

Main observations and recommendations from Joint NPTF-UNPFN Monitoring Visit

Dates: 15.-17. February 2012

Locations: Banke and Bardiya

Purpose of field visit: Observe and monitor projects supported by Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF) and UN Peace Fund Nepal (UNPFN)

Participants from PFS, UNPFN and Donor Partners: Danish Embassy (Ms. Bandana Sharma, Ms. Mie Vestergaard), DFID/Donor Group Secretariat (Ms. Juliet Wattebot O'Brien), GIZ-NPTF (Ms. Barsha Pradhan), Norwegian Embassy (Mr. Eirik Sødal Vole), PFS (Mr. Arvind Rimal), UNRCHCO/UNPFN (Ms. Anne-Sophie Lebeux) and UNRCHCO (Prem Awasthi).

The group visited five projects in total, 3 supported by NPTF and 2 by UNPFN

NPTF-projects:

1st visit: NPTF/0203 – Physical Rehabilitation Services for Conflict Affected Disabled People in Nepal

Implementing agencies: National Disabled Fund (NDF), Physical Rehabilitation Centre, Social Welfare Council (SWC)

Duration of project: 09/2011 - 07/2013

Total approved budget: NPR 52,224,691

Interaction with Nepalgunj Medical College (Kohalpur, Nepalgunj, Banke)

Implementing agency at site: National Disabled Fund (NDF)

Main observations:

- The medical college is well-functioning as to in-house treatment of disabled at large. With support from Handicap International, expertise among staff also seems to be in place.
- The project has yet to receive the funds from the NPTF
- Because of lack of funding, the project to support disabled CAPs has not initiated yet; the college seems prepared to start the project when possible. Up to now, 52 disabled CAPs have received treatment as part of the college's general services, according to their figures. The aim is to receive and treat between 450-550 disabled CAPs from MoPR's official list during the project period. The inception workshop that

is being planned by NDF within the coming month is supposed to decide on the coverage areas for each rehabilitation center, including this.

- Free care will be given based on the MoPR disabilities list. These are being recommended by LPCs to DAO who sends the list to MoPR. Given the involvement of various political actors in the process of finalization of the list, transparency should be ensured in access to the care and services.
- The number of CAPs seeking assistance is low but support will be required for the rest of their lives. The Medical College has centers at community level and mobile camps, but community-level follow-up of patients after treatment at the college can be further strengthened.
- Gender-sensitivity can be strengthened; lack of female staff at the college, particularly in the workshop. None of the female staff are able to fit prosthetic limbs - there had been one but she left when she got married.
- Mobile camps are seen as a good practice to increase outreach and services to clients with limited accessibility. Additionally, the provision of psychosocial services is key of the rehabilitation process of individuals

Recommendations:

- NPTF/donors: follow up with Ministry of Women to ensure that funds are disbursed
- MoPR: Increase transparency and oversight in the decision making process and appeals procedure regarding access to the disabilities list. It is important to enable disabled CAPs currently not on MoPR's official CAP-list to apply for inclusion in the list, in order to receive full reimbursement of their treatment.
- MoPR/donors: Rather than building new rehabilitation centers to support disabled CAPs and ex-combatants existing institutions should be used or upgraded, whenever possible. New structures are costly, delay access to care for CAPs, and there are insufficient resources in Nepal to staff them. The existing structures, if well managed, can provide adequate support.
- NDF/MoPR: Conflict sensitivity is important when treating disabled CAPs which can include victims from both sides of conflict in the same center. The Project strategy should try to incorporate measures to carefully manage interaction between CAPs in the center
- NDF: Strengthen gender-sensitivity in the treatment of disabled, e.g. by reviewing working conditions and hiring procedures etc to ensure that they are as female friendly as possible.
- NDF: Look at options to ensure sustainability of staff in structures, with an emphasis on women who often stop working once they get married or have a child.
- NDF/MoPR: Look at options to feed the practices observed in the project (outreach through mobile camps, long term assistance, women involvement, psychosocial

services) into GoN rehabilitation strategy or related programming to ensure inclusive and comprehensive provision of rehabilitation services, also in the longer term.

