

Final Report

on

Project :

Initiative for people's participation and ownership in the Constituent Assembly

Submitted to :

Enabling State Program (ESP)

Kiran Bhawan, Sanepa- 2, Lalitpur

Submitted by :

Lead organization :

Rural Self-reliance Development Centre (RSDC)

Baluwatar, Kathmandu

Tel: 4438596, 4435010

Fax: 4442056

E-mail: rsdc@wlink.com.np

Website: www.swabalamban.org.np

&

Partner organization :

Human Rights and Democratic Forum (FOHRID)

Mailing Address: GPO Box: 19186, Kathmandu, Nepal

Street Address: 196/14, Radhe Marga, Dillibazar, Kathmandu

Tel: 00977-1-4423125

Fax: 00977-1-4438812

E-mail: fohrid@wlink.com.np

Website: www.fohrid.org.np or www.fohridnetwork.org

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Preface

This is the final report of the project 'initiative for people's participation and Ownership in the Constituent Assembly' implemented by Rural-Self-reliance Development Centre (RSDC) in partnership with Human Rights and Democratic Forum (FOHRID) with support of ESP/DFID. Duration of the project was 15 Dec. 2006 to 14 May 2007 and the implementing areas were five VDCs each of Dhanusha, Makwanpur and Palpa districts.

The report includes project background, objectives, activities and its implementation status, results and out come, impact on target groups, suggestions from beneficiaries, problems/challenges and learnings. Other necessary informations are annexed.

It is a matter of great pleasure that this project has been launched successfully with whole hearted participation of target population from all sectors and all the participants/beneficiaries from all sectors expressed that in the present context this is one of the important things to learn/know about the constituent assembly, and its process because this is the first ever phenomenon for Nepali citizen.

RSDC/FOHRID should extend gratitude to ESP/DFID for providing financial support to this important project. Likewise, these organizations are thankful to SDPP District Programme Coordinators of RSDC (Mr. Damodar Joshi, Mr. Ramjee Prasad Neupane and Mr. Moti Lal Bashyal) of respective districts for providing the significant support to launch the programme successfully at district and community level. Similarly, district facilitators, mobilizers and all the officials/staff of both organizations did also play important role to make it success; so they deserve thanks. The Swabalamban cooperatives of the project VDCs must be appreciated for the pivotal role they have played in the implementation of the project. Finally, the executing agencies are thankful to all the participants from the initiation to the final phase of the project for their meaningful participation.

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Abbreviations

CA mobilization	=	Constituent Assembly Mobilization
CA	=	Constituent Assembly
CASC	=	Constituent Assembly Sensitization Committee
CBO	=	Community Based Organization
Dalit/MC	=	Dalit and Marginalized Community
FOHRID	=	Human Rights and Democratic Forum
GO	=	Government Organization
Gov.	=	Government
INGO	=	International Non Government Organization
NGO	=	Non Government Organization
Pol.	=	Political
Rep.	=	Representative
RSDC	=	Rural Self-reliance Development Centre
ToT	=	Training of Trainers
VDC	=	Village Development Committee

Project Completion Report
on
Initiative for people's participation and ownership in the
Constituent Assembly

1. PROJECT DETAILS

Implementing agency

Lead organization: Rural Self-reliance Development Centre (RSDC)

Partner organization: FOHRID Human Rights and Democratic Forum

Contact person: Ram Risal

Contract title: Initiative for people's participation and ownership in the Constituent Assembly

Contract no: CNTR/ESP/EA/06-07/235

Project duration: 15 December 2006 to 14 May 2007

Project location: Five VDCs each of Dhanusha, Makwanpur and Palpa districts of Nepal. (see Annex – 1)

Target groups

The stakeholders such as local people, political parties at the local level, local campaigners, NGOs, GOs, CBOs, women, Dalit, ethnic minorities, marginalized community, farmers, local leaders, students, teachers, religious groups, youth etc. supposed to enhance their political awareness and participation in the constituent assembly election for the formation of new democratic constitution. This project was expected to enable them to express and claim their rights in the State mechanism.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In order to produce activists at the local level to transfer the customized knowledge on the constituent assembly.

