



MAINSTREAMING
**GENDER EQUALITY
AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**
IN COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME





MAINTREAMING
GENDER EQUALITY AND
SOCIAL INCLUSION
IN COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME



Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)



Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Community Support Programme

Published by:

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)

Date of Publication:

June 2013

Publication Support:

Community Support Programme/UKaid

Printed at:

Sthapit Offset Printing Press, Kathmandu

Contact Address:

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)

P.O. Box: 8130

288 Gairidhara Marg, Gairidhara, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: +977-1-4004976, 4004985

Fax: +977-1-4004508, 4443494

Email: rrn@rrn.org.np

Website: www.rrn.org.np



Table of Contents

Foreword	IV
1. Introduction	1
Background	1
Main objective	3
Specific objectives	3
Methodology	3
Limitations	5
2. Overview of GESI Mainstreaming in CSP-II	6
National context	6
RRN's GESI strategy 2012	7
Conceptual framework for GESI mainstreaming	7
RRN GESI Accountability Framework	8
3. Success Stories	9
Women initiate drinking water project	9
Competent woman	10
CAC brings about positive change	11
Women move forward for community development	12
Ramu Chaudhary does not need to migrate for job	13
No limit for change	14
I can bargain now	15
Upliftment of social status of women	16
Visually impaired becomes a breadwinner	17
Nothing is impossible if you try	18
4. Reflections	19
Institutional policy, approach and commitment towards GESI -II project	21
Knowledge/Understanding on GESI among CSP-II project staff and right holders	21
Attribution to success of GESI mainstreaming	22
Changing 'rules of the game'	23
Challenges	23
5. Conclusion and Way Forward	25
Way forward	25
Conclusions	26
References	27
Annexes	28



Foreword

Gender equality and social inclusion is no longer as a "women's concern" or "social concern" but is a central issue of society. A focus on gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusion of excluded in development practice is a means to enhance the total development effectiveness.

Improving the status of women and excluded groups, to promote their potential roles in development is not just a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice. Affirmative action in support of women and excluded groups, and greater attention to their needs, concerns and contributions now are also recognised as crucial to achieving sustainable development. Undoubtedly, some progress has been achieved in empowering women and reducing gender and social disparities in Nepal. RRN has continued to work on advancement of women and excluded groups, and the achievement of equality between women and men of all castes, class and ethnicities. An effort has been made to strengthen voice and participation of women and excluded groups in local governance processes to access resources, influence decision making, and hold service providers accountable in their demand for services.

The objective of this study was to assess the present status of gender and social inclusion mainstreaming and its impacts on the lives of the people of the targeted communities in the Community Support Programme (Phase II) implemented by RRN and funded by UKaid. During the course of this study, a series of field visits and interviews with the local communities were organised in the project areas. There are life experiences and stories of positive change captured in this booklet. I hope this will be a useful document for development partners.

I would like to thank the entire RRN CSP-II Project Team for the excellent work. Particularly I would like to thank Sumnima Tuladhar for research and documentation, and RRN team members - Kulchandra Dahal, Seema Luitel, Som Rai and Kamal Khanal for facilitating and finalising the document.

Thank you.

Dr. Prabin Manandhar

Executive Director

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)



1. Introduction

Background

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) has become a recognized indicator for social development. In the changing socio-political context of Nepal, issues of GESI are pertinent for social transformation. Many development programmes now incorporate gender and social inclusion as a core component of their interventions. However, if we look at the data, Nepal still has a long way to go in achieving parity in gender and social inclusion.

Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Index (GEM) of Nepal stand at 0.509 and 0.496, respectively (UNDP Nepal Human Development Report 2011). Exclusion of women from the political participation and decision/policy making has been a critical issue for gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Nepal Living Standard Survey 2003/4 estimated that 31% of Nepalese were living below the poverty line. Almost half of all Dalits live in poverty, and poverty incidence among Hill Janajatis and Muslims is significantly higher than national average.

DFID Nepal's theory of change that underpins their work on gender equality and social inclusion has been considered as a basis for this assessment since the CSP-II is supported by DFID.

The theory is conceptualised in the Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment

(GSEA) framework with three interlocking "domains of change": 1. access to livelihood assets and services; 2. the ability of women and poor and excluded people to exercise voice, influence and agency; and 3. the "rules of the game", which refer to the policies and institutions which mediate and regulate people's participation in the life of the state as well as their access to livelihood opportunities. The first two domains of change ("access to assets and services" and "voice, influence and agency") are part of empowerment processes. The last domain of change ("rules of the game") is where social inclusion does, or does not, take place¹.

The following definitions of gender equality and social inclusion stated in RRN's GESI Strategy 2012 have been adopted for this assessment.

Gender equality and social inclusion refer to a societal state where women and men of all social groups enjoy the same status and have equal access to all resources and benefit from all opportunities. It focuses on affirmative actions to create a level playing field between disadvantaged and advantaged women, men and groups based on socially-defined identity and prevailing power relations.

Gender equality means exercising an equal opportunity, empowerment and participation of both women and men in all spheres of public and private life. This does not mean providing girls and boys, women and men, equal treatment in all spheres of society but recognizing

Gender equality means exercising an equal opportunity, empowerment and participation of both women and men in all spheres of public and private life.

¹ Unequal Citizens in Nepal: Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal: World Bank/DFID/2006



that men's and women's living conditions and position are different due to sex and gender roles, and ensuring that these differences do not become the cause of discrimination. It means contributing to an equal sharing of power in socio-economic and political processes. Thus, gender equality calls for accepting and valuing the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in society, and changing unequal power relationships between women and men for a better balance in the values and priorities.

RRN's Community Support Programme (CSP), which has been running since 2003, is one of the good examples in mainstreaming gender and social inclusion.

Social inclusion is understood as the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of excluded individuals and groups to development opportunities. Social inclusion is the process of outreach to include all sectors of society in planning and decision-making that affects their lives and making space for them to improve their living standards and their overall well-being.

GESI mainstreaming highlights the effect of programmes, policies, and resource allocations on men and women, and different castes and ethnicities. Mainstreaming includes organisational transformation in administrative, financial, and organisational procedures, and in projects and programmes. If GESI mainstreaming is done effectively, the mainstream will reflect an environment much closer to true democracy.

RRN's Community Support Programme (CSP), which has been running since 2003, is one of the good examples in mainstreaming gender and social inclusion. With successful operation in 19 districts in the second phase, the CSP-II intends to improve the access of the poor and excluded groups to

community-based development opportunities, and to empower poor and excluded people to increase their access to basic services.

DFID/UKaid supported Community Support Programme (CSP) was originally designed in June 2003 with the purpose of supporting the immediate development needs of the poor and excluded people, affected by the armed conflict in 39 districts spreading across the far-west, mid-west, western and eastern development regions of Nepal. The programme is now running in second phase (CSP-II).