2nd visit: NPTF/0413 – Constitution Making and Peace Building through dialogue on Indigenous Nationalities Rights

Implementing agency: National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN)

Duration of project: 04/2011 – 12/2012

Total approved project budget: NPR 24,556,500

Interaction with members of committee formed by NFDIN (Gulariya, Bardiya)

Main observations:

- This project had only just started and activities to-date had been largely focused on setting up an office and establishing the group, which had only met two times.
- The overwhelming concern of the group was why their organizations were excluded from the LPC.
- Due to lack of clear guidelines from NFDIN centrally, there seemed to be confusion about how to go about with the proposed activities, such as the trainings and the planned conferences, and therefore further progress on activities have been stalled. Neither the roles of the members, activities to be carried out or planned outputs or outcomes of the committee seemed clear. Nor was it clear how the project management would ensure coherence in the committee and how the committee can provide something different from the LPCs.
- They did not seem to have a clear idea of their purpose or what they wanted to achieve. This lack of clarity of role among the committee members raised questions about top-down approaches to peacebuilding. What value does such a committee have when it is formed without clear objectives and no ownership from local people?
- Some of the activities proposed - e.g. radio programmes - could benefit from collaboration with other NPTF supported projects such as Peace Promotion through Radio Nepal.
- There were only two women on a committee of 17 people - the reason given for this was that all the members were chairs of represented organizations. When asked, several said that they would be prepared to give up their position for a woman.

Recommendations:

- Donors/MoPR: give feedback on the question of inclusion in LPCs - are they just a local representation of national politics? What scope is there to make them more inclusive and reflective of the local situation?

- Donors/MoPR: encourage the ministry to look more at existing structures when supporting local peacebuilding and what more could be done. Review the project design to correct the effects of the top-bottom approach when setting up the committees to ensure the empowerment and buy-in of project partners at the local level. One concrete way forward could be to focus the committee's peace-building activities on concrete issues specific to the local context, defined by local stakeholders, combined with a consultation process of other local actors, especially LPCs.
- NFDIN should clarify the project activities to the district based committees and their roles in implementation. The project activities should be implemented by committee rather than tendering out individual activities to the individual organizations.
- NPTF: to communicate more actively to all projects about the NPTF portfolio and encourage joint working. (This also links to one concept note currently under discussion.)
- NPTF: follow up female participation with the project management and explore ways to encourage groups like this one to become more inclusive of women
- To future monitoring teams: This is the first time a mission is organized to this project and it is recommended to meet this project again in other districts and utilize the findings of external monitoring team to provide a better and comparative view of the project progress. Additionally, it is recommended to review the format of the monitoring of such activities (plenary sessions) with a view to further help generating dialogue among the monitoring team and the partners

3rd visit: NPTF/0412 – Strengthening LPCs: Peace from bottom up

Implementing agencies: Peace Structures Coordination Division (PSCD), Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR)

Duration of project: 02/2011 – 07/2013

Total approved project budget: NPR 303,661,000

Meeting with LPC members (Gulariya, Bardiya), 16.02.2012

Main observation:

- The LPC is established and has implemented some activities, e.g. street dramas, production of boards re peace-building, and mine risk reduction education in collaboration with the Red Cross Society. Further activities entail referral of conflict affected people by the LPC to the District Administration office for official CAP list of MoPR in order for them to receive reparations.
- Most of the work seemed to be working with the CDO on identifying conflict-affected people. The LPC see themselves as a bridge between CAPs and the CDO. There was a representative from a victims group in attendance also who said that a number of conflict-affected people were still missing from the list. It seems that there is still a

lack of transparency around the list of CAPs. CDO office publish the list of persons on their notice board but there is no mechanism to inform the individuals that their name has been included.

- The success of the LPC depends largely on the Chief District Officer; everything has to pass through him and the all party mechanism formed at the District Administration Office. According to the LPC members, there was a lack of coordination from the former CDO and the new CDO who arrived only the day before is very busy. This makes their work slow and dysfunctional.
- According to some of the “independent” LPC members, representatives from the different political parties dominate meetings, as the structure of the LPC has a relatively high percentage of representatives from the different political parties.
- A permanent local-level secretary was requested, as secretaries have so far been changing every 3-6 months. At present the LPC has no staff to run the office.
- Though LPC have conducted some peace building activities at the district level and formed and trained village level LPCs on roles and responsibilities, they have not received any support on building their own capacity. These structures need to be strengthened, notably through capacity training, to make them operational. This would seem to fall within the scope of the NPTF-funded project.
- The LPC had not received any funds in this fiscal year, and say they need this to carry out their activities, although it was not entirely clear how they would use this money. The LPC chairperson also informed that due to lack of CDO’s cooperation budget was freezed last year.

Recommendations:

- Donors/NPTF: Get an update from the MoPR on progress on strengthening LPCs project, including the village level LPCs and making LPCs more inclusive, given the current context and developments at the districts. Consider how to cooperate with groups that don’t feel represented in the LPC (e.g. Janajatis).
- MoPR: Encourage release of funds to the LPC in order for the committee to implement planned activities.
- LPC/MoPR: According to the MoPR LPC ToR, 1/3 of the LPC members should be women. Currently, only five members are women. Previously, there were seven, but two have left the LPC, and should be replaced so that the criteria of the ToR are met.

