

Mainstreaming the Use of

Underlying Causes of Poverty Analysis (UCPA)

in Local Government Planning and Budgeting Process



Reflections and Lessons from
Community Support Programme (CSP-II)



Rural Reconstruction Nepal
(RRN)

C	Community
S	Support
P	Programme
समुदाय सहयोग कार्यक्रम	

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December 2013



Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)

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***Reflections and Lessons from Community Support Programme (CSP)
II Implemented by Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)***

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FOREWORD

Poverty has been one of the persistent problems facing governments and people throughout the world. Many least developed nations like ours lack essential raw materials and the knowledge and skills for alleviating poverty and attaining economic development. Despite several poverty alleviation attempts, Nepal still remains as one of the poorest countries in the world with the overall poverty rate of 25 percent and Human Development Index of 0.463, thus ranking it in 157th position out of 187 countries.

There is debate on the nature and extent of poverty in Nepal. There are large disparities across geographical regions and between groups in Nepal. Agricultural holdings per household are the smallest in the country, and access to health, education, roads, telephones, electricity, water supply and sanitation services is very limited. Poverty in Nepal has strong correlation with socioeconomic variables such as caste, occupation, sector of employment, education level, composition of income and family size. Social discrimination plays a significant role in keeping the most disadvantaged people in rural Nepal poor and marginalized. Those who are living in poverty and are socially excluded are doubly vulnerable.

The objective of this study conducted by RRN Community Support Programme (CSP)-II is to assess the underlying causes of poverty and underdevelopment. CSP-II is funded by UKaid and implemented by RRN. During the course of this study, series of field visits, interviews and interactions were conducted with RRN staffs, representatives of district and line agencies, political party leaders and beneficiaries in the project districts. I hope this report will be a useful document for all development partners and agencies for conducting poverty related research and will contribute significantly to improve local governance.

I would like to commend the entire RRN CSP-II Project team for their pioneering effort. Particularly I would like to thank Netra Timsina, Kulchandra Dahal, Seema Luitel, Som Rai, Nirjala Panday and the entire field staff for supporting the study and finalising the document.

Thank You.

Dr. Prabin Manandhar

Executive Director

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Support Programme (CSP) II used Underlying Cause of Poverty Analysis (UCPA) to facilitate the planning process of Village Development Committees (VDC). Its purpose was to ensure that support provided through the project critically contributed to poverty eradication and social justice. Many VDCs in the project districts have mainstreamed the use of UCPA and its findings in the planning process.

A participatory approach that favours the poor and marginalised people in development planning is new to VDCs and local level political leaders. The stakeholders, however, participated in the UCPA process with keen interest and worked towards identifying development problems in the VDCs. Many were excited about the findings and impacts of UCPA in the planning process of VDCs.

By the end of the UCPA exercise, local governments (VDC secretaries) had begun to own the tool using information extracted from the exercise to prioritise projects meant for marginalised sections and least developed areas in the VDCs. Several projects have been sanctioned and supported by VDCs based on UCPA recommendations.

The UCPA exercise has helped increase accountability of local authorities and development partners. They have been committed in developing annual plans and budgets that reflect clarity and answerability. Ever since local level political leaders and VDC secretaries started actively participating in the process of UCPA, transparency in project implementation and use of funds in many VDCs has increased significantly. The parties involved have become morally bound to use information from UCPA and apply findings to all stakeholders' benefit. The UCPA exercise has strengthened coordination between local governments and NGOs in their joint commitment to development projects. In many VDCs, where UCPA was implemented, NGOs and INGOs working at the local level were asked by VDC secretaries to focus on areas of priority identified by the UCPA exercise.

Today, the conventional outlook towards development being focused only on infrastructure has changed and political leaders have

acknowledged and accepted the concept of social dimensions in development. They now regard development of human resource as equally important for development of VDCs. This phenomenon has had positive impacts on the poor and marginalised people, as allocation of funds for their training and empowerment has now increased. The change in people's mindset, as a result, has led to increased budgets for human resource development in VDCs where UCPA was implemented.

Lessons learnt from the implementation of UCPA during CSP II are worth noting for enhanced project work in other VDCs. The lessons could be adopted by regulations and guidelines developed under Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) and Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP), which could strengthen the implementation of the participatory approach. UCPA's "scaling up" and "scaling out" lessons will also help in monitoring the use of resources/funds and promote good governance both on the parts of the local government and political parties' governing mechanisms. The most significant impact of UCPA is that it holds stakeholders accountable to their actions, particularly those concerning the poor and marginalised social groups in VDCs.

ABBREVIATION

CAC	Citizen Awareness Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Community Support Programme
DAG	Disadvantaged Group
DDC	District Development Committee
IPC	Integrated Planning Committee
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Programme
LSGA	Local Self Governance Act
MCPM	Minimum Conditions Performance Measurements
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPR	Nepalese Rupees
RRN	Rural Reconstruction Nepal
UCPA	Underlying Causes of Poverty Analysis
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCF	Ward Citizen Forums

1. INTRODUCTION

Community Support Programme (CSP) is one of the core projects of RRN. It was originally designed in June 2003 to support the immediate development needs of the poor and excluded people, who were affected by the armed conflict in 16 districts of Far Western, Mid Western, and Eastern Regions of Nepal.

The second phase of CSP, which started in April 2010, is now being implemented in 19 districts by RRN. The overall goal of CSP II is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion in the districts. Three more districts, Dhanusha, Mahottari, and Sarlahi, Central Region, were added to the 16 districts during CSP II.

RRN-CSP II's purpose is to improve the access of poor and excluded groups to community based development opportunities. Some sections of the society are deprived of development interventions because of their gender, caste, ethnicity, and geographic settlement status. By improving their economic status and engaging them in development activities, the programme aims to empower the poor and excluded people through their increased access to basic services.

RRN-CSP II employs community mobilisation, skill building and use of local resources, inclusive project delivery, public auditing, joint monitoring and do-no-harm approaches to implement the programme. Collaboration and partnership with government line agencies and other relevant stakeholders have contributed to improving accountability of the concerned agencies towards the poor and excluded in general and women in particular.

The project has used UCPA to facilitate VDC planning process that contributes to poverty eradication. Many of the VDCs in the project districts have mainstreamed the use of the UCPA tool in their planning process.

The report consolidates the reflection and lessons learnt of UCPA's effectiveness under CSP II, which was facilitated by RRN-CSP since 2010. The document begins with a theoretical discussion on poverty and

development primarily focusing on the underlying causes of poverty followed by discussions on the tools used in UCPA. A section is devoted to the process of orienting the tools and techniques of UCPA to VDC authorities and political actors who shape the planning and budgeting process for VDCs. The document also captures the level of ownership of local government and political parties towards the UCPA process and makes a strong case for the usefulness of the tool and techniques. While presenting the findings of how VDCs have mainstreamed the use of UCPA in their planning process, the report importantly highlights the possibility of the “scaling up” and “scaling out” process in development planning at the local level.

Community Support Programme and Local Development

Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) 1999 and Local Self Governance Rule 1999 have been guiding frameworks for Nepal's local development and give rights and responsibilities to local governments and other local development actors to engage in local development. Although representatives have not been in local governance over 15 years, the Government of Nepal has come up with an alternative arrangement for local governance that enables basic services to be delivered at the local level under LSGA.

Community Support Programme was initially designed to support the immediate development needs of the poor and excluded people affected by Nepal's armed conflict. After 2007, the project was continued with some modifications in implementing mechanisms when it was linked to the local government. CSP's second phase, which started in April 2010, is being implemented in coordination with the local government and brings lessons and good practices to LGCDP and local development grants mobilization guidelines/Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development.

