

## LGCDP Design Inputs - Lessons from CIDA Projects in Nepal

### Brief Descriptions of CIDA Projects

**Community Environmental Awareness and Management Project (CEAMP) 2003-2008:** The project's purpose was to increase the capacity of District Development Committees (DDCs) and partner organizations to integrate sound, gender sensitive, environmental management practices into the planning, implementation, and monitoring of district development programs. CEAMP was implemented in four central and western districts: Kavre, Sindhupalchowk, Palpa, and Nawalparasi.

**Community Ground Water Irrigation Project (CGISP) 1999-2007:** The project's objectives were to increase agricultural production on a sustainable basis and improve the incomes of small farmers. The project aimed to facilitate adoption of a 'demand responsive' approach by central government agencies, in which farmers could access credit (in lieu of a subsidy) for installation of a shallow tube well and demand technical and agricultural support services from government and private sectors. CIDA co-financed CGISP with the Asian Development Bank by providing a TA grant for social mobilization (SM). The project was implemented in twelve Terai districts: Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, and Chitwan.

**Consolidating Capacities of Gender Responsive Organization of Nepal (CCGRO) 2006-2008:** The project's purpose is to consolidate the capacities of existing gender responsive organizations (GROs) in Nepal with the objective of meeting practical needs and strategic interests of women through community-based initiatives. It is being implemented in seven districts of the central, western, mid, and far western regions: Sarlahi, Mahottari, Bara, Kaski, Surkhet, Dadeldhura, and Doti.

**Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) 2007-2008:** In Nepal, the CFLI's purpose is to address basic human needs and to promote human rights, democracy, and good governance. It provides an entry point for Canada to become involved with grassroots community people and to quickly, effectively, and efficiently respond to their needs. This responsive mechanism supports projects throughout Nepal.

**Developing Democracy in Nepal Responsive Facility (DDNRF) 2007-2008:** The project's purpose is to respond to opportunities to support democratic processes in Nepal, in particular the election of a Constituent Assembly and drafting of a new constitution. DDNRF is designed to be flexible and adaptive with the evolving situation on the ground, while being sensitive to the country's complex post-conflict dynamics and efforts to build sustainable peace. It covers all 75 districts.

**Local Development Facility (LDF) 2003-2008:** The LDF's purpose is to support the local capacity to prevent violence, manage conflict, enhance peace building, and mitigate the effects of armed conflict by providing basic human needs to women, poor, and socially excluded groups. It aims to achieve this through developing governance capacity at the local level to prevent conflict and contribute to peace building. This proactive and responsive mechanism operates effectively and in a timely manner to Nepal's changing development context. It supports projects throughout the country.

**SAHAKARYA (Working Together) 2003-2008:** The project's purpose is to improve the socio-economic condition of selected communities by promoting equitable representation through Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that are capable of managing local resources and interacting with locally elected bodies and government agencies. It contributes to the improvement of livelihoods and health in rural communities in five mid and far western districts: Jumla, Dailekh, Surkhet, Dadeldhura, and Baitadi.

## Key Approaches of CIDA Projects

**Decentralized, demand-led community empowerment:** Integrates a community planning process into VDC and DDC planning through resource mobilization and resource sharing.

**Demand-responsive and public-private partnerships:** Mobilizes communities to develop sustainable water users groups and associations that construct, operate, and maintain infrastructure (shallow tube wells); provide access to services for small farmers (< 1 hectare) in collaboration with civil society and the private sector (suppliers, drillers, cooperatives, and banks); and promote increased agricultural productivity and marketing, with government playing a facilitation role.

**Gender equality and social inclusion:** Capacitates NGOs as Gender Resource Organizations to support practical needs and strategic interests of women and disadvantaged social groups.

**Peace and conflict sensitive development:** Links peace building with development and capacity building of local organizations to work 'in and on' conflict through addressing root causes of the conflict and integrating economic and tangible interventions.

**Advocacy, lobbying, networking, and alliance building:** Builds local institutions (peace networks, single/women peace groups, associations, cooperatives, and user groups), networks, and alliances at the district, regional, and national levels.

**Community empowerment through community needs and rights-based approach:** Builds and strengthens institutions to have broad-based memberships and good governance practices in order to provide services to their members and promote community empowerment and rights advocacy.

