

Main observations and recommendations from Joint Government-Donor Monitoring Visit

Dates: 18-20 June 2012

Locations: Kaski

Purpose of field visit: Observe and monitor projects supported by Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF) and provide suggestions for improvements in project implementation

Participants from NPTF and Donor Partners: Danish Embassy (Ms. Mie Roesdahl), European Union (Mr. Jiwan Subedi); GIZ-NPTF (Ms. Barsha Pradhan, Mr. Santosh Bisht), NPTF Technical Committee, Civil Society Representative: Dr. Narayani Tiwari, PFS (Mr. Arvind Rimal, Ms. Januka Regmi), USAID (Ms. Leah Muller, Ms. Sumitra Manandhar)

The group visited six NPTF funded projects in total.

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 staff members of Green Pastures Hospital, Handicap International and INF (Pokhara, Kaski district). Observation of the hospital facilities including physiotherapy department and workshop for artificial limbs.

Main Observations:

- The Hospital has positive environment and sufficient space for in house treatment of disabled with well maintained and hygienic clinic and workshops. This place serves disabled people from Western Region specifically and from throughout the country in general. Looking at their past projects, they have a good foundation to implement project. GPH is reliable, proven organization with lots of experience in supporting the people with disability.
- Assistive devices are prepared as per the need of patient and are very expensive. While conflict affected disabled people are provided free services and transportation costs through ICRC, other disabled people can contribute according to their economic status since the hospital is charity based.
- Mobile camps are provided in the villages for outreach to disabled people, which provides good opportunities for people to access the services.

- NPTF support is going to conflict victims since one month, however it is difficult to assess the impact in this short duration. Furthermore, it is also difficult since there are so many contributors to the Hospital.
- Given the lack of qualified technical human resource in the field of orthotics and prosthetics, GPH is building capacity of its staff members in various countries, which contributes to sustainability.
- Transportation cost is not provided by NPTF project, while the provision for artificial limbs is also lower than actual costs, which is creating challenge for the partner organization.
- The level of disability recommended by MoPR in its list of conflict affected people does not match with the actual disability in some places. Technical people in mobile camps assess the level of disability and provide services accordingly
- Gender friendliness in GPH seems to be better than Nepalganj Medical College in the last visit but it needs to be further improved. The level of awareness among women on scope of work influence the availability of female technicians.
- The NDF partner has comparative advantage of getting funds for supporting disabled people who are not conflict affected through other means, thereby reducing the chances of potential conflict between conflict affected and not affected.
- Few conflict affected people with disabilities benefit from such projects. Though this project addresses the root cause and effects of conflict, the value for money and its contribution to peace is questionable.

Recommendations:

- To the NDF to clarify on avoiding potential overlap of funding from NPTF and ICRC for supporting CADPs.
- The workshop of hospital has mostly male staff. To the Green Pastures Hospital: to raise awareness among women on the scope of the profession and include more women staff to promote gender equality for easier access to disabled from both genders

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 peace building network committee formed by NFDIN (Pokhara, Kaski)

Main Observations:

- The members of Peace Building Network Committee were found to be unclear about their roles due to lack of guidelines. They also seemed to be confused about whether they should go for peace movement or rights based movement. Two members had received two days orientation in a regional programme in Palpa on their roles and responsibilities, in response to recommendation made from former joint visits and external monitoring visit. They were planning to share with all the other members of the group within the next few weeks. The members of the committee have been able to resolve disputes and address potential conflict in 1-2 cases.

- In Kaski, NFDIN has contracted out the peace building activities to NEFEJ, Student's Organization and Magar Sangh through bidding process. This demonstrates that non state actors are included in NPTF funded project.
- There is a demand from the PBNC for higher resource allocation and time extension of the project. However, NPTF needs to continue to monitor the project to look at the effectiveness of the project to consider the demands.
- This kind of project should reach out to communities other than ethnic indigenous communities only so that people from different communities come together resulting in increased harmony. The PBNC members have come to realize importance of involving communities other than indigenous people and to bring them together rather than segregating them or work in isolation. Eg. Joint activities, joint forums and dialogues. Recommendation to PFS and NFDIN: To explore ways to involve people from other communities in peace building initiatives.
- While designing the project, it was not envisioned that the project context would change drastically. However, the political context has been very volatile and the project has not been able to address these fluidity in the wake of the tensions that arise. Conflict transformation is not integrated in the project and therefore, the project may not be contributing to peace but building tensions.