The Government of Nepal started LGCDP as a sector-wide approach to development in 2008 with the support of the donor's consortium funding. LGCDP aims to improve local governance by improving accountability and transparency of the local government. It adopts a participatory approach wherein the engagement of local people in planning and implementing development activities are viewed as major aspects of inclusive and democratic local development. RRN has

implemented CSP's activities largely in coordination with LGCDP and MoFALD. UCPA has been an integral part in improving local governance and will be a useful tool.

MoFALD has developed a list of guidelines for the implementation of a number of programmes including annual plans at the local level. VDC grant mobilisation, social protection, public hearing, DAG, and Dalit/Janajati coordination committee guidelines are some examples. UCPA is useful in implementing these guidelines in participatory ways.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

A variety of methods and tools were used in order to prepare the document. Desk reviews of past documents related to UCPA were carried out. From the review of RRN's guidelines and reports on UCPA, extensive ideas were incorporated into the document. The report includes reviews of project documents and quarterly reports of the project.

RRN has been active in 204 VDCs in 19 districts across Nepal during CSP II. Out of 204 VDCs, UCPA has been conducted in 142 VDCs. A total of 13 VDCs and seven districts, Ilam (Chulachuli), Jhapa (Lakhanpur), Morang (Budhanagar and Govindapur), Siraha (Hanuman Nagar and Gamariya Maheshpur), Dhanusha (Laxminiwas, Benga Dabar, and Dhanushadham), Banke (Kohalpur and Ban Kataiya), and Salyan (Sarpani and Phalabang) were visited during the study to survey the extent to which the use of UCPA had been mainstreamed in the VDC planning process (Annex 1). Information on the use of UCPA and its process was gathered through interactions with RRN local staff, VDC secretaries, and other related personnel. Interviews and discussions with local political leaders added an interesting dimension to the study. Members of Ward Citizen Forums (WCF) and Citizen Awareness Centres (CAC) actively participated in discussions and shared experiences and lessons particularly pertaining to the usefulness of UCPA in the local planning process. LGCDP's social mobilisers and CAC facilitators participated in all the VDCs' interactions. Representatives of women's networks formed under CACs (LGCDP and CSP) and involved in the UCPA exercise took part in group discussions and shared impressions and experiences on the UCPA tools and techniques. Local school teachers also took part; they provided useful information and shared their feelings and experiences on UCPA.

Seven focus group discussions with Dalits, women's groups, poorest of the poor and ethnic minorities were organised to gather their perspectives on the use of UCPA, as they had also been part of the ward level UCPA exercise.

3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL BASE IN ANALYSING CAUSES OF POVERTY

The different actors of development, state or non-state, have different perspectives in understanding the causes of poverty and underdevelopment. Some seek technical solutions in eradicating poverty, while some argue that poverty is a structural issue existing in contemporary society within political, economic, and social bounds (SAAPE, 2013; Banerjee and Duflo, 2011; Sachs, 2005). The RRN-CSP project's perspective is that poverty is a structural problem and its underlying causes can be understood through various assessment tools during the implementation of project activities.

The underlying causes of poverty are the inter-linkages and combination of political, social, economic, and cultural elements of society or the sociopolitical structure of society. The sociopolitical structure nurtures and perpetuates poverty at systemic levels (Rehnema, 2000). The structural issue is rooted at all levels, both national and local (Sachs, 2012).

A widespread perception exists that poverty is not confined merely to settlements inhabited by the poor, no individual becomes poor due to his/her personal reasons and nobody is deprived of his/her rights or his/her free will. Political, social, economic and cultural reasons prevail that make people poor or keep certain groups or classes lagging behind (Wagner, 2002). Such reasons are created, nurtured, and expanded by a number of factors such as state structures and operational policies, social structures (norms and values), lack of access to economic opportunities, distribution system, and the environment a person lives in (Dreze and Sen, 2013).

It is a well established fact that until and unless the causes of poverty are critically understood, analysed and addressed, the desired impact of

development programmes cannot be achieved. In order to analyse causes that lie at various levels and figure out potential measures to address them, Katherine et al (2005) categorises the causes of poverty into three categories:

- i) Immediate Causes of Poverty,
- ii) Intermediate Causes of Poverty, and
- iii) Underlying Causes of Poverty.

Factors that are directly related to the life and death of people are included under immediate causes. For example, malnutrition, diseases, or natural disasters. Such causes can be directly seen and felt and must be identified and addressed immediately. Simply addressing them, however, is not enough to eradicate poverty.

The intermediate causes of poverty are directly related to the wellbeing of people. The causes focus on the forces that compel people to act on their needs. It emphasises on lack of access to basic services (health, education, employment, skills, etc). Most development activities, which are being carried out, attempt to address these intermediate causes.

The underlying causes of poverty particularly focus on aspects such as why intermediate causes still exist despite development interventions being made on a regular basis for so many years. Persistent poverty and inequality despite continued attempts to counter both poses some critical questions to development actors. The questions are: why are the majority of people poor? Why do the majority of people lack access to resources for their livelihoods and why are they deprived of such access? Why are the majority deprived of basic services such as health, education, and employment? Why are state mechanisms or political processes not accountable to people? Why does social discrimination such as caste and gender continue to exist? All these questions are directly related to the systems, policies, rules and norms that are deeply rooted in society and govern us at the local and national levels. The questions are largely related to political, economic, and social structures and form the basis for the following inequities:

- The inclusion of some groups and classes and the exclusion of others.
- Formulation of policies that are consistent with the interests of certain

groups that create a condition whereby certain groups have monopoly over power.

- The social and cultural legitimisation of behaviour that is discriminatory and unjust.

By addressing the underlying causes of poverty, we ensure that access to livelihood opportunities for the poor, deprived, vulnerable and excluded people is increased. Poverty cannot be viewed only in terms of the absence of materialistic wellbeing but also in terms of powerlessness. A need to identify the economic and social policies of the state that are not in favour of the poor is strongly felt. In other words, we can address the causes of poverty by promoting the status of the poor, deprived, vulnerable and excluded people and creating an enabling environment for them to live life with dignity (Collier, 2012).

4. PARTICIPATORY TOOLS USED IN UCPA

RRN has provided orientations on 17 participatory tools and techniques on the use of UCPA to VDC secretaries, WCF and CAC members, LGCDP facilitators, CSO network representatives, and local political party representatives who are represented in the Integrated Planning Committees of VDCs. A brief description of the tools and techniques used in UCPA is presented as follows:

i) VDC Power Mapping

The power mapping exercise provides a general idea about the geographical location, settlement patterns, available natural resources, economic opportunities, and power centres of the area concerned. VDCs in Nepal are regarded as units for planning and programme implementation at the local level. They are regarded as units to analyse power dynamics by UCPA, as power dynamics play an important role in the planning process of VDCs. The objective of the VDC power mapping is to identify the power centres, sections of the population utilising more resources, as well as geographical areas inhabited by the poor, deprived and excluded classes and nationalities. Information received through VDC power mapping have been used as the basis for identifying gaps and prioritising development activities in deprived locations and sections of society.