RRN/CSP-II provides support for the implementation of community-led initiatives in following six core sectors:

1. Increased access of poor excluded and conflict affected people to basic service facilities
2. Enhanced capacity of user groups and community-based organisations (CBOs) to equitably and sustainably manage local infrastructure
3. Strengthened capacity of poor and excluded people to generate sustained income
4. Integrate learning and practices of CSP-II into VDC/DDC planning and monitoring processes for transitioning to LGCDP
5. Enhanced capacity of poor and excluded communities to lead social action to claim their rights
6. Extended collaborative support for immediate relief and rehabilitation to needy communities

RRN/CSP-II addresses GESI as a "crosscutting issue" and also employs public auditing; community



mobilisation; skill building and use of local resources; inclusive project delivery; joint monitoring and do-no-harm as approaches to implement the programme.

Main objective of the study is

To assess the GESI mainstreaming in the CSP-II and its effects on the lives of the people of the target community, and to provide suggestions for further interventions based on the findings of the study

Specific objectives are

- To conduct an assessment of GESI mainstreaming in CSP-II in order to transfer ideas and share success stories to other concerned stakeholders
- To make recommendations for future interventions
- To share the findings of the assessment so as to help increasing awareness among concerned

stakeholders about the importance of GESI mainstreaming in development projects

Methodology

Following methodologies were applied to conduct the assessment and documentation process. The process of assessment was participatory where the RRN programme/field staff and the right holders contributed to the assessment.

Desk Review and Consultation

Related project documents such as organisational policies, publications, and periodical reports and meeting minutes were reviewed. In addition to the documentation review, the assessment included a series of interactions with the project team in the head office to review the existing process and level of GESI mainstreaming in CSP-II. An interview conducted with the Programme Director helped in obtaining an in-depth appreciation of the programme. The interview also offered an insight into how CSP-II has been mainstreaming

A one-day interaction was organized in Morang district where a broad discussion was carried out with regional and district coordinators from all 19 project districts, focusing on status, impact and challenges of GESI mainstreaming in respective districts.



An interaction with the members of Citizen Awareness Centre at Thalaha VDC, Morang.

gender and social inclusion in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and into what has been the added value of GESI mainstreaming in the successful operation of the project. A one-day interaction was organized in Morang district where a broad discussion was carried out with regional and district coordinators from all 19 project districts, focusing on status, impact and challenges of GESI mainstreaming in respective districts.

Orientation/ Workshop on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Prior to the field visit and interaction on GESI mainstreaming a one-day orientation/ workshop was organized for the regional/district coordinators to promote a better understanding of key gender and social inclusion issues. It was a participatory workshop, which reflected upon individual and group understanding of the issues using examples and group work. In addition, an orientation on success story writing

was also organized for the field staff to contribute to the assessment. The success stories used in this assessment are contributions from the RRN field staff.

Field Visit

Field visits were organized in two selected districts: Morang and Rolpa. These districts were selected to cover the plain and hilly regions of Nepal.

Interactions took place with beneficiaries/women's groups in two different VDCs each in Morang and Rolpa district where RRN is implementing CSP-II programmes. Similarly, discussions were carried out with the beneficiaries and stakeholders (both male and female). The field visit also involved observing overall project activities in these two districts. In each district sharing meetings with RRN team comprising of its field staff were organized.

First field visit was conducted in Morang district in two VDCs –Thala and



Bayarban and in Rolpa district in Ghodagaun and Khumel VDCs to interact with the community /programme people and to direct stakeholders to understand how GESI mainstreaming is progressing in practice and to assess the results and impacts. The field visit was comprised of all the regional and district coordinators of CSP-II programme to encourage cross learning through interaction with the community and the local women participants.

The field visits assessed how GESI is mainstreamed in RRN CSP-II, especially in the following areas:

- Community based infrastructure support
- Capacity building training to users
- Vocational training and income generation
- Social mobilisation for the voiceless people's access to resources through reflect method, using the forum of

Citizen Awareness Center (CAC) in the community level

Likewise, RRN CSP-II core initiatives like public auditing; inclusive project delivery; joint monitoring and do-no-harm approaches to implement the programme; partnership with government line agencies, and other relevant stakeholders were briefly appraised.

The final draft was shared with the Regional Directors and the entire regional team for corroboration of the information gathered in the field visits during this assessment, and most importantly, to get their valuable inputs to the whole report.

Limitations

This study covers limited study area i.e., only two districts out of 19 districts. Thus, many good interventions, progress and challenges faced by specific district programmes cannot be presented in the assessment.

An interaction with the members of Citizen Awareness Centre at Bayarban VDC, Morang.



2. Review of GESI Mainstreaming in RRN/CSP-II

National context

Nepal, being the member of the United Nations and international community is a signatory to various conventions and instruments, i.e., Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ILO convention 169, Convention on Elimination of All kinds of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW), and other 20 International Instruments to protect and promote women and human rights.

Nepalese society is still highly patriarchal. Most of the women are much controlled by men in and around their lives. Patriarchal practices are not only reinforced by religion and culture but also largely by the legal system. The culture of patriarchal domination has resulted in lack of active and effective participation of women in all development fields.

Women's access to fixed assets, property, and credit is still very limited. Discriminatory wage structures and unequal access to earned income have not been reduced, but have actually increased over the last ten years both in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. In the non-agricultural sector in general and in the manufacturing sector in particular, women are concentrated at the lower end of the pay scale. Traditional discriminatory social structures are transferred to work place, and poor rural women from Dalit and

disadvantaged ethnic groups are at the lowest level of the wage ladder.²

Government of Nepal has developed its national laws and policies in compliance with international instruments. The PRSP embodied in the Tenth Plan of GoN has identified gender and inclusion as its main strategy to reduce poverty.

In addition to the poverty that is prevalent among all social groups in Nepal, certain groups have been systematically disadvantaged because of discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, regional identity, and geographic location. Social exclusion is a cause and effect of poverty as it prevents equitable access and opportunities to services, resources, and political representation for certain groups, and perpetuates unequal development outcomes. Due to the exclusion of groups such as the Dalits, Adivasi, Janajatis, Madhesis, and Muslims, these groups, to a main extent, have remained poorer than other groups, have made slower progress in education and health outcomes, participate less in political and economic life, and have less access to services and resources.³

At present, poverty is exacerbated by urban-centric and inequitable economic growth, the lack of access to basic services and infrastructure, and poor governance. Social exclusion is a social and structural problem that requires

Social exclusion is a social and structural problem that requires institutional changes as well as major shifts in the mindset of Nepal's citizens – from dependency and patronage to individual and collective responsibilities and rights.

² Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, UNFPA2007,

³ Overview of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Nepal, ADB, 2010



institutional changes as well as major shifts in the mindset of Nepal's citizens – from dependency and patronage to individual and collective responsibilities and rights. Now is an opportune time to mainstream GESI within the process of reconstruction, reintegration, and reconciliation. If no change is forthcoming, violence may reoccur.⁴

RRN's GESI strategy 2012

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN) has been implementing diverse programmes to address the issue of women, the poor, Dalits, Janajatis and other disadvantaged groups by organizing them in various community/users groups. So far, RRN has completed more than 150 different development projects/programmes on education, health, economic development, peace, and natural resource management and on social awareness at community level whilst keeping the GESI as a mainstream component.