Recommendations:

- Recommendation to NFDIN: Rather than bidding and contracting projects to individual implementing agencies, NFDIN should implement its activities through PBNC, having one regular NFDIN staff as a member of the committee, who can transparently implement the project.
- Recommendation to future monitoring teams: Follow up on the orientation on the roles and responsibilities for all the group members and its effectiveness.

3rd visit: NPTF/0415 – Peace Promotion through Radio Nepal

Implementing agency: Radio Nepal

Duration of project: 01/2012 – 12/2012

Total approved project budget: NPR 19,906,656.00

Interaction with the staff members involved in NPTF funded project “Radio for Peace”, observation of the recording studio and listening to a short clip of one of the broadcasts in Nepali language

Main Observations:

- The regional centre of Radio Nepal is fully dependent on the central office for content since its role is limited to translating the Nepali program broadcasted by centre into Gurung and Magar languages. The local language program is relayed through only one FM station, in Kaski, whereas the Nepali language program is broadcasted by many FM stations.
- Three women out of a group of seven staff members for this project demonstrated a good gender balance in project team composition.
- The radio program conveys the issues of the victims of all sides of conflict and messages are not politically biased. The main peace related messages conveyed are - difference between peace and conflict periods, information on relief packages available for the victims, and stories of reconciliation.

- Since the mobile teams from central region visits selected districts and broadcasts their voices at the national level, it promotes sharing among people from various regions. It promotes national integration by making people realize that they have shared concern. It also helps counter the allegation that donor supported programs have heightened divisions.
- The program should be continued and expanded keeping in view its potential to address other conflicts. Since the radio program carries element of national integration through sharing of common pain and happiness, it should be seen as a program that addresses emerging conflicts, such as conflict between caste-ethnic groups.
- Not much emphasis on listeners' feedback has been given at the regional level as only medium of receiving the feedback via listener's letters go to the central office of Radio Nepal.
- The project does not have any component of coordination with the organisations of Gurung and Magar ethnic groups in terms of raising awareness about the program or seeking feedback.

Recommendations:

- To Radio Nepal to explore the possibility to modify the project, so that the regional programs have local content/local voices messages from their own region. There is a need to conduct field interaction with the target language listeners' group for feedback as well as raising awareness about the program as well as to set aside some time in addition to the main program that is produced by Kathmandu, for reading out and answering letters from listeners and receiving phone calls.
- To the future monitoring teams: follow up at the central level about the feedback on the programs being broadcast and use of the feedback in improving the content
- To Radio Nepal Regional Office: Expand coverage by relaying the program through more FM stations in the region. The Acting Chief has such experience from his previous posting and thinks this is a good idea, to be pursued. Additionally, consider possibility of broadcasting the programs in other languages as well, such as Thakali. This may be practical after more FM stations have been involved.
- To PFS: Synergy among various NPTF programs at national level needs to continue to be strengthened to bring synergy among different IAs.
- To Radio Nepal Regional Office: Work more with other NPTF implementing agencies, LPCs and other line agencies of NPTF, specifically the Magar Sangh so as to promote listenership as well as an effective mechanism for assessing the impact of the program.
- To the PFS: To seek clarification from Implementing Agency about the provision of maintenance of equipments further to the NPTF project period.

4th visit: NPTF/03 –Reconstruction of Police Units destroyed during conflict (Phase I and Phase II)

Implementing agency: Nepal Police

Duration of project: 11/2009 to 07/2012 for the first phase; 09/2011 to 03/2013 for the second phase

Total approved project budget: NPR 801,378,340 for the first phase; 1,277,909,000 for the second phase

Meetings with Chief of District Police, visit to Police Post, Sisuwa, Dandakonakin Kaski District and interaction with Community Members and NP chief engineer responsible for reconstruction of police posts

Main Observations:

