

Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation for Strengthening Peace and Social Harmony

Promoting Peaceful and Inclusive Society in Nepal



December 2019

Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation for Strengthening Peace and Social Harmony

Pro Public
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पत्र संख्या २०७६/७७
चलानी नं २६८

थारु आयोग



काठमाडौं-२९, अनामनगर
फोन नं. ५७०५११८, ५७०५११९

Message

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Pro-Public for inviting me in National Sharing Meeting and sharing my learning, experience, and achievements from 'Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation for Strengthening Peace and Social Harmony' Project. I have importantly felt the prominence of this project in the context of Nepal.

From speaker presenting an account of the program and watching documentary, I have perceived the project implemented by Pro Public as a pilot project which has positive impact on the life of people at local level and can be replicated across the country. I hope the government of Nepal will always be positive towards this such good initiation taken by Pro Public.

I am commended knowing that a book is published by Pro Public to share its process, best practices, results, and achievements. I believe that this publication will be supportive in formulating further plans, programs by other various national and international agencies.

Last but not the least, I on the behalf of Tharu Commission, Nepal would like to congratulate Pro Public and thank Robert Bosch Stiftung for this important work they have carried out in Nepal. I would also like to thank official of local government where the project was implemented and an entire team of Pro Public for their dedication and hard work.

Bishnu Prasad Chaudhary
Chairperson
Tharu Commission
Anamnagar, Kathmandu, Nepal



पत्र संख्या:-

संस्थानी नं.:-

राष्ट्रिय समावेशी आयोग

प्रतिक्रमा
समावेशी
समाज

Foreword

I was privileged to be the part of the national sharing meeting which, to me, served as an window on works performed by Pro Public under "Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation for Strengthening Peace and Social Harmony" project.

The brief presentations by stakeholders followed by a documentary screened before us gave an interesting account of amazing works Pro Public carried out in four districts and, at the same time, the impacts the project made on people. As I was engrossed in watching the documentary, I felt like being transported to the places and people where the project was actually being implemented. All I can say is that Pro Public has done an incredibly good work.

While my best wishes are with Pro Public, I wish even greater success for its programs in its future pursuits. I also wish that favorable environment to implement such programs is created across the country.

Since the Government is into the campaign called "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali", I strongly feel that this program implemented by Pro Public is not only indispensable for this campaign of the Government, but at the same time, it will add fresh impetus to the campaign making it into a reality.

I wish to congratulate the person or the team that developed the idea or the concept into a project of this nature with such a lasting impact. I am pleased to write this message for a publication to be published by Pro Public reflecting the works, its results and achievements under the project.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate and express my sincere thanks to Pro Public for implementing such an innovative project in Nepal.

.....
Bishnu Maya Ojha
Acting Chairperson
National Inclusion Commission



Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons



Ref: 254

Message

It gave me immense pleasure to attend the national sharing meeting and reading the report of the project "Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation for Strengthening Peace and Social Harmony". I have no doubt about the importance of dialogue and mediation for building peace and social harmony in diverse communities of Nepal.

I would like to congratulate Pro Public for implementing this pilot project in a highly transparent manner. Now I come to opine that Transparency, good governance, peace and social harmony should not only be confined to the communities of these four districts. So, I would like to appeal the Hon'ble parliamentarians attending the national sharing meeting in this august gathering to exert their influence on the Government of Nepal so that the concept of this project figures on national plan there by taking this project to rest of the districts.

There has been an immense need for such a project in a country like Nepal that has been put through armed conflict and that is home for people with diverse culture, race, religion and ethnicity. There is no doubt that the activities carried out under this project have strengthened peace and social harmony in the project communities by bridging the gap among the people under different religion, race, class, sex, ethnicity.

It's high time we Nepali people learn to live in peace and unity. We must adopt the way of mutual cooperation, co-existence, respect and recognition of each other's identity, that leads to the way of peace and social harmony. I believe Pro Public has been able to establish the value of co-existence very well.

This publication of Pro Public which covers its significance in the process of building peace and social harmony in the diverse communities of Nepal will prove an asset for National and International agencies who are working in the similar areas of peace building and conflict transformation.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Pro Public and Robert Bosch Stiftung for conceptualizing and implementing this innovative idea.

Mani Ram Gyawali

Mani Ram Gyawali
Under Secretary

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Acknowledgement

Nepal remains polarized blamed at a number of issues unaddressed at the roots of exclusion even after signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) in 2006 and promulgation of the constitution of Nepal 2015. The constitution of Nepal asserts that the country is a secular, inclusive, democratic, socialism-oriented federal democratic republican state. The constitution guarantees equality and prevents discrimination on grounds of origin, religion, race, class, sex, ethnicity, geographical region and political beliefs. However, the government of Nepal is yet to translate the letters and spirit of the constitution into reality to the acceptance of all faith and ethnic groups. The Madheshi, the Tharu, the Muslim and the Dalit communities, recognized as marginalized, feel that they are less privileged than Pahadi (people living in the Hills) and the so-called “high caste” people. This seething discontent has resulted in bad blood between Madheshi and Pahadi, Tharu and Pahadi and Hindu and Muslim, fomenting mutual distrust leading to violent outburst at times.

Nepal has seen several religious, ethnic, geographical and political conflicts in the past, often as the result of the seething discontent among different faith and ethnic groups which make them take violent approaches towards each other. This applies to members of Christian, Hindu and Muslim as faith groups and Tharu, Pahadi and Madheshi as ethnic groups. As a newly declared federal democratic republic of the 21st century, Nepal has many political parties running along the lines of different ideologies and political approaches and, this too, run them into conflict with each other, on and off.

Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that due space and scope is created and provided to members of all religious, ethnic, geographical, and political groups to come together under one roof, exchange views & opinions, and understand each other through a series of social dialogue aimed at facilitating and promoting mutual respect, social harmony, tolerance, and creating an environment for collaboration in building the community by casting off the perceived ‘enemy images’ of each other.

This publication aims at giving an insight into the ‘Changed Perception’ of the community members from different religious, ethnic, geographical, and political groups as a result of social intervention. The project “Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation for strengthening Peace and Social Harmony”, implemented by Pro Public with the support from Berlin, Germany based, Robert Bosch Stiftung (RBS), facilitated the transformation of the members from different groups, and thus, contributed to creating a environment conducive to social harmony, tolerance and mutual respect in the project communities.

The project facilitated the process of trust building and promoting social harmony among the members of diverse groups. If the voices expressed by the beneficiaries of the project are anything to go by, it clearly shows that people who have been part of project activities are not only living peacefully but also are seen as valuable members of their respective communities. They are of opinion that the project activities boosted their confidence, transferred leadership skills and made them optimistic about it that change is possible and can be brought about. They attributed their ‘change of perception’ to activities and events conducted in collaboration with many stakeholders and the community envisioning exercise.

This publication gives details about the activities carried out throughout the project period, achievements, challenges and lessons learned, along with the impressions shared by the stakeholders and beneficiaries of the program.

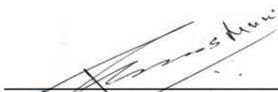
We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Robert Bosch Stiftung for its partnership with Pro Public towards carrying out this very important task. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to Ms. Imke Kerber, Program Manager of RBS, for her resolute support in the successful implementation of the project. Similarly, we would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Krishna Kumar Dallakoti, Chief of District Coordination Committee of Chitwan, Mr. Bain Bahadur Chhetri, Chief of District Coordination Committee, Kaski and Ms. Laxmi Devi Pathak, Deputy Mayor (Convener, Judicial Committee) of Tansen Municipality, Palpa for attending the closing ceremonies of the three rounds of training, organized in these specific locations, as chief guests. Likewise, special thanks go to Dr. Kumar Sharma Acharya, Member of Mediation Council Nepal, Advocate Ms. Kabita Pandey and Ms. Shobha Regmi for their contribution in the facilitation of the training.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to Hon'ble Ms. Niru Devi Pal, Chair, Women and Social Committee of Parliamentary Committee for her encouraging remarks as chief guest of the national sharing meeting. Similarly, we would also like to thank other respected guests: Hon'ble Mr. Lilanath Shrestha, Member of Parliament from Siraha-3, Hon'ble Ms. Bishnu Maya Ojha, Act. Chairperson of National Inclusive Commission, Hon'ble Mr. Bishnu Prasad Chaudhari, Chairperson of Tharu Commission, Mr. Yub Raj Bhusal, Former Secretary of Nepal Government and Mr. Mani Ram Gyawali, Under Secretary of the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP), Nepal for their presence and valuable remarks in the national sharing meeting. Likewise, we would like to express our special thanks to the Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Ward Chairs and Chief Executive Officers of the respective municipalities whose contribution led to the successful implementation of the project possible.

