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NEPAL COUNTRY CASE STUDY

CITIZENS' VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY EVALUATION

July 2008

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The report will, together with the four other Country Case Studies from Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia and Mozambique, be placed on the CD-ROM inserted in the main evaluation report which will be published by the Department for International Development, DFID, later in the year: www.dfid.gov.uk .

Responsibility for the content and presentation of findings, conclusions and recommendations rests with the authors.

Preamble

The Nepal Country Case Study took place at a time of apprehension, hope and frustration in the country – in October 2007, when the main focus of attention was the postponement of the scheduled elections for a Constituent Assembly. After centuries of monarchical rule; after ten years of violent conflict between the Maoist insurgents and the political establishment; after the King's relinquishing power; after the signing of a peace agreement with the insurgents; after the coming together of eight political parties in an interim transitional government; and after the recent withdrawal of the main Maoist party from the coalition – after all these things, it was hoped that the Constituent Assembly would be Nepal's chance for reconciliation, reconstruction and the establishment of democratic structures. For this evaluation, the build-up to the Constituent Assembly was a touchstone of how the donors in Nepal had reacted to this major opportunity to enhance the citizens' voice and to build mechanisms for ensuring government accountability.

And, for those who, like us, are attempting a situation analysis of Nepal, here is a warning:

'The truth is that this is a complicated country, its 26 million people an intricate tangle. Best estimates have 90-odd caste and ethnic nationalities living in the country's 150,000 square kilometres (less than 20 percent of which is arable), speaking 71 languages and dialects, and observing Hindu, Buddhist, animist, Muslim, Sikh or Christian rites or, more and more, eschewing god. There is no such thing as a typical Nepali. Each caste and ethnic nationality has its own class divides, hierarchies and patriarchies. Each has its own origin myths, its own history and its own particular relationship to state power in Kathmandu. People's political affiliations swing from communist to Hindu fundamentalist. All this makes the country difficult to decipher.'

from Manjushree Thapa's, *Forget Kathmandu*

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Development Cooperation
BOG	Basic Operating Guidelines
CA	Constituent Assembly
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CeLRRD	Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development
CHF	Swiss Franc
CIAA	Commission for Investigation of Abuses of Authority
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CoCAS	Coalition for Constituent Assembly Support
CPJS	Centre for Professional Journalism Studies
CPN/M	Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CV&A	Citizens' Voice and Accountability
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DCC	District Coordination Council
DDC	District Development Committee
DFDP	Decentralised Financing and Development Programme
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DFO	Department of Forestry Office
DJEC	Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign
DIP	Decentralisation Implementation Plan
DLGSP	Decentralised Local Governance Support Programme
DPWG	Development Partners Working Group
ECG	Evaluation Core Group
EFA	Education for All
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forest Users' Groups in Nepal
FFA	Force Field Analysis
FM	Frequency Modulation
FUG	Forest Users' Group
FWLD	Forum for Women, Law and Development
FY	Financial Year
GNP	Gross National Product
GoN	Government of Nepal
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HELVETAS	Swiss Association for International Cooperation
HUGOU	Human Rights and Good Governance Advisory Unit
HURDEC	Human Resource Development Centre
IDA	International Development Organisation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPO	Indigenous People's Organisation
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
JEP	Janajati Empowerment Project

KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (Reconstruction Bank – Germany)
LGDP	Local Governance and Development Programme
LSGA	Local Self-Governance Act
LSGR	Local Self-Governance Regulations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	Minimum Condition
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFSC	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
MoLD	Ministry of Local Development
MSC	Most Significant Change
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NCCS	Nepal Country Case Study
NCDN	National Committee for the Development of Nationalities of Nepal
NCG	Nordic Consulting Group
NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NFN	NGO Federation of Nepal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPR (NR)	Nepalese Rupee
NSCFP	Nepal/Swiss Community Forestry Programme
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OPEC	Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPR	Output-to-Purpose Review
PASRA	Poverty Alleviation in Selected Rural Areas
PLC	Participants Learning Centre
PM	Performance Measure
PMAS	Poverty Monitoring and Analysis System
Pro Public	Forum for Protection of Public Interest
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RCIW	Rural Community Infrastructure Works Programme
RDIF	Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund
RNE	Royal Norwegian Embassy
SAMAGRA	Holistic Development Service Centre
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SHG	Self-Help Group
SNV	Stichting Nederlandse Vridjwilligers (Foundation of Netherlands Volunteers)
SPA	Seven Party Alliance
TAF	The Asian Foundation
ToT	Training of Trainers
UK	United Kingdom
UML	United Marxist Leninist
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIN	United Nations Mission in Nepal

UNOHCR	United Nations Office of the High Commission for Refugees
USD	United States Dollar
VDC	Village Development Committee
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Exchange rates, as at 01 October 2007:

	Currency	Units per USD	USD per unit
CHF	Switzerland Francs	1.2	0.8
EUR	Euro	0.7	1.4
GBP	United Kingdom Pounds	0.5	2.0
NR	Nepal Rupees	70.6	0.01

Executive Summary

Mandate

The Nepal Country Case Study (NCCS) explores the approaches donors in Nepal are taking in the promotion of CV&A interventions – in which CV (Citizens' Voice) is the expression of citizens' views, their opinions and their preferences; A (Accountability) is the response of governments in terms of their transparency in decision making, their 'answerability' and their exposure to sanctions. NCCS is one of five such evaluations of CV&A being carried out by the Evaluation Core Group (ECG) established by seven donor partners from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. The Nepal evaluation has been designed according to an Evaluation Framework and the Methodological Guidance commissioned from the Overseas Development Institute.

Objectives

The overall purposes of the CV&A evaluation are:

- To improve understanding of CV&A among development partners by mapping and documenting approaches and strategies of development partners for enhancing CV&A in a variety of developing country contexts; and to learn lessons about which approaches have worked best, where and why.
- To assess effects of a range of donor CV&A interventions on governance and on aid effectiveness, and whether these effects are sustainable.

As stated in the ToR for the Nepal evaluation, the three specific objectives are:

- To assess a number of interventions against their intended objectives and, on the basis of that, draw conclusions about what works, and what does not, in relation to intervention programme theories;
- To assess the relevance of the interventions for strengthening voice and accountability in the specific country context;
- To provide an overall analysis/assessment of donors' roles, successes and failures in supporting CV&A in different country contexts.

The Context

The evaluation has taken place at a critical time for Nepal: after ten years of civil strife, a cease fire had been agreed with the Maoist insurgents; an interim government had been established involving the Maoists as well as the seven main political parties; after centuries of monarchist rule, provisional agreement had been reached by the majority of parties that Nepal would be declared a republic; and the country was preparing for elections to a Constituent Assembly that would draft a new Constitution and agree a restructuring of the state along (it was expected) federalist lines. There were many crucial issues to be addressed in any CV&A programme: the future of the monarchy; the rationale for a federalist structure; the promotion of the county's declared decentralisation policy; the need to take better account of those groups that had been excluded

from decision making forums and were recognised as the most disadvantaged in Nepali society – the *dalit* (untouchable castes) and the *janajati* (indigenous peoples).

So the nature of donor support to the civic education and awareness campaigns in the build-up to the CV&A elections – needing to address all the above issues – for the Evaluation Team became one very significant touchstone of donor performance in taking CV&A initiatives.

The Approach

The evaluation set out to answer the following main research questions:

- What are the main channels (actors, spaces and opportunities) for citizens' voice and empowerment (especially for the poor, marginalised and excluded groups) and accountability of government to its citizens – and how do they work?
- How effective are the approaches adopted by the donors – effective in contributing to enhanced CV&A?
- In what ways are CV&A interventions leading to poverty reduction and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – and which have proved to be successful in leading from improved CV&A to broader development outcomes?
- What lessons can be drawn about donors' effectiveness in supporting CV&A – particularly in relation to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – principles of ownership, alignment and harmonisation?

In answering them, the team engaged in the following four main activities:

- Interviewing a range of key informants – in relation to carrying out a situation analysis (particularly to establish the 'country context');
- Interviewing donor agency staff – in relation to their priorities, choices and strategies;
- Holding a number of focus group discussions – with representatives of civil society, the media and stakeholders of specific interventions;
- Visiting a selection of project sites to observe activities and meet with beneficiaries.

The team focused on nine interventions promoted by five of the seven ECG donors, covering a broad spectrum of CV&A initiatives: civic education, including those using electronic media; promotion of good governance; support to decentralisation reforms; projects targeting excluded communities; and rural development programmes with CV&A components.

The nine interventions were:

1. **Coalition for Constituent Assembly Support**: civic and voter education related to the Constituent Assembly (DFID);
2. **Media for Consolidation of Democracy**: enhancing the voice of the rural poor (Danida);
3. **Leaders, Listen to the Voice of People!**: 'listening programmes' for political leaders (Royal Norwegian Embassy);
4. **Nepal Good Governance Project**: advocating for a more inclusive democracy (SDC);
5. **Decentralised Financing and Development Programme**: providing rural infrastructures and human resource opportunities (DFID/UNCDF);
6. **Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign**: capacity building for excluded communities units in relation to rights issues and advocacy (Danida);
7. **Janajati Empowerment Project**: capacity building for *janajati* organizations and advocacy targeted to officials (DFID);

8. **Nepal/Swiss Community Forestry Programme**: technical support to Forest Users' Groups and officials (SDC);
9. **Poverty Alleviation in Selected Rural Areas**: providing employment opportunities to rural poor (GTZ).

Findings

Opportunities, constraints and entry points: The Evaluation Team found that the programmes of all five donors are context-specific and are based on a quite realistic – if a rather cautious – assessment of the Nepal context. All share the same poverty alleviation goals, though they do make different strategic choices in terms of actors and target groups. However, because of the uncertain political scenario, all have withdrawn somewhat from support to government or quasi-government institutions and have turned more to civil society organisations (CSOs). The Basic Operating Guidelines, re-issued by the donors during the team's visit, are significant in declaring their accountability to local communities rather than to the Nepal government.

I**nstitutional, organisational and individual capacities**: All the donors put emphasis on capacity building on both sides of the CV&A equation. But, because of the sometimes volatile and now shifting political landscape in Nepal, it has not been at all easy for the donors to engage with government agencies. On the other hand, the need for CV&A is clear – is urgent, in fact – as democracy is a new and fragile practice in Nepal. So, other than government institutions, the focus of capacity building has been on civil society organisations in general and, in particular, on those CSOs that engage with the excluded groups and communities.

CV&A channels: Since, as explained above, there are more interventions related to Voice rather than Accountability, there are many more CSOs engaged in CV&A initiatives than government agencies. CSOs have multiplied rapidly over the last 15 or so years – and some could be less genuine in their social commitments than others. And one question raised to the team was whether the donors are rigorous enough in selecting their CSO partners. The media, on the other hand, has demonstrated a clear potential to be both innovative and effective in CV&A programmes – all three of the studied interventions with strong media components were engaging citizens, officials and politicians in significant public debates on the main issues to do with democracy and human rights.

Changes in policy, practice, behaviour and human rights: There have been important influences on government policy in relation to the rights of the *janajati* peoples – brought about through donor-supported projects. It could well be, too, that the public debates in the media will have an impact on the thinking of the political parties. The team could also identify a number of changes in practice: for example, increased access by the *dalit* communities to citizenship, to natural resources and to basic services. In working with pilot local authorities, there are clear gains in more efficient financial management and improved service delivery. As for changes in behaviour, it can be clearly seen that the media programmes and the campaigning of the widespread Good Governance Clubs are raising public awareness of political and rights issues – and promoting the accountability of public officials. Finally, though the studied interventions have enabled marginalised peoples to claim their rights, have created more public awareness about civic affairs, and have held many individual officials to account – and though many issues to do with power relations have been addressed – it is too early to say that they will also be redressed.

Broader development outcomes: Though donors in Nepal – or elsewhere, presumably – are not actually designing their programmes within the Governance and Human Rights sectors along CV&A lines, two basic assumptions can be identified within the programmes having CV&A components: that supporting CV&A will lead to a deepening of democracy – and that the strengthening of democratic processes will lead to improved service delivery and a more equitable distribution of wealth. This interweaving of democratic processes and service delivery improvements is quite explicit in most, if not all, of the nine interventions; and they provide some examples of how increased participation in formal and informal governance structures – whether self-help groups or forest users' groups, whether public hearings or public audits – have led to improved livelihoods for the poor and marginalised.

Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

Channels, mechanisms and processes
In the main, in pursuing CV&A objectives, the donors in Nepal have chosen to work predominantly with civil society organisations rather than with government or quasi-government agencies. And this is not just because it is easier to work in this way – the partnership can be more flexible and more independent – but because the government structures have at times been perceived as too undemocratic, at times too fluid. In addition, with regard to the Accountability side of the CV&A scales, the donors have put much less weight on the public oversight institutions than they do in most emerging democracies.

Results and outcomes
In general, though, it can safely be concluded that the donor-supported interventions have made a distinctive contribution to the urgent and ongoing public debate in Nepal about many critical issues – about social exclusion, about representation, about federalism and about the future of the monarchy. However, it can also be claimed that the CV&A interventions are, as yet, too scattered across places and across target groups to have a really strong impact on the accountability of those who have responsibility for governance.

Mindful of the imbalance of CV&A interventions in Nepal, the majority of the targeted beneficiaries are the rural poor and the excluded communities. As elsewhere in the world, the obvious justification is that this is in keeping with donors' poverty alleviation goals. However, the very concept of CV&A suggests that a balance needs to be struck in reaching out to not only the poor and disadvantaged but also to those who 'make the rules of the game', in order to meet the objectives of a mature CV&A – that the needs of the poor should be addressed, and the actions of those in public office should be made accountable.

Pathways to broader development
The longer-term goals of civic education interventions (a well informed and critical public, responsive governments at national and local levels) can only be achieved through a broad-based, integrated and collaborative programme, and one that addresses people on both sides of the CV&A equation. On the other hand, the link between democracy and development, the realisation of poverty alleviation objectives, can be seen more clearly and achieved more concretely in CV&A interventions in support of decentralisation reforms – through enhancing public participation in consultative structures, developing participatory planning mechanisms, devising public monitoring mechanisms, and opening up the work of local authority officials to public scrutiny. An intervention designed exclusively as a CV&A intervention might not be so readily appreciated by people who have prior 'food-on-the table' concerns. Perhaps service delivery successes

are more easily achieved when CV&A components are incorporated in broader community development programmes.

CV&A and aid effectiveness

A key shortcoming of what could be labelled the donors' CV&A strategy is the lack of strategic thinking in the development and management of programmes. There is a need for much greater commitment to the coordination of CV&A initiatives – beyond information sharing and involving joint planning and basket funding. The shifting of political scenarios has meant that it has not been easy for donors to participate with government agencies in forums for the review of needs, assessment of comparative advantages, planning of interventions and the operation of an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. The following main recommendations are all related to possibilities for building a more strategic CV&A programme, achieving more effective donor coordination, encouraging a greater sense of ownership by government institutions and agencies – and enhancing the quality of the interventions.

Recommendations

Harmonisation

1. The Evaluation Team recommends that the donors should embark on a strategic process of formulating their programmes (primarily within the sectors of governance and human rights) with a consistent and explicit approach to CV&A.
2. In designing such a CV&A programme, the donors should, as much as possible, ensure a balanced approach to, on the one hand, encouraging people to express their concerns, participate in decision making forums and, on the other hand, working with government agencies to respond in a responsible and transparent manner.
3. In planning such CV&A interventions, the donors should aim at programmes being more comprehensive in support of various institutions and agencies that have a role in deepening democracy, incorporating components such as: support to the Electoral Commission; capacity building of political parties; support to parliamentary processes; capacity building of civil society organisations involved in CV&A; capacity building of local authorities and sub-district committees for planning development initiatives, support for minorities and marginalised communities to become fully engaged in CV&A; support to the media engaged in CV&A; promotion of a coordinated national civic education programme.

Coordination

4. In designing such comprehensive, sustained and harmonised programmes, the donors will need to establish more effective mechanisms for coordination of their interventions – in order to maximise funding, minimise duplication, allocate management roles and develop M&E systems.

Ownership

5. Towards more effective coordination of CV&A programmes, and towards an ownership of those programmes by Government institutions, the donors should encourage the activation of the joint Government of Nepal/donor planning and supervision forums.

Inclusion

6. Further donor investment in both pro-poor and pro-gender initiatives will be needed, as a means of consolidating achievements in CV&A.

Selection of CSOs

7. The donors should take greater care in selecting their implementing partners – by setting rigorous selection criteria, in carrying out capacity assessments, and in observing the CSOs more closely in their implementation of programmes.

Engaging with the media

8. Given the important role that the media can play in CV&A initiatives, the donors should reflect on how best to engage with the media houses – through establishing, for example, editors' forums, promoting briefing sessions on CV&A with relevant journalists, and being prepared to sponsor civic education programmes on both national and local channels, through both electronic and print media.
9. Donors and government agencies should recognise that media can go beyond being merely disseminators of information to become significant partners in development – particularly as key implementers of CV&A interventions.

Engaging with political parties

10. In as much as the political parties have a crucial role to play in consolidating democracy in Nepal, the donors should mount a diagnostic study on the potential for engaging with them in capacity building programmes.

Stretching planning horizons

11. Donors, in particular, should recognise that CV&A outcomes – especially those related to changing entrenched attitudes and reforming long-established structures – are not easily realised and demand longer-term commitments than those usually made in project planning.

Selecting methods

12. To uphold the participatory principles of CV&A, interventions should, as much as possible, adopt an issue-raising and a discussion-based approach (rather than a message-driven one) using a variety of methods such as community theatre and songs, electronic and folk media.
13. Mindful of the successful examples already implemented in Nepal, donors should explore further possibilities for supporting programmes that link local research, advocacy and campaigning activities with discussion formats, publications and broadcasts at both local and national levels.

Consolidating local governance interventions

14. In order to sustain interventions in support of decentralisation reforms, more emphasis should be put on orientation and capacity building components that address common attitudinal factors that involve reservations and reluctance on the part of ministry officials when they face the prospect of decentralisation and a concomitant loss of power and influence.

CV&A and livelihoods

15. In the light of the achievements of interventions focusing on poor and excluded communities studied in this evaluation, more opportunities should be sought for linking rights awareness campaigns with livelihood improvement initiatives.

1. Introduction

The Nepal Country Case Study (NCCS) is one of five such evaluations of the Citizens' Voice and Accountability Evaluation (CV&A) being carried out by the Evaluation Core Group (ECG) set up by seven donor partners from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. The NCCS has been designed according to the CV&A Evaluation Framework and in the light of the Methodological Guidance commissioned from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI)[1].

The team

The NCCS was being carried out by four consultants: John Fox (team leader), Julie Thaarup and Glen Swanson from NCG Denmark, and Yadab Chapagain, Director of HURDEC, Kathmandu.

Rationale and objectives

In development discourse over the last few years, it has been frequently argued that governance is a key factor in poverty reduction. It has also been recognized that good governance requires an interactive relationship between citizens and the state – a matter of citizens being able to give 'Voice' and of the state being willing to exercise 'Accountability' with regard to its citizens. Two assumptions underlay the decision to mount the CV&A evaluation: that the active participation of citizens in determining development priorities and policies can improve a government's commitment to reducing poverty; that the ability of citizens to scrutinise public institutions and hold them to account are important factors in promoting good governance.

The two purposes for the evaluation are:

- To improve understanding of CV&A among development partners by mapping and documenting approaches and strategies of development partners for enhancing CV&A in a variety of developing country contexts; and to learn lessons about which approaches have worked best, where and why.
- To assess effects of a range of donor CV&A interventions on governance and on aid effectiveness, and whether these effects are sustainable.

And there are three specific objectives for the country case studies:

- To assess a number of interventions against their intended objectives and, on the basis of that, draw conclusions about what works, and what does not, in relation to intervention programme theories;
- To assess the relevance of the interventions for strengthening voice and accountability in the specific country context;

[1] Foresti, M, Sharma, B, O'Neill, T and Evans, A. (2007) Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework. ODI. August.
Foresti, M, Sharma, B, O'Neill, T and Evans, A. (2007) Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework, Annex A: Methodological Guidance for Country Case Studies. ODI. August.

- To provide an overall analysis/assessment of donors' roles, successes and failures in supporting CV&A in different country contexts.

The research questions

As for all the country case studies, the one in Nepal was designed to answer four main research questions in relation to:

- **Channels, mechanisms and processes**:
  - What are the main channels (actors, spaces and opportunities) for citizens' voice and empowerment (especially for the poor, marginalised and excluded groups) and accountability of government to its citizens?
  - How do these channels actually work?
- **Results and outcomes**:
  - How effective are the approaches adopted by the donors – effective in contributing to enhanced CV&A?
- **Pathways to broader development outcomes and impacts**:
  - In what ways are CV&A interventions leading to poverty reduction and to the achievement of the MDGs?
  - Which intervention strategies ('models of change') have proved to be successful in leading from improved CV&A to broader development outcomes?
- **CV&A and aid effectiveness**:
  - What lessons can be drawn about donors' effectiveness in supporting CV&A, particularly in relation to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – principles of ownership, alignment and harmonisation?

Timing

The mission to Nepal took place from 24 September to 19 October 2007. Beforehand, meetings had been scheduled with five of the seven ECG members supporting programmes in Nepal: Denmark, Germany, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. There was a deviation from the ToR in as much as it was decided to run together the 'inception' and the 'main' phases of the fieldwork, so that it could be completed before the elections for the Constituent Assembly scheduled for 22 November 2007.

Structure of the report

The report follows the template set out in the framework for this evaluation.
Chapter 2 describes the methodology of the evaluation in Nepal and comments on the challenges faced by the Evaluation Team.
Chapter 3 explores the context for the evaluation: a socio-political profile of Nepal and a brief description of the country's 'aid environment'.
Chapter 4 presents the main findings of the Evaluation Team, in relation to the five core components of the Evaluation Framework applied to the Nepal context: opportunities, constraints and entry points for CV&A; institutional, organisational and individual capacities; CV&A channels; perceived changes in policy, practice and power relations; broader development outcomes.
Chapter 5 summaries the main conclusions reached by the evaluation on the four main research questions related to channels, mechanisms and processes; results and outcomes; pathways to broader development outcomes; CV&A aid effectiveness.

Finally, Chapter 6 presents the team's recommendations on overall approaches to CV&A; relevant operational issues; policy dialogue between donors and other key actors.
Reference is made to the annexes where background information is available, most notably the Annex B, which has background information to the chapter on methodology as well as Annex C, which deals more in detail with the context.
Annex D gives a summary sheet for each of the nine interventions assessed in this evaluation. The sheets provide a description and background information for each of the interventions as well as assessments according to DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability and, finally, a 'model of change' for the intervention.

Acknowledgement

The Evaluation Team would like to thank all the stakeholders – the donor agencies, the programme managers, the field staff and the many beneficiaries – who so freely gave their time, their support, and their opinions.

2. The Methodology

2.1. Rationale for Selection of Interventions

Consultations

The Evaluation Team met with all five donors separately during the first week of the mission – Danida, DFID, GTZ, Norad and SDC. Beforehand, the contact persons at the embassies had been asked to provide the team with a list of their current CV&A interventions. The meetings involved a short explanation of the evaluation, followed by discussion about the range of interventions and some considerations about the donors' approaches, strategies, policies and reactions to the evaluation.

Selection criteria

A range of intervention areas that the team found to be covering the spectrum of CV&A became the first selection criteria. These were defined as:

- Programmes concerned with **civic education**;
- Civic education programmes using **media**;
- Programmes focusing on **governance** and **human rights** issues;
- Those supporting **decentralisation** policies and processes;
- Those addressing **social exclusion** issues;
- **Rural development** interventions that have a CV&A component.

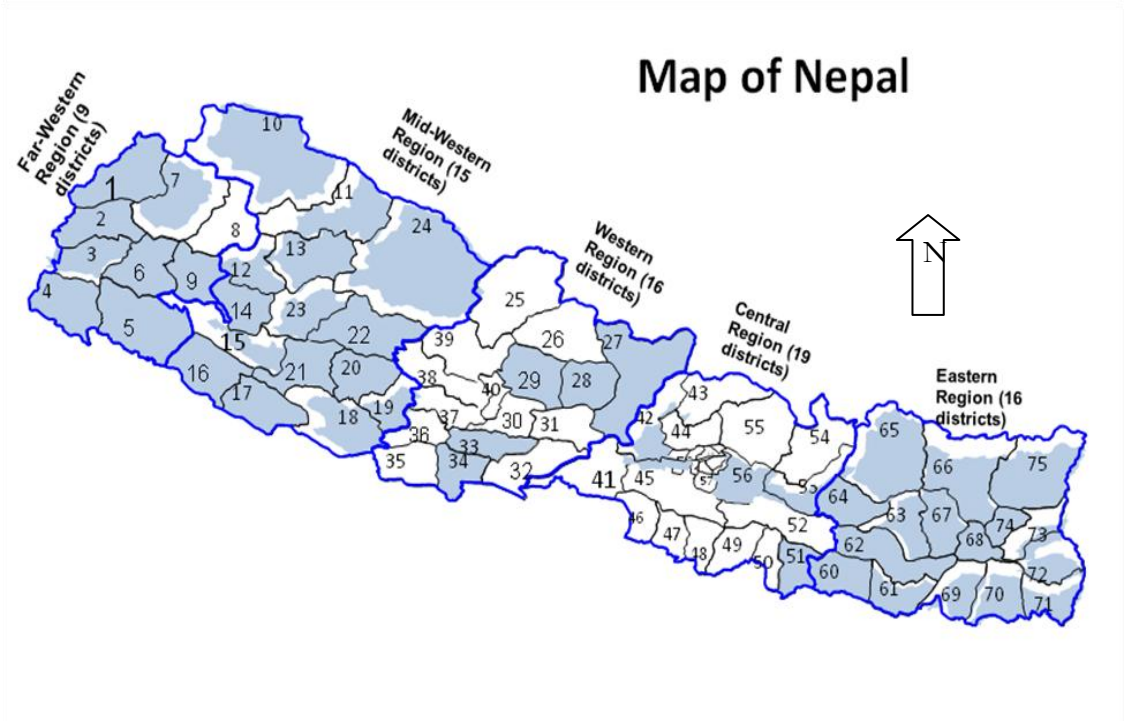
Second, the team listed a range of characteristics that could ensure variations within programmes selected with respect to:

- **Funding** (bilateral funding, bilateral co-funding, or multilateral funding);
- **Partners** (central government, district and village government structures; civil society organisations;
- **Level** (national, regional, district, village);
- **Beneficiaries** (*dalit*, *janajati*, women, general public);
- **Immediate target**;
- **Duration**;
- **Budget**.

The first selection of interventions for further investigation had been prepared before the workshop with donor representatives, who agreed with the selection and added one more. The final selection of nine interventions is given on the following page. They cover a broad spectrum of CV&A initiatives: civic education initiatives, including those using electronic media; promotion of good governance; support to decentralisation reforms; projects targeting excluded communities; and rural development programmes with CV&A components. They also cover the country: east to west and north to south.

Table1: Selected Interventions

Donors	Partners/Implementers	Target area	Target groups	Timing	Budget
Conducting civic education					
1. Coalition for Constituent Assembly Support (CoCAS): a public awareness programme related to making a new constitution for Nepal					
RDIF (DFID, SDC, AusAID, RNE)	CSOs: CeLRRD, FLWD, IGD, Pro0Public, TAF	National	General public	18 months, from January 2007	USD 1.2 million
2. Media for Consolidation of Democracy (MCD): using media for enhancing the voice of the rural poor					
Danida	CPJS	National and 31 districts	General public and district officials	18 months, from November 2006	NR 15 million (USD 2.8 million)
Promoting good governance					
3. Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People! (LLVP): organisation of 'listening programmes for political leaders across a number of districts					
Norwegian Embassy, Kathmandu	Pro-Public	10 districts	Politicians, community-based groups, journalists	10 weeks, from 1 July 2007	NR 5 million (USD 0.9 million)
4. Nepal Good Governance Project (NGGP): enhancing the capacity of civil society to advocate for a more inclusive democracy					
SDC	Pro-Public	National (64 districts)	Good Governance Clubs, politicians, journalists	Three years: 2006-2008	CHF 960,000 (USD 13.6 million)
Supporting decentralisation					
5. Decentralised Financing and Development Programme (DFDP): providing community-based, rural infrastructure and human resource opportunities					
DFID/UNCDF	MoLD	20 pilot districts	DDC officials, rural poor and marginalised groups	December 1999-October 2007	USD 11 million
Engaging excluded groups					
6. Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign (DJEC): capacity building for 'untouchable' castes and indigenous groups in relation to rights issues and advocacy					
Danida	SAMAGRA	Six districts	*Dalit* and *janajati* excluded groups	Two years, staring December 2005	NR 13 million (USD 2.4 million)
7. Janajati Empowerment Project (JEP): capacity building for *janajati* organisations and advocacy targeted to officials					
DFID	NEFIN	Central level and selected districts	Indigenous people's organisations	Three years from 2004	£ 1.5 million (USD 3 million)
Promoting CV&A within rural development programmes					
8. Nepal/Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP): technical support to forest' groups, related to planning and management of community development					
SDC	MoLD, FECOFUN	Three districts	Forest users' groups	Four years from July 2004	CHF 8 million (USD 113, 000)
9. Poverty Alleviation in Selected Rural areas (PASRA): employment opportunities for rural poor – and opening access to income-generating activities					
BMZ	GTZ/MoLD	Eight Western districts	Rural poor	Three years, from January 2005	EUR 10 million (USD 14.2 million)



Selected Interventions and their Coverage

Program	Region /Districts (Corresponding number in the map)				
	Far western	*Mid-western*	*Western*	*Central*	*Eastern*
DFDP	Darchula 1; Baitadi 2; Kailali 5; Bajhang 7; Achham 9	Humla 10; Mugu 11; Jumla 13; Salyan 21; Rukum 22; Jajarkot 23	Kaski 29; Rupandehi 34	Dhanusha 51; Dolakha 54; Kavre 56	Udayapur 62; Solukhumbu 65; Terathum 74; Taplejung 75
CoCAS	National				
Dalit/JEC			Gorkha 27; Lamjung 28	Dhading 42	Siraha 60; Saptari 61; Udayapur 62
JEP/NEFIN	National				
MCD/CPJS		Humla 10; Mugu 11; Kalikot 12; Jumla 13; Dailekh 14; Surkhet 15; Bardiya 16; Banke 17; Dang18; Pyuthan 19; Rolpa 20; Salyan 21; Rukum 22; Jajarkot 23; Dolpa 24			Siraha 60; Saptari 61; Udayapur 62; Khotang 63; okhaldhunga 64; Solukhumbu 65; Sankhuwa - sabha 66; Bhojpur 67; Dhankuta 68; Sunsari 69; Morang 70; Jhapa 71; Ilam 72; Pachthar 73; Terathum 74; Taplejung 75
NGGP	National				
NSCFP				Ramechhap 53; Dolakha 54	Okhaldhunga 64
PASRA		Surkhet 15; Pyuthan 19; Salyan 21; Jajarkot 23			
LLVP	Kanchanpur 4; Doti 6	Banke 17; Dang 18	Kaski 29; Palpa 33	Chitwan 41; Dhanusha 51	Udayapur 62; Morang 70

2.2. Rationale for Chosen Methods

In seeking answers to the four main research questions indicated in the Introduction, the team engaged in the following four main activities:

- Interviewing a range of key informants – in relation to carrying out a situation analysis (particularly to establish the 'country context');
- Interviewing donor agency staff – in relation to their priorities, choices and strategies;
- Holding a number of focus group discussions – with representatives of civil society, the media and stakeholders affected by specific interventions;
- Visiting a selection of project sites to observe activities and meet with beneficiaries.

For the list of people contacted, see Annex E.

Analytical frameworks and data collection

Mindful of the five-part Evaluation Framework and the five DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, as defined in the Methodological Guidance), which were applied in general terms to a donor's aid strategy as well as to a number of specific interventions, the Evaluation Team applied a checklist of questions in the semi-structured interviews (see Annex B). In the focus group discussions with civil society representatives, the team adopted a Force Field Analysis (FFA) framework, in order to explore views on CV&A donor-supported programmes in Nepal, to assess approaches and impacts, and to augment the documentary studies concerning the situation analysis for Nepal. (For the outcome of the FFA, see Annex F).

In appraising the sample of interventions, and in addition to collecting quantifiable information on such factors as locations, target groups, indicators, work plans, activities and beneficiaries reached, the team adopted a modified version of the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique, in order explore the perceptions of respondents and to make an assessment of impacts – MSC being a participatory M&E instrument that involves gathering knowledge about change that participants have witnessed and the modifications of perceptions that have occurred[2].

2.3. Challenges

The main logistical challenge was to achieve an appropriate balance between choosing a representative sample of interventions and allocating enough time for assessing them at a reasonable depth – given the three weeks available for the fieldwork. It meant that the time available for site visits was limited to about two days for each intervention – in addition to the interviews with relevant donor staff and programme managers. And, given the decision to travel away from the capital, Kathmandu, to different regions of the country and to make contact with projects targeting 'excluded' groups, travelling became a time-consuming activity.

With regard to language issues, the majority of the people met had mastered English, so in general there were no problems of interpretation. However, when visiting programmes outside Kathmandu, the team met with some beneficiaries who did not speak English – and therefore solutions had to be found. In one place an interpreter was hired; in another, a villager made the translations.

[2] Rick Davies and Jess Dart. The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use. 2004. (available at www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSC Guide.htm)

In relation to this, the team wishes to emphasise that, in all encounters with donors, implementing agency staff and beneficiaries, there was not the anticipated difficulty in reaching an understanding of both the concept and the applications of CV&A. In general, the people contacted by the team were very interested in the themes, appreciative of the potentials of the study – and they made themselves available for meetings. However – and this was the only serious ethical issue that surfaced – some Nepali respondents asked not to be identified after expressing negative views in interviews about government policies or donor agency practices.

The Evaluation Framework and Methodological Guidance were crucial documents in as much as they provided a common orientation and consistent process for all the evaluation teams. However, their theoretical perspective and the complexity of the evaluation themes to a certain extent militated against the country case studies being of practical use to those designing or managing (as opposed to analysing) CV&A interventions. It was particularly difficult to 'ride the two horses' and apply the DAC evaluation criteria alongside the given evaluation framework's themes – and so this report will reveal a tension between it being, on the one hand, a thematic study and, on the other hand, a programme evaluation.

2.4 Limitations of the Methodology Used

Selection of interventions

The Evaluation Framework and Methodological Guidance were, in the main, detailed and therefore effective in relation to the data gathering process, the menu of analytical tools and the structure of the report. One shortcoming, however, was the lack of clarity concerning the selection of case study interventions – in relation to the selection criteria, the size of the sample, and whether the selection should be based solely on the ECG partners operating in the country. The team's decision to concentrate mainly on the CV&A interventions of the ECG partners might have led to a restrictive view of CV&A donor support in Nepal; also, it might have made comparisons difficult if other teams have taken a different decision.

Application of DAC criteria in establishing a profile of interventions

Given the time constraints – having on average only two days per intervention studied – it meant a rather superficial assessment of individual interventions. Therefore, it was important to have access to, and to be able to rely on, previous M&E reports. In particular, given the shortness of time and the number of interventions to be covered, the team was severely constrained in its ability to make sound judgements about the 'efficiency' and 'impact' aspects of the interventions. It was much easier, of course, to assess 'relevance' in relation to the significance of the declared objectives, 'effectiveness' in terms of immediate results (or 'effects') and policy and capacity building aspects that would have a bearing on 'sustainability'.

Application of the MSC technique

In its full application, MSC depends on the participation of many intervention stakeholders – in terms of collecting 'stories of change', in deciding which to focus on, and in analysing the data. It should also be applied throughout the intervention cycle, in order to provide data on processes, outputs and impacts. But, given the scope and time constraint of the evaluation, in the NCCS the team was able to apply it in a much more limited sense – by, in encounters with stakeholders, always being alert to potential 'stories of change', prompting fuller narratives, recording them and assessing their relevance to the study of CV&A. These accounts have been used to enrich the findings throughout the report, but particularly in the intervention 'summary sheets' of Annex D.

3. The Context

3.1. The Political Landscape

At the time of conducting this study, Nepal was in a state of hiatus. The Communist Party of Nepal – the Maoists – made some fresh demands that caused a postponement of the elections scheduled for 22 November 2007 that would have led to a formation of a Constituent Assembly – and the drafting of a new constitution.

Nepal had been recovering from the ten years of armed insurgency instigated by the Maoists. It was a conflict that had caused a severe disruption of both formal and informal governance structures and social networks, especially in the rural and more remote areas of the country. Since July 2002 there were no elected representatives at the local level – and since October 2002 also at the national level. Legislative and oversight functions were allowed to lapse. Service delivery was seriously constrained. Over 75% of village development committees (VDCs) were displaced and even police posts were restricted to the limits of the district headquarters. Sometimes the conflict put in abeyance – or certainly inhibited – donor support, not only to government institutions but also to civil society. So, donor strategies in Nepal are critically influenced by this political scenario – and, especially, any interventions concerning Citizens' Voice and Accountability.

Despite its strategic position between China and India, despite its unrivalled tourist attractions, Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries. In 2006 the per capita income was only USD 270. The poverty is deeply entrenched. It is deepest in the rural areas; especially so in the Mid-West and the Far-West. Moreover, the problems of poverty are compounded by ethnic and caste disparities – and by gender discriminations. This is the situation that helps to explain why Nepal is one of the few countries left in the 21st century where a Maoist party can gain so much support.

It was in response to the success of the Maoists in threatening even the capital, Kathmandu, that King Gyanendra assumed uncluttered executive power in February of 2005. Before then, the moves towards democracy had taken a rather tortuous path. Until 1990 Nepal was essentially a Hindu kingdom, where perhaps a majority of the population believed that the king was the incarnation of a god. But in 1990, in what is now known as the first 'People's Movement' – initiated by the underground political parties – the *Panchayat* system of local development committees under an absolute monarchy was overthrown.

The last decade of the 20th century was a time of hope for the intellectuals and liberals of Nepal. The mood of the time is well captured in Manjushree Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu*[3]: 'Day by day Nepalis are contesting empty myths and replacing them with new truths – or at least with pertinent questions. The private media has boomed in the past decade, and books are being published at an unprecedented rate. The city's tea shops, restaurants and bars are abuzz with punditry. Nepali society is in a state of intellectual ferment.' The Evaluation Team experienced the same. Despite the uncertainties – or because of them – people are keen to talk, to speculate, to argue. As one donor representative said when interviewed: 'Nepal must be the most politicised country in the world.' It is a fertile ground, then, for encouraging Voice – if not for prompting Accountability.

But two events cast their shadows: the Maoists' threat and the King's response. Gyanendra had ascended to the throne after the massacre at the Royal Palace on 1 June 2001, when the Crown Prince was said to have shot down King Birendra, the Queen, and other members of the royal family – and then shot him-

[3] Manjushree Thapa, Forget Kathmandu: an elegy for democracy, Penguin Books, revised edition, 2007.

self. King Gyanendra has never been popular; he is even suspected by many Nepali of having masterminded the family massacre. So the people were caught between the Scylla of Maoist revolutionaries and the Charybdis of absolute monarchy.

In response to a constitutional crisis in October 2002, the King fired the elected Prime Minister and assumed direct control over the government. In the interests of maintaining security – and in the hope that the Maoists would be defeated – the King received support from the 'aid community'. Then, on 1 February 2005, the King effected what could only be called a military coup, made himself chairman of an ultra-right cabinet, suspended civil liberties, and intimidated political activists standing up for democracy. And because of the Maoist insurgency, no local elections could be held.

'Since October 2002,' Manjushree Thapa says, 'all we had was a king, a royal cabinet, an army and a bureaucracy, all operating in a constitutional neverneverland.' And the political parties, the most prominent being the Nepali Congress Party and another communist party, the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist), had lost a good deal of credibility, because their leaders seemed more intent on winning positions in the government than with upholding their declared democratic principles.

The royal coup of February 2005 put an end to the jockeying of the parties – until the emergence of a second People's Movement, in April 2006. The King capitulated and an Interim Government was established, comprising the seven leading parties – the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) – and eventually the Maoists, after a ceasefire was agreed. The main goal of the Interim Government has been to prepare for a Constituent Assembly that would deal with a restructuring of the state (most likely on federalist lines), restoring democracy (especially reinvigorating the decentralisation reforms), and creating equal rights and opportunities for all ethnic groups. In August 2006, the SPA and the Maoists accepted assistance from the UN for facilitating the peace process and in planning for the Constituent Assembly.
(BOX)

At the end of the fieldwork and after the debriefing session, we, a relaxed Evaluation Team, took a trip to Durbar Square, in the heart of old Kathmandu and with temples dating back to the 17th century. We had a late afternoon drink in a rooftop cafe. We could see the ornate rooftops of the Hanuman Dhoka Palace, where a crowd was waiting for King Gyanendra to arrive – though some said it would be the Prime Minister rather than the King who would participate in this year's Dasain ceremony. And in the courtyard down below, the Maoists were holding a demonstration. Against a backcloth of red banners emblazoned with the hammer and sickle, they were making ranting speeches and releasing balloons bearing up into the clear blue sky slogans saying 'Down with the monarchy'.

We remembered what a Nepalese senior civil servant had said to us when we had interviewed him a few days before: 'If you want to understand this country, you must realise that we are trying to live in three centuries: the 18th century of Hindu kings, the 20th century of Maoists – and the 21st century of trying to build, encouraged by you donor people, a real democracy.'

(BOX END)
At the time of writing in December 2007, it seemed likely that the SPA would accede to the demands of the Maoists in declaring a republic and accepting a full proportional representation system in the CA elections.

3.2. Decentralisation: Policy and Practice

Rather incongruously, at the same time as the country was suffering the conflict between the monarchists and the communists and bemused by the competition between the political parties, Nepal espoused a decentralisation policy – greatly encouraged by the donors. Here then, at the local level, is a space and a strategy for enhancing citizens' Voice and promoting government's Accountability.

