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Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project

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# CS:MAP Newsletter

## Welcome Message

It gives me great pleasure to present the first issue of the Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project (CS:MAP) newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to provide a platform for all partners to share their work, both internally among other CS:MAP partners and also among external stakeholders, and to highlight some key activities, events and achievements from the last month.

CS:MAP is a five-year project funded by USAID and implemented in Nepal by FHI 360 in partnership with Equal Access International and International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) with the goal of fostering a more legitimate, accountable and resilient civil society that is capable of advancing the public interest. It aims to achieve this goal by strengthening the enabling environment for civil society and media; improving civil society and media capacity for effective policy advocacy and government engagement; ensuring coordinated and effective civil society and media oversight of public resource use and service delivery; and strengthening organizational capacity and sustainability of CSOs working in USAID priority sectors.

Regards!

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

## Strengthening the Enabling Environment for Civil Society and Media Organizations in Nepal

### CSOs debate sample NGO Management Act for local government units

On October 18, 2017, CS:MAP partner 'Informal Sector Service Centre' (INSEC) organized a discussion program on the sample *NGO Management Act 2074*. The objective was to share key concerns that CSOs had with the sample Act, generate feedback, and submit a position paper to be the *Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development* (MoFALD). The sample Act had been released by MoFALD for local government units to deliberate, adapt and adopt,



with the aim of governing NGO operations and activities within local units.

Advocate Mr. Tika Dhoj Khadka presented a paper sharing key CSO concerns with the sample Act,

highlighting provisions and clauses that had the potential of limiting NGO role in local units and impacting their function.

The chairperson of the *NGO Federation of Nepal*, CEO of *Samjhauta Nepal*, representatives from the *Human Rights Organization of Nepal* (HURON) and *Freedom Forum*, and the CS:MAP legal advisor, among others, put forth their concerns related to specific Articles in the sample Act. Mr. Gopal Lamsal, the chairperson of the *NGO Federation of Nepal*, stated that the sample Act is fundamentally wrong and fails to match requirements provisioned by the Constitution of Nepal.

Other participants at the program pointed out to the practical implications that current drawbacks in the Act could have on NGO effectiveness and expressed willingness to collectively hand over recommendations for reform to the concerned ministry. Chairperson of INSEC, Mr. Subodh Pyakural expressed commitment to finalize the position paper to submit to MoFALD.

## Interaction on GESI Checklist

On October 18, 2017, CS:MAP partners Samjhauta Nepal and Media Advocacy Group (MAG) shared a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) checklist that they had drafted, with political party representatives including 10 former members of parliament. The interaction was organized with the objective of orienting the leaders on the importance of reviewing draft policies from a GESI perspective. Samjhauta Nepal highlighted key areas that need analysis through a GESI lens during drafting of new policy instruments, or the review of existing ones. The draft GESI checklist was reviewed by participants and their feedback is currently being integrated into a revised

version to be distributed to various law-making bodies, including the various parliamentary committees and sub-committees.



## National Mass Communication Policy Review

Nepal's *National Mass Communication Policy 2016* was reviewed by CS:MAP partners *Media Advocacy Group (MAG)* and *Samjhauta Nepal* to uncover challenges and gaps from a GESI perspective. This review was initially shared with a loose group of media organizations and stakeholders in June 2017. On October 25, 2017 MAG organized a sharing



session with the CS:MAP media coalition including the *Federation of the Nepali Journalists (FNJ)*, *Association of Working Women Journalists (WWJ)*, and *Sancharika Samuha*, and representatives from mainstream media. As a direct outcome of this program, an executable action plan was developed for pursuing the amendment of the *National Mass Communication Policy*, for ensuring the inclusion of GESI while drafting new laws and directives related to the media.

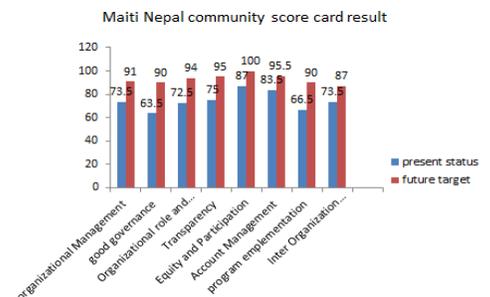
## Implementation of Social Accountability tools in Makawanpur

From October 25 to 27, 2017, *South Asia Partnership (SAP)* Nepal organized practical 'Community Scorecard' application sessions with three CSOs in *Makwanpur – Rural Awareness and Development Organization Nepal*, *Maiti Nepal* and *Mahila Utthan Samaj Makwanpur*. This

activity was undertaken under SAP's pilot Social Accountability tools implementation program. The objective of the event was to demonstrate and promote the utilization of the Community Scorecard as a tool for measuring internal governance within CSOs. Of the 74 participants in these events, 68 were female and included board members, staff and representatives from the participating CSOs.



