

Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project

# CS:MAP Newsletter

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Issue 29

**Words from the  
Acting Chief of Party,  
Civil Society: Mutual  
Accountability  
Project**

It is my immense pleasure in bringing to you yet another issue of the Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project (CS:MAP) monthly newsletter. I sincerely hope that this 29<sup>th</sup> issue will help us reflect upon activities and achievements from the month of February 2019, share with and learn from one another, cherish the collective results that we have achieved this far, and aspire to do more towards advancing the Nepali public interest. As with the earlier issues, we anticipate that you will enjoy going through this edition, and provide feedback on making future editions even more interesting and fruitful.

Happy reading!

Sajana Maharjan  
Acting Chief of Party,  
CS:MAP, FHI 360 Nepal

**Strengthening Enabling Environment for Civil Society and Media Organizations in Nepal**

**Corporate Leaders Vow to Advance CSR Initiative**

Corporate leaders vowed to contribute to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to establish themselves as socially responsible businesses, and to pay back to the community. In a dialogue held in Nepalgunj on February 26, 2020, they demanded for clear policies and guidelines, as well as for state recognition of their contribution. CSR being a traditional culture in Nepal, it is formally governed through the Industrial Enterprises Act 2016, and through the circulars of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) to banking and financial institutions.

CS:MAP's implementing partner GoGo Foundation, in collaboration with NGO Federation of Nepal, Banke Chapter, convened the event with the objective of bringing local business leaders, civil society organization (CSO) activists and media persons together, to develop a common understanding on the significance of CSR for social causes in Nepal. The event's other objective was to identify the challenges that hinder corporate houses to work in line with state provisions related to CSR and CSOs' collaboration with corporate houses in institutionalizing CSR.



Speakers included the Mayor of Nepalgunj Sub-metropolis, Dhawal Shumsher Rana; Director of Nepal Rastra Bank, Mukti Nath Sapkota; Secretary General of Nepalgunj Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Chiranjivi Oli; and business people,

journalists, academicians and branch managers of banks based in Nepalgunj. They spoke on CSR's localization process, policy issues, CSR's regulatory mechanism and the publicity stunt by corporate houses. The business leaders also expressed their disappointment over the state's failure to reciprocate and

recognize their contribution. Civil society leaders emphasized on the need for collaboration with corporate houses and CSOs for effective CSR implementation.

Kedar Khadka, Executive Director of GoGo Foundation, made a brief presentation on CSR global movement and national enabling context including issues and challenges to implement CSR in Nepal. The program concluded with a 'Joint Public Declaration' signed by the key participants to advance CSR campaign. A total of 77 people (female 12) participated in the event.

### **Civil Society Gears up for Submitting 3rd UPR Report**

After a series of province-level consultations on Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to prepare civil society reports on key human rights issues, CS:MAP's national advocacy partners Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) and Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) organized three national-level consultations in February in Kathmandu.

INSEC, as the secretariat of the CSOs' coalition for UPR, coordinated with 295 CSOs for UPR report preparation and submission procedure. In the two events organized by INSEC on February 28 and 29, 2020, the highlights and issues incorporated in the UPR draft report was shared. Similarly, draft report prepared by women coalition and coalition on Durban Review Conference Follow-up Committee for UPR was also shared. Likewise, DNF organized the national consultation on behalf of Dalit CSOs on February 25, 2020. In all the three events, representatives from the CSOs shared their inputs, concerns and agenda to be incorporated in those reports.

The major concern raised by the participants relate to follow-up actions and continuous advocacy to implement the



previous UPR recommendations. Anup Raj Sharma, Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), said that NHRC is coordinating with the national human rights institutions (NHRIs) for UPR reporting and would focus on presenting the status of human rights protection concerns and human rights-related policy debate.

With the recommendations received from those consultations, INSEC and DNF will submit civil society report on key human rights issues, and Dalit issues respectively this March. Additionally, Women Act along with Blue Diamond Society is also set to submit a civil society report on lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and

intersex (LGBTI) rights this March based on various consultations organized in previous months. These three events were attended by 294 people (female 119, others 6) from CSOs, media, NHRIs and the Government of Nepal, including the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, NHRC, National Dalit Commission, and Federal Parliamentarians, among others.

