



Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project

August 2019
Issue 22

CS:MAP Newsletter

Words from the 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 22nd issue will help us reflect upon activities and achievements from the month of July 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!

Bishnu Sapkota
Chief of Party, CS:MAP;
Country Director, FHI 360
Nepal

Strengthening Enabling Environment for Civil Society and Media Organizations in Nepal

Civil Society Leaders Lead the Initiative for CSO Accreditation

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) formed a five-member “CSO Accreditation Indicator Drafting Committee” to start work on the process for CSO accreditation in Nepal. The committee was formed under the leadership of Jit Ram Lama, President of NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) at an interaction among Nepali civil society leaders, held on July 26, 2019 in Kathmandu.

Kedar Khadka, Executive Director of GoGo Foundation, presented on the importance and procedure for CSO accreditation. The presentation discussed why civil society is important, prevailing practices of national and international CSOs, and the importance of CSO accountability and transparency, among others.

Jyoti Baniya, President of the Forum for Protection of Consumer Rights Nepal, suggested to develop some indicators for the accreditation framework.



About challenges faced by the CSOs, he said that government had completely bypassed the citizens and there was no participation of the CSOs in law-making process. There is a need for self-regulation, self-audit in order to improve the CSOs as well, he added. Prominent CSO leaders and media persons from across the country emphasized the need for the CSOs accreditation in the changed context. They said that the CSOs accreditation would contribute to respond to the growing allegation against the CSOs by the bureaucrats, politicians and citizens. Altogether 52 representatives including 10 female participants took part in the event organized by the GoGo Foundation.

Multi-stakeholders Dialogue on Freedom of Expression Held

Freedom Forum organized a multi-stakeholders' discussion on July 30, 2019 in Kathmandu with an objective of updating the stakeholders on the contemporary challenges of Freedom of Expression and policy resolution to address those challenges.

Toby Mendel, a renowned international expert on freedom of expression, was the keynote speaker who briefed about international standard of freedom of expression referring to article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Seeking, imparting and receiving information should be guaranteed for exercising freedom of expression regardless of frontiers, to any individuals and medium as well, he added.



Media is seen as an intermediary to assure freedom of expression and information. Self-regulation is the basic model of media regulation. Other regulatory mechanisms also exist though such mechanisms should be free from government interference, Mendel further said.

He said media diversity is another aspect, which needs to be promoted in terms of ownership, structure and contents. Licensing and registration can be acceptable for broadcasting, but not legitimate for the print media as per the international law, he added. Mendel also

highlighted media rights in regard to federalization. He suggested broadcasting should be under the jurisdiction of the federal government while the regulatory provision for the print and other media should remain with the provincial and local governments.

Commenting on the bills like Information Technology, Advertisement, and Media Council related to freedom of expression, he pointed out various flaws such as unconstitutionality, ambiguous provisions, vague words, government-dominated structure and laws made without necessity. Out of 55 participants, there were 17 females as well as 18 parliamentarians from the federal parliament and state assembly of Province 3 plus other stakeholders.

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

Good Governance Barometer guides community improvements in Nepal

Alex Levy and Joseph Sany from FHI 360 are supporting CS:MAP team in GGB implementation. Based on their observation during their recent field visit in Nepal, they have written a blog on G3E newsletter, DEGREE that was recently published. This blog tries to capture the usefulness of GGB to see how this process has actually led to improved service delivery in real communities.

Please find the link to the blog: [Degrees: Good Governance Barometer guides community improvements in Nepal](#)

Provincial assembly member of Province 3 Goma Bhurtel said since the issue was very important, she would raise it in the provincial assembly as well. Expressing commitment to solve the problem, Tanka Prasad Timalisina, Mayor of Namobuddha Municipality, said that should be addressed by formulating guidelines. He also said that Namobuddha Municipality was ready to collaborate with Samudayik Sarathi to solve the problem.

Nepalgunj Sub-metropolis Shows Good Gesture to Civil Society

Information and Human Rights Research Center (IHRC) organized an interaction in Nepalgunj with an objective of promoting meaningful participation of citizens in local-level planning process in Nepalgunj recently.



The interaction decided to hand over a letter to the Mayor of Nepalgunj Sub-metropolis. A team of civil society representatives visited the Mayor and handed over the letter to him. It contained the agenda like ensuring citizen's meaningful participation in planning process; adopting the modality of Open Government Partnership; using social accountability tools to promote good governance; ensuring citizen participation in council meetings; and promoting greenery and sanitation in the sub-metropolis, among others.



Mayor Dhawal Shumsher Rana welcomed the delegates of the civil society and requested them to support him for citizen participation in the activities of the sub-metropolis. Rana said civil society could raise the concerns of the citizens which would help the sub-metropolis to take appropriate actions to address them. He immediately called the concerned officials and instructed them to ensure stakeholders' participation in the council meeting.