**Basic human needs approach:** Responds to local community needs and demands.

**Rights Based Approach:** Empowers communities to identify and articulate their concerns and advocate for their rights.

## Lessons Learnt by CIDA Projects

### Policy

**Frequent changes in macro policies can lead to challenges implementing programs and projects:** Political instability and frequent changes in government can lead to an unstable macro policy environment that affects programs/projects. A useful policy feedback mechanism is a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) at the central level, which includes representatives of all related Ministries. The PAC can promote policy reforms, improve inter-departmental coordination, and encourage direct interaction with communities to become acquainted with their issues. (CGISP, SAHAKARYA, CCGRO, CEAMP)

**Social Mobilization(SM) can be an effective intervention in all development programs:** SM can be an integral part of all development programs in order to identify and reach the target groups. A holistic approach to social mobilization can effectively raise awareness, mobilize, and provide access to information among the targeted communities. SM should be a national strategy. All government development programs should follow SM based community empowerment process as an entry point. (CCGRO, CGISP)

**Government's role should be as a facilitator and support services should be sub contracted:** The government can play a more effective role as a facilitator than a direct implementer. Support services can be sub-contracted to other actors, such as civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector as based on specific TORs, guidelines, and roles for different actors. (CGISP)

**Transparency is essential in selection processes:** Technical Assistance (TA) selection process/sub contacting is more effective if it follows a transparent process through an independent selection committee with defined roles and a code of conduct. A lack of transparency in selection processes leads

to community grievances and compromises the quality of services, thus affecting the achievement of results. (CGISP)

**Community-led joint programming can lead to greater effectiveness:** Joint programs between local groups (CBOs, users, networks) and government (DDC/VDC) using DDC/VDC funds builds the relationship between people and government. Line agencies can effectively work together with local groups following policy guidelines encouraging competition among different local groups. Joint programming helps to increase the access of CBOs to financial resources, ensure accountability of local bodies, maximise the program reach, and avoid duplication. (CEAMP, SAHAKARYA, LDF, CFLI)

## Implementation

**Community mobilisation is promoted by decentralized planning:** People become motivated and own the process when planning with their communities has clarity on roles, targets to achieve, and monitoring and reporting systems. Community ownership ensures accountability. Policies and criteria should be flexible. They should be reviewed periodically with communities and all stakeholders to ensure their appropriateness, adequacy, and relevance. (CEAMP, SAHAKARYA, CCGRO, LDF, CFLI)

**Transparency and accountability ensures effective service delivery:** Promoting transparency and accountability among stakeholders is essential for effective service delivery and achieving results. Public and social auditing of infrastructure works ensures transparency and the quality of construction inputs and outputs. A clear and mandatory provision for public and social auditing should be included in the program design. (CEAMP, CGISP, LDF, CFLI, CCGRO)

**Working with existing CBOs/Cooperatives:** New projects should not create new CBOs. Rather, they should strengthen and work with existing institutions. (SAHAKARYA)

**Ensuring timely budget flow and services is important for effective results:** The fund flow mechanism should be efficient and without bureaucratic hurdles. It should be managed with transparency and integrity. (CGISP, CEAMP)

**Local bodies are more effective in managing the local environment:** National level institutions need to trust the local bodies, support their capacity building, provide necessary funds on a regular basis, and carry out regular monitoring and facilitation. (CEAMP)

**SM should be based on the demand and perspective of the people:** SM should be a process to identify target groups, local resources, gaps, skills and knowledge. It should facilitate the delivery of services. Programs have failed to reach target groups and failed to meet the development objectives when elites and better-off people capture the benefits of the interventions. (CCGRO)

**Programs should have a strategic vision and results-based management system:** A clear monitoring and reporting system should define indicators for outputs and outcome reporting. Planning should be based on an iterative process that adapts to any changes in the context. (CEAMP, SAHAKARYA, LDF, CFLI, CCGRO, DDN)

**Provide clear guidelines for NGO governance and competitive selection procedures:** Various guidelines, manuals, or procedures available from different agencies can be adopted and adapted as needed. Involving CSOs from marginalized groups requires capacity building and mentoring for good organizational governance practices, which requires time and resources. (LDF, CCGRO, CFLI, SAHAKARYA)

**Sustainability of results depends on an institution/organization's continuity:** Linking community-based institutions (cooperatives, FUGs, SCGs, farmers' groups) with financial institutions, DDC/VDCs, and line agencies leads to their continuity and sustainability. Self-sustained community development through the empowerment of women, marginalized, and socially excluded groups requires a longer period. (CFLI, CCGRO, SAHAKARYA)