RRN has adopted the GESI strategy with the objectives of

- Institutionalizing GESI in RRN structure and system through policy, approach and projects/programmes
- Facilitate projects/programmes to implement the GESI strategy in an effective way
- Provide guidance to stakeholders for effective implementation of the GESI strategy based on clear understanding and knowledge

The GESI strategy is a reference document that sets out a consistent intervention to address identified

problems or existing situation of inequality and exclusion and to mainstream GESI in projects and programmes. The strategy prioritizes actions for GESI mainstreaming and measures progress and setbacks by providing a guiding framework for monitoring and following up on the related interventions. With the implementation of this strategy, RRN will ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality and social inclusion in planning, implementation and monitoring in all its projects and programmes.

The major focus area of RRN is; protection and promotion of human rights, gender equality and social justice. It has significantly contributed to rural development and socio-economic reconstruction process by embracing the rights- based, participatory and people centered approaches to sustainable development. The organisation has incorporated GESI as a crosscutting component in all its projects/programmes, with the aim to further intensify the momentum and to strengthen the effectiveness of the GESI component whilst considering the changing context at national and local level.

Conceptual framework for GESI mainstreaming

GESI mainstreaming is to integrate GESI perspective in policy, design, approach and implementation to achieve the goal of equality and inclusion in mainstream development agenda. Mainstreaming gives value to differences and diversity by stressing the need to reorganize, improve and assess policy and processes from an equality and inclusion

RRN has incorporated GESI as a crosscutting component in all its projects/programmes, with the aim to further intensify the momentum and to strengthen the effectiveness of the GESI component whilst considering the changing context at national and local level.

⁴ Gender and Inclusion Assessment USAID/Nepal July 2007



perspective. It includes organizing, mobilizing, and building the capacity of various groups, networks and alliances of the excluded groups for their empowerment as well as sensitizing stakeholders and policy makers at all levels. It also means identifying the barriers to inclusion for specific excluded group (in view of the context they live in) and finding solutions to address those barriers.

RRN GESI accountability framework

The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in relation to operation and governance of these projects/programmes are presented hereunder:

Responsible Organisation/Institution	Roles and Responsibility for GESI integration
Regional and District level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring that projects/programmes benefits accrue equitably, regardless of race, creed, religion, language, age, caste or ethnicity of the beneficiaries - Ensuring that adequate baseline data are collected in disaggregated form to measure progress towards results - Reviewing GESI strategy and providing feedback for improvement - Establishing coordination with local organisations and networks of women, CAC and excluded groups - Ensuring regular interaction of GESI focal point with all other thematic officers
Rural Reconstruction Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring GESI friendly organisational culture - Reviewing GESI results in mid/annual meetings - Ensuring gender balance and inclusive staff structure - Ensuring that project staff and other key stakeholders have the required skills, knowledge and personal attributes to contribute to GESI - Reviewing GESI strategy and providing suggestions for improvement, collaboration, and synergy with other programmes/projects - Developing required management, financial planning, human resource as well as communication practice/procedure for an effective implementation of GESI strategy - Facilitating wider coordination and alliance building to work for common agenda of gender equality and social inclusion - Ensuring regular interaction of GESI focal point with all other thematic groups - Implementing GESI disaggregated data recording system - Preparing GESI sensitive impact indicators - Collecting qualitative cases for the progress towards GESI



3. Success Stories

Women initiate drinking water project

The citizens of wards no 2, 4 and, 7, Chipring VDC, Khotang district had no alternative to a harsh life. The area is a very dry land. Lack of proper drinking water facility had made the life of women more burdensome. Women members of the community had to walk for two hours every day to have access to water. To address this problem, the women of the community went to the authority at the VDC level where the VDC Integrated Planning Committee decided to provide a financial assistance of NRs.70,000. However, this amount was not enough.

The women members of the community then decided to seek help from RRN, Khotang. After hearing their proposal, RRN along with community donation summed up to about NRs. 6,55,038 for 44 households. Some 12 drinking water taps were constructed for the community. The taps were constructed in proximity of 50 to 100m distance while earlier the women had to commute 1 km to fetch water. This means that now they only had to carry water pots for 10 minutes in comparison to the 2 hours commute earlier.

The drinking water project initiated by women has helped them save ample

time, which has resulted in number of benefits. Firstly, the women are now able to give quality time for children that have helped improving child rearing in the village. Moreover, school-going children have not missed their school much as they do not need to help their mother in fetching water. Secondly, the women have been able to dedicate more time for income generation activities and their engagement in agriculture has also improved due to having water access nearer. Thirdly, as the tap is near, more water can be stored at home. Due to this, sanitation and hygiene have improved in the households. With the adequate water, children can now 'afford' to wash hands properly. And last but not least, it has lessened physical burden significantly giving women some relief in their everyday life.

Through the women's initiative, the community has initiated for their village to be an open defecation free area, along with toilet construction for each household. Women are now actively involved in discussions and have commenced on and off seasonal farming as well as farming of cash crops.

- Tahal Jirel

The drinking water project initiated by women has helped them save ample time, which has resulted in number of benefits



A Competent Woman



After three months of mason training, she started working as an unskilled laborer and after her performance evaluation, her wages got increased. She then got promoted as an assistant skilled mason.

Nandkali Rana resident of Shukumbashitol, Kohalpur-3 Banke, lived in a deplorable economic condition before she came in contact with RRN/CSP-II. She worked as an unskilled laborer and her income was never enough to meet her daily needs. She is the sole breadwinner of her family and was unable to send her sister to school.

She got an opportunity to do a three months mason training facilitated by RRN/CSP-II. After three months of mason training, she started working as an unskilled laborer and after her performance evaluation, her wages got increased. She then got promoted as an assistant skilled mason. Now-a-days, she is working as a skilled mason and earns equal wage as her male counterparts. The wage she receives is little higher than a minimum wage as per daily wage standard set by the Government of Nepal.

Now Nandikala is taking carpentry training with the support from the VDC and she says that she can earn more after completing this training. She will be able to take contracts in both mason and carpentry work. To save traveling time, she has bought a bicycle to commute to her training and workstations. To be able to be mobile, she feels more confident and free. With her income she has renovated her house and is able to cover monthly school fees of her sister. She has also invested some of her savings with 5% interest in the market. She is also planning to start a life insurance of Rs.1,00,000 for a secure future.

She recently got nominated as an assistant trainer at CTEVT in the area.

- Bimala K.C.



CAC brings about positive change

Women from Kharmi, Ward no. 3 of Khotang district were confined within their kitchen walls, deprived of opportunities of any kind. The 32 weeks of REFLECT classes provided by RRN/ Sungabha Citizen Awareness Centre (CAC) helped women members of the community to get empowered. Moreover, they have realised how it is necessary for women to support each other and be united to tackle oppression and domination.

Through the CAC and its weekly discussions, the community successfully solved two important conflicts among community members. Such initiatives have contributed in bringing about a harmonious environment in the community.

As a result of their engagement in CAC, the women who used to be shy to give their introduction now stand before the mass and give speeches. They also participate in street dramas. Their families have also become supportive of their activities. Sometime back, women were not allowed to leave the house premises but now-a-days women's participation is visibly increasing in all development initiatives in the community. In addition, the women have taken an economic empowerment initiative and have also started seasonal and off-seasonal farming.