### **CSOs Pledge to Improve Internal Governance and Self-Regulation**

Civil society organizations (CSOs) committed to implement the Minimum Standard of Internal Governance and Self-regulation 2076 BS and CSOs Position Paper 2076 BS at a meeting called by NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) on February 25, 2020 in Kathmandu. The objective was to support CSOs to improve their internal governance and strengthen self-regulation.

Representatives of NFN district chapters of the Kathmandu Valley, various federations, networks, and non-governmental organizations agreed that the minimum standard for internal governance and self-regulation for CSOs

was an utter need and that it should be implemented extensively to uplift the internal governance and self-regulation system of the CSOs.

NFN's Karnali and Sudurpaschim provincial committees launched the Minimum Standard for Governance 2076 BS and CSOs Position Paper 2076 BS in their respective provinces during the last week of February. The documents were launched amid the presence of the provincial policy/ law makers, provincial and district chapters, provincial committee of various federations, CSOs and media.

Members of the Social Development Province Assembly Committee, Province Assembly, representative of the Office of the Attorney General, Secretary of the Social Development Ministry were briefed on CSOs Position Paper and were requested to provide civic space for civil society participation in the provincial-level policy formulation. Decision makers expressed their commitments to engage civil society while developing such laws and consider the Position Paper.



### Sexual and Gender Minorities Deprived of Constitutional Rights



An assessment report on human rights has shown gaps in Nepal's legal framework on the rights of LGBTI people despite the constitutional guarantee of equal rights to them. Human rights activists, at a dissemination program on the findings of an assessment of human rights carried out by Women Act and Blue Diamond Society, reaffirmed that legal framework needs revision to ensure sexual and gender minorities' constitutional rights. The dissemination program was organized on February 20, 2020 in Kathmandu.

Participating human rights activists appreciated the report for detailing categorical issues, strengths and gaps in constitutional provisions, Acts and policies that hinder LGBTI community to exercise their human rights as ensured in the constitution of Nepal. The report highlights that despite the Supreme Court decisions and fundamental constitutional rights, laws, policies, and Acts, government programs are insufficient to address the issues of LGBTI.



The assessment report was prepared following a series of consultation, interactions and focus group discussions with regional and national-level stakeholders and sexual and gender minorities. Altogether 52 people including human rights activists participated in the event.

### Orientation to Review Laws and the 5th National Human Rights Action Plan

CS:MAP-HRS partner Women Act and Blue Diamond Society organized two interactions on February 25 and 28, 2020 to make women and sexual and gender minorities aware of key findings of the review of five laws; namely, Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act, Crime Victim Protection Act, Rights to Education, Right to Employment and legal provision on the rights of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal. They were also oriented to the 5th National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP).

The main objective of the events was to share key findings of the legal review and 5th NHRAP to women and LGBTI and CSO representatives. It also aimed to discuss and collect feedback from participants on the findings.



Krishna Bhakta Pokharel, Coordinator of Parliamentary Regulations Draft Committee of the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament of Nepal, expressed his commitment to raise the issues of LGBTI and women in the Parliamentary Regulations Drafting Committee. Participants in the program appreciated for carrying out the review of the important laws related to human rights, women and LGBTI people and sharing the findings.

The first event on February 25 was attended by 44 participants (female 26, and others 9) and the second organized on February 28, 2020 was participated in by 44 people (female 14, and others 17).

## Civil Society and Media Engagement with Government for Effective Public Resource Use and Service Delivery

### Local Government Pledges to Form a Good Governance Policy

Siddhalek *gaunpalika* in Dhading district convened *Sajhedari Manch* meeting on February 23, 2020. The meeting discussed on the importance of good governance policy, its formulation process, and benefits to the people. Rajaram Sharma, Secretary of Federation of Nepali Journalists, Dhading Chapter, made a presentation on the importance and suggested possible contents for a good governance policy.