- The Nepal Police Chief Engineer for the Construction of police posts gave an informative presentation about the project and its status. Of the 100 police posts that were planned to be rebuild in Phase 1 of the project (at national level), 88 are completed and 12 are in progress of being built. **Only 5-7% of the funding disbursed in phase 2 of the project has been spent so far.**
- There were 8 bids in the bidding process, some from construction companies outside Kaski. It was the same construction company which won both tenders for the two police posts in Kaski (and one other in another district). E-bidding is not yet known and used. The constructor apparently came for the monitoring visit and was present at the meeting with community members.
- Two police posts have been built in Kaski District, out of 4 total number of destroyed police posts. The Dandakonak police post visited was approximately 3-5 kilometers from Pokhara town. A number of community members had travelled far to meet the monitoring team and raise their voice on the **need for more police posts in remote areas**. Women in particular raised the importance for their security of having a police post within proximity. Also some held that the police post should have been reconstructed in its original location as the shops in that area (4-500 meters away) were losing business.
- Community women were happy about the **increased security level** with the police post being there and allowing them to go out even in the dark. Drug addiction, alcohol abuse, road accidents and other incidents have been reduced as a result of the police post being built in their area.
- Community members raised frustrations that the NPTF, in their words, 'did not provide the full package'. Water supply, electrical installation, kitchen facilities, etc. was not provided, and some rooms were too small (however this seemed to be the result of the police post being built for a smaller number of officers than were deployed to the post – see below).
- While the police post was made for 8 to 10 police officers, the number of staff at the post was 32 – as they had upgraded the police post to having a stronger role in district policing (exact name of entity is unknown). According to the SSP, the new police posts are much better equipped for providing security and securing human rights of, for example, detainees and victims than even the district headquarters. This led to an increased demand for such provisions even in the district headquarters, specifically separate cells for detaining women.
- The number of women police is only 2 among the 32 police officers. Although there are rooms for women to stay, the two women stayed with their families outside the police post. The **women toilet that was intended to make the police post more gender sensitive was used for storage purposes**. This should of course be available for women posted there.
- A community committee was established to oversee the construction with 7 men and 2 women, but it was no longer active after the construction had almost finalized. **Community-police relations seemed good**. The SSP put some weight on the importance of the community committing to building a compound wall as part of the project, however, this had not been done yet and it seemed that it was not in the planning. Community mobilization and coherence necessary for this task to materialize seemed impacted by the conflict over land described below.
- At the meeting with community members frustrations were raised regarding the use of the land for the police post. Though there has been clear decision from the court that the land

belonged to the police and no compensation needs to be given to the tillers, there have been unsuccessful negotiations on compensation for the lost crops. The SSP has now forwarded the petition for compensation to another entity within the NP. As the issue around land was not resolved before construction started, it has now become highly politicized and difficult to solve. In this way the project seemed to have had negative effects on communal harmony. However, the interaction between the SSP and the community was constructive in terms of trying to resolve the issue. In addition to the conflict over the land, community members also raised the issue that the chosen location was a flood area, and inquired whether this had been taken into consideration.

Recommendations:

- To the Nepal Police: There could be **increased transparency for the community members on the specific contributions** by the NPTF, by the police and by the community. Also, it should be clear what the contractor must deliver according to his contract. (This has been raised in previous monitoring visits also).
- To the Nepal Police: Nepal Police should further consider **how the construction of police posts links in with the broader priorities of the police in their efforts to promote security** and access to justice and in future phases add elements to the building of police posts that will contribute to the overall objective of enhancing security and access to justice or revise the project to reconstruct police posts according to such considerations.
- To Nepal Police for **increased transparency on the choice of location** for rebuilding police posts would be beneficial, especially if clear criteria were used.
- To the Nepal Police: Broader considerations should be done to **identify avenues to address the attitudinal changes necessary in order to ensure that the gender sensitive infrastructure contributes to addressing the needs and rights of women police officers** thereby also possibly contributing to more female police officers at district level. This may be done through awareness-raising of police officers (with a focus on male police officers) concerning the importance of and effective approach to better inclusion of women.
- To the PFS/donors: While assessing the third phase proposal, NPTF should ensure that lessons learned from first phase on the **need for proper preparation and clarity on the identification of location and use of land** is incorporated into the second phase and we see positive effects. If this preparatory process is rushed or done ineffectively, the challenges will be many in later phases of the construction process.
- To the PFS/donors: Two broader issues came up for reflection in relation to future police post reconstruction projects/phases: a) It may be relevant to **revisit the criteria for building new police posts in terms of where they contribute most to security and access to justice** in light of the current challenges and progress so far in the peace process. It seems likely that the locations where former police posts were placed will be among those that meet the criteria but other places may also be considered based on among other things the security challenges and needs of different areas of the district and securing access to justice for all. Among the former locations some may be considered more relevant than others in light of the security situation, risks, and needs identified at this time. b) It may also be relevant to **reassess whether the size of the police posts should be similar in all places, or a more tailor-made is needed at this time**. Although the NP technical team (according to the engineer) has travelled to all locations to assess the needs in that particular place, it seems that a fairly standard model of construction is applied. This has been raised in previous monitoring visits as a concern. The issue may be even more relevant when the next phases may start reconstructing police posts in less populated areas.