CSOs and Media to Amplify the Voices of the Marginalized Communities

Development Exchange Center (DEC) Nepal, NGO Federation of Nepal and Federation of Nepali Journalists,



District Chapter Dhading jointly organized an interaction on the 'Role of Media and Civil Society in Promoting Civil Society Voices' on June 28, 2019 at the district headquarters.

Representatives of civil society and media discussed on the current scenario, importance of civil society in each local government and problem faced by the civil society, among others.

The representatives expressed their concern about the shrinking civil society space. The interaction also emphasized on the importance of collaboration between civil society organizations (CSOs) and media to make the local governments more accountable to the citizens.

The interaction decided to increase the CSOs and media collaboration for civic concerns and amplify the voices of the marginalized communities. Altogether, 25 representatives (6 female) from the CSOs and media participated in the interaction.

LDAGs Members Endeavour to Protect Environment

Listening, Dialogue and Action Group (LDAG) members of Shikhar and Chautari LDAGs in Bheriganga Municipality in Surkhet district have been actively participating in social activities.



For the last two years, since the LDAGs' establishment, their members have increased their activity in areas like plantation, sanitation, public awareness raising, and support to different Wards to develop and implement their plans and activities. A tree plantation event was organized by Ward nos. 11 and 13 of the municipality to implement the President Chure Conservation Program.

The members of the LDAGs coordinated with schools, health post and other concerned bodies to participate in the plantation event. About 1,300 saplings of different kinds of plants have been planted.

Besides the plantation, the LDAGs also coordinate to protect the plants and to arrange water supply during summer. Tillak Ram Durgi, and Tika Ram Subedi, chairs of Ward nos. 11 and 13 respectively, thanked the members of the LDAGs for their work.

District-level Nagarik Samaj Manch Formed in Makwanpur

DEC Nepal and NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN), Makwanpur Chapter, jointly organized a strategic coalition building meeting CSOs and media in Hetauda on July 16, 2019.

The meeting focused on areas of collaboration between media and the CSOs and importance of joint initiatives at the district and *palika* levels. Participants emphasized on the need of a district-level joint network encompassing the existing networks and alliances rather than having an additional network.



The meeting decided to form a "*Nagarik Samaj Manch* (Civil Society Forum)" comprising 17 CSO networks operating in the district. NFN will lead the Manch as a coordinator. The forum decided to form *Nagarik Samaj Manch* in all *palikas* starting from Manahari *gaunpalika* on the initiation of DEC Nepal. Altogether 19 representatives (female 14) from the CSOs and media participated in the meeting.

Capacity Building of CSOs and Media

Local Government Representatives Pledge to Use Social Accountability Tools

Rural Women Development Center (RWDC), Dang organized an orientation to social accountability (SA) tools on July 19, 2019 at Gadhawa *gaunpalika* in Dang district with an objective of promoting good governance by building the capacity of the local elected representatives.

The orientation focused on common SA tools such as Public Hearing, Social Audit, Public Audit, Community Score Card, Citizen Report Card (CRC), Exit Poll, Public Expenditure Tracking.



The elected representatives said, "the SA tools taught us to be more accountable to the citizens." They said although they had basic knowledge, the orientation was more comprehensive and helped them to understand the overall SA tools required to improve governance in their *palikas*.

Among the tools, the representatives said, Exit Poll and CRC were more interesting and newer to them. Most of the Ward chairs and *gaunpalika* chair pledged to apply Public Hearing, Public Audit and the provision of right to information (RTI) to improve governance.

Gadhawa *gaunpalika* chair committed to recruit information officer for the *palika* and build his/her

capacity on information dissemination and RTI; pro-actively disclose information on the services provided by the *palika*; use appropriate SA tools in the *palika*, and formulate necessary policies to sustain the use of the SA tools among others.

A total of 30 people (3 female) including chair, vice chair, chief executive officer, officers of sectoral division heads, Ward chairs, representatives of Chamber of Commerce and Industry and civil society participated in the orientation.

Editorial Team

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

Nirmal Rijal, Ph.D., Media Director, CS:MAP, Equal Access International

Ram Sharan Sedhai, Development Communication Manager, CS:MAP, FHI 360 Nepal

This newsletter is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this newsletter are the sole responsibility of FHI 360 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

For Further Information Contact:

Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project (CS:MAP) | FHI 360 Nepal

GPO Box 8830, Gopal Bhawan, Anamika Galli, Baluwatar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977.1.4437173 | Fax: 977.1.4117475

Web: <https://www.fhi360.org/countries/nepal>