Tanka Nath Sharma, CA Coordinator, and participants raised issues related to service delivery and governance at the local level. Laxman Bhattarai, Chief Executive Officer, and Kamala Sharma, Vice Chairperson of the *gaunpalika*, addressed the issues raised during the meeting.

Prem Nath Silwal, Chairperson the *gaunpalika*, committed to form a good governance policy after holding discussions at the local level. A total of 35 people (female 7) including Ward chairperson, journalists, CA members, CSOs representatives and local people.

### CSOs Take Initiative to Improve Internal Governance

CSOs of Surkhet district organized discussions in Surkhet on February 28, 2020. Civil society champions discussed on the importance of minimum standards for internal governance of CSOs. Sundar Nepal, a CS:MAP partner organization, which has applied the minimum standards for internal governance, shared its experiences focusing on why it is useful to a CSO.



Ghanshyam KC, Chairperson of NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN), Surkhet Chapter, also spoke about the importance and effectiveness of internal governance. He also shared the minimum standards finalized by NFN.

Following the presentations, participants discussed on the importance of internal governance for CSOs that helps to enhance the public image of organizations and building trust with the government and stakeholders. The participants urged the government to monitor CSOs whether they are operating ensuring minimum standards or not. The discussion also focused on financial transparency and CSOs commitment towards social change.

They also appreciated Sundar Nepal for improving its internal governance. Representatives of District Administration Office and District Coordination Committee also recognized CSOs efforts and recommended to apply it. They also committed for possible support from their side. CSOs made a 12-point declaration and formed a monitoring committee. A total of 40 people (female 8) participated in the program.

Meanwhile, CSOs of Dolakha district agreed to implement the minimum standards of good governance to improve internal governance of their organizations. CS:MAP partner Human Rights Awareness and Development Center (HURADEC) organized a district-level interaction on CSO's minimum standards which will help in improving internal governance on February 20, 2020 in Charikot, the district headquarters.



The CSO's minimum standards guideline has been prepared by NFN through a series of consultations at both national and sub-national levels. HURADEC and NFN, Dolakha Chapter jointly organized the event and discussed on customizing the standards to implement at the local level. The program also formed a committee led by Raju Thapa, Chair of NFN, Dolakha Chapter to adopt it at the local level and provide technical support for its implementation and monitoring.

The major contents of CSO's minimum standards comprises endorsement of budget and plan of the organization from general assembly, open membership, disclosure of all the activities, internal audit, terms of reference for staff and executive members, transparent procurement and grievance handling system. Mr. Thapa facilitated on the minimum standard whereas CSO activist Hom Pathak spoke about good governance. A total of 31 participants including 10 females attended the event.

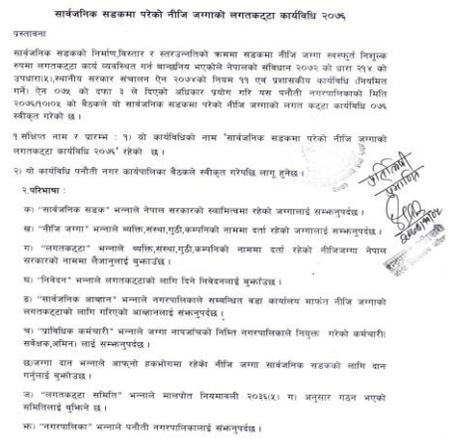
### Panauti Municipality Formulates Guidelines for Delisting Private Land

CSOs in Kavre district raised the issue of delisting private land acquired for the expansion of public road. For quite a long time, citizens were forced to pay taxes of the land that was acquired for public road expansion just because the government did not delist the land. This issue was raised during interactions which was later taken up for advocacy by CSOs in Kavre district. To put pressure on the local government, CSOs submitted memoranda, organized interactions and even discussed the issue through the local media in the past.