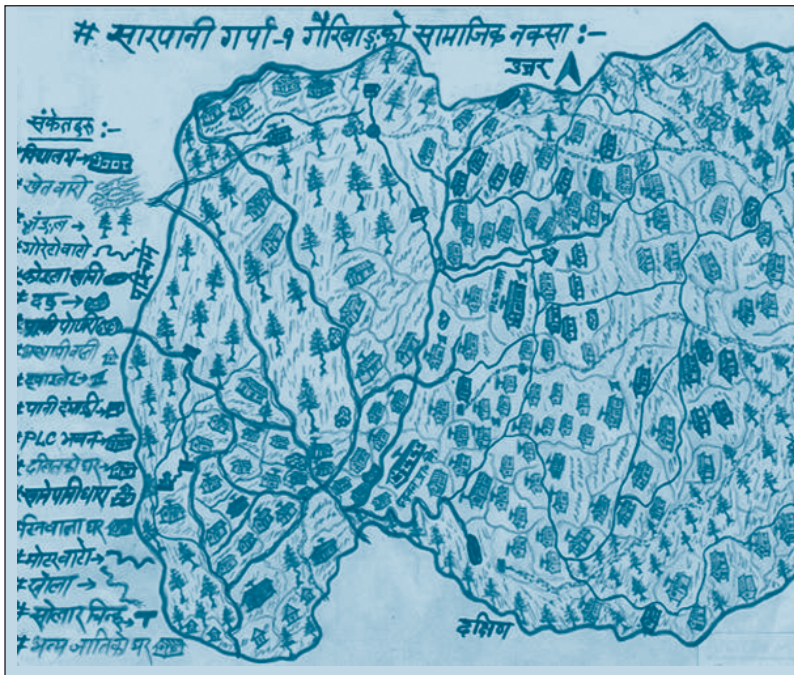
ii) Social and Resource Maps

Social and resource maps are tools that are used to present the physical condition of VDCs such as settlements, roads, schools, health posts, service centres, available natural resources such as land, water, forest, minerals, etc. The maps were sketched by participants from the local level target groups.

The physical condition of villages is illustrated with pictures, which encourages all participants to actively take part in analysing

information. The process helps in clarifying people’s perceptions by strengthening their knowledge on the village. The tool can be used to monitor and identify allocated resources for various development projects at the VDC level. Sample of a social map is given below.

Figure 1: social and resource map prepared by participants in Sarpani Garpa - 1, Salyan



iii) History or Timeline

Historical aspects of any settlement/village are important and must be considered when planning development programmes and envisioning projects for the future. Lessons from the past are extremely useful in shaping the future. For this purpose, the participants of UCPA identified economic, social, political, cultural and natural events that had had positive or negative impacts on their villages or settlements. Historical understanding helps in building up positive lessons and reducing the negative impacts of natural or man-made events.

An important objective of this exercise was to make people realise that they can play a crucial role in the positive transformation of society through sincere and concerted efforts. It is imperative in convincing individuals from marginalised groups that they have the capacity to influence society and contribute to social change, thereby raising their confidence and ensuring productivity.

iv) Class or Wellbeing Analysis

On a general level, class or wellbeing analysis helps in understanding the strata of society in terms of poverty and discrimination. In particular, the exercise is used to identify the households under extreme poverty and thereby focuses on the empowerment of the group helping them to “come out” of the poverty trap.

Households in a certain village differ in terms of economic prosperity, social recognition, and access to decision making. The factors affect their strategies towards how they desire to earn their livelihoods and how their level of dignity is developed in society.

The analysis was conducted with the participation of local people using local indicators such as assets they own, jobs they hold, and availability of food from their own production.

v) Caste and Ethnicity Analysis

Caste and ethnicity analysis helps in visualising the distribution of households in a particular VDC or ward based on castes and ethnicities. The tool helps identify Dalit and other marginalised groups and their geographic distribution in VDCs and wards so that prioritised households at the local level can be supported through local development interventions.

vi) Dependency Analysis

Dependency analysis focuses on power relationships in a particular society. The purpose of the tool is to find the level of dependency of different groups defined by their castes and classes. Moreover, the exercise looks at and identifies situations where injustice and inequality are being practiced. The analysis helps to bring about social transformation of justice and equality through appropriate strategies that aim to provide people from different classes and castes sense of

dignity and respect for themselves. The dependency of the poor and marginalised on powerful social groups creates an exploitative social structure that needs to be broken down, if development interventions are to bring equity and justice in society.

vii) Exploitation Analysis

Exploitation manifests in different forms and is rooted in structures such as caste, class, gender, religion, language, and region. Effective implementation of programmes related to social change can be ensured if development actors and target groups are aware of the exploitative social structures of discrimination, misbehaviour, injustice, and domination. The exercise helps to understand the existing structures of different forms of exploitations and their level of severity. Poverty in a particular society is the outcome of such exploitative forms of social structure.

viii) Loan and Interest Analysis

In rural Nepal, one of the most serious causes of poverty is the high interest rate on loans. Poor people take loans to send family members abroad for labour work and household necessities such as food, health services, and rituals. Most of their earnings are used to pay interest, “trapping” the poor into the cycle of loan and debt, and eventually the loss of property.

ix) Wage Analysis

Wage is the only means of livelihood for poor families in rural communities. Most wage earners are exploited because of the absence of formal mechanisms that determine wages. The landless and agriculture labourers are dependent on medium and rich households for their livelihoods. Often, fixed wages or work schedules are not present. The low wages compared to prices of commodities for basic needs is inexcusable and demonstrates a deeply exploitative social reality. Moreover, gender discrimination puts women at an even more disadvantaged position, as in many rural areas women get paid less than men even for the same nature of work.

x) Wages and Goods Price Increment Analysis

The exercise aims to understand the ratio of wages the labourers receive to the price of essential goods such as food, clothes, etc. The high price of essential goods has been one of the underlying causes of poverty, as the amount of wage is meager compared to the hike in prices of essential goods and commodities.

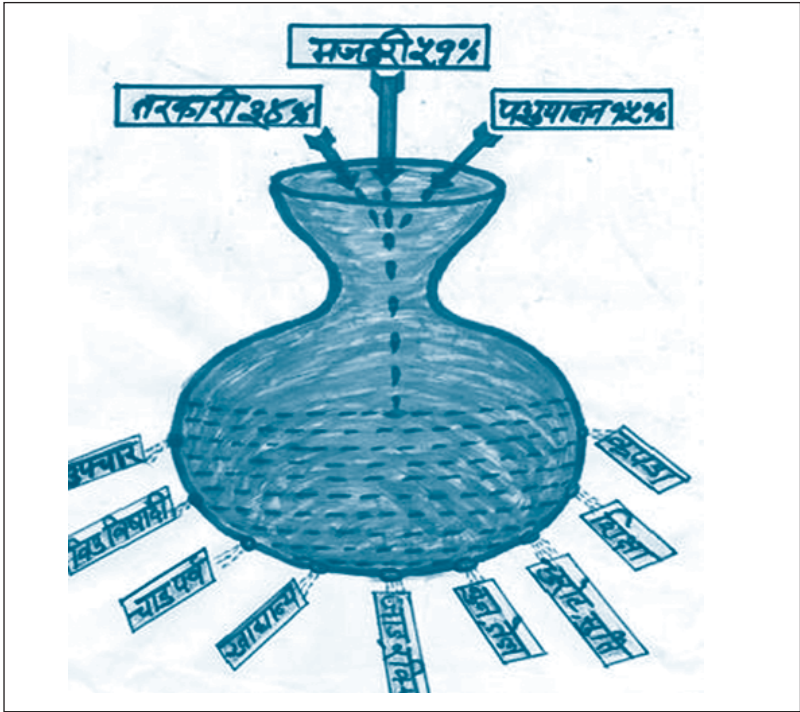
xi) Income and Expenditure Analysis

Trends and patterns of expenditure are different for each household. The purpose of expenses and the items purchased are affected by different factors such as class, caste, gender and sometimes even by location and market. Because of differences in income levels, expenses may differ from person to person. The exercise helps to uncover how the poor and disadvantaged people use their earnings to maintain livelihoods and helps to develop coping strategies for the poor in order to maintain their livelihoods and reduce unnecessary expenses.

xii) “Pot with a Hole at the Bottom” Analysis

The exercise is an important tool in the process of creating awareness and empowering the poorest of the poor. Information is gathered through income and expenditure analysis, which is then evaluated through a diagrammatical representation of the information in a pot with a hole at the bottom. The analogy of the wasted water relates to wasted expenses following unplanned or haphazard spending. The activity helps in avoiding unnecessary and extravagant expenses of a household often influenced by social malaise. The main objective of the analysis is to create awareness about the best ways to utilise available resources.