**CSOs can effectively deliver services:** CSOs can act as a bridge between the government and communities, to help communities to develop ownership and access resources from the government. The effective use of CSOs requires clear methodology based on simplified Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA) guidelines, rules for CSO/community engagement in service delivery, community mobilization, and context specific flexibility. (CFLI, LDF, CCGRO, CEAMP, SAHAKARYA, CGISP)

**Awareness raising improves human rights:** Raising community awareness regarding available services and access to services increase the demand for services and improve the accountability of service providers. (CLFI, SAHAKARYA, DDNRF, CCGRO)

### Co-ordination

**CSOs can play a role to strengthen linkages, improve coordination with local governments (DDC/VDCs), and increase government presence, transparency, and credibility for a sustained development process:** A multi stakeholder project requires a strong coordination mechanism and defined roles for all stakeholders. Effective coordination mechanisms are needed at all levels for advocacy on common issues, collaboration, sharing resources and experiences, creating synergies to maximize outreach, and avoiding duplication. Coordination also contributes to bringing about constitutional and democratic changes. (CEAMP, CGISP, DDNRF, LDF, CCGRO, SAHAKARYA, CFLI)

### Gender Equality (GE) and Social Inclusion (SI)

**GESI awareness raising increases access and influences policy reforms:** The awareness raising increases active participation of women and socially excluded groups in projects which increases access to project information and resources. To have a greater programmatic impact for a meaningful participation, it is important to have individuals in the local staff, who are women, marginalized, and of ethnic communities. (CCGRO, DDNRF, LDF, CFLI, SAHAKARYA)

**GESI sensitive policies and affirmative action strategies are necessary for effective GESI:** Special strategies addressing the needs of socially excluded groups and women (such as financial support to lactating mothers during trainings, cash incentive to the ultra poor to initiate IGA, etc.) helps to ensure their active participation in project activities. Short duration trainings (less than 2 days in a row at the community level) are effective for promoting the participation of both women and men and increase women's participation by making it culturally acceptable for women to attend activities. (SAHAKARYA, CCGRO)

**Building critical mass of women groups helps address exclusion issues:** Setting special targets and giving special focus (training, counselling, and encouragement) to women and minorities helps to bring them into the mainstream of development. To enhance the women groups, it is essential to build confidence and trust among the group members and promote committed leadership, honest financial management, an understanding of challenges and opportunities, and an attitude of working together to achieve the desired results. (CEAMP, CCGRO)

**A targeted approach promotes women and empowerment of socially excluded groups:** Setting targets increases the participation of women and socially excluded groups, in terms of both their numbers and the quality of their involvement. The formulation of a project monitoring reporting format (PMRF) from the GESI perspective with indicators and close monitoring is important in project design and implementation. (CCGRO, SAHAKARYA, DDNRF)

### Peace Building and Conflict Transformation

**An understanding and practicing the conflict sensitive development (CSD) approach can allow development to continue:** Development results can be delivered in conflict environment when projects follow the CSD approach of being impartial, non partisan and transparent using a low key discreet operation, flexibility based on situational analysis, code of conduct, and security procedures and protocols. Using a group approach (peace networks) and partnerships with communities increases their capacity and confidence to debate, discuss, and negotiate to mitigate or resolve conflicts.

**Addressing local needs and ensuring ownership can promote conflict resilience:** The projects based on community needs and managed by communities themselves proved to be conflict adaptive and resilient to violent conflict. (LDF, SAHAKARYA, CFLI, CGISP, CCGRO)

**Balancing between tangible benefits and capacity building can make programs resilient even to armed conflict:** Support to initiatives that bring tangible changes in the lives of communities make programs relatively resilient to armed conflict at the community level. A balance between capacity development (skill-training/workshops and seminars) with tangible community benefits (infrastructure such as drinking water, small irrigation, schools, income generation, and employment generation focusing on youth) to the community reduce conflict and promote peace. (SAHAKARYA, LDF, CFLI, CEAMP)

**Working in partnership with local CBOs/NGOs, hiring local staff, and building networks and alliances helps to work in conflict environment:** Building partnerships, networks, and alliances is essential for implementing projects during intensified conflict periods. To ensure the participation of capable organizations in service delivery, it is necessary to develop a standard, clear and transparent sub-contracting process when employing the services of NGOs and the private sector. (LDF, CFLI, CCGRO, SAHAKARYA)

### **Networking/ Lobbying/Advocacy**

**Linkages with national level institutions promote more effective advocacy for progressive reforms:** Promoting linkages between communities and CSOs with national level institutions (pressure groups, federations, and human rights or professional organizations) increases people's voice and local pressure for good governance, policy dialogues, and pro-people policy changes. It also facilitates the creation of greater development space (DDNRF, LDF).