- *Nirmala Rai*

Citizens Awareness Centres (CAC) and the REFLECT process

A CAC brings together disadvantaged citizens every 7 days for 3-4 hrs to identify, analyse and act upon issues that directly affect their lives. CAC involves disadvantaged people who have been usually left out from previous, similar initiatives. The social mobiliser and community facilitator hold REFLECT classes at the CAC where they facilitate DAG members on their rights and support them to act on identified issues and enhance their access to services in the community, VDC and DDC.

The REFLECT process empowers DAG members to advocate and lobby for their own rights as well as those of the whole community including the well-off and powerful. This process facilitates the well off and the poorest to support and understand each other's problems and issues.

Through the CAC and its weekly discussions, the community successfully solved two important conflicts among community members.



Women move forward for community development



There are 150 households of Dalit population in the community, and majority of women from all these households are now empowered, as they are now aware about their rights. "Do not accept discrimination" has become their motto and they live by it.

Women who lived in oppression of a male dominated society in Ghodagau-VDC are now fully conscious of their rights and have found their voice through Mandavi Citizen Awareness Centre (CAC), Rolpa. After women started taking interest and getting involved in various community development activities, gender inequality has been decreasing continuously. Women are now moving forward in decision-making positions and are considered as important development partners. From home to community development, women's views are now heard. Women are now able to make sure that the allocations from the VDC IGA (income generation assistance) for women are strictly utilised in favour of women's wellbeing.

The CAC women members requested RRN, Rolpa to construct a community building. The Construction committee was comprised mostly of women while

the sub-committees included both men and women. Through inclusive participation, the construction was accomplished on time. There are 150 households of Dalit population in the community, and majority of women from all these households are now empowered, as they are now aware about their rights. "Do not accept discrimination" has become their motto and they live by it. They do not hesitate to participate in community decision-making process. It's all about getting opportunities; and if given a space, everyone can prove himself or herself. The chairperson of the CAC, Mandavi says, "We used to be dominated but not any more now. We now have courage, perseverance and determination". The chairperson of the VDC, Bhaktiram Pandey praised the efforts of local women and determination they showed to bring about development in their community. Resource person of District Education Office, Keshav raj Pokhrel says, "Women were deprived of opportunities. But ever since they belong to CAC and have support from the members, they feel more dignified and are displaying more responsibility compared to their male counterparts." During the construction of the building, women took care of the management of construction materials, transportation facilities and community mobilisation. The community building built with RRN support has become a convenient space to gather and organize various events and activities.

- Suresh Pokhrel



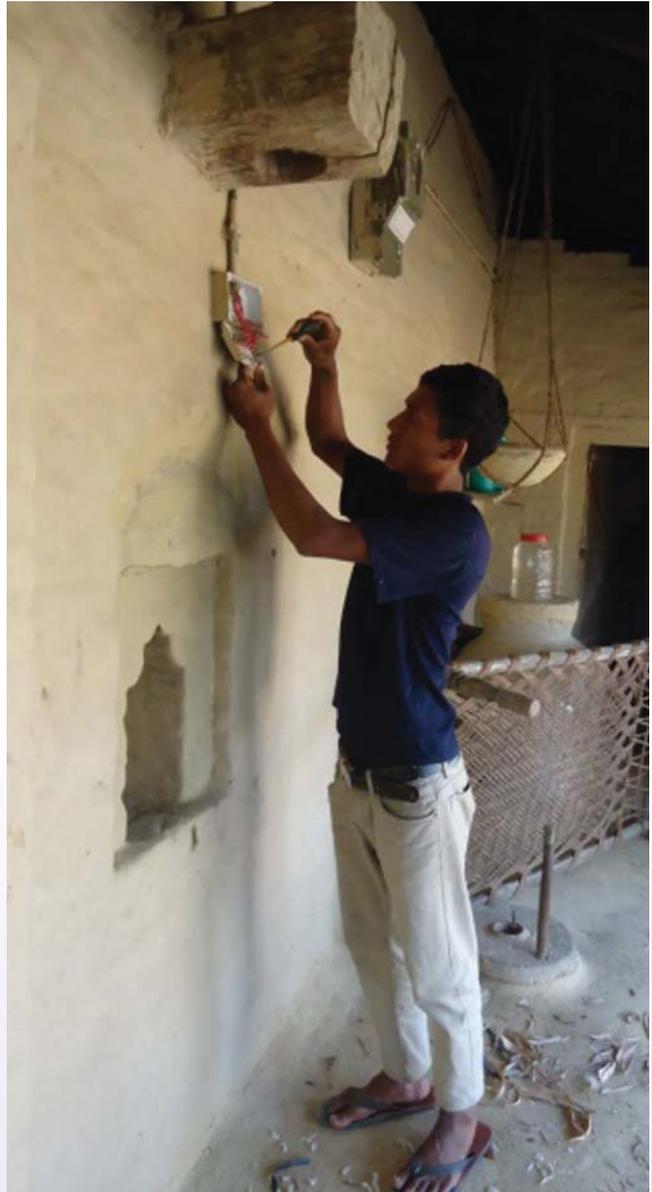
Ramu Chaudhary does not need to migrate for job

Ramu Chaudhary is a resident of Gadiya Gaun Naubasta VDC -3, Banke District who lives in a joint family of 13 members with his wife and children. He struggled hard to upkeep his big family from his daily labor wages. He's also been to India (Kalapahad) couple of times just to try his luck and hoping to earn more to be able to support his family, but this never fulfilled his family's basic requirements.

His life took a positive turn after he met one of the CAC facilitators under RRN/CSPII Banke. The CAC members recommended him for house wiring training conducted by RRN/ CSP-II Banke. After he completed the three months long training course, he received an offer from a house-electric wiring contractor. All customers were happy with his efficient work and he started gaining popularity in the community day by day. His popularity also spread to Kohalpur near the market town.

Now he has contracted four houses for house- wiring and has also provided job opportunities to other four workers from his community. He is looking for a third phase electric-wiring training to upgrade his skills and is expecting RRN CSP – II for further support.

He thinks success will always find you if you are hardworking and have perseverance. He feels that once you start earning, all family members become more helpful and supportive. He also suggests other skilled youths to work in Nepal rather than migrating to India and other foreign countries as they



will be able to comfortably earn more here than abroad.

- Raja Ram Chaudhary



No Limit for Change



Ten women from the Rajbanshi and Chaudhari communities with the desire to do something resourceful took micro enterprise development training and have established Rankali Mushroom Enterprise to successfully uplift their economic status.

“In just 3 months we have been able to earn more than Rs.1, 50,000. We are more inspired than ever to continue working towards self-empowerment!” exclaims, Lila Rajbanshi, the President of Mushroom Manufacture Centre.

After holding a 32-week long REFLECT class RRN Jhapa facilitated the setting up of the Fulbari Citizen Awareness Centre in Garamani VDC-3 to spread awareness among the people of the community, and especially among the women from the Rajbanshi and Chaudhari communities. The women, who were once too shy to open up, have now no qualms about introducing themselves and discussing their problems.

