

# SOCIAL COHESION AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME (SCDP)



Women of Bara district of Province no. 2 after receiving Senior Citizen ID for Social Security Allowance

## BACKGROUND

After promulgation of the new constitution in late 2015, Nepal experienced an upsurge of discontents coupled with mistrust among communities based on their ethnic identities, political beliefs and regional identities regarding the federal restructuring and equitable participation. Confrontational politics and spiraling tensions created deep and widespread social rifts that have the risk of being overlaid during the transition to federalism and implementation of the new constitution.



Tharu women performing in multicultural festival in an event organized to promote social cohesion in Matehiya, Banke, Province no. 5

SCDP aims to help address socio-political tensions emerging from Nepal's transition to federalism and ensure harmonious implementation of the constitution. Social cohesion should be an integral part of resilience-based development efforts and is a precondition for good governance. Strengthening social cohesion requires a long-term approach. This includes capacity building of communities; cooperative actions among communities; and support the government and civil society organizations to develop and adjust policies for promoting social cohesion. SCDP brings communities together, promoting inter-community goodwill and increasing ownership of people in the political process which are going to be key for Nepal to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.



## QUICK FACTS:

**Duration:** Jan 2016 to Dec 2019

**Focus:** Conflict prevention, social cohesion and peacebuilding

**Target Group:** Community groups (vulnerable and marginalized communities), elected representatives, government officials, political parties, civil society organizations, women and young people.

**Source of Funding:** UNDP

**Collaborating Partners:** Community-based organizations and local bodies

**Budget for the project period:** US\$ 2,209,745

## ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

- Till now (mid 2019), the project successfully rolled-out micro grant's for community-based organizations as 52 quick impact projects that brought together marginalized groups with history of hostilities and mistrusts for mutually beneficial collective actions such as livelihood activities and facilitating access to government services.
- More than 108,000 youths, women, marginalized groups, civil society members, government officials, elected representatives, political leaders and journalists engaged in promotion of social cohesion through more than 550 community level initiatives through various mechanisms formed through the project such as Social Cohesion and Community security mechanism, Right to Information Networks, Youth Volunteers Group and Community Service Facilitation Centers.
- SCDP contributed in creating a peaceful environment for the timely administration of elections through a range of activities. 1,704 political leaders, civil society actors, and government officials were directly engaged in electoral violence prevention dialogue and consultations where 36% of participants were women. 56 forum theater shows were conducted in 10 districts, and audio and video Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were broadcasted throughout Nepal to promote peaceful elections.
- Youth engagement and volunteerism strategy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is developed by the Dhangadi Sub metro polis. Tikapur, Mahakali and Nepalgunj Metropolis have also initiated the development of such strategy with support from SCDP- UNDP. This strategy and SOP target the youths and mostly students who have completed their studies to engage them in the development initiatives based on the thematic areas of development through volunteerism.
- After few years of the violent incident in Tikapur, both the rival communities (Tharu and Pahadi) leaders sat together for the first time to form a collaborative committee on social cohesion. The committee decentralized and have formed similar committees at the community level to build mutual trust.
- Mechanisms supported by this project contributed for timely and effective community acts to mitigate emerging risks and consolidating social cohesion by moderating and neutralizing inter-religious and inter-ethnic tensions between ethnic and ideological groups.

### GENDER & SOCIAL INCLUSION INTERVENTIONS/ACHIEVEMENTS

- SCDP has a GESI sensitive approach to engage with women leaders and members from the marginalized communities.
- SCDP was able to bring the key ten political parties, including main opposition, together to formulate a joint 12- point "Common Minimum Understanding", a rare consensus, to implement gender- responsive land policies to ensure increased access to land that prioritizes land ownership for women, vulnerable people and the landless.
- 37% of the 2001 people, who acquired basic skills on approaches to promoting social cohesion, are women.
- Women and members of marginalized groups have initiated joint livelihood enhancing undertakings across ethno-religious identities in its working districts including Pachthar, Sunsari, Chitwan, Bardiya, Kailali, Kanchanpur. These groups have previously experienced communal tensions.
- SCDP was able to maintain a high degree of women's participation in the events it organized. Women's participation in events organized to discuss issues related to social cohesion and community security was maintained at 33% across the activities. Similarly, events organized exclusively on women's human security issues and inclusion the participation of women was maintained at 70%.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

Emerging local political, resource and identity-based tensions will be systematically identified and promptly addressed by joint initiatives of community groups in collaboration with political parties, locally elected representatives and government authorities.

Community groups, representatives of civil society groups, political parties, and locally elected representatives will be oriented on risk identification and risk mitigation and doing so promote social cohesion and avoid escalation of conflict.

Increased participation of women, youth and members of marginalized groups in local level decision-making process

## OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The core goal is to reinforce the establishment of a more socially cohesive society, and avoid the escalation of social and political tensions. SCDP's specific objectives are to:

- Support the Government of Nepal, local authorities, and key stakeholders to strengthen social cohesion during the initial roll-out of a new federal arrangements and broader implementation of a new constitution
- Promote multi-sectorial mechanisms to enhance democratic participation and good governance in provincial and local governance and development processes

### Names of Provinces & districts where the project works


Province 1 (Panchthar & Sunsari), Province 2 (Dhanusa, Rautahat, Bara, & Parsa), Province 3 (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, & Chitwan) Province 5 (Rupandehi, Banke, & Bardiya) and Sudurpaschim Province (Kailali & Kanchanpur)

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