We would also like to express our deep appreciation to all the 40 Dialogue Facilitators for actively working as agent of social change and to promote peace and social harmony in their respective communities. Similarly, we would also like to thank all 400 members of the Social Dialogue Groups (SDGs) and 100 members of the advisory committee for their contribution and support towards successful implementation of project activities.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of Ms. Sophie Schmitt and Ms. Akanchhya Aryal for their contribution in the course of project designing and implementation.

Last but not the least; we would like to thank all the staff members of the project: Mr. Babu Ram Poudel, Program Manager, Mr. Trilok Sharma, Program Officer, Ms. Shanju Jha, Finance Officer and Ms. Sapana Nepali Program Assistant for their dedication and hard work in successful implementation of the project activities.



Sr. Advocate Prakash Mani Sharma
Executive Chair

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1. Introduction

Nepal, one of the 48 least developed countries of the world with the population of 26,494,504 (CBS, 2011) and per capita income of about US\$ 850.00 (CBS, 2017), is recovering from a decade-long violent armed conflict, and is passing through a stage of peace building, social reconciliation and economic development. In 2006, Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the state and the then Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) ending a decade-long armed conflict that killed over 13,000 people, wounded and displaced thousands and left deep scars in the psyche of Nepalese citizens. The conflict 1996-2006 had its roots in poverty, inequality, disparity and exclusion. The state restructuring process and the implementation of fundamental rights of the citizens enshrined in Nepal's constitution 2015 aims to address all the root causes of conflict. Now, Nepal strives to emerge as an inclusive, equitable, and prosperous middle-income country by 2030 with the spirit of welfare state¹.

The grim reality, however, is that the country remains polarized blamed at a number of issues yet to be addressed that are at the roots of exclusion, the very source of decade-long armed conflict. Even after signing of the CPA in 2006, and in spite of some correction steps taken here and there, a lot is left to desire. The constitution of Nepal asserts that the country is a secular, inclusive, democratic, socialism-oriented federal democratic republican state. It also guarantees equality and prevents discrimination on grounds of origin, religion, race, class, sex, ethnicity and geographical region. However, the government still has a long way to go before it really succeeds in translating the letters and spirit of the constitution into reality to the wider acceptance of all religious groups and ethnic communities living in Nepal. The Madheshi, the Tharu, the Muslim and the Dalit communities, recognized as marginalized, feel that they are less privileged than Pahadi (people living in the Hills) and these-called "high caste" people. This seething discontent has resulted in bad blood between Madheshi and Pahadi, Tharu and Pahadi and Hindu and Muslim, fomenting mutual distrust leading to violent outburst at times.

As to the faith groups, 2011 census shows 81.3 percent of Nepalese are Hindu, 9 percent Buddhist, 4.4 percent Muslim, 1.42 percent Christian and the rest belonging to other religions. Historically, different faith

¹ Baseline Report, *Nepal's Sustainable Development Goals, National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal, June 2017*

groups largely coexisted peacefully, and that Nepal saw no major religious conflict, some minor cases of clashes here and there were reported, though. However, in recent times, there has been recurrence of religious conflicts, resulting in violent clashes, death and destruction between members of Christian, Hindu and Muslim communities. As a newly declared federal democratic republic of the 21st century, Nepal has many political parties running along the lines of different ideologies and political approaches, and, this too, at times, breeds conflict.

Sustainable development has been a global agenda for the last 25 years. The United Nations has set the foundation for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. Nepal, as a member of the UN, is committed to this global initiative. SDG 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive state. It requires the state to significantly reduce all forms of violence against women and end discriminations in ethnic, religious and Dalit communities². In line with the SDGs, Nepal has to realize its people's increased aspirations for peace, development and prosperity alongside their claim to a greater stake in the government and society, notably by exercising a greater voice in determining state policies as well as ensuring human security.

Further more, the successful holding of federal, provincial and local elections in 2017 triggered a new wave of development in Nepal. It provided important roles and responsibilities to the newly elected members of municipalities and rural municipalities. However, these new breeds of people's representatives are still in the process of building their own capacity alongside other necessary knowledge and skills that takes to effectively play their prescribed roles and responsibilities. So, this is a very crucial time to create learning opportunities for elected representatives on skills related to dialogue, mediation, conflict resolution, and so on that helps them to enhance their skills and performance, and thus, contribute to strengthening peace and social harmony in the communities.

²Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

Some Facts and Figures of Nepal	
Total geographical regions	3
Total caste and ethnicities	125
Total languages	123
Total existing religion groups	10

2. About the Project

Pro Public, with its previous experience and expertise in peace building initiatives in Nepal, implemented the “Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation for Strengthening Peace and Social Harmony” project funded by Berlin, Germany based the Robert Bosch Stiftung (RBS), from August 16, 2018 to October 31, 2019. The Project was built on Pro Public’s previous successful implementation of dialogue facilitation and mediation in support of the integration of former combatants. Pro Public had implemented “From Combatants to Peacemakers Project” from October 2015 to June 2017 with direct support from the USAID. In 2013 and 2014, Pro Public had successfully carried out dialogue facilitation and mediation in 10 districts, working with the communities where former combatants were relocated after closure of cantonments in collaboration with the Nepal-German Support of Measures to Strengthen the Peace Process Program (STPP/GIZ) and the Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF/GIZ) respectively.

With the great success of the project in the reintegration process of former combatants, Pro Public applied the tool of “Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation” with the inter-faith communities, race, class, sex, ethnic, geographical region and political beliefs to foster better relationships among them aiming to strengthen peace and social harmony across the communities. Having been witness to the ethnic and faith-based conflicts between Madheshi-Pahadi, Pahadi-Tharu, Hindu-Muslim, and political parties, Pro Public realized the necessity to create space and scope for dialogue among them to promote connection, reconciliation, healing, trust building and collaboration.

Objectives of the Program

The overall aim of the project was to contribute to building and strengthening infrastructures for peace (I4P) at the community level by capacitating/training Dialogue Facilitators and Mediators who can play the role of a catalyst in the communities towards strengthening peace and social harmony. The specific objectives of the project were as follows:

- Deconstruct dividers that promote hostile perception and build connectors that reinforce mutual understanding, connection, and cooperation among the people of different ethnicity, caste, religion, and geography;
- Promote nonpartisan culture among political actors and relationship building across ethnic, caste, religious, and geographical lines;
- Support inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and inter-geographical coexistence and cooperation on common issues which promote tolerance and respect and the ability to live together despite differences;
- Enhance dialogue to prevent conflicts and mediation to resolve disputes; and
- Advocate for policies that support effective inter-ethnic, inter-caste, inter-religious, and inter-geographical actions in peace building and development initiatives of Nepal.

3. Project Locations

A total of four project communities were located in four different districts of Nepal. The communities were selected based on the presence of heterogeneous mix of population of different religion, race, class, sex, ethnicity, geographical location, and political beliefs beside having history of conflicts between Madheshi-Pahadi, Hindu-Muslim, Tharu-Pahadi and so on. The project districts/communities can be seen in the following map.



