

CARTA

Citizen Action for Results,
Transparency, and Accountability



Rural Access Improvement and Decentralization Project (RAIDP)

PROJECT DETAILS

PARTNERS

Partnership for Transparency Fund
HELVETAS Swiss Inter-cooperation
SKY-Samaj Nepal

TOTAL COST

US\$150,000

DURATION

September 2012 - December 2013

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

16 districts out of the 30 RAIDP
districts

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS

Media awareness campaign, posters,
focus group discussions (FGDs), site
visits with community members

Context

The Rural Access Improvement and Decentralization Project (RAIDP) aims to narrow the gaps between urban and rural lives by up-grading tertiary roads linking rural communities to the national transport system. Community Based Organizations (CBOs) were mobilized to monitor the implementation of road improvement works. Over the project period (2005 to 2013), over 2 million Nepali have benefitted from improved rural transport infrastructure and services produced by the program.

Ideally, the CBOs would provide RAIDP implementers additional quality feedback of the work done, including: the probity and integrity in contracting local labor; the resolution of complaints; information dissemination; indications of collusive procurement practices; and environmental and social safeguard issues. However, in reality, there were accountability and capacity issues that severely limited CBO's effectiveness:

- Monitoring was a random process carried out without assigning clear monitoring responsibilities to CBO members.
- Few CBO members had knowledge of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) due to a lack of training.
- Grievances were often submitted verbally, but few were resolved.

- CBO members were not sure of their role in ensuring quality road construction and had little knowledge of what quality construction consisted of.
- CBOs did not have a set of standard tools to measure road construction quality such as the Labor Based Tool kit (LBT).

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The objective of the CARTA sub-project was to strengthen the capacity of CBOs to monitor road construction and the contract process under RAIDP, and to facilitate access to relevant agencies to redress grievances. The specific goals were to:

- Support 80 CBOs to understand the policy and principles in ESMF, and their roles and responsibilities;
- Capacitate CBOs to understand construction work quality issues by providing training based on the project training manual and supplying the LBT kits;
- Capacitate the CBOs to monitor the labor contract process and payments to contractors;
- Enable the CBOs to report grievances and assist them in recognizing malpractice.

RESULTS

The overall results of the sub-project were positive. Two surveys provided comparison data that demonstrated increased knowledge and skill levels after training interventions. For instance, 97% of CBO members had knowledge of ESMF, compared to 28% prior to the sub-project. Likewise, 92% of CBO members had knowledge of the quality of civil work and community monitoring methods, compared to 26% at the baseline. All CBOs received and discussed contract documents by the end of the sub-project, in contrast to 27% before CARTA. Prior to CARTA, CBOs were not assigned roles to monitor civil work, and only 60% of road projects were displayed on information boards. By the end of the sub-project, 84% of CBOs were assigned monitoring roles and 96% of the road projects were displayed on the boards.

CARTA

The objective of Citizen Action for Results, Transparency and Accountability (CARTA) is to enhance the development impact, sustainability and ownership of pro-poor projects in Bangladesh and Nepal financed by the World Bank (WB), by promoting civil society organization engagement and experience and capacity to demand better governance. The program was funded by US\$1.9 million grant from the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) and administered by the WB.

In addition, the number of recorded and redressed grievances increased substantially. For example, before the intervention, all the grievances were verbal and hardly ever addressed. At the end of the sub-project, there were 187 recorded grievances, 89% of them being addressed. As a result of the increased number of valid filed grievances, the Local Development Officer and the District Technical Office Chief carried out additional monitoring visits at the district level.

IMPACT

Media mobilization and raising awareness activities created demand for some of the tools used in CARTA. For example, many CBOs in non sub-project locations requested training on ESMF and the use of LBT. Responding to the demand, LBT activities were replicated in other RAIDP road projects. This newly created demand for capacity building activities reflects the intrinsic and extrinsic values of citizen empowerment that allows for communities to demand and contribute to better governance and service delivery.