for far form the VDCs premises.	Suggested to install at bill boards in various locations in order to disseminate the information in wider audience.	Increase in the number of case registered in CMC than before.
55	ADR/ CeLRRd	The low number of cases registered from geographical remoteness to reach to CMCs from various wards of VDCs	Provision made to establish Sub CM Centers.	The number of disputes from those VDCs which could not have access to CMC because of geographical remoteness had started registering at Sub-CMC

56	ADR/ CeLRRd	Less number of awareness activities regarding the importance of mediation and the presence of CMCs.	More social marketing events were added.	Number of cases increased after social marketing events.
58	ADR/ CeLRRd	Poor GESI status among community mediators (CMs) and CMCs.	Made compulsory for women participation (one from every ward) and equal participation of social representatives based on the population statistic.	Improved GESI status of CMs and CMCs.
59	Youth Mobilizati on /Youth Initiative (YI)	Previous training on governance was not effective on enabling them to use advocacy tools to raise local issues.	YI conducted evidence based training for LYGs	Participants of evidence based training has developed their capacity to formulate evidence based action plan and they are about to implement those plans.
60	Youth Mobilizati on /Youth Initiative (YI)	Monitoring and field visit found that the participants of enterprise development training (EDT) were not actively implementing their business plan.	Frequent follow-up of activities of EDT participants.	Few participants have started to implement their business plan accordingly. Preliminary data: (EDT participants Ms. Rita Yadav of Gangaparaspur VDC Dang has started vegetable farming and Muna Lamichhane of Fulbari VDC have started tailoring business.)
61	Youth Mobilizati on /Youth Initiative (YI)	Observation of LYGs meeting found that LYG members were not punctual to attend meeting.	It was made mandatory to attend meeting on time.	Developed culture of being punctual in meeting and other activities.
62	Youth Mobilizati on /Youth Initiative (YI)	M&E dept. found that reports/data submitted by district were incomplete.	Frequently orientation of district staffs on M&E templates.	M&E dept. is getting qualitative data from districts.

63	Media Mobilizati on / Equal Access (EA)	The participants' evaluation marks were less in the training reports so it was found that there was gap in terms of coordination between trainer and M&E in the preparation stages such as pre/post format development.	Proposed joint consultation with the resource persons/trainer of the training and M&E team	Coordination with trainers of each training was done with M&E team along with media team.
64	Media Mobilizati on / Equal Access (EA)	FM stations were unware of the progress and weakness of their own which was found after the M&E visit.	CLF scores were shared with FM partners	FM stations managers became more responsible coordinating with SB partners and EA team.
65	Media Mobilizati on / Equal Access (EA)	It was found that more of the RLG feedbacks were focus on drama format so it was recommended in the M&E report that listeners were more interested in drama.	Dramas was included in the Naya Nepal Radio program	Increased in quality percentage (80% in last quarter and 90% in June 2015)
66	Media Mobilizati on / Equal Access (EA)	It was found that there was some overloaded work to collect the 200 formats monthly and if there will be SQS in the same month and added 100 formats. So, it was decided to track all the information into the compare software and mobile monitoring was proposed. So, it was planned to apply the mobile monitoring and sending the data base through software.	Mobile monitoring system should be follow rather than paper work	Mobile monitoring training was planned in the July 2015 and preparations were completed jointly with IT team.