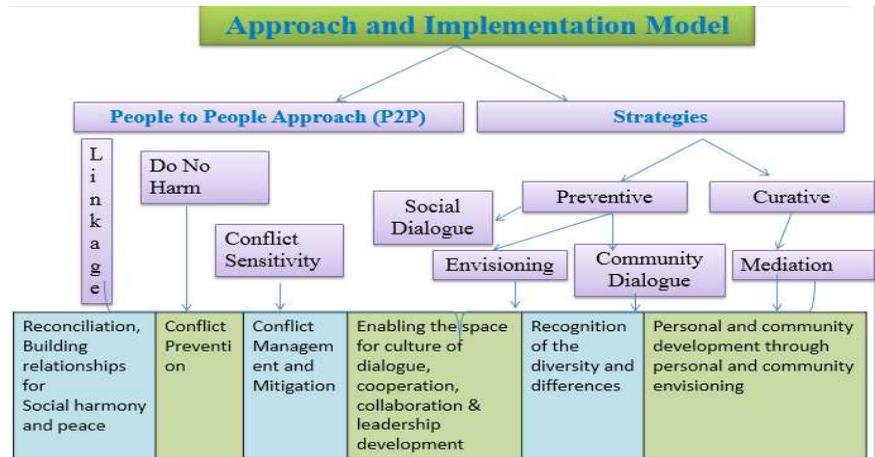
Figure- 2

4. Approach and Project Activities

4.1 Approach

The project used the people-to-people approach, bringing to gether the representatives of various religions, race, class, sex, ethnicity, geographical location and political belief groups. The aim was to pick candidates to become Dialogue Facilitators (DFs) and engage the community people from different backgrounds in series of dialogue. The DFs were selected through a consultation meeting with key actors of the respective communities, including representatives from respective municipalities, political parties, networks, user groups, local intellectuals and so on. Through the application of dialogue and mediation, DFs were engaged in building trust and understanding in their respective communities. In addition, community dialogue and spaces to meet and exchange (dialogue and mediation centers) were created to increase peace and social harmony across the project areas.

A total of 40 Social Dialogue Groups (SDGs) were formed in four communities, ensuring representation of individuals from various groups - religion, race, class, ethnicity, geographical location and political belief that included 50 percent of women to be facilitated by DFs. In the process of dialogue, the DFs encouraged sharing of personal narratives, compassionate listening and creation of a common vision for the betterment of participants' lives and communities. DFs were also capacitated for and were available to mediate conflicts in the community upon request. All the project activities were directed towards preventing and reducing violence at



4.2 Activities

Over 15 months of the project period, all the activities that included project launching meeting; formation of advisory committees and orientation to them; three rounds of training on dialogue facilitation and mediation; formation of SDGs and series of meetings; community dialogues, community envisioning, project closing/handover and the national level experience sharing program were carried out as per the timeline presented below.

Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Project Launching Formation of Advisory committee and Orientation of Advisory Committees		Capacity Building		Social Dialogue										
								Capacity Building						
Advisory Committee Meetings														
									Mediation					
Community Dialogue														
									Community Envisioning			Project Handovers		
National Level Experience Sharing														
Monitoring and Supervision														

4.2.1 Project Launching

As a phase-in strategy, Pro Public organized a project launching meeting in all the four project locations: Lahan Municipality of Siraha, Shivaraj Municipality of Kapilvastu, Nepalgunj Sub-metropolitan City of Banke and Tikapur Municipality of Kailali

towards the last week of September and the first week of October, 2018. The objective of the meeting was to inform key actors and target groups about the activities to be implemented under the project, selections of the candidates for training on Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation and formation of Advisory Committees.

The participation of mayors, deputy mayors of the municipalities, ward chairs and elected ward committee members, local political leaders, representatives from different user groups, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), security agencies, youth clubs, women' groups, media, educational institutions and other key actors of the community representing different castes, ethnicity and religious groups, and geographical locations was ensured.



Sr. Advocate Mr. Prakash Mani Sharma, Executive Chair of Pro Public, briefing about the project objectives and activities of the project to the stakeholders of the Shivaraj Municipality - 4 of Kapilvastu during the project launching.

During the project launch meeting, all the participants were briefed about the project goal, objectives, beneficiaries, activities, timeframe and so on. Similarly, 10 candidates for the training on Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation were selected and 25 members of the Advisory Committee were formed in each community ensuring representation from religion, race, class, sex, ethnicity, geographical location and political belief.

4.2.2 Orientation for Advisory Committees

Members of the Advisory Committees were provided orientation on project activities. A short presentation on dialogue and mediation was made and two documentaries based on the concept and practices of dialogue and mediation were screened followed by an open discussion. The open discussion was held to provide the participants an opportunity to put their queries and questions and get the clarity. On the whole, the presentations on roles and responsibilities of the members of the Advisory Committees, conceptual clarity on dialogue facilitation and mediation, objectives, goal and activities of the project, meetings and screening of the videos and the open discussions served well to clear up the goals of the project. The participants were glad to become a part of the committees and expressed commitment to support and cooperate with the project for its effective and successful implementation in their respective communities.



Group photo of the Advisory Committee members after orientation program in Nepalgunj sub metropolitan city-18, Banke.

4.2.3 Meetings of Advisory Committee

Throughout the project period, three rounds of meetings with the advisory committee members were held in all the four project communities. In all the meetings, members of the advisory committee were briefed about the project activities carried out this far and activities on cards were shared with them. Their feedback on the modality, timing, participation as well as their issues and concerns were well received. The advisory committees were closely consulted in identifying burning social issues of the specific communities and organizing community dialogues on the same.

From discussions with the communities, the following issues emerged as burning issues on which community dialogues were organized gradually.

Communities/Districts	Issues identified from the meetings of Advisory Committee
Lahan/Siraha	Child marriage/dowry system; drug addiction; violence against women; and collaboration among political parties of peace and social harmony
Shivaraj/Kapilvastu	Child marriage/dowry system; drug addiction; violence against women; and collaboration among political parties of peace and social harmony
Nepalgunj/Banke	Child marriage/dowry system; drug addiction; violence against women; and collaboration among political parties of peace and social harmony
Tikapur/Kailali	Child marriage/dowry system; drug addiction; violence against women; and collaboration among political parties of peace and social harmony



Group photo of Advisory Committee after a meeting in Lahan Municipality -15, Siraha.

Members of the advisory committees were invited and engaged in different levels of the activities throughout the project period. Comments, views and opinions of the members are presented below.

Impressions of Members of Advisory Committee



This program is very much essential in the future. I think Pro Public should make an arrangement with the local government so that the local government can implement the program in the future.

- Nanda Bohara, Member, District Committee, CPN (UML),
Tikapur Municipality -7, Kailali



This project is implemented in limited areas as a pilot project. Since Nepal is a country with great diversity in terms of language, religion, culture and race, the project needs to be implemented all over the country.

- Giri Prasad Gaire, Cadre, CPN (UML), Shivaraj Municipality-4,
Kapilvastu



I feel that the project has been able to resolve the conflict within the family. Various types of conflicts and disputes across the community have also been resolved. Thus, I, in my capacity as an advisor, would like to request Pro Public to take the project in all 23 wards of the Sub-Metropolitan City of Nepalgunj.

- Shyam Bahadur Thapa, Local Intellectual, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke

4.2.4 Capacity Building

Altogether 40 candidates, 10 from each of the four project locations, coming from various backgrounds, especially the political actors (both elected and non-elected) were picked for dialogue facilitation and mediation training by reaching broader consensus. Pro Public organized three rounds (8 days, 7 days and 5 days respectively) of training for the 40 candidates from all the four project communities.