In 1999, the Nepali government promulgated a Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA). This introduced a two-tier system of local government, with village development committees and equivalent municipal bodies as the lower tier, and district development committees as the upper tier. Today, there are 75 DDCs, 3,915 VDCs and 58 municipalities.[4] The LSGA envisages full devolution of central-level development functions and responsibilities to these local bodies. A Decentralisation Implementation and Monitoring Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, was set up to drive forward the decentralisation agenda. It formulated the Decentralisation Implementation Plan (DIP), and it oversaw the gradual transfer of programmes of three sectors: primary education, health and agriculture. Though the Ministry of Local Development has prepared a comprehensive devolution strategy, this cannot be implemented until a stable government is in place – and one committed to the decentralisation ideology. Moreover, the process of local democratisation was seriously impeded when in 2002, because of the insurgency, it was not possible to hold any local elections. So local bodies have continued to be made operational by the deployment of deputed personnel and individuals nominated by central government. There were, however, municipal elections organised by the 'King's Parliament' – but their legitimacy was not recognised either by the Nepali political parties or by the international community.

However, as noted optimistically in the DFDP evaluation report, the decentralisation reform process regained some pace after the King's abdication in April 2006. The Ministry of Local Development (MoLD) and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) both took initiatives towards revitalising the decentralisation agenda, as well as announcing new policies on fiscal decentralisation. In the 2006/2007 budget, there was a doubling of grants to VDCs and the introduction of a performance-based grant allocation system for the local authorities.

Nevertheless, the gap between policy and practice, between rhetoric and reality, has to be recognised. The dilemmas and challenges associated with Nepal's decentralisation experience were well pointed up in a study published in 2001[5]: 'The core of local governance in Nepal, the District Development Committees, Village Development Committees and municipalities, suffer from a legitimacy crisis, as they are caught by a series of paradoxes between responsibilities and resources, between accountability and power, and between legislative framework and ground realities'. Some of the CV&A interventions treated in this evaluation will explore their 'ground realities' and the extent to which they have been able to augment local government resources and develop accountability mechanisms.

[4] See Nepal DFDP Final Evaluation Report, UNCDF, November 2006.
[5] Dev Raj Dahal, Hari Uprety, Phanindra Subba, Good Governance and Decentralisation in Nepal, Centre for Governance and Development Studies and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Kathmandu, 2001.

3.3. Social Structure, Gender and Exclusion

The complex social structure of Nepal is divided between Indo-Aryan caste groups and Tibeto-Burman ethnic groups. Within this context some general, relevant aspects of gender and social exclusion can be summarized.

Ethnic differences, caste and gender inequalities are key attributes of Nepal society; poverty and social exclusion are principle elements of the complex social structure. A significant proportion of the rural population of Nepal is marginalised on the basis of gender, language, caste, religion and culture. Many women suffer discrimination; the *dalit* (lower castes), the *janajati* (indigenous peoples), *madhesi* (people of the southern Terai region bordering India), and Muslim communities – these all suffer marginalisation. There are, of course, other marginalized groups, such as those with disability, the urban homeless, orphaned children and those displaced through conflict.

While poverty and social exclusion are both difficult to define and difficult to measure, they emerge from multiple dimensions involving historical, economic, cultural, and regional differences. In Nepal, poverty and social exclusion are closely related, entailing a lack of economic, educational and health opportunities – and a difficulty in attaining citizenship or participating in political affairs.

Some literacy statistics will illuminate the problem. In 2001 the average national literacy rate was 54.1%; but that of the *dalit* was only 33% - while that of the *jananjati* people was 50% and that of some marginalised castes of the *madhesi* was 40%[6]. Social exclusion is perhaps most evident in the composition of the state bureaucracy. For the early 1980s, state records show that 69% of those passing civil service examinations were from either the Bahun and Chhetri castes. By the early 1990s this had increased to 81% and, by 2001, 98% were from the Bahun and Chhetri castes.[7] Such expanding, pervasive inequalities can be understood as having contributed towards further disparities in access to economic resources, which in turn may have contributed to the increasing attraction of dissident groups, including the Maoist People's Army.

In respect to women's marginality and economic vulnerability, a 2001 census identified that women accounted for 48% of the overall workforce within rural agriculture and 34 % in the non-agriculture sector.[8] Although today the law provides easier access to land and economic resources, it should be noted that land is still perceived as a highly valued asset and, according to prevailing traditions, in reality women often have no property rights within many communities.[9] Even though the constitution guarantees women equal rights, social/cultural behaviour is such that women are still suffering discrimination. According to the same 2001 census, women were found to hold only 5% of the land titles and to own only 0.8 percent of houses.[10] Despite attempts during the last 20 years to promote income generation, through credit and savings groups, the economic situation of women has not changed significantly.[11]

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[6] Three Year Interim Plan (2007/08 – 2009/10), National Planning Commission, GoN, December 2007.

[7] Thapa, Deepak and Bandita Sijapati(2003). A Kingdom under Siege, Nepal's Maoist Insurgency, 1996 to 2003. Kathmandu: Printhouse.

[8] Geiser, Alexandra. 'Social Exclusion and Conflict Transformation in Nepal: Women, Dalit and Ethnic Groups': FAST Country Risk Profile Nepal. Swiss Peace 5, 2005.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Acharya, Meena (2003). Efforts at Promoting Women in Nepal. Kathmandu. Tanka Prasad Memorial Foundation, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES).

[11] Geiser, Alexandra. op. cit

In this respect it is worth noting that it took seven years after being instructed by the Supreme Court for the Parliament to introduce a bill to combat the legal discrimination against women and to uphold their property rights. Nevertheless, as many civil society organisations have reported, traditional behaviour still stifles the implementation of these laws and, consequently, the benefits of these reforms have not permeated to the community level, where local people as well as administrators and legal practitioners are little aware of the laws and of their own responsibility to enforce them.

3.4. The Distribution of Power: the Elites and the Excluded

Nepal, then, is an extremely hierarchical society, divided by caste, ethnicity, gender – and by the terrain itself. So democratic aspirations, as those embedded in the decentralisation policies as discussed in Section 3.2. above – or in the programmes designed to enhance Voice and Accountability – have to free themselves from the deeply ingrained habits of elitism, cultural arrogance and social discrimination.

Privilege, discrimination and marginalisation are also, of course, determinants of poverty. And these habits perpetuate serious violations of human rights. For example, many children are still married off at an early age and a substantial number of school-age children receive little or no education. Women suffer from domestic violence, allegations of witchcraft, demands to pay dowry, lack of ownership of property, trafficking for prostitution, and restricted freedom of movement due to family and society traditions. The constitutional rights of the people of Nepal are thus continuously being violated, in spite of the fact that the Government has made commitments to improving this situation by signing a number of international treaties which oblige the Government to secure and protect the basic rights of the Nepali people.

Untouchability and other forms of caste discrimination are legally abolished. However, while there are many in Nepal who are committed to a deepening of democracy, still for many people the caste system continues to be a salient feature of personal identity and social relationships which, to a significant extent, determines access to opportunities. Addressing exclusion, then, becomes a key theme of development strategy in Nepal – and it is a central theme of two of the interventions studied in this evaluation.

3.5. Public Oversight Mechanisms

Despite the kinds of abuse noted above, human rights have been codified in Nepal's 1990 Constitution and have been elaborated in the Interim Constitution of 2006. The government has ratified 30 or more international conventions and instruments impinging on human rights. It has established a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and prepared a National Human Rights Action Plan. However, as well as discriminatory attitudes and actions, in Nepal, even though the ceasefire holds, there are still instances of killings, kidnapping and intimidation.

The NHRC has been without Commissioners for over a year, and the Commission for Investigation of Abuses of Authority (CIAA) is also lacking Commissioners and is suspected of not being independent enough of Government.

Corruption is reported to be pervasive in Nepal, and the Study Team encountered a good deal of cynicism about current attempts of the Government to deal with it. The 2001 study on decentralisation[12] paints a pessimistic picture: 'All the accountability institutions, such as the Auditor General's Office, the Public Accounts Committee, CIAA and the Special Police Department need to be strengthened to bolster the

[12] Dahal, Uprety and Subba, op.cit.

national integrity system in fighting corruption and the criminalisation of the economy through the creation of a strong law-enforcement mechanism of the governance process. The tendency of government to encourage unlawful behaviour among political dissidents and conspiracies and unholy manoeuvrings within the government must be exposed by the media, the civil society and other watchdog agencies.'

'Corruption is rampant everywhere in Nepal: at all levels of society and in the country's institutions,' runs a statement in a project document prepared by Pro-Public, one of the CSOs implementing CV&A interventions studied in this evaluation. 'It is eroding society's moral fabric, has violated the social and economic rights of poor and vulnerable people, is impeding economic development and increasing inequality, and fuelling conflict and instability in the country.'[13]

One major constraint, of course, is that the Judiciary is also functioning poorly – with staff shortages, limited facilities, a huge backlog of cases and no presence in the more remote areas of the country. Therefore, the general impression gained by the team is that the public oversight mechanisms do lack capacity – and the impression of the general public seems to be (as articulated in interviews and in discussion sessions with the variety of stakeholders) that the 'political will' is lacking to address these capacity gaps and to render them effective as agencies holding public officials to account.

3.6. Civil Society, the Media and Public Space

Since 1990, civil society – and especially the media – has taken up the watchdog role with a remarkable energy. Also remarkable is the growth of civil society and the media over the last two decades. Some current estimates put the number of civil society organisations (CSOs) at 30,000 – as opposed to less than 500 in 1990[14]. (The definition of CSO used in this evaluation is what is normally understood by the term NGO – excluding civil society actors such as private sector businesses, professional associations and trade unions.)

The growth and changing profile of the media in the decade since 1990 is well documented in a report produced for the UNDP-sponsored Cross-Boundary Media Initiative.[15] It highlights the 'media boom' following the restoration of democracy in 1990, and the part the media played in creating a more open atmosphere in the country. It tells how the private sector has challenged the government monopoly of the media. And it tells the success stories of private newspapers such as *Kantipur* and the English language *Kathmandu Post*, the rise of private TV stations such as Kantipur Television, the Image Channel, Sagarmatha TV, Avenues TV; and the mushrooming of FM stations across the country.

In relation to CV&A strategies, CSOs – the mix of voluntary, community and civic bodies – can stimulate and process public demands, support dissent and attempt to constrain arbitrary and discriminatory actions of government agents and agencies. Many people that the team interviewed argued, or implied, that this growth of CSOs is a response to resources being made available to them by donors, who shifted support from government to civil society in response to the conflict situation, in which working with the government apparatus was difficult. However, others emphasised the tradition of voluntarism, self-help and philanthropy that has been nurtured in Nepal's Hindu and Buddhist religions. The concept of *dharma* (duty or social responsibility) is deep rooted. Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that the donors shifting much of

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13 Civil Society Anti-Corruption Project: Project Document, prepared by Pro-Public, October 2004.

1414 Singh, A and Ingdal, N. A Discussion Paper on Donor Best Practices towards NGOs in Nepal, Norad Collected Reviews 10/2007.

15 Thapa, D. Country Media Profile: Nepal, Support to the Development of Cross-Boundary Media Initiatives in South Asia Promoting Peace and Stability, NCG, February 2003.

their assistance from government institutions to building the capacity of civil society must be a cause of the growth of CSOs.

Though the Government might well still be wary of civil society's role in prompting accountability, it has increasingly recognised the role of civil society in social and economic development. According to the PRSP/Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-07), NGOs and CBOs are expected to play 'a complementary role in support of the Government's massive efforts towards poverty alleviation in the country'. The situation continues in the Three-Year Interim Plan (2008-10) which was approved in November 2007. It seems, then, that the various Nepali governments – even back to the *Panchayat* days – are ready to put their weight on the Voice side of the CV&A equation.

As elsewhere in the world, in Nepal the media have now become both independent and expanded. There are now five TV channels competing with the state-run Nepal Television – and it must be hard to keep count of the FM stations that are competing with Radio Nepal and operating from the capital or from outlying community bases. The newspapers are lively – each one blatantly partisan in support of the various political parties – and taken up with news and arguments about state restructuring and political party positions. Nepal, too, has one of the most serious and respected journals in the region: Himal South Asia. Finally, of course, a growing number of Nepali have access to news and comment from the satellite stations of the BBC, CNN, Star TV and Zee.

Nonetheless, it should also be recognised that the print media reach only a relatively small proportion of the population – the elite and the literate – and the TV stations are accessible mainly in the major towns. Even Radio Nepal is restricted in its coverage to about 80% of the population because of the mountainous terrain. But accessibility, especially for the more remote peoples, has been greatly improved by the expansion of community-based FM stations.

Here, then, through the CSOs engaged in monitoring and advocacy about human rights and good governance – and through both electronic and print media – there are spaces opening up for CV&A initiatives.

3.7. Key Issues for CV&A Interventions

This overview of the situation in Nepal – highlighting significant historical and contemporary factors – has identified a number of issues that should be addressed in any donor-supported CV&A strategy:

- **Of immediate concern, the tasks of the envisaged Constituency Assembly**:
  - the possible reshaping of the state along federalist lines;
  - the future of the monarchy;
  - the integration of the Maoists in national and local political structures;
- **In relation to local democracy**:
  - weak capacity of district and sub-district political structures;
  - limited participation of the public in local governance;
  - constraints against the public monitoring the performance of local authorities.
- **Of long-standing concern, the exclusion of lower caste and indigenous peoples**:
  - persistence of psychological and social factors leading to exclusion;
  - poor representation of *dalit* and *janajati* peoples in formal decision-making structures;
  - marginalisation of the *dalit* and *janajati* peoples in social settings and in economic activities.
- **In relation to governance and human rights**:
  - persistence of corrupt practices in public institutions;

- negative attitudes of the public concerning the accountability of public institutions;
- the public's lack of knowledge related to rights issues;
- weak capacity of public oversight mechanisms.

The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project reports aggregate and individual governance indicators for 212 countries and territories over the period 1996-2006. With regard to the dimension of Voice and Accountability, Nepal scores the following:

Table 2: Governance Indicators

Governance Indicator	Year	Percentile Rank (0-100)	Governance Score (-2.5 to +2.5)
Voice and Accountability	2006	13.0	-1.15
	2002	22.6	-0.87
	1998	44.2	-0.18

Source: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/sc_chart.asp#

These scores are, as expected, quite low. For comparison, Denmark's percentile rank in 2006 was 100 and its governance score was +1.72; India's percentile rank in the same year was 58.2 and its governance score was +0.35. For Mozambique, one of the CV&A case study countries, the percentile rank was 47.6 and the governance score was -0.06. Also, the variation over the years reflects the recent turbulent political history of Nepal.

3.8. The Architecture of Aid

An Overview

It could be said that there have been three main phases to donor aid policy in Nepal. From the time the country opened up to the rest of the world in the early 1950s – and up to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s – aid to Nepal was a tool of power politics. The United States, China, Russia and India all funded projects – expensive infrastructure projects related to road construction, power generation and industrial developments. But, despite a massive flow of USD.5.2 billion by the end of the century[16] (more per capita than for any other South Asian country) the grip of poverty was not broken.

The second phase was more complicated. There was a changed focus to rural development and smaller-scale community-based projects. Also (and particularly relevant for this CV&A evaluation), as elsewhere in the world there was a concern to support democratisation, advocate constitutionalism, uphold human rights and promote good governance. Some would say, cynically, that the West took up these causes only when the threat of communism receded after 1991 – coincidentally, at about the same time that Nepal itself adopted more democratic structures after the first 'People's Movement' . (Though, ironically and perversely, a communist insurgency was to plague the country from the mid-1990s.)

It was during this period that the role of international agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, as well as the Asian Development Bank, became increasingly important. And all five of the donor countries involved in this study were also active: Denmark, Germany, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The donors shared many of the same concerns, and all defined their

[16] John Whelpen, A History of Nepal, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

overriding goal as poverty alleviation. Many focused on the key issue of social exclusion, with a number of programmes targeting the *dalit* (low caste) and *janajati* (indigenous) communities.

The third, and current, aid phase is one marked by a degree of confusion and a tendency to 'wait-and-see'. With the return to autocratic rule by the King in April 2005, a number of donors lost confidence in the reform agenda and withdrew their support to government institutions. Danida, for example, withheld what had been considerable support to decentralisation initiatives through its Decentralisation Advisory Support Unit.

Nevertheless, as argued in a recent evaluation report on the DFID Country Programme for Nepal[17], the government has established a sound policy framework for aid effectiveness. The country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is complemented by a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and a Poverty Monitoring and Analysis System (PMAS). There are also mechanisms for donor/government co-ordination. However, the implementation of the PRSP is constrained by three main factors: the unwillingness of some bilateral partners to associate closely with a government that lacked legitimacy; the limited ability of the government to deliver services in rural areas as a result of the insurgency; under-spending by the government in social sectors; inefficiencies in its judicial and financial systems; and bureaucratic inertia. The following table shows how the USD 2 billion of foreign aid received by Nepal during the period 2001-2005 was shared between the main donors – highlighting the disbursements of the five ECG partners:

Table 3: Development Assistance to Nepal 2001-2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total	% Total
			In USD million				
Japan	84	98	61	56	63	362	17%
Germany	**38**	**35**	**63**	**53**	**63**	**251**	**12%**
United Kingdom	**33**	**37**	**53**	**66**	**62**	**251**	**12%**
IDA	30	15	79	46	16	185	9%
United States	20	33	38	35	55	181	9%
Denmark	**26**	**25**	**40**	**34**	**28**	**153**	**7%**
Norway	**12**	**13**	**20**	**23**	**25**	**93**	**4%**
Switzerland	**12**	**14**	**14**	**16**	**16**	**16**	**4%**
EC	11	13	16	22	10	73	4%
Others	124	79	78	76	91	448	22%
Total (all donors)	391	361	463	428	428	2070	100%

Source: Official Development Assistance Disbursements 2A, OECD-Stat, 19 April 2007

60% of Nepal's development budget is donor-financed. Bilateral aid is the main source of development assistance; in 2005 it constituted 74% of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

One feature of donor support as it is now in Nepal, and one that will be taken up in the analysis of CV&A practices, is the lack of harmonisation in planning and implementing interventions. As a review of Danish support[18] concluded: 'One of the most destructive factors in a conflict transformation process is the reality of "turf battles" among donors and third party actors.... 17 international organisations specialising in peace building have initiated activities in Nepal. In addition, many donor organisations in Nepal pursue a conflict transformation agenda. While this may be a very positive situation, there is a very real danger of duplication, confusion and destructive competition.'

[17] Chapman, N et al. Evaluation of DFID Country Programmes, Country Study: Nepal, Evaluation Report EV679, October 2007.
[18] Review of the Danish Support to Human Rights, Good Governance and Decentralisation in Nepal, 1 July, 2005.

The team collected information from the Ministry of Finance concerning the current pattern of aid. Of 202 projects, more than half of them are concerned with the provision of infrastructure and the improvement of service delivery. Of the 92 projects that seem to be related to CV&A, most of these focus on citizens' Voice rather than on the Accountability aspects of governance. To a certain extent this can be explained by the changing and difficult political dynamics of the country that have been traced above. But it seems that, whatever the political landscape, donors do prefer working with civil society organisations rather than with government agencies. This is one of the themes that will be taken up in Chapter 4 that explores entry points for CV&A, capacities of state and non-state actors, and CV&A channels.

A more detailed review of current donor policies and practices, as well as an elaboration of the political, social and economic themes, can be found in Annex C: Context Analysis.

However, before moving to a discussion of the team's findings concerning CV&A interventions in Nepal, it should be emphasised that CV&A is not a concept used by the donors in designing their support programmes. Examples of interventions working on either side (or both sides) of the Voice and Accountability equation are to be found inside projects with labels such as Governance, Human Rights and Decentralisation. And the particular concern in Nepal after the establishment of an interim parliament in 2002 has been the shift from the mitigation of conflict to the maintenance of peace. So the main challenge facing donors in the last two years has been how best to assist in the restoration of an inclusive democracy and in the development of a more equitable prosperity.

To address the issues presented above in Section 3.6, a comprehensive donor support programme, enhancing both the Voice of Nepali citizens and the Accountability of those in government, would have the following components:

- **In preparation for the elections to the Constituent Assembly, a civic education programme for the public focusing on**:
  - the possible restructuring of the state;
  - the pre-requisites and consequences of a federalist structure;
  - the future of the monarchy.
- **In support of local democracy**:
  - capacity building of local authorities, in relation to participatory planning and transparent financial management;
  - facilitation of public participation in local governance structures;
  - establishment of systems for the public monitoring of local authority performance.
- **In addressing the problem of social exclusion**:
  - incorporation of components in civic education programmes that explore the psychological and social factors leading to the exclusion of certain communities;
  - advocacy campaigns on behalf of the *dalit* and *janajati* communities;
  - inclusion of *dalit* and *janajati* peoples in decision making structures at both national and local levels.
- **In the promotion of good governance and the upholding of human rights**:
  - incorporation on anti-corruption and human rights components in civic education programmes;
  - capacity building for the public oversight mechanisms;
  - targeted training programmes on governance and rights issues for public officials and civil society leaders.

The Five Case-Study Donors

As mentioned above in Chapter 2, the team selected nine interventions for the evaluation as most relevant for an analysis of CV&A interventions, in line with the criteria described in that chapter and in Annex B. The interventions were chosen in the light of discussions with the five donors concerning their present strategies and the resultant portfolio of programmes.

What follows is an outline of the five donors' aid strategies, their programmes, and a particular commentary on their CV&A interventions.

Denmark
The overall and medium-term strategic objectives of Danish engagement in Nepal are:

- To facilitate and promote the development of a democratic political environment, respect for human rights and rule of law, and a peaceful resolution of the armed conflict;
- To contribute to poverty reduction through the improvement of service delivery targeting the poorest segments of the population.

The objectives are pursued through the following intermediate focal areas:

- Support to the democratic forces in Nepal;
- Assistance to the people of Nepal through both non-state and state actors, staying loyal to their mandate of providing services on an apolitical basis;
- Support to efforts aimed at facilitating dialogue and increasing the incentives for peace.

Under the bilateral country frame the following programmes are currently under implementation:

- Education (primary and secondary) 2003-2009;
- Human Rights and Good Governance 2003-2008;
- Rural Energy 2007-2012;
- Support to the Peace Process 2007-2008.

In relation to specific CV&A interventions, the Human Rights and Good Governance Programme (Danida/HUGOU) is the most relevant. Support for strengthening of citizens' voice has been provided to a wide range of civil society organisations within all of its seven components, with a particular emphasis on marginalized groups and victims of the conflict. In the past, Danida/HUGOU also worked extensively on strengthening the accountability of the state, through support to, *inter alia*, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the CIAA, the Judiciary and local governments. However, with the King's takeover of power, most activities in cooperation with state and government institutions were suspended, and the focus was shifted almost exclusively to civil society. Although the political environment is changing – and, after the success of the second 'People's Movement' in April 2006, the environment seemed quite positive – the time has not yet been deemed right for a shift back to support for government agencies. The programme continues to have a strong focus on Voice with an emphasis on preparing for the Constituent Assembly elections and improving access to justice for victims of the ten years of civil conflict. When key developments and political commitments to improvements in government accountability are clearer, then Danida will be ready to once again work on this aspect.

Besides the HUGOU programme, Danida supports the Election Commission and trade unions through Peace Support Funds. A new phase of HUGOU is scheduled to start in 2009, for which an increased focus on accountability is planned.

United Kingdom
DFID has assisted Nepal in the areas of livelihoods (agriculture, forestry, transport and communications, local development projects); basic services (education, health, water supply and sanitation); good governance, human rights, peace building, and social inclusion. Besides this, DFID Nepal and the World Bank jointly support the Government of Nepal in implementing the Nepal Health Sector Programme.

With regard to programmes with most relevance for CV&A, DFID, jointly with UNCDF, has been supporting the important decentralisation intervention explored in this study: the Decentralised Financing and Development Programme (DFDP). For this intervention, DFID partners with the Ministry of Local Development and seeks to ensure service provision to the districts. It also involves civil society – and, in stimulating demand as well as influencing the response of local authorities, DFDP works on both sides of the CV&A equation.

DFID has, furthermore, set up a separate programme of relevance to CV&A: the Enabling State Programme (ESP). ESP was launched in January 2001, and it aims at contributing to reducing poverty by supporting the improvement of governance in Nepal. It is taking an innovative approach to addressing the problems of governance; in particular, it seeks to avoid the common problem of poor national ownership and the imposition of external ideas. Also, the multi-donor Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund (RDIF) is managed by the ESP.

The intention of ESP was to contribute towards achieving pro-poor governance by supporting the following four-stage change process:

- Developing a better practical understanding of governance and identification/development of advocates for change;
- Change advocates influencing decision-makers to start carrying out reforms;
- Prompting desire for change among policymakers with reforms being carried out;
- Continuing improvements in a new environment of pro-poor governance.

Partners in the ESP programme are both government and civil society organisations, with a focus on marginalized groups and social inclusion.

As described in the Evaluation of DFID's Country Programme[19], in its Governance sector interventions there is an emphasis on the need for reform in order to improve service delivery, overcome patronage and tackle exclusion. The ESP involved a multiple approach, covering areas such as decentralisation, the judiciary, the media, revenue improvement, corruption control and privatisation. In response to the escalating conflict, DFID put much greater emphasis on peace-building and democratisation. Also, the balance of the programme shifted from the 'supply side' – for example, improving public finance management – to the 'demand side' activities – for example, supporting ethnic organisations and raising awareness about corruption.

Germany
At present, GTZ's activities focus on the following priority areas: local self-governance, civil society capacity building, renewable energy, and health and family planning. The aim is to strengthen the government, civil society, democratic self-governance and participation by the local population in direct poverty reduction measures. Where possible, support is also given to the onward development and implementation of the national peace and reform agenda to strengthen local self-governance. Special attention is paid to promoting conflict reduction measures and to giving marginalised groups access to services at the local level.

[19] Chapman, N. et al. op.cit.

GTZ is working to improve the food and income situation of the poor, to set up self-help organisations, to enhance infrastructure, to tap new sources of income, and strengthen local service delivery systems in rural areas. In relation to CV&A, it also holds that it is important to continue supporting local administrative bodies in their cooperation with civil society organisations and residents' groups. The objective here is to make the planning, financial administration and implementation of municipal service delivery more efficient and to improve accountability and transparency. At the national level, guidelines for local self-governance are being drafted with GTZ assistance. And, finally, in cooperation with KfW, support is being provided for a municipal development fund that finances investment in local infrastructure.

The following projects are currently underway within the scope of the priority area, 'Local Self-Governance and Civil Society':

- Urban Development through Local Efforts (UDLE);
- Rural Finance Nepal (RUFIN);
- Poverty Alleviation in Selected Rural Areas in Nepal (PASRA) – included in this study.

GTZ puts emphasis on social inclusion, and they work on both sides of the CV&A equation. Their programmes are coordinated with the relevant ministries. They give support to the improvement of local bodies' transparency and accountability. And they promote Voice activities in as much as they facilitate the formation of user groups and offer training in human rights and citizens' entitlements.

Norway
Norway's cooperation with Nepal started as a people-to-people relationship, with active participation of non-governmental agencies and academia. Government-to-government development cooperation was established with the signing of a memorandum of understanding in 1996. In accordance with Nepal's own priorities, Norway has chosen to concentrate its assistance on basic and primary education, good governance, human rights and, within the energy sector development, on hydro-power and electrification.

In July 2005, Norway decided to reduce development assistance by 10%, as a reaction to the negative democratic development in the country. However, in connection with the partial restoration of democracy in April 2006, this decision was reversed. It has been indicated that the Norwegian support to Nepal may increase if the positive development continues.

With regard to CV&A issues, in the area of good governance and human rights, Norway supports the UNDP in Nepal, which aims at strengthening local governments in development and planning issues, and in supporting local social mobilisation. As a result of the political situation in 2005, Norway stopped the support to the NHRC. Instead, it chose to assist the establishment of the UN High Commission for Human Rights, and it gave support to non-government organisations for monitoring the human rights situation. Furthermore, Norway supports activists and organisations that enforce dialogue between the conflict lines.

Of direct relevance to CV&A, Norway supports innovative programmes that engage in debate the public and politicians – current and future – as does the 'Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People' intervention, a case study in this evaluation.

Switzerland
The strategy of the Swiss Development Cooperation has put an emphasis on rural development, with projects and programmes in rural infrastructure, agriculture, forestry, vocational skills development and social

services. SDC has contributed to the formulation of the key development policies and has fostered decentralization at the district and more local levels, focusing on democratic development and participation.

SDC's programme in Nepal – particularly transport infrastructure (roads, trail bridges), management of natural resources (forestry, agriculture) – has over the years established a strong foundation in the country that is directed to capacity development and policy improvement. Governance issues such as decentralization, human rights and anti-corruption, especially at the local level, as well as the promotion of equity and social inclusion, are integral parts of programme implementation. Strong linkages with groups of citizens, users' committees and local NGOs, and networking with allied community-based organizations – this has given SDC the opportunity to act in relation to the conflict at the local level, easing tensions and preparing the way for dialogue and reconciliation. This presence in the field has allowed SDC also to address difficult issues linked to the effect of violence and fear on the civilian population, especially in relation to women.

With regard to CV&A issues, SDC aims at working at micro, meso and macro levels. Its partners are government authorities (local and national), as well as civil society organisations. SDC has been supportive of the principle of channelling funding through local governments in order to promote their accountability to their publics. During a meeting with SDC representatives, they expressed the view that, in the future, they will be more active in working with DDCs and VDCs, as well as supporting the implementation of the Local Self-Governance Act. Throughout the period of insurgency, SDC was able to maintain it links with government partners.

4. Findings

4.1. Opportunities, Constraints and Entry Points for CV&A

The team would emphasise again that, though CV&A is a concept shaping this evaluation, it is not one that necessarily determined the donors' formulation of strategies and interventions; rather than seeing CV&A as a separate sector, the donors in Nepal – as elsewhere – have defined strategies related to the more established concepts of Governance and Human Rights. As such, there is no explicit donor strategy for CV&A in Nepal. So CV&A can be understood as a pair of glasses that we put on for looking at a range of programmes with the objectives of enhancing democracy, improving governance or upholding human rights. Nevertheless, none of the five donors had any difficulty with the CV&A concept; they could readily identify interventions with CV&A components.

The context sensitivity

Overall, the team found that the programmes and strategies of the five donors were all context-sensitive and based on a realistic analysis of the situation. As will have been apparent from the review of the programmes of the five case-study donors in Section 3.8, their overall priorities and objectives are, to a large extent, the same – all related to poverty alleviation. But how they set out to achieve their objectives, and where they seize opportunities, differ. DFID, for example, is prepared to go forward with its support to decentralisation structures, whereas Danida has chosen to pause until an element of local democracy is restored; GTZ often includes an aspect of income generation in its community development programmes, whereas DFID is mainly guided by a principle of social inclusion; The Royal Norwegian Embassy has shown itself very ready to engage in informal dialogue with national political leaders on governance or rights issues, whereas SDC has focused very much on governance issues at the local levels.

Nevertheless, all the donors, to a greater or lesser extent, have decided to reduce support to the formal structures of government in times of political uncertainty and have turned more towards civil society for partnerships. They have all expressed concern about the limits in supporting the local democratic structures (DDCs and VDCs) at times when these bodies are run by public functionaries and not elected representatives. As shown above in Section 3.8, donors do have strategies for supporting government structures; however, in practice they have been constrained owing to the lack of government representation at the local level. This does pose the question as to how explicit or clear the donors' overall strategies are for CV&A at the country level. Just as, in the meetings with the team, all the five donors recognised the usefulness of the CV&A concept – and could easily identify projects with CV&A components – agreeing that the integrative concept might enhance both the design and implementation of programmes if they were to use it as a guiding concept in the formulation of their strategies in the sectors of governance and human rights.

All five donors support, and have signed, a set of Basic Operating Guidelines (see Annex H). The BOGs emerged out of a perceived necessity to respond to an insurgency situation where interventions associated with government cooperation could not be granted access to their target communities. In order for the donor-supported programmes to operate and deliver services, they had to de-link themselves from government. The BOGs, then, represented a united donor platform and a commitment to coordination at a time of civil conflict.

First issued in 2003, and re-issued in October 2007, the BOGs stress the donors' orientation towards the local communities, particularly to marginalised people. There is no mention of government involvement. As the document has it: 'We are accountable to those whom we seek to assist and to those providing the resources'. In other words, the donors are saying that they are essentially accountable to the beneficiaries and to their own governments (those providing the resources) – and not to the Nepalese government.

In general, donors further reduced support to government programmes after February 2005 and reoriented themselves towards civil society for service delivery and awareness raising. At that point, the government was not established through anything like a democratic process – the issue was one of legitimacy as well as accountability. So an important issue is raised by the Nepal case study: How possible or appropriate is it to promote the accountability of state institutions when the very legitimacy of a government is questioned by donors?

The issue of how much, and to whom, the donors themselves should be accountable was raised several times during the team's field visit. Representatives of Danida/HUGOU claimed that they put emphasis on accountability within their own organisation, 'to practise what we preach'. A representative of SDC commented, 'We are accountable to the people' – and they told how, in open dialogue, they had even experienced beneficiaries requesting to know the size of SDC staff salaries. The same representative went on to say that donors really should look at how they themselves demonstrate the kind of accountability that they expect of others.

In the team's discussions with donors on accountability, terms such as 'transparency in decision-making', 'answerability' and 'exposure to sanctions' were used. Do donors have monitoring procedures in place – and a communication strategy with respect to their beneficiaries – to exercise an accountability that includes all these aspects?

Entry Points

The nine selected interventions, as already indicated in Section 2.1, are representative of the main range of entry points found across CV&A interventions in Nepal:

- Civic education, focusing on governance and human rights;
- Decentralisation policies and processes;
- Social exclusion issues;
- Rural development initiatives.

As in many other countries, elections become the stimulus for civic education – whether narrowly focusing on voter education or, more deserving the label of civic education, those interventions that address broader themes of nation building, democracy, governance and human rights. It was the critical election for the Constituent Assembly that encouraged a number of donors to come together in the **Coalition for Constituent Assembly Support** intervention – CoCAS.

Such a civic education intervention – and this is a theme taken up in Sections 4.3, and 5.1 – can, ideally, work across the CV&A divide and engage with not only the public at large but also with specific groups such as politicians, law enforcement officers and local government officials.

The Constituent Assembly was also the focus for the other civic education interventions taken up as case studies: **Media for Consolidation of Democracy** (MCD), **Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People!** (LLVP), and the **Nepal Good Governance Project** (NGGP).

The decentralisation process is another common entry point for CV&A interventions – in this evaluation, represented by the **Decentralised Financing and Development Programme** (DFDP), supported by UNCDF and DFID. This particular example demonstrates how such an intervention can, at the national level, influence policy making and, at the local level, build capacities of officials and community representatives – and develop mechanisms for enhancing the accountability of local government officers.

As highlighted above in Sections 3.3 and 3.4, social exclusion is a major concern in Nepal, and it has become an entry point for a number of interventions. It is the focus of two interventions in this evaluation: the **Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign** (DJEC) of Danida that assists marginalised groups to exercise their citizen rights and secure better livelihoods – and the **Janajati Empowerment Project** (JEP) of DFID that seeks to enhance the participation of *janajati* people in socio-economic and political processes. But, as will be seen later in this report, there are significant challenges to be overcome in promoting such interventions – challengers related to the remoteness of some of these communities, to the risk of adopting paternalistic stances, and to the difficulties of linking local actions to nation policy debates.

Finally, in recognition of the potential cross-cutting nature of CV&A, any social development programme can be – perhaps, should be – an opportunity for encouraging the participation of beneficiaries, facilitating their expression of views and improving governance structures and processes. There are two community development interventions that were selected because they incorporated strong CV&A components: the **Nepal/Swiss Community Forestry Project** (NSCP) of SDC and the **Poverty Alleviation in Selected Rural Areas of Nepal** (PASRA) of BMZ and GTZ. Both interventions build the capacities of users' groups, promote awareness raising in relation to human rights, and advocate for transparency and accountability in local authorities.

Coordination of aid

The current, official mechanisms for GoN/donors aid coordination are set out in Annex C – the Nepal Development Forum, Local Donors Meeting, Donors Only Group and the Sector Coordination Groups. However, despite the priority accorded to alignment in GoN statements, it seems that the government is not taking a strong lead in ensuring that donor programmes are in line with national policies and strategies. From the team's discussions with the National Planning Commission, it was clear that it sees its role more to approve individual project proposals – each judged on its own technical merits, rather than in the light of sectoral needs, the comparative advantages of different donors, and the avoidance of overlaps. The Commission does not yet have a record of the full spread of donor-supported interventions, so it is not in a position to, for example, assess gaps and prioritise donor inputs.

As for the donors themselves, one of their recurring themes in discussions with the team was their interest in the better coordination of programming. But, despite an appreciation of the Paris Declaration on the harmonisation of donor activities, despite the numerous working groups or focus groups that have been established in Nepal, the main activity seems to have been limited to a mapping of donor-supported projects, the setting up of data bases and the sharing of information. There is little evidence of engaging in joint planning and moving towards more basket funding. As one head of a UN agency said: 'We all believe in coordination – but none of us want to be coordinated.'

4.2. Institutional, Organisational and Individual Capacities

In Nepal, as elsewhere, capacity building – whether broadly or narrowly defined – is seen as a corner stone of donor support. In enhancing CV&A, it would be assumed that there would be a balance in developing capacities of both citizens' organisations (to strengthen their ability to express their concerns and to moni-

tor the performance of their leaders) and of government agencies (to strengthen their ability to respond efficiently and fairly to public needs and demands). However, given the shifting political landscape of Nepal – so often tilting towards autocratic rule – it has been far from easy for donors to put their weights at all equally on both sides of the scales.

Assessment of needs

In relation to supporting moves towards greater democratisation – in line with donor objectives as set out above – there can be no doubt about the need for such support. As described in the context analysis of Chapter 3, democracy is a relatively new phenomenon in Nepal – and, as events have shown, extremely fragile. As noted in Whelpton's 'History of Nepal', a conclusion of a study on aid in the 1950s and 1960s was that it was largely ineffective because of the donors' failure to realise that ordinary Nepalese were not eager for change. However, it would be hard to justify such a view now – given the evidence of April 2006 when people *en masse* took to the streets in opposition to King Gyanendra. However, it should be recognised that capacity building needs should be seen, not only in providing support to institutional structures – whether agencies at the national level such as the NHRC, the CIAA, or at the local level such as the DDCs and VDCs – but also in addressing attitudinal factors. It seems that Nepali people have not yet acquired the habit of democracy[20].

Much donor support has gone into building the capacity of civil society organisations. Here, in terms of assessing needs, there is something of a paradox. On the one hand, CSOs are very new – they have sprung up like mushrooms only with the establishment of democratic structures after 1990. Many of them lack material resources; they lack organisational skills. But, on the other hand, in terms of values and commitments, civil society in Nepal has a great strength. There is a tradition of social service – of caring for the vulnerable – that, presumably, comes from the deep-rooted religions of Hinduism and Buddhism. However, one traditional feature of Nepali society is readily and urgently defined as a need by those who wish to promote CV&A – and that is the plight of the suppressed *dalit* (lower caste) and the marginalised *janajati* (indigenous) societies. In this regard, the main capacity needs are related to community organisation, to advocacy strategies and to the claiming of citizenship entitlements.

As for the media houses and practitioners, it is important that donors do not treat them as they might in Africa, for example, where the media is, in general, quite weak. In Nepal, as in India, the press has been long established and there is a flair for the newer electronic radio and TV channels. But, in as much as the media is a potent channel for CV&A, it is also in need of financial resources to develop and air relevant programmes.

Effectiveness of donor capacity building initiatives

A review of the nine selected interventions – and, in particular, the 'change models' presented in Annex D – shows that it is perhaps the media, already competent and confident, that can demonstrate 'quick gains' with a relatively limited input from donors. The examples are the 'Media for Consolidation of Democracy', the 'Nepal Good Governance Project', and the 'Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People!' where, in all three cases, the associated TV and radio programmes are anchored by experienced and popular TV journalists – Kishore Nepal and Kedar Khadka.

[20] See a statement in the Project Document of the Civil Society Anti-Corruption Project implemented by the CSO, Pro-Public: 'Nepalese civil society lacks a habit of complaining against government bodies for their irregularities and weaknesses. The traditional mindset like "nothing can be done either by writing or speaking against anomalies in the government offices" has reigned in the mind of Nepalese people for a long time.'

On the other hand, an initiative such as CoCAS, a complex civic education programme, perhaps failed to achieve its objectives partly because it did not seek to build the essentially 'educational' capacities of the implementing agencies. The programmes deployed CSOs with experience of advocacy, where mainly transmittal (message-driven) approaches are appropriate, rather than agencies with expertise in participatory (mainly issue-raising) approaches. So the materials produced and the formats chosen (mainly seminars and workshops) could not reach (in both geographical and psychological meanings of the term) the general public.

The DFDP exhibits a lack of balance found in many such programmes that support local government reforms. The capacity building focus is on the local authority officials and on the sub-district planning structures (in the case of Nepal, the VDCs and users' groups) – but not on the line ministries who are expected to devolve their responsibilities and functions to the lower levels. And so the reservations and reluctancies persist – and the local government reform agenda is impeded.

Another case of interest is a comparison of the two programmes on social exclusion: Capacity Building of Janajati Organisations through support to the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) and the Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign through support to SAMAGRA. Although the two programmes have the same objectives (the promotion of rights for *janajati* people) through the same kinds of capacity building activities, the envisaged results are very different. The one (for NEFIN) is building the capacity of an organisation that has a vision of a Nepalese state built (or divided) along ethnic lines. The other (by SAMAGRA) is building the capacities of 'social families' and supporting the actual integration of various excluded groups – *dalit*, *janajati* and women. The one programme is separatist, the other integrative.

Most of the nine selected interventions were being implemented by civil society organisations, and the project documents of such interventions include capacity building components for these CSOs. In this regard, the effectiveness of the capacity building programmes depends, of course, on whether or not a thorough capacity analysis is carried out. Here, the impression the team formed is that the donors are not paying much attention to such analyses. This affects both the appropriateness (and fairness) of selection and the quality of work done. As one CSO commentator said: 'The donors have their pet CSOs that they support, year after year'. Concerned about the reach, the products and the outcomes of civic education, a senior UN official said, 'The donors really should be much more careful about the quality of the programmes they are supporting'. And one statement that came out of the workshop for CSO representatives was: 'Donors should be more stringent in setting criteria for selecting agencies they fund.' (See Annex F)

As for the reach of programmes implemented by CSOs, with the exception of the media initiatives (using both mainstream and community-based channels), the Nepal CV&A programmes were frequently criticised by respondents interviewed by the team for not engaging the more remote, the more marginalised – and, hence, the most needy groups. Two issues are at stake here: first, the communication difficulties of a harsh terrain where the remote communities are virtually cut off – and, second, the fact that the CSOs who have a mission to engage the excluded communities are themselves said to be often staffed by the elites. And so there are social as well as physical barriers to cross.