As a result, Panauti Municipality of Kavre formulated guidelines to delist the land used for public road. The guidelines were first drafted by Samudayik Sarathi, a CS:MAP implementing partner, which was later discussed with key stakeholders and finalized incorporating their feedback. Indra Adhikari, Senior Administrative Officer of Panauti Municipality, says, "The municipality will post a public notice for citizens to file applications with a request to delist their land acquired for public road." "Technical support from Samudayik Sarathi was really instrumental in drafting the guidelines in the initial phase," he added.

### Interaction on Corporate Social Responsibility Held in Sindhupalchowk

Samudayik Sarathi organized an interaction on February 25, 2020 in Sindhupalchowk on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of financial institutions working in the district. Main objective of the interaction was to



sensitize citizens to the use of CSR and create conducive policy environment so that CSR can be used for broader social welfare mobilizing the fund through CSOs.

Krishna Gopal Tamang, Chairperson of District Coordination Committee, said that financial institutions should invest their CSR funds transparently and accountably. The federal government should take initiative in making policy to utilize the fund by creating single basket, he added. "Taskforce needs to be formed by the federal government to study how CSR fund can be utilized effectively," Tamang said.



Participants said that local government should coordinate with the financial institutions and create environment for working together to maximize the use of CSR funds. Stakeholders said that financial institutions have been using the funds and investing them in the way they wanted due to lack of clear policy and guidelines. Lack of clear policy and modality to invest CSR funds for social cause, financial institutions are not in a position to make the best use of this fund, participants said.

### LDAG Pushes Local Government to Operate Outreach Clinic in Dolakha

Listening, Discussion and Action Groups (LDAGs) have been raising the problems being faced by local people of their respective working areas. The LDAG in Shailung *gaunpalika* raised the issue of operating an outreach clinic at Magapauwa Pipal Danda of Shailung *gaunpalika* Ward no. 4, Dolakha district in its meeting along with the local women's group.



Shailung is one of the remote places in the district and people have to walk a long distance to avail general health facilities. In keeping with the hardship faced by the local people, the members of LDAG and women's group visited the *gaunpalika* and urged the chief of the *gaunpalika* and the chair of the Ward to operate an outreach clinic. Because of their initiation, the *gaunpalika* has started the operation of outreach clinic since February 17, 2020.



The building of the clinic constructed by Architecture Sans Frontiers (ASF) Nepal was inaugurated by Bharat Prasad Dulal, Chair of Shailung *gaunpalika*. Mr. Dulal said that the clinic would facilitate the local people to avail health services at their community.

Earlier, they had to go as far as the district headquarters Charikot to get general health services. Now, the local people are happy to get first aid and primary health services at their community.

### Local Government Applies Community Score Card

Rural Women Development Centre (RWDC) conducted a Community Score Card (CSC) at Ward no.14 of Ghorahi Sub-metropolis on February 18-20, 2020. During the event, Ward representatives, officers and service receivers analyzed the service delivery process and resource use and identified gaps, strengths and weaknesses in service delivery mechanism and designing action plans for improving the services in the days to come. CSC has helped the Ward to be transparent, accountable and increase citizen participation for effective public service delivery throughout the Ward.

RWDC conducted the preliminary meeting with service providers and service seekers. Similarly, resource assessment, self-assessment, work performance evaluation, and face-to-face meetings were conducted between service seekers and service providers. Most of the gaps identified by were recommendation for citizenship; business registration; office management; local level planning process; budget implementation; use of public resources; time keeping; and personal event registration, among others. They also talked about the possible solutions.



In the face-to-face meeting, public service seekers and service providers also prepared an action plan for improving public service delivery and to address the gaps. Elected bodies committed to

address the identified gaps. Similarly, the Ward prioritized issues like increasing citizen engagement in local-level planning process; time keeping; social security allowance; monitoring of business registration, and monitoring and facilitation of local plan. Shakti Ram Dangi, Chairman of the Ward pledged to address all the issues in partnership with Ghorahi Sub-metropolis and civil society.

A total of 33 (female 11) participants representing *Tole/lane organization*, child clubs, mother groups, marginalized community, elected representatives and government staff participated in the event.