The trainings focused on transferring both theoretical and practical skills such as: skills related to mediation (such as communication skills), the nature, scope and stages of dispute, dispute style/mode and dispute analysis, mechanisms of dispute resolution, historical background of mediation, dispute resolution through mediation, positions, interests and alternatives, value creation and distribution, intents and impacts, additional skills and tools of mediation (ZOPA, BATNA, Dirty Tricks), roles, responsibilities and qualities of mediators, code of conduct for mediators, legal provision and social justice on mediation, psychosocial analysis of disputant parties, social justice, human rights, gender equality, social inclusion and women rights, followed by seven steps of mediation. Besides, the contents of dialogue facilitation included intensive orientation on seven steps



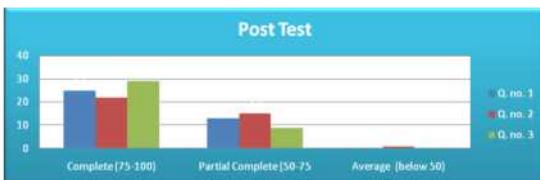
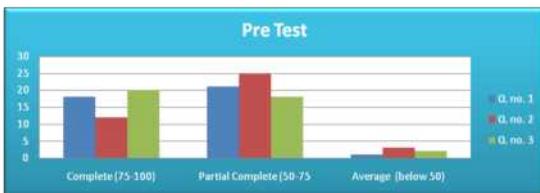
Founder President of Pro Public Prof. Dr. Shreekrishna Shrestha and Vice-Mayor of Tansen Municipality of Palpa district Ms. Laxmi Devi Pathak providing certificate to the participants after second round of training on Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation organized in Tansen, Palpa.



Group photo of Dialogue Facilitators and Mediators after receiving the third round of training on Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation in Pokhara, Kaski.

of dialogue meetings i.e. childhood story, good news and current problems, painful story, empathetic listening, personal envisioning, identification of community problem and community envisioning. Upon successful completion of the three rounds of the training the participants were certified by Pro Public.

For the assessment of the DFs, few questions were included in the pre and posttest questionnaires of the third rounds of the training. The questions ran like (1) how would you scale your knowledge and skills on dialogue facilitation?, (2) how would you scale your knowledge and skills on mediation?, and (3) how would you scale your present role in various activities that takes place in your community? The questions were meant to evaluate the overall confidence level of the DFs from the past three rounds of training and their being engaged in various activities at community level. The results were as follows:



Some of the impressions shared by the DFs and guests having received the three rounds of training are presented below.

Impression of the Guests During the Training



There are many challenges. And yet, you can deal with them successfully if you work with dedication, impartiality and in a fair and free manner. It is the mediators who need to support the Judicial Committee. There is a provision for a mediation center in each ward. This is a bit different from that. The society has huge expectations from you.

- Bain Bahadur Chhetri, Chief, District Coordination Committee, Kaski



The issue of identity has been perceived differently by different people. Identity is important. It is essential. Identity is made from our culture, values, language and so on. We have to keep our identity intact. But again, we need not fight among us in the name of identity. We have to respect all. You have become trainers for resolving such issues through dialogue and mediation. I want to thank Pro Public which has organized such an important event. I can see the diversity here among participants in terms of place, race, political affiliations, language etc. We are conducting this training with the participation of diverse people and bringing them together under one roof.

- Sr. Advocate Kumar Sharma Acharya, Member, Mediation Council Nepal



I worked as a mediator during the 'Panchayat System' (under absolute monarchy). Back then, we favored one party in the conflict and denied the other. It didn't promote peace and harmony in a real sense. But this approach of mediation connects people with differences.

- Laxmi Devi Pathak, Deputy Mayor (Convener, Judicial Committee), Tansen Municipality, Palpa



How beautiful our society will be if it can be free from greed and fear, and if we can observe compassion, love and equal treatment to all. A society that can treat everyone equally and accept mutual co-existence. All of you have put a great responsibility on us.

- Prof. Dr. Shreekrishna Shrestha, Founder President, Pro Public

Impression of the DFs After receiveing the three Rounds of Training



I am very happy because we all have become competent mediators. We have met the government criterion for a certified mediator having been put through training of 48 hours. I want to congratulate myself and all of you and extend the best wishes to all. The negative thoughts are now off our head and our actions are positive. The Ward I reside in has 75 percent Madhesi (people from flat land) population. There used to be disputes almost every day. After we trained 100 people in the last one year, the disputes have gone down to 2/3 in a year. If we can get this result by training 100 people, the whole ward can live in total peace and harmony if only we can train 500 people.

- Digvijaya Dhungana, Ward Member, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



We have learnt the methods and process of the seven steps of mediation. This is very good. We also have learnt the power of empathy.

- Yam Lal Jaisi, Ward Member, Tikapur Municipality-7, Kailali



We have received knowledge from our trainers on the role we have to play for the development and transformation of our society.

- Santoshi Pandey, Memer, District Committee, CPN (Maoist Center), Shivaraj Municipality-4, Kapilvastu



I am a person with bit of temper. After I took this training, I don't get angry anymore. I used to fight with my wife until I had the training. Now, I empathize with her.

- Purna Pariyar, Cadre, CPN (Maoist Center), Shivaraj Municipality, Kapilvastu



I used to get angry if someone spoke to me badly or said bad things to me. I no longer get angry at this now.

- Gyan Kumar Mahato, Cadre, Federal Socialist Forum Nepal (FSFN), Lahan Municipality, Siraha



I had this negative mindset that people from the hills treat the people from the plains unfairly. My perception changed after I attended the training.

- Gautam Verma, Cadre, CPN (UML), Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



In the first training, I had doubt if the dialogue facilitation works in the community. But after we formed the groups in the communities and attended second and third rounds of the training, I have no doubt and I am full of confidence in the whole process and its positive effects on the community.

- Nirasha Devi Pariyar, Cadre, CPN (Maoist Center), Tikapur Municipality -7, Kailali



The three rounds of the training on dialogue facilitation and mediation have given us confidence and we can now use the skills and knowledge to facilitate the social dialogue groups and to resolve the interpersonal disputes.

- Keshu Pokhrel Oli, Cadre, Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke

4.2.5 Social Dialogue

After successful completion of the first round of training on Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation for 40 candidates picked from four project locations to act as Dialogue Facilitators/Mediators, a total of 40 SDGs, 10 SDGs in each four project communities, were

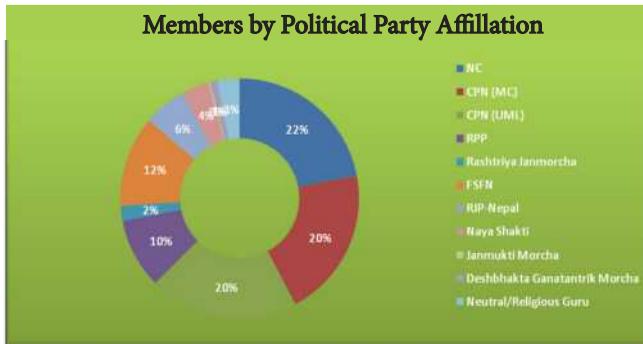
formed. The number of total members in these 40 groups were 400, 10 in each groups. The 400 members of SDGs represented political parties (Nepali Congress (NC), CPN (UML), CPN (MC), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Rashtriya Janmorcha, Samajbadi Party, RJP-Nepal, Janmukti Morcha, Deshbhakta Ganatantrik Morcha, Religious Guru, different caste groups (Brahmin/Chhetri, Dalit, Janajati and others), ethnic groups (Madheshi, Pahadi and Tharu) and faith groups (Hindu and Muslim) etc.



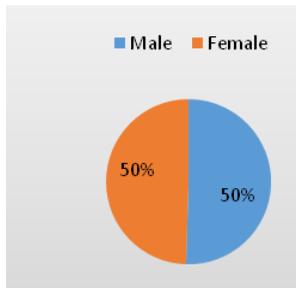
Members of Social Dialogue Group in Tikapur Municipality-7, Kailali participating in a dialogue session

Following the formation of the 40 SDGs, the seven steps of dialogue meetings were organized and completed by the end of June, 2019. The overall impression of the members of the SDGs was that the dialogue meetings handed them powerful tools that worked to change their own outlook, perceptions, and mindset and that they began to look at things more positively. They said that they have begun to see things in a positive light and that they are increasingly successfully their community to connect each other in a more constructive way. The power of the tool is amazing, they say. It has helped grow tolerance, acceptance, and mutual coexistence. Now, the people from different backgrounds have started to accept each other, get along well, engage in dialogue amicably, and put their heads together to find solutions to the community problems and put collective and concerted effort into solving them.