For advocacy and educational work, no CSO on its own can achieve the desired impact. So coalition building becomes important. The CoCAS civic education programme is a good example. Despite the criticism that the programme was limited in its reach, most districts were included in the workshop series because the strategy was to work with four CSOs who were able to take on target regions and then work through their own networks of CBOs. But a more effective coalition for such a national civic education programme would have included a wide range of government as well as non-government agencies – such as the Ministry of Education, the Election Commission, the trade unions, professional associations, and even the political parties.

Sustainability

For CSOs such as the four engaged in the CoCAS intervention, sustainability is a very worrying issue, as it is for most such CSOs in the developing world – however successful the capacity building – because they are likely to be dependent on donor support for as far as anyone can see into the future. They are unlikely to get government support – and they cannot generate anything like sufficient funds from their membership or from their constituencies. (A point strongly argued in the focus group discussion with CSO representatives – see the report of the 'Force Field Analysis, Annex F.)

The Nepal/Swiss Community Forestry Programme, Phase V, is coming to an end by 2008. Both staff and user group members expressed concerns about the future during the team's visit, as the plans for the next phase, including a gradual exit strategy, had not been disseminated yet. It is not likely that the forestry programme can keep its current level of activities without external assistance. In the current phase, NSCFP has been more focused on capacity building of users' groups and less on capacity building of government agency staff and local NGO service providers. This has implications for sustainability, as it is now down to the staff of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, with their limited resources, to ensure the continuation of the community forestry programme.

On the other hand, the Good Governance Clubs established through the SDC-supported Nepal Good Governance Project do seem to have taken on a life of their own – and a possible sustainable life. There seems to be a strong incentive – one grounded in genuine interest – for young people, often professional young people, to join these groups and to become active in advocacy and educational work that does not call for much in the way of resources.
(BOX)

Sapkota is the young Chairman of the Kavre Good Governance Club. He has a degree in Economics and Sociology. But he has chosen work that pays little but gives much satisfaction. He is deeply involved in the promotion of the Club's activities: researching community issues, organising public hearings, dealing with individual complaints of community members, taking up cases with local authority officials, holding press conferences....
'Why have I chosen to do this? Well – can I tell you my story? When I was a child I saw how my father suffered in trying to follow up a land dispute. He was a very frustrated man. He was beaten by the local bureaucrats.
Later, I got involved in the family case. And then I thought, "Why should I concentrate on only my own problems?"' So that is why I work in the Club. And I am also a freelance journalist.'

(BOX END)
For media agencies engaged in CV&A work, the situation could be quite different. The media houses are, anyway, self-sustaining through their advertising revenue. So there is always the possibility of CV&A programmes, if they can reach a wide enough audience, of being supported by the stations themselves or by corporate sponsorship. The 'talk-show' programmes anchored by Kishore Nepal (presently within the Danida-supported Media for Consolidation of Democracy intervention) is a case in point. They are very popular weekly programmes – and Kishore Nepal himself envisages a time when donor support will not be needed.

Constraints

Whatever the capacity of government or non-governments organisations, there are considerable constraints operating against CV&A interventions taking effective action. First, there are the context-specific factors that have been explored in Chapter 3:

- The possibility of Nepal being plunged back into civil strife, with the Maoists resorting again to violent means to achieve their political objectives;
- The possibility of a military coup and a return to an autocratic regime quite unsympathetic to any free form of civic education and public scrutiny of government performance;
- The emergence of a poorly defined federalist structure for the state that gives rise to competing ethnic and social factions.

These are fears that could inhibit significant investment in CV&A. But there are also factors present in the current scenario:

- The ethnic mix of Nepal that, as indicated in Sections 3.3 and 3.4, means some communities remain unreached and disengaged;
- The persisting caste distinctions that mean some communities remain subservient and neglected;
- The hierarchical nature of the society, whereby the accountability of leaders and officials flows upwards but not so easily downwards;
- The habits of centuries, whereby people so easily comply with authority figures – whether kings or communists.

Nevertheless, despite these constraints, it was not difficult to find examples of donor-supported CV&A initiatives in Nepal. Not surprisingly, there were more interventions designed to free Voice than to enhance Accountability – but that is the main topic of the next section.

4.3. CV&A Channels

The nine interventions selected by the team show, in the main, a rather conventional range of channels – actors and mechanisms – being used by donors in Nepal to promote CV&A.

The Actors

With regard to actors, as noted above and in Chapter 3, overall there are more interventions related to Voice than to Accountability. Accordingly, there are many more CSOs engaged in CV&A activities than government agencies. A similar weighting can be seen in the nine interventions selected by the team. CSOs are involved in eight of them. Government agencies are involved in prime roles in only three: the PASRA programme partners with Ministry of Local Government; the DFDP, focusing on local government structures – and the Nepal/Swiss Community Forestry Programme (NSCFP), engaging staff of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation. Nevertheless, the three programmes that utilise the media all promote situations where politicians and government officials are exposed to questions and challenges by members of the public.

Civil society organisations
The non-state actors, then, are mainly CSOs such as the four implementing the CoCAS civic and voter education programme (Pro-Public; the Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development; the Forum

for Women, Law and Development; the Institute for Governance and Development) that could be called 'citizen watchdog' or advocacy organisations. Two CSOs are working with and for untouchable castes (*dalit*) and indigenous communities (*janajati*): the Holistic Development Service Centre (SAMAGRA) and NEFIN.

As noted above in Chapter 3, CSOs have multiplied rapidly over the last two decades – a growth nurtured if not stimulated by the donors. In the campaign for democratising state structures and for upholding human rights in Nepal, they have run public awareness programmes, protested about civil rights abuses and demanded greater accountability on the part of political leaders and officials. 'The concerned voice of civil society is getting louder,' said one of the participants of the CSO workshop.

One matter of concern, however, is the extent to which donors coordinate their support to CSOs. For example, Pro-Public appears in three of the nine inventions of this study – though this is not to say that it shouldn't. But in discussions with various donors and in consulting available databases, it was noticeable that the same names of CSOs kept recurring. And it seems that the donors do not have a mechanism for reviewing which CSOs are receiving assistance from whom, for what activities, and to what extent.

On a related issue, it was one of the CSO leaders who sounded a note of warning about the genuineness of some (perhaps many) of the organisations that have sprung up in recent years:
'Whether you call them briefcase NGOs or small businesses, the donors need to be careful' Kedar Khadka of Pro-Public said, 'They should learn to distinguish between businessmen and the real campaigners.'
Here, then, is a case for quality control that will be taken up in the final chapters.

The media

Kedar Khadka is a trained and practising journalist, as well as a Director of a prominent CSO, Pro-Public. His organisation has a studio and, like Kishore Nepal's Centre for Professional Journalism Studies (CPJS) that implements the Media for Consolidation of Democracy intervention, it produces radio and TV programmes that are key components of their civic education programmes.

So the media houses have become very important actors in CV&A programmes in Nepal. Kedar Khadka's and Kishore Nepal's TV and radio programmes (the format of which will be discussed below) are aired on national channels: TV stations such as Nepal Television (NTV), Kantipur and Image – and Radio Nepal. They also use the local FM stations that are now well-scattered across the country. However, it seems that donors are very cautious about their engagement with the media in Nepal. This is a view frequently expressed in the team's discussions with media practitioners and CSO representatives. It is relevant here to quote the finding on the role of the media as put in the Media for Consolidation of Democracy summary sheet in Annex D: More easily and more effectively than other communication strategies, the media – especially the electronic media – can reach out across a country, engage all sections of the population, raise issues, provoke debate and influence policy makers. As said in the 2005 Review of the Danish support to Human Rights, Good Governance and Decentralisation in Nepal: 'The progress made in Nepal on human rights training for journalists, consensus building on key social issues among journalists from different media houses and the establishment of many community radios is indeed impressive. Its relevance to conflict transformation is considerable.' Nevertheless, a more comprehensive and concentrated media

strategy could have been supported by the donors in relation to the current political debate in Nepal. But, as Kishore Nepal said in the interview, 'The donors seem afraid of supporting the media – for them it is rather like putting their hands in the fire.'

Public oversight institutions
It would be expected that the public oversight institutions, such as the NHRC and the CIAA, would be included among the CV&A actors. They, and other public watchdog institutions such as the Auditor General's Office and the Public Accounts Committee, have all been supported by donors. However, because of the turbulent political scenario, lack of accountability, and because these bodies have not in the recent past demonstrated an independence from government, donor support has seriously diminished. None of them appear in the nine interventions selected by the team.

When interviewed by the team, Murali Kharel, the Deputy Director of the NHRC, expressed a strong regret that there is little or no coordination between his agency and civil society in their education campaigns seeking to raise public awareness about rights issues – particularly with regard to marginalised or excluded communities. And a similar wish for more cooperation was apparent in the interview with Hon. Lalit Bohadur Limbu, the Acting Chief Commissioner of CIAA, when he talked about the agency's community education work and its orientation programmes for government officials.

Government structures
It is at the local level that donors seem to have had more confidence in choosing government actors. The DFDP provides a good example for exploring the interaction of local government agencies and the public in programmes designed to increase public participation in decision-making and in improving service delivery.

DFDP targets the DDCs and VDCs, plus grassroots institutions – users' committees and other community organisations. Unfortunately, since 2002 no local elections have taken place, so the local authorities are staffed and run by appointed officials. But the small-scale infrastructure projects supported through the programme are, as much as possible, for the benefit of the rural poor, particularly *dalit* and other disadvantaged groups.

Another of the nine interventions that targets both government and non-government agencies is the Nepal/Swiss Community Forestry Programme (NSCFP). The main actors are the forest' groups (FUGs), but field staff of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation are also involved in a programme that promotes a joint, and locally-based, management of the forest resource. The programme provides technical assistance to the field office of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation; however, the heaviest weight is put on the capacity building of the users' groups.

However, in general, there is marked imbalance in the way donors in Nepal have supported CV&A initiatives. One comment of a senior civil servant struck the team as very significant and creatively provocative. 'We should appreciate the donors for what they have done in regard to Voice in Nepal,' he said. 'They have stimulated the people of this country to reflect on their plight, to be critical and to make demands. But we should "unappreciate" them that they have not worked so much with those people or institutions that need to respond to the criticisms and the demands of the people. Maybe, in this, the donors are partly responsible for the turmoil this country is experiencing.'

In this regard, the political parties – who are the key actors in the restructuring of the state, the ones who will be ultimately accountable for the way the country is governed – have not been engaged as key actors in the donors' CV&A programmes. The team would suggest (with some hesitation, given that they are not familiar enough with the on-the-ground problems) that a critical opportunity is being missed here.

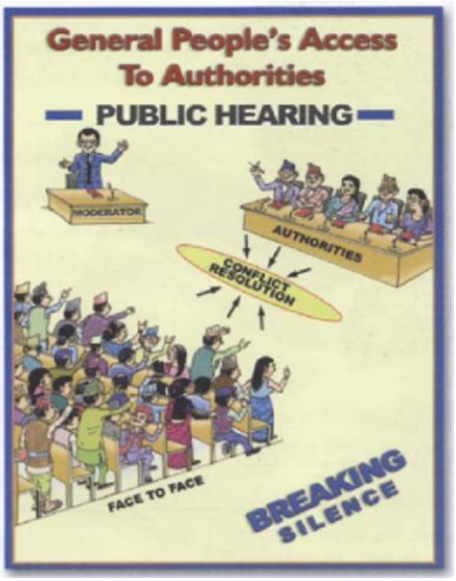
The mechanisms

The election for a Constituent Assembly
Elections are the most frequent and most clear-cut mechanisms by which citizens can use their collective Voice to hold their leaders to account in a democratic society. And, as discussed in Section 4.1, it was an election that was preoccupying people during the team's field visit to Nepal – the political parties, civil society, the media, the donors and, presumably, the general public. The preparation for an election to a Constituent Assembly for a restructuring of Nepal's political landscape provided a massive opportunity for a concerted and focused civic education programme, addressing all the issues one would expect of a comprehensive CV&A programme – issues of nation building, democracy, governance, constitutionalism and human rights. But here, the team argues, there was a collective missed opportunity on the part of the donors for a much more concerted effort, one that would have involved a more careful selection of actors in order to build a more comprehensive and more penetrative civic and voter education programme in the build-up to the CA. As argued in the summary sheet on CoCAS in Annex D: A truly national civic education programme would need a more strategic approach: a much longer and more integrated programme, using a multiplicity of actors and a combination of 'on-the-ground' sessions and broadcasting. The workshop modality is likely to involve mainly those who are used to going to workshops. As one interviewee said: 'If you use civil society groups, then it will be civil society talking to itself.'

There was an urgent and clear-cut case for donor support in the build-up to the scheduled Constituent Assembly elections. But the main shortcoming of the CoCAS intervention was, perhaps, that it chose actors (the CSO implementing agencies) that were not fully equipped to deliver a comprehensive and penetrative programme for the general public. It lacked an adult education perspective.

In this, the CoCAS intervention exhibited problematic features often found in other countries, where civic education programmes are put in the hands of civil society organisations that are more used to the transmittal approaches of advocacy rather than the participatory approaches of adult education.
(However, since the CA elections have been postponed, there might still be time to review and refine the CoCAS strategy.)

Public hearings
Much has been said above about the potential of the media in CV&A programmes. And in Nepal all three of the selected interventions using media have also employed a mechanism that has proved very effective in focusing both Voice and Accountability aspects – the public hearing. These are well described in Pro-Public's brochure on the Good Governance Programme:



'The GGP creates a platform to let the public voice come out with a view to sending a clear signal to the responsible authorities about the direction that the public wants its government to take. And this is carried out through 'Public Hearings'. The prime goal is to provide a forum to the people for their access to authorities by generating critical stakeholders at various levels, from central to regional to local (VDC/municipality). Ultimately, it aims to develop zero tolerance against irregularities.

'The main purpose of Public Hearings is to help citizens break away from the old ways of either remaining indifferent or reacting destructively, particularly in matters relating to good governance. It encour-

ages citizens to talk about pro-poor governance and helps them identify what they really need. In a Public Hearing, the general public have an opportunity to directly put their questions to a representative or an authority..... Apart from being a practical weapon to help eradicate corruption at the local government level, the Public Hearing has proved to be a creative exercise in translating the concept of 'government for the people and by the people' into a reality. It is a small but meaningful step towards participatory democracy.'

And when such occasions are broadcast, of course, the hearing takes on a heightened significance and reaches a much wider audience.
(BOX)

Pro Public organised a Public Hearing on the issue of appointment of the Chief Commissioner of the CIAA – with a view to triggering a national debate on the topic. It was the first event of its kind in the country. It recommended ten persons for the vacant post of the Chief Commissioner – and the one chosen was from the list. Pro-Public claims that, after this kind of event, the government as well as civil society began to replicate the mechanism at various levels.

At the end of a Public Hearing on a particular subject, participating authorities are requested to sign public declarations to show their commitments. In Annex D, in the summary sheet for 'Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People!' initiative, there is an example of such a signed declaration.

(BOX END)

Public audits

Another example of a programme that integrates both V&A activities is the PASRA programme. It is a programme that supports awareness raising, setting up of community groups, but at the same time creating mechanisms for accountability by arranging public audits (mass gatherings where the receivers and givers come together).

Similar to the public hearings, public audits are encouraged as a means by which communities can promote fuller participation, as well as encouraging transparency and accountability. This is especially relevant in the management of community funds, in that it allows community members to review all financial transactions and community decisions, and discuss both the soundness and impact of their actions.

In addition to building skills of community leaders to manage collective assets, public audits also encourage broader participation among women, the poor and the socially excluded, such as the *dalit* and *janajati*. Accordingly, this activity is critical in augmenting the community-based responsibility of user associations. This was especially evident among the FUGs, but it is also an important component within the 'social families' established by SAMAGRA and the cooperatives and associations of PASRA.

In Nepal, public audits are becoming more frequent within rural participatory practices and, consequently, they have a direct impact upon good governance at the local level. In this respect, the Ministry of Local Development could well be encouraging this practice so that it becomes a more common feature in community programmes.

Village/citizens' committees

Within the two interventions that specifically aimed at empowering excluded people (*dalit* and *janajati*) the mechanism used was to support the organisation of community groups/committees in order to create awareness on rights, and how to exercise them. With regard to the Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign, one important feature was that the intervention not only created awareness about rights, but actually

assisted people in exercising their rights. One of the most notable results in this regard, was the obtaining of citizenships for a large group of *dalit* people.

'My husband has gone away. I don't know where,' said one of the beneficiaries of the DJEC intervention. 'He has been gone three years. Without his permission I couldn't register as a citizen. But the social family has now helped me to receive my registration.'

Reaching marginalised and excluded peoples

It was a common criticism heard by the team that the donor-supported interventions do not reach the most needy groups – the poor and the marginalised. But in the Media for Consolidation of Democracy intervention, Kishore Nepal's media team has employed a format for reaching out to the distant and disadvantaged communities. As stated in the summary sheet for this project in Annex D: In a context where the human rights condition in Nepal is critical, where the civil conflict had taken the lives of more than 15,000 people and made many thousands more victims of intimidation and torture, and where people in the villages feared for their lives, this media initiative has been able to highlight atrocities and to 'bring out the voices of the people' – including the *dalit*, *janajati* and other marginalised peoples. One crucial factor is the personality and popularity of Kishore Nepal himself – but the intervention, judging by comments from a wide cross-section of people encountered in the course of the study, does demonstrate the potential of the media to reach out to rural masses, to give them voice, and to engage them in debate with officials and politicians on social and political issues that concern them.

The issue of reaching excluded and marginalized people inevitably raises the question of representation. The implementing partner for the Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign is the NGO, SAMAGRA. It plays a facilitating role between the communities and the authorities as they negotiate on behalf of the communities to ensure that funds and other resources are distributed from the DDC to the communities. SAMAGRA also assists the local authorities in mapping those areas where needs are highest. However, even though this is an example of tight cooperation between civil society and government authorities, it also poses questions about accountability and transparency, as well as representation[21]. How representative are these NGOs talking on behalf of communities? And to whom are they accountable?

One interesting example in this regard is the SDC-funded Community Forestry Project. Here, the most pertinent CV&A relation is the one between the committees of the forest users' groups and the communities. The team was informed that a forest users' group is accountable to the community in which it operates. The widespread recognition that poverty and equity issues were not being adequately addressed through community forestry has had a significant influence on implementation and practice in recent years, with emphasis on developing new linkages and mechanisms that are intended to be pro-poor. There is an increasing awareness of the need for community forestry to contribute to the social and political capital of poor and disadvantaged households, who are often trapped by the hierarchical and feudal society in which they live into ethnic, caste and gender categories from which it is difficult to escape. Therefore, the programme has introduced pro-poor methods and approaches to ensure that forest resources benefit the poorest in the communities.

'Our goal is to see all the poor households of our community rise out of poverty,' said a community-based project worker of NSCFP. 'Poor households have begun savings schemes. They are using the money for schooling and hospital bills.'

[21] It should be stressed that this does not mean that the organisation, SAMAGRA, is not accountable, transparent or representative. In fact, SAMAGRA's executive committee includes representatives of women's groups, *dalit* and other marginalised communities. But, given the large amounts of money channelled through NGOs, the question of how representative they are becomes of general significance.

However, there is one possible negative consequence of the donors working through non-governmental as opposed to governmental organisations: that parallel structures will be set up for project implementation and oversight. This was a point strongly agued in the team's CSO workshop. If there is weak coordination of initiatives directed at specific communities, there will be a duplication of effort on the part of donors, confusion on the part of the beneficiaries – and an overload for those in the communities who are capable and willing to be active in awareness-raising or development activities.

A mechanism for synergy
The Decentralised Financing and Development Programme has as its core mechanism a block grant to DDCs based on the local authority being able to meet certain minimum conditions and to achieve certain performance measures (a MC/PM scheme) to do with participatory planning of community-based projects, efficient accounting and effective communication with the public about budgets and expenditures. This has interesting consequences – and a mingling of the Voice and Accountability channels. The MC/PM scheme enables delivery of infrastructure to needy communities, promotion of income generating activities – and a devolution of governance processes to the community level.

The following extracts from the DFDP Final Evaluation Report of October 2006 highlight the efficacy of the MC/PM system:
'An efficient fiscal transfer system has been established and is operational under the DFDP. There is a consistent accounting system across districts and internal auditors are in place. Use of block grant funding as an instrument to raise DDC performance (through Minimum Conditions and Performance Measures) has been effective..... Using a multi-definition of poverty that includes empowerment, income and institutional reform, the programme has succeeded in essentially achieving its overall goal of reducing poverty in the pilot districts through the provision of rural infrastructure and human resource development opportunities.'

4.4. Changes in Policy, Practice, Behaviour and Power Relations

The focus in this section is on the various kinds of change that the selected CV&A interventions have brought about in Nepal. In the light of the Evaluation Framework the analysis will be related to changes in policy, practice, behaviour and power relations. For more details about the outputs and outcomes of the individual interventions, please refer to the summary sheets in Annex D. Of particular significance for this analysis are the 'models of change', also in Annex D.

Changes in policy

Because of the precarious political situation in Nepal – and the distant, if not dislocated, relationship between government and donors – it is not likely that CV&A interventions would have led to policy changes. This can be clearly seen from the change models for the nine selected interventions. However, the Janajati Empowerment Project is an exception; one of the results reported by NEFIN was the achievement of a 20-point agreement with the Nepalese government. This agreement deals with how the *jananati* should be granted representation; for example, proportional representation in the Constituent Assembly. This agreement is not legally binding; however, it might have the potential of policy change in the future if NEFIN is successful in pushing for the agreement to be maintained. Another concrete output of the intervention is the government's ratification (August 2007) of ILO Convention 169 that describes indigenous people's rights over land, culture, language, education – and the right to self-determination.

A civic education programme such as CoCAS, and the three media-related initiatives analysed in this evaluation, are unlikely to have a direct bearing on policy-making that can be perceived – or really ex-

pected. Except that it was hoped that the senior politicians who participated in the innovative 'Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People!' intervention would be stimulated to address pro-poor issues in the policies of their respective political parties. But, as a main intervention related to local governance, the DFDP can be said to have contributed to the refining and strengthening of the country's policies on decentralisation.

Changes in practice

Within the 'practice' category of changes, several results have been identified.

From the discussions with people in one village where the Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign had been implemented, it was reported how things had changed in terms of increased access for the *dalit* in the area. Concrete examples were: access to public goods such as citizenship, memberships for the *dalit* in the committees of the forest users' groups, increased admission to schools for *dalit* children, and access for the *dalit* to worship areas in the community. Some of the examples concerned action towards the government authorities; others concerned actions for reduced discrimination from other villagers. One of the main activities in the Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign was to mobilise the people (through the 'social family' unit) in order to claim access to resources from the local government authorities. This was possible, as the government has set aside special funds for disadvantaged groups that can be accessed at the DDCs. Representatives from SAMAGRA (the implementing NGO) assisted the people in claiming access to these funds in order to improve facilities in the village (for example, a roof for a school building) as well as other services (for example, citizenship).

SAMAGRA has made a commendable effort in its information, education and communication initiatives. In addition to their work on community mobilisation of marginal groups, they have also made a significant impact through the publication of a citizen's rights handbook. This guide, coupled with the training provided by locally-recruited facilitators, offers clear and concise directions on how citizens can receive full registration and their subsequent entitlements, including access to school, land registration, etc. In addition, the awareness campaigns have enabled citizens to successfully demand fair access to community water points, and the protection of local development funds.

With regard to the DFDP there are a number of recorded results that also have to do with improved service delivery, transparency and access to services. As stated in the final evaluation: 'The DFDP has had a demonstrated impact on a widespread recognition of the importance of a transparent decentralised Public Expenditure Management System for infrastructure and service delivery to communities'.

Within the media sphere, the national-level broadcasts of the Media for Consolidation of Democracy and the Nepal Good Governance Project must have caught the attention of the leadership of the political parties, because they were on mainstream channels and at prime times – and it is likely that they will have made some kind of contribution to the ongoing political debates focusing on the Constitutional Assembly, the future of the monarchy and the reconstruction of the state. In particular, the broadcasts of the 'public hearings' – the core activity of the Nepal Good Governance Project, as well as the Media for Consolidation of Democracy, from a study of the recordings, did have a marked effect on the officials who were put on the spot by the participating citizens. However, as stated in the MCD profile in Annex D: '.....given the current deadlock between the Seven Party Alliance and the Maoists, given the indefinite postponement of the elections for the Constitutional Assembly, it seems that, though the project will have "enhanced the debate on the constitutional process" it has not led to the prime envisaged impact: that "the political parties and other institutions will be more responsive towards the needs of the poor"'.

The other media programme (Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People!) also showed results in terms of changes in the concrete provision of information and improved transparency. The most tangible outputs of the 'listening programmes' were the district declarations from all of the ten districts – jointly released by representatives of the participants and by the leaders. These declarations, signed by the leaders, reflected agreements or commitments on the main issues debated in the meetings – agreements to take up the issues in the political parties and through their manifestos. A set of all ten district declarations were sent to the eleven participating political parties.

Changes in behaviour

With regard to 'changes in behaviour', several incidents were described for the team. For example, the Nepal Good Governance Project works successfully in two dimensions in raising public awareness and in promoting the accountability of public servants. In the vertical plane, because of the broadcast component, the local-level investigations and debates of the Good Governance Club network can be aired at the national level through the TV and radio programmes. In the horizontal plane, at both local and national levels, the project brings together complainants and officials in the exploration of issues. In the immediate sense, the impact is plainly visible. It should also be accepted that Pro-Public (through NGGP and through its other linked initiatives) is making a significant contribution to the achievement of its wider, developmental goal: to promote peace, democracy and good governance at all levels.

When looking at the Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project many changes in behaviour, and more responsible actions at the community level to ensure greater participation of all citizens, were reported and have been diagrammed in the intervention's change model. As mentioned earlier in this report, the intervention has introduced a range of pro-poor approaches in order to ensure that benefits and resources from the forest reach the poorest people in the communities. These initiatives have, among other things, resulted in financial support by the forest users' groups for school fees to children from poor households and direct support in cases of death.

Similarly, PASRA has encouraged communities to become active within users' groups, cooperatives and associations. In its simplest form, this involves social mobilisation and empowerment. More specifically, this entails establishing the institutional structures that allow not only the participation of marginalised groups, but also a mechanism that respects and listens to their contribution in community activities. In this, self-help groups have become principal means for transforming the attitudes and behaviour of both the communities and the local administrations.

In addition, PASRA activities have also encouraged the introduction of micro-credit schemes that offer a viable alternative to the exploitive conditions imposed by traditional moneylenders. With these mechanisms, very poor households have access to funding that can assist with the purchase of livestock, seed and healthcare. This has been especially beneficial to households where male members have gone to India in search of work. In those circumstances, women are often left alone for extended periods of time, during which they are unable to meet the financial requirements of the family.

PASRA, in cooperation with the GoN's Rural Community Infrastructure Works Programme (RCIW), has also been successful in introducing participatory learning centres (PLCs). Primarily established to provide adult literacy courses, the PLCs also run education campaigns on health, hygiene and nutrition. These PLCs also encourage the attendance of girls in schools.

Changes in power relations

In general, the conclusion is that the power relations are addressed in the interventions, but it is doubtful whether power relations are also redressed as a direct result of that. The interventions looked at do make contributions in terms of holding government accountable, claiming rights, improving livelihoods for poor people, creating public awareness, etc. But whether or not these will lead to changes in power relations is questionable at this stage. The reason is, of course, that donors' interventions do not happen in a vacuum, and they are therefore limited in terms of effects – as traced in the change models set out in Annex D, other factors influence and determine power relations.

4.5. Broader Development Outcomes

Linkages: V&A and development

In analysing the possible – and actual– linkages between CV&A outcomes and broader development outcomes, the team faced an interesting challenge. Since, as discussed earlier, the donors do not formulate their strategies along CV&A lines, as such (and a fairly wide variety of programmes have CV&A components) then the donors' assumptions about how CV&A might lead to broader development goals are not usually made explicit.

Nevertheless, the team suggests that the CV&A interventions of all five donors are promoted according to two basic assumptions: first, that supporting CV&A interventions will lead to a deepening of democracy in the country and, second, that it is through a deepening of democracy that the poverty alleviation goals of the donor programmes can be more fully and more fairly reached. The linkage between CV&A and democracy is direct and obvious; the linkage between democracy and poverty alleviation is neither so direct nor so obvious.

A review of the 'models of change' for all nine interventions as set out in Annex D will allow some generalisations about the way in which the linkages between CV&A outcomes in Nepal are envisaged and are realised.

Development pathways

The three civic education interventions explored in this study ('Coalition for Constituent Assembly Support', 'Media for Consolidation of Democracy' and 'Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People!') have much in common in their chains of direct results, intermediate outcomes and broader development outcomes. For all of them, the focus was on the preparation for the Constituent Assembly. All of them envisaged that the result of their awareness raising and educational programmes would be a better informed and more critical public – whatever the outputs, in terms of public hearings, orientation of journalists through workshops, or discussion programmes aired on radio and TV. All worked towards an intermediate outcome as stated by CoCAS: 'General public more aware, more knowledgeable about critical political reform issues, and more engaged in the CA process.' And all would see the CA as an opportunity for restructuring society along more democratic lines, especially with regard to the inclusion of previously marginalised communities. So the links between a public being better informed, a Constituent Assembly more critically chosen, and a society more democratically structured – these links are clear.

As to the broader poverty alleviation goals being achieved, here there are some important implications related to economic as well as social issues. Both the media initiatives envisage that policy makers and political parties would be better informed about the grassroots realities and political concerns of the rural poor.

Here, the Nepal Good Governance Project is much more explicit about the links between CV&A outcomes (for example, a more inclusive democracy) and improved service delivery – especially for the poor. And so NGGP can, with good reason, set a concrete economic goal: 'Service delivery (in education, health, water) improved at all levels'.

The interweaving of democratic processes and service delivery improvements is quite explicit, too, in an intervention such as the Decentralised Financing and Development Programme that focuses on local governance – and working on both sides of the CV&A equation. The three main assumptions, in the reverse order to how they are presented in Annex D, make a clear chain of results and outcomes:

- 'Contribute to evolving procedures, practices and policies of wider relevance for decentralisation processes in Nepal;
- 'Strengthen the capacities and legitimacy of local governments, including elected representatives, and thus contribute to improved local governance;
- 'Have a direct impact on socio-economic development and poverty alleviation through the improved sustainable provision of basic public and community infrastructure and services.'

With regard to the two interventions on social inclusion, the links between CV&A and broader development outcomes were also rather explicit as they both focused on activities for creating awareness of rights, representation, capacity building, etc, in order to ensure democratic participation and improved livelihoods for the excluded groups (*dalit* and *janajati*).

An interesting example of an intervention that started with a poverty-alleviation focus is the PASRA programme. It promotes income opportunities for the poor as the starting point for reaching goals of participation and awareness raising. As one of the programme managers said: 'Poor people don't care about democracy as long as they don't have food.' Whether one is a prerequisite for the other is of course never a simple relationship; it will depend on various other factors. In the Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign the experiences from the field visit were the opposite: that awareness and claiming of rights led to income opportunities (through obtaining citizenship status – which, in turn led to access to land and thereby income opportunities).

Finally, in the example of the Community Forestry Project, it was also seen that direct access to resources (in the forest) was a vehicle for poverty alleviation in the community. However, this outcome did not come of its own accord. An explicit approach for reaching the poorest had been introduced, based on a realisation that they would not be reached without special provisions. Giving communities access and responsibilities for the management of local resources proved useful for creating participation and engagement in local decision-making structures.

However, the most valid assumptions and the best laid plans about CV&A can go awry if the political landscape shifts. The hopes for a Constituent Assembly, a re-writing of the Constitution and restructuring of society – all these hopes have had to be put on hold after the new demands of the Maoists and the postponement of the CA elections. And local democracy cannot be very meaningful without elected representatives.

5. Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

5.1. Channels, Mechanisms and Processes

For a civic education programme to be comprehensive – one dealing with a spectrum of themes such nation building, democracy, governance, constitutionalism and human rights – it needs:

- A much greater input of resources than the interventions mounted in Nepal in the build-up to the Constituent Assembly;
- The engagement of agencies, whether CSOs or local government structures, that are able to reach out to the general public – and particularly to the poor and more remote communities;
- Agencies that have the experience and expertise to organise and deliver a programme in a language and format that is understood by the target groups and in a manner that not only arouses their interest but also stimulates them in a discussion of issues.
- A collaboration between relevant government agencies, civil society groups, the media and educational institutions.

The three studied interventions using media ('Media for Consolidation of Democracy', 'Nepal Good Governance Project' and 'Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People!') show a remarkable capacity to deal with controversial issues, an energy in engagement – and a long reach into the more remote areas of the country. In particular, the broadcast 'public hearings' have proved to be very effective in dealing with abuses of power and in arousing the public's interest.

In a workshop on communication aspects of Voice and Accountability[22] that brought together representatives from government, civil society and media organisation, it was argued that there has been long criticism of the developing countries' media for being unwilling or unable to sufficiently cover poverty-related issues. However, this is clearly not the case in Nepal. And the important lesson that can be drawn from the Nepal experience is that, in promoting CV&A, the media can:

- Perform a visible and potent watchdog role;
- Reach out to the remotest areas of a country, especially in combining mainstream and community-based media channels in its CV&A broadcasting;
- Arouse wide public interest in governance and rights issues if they involve respected and dynamic broadcasters;
- Such broadcasters are willing (sometimes putting themselves at risk) to go out to the rural areas, tackle controversial issues and, when necessary, confront officials and politicians.

As has been emphasised in this evaluation's context analysis, social exclusion is a key theme in Nepal – given the diversified and stratified nature of the society. And a number of the case study interventions focus directly on this issue – the Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign and the Janajati Empowerment Project – and all four of the civic education programmes (CoCAS, MCD, LLVP and NGGP) also put an emphasis on engaging with the marginalised groups, as well as addressing the issue of exclusion in their materials and in their discussion forums. As argued above, the interventions using media have demonstrated, given the commitment and the stamina of the journalists involved, a potential for reaching out to

[22] Deepening Voice and Accountability to Fight poverty: A Dialogue of Communication Implementers. March 30-31, 2006. A Summary Note. DFID, OECD, World Bank.

the rural masses and the suppressed peoples, giving them voice, and promoting their debates with officials and politicians.

However, three lessons can be drawn:

- To tackle the issue of social exclusion effectively, programmes need to be devised that specifically target the affected communities; it is not enough simply to 'add on' the intention to engage the excluded groups in more broadly-based interventions;
- As was stated in the CSO workshop, there are constraints other than the logistical in reaching out to the excluded or marginalised communities – that the agencies that are doing the reaching out are themselves often led by 'the elites';
- Donor, local government and implementing agency coordination is needed to avoid the setting up of parallel structures for project management and oversight.

In the main, in pursuing CV&A objectives, the donors in Nepal have chosen to work predominantly with civil society organisations rather than with government or quasi-government agencies. And this is not just because (as argued above in 4.1 above) it is easier to work in this way – the partnership can be more flexible and more independent – but because the government structures have at times been perceived as too undemocratic, at times too fluid. Also, with regard to the Accountability side of the CV&A scales, the donors have put much less weight on the public oversight institutions than they do in most emerging democracies.

However, a number of lessons emerge from the Nepal experience concerning criteria for success in promoting accountability at local levels of governance:

- At the district and even more local levels it is easier to bring the actors together from both sides of the CV&A arena – citizens and officials, citizens and their leaders;
- The debates can be more intense, because the protagonists are the ones, as they say, wearing the shoes – and so they know exactly where the shoes pinch;
- Structures such as the DDCs and the VDCs of Nepal can be spaces for articulating aspirations, making demands, monitoring performance – and holding officials to account;
- The kind of block grant funding of the DDCs – facilitated through the application of performance measures – provides a strong incentive for local authorities to engage in participatory planning for responding to people's needs and for implementing community-based development projects.

In reflecting on the national scenario in Nepal – in particular, the factors that inhibited the donors from engaging with government agencies – two conclusions should be highlighted:

- If the CV&A balance is tipped too heavily on the Voice side in donor-supported interventions, then they can leave themselves open to the criticism that they are encouraging public protests, facilitating demands that can lead to expectations being articulated that cannot be met – and so contributing to social unrest;
- In such situations of caution, if not mistrust, it is easy to disengage with the political parties – who, in the case of Nepal, will be the key actors in the restructuring of the state.

5.2. Results and Outcomes

The products of CV&A interventions are not always tangible – the first order outputs or results that could, importantly, be gains in knowledge or shifts in attitudes. However, the team recognises how the nine interventions have made significant contributions to CV&A on specific themes and in particular places. Certainly, as explored in Chapter 4 above, the CV&A interventions have assisted in building the capacity of individual civil society organisations in Nepal to mount public awareness campaigns and address human rights issues. In this, the interventions have made a contribution to the peace-building initiatives following the ten years of Maoist insurgency.

The donor programmes have had a discernable impact on Nepal's formulation of a decentralisation policy – in helping to establish the government's structures for refining and implementing the decentralisation reform agenda. And, in the twenty pilot districts of the DFDP, procedures and instruments have been designed and tested for the participatory planning of community development initiatives and for more efficient and transparent financial management within the local authorities.

Another aspect of media engagement in CV&A is that there are good examples in Nepal of multi-media packages being produced in the enhancement of interventions. Both Kishore Nepal's 'Media for Consolidation of Democracy' and Kedar Khadka's 'Nepal Good Governance Project' have produced not only popular TV and radio programmes but also their related magazines, booklets, posters and websites. Also, as indicated in Section 4.4, a significant contribution to the success of SAMAGRA's in its community mobilisation work has been the quality of its IEC materials.

A number of lessons, then, emerge from this analysis:

- CV&A initiatives will be important in any society, however well developed the institutions that promote democracy, but in a country such as Nepal, emerging from a long period of insurgency and dislocated governance structures, a CV&A strategy should have a central place in donor-supported programmes;
- Even when national governments are incapacitated and their policies cannot be effectively implemented, it is possible for donor-supported programmes to 'hold the ring' until circumstances turn more favourable – as is the case with the continuation of the UNDP/DFID local government support programme;
- In a situation where more liberal policies related to the media are being implemented, the expansion of media channels, TV, radio and print, opens up great opportunities for mounting CV&A interventions, whether addressing the general public or specific communities;
- Integrated communication strategies – utilising a mix of broadcasts, face-to face meetings and print materials – can not only extend the reach of interventions but also deepen the analysis of issues.

In focusing on the plight of the suppressed and excluded groups – the *dalit* and the *janajati* – as argued above, some significant achievements have been made, such as the government's commitment to ensure a fairer representation of the groups in the Constituent Assembly and to recognise the rights of indigenous peoples with regard to education, land and the preservation of culture. But one question left unanswered by the team is the extent to which the concern for communities such as the *dalit* and *janajati* has sidelined the gender issue in the development discourse of the donors in Nepal. What struck the team was that the topic of gender seemed to be given less emphasis than is usual these days in programme documents, in discussions with the donors and their implementing partners. But this is a matter for further investigation.

In general, though, it can safely be concluded that the donor-supported interventions have made a distinctive contribution to the urgent and ongoing public debate in Nepal about many critical issues – about so-

cial exclusion, about representation, about federalism and about the future of the monarchy. However, it can also be claimed that the CV&A interventions are, as yet, too scattered across places and across target groups to have a really strong impact on the accountability of those who have responsibility for government.

The key lesson is:

- Mindful of the imbalance that has been highlighted in this evaluation of CV&A interventions in Nepal, the majority of the targeted beneficiaries are the rural poor and the excluded communities. As elsewhere in the world, the obvious justification is that this is in keeping with donors' poverty alleviation goals. However, the very concept of CV&A suggests that a balance should be struck in reaching out to not only the poor and disadvantaged but also to those who 'make the rules of the game', in order to meet the objectives of a mature CV&A – that the needs of the poor should be addressed, and the actions of people in public office should be made accountable.

5.3. Pathways to Broader Development Outcomes

As argued in Section 4.5, two basic assumptions can be discerned in donor strategies for CV&A. First, that in opening up opportunities for citizens to express their aspirations and their concerns, there will be a furthering of the process of democratisation. Second, that it is in democratic states that poverty alleviation goals are more likely to be achieved.

With regard to the first of these assumptions, the CV&A concept shares much of what is also embedded in the concept of 'participation' that has had such a long run in development discourse. To a certain extent all nine of the CV&A interventions studied have objectives to do with participation. They are designed to stimulate public debate about the Constituent Assembly, to engage local people in public hearings about local issues, to bring marginalised peoples into a discussion of their rights, to involve communities in the planning of local development projects or in the management of the forest resources – and, as such, the interventions can be said to have enhanced democracy at both national and local levels.

And, when focusing on the narrowness of scope of the interventions, and the scatter of target groups – or other limitations – it is easy to overlook the dramatic change that has come over Nepalese society since only 1990. This study began with Manjushree Thapa's comment about how difficult it is to come to an understanding of Nepal's complexities. Perhaps it is the time to quote again from her *Forget Kathmandu*. Here she expresses her amazement at the change that came over the country after the first 'People's Movement' of April 1990:

'Democracy. Again. Parliamentary democracy. At last. This time it would be for real. A heady optimism overtook us all.

'In the Nepali language, there are five forms of address, five ways to say "you". The term "sarkar" was reserved for the kings, who addressed their subjects not by the next term down, "hajoor", or even the next one down, "tapain", but by the second-to-last term of address, "timi" ("timi" is also reseved for adults addressing children). When the Nepali Congress leader Ganesh Man Singh asked the king to no longer address people in the "timi" form, but to use the respectful form "tapain", something palpably altered within all Nepalis..... We got a sense of what it meant to be sovereign.

'It felt as though a spring wind were sweeping down to blow away the haze that had so long obscured our view of ourselves. It felt as though we could look around and finally see the truth.'

It should not be forgotten, in the interest of analyzing shortcomings and shortfalls, that the donors in supporting various CV&A interventions have played a part in this change. But over the last few decades in Nepal, the building of democracy has proceeded by fits and starts. And, at the time of writing this report, there is great uncertainty as to whether the gains made in freeing political parties and in establishing parliamentary authority will be maintained. It is, then, too early to say whether the exercise of democracy in the country will lead to a fairer sharing of the nation's resources, the reduction of poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. All that can be said at this stage is that those who support the giving of Voice to people and the holding of leaders to Account – these partners in the civil society and in the donor community are confident that such a deepening of democracy would lead to the realisation of these more tangible economic benefits.