Figure 2: A sample of a “pot with a whole at the bottom” analysis created by participants



xiii) Women's Mobility Analysis

Women constitute more than 50 per cent of the total population and play an important role in bringing about change and transformation in society. Until and unless meaningful participation of women is ensured, desired changes are unlikely to materialise.

The objective of the analysis is to end discrimination to which women are subjected and ensure the meaningful participation of women in decision making processes. Mobility is one of the most important factors that affect women's consciousness and capacity to engage in public affairs. Encouraging women to engage in various public affairs at the local level would build their confidence and capacity to influence decision making processes.

xiv) Women's Life History

The exercise aims to bring the success stories of women's struggles into the open. It is important to highlight the success of women who have fought for their rights and gained access to their rights. Such cases could be inspirational for other women campaigning for women equality and justice in their communities.

xv) VDC Budget Analysis

The VDC allocates budgets every year for different aspects of development, both infrastructure and human resource development. Ministry of Local Development has developed guidelines for allocating funds to different sociopolitical causes including the empowerment of Dalits, ethnic groups, women, children, people with disability, and other minority groups. The exercise helps in monitoring the allocation and implementation of budgets at the local level and accountability of local authorities, checking whether commitments made in annual budgeting and planning are implemented or not.

xvi) Inclusiveness of Local Organisation Analysis

This exercise analyses representativeness and inclusiveness in the local level public institutions, both at government and non-government levels. VDC, local health post, agriculture and veterinary service centres are government agencies at the local level and different kinds of user groups, clubs and committees are non-governmental institutions. Understanding the inclusiveness and representativeness of the local institutions helps in increasing the access of poor and marginalised people to local institutions.

xvii) Seasonal Calendar

Preparing a seasonal calendar helps keep track of activities carried out by communities throughout the year. The method is used to determine available time for daily schedules, agriculture and income generating work, identification of the coldest and hottest months, festival time, etc. The information is relevant in making appropriate interventions in the agriculture sector and helps in planning other development activities given the time and availability of local people.

5. ORIENTATION ON USING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES BY VDCs

RRN organised a three to five-day orientation to enable participants to carry out UCPA in its project VDCs. Participants constituted representatives of WCFs (political party representatives) and VDC officials including VDC Secretary, representatives of different CSOs working at the VDC level such as women's networks, indigenous people's networks, and representatives of Dalit communities. Three to five representatives (in most cases three representatives, but in some five) from each ward attended a three to five-day workshop/training on UCPA. The main objective was to involve local level decision makers, rights' activists, development facilitators, and local government authorities in identifying the underlying causes of poverty, particularly focusing on structural causes at the local level. The exercise helps prioritise development projects that address the need of the poor and marginalised sections of society.

On the first day of training, participants were provided an orientation on the tools and techniques for analysis. A total of 17 participatory tools were introduced to the participants.

On the second and third days¹, the respective representatives of the wards used the tools and techniques on a diverse group of people. VDC power mapping, social mapping, income and expenditure analysis, historical account, seasonal calendar, loan and interest rate analysis, analysis of relationship, exploitative structures, and analysis of "pot with a hole" were among the major tools that citizens at the ward level observed and used in the exercises.

On the fourth day, ward level facilitators came together and presented the findings of their wards. In most cases, VDC secretaries participated in the presentation. The ward level analysis identified many priority projects to be implemented by VDCs.

Finally, maps prepared and analysis carried out were integrated into one comprehensive document. One copy has been handed over to the VDC and one copy is retained at respective RRN offices.

The orientation explained through steps:

- Step 1 RRN organises a meeting with the VDC Secretary.
- Step 2 VDC secretary calls a meeting with representatives of WCF, CAC, CSO networks, and political parties to discuss the dates, process, and schedule of RRN-UCPA staff.
- Step 3 The meeting identifies at least three representatives from each ward in an inclusive manner (a few more key individuals who could contribute to the process are identified by the VDC Secretary selecting more than 27 participants). RRN staff observes and facilitates the process.
- Step 4 **Day 1.** RRN provides a one-day orientation on the tools and techniques of UCPA to all ward representatives at the VDC level (RRN staff participate as facilitators).
- Step 5 **Day 2 and 3.** The representatives go to their respective wards and carry out UCPA exercise for two days (RRN staff observe and facilitate).
- Step 6 **Day 4.** All ward representatives gather at VDC focal point and present their findings (RRN staff observe and facilitate).
- Step 7 **Day 5.** The representatives integrate the ward level information for VDC use (RRN staff observe and facilitate the process).
- Step 8 VDCs use the findings to plan and budget development projects.

1. In some cases, ward level exercises were carried out only for one day. In most cases, the analysis was completed in two days.

6. MAINSTREAMING THE USE OF UCPA IN PROJECT VDCs

i) Reflection on Tools, Techniques, and Approaches

According to feedback received from participants, UCPA tools and techniques learned from RRN's training helped implement the VDC Grant Guidelines (issued by MoFALD). The UCPA is in line with the grant guidelines (Narendra Pokharel, VDC Secretary, Govindapur VDC, Morang District). The participant shared that the tools for UCPA were also used to raise awareness among poor and marginalised groups. After the UCPA orientation, women's networks asserted that the budget allocated for women should be spent for women's issues and not infrastructure; it was shared that the tendency is for the budget to be spent on infrastructure, irrelevant to the needs of the target groups, instead of being spent on women's issues and marginalized groups.

Hari Maya Upreti, Govindapur VDC (member of VDC programme planning and represents women's network) pointed out that the UCPA exercise correctly identified disaster vulnerable points in the VDC and helped in developing the local disaster risk reduction plan. Safe places for shelter in case of floods and other disasters were identified. She also shared that the exercise on women's mobility was useful in understanding the importance of women's participation in decision making and economic activities. The findings of the analysis is that very few women in the VDCs participated in decision making processes and an equally few number were engaged in formal economic activities within the VDCs.

The approaches and methods of the use of UCPA proved to be extremely important in understanding the causes of poverty in the villages of target groups. It also helped gauge aspects such as resource availability, resource gaps, and priority areas in project VDCs. According to Kanaiya Lal Rajbanshi, member, VDC plan preparation committee and president, Nepali Congress Party, Govindapur VDC, Morang District, the

disaster vulnerability analysis was quite fruitful in making interventions through the budget of VDCs.

ii) Level of Ownership by VDC Secretaries and Local Political Parties

An interaction meeting was held at the VDC office with the VDC Secretary and political party representatives who were given UCPA training in Govindapur VDC, Morang District. The representatives were also members of the VDC programme development committee. During the interaction, local leaders of political parties stated that they would consider the context analysis that was carried out in the UCPA exercise 10 months ago and information from the exercise would be incorporated into the programme development process before the upcoming VDC council in January 2014.

In Buddhanagar VDC, Morang District, the UCPA training was held about two and half years ago. After the UCPA exercise, two VDC councils were organised. Members of Integrated Planning Committee (IPC), who received the UCPA training, mentioned that information and reflection on the UCPA exercise was extremely useful for the VDC's planning process, as it had generated a clear picture of the communities and locations that the VDC's budget should focus on. UCPA has been used as a guideline by the VDC authorities to allocate funds for marginalised groups.