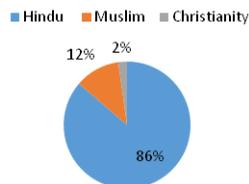
Representation ratio of the SDGs is presented in the graph below.



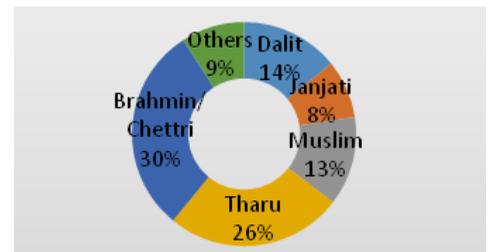
Members by Sex



Participants by Religious Group



Participants by Caste and Ethnicity



Impression of Social Dialogue Group Members and DFs & Religious Gurus



We, women from the Tharu community, stopped celebrating Teej festival branding it as the festival of the hill people (primarily Hindus) since 2015. But after 2019, having attended the dialogue and mediation program, we started to celebrate the festival again together with the hill people. After participating in the seven stages of the dialogue program we felt that both hill people and people from the plains are equal and the same.

- Chandrawati Chaudhary, Cadre, Nepali Congress, Tikapur Municipality-7, Kailali



In the past, when Christians would talk about their religion, I wouldn't like it. I used to think that they brag about their religion. These days I don't feel that way.

- Kamala Sah (Chaudhary), Cadre, Naya Shakti, Tikapur Municipality-7, Kailali



I come from Christian community. In the past, I used to feel that the community looked down on us blaming that we have abandoned traditional religion. But after I attended this program, I realize that I was wrong. They respected us.

- Sunita Pun, Cadre, CPN (UML), Tikapur Municipality-7, Kailali



I was removed from Women Community Health Worker on charge of being a witch. I have forgiven all those that ill-treated me, including my family members after taking part in the program.

- Domini Devi Chaudhary, Survivor, Lahan Municipality-15, Siraha



I didn't view people in the positive light particularly those that were affiliated with political parties other than to which I was affiliated with. After participating in the seven stages of dialogue, I have now realized that we should not be divided along the political lines, caste, race or region. We need to remain united and treat each other equally.

- Kabita Acharya, Cadre, CPN (UML), Shivraj Municipality-4, Kapilvastu



My husband was killed by Maoist rebels. I used to get angry at the Maoists and harbored revenge. After I listened to their own stories, I felt that the pain everyone feels is the same. I empathize with them. They empathize with my pain. We cried at each other's stories. Now I have drawn closer to them than other people in my life.

- Mithu Shrestha, Cadre, Nepali Congress, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



We used to avoid Muslims and would not mix up with them. After attending the dialogue program, we no longer avoid them and feel that they are like us.

- Laxmi Pokharel, Cadre, Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



I was politically indoctrinated to revolt and use violence to overthrow the current dispensation and get control over the state power for years. Pro Public's dialogue program has changed my rebel mentality that I had nurtured for years.

- Santoshi Pandey, Member, District Committee, CPN (Maoist Center), Shivaraj Municipality-4, Kapilvastu



After participating in the Pro Public's dialogue program, firstly, we became aware and educated about so many things. Secondly, I got motivated to working for the ending of suffering of other people in the society.

Raj Kumar Mahato, Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal, Lahan Municipality-15, Siraha



There were ego clashes in the past among people of different castes and religions. Now there is a feeling that we should avoid such clashes and should co-exist in peace and harmony.

- Nanda Devi Saud, Cadre, CPN (UML), Tikapur Municipality-7, Kailali



Before participating in the dialogue program, we used to avoid people from other community and never listened to them. Having participated in the dialogue program, we now respect each other and our relation has significantly improved. Not only 10 of us but the society as a whole has been transformed.

- Rabbu Fatma, Cadre, Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Shivaraj Municipality-4, Kapilvastu



In the past, we were indifferent to each other. After participating in the dialogue program, we have begun to feel that we should care about each other and love each other. The situation has become better.

- Subhan Ali Behana, Cadre, CPN (UML), Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



In the past, we invited people only from our own religion in our festivals. Our festival is approaching. I will invite all 10 people from the group to the festivity irrespective of the religion they follow. Though we belong to different caste and religion, the color of our blood is the same. We have changed a lot.

- Aaysha Ansari, Cadre, Federal Socialist Forum Nepal, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



In the past, we used to file cases of gender-based violence at the courts. After taking the training from the program, we mediate and settle them within the community.

- Aamana Khatoon, Cadre, Nepali Congress, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



Nepalgunj is a place where we have witnessed many conflicts on the basis of caste, language and religion. There had been conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. When the conflict broke out people even had to fear for their lives. Things have changed now. People affiliated to different political parties and party workers now feel that they should get united to do good work and develop good projects for the development of the place.

- Kamala Pokharel, Cadre, Nepali Congress, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



If there are more organizations like yours in the country, it will contribute to uniting the divided people, and also humanize them.

- Chudamani Pokharel, Hindu Religious Guru, Shivaraj-4, Kapilvastu



Participating in the session where we shared childhood stories through the seven stages, we felt like we all belonged to one family. The works of Pro Public bind one person to another as if one brick is placed upon another to build a wall.

- Mohmmad Alam, Muslim Religious Guru, Shivaraj-4, Kapilvastu

4.2.6 Community Dialogue

Pro Public organized four rounds of community dialogues on burning social and political issues identified by the advisory committees in all the four project communities. The issues that emerged from the first and second community dialogues ranged from Child Marriage, Dowry System, and Drug Abuse to Alcohol Abuse. Likewise, in the third round of dialogue, several issues were raised in different communities such as; Chhaupadi in Tikapur, Kailali, Child Labor in Nepalgunj of Banke, and Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Shivaraj of Kapilvastu and Lahan of Siraha. The fourth round of Community Dialogue involved political parties and the thrust of the dialogue was “Role of Political Parties in Strengthening Peace and Social Harmony”.



Community Dialogue on Child Labor organized in Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan city-18, Banke.

All the community dialogues were organized in collaboration with the municipalities and civil society organizations and the government agencies. Participants of the dialogue came from diverse groups – faith groups,

ethnic groups, race, class, sex, geographical location and political belief.



Declaration Letter of Child Marriage and Dowry System

Towards the end of all the four rounds of the dialogues, Declaration Letters (DLs) signed by the panelists and participants were issued.

These signed Declaration Letters were put on the wall of offices of the municipalities of

all the four project locations for public display so as to allow their access to it. Copies of DLs were also provided to all the concerned agencies asking them to address the problems through strategic implementation of policies and programs. A total of 16 DLs, four in each project communities, were issued. Issue-wise there were six DLs that are presented below.

Impression of the Stakeholders



The participants have become aware about child labor and the measures to be adopted for its reduction.

- Prakash Sapkota, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan, Banke



The program that Pro Public has been implementing for one year has provided additional energy to us.

- Krishna Prasad Joshi, Social Development Officer, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City, Banke



The program implemented by Pro Public should be replicated by us. If a non-government organization can do this, we the government agencies should also be able to do such things. This is the message I have taken from this program.

- Hem Raj Bhatta, Police Inspector, Tikapur Municipality, Kailali



The feeling of ownership seen among the participants is testimony to the fact that the program has become successful and the message intended has been delivered.

- Moti Lal Yonjan, Police Inspector, Shivraj Municipality, Kapilvastu



The fact that we have implemented the program on the spot to the target audience is itself a success

- Meena Pariyar, Founder Chair, Diyalo Nepal, Shivraj Municipality, Kapilvastu

4.2.7 Community Envisioning

Community Envisioning workshop was organized to envision plan for the next five years for the respective communities in the presence of the representatives of municipality, leaders of political parties, members of SDGs, representatives from CSOs, media, academia, and other groups like mother's groups, community forest groups and so on.

The topic for the seventh round of dialogue exercise with the SDGs was community envisioning which involved, among others, identifying the community problem at their locality and planning to address them in a collaborative manner. In the workshop, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the communities was carried out. Having conducted the SWOT analyses of the communities, the next step was to identify major development agendas from the workshops in all four communities. See the development agendas identified through the workshop in the table below.