So, though a broad highway to such poverty alleviation goals is not yet open, some narrower democratisation pathways have been followed at local levels – as exemplified in some of the interventions looked at in this study in support of decentralisation – whereby communities have been given greater responsibility for the management of resources, an easier access to education and health services, and more opportunities for increasing their incomes.

Based particularly on a review of the 'change models' found in Annex D, a number of lessons can be drawn about what works and what doesn't work so well:

- The broad goals of civic education interventions (a well informed and critical public, responsive governments at national and local levels) can only be achieved through a broad-based, integrated and collaborative programme, and one that addresses people on both sides of the CV&A equation;
- On the other hand, the link between democracy and development, the realisation of poverty alleviation objectives, can be seen more clearly and achieved more concretely in CV&A interventions in support of decentralisation reforms – through enhancing public participation in consultative structures, developing participatory planning mechanisms, devising public monitoring mechanisms, and opening up the work of local authority officials to public scrutiny.
- An intervention designed exclusively as a CV&A intervention might not be so readily appreciated by people who have prior 'food-on-the table' concerns. Perhaps the success of those interventions that focus on entitlements of excluded groups or access to resources for the rural poor – perhaps it depends on incorporating CV&A components in broader community development programmes.
- Short and limited-scope interventions, such as the 'Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People!' case study intervention, are likely to achieve their long-term, envisaged outcomes only if they incorporate mechanisms for tracking the implementation of declared commitments.

5.4. CV&A and Aid Effectiveness

Harmonisation

One telling finding of the evaluation is that, even though the pending election for a Constituent Assembly could have stimulated a combined effort on the part of the donors to mount a comprehensive and well-resourced CV&A initiative, no such intervention harmonisation occurred. Despite the urgency of the situation, despite the obviousness of what such a civic education programme needed to address, the initiatives in preparation for the CA were late, short-term and fragmented.

The key lesson in this respect is:

- Appreciating the innovative way in which a number of CV&A interventions have been designed and delivered in Nepal, the team concludes that comprehensive and penetrative CV&A programmes demand strategic and collaborative thinking about their development and management, in order to achieve a broad-based impact.

Coordination

To take a more strategic approach to CV&A programming would entail a much greater degree of donor coordination than presently exists in Nepal. The current, official mechanisms for GoN/donors aid coordination are set out in Annex C and are summarised in Section 4.1.

The lessons that emerge are:

- Effective – and appropriate – coordination of donor-supported interventions depends on a government taking a strong lead in ensuring that the programmes are in line with national policies and strategies.
- For such coordination of CV&A (or any sector) interventions to take place, the relevant government agency (in the case of Nepal, the National Planning Commission) needs to define its role wider than simply approving individual project proposals. It needs to be able to assess broad-based CV&A needs, the comparative advantages of different donors in relation to possible CV&A initiatives, and the avoidance of overlaps.
- With regard to the donors, coordination needs go beyond the building of data-bases and the sharing of information – towards joint planning of CV&A interventions and the acceptance of basket funding.

Ownership

The Paris Declaration commits donors to 'respect partner country leadership and help their capacity to exercise it'. The shifting political scenario in Nepal has meant that it has not been easy for donors to engage government agencies in forums for the planning and supervision of development initiatives. But the following chapter presents a recommendation related to capacity building of government institutions that would certainly enhance the joint promotion of CV&A programmes – and, therefore, help build a sense of ownership.

6. Recommendations

The objective of the evaluation was to evaluate not individual interventions but the donor strategies in relation to CV&A. The following recommendations are made at that level. They are made as a consequence of the conclusions reached by the team and in the light of the context analysis of Nepal.

The recommendations are addressed then, in the main, to those in the donor agencies, government institutions and civil society who have a responsibility for planning and overseeing CV&A interventions:

Harmonisation

1. In as much as the donors have appreciated that the CV&A concept is useful in analysing a range of interventions related to enabling citizens to express their concerns, participate in decision making forums, monitor the performance of government officials and politicians – and related to the manner in which those officials and politicians respond and make themselves accountable – then the team recommends that the donors should embark on a strategic process of formulating their programmes (primarily within the sectors of governance and human rights) with a consistent and explicit approach to CV&A.

2. In designing such a CV&A programme, the donors should, as much as possible, ensure a balanced approach to, on the one hand, encouraging people to express their concerns, participate in decision making forums and, on the other hand, working with government agencies to respond in a responsible and transparent manner. This will entail support to both Voice and Accountability channels and mechanisms.

3. Therefore, in planning such CV&A interventions, the donors should aim at programmes, particularly civic education programmes, being more comprehensive in support of various institutions and agencies that have a role in deepening democracy (relevant commissions, parliament, political parties, local authorities, civil society, the media, etc.) – and more sustained programmes.

   The team argues that there would be no contention about what such a CV&A strategy should lead to and sustain:

   - A credible system of representation, bringing in communities that have experienced suppression or exclusion;
   - Socially responsible and well-functioning political parties;
   - An electoral system that guarantees regular, free and fair elections;
   - A system of checks and balances based on a separation of powers, with independent judicial and legislative branches;
   - A vibrant civil society, able to monitor government and private business and to provide various (formal and informal) spaces for political participation;
   - A free, strong and independent media.

   An intervention to support all the above would entail the contributions of a number of donors, in order to cover the different sectors and, at the same time, to reduce transaction costs for both the Government and the donors.

   Such a programme could have a number of discreet but interacting components, such as:

   - Support to the Election Commission;

- Capacity building of political parties;
- Support to parliamentary processes;
- Capacity building of civil society organisations involved in CV&A;
- Capacity building of local authorities and the sub-district committees for planning development initiatives;
- Support for minority and marginalised communities to become fully engaged in CV&A;
- Support to the media engaged in CV&A;
- A coordinated national civic education programme.

Each of the components would complement the others. For example, the Election Commission needs to engage with the political parties; the effectiveness of parliament depends on the capacity of political parties to organise themselves; politicians and officials, whether at national or local levels, will be better held accountable if the media is free to engage; the media and civil society have important roles in civic education programmes that encourage people (especially the minorities and the marginalised) to express their concerns and to participate in the management of public affairs.

Coordination

4. In designing such comprehensive, sustained and harmonised interventions, the donors will need to establish more effective mechanisms for coordination of their interventions – in order to maximise funding, minimise duplication, allocate management roles and develop M&E systems.

Ownership

5. In order to move towards more effective coordination of CV&A interventions, and towards an ownership of those interventions by Government institutions, the donors should encourage the activation of the joint GoN/donor forums, so that they are genuinely involved in planning and overseeing donor-supported interventions.

Inclusion

6. While social inclusion has been emphasised in establishing the four pillars of Nepal's PRSP, there remains a need for further donor investment in both pro-poor and pro-gender initiatives, as a means of consolidating achievements in CV&A.

Selection of CSOs

7. Given the concerns about the capacities and motives of CSOs that are seeking to be involved in CV&A interventions, the donors should take greater care in selecting their implementing partners – by setting rigorous selection criteria, in carrying out capacity assessments, and in observing the CSOs more closely in their implementation of programmes.

Engaging with the media

8. Given the important role that the media can play in CV&A interventions, the donors should reflect on how best to engage with the media houses – through establishing, for example, editors' forums, promoting briefing sessions on CV&A with relevant journalists, and being prepared to sponsor civic education programmes on both national and local channels, both electronic and print media.

9. Donors and government agencies should recognise that media can go beyond being merely disseminators of information to become significant partners in development – particularly as key implementers of CV&A interventions.

Engaging with the political parties

10. In as much as the political parties have a crucial role to play in consolidating democracy in Nepal, the donors should mount a diagnostic study on the potential for engaging with them in capacity building programmes.

Stretching planning horizons

11. Donors, in particular, should recognise that CV&A outcomes – especially those related to changing entrenched attitudes and reforming long-established structures – are not easily realised and demand longer-term commitments than those usually made in project planning.

Selecting methods

12. To uphold the participatory principles of CV&A, interventions should, as much as possible, adopt an issue-raising and a discussion-based approach – rather than a message-driven one – using a variety of methods such as community theatre and songs, electronic and folk media.

13. Mindful of the successful examples already implemented in Nepal, donors should explore further possibilities for supporting programmes that link local research, advocacy and campaigning activities with discussion formats, publications and broadcasts at both local and national levels.

Consolidating local governance interventions

14. In order to sustain interventions in support of decentralisation reforms, more emphasis should be put on orientation and capacity building components that address common attitudinal factors that involve the reservations and reluctance on the part of ministry officials to the prospect of decentralisation, and a concomitant loss of power and influence.

CV&A and livelihoods

15. In the light of the achievements of interventions focusing on poor and excluded communities studied in this evaluation, more opportunities should be sought for linking rights awareness campaigns with livelihood improvement initiatives.

Annex A: Terms of Reference

Nepal Country Case Study

Copenhagen 14 August 2007
File No. 104.A.1.e.59

Citizens' Voice and Accountability Evaluation

1 A core group of DAC partners (Evaluation Core Group/ECG[23]) agreed in 2006 to collaborate on a joint evaluation of development aid for strengthening Citizens' Voice and Accountability (CV&A). As an initial stage in this process, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) undertook development of an evaluation framework to assess CV&A interventions[24] and piloted the framework and methodology in two countries. The ECG now wishes to use this framework and its accompanying methodology to evaluate interventions across a range of country types. At the end of this process, a synthesis report will be produced which will make recommendations for donors to consider. These will draw on lessons about CV&A interventions from the case studies and, importantly, place them within the broader context of existing literature on the subject and extant policy approaches.

2. These TOR include the generic requirements for each country case study (CCS), which will be commissioned by donor partners separately. Additional information specific to the country or region used as a CCS have been added by the Evaluation Department. (See also end of Paragraph 11). It should also be noted that although commissioned by a single donor each CCS will evaluate interventions across all ECG partners active in the country or region. Additionally, in order to gain a holistic understanding of the scope of CV&A initiatives across the country, a minor mapping exercise to record other relevant donor and national interventions will be necessary.

Background and Rationale

3. There is an increasing emphasis on governance in development fora as the key dimension to addressing poverty reduction and inequality and promoting economic stability and growth. This goes beyond the institutional framework of government to the interaction between formal and informal actors, processes, customs and rules. It is a process of bargaining between those who hold power and those who seek to influence it. But only those who can convey their views have a "voice" and only governments or states who are accountable, and can be held so, will respond.

4. Good governance thus requires a just and responsive relationship between citizen and state. Development actors have long recognised this and worked on programmes to enhance the ability of the most vulnerable in society to articulate their needs, and with partner governments to provide the mechanisms and capacity to respond. Despite these efforts, there is a lack of evidence and real understanding of the dynamic and complex nature of factors influencing voice and accountability and there is thus a need to more systematically examine and evaluate current interventions.

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[23] Donor partners from the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Belgium, Norway and Germany

[24] It should be noted that donors are unable to work directly on voice (an action) or accountability (a relationship). In practice, donors strengthen CV&A by seeking to create or strengthen the preconditions for the exercise of CV&A and/or particular channels and mechanisms that underpin actions of CV&A relationships. In the context of this evaluation, such activities are referred to as 'CV&A interventions'.

5. This donor initiative seeks to identify both what works and what does not and why, and to identify gaps, overlaps and duplication in donor provision. By becoming more effective and transparent in our delivery of assistance to this vital area of both governance and social development aid provision, it also, as espoused by the Paris Declaration, seeks to improve donor coherence and accountability to those with whom, and on whose behalf, we work.

6. Quality of governance is recognised as a key factor correlated with poverty reduction and macroeconomic stability, and therefore influencing the achievement of the MDGs and preventing conflict[25]. Good governance is concerned with how citizens, public institutions, and leaders relate to each other, and whether these relationships lead to outcomes that reduce poverty.

7. Voice and accountability are concerned with the relationship between citizen and the state, which is a core feature of the governance agenda. A large body of research and experience has demonstrated that active participation of citizens in the determination of policies and priorities can improve the commitment of government to reduce poverty and enhance the quality of aid and outcomes.

8. Similarly, it is increasingly recognised that government/state accountability, and the ability of citizens and the private sector to scrutinise public institutions and to hold them to account is an important facet of good governance. Failures of accountability can lead to pervasive corruption, poor and elite-biased decision-making and unresponsive public actors[26].

9. Thus Citizens' Voice and Accountability[27] are important for developing more effective and responsive states and for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of aid, particularly in the context of country led approaches. The Paris Declaration includes specific commitments on these issues by development partners[28].

10. There are many forms of accountability relationship (for example formal and informal accountabilities; social, political, and electoral accountabilities, accountabilities between different public institutions). This Evaluation is focused on donors' support to the development of CV&A, focusing on downward or vertical accountability i.e.: that operating between the state and citizens.

11. Strengthening CV&A is pursued through a wide range of approaches. Examples include civic education, media strengthening, national and local policy and planning processes (including decentralisation), participatory budgeting and expenditure monitoring, social auditing and civil society and advocacy programmes. But the processes of empowerment and fostering an environment conducive to accountability and responsiveness are complex and dynamic as are the difficulties of attributing the factors that provoke change – both negative and positive. Donors have thus recognised that there is a need to develop a more

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[25] This association and the direction of causation is the subject of a significant body of research, for example many of the papers by Kaufmann & Kraay, and discussion of this subject in the Global Monitoring Report 2006 (pp. 121-2)

[26] In development debates a stronger focus on participation emerged during the 1980s, in relation to projects, and has since been taken into the consultation of poor people on development priorities for Poverty Reduction Strategies, with varying degrees of success (see for example McGee, Levene, J. & Hughes, A Assessing Participation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, IDS research report 52; World Bank & IMF (2005) Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Approach). A range of information on the topic of Voice and Accountability will shortly be available from the Governance & Social Development Resource Centre website (www.grc-dfid.org)

[27] The "ODI Literature Review and Donor Approaches on Citizens' Voice and Accountability" highlights the complexity of this subject and the various interpretations of what constitutes V and A in different contexts.

[28] Principally Sections 14-15 on ownership; 38 on Fragile States; and 48 on Mutual Accountability.

comprehensive understanding of this area by using a common framework to evaluate interventions in a number of different country contexts. **Regarding CV&A in a Nepal context, please refer to Appendix C.**

Purpose and Use

12. The purpose of the Evaluation is twofold:

a) To improve understanding of CV&A among development partners by mapping and documenting approaches and strategies of development partners for enhancing CV&A in a variety of developing country contexts; and to learn lessons on which approaches have worked best, where and why.

b) To assess effects of a range of donor CV&A interventions on governance and on aid effectiveness, and whether these effects are sustainable.

13. In enhancing learning about CV&A interventions, the Evaluation will hence make a contribution in an area of development co-operation which is allocated increasing resources but in which there is still little evidence on results. The Evaluation also serves an important purpose of enhancing the transparency and accountability of donors.

14. As an instrument of both learning and accountability, the Evaluation will contribute to policy development, improved practices and understanding in an important aspect of governance, and be of use to a wide audience: policy makers, desk officers, country offices and implementing partners and evaluators.

15. This multi-donor initiative will culminate in a Synthesis Report to be published in April 2008. It will analyse the lessons learned from the various case studies and make recommendations for donors to consider and implement. The CCS are thus a vital part of this process**,** and need to be reflective of different governance contexts and provide examples of the variety of approaches to CV&A.

Objectives and Scope of the Country Case Studies

16. Against the described background and purpose of the Evaluation the objectives of each of the country case studies are to:

a) Assess the selected interventions against their intended objectives, and on the basis of that draw conclusions on what works, and what does not, in relation to intervention programme theories.

b) Assess the relevance of the interventions for strengthening voice and accountability in the specific developing country context.

c) Provide an overall assessment/analysis of donors' role, success and failures in supporting CV&A in different country contexts.

17. In accomplishing the objectives of the assignment a thorough understanding of, and familiarity with, the CV&A and Evaluation Framework and associated documentation[29] will be necessary. The

[29] See attached files. It is important to note that the Evaluation Framework and Methodology is integral part of the present TOR.

Evaluation will be based on the common Framework and it will be carried out according to the processes/steps outlined in the Methodological Guidance attached as Annex A to that document, which provides references to a choice of methods and tools for the evaluation.

18. Prior to undertaking the Evaluation phase itself, considerable work will be required by the CSS Team to finalise with donor partners in Nepal those interventions selected for evaluation. Critical to this process is gaining an understanding of the context against which CV&A interventions can be gauged and establishing a dialogue with key international and national actors to explore the various interpretations of "voice and accountability" and, in some contexts, "citizen" (See Appendix 1 on page 9).

19. Using the Evaluation Framework and Methodological Guidance, and adapting it to the specific country context, the CCS Team will provide answers to the following overarching evaluation questions:

- **Question 1: Channels, mechanisms and processes**
  What are the concrete channels, i.e. actors, spaces and mechanisms supported by donor-funded interventions for: (i) citizens' voice and empowerment; (ii) increased role of poor and excluded groups, and women or their representatives in governance processes; and (iii) accountability of governments to citizens?
  How do these channels, work and how important are they to achieve CV&A outcomes?

- **Question 2: Results and outcomes**
  To what extent have the different approaches and strategies adopted by donors contributed to enhanced CV&A in partner countries?

- **Question 3: Pathways to broader development outcomes and impacts**
  In what ways are CV&A interventions contributing to broader development goals, such as poverty reduction and the MDGs? In particular, what are the main pathways leading from improved CV&A to such broader development outcomes?

- **Question 4: V&A and aid effectiveness**
  What can we learn from experience to date of donors' effectiveness in supporting CV&A interventions with particular reference to the principles enshrined in the Paris Declaration?

Process

20. Two pilot studies were conducted in Benin and Nicaragua. They indicated that there was insufficient mutual understanding of the meaning of "voice and accountability" among ECG donors and partners. Without such an understanding amongst donors, host nation and implementing partners it will be difficult to identify appropriate interventions for study. To overcome this, each CCS will consist of two phases and Danida [30] will play an active part in Nepal in the first phase along with the CCS Team Leader.

First "Inception" Phase

21. The first phase will occur some weeks in advance of the second "main" phase. Initially desk based research and work to initiate the context analysis and identify, with "in country" donor partners, potential

[30] From the Evaluation Department or the Embassy as appropriate/convenient.

interventions for evaluation. This will be followed by an "in country" visit (probably capital based) of some five to seven days to:

- Conduct introductory meetings and/or workshops to explain the Framework and Methodology and explore the different perceptions and interpretations of "Voice and Accountability";
- Finalise, in close consultation with relevant country offices (and the Embassy of Denmark in Kathmandu), the range of interventions to be evaluated ensuring balance between "supply and demand" side policies, programmes and projects and spread of rural/urban, formal/informal, empowered/disempowered actors.
- Determine the most appropriate evaluation methodology and tools (drawn from the options contained in the Methodological Guidance);
- Ensure that there is adequate background material and expert advice on the country context[31];
- Arrange a programme of appointments and field visits in preparation for the full team's visit;
- Ensure logistics and accommodation arrangements are in hand;
- Report progress and observations in the form of an inception report to the Evaluation Department and donor partner country offices (indicative length four to six pages); and,
- Be prepared to attend and discuss/present the preliminary findings at a meeting of the ECG in Germany (22-23 October).

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Second "Main Evaluation" Phase

22. The second phase will involve all members of the CCS Team. The duration of the field study should not exceed three weeks. The CCS Team will conduct an evaluation of the interventions identified based on, and drawing questions from, the Evaluation Framework and accompanying Methodological Guidance.

23. At the end of the evaluation period the CCS Team will:

- Conduct a debriefing seminar on the preliminary findings; and
- Write the Evaluation Report.

24. As the Team will be using a new framework and approach for evaluating CV&A, it will be important to note, throughout the evaluation exercise, aspects of the Evaluation Framework which proved of most value (and vice versa) and areas where additional guidance would have been of benefit.

25. Apart from the country mission, time should be also allocated for pre reading, documenting and writing up the Evaluation Report. A Quality Assurance (QA) Panel for this process has been established and all CCS reports, in addition to being submitted to the commissioning donor, have to be copied to the QA Panel for their advice. The QA Panel will be available (by telephone) to the CCS Team leader for advice on standards and queries on methodological approaches.

26. A one-day workshop may be arranged, probably on completion of all CCS (mid to late January 2008), to further share experiences and comments on the CCS, the Framework and methodologies employed with other consultancy teams, ECG members, the QA panel and Synthesis Report authors. All of this is designed to contribute to a greater understanding of the issues involved and assist in the compilation of the Synthesis Report.

Outputs and Deliverables

[31] This knowledge may be available beforehand but it may also be necessary for the Team to commission additional work (included within the terms of the consultancy contract) from a national expert.

27. The following specific reports and outputs are required over the period of the assignment:

- In country Introductory Workshop – CCS Team Leader
- Inception Report – CCS Team Leader (prior to initiation of second phase);
- Evaluation Debriefing Seminar in Kathmandu (prior to end of "in country" mission)
- Debriefing Note summarising the findings, conclusions and recommendations (to be presented at the end of the in country mission, max. five pages);
- Draft Evaluation Report (indicative length 40 pages) to be delivered to the Evaluation Department and the QA panel not later than 1 December 2007. Comments will be provided by the Evaluation Department not later than 20 December 2007;
- Final Evaluation report (indicative length 40 pages) – to be delivered to the Evaluation Department and copied to the QA Panel not later than 15 January;
- Attendance, by the team leader at a feedback workshop (location: in one of the capitals of the seven participating donors – probably mid- to late January 2008); and,
- A brief post-mortem note (max four pages) as a feedback to the Evaluation Department of the evaluation process as experienced by the Team.

28. The Evaluation Report is expected to adhere to DAC Evaluation Quality Standards but for ease of the Synthesis Report's compilation and analysis the following layout is to be adopted:

- Executive Summary.
- Part 1: Introduction.
- Part 2: Process undertaken to complete the assignment: rationale for interventions selected and methodologies employed; challenges encountered in using the Framework and Methodological Guidance; field trips undertaken, logistics challenges etc.
- Part 3: Pilot Country/Regional context relevant to CV&A.
- Part 4: Interventions evaluated. Use the Evaluation Framework and describe the outputs, outcomes and impacts against the evaluation questions and, specific criteria and indicators used to answer them. Use specific interventions to illustrate key issues. Conclusions drawn and intervention-specific recommendations made.
- Part 5: Lessons learned and general recommendations.

29. The Evaluation Report's indicative length is 40 pages but annexes may be attached as required to cover, inter alia, TOR, Inception Report, Context Analysis; Interviews/meetings conducted etc.

Team Composition, Contracting and Reporting Arrangements

30. The work should be conducted by a small team of up to four consultants (including the nominated Team Leader). The Consultancy team, at least one of whose consultants must be from/based in Nepal, should possess the following:

- Experience of complex evaluations;
- Experience and knowledge of participatory approaches to evaluation, and of joint evaluation (desirable);
- Expertise in governance, social development and, as appropriate, conflict prevention issues;
- Strong analytical, reasoning and writing skills;
- Experience of working in sensitive environments
- Regional/country knowledge and expertise including awareness of the political context of development interventions in this area;

- Knowledge of the country lingua franca (indispensable).

31. All team members should be sensitive to issues relating to working with the poor, marginalized and vulnerable members of society.

32. The reporting language is English. Consideration will be given to translating each report and the Synthesis Report into the most common languages used by donors and beneficiaries.

33. Consultants will be responsible for making their own logistics and accommodation arrangements in Nepal but introductions will be made by the Embassy of Denmark in Kathmandu to relevant development offices and embassies.

34. The start date for this work will be 3 September 2007. The first mission to Nepal should be in Week 37 starting 10 September and the second mission in the period 1-19 October. The Draft Evaluation Report should be ready by 1 December 2007 and the Final Evaluation Report by mid-January 2008.

35. Evaluation Management: The various roles of the ECG, Evaluation Theme Leader, commissioning donor, QA Panel, and the local donor representatives, are as outlined below:

The Evaluation Core Group provides overall endorsement of, and direction to, the key components of this initiative e.g. Terms of Reference, timing, reports' publication and dissemination decisions etc. Chairmanship of the Group is shared, rotating as per the location of ECG meetings. ECG members are the key interlocutors between consultancy teams engaged in the work and donor colleagues in both capitals and country offices.

The Evaluation Theme Leader: DFID provides the management and administrative support for this initiative through its nominated Evaluation Theme Leader.

Commissioning donor is the donor which undertakes to commission, fund and manage a specific component of CV&A work

The Quality Assurance Panel (see TOR attached) has been commissioned by DFID on behalf of the ECG to ensure that the DAC Evaluation Quality Standards are adequately reflected in the final Evaluation Framework, Methodological Guidance, CCS and Synthesis Report; and, that reporting standards are uniformly observed as per the TOR for CCS. It is an advisory role and it reports through the Evaluation Theme Leader to the ECG.

Annex B

Nepal Country Case Study: Methodology

1. The Research Questions

The Nepal Country Case Study (NCCS) was expected to answer four main research questions in relation to:

- Channels, mechanisms and processes:
  - What are the main channels (actors, spaces and opportunities) for citizens' voice and empowerment (especially for the poor, marginalised and excluded groups) and accountability of government to its citizens?
  - How do these channels actually work?
- Results and outcomes:
  - How effective are the approaches adopted by the donors – effective in contributing to enhanced CV&A?
- Pathways to broader development outcomes and impacts:
  - In what ways are CV&A interventions leading to poverty reduction and to the achievement of the MDGs?
  - Which intervention strategies ('models of change') have proved to be successful in leading from improved CV&A to broader development outcomes?
- CV&A and aid effectiveness:
  - What lessons can be drawn about donors' effectiveness in supporting CV&A – particularly in relation to the principles of the Paris Agreement – principles of ownership, alignment and harmonisation?

In seeking answers, the Evaluation Team engaged in the following four main activities:

- Interviewing a range of key informants – in relation to carrying out a situation analysis (particularly to establish the 'country context') and to select a number of CV&A interventions for close study;
- Interviewing donor agency staff – in relation to their priorities, choices and strategies;
- Holding a number of focus group discussions – with representatives of civil society, the media and stakeholders of specific interventions;
- Visiting a selection of project sites to observe activities and meet with beneficiaries.

The full list of people contacted is presented in Annex E.

2. The Analytical Framework

The team's approach (the steps taken, the data collection methods used, the discussion formats chosen, and the analytical framework applied) was in the light of the ToR and two key documents provided by ODI: The Evaluation Framework and the Methodological Guidance. Any deviations from the recommended approach will be commented on in this annex.

The four main research questions have already been identified. They arise from the five themes that provide the analytical framework, and the one used for structuring the presentation of the team's findings in Chapter 4 of this report:

A. **Opportunities, constraints and entry points for CV&A**:
   - Initial conditions, opportunities and constraints;
   - Donors' overall strategies for CV&A intervention.

B. **Institutional, organisational and individual capacities**:
   - Capacity needs of state and non-state actors;
   - Donor's strategies for capacity development.

C. **Voice and accountability channels**:
   - Availability and type of channels;
   - Representativeness of channels;
   - Accountability and legitimacy of channels.

D. **Changes in policy, practice, behaviours and power relations**:
   - State of responsiveness and state accountability;
   - Budget allocation and public finances;
   - Power and equality relationships.

E. **Broader development outcomes**:
   - Direct and indirect influence/contribution of CV&A interventions;
   - Sustainability of development outcomes.

3. Preparatory Phase

Deviations
In general, the team found the Evaluation Framework and Guidance very relevant in identifying issues for exploration, in choosing research methods and in analysing the data collected. There were, however, three adjustments made for the one week's preparatory phase.

The team arranged the workshop differently from what is described in the ODI papers. There were three main reasons for this. First, the team did not find that respondents were experiencing difficulty in understanding and appreciating the concepts of Voice and Accountability – a difficulty anticipated in the guidelines. Second, the Danish Embassy staff (who were all enthusiastic about the mission and very helpful in assisting the team's preparations) argued that it would be more useful to discuss with donors and civil society representatives separately, in order to create an open atmosphere where frank discussions could take place. Third, unlike the other country case studies, the Nepal team (in order to complete fieldwork before the elections for the Constituent Assembly scheduled for 22 November) did not have a gap between the preparatory week and the fieldwork phase – so there was more pressure during that first week to collect necessary documents.

So the team arranged two separate workshops: one with donors, and one with civil society representatives. One particular issue occupied the team during the first days: establishing criteria for selecting the interventions. (One shortcoming of the Methodological Guidance is that they do not give specific advice on this issue: the number of interventions to be selected, how to combine the various criteria for selecting, how

much time should be set aside for each programme, etc. And this is a matter that will affect the comparison across country case studies.)

The workshop with the donor representatives had two purposes: one being to present and discuss the Evaluation Framework, the other to finalise the selection of interventions to be included in the evaluation. Only one representative was critical about the introduction of a new CV&A concept – arguing that it was merely a renaming of existing approaches and activities. But, in general, the participants engaged actively in the workshop, welcomed the study, and looked forward to the report – especially with regard to what it might say about donor harmonisation in Nepal.

Selection of interventions for the evaluation
The team met with all five donors separately during the first week of the mission – Danida, DFID, GTZ, the Norwegian Embassy and SDC. Beforehand, the contact persons at the embassies had been asked to provide the team with a list of their current CV&A interventions. The meetings involved a short explanation of the evaluation, followed by discussion about the range of interventions and some considerations about the donors' approaches, strategies, policies and reactions to the evaluation.

A first selection of interventions for further investigation had been prepared before the workshop with donor representatives. A range of intervention areas that the team found to be covering the spectrum of CV&A became the first selection criteria. These were defined as:

- Interventions concerned with **civic education**;
- Civic education programmes using **media**;
- Interventions focusing on **governance** and **human rights** issues;
- Those supporting **decentralisation** policies and processes;
- Those addressing **social exclusion** issues;
- **Rural development** interventions that have a CV&A component.

Second, the team listed a range of characteristics that could ensure variations within interventions selected with respect to:

- **Funding** (bilateral funding, bilateral co-funding, or multilateral funding);
- **Partners** (central government, local (district and village), civil society;
- **Level** (national, regional, district, village);
- **Beneficiaries** (*dalit*, *janajati*, women, general public);
- **Immediate target**
- **Duration**
- **Budget**

The team then selected eight interventions that were representative in terms of the above criteria and presented the list to the donors during the workshop. The group agreed with the selection and the only change made was to add another intervention. The team had selected a Social Exclusion intervention funded by Danida and it was proposed to add another similar one funded by DFID for comparison purposes and for harmonisation considerations. The final selection of nine interventions is given in Chapter 2, page 19.

The team split in two when focusing on the selected interventions: John Fox and Yadab Chapagain focusing on five civic education and local governance projects:

- CoCAS: Strengthening Public Awareness, Participation and Accountability;
- Media for Consolidation of Democracy;
- Nepal Good Governance Project;
- Decentralized Financing and Development Programme;
- Leaders! Listen to the Voice of the People.

Julie Thaarup and Glen Swanson focusing on:

- Poverty Alleviation in Selected Rural Areas;
- Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project;
- Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign;
- Janajati Empowerment Project

Documentation
For each of the selected interventions, the team tried to collect the following documents:

- Project/programme document;
- Feasibility study and original project/programme proposal (if available);
- Latest work plan;
- Annual reports;
- Previous reviews or evaluations;
- Relevant sectoral policy statements.

Civil society workshop
As with the donor representatives, the civil society representatives who attended the stakeholder workshop were positive about the evaluation exercise. 'It is a good thing that donors are realizing the importance of projects that capture the people's voice,' said one member. 'And it is a good thing that you are now having a closer look at such projects'

But one point was strongly emphasized: that donors should recognize how, in Nepal, certain peoples are excluded, and have never been able to express their voice – let alone be heard. It was said that the *dalits* and the *janajatis* account for 20% of the population.

It was also argued that civil society organizations have an important awareness-raising and educational role to play. 'Yes, people are now demanding their rights,' said a participant. 'But often what they are saying is based on emotion rather than knowledge. We need to change that!'

There was also some self-criticism: 'We, the Nepali NGOs, we are not reaching the people who don't have access to donor funds. And we never really challenge the donors on this point. All kinds of things get in the way: the remoteness of some communities; language barriers – and donor modalities.'

And the same participant expressed a reservation about the impact of the study: 'Whatever your conclusions, it is unlikely that donors will change their funding mechanisms.'

But the main discussion format for the workshop for civil society representatives was Force Field Analysis, a neat and productive way of eliciting a group's ideas and attitudes about a programme, an institution – or any kind of activity. In this case, the participants focused on the forces operating for and against the achievement of CV&A intervention objectives. One group concentrated on the Voice and the other on the Accountability side of the CV&A relationship. First, the two groups brainstormed the array of restraining and driving forces at play; second, they considered action points that would be necessary to augment the driving forces and to counteract the restraining forces.

The two outcomes are given in Annex F.

It will be seen that, on Voice, the major concerns are that, despite the emphasis given in donor policy statements and despite the number of targeted interventions, the donor-supported programmes are not reaching the most marginalized (and most needy) groups. There is a view (though not made precise) that donor modalities are a main constraint.

On Accountability, there is a pessimism that the centralized, bureaucratic and elite-dominated decision making structure will be very hard to change.

4. The Interviews

In conducting their interviews with staff of donor agencies, key stakeholders and beneficiaries, the team applied the following checklists:

Key questions for interviewing a range of key informants, in relation to donor CV&A strategies:

- Do you think the CV&A categorisation is a useful one?
- How familiar are you with donor CV&A programmes in Nepal?
- How would you describe the overall donor strategies in Nepal – and, in particular, their CV&A strategies?
- To what extent do donors take the particular socio-economic and political context of Nepal into account when designing and implementing their interventions?
- Are there aspects of the socio-economic and political context that the donors seem to avoid?
- In their CV&A interventions, how effective are donors in engaging with government agencies, with civil society, and with the media?
- How do you see the balance between the support to these different sectors?
- How effective are the donors' capacity building initiatives for Nepali institutions and organisations?
- How effective is donor support for advocacy and coalition-building initiatives?
- In their support for CV&A, when considering the range of relevant interventions, what would you say have been the most striking achievements, the most significant changes that you have observed?
- To what extent do you think strengthening of CV&A can lead to improved service delivery, poverty alleviation and other social and economic gains?

Key questions for interviewing donor representatives and programme managers, in relation to their CV&A strategies:

- Do you think the CV&A categorisation is a useful one?
- How would you describe your overall aid strategy in Nepal – and, in particular, your CV&A strategy?

- To what extent do you take the particular socio-economic and political context of Nepal into account when designing and implementing your interventions?
- Are there aspects of the socio-economic and political context that you think it best to ignore/avoid?
- In your CV&A interventions, how effective are you in engaging with government agencies, with civil society, and with the media?
- How do you see the balance between your support to these different sectors?
- What are the constraints in engaging with these sectors?
- Have sufficient funds been allocated to achieve the interventions' objectives?
- What proportion of allocated funds has already been spent?
- What importance do you attach to capacity building in your CV&A programmes?
- How effective are your capacity building initiatives for Nepali institutions and organisations?
- How effective is your support for advocacy and coalition-building initiatives?
- In your support for CV&A, when considering the range of relevant initiatives, what would you say have been the most striking achievements, the most significant changes that you have observed?
- To what extent do you think strengthening of CV&A can lead to improved service delivery, poverty alleviation and other social and economic gains?

Key questions for interviewing field staff, beneficiaries and others in relation to specific CV&A interventions:

- What is the programme about – its purpose and main activities?
- How did it start?
- What do you think are the main aspects of the programme?
- What main changes have you experienced as a result of the programme?
- How would the situation be had the programme not been here? (For beneficiaries, to be combined with the MSC approach)
- What do other people here think about the programme?
- Has the programme encountered problems – if Yes, which?
- What other similar programmes in the area do you know of?
- If changes were to be made to the programme, which ones would they be?

In all the interviews, in the focus group discussions, in the field visits, and especially with beneficiaries, the team sought to apply the 'Most Significant Change' approach. Given the time constraints (and the main focus of the study on strategic issues) it was a severely modified and restricted version of the approach – which, as a monitoring tool, relies on a rather intricate series of interviewing, story collection, sifting and prioritizing by various stakeholder levels. But the principle is important: that valuable insights can be gained about the outputs and outcomes of a programme by listening to and recording people's perceptions about how their own lives (or their own or other organizations) have changed as a result of interventions.

5. CV&A Case Studies

The team, in their two pairs, spent between three and four days on each intervention, reviewing the relevant reports, interviewing the responsible donor staff, project directors and managers – and then, at project sites, interviewing project field staff and beneficiaries.

Four field trips were organized during the stay in Nepal: One visit went to the districts of Lamjung and Dhading (Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign), the second visit went to the district of Dolakha (Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project and Janajati Empowerment Project), a third visit went to Kavre district (CoCAS, NGGP, DFDP) and the fourth field trip went to Dadeldhura district in West Nepal (PASRA). Together, the visits covered east, west and north Nepal; the remaining programmes were centrally-based in Kathmandu and were therefore visited from there.

For each intervention the team prepared the Summary Sheets that can be found in Annex D. The sheets provide a brief profile of each intervention, including basic information such as title, donor agency, implementing partners, objectives, main activities, duration and overall budget. Then follows the team's assessment using a selection of questions relevant to CV&A and derived from the DAC criteria as defined in the Methodological Guidance:

- **Relevance**: in relation to the political and socio-economic context;
- **Efficiency**: assessing whether project inputs are consistent with the efficient achievement of outputs and outcomes;
- **Effectiveness**: assessing whether the intervention has reached (or is reaching) its objectives – and whether the choice of CV&A channels was/is appropriate;
- **Impact**: identifying key achievements in terms of policy, practice and behavior change;
- **Sustainability**: assessing how likely it is that outputs supported by CV&A interventions will be sustained.

The team's derived 'change model' for each intervention is also included – as based on the terminology and patterning of the examples given in the Evaluation Framework.

Finally, the fourth s heet of the Summary includes additional material: a list of documents consulted that are specific to the intervention; quotations from other evaluations/reports; striking quotations from interviews, etc.

Annex C: Context Analysis

The following context analysis of Nepal is based on the Evaluation Team's field experience and a desk review prepared in the first phase of the assignment. It outlines Nepal's social, economic and political framework and reviews institutional structures that are currently in place, as they relate to aspects of citizens' voice and accountability. It draws on the wealth of qualitative and quantitative data made available from the Government of Nepal, the donor agencies and NGO communities.

Part 1: A Country Profile

A Land of Diversity

Wedged between China and India, and lying along the southern slopes of the Himalayas, there can be few countries more ethnically and linguistically diverse than Nepal. It has approximately 27 million people; 86% of them making their livelihoods in rural areas. Almost 50% of the population live along the southern plains of the *Terai*; the rest inhabit the hills and higher mountains.

Nepal's population is growing at an estimated annual rate of about 2% — with the urban populations growing at 4.4%. And this population is amazingly diverse; with ethnic groups belonging to both the Indo-Aryan and the Tibeto-Burman races. Seventy five distinct ethnic groups have been identified, speaking 92 different languages or dialects. Nepali, an Indo-European language, is the official language as well as the mother tongue of about 50% of the population. The majority (approximately 86%) of the population are Hindu; Buddhists account for approximately 8% of the population. But, to a large extent, the two main religions are mixed, with often Hindus and Buddhists sharing the same temples and ceremonies. In addition, there are small Christian and Muslim minorities – as well as certain animistic practices of indigenous religions surviving. In 2006, Nepal was declared a secular state, although several state laws and organs still follow the traditions of the old Hindu state.

Of the 147,181 square km of Nepal, only 21% is under cultivation. Roughly, the country can be divided into three major regions: the flat and fertile sub-tropical lowlands of the *terai* along the southern belt of the country; the middle strip comprising the central hills, with terraced cultivation along fertile valleys; and the Himalayan range in to the north, with peaks of over 8,000 metres and an arctic-like climate.

It is within this landscape of multiple layers of overlapping identities that many groups suffer from relative inequality and are subsequently excluded from participating in political power, at either the local or the national level. Consequently, many of the ethnic communities that comprise an estimated 36% of the total population are subject to disproportionate levels of poverty. As highly marginalized people have greater grievances, potential dissent is at its greatest. This is evident in that much of the brunt of the violence that struck Nepal was in areas where the incidence of poverty was at its highest.

Historical Perspectives

Nepal was never colonised; since World War II it has been largely successful in balancing its relations with its two powerful and large neighbours, India and China. Modern Nepal was founded in the latter half of the 18th century, when Prithvi Narayan Shah, a ruler of the small principality of Ghurkha, unified a number of smaller independent hill states. It was in 1846 that the Rana family gained full executive power over the country through a bloody coup d'etat. The Rana period was a tightly centralised autocracy; it pursued a policy of isolating Nepal from external influence, keeping itself under the umbrella of the British-India rulers. It was a policy that helped Nepal maintain its national independence, when countries around were coming under colonial rule.

Three years after Indian independence in 1948, Nepal entered into an era of great political change. In 1951 the 104-year-long Rana regime was toppled, following the 'Movement for Democracy' launched jointly by the political parties and the king. It was a time when the political leaders of India and Nepal joined hands. The Indian leaders had played a significant role in the negotiated settlement in 1951 and, thereafter, whenever Nepal has faced times of crisis, there has always been an Indian influence in Nepalese affairs.

The idea of holding an election for a constituent assembly to chalk out a 'peoples' constitution' was first mooted in 1951. However, instead of electing a constitutional assembly, the king issued a constitution in 1959 that led to a multi-party election for the Parliament. The Nepali Congress party won most of the seats, and it held a government for 18 months – until the king staged a coup d'état. He imposed a party-less *Panchayat* autocracy, with an absolute monarchical system that prevailed for the next 30 years, despite several armed and political agitations by both the Nepali Congress and other communist parties.

The political parties (left and the centrists) joined hands in 1990 to stage a movement for democracy (the *Jana Andolan-1*), which forced the king to abolish the *Panchayat* system and to promulgate a new constitution characterized by a multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy. The constitution established a two-tiered Legislature, the Supreme Court, the Public Service Commission, the Attorney General, the Auditor General, the Commission for the Investigation of Abuses of Authority, and the Election Commission. The king was the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Nepal Army.