- I. To sensitize people on the process of constituent assembly through the activists trained under this project.
- II. To contribute in the process of constituent assembly formation by enhancing people's participation in its process.
- III. To transfer customized knowledge on principle, people's participation, election process, constituency, inclusion and participation of marginalized community in the whole process of election to the constituent assembly.

3. IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Preparation of Advocacy Guidebook and Leaflet

Advocacy Guidebook was prepared according to the objectives of Activity 1. FOHRID played the leading role in preparing the preliminary draft of the Guidebook. Written comments on the draft were sought from the experts. Thematic editing was carried out. The Guidebook was finalized after a consultation meeting held on 20 February 2007 in Kathmandu with the participation of political scientists, experts on constitutional law and ToT experts. The Guidebook was printed and published 1,000 copies. The leaflet was printed 10,000 copies. This activity was accomplished in the following two phases:

Phase I: Suggestions and comments on the primary draft were collected from experts having experiences on various fields such as political science - 3, constitutional law - 3, ToT -3.

Phase II: The draft was updated by collecting suggestions and feedback from experts. It was finalized after a comprehensive consultation meeting. These materials were disseminated to the target audience.

Activity 2: Training of Trainers (TOT)

A 2-day TOT was conducted on the basis of the Guidebook prepared under Activity 1.

The issues discussed in the TOT are presented in the following table:

Table 1: Sessions and Headings of ToT

Session	Topics
First	State and constituent assembly
Second	Constituent assembly and peace process
Third	Norms and values of jurisdiction in democratic system
Fourth	Importance of constituent assembly
Fifth	Basic aspects of constituent assembly
Sixth	Constituent assembly
Seventh	People's role in constituent assembly
Eighth	Evaluation / conclusion

Table 2 : Participation in the ToT (see Annex – 2)

S. No	District	Male	Female	Dalit/MC	Total
1	Palpa	6	1	1	7
2	Makwanpur	6	1	-	7
3	Dhanusha	7	-	5	7
Total					21

Altogether, 9 experts were involved to provide training to the participating trainers and facilitate the program.

Activity 3: Sensitizing people at the local level

Five VDCs each of Dhanusha, Makwanpur and Palpa districts were selected to implement this project. Participants of TOT were appointed as CA Mobilizers. They formed 15 Constituent Assembly Sensitization Committees (CASC) in their respective VDCs. The members in the communities ranged from 15-22. The CASC held weekly meetings and maintained minutes of the meetings. Such meetings are expected to continue till the Constituent Assembly elections. CASCs have been sensitizing people in their communities on the importance of representation and voting rights in the constituent assembly.

The district facilitators and CA mobilizers worked at the local level. They carried out their responsibilities very sensitively. CA mobilizers coordinated to form a CA Sensitization Committee in each project VDC involving the general public with fair share of women and the Dalits and marginalized community.

Participation of the people in the CA sensitization committee is presented in the following table.

Table 3 : Participation in the CASC

S. No.	District	No. of Committee	Participation			Total
			Male	Female	Dalit/MC	
1	Palpa	5	58	30	33	88
2	Makwanpur	5	46	37	33	83
3	Dhanusha	5	14	61	27	75
Total						246

Activity 3.1: Public meeting at the community level

District Facilitators and CA Mobilizers worked at their localities to form CASCs in the Project VDCs. The Activists produced through TOT were mobilized for this purpose. The self-reliant cooperatives played coordinating role. The 15 events of public meetings at community level were executed according to the Phase II action plan. Public meetings at the local level were organized with the leading role of the CASC. Representatives from political parties and their sister organizations, backward community, intellectuals, women and Dalits participated in the programs. Local cooperatives also extended their help to coordinate the programs at the local level and their members and the people from the locality actively participated. The participants expressed their views through public hearing. They were inquisitive about the following issues:

- Constituent assembly,
- Federal system of governance,
- Election system,
- Inclusive representation,
- Proportional representation.