They discuss about the prevalent social problems of their area and try to learn as much as they can about their rights, duties and responsibilities. Due to the absence of economic, educational, social and political awareness, the women of the community have sent their children to work in other people's houses as

domestic workers rather than sending them to schools. Now, however, the locals have set up various programmes to combat such situations and have approached various organisations for capacity development regarding income generation.

Ten women from the Rajbanshi and Chaudhari communities with the desire to do something resourceful took micro enterprise development training and have established Rankali Mushroom Enterprise to successfully uplift their economic status. Most people here are squatters and depend on daily labor for hand to mouth existence. Some even depend on the running of their teashops for revenue, but even this is seasonal work. Kushal Timsina, the mobiliser of Fulbari Citizen Awareness Centre says, “We will try to expand this business as it is not only our reliable source of income but it also uplifts our social status and provides us with a sense of self-respect.”

- Ratna Karki



I can bargain now



Hira Chaudhary is a 25-year-old resident from Dhikpur -3 Dundra Dang. She comes from a socially excluded group and is very poor. She has taken formal education only up to grade five. She has seven members in her family. In her 12 'Kattha' of land, only 8 Kattha is cultivable. Her husband has migrated to India as a labourer. Hence, she had to feed for her family all by herself. They lived in poor conditions.

She became a member of CAC conducted by RRN/CSP. When she found out that RRN/CSP Dang provides training and support for income generation activities she applied for training. Considering her problem, the organisation provided her with the training and support she needed.

After providing vocational training to the people including Hira Chaudhary, RRN/CSP provided them with seeds, spray tanks and other equipment. Hira was able to produce vegetables in large

amount and sold it in a village and Narayanpur Bazar, which helped her to earn a decent amount of money. She now has already earned NRs.33,000 by selling vegetables.

"RRN's support has changed my life, I didn't even dare to talk to people but now I can bargain with them while selling vegetables" said Hira proudly.

With her new-found income, Hira has bought new clothes and books for her children and has also invested some amount of money to buy CGI sheet for house roof. "Hira's father-in law says, "We did not believe that our daughter-in-law could run the household on her own but she has proved herself and has brought happiness in our lives." Now her husband's income can be saved and she is also asking her husband to return home to join her to expand vegetable farming.

- Bikash Chaudhary

Hira was able to produce vegetables in large amount and sold it in a village and Narayanpur Bazar, which helped her to earn a decent amount of money. She now has already earned NRs.33,000 by selling vegetables.



Upliftment of social status of women

Sudha Chaudhari, a 34-year-old resident of Dhikpur -2, Machai, was deprived of a formal education due to conventional social boundaries and orthodox family she comes from. She has three daughters. Her husband is working abroad. He keeps sending her some money, but she also makes a living from her own farming and agriculture on 7/8 Katthas of land (Approx. 25515 sq.ft./29160 sq.ft.) while raising her children on her own and not depriving them of their basic needs and education.

She says, "Now-a-days parents send their daughters to cheap schools or government schools thinking that daughters are worthless while they send their sons to expensive boarding schools". But after learning how much of an evil it is to discriminate between sons and daughters at the Citizen Awareness Centre she tried her best with her other friends to abolish such discriminations from her village.

Sudha's fellow women participants have also nominated her as the President of the Management Committee of the Citizen Awareness Centre. She adds, "after I was designated as the President of the committee, many other women participants of the centre would keep requesting me to be present in village meetings, to be a part of construction committees during construction works, to be a part of the communal forest committee, to take part in various programmes, to invite the VDC and put forth the problems of our village as well

as the opinions of community people. And I eagerly acknowledged all their requests. Without having been exposed to the CAC discussion classes, I wouldn't have been able to fulfill even a single one of those tasks."

Women are equal to men if provided with the opportunity. These days even small arguments in the village are peacefully solved. Through village seminars and various social programmes the centre has been able to provide opportunities for women to learn about women's rights and health problems, environmental cleanliness and sanitation, income sources in the village, income generation, child rights, violence against women, allocation and division of the VDC budget and quotas for backward and marginalised groups as well as females, and to learn how to utilise their attained knowledge in society.

Sudha says, "I try to make sure that my children are not discriminated and to make sure that society fights back this discrimination as well, so that the children of the future do not have to live under any kind of unequal treatment from society.

"This awareness programme has brought about a lot of positive social change and development, but overall it has uplifted the social status of women," says Prithvi Chaudhari, a teacher in the village.

-Kanshi Ram Chaudhary

I try to make sure that my children are not discriminated and to make sure that society fights back this discrimination as well, so that the children of the future do not have to live under any kind of unequal treatment from society.



Visually impaired becomes a breadwinner

We can say that the ability and power to make our lives significant or negligible is in our own hands. Such an individual to prove this theory is Shyam Kumari Chaudhari who struggled with the challenges of an abnormal birth and managed to become a respectable example to all.

Ms. Chaudhari from Patabhar VDC is the eldest daughter of her family. As squatters they were compelled to change their habitat frequently until they settled permanently in Guleria, Municipality- 1 Khairapur, Bardiya. Chaudhari was born blind and thus was considered a disgrace for her family. She was denied of love and affection from her family. She was hidden from her relatives and guests and was later taken to live away from her brothers and father as she was thought to be a child of bad woman. She was regarded a burden to her family.

After RRN/CSP-II supported her with a sum of Rs.10,000 and she was able to set up and run her own retail shop as well

as find additional sources of income by further setting up a candle and incense stick production business.

Ms. Chaudhari acknowledges RRN for its contribution to make her life worthwhile. After being an example in society rather than a useless burden to her family, Ms. Chaudhari proudly says, "I earn Rs. 300-.500/- on daily basis from my shop. I spend my income on medicine for my family, education for my brothers and sisters and other essentials for my household. My parents also regret their behaviour towards me in the past and are thankful that I am there to support them. I now look after the entire household."

Today she is leading a dignified life, content and prosperous. Ms. Chaudhari has successfully challenged discriminatory social norms towards physically challenged people and has become an example in her village.

- Lal Bahadur Chaudhary

After being an example in society rather than a useless burden to her family, Ms. Chaudhari proudly says, "I earn Rs. 300-.500/- on daily basis from my shop. I spend my income on medicine for my family, education for my brothers and sisters and other essentials for my household."



Nothing is impossible if you try



While she was struggling hard, Parvati luckily came into contact with RRN Bardiya's Bijaynagar Kamaiya Relief Camp, which was a part of the Community Support Programme II. RRN provided her cooking training. Initially she was hesitant as she was illiterate and much older than the rest of the trainees.

"Now even I can lend money to other people" says Parvati Tharu, resident of Dhadhwar 9, Bijaynagar, a former Kamaiya.

In 2058 B.S. Nepal Government provided Parvati with 5 Katthas (approx. 1693m) of land after she was freed from the Kamaiya System (Bonded Labor System). This support was not enough for her to sustain her family of ten even for two months. Economic crisis left her with no option but to consider returning to the Kamaiya System for survival. But even this option was not practical, as her former landlord would reject her because of the legal abolishment of the Kamaiya System. Left without choices, Parvati's son and husband were compelled to migrate to India for livelihood and she had to take on all the responsibility of looking after the entire family.