Nepal witnessed a wide range of parties in the democratic period after 1990. However, two of them emerged as the major mainstream parties in the two subsequent elections following the restoration of democracy in 1990. The Nepali Congress represented the centre-right and the United Marxist Leninist (UML) the centre-left. The Rastriya Prajantra Party, led by previous *Panchayati* leaders, remained a smaller but a strong force at the extreme right end. Some of the communist parties that could not adopt the path of the UML remained critical of the system, and they ran for the parliament as the United Front. In the first elections, they obtained six seats, but lost their seats by the second elections of 1996. This was the front, representing the extreme left of the political spectrum, that later resorted to armed conflict (through the 'People's War' under the leadership of the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) CPN/M).

The governments in the multi-party period of 1991 to 2001 were not able to live up to expectations. Though several structural reforms were initiated, social and economic development was slow. Ten different governments came and went. It was a period of political in-fighting, extensive corruption in politics and in the administration, and a destructive rivalry between the major political parties. In this chaotic situation, the Maoists declared armed war against the state in 1996. So Nepal experienced a serious political decline; the administrative system became dysfunctional and service delivery was badly affected across the rural areas of the country.

Then, in 2001, with the massacre of King Birendra and his entire family by the Crown Prince, Dipendra, the present king, Gyanendra, came to the throne. In 2002 the parliament was dissolved and a fresh election was declared – but it did not take place.

Between 2002-2005, King Gyanendra appointed and dismissed three prime ministers. He took power again in February 2005, over-ruling all the fundamental rights of people and infringing all the norms of democracy and constitutional monarchy. From then on there was a continual struggle between the people and the monarchy.

The Current Political Scenario

The current political climate is certainly unsettled – in fact, right on the edge of chaos. Since the establishment of multi-party democracy in the 1990s, Nepal has had 15 changes of government[32]. Now, as the Parliament debates removing the monarch and declaring itself a republic, Nepal finds itself at a crossroads.

On 21 November 2006, the Government of Nepal signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the CPN/M (Maoist), ending the 11 year-long insurgency. In turn, this led to the formulation of an eight-party House of Representatives on 15 January 2007, including representatives from the CPN/M. One of the first courses of action taken by this assembly was the drafting of an Interim Constitution.

Immediately following this legislation, groups representing the *terai* lowlanders and the *janajati* indigenous groups raised serious objections that this interim document neglected them. This resulted in the March 2007 amendment to the constitution to ensure i) the establishment of a federal system through a Constituent Assembly election; ii) addition of electoral constituencies on the basis of population; and iii) the formulation of a commission to delimit the constituencies and ensure proportional inclusion of indigenous and marginalised groups in all state agencies and departments[33]. In addition, the government established a committee, which called for *terai* and *janajati* groups (including the Nepal Forum and Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities) to take part in discussions on social and economic marginalisation of specific ethnic and social groups.

In April 2007, an Interim Government was created, which comprised the principal parties and included the CPN/M. It was tasked with preparing for the elections for the Constituent Assembly, which was originally slated to be held on 20 June 2007 (postponed to 22 November, and then again to the spring of 2008).

At this time, a second amendment was made to the Interim Constitution to address the new election date. This also included a number of unprecedented conditions; among them, terms for the provision of the possible abolition of the monarchy, if approved by two-thirds of the parliament. In addition, the amendment allowed for the provision of a no-confidence motion on the Prime Minister; the right of the parliament to remove the Prime Minister; parliamentary screening of Supreme Court appointments; and the provision to exclude 'blacklisted' persons from participating in the elections.

At present the major players in the serious political game in Nepal are the political parties, the

[32] Resilience Amidst Conflict: An Assessment of Poverty in Nepal, 1995-96 and 2003-04. Central Bureau of Statistics. The National Planning Commission of Nepal. September 2006.
[33] ADB Country Operations Business Plan: 2008. p10.

royalists, the king himself, and the international community (especially India, China, the USA, and the UK) – who seem to have different preferences regarding the future role of the king. The royalists, of course, have never been in favour of such a Constituent Assembly, and the Maoists want the institution of the monarchy be abolished immediately, even before holding the elections. The centrist (both the rightist and leftist) parties favour a democratic, multi-party federal republic.

And the international community has a strong influence on Nepalese politics – the legacy of the *Ranas* and the colonial rule of the British over India. The kings and governments have thrived on their winning favour of the international community – particularly India. Even today, it seems that the international community gauges India's views in order to shape their own policy towards Nepal.

With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the Maoist combatants moved to seven cantonment sites, where their arms are being stored and monitored by UN staff. The Nepal army has moved back to barracks. The interim parliament has met for the first time. In order to support the peace process, the UN Security Council on January 2007 adopted a resolution to establish a UN political mission in Nepal (UNMIN) for one year. The UNOHCR is monitoring the human rights aspects of the ceasefire.

While the government of the seven-party alliance (the Maoists opted out of the government in September 2007) is preparing for the Constituent Assembly election, one key question is whether the Maoist party will take part. The mixed electoral system (a mix of 'first-past-the –post' and proportional representation) for the Constituent Assembly has been challenged by the Maoists, and there is pressure to review the provisions – so close to the end-date. Also, the situation in the *terai* districts is unstable, where several parties are emerging with quite different views.

Even though these developments are a radical departure for Nepal politics, to date frustration remains high with the Government's actions on implementing the interim constitution; strikes and civil protest continue, demanding wider inclusion and the establishment of an ethnic-based federal state structure, where each within this federation would have the right to exercise self-determination. Much of the hostility throughout the country has subsided, but there have been some limited outbreaks of violence in the low-lying *terai* region. It has been suggested that these latter actions are principally between opposing factions, who are competing for representation.

Within the current process for the restoration of democracy in Nepal, there has been an increased demand for greater accountability, responsiveness and participation in governance. Challenging this is a weak and indecisive central government administration, lacking the necessary skills and without an incentive to implement further improvements in the livelihoods of the majority of rural people. At the local level, these ineffective structures give rise to demands for reform of local government structures, more administrative responsiveness, increased citizens' participation, and local ownership of development initiatives.

Reportedly, one of the most serious blockages in the way of meeting demands for reform is the long-standing and hierarchically stratified authority of the central government over line agencies. So accountability flows upstream rather than downstream – meaning that local concerns are often unheeded. During the Evaluation Team's interviews, it was readily acknowledged by bureaucrats that their own tenure in office and possibilities for advancement depended on their maintaining the status quo. As the result, local people's interests and central bureaucratic intentions are often at odds with each other. This view was especially evident in discussions with the Forest Users' Groups and the local Department of Forestry Office (DFO) – as well as in discussions with villagers in central and western Nepal.

The Administrative System

Administratively, the country is divided into five development regions, 75 districts administered by district development committees (DDCs), 58 municipalities (including one metropolitan city and four sub-metropolitan city municipalities), and 3,913 village development committees (VDCs). Each district is divided into between nine and 17 sub-districts (*ilakas*). The office bearers of the DDCs, VDCs and municipalities, were elected up until July 2002. When the tenure of the elected representatives was not extended in 2002, and elections have not been held, the positions are either vacant or assumed by nominated officials. Essentially, the local bodies have been led by civil servants.

So, at the local level there are two tiers of local bodies: the DDCs being the upper level and municipalities and VDCs comprising the lower levels. These two entities were established through the provision of the Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA) of 1999, which replaced the earlier three separate Local Bodies Acts until 1991.

The VDC represents the lower tier of government and is constituted as the executive arm of the village council; it is composed of a chairman and vice-chairman, nine ward representatives of which two, a woman and one other, are nominated by the village council. While municipalities are parallel to the VDCs, their formulation requires a population of at least 25,000, having an annual income of five million rupees and administrate education facilities as well hospitals, roads, drinking water, electricity and communications.

Each district has a DDC and a district council. A DDC is composed of the VDC chairpersons and vice-chairpersons, the mayors and deputy mayors of municipalities, as well as the representative parliamentarians. Given that many VDCs are vacant because of the hostilities, many DDCs are currently being administrated by a government representative, who is in turn supported by local officials of the respective line-ministries.

In June 2006, the UNDP reported that, as a result of the aggressive approach by the Maoists, 68% of the VDC Secretaries were displaced (2,735 out of 4,017).[34] While, today, the peace accord has stabilised the situation and allows these VDCs to re-form, in many regions of the country they remain inoperative.

Governance Structures and Institutions

The separation of powers among the different organs of the state – the Legislature, the Judiciary, and the Executive – has been practised in Nepal ever since 1951. However, the king had been exercising all these powers until 1990, as the ultimate and supreme authority. This continued to some extent even when the king became a constitutional monarch after 1990. The king again ruled as an absolute monarch during the period February 2005 to April 2006 – eventually yielding to the seven-party alliance, as per the Interim Constitution.

The Interim Parliament consists of the members elected in the 1999 election and other members nominated by the Maoist Party, Nepali Congress and Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist); the Prime Minister assumes the power of the head of state. The king has been relieved of his traditional duties – including that of the Supreme Commander of the Army.

[34] OCHA UNDP/DLGSP Kathmandu. July, 2006. See http://www.un.org.np/maps/maps.php.

Nepal has adopted a parliamentary committee system; there are nine committees formed to scrutinize and advise the Executive functions. The National Planning Commission carries out policy coordination and reviews. The policy formulation procedures include stakeholder participation and involvement, and there is an expressed commitment to follow the good governance principles in programme implementation. However, the institutional reform is not working out as intended. The democratic culture is weak. Public policies are formulated often without the participation of the stakeholders and without sufficient deliberation. Institutional and policy reform initiatives have been rather too parochial in their approach; most of them have ended in 'faddism'.

Civil service reform has been a top priority of the government. The Administrative Reforms Commission established for this purpose advised that the bureaucracy should be organized in an efficient, responsive and cost-conscious way, in order to implement the policies of economic liberalization, market economy and privatization. It also developed guidelines concerning the relationship between civil servants and the politicians. Sadly, the efforts to reform the civil service were aborted when their political masters opted for an ad-hoc approach to shaping and reshaping the civil service.

The institutions established to oversee the proper functioning of the government apparatus include the Parliamentary Audit Committee, the Auditor General, and the Commission for Investigation of Abuses of Authority (CIAA). Among these, the CIAA and the Parliamentary Audit Committee have been very active during the 1991-2004 period.

Corruption, it seems, is pervasive in Nepal, and the team encountered a good deal of cynicism about current attempts of the Government to deal with it. The 2001 study on decentralisation[35] paints a pessimistic picture: 'All the accountability institutions, such as the Auditor General's Office, the Public Accounts Committee, CIAA and the Special Police Department need to be strengthened to bolster the national integrity system in fighting corruption and the criminalisation of the economy through the creation of a strong law-enforcement mechanism of the governance process. The tendency of government to encourage unlawful behaviour among political dissidents, and conspiracies and unholy manoeuvrings within the government, must be exposed by the media, the civil society and other watchdog agencies.'

A common view on corruption is as expressed in the following newspaper article: 'One or the other party formed the government after the elections, but they not only overlooked the people's aspirations and the national development agenda but also nearly all the leaders and influential cadres of the centrist parliamentary political parties accumulated unimaginable wealth through all sorts of corrupt practices. The rule of law continued to remain a phrase unknown to the masses.'[36]

One other constraint, however, is that the Judiciary is also functioning poorly – with staff shortages, limited facilities, a huge backlog of cases and no presence in the more remote areas of the country.

[35] Dahal, Uprety and Subba, op.cit.
[36] From The People's Review, Kathamndu, April 3-9, 2003.

Decentralization

Decentralization has been an important measure adopted by Nepal to improve governance and enhance public involvement in the government affairs. Even during the autocratic *Panchayat* regime, political decentralization was being practised, and there were functioning *Panchayat* units at the village and district levels. The contemporary framework for decentralisation also has its antecedents in the Constitution of 1990, the Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA) of 1999, the Ninth Five-Year Plan Document (1998-2002) and the Tenth Five-year Plan (2002-07).

The LSGA puts emphasis on the management of public administration and service delivery through the transfer of specific responsibilities downwards to the local government bodies. A number of functions have been devolved to the local bodies, including primary health care, primary education and agricultural extension.

This Act emerges out of recommendations from the Decentralization Co-ordination Committee of 1996 and provides the VDCs, municipalities and DDCs with a political, administrative and financial mandate to lead, facilitate and manage local self-governance and participatory development. Nominally, this Act creates the framework for decentralization, in which rural communities identify their needs, collectively design programmes to address these needs, and implement actions with local accountability and transparency.

The LSGA, and the subsequent Local Self-Governance Regulations (LSGR) of 2000, provide the overall framework for decentralization. From these, policies and legislation have been drafted that encourage community-based participation through local government institutions, with support from NGOs, self-help groups such as users' committees, community organizations and women's groups. Within this framework, local community bodies are increasingly involved in community-based service provision, with users' groups in the management of local resources. To date, thousands of users' groups have been created. These include the ubiquitous 'community forest groups', as well as numerous other community-based organisations.

Through the LSGA, improved local governance has been achieved in terms of people's participation in poverty reduction, empowerment of women and weaker social groups, and the involvement of NGOs and the private sector in the delivery of social and production services. In addition, the number of women in leadership roles in community-based activities is reportedly increasing through these initiatives.

However, it should be noted that although the LSGA has made strides in devolving authority to local bodies, central line agencies remain reluctant to put this into full practice. Local bodies continue to be treated as subordinate agents of local development rather than as autonomous units of local self-governance.

Nevertheless, through these structures local elections were held, and the local government bodies were gradually taking up service delivery orientations. But then the country was engulfed in political conflict, and VDCs were completely defunct; municipalities could function only in limited areas, and the DDCs became confined to immediate areas surrounding district headquarters. The result was that these local bodies were, by and large, in the hands of the bureaucrats appointed by the Ministry of Local Development. This was followed by political appointments to the local bodies; and, although an election of municipalities was staged during the king's rule, the outcome lacked sufficient legitimacy.

In respect to the partially functioning structures of the VDCs and DDCs, in addition to making

it extremely difficult to strengthen local capacity, the current absence of an elected local government seriously impedes efforts to promote local participation and subsequent ownership of development interventions. As a result, this greatly increases the challenges of projects and programmes in effectively supporting district capacity for promoting sustainable rural livelihoods and in encouraging participatory planning.

Nevertheless, the declared stance of the government towards decentralization remained intact, even in difficult periods. The Local Bodies Fiscal Commission continued with a number of policy studies regarding functional responsibility and expenditure assignment, a formula for fiscal transfer, revenue assignment, and so on. Similarly, the DFDP of UNCDF/DFID (the Decentralized Financing and Development Programme, one of the selected interventions of this evaluation) continued with capital grants to the 20 programme DDCs, and it developed a system and tools for a performance-based grants. This system is now being rolled out in all the districts for the unconditional GoN grants.

Today, the country is set on a path towards a federalist system of decentralization. The seven-party alliance has agreed to this in principle, and several social organizations view the federal system as an important measure for addressing long-standing regional, socio-political disparities, and an equitable development opportunity for all in the country. Currently, this issue is bogged down in parliamentary debate, with an unclear resolution in sight.

Poverty Reduction Strategies

With a GNP per capita of USD.270, Nepal is one of the world's poorest nations, ranking in the last rungs of the UNDP Human Development Report. The incidence of poverty varies enormously; for example, from 72% in the Mid-West and Far-West Development Regions to 28% in the Eastern Region. A recent survey conducted in 2004 put 31% of the population as living below the poverty line.

Income and expectation gaps are understandably at their greatest between the urban and rural divide. And, alarmingly in Nepal each year, these gaps – as measured in education attainments and income – are widening and consequently increasing the threat to social stability[37]. Thus, the rural poor become further marginalised and without the means to effectively articulate their frustrations.

Throughout Nepal, poverty has been correlated with social exclusion. Such exclusion is especially complex, with regard to the multiplicity of social dimensions at play. And such social exclusion exists in a context where it is accepted practice – the unequal treatment of lower castes and marginalised ethnic groups. Consequently, these disadvantaged groups have disproportionate representation in decision-making bodies and they have restricted access to economic benefits. 'Untouchability' and other forms of caste discrimination have been legally abolished. However, for a majority of people, the caste system continues to be a salient feature of personal identity and social relationships which, to some extent, determines access to opportunities.

As an extremely hierarchical society – divided by caste, ethnicity, gender, and geography – social inequalities are not sufficiently addressed by the state. The structural imbalances result in the violation of human rights and are perpetuated by the state's inability, or lack of will, to address them. Extreme poverty, and the lack of educational opportunities and thereby lack of awareness, also contribute to serious violations of human rights. Many children are still married off at an

[37] Dahal, D.R., Uprety H., and Subba P. "Good Governance and Decentralization in Nepal" Center for Governance and Development Studies in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Katmandu. Jan. 2001. P. 20.

early age and a substantial number of school-age children receive little or no education. Women suffer greatly from domestic violence, accusations of witchcraft, demands for dowry. Or they suffer from the lack of ownership of property; they are victims of trafficking for prostitution; and they have restricted freedom of movement due to family and society traditions. Their constitutional rights are thus continuously being violated, in spite of the fact that the government has made commitments to improving this situation by becoming a party to a number of international treaties which oblige them to secure and protect the basic rights of the Nepalese people.

The greatest incidence of poverty is found among households headed by agricultural wage labourers, within illiterate households, among those households with many children, and among minorities (the *dalit* and *janajati*). With very few exceptions, the *dalit* population (constituting approximately 13% of the total population in Nepal) comprises the poorest segment of the Nepalese society. Another striking overall characteristic is the greater poverty among women due to deeply rooted discriminatory practices, primarily related to property rights and access to resources, health and education.

Since 1996, poverty indicators show an overall decline from 42% to 31%; a reduction of 11% in 10 years. Yet, as indicated by the unrest stemming from the *terai* and *janajati* peoples, poverty levels remain generally uneven among the numerous castes and ethnic groups in different regions of the country. While overall poverty remains greater in rural areas than in the cities, there is even more marginalisation and increased poverty in the more remote highlands.

Nepal has made some gains in respect of the MDGs. The most significant of these has been with programmes addressing poverty, gender equality, and health. Less significant gains have been made in respect to primary education, maternal health and HIV&AIDS – and the present rate of progress indicates that targets will not be met.[38]

It has been reported that one of the most significant deterrents to poverty is ownership of land. There is a direct correlation between the proportion of households with land and the incidences of poverty in Nepal[39]. This correlation should be understood in respect to the challenges faced by ethnic minorities in their continual struggle for recognition of their citizenship status. Many of them are without the proper documentation needed to stake their claims to land ownership – documentation also needed for entitlement to various public services, including rights to attend school and to secure government financial support.

Poverty and inequality in Nepal, as elsewhere, go hand in hand. Recognising this, numerous development strategies have targeted social inclusion as a fundamental goal. This is identified in the PRSP/Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-07) as the third pillar: in addressing gender, caste, and ethnic-based disparities by bringing the poor and marginalised groups into the mainstream of development through programmes aimed at the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Underlying this is the view that empowering the marginalised will be achieved by dismantling the existing socio-economic and legal constraints.

First prepared in 2004, the PRSP completed its programme cycle in June 2007. A key event of this period has been the end of the 10-year-long conflict with the Maoists. And, to a great extent, poverty and the rise of insurgency are both rooted in the profound social exclusion faced by many ethnic and social groups, the socio-economic disparities, the increasing lack of employment opportunities, poor and unaccountable governance – and the rising expectations of many

[38] Bohara, A.K. Mitchell, N.J. Nepal M. 'Opportunity, Democracy and the Exchange of Political Violence', Journal of Conflict Resolution 50:1 2006. Pp 108-128.
[39] Ibid, p. 14.

peoples. So social inequalities, economic marginalisation and political instability are readily cited as being the root causes of the Maoist insurgency. The Tenth Five-Year Plan was designed to address these causes and to provide a framework through which donors could contribute. In particular, the Plan gave priority to marginalised groups. This included activities focusing on social inclusion that reach out to the poor and other excluded groups and strengthening community-based development programmes to address poverty.

While the Government's Second Progress Report on the Tenth Five-Year Plan[40] indicates overall progress, there is considerable emphasis given to the impact of the security situation. The Report refers to the precarious level of service delivery, resulting in the deterioration of local economies in the countryside that bore the brunt of the insurgency.[41]

In response, the Interim Government is initiating a new three-year Interim Development Plan. It has been designed as a continuation of the course set in the previous PRSP, and it has identified three concurrent strategies that include economic prosperity, provision of good governance, and inclusive development. The overarching aim of this new Interim Development Plan will be to achieve 5.5% per annum growth in the GDP and lower poverty from its current level to 24%. In addition, the agricultural sector is tasked with achieving a growth rate of 3.6% and the non-agricultural sector of 5.6%.

General Economic Developments

Nepal's economic development efforts have produced mixed results. Whilst a growth of up to 7% was recorded in the post-1990 period, this was negative at the beginning of the millennium. It is around 4% at present. The GNP per capita has increased in real terms – albeit at a modest rate of approximately 1.5% per year. Government revenue collection, as a percentage of GDP, has remained relatively stable at around 11%, which is among the lowest ratios of comparable developing countries. This has hampered capital investment in the public sector, and approximately 60% of Nepal's development budget is financed by donor grants and direct support.

Agriculture is the most important economic sector in Nepal. It employs more than 80% of the labour force and contributes approximately 40% of the GDP (2001). Growth in agricultural production has not been able to keep pace with food demand, with a population growth of approximately 2% annually.

The Nepalese economy relies on substantial remittances from Nepali citizens working abroad, primarily in the United Kingdom, India, South East Asia and the Middle East – and pensions paid by the United Kingdom to former Ghurkha soldiers in the British Army. While the total amount of these remittances is unknown, it is assumed to be in the region of at least USD 150-200 million annually.

Economic analysts observe that the conflict has devastated the economy of the country. The tourism sector, the key foreign currency-earning sector, has suffered most. The investment climate was negative during the conflict period. Likewise, the negative effect of the insurgency is noted in government expenditure, where only 88% of a targeted NPR 91 billion was achieved. While planned disbursements in education were maintained, health, drinking water, roads and agriculture all recorded significant under-spending caused by difficulties in undertaking development activities in rural areas. Recurrent expenditure connected to development work also fell;

[40] NPC, HMGN, 2005.
[41] Resilience Amidst Conflict: An Assessment of Poverty in Nepal, 1995-96 and 2003-04. Central Bureau of Statistics. The National Planning Commission of Nepal. September 2006.

while security expenditure rose by 8% on the 2003 figure. In F/Y 2005/06, Nepal's growth rate stood at a meagre 3.3%, of which the agricultural sector's growth was 1.1%[42].

The effect of the conflict on the country's economy is well summarised in a study by Keshab Bhattarai: 'Conflicts and growing internal tensions have reduced investment and other economic activities, deterred donors to continue developmental activities in Nepal and frightened tourists from visiting Nepal. It has created hatred among people and demoralised investors and created a sense of fear among consumers and producers'.[43]

Civil Society

The growth of CSOs – including NGOs, community-based organizations, professional and occupational associations, trade unions, and 'interest groups' – in Nepal has taken place in an impressive manner. There were less than 500 in 1990; there are now over 15,000 – some say there are almost 30,000[44].

Government policy has increasingly emphasised the role of civil society in the development process. According to the Tenth Five-Year Plan, NGOs, CBOs and specialised institutions are expected to play 'a complementary role in support of the government's massive efforts towards poverty alleviation in the country'. In this, civil society is seen as a critical element and as a partner with both the state and the market, in promoting good governance, equitable and sustainable development.

While the majority of the CSOs focus on service delivery 'action', they also carry out research, undertake advocacy functions, and provide inputs to the policy process. The donor community has been working with them as partners in development and in delivering services to people, even during the time of conflict, when the government machinery was defunct at the local levels. Many donor agencies that stopped working with the government machinery when the king took over power continued to work with CSOs. On the broader social aspects as well, CSOs have shown their merit. As a result of CSO action, the government has enacted laws concerning equal property rights for women. The role of civil society has been very distinct and influential in mobilizing people during the April movement of *Jana Andolan*-2, and then in reaching the comprehensive peace treaty. Some NGOs have been organizing Good Governance Clubs and public hearings on major policy issues.

As described in the Norad review of NGOs in Nepal[45], NGOs (or CSOs according to the definition used in this evaluation) are coordinated by the NGO Federation (NFN). Established in 1991, NFN is an umbrella organisation of 3,400 NGOs with district federations in 75 districts and in five regions. But this is not the only umbrella organisation, and still the majority of registered NGOs stay outside or are members of other umbrella organisations.

The main objective of NFN is to raise the professional level of NGOs[46]. It has developed a code of conduct for its members as a self-regulatory measure. The code emphasises a number of key principles: impartiality; cooperation and coordination with government and non-governmental organisations; self-reliance and sustainability; financial transparency; professional ethics. How-

[42] Economic Survey, Fiscal Year 2006/07, P.ix.
[43] Bhattarai, K. Political Economy of Conflict, Cooperation and Economic Growth: Nepalese Dilemma. Hull University.
[44] Singh, A and Indal, N, A Discussion paper on Donor Best practices towards NGOs in Nepal. Norad Collected Reviews, 10/2007.
[45] Ibid.
[4646] See: http://www.ngofederation.org/

ever, there was a consensus in the team's workshop with CSOs that a significant number of NGOs have a prime commercial motive, are actually partisan in their political affiliations, and are very dependent on donor funding.

Another strong component of a more inclusive definition of civil society – the media – has been playing a contributory role in raising public voices and holding government accountable. The Constitution guarantees a large measure of press freedom. However, the Nepalese media (both press and electronic) suffered from closure to direct and indirect censorship during the king's rule. The government applied both covert and overt means to financially weaken the media through biased government advertisement and subsidy policies. The role of the media, both print and electronic, in the success of the second 'People's Movement' is highly regarded. The impact of media on society and public spheres is likely to further increase with the growth in the number of local radio (FM) stations – there is now hardly a district that does not have a local radio.

There are, nevertheless, concerns and issues regarding the development of CSOs in Nepal. First, there is a lack of legal clarity about NGO operations in development. Anything from an association of rickshaw pullers to a religious organisation is governed by a single Act – the Societies Registration Act. This has created a policy gap in identifying the NGOs by their nature. The same deficiency in legislation applies to the FM radio stations (since there is no clear distinction as to whether a FM station is a commercial or a community entity). Secondly, as stated above, many CSOs are aligned with partisan politics. Even the federations of NGOs are divided along political party lines. As one donor representative said during the team's discussions: 'Nepal must be the most politicised society in the world'.

However, the team's assessment of the nature and performance of CSOs is based upon opinions widely expressed in its interviews and discussion groups. Unfortunately, the Norad study on 'donor best practices' towards NGOs in Nepal[47] focuses on governance and management practices rather than on motivation and commitment.

Upholding Human Rights

The 1990 Constitution for the first time codified respect for, and commitment to, certain fundamental principles. The Interim Constitution of 2006 has further established a number of rights as basic rights of citizens. Accordingly, Nepal has ratified 30 or more international instruments/conventions and signed three other conventions concerning human rights. It has also amended several domestic laws, in line with the international human rights instruments, and it has been duly submitting reports in compliance with its reporting obligations.

In accordance with its commitments, the government has prepared a National Human Rights Action Plan, which identifies measures related to human rights protection and the promotion of both immediate and structural changes. The immediate measures include providing opportunities for the marginalized sections of the population through positive discrimination. The structural measures include a review of legal instruments in order to identify gaps in legislation and to enact new laws as necessary.

There are a number of institutional arrangements to promote and protect human rights in the country. The NHRC was established in 2000 as an autonomous statutory body. It has the authority to probe incidents related to human rights. It has powers similar to those of the Courts for the purpose of taking action on petitions, complaints and conducting fact-finding missions. Another constitutional body is the National Women's Commission formed in 2002, mandated to

[47] Singh, A and Ingdal N, op.cit.

promote and preserve women's rights and secure their well-being. To achieve this, the Commission advises the government bodies and coordinates the activities and programmes of government, INGOs, intellectuals, legal experts and human rights activists.

The Human Rights Committee, one of the nine parliamentary committees, is engaged in the formulation of policy guidelines, and it provides directives to the government on human rights issues. Moreover, the government also set up a Human Rights Promotion Centre under the Prime Minister's Office in 2003. The objectives of this Centre are to inform the general public about the activities undertaken by the government, coordinate and facilitate works of various entities relating to the fulfilment of instruments to which Nepal is a party. Furthermore, at the operational level, a remarkable institutional arrangement in this regard is the formation of Human Rights Cells in various ministries and security institutions. A Cell was established in the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2003, in the Nepal Army in 2002, and in the Nepal Police in 2003.

The National Dalit Commission, formed in 2002, is mandated to improve the situation of the *dalits* through promoting their rights, and improving their social, economic, and political and health conditions. The Commission concentrates its action at the policy and strategy levels of the central and local governments, and it engages with national and international development actors. Besides this, it also encourages the removing of the discriminatory practices towards the *dalits*, examines complaints, and advises on the formulation of necessary laws.

The National Committee for the Development of Nationalities of Nepal (NCDN) was set up in 1998 with the objective to carry out programmes for the benefit of disadvantaged groups of people. The committee is now upgraded to the National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN). The Foundation interfaces with the GoN and indigenous nationalities, provides policy feedback to the GoN on indigenous nationalities' issues, implements targeted capacity development programmes, such as those for arranging scholarships, skill enhancement, income generation and awareness raising.

Yet, despite the presence of relevant institutions and the passing of laws, the human rights situation can be described as dismal[48]. Disparities, in terms of respect for and protection and fulfilment of human rights between rural and urban areas, are huge. Illegal killings of civilians and disappearances were rampant during the civil unrest – perpetrated by both the state and by the insurgents. The NHRC and other institutions do not have sufficient resources, both human and financial, to carry out the mandated functions. Moreover, the NHRC reports that there are lags on the part of the Government to cooperate, respect and honour the decisions and directives of the Commission.

The constitutional rights of the people of Nepal are thus continuously being violated, despite the Government's declared commitments and its signing of a number of international treaties that oblige it to secure and protect the basic rights of the Nepalese people. There is still extreme disparity in the distribution of national resources – and in the exercise of power between the small controlling elite and the rest of the population. The unjust social, economic and political structures remain intact, and examples of social exclusion and acute poverty abound.

[48] See paper by Professor Kapil Shrestha, 'Reconsidering the Issue of Women's Human Rights and Political Rights' in Gender and Democracy in Nepal, edited by Laxmi Keshari Manandar and Krishna Bahadur Bhattachan, Central Department of Home Science Gender Study Programme, Tribhuvan University, 2001. (The author is a former member of the National Human Rights Commission.)

Part 2: The Aid Environment

Nepal has been a recipient of foreign assistance since 1951, when the first aid agreement on technical cooperation was signed with the USA. Since then, Nepal has been receiving substantial amounts of assistance in a wide spectrum of sectors. The major ones are: agriculture, transportation, rural infrastructure, power generation, communications, industry, education, health, drinking water, irrigation, forestry and human resource development.

The Importance of Foreign Aid

Nepal is a heavily donor-dependent country. The 2007/8 Budget shows that an estimated 26.53% of the total expenditure budget of about NRs 169 million will be met through foreign sources, including grants and loans. Internal revenue is meagre; sufficient to meet only the recurrent expenditure needs – there is less than 10% of the internal revenue available for capital expenditure after meeting the current expenditures. (See table below.)

Internal Revenue as Percent of Expenditures

FY	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Revenue as percent of recurrent expenditure	*107.86*	*107.23*	*105.60*
Revenue as percent of total expenditure	*65.18*	*65.33*	*61.34*

Source: GoN Budget Summary FY 2007/08

By default, therefore, the government has to rely entirely on foreign assistance for development purposes, which is above two-thirds of the total capital expenditure.

External assistance as percent of total expenditure

FY	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Percent of grant to total expenditure	12.47	12.09	16.25
Share of grants from bilateral sources	55.09	56.69	47.17
Share of grants from multilateral sources	44.91	43.31	52.83
Percent of loan to total expenditure	7.41	7.84	10.28
Share of loan from bilateral sources	0.49	15.70	9.31
Share of loan from multilateral sources	99.51	84.30	90.69
Share of grants and loans to capital expenditure (percent)	74.45	72.23	81.12

Source: GoN Budget Summary FY 2007/08

Total aid

The size of the development programmes in 2007/08 to be implemented with donor grants and loans has been NRs 59,753,379,000 of which the share of GoN is around 25%. The rest of the budget is met by the grants or loans. The grants from the donor agencies to the various government ministries and agencies are made in the form of projects or programmes. Such grant amount has been a total of NRs. 27.5 billion for the fiscal year 2007/08. More than a third (Rs 10.5 billion) of the total grant is budgeted as direct payment and commodity grants.

Change in Foreign Aid Flow

	Grant	Loan	Total
2005/06	17.9	-17.2	2.5
2006/07	15.7	13.7	15.2
2007/08	19.7	3.5	12.8

Source: Projects Financed with Foreign Assistance, MOF, GON 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08

The size of the loans (17.4 billion) has been around 60% of the grants. The loan amount is also classified as direct payment, reimbursable and cash. The cash portion is around 30% of the total loan.

Trends in external assistance

The analysis of the budget also shows that foreign assistance in Nepal comes from multi-lateral and bilateral sources. While the proportion of bilateral and multilateral sources has almost an equal share in providing grants to Nepal, the multilateral agencies are the main source for loans (up to 99.5% in 2005/06).

An analysis of the foreign assistance over the past three years shows that the total external assistance has been increasing in the past two years by over 10% from a very low 2.5% in 2005, which could be attributed to the kings' takeover of power. The increase of grants has been significantly higher compared to loans.

External Assistance by Sector

External assistance is seen in a broad range of development sectors in Nepal, covering all the sectors for which investment is allocated in the GoN budget. The six sectors that consume over 85% of the external assistance money in 2007/08 are Public Enterprises, Education & Sports, Physical Infrastructure, Health, Local Development and Administrative Reforms.

More than an additional 10% of the external assistance for the same fiscal year has been in Water Resources, Agriculture & Cooperatives, Science & Technology, and Election and Human Rights sectors. The rest of the 5% of the external assistance is in Peace and Reconstruction; Information and Communication; Forests and Soil Conservation; Women, Children and Social Welfare; and Others. Details are given in the table below:

Sectorwise Foreign Aid (FY 2005/06-2007/08) **(NRS in '000)**

SN	Sectors	FY 2005/06		FY 2006/07		FY 2007/08	
		Foreign Aid	%	Foreign Aid	%	Foreign Aid	%
1	Investments – Public Enterprises	6,640,530	19.99	7,940,468	19.54	8,663,187	19.33
2	Education and Sports	5,784,145	17.41	6,586,495	16.21	7,754,090	17.30
3	Physical Planning and Works	6,583,344	.82	8,083,306	19.89	7,002,127	15.62
4	Health	3,215,219	9.68	4,713,967	11.60	6,183,498	13.79
5	Local Development	3,557,057	10.71	3,925,689	9.66	5,911,899	13.19
6	Administrative	1,949,562	5.87	3,612,781	8.89	2,873,147	6.41
7	Water Resources	2,121,356	6.39	2,138,477	5.26	1,488,017	3.32
8	Agriculture and Cooperatives	1,303,812	3.92	1,299,789	3.20	1,455,492	3.25
9	Science and Technology	774,700	2.33	902,006	2.22	919,649	2.05
10	Election and Human Rights	2,000	0.01	630,000	1.55	717,200	1.60
11	Peace and Reconstruction	-	-	-	-	650,000	1.45
12	Information and Communication	522,130	1.57	401,985	0.99	618,980	1.38
13	Forest and Soil Conservation	219,196	0.66	119,231	0.29	247,898	0.55
14	Women, Children and Social Welfare	94,033	0.28	147,500	0.36	180,806	0.40
15	Others	451,416	1.36	134,806	0.33	162,354	0.36
	Total	33,218,500	**100**	40,636,500	**100**	44,828,344	**100**

Source: *Book on Projects Financed with Foreign Assistance, MOF, GON 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08*
Administrative: *Courts, Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority, Election Commission, Office of the Auditor General, Office of the Attorney General, Prime Minister and Council of Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Home, National Planning Commission Secretariat*

Election and Human Rights: *Election Commission, National Human Rights Commission, National Vigilance Center*
Others: *Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Supply, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Population & Environment, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Ministry of Land Reform and Management, Ministry of Labour & Transport Management*

The Donors of Nepal

The sources of external aid in Nepal are broadly the bilateral donors, multilateral agencies and the international NGOs (INGOs). The bilateral donors include Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America. The multilateral agencies are the Asian Development Bank, European Union, The World Bank, FAO, ILO, IMF, UNCDF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNIFEM, WFP, and WHO.

A relatively new phenomenon is the donors putting money in collective funds to assist in Nepal's development endeavours. Such funds appear under different names such as 'EFA Donor' which is a basket fund of money by different donors created for assisting Nepal to implement 'Education for All Programmes'. The 'Donor Pool Fund' is another similar mechanism that provides assistance in health-related programmes and projects.

According to the figures of the Ministry of Finance, there are 21 sources of external assistance funds which flow in terms of loans and grants. Of the 21 agencies, 10 comprise 90% of the total aid flow in Nepal. The 10 are International Development Association (IDA of the World Bank Group), Asian Development Bank, 'Education for All' Donors, Japan, Germany, India, 'Donor Pool Fund', United Kingdom and the UN Agencies. Details are presented in the table below:

External Assistance by Donors (2005/06-2007/08) **(NRs'000s)**

S. N.	Donor	FY 2005/06 Total Aid	% of total	FY 2006/07 Total Aid	% of total	FY 2007/08 Total Aid	% of total
1.	IDA (The World Bank)	6,908,412	20.8	6,264,222	16.0	10,286,559	22.9
2.	ADB	6,764,570	20.4	8,909,671	22.8	9,801,119	21.9
3.	EFA Donor	2,768,999	8.4	3,365,572	8.6	3,898,934	8.7
4.	Japan	4,569,779	13.8	2,905,508	7.4	3,591,310	8.0
5.	Germany	2,997,635	9.0	3,246,194	8.3	2,891,598	6.5
6.	India	342,225	1.0	4,457,770	11.4	2,779,849	6.2
7.	Donor Pool Fund	1,771,357	5		0	2,690,813	6.0
8.	United Kingdom	1,257,062	4	1,801,825	5	2,397,044	5.3
9.	UN AGENCIES	2,226,424	6.7	2,754,964	7.0	2,216,523	4.9
10.	USA	176,417	0.5	1,092,238	2.8	904,569	2.0
11.	Denmark	859,556	3	906,061	2	843,992	1.9
12.	Norway	361,486	1.1	402,309	1.0	426,215	1.0
13.	IFAD	158,026	0.5	174,328	0.4	290,195	0.6
14.	OPEC Fund	568,960	1.7	520,500	1.3	225,745	0.5
15.	Saudi Devt. Fund	64,077	0.2	90,000	0.2	220,000	0.5
16.	Finland	0	0.0	122,704	0.3	176,140	0.4
17.	Netherlands	209,666	0.6	88,120	0.2	152,285	0.3
18.	Switzerland	204,548	0.6	134,375	0.3	141,667	0.3
19.	China	10,000	0.0	869,090	2.2	100,000	0.2
20.	European Union	134,224	0.4	98,922	0.3	106,409	0.2
21.	Other	799,377	2	882,464	2	687,378	1.5
	Total	33,152,800	100	39,086,837	100	44,828,344	100.0

Source: Calculated from Book on Projects Financed with Foreign Assistance, MoF, GoN 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08

It should be noted that, as far as possible, the various sources have been identified by their parent names. For example 'UN Agencies' in the table represents several UN organs, Germany represents the total of assistance from GTZ or KfW, and Norway includes assistance from the Nordic Development Fund as well.

Altogether, 114 INGOs have been reported as working in Nepal that have planned programmes worth NRs 4 billion for the FY 2007/08. However, the budget of these INGOs cannot be added fully as development assistance coming into the country, as in many cases they are double-counted because many receive and show the earmarked money from the donor agencies.

The INGOs having a long presence in Nepal include ActionAid, CARE, Danish Association for International Cooperation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, HELVETAS, International Nepal Fellowship, IUCN, PLAN International, Save the Children (Norway, UK, USA, Japan), The Asia Foundation, United Mission to Nepal, World Wildlife Fund, and Oxfam.

Geographic Coverage of Donor-Supported Programmes

Nepal is considered to have been divided geographically by donor countries – although tacitly. For example, the presence of USAID is more pronounced in the Mid-Western Region (which is the seedbed of Maoist revolution), and DFID is concentrated in the Eastern hills. A few districts in the Central-East hill districts are considered to be the domain of SDC. The Netherlands has some districts in its fold (five Karnali districts in the Mid-Western hills and three Far-Eastern hill districts). India concentrates in the southern Terai districts.

The donors in Nepal can also be identified in terms of their sectoral preferences. Japan is focusing on infrastructure. Urban development support is more identified with GTZ. Danida is known for its preference for governance and democracy-related activities, though it is also heavily involved in energy, natural resources and education sectors. The table on the next page gives an overview of the donors (development partners) and their key sectoral areas of support:

Aid Coordination in Nepal

The Government of Nepal has accorded a high priority to foreign aid management and coordination, because financing of Nepal's development expenditure through external assistance has significantly increased (around 57%) over the past decade. The objectives of the Foreign Aid Policy of the government recommends that there should be (i) established convergence between nationally-determined development priorities and foreign-aided development activities; (ii) improved foreign aid operations (e.g. project selection, design, management and monitoring and evaluation); (iii) stronger linkages between foreign aid and poverty reduction; and (iv) establishment of a genuine partnership between GoN and development partners.

The Foreign Aid Coordination Division of the Ministry of Finance primarily carries out the aid coordination function. A four-tiered coordination mechanism is in place. At the macro level there are said to be few shortcomings experienced by the donors or the GoN officials. At the local level, UNDP is also assisting in a coordination exercise. The most recent initiative towards this end is a mapping of donors in all over the country, at both macro and micro levels. The macro-level mapping includes listing of the agency, programme, total budget, programme period, budget for fiscal years 2007 and 2008. The map also mentions the funding mechanisms at the district level, the name of key partners, the core focus sectors and a brief description of the programme.

The map for the micro-level includes the agency, programme, funding mechanism below the district level, and CBO-supporting partners. The types of activity and support in terms of education/empowerment, target group, and a description of interaction with communities are also mentioned. The mapping exercise is yet in its development stage but the tool, once complete, is expected to address the long-experienced need to achieve donor coordination and balance in the efforts to avoid overlaps and to ensure an equitable coverage of development programmes in the country.