### Village Assembly Approves Governance Policy

*Kalika* and *Uttargaya gaunpalikas* of Nuwakot district have introduced Good Governance Policy. As decided in last meeting of *Sajhedari Manch*, both *gaunpalikas* drafted the policy and Village Assemblies of both *gaunpalikas* approved the Good Governance Policy, 2076 BS.

In this regard, Community Development Center provided strategic support to develop the policies in the *gaunpalikas*. For developing the policy, a decision was made by *Sajhedari Manch* meeting of the *gaunpalikas* on January 17 in Kalika and on February 12, 2020 in Uttargaya. Now both *gaunpalikas* have planned to publish the policy.



## Capacity Building of CSOs and Media

### CS:MAP Builds the Capacity of Partner Organizations

CS:MAP organized a three-day Advanced Excel Training to the concerned staff of all implementing partner organizations from February 18 to 20, 2020 in Pokhara. The objective of the training was to further strengthen the skill and capacity of administration and finance officers of the partner organizations in the use of MS Excel which is imperative for them to perform their day-to-day tasks.

The training was divided into two segments: discussion on sub-award management issues/updates and Excel training. The session covered areas like power functions in excel, text and date function, logical function, conditional formatting, sorting and filtering, data validation, VLOOKUP function and data summarization and visualization.



Two Excel Trainers from FE+, a training institute, facilitated the training. To have hands-on knowledge, each

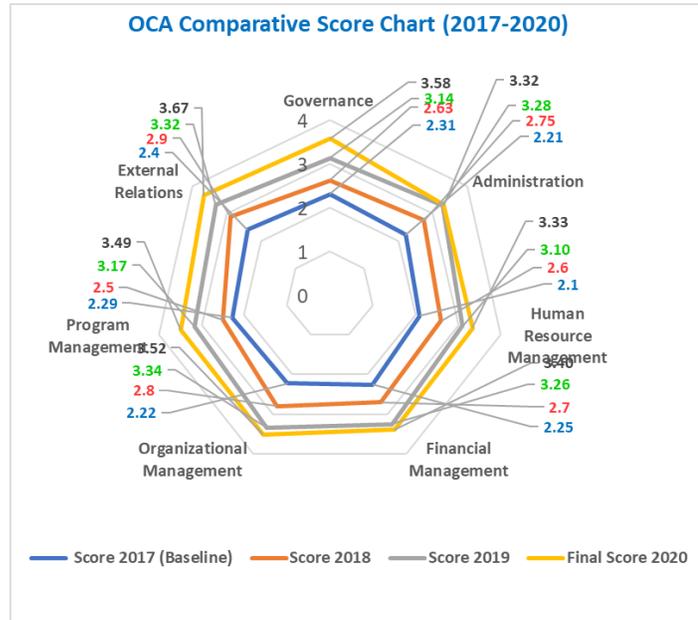
Two Excel Trainers from FE+, a training institute, facilitated the training. To have hands-on knowledge, each

participant did the practical exercise on their laptops. Individual support was provided to the participants for effective learning. The sessions were interactive, and participants were provided with knowledge and ideas to work in excel to accelerate their working capacity. A total of 24 people (female 8) participated in the training.

### Organization Capacity of 14 CSOs Assessed

Nepal National Social Welfare Association (NNSWA) and MITRA Samaj have completed the final round of Organization Capacity Assessment (OCA) of 14 CSOs using CS:MAP-developed OCA tool. The assessment was started from the first week of January and ended on the third week of February 2020. The assessment focused on seven domains (Governance, Administration, Human Resource Management, Financial Management, Organization Management, Program Management and External Relationship) and 39 sub-domains. CS:MAP capacity building team backstopped both partners to ensure the quality of assessment, mentored their staff in assessments on probing skills and qualities along with the requirements as outlined in the tool.

After the assessments, with the support from the organizations, CSOs prepared Institutional Improvement Plan for the next one year, covering major gaps identified in all 39 sub-domains. The final round of assessment showed significant increments in terms of score and institutional capacity of CSOs compared to the baseline established in 2017. The cumulative final capacity score is 3.53 with an increment of 1.27 compared to the baseline score.



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