**Involving and seeking commitments from political leaders and local authorities in issue based debates and discussions helps to build accountability:** Involving political leaders and local government officials in discussions, debates, and interactions with the public improves the accountability of local governments, service providers, and party leaders. Accountability builds their relationship with the public. This interaction promotes people's voices and provides space for them to articulate their rights and needs on development concerns and issues with service providers and leaders. By mobilizing people, the CSOs can effectively follow up for advocacy on various issues with government and political parties regarding their commitments (DDNRF).

**Use of media effectively to provide access to information:** Access to information is important to strengthen the demand side from the public. It has been proven that local communities more readily accept materials in local languages that are simple, objective, educational, accurate, non-partisan, and illustrative. The use of local FM radios and print media have been very effective (DDNRF).

### **Recommendations for LGCDP**

#### **Policy level**

- Promote a minimum level of macro policy stability to ensure program/project success and avoid high risks. Good development goes well beyond aid and programs. Frequent policy changes due to instability affect programs/projects and aid effectiveness.
- The key commitments required for improved policies are the political will for delegation of responsibility and authority, policies safeguarding anticorruption measures, judicial reform, and rule of law.
- Governance, institutional development, and capacity building should be at the center of all programming to broaden the approach and focus on demand and supply reforms.
- The new role of State should be to coordinate, facilitate, and regulate.
- Supply side reform should include policy coherence and harmonization from central ministerial to district and local levels.

#### **Supply side governance**

- Programs should follow a Results Based Management approach including planning implementation, monitoring and reporting, and evaluation with measurable indicators.
- A social mobilization guideline is needed to strengthen the links between supply and demand sides. This involves creating a thorough understanding of the needs, aspirations, culture, languages, problems, and issues of the local people by creating visions from the local perspective, mobilizing local resources, promoting indigenous technology, enhancing local capacity and encouraging local institutions. It is also important to discuss people's rights, advocate for the voiceless, bridge between the target group and development agency, and improve the local environment and sustainability of all institutions, infrastructures, and interventions. SM should be used as an entry point for all development programs/projects at the district and community levels.
- Strengthening participation and deliberation is important. A proven method is a comprehensive village development planning exercise (linked to District Periodic Plan) with inclusive community participation in all wards. The line agencies, DDC staff members and technicians, and district level

NGOs should work to facilitate the community as decision makers. The plan must be drawn up with a medium to long term vision and resource commitments. The plan should be subsequently validated for necessary rectification. For sustainability, training and awareness activities need to be embedded together in the work plan with “hardware” components.

- Participation from communities should strike a balance between representation from all groups and adequate representation of each group. The reach and intensity of the program is also essential to ensure credibility and ownership of the process.
- A Village Development Fund contributed to by all concerned development partners needs to be established and managed by the Fund Management Committee (FMC) at the VDC level. The FMC should have representatives of women, Dalits, and socially excluded groups selected by community people. The representatives should be accountable to the community. The FMC should be given full responsibility for receiving funds, financial decision making, budget management, implementation, self monitoring, and reporting. The committee will also have a representative and signatory from the VDC. One woman and man from the community should also be signatories. The DDC should play a strong monitoring and coordination role. FMC's performance evaluation should be done by the people at least once in two years.
- The Village Development Work Plan should be executed fully by local CBOs/User Groups/NGOs under the administrative management, supervision, and frequent monitoring of the FMC. Secretarial and day-to-day supervisory assistance should be provided by a Village Development Facilitator appointed in a competitive and transparent manner by the program/projects or VDC.
- Proper coordination and support from DDCs, district line agencies (for technical assistance), and VDC is essential for program implementation. Networking and regular monitoring helps to strengthen their relationship with the local community so it can seek necessary support from line agencies. The community people should be given confidence and full responsibility to use such technical assistance.
- A development activity should be considered complete only after a mandatory public/social audit at the village level. Public/social auditing must be entrenched into the development process to ensure transparency and accountability for the prevention of financial malpractices. As well, strong and frequent monitoring is essential for successful implementation.
- The program should ensure the implementation of a gender equality and social inclusion policy to increase the active participation of women and socially excluded groups. Development of GESI sensitive results and indicators assists in ensuring quality participation. Program/project design and implementation should include training, formulation of a results and project monitoring reporting format (PMRF) from the GESI perspective, indicators to monitor/report, and close monitoring.
- District level Project Advisory Committee (PAC) is essential as a mechanism for policy feedback between the central policy makers and grassroots communities. The PAC provides evidence for selecting effective policies and promoting policy reform.
- It is important to roll back the domain of the State in the new development context by contracting out to civil societies or private sectors through public financing, developing public private- civil society partnerships, and devolving management of authorities to user groups, service cooperatives, etc. This process will require clear guidelines and implementation frameworks.