Besides the mapping, the exercise will include the preparation of a 'code of conduct' for donors, which will be applicable to UNDP, World Bank, DFID, and ADB. The key issues to be addressed include fund flows and reporting of accounts, programme development and implementation modality – and sorting out the accountability of partner NGOs.

Donor	Key Sectoral areas of support
1. **Australia**	Health, forestry, livestock, airport
2. **Austria**	Hydro-electricity, conservation of heritage sites, drinking water
3. **Belgium**	Telecommunication, disaster management, health policy
4. **Canada**	NGOs, professional associations, educational institutions, food aid
5. **PR China**	Transport, health, social development and services, industries, electricity
6. **Denmark**	Gender, environment, democratization and human rights, education, energy, electrification
7. **Finland**	Drinking water, education, hydro-electricity, telecommunication
8. **France**	Education, vocational training, telecommunication, civil aviation, food aid
9. **Germany**	Health, civil society, food aid, town development, agriculture, power, rural infrastructure, heritage site conservation, hydropower, energy, business promotion
10. **India**	Multi-purpose irrigation, hospitals, roads and transport, hydroelectricity
11. **Japan**	Human resource development, water supply, health and medical services, agricultural infrastructure and technology, economic infrastructure such as power, road, bridges, food aid
12. **Republic of Korea**	Human resource development, roads improvement, sericulture
13. **Kuwaiti Fund**	Irrigation
14. **The Netherlands**	Community development, energy, conservation, natural resource management, governance
15. **Norway**	Hydroelectricity, education, decentralization, human rights, food aid
16. **Saudi Fund**	Food aid, roads, irrigation, hydroelectricity
17. **Sweden**	Water supply, land management
18. **Switzerland**	Health, roads and trail bridges, technical education, agriculture, governance and decentralization, natural resource management
19. **United Kingdom**	Agriculture, roads and transport, governance, local development, communication, education, administration improvement, health, water supply, forestry and power
20. **USA**	Democracy and good governance, peace promotion, health and family planning, economic growth, inclusion and empowerment
21. **Asian Development Bank**	Education, roads, agriculture, water supply, irrigation, microfinance, governance, decentralization, privatization, public enterprises management
22. **European Union**	Agriculture, environmental management, delivery of essential services, energy, irrigation, watershed management
23. **International Fund for Agriculture Development**	Food security, small farmers development, poverty alleviation, forestry and livestock, irrigation
24. **International Labour Organization**	Bonded labour, industrial safety, marginalized peoples' development, employment
25. **International Monetary Fund**	Revenue administration, human resource development, custom administration, financial institution, public enterprises
26. **OPEC Fund**	Power generation, forestry, road electrification, water supply, irrigation
27. **UNDP**	Pro-poor policy, democratic governance, energy and environment, advancement of women, HIV/AIDS, roads and infrastructure, aid coordination, human rights, decentralization, rural and urban development, peace building
28. **UNESCO**	Education, culture
29. **UNFPA**	Reproductive health, population and development strategy
30. **UNICEF**	Children's and women's health care and rights, nutrition, community advocacy
31. **World Food Programme**	Food aid, community infrastructure, food for education
32. **World Health Organization**	HIV/AIDS, prevention and control of diseases, health service delivery system, health policy
33. **The World Bank**	Water supply and sanitation, poverty reduction, financial sector reform, education, transport and roads infrastructure, business and enterprises, economic reform, power development, commercial agriculture, health

Source: Nepal Development Partners' Profile; Foreign Aid Coordination Division, MOF, GON, August 2006

(BOX)

AID COORDINATION MECHANISMS IN NEPAL

1. Nepal Development Forum:
This group normally meets every 18 months to discuss major development policy issues with the development partners. The last Nepal Development Forum chaired by Nepal was held in May 2004 in Kathmandu.

2. Local Donors Meeting:
Chaired by the Finance Minister, this group meets two to three times a year to explicate government policies and discuss major development issues.

3. Donors Only Group:
Convened and co-chaired by World Bank and UNDP representatives, the Donors Only Group meets every two months to discuss matters of common concern and share experiences on donors' programmes.

4. Sector Coordination Groups:
Various sector coordinating groups, with members from donors and representatives from sectoral agencies of the government, hold meetings periodically to exchange information and enhance coordination in their respective sectors. At present there are 12 coordinating groups: (i) Good Governance and Public Sector Management; (ii) Macro-Economic Management, Financial/Private Sector and Trade; (iii) Child Labour; (iv) Gender and Development; (v) Health and Population; (vi) Education; (vii) Agriculture/Rural Development (including Rural Water Supply); (viii) Natural Resources Management and Environment (including Forestry); (ix) Energy/Power; (x) Transport & Telecommunications; (xi) Urban Development (including Urban Water & Environment); and (xii) Disaster Preparedness

Source: Development Cooperation Report 2005, MoF, GoN

(BOX END)

At the operational level, however, none of the Government agencies are pro-actively taking the lead for coordination. Therefore, the donors have to assume the responsibility. It would have been more effective if an apex government agency had taken the lead rather than a donor agency. This has happened, to a certain extent, with regard to implementing a voters' education programme for the CA election – where the Election Commission took coordination responsibility. However, at the same time, no such a leadership was available for the civic education programme in the build-up to the CA elections.

Donors' Working Modalities

The most common working modality of donors is to work in partnership with local institutions. Moreover, the donors have shifted their approach to a programme mode from the project mode that was prevailing until some 10 years ago. The multilateral and bilateral agencies work invaria-

bly through government agencies as counterparts. However, there are also differences. For example, while CIDA's preference is for community-based, quick-result programmes, Norway prefers, basically, to work with state mechanisms. It puts its funds into existing organisations rather than itself creating implementing mechanisms. The World Bank, with its social action funds, seems to prefer working directly with community groups – thus avoiding working with local government units.

During the period of the king's rule, many donors could not work with the autocratic regime; most changed their strategy and worked directly with civil society organizations, community groups and NGOs. In this process, even the local authorities were often bypassed. The experience of working with both the government and civil society as implementation counterparts is mixed. While from the sustainability point of view donors still prefer the government channel, they also are critical about dealing with its bureaucratic processes. By the same token, working with CSOs may produce quick results – but the sustainability of the interventions can often be questioned.

Impacts and Issues

Donor engagement in the development process in Nepal is sometimes critical; significant changes can be attributed to donor interventions. Donors have been a source of inspiration for the adoption of several new policies; they have often set the development agenda. To cite a few examples: Stakeholders give credit to donors for bringing about the Local Self-Governance Act, 1999, and the related regulations of 2002. The concept of inclusive development, capturing the issue of women, *dalit*, ethnic groups and marginalized groups, which is the core of the development agenda today, has been introduced by the donors.

The donor agencies are better placed to effectively push for the adoption of good practices by government. They can carry out experiments, as they have resources and expertise to do so. So a number of workable ideas have been generated in the field. A good example is the performance-based grant system for the DDCs, which was introduced in 2004 as an experiment in 20 DFDP districts. This is now adopted by the Government for all 75 DDCs for providing unconditional block grants.

With regard to CV&A – the subject of this study – it is clear that more interventions focus on Voice rather than Accountability. The following analysis bear this out. The table, with information provided by MoF, reviews 202 projects financed with foreign assistance in Nepal for FY 2007/8:

Focus	No. of projects	Percent of total
Neutral	110	54.46%
Accountability focused	11	5.45%
Focused on both V and A, with emphasis on Accountability	12	5.94%
Voice focused	18	8.91%
Focused on both with emphasis on Voice	22	10.89%
Focused on both Voice and Accountability	29	14.36%
Total	202	

Whether the tipping of the scales towards Voice at the expense of Accountability is a consequence of the difficult political terrain in Nepal over recent years – or of the donors' reluctance to work with governments, whatever the conditions – this is a question explored in the main text, in Chapters 4 and 5, when considering donor CV&A strategies.

Annex D: Intervention Summary Sheets

The following four-page summary sheets present:

- A profile of each intervention, structured according to the DAC criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, including a brief commentary on lessons learned;
- The 'models of change', identifying the intervention logic of each of the programmes, proceeding from an interpretation of the assumptions in the minds of those who designed the interventions, then identifying the steps in the causal chain – from activities to outputs to outcomes.
- A fourth page, listing the specific documents consulted, interesting quotations from the interviews conducted and other relevant background information.

Application of the DAC criteria
As stated above in Section 5 of Annex B, the team used a selection of questions relevant to CV&A and derived from the DAC criteria as defined in the Methodological Guidelines:

- **Relevance**: in relation to the political and socio-economic context;
- **Efficiency**: assessing whether project inputs are consistent with the efficient achievement of outputs and outcomes;
- **Effectiveness**: assessing whether the intervention has reached (or is reaching) its objectives – and whether the choice of CV&A channels was/is appropriate;
- **Impact**: identifying key achievements in terms of policy, practice and behaviour change;
- **Sustainability**: assessing how likely it is that outputs supported by CV&A interventions will be sustained.

Also, as argued in section 2.4 of Chapter 2, given the time constraints, the team has made use of previous M&E reports, as well as its own fieldwork discussions and observations. It should be emphasised again that the team was constrained in being able to make sound judgements about the 'efficiency' and 'impact' aspects of the interventions. It was easier to assess 'relevance' in relation to the significance of the intervention's development objective or purpose, 'effectiveness' in terms of immediate results (against declared objectives), and 'sustainability' in relation to policy frameworks and capacity building aspects.

Models of Change
In the 'change models': the boxes in red indicate where expected results of the intervention were not actually realised; the occasional boxes in blue indicate situations where critical external factors intervened; eg. where, in CoCAS civic education programme, the planned voter education component did not take place because the elections for the Constituent Assembly were postponed.

Brief interpretations are given after each of the 'change models' – which have been elaborated in presenting the team's findings and conclusions in Chapters 4 and 5.

Coalition for Constituent Assembly Support (CoCAS)

1: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1.Donor agency	RDIF (DFID, SDC, AusAID, Norwegian Embassy) managed by ESP
2.Partners/implementing agencies	Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRD), Forum for Protection of Public Interest (Pro-Public), Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), Institute for Governance and Development (IGD) – managed by The Asia Foundation (TAF)
3.Objectives	'To increase public awareness , participation and accountability in the forthcoming CA process in Nepal'
4.Main activities	Producing 8-10 monographs on issues surrounding the CA process; regional and national-level consultative meetings on the issues; 8,000 sets of civic and voter education produced; 7,500 public meetings; 10 voter education radio messages transmitted over 25 FM stations; 300 'Back to the Voter' public meetings; 10 TV and 24 radio debates on thematic reform issues; 10 workshops with elected CA members
5.Taget group/beneficiaries	General public – across all 75 districts of Nepal
6.Key linkages	From the Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund (RDIF) – and in conjunction with the Nepal Election Commission
7.Duration	18 months
8.Starting date	January 2007
9. Total budget	USD 1,241,807

II: Overall Assessment of Intervention

Relevance

After a long history of caste differentiations, ethnic discriminations, poor governance and a concentration of power in a small elite – of social, political and economic exclusion of many groups – in mid to late 2007 Nepal's citizens were expected to elect a Constituent Assembly that would be responsible for drafting a new constitution. As the Project Document said: 'The constituent assembly process will be a complicated undertaking involving multiple interests. Previous experience, both internationally and in Nepal, suggests that a successful political transition and sustainable peace will require significant public participation throughout the process. Otherwise, the result could be a short-sighted deal rather than a durable political arrangement.' However, a survey conducted in 2004[49] showed that only 30% of Nepali had a basic understanding of democracy; another survey in 2006[50] revealed that 85% were not aware of the meaning or purpose of a constituent assembly. There was, then, a clear case for a national civic education programme focusing on the build-up to the Constituent Assembly. So the objectives of the intervention were clear. It was assumed that a wide cross-section of the public could be reached through an implementation plan using four civil society organisations with a record of conducting civic education.

Efficiency

With TAF taking on a coordinating and monitoring role, the management responsibilities were shared between the four implementers. This entailed two problems: the lack of coherence in research, production of IEC materials and actual delivery – and, in as much as the implementers made up the Steering Committee, this body was thus inhibited in providing oversight and ensuring accountability. The USD 1.2 million budget was very small for achieving a truly national CE programme – and a media initiative, particularly through radio, might well have been more cost effective.

[49] IDEA (2004), Dialogues on Constitutional Processes in Nepal.

[50] Sharma, Sudhindra and Pawan Kumar Sen (2006), Nepal Contemporary Political Situation-II, Interdisciplinary Analysts, Kathmandu, TAF.

Effectiveness
Before the late postponement of the CA elections, the civic education component of the project had been completed. (The second component, to be run in conjunction with the Election Commission, was to focus on voter education related to the CA election processes.) IEC materials had been produced by IGD (posters, flip-cards, pamphlets and guidelines) – but the resource book produced by CeLRRD, on which the IEC material should have been based, actually came out after the IGD materials. FWLD carried out the ToTs for the trainers of the four implementing agencies – leading to the training of the district-based facilitators. CeLRRD also conducted two national conferences on the researched themes for the programme – and these were supplemented by radio and TV debates. All four implementing agencies conducted their workshops (aiming at 50 participants in each) in their designated regions. Thus, the immediate objectives for the civic education part of the project were achieved, through implementing the round of 50 public meetings in each of the 75 districts. But for a programme that had objectives of reaching the general public, the main beneficiaries were the participants in the one-day workshops. It is most unlikely, however much those workshops comprised representatives of excluded and marginalised groups, that the participants would go on to educate or even inform their wider communities. It is also unlikely that the very academic, abstract and theoretical nature of the 'theme book' produced by CeLRRD would easily lead to effective teaching materials for the general public. It seems that the programme lacked an adult education perspective. The material is designed for a transmittal rather than a discussion-based methodology. (The posters and flip-cards present both the questions and the answers.) Finally, the programme relied on a cascade of workshops; it did not use methods that could have extended the programme's reach to a much wider public: methods such as community-based theatre, songs, mainstream and community radio. Finally, though the public awareness objectives might have been achieved to a limited extent (substantiated by record of numbers attending workshops and by the impact assessment carried out), there are no measures to assess whether CoCAS led to a greater 'accountability in the forthcoming CA process'.

Impact
For conducting an impact assessment, in each district two meeting sites had been chosen for pre-and post-meeting assessments through focus groups. The Monitoring and Assessment Report of 17 September 2007 – reporting on the completion of the civic education component completed in May, June and July shows that, of the 150 cases, the average civic awareness index before the launch of the programme was 36% - and after the completion of the campaign it was 77%. But the measure is of knowledge gain rather than attitude shift – or even enriched understanding.

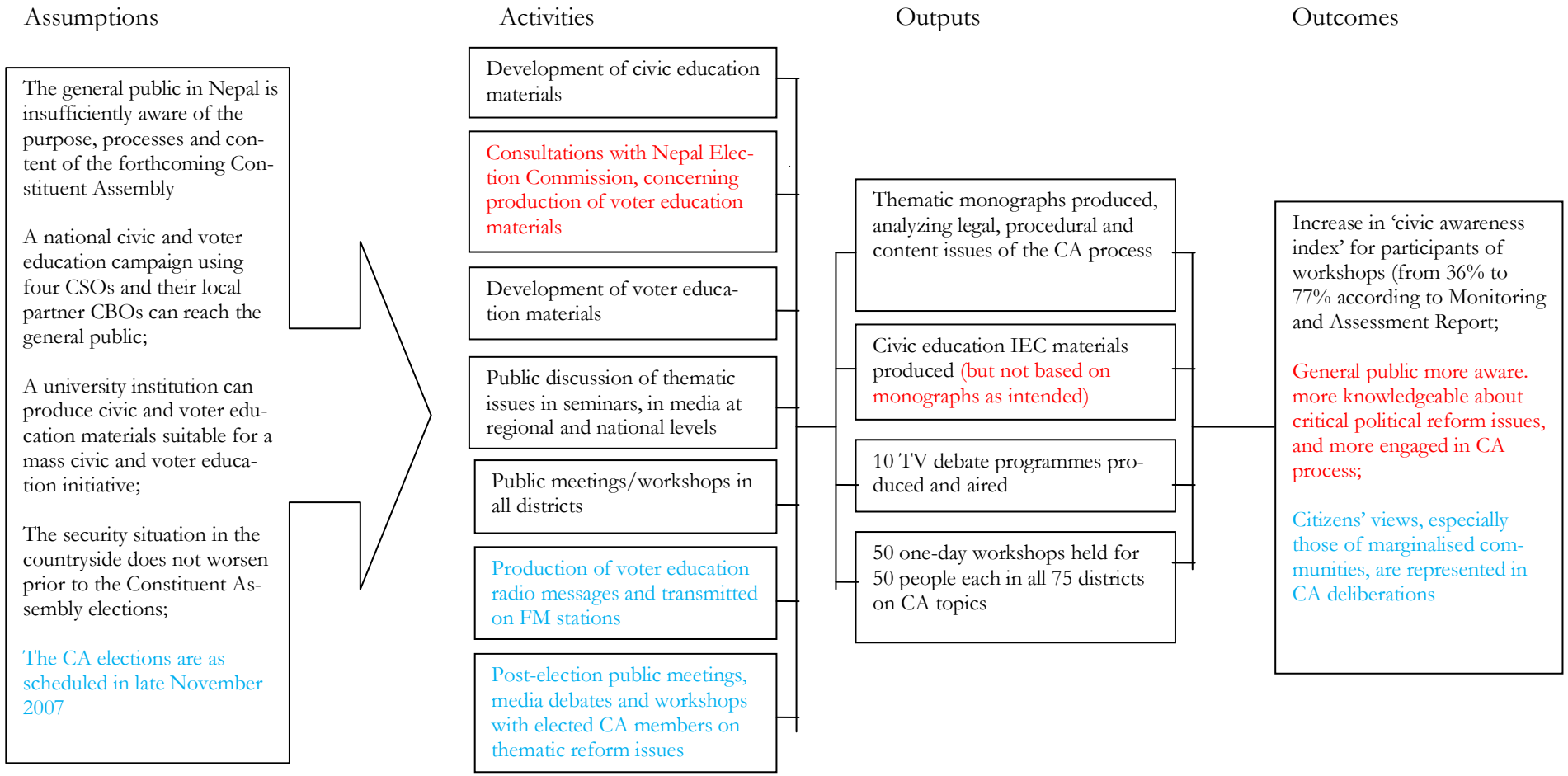
Sustainability
It would need a more sustained education programme, reaching many more people, to make a more sustainable impact on the public's understanding of state restructuring issues and increased participation in political structures.

Lessons Learned
Scope: A truly national civic education programme would need a more strategic approach: a much longer and more integrated programme, using a multiplicity of actors and a combination of 'on-the-ground' sessions and broadcasting. The workshop modality is likely to involve mainly those who are used to going to workshops. As one interviewee said: 'If you use civil society groups, then it will be civil society talking to itself.'

Methods: A more effective civic education programme would adopt a more issue-raising and discussion-based approach rather than a message-driven one – using a variety of methods, such as community theatre, songs, electronic media and folk media.

Donor coordination: Perhaps this was a missed opportunity for a joint donor programme that would have released more funds and achieved a more comprehensive and coordinated civic education intervention.

III: CoCAS Model of Change



When the Maoist party put forward new conditions concerning the immediate declaration of a republic and full proportional representation for the CA, the elections scheduled for 22 November 2007 were postponed indefinitely – the blue boxes signify the consequences for CoCAS.
The assumptions and the causal chain are typical of many civic education programmes: produce IEC materials on key governance topics; select a range of CSOs for delivering the materials in a cascade of ToTs and workshops for representatives of community-based groups – but it unlikely that, without a strong media campaign or the use of community-based communication formats, the reach of the programme will extend significantly beyond the workshop participants.

IV: Relevant Primary and Secondary Data

Documents consulted (specific to the CoCAS intervention)
Strengthening Public Awareness, Participation and Accountability in the Constituent Assembly Process in Nepal: Project Document, The Asian Foundation;
Civic Education Monitoring and Monitoring Assessment Report, Sudhindra Sharma, 17 September 2007;
Coalition for Constituent Assembly Support: **CeLRRD's Interim Report**, September 2007;
CoCAS IEC Materials: posters and manuals.

CoCAS Strategy

- Analysis of the constitutional concepts and issues to be debated as part of the constituent assembly process;
- Development and dissemination of easily understood and locally contextualised civic education materials on these concepts and issues;
- Facilitation of open, non-partisan public discussion that promotes education while also obtaining critical feedback for constituent assembly members on grassroots views;
- Inclusion of communities and perspectives that heretofore have been marginalised in the political process;
- Engagement of elected constituent assembly members to enhance their knowledge of constitutional issues and accountability to citizens;
- Conduction of activities in a rapid, coordinated and cost-effective fashion, and responsive to changes in the fluid political situation.
  (from Interim Report of the Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development)

Some significant quotations
Professor Yubaraj Sangroula, KSL: 'We cannot effectively educate at the grassroots level without coordinating with political parties.'
Justice Krishna Jung Rayamajhi: 'The target group of the CA awareness programme is largely an illiterate mass. One should not worry about educated people – but a large illiterate mass cannot understand theory. Therefore, theoretical and philosophical points should be avoided.'

Extract from one of the thematic papers, produced as a basis for the CE materials, 'Restructuring of Policies and Institutions of State':
'The post-1990 Constitution failed to realize the need of "successful transformation of the liberal (political) democracy into the social and economic democracy along with opportunity and access for entire population to participate and contribute in its pragmatic progress". The definition of "democracy" was taken in a strictly limited sense, i.e. the multi-party system along with adult franchise. However, the progressive reforms in the political parties had never been thought about as "pre-condition" for sustainability and "inclusivity" of the democracy. The respect to proportionality of cultural, linguistic, geographical, ethnic and sex representation of the population in the 'political parties' was minimal, if not totally absent....'

The IEC materials
Translation of the text of the initial flip-over chart (where a question is asked and also the answers are given):

'Why a Constituent Assembly?

- To formulate framework for national development
- To make political parties responsible
- To make democracy enriched and sustained
- To make the people the masters of the country'

Media for Consolidation of Democracy (MCD)

I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1.Donor agency	Danida
2.Partners/implementing agencies	Centre for Professional Journalism Studies (CPJS)
3.Objectives	'To promote and strengthen the voices of the rural poor by using the media for consolidation of democracy'
4.Main CVA and other activities	Organisation of 'interactive debates' on constitutional issues in district and rural centres and broadcast in weekly TV programme 'Rajya Ko Rupantaran', radio programme 'Abhiyan', website of CPJS and the journal 'Rupantaran'
5.Target groups/beneficiaries	Public and officials of districts in the Eastern and Mid-Western Development Regions
6.Key linkages	Broadcasts on national TV and radio networks
7.Duration	18 months
8.Starting date	15 November 2006
9.Total budget	NR 15,001,742

II: Overall Assessment of Intervention

Relevance
It would be hard to find a more specific example of a 'Citizens' Voice' project than this one. 'Social inclusion' has become a much-used catchphrase in Nepal. But, as argued in the Project Document, MCD is responding to a situation of 'vast imbalance' in Nepal, whereby people outside the Kathmandu Valley have had little chance openly to express their needs and concerns, and politicians are not adopting a consultative approach in their policy making. The electronic and print media, mainly Kathmandu-based, is not effectively covering the political perspectives of the rural poor. Moreover, there have been few examples of genuinely interactive media in Nepal. Finally, MCD builds on the proven popularity and success of Kishore Nepal's 'Mat Abhimat' TV programme produced by CPJS and funded from 2003 by SDC, ESP/DFID, ActionAid Nepal and the World Bank, as well as by Danida/HUGOU.

Efficiency
According to the first Bi-Annual Report (up to end June 2007) the project's progress has been as follows:
Output 1: Policy makers and political parties better informed about grassroots realities and political concerns and priorities of the poor: Public debates on the constitutional process with Assembly members, legal experts and 'grassroots people' were held, resulting in two episodes of TV and radio programmes; two issues of the journal published and the web magazine hosted and updated regularly.
Output 2: The rural poor of conflict-affected districts are in a better position to assert their political rights in the evolving and unfolding political processes: Two orientation sessions were held, particularly for journalists working in rural areas; interactions among various grassroots representatives resulted in 22 episodes of TV and radio programmes; interactions among various indigenous communities held in various parts of the country resulted in seven TV and radio episodes.
In the main, the activities indicated in the work plan were completed on time.

Effectiveness
Enhancing citizens' voice: In a context where the human rights condition in Nepal was critical, where the civil conflict had taken the lives of more than 15,000 people and made many thousands more victims of in-

timidation and torture, and where people in the villages feared for their lives, this media initiative has been able to meet its objectives to highlight atrocities and to 'bring out the voices of the people' – including the *dalit*, *janajati* and other marginalised peoples.
Potential of the media: One crucial factor is the personality and popularity of the anchorman for the broadcasts, Kishore Nepal – but the initiative, judging by comments from a wide cross-section of people encountered in the course of the study, does demonstrate the potential of the media to reach out to rural masses, to give them voice, and to engage them in debate with officials and politicians on social and political issues that concern them.
Mixed media: In an innovative and integrated way, the project has enabled production of a mix of formats: TV and radio programmes; publications and a website.

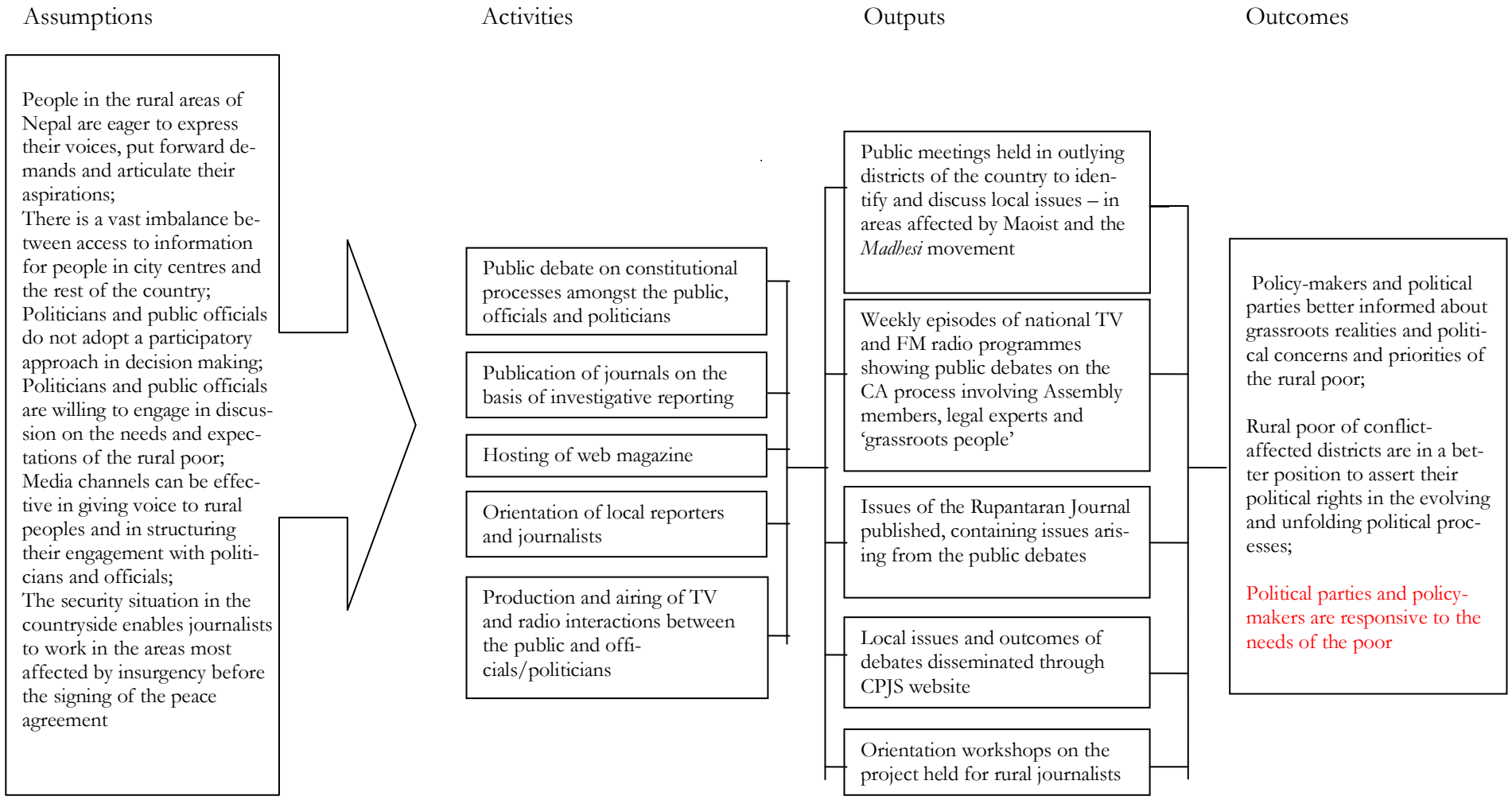
Impact
The main intention of the project was to 'put the voices of the poor right in the spotlight, so that the politicians will take into account their needs and ensure their participation'. The claims in the bi-annual report are enthusiastically positive: 'The people's responses were overwhelming. The interactive debates on the political process.... were hugely popular.' Clearly, these public debates, TV and radio broadcasts are well known, appreciated and have aroused public interest. Given the popularity of the broadcasts, it is likely that they will have caught some attention of the leadership of the political parties – and it is likely that they will have made some kind of contribution to the ongoing political debates focusing on the Constitutional Assembly, the future of the monarchy and the reconstruction of the state. However, given the current deadlock between the Seven Party Alliance and the Maoists, given the indefinite postponement of the elections for the Constitutional Assembly, it seems that, though the project will have 'enhanced the debate on the constitutional process' it has not led to the prime envisaged impact: that 'the political parties and other institutions will be more responsive towards the needs of the poor'.

Sustainability
There are two key issues here: First, CPJS looks for independence from donor funding through attracting advertising revenue in support of such interactive media formats. Second, it is likely that, as anticipated in the PD, more media houses will follow the examples provided by CPJS. 'The greater involvement of other media houses is the best way of sustaining and consolidating democracy.'

Lessons Learned
Role of the media in civic education programmes: More easily and more effectively than other communication strategies, the media – especially the electronic media – can reach out across a country, engage all sections of the population, raise issues, provoke debate and influence policy makers. As said in the 2005 Review of the Danish support to Human Rights, Good Governance and Decentralisation in Nepal: 'The progress made in Nepal on human rights training for journalist, consensus building on key social issues among journalists from different media houses and the establishment of many community radios is indeed impressive. Its relevance to conflict transformation is considerable.'

Donors' support of the media: Nevertheless, a more comprehensive and concentrated media strategy could have been supported by the donors in relation to the current political debate in Nepal. But, as Kishore Nepal said in the interview, 'The donors seem afraid of supporting the media – for them it is rather like putting their hands in the fire.'

III: MCD Model of Change



A clear example of how by reaching out to remote areas, by structuring discussion between the public, politicians and officials, by airing broadcasts at the national level, mainstream media can give voice to the marginalized and, at least, provoke debate about accountability.

IV: Relevant Primary and Secondary Data

Documents consulted
Project Document, Media for Consolidation of Democracy, Centre for Professional Journalism Studies, Danida/HUGOU, November 2006;
MCD, Bi-Annual Progress Report, 15 November 2006 – 30 June 2007, CPJS;
MCD, Annual Work Plan and Budget, 15 November 20o6 – December 2007;
Kishore Nepal, **Under the Shadow of Violence**, CPJS, Kathmandu, 2005;
Kishore Nepal, **Social Inclusion: What really achieved?** CPJS, 2007;
Danida, **Human Rights and Good Governance Programme in Nepal: Programme Document**, October 2005'
Review of the Danish support to the Human rights, Good governance and Decentralisation in Nepal, 1 July 2005.

Project strategy (extract from the Project Document)
'The practice of interactive media is almost non-existent in Nepal. The mighty and the powerful have monopolized the use of the media, be it state-owned or private. Now the time has come to break this one-way traffic. The aspirations of the people from the remote areas should and must be reflected in decision-making in relation to public affairs. Any political decisions made without the concerns of the poor will not gain legitimacy and sustainability; interactive media will provide the grounds for listening to the poor people.

'Moreover, this initiative will help poor people from across the country to understand the issues and opinions of the rural poor and what they would like to include in the unfolding political processes, including the new Constitution. The project will provide an effective platform for politicians and policy-makers to learn about the needs of the rural poor….'

Key learning (extract from MCD Progress Report of July 2007)
'Working directly with the people offered many more opportunities than envisaged. Since the Nepali society was never exposed to the media on a large scale, implementation of the media planning sometimes is quite difficult. But, if convinced properly, rural people accept the changes and realities instantly – and become media friendly.'

Media's role in peace building (extract from MCD Annual Workplan and Budget November-December 2007)
'In any country where political institutions and opposition groups are not yet, or are no longer, operating properly, media is able to report and reflect popular discontent with the course of national policy, identifying early problems that demand solution if political stability is to be maintained. Far from subverting public order in unstable societies, free and robust media can actually promote conciliation by encouraging the discussion of public concerns before they reach a volatile or explosive stage.'

Leaders, Listen to the Voice of People! (LLVP)

I: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1.Donor agency	Norwegian Embassy, Kathmandu
2.Partners/implementing agencies	Pro-Public
3.Objectives	'To listen to what the people think, and have to say, about the restructuring of the State, while engaging them to raise voice about the national agenda'
4.Main CVA and other activities	Organising district-level 'listening programmes' and 'press meets'
5.Target group/beneficiaries	98 politicians, representing 11 political parties, and local people from10 districts (forest users' groups, mothers' groups, religious organisations, etc) ; two in each development region of the country
6.Key linkages	Using similar 'public hearings' format as in the Nepal Good Governance Project, also implemented by Pro Public. Also, UNDP's Decentralised Local Governance Support Programme assisted in selection of representative participants in the public hearings
7.Duration	10 weeks
8.Starting date	1 July 2007
9.Total budget	NR 5,189,125

II: Overall Assessment of the Intervention

Relevance
When Nepal is moving, however erratically, towards the election of a Constituent Assembly, there is relevance in an initiative, however brief, that enabled central-level political leaders of all the main parties to travel out from Kathmandu to meet with people from a wide cross-section of the society, to hear their concerns about the possibilities of restructuring that are being proposed. There are crucial issues to be discussed: mechanisms for ensuring greater social inclusion in political formats, election processes for achieving fairer representation, and federal structures for reflecting different ethnic interests.
Since 1991, when it was founded, Pro-Public has been holding public hearings across the country; but a unique feature of this initiative was the 'ground rule' that, for the whole day, the politicians were allowed only two minutes at the beginning to make statements – and then seven minutes at the end to make their response.

Efficiency
Coverage: Pro-Public carried out the programme of public hearings in the following districts: Morang and Udayapur in Eastern Region; Dhanusha and Chitwan in Central; Kaski and Palpa in Western; Dang and Banke in Mid-Wester; Doti and Kanchanpur in the Far-Western Region. There were day-long meetings in the district headquarters, preceded by a meeting with the press on the previous day and followed in the evenings by visits to villages. An intensive programme, maximising on the opportunities for interaction.

Target group: All 11 political parties invited took part – nominating parliamentarians and central committee members. In total, 98 party leaders participated.

Possible alternatives: As indicated below, greater press coverage could have maximised inputs – but at the risk of inhibiting the politicians.

Effectiveness
Reach: As far as possible, the programme achieved its objectives of ensuring a proportionate participation in the hearings from different sectors such as women, *dalit*, *janjati* and *Madheshi* (indigenous people of the Terai, southern plains. In total, 2,241 people took part (more than anticipated), in the 10 public listening events in ten districts, including 412 journalist, 1,089 key stakeholders and 740 field participants.
Synergy: One aspect of the organisation demonstrates the possibility of linking with other project initiatives, In this case, in eight of the ten districts the host organisations responsible for local coordination of activities were the Good Governance Clubs established by the same implementing agency, Pro-Public, under the Nepal Good Governance Project supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
Structuring of discussions: From a study of video recordings it is clear that the success of the events was partly, if not mainly, due to having a very experienced moderator and television presenter – Kedar Khadka of Pro Public. Also, consistent shape and significance were given to the meetings by having a poll based on five questions presented to key stakeholders and leaders: 'What should be the structure of the nation?' 'On what basis should the federal system be formed?' 'How many federal states should there be?' 'Who should be the Head of the Nation?' 'How should the Head of the Nation be selected?' Altogether, 1,187 opinion poll papers were filled – more than anticipated.
District declarations: The most tangible outputs of the 'listening programmes' were the district declarations from all of the ten districts – jointly released by representatives of the participants and by the leaders. These declarations, signed by the leaders, reflected commitments on the main issues debated in the meetings – agreements to take up the issues in the political parties and through their manifestos. A set of all ten district declarations have been sent to the respective eleven parties.

Impact
One important test will be whether or not the signed commitments will actually be taken up by the political parties in their manifestos and whether, at the district levels, actions will be taken along the lines agreed at the meetings. It is too early to say. It is also assumed that the leaders who took part will be stimulated to influence their party colleagues to be more responsive to the concerns of their constituents. It could well be that, for a few of the leaders, the challenge of listening for a whole day without talking – a very stiff challenge for most politicians – could be traumatic enough to cause some change in attitude and behaviour.

Sustainability
This was conceived as a one-off event so sustainability, in the normal sense of the term, is not an issue. But, from the Pro-Public report, it can be seen that the leaders argued that other events of a similar kind and for similar leaders should be promoted. It seems, though, that no mechanism for follow-up – for gauging the extent to which commitments are honoured – has been devised.

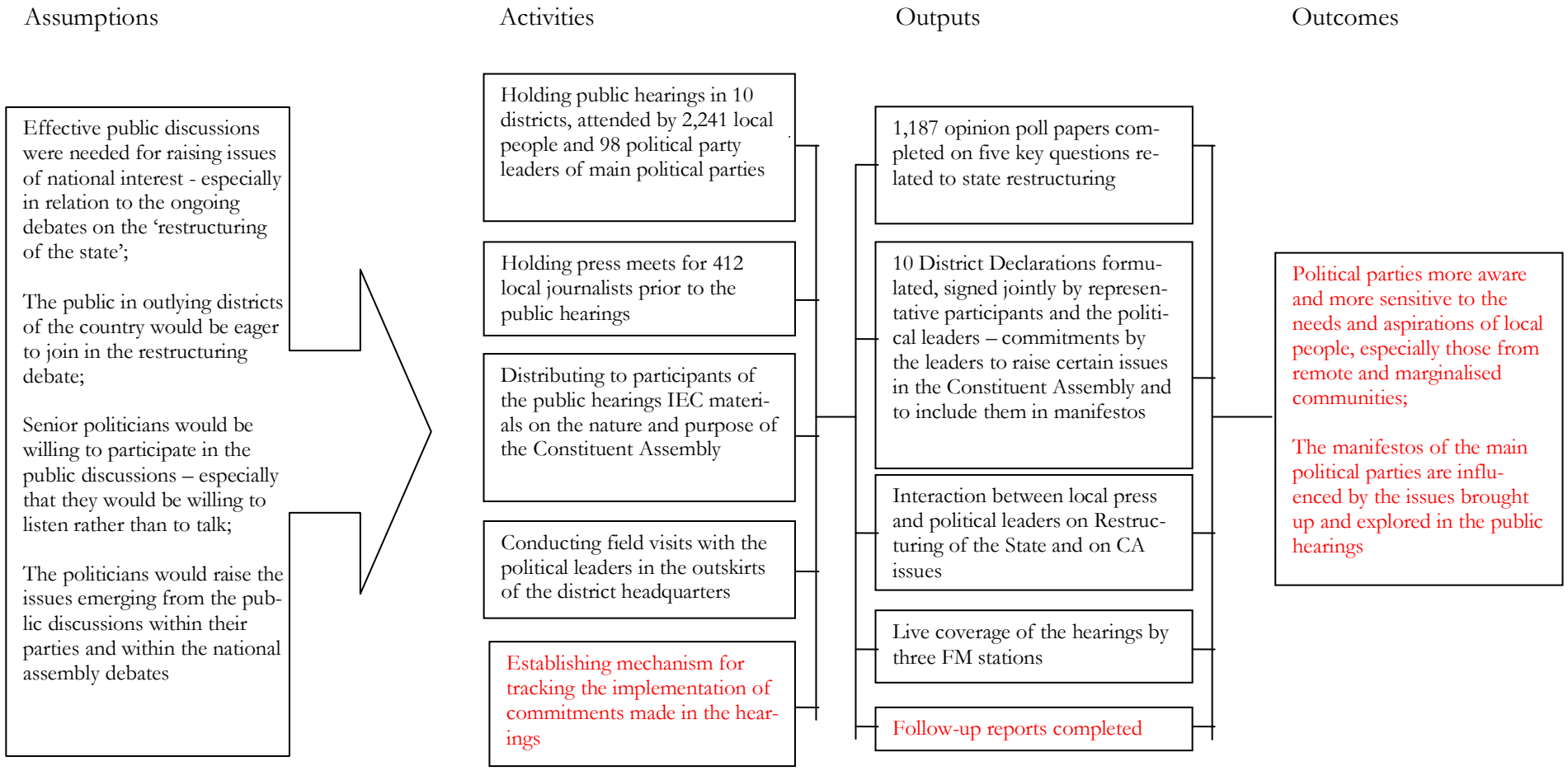
Lessons Learned
Communication strategy: This was such an innovative mini-project that perhaps more could have been done to secure mainstream press coverage. The local journalists were engaged, but a more focused communication strategy could have stimulated much wider publicity and comment.

Monitoring: Such an imaginative initiative deserves a closer monitoring of consequences.

Credibility: It seems that the idea for this activity arose during the regular informal discussions the Norwegian Ambassador holds with political leaders. And, clearly, the Norwegian Embassy has earned good credit from the technical assistance it has given to the formulation of election policy and processes in Nepal. (And, no doubt, from its patient and persistent mediation work in Sri Lanka.) Here, then, is an example of how 'quiet diplomacy' can be effective and can link with more 'public' activities involving politicians.

Linkages: A short, one-off event of this kind can be rendered additionally effective if it links with other awareness-raising activities – through a sharing of materials and facilities.

III: LLVP Model of Change



The assumptions about the desirability of confronting politicians with the views of local people are reasonable; the device of the public hearing is effective; the broadcasts give a wider coverage to issues; the signed declarations provide additional pressure; but, without a mechanism for following up the commitments made at the public hearings, it will not be known if the intentions were acted on.

