

SPCBN Civil Society Outreach Project

1st Phase

As one of its key objectives, the SPCBN project has been supporting civil society to facilitate the participation of excluded and disadvantaged communities in the development of the new Nepali constitution. This will be done in two phases.

The first phase specifically targets NGO federations, associations and/or consortia that represent historically marginalized communities in Nepal. As such, Request for Proposals (RFP) were made and seventeen grants, amounting to approximately US\$ 40,000 each, were awarded to successful applicants.

The purpose of the RFP was to select Nepali NGO partners who will implement a 'Loktantrik Sambad' ('Democracy Dialogue') process at the village and community level. The Democratic Dialogues resulted in two outputs: a) civic education and awareness on the CA process, procedures and schedule; as well as, b) the development of community recommendations in the form of submissions to be presented to the CA for inclusion in the new constitution. **Over 108,000 people participated in the CSO Phase 1 process in 68 districts. Submissions were provided to all the CA committees by each of the NGO participants.** A final study is being prepared by Professor Krishna Khanal that will be presented to the CA in February 2010.

2nd Phase

1.0 Background

Nepal elected 601 members Constituent Assembly (CA) during April 2008. The assembly is going to formulate a new democratic constitution re-coursing to widened participations of the citizen. The participation of citizens has been solicited and sought in building new democratic constitution and imparts authorship and ownership to the people. As a start up, the Constituent Assembly members have reached out to communities to solicit their inputs and views in building draft of the new constitution during the previous months. To secure inputs from the part of citizens a set of questionnaires were framed and these were delivered to the people in eliciting their answers to the core constitutional issues and themes. Based on the views and submissions received from communities, experts, civil society and among others, CA will, according to the revised time table announced the other day, come out with preliminary draft of the constitution. The draft will be taken to the citizens to assure an opportunity for a review, feedback and comment on the provisions of the draft.

Citizens need to utilize the historic opportunity and actively contribute to participate in to articulate their views and comments/submissions on the draft circulated on behalf of the constituent assembly and published in the **Nepal Gazette**. This will contribute to secure ownership/authorship of the people and legitimacy in the constitution building process. However, there is a need to catalyze and support citizens especially with regard to building their democratic competence to air and present their comments/views/opinions in the preliminary draft of the constitution. Citizens should, indeed, be enabled to seize lead in presenting inputs building of new democratic constitution for the country.

1.1 Rationale of Enhancing Civic Competence

Needless to restate, Nepal is a highly stratified and exclusionary society from social and political point of view. Around one hundred diverse ethnic groups and the Dalits, among others, compose the social mosaic of the land. Most of these groups are marginalized. They face discriminations based on caste and ethnicity. Moreover, gender based discriminations subject women to severe forms of injustices and oppression. The hierarchic and oppressive social codes and norms deter them from participation in public spheres where key issues of wider civic concerns are deliberated and decided. Moreover, these groups are not aware and

informed of the spaces and opportunities offered by CA to raise their voices/aggregate issues/agenda in the process of building constitution. Furthermore, several studies have indicated that a low percentage of people, no matter the group/so and background, are aware of Constituent Assembly and its contribution to the building of new constitution. This calls for initiatives for capacity building of civil society organizations to mobilize their efforts towards enhancing competence of the citizens to articulate their views, issues and concerns in the process of constitution writing. This is more important especially for raising awareness of the marginal groups especially women whose voices tend to be always suppressed.

1.2. Modality of Implementation

UNDP has hired a professional organization that has experience and expertise in developing and designing civic education materials. In the first phase, we hired IGD for training. **Institute for Governance and Development (IGD)** is a national civil society organization having sufficient experience and expertise to work together with UNDP towards capacity building of 18 CSOs with a view to strengthen and mobilize their efforts for assisting citizens to articulate their comments/suggestions on the constitution building process in general and the preliminary draft of the constitution in particular. IGD had been mandated to conceptualize, develop and design civic education materials for the Coalition for Constituent Assembly Support (CoCAS). IGD handled this responsibility successfully. Hence, IGD has been hired to work together with UNDP towards capacity building of CSOs (identified/selected) in enabling them to facilitate democratic dialogues at the local level so that citizens could make best use of the available spaces to deliver inputs in improving the draft constitution.

2. Introduction

The SPCBN Project supports a Civil Society Outreach Initiative which has provided grants to a wide range of civil society federations and associations representing a diverse range of communities. These grantees will conduct community-level “Democracy Dialogues” (“*Loktantrik Sambad*”) on the draft constitution throughout the country. This process will inform the general public about the draft constitution, as well as collect feedback and submissions for the Constituent Assembly.

This program will be implemented in all the VDCs of 75 districts, Dialogues will be conducted at VDC and constituency level.

The overall goal of the project is to promote the effective participation of citizens in Constitution building process of Nepal. Progress will be made by accomplishing following results:

IR 1: Improved people's knowledge on constitution making process and ensure inclusive participation of citizens in the construction of draft constitution.