Secretary, Lakhanpur VDC, Jhapa District said, "Although the VDC's annual programme was always developed after consultation at the tole and ward level, the UCPA exercise has provided us with skills and knowledge to analyse the contents in-depth and it has helped the poor and marginalised people to come to the forefront and claim their development rights." According to him, the UCPA has been both a process and tool for empowerment of the poor and marginalised people. He sees the possibilities of including the tools of UCPA in the government's guidelines for local level planning, if the recommendations from the VDCs go to the DDC and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development.

In Siraha District, the UCPA exercise was the initiating factor in enhancing the quality of services of the VDC. Ram Ashis Mindwar, Secretary, Hanuman Nagar VDC, Siraha District said that UCPA was

extremely useful in enhancing the overall performance of the VDC, as it has been ranked above the Minimum Conditions Performance Measurements (MCPM) by MoFALD. This year, the VDC has received NPR. 200 thousand additional grants from the ministry as a reward for tasks accomplished. Since the projects in the VDC were selected based on the UCPA exercise, people's participation was high during the project's implementation. In addition to the funds of the VDC, the local community contributed both in cash and kind to the development projects.

Deepak Yadav, political leader, Dhanushadham VDC, Dhanusha District, participated in the UCPA exercise in April 2012. He has been a member of IPC. He shared that the UCPA exercise has worked as a common platform for all political parties in the VDC and allowed them to work together on development activities. After the UCPA exercise, consensus was reached in identifying and selecting development projects in the VDC. The exercise has also increased transparency in the selection and implementation of development projects. He opined that all development projects should begin with the UCPA exercise.

Giridhari Prasad Pant, Secretary, Sarpani Garpa VDC, Salyan District, expressed that the UCPA exercise had been extremely useful in prioritising projects in the VDCs based on real needs. The UCPA has drastically reduced the chances of control of projects by leaders of political parties. Before the UCPA exercise, projects from the VDC budget tended to be influenced by political interests. Political party representatives at the VDC level agreed with the VDC Secretary that the possibility of local political leaders manoeuvring VDC funds had been drastically reduced. They added that UCPA had been an important tool in bringing all parties together and had helped reach consensus regarding development activities in the VDC. The secretary further said that UCPA had helped people develop the project at the tole level by themselves and empowered them to claim rights for services available from local development agencies and the local government.

Indra Bahadur Basnet, Phalbang VDC, Salyan District, shared that UCPA had provided a tremendous amount of knowledge in the form of tools and techniques through which identification of the causes of poverty and prioritisation of interventions had taken place. He said his analytical capacity had been strengthened through the UCPA exercise as he understood that people became poor not only due to lack of money, but

also through lack of power, lack of access to resources and services, and difficult geographical terrains. The political party representative of Phalbang VDC said the information gathered during the UCPA exercise was useful for them to understand the demography and status of development in their VDC.

Kohalpur VDC, Banke District, had allocated NPR. 15,000 for the UCPA exercise. Amar Khatri, Secretary, Kohalpur VDC, Banke District said, "After I attended the orientation regarding UCPA tools and techniques, I felt the exercise was important for VDCs and decided to contribute NPR. 15,000 to facilitate the process at the ward level in partnership with RRN." He added, "Before UCPA, we did not have exact statistics of the population and we had no information about marginalised social groups and toles. Information collected through UCPA have given us a clear picture of the VDC's status on poverty, marginalisation, resource availability, and potential areas that need to be prioritised when investing the VDC's budget."

Jayaram Chaudhari, Secretary, Bankatuwa VDC, Banke District, mentioned that information extracted and priorities determined from the UCPA exercise had been jointly owned by the VDCs and the political party leaders at the VDC level, which had helped develop common understanding between VDC and political party representatives in the VDC planning process. It had also prevented vested interests of representatives to divert the VDC fund toward other directions than the areas of priority.

iii) Reflections on the Use of UCPA in VDC Annual and Long-term Plans

In 12 VDCs that the study covered, it was found that priorities identified by the UCPA exercise were later reflected in their annual and long-term plans. Some VDCs have also used the UCPA tools and techniques in regular annual planning processes, particularly in tole and ward consultations to identify priority projects. MoFALD has issued guidelines for the local planning process which demands the adoption of participatory tools and techniques during consultations with local people.

Narendra Pokharel, Secretary, Govindapur VDC, Morang District said, "UCPA tools and techniques seems to be directly linked to the VDC Grant

Guidelines that have been given by Ministry of Local Development for the local planning process. UCPA has been an extremely useful tool in identifying relevant projects in terms of transparency through meaningful participation of local people and appears to support the effective implementation of the grant guidelines.”

The UCPA exercise had identified some relevant projects and VDCs had provided budgets to implement them. The following projects were selected based on UCPA findings for the fiscal year 2012/2013:

Women friendly community building, ward no. 1, Citizen Awareness Centre. UCPA identified the project and the VDC provided the fund along with other partners.

Women awareness programme particularly with a focus on violence against women. The programme was approved by the VDC as a case of sexual assault by a group where the victim was a Dalit woman. Violence against women has been a serious issue identified in reference to the sexual assault during the UCPA exercise.

Disaster vulnerable areas were identified and the VDC decided to allocate funds for the next fiscal year to help build an embankment at Bakraha River from the point at which the water flow had broken the year before.

In Buddhanagar VDC, Morang District, the UCPA exercise prioritised the construction of toilets in the Dalit tole, an initiative supported by the VDC. Women empowerment analysis carried out through the UCPA exercise has helped in developing a consensus that the budget allocated for women’s empowerment in the VDC should be invested solely for the original purpose and not for other activities as was done prior to UCPA. After UCPA, the budget allocated for women has been expended for programmes such as women’s education, awareness on violence against women, etc.

Badri Kamat, CAC Facilitator, Buddhanagar VDC, Morang District (he is also a member of IPC) said that before the UCPA exercise, the VDC budget used to be allocated randomly, particularly with the influence of local level political leaders. But after the UCPA exercise, the VDC has started to invest in identified priority areas (based on urgent needs). UCPA also analysed current practices of selecting representatives for the VDC planning process and found that a systematic approach was not

adopted; political parties and VDC authorities selected their relatives or acquaintances. After the UCPA exercise, women groups and networks questioned the VDC authorities about the criteria used for selecting women representatives for VDC planning. The women networks made interventions demanding that a fixed criterion for the selection process of representatives for VDC budgeting and planning be in place and the trend of nominating representatives close to political leaders had to come to an end. After the intervention, the VDC developed a criterion whereby individuals would be selected based on capacity. The women's network met the set criteria and it was represented in the VDC planning process.

Following the intervention by the women's network, the VDC developed set of criteria for selecting other representatives from various social groups such as Dalits, women, and ethnic and minority groups. Before the use of UCPA, user committees were also dominated by the elite, for example, members from ward no. 1 were from ward no. 9 user committee. Mismanagement of projects and budgets was high before the use of UCPA. But now such disproportionate representation no longer exists and level of awareness regarding such unjust occurrences has increased considerably after the budget analysis exercise was carried out.

Some examples of the UCPA exercise in Buddhanagar VDC:

- A need for a school in Rishidev Dalit tole was identified by the UCPA exercise. The VDC suggested that the DDC be appealed for funding and consequently the construction of Shree Ram Primary School was supported.
- UCPA identified the lack of a common venue in the VDC where locals could come together for meetings. Moreover, the VDC did not have an office of its own, as it had been destroyed during Nepal's conflict period. Thus, recognizing the need, the VDC included a budget for the construction of the Peace Promotion Building in its annual plan and it contributed NPR. 50,000; DDC contributed NPR. 200,000; RRN, NPR. 428,000; and parliamentary fund NPR. 37,000 for the project.
- Since the health post in the VDC had become dilapidated, discussions during UCPA prioritised the renovation of the health post. The VDC included the project in their annual plan and allocated funds for its renovation.