IV: Relevant Primary and Secondary Data

Documents consulted
Final Report: 'Leaders, Listen to the Voice of People!' Pro-Public, September 2007.

Rationale
From the Final Report:
'There are several critical issues at the national, regional and local levels which are linked with the Restructuring of State. In order to productively handle the national issues so as to help improve the situation in the country, effective public discussions – at all levels as far as possible – were felt to be urgently needed.'

Key questions put to stakeholder participants
1. What should be the structure of the nation (federal or unitary)?
2. On what basis should the federal system be formed?
3. How many federal states should there be?
4. Who should be the Head of the Nation?
5. How should the Head of State be selected?

The Biratnagar Declaration
The nation is now undergoing preparation for the historical Constituent Assembly polls slated for November 22, 2007. With the aim of acquiring knowledge on what the local civil society representatives think about the state's restructuring and federal system of governance and what they want to convey to the leaders of political parties and parliamentarians, the Good Governance Program of Pro Public in collaboration with its regional office in Biratnagar and Good Governance Club District Coordination Committee, Morang organised a public debate program titled "Leaders, Listen to the Voice of People!", and the Declaration below was issued incorporating the conclusion of the program participated in by central-level representatives and parliamentarians of 10 political parties:

Public commitments enshrined in Biratnagar Declaration:

1. We are ready to push forward the issues raised by the participants of the public debate program titled "Leaders, Listen to the Voice of People!" as an issue of discussion in our respective parties.
2. We, the representatives of political parties, have agreed to go to the people in the days ahead, only after determining the priorities of the main national agenda.
3. We express our commitment that we will prohibit and help prohibit the candidacy of individuals facing allegations of corruption and human rights abuse in the Constituent Assembly polls from our respective parties.
4. We sign in the following manner expressing commitment that the Rayamajhi Commission report would be made public and an immediate process of action will be initiated.

Nepal Good Governance Project, Phase III (NGGP)

I: Profile of the Intervention

Issues	Details
1.Donor agency	SDC
2.Partners/implementing agencies	Pro-Public
3.Objectives	'To enhance the capacity of civil society to advocate for peace, inclusive democracy, respect for human rights and good governance'
4.Main CVA and other activities	Promoting Good Governance Clubs; holding public hearings; producing bulletins in Nepali and English; producing radio and TV programmes; maintaining a Help Line
5.Target group/beneficiaries	GGCs in 64 districts: politicians, journalists, human rights defenders, development workers, youth...
6.Key linkages	Other SDC-financed projects, especially the SDC clusters (Dolakha, Rhameshap, Okhaldunga); collaboration with OHCHR mission; support from Pro-Public's DFID/ESP Anti-Corruption Project to the media component (CHF 57,000 per year)
6.Duration	Three years
7.Starting date	19 January 2006
8.Total budget	CHF 960,000

II: Overall Assessment of Intervention

Relevance
With its third phase starting up at the beginning of 2006, before the end of the authoritarian royal regime, SDC saw NGGP as having potential for being a highly relevant and important project. 'In a country that is deeply affected by an armed conflict that might intensify in the near future again and that traverses a period of strong authoritarian inclinations by the royal central government, *it is fundamental that a platform is given to civil society, whose voice must be raised and hopefully heard*.' After the *Jana Andolan* of April 2006 (the second 'people's movement'), the peace accord agreed with the Maoists, the hopes and frustrations of attempts to elect a Constituent Assembly, the project is no less relevant. It works on both sides of the CV&A equation: enabling people to give voice and making government accountable. 'Pro-Public is a bridge between the people and their leaders.' (Kedar Khadka, Director GGP)

Efficiency
Output 1: *Peace initiatives taken up by civil society at all levels*: It seems the GGCs have had no trouble in changing focus from anti-corruption to peace-building and social inclusion concerns. The weekly radio programmes, aired on Radio Nepal and re-broadcast on 14 FM stations – and the 'For and Against' TV programmes – range widely over issues to do with governance, human rights and democratisation. Pro-Public was broadcasting debates from the streets, in the midst of the April 2006 up-risings in Kathmandu – recordings aired on the Image network. Output 2: *Human rights violations and committed by both sides to the conflict documented*: As the SPA and Maoist peace accord happened, the focus switched to the Constituent Assembly concerns. Output 3: *Disadvantaged groups supported in expressing their opinions on service delivery*: The televised Public Hearings provide an animated, and often quite confrontational, chance for people to air their grievances and have them aired to the wider audience made possible by radio and TV. Output 4: *Capacity of Good Governance Clubs enhanced*: Now there are 5,900 GGCs throughout the country – in 64 of the 75 districts. National federation of GGCs planned for 2005 is still to be established. Particularly in the establishment of the Clubs – that seem to take on a life of their own – the project inputs can be seen as catalytic.

Effectiveness
NGGP has achieved it prime immediate objectives in setting up GGCs in 64 of the 75 districts. The GGCs attract people of all ages, but mainly young educated professionals: teachers, lawyers, journalists. But another objective is achieved in as much as the clubs do include young activists from the excluded communities. The clubs are much more active in holding local-level public hearings, organising campaigns than being just 'Listening Clubs'. Since the start of Phase I in 1997, the weekly 30 minutes radio programme broadcast through the national station as well as FM stations takes on a popular and highly participatory magazine format, including incident reports, Good Governance Club reports, 'office time' exposures, a help line and a listeners' forum. The TV programme certainly raises a powerful Voice and has become well-known and well-respected. Some of the outputs of the GGCs include: agreements reached at district level by the political parties through joint public commitments; financial support from DDCs for holding good governance campaigns and for trainings on human rights; training for local journalists; training for VDC members... The 'Good Governance' magazine is professionally designed, informative and wide-ranging in content on current social/political issues.

Impact
In raising public awareness and in promoting the accountability of public servants, the GGP works successfully in two dimensions. In the vertical plane, because of the broadcasting component the local-level investigations and debates of the GGC network can be aired at the national level through the TV and radio programmes. In the horizontal plane, at both local and national levels, the project brings together complainants and officials in the exploration of issues. In the immediate sense, the effect is plainly visible. It should also be accepted that Pro-Public (through NGGP and through its other linked initiatives) is making a significant contribution to the achievement of its wider, developmental goal: 'to promote peace, democracy and good governance at all levels'. As claimed in Pro Public's brochure on NGGP, through their activities, broadcasts and publications, the GGCs have become 'a force to be reckoned with'. One indicator is that Pro-Public has been able to run joint programmes with the CIAA and has been invited on a number of government established committees that are monitoring practices on such matters as doctors' fees to kerosene adulteration.

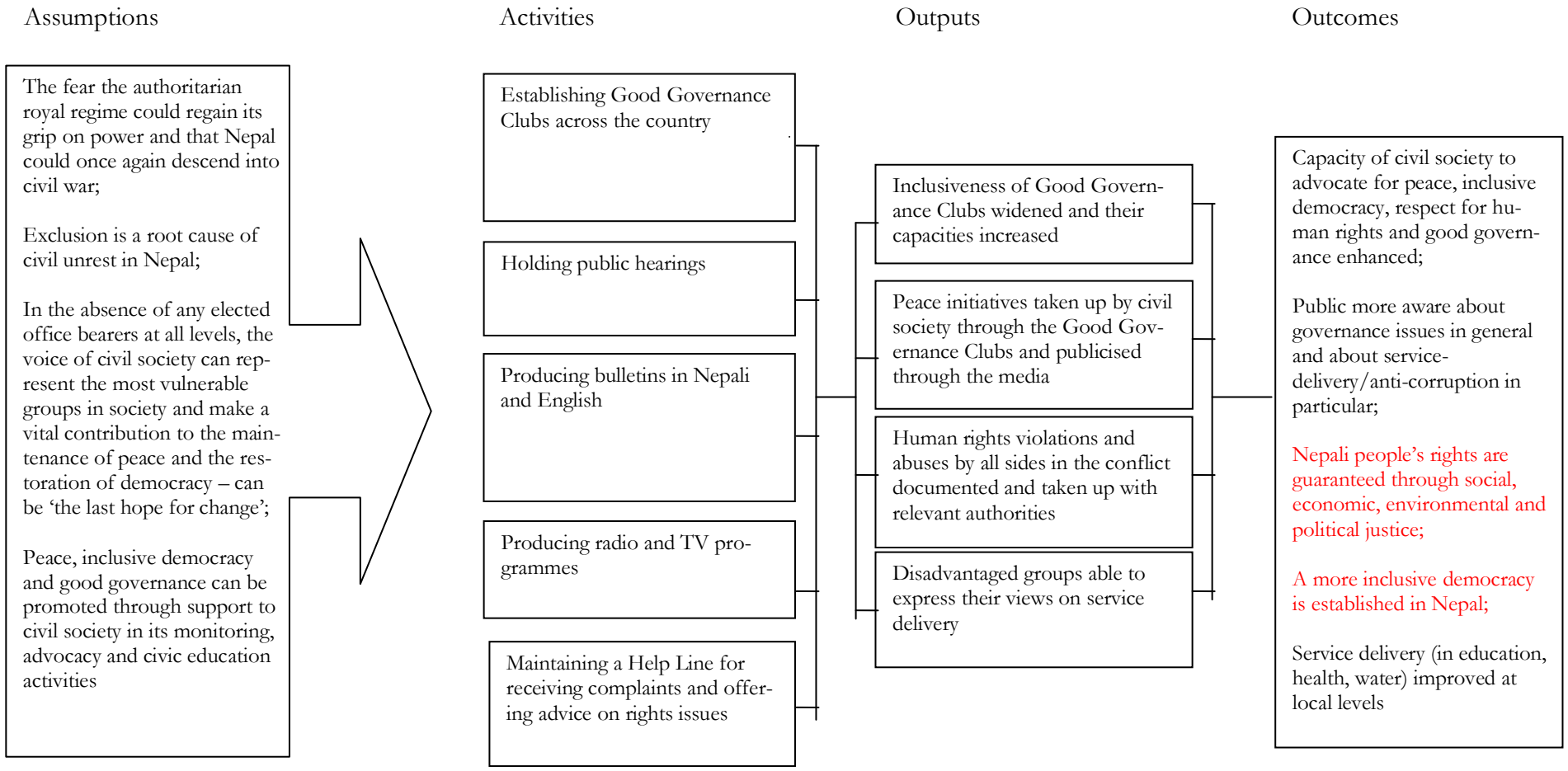
Sustainability
One contributing factor to the establishment of democracy, the upholding of human rights, and the promotion of good governance in Nepal is the strength of civil society. Pro-Public, through its projects such as NGGP, is making an important contribution. And it is hopeful: 'There is no denying that the role of civil society is indispensable in establishing good governance in the country in the days to come. A national consensus is gradually developing to create this situation. The top government officials have started to pay due respect to the role of civil society.'

Lessons Learned
Selection of partner CSOs: Talking of civil society in Nepal, Kedar Khadka makes an important distinction between the 'businessmen' and the 'campaigners'. But how should donors determine who are the genuine campaigners?

Role of the media in raising public awareness: Again, the radio and TV programmes of Pro-Public/NGGP demonstrate the potential of the media to raise public awareness and to promote debate.

Integrated initiatives: NGGP also demonstrates the benefits of a programme that links local investigative, advocacy and campaigning activities with both national and local broadcasts and publications.

III: NGGP Model of Change



Helping to ensure that this intervention does not stimulate an expression of grievances and demands that might lead only to a frustration of expectations, this intervention works at two interactive levels: engaging the public and office bearers in rigorous dialogue at the local level – and then, through the popular broadcasts on mainstream channels, elevating the debate to a national level.

IV: Relevant Primary and Secondary Data

Documents consulted
Nepal, Good Governance Project, Pro Public Phase III, **Credit Proposal No. 7F-01039.03**, SDC;
Good Governance Project, Zero Tolerance against Corruption (Project brochure);
Good Governance, July-August 2007 (magazine);
Project Review, 2005.

GG Help-Line
'The GG radio programme not only broadcasts informative and empowering messages but it also helps listeners through its GG Help-Line. It works to address the problems of people from remote areas who have not been able to receive services from the government authorities for a long time. The Help-Line helps people resolve their problems by making contacts with the concerned government officials.'

(From: 'Zero Tolerance Against Corruption' – a brochure on the Good Governance Project)

Public hearings
'The GGP creates a platform to let the public voice come out with a view to sending a clear signal to the responsible authorities about the direction that the public wants its government to take. And this is carried out through 'Public Hearings'. Their prime goal is to provide a forum to the people for their access to authorities by generating critical stakeholders at various levels, from central to regional to local (VDC/municipality).... The main purpose of Public Hearings is to help citizens break away from old ways of either remaining indifferent or reacting destructively, particularly in matters relating to good governance..... In a Public Hearing, the general public will have an opportunity to directly put their questions to a representative or an authority. Generally, Nepali people are considered to be of a docile character. They either believe that their voices are never heard or fear that they would invite more troubles by doing so.... It is a small but meaningful step towards participatory democracy.'

(From: 'Zero Tolerance Against Corruption')

GGC activities
Political parties is Kaski District have committed to resolve problems of Bhadoure VDC. About five GGCs in coordination with GGC District Coordination Committee in Kaski organised a round table in Kaski. The joint public commitment signed by the VDC secretary and the political parties mentions the time-frame to resolve entire problems facing Bhadoure VDC.'

(From: Good Governance, the GGP bulletin, July-August 2007)

Decentralised Financing and Development Programme (DFDP)

I: Profile of the Intervention

Issues	Details
1. Donor agency	DFID/UNCDF
2.Partners/implementing agencies	Ministry of Local Development (MoLD)
3.Objectives	'To reduce poverty in the pilot districts through provision of rural infrastructure and human resource opportunities.'
4. Main CVA and other activities	Establishing an infrastructure delivery mechanism; providing income generation opportunities through 'time-saving infrastructures'; influencing policy reform related to decentralisation; instituting a local government reform programme, including Minimum Conditions (MCs) and Performance Measures (PMs), as a basis for block grants to DDCs
5. Target group/beneficiaries	People involved in the local government process in 20 pilot districts, officials, rural poor, particularly women, *dalit* and disadvantaged groups
6. Key linkages	Linked to former UNDP-supported Decentralisation and Local Governance Support Programme for identification of beneficiary groups
7. Duration	Five years – but with no-cost extensions to October 2007 (project document for Phase-II about to be published)
8. Starting date	December 1999
9. Total budget	USD 11,000,000

II: Overall Assessment of Intervention

Relevance

However much conflict and political crises (as at the time of the study) have got in the way of implementing the declared decentralisation policies in Nepal, the interim constitution agreed upon by the interim government (including the Maoists) appreciates the significance of local government in development. And most people assume that, once political stability is found, then the decentralisation process will be resumed. So, despite the constraints, DFDP is certainly relevant in maintaining the idea of decentralisation and in preparing for wider, more significant implementation of decentralisation policies when the political scene stabilises.

Efficiency

Final Evaluation Team (Sept 2006) reported: Local authorities (DDCs, VDCs) and grassroots institutions (users' committees and community organisations) had implemented and, for the most part, were maintaining small-scale rural infrastructure and other public investments. As of the time of fieldwork, 1,783 projects had been approved; 1,589 micro-projects had been completed in 676 VDCs with approximately 2.4 million beneficiaries at a cost of USD 8 million. The amount of government funding to the districts had increased yearly, with the 2006 budget doubling support to VDCs from NR 500,000 to NR 1,000,000 per VDC. There was also an increase in local revenues collected by DDCs. Working through local authorities, for the promotion of community development initiatives, rather than setting up separate and project-specific structures, is likely to be more cost-effective and more sustainable.

Effectiveness
The Evaluation Report found that the success of the project in reaching it set objectives depended on its combination of mechanisms: infrastructure delivery, income generation activities and institutional reform that has involved devolution of governance processes to the community level. 'It is the combination of infrastructure delivery and system development that has been most valued by the beneficiaries.' Specifically, an effective fiscal transfer system has been established and is operational in the target districts. And there is an efficient accounting system across target districts and internal auditors are in place. The use of block grant funding as an instrument to raise DDC performance (through the Minimum Conditions and Performance Measures) were working successfully.

Impact
The three main assumptions underlying the main goal of the project were that it would:

- Have a direct impact on socio-economic development and poverty alleviation through the improved sustainable provision of basic public and community infrastructure and services;
- Strengthen the capacities and legitimacy of local governments, including elected representatives, and thus contribute to improved local democratic governance;
- Contribute to evolving procedures, practices and policies of wider relevance for decentralisation processes in Nepal.

Within its geographical boundaries, the first of the above assumptions has proved valid. With regard to the second, DFDP has involved capacity building in terms of systems training and production of manuals – but it was emphasised in interviews that this training could have a wider scope in relation to, for example, participatory planning. (As for the training of elected officials – these have not been in place since 2002) It seems that the public consultative processes are not being used by the pilot districts in their planning outside of the project's framework. However, as the DFDP Final Evaluation said: 'The DFDP has made a substantial and substantive impact on many levels of government programmes and decision making. The DFDP is well-known and respected throughout institutions, government departments, line agencies, NGOs, districts, villages and communities. The DFDP has had a demonstrated impact on a widespread recognition of the importance of a transparent decentralised Public Expenditure Management System for infrastructure and service delivery to communities'.

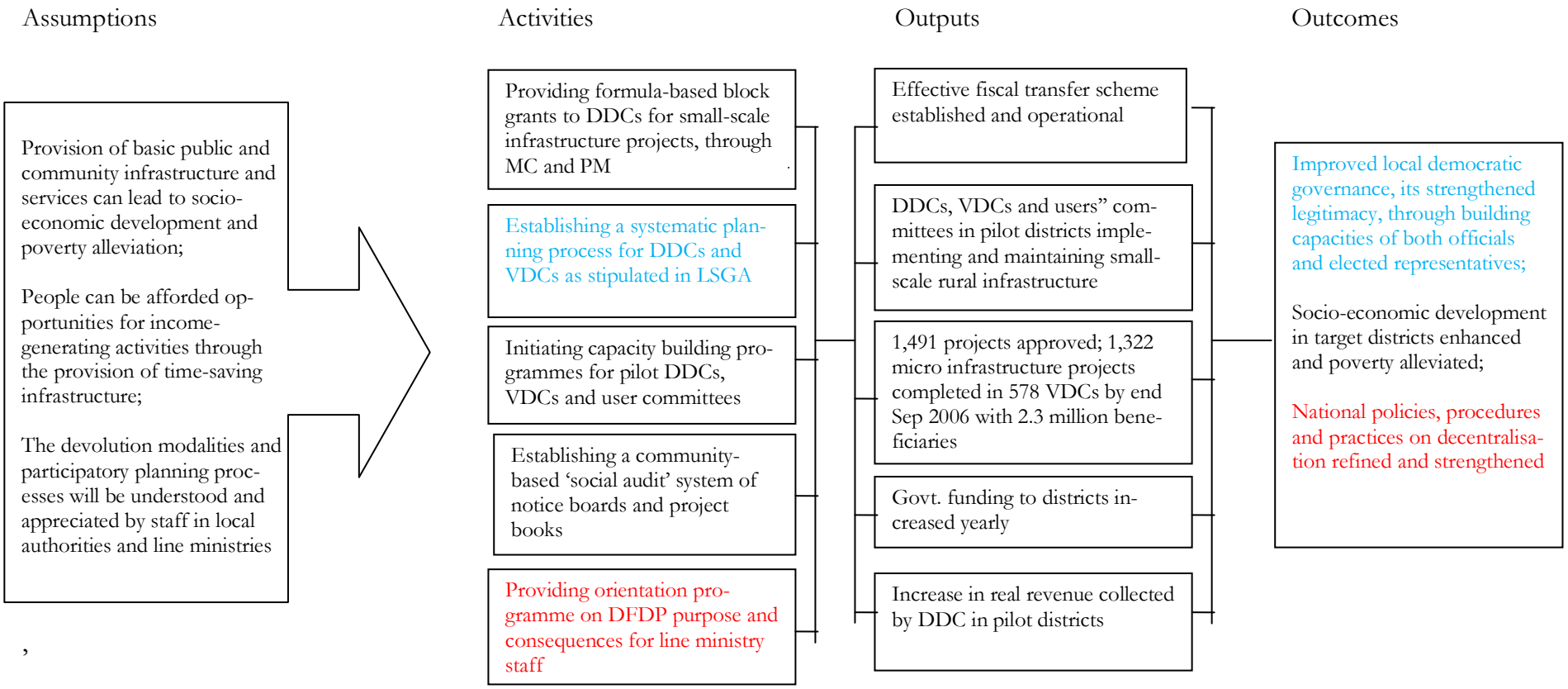
Sustainability
The unstable political and security situation was/is the main factor affecting sustainability. Donor agencies, which had supported decentralisation initiatives in Nepal, differed in their response to the political uncertainty as the peace process between the parties and the Maoists was being worked out. Danida, for example, adopted a 'wait and see' attitude, arguing that such programmes should wait until legitimate and elected local councils are in place; UNDP/DFID argued that the DFDP reform processes had been able to operate without undue interference during the conflict period – demonstrating the value of community involvement in development planning and execution. Moreover it is argued that DFDP can contribute to build decentralisation systems that would be in place once the 'political machinations' are worked out. A study for the DPWG argues that a follow up to DFDP under preparation by UNDP/UNCDF/DFID will/should prepare the ground for a more comprehensive national programme.

Lessons Learned
Contexts: In times of political uncertainty and security problems, should projects such as DFDP be continued?

Mainstreaming: Unless such projects are 'mainstreamed' within ministries of local government they can remain islands of public participation, while the ministry and local government staff continue with top-down planning approaches.

Capacity building: For sustainability of such initiatives, there needs to be a rigorous capacity building programme that, alongside the provision of resources and the training in planning skills, addresses the attitudinal factors that involve reservations and restraints.

III: DFDP Model of Change



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Since 2002, the participatory planning process was mainly a theoretical exercise, as DDCs and VDCs have been without elected representatives and administered by civil servants/government appointees. In relation to CV&A, however, the two instruments of Minimum Conditions (MCs) and Performance Measures have made a significant contribution to enhancing the accountability of the DDCs.

IV: Relevant Primary and Secondary Data

Documents consulted
Nepal DFDP Final Evaluation Report, October 2006;
Assessment of the Context for Decentralisation and Local Governance in Nepal, report commissioned by UNCDF and UNDP, by Neil Webster and Raj Nepal, April 2006;
Planning Governance at the Local Level: A Short Comment, Mukti Rijal (undated);
Poverty Reduction through Local Governance and Service Delivery, DFDP Annual Report 2006;
Review of the Local Public Financial Management, MoLD/UNCDF, February/March 2007;
A Report on the Comparative Assessment on Efficiency of Infrastructure Service Delivery under DFDP, MoLD/UNCDF, July 2006;
UNDP Nepal, Annual Report 2006;
Draft Proposal for a Local Governance and Development Programme, 25 September 2007.

Extracts from DFDP Final Evaluation Report
'Using a multi-definition of poverty that includes empowerment, income and institutional reform, the programme has succeeded in essentially achieving its overall goal of reducing poverty in the pilot districts through the provision of rural infrastructure and human resource development opportunities.....
'An efficient fiscal transfer system has been established and is operational under the DFDP. There is a consistent accounting system across districts and internal auditors are in place. Use of block grant funding as an instrument to raise DDC performance (through Minimum Conditions and Performance Measures) has been effective.....
'Despite a requirement for a 30% allocation to women and disadvantaged groups, DFDP projects have not been able to address gender and social inclusion adequately. The concept of women and disadvantaged focused groups is not clear at all levels, with focused projects generally interpreted as women or disadvantaged groups as recipients not decision makers.
'MLD (Ministry of Local Government) has established a comprehensive Devolution Plan that is awaiting the solution to the current political situation. Proposed replication of DFDP process includes replication of the MC/PM to all 75 districts...'

Proposed Local Government Support Programme (LGSP), follow-up to DFDP
Over the period 2007-2010, LGDP will provide comprehensive support to decentralised governance, local service delivery and community empowerment in Nepal, and will constitute the basis for a national programme framework for all such assistance by development partners..... The programme, which will build on the positive accomplishments of UN and other local governance support activities undertaken in recent years, will focus on two complementary strategies: a) building the capacities and procedures of local bodies, and their financing arrangements, to promote more effective delivery of basic infrastructure and services ('supply'); and b) promoting more active and effective interaction by communities – and especially of the more marginalised segments – with their local governments, in order to better articulate community voice and to hold their local governments to account for the services they are supposed to deliver ('demand').... The immediate geographical focus will be on the Mid and Far West districts but this will expand as quickly as additional partner resources are made available to the programme; at the same time, certain key activities (civic education, local government capacity building, support to local government performance assessments, and support to national government for policy coordination and development) will have a national focus from the outset. Through its activities, LGDP will also seek to establish the platform for a harmonised and joint GoN/multi-donor local governance support platform, including a harmonised donor financing arrangement, which will evolve as the outcomes of Nepal's constitutional reform become clear.

(From LGDP Proposal, September 2007)

Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign (DJEC)

1: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1.Donor agency	Danida
2.Partners/implementing agencies	Holistic Development Service Centre – SAMAGRA
3.Objectives	'Dalits, Janajatis and other marginalized groups are exercising their citizen rights and securing better livelihoods and dignity in an environment of peace'
4.Main CVA and other activities	Capacity building of community units ('social families'), advocacy campaigns, rights and empowerment activities
5.Target group/beneficiaries	Excluded groups (*dalit*, *janajati*, women) in six districts
6.Key linkages	The intervention was a continuation of another previous programme aiming to support the same groups in the same districts. It has similar objectives to another HUGOU project under its 'Social Inclusion' component
7.Duration	Two years
8.Starting date	December 2005
9.Total budget	NPR 13,164,675

II: Overall Assessment of Intervention

Relevance
Dalit and *janajati* both represent groups that face economic, political and cultural marginalisation in contemporary Nepal. In addition, in the current ongoing conflict, the *dalit* and *janajati* have suffered most severely and in large numbers. They have become target groups of the Maoists for recruitment as well as victims of atrocities at the hands of both the Maoists and the security forces.
The Nepal Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)/Tenth Plan (2002-2007), is built upon four pillars – broad-based high and sustainable growth; social sector development with emphasis on human development; targeted programmes with emphasis on social inclusion; improved governance. The Tenth Plan/PRSP seeks to address gender and caste/ethnic related disparities and facilitate social inclusion by mainstreaming efforts – by taking actions under all four pillars of the PRSP.
A programme that focuses on empowering these groups in order to improve their lives has high relevance, as it targets a group that has special needs as well as falling in line with the government priorities.

Efficiency
A total of 203 'social families' (community groups) have been reformed and trained on a rights-based approach to advocate for their rights and to be involved in local-level campaigns challenging exploitation, 'untouchability' and other forms of discrimination. The project builds on previous interventions, as the social families have replaced the former income generating groups that were previously part of a SAMAGRA implemented programme.
Community members have been mobilized to form micro-credit groups, to empower vulnerable groups (including women, *dalit*), to support applications for citizenship certificates and to receive entitlements for local government funds. In addition, the intervention has provided training on rights, and published a leaflet/book containing information on the government budget, available resources, rights, etc.
It has proved difficult to isolate programme activities from other present and past activities, as the intervention built upon these and even merged with other activities and their results as well as assets (eg. community building).

Effectiveness
Establishment of social families: The concept of the social family is an inclusive one, as it is open to all community members. This is one of the features that make it unique, and that can prove its ability to add to the integration of various groups at the local level.
Members of the social families visited stated satisfaction with the programme and the methods chosen to achieve the outputs: capacity building to the groups, micro credit activities, training on rights, and empowerment activities.

Representation of communities: One of the principal attributes of the programme is that SAMAGRA acts on behalf of communities and connects these community groups with government representatives. SA MAGRA represents the community in consultations with the local government and advocates for resources allocated to the communities – through social families. In this respect, SAMAGRA has a comparative advantage in negotiating, as local authorities accept them as spokespersons for their project communities.

Impact
During the field visit to two social families the team saw some of the concrete results and outcomes from the programme. During one field visit villagers told stories about how their lives had changed as a result of their participation in the social family. Examples included awareness of rights leading to concrete demands at the local authorities (eg. citizenship, roofing for a building in the community), reduced discrimination against *dalit* people in the community, memberships for *dalit* in the community forest users' groups committees, increased admission to schools for *dalit* children, and access for *dalit* groups to worship areas.

Sustainability
As mentioned, the intervention and its support to the social families build on existing groups formed as income generating groups. The practice of savings and loans to community members seem to be well administered and organized by community members and there seem to be sufficient trust in the benefits of that activity in order for it to continue functioning well after the eventual end of the project cycle of funding.

Lessons Learned
Coordination: There is a need for more donor coordination within the area of support to excluded groups.

Accountability: Giving voice and linking with access to resources gives a sharper point to citizens being able to express their views, and it forces authorities to be accountable.

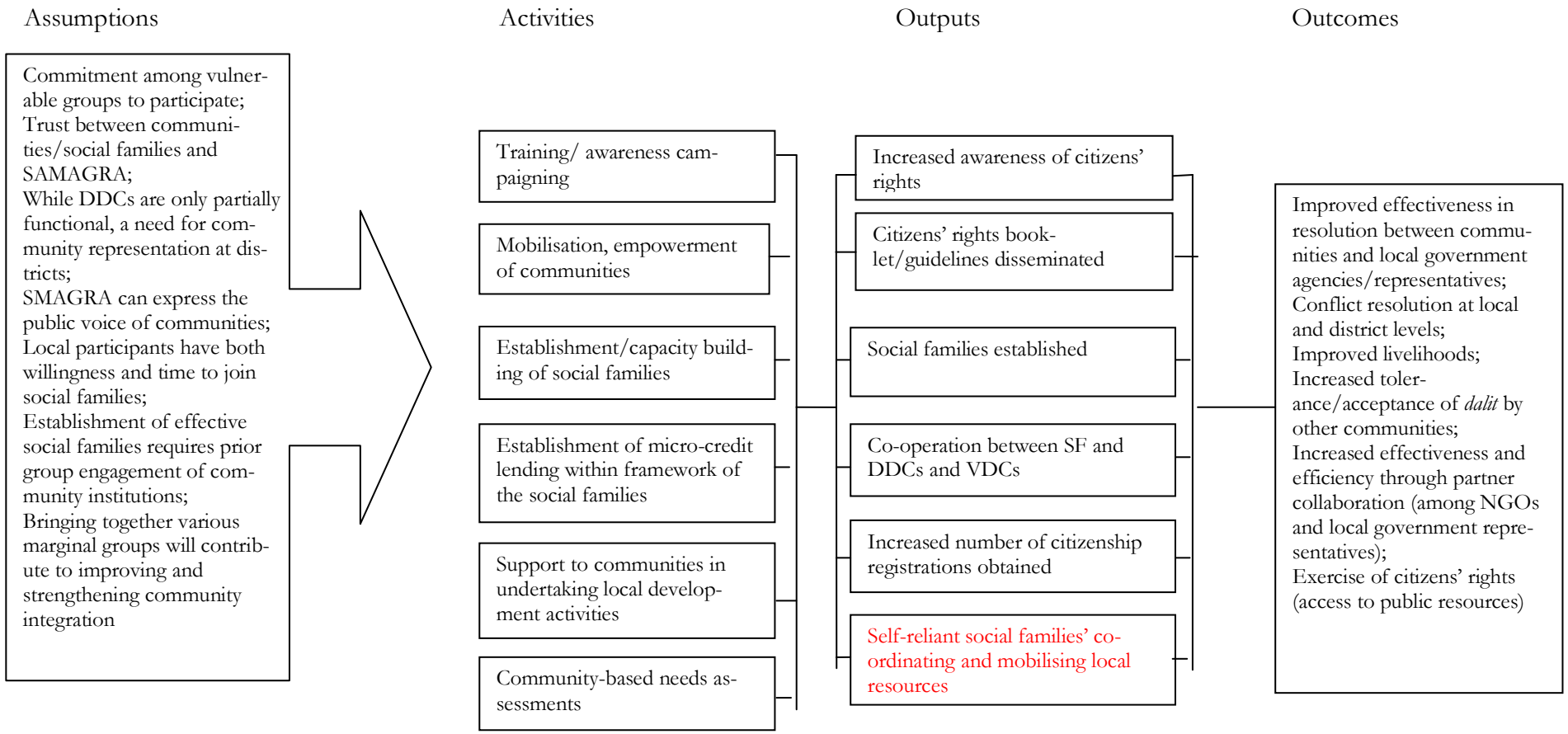
CV&A and livelihoods: Links with rights-based awareness and social mobilization programmes can be effectively implemented with active support and cooperation from the local communities if such programmes are implemented in tandem with livelihoods improvement initiatives.

Social families: The social family concept is open to all villagers in a given location; it therefore has an integrative potential, not least in a Nepalese context where groups based on ethnicity and caste are many.

Links with government initiatives: With the current government distribution mechanisms for funds for disadvantaged groups, the support of 'voice and accountability' initiatives becomes even more pertinent.

The issue of representation: As long as the disbursement of funds from government is not handled through the VDCs, it becomes the responsibility of CSOs to speak on behalf of the communities – and this raises the question of representation.

III: DJEC Model of Change



The model highlights the kinds of activity that are effective in increasing inclusion ('social families', awareness raising about rights and entitlements. While these can lead to purposeful dialogue with local administrations and support the integration of different social groups, the model shows that these achievements are more limited with regard to increasing the self-reliance of the social families in co-ordinating and mobilising local resources.

IV: Relevant Primary and Secondary Data

Documents Consulted:
Danida/HUGOU Human Rights and Good Governance Programme. Project Document: Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign (In Siraha, Saptari, Udaypur, Dhading, Gorkha and Lamjung Districts). Holistic Development Service Centre (SAMAGRA). Chabahil, Kathmandu. October 2005;
Human Rights and Good Governance Programme in Nepal: Programme Document. Danida. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. October 2005;
Human Rights and Good Governance Programme, Phase II (2003-2008). Nepal Component Description: Social Inclusion. June 2003 (revised March 2006);
Evaluation of Dalits/Janajatis Empowerment and Advocacy Campaign in Siraha and Saptari Districts Implemented by SAMAGRA. Danida/HUGOU, Kathmandu, Nepal, September 2005.

Significant Change quotations:
Dr. Jit B. Gurung. Senior Adviser for Social Inclusion, HUGOU:
'They (SAMAGRA) have established the Social Family. This is a metaphor for community, and comprises a family of diversity.'
'What distinguishes this approach from others is the establishment of the Social Family as a basis of community empowerment.'

On social inclusion:
Dar Nath Neupane. SAMAGRA, Director:
'Our focus in on the voiceless people left vulnerable through caste and social exclusion. Our mission is to empower. This is a peaceful struggle to improve livelihoods with dignity.'

Social inclusion and citizens' rights.
Quotes from a visit to a rural community with members of the SAMGRA Social Family, Dhading District:
'We began as a Social Family and now we want to join a cooperative. Then we can have (further) access to (micro-credit) bank loans.'
'We are landless; we work the fields for others. Without our citizen papers (registration) we have no claim to government help.'

Quotes were from a second rural visit to members of another SAMGRA Social Family, Lamjung District:
'My husband has gone away… I don't know where... He has been gone three years… Without his permission (signature) I could not register as a citizen. The Social Family has helped me receive my registration.'
'I make noodles and sell them to the community. I took a (micro credit) loan from the project and hired four other women to work for me. My loan will be paid in one year.'

On community needs and priorities.
The District Livestock Officer: 'Cows are raised by the wealthy households; goats by the poor. We have used SAMAGRA to help us with our (goat) livestock distribution programme to identify the poorest and most vulnerable households. With support from SAMAGRA we provide livestock and technical training.'

Head of DDC Office: 'The number one priority of the district poor is food security. Second to this, the biggest challenges for the *dalit* and *janajati* is lack of knowledge to use the market, lack of capital, lack of land and illiteracy.'

Janajati Empowerment Project (JEP)

1: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1. Donor agency	DFID
2.Partners/implementing agencies	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN)
3.Objectives	Increased responsiveness to *janajati* rights and participation of *janajati* in socio-economic and political processes at all levels, including policy making
4.Main CVA and other activities	Capacity building of *janajati* organizations (Indigenous People's Organisation - IPOs), awareness raising amongst *janajati*, advocacy towards decision makers
5.Target group/beneficiaries	Central level and in selected districts where IPOs need capacity building
6.Key linkages with other programmes	ESP - Enabling State Programme
7. Duration	Three years
8. Starting date	2004
9. Total budget	£ 1,523,935

II: Overall Assessment

Relevance
According to the project document: 'The majority of Nepal's 8.5 million *janajati* suffer from social and political exclusion, poverty, and low literacy levels.' A programme that aims at the *janajati*' increased participation in socio-economic and political processes is therefore highly relevant. The Nepal Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)/Tenth Plan (2002-2007) is built upon four pillars: broad-based high and sustainable growth, social sector development with emphasis on human development, targeted programmes with emphasis on social inclusion and improved governance. The Nepalese government has set aside special funds at district level for disadvantaged groups (for the welfare of people with special needs, such as *dalit*, *janajati*, the poor, the disabled). In order to access these funds, a DCC (District Coordination Council) has to exist that can enter into negotiations with the district government authorities on the disbursements of these funds. It takes a minimum three IPOs to form a DCC, and the existence of IPOs is therefore a pre-requisite for formation of a DCC. Support to the capacity building of IPOs therefore has an obvious relevance, as they form the basis for the officially recognized units that can enter into negotiations with the district authorities and get access to welfare funds.

Efficiency
In November 2006, an 'Output to Purpose Review' (OPR) was prepared. This document concluded that 'Much of the project focus and budget has been on direct implementation of socio-economic empowerment activities at the community level by JEP, rather than the member IPOs and DCCs. As a result, project efficiency has been compromised leading to: (a) ineffective implementation, (b) insufficient support at field level and (c) weak monitoring'.

Effectiveness
The OPR writes: 'The approach taken to build the capacity of *janajati* organisations (NEFIN and IPOs) to achieve the project purpose of bringing about change has been weak. Due to the focus on socio-economic empowerment activities, large project coverage and lack of recognition of the importance of institutional strengthening, not much attention has been given to this area beyond the provision of some physical infrastructure and training. However, the same OPR also concludes that 'JEP has made reasonable progress towards the project purpose.'
Assessing the extent to which the objectives were achieved fully is only partly possible at this stage of the evaluation. The objective was 'increased participation' and therefore results can show in the future as well

as in the present. However, concrete results have been reported. One of those reported by NEFIN was the achievement of a 20-point agreement with the government. This agreement, in principle, is not in any way legally binding and it deals with how *jananati* should be granted representation, e.g. proportional representation in the CA. Another concrete output of the programme is the government's ratification (August 2007) of ILO Convention 169 that describes indigenous people's right over land, culture, language, education and the right to self-determination.
NEFIN representatives furthermore explained that their organisation had increased its credibility and was now recognized as a resourceful and capable organization in the country. This was said to lead to more willingness on the side of other donors and NGOs to cooperate with NEFIN and to see them as a potential partner.

Impact
The review from November 2006 concluded that: 'Overall, JEP has made reasonable progress towards the project purpose. There is clear evidence of increased awareness among Janajatis of not only their cultural and linguistic rights, but also their socio-economic and political rights and this has had a positive impact on the degree of engagement and participation in the domain of the state. Mobilisation by the Janajati people, organisations and representatives has been effective in forwarding their agenda and they are taking greater initiatives to claim their rights.' It is likely that these changes will have an impact in the longer run and that *janajati* groupings are empowered to put forward claims and improve their situation. However, one unintended consequence of the intervention could be that it has supported a separatist agenda. NEFIN has an agenda of a Nepalese state organised along ethnic lines and it was mentioned by one donor representative that they did not support this agenda. But one consequence of the intervention has probably been supporting the fight for this agenda after all.

Sustainability
The strong focus on capacity building speaks in favour of the intervention having achieved sustainable results, as the organizations now stand stronger, even after funding has ceased. That being said, it is clear that the organization will have to continually attract new resources in order to keep up the capacity and abilities to carry out advocacy activities and capacity building of its member organizations. According to the OPR: 'Moreover, the issue of sustainability has not been adequately addressed. Concerted efforts to establish linkages with local government bodies and other institutions that can provide access to livelihoods opportunities for the poor are required to ensure sustainability and promote accountability of government bodies'.

Lessons Learned
Representation: Whose voice is expressed in the IPOs? How representative are these IPOs? The ESP programme manager mentioned that there are tendencies for elite capture in the IPOs and that ESP is concerned that the IPOs need to be more inclusive and has made this a condition for funding the next phase of the intervention.

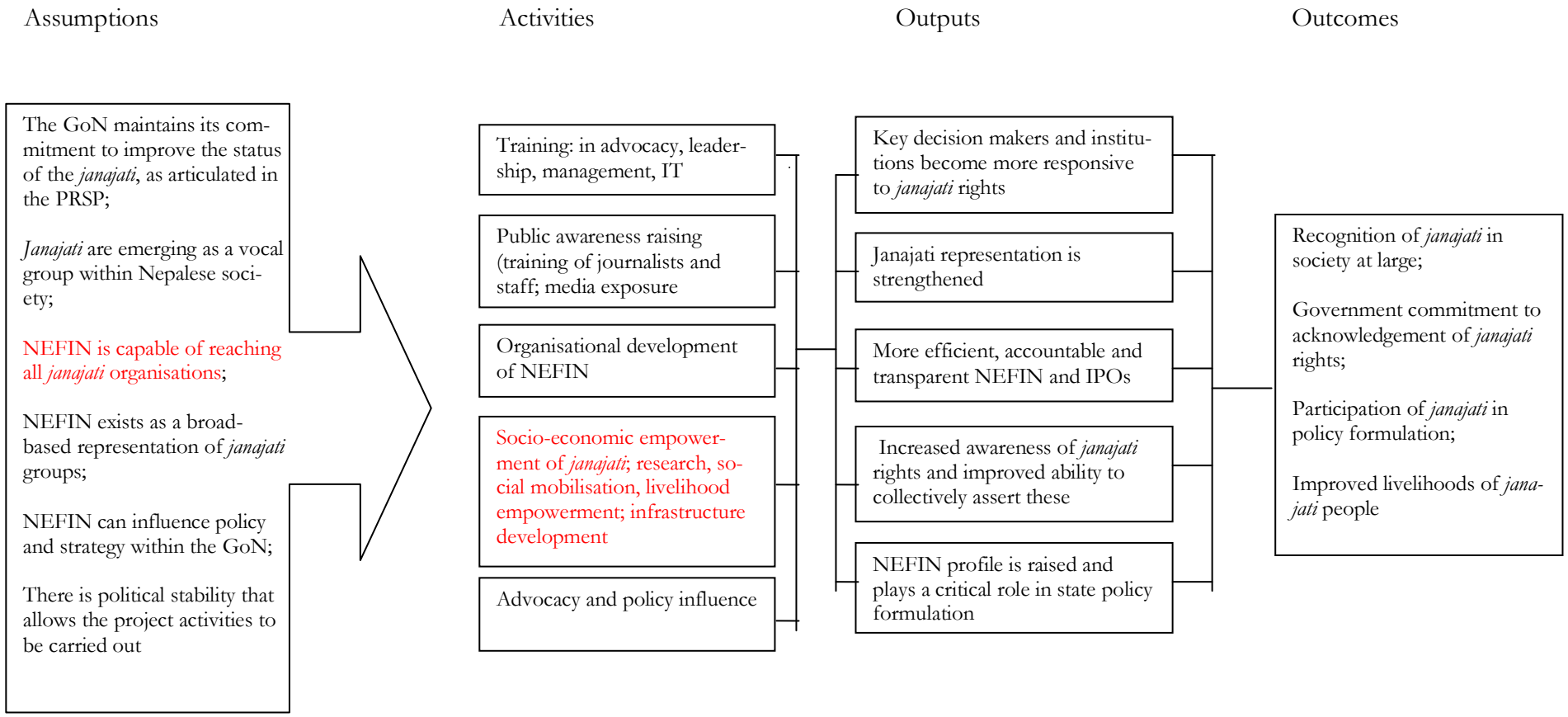
Gender: The team met with six representatives from NEFIN, as well as with six representatives from IPOs in Dholaka District – all were male. This indicates that a gender perspective has not been integrated in the programme.