Several times, CASCs called meetings of the representatives from political parties, their sister organizations, local NGOs, CBOs and civil society and discussed the issue of CA polls. Participation of public in the program is illustrated in the following table:

Table 4 : Participants in Public Meeting

S. No.	District	Total events	Particulars of participants			Total
			Male	Female	Dalit/MC	
1	Palpa	5	570	590	308	1,160
2	Makawanpur	5	659	493	425	1,152
3	Dhanusha	5	501	853	553	1,364
Total						3,676

Reflection

- The representatives of political parties, their sister organizations, NGOs, CBOs and civil society appreciated the program.
- Participating jointly in the program, participants from all walks of life built confidence that the CA polls can be held in a fair manner with community consensus.
- Commitments were made to organize similar programs in the future.
- Overwhelming participation and interest of the community members showed that the CA polls cannot be disturbed by any force.
- It was appreciated for taking the issues and agenda to the target groups.
- The illusions / confusions about CA polls were removed.

Role of citizens in the CA

Approval and participation of all the citizens is necessary to attain the goal of CA polls. For this purpose, general public must be informed about CA polls. Political parties and their sister organizations educate the people according to their political interests but the NGOs and civil society can disseminate information without any political bias. Therefore, the role of NGOs and civil society is very much important to educate people in this process. Hence the importance of such projects.

Activity 3. 2: Public Meetings at district level

This activity was executed in 2 phases. The **introductory meetings** were held in all the 3 districts before entering into VDCs. Main objective of holding introductory meeting was to facilitate the activities from district to local level. The meetings at the district level were participated by the representatives of line agencies, civil society, media, cooperatives, and lawyers, among others. This meeting especially formulated policy and guidelines to implement the project at the local level. This also helped to avoid overlapping. Its objective was also to look for security and awareness in advance for the implementation of the project. The project team received desired cooperation and result from the meetings.

Table 5 : Participants in Introductory Meeting

S. No.	District	Organization	Gov. rep.	Pol. rep.	Civil society	Cooperatives	Male	Female	Dalit /MC	Total
1	Palpa	17	1	5	4	15	38	4	1	42
2	Makawanpur	39	8	6	3	2	46	12	5	58
3	Dhanusha	18	3	1	7	30	51	8	3	59
Total										159

Following achievements were gained through introductory meetings:

- General stakeholders were informed about the objective and methodology of the project.
- The stakeholders expressed their commitment to assist the project implementation.
- Suggestions were collected from government agencies, security forces and political parties.
- Efforts were made to avoid overlapping in the projects with similar objectives.

Closing meetings were held after the completion of the VDC level meetings in all districts. The outcomes of the CA Committee Meeting and VDC level meetings were shared on the occasion. Especially, the meeting focused on the role of the people in the constituent assembly election. The participants also discussed the ways to assist local people district wide to play their due role in the process of CA elections.

Table 6 : Participants in Closing Meeting

S. No.	District	Organization	Gov. rep.	Pol. rep.	Civil society	Cooperatives	Male	Female	Dalit /MC	Total
1	Palpa	19	3	8	6	10	40	6	-	46
2	Makwanpur	34	5	1	8	8	48	8	8	56
3	Dhanusha	20	5	5	5	22	53	4	5	57
Total										159

Activity 4: Publication and dissemination

Advocacy Guidebook 1,000 copies and Leaflets 10,000 copies were published as mentioned in the budget description. The Guidebook and leaflets were disseminated widely among stakeholders.