UNPFN-projects:

1st visit: UNPFN/A-7 - Monitoring, reporting and response to conflict related child rights violations

Implementing agencies: UNICEF/OHCHR, MoPR, I/NGOs

Duration of project: 01/2010 – 05/2012

Total approved budget: USD 2,664,034

Briefing on reintegration programme for CAAFAG/CAAC and interaction with members of District Referral Mechanism, (WCO office, Gulariya, Bardiya) 16.02.2012

Implementing agency at site: Sundar Nepal Sanstha (BNA) – local NGO

Main observation:

- The project has helped develop simple but effective referral mechanisms for child rights' protection coordination at the district level (District Referral Mechanism - DRM) and strengthened coordination between state and non state actors. However, the mechanism lacks supporting documentation to keep records and provide evidence of referrals.
- The DRM committee meets on an ad-hoc basis when there is a need for a referral. Referral cases are handled in close cooperation and collaboration with government agencies and NGO's working on children's welfare. When such an organization identifies a potential referral case, the committee is contacted and assists in referring the children (to where, when, etc.).
- There is no common understanding on children's rights between the different organizations, as they all have differing mandates.
- The DRM committee lacks resources and support (budget: 80,000 NPR/year) – they can only coordinate and collaborate with other organizations.

2nd visit: UNPFN/A-7 - Monitoring, reporting and response to conflict related child rights violations

Implementing agencies: UNICEF/OHCHR, MoPR, I/NGOs
--

Duration of project: 01/2010 – 05/2012

Total approved budget: USD 2,664,034

Interaction with education, Skill/VT & IGA & gender specific supported CAAFAG/CAAC & PB, (Shivapur, VDC-5, Bardiya) 16.02.2012

Implementing agency at site: Sundar Nepal Sanstha (BNA) – local NGO

Main observations from meeting with school representatives:

- After students started receiving support from the scheme, the school increased tuition fees, allegedly to improve school facilities. Some voices were raised about the fact that school staff has interfered in the project for the benefit of the school and at the expense of the scholarship beneficiaries.
- The children receiving education support expressed that the support was insufficient since they still had to pay for the school fees. The girls who had received gender based support in the form of cycle for commuting long distance in the dark said they would have preferred to have school fees covered if they had known earlier that they needed to pay it.

- There appeared to be a misperception among school staff about the mandate of the scheme. Complaints were raised about how the support through the scheme did not benefit the school and how there were no funds allocated to school maintenance. These are areas that fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, not the CAAFAG-scheme.

A separate meeting was held simultaneously with the beneficiaries of the CAAFAG-scheme.

Main observations:

- The project is assessed as well-functioning. The beneficiaries have received training (e.g. in electrics and tailoring) and education support and they were content with the training received. Several of the beneficiaries have established their own shops or small-scale activities to earn their own money.
- The beneficiaries were concerned to have a sustainable livelihood, and stated the need for further support e.g. for education or additional/advanced training. Some still felt discriminated and stigmatized in the community due to their linkages with PLA, but others said that the stigmatisation had ended when they had become economically independent. Some stated that because of previous support from the project, other ways of receiving support (e.g. through their families) had been denied. Their training and education gave them a sense of empowerment and independence from the society discarding them.
- Regarding the integration component, project beneficiaries are still stigmatized in their community, emphasizing the need for further support to establish sustainable livelihood, including psychosocial support.

Recommendations:

- UNPFN/UNICEF/MoPR: The project needs to clarify the provision provided by the project vis-à-vis the expectations of the beneficiaries. A potential link up for conflict affected children could be made with the scholarship support provided by the MOPR for children of conflict affected.
- UNPFN/UNICEF/OHCHR: UNPFN to follow-up with the implementing agencies whether additional support was requested/needed by the school besides the structural support for strengthening the infrastructure of the schools provided by the project¹.
- UNPFN/UNICEF/OHCHR To inform future programming, document the good practice developed by the project as well as the lessons when providing reintegration support to CAFAAG and CAAC.

¹ This support is provided by the project to help schools play their role of key community structure for children's successful reintegration, while many of them have an insufficient number of teachers, as well as classrooms and materials.

- NPTF/UNPFN/UNICEF/OHCHR: As this project is coming to a close before the end of the second quarter, there is a need to further look at the project exit strategy to ensure that further support is provided to the project beneficiaries as well as ensure a follow-up to the project results achieved (referral mechanisms on child rights violations, development of trained psychosocial network). Look at synergies with the NPTF concept note being developed on the NAP 1612 with the current support from UNICEF.
- UNICEF/OHCHR: The project is scheduled to end by end of May 2012. Important to clearly communicate with the beneficiaries what the consequences of the closure of the project would be and how they could receive support through other means.
- UNPFN: Consider whether further support is needed for this group. Important to consider whether their needs are special (because of their connection to PLA, trauma, stigmatization etc.) and therefore still need to be addressed through peace support projects or whether their needs are related to education/employment and development in general and therefore should be addressed by other means.