- The UCPA exercise had recommended that three CACs be established in the toles inhabited by people of marginalized social groups. The VDC with LGCDP fund established and supported three CACs, namely Pragati Nagarik Sachetana Kendra, Rishidev Tole, Jhatiyai; Muslim Nagarik Sachetana Kendra, ward no. 9; and Mushahari Nagarik Sachetana Kendra, Mushar Tole.

Tek Bahadur Karki, Secretary, Lakhanpur VDC, Jhapa District, shared that the VDC had funded some projects prioritised by the UCPA exercise. They are outlined as follows:

- The VDC funded a community building in ward no. 3, Lakhanpur, as prioritised by the UCPA exercise. CAC has coordinated the construction of the community building. The need of the building was felt for the purpose of a fixed and common venue for meetings and interactions in the VDC. The VDC provided land for the community building.
- UCPA also prioritised the construction of a road that would enable people to access the community building. The VDC provided funding for the road construction.
- During the UCPA, women's empowerment was prioritised and the issue of 33 per cent of women's inclusion in the decision making process received special focus and identification. It was discussed as an important issue that needs to be addressed by the VDC as part of its responsibility towards social accountability. The VDC has now allocated funds for women's training.

In Chulachuli VDC, Ilam District, UCPA identified some projects on priority basis and the VDC has allocated funds for the following projects:

- A culvert that links ward no. 1 and 2, Chulachuli VDC. In the two wards, the majority of the households are inhabited by Dalits and they have no access to roads. Based on the UCPA recommendations, VDC has provided NPR. 100 thousands for road construction.
- An access road to ward no. 2 (Dalit hamlet) was also prioritised by the UCPA exercise and thus the VDC allocated NPR. 100 thousands for filling the road with gravel.

Hanuman Nagar VDC, Siraha District, has allocated funds for the following projects based on the priorities set by the UCPA exercise:

- The need was identified during social mapping as Hanuman Nagar High School is surrounded by a pond and, during the rainy season, water overflows through the entrance gate. It obstructs the mobility of students and teachers to and from the school. During the rainy season, many students, primarily children, face difficulties in crossing the flooded roads. The UCPA exercise had identified the issue as one of the most urgent to be addressed in the VDC, which allocated funds for the culvert construction project. Now constructed, the Narahaiya culvert has eased the mobility of students and teachers. It also serves as a medium to transport agricultural products to the market from villages. Details of the project were prepared jointly by the VDC Secretary and WCF.
- The UCPA exercise also identified the construction of a road linking Mahespur and Sitapur as a priority project. Sitapur VDC, a neighbouring VDC of Hanuman Nagar VDC allocated NPR. 100,000 for the project, although the UCPA was carried out in the latter.
- The Jamuwa irrigation dam partially covers the command area of four VDCs in Siraha District. During the UCPA exercise, a need for a permanent dam was identified as an urgent action to be taken by the VDC. Every year, the VDC would allocate Rs. 50,000 for a temporary dam. The VDC allocated funds for the irrigation project and approached the DDC for supplementary fund. The DDC has supported the project based on the VDC's request. Now the irrigation system is functioning well.
- UCPA also prioritised maternity health services in the VDC, as one of the most critical facilities needed for women during childbirth. The VDC has allocated NPR. 160,000 and the district hospital has allocated NPR. 50,000 to expand the maternity facility in Bhaluwai Health Post, Hanuman Nagar VDC.

Gamariya Maheshpur VDC has also mainstreamed the use of UCPA findings in its annual budgeting. The VDC allocated funds to the following projects based on the UCPA exercise:

- The VDC allocated NPR. 100,000 for Sitapur Maheshpur culvert based on UCPA's identification of mobility problem experienced by

students when attending school. Difficulties in transporting agricultural products from the villages to markets (Mirchaiya) were also felt.

- The VDC allocated funds to install tube wells for drinking water facilities in Dalit villages. The tube wells were distributed among five groups with five members each. The UCPA exercise has identified drinking water facilities as an urgent need of the Dalit people in the village.
- The exercise on women's mobility has directed the VDC to allocate funds for capacity building of women including development of income generation skills. The VDC has allocated NPR. 115 thousand during the last fiscal year for women's cause.

Laxminiwas and Benga Dabar VDCs, Dhanusha District, have allocated funds for the project prioritised by the UCPA exercise:

- Sanitation in some villages of Laxmi Niwas VDC was identified by UCPA as an urgent problem that needed to be addressed and, as a result, the VDC allocated funds to build 16 toilets for the poor and marginalised households (Dalit village). Support for the construction of two wells for drinking water facilities in Dalit wards no. 1 and 9 was also provided by the VDC.
- The construction of a community building in ward no. 4, Laxmi Niwas VDC, was supported by VDC funds based on the recommendation made by the UCPA exercise.

Dhanushadham VDC, Dhanusha District, allocated funds for projects based on the priorities identified by the UCPA exercise. The following projects were prioritised by the UCPA:

- Janata Primary School and Janaki Niwas Primary School in Dhanushadham VDC are highly populated by Dalit students. Both the schools have very poor facilities. The UCPA exercise recommended that the schools be given some support from the VDC, which later allocated funds for the school building and furniture during the annual budgeting session.
- A small rivulet blocked mobility of four wards (ward no. 6, 7, 8, and 9) in Dhanushadham VDC. Through the social mapping exercise,

difficulties in mobility in the wards due to the rivulet, was identified as a major problem faced by the households. The VDC, DDC, and the community jointly contributed to the construction of Shaharsha culvert accessing the village.

- One of the problems identified during the UCPA exercise was the non-availability of a common place through which the VDC could provide basic services; its building had been destroyed during the conflict period. A community building for common use was recommended by the UCPA exercise and the VDC allocated NPR. 250,000 for the building.

The UCPA exercise in Sarpani Garpa VDC, Salyan District, contributed greatly in mainstreaming the findings in their annual plans and programmes. After the UCPA exercise, the VDC Secretary had attended the UCPA training for all five days and visited all the wards, the VDC allocated NPR. 40,000 for the sanitation campaign as ward representatives in the UCPA team had identified unhygienic conditions as one of the major problems in the VDC. With the joint campaign of VDCs and CSOs on sanitation, 90 per cent households have begun to use toilets for defecation.

iv) Reflections on the Use of UCPA by Target Groups

A Dalit woman Rambhadevi Rishidev, Buddhanagar VDC, Morang District shared that the UCPA exercise had proved to be a tool for social change, successfully helping to implement development interventions in poor and marginalised communities. She further elaborated saying, *“We had been demanding a primary school from the VDC and DDC since a very long time. But it was only after the UCPA exercise identified our need as a priority project that the DDC provided support to build a school in our village.”*

A Dalit woman of Govindapur VDC, Morang District, expressed, *“In our village, a case of sexual assault on a woman took place and, despite the voices raised against the incident, the victim had not received justice as local elites were unwilling to take action against the culprits. But the analysis of women’s mobility and women’s life history during the UCPA exercise resurfaced issues concerning injustice in the public domain. Finally, with pressure from local authorities, NPR. 50,000 was provided as relief to the victim but the search for the culprits has still not been*

conclusive. UCPA worked as a critical tool in raising awareness regarding the rights of women in our village.”