4. RESULTS AND OUTCOMES OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- People's enhanced political participation in the CA polls will be ensured in the programme areas.
- Capacity building of the people in the target districts is achieved to claim and express their political rights.
- Demand of the Advocacy Guidebook and Leaflet produced through this project is increasing among stakeholders.
- Customized knowledge on Constituent Assembly is being transferred to a larger audience.
- The activists, who received ToT, and CA Mobilizers produced by this project have started organizing community people to sensitize them on CA election. They are disseminating the knowledge gained through this project.
- This action enabled the local people to determine and look for their role in the inclusive and democratic constitution.
- The project-produced material has helped to customized knowledge on constituent assembly.
- Nationwide use of this Resource Book will help to expand the customized knowledge.
- The stakeholders of the project districts have demanded implementation of the project in all VDCs.

Output level

- Total 1,000 copies of Advocacy Guidebook and 10,000 copies of Leaflets were published.
- 21 participants received ToT.
- 15 CA Mobilizers and 3 District Level Facilitators were appointed to facilitate the project implementation.

- CA Sensitization Committees are functioning to contribute in the forthcoming CA election even after the completion of the project period.

5. IMPACT ON TARGET GROUPS

- Consultation meetings and collection of written suggestions from the experts, political analysts and civil society helped to prepare an effective Advocacy Guidebook.
- The interactions / discussions held to prepare the Guidebook and other similar activities helped develop customized knowledge that could be transferred from the experts to the participants from the central level.
- People's participation is possible only after advocacy with them. Target groups received information on CA and they have been aware of the process.
- Participants can share this knowledge with the community and cross section of the society. This helped the general people to be educated and aware on the process of CA election.
- The Guidebook helped to transfer the customized knowledge to the target group and the general people. It will be a resource material for organizations, political parties, civil society and individuals willing to conduct programs on CA.
- The target groups have been able to claim and express their role in the CA.
- Feeling of ownership of the target group has increased in the CA.
- General public received a forum to speak out their mind through public meetings.
- Political parties also got a chance to understand the feelings of the general people.

6. FEEDBACK FROM THE BENEFICIARIES

- Advocacy Guidebook is excellent to transfer customized knowledge on constituent assembly. It should be widely disseminated among organizations and individuals.
- Activities of the INGO/NGOs for awareness creation on the CA election should be coordinated by the Election Commission.
- While transferring knowledge about constituent assembly, focus should be given on the provisions in the Interim Constitution, relevant laws, process determined through political agreements etc. One must be careful not to disseminate any false information.
- The meetings discussed the benefit of the programs. The participants opined that the program was very fruitful for them. They suggested extending these programs to a larger audience, especially targeting the backward community.
- The programs should be implemented in the simple local language.
- The program be recorded and disseminated / broadcasted through mass media.
- The people should be made aware even after the CA polls.

- The program was appreciated and the stakeholders expressed commitments to extend cooperation to such programs.
- The local media encouraged the organizers by broadcasting and publishing news about the program with priority.

7. PROBLEM

Some problems were faced as this project is directly related to CA election. Recent unrest in the Terai region also created some problem. Uncertainty with the Election Commission regarding election process has added problem. Lack of promulgation of Election Act in time has also made the implementation of this project difficult.

- Difficulty was felt in implementation due to delay in the promulgation of the interim constitution.
- Time was spent on various discussion and consultation as the process for the election to the constituent assembly was not finalized.
- The issue of amendment to the interim constitution and relevant acts hindered the finalization process.
- Clear roadmap could not be determined due to lack of necessary legal provisions.
- The government / Election Commission could not make clear the process of CA polls through passing bills and preparing guidelines and codes of conduct.
- The political parties could not come up with clear opinions as the dates and process of CA polls remained unclear till the time of implementation of this project.

8. LEARNING

Certain knowledge has been gained from this project as the election to the constituent election is a new concept and practice in Nepal. This is an opportunity to understand and share ideas about CA. It has taught us that the people's participation in the governing system should start from the formation of the constitution itself. We have been aware of the necessity to ensure people's ownership and role in the process of constitution formation. Use and revision of the materials and co-working with the experts on the knowledge pertaining to the new subject of constituent assembly enabled us to prepare the document in this field which is essential for individuals, organizations, general public and the state itself.