Parvati Tharu had to then move to Guleria, where she started working as a day wage laborer. But she could not continue with this harsh job that required her to spend entire day from

dawn to dusk while her children were left unattended. So, she decided to set up a small teashop in the village. She couldn't make enough money from the teashop as she could not expand it and did not have any investment.

While she was struggling hard, Parvati luckily came into contact with RRN Bardiya's Bijaynagar Kamaiya Relief Camp, which was a part of the Community Support Programme II. RRN provided her cooking training. Initially she was hesitant as she was illiterate and much older than the rest of the trainees. But later 10 days of her practical training, she was all set to utilise new skills she had obtained. She then approached RRN to buy more utensils. Now she earns a good income from daily business and from Haat Bazar (Weekly fair). Parvati worked very hard for attaining this position.

Now her husband and son are back from India and are helping her in her business. Her son, inspired by his mother's success is thinking of starting a similar business. *- Shobhan Rijal*



4. Reflections

The 'theory of change' used as a framework for this assessment found excellent work and success in all three interlocking 'domains of change' such as access to livelihood assets and services; the ability of women and poor and excluded people to exercise voice, influence and agency; and the "rules of the game".

The CSP-II programme was clearly able to increase outreach and women and excluded population could benefit from the increased access to various livelihood options provided by the project. There were cases where most desperate women who had even tried committing a suicide because of helplessness could find a proper livelihood option and are now living a dignified life. As the project activities were running successfully, more needy people got to learn about the support CSP is providing. They started approaching RRN for getting opportunities.

The assessment found the options that have been made available to the people who participated in the project to be sustainable. During the two field visits women seemed to be content with what they were doing, and even after the completion of direct support, they were able to run their trade and business or could utilise the skills they had received to make a decent living. This has given them hope for their family and helped them to gain respect in society.

Likewise, the initiatives taken for GESI mainstreaming in the project mainly in REFLECT classes, awareness drives, the

Community Awareness Centres and Self-help groups. Likewise, the micro credits component has been found to be a powerful vehicle for the empowerment of women. There have been instances of inclusive development initiatives in all of the working districts. Numbers of women and excluded communities are aware about their stakes in society and have started claiming their rights and space at all levels of development initiatives. They have in many occasions led influential drives for social awareness, such as against domestic violence and trafficking. What is more, they are also able to argue and negotiate with local stake holders and the government authorities for funding for local development initiatives to build small bridges, water reservoirs, etc. What is impressive is that now it has become a norm in the communities to form committees inclusive of women, Janajatis and Dalits or people in minorities. Thus the change has occurred and is grounded.

The women and excluded groups are also coming forward and taking inspiring steps to be part of development process in their respective communities. For example, in Rolpa and Morang districts, all women executive committees and all Dalit groups respectively have successfully accomplished community construction works to convene community development works. Through these they were able to tap local resources and mobilise people in community for wider societal benefit. Only few women, Dalit and Janajati members also aspire to take

Community Awareness Centres, the Peace Promotion Centres and Self-help groups. Likewise, the micro credits component has been found to be a powerful vehicle for the empowerment of women.



active role in local elections, if and when the local elections take place. Their aspirations to contest in the elections came only after they got engaged in various initiatives like the CAC. The excluded people in the project areas have been gradually able to absorb a sense of empowerment and are proud to own the CAC initiatives.

Change has also occurred in the most important aspect of the change theory referred in this assessment-'changing rules of the game'. In the working districts, women have taken their own initiatives and have been able to bargain for their equal representation in various community structures and are also willing to lead. Such a strong engagement of women have not only resulted in transformation of their public image as 'capable' citizens but also as respected family members, where they are much supported by their male family members. A woman from Thala VDC stated that they are so passionately engaged in community development process that they have become almost 'addicted' to change and that nothing less than a visible change would satisfy them. For them it is not only about individual struggle, it is a collective mission and they stand by each other.

The Citizen Awareness Centres all across the 19 working districts of CSP-II are equally active, motivated and have eagerly participated in capacity development activities to improve their knowledge on rights issues, including knowledge of various political systems. In addition, these Centres were voluntarily playing role in resolving conflicts in the communities.

In Khumel VDC of Rolpa, women were unapologetic about the way they are fined and happy in absence of their husbands who have gone out of the

country for foreign jobs. In absence of male breadwinners, women have come forward to take the role otherwise not recognized by the society, although women toil real hard to run the households. They feel that given a chance they can be independent and self-reliant. At the same time there is family disintegration taking place due to the male migration for jobs. Women have sole responsibility of raising children, looking after family subsistence and facing the society.

In Thala VDC of Morang, seven women members formed a committee. They meet every month to discuss current scenario and issues. They collect Rs. 10 from everyone per month and now have collected Rs. 5000. They utilise the saving to help each other. With their awareness and initiative, everyone in the group now has citizenship, marriage certificate and birth certificate of their children. They realised after training from RRN that these certificates are important. They are well aware that without these certificates people will deny them the ownership. Furthermore, they say,

- We are aware about gender budgeting
- We have community meetings on where to go and whom to go to for solving of issues
- We took signatures of 25 women to build a pitch road for Thala VDC
- Husbands scold us less. Children are more responsible. We now share a liberal attitude
- Women's Day is our right. Of course we celebrate

RRN has put forward a credible effort of supporting the women and excluded

In the working districts, women have taken their own initiatives and have been able to bargain for their equal representation in various community structures and are also willing to lead.



community to ensure change in power structure and transformation of society, by giving continuity to the initiatives it has started with the right holders.

Another dividend brought about by the project is the increased mobility of women, which has assured their quality participation. Once used to be confined in four walls, the women have broken the conventions and are now coming out to public meetings, travelling to district headquarters and attending various meetings frequently. This has certainly increased their engagement in public sphere.

Institutional policy, approach and commitment towards GESI in CSP-II project

RRN's GESI Strategy 2012; Guidelines on GESI put forth a clear path for gender integration within the organisation and in its monitoring mechanism.

The GESI Guidelines clearly outlines responsibilities and tasks of all actors within RRN in integrating GESI, including the responsibilities of its regional and district units, its central unit and its local community based partners. The guidelines clearly mention that an equitable benefit of project activities for beneficiaries is a responsibility of the regional or district units.

Public Audit has been good practice for making project implementation successful and for creating harmony among the user groups and for implementing agency.

Positive aspects of project implementation:

- Programmes assess the capacity of rights-holders to claim their rights, and of duty-bearers to fulfill their

obligations. They then develop strategies to build these capacities

- Programmes monitor and evaluate both outcomes and processes guided by human rights standards and principles
- People are recognised as key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients of commodities and services
- Includes all stakeholders, men engaged
- Programmatic strategies are implemented in action
- Programmes focus on marginalised, disadvantaged, and excluded groups
- The development process is locally owned

Knowledge/Understanding on GESI among CSP-II project staff and right holders

In both of the visited districts, the coordinators received training on GESI and they oriented district staff on the GESI component. However, new staff members are yet to receive a GESI orientation. There is a noticeable difference in understanding. The district coordinators have a very good working relation with all the local stakeholders and have been taking initiatives to bring broader awareness on GESI issues among the local actors.