- According to the SSP there are **other critical issues that need to be addressed in order to promote security, access to justice and human rights by the police** (perhaps for considerations of new NPTF projects in line with new priorities as identified at prioritization workshop). Conditions in the custody/detention center is severely bad with 64 people now occupying the space that is only intended for 20 to 25; patrolling vehicles are subject to wear and tear and are not replaced or properly maintained thus limiting outreach and quick reactions to crime; there are not sufficient options to deal with drug abusers beyond imprisoning – councelling facilities and competencies are needed; and forensic facilities and criminal investigation need to be strengthened.

5th visit: NPTF/04 – Continuous Voter's Registration with Photograph

Implementing agency: Election Commission

Duration of project: July 2011- June 2012

Total approved project budget: NPR 397,500,000

Interaction with District Election Officer, Election staff and consultants at District Election Office and observation of storage of equipments and continuous voter registration programme in Kaski District.

Main Observations

- DEO has recently shifted to its own building, which seems to be sufficiently spacious for storage of equipments for voter's registration and elections. Though there was no female staff member currently in the office, it offered gender friendly infrastructure such as separate toilets for women.
- The District Election Officer expressed his view that the possibility to conduct elections in November is least likely unless the election regulations are issued by Election Commission within the next month. The other challenge that he mentioned for the elections was the limited capacity of electronic voting machine (EVM) for 64 candidates that would render them useless in case the number exceeds 64 candidates.
- Special attention has been given for continuous voter registration to register those voters who had missed the opportunity to register so far. Outreach at the village level was completed for registering voters with less access to the district election office.
- In the district, there is good coordination with the District Administration Office as one of the staffs of DEO is placed in DAO for CVRPP of those who get their citizenship certificate. Voter's registration is continued also in the DEO.
- The speculations are that about 10% cases have not yet registered. DEO is planning for mobile registration of those cases but also mentioned about the lack of motivation of people to vote and the need for political parties to influence certain groups of people for voting, and therefore registering them.
- Proper mechanism of verification of the data of registered voters has been established by DEO i.e. the list with the details of the voters is published in public places, once they register. In cases where the voters find discrepancy in their information, they can fill up a form claiming the discrepancy which is verified by DEO staff through personal contact or with the help of VDC secretary.
- 250 disabled and 3 people of third gender have been identified of more than 1 lakh people registered. The EVM machines demonstrate that they are friendly to the visually impaired people.

Recommendations

- **To the elections commission:** Need to explore the possibilities of making election friendly to people having special need i. e. people with disabilities related to mobility.
- **To the NPTF:** Further verification is required about provision of citizenship certificate for single women's children, and their registration in voter list, which the DEO had claimed was ongoing in Kaski. The number of voters registered in Kaski district differed in the records provided in Kathmandu and in Pokhara, which require further verification.

6th visit: NPTF/0412 – Strengthening LPCs: Peace from bottom up

Implementing agency: 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

Interaction with LPC members and visit to LPC Office premise

- The LPC had an inclusive representation from various political parties, representatives of civil society and human rights organization, victims of conflict, with more than 33% of the women members for both the LPC and Secretariat.
- The main concern of the LPC members was that all the victims of conflict referred by them haven't received relief, which resulted in increased mistrust of the victims towards LPC. They were also dissatisfied by the long delay by DAO in forwarding the list of disappeared persons to MoPR. There seemed to be a lack of transparency at the DAO in providing relief support to the identified victims.
- Though the LPC was formed only one year back, it has completed a number of peace initiatives at the local level through awareness materials, interactions and street drama. The members emphasized the need to address psychosocial trauma of conflict affected people
- The team realized frustration among LPC members due to complicated financial administration and delayed budget release on the part of DAO, which prevented them from performing their functions better.
- The LPC members received training on their roles and responsibilities recently but there has not been any training on conflict mediation. On further exploring the issue, they said that they have not handled any political disputes so far, since they are not sufficiently capable of mediating and the need has not arisen for Kaski as it is considerably peaceful district.
- The LPC members also expressed their concern that the annual budget allocated for them is insufficient and should be increased.

Recommendations

- To the MOPR: To revise the budget release process at the policy level or ensure better coordination for timely release of budget.
- To the MOPR: to ensure transparency to the public on the relief provided to the victims of conflict.
- To the MOPR: Relief for the identified conflict victims should be in full package, not piecemeal. It is also important to ensure transparency in the process of relief distribution to avoid conflict among the victims or between the victims and the LPCs.
- To the MOPR: To have a permanent staff within LPC Secretariat to ensure continued financial management and sustainability of skills that they may potentially receive.