This workshop was mainly successful in raising the awareness level of the community people along with other concerned agencies within the municipalities about how these types of workshops can be effectively used to identify development agendas and how community-level stakeholders motivated to envision future plan for their own communities. The development agendas identified by the communities were submitted with the respective municipalities and other concerned agencies asking them to incorporate them in their respective plans.



Participants are presenting the plan they have planned during the Community Envisioning Workshop organized in Shivraj Municipality - 4 of Kapilvastu

Lahan of Siraha	Shivaraj of Kapilvastu
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Irrigation and construction of agriculture road 2. Cold store 3. Blacktop of roads & construction of bridges in rivers 4. Mitigation of drug abuse & alcohol drinking 5. Pure drinking water 6. End of caste-based discrimination 7. Quality education & establishment of vocational training institute 8. Easy access to quality health service 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Irrigation and group farming 2. Pure drinking water 3. Cold store 4. Construction of child development center 5. Good health facilities by constructing good health posts 6. Good road and drainage management 7. Establishment of vocational training center 8. End of violence against women (VAW)
Nepalgunj of Banke	Tikapur of Kailali
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End of drug abuse problem 2. End of child marriage and dowry system 3. Irrigation facilities 4. Road, drainage and sanitation 5. Quality education and easy access to health facilities 6. End child labor 7. Vocational training 8. End of violence against women (VAW) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Solving flood and soil erosion problem 2. End of drug addiction and gambling 3. Eradication of child marriage 4. End unemployment problem 5. Establishment of vocational training center 6. Building black topped road & concrete bridges over river 7. Establishment and upgrading of health post 8. Cold store

4.2.8 Production of Documentary

A documentary has been produced capturing all the major activities carried out under the project. They include learning, experiences, results, impacts and the impressions of the key actors and the beneficiaries. The documentary reflects on the past and the current perception in terms of relationship between community members from different faiths groups, race, class, sex, ethnicity, geographical location and political belief. It shows how the project intervention contributed to building the relationship and brought about social

harmony and peace among the community people. It also shows that social dialogue process is a powerful tool to build and restore relationship among people who harbored “enemy images” of each other. The documentary presents community dialogue on different burning issues identified by the communities. Moreover, it captures the impressions/remarks from elected representatives, representatives from the government of Nepal, DFs, members of the SDGs and members of the advisory committees. It also discusses sustainability efforts beyond the project period.

4.2.9 Mediation Services

The DFs are qualified mediators on par with the standard of the Nepal Mediation Council. They have been provided the 48 hours trainings by Pro Public. They mediate disputes in their communities and offer their services. Altogether 35 disputes were mediated by DFs during the project period. Cases of disputes were brought forth by women, youth, and people from marginalized groups. Nature of the disputes ranged from petty transactions, allocation and distribution of water, encroachment on roads and passage, compensation for damage of standing crops, payment of wages, to recovery of lost and found cattle and so on. At times, DFs were also invited by police officers for the facilitation and mediation of cases. This amply shows that the local formal institutions recognize and appreciate the services provided by the DFs.



Dialogue and Mediation Center established in Shivaraj Municipality - 4 of Kapilvastu

Disputes Settled in the Communities

S.N.	Community	Number of Cases
1.	Lahan/Siraha	8
2.	Shivaraj/Kapilvastu	12
3.	Nepalgunj/Banke	3
4.	Tikapur	12

Impression of the Dialogue Facilitators and Mediators



In the past, many people would come to the Ward Office with their problems. We used to dictate solutions to the parties in conflict. After receiving training from the project, we treat both parties in conflict equally so that no injustice is done to either party.

- Asha Shahi, Ward Member, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



In the past, we made one party in conflict win and the other lose. But after attending the training, we make both parties win. In other words, we find a win-win solution for both parties.

- Habib Ahmad, Cadre, CPN (UML), Shivaraj Municipality - 4, Kapilvastu



There had been a dispute between the son of the Ward Chair and a taxi driver. We mediated the dispute successfully by using the skills we gained through training provided by the project.

- Ananda Kumar Raut, Ward Member, Lahan Municipality - 15, Siraha



There was a dispute between husband and wife. We mediated it and now they are happily living together.

- Ram Kumari Das, Ward Member, Lahan Municipality - 15, Siraha

4.2.10 Hand over and Social Audit

With the aim of presenting the achievements of the project to the key stakeholders of the communities and to handover the dialogue facilitation and mediation centers set up under the project, Pro Public, DFs, respective municipalities, and advisory committees signed an agreement cutting out the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders for the sustainability and continuity of the centers. The agreement

created scope and space for collaboration among the parties. The agreement also reflects the commitment of the local government in using the DFs as resources in resolving conflicts and promoting peace and social harmony in the communities. Representatives from various walks of life, political parties, municipalities, youth groups, marginalized communities, journalists, and women groups attended the handover ceremony and social audit events organized in all four project communities.



Mr. Babu Ram Poudel, Program Manager of the project, handing over a signed agreement to the Ward Chair of Shivaraj Municipality-4 of Kapilvastu

Impression of the Representatives of the Municipalities



This is a very positive project. The way the project has addressed issues of the people in their participation and the way it has reached the people is very positive. I have taken the project very positively.

- Tapendra Bahadur Rawal, Mayor, Tikapur Municipality, Kailali



The workload of the Judicial Committee has lessened due to your work. As your work becomes more successful, our work has become better and easier.

- Netra Adhikari, Mayor, Shivraj Municipality, Kapilvastu



The cases of disputes have decreased drastically in this Ward. I feel that the project has been 100 percent successful here.

- Tej Narayan Chaudhary, Ward Chair, Lahan Municipality-15, Siraha

4.2.11 National Level Experience Sharing Meeting

A National Level Experience Sharing Meeting was organized on October 21, 2019 in Kathmandu towards the end of the completion of activities planned under the project. Hon'ble Ms. Niru Devi Pal, Chair of the Women and Social Committee under the House of Representative was the chief guest of the meeting. Other guests included Hon'ble Mr. Lilanath Shrestha, Member of Parliament from Siraha-3; Hon'ble Mr. Bishnu Maya Ojha, Act. Chairperson of the Commission of Inclusive Society; Hon'ble Mr. Bishnu Prasad Chaudhari, Chairperson of the Tharu Commission, Mr. Yub Raj Bhusal, Former Secretary of the Government of Nepal and Mr. Mani Ram Gyawali, Under Secretary of the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) Nepal.

A short presentation was made showcasing the achievements, lessons learnt, experiences, and challenges of the project, followed by the screening of a documentary detailing activities carried out under the project, good practices, and the impact of the program on DFs, members of SDGs and their communities. The documentary reflected on the past and the current perception of the community people in terms of relationship between the community members from different community groups.

In the National Level Experience Sharing Meeting, the chief guest and other guests expressed positive remarks about the project. DFs, representatives of the municipalities and members of the Advisory Committees spoke about their impressions on the interventions in the project communities. Some of their remarks are given in the box below.



Group photo of the guest and participants after organizing National Level Experience Sharing and Documentary Screening Program in Kathmandu.

Views of the Guests



I want to thank you for developing this pilot project. We have seen that if we want we can do. It's such a good thing to witness such a success through efforts of a single organization. We can convince the government at the local level to take this project across the country.

- Hon'ble Niru Devi Pal, Member, House of Representatives, Chair, Women and Social Committee



I watched the documentary. I have come to know that peace and social harmony is essential for the development of any country. This project has developed a sense of positive thinking. Had this project been implemented in all Municipalities, the country would have developed in a faster pace. This project is very much needed in Nepal. If we can implement this project at the local level in all parts of the country, the local government can take it forward.

- Hon'ble Lilanath Shrestha, Member, House of Representatives, Siraha-3



Diversity is an asset of Nepal. We should be able to preserve it. We listened to the opinions and experiences of everyone here. We also had the opportunity to watch the documentary. I have felt that this pilot project has become successful.