Coverage: It was also mentioned by one IPO member that NEFIN is a centralised, Kathmandu-based organization with little outreach beyond the districts closest to the capital.

Donor coordination: There is under-utilisation of potential donor coordination between *janajati* interventions;

Cultural integration or separation? NEFIN is an organization with the agenda of a Nepalese state built along ethnic lines. By supporting this organisation, donors indirectly support an agenda of a federal Nepalese state.

III: JEP Model of Change



The model highlights the principal achievements in the promotion of human rights and the stimulation of increased participation of janajati peoples in social, economic and political processes. The main focus has been on limited support to establishing offices and training of personnel. Also, the model illustrates that less has been achieved in with regard to institutional strengthening. A key point is that there can easily be an over-optimistic assumption about capacity to reach a broad swathe of marginalised peoples – and so the socio-economic gains are, thus, limited.

IV: Relevant Primary and Secondary Data

Documents Consulted:
Janajati Empowerment Project. Project Document Submitted to Enabling State Programme. Prepared by the Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). Anamnagar, Kathmandu. 2004;
Janajati Empowerment Project (JEP) Output to Purpose Review. By Jennifer Appave, Jitpal Kirant, and Arka Raj Timsina. Kathmandu, Nepal, November 2006;
Social Inclusion: Gender And Equity In Education Swaps In South Asia-Nepal Case Study. Sushan Acharya, UNICEF 2007.

Some Significant Change quotations:

'Previously *janajati* groups were under-represented. Now we have brought to the parliament a 20-point agreement on the recognition of indigenous rights in Nepal. This has not been passed but has been received by the parliament.'

'NEFIN has become recognised as an effective voice of the *janajati* peoples. We are reaching the communities and linking them to the upper levels of government representation…. Our biggest challenge is too meet the raised expectations of the rural people.'

'With regard to state building, NEFIN's position is: A federal system based on linguistic, caste, ethnicity.'

Nepal/Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) – Phase V

1: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1.Donor agency	Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)
2.Partners/implementing agencies	Inter-cooperation partnering with Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Forest Users' Groups (FUGs), FECOFUN (Federation of FUGs), civil society and private sector
3.Objectives	To contribute to government's national goal of poverty reduction in terms of PRSP four pillars, namely broad-based economic growth, social and human development, social and economic inclusion of the disadvantaged, pursuit of good governance through community forestry
4.Main CVA and other activities	Technical support and advice to FUGs and government authorities on management of community forestry, pro-poor tools, and planning of community forestry development activities such as social mobilisation for group formation, preparation of groups' constitutions, community forest operation plan, enterprise and sustainable forest management training, governance coaching, wellbeing ranking, etc.
5.Target group/beneficiaries	Forest users' groups in three districts (Dolakha, Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga)
6.Key linkages	Forest Users' Groups are also being supported by other donors in Nepal
7.Duration	Four years
8.Starting date	16 July 2004 (Phase 5, programme started in 1990)
9.Total budget	CHF 6,566,300

II: Overall Assessment

Relevance

More than 90% of Nepal's people live in rural areas. Forests are especially important to the landless and the poorest, who depend on fuel wood, fodder, and other non-timber products for their daily survival. In this light, support to community forestry is of utmost relevance. The districts covered by the NSCFP intervention demonstrate a coverage of 81% of users, which can also be read as a sign of high relevance to the programme assigned by the community members. There has been a growing recognition of the fact that positive change has taken place, local institutions have been set up and many user groups are functional in managing forest, but equal participation of women, poor and discriminated groups in FUGs' leadership positions is still not being realized. Therefore, in this 5th phase, the intervention has piloted a series of innovative approaches, which have redirected FUGs to become more poverty oriented through a pro-poor approach. New methods that include well-being ranking, special requirements to fund disadvantaged and poor households, as well as women, children, etc. have been included in the intervention. With this pro-poor focus, the intervention has increased its relevance to many. The current situation of conflict also adds to its relevance. Some of the root causes of the conflict in Nepal today are absolute poverty, social and political inequality, discrimination and exclusion of a large part of the Nepali society from decision-making processes, and access to important resources. Furthermore, due to the conflict, rural populations are still isolated, through blockades, strikes and other disturbances, and they therefore rely even more heavily on a subsistence-based livelihood. Based on these various factors, the NSCFP is deemed to be very relevant.

Efficiency

An external review of the intervention was undertaken in June 2007. Its main conclusion is that 'this is a successful, highly innovative, flexible and responsive project that has added significant value to the community forestry approach. It has demonstrated real progress in this phase to redirect community forestry to contribute to poverty alleviation' In general, the conclusion is that the intervention has functioned well according to activities planned. From visits to two districts, it was seen that, in one, pro-poor manage-

ment ranged from financial support by the FUG for school fees to children from poor households; direct support in cases of deaths; general capacity building of the FUG; a greener forest; financial growth in the FUG; development activities, including a health post construction, roads construction; scholarships for the poorest children; and maternity support to poor mothers. The other group was less successful: struggling with how to finance community development activities as well as with how to manage the group itself.

Effectiveness
According to the external review, the FUGs supported directly by SDC through NFSCP are characterised by and regarded for their comprehensive and stronger operational plans, a key foundation for a dynamic and self-sustaining group. However, as indicated above, groups vary in the attainment of the intervention's development objectives – objectives that need time and a sensitivity to different potentials. Also, it seems that the activities have not always benefited the poorest households, despite the greater emphasis of Phase V, which has put specific stress on pro-poor approaches, wellbeing ranking and earmarking specific budget lines for reaching the poorest.

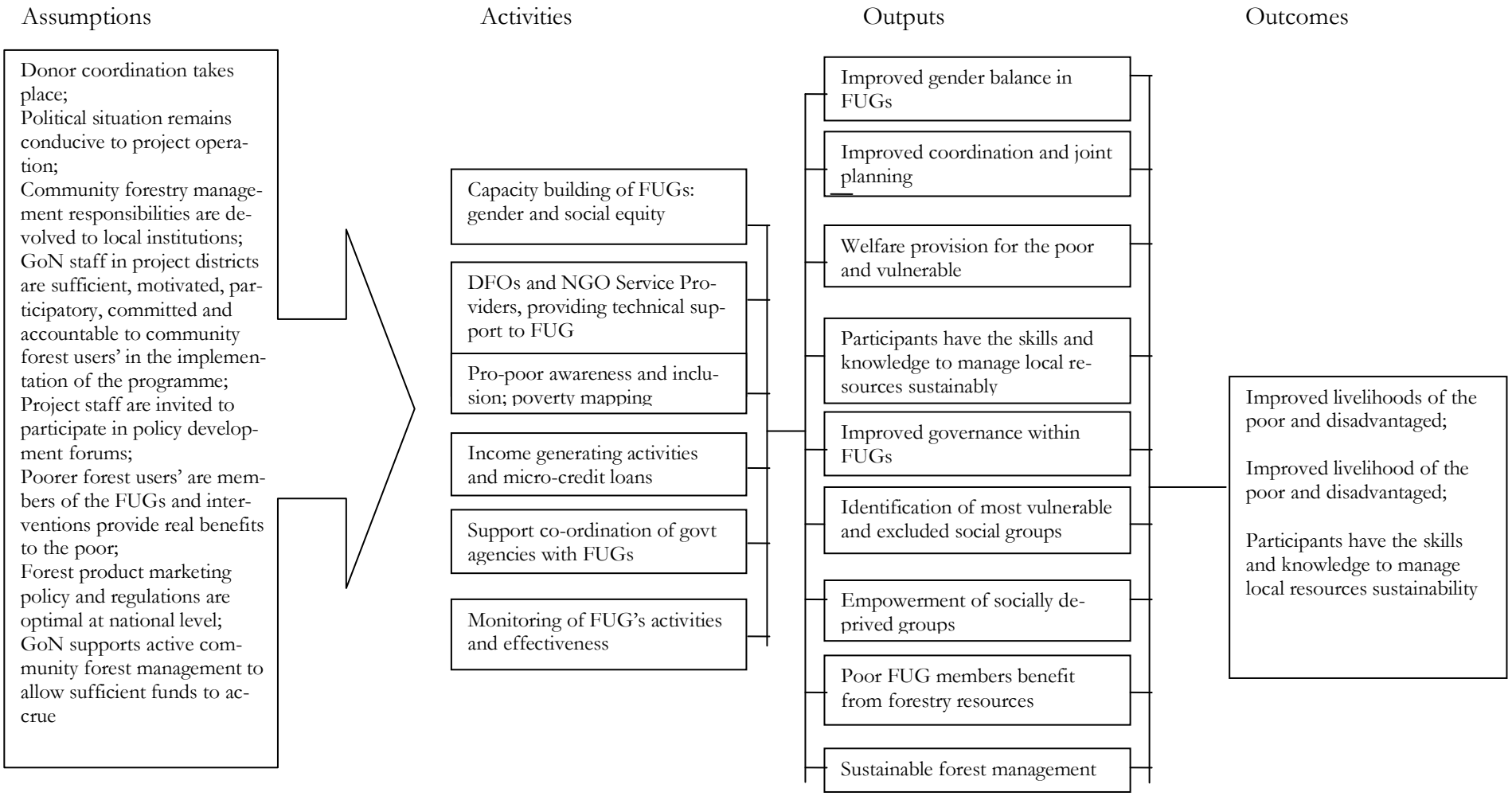
Impact
Community forestry has achieved notable results and added value to the communities in various ways, which will also continue beyond the programme cycle. The Evaluation Team was struck by the strength and organisational capacity of one of the two FUGs visited. It is likely that the organizational and analytical planning skills demonstrated by the committee members might have an impact in other spheres of these participants' lives, as these are skills that are generally applicable.

Sustainability
The issue of sustainability is highly relevant, as the NSCFP Phase V is now coming to an end by mid 2008[51]. Both staff and FUGs expressed concerns about the future, as the plans for the next phase, including gradual exit strategy, had not been disseminated. The support of the international community has made it possible for Nepal to implement a programme of community forestry, and it is difficult to imagine the forestry sector keeping its current level of activity without external assistance. The project therefore aims to achieve a high level of institutional and financial sustainability among FUGs by end of the next phase The FUG**s** do have direct access to resources in the communities and therefore do not rely on external funding alone, so the FUGs and their activities will be able to continue even after the end of NSCFP. However, it is estimated that the level of activities and capacity building will be reduced and the pro-poor management might also not continue without the technical support and conditions put forward by NSCFP. In the current phase of NSCFP, there has been more focus on capacity building of FUGs and less on capacity building of staff of government agencies and local NGO service providers, who had received intensive capacity building in previous phases until 2004. After the final closure of the project in 2011, the stakeholders will have to continue the community forestry programme from their own and the FUG's resources. This could have implications for sustainability.

Lessons learned
CV&A: Interventions that aim at improving good governance are not only about improving the link between government accountability and citizens' voice but can also be about citizens' accountability towards other citizens.
Using existing structures: NSCFP's success depends on linking citizens' need for access to resources with government structures.
Elite capture: Can happen when the local communities manage resources.
Capacity building of civil society units: Should remain alert concerning the reaction of government agencies and NGO service provider. Given the high number of grant-funded forestry programmes operating in Nepal, there is a real risk that donors will see such grants to civil society as a cure-all for the inadequacies of government services.
Donor coordination: In the past many donors were involved in forestry; currently there are only a few engaged – and coordination could be tighter.

[51] SDC and the GON have agreed to continue the intervention until 2011. A design process of NSCFP Phase VI for the period 2008-2011 is underway; during the phase there is a possibility of conceptualising a new programme.

III: NSCFP Model of Change



The model shows how the intervention has focused on working within the context of community forestry groups to promote economic growth, social and human development, and the inclusion of the poor. It highlights that a range of achievements are possible with such interventions: strengthening the capacity of users' groups, supporting their operational plans, increased gender representation in the FUGs, and increased income for some of the poorest households.

IV: Relevant Primary and Secondary Data

Documents Consulted:

Community Forestry: Sustaining Forests, Livelihoods and Democracy. Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Issue Paper 4. Kathmandu, Nepal. 2007;

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Some Significant Change quotations:

On the impact of user groups:

The staff of the NSCFP office in Dolakhar District: 'Perhaps one of our greatest difficulties is the large number of users' groups; we have too many users' groups in some communities and this creates tensions between VDCs. We try to coordinate and integrate these groups.'

'We provide much needed support to the integrated community plans that are being drawn.'

'Through the users' groups we mediate between the communities, the forest wardens and the District Forest Office.'

Government linkages.

The DFO official in Dolikhar District: 'Let's be realistic: the DFO is accountable to the Ministry of Forestry, not to the communities.'

On forestry management and community planning:

'We began 24 years ago to protect our forest from illegal cutting. Now we have more the 400 members. We have a five-year plan. Every household in the community is a member. We provide support to the poorest members… We have a death fund; we give financial support to flood victims.'

'Our community has 19 castes including *dalits* and *janajatis*. 65 households are very poor and (with project support) we carried out a social ranking exercise… Now we have begun activities to support these families… with livestock and agricultural support to 32 of these households.'

'We discuss our problems with the NGOs and the government officials. Together we are preparing our planning activities and our budget has been submitted to the district offices. (DDC).'

'We have started some income generating activities. We had a papermaking factory and this was burnt down. We are replanting our mulberry bushes but the factory remains closed. We want more technical assistance to improve our income.'

'We control logging activities and we have taken our case on illegal cutting to the DFO.'

'Our goal is to see all the poor households of our community rise out of poverty. Poor households have begun (micro credit) savings and investment. They have used this money for schooling and hospital bills.'

'Eleven year ago the land surrounding our village was heavily degraded. Today we have dense forest around our village. We have stopped illegal cutting of our forests … and invested in community development.'

Poverty Alleviation in Selected Rural Areas of Nepal (PASRA)

1: Profile of the Intervention

Issue	Details
1.Donor agency	The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
2.Partners/implementing agency	Ministry of Local Development, through Rural Community Infrastructure Works Programme (RCIW)
3.Objectives	Poverty reduction through access for rural poor in selected regions to short-term employment opportunities and improved access to long-term income opportunities
4.Main CV&A and other activities	Combination of interventions to address short-term food security and strengthening self-help capacity of target groups: social mobilisation, employment schemes through physical infrastructure, income generation, and strengthening of service delivery
5. Location	Rural poor in eight western districts
6.Key linkages	GoN's RCIW) Programme
7.Duration	Three years
8.Starting date	January 2005.
9.Total budget	EUR 9,850,000.

II: Overall Assessment

Relevance
PASRA addresses rural districts that comprise the poorest regions of the country, where the majority of the population is unable to produce sufficient food year round. Years of conflict and the lack of resources to improve social and economic conditions have exacerbated this situation. The intervention contributes directly to the Rural Community Infrastructure Works (RCIW) Programme, which the GoN considers to be its highest priority programme; it includes partnership with the Ministry of Local Development (MoLD), the World Food Programme (WFP), and DFID. It contributes to the PRSP by focusing on poverty alleviation by mobilising means and resources; involvement of the community members and the private sector; targeting discriminated and marginalised groups; generation of short-term employment; long-term self-employment opportunities and food security; strengthening of local financial service providers; and the construction of rural roads. Through RCIW, the intervention also addresses four MDGs: 1, 2, 4, 7.

Efficiency
PASRA is supporting rural communities through the expansion of the existing road network, empowering local communities through self-help groups (SHGs), the introduction of new agricultural products and training in conflict resolution, health and livelihoods. It is an efficient means of providing short-term employment through rural infrastructure activities. It has also provided short-term income generating opportunities for almost 24,000 individuals representing almost 17,000 households. Through local cooperatives, offering financial support, beneficiaries have also access to small loans. The SHGs are focal points for health awareness and training.

Effectiveness
PASRA's activities have had an effect on the income and food security objectives, and on improving coping strategies of the poor. In addition, participants have acquired basic construction skills and socially marginalised groups have effectively established SHGs as community forums, through which they can articulate their concerns and priorities. Attention has been given to consolidating PASRA activities with the overall RCIW, by integrating all partners' activities into a common planning and monitoring framework, though this has not yet been implemented. Through the establishment of SHGs and community mobilisation efforts, the expected targets for social inclusion have been met. The intervention has made

significant gains in the inclusion of women in all activities. Income provision activities are helping to stem short-term migration, which leaves women in the vulnerable position of principal heads of households. PASRA has achieved its objective of providing short-term employment through project activities to 30,000 beneficiaries annually. It has supported more than 4,400 individuals through SHGs focusing on income generating activities. More the 180 km of road have ben laid or serviced, which exceeds its stated target. Fruit orchids have been introduced but, given the long-term cycle of these trees, significant yields will be evident only beyond the current cycle of the activities.

Impact
The main focus of the PASRA intervention has been on the immediate short-term food security situation. But the establishment of SHGs should have longer-term impacts. And the SHGs are reportedly making significant gains in re-establishing sound community relations after years of conflict and hostility between communities and government representatives.

Sustainability
PASRA activities are heavily dependent on programme funding. Road construction will require additional financial support to complete ongoing activities, but there appears to be limited available funds from either the government or other donors that will permit these activities to continue. Phase II of PASRA is under consideration and this could mean support for another cycle. During the second phase, the first year of activities will be pursued to consolidate road construction, and this will be followed in the subsequent years by support to local governance and service delivery systems. Wear on these rural roads from light vehicles and foot traffic is minimal, and the communities that participated in their construction can continue to maintain them. A significant number of communities now have year-round access to markets. This has led to the expansion of existing market crops, as well as new products, including collecting and selling pine resins for production of turpentine, and the expansion of apiculture. SHGs, on the other hand, are heavily dependent on support from the programme facilitators and, although some SHGs have integrated with cooperatives, others appear as 'one-off' activities supporting greenhouses, kitchen gardens and the introduction of new plants, such as olive trees and so forth. Further support will be required for marketing, as well as food storage and processing/preservation before these activities can become sustainable and beneficial to local farmers.

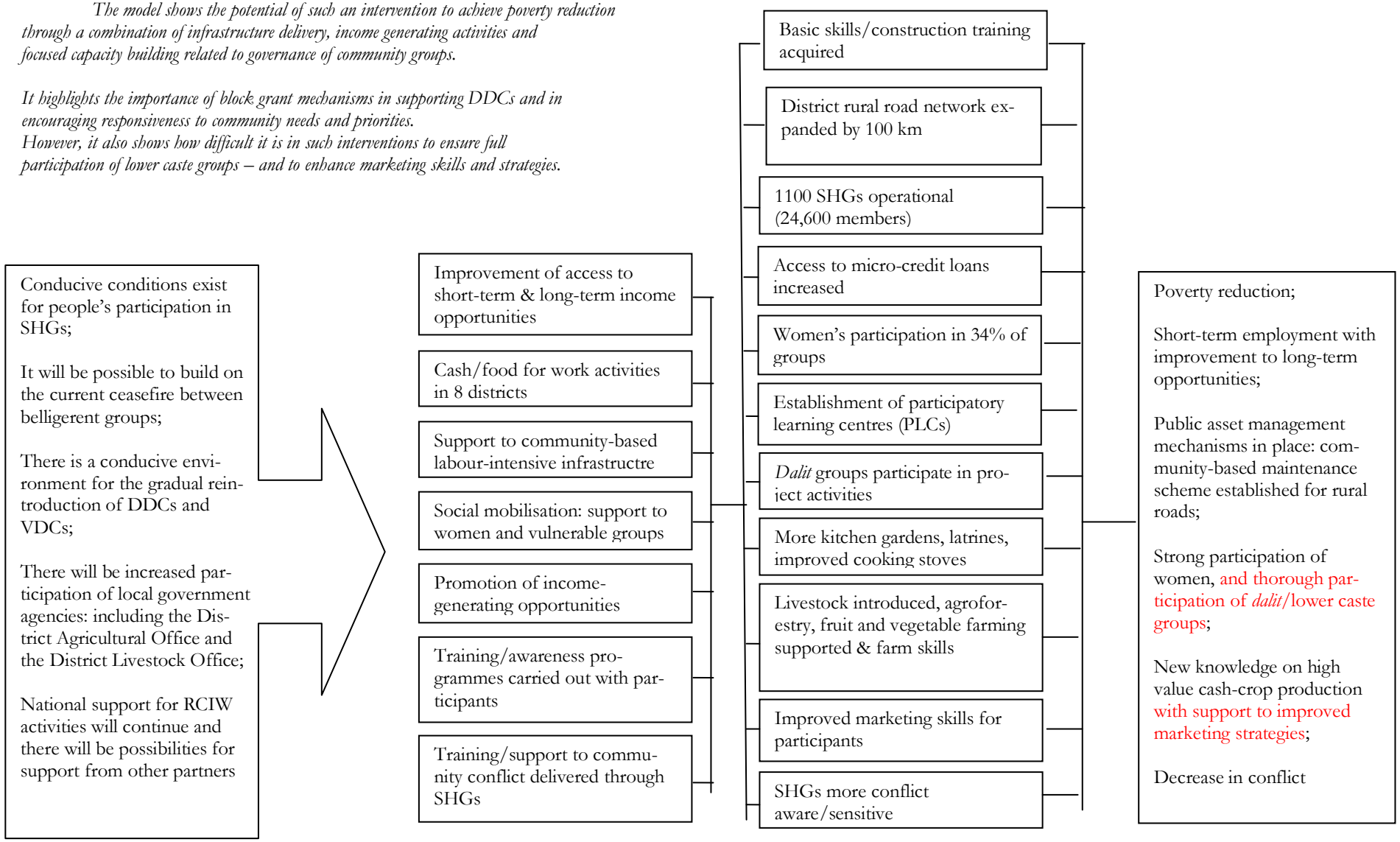
Lessons Learned
Committee overload: Various committees and organisations over-represent some communities and there is a lack of integration between these locally-based organisations. There is a need for stronger integration with existing community structures, including cooperatives, councils and other participatory groups. Currently there is a risk that citizens' participation, and consequently their 'voice', is diffused through the number of somewhat disjointed community institutions.
Reliance on infrastructure: PASRA has focused primarily on creating infrastructure as a means by which beneficiaries have access to funds and skill development. Although numerous activities have been implemented to support a range of beneficiaries, it is critical that a synergy is created whereby intervention components can contribute towards strengthening social networks and community development.
Communication: Beneficiaries are unaware of what future support their efforts will receive, in respect to both continual participation in the road building activities and their subsequent management and maintenance of the constructed roads with the DDC.
Complex community development channels: The creation of SHGs and other community groups means complex channels of communication are emerging (including VDCs, DDCs and various line ministries) – and this inhibits beneficiaries in participating in broader regional development.
Short-term migration: A considerable challenge to the effectiveness of intervention activities. While this provides remittances through wages earned across the border, it also drains labour from the districts and leaves women in the vulnerable position of heads of households.
Inclusion of the poorest: The extent to which poorest households are included in intervention activities is dependent upon their location along the road construction sites. This raises concerns about how effective and inclusive PASRA criteria are for vulnerable beneficiaries.

III: PASRA Model of Change

Assumptions | Activities | Outputs | Outcomes

The model shows the potential of such an intervention to achieve poverty reduction through a combination of infrastructure delivery, income generating activities and focused capacity building related to governance of community groups.

It highlights the importance of block grant mechanisms in supporting DDCs and in encouraging responsiveness to community needs and priorities.
However, it also shows how difficult it is in such interventions to ensure full participation of lower caste groups – and to enhance marketing skills and strategies.



IV: Relevant Primary and Secondary Data

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Rural Community Infrastructure Works Programme (RCIW): Annual Report. Fifth Year, Phase II. Kathmandu, Nepal. 2006.

Some Significant Change quotations:

Members of the Masta Bhagabaati Cooperative in Koteli village, Chauraha.

Regarding household benefits

'With help from the project we have begun saving. My husband has gone to India to work: I am alone and cannot pay my children's school fees. But the cooperative helps me with small loans. I am alone and no one else can loan me money.'

'We have begun goat farming. This is new for us. We also have planted our own vegetable gardens and are saving to raise buffalos. We sell milk at the market. The market is far from here, but the project has started a local collection point (for milk) that we supply.'

'We (now) hold regular meetings to discuss our problems and try to find solutions with these projects.'

'Families in our group can borrow money or they can receive help with our emergency fund. We have used loans to buy seeds, goats and buffalos.'

Participatory planning and conflict resolution.

'We have discussed our problems. We need schools, a clinic and better roads. We also want help with looking after our livestock. With the project we have contacted the district office and we have asked for their help…. We go to the town to their offices and meet with the officials there.'

'We try to work out our problems between our communities. Before there were tensions and conflict and now we are working on their resolution.'

'We have problems with land. There are many outstanding issues about ownership. We now resolve these through local meetings and negotiation through the village committees and councils. It is easier to resolve these here then at the district, where they are not interested in our problems.'

Communication and linkages to the state

'Almost every house has a radio… we followed the peace negotiations (with the Maoists.'

'We began meeting six years ago to build this road. Now we also have a savings and credit project for our members.'

'The road has helped us get to the market… We worked on the road and we were paid to build the road.'

'The secretary of our group goes to the DDC on our behalf. They talk about our problems and about our village plans. When we had a landslide, we went to the DDC in the district capital and they gave us gabion boxes to shore up the eroded banks….Last year we asked for support for building an irrigation channel.'

Annex E List of People Consulted

Development Partners

Danida/Copenhagen Headquarter
Lars Elle, Senior Adviser, Evaluation Department
Pernille Hougensen, Head of Section, Evaluation Department
Knud Mortensen, Senior Technical Adviser, Education
Steen Sonne Andersen, Head of Section, Nepal Country Desk

Embassy of Denmark
Finn Thilsted, Ambassador

Danida/HUGOU
Johan Sorensen, Counsellor
Murari Shivakoti, Deputy Programme Coordinator
Santosh Bisht, Senior Adviser, Elections/Democratic Processes Component
Sandra Jensen, Human Rights and Good Governance Officer
Michelle Parlevliet, Conflict Transformation Adviser
Dr. Jit B. Gurung, Senior Adviser, Social Inclusion Component

Department for International Development (DFID)
Donata Garrasi, Social Development Adviser
Bandana Risal, Programme Manager, Enabling State Programme
Sanjay Rana, Sr. Programme Coordinator, Enabling State Programme

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)
Kirstin Krause, Coordinator
Sakia Bauner, Assistant to the Country Director
Ramesh Shresta, Coordinator

Royal Norwegian Embassy
Einar Rystad, Counsellor
Mette Strengehagen, Second Secretary
Kamla Bisht, Political and Social Development Officer

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Jean-marc Clavel, Counsellor (Development), Country Director
Elisabeth von Capeller, Second Secretary (Development), Assistant Country Director
Anju Upadhyaya, Forest Development Officer, Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Programme
Bharat k. Pokharel, Country Representative, InterCooperation/ Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Programme
Brieke Steenhof, Project Advisor, InterCooperation/ Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Programme
Usha Dahal, District Project Coordinator, Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Programme

United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN)
Dr Fida Nasrallah, Chief Electoral Adviser
Leone Hettenbergh, External Projects Coordinator

United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNDP)
Sharad Neupane, Assistant Resident Representative
Bishnu Puri, National Programme Manager, Decentralised Financing and Development Programme (DFDP)

National Commissions

National Planning Commission
Chainya Subba, Commissioner

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)
Gauri Pradhan, Member
Murali Kharel, Deputy Director

Nepal Election Commission
Neel Kantha Uprety, Election Commissioner

Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA)
Lalit Bahadur Limbu, Acting chief Commissioner

National Coalition Against Racial Discrimination
Sumitra Manandhar Gurung, Chairperson

Ministry Representatives

Mukunda Raj Prakash, Under Secretary, Ministry of Local Development
Jagardish Baral, Under Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Soil

Civil Society Organisations, Nepal

Kumar Sharma Acharya, President, Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRD)
Dr Yabaraj Sangroula, Principal, Kathmandu School of Law and CeLRRD
Sabin Shrestha, Executive Director, Forum for Women, law and Development (FWLD)
Dr Shri Krishna Shrestha, Chairman, Pro Public
Prakesh Mani Sharma, Executive Director, Pro Public
Kedar Khadka, Director, Good Governance Project, Pro Public
Bishnu Prasad Pokhrel, Programme Officer, Good Governance Programme, Pro Public
Brenda Norris, Programme Officer, The Asia Foundation, (CoCAS)
Kishore Nepal, Chairman, Centre for Professional Journalism Studies (CPJS)
Shishir Vaidya, Coordinator, CPJS
Dar Nath Neupane, Executive Director, Holistic Development Service Centre (SAMAGRA)
Bal Krishna Lal Joshi, Chairman, Holistic Development Service Centre (SAMAGRA)
Amar Singh Adhikari, Programme Coordinator, SAMAGRA

Om Gurung, Senior Advisor, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN)
Nima lama Yolmo, Secretary, NEFIN
Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar, General Secretary, NEFIN
Prakash Kumar Mandal, Vice-Chairperson, NEFIN
Jyoti Danuwar, Project Co-ordinator, Janajati Empowerment Project (JEP) NEFIN

Civil Society Organisations, Denmark

Robin Griggs, Programme Co-ordinator, MS (Danish Association for International Co-operation)

Beneficiaries of DFDP, CoCAS and GGP in Kavre District

P K Shyam, Chairman Panchkhal VDC
Krishna Pyan Nakarmi, CLRC, Kavre and Kavre Deaf School
Arjun Kumar Thapa, Local Development Officer, Taplejung District
Ramesh Kumar Adhikari, Local Development Officer, Salyan
Ram Chandra Adhikari, Planning Officer, Kavre
Taranath Bovasa, Internal Auditor, DDC Kavre
Mahendra Lamsal, IGD Project Officer

Villagers: Methinkot VDC, Bhakunde Besi Market

Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Programme (NSCFP)

himeshwar Dhital Municipality. Members of the village and Thangsa Deurali Forest User Group in Makaibari village, Dolakha
Bhimeshar Municipality, Members of the Khortali Forest User Group, Dolakha
Rammani Dhital, District Forest Officer, Dolakha
Uddhav Prasad Pokharel, Chairperson, Federation of Community Forestry User Groups (FECOFUN), Dolakha
Gyanendra Pradhan, Rangepost Committee Chairperson, FECOFUN, Dolakha
Udaya Chandra Shestra, Auditor to FECOFUN, Dolakha

Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign

Binod Thapa, Regional Coordinator, SAMAGRA
Two Social Family members in the districts of Dhading and Lamjung
Members of DDC, LDO and ministry representatives in Beshishahar District

Janajati Empowerment Project

Members of IPO in Dolakha

Poverty Alleviation in Rural Selected Areas (PASRA)

Rajendra Prasad Misha M & E Officer. Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Dadeldhura District
Prem Singh Nayak. Gender and Social Inclusion Officer, UNDP. Dadeldhura District
Uddhav Raj Bhattarai. Sub-Office Coordinator. Dadeldhura District
Bishnu Bhatta. GTZ. Programme officer for social mobilisation. Dadeldhura District

Y.R. Joshi. Rural coordinator for PASRA. Dadeldhura District
Manakala Bohara. Social mobiliser for PASRA. Dadeldhura District
Nabin Sahi. Social mobiliser for PASRA. Dadeldhura District
Puspa Raj Joshi, Residence Engineer.
Suzis Bhandari. NGO Coordinator for PASRA. Dadeldhura District
Siddha Raj Bhatt. Chairman. The Rural Environmental Development Centre (REDC). Dadeldhura District
Hemant Shahi. Vice Chairperson. The Rural Environmental Development Centre (REDC). Dadeldhura District
Ganesh Kathayat. General Secretary. REDC, Dadeldhura District
Chandra Bist. Secretary. REDC Dadeldhura District
Mahendra Shahi. Member, REDC. Dadeldhura District
Suni Bhandari. Member, REDC. Dadeldhura District

A field trip to Dadeldura District included discussion and meetings with the following community groups:

- Members of the Masta Bhagabati Savings and Credit Cooperative. Koti VDC. Chauraha, Dadeldhura District
- Members of the Siranichok Self-help Group. Asurpa. Dadeldhura District
- Members of the Sirjansil Self-help Group. Koteli. Dadeldhura District
- Members of the PASRA Participation, Learning and Action Group, Asigram VDC. Dadeldhura District
- Members of Bhatkada Bajar village. Bhatkanda. Dadeldhura District

Participants of the Workshops

Stakeholders' Workshop
Sumitra Manandhar Gurung, NCARD
Dor Nath Neupane; Samagra
Bal Krishna Lal Joshi; Samagra
Sumitra Manandhar Gurung; National Coalition Against Racial Discrimination
Mahat, Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC):
Robin Sitoula; Youth Initiative
Komal Pokhrel; National Peace Campaign
Prakash Gyawali; Informal sector services centre (INSEC)
Biseshwor Rajak; Madheshi Dalit Development Federation (MDDF)
Bishnu Nisthuri; President, Federation of Nepalese Journalists
Kishore Nepal; Centre for Professional Journalism Studies (CPJS)

Debriefing Workshop
Kishore Nepal, CPJ
Santosh Bisht, HUGOU
Murari Sivakoti, HUGOU
Jit Gurung, HUGOU
Dor Nath Neupane, Samagra
Bal Krishna Lal Joshi; Samagra
Kedar Khadka, Pro-Public
Bishnu Puri, Programme Manager, DFDP

Annex F: Force Field Analyses from the Civil Society Workshop

Objective 1: To strengthen Voice

Driving forces	Restraining forces
People really want to achieve their rights	The grassroots and excluded groups lack organisation
People are willing to unite and organise →	They lack coordination and are not used to cooperation
Issues of marginalisation and exclusion have been sufficiently identified	The key players (national and international) have strong vested interests ←
Some form of proportional representation has already been agreed →	Any moves towards greater democratisation might be nipped in the bud
The press is relatively free to deal with political and social issues	Illiteracy of the people is a major constraint ←
	There is an entrenched centralised state mechanism
Social discrimination is now being challenged →	
People are more conscious of what would be true democracy	Donors who work with the marginalised groups are more ready to listen to the donors rather than to those they are supposed to serve ←

Action Points:

Donors should provide more untied or core funds;

Technical barriers should be removed between excluded groups on the one hand and donors/NGOs on the other;

More emphasis should be put on having access to information;

More resources should go to provision of literacy programmes, especially through the media;

Programmes should focus more on good governance – towards better representation of marginalised groups in decision making forums;

There should be a measure of positive discrimination with regard to marginalised peoples.

Objective 2: To strengthen Accountability

Driving forces	Restraining forces
The concerned voice of civil society is getting louder	The centralised system of decision making persists
Rayamajhi investigation reports are available	← Bureaucracy is upwards rather than downwards accountable
CIAA reports publicise unaccountability matters	Too much reliance on donor funding
Social audits are increasing →	The rule of law is not abided by
Basic rights to education and health are being recognised	Political parties are not accountable to the people
The CSO base is being widened	← The decision makers in most institutions (civil society as well as CSOs) are not marginalised people but the elite
	CIAA reports are not acted on
→	There is a lack of disaggregated reports on outreach services by different community (ethnic, caste) groups
	← There is a lack of political will to act on HR conventions
	Parliament makes recommendations, but it cannot make the politicians implement

Action Points:

Cut down on the number of bureaucratic formalities and press donors to provide untied funds;

Put more emphasis on fund raising from private sector (NGOs too reliant on foreign donors);

Put more emphasis on programmes designed to empower people to hold government accountable;

Carry out more 'citizens' satisfaction' surveys;

Make policy making bodies more inclusive;

Establish provisions to call back politicians who are not accountable;

Donors should be more stringent in setting criteria for selecting agencies they fund.

Annex G: Documents Consulted

Evaluation Approach

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Annex H: The Basic Operating Guidelines

Basic Operating Guidelines agreed to by Undersigned Agencies in Nepal

The Basic Operating Guidelines were signed by our agencies in 2003, allowing our impartial development work to continue during conflict. We republish these guidelines committed to respecting them and determined to focus on development activities that include the diverse groups that together constitute Nepali society. We remain impartial in the conflicts present in Nepal and look forward to their resolution through dialogue and understanding between all political and social groups. As Nepal moves towards elections to a Constituent Assembly our work will continue if the safety of our staff and their impartial work is respected by all Nepalis.

1. We are in Nepal to contribute to improvement in the quality of life of the people of Nepal. Our assistance focuses on reducing poverty, meeting basic needs and enabling communities to become self-sufficient.

2. We work through the freely expressed wishes of local communities, and we respect the dignity of people, their culture, religion and customs.

3. We provide assistance to the poor and marginalized people of Nepal, regardless of where they live and who they are. Priorities for assistance are based on need alone, and not on any political, ethnic or religious agenda.

4. We ensure that our assistance is transparent and we involve poor people and their communities in the planning, management and implementation of programmes. We are accountable to those whom we seek to assist and to those providing the resources.

5. We seek to ensure that our assistance tackles discrimination and social exclusion, most notably based on gender, ethnicity, caste and religion.

6. We recruit staff on the basis of suitability and qualification for the job, and not on the basis of political or any other considerations.

7. We do not accept our staff and development partners being subjected to violence, abduction, harassment or intimidation, or being threatened in any manner.

8. We do not work where staff are forced to comprise core values or principles.

9. We do not accept our assistance being used for any military, political or sectarian purposes.

10. We do not make contributions to political parties and do not make any forced contributions in cash or kind.

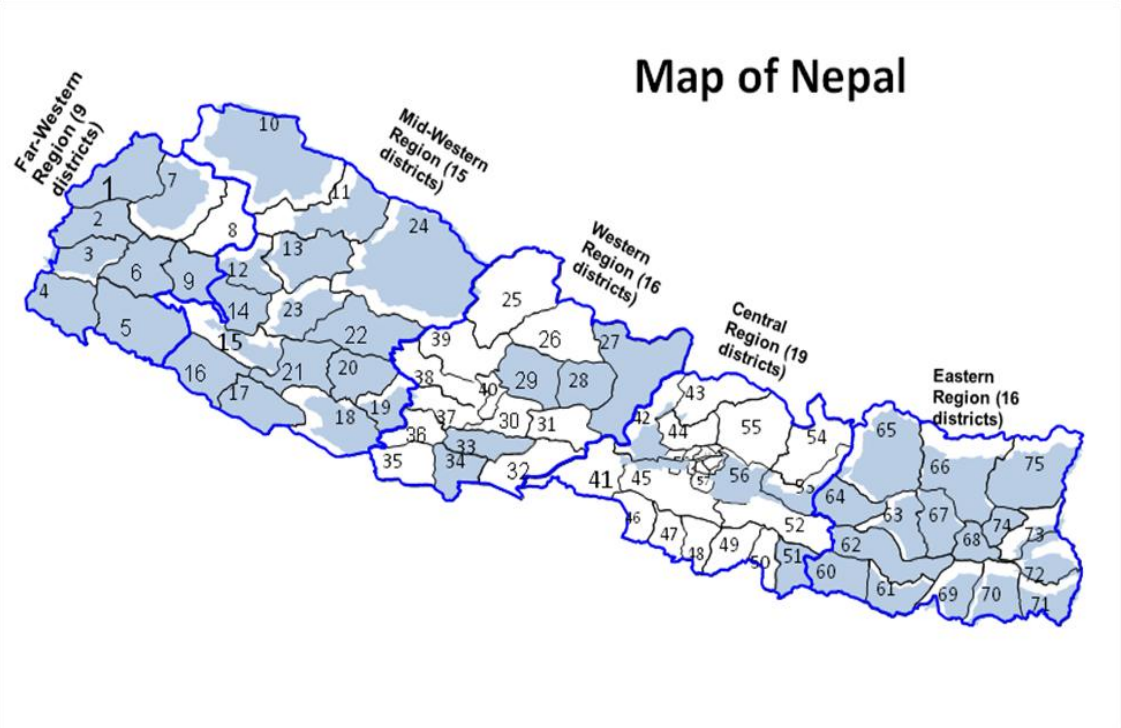
11. Our equipment, supplies and facilities are not used for purposes other than those stated in our programme objectives. Our vehicles are not used to transport persons or goods that have no direct connection with the development programme. Our vehicles do not carry armed or uniformed personnel.

12. We do not tolerate the theft, diversion or misuse of development or humanitarian supplies. Unhindered access of such supplies is essential.

13. We urge all those concerned to allow full access by development and humanitarian personnel to all people in need of assistance, and to make available, as far as possible, all necessary facilities for their operations, and to promote the safety, security and freedom of movement of such personnel.

14. We expect and encourage all actors concerned to comply strictly with international humanitarian principles and human rights law.

United Nations | European Commission | Danish International Development Assistance | German Technical Cooperation | Canadian International Development Agency | JICA | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

NORWEGIAN EMBASSY | SNV | Australian Government AusAID | ain Association of International NGOs in Nepal | DFID Department for International Development | EMBASSY OF FINLAND KATHMANDU

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