Analysis of loan and interest rate, as one of the UCPA tools, had immediate impacts on the loan taking system in villages. Naramaya Majhi, Lakhanpur VDC, Jhapa District said, “The analysis of loan and interest rates that exists in our village appeared to be many folds higher with individual lenders as compared to the rate provided by cooperatives/savings and credit groups that are working in our village. We have started to take loans from them in order to escape from high interest rates. UCPA has been a tool for raising awareness regarding the exploitative structures in our village.”

Hanuman Nagar High School, Narahaiya, Hanuman Nagar VDC is surrounded by ponds. In the rainy season, water from the pond would overflow and flood roads, restricting the mobility of students, particularly of small children. Consequently, students would be absent from school for two to three months because of the obstruction in mobility to the school. The UCPA exercise had identified the need for the construction of a culvert as a priority project. Satyanarayan Mukhia, Mukhiya Village shared, “The culvert in the Narahaiya road has changed our life as our children now go to school throughout the year, even during the rainy season.”

Meena Gharti, Sarpani VDC, Salyan District shared, “Based on feedback from the UCPA exercise, we realised that our VDC had a problem of unhygienic conditions, and defecation in open areas had been a major cause of sanitation related diseases in the VDC. The exercise has pushed the VDC to prioritise and lead a campaign to gain “defecation free” VDC status within six months’ time. As a result, just after three months of launching the campaign, about 90 per cent households started to use toilets for defecation.”

Sita Thakur, Chairperson, CAC, Laxminiwas VDC, Dhanusha District reflects, “Wage analysis has proved to be a useful tool in understanding the wage rate discrimination between men and women. It was found that in all wards of our VDC, the rate of wage for the same work is lower for women than for men. Engagement in analysis and knowledge building has helped women in the VDC launch campaigns against wage discrimination. As a consequence, some employers have begun to pay equal wages; however, the campaign needs to be strengthened in order to eradicate the practice of wage discrimination.”

7. LESSONS LEARNT FROM UCPA EXERCISES

- Since the critical approach that favours the poor and marginalised in development planning is a new approach for the VDC and local level political leaders, they appeared to be keen on using UCPA in the local level planning process. The participants recalled the most recent exercises with relative ease, while it took some time for them to recall exercises that were carried out two to three years ago. It has been felt that follow up action is important for the institutionalisation of UCPA in the local level planning process, as it helps sustain the momentum and spirit of the UCPA exercise.
- Orientation on UCPA that was provided to political parties, influential CSOs, and individuals helps in creating a pressure group for local authorities and pushes them to use information gathered from UCPA for the preparation of VDC short-term and long-term plans. Carrying out UCPA appears to be feasible in terms of time and expenses. The UCPA exercise empowers the local community to assert their rights and enhances their capacities to plan local development activities without exhausting resources such as time and money. Reflecting on the current UCPA exercise facilitated by RRN, the cost ranges from NPR. 50 to 60 thousand and it takes three to five days for completion. According to the VDC secretaries, the findings of the UCPA are valid for three to five years as development interventions take at least three years to change current situations, assuming changes occur in a coherent manner. Reflecting on the UCPA participants' perceptions, the tools and techniques used do not seem to be complex. The participants thoroughly understood the mechanisms of tools and techniques used to identify issues and priorities for development intervention.
- The UCPA exercise increased the accountability of local authorities and other development partners and encouraged them to fully carry out their commitments set for annual plans and budgets. Since local

level political leaders and VDC secretaries have actively participated in UCPA exercises belonging to many VDC projects, the manipulation of projects has been drastically reduced. The former are bound to comply with the priorities set by the participants during UCPA, as they themselves were involved in identifying priorities. It seems people in decision making positions become morally bound to use information gathered from UCPA and they have been doing so in many VDCs, where its exercise was carried out.

- UCPA has strengthened coordination between the local government and NGOs for development projects in VDCs. In many VDCs, where UCPA was carried out, VDC secretaries asked the NGOs and INGOs working at the local level to focus on priority areas identified by the UCPA exercise. For example, in Sarpani Garpa VDC, Salyan District, NGO members working in the VDC and VDC authorities came together and declared the VDC a “defecation free zone” within three months. The VDC Secretary coordinated the campaign.
- Mainstreaming the gender issue in UCPA processes brought about outcomes that were found to be encouraging. In most cases, VDC level women’s networks had participated in the UCPA exercise helping to ensure they were able to assert their rights to VDC services and budgets, as empowerment is an important component of UCPA. In some cases, local level political women leaders have also been engaged in carrying out UCPA in their VDCs. Violence against women, access to services and budgets allocated for women’s empowerment in the VDCs, and women’s representation in the planning and decision making process at the local level have been major concerns raised by women during the UCPA process. After the exercise in Govindapur VDC, Morang District, perpetrators of violence against a Dalit woman were convicted and punished. The incident was the centre of discussion during UCPA and was followed by a plan to build up pressure on concerned authorities in bringing the culprits to justice. Moreover, before the UCPA exercise in Buddhanagar VDC, women representatives were not present in the annual VDC planning process. Now women representatives have been included in the VDC planning committee from the next round. It was found that issues regarding inclusion and representativeness were raised and highly debated. In most cases, after the UCPA exercise, VDC planning committees and user committees have been

more inclusive than in previous times. The process adopted and tools used encourage structures of decision making in local development affairs to be inclusive and gender balanced.

- The UCPA exercise has the potential to promote a common platform whereby all stakeholders can be brought together to engage in VDC development work. It appeared that in many UCPA exercises, consensus on local development was built among different groups, which reduced tension between local authorities and political parties in prioritising VDC projects.
- The UCPA exercise enhances the accountability and transparency of VDC budget planning, as it strengthens partnership in development activities. Partnership in development activities promotes accountability and transparency at multiple levels. Likewise, it also enhances the accountability of other development partners at the local level.
- The UCPA tools and techniques proved to be useful in engaging local political parties and representatives of people's organisations to critically examine development priorities in their VDCs. Some VDCs in project areas had allocated funds for the UCPA exercise, such as Kohalpur VDC, Banke District. If the need and reliability of UCPA are properly and clearly understood by VDC authorities and political party leaders, VDCs could incorporate UCPA as an integral part of their planning process to prioritise projects that would enhance development effectiveness.
- UCPA has helped change the conventional mindset of development as only concerning or focusing on infrastructure. The UCPA exercise has led to the realisation that development of human resources is equally important for sustainable development. It has also helped in the empowerment process of the poor and marginalised people, as funds become rightly allocated and invested in training and uplifting activities for the target groups. The change in mindset has increased the budget for human resource development in VDCs where UCPA was undertaken.

8. THE WAY FORWARD

- The emerging trend in development is that local government is being given more and more responsibilities to deliver basic services such as health, education, employment, food security, human resource development (empowerment), and infrastructure development, which are all related to poverty eradication, improving governance, and ensuring equality and social justice. The budget at the local level has increased by many folds in the last 10 years and continues to increase. However, local level development requires more coordinated actions between government and non-government development actors.
- Mainstreaming the use of participatory tools and techniques by the local government enhances accountability and effectiveness thereby making development interventions more effective.
- An understanding of participatory tools and techniques by the local government and political actors would help the individuals concerned reflect during the process of local level development planning on one hand and would provide space for non-state actors, mainly NGOs, to engage in development activities on the other. Lessons from the implementation of UCPA in the current phase of the project can be consolidated and scaled up to other VDC project districts. The lessons could contribute to existing regulations and guidelines that would then encourage a participatory approach in local level planning and budgeting.
- UCPA helps in developing and mobilising local human resources for local development. In many VDCs, secretaries appreciated the role played by local political parties and CSOs in identifying priorities for projects, as they lack sufficient human resource for mobilisation within the VDC system. VDC secretaries realise that until the next local election is held, the limitation of available human resource will continue to be an issue in VDCs. Exercises such as UCPA that largely accommodate local development actors such as political leaders, CSO networks, and target groups (development beneficiaries)

strengthen the capacity of local government when implemented widely.