- Hon'ble Bishnu Prasad Chaudharit, Chairperson, Tharu Commission, Nepal



Having watched and listened to the impact the project made across four districts, I felt as if I was myself present in those districts while the project being implemented. I wish for success and favorable environment for Pro Public to implement this project in more districts. The Government has initiated a campaign "Happy Nepali, Prosperous Nepal." This project is crucial to the success of this campaign. Such a project should be implemented throughout the country. I want to commend the person who envisioned and conceptualized this project. The concept of this project is very good. I also want to request the donor to provide resources to continue this project.

- Hon'ble Bishnu Maya Ojha, Act. Chairperson National Inclusive Commission, Nepal



The experiences of the four districts are being shared here. Pro Public has worked in many other districts too. This project should be extended to other places as well. The Government of Nepal will certainly support in this. I hope honorable Members of the Parliament will give necessary instructions to the government. It is a pleasure to know that the local governments too are willing to take this project forward in the future.

- Yub Raj Bhusal, Former Secretary, Nepal Government



Pro Public, as a responsible organization, has undertaken the project in a very transparent manner. This project should not be limited to four Wards of four districts. Issues of transparency, good governance, public awareness, social harmony and reconciliation should not be limited to a ward. Honorable members of Parliament, these should be included in the policy of the government and taken across to all 77 districts of the country.

- Mani Ram Gyawali, Under Secretary, Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP), Nepal



In 2015, a violent incident occurred in Tikapur which had a very adverse effect in the community. The whole country mourned the incident. There have been gaps, ill feelings, conflicts between people from hills and people from the plains (Tharu community). Pro Public has worked to built bridges among these communities and brings them closer. I want to salute the work of Pro Public.

- Ramlal Dagaure Tharu, Ward Chair, Tikapur Municipality-7, Kailali

4.2.12 Monitoring and Supervision

Members of the project visited all the four project locations for the supervision and to observe the dialogues. They received the first hand information about the project, gathered impressions and challenges faced by the DFs. They also provided necessary guidance and advice throughout the project period. During the monitoring visit, separate meetings with DFs were held to discuss the overall status of dialogue activities, their impressions and the challenges they faced so far. On the whole, the DFs shared good impressions about the knowledge and skills they have had from different rounds of meetings. Members of the SDGs were also met in their specific groups and their impressions and perceptions too were gathered. The SDG members were of view, “We are learning some new things that we find really valuable for us, for our family and our society. We have understood the meaning of cooperation and good relation between us”. They also admitted that they are now far more close to each other as community members and that it serves them well to meet and share stories.

Similarly, a monitoring and evaluation team of the Social Welfare Council (SWC), a government body established to monitor and supervise the interventions made by the non-governmental



Monitoring and Evaluation team from the Social Welfare Council discussing with the members of Social Dialogue Groups in Shivaraj Municipality - 4 of Kapilvastu

organizations in Nepal, made a visit two of the project communities (Shivaraj of Kapilvastu and Lahan of Siraha) and observed community dialogue and project closing & hand over program. They also met and discussed with the DFs, member of SDGs, members of Advisory Committees and with the elected representatives as well as local government officials.

5. Challenges

The project didn't face any real challenges such in course of implementation. However, some minor challenges came its way. One of the challenges was the short period of the project. Mobility as well as priorities/responsibilities of the DFs was another challenge. The community people showed huge interest to be a part of DFs or to be members of the SDGs or to be members of the Advisory Committees. However, the pressure subsided once they were explained about the provisions and limitations of the project. It was also observed that some of the members of the SDGs are in need of psychosocial counseling, a need not envisioned by the project. And to address their need, a session of psychosocial counseling was included in the second round of the training. As to other events, especially in the community dialogue, there was a limit of 40 participants to be taken in, but owing to the popularity of the program pressure for participation rose. However, it was managed and more people than planned were allowed to participate without an extra cost in the budget.

6. Lessons Learnt

Before this project, Pro Pubic implemented "Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation" for the reintegration of the ex-combatants with the community people. It was a great success. This time, the tool was used for bridging the gulf of mistrust and animosity between different faith groups in the community through this project. The lessons learnt from this project are as follows:

- ☛ Dialogue can work as a powerful instrument to build relationship among different faith groups.
- ☛ Engagement of elected representatives in such interventions is effective.
- ☛ Inclusion of the political parties in such interventions is meaningful to change their perceptions and to spread the messages across broader populace

- ☛ Advisory committee members should also be provided with the seven steps of dialogue to give them knowledge about its process and impacts.
- ☛ Advisory committee members needs to be mobilized as observers during the meeting of the SDGs to help them increase their own understanding, which in turn, ensures more meaningful contribution to overall interventions.
- ☛ Community dialogues on social and political issues are highly relevant to promote social harmony by sensitizing people, making them responsible to the authorities and developing a feeling and culture of collaboration.

7. Sustainability

Pro Public developed the project by keeping in mind its sustainability beyond the project period. And to ensure it, the project was implemented in close coordination with the local government. Once all the activities were completed, dialogue/mediation centers were handed over to the respective municipalities through joint agreements between the municipalities, advisory committees, DFs and Pro Public. This has increased the prospect of sustainability. Commitment for the allocation of funds to ensure the continuity of the program has been made by the elected representatives of the respective municipalities. Since the DFs are permanent residents of the communities, the process is underway to list them as mediators with the Judicial Committees in their respective communities. This increases the prospect of DFs being able to use their knowledge and skills continuously beyond the project period. The views expressed by some of the elected representatives and DFs, which favor the sustainability of the project, are presented below.

Statements by some of the elected representatives and DFs



Even though the people who received training on dialogue and mediation are from Ward number 4, we can use them as mediators or facilitators if and when the conflict arises in any Ward of the Municipality.

- Netra Adhikari, Mayor, Shivraj Municipality, Kapilvastu



To give continuity to the Pro Public's Social Dialogue Group meetings, we have allocated three hundred thousand rupees for this fiscal year 2019/2020. Even after this project is phased out, we can't afford to remain idle.

- Tej Narayan Chaudhary, Ward Chair
(Dialogue Facilitator/Mediator), Lahan Municipality-15



There is a judicial Committee in Tikapur Municipality. We have allocated sizeable fund to work through the committee. Besides, I have allocated one hundred and fifty thousand Rupees in my Ward for activities related to this project. We want to continue the program through the dialogue facilitators and mediators in the future.

- Ramlal Dagaura Tharu, Ward Chair, Tikapur Municipality-7, Kailali



Though the project is coming to an end, we will continue it in cooperation with the local government, including Ward Office and Municipality.

- Nirasha Devi Pariyar, Cadre, CPN (UML), Tikapur Municipality, Kailali

8. Request for the interventions

Encouraged by the interventions and the results, the community level stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project and members from the neighboring communities have requested Pro Public for the continuity of the project through an extension program. Their requests are presented in the box below.

Requests made by the stakeholders and beneficiaries



I request you to work together with the Judicial Committees and extend the project to all the 24 wards of Lahan Municipality.

- Sariyar Chaudhary, Deputy Mayor
(Convener, Judicial Committees), Lahan Municipality-15, Siraha



Significant changes have taken place in ward number 18 through the project. There are many backward people in the rural areas. Social evil and violence such as child marriage are widespread. If you chose to extend the program and involve us, we would be happy to take this program ahead.

- Aayesha Ansari, Cadre, Federal Socialist Forum Nepal-Nepal,
Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



We have got a valuable training from Pro Public. We were shown a proper path by Pro Public. We should walk down the path shown by Pro Public.

- Shanti Khadka, Dialogue Facilitator/Mediator, Tikapur-7, Kailali



I have been observing the works of Pro Public very closely in Ward number 7 of Tikapur municipality. So, I would like to request you to launch this project in my ward too.

- Baliram Chaudhary, Ward Chair, Tikapur Municipality-6, Kailali



I request you to implement the project in my Ward and would like to assure you that we will be ready to provide all kinds of support that you require for implementing the project.

- Krishna Karki, Ward Chair, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-20, Banke

9. Impacts

The project interventions have made some positive impacts on building relationship among the family and the community members. Views and opinions in this regard expressed by the beneficiaries and other stakeholders are presented in the box below.

