

CARTA

Citizen Action for Results,
Transparency, and Accountability



Strengthening Governance and Capacity Building of Community Organizations (PAF-2)

PROJECT DETAILS

PARTNERS

Partnership for Transparency Fund
HELVETAS Swiss Inter-cooperation
Friends Service Council Nepal (FSCN)

TOTAL COST

US\$ 145,5880

DURATION

18 months

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

10 districts

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS

Public hearing, social audit

CONTEXT

PAF-2 is a development project funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Poverty Alleviation Fund Nepal. The project objective was to improve living conditions, livelihoods and empowerment among the rural poor, with particular attention to groups that have been excluded by reasons of gender, ethnicity, caste or geographical location. It disburses funds to over 20,000 Community Organizations (COs) working with numerous Partner Organizations (POs). It is disbursing money in 40 districts ranked as the poorest by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

The Fund acts as an intermediary and implements the project by signing agreements with POs. The POs are responsible for delivering services, such as training, to facilitate the formation of COs, provide technical assistance, supervise COs, and facilitate their institutional development. The POs provide services to COs through Social Mobilizers (SMs), are supposed to visit COs at least monthly. The types of services are based on assessments of the COs and their needs. Based on this analysis, SMs prepare annual action plans with COs. POs are responsible for the training events listed in these plans.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The overall objective was to strengthen the community organizations' governance and capacity for effective and efficient project management so that COs could provide better service to their communities. The specific objectives were to:

- Enable COs to monitor POs' accountability.
- Increase knowledge and skill of COs on good governance, networking, and project management.
- Update and refine participatory tools and indicators used to evaluate the institutional development of COs.
- Enable COs to review their own institutional development using a participatory process.

The sub-project targeted a total of 120 COs in 10 districts. Above objectives were intended to increase the ability of COs to hold the POs accountable and provide better service to their local communities. Training and awareness raising activities helped COs understand better the POs' obligations under PAF-2, recognize their own development needs and improve their monitoring and project management capacities.

RESULTS

The sub-project resulted in a number of positive improvements:

- ♦ 100% of the 120 COs had training plans (baseline: 0%).
- ♦ 45% of COs registered written grievances (baseline: 5%).
- ♦ The average annual visits by SMs increased slightly to 8 (baseline: 7.7). While the number did not increase substantially, the quality of visits did. SMs improved the performance of their responsibilities such as assessing training needs, providing training plans, and checking CO progress. The change was primarily due to COs reminding POs of their obligations as mandated under PAF-2.
- ♦ According to the end-line survey, 92% of the COs were satisfied with the services provided by POs (baseline: 60%). The improvement in satisfaction levels was due to the increased knowledge levels of the COs, and the higher response levels of the POs. In effect, as the COs became more demanding, the POs became more responsive.

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.

- ♦ FSCN, the implementing CSO, recommended several specific revisions to the assessment tools used by the PAF project. The revised tools enabled 100% of the COs to complete a self-review of their level of institutional development in a participatory way (baseline: 17.5%)

IMPACT

CARTA activities (trainings, individual coaching and counseling sessions) had a positive impact on the COs' level of institution development. Regardless of the establishment year, the COs improved their level of institutional development. At the conclusion of the CARTA sub-project, none of the COs were in the "nascent" stage. This trend shows COs acquired more self-confidence in their own competence and independence.

In addition, COs joined networks according to their needs. Becoming members of larger thematic networks (e.g. saving associations and cooperatives). These positive changes present an optimistic outlook on the capabilities of COs to improve the living conditions and livelihoods of the rural poor where the central government does not have a strong presence. In this way, COs can fulfill their roles more effectively if they can leverage their skills and networks.