- Since the tools and techniques used in UCPA proved to be gender friendly, if more VDCs follow the UCPA process, more gender friendly planning at the local level will take place. Nevertheless, women's representation needs to be increased in the UCPA process. If the number of women in the UCPA process is increased, more issues related to gender, women's rights, and inclusion will come to the forefront of the VDC planning process. Particularly, women facilitators would add more value in bringing gender perspectives into the UCPA and local planning process.
- "Scaling up" and "scaling out" lessons of UCPA will also help in providing a check and balance of resources and funds used and will help promote good governance both on the parts of the local government and governing mechanisms of political parties. It also holds CSOs accountable for their actions, particularly those concerning the poor and marginalised social groups in VDCs.
- UCPA proved to be a potentially useful approach that can be built upon the larger framework of LSGA and can be integrated into LGCDP in the future. UCPA as a participatory tool and technique will be helpful in implementing the various guidelines issued by MoFALD for VDCs and DDCs. One of the objectives of LGCDP is to develop a critical mass at the local level that can act as a watchdog of local development and help enhance the accountability and transparency of local government. UCPA helps in building up an approach based on critical knowledge, creating an environment where the local government and community groups can work together for community development.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1:

People's Involvement in the UCPA Documentation Process

Govindapur VDC, Morang District

1. Hari Maya Upreti, Women Rights' Activist
2. Phulmati Devi Gori, Interparty Women Network
3. Shanti Devi Rajbanshi
4. Krishna Lal Rajbanshi
5. Kanaiya Lal Rajbanshi, Nepali Congress
6. Devi Pratap Rajbanshi, Nepal Satbhawan Party
7. Narendra Pokharel, VDC Secretary
8. Lil Karki, RRN

Buddhanagar VDC, Morang District

1. Rambhadevi Rishidev, Women's Network
2. Shiva Lal Rishidev
3. Birendra Mandal, Head Teacher, local school
4. Badri Narayan Kamat, Facilitator, CAC
5. Shushila Shrestha
6. Phulo Devi Rajbanshi
7. Shanto Dolangi, Para Legal
8. Sita Gurung, Women's Network
9. Ganga Prasad Yadav, Backward Group (OBC)
10. Hari Narayan Yadav, Community Mediator

Lakhanpur VDC, Jhapa District

1. Tek B. Karki, VDC Secretary
2. Tanka Prasad Shapkota, Ward Citizen Forum
3. Tanka Khadka, Ward Citizen Forum

4. Chandra Kala Bhandari, LDRMC
5. Sushila Adhikari
6. Naramaya Mahji, Ward Citizen Forum
7. Drona Adhikari, RRN

Chulachuli VDC, Jhapa District

1. Om Narayan Khanal, VDC Chairman (former)
2. Deepak Ghimire, RRN
3. Bedu Prasad Rijal, VDC staff
4. Til Prasad Angthum, UCPN
5. Mahendra Rijal
6. Laxmi Chapagain
7. Amrit Kerung, CAC Secretary
8. Laxmi Banskota
9. Mani Kumar Kerung
10. Shil Prasad Rai
11. Tulasha Sewa, VDC staff
12. Shusmita Aadhikari
13. Mahesh Rai
14. Narayan Lawoti
15. Prasad Singh Lawoti

Hanuman Nagar VDC, Siraha District

1. Ram Ashis Mindawar, VDC Secretary
2. Shyam Sundar Shah, RRN
3. Mani Kumar Kamati, LGCDP Facilitator
4. Ram Kumar Bhutiya, Ward Citizen Forum
5. Ram Gopal Kamat, LGCDP Facilitator
6. Raja Ram Kamati
7. Jeewan Pandit
8. Satya Narayan Mukhia, User Committee
9. Chandra Dev Bhujel, Ward Citizen Forum
10. Binod Kumar Kamati, Ward Citizen Forum

Gamariya Maheshpur VDC, Siraha District

1. Dilip Kumar Shah, VDC Vice Chairperson (former)
2. Jagannath Shah, Head Master
3. Shyam Mandal, CAC
4. Surya Nath Yadav
5. Yogendra Shah
6. Radhika Devi Shah, CAC Chairperson
7. Phul Maya Ram Yadav
8. Ghurmi Devi Shah
9. Bhagawan Yadav
10. Khem Pokharel, RRN
11. Raj Kishor Shah
12. Ramesh Magranti, VDC Secretary

Laxminiwas VDC, Dhanusha District

1. Bhumi Kafle, RRN
2. Ram Laxmi Mahato, Head Teacher
3. Binod Kumar Mahato, Facilitator
4. Shyam Singh, Head Teacher
5. Kameshwori Das, VDC representative
6. Kaushal Kishor
7. Ram Laxmi Yadav, VDC Secretary
8. Bishnu Basnet, RRN
9. Birendra Kumar Singh, Facilitator, LGCDP
10. Rajendra Mahato
11. Sita Thakur, CAC Chairperson
12. Ramila Shrestha, Facilitator
13. Ashok K. Mahato, VDC Vice Chairperson (former)
14. Jogendra Singh, Sadbhawana Party
15. Mahendra Singh, Nepali Congress

Benga Dabar VDC, Dhanusha District

1. Dev Narayan Mahato
2. Renu Singh
3. Kiran Singh
4. Ramesh Kumar Shrestha

Dhanushadham VDC, Dhanusha District

1. Udaya Kumar Yadav, CPN Maoist
2. Sarita Bhandari, Teacher
3. Agnu Shah, UCPN
4. Durga Chand Shah, Nepali Congress
5. Dipak Yadav, Maoist
6. Amani Paudel, Nepali Congress
7. Yog Kumar Yadav, UML
8. Dhani Ram Thakur, VDC Secretary

Sarpani Garpa VDC, Salyan District

1. Binod Sharma, RRN
2. Tulashi Yogi, Rastriya Janmorcha
3. Dabal Singh Rana, Ward Citizen Forum
4. Keshab Rana
5. Man B. Bhattala, Coordinator, Ward Citizen Forum
6. Iswor Budha
7. Hiramani Gharti, Social Mobilizer
8. Jagat Gharti
9. Jhupa Singh Rana
10. Setu Lal Sunar
11. Hari B. Gharti, UCPN
12. Man B. Rana
13. Nabin Budha
14. Giridhari Prasad Pant, VDC Secretary
15. Kamala Panta

16. Hari Kala
17. Meena Gharti

Phalabang VDC, Salyan District

1. Indra Basnet, VDC Secretary
2. Dambar Budhathoki, Nepali Congress
3. Besh Bahadur Giri
4. Giridhar KC, Deputy Coordinator, Ward Citizen Forum

Kohalpur VDC, Banke District

1. Amar Khatri, VDC Secretary
2. Punam Baral, Social Mobilizer, LGCDP
3. Bhesh Raj Bhattarai
4. Renu Maya Shahi
5. Saraswoti Chaudhari
6. Deepa Thapa
7. Megha Raj Thapa
8. Narayan Kandel

Ban Katuwa VDC, Banke District

1. Jaya Ram Chaudhari, VDC Secretary
2. Jageshwor Prasad Chaudhari, social mobilizer, LGCDP
3. Pranishi Kumari Tharu
4. Nmantara BK
5. Janga Bahadur BK
6. Min Rokaya
7. Sarita Neupane
8. Geeta Oli