'REFLECT' classes are run with an aim for capacity building and empowerment of women through literacy and development education focusing on issues identified by the participating women. The REFLECT classes are instrumental in imparting understanding and knowledge on GESI

RRN's GESI Strategy 2012; Guidelines on GESI put forth a clear path for gender integration within the organisation and in its monitoring mechanism.



issues. The women who received 32 weeks long training have greater clarity on GESI issues and are thus more active in community development initiatives. Graduates of REFLECT classes who become members of CAC (Community Awareness Centre) display enough evidence of successful GESI mainstreaming in activities of the CSP-II.

Attribution to success of GESI mainstreaming

Through the CSP-II programmes, RRN is able to bring about wide changes at various levels in the communities and in the lives of thousands of men, women and children, especially those who are socially excluded.

It is evident through the success stories from communities that GESI mainstreaming has been a clear programme intervention and is producing desired results or positive changes in the communities. Formation of Citizen Awareness Centres, engagement of women in self-help groups, micro finance, and their participation in community development work indicate that the REFLECT classes and other awareness interventions are crucial in empowering women.

The change in women's perceptions on development issues and rights are visible among the women who have been part of the CSP-II activities. As a result women are leading some development projects, such as construction of bridges and community buildings, and the outcome is visibly different. They are also able to prove their credibility in the male dominated society. A member of bridge construction committee from Bayarban VDC, Morang says, "people in

government authorities thought we were fake and we would fail. But after the successful completion of the construction they are openly giving credit to us!"

What is impressive is the pro-active approach taken by the women. They are not excluding men in their programmes and are able to change the rules of the game by positively changing the gender stereotypical roles in society. For example, while women gather for meetings and take part in campaigns or programmes, their spouses happily agree to do the household chores. Similarly, engagement of men in household has a very positive impact on child rearing practices. Men are becoming more sensitive towards their young children's wellbeing, which otherwise would be a woman's task. It is important to mention that from the very beginning of group formation for CAC and PPC, there has been no connotation of men being opponents. The initial discussions and orientations also emphasized engaging all actors in society for desired change, and men being important part of the society, were also regarded as important actors in changing women's status in society. Whatever women learn in the process they share that in their households with family members including their spouses and in-laws, and share also some relevant issues with children. Their in-laws and husbands are also eager to listen to what they have learnt. Women also request to engage men in the group formulations. Practically, it is not possible for women to complete the 32 weeks REFLECT class without the support of their spouses.

Gradually, men seem to be accepting change occurring in society through women and are also proud of

The change in women's perceptions on development issues and rights are visible among the women who have been part of the CSP-II activities.



accomplishments made by women. Spouses of women participating in CAC and REFLECT are eagerly attending meetings called by women in the community. Likewise the men have started looking after household chores like cooking and washing dishes while women are busy attending programmes. However, men do want to keep track of what women are engaged in and sometimes drop by the CAC meetings and REFLECT classes to monitor what women are doing, and keep giving lectures on 'morality'.

Another encouraging fact is that every CAC is comprised of an advisory committee that includes both men and women, even if women dominate in representation.

Changing 'rules of the game'

The women and Dalit communities are now taken seriously in various levels of decision-making. More and more grounds are formed where women, men and people from minority groups are equally participating in initiatives for the sustainable development of their societies. A water reservoir construction taking place in Rolpa district has a mixed group in the management of the construction under the guidance of a senior member of the community. All the finances and any decision taken for the completion of the construction is a joint effort with transparent record keeping, which is shared among the members who work in consensus decisions. Such examples occurring in all 19 working districts of CSP-II are definitely helping to reduce inequalities between women and men in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development.

Challenges

There are still challenges and barriers for changing the ongoing rules of the game. Foremost challenge for the women and the excluded groups is to fight a social stigma and prepare oneself to embrace change. Societal norms where women are confined within four walls of the households still pose a continuous challenge to be dealt with. But with a lot of effort, women are gradually changing the mindsets of their family members and spouses.

For many women who come from low-income households, it's always a struggle to uphold their finances and share the economic burden of their respective families. At the same time it's 'double responsibility' for all the women who still have to take all the responsibility of raising children, doing household chores and then to engage in community development work. It is at times tiresome for the women but they can immediately compare their status with women who are just doing the 'regular' household chores, and who are deprived of exposure and of so many opportunities and get motivated to keep their engagements alive.

'Changing the rules of the game' still remains a tough challenge considering the community at large. Local authorities have started taking the women and Dalit initiatives seriously because they were backed by a national NGO like RRN. Hence they feel much grateful to RRN's presence in the districts and VDCs, as without the engagement of a 'big' organisation the voices of excluded may become weak.

In Thala VDC (Morang) there was an incident where the women had to

Local authorities have started taking the women and Dalit initiatives seriously because they were backed by a national NGO like RRN.



confront the VDC officials as two of their proposals for financial assistance to build a public culvert were discarded. The people were very rude and did not even listen to their demands. The women felt that just because they were women, the officials behaved like that. They went to RRN for help instead, and after RRN got involved the VDC also extended their support.

Some of the current general challenges outlined by RRN staff are:

- Absence or lack of availability of VDC Secretary in some VDCs, including their workload pose challenge in coordination and collaboration in activities they have to lead
- Frequent changes of government officials have prolonged the project implementation
- Unnecessary political pressure in claiming ownership of the project demand and implementation
- Although women are gradually coming out from conventional roles, there is a lack of political aspiration that can be viewed as an indicator that the marginalised and majority of women still are weak in claiming their agency
- General development initiatives such as construction of road, water taps,

etc. benefit all. However there is limitation to providing IGA to all excluded groups and this is a challenge

- Increasing outreach and strengthening capacity of women and other marginalised people to become influential voice at both micro and macro levels remains a challenge.

Some other challenges directly related to GESI are:

- One of the main challenges is the level of awareness and internalisation of gender and social inclusion among stakeholders, such as governmental officials, inter-governmental organisations' staff, journalists, and civil society, including NGOs and CBOs.
- Strong stigma attached to gender roles and racial discrimination among different castes in Terai prevent participation of excluded groups and women in activities
- The main objective of CAC is to include women, excluded and the poor, and it is trying its best to reach out to marginalised communities. However, to engage the poorest of the poor remains a challenge.

The main objective of CAC is to include women, excluded and the poor, and it is trying its best to reach out to marginalised communities.



5. Conclusion and Way forward

Studies show consistently that paying attention to gender issues in programme design actually leads to more effectiveness. Thus, even when extra expenses are required to deal with gender issues they should be incurred because the economic returns are nearly always much greater.

GESI is an area where innovation should be a standard practice, because GESI challenges old ways of working and deals with difficult questions, for example (i) how to transform the needs of the people into rights entitlements; and (ii) how to narrow gaps between various social groups while also building citizenship and social cohesion, without creating boundaries that may lead to new segmentations or even to political secession.⁵

RRN/CSP-II has consistently displayed its commitment towards mainstreaming GESI. It has developed conceptual framework for GESI mainstreaming and applies the framework in the field.