IR 2: Enhanced opportunities for dialogue between CA Members and their constituencies.

IR 3: Strengthened civil society outreach capacity by which recommendations are reviewed by the CA

NGO's Selected for 2nd Phase Grants

Backward Education Society: BASE is a nationally-recognized, regionally-focused Tharu-led NGO with 20+ years of experience. BASE was a partner in Phase 1 and will conduct these Phase 2 in 3 districts, 14 constituencies and 123 VDCs in the Tharuhat plains of the MW/FW Terai.

Dalit NGO Federation: DNF was established in 1996 as an umbrella organization for 200+ Dalit NGOs working on rights and development. It has its main office in Kathmandu and will be requested to cover 4

districts, 20 constituencies and 265 VDCs in Lumbini zone.

Himalayan Conservation and Development Association: HCDA is located in Humla, district with highly regarded local experience on development issues. They will be implementing CSO Phase 2 in 4 districts, 4 constituencies and 104 VDCs in the Karnali zone.

Human Rights Protection and Legal Service Center: HRPLSC specializes in the Rapti Zone, one of the most conflict-affected areas of the country. They were one of the best performing NGOs in CSO Phase 1. Their consortium will cover 5 districts, 13 constituencies and 231 VDCs in Rapti.

Janaki Women Awareness Society: JWAS is a woman-headed NGO based in Janakpur, Dhanusha district. JWAS has over 16 years of experience working in hill and Terai districts. They will be requested to cover 4 hill districts, 9 constituencies and 217 VDCs in the Janakpur zone hills.

Kirat Yakthung Chumling: KYC was a partner in CSO Phase 1. They have worked with a broad array of donors on a wide range of rights and development initiatives. KYC will be working in 6 districts, 17 constituencies and 258 VDCs in the eastern Mechi hill zone.

Kirat Rai Yayokkha: KRY was established in 1988 and is headed by an indigenous woman. They worked with the Canadian Cooperation Office on submissions for the draft constitution. KRY will work in 5 districts, 10 constituencies and 232 VDCs in the eastern Koshi Sagarmartha hills.

Madhesi NGO Federation: MNF is a leading Madhesi NGO with close ties with the CA Madhesi Caucus and a CSO Phase 1 partner. They include numerous smaller Madhesi NGOs and will work in 4 districts, 22 constituencies and 317 VDCs in the Mithila belt of the central Terai.

Nepal Magar Association: NMA was a CSO Phase 1 partner and performed very effectively in the CA submission collection. NMA will implement Phase 2 through their district chapters in 6 districts, 15 constituencies and 315 VDCs of the western Gandaki hill region.

Nepal National Social Welfare Association: NNSWA began in 1990 in Kanchanpur as a local NGO working for the Dalit community. They grew into one of the most professional NGOs in the Far West Region. NNSWA will cover 4 districts, 8 constituencies and 145 VDCs in Mahakali zone.

Nepal Tamang Ghedung: The NTG was one of the more impressive NGOs at both field implementation and national advocacy during CSO Phase 1. NTG will implement Phase 2 in 6 districts, 18 constituencies and 343 VDCs of the central Tamsaling hill area.

Newa Dey Daboo: NDD is a well-known NGO working for the rights of the Newari people. It has over ten years experience in outreach and development with respected staff. NDD will lead the CSO Phase 2 process in the 3 Kathmandu Valley districts with 15 constituencies and 119 VDCs.

Rara Human & Environmental Development Initiative: RHERI is locally based in Chisapani, Banke district and was established ten years ago with strong local partners. RHERI will work in 4 districts, 8 constituencies and 166 VDCs of the mid-western Bheri hills.

Rural Community Development Forum: RCDF is based in Beni, Myagdi district and began in 2007. This woman-headed NGO has its own community radio with 500,000 listeners. RCDF has been requested to cover 6 districts, 14 constituencies and 295 VDCs in Dhaulagiri zone.

Rastriya Dalit Network: RDN is led by experienced and respected national Dalit leaders and located in Nepalgunj, Banke district. RDN was a Phase 1 partner and will implement the CSO Phase 2 in 4 districts, 7 constituencies and 200 VDCS in the Seti hills of mid-west Nepal.

Tharu Indigenous NGO Federation: TINF is a new NGO federation headed by a respected Tharu intellectual and activist with experienced individuals in key staff positions. TINF will be requested to work in 3 districts, 21 constituencies and 233 VDCs of the eastern Terai.

Social Development Path (SODEP), Nepal: SODEP Nepal is Madheshi headed NGO based in Janakpur. SODEP has more than 15 years experience in development field with experienced professionals staff including more Madheshi female members. SODEP Nepal will cover 4 districts, 25 constituencies and 387 VDCs of Eastern Terai (new cluster)

18. **Jagaran Nepal:** Jagaran is a women headed-NGO. It has been working for over 10 years for women empowerment, human rights and institutional development. Jagaran will work in 7 constituencies and 196 VDCs of 4 districts of Janakpur hilly zonal cluster.