Impacts shared by Stakeholders



I got married after I fell in love. Then I went to India. I used to be sad about it that none of my family members spoke to me. I communicated to my grandmother after I learnt about dialogue, empathy, love and reconciliation having participated in the dialogue and mediation session provided by the project. My grand mother listened to me and understood my feelings. She then communicated to and convinced her daughters. It's been six-seven months since the members of my family have begun to speak to me. My life has been transformed by the project. I want the project to be implemented in other parts of the country and transform lives of other people like me.

- Aarati Ali, Cadre, Nepali Congress, Tikapur Municipality - 7, Kailali



Before Tikapur incident occurred, the relations between Tharu community and people originally from hills was okay. After the incident, relation between the two communities worsened. They started boycotting each other's programs. After this project was implemented, they have started supporting each other in times of need. Some months back, there was a fire in my neighborhood. The family lost everything in the fire, including the house and cattle. All of us in the community, including the members of the dialogue group, discussed and then we raised funds in cash and kind and handed over to the family.

- Kamala Sah (Chaudhary), Cadre, Naya Shakti, Tikapur Municipality-7, Kailali



Nanda Kishore is my nephew. We were very close. But then politics drove a wedge between us, and we parted our ways. We were out of touch for 20 years. After participating in the dialogue and mediation process provided by the project, we reconciled in such a way that tears rolled down my eyes.

- Jagannath Yadav, Cadre, Federal Socialist Forum Nepal-Nepal, Shivaraj Municipality - 4, Kapilvastu



There was a bench in public place for people to rest on. It was quite old. A member of the community destroyed it. Another member of the community said that since he was not consulted before destroying it, he would file a case. We facilitated the case and he did not file the case. Had there not been this project, this case would have taken a nasty turn, and would have gone to the Court.

- Jageshwar Chaudary, Cadre, CPN (UML), Lahan Municipality-15, Siraha



In the past we witnessed conflict in this place based on region and religion. I feel that after Pro Public's work for one year, such violent incidents will not be take place in the future.

- Deepak Kumar Verma, Ward Chair, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-18, Banke



The thoughts and outlook of people has changed significantly after taking the training from the project. In the past, people would get indifferent to issues of development. Now they take interest.

- Shiv Kumari Tharu, Deputy Mayor, Shivraj Municipality, Kapilvastu

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

Since the main objective of the program was to promote social harmony and peace in the four project communities through dialogue and mediation among different groups, the project implemented different activities to achieve the objective. Key activities, among others, included capacity building of the DFs, formation of SDGs and the series of social dialogue, community dialogue, community envisioning and mediation, and reconciliation exercise between the community members. The activities carried out under the project created space and scope for coming closer and connecting to each other, building better understanding among each other, bridging the gap between groups and individuals, and building trust and empathy. In addition, the participants developed skills in dialogue facilitation, mediation and event management. The activities worked to promote and strengthen relationships and trust between community members from different backgrounds, which in turn, contributed to the promotion of peace and social harmony.

The project followed the principle of inclusion in terms of gender, ethnicity, faith, political parties, and geography and so on. Of the total 400 SDGs members, 50% were women and over 70% individuals came from marginalized groups.

The project contributed to the empowerment of the people from diverse backgrounds and strengthened their relationships with each other resulting in the collaboration for the overall development of their communities. The skills acquired, especially mediation and dialogue facilitation, can further contribute to sustainable peace beyond the project period. Efforts are put into ensuring sustainability of dialogue and mediation centers. Agreements have been made between Pro Public, municipalities, advisory committees and DFs to this effect. From the learnings, it can be safely concluded that dialogue facilitation and mediation are powerful tools in promotion of peace and social harmony. Dialogue facilitation, mediation and other activities such as community dialogue and community envisioning need to be conducted regularly in the communities. A room for conflict is always there in human societies. And hence, such mechanisms are effective tools that must be there to cope with conflicts and transform it into peaceful settlement. The response expressed by the beneficiaries of the project clearly indicates that there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of local people and even an elected official of the local government in the area of mediation and dialogue facilitation so dispute can be transformed nonviolently at the community level.

Annexes

Agreement Letter

We, the municipality, Pro Public, Advisory Committee and Dialogue Facilitators and Mediators, sign an agreement letter, along with the following specific responsibilities, for the institutionalization and sustainability of the services provided by the Dialogue Facilitators and Mediators having received training under the project “Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation for Strengthening Peace and Social Harmony” implemented by Pro Public and supported by RBS.

Pro Public

- ☛ For the development, expansion and sustainability of the program, Pro Public will try to collaborate to find out the alternatives to use and promote the knowledge and skills of the Dialogue Facilitators and Mediators.
- ☛ Pro Public will try to ensure participation of DFs and members of Social Dialogue Groups (SDGs) in the other opportunities too. And, when and if any opportunities come along, it will also try to enroll them in refresher training and other advanced level trainings in the days to come.
- ☛ Pro Public will follow up with the national level agencies such as National Planning Commission (NPC), Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) and other line agencies in addressing the development issues identified by the Community Envisioning.

Dialogue Facilitators and Mediators

- ☛ Dialogue Facilitators and Mediators will use their knowledge and skills, acquired so far, as required in the communities and will serve at the request of the community people. For this, they will coordinate with the municipality and the other concerned agencies too.
- ☛ DFs will meet at least once in a month and discuss the latest activities, coordination and initiatives taken, and latest incidents and community environment, and will also discuss about the plan for the coming month.
- ☛ DFs will coordinate with the municipality in addressing the social issues identified by the Community Envisioning by prioritizing for next five years.
- ☛ DFs will coordinate among themselves and municipality for the regular operation of the Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation centers.

Advisory Committee

- Advisory Committees will guide and offer suggestions to the DFs for using their knowledge and skills, acquired so far, for the overall development of the community.
- Advisory Committees will play a vital role to include the DFs in various activities to be implemented in the communities by different agencies.
- Advisory Committees will coordinate and advise for the implementation of the social issues identified by the Community Envisioning by prioritizing for next five years.

Municipalities

- Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Centers established in the premises of the municipalities under this project will be continued in coordination with DFs.
- Using the knowledge and skills acquired by the DFs, the municipality will coordinate with and engage them at various levels of activities related to social issues and conflicting situations and also provide the financial support as required.
- The development issues identified by the Community Envisioning and prioritized for the next five years will figure in the annual plan of the municipalities and coordinated for addressing them.

Declaration Letter

We, the elected representatives and the community people of Shivaraj Municipality, agree that child marriage and dowry system prevail as the worst form of social evils in our community. In this context, through a Community Dialogue organized by Pro Public with the fund support from RBS, Germany, we call upon every resident of the municipality to contribute to the mitigation of Child Marriage and Dowry System through this declaration.

- First and foremost, we, the signatories, observe zero acceptances on child marriage and dowry system and motivate others too to campaign against this evil practice.
- Enforce the legal provisions on child marriage and act to discourage child marriage.
- Conduct regular mass awareness campaigns on the socio-economic and cultural impacts of child marriage.

- ☛ Conduct awareness campaigns about the adverse effect of child marriage on the health of mother and child.
- ☛ Conduct research on negative impacts of child marriage on women's education and career and spread awareness about it.
- ☛ Offer legal, economic, and psychosocial support to the victims of domestic violence blamed at child marriage
- ☛ Conduct interaction programs on initiatives taken by the municipality to end child marriage and dowry system and conduct consultation meetings with the stakeholders.
- ☛ Contribute to the government's effort in the attainment of its goal towards ending child marriage and dowry system by 2030.
- ☛ Conduct activities in favor of gender equality and women empowerment in coordination with the civil society, social media, and different organizations.
- ☛ Launch initiatives to spread awareness among girls under 20 on adverse effects of child marriage.
- ☛ Campaign for equal opportunity in education for boys and girls (son-daughter).
- ☛ Contribute to strengthening social harmony and peace through abolition of child marriage and dowry system and the inequalities resulting from it.



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