9. PARTNERS AND COOPERATION

There is a very good relation and mutual cooperation between RSDC and FOHRID, the implementing partner organizations of this project. Clear distribution of responsibilities was made between these two organizations. FOHRID executed Activity 1 & Activity 4, whereas RSDC executed Activity 2 & Activity 3. Both the organizations worked with

equal sense of responsibility. RSDC was responsible for overall execution and FOHRID was responsible for overall coordination of the literature development.

10. BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE

In order to carry out the activities of the project an amount of NRs. 1,200,000.00 was committed by ESP and RSDC and FOHRID had pledged NRs. 138,000.00 in terms of officer rent in the districts and the centre and some other services like telephone, fax and internet. The latter provided the pledged office and services. The expenditure from the fund received from ESP is NRS. 1186,209.00, with NRs. 13,791.00 remaining unspent. (see Annex -4)

Annex – 1

PROJECT DISTRICTS AND VDCS

S.No.	Name of District	Name of VDC
1.	Makwanpur	1. Aamhangyang
		2. Handikhola
		3. Padampokhari
		4. Manahari
		5. Bhainse
2.	Palpa	1. Yamgha
		2. Khanigaon
		3. Brangdi
		4. Kaseni
		5. Deurali
3.	Dhanusha	1. Giddha
		2. Ekrahi
		3. Dubarkot Hathletawa
		4. Singhai Madan
		5. Phulgama

Annex – 2

LIST OF TOT PARTICIPANTS

S.No.	Name
1.	Bhupati Panday
2.	Bhuwan Khanal
3.	Bir Bahadur Thapa
4.	Damodar Joshi
5.	Gana Bdr. Bhudhathoki
6.	Gopal Lama
7.	Hari Pd. Adhikari
8.	Hira Lal Mandal
9.	Krishna Mandal
10.	Laxman Pd. Ghimire
11.	Madhab Upreti
12.	Mathura Adhikari
13.	Moti Lal Bashyal
14.	Parmeshwor Mandal
15.	Pashupati Mahato
16.	Ram Pujan Mahato
17.	Ramjee Pd. Nyaupane
18.	Rup Chandra Saru
19.	Shanti Lama
20.	Yam Lal Parajuli
21.	Yogendra Pd. Ram

Annex – 3

LIST OF PROJECT PERSONNEL

S.No.	Name	Designation	Work Station
1.	Birendra Pd. Thapaliya	Project Coordinator	
2.	Mrs. Sabitri Devi Sharma	Program Officer	
3.	Bir Bahadur Thapa	District Facilitator	Makwanpur
4.	Gopal Lama	VDC Mobilizer	Makwanpur
5.	Madhab Upreti	VDC Mobilizer	Makwanpur
6.	Bhuwan Khanal	VDC Mobilizer	Makwanpur
7.	Hari Pd. Adhikari	VDC Mobilizer	Makwanpur
8.	Shanti Lama	VDC Mobilizer	Makwanpur
9.	Parmeshwor Mandal	District Facilitator	Dhanusha
10.	Ram Pujan Mahato	VDC Mobilizer	Dhanusha
11.	Yogendra Pd. Ram	VDC Mobilizer	Dhanusha
12.	Hira Lal Mandal	VDC Mobilizer	Dhanusha
13.	Krishna Mandal	VDC Mobilizer	Dhanusha
14.	Pashupati Mahato	VDC Mobilizer	Dhanusha
15.	Bhupati Panday	District Facilitator	Palpa
16.	Yam Lal Parajuli	VDC Mobilizer	Palpa
17.	Gana Bdr. Bhudhathoki	VDC Mobilizer	Palpa
18.	Laxman Pd. Ghimire	VDC Mobilizer	Palpa
19.	Mrs. Mathura Adhikari	VDC Mobilizer	Palpa
20.	Rup Chandra Saru	VDC Mobilizer	Palpa