Mr. Janak Karki from SAP facilitated the sessions with participants divided into two groups. Both groups discussed eight pre-set Community Scorecard indicators with one group



marking themselves on their current status and the second on where they wished to reach within a year. Results were shared, agreed upon and presented graphically to demonstrate status and target. Board and staff members appreciated the usefulness of this Social Accountability tool and have committed to use it in measuring and improving internal governance standards.

## Civil Society and Media Engagement with Government on Public Policy

CS:MAP implements activities at the subnational level through 14 partners working in 34 project districts. The project mobilizes various local structures such as *Common Assemblies*; *Public Private Working Groups*; *Radio Listening Discussion and Action Groups* (LDAGs) and *Sajha Sabhas* for promoting constructive government engagement aimed at policy advocacy and reform. In October 2017, 14 *Common Assembly* meetings were conducted in Kailali, Doti, Achham, Dhading, Kathmandu, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Arghakhanchi, Rukum and Dang districts. These meetings focused on issues related to the Health, Education, Agriculture and Disaster Risk Reduction sectors. Similarly, 9 LDAG meetings were conducted to discuss governance issues discussed on CS:MAP's radio program *Sajha Boli*. CS:MAP partner CSOs conducted three events in Kapilvastu, Palpa and Dang districts focusing on the role of CSOs for strengthening governance system in the districts.

As part of their institutional development process, strategic planning workshops were conducted in two CSOs – *IRDS* and *DEC Nepal*. CS:MAP ISO partner *NEPAN* conducted advocacy orientation sessions for board members and senior staff of *Sundar Nepal* and *DEC Nepal*.

### Inauguration of Shreejanshil Shakha in Dang

Ms. Aasmani Chaudhary, Chairperson of *RWDC*, and Ward Members of Laxmipur, Dang, inaugurated an Innovation Center (*Shreejanshil Shakha*) in Ghorahi Sub-metropolitan – 4 Laxmipur Dang, established under



CS:MAP in October 16, 2017. *RWDC* has provided a computer, internet connectivity, basic furniture and books to *Sunpur Samudayik Ban Upabhokta Samuha, Laxmipur* for operating the Center as a library or resource center. The *Shreejanshil Shakha* is now open to the public and will be used as a common platform for CSOs and media to convene joint interactions, among other usage, such as LDAG and Common Assembly meetings. Between 20 and 30 people visit the *Shreejanshil Shakha* each day as it has started hosting LDAG and Common Assembly meetings. Local people are



happy as they had not had access to such a facility before. They believe the center will be utilized as a space for discussing local issues and generating collective plans for effective government engagement on local policy issues.

### Medical stretchers provided by Ward Office after Advocacy by Common Assembly

HURADEC facilitated a *Sajha Sabha* (Public Forum) in *Likhu Gaunpalika, Dolakha* on June 17, 2017, which identified difficulties for pregnant and lactating women in visiting health facilities, especially due to the lack of a medical stretcher. The follow-on meeting held on September 2017 advocated with the newly elected Ward chairperson to allocate budget for purchasing the stretcher, with Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) Dolma Tamang voicing the need. The Ward Office of *Likhu Gaunpalika* purchased 18 stretchers on October 11, 2017 as a result. As the local health office received the stretchers, pregnant and lactating women now benefit from this facility. Asha Bahadur Tamang, former VDC Chairperson says, 'If we hadn't raised the voice at *Sajha Sabha* regarding stretcher we would not have got that facility now'.



## Capacity building of CSOs and media organizations

### Strategic planning workshops: A step for clarity of vision and streamlining commitments



*Development Exchange Center Nepal (DEC-Nepal)* is committed for transformational changes in the lives of marginalized sections of society. CS:MAP ISO partner *MITRA Samaj* facilitated a strategic planning workshop at DEC Nepal on October 14-17, 2017 with 11 board and staff members participating.

The workshop reviewed the organization's current situation using

Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (PESTLE) method of stakeholder analysis. Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis sessions were conducted to identify the organization niche and there was agreement to move ahead with the vision "creation of well-governed and equitable society".

This event turned out to be a good platform for joint discussion on achievements that further inspired the representatives to contribute more towards organizational growth. On the other hand, there was also realization that the organization is no more a small organization run only by voluntary spirit of limited members. There was agreement that there should be membership expansion and addition of

professional team members to contribute to fund raising and effective program management. Increased capacity, it was agreed, would support the organization to be more effective in policy advocacy and help in creating a better image with constituents, helping the overall cause of enhancing public perception of CSOs.



#### Editorial team

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