### **Demand side governance**

- To strengthen governance, government should recognize the role of NGOs/CSOs as service delivery and advocacy agents. NGOs/CSOs should be given the task of social mobilization to aware people on their rights, needs, and State-developed acts and regulations, in order to make government responsive, accountable, and transparent. SM should be done independently of government interference to strengthen the demand side. The government does need to have checks and balances on the work of NGO/CSOs and own and facilitate the process. Sub-contacting with specific TORs (NGO Cooperation Agreements) can ensure the government ownership of the process while safeguarding the CSOs' autonomy. As well, people's access to information on their rights and priorities is essential.
- Promoting a Community Driven Development approach gives the community and local governments control over planning decisions and investment resources. Infrastructure development should follow an economic development and social empowerment process.

- Prioritization of issues for the inclusion and empowerment of women and socially excluded groups should be emphasized. The inclusion of women and socially excluded groups requires guidelines and affirmative actions. Examples include breaking cultural and structural discrimination through affirmative action for access and control over resources- for instance by having Dalits manage water resources, health clinics, and having Dalits get access to toilets to increase their participation in development and self esteem. Another example is promoting women's leadership at the decision making level on school management committees, and development of community halls, small irrigation canals, etc. Women and socially disadvantaged groups should be signatories in fund management committees. Reviewing existing guidelines rather than reinventing them will be useful in saving time and resources. (Gender Equality Coordination guidelines for DDC by CIDA/CNGO; SAHAKARYA, CEAMP developed GESI guidelines, CCO developed GESI in project cycle, etc.).
- For sustainable results, coordination and collaboration is essential to promote knowledge and resource sharing, builds strength for facing challenges and issues, avoid duplications, and create synergies. Multi – stakeholder program/projects need careful design and sequencing of activities and resources for results based coordination. The purposes of the coordination should be identified, discussed, and agreed among the coordinating partners. It is always important to identify the different roles among the partners. Depending on the purpose and levels of coordination, choose effective means of communication, such as periodic meetings, workshops, email and report sharing, etc. Effective coordination requires persistence, commitment, dedicated time, and strong leadership. The DDC should provide program level coordination, while network organizations can manage issue based coordination.
- Public hearing, discussions, debates, and direct interactions with local governments/political party leaders helps to promote accountability, rapport building, and implementation of commitments.
- Developing community level accountability is also important. Community driven development approaches should demonstrate and change community practices by encouraging more transparent information flows, broad and gender sensitive community participation in local decision making, and participatory monitoring of local institutions. These approaches should encourage good governance practices by CBOs, NGOs and CSOs.

### **Peace Building and Social Transformation**

- The adoption of conflict sensitive strategies is essential. These include analysis of conflict dynamics - needs, actors, dividers and connectors, Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) within projects, and community public and social audits, etc.
- Working in a conflict context requires the use of local resources, local staff, quick disbursement methods, transparent approaches, and increased disbursement of resources and decision making roles and responsibilities to communities.
- Program/projects needs to be somewhat flexible to work in conflict/post conflict environments.
- To promote peace building, capacity building should be integrated with tangible benefits that respond to people's basic human needs and promote local ownership of projects.
- Working for peace building requires skills in community healing, counselling, and reconciliation in a post conflict environment.
- Development to reconstruct infrastructure should lead to a social empowerment and transformation process. Peace building is more effective through compliance to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and human rights based delivery mechanisms.
- To work on conflict and peace building, some humanitarian response should accompany the development activities.