Way forward

Encourage CACs and PPCs with more experience of GESI to share their insights and success stories with other local actors. The commendable successes achieved in the communities toward GESI should be shared more often among the community and concerned stakeholders to motivate stakeholders to take GESI issues more seriously.

To speak of empowerment as a result presupposes a process of change to produce this result. So 'empowerment' evidently refers not to a state of affairs but to a process of change with a specific kind of result. In this respect it differs already from 'agency,' which refers either to a given person's degree of involvement in a course of action, or to the scope of actions that a person could be involved in bringing about.⁶

Increase work on 'agency' and 'changing rules of the game' where women and excluded communities are at the forefront as actors in establishing equitable governance. The political representation of women and traditionally excluded groups needs to be promoted. They need assets and knowledge, access to services and opportunities, the ability to hold accountable the institutions that affect them, and greater voice, agency, and influence through broader coalitions for change.

Ongoing initiatives and interventions are credible; however, broader approaches such as wider networking in the communities of the CAC and the Peace Promotion Centres are desired to ensure sustainability of GESI mainstreaming. Strategic partnerships with national and local actors need to be emphasized and these partnerships need to be sustained so that continuity in advocacy is guaranteed.

GESI is an area where innovation should be a standard practice, because GESI challenges old ways of working and deals with difficult questions.

⁵ Moser, Caroline: DFID Gender Audit Methodology: Its implementation in DFID Malawi.

⁶ Drydyk, Jay: How to Distinguish Empowerment from Agency. Department of Philosophy, Carleton University, Ottawa



Gender mainstreaming needs to be a focused and continued programmatic intervention within the organisation. Orientation on gender and social inclusion as a part of induction process need to be strengthened.

RRN/CSP-II affirms that it is a conflict sensitive development approach linking conflict analysis with each constituent step of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Since the men and women engaged in the community programmes addressing gender and social inclusion are practically exposed to situations where there could be conflict in the community, a serious thought should be put towards orienting the field staff of RRN/CSP and the local women leaders on do no harm, conflict sensitivity and conflict transformation.

As there are various components of community mediation in activities of CAC and the peace promotion centres, community mediation training should be in place and aligned with GESI issues. Furthermore, as the women community leaders face opposition from conventional society, the authorities or the community and local political parties, a risk analysis should be done and adequate risk mitigation strategies should be carried out to ensure security of the women and the field staff.

Celebrating small victories/personal level achievements/individual joys and triumphs is important to foster a sense of accomplishment among women so that they are refreshed to go ahead to continue the long battle to defend equality and social inclusion.

In the future organisations like RRN and DFID need to focus on bringing change with a larger scenario and ensuring that any groups of excluded, vulnerable or

women can claim their own stake and that they are taken seriously. Wider policy dialogues and interventions need to be envisioned and encouraged to change structural attitudes. Social construction of gender needs to be brought into the national development scenario and plans need to be devised to decentralize existing democratic rules and regulations.

Continuation of successful interventions is expected from RRN. It can use the credibility it has earned in development sector in Nepal to work further to influence GESI policies and practices at both local and national level.

Conclusion

The findings of this assessment give an ample ground to state that mainstreaming GESI when implementing development programmes results in increased social and economic benefits for the entire community. The whole discourse of gender mainstreaming has become an added value for overall CSP-II. RRN's Gender Strategy mentions that integrating GESI means bringing about extensive change in the social, political and economic sphere through promotion of human rights and effective participation of both women and men, especially socially excluded groups, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

To mainstream the strategy, there is a need to intervene and sustain change processes at multiple levels. It is thus a straight forward recommendation of this assessment that RRN and DFID develop a joint vision to take responsibility of taking the process of change forward with the right-holders. A continued engagement is required for sustaining the changes that have

RRN/CSP-II affirms that it is a conflict sensitive development approach linking conflict analysis with each constituent step of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.



occurred in the lives of women and other excluded groups as the national context is such where the women, Janajatis, Dalits, Muslims and other excluded communities and groups still need to be empowered further to ensure a society where equality and full social inclusion become a full reality. Although women are gradually coming out from conventional roles, very few women and Dalit members showed their willingness to engage and influence local politics. Lack of political aspiration can be viewed as an indicator that the marginalised and majority of women still are weak in claiming their agency. Further work is required at all levels to address this.

Listening to the voices of women and the oppressed community has resulted

in success stories both in the community level and in the personal level of beneficiaries. Thus, in future these voices and desires of the communities need to be regarded as integral part of all phases of programme design and implementation processes so that the women and excluded groups become empowered protagonists and partners. It is now essential that RRN as a leading development organisation of Nepal breaks the conventional approach of considering gender and social inclusion as a 'required' programme element and moves on to exhibit a powerful example by uplifting the GESI issues in all upcoming 'sustainable' development initiatives.

RRN's Gender Strategy mentions that integrating GESI means bringing about extensive change in the social, political and economic sphere through promotion of human rights and effective participation of both women and men, especially socially excluded groups, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

References

- Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN), 2012: GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI) STRATEGY
- RRN Website: www.rrn.org.np
- RRN CSP-II Half Yearly Report
- RRN: Framework for Assessing Gender Equality Results
- Drydyk, Jay: How to Distinguish Empowerment from Agency. Department of Philosophy, Carleton University, Ottawa
- Moser, Caroline: DFID Gender Audit Methodology: Its implementation in DFID Malawi.
- ADB, 2010: Overview of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Nepal,
- USAID, 2007: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Nepal
- UN Country Team, 2011: Social Inclusion and Gender Equality - Promoting the rights of Women and the excluded for sustained Peace and inclusive development



Annexes

Annex 1: Assessment of GESI Mainstreaming (CSP-II/RRN Rolpa) Discussion Outlines

Knowledge/Understanding on GESI among CSP II partners/ project staff

- Have you been oriented/trained on GESI? Refresher training, etc.
- Have you been briefed about GESI mainstreaming at the activity level?
- Have you included stakeholders in GESI discussions?
- Have you discussed GESI issues and the motive of its mainstreaming in activities with right holders?

Attribution to success of GESI mainstreaming

- What efforts are made to ensure that the GESI mainstreaming is being materialised continuously and constantly?

What measures have been applied to ensure women, men and marginalised, excluded participated in the various programme levels such as decision making, implementation, M&E, etc.?

- Examples of special consideration/positive discrimination for ensuring GESI mainstreaming (consideration such as social dynamics, individual issues, time, flexibility, etc.)
- Is the evidence generated around GESI from the learning, outcomes, baselines, etc.?
- Innovativeness introduced/achieved in the process of GESI mainstreaming
- What are the lessons learned and challenges so far in mainstreaming GESI at different levels?
- Outstanding impact/results

Changing 'rules of the game'

- How the local 'rules of the game' are changed?
- Why should a project need to change the local 'rules of the game'?
- What strategies does the project apply to contribute in changing the local 'rules of the game'?
- What achievements your project can claim of changing the 'rules of the game'?
- Who have benefitted by changing rules of the game?
- Can you give some examples please?
- What challenges and barriers are there in bringing change in the ongoing rules of the game?

Way forward

- In which way the successes achieved toward GESI are shared among the community and concerned stakeholders?
- Any additional approaches conceived to ensure sustainability of GESI mainstreaming?