3rd visit: UNPFN/E-5 – Ensuring recognition of sexual violence as a tool of conflict in the Nepal Peace Building Process

Implementing agencies: UNFPA & UNICEF, MoPR, MoHP, Dep. of Women and Children, Dep. of Education

Duration of project: 06/2010 – 04/2012

Total approved budget: USD 2,100,000

Interaction with District level and NGOs stakeholders (DHO and WCO) who provided support to the camps and follow-up on identified cases of sexual violence (referral mechanism), as well as camp volunteers. (Health Post, Motipur VDC, Bardiya, 17.02.2012).

Interaction with women beneficiaries who received psychosocial and/or reproductive health services (Health Post, Motipur VDC, Bardiya, 17.02.2012)

Implementing agency at site:

Main observation:

- The project appears to have been successful, especially in terms of creating dialogue and awareness about available services and institutions.
- The project integrated approach combining reproductive health services, human rights awareness and documentation of cases of sexual violence has proven to be very relevant, noting that generally women survivors tend to take less care of their own and children's health. Besides providing direct support to women facing stigma and discrimination in the community, the project has also helped raising awareness among community members, especially concerning the need of providing specific

support to women and create linkages between various stakeholders (mapping of existing services).

- This project had met a big need in terms of provision of healthcare as well as legal and psychosocial support to women. Beneficiaries said that this had been an opportunity to talk about issues and health problems that they could not normally talk about for fear of stigma, and in most cases, this had been a great relief.
- The camp had been a good start but clearly could not meet ongoing needs. Particularly, there is a need for ongoing psychosocial support for many, which is partly being met by the FCHW, who have received some basic training. However, it is clear that universal and more skilled provision are lacking. While the mobilization of local government health services and health workers was appreciated, it could include a few components of training on legal and psychosocial counseling for continuing the services during post health camp period, rather than having a complete external team.
- Men played a very limited role in the project, but received briefings on gender issues. However, they were not briefed on SGBV issues, as it was important not to disclose the real aim of the project to the men. In many cases, women still live in close proximity to the perpetrators.
- Women want and need services, but are unaware of their rights. Sometimes, even if they know services exist, they are unaware about how to access them. During the project, awareness was raised through discussions with focus groups and documentation officers. Psycho-social counseling was very beneficial for sharing experiences and learning.
- A lot of resource-mapping was done in order to refer people to districts where services were available. This resource-mapping has made it increasingly common for service providers to refer people to each other.

The way forward:

- As this project is coming to a close before the end of the second quarter, there is a need to further look at the project exit strategy to ensure that there is a follow-up to the project results achieved. In particular ensure synergies with other transitional justice initiative to share the project results and cases documented as well as with feed into ongoing efforts to implement the NAP on 1325 and 1820, especially the NPTF project, as the project ties in closely with the NPA following strategic objective 7.3.2: “to ensure the protection of women and girls’ rights and prevention of these rights in pre-conflict, during conflict and post conflict situations”.
- A plan existed to develop government ownership of the project outside the camps later, building on the local capacities developed by the project. However, further discussion is needed on how to link short-term interventions into the wider state system (whether delivered by state bodies or contractors such as NGOs). Parts of this project will probably fall under the responsibilities of the NAP, others will be the responsibility of MoH.

- While the project awaits formation of TRC for referral of 60 cases, the cases documented from this project will be a strong reference points for project being proposed for implementation of NAP 1325/1820. Potential linkages should be further explored with other initiatives and institutions, e.g. the NHRC.
- In order to overcome challenges and get to the root of problems, empowerment of the community, particularly economic, is needed. Often men are negative to women's meetings as they feel it is the duty of a wife to take care of the household. In the next phases, more male awareness needs to be created through involvement and learning more about SGBV.
- Note: the issues that we discussed were very personal and highly sensitive - In future visits, need to rethink if the monitoring team need to meet with beneficiaries of these types of project, particularly as the beneficiaries may feel obliged to offer up personal stories in the hopes that they will receive additional support. The visit planning team should consider this for future visits.

General observations regarding the field monitoring visit:

- General lack of sustainability in the projects. It is difficult to see how state institutions or other entities can take over from the projects and address the needs that are still there.
- Important to be clear on the purpose of a monitoring visit when visiting the different projects; expectations to the monitoring team in the communities were very high.
- Follow-up from MoPR, UN, NPTF and implementing partners based on above recommendations is important.
- Another general recommendation for GoN, donors and UN is the importance of a sector-wide approach in the different projects, so that MoPR does not become the only ministry involved. There is a need for stronger linkages and coordination with e.g. Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education.
- Furthermore, whenever new UNPFN or NPTF projects are approved or up for consideration, it is important to conduct some sort of mapping of initiatives already in place that these new projects could complement and/or build on instead of simply overlapping.