

Activity No. 1.2 Formation of intercultural dialogue panel for policy dialogue

Activity No. 1.2.1 Form intercultural dialogue panel (IDP) and conduct policy dialogue

The project formed an intercultural dialogue panel (IDP) consisting of 13 (or F 3/M 10) members from different settings in September 15, 2010 at Hotel Tibet, and the IDP conducted two policy dialogues at Hotel Malla and Nepal Academy, Kathmandu with 211 (or F 53/M 158) senior personnel from the different settings and organizations for two days (one day of each dialogue) on 24 September 2010 and 28 July 2011 respectively.

Topics/activities covered

The purpose of IDP was to facilitate policy dialogue for constitutional protection and promotion of local cultures and cultural rights, and provide strategic inputs to the project. IDP meeting to provide strategic inputs to the project can be viewed under activity no. 1.2.2.

The lead applicant called a meeting of the national project steering committee (NPSC) to form IDP in September 15, 2010 at Hotel Tibet. A total of 17 NPSC (or F 3/M 14) members including senior project personnel participated in the meeting. The meeting formed an IDP of 13 (or F 3/M 10) members consisting of at least one senior official from Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), an umbrella organization of IPOs in Nepal, National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN), a government body to support the multicultural social milieu, relevant thematic committees in Constituent Assembly (CA), Social welfare Council, NGO governing body of Nepal and partner organizations.

List of IDP members

1. Mr. Mukti Rijal, ED, IGD
2. Prof. Ganesh M Gurung, Chairman, UGC
3. Hon. Raj Kaji Gurung, Coordinator, Caucus of indigenous CA member in CA
4. Hon. Roshan Gaha-Magar, Member, CA
5. Hon. Govindaram Chepang, Member, CA
6. Hon. Lila Subba, Member, CA
7. Dr. Tika Pokherel, Chairman, WVAF
8. Mr. Dhan Pd. Tamang Chairman, NTGA
9. Ms. Soni Lama, Secretary General, NIWF
10. Ms. Niti Sherpa, Asst. Director, SWC
11. Mr. Kumar Blon, Secretary, NEFIN
12. Mr. Resham Gurung, Secretary, GTNC
13. Narayan Pd Thebe, Sr. Officer, NFDIN

The IDP in association with the PSC and senior project personnel materialized program schedules of policy dialogues, assigned role among the IDP members, developed presentations embodied with key issues of the 'District Declarations', prepared list of expected participants (organizations and individuals) of the dialogues, and facilitated policy dialogues. Further meeting of IDP can be viewed under activity no. 1.2.2.

The first policy dialogue held in September 24, 2010 at Hotel Malla with 118 senior government officials and personnel from different organizational and professional settings for one day, whereas second policy dialogue held in July 28 July 2011 at Nepal Academy, Kathmandu with a total of 93 senior government officials and personnel from different organizational and professional settings for one day. They were the ministers, constituent assembly (CA) members, chairmans of the concerned thematic committees in the CA, professors, and the representatives of major political parties, civil society, NEFIN, NFDIN, state authorities, IP intellectuals, human rights activists, medias, Social welfare Council, the target communities, etc. contributed meaningfully to the dialogues.

Purpose of the policy dialogue was to inform policy circle for constitutional protection and promotion of local cultures, cultural rights and cultural diversity. Policy dialogue divided into two major sessions- the opening session and the dialogue session. The first dialogue was started with the opening remarks by the chief guest Hon. Purna Kumar Sherma, the Minister, Ministry of Local Development/Government of Nepal, whereas and second dialogue was started with lightening the lamp from the chief guest Hon. Nilamber Acharya, the president of the Constitutional Committee in CA.

Second sessions of the dialogues started with the presentation on the key issues of grassroots views and voices on the protection and promotion of local cultures that compiled through VDC and district dialogues. After the presentations, the key speakers/guests were requested to put their remarks on the presentations. A few names, Hon. Nilamber Acharya, the president of the Constitutional Committee in CA, Hon. Lal Babu Pandit, the president of the committee on the protection of the rights of minorities and marginalized communities in CA, Hon. Raj kaji Gurung, coordinator of the caucus of indigenous CA members, Hon. Prithvi Subba Gurung, representatives of major political parties, IP intellectuals made remarks on and insightful inputs to the draft Declarations. At the end of the sessions, the floor was opened for panel discussions.

The IDP, rapporteurs and facilitators have collectively facilitated and recorded views of the speakers and the floor. Finally, the dialogues concluded with the 'National Declarations' as the Draft Submissions to CA and the relevant Thematic Committees in CA. Later, the Draft Submissions submitted to CA and the relevant Thematic Committees in CA with a follow up to ensure grassroots views and voices on the protection and promotion of local cultures and cultural rights in the New Constitution.

Reason for modification or delay

None.

Results

The project formed an intercultural dialogue panel (IDP) consisting of 13 (or F 3/M 10) members which facilitated policy dialogues and carried out follow up for the realization of the cultural issues in the new Constitution. The IDP also provided strategic inputs to the project in a regular basis.

Two round of policy dialogues with 211 (or F 53/M 158) senior officials form different settings for the constitutional protection of indigenous and local cultures, cultural rights and diversity successfully conducted. Brief information on the participants of the policy dialogues is provided as:

Table 4: Brief information on the participants of the policy dialogue

SN	General description of the participants	Total no. of participants*		
		Female	Male	Total
1	Policy makers (members of the CA and thematic committees in CA, senior government officials, political leaders, SWC, NEFIN, NEFDIN, etc.)	10	25	35
2	Members of civil society (IPO leaders, human rights activists, NGO representatives, social/religious leaders, etc.)	28	86	114
3	Intellectuals (professors/lecturers, researchers, intellectuals, culture and language experts, etc.)	15	40	55
4	Media personnel (representatives of national TV, radios and print media)	0	7	7
Total		53	158	211

*figures in cumulative terms

The dialogues successfully concluded into the National Declarations of cultural issues of target communities to inform concerned policy circles for the constitutional protection and promotion of local cultures, cultural rights and diversity.

The National Declarations submitted to the concerned policy making bodies, such as the constitutional and concerned thematic committees in CA and the planning commission to ensure the constitutional protection of indigenous cultures and their cultural rights.

The IDP made utmost efforts to make the dialogues successful, has been taking crucial role in carrying out follow up for the realization of the cultural issues of local indigenous communities in the new Constitution. Now, the new constitution making process of Nepal is impeded, and the efforts made by the project can be worthless.

The National Declarations prepared by the policy dialogues and submitted to the concerned policy making bodies were as:

Some of the key issues of the draft submissions (the National Declarations - 2010)

1. The new constitution to be framed and enacted by the constituent assembly (CA) should guarantee cultural right as basic fundamental right for recognition and protection of the culture of all the peoples in general and indigenous ethnic groups in particular and ensure harmony and mutual interdependence among them.
2. While giving constitutional continuity to uphold Nepal as a secular state an alternative to cow as a national animal, acceptable to all community, religion, culture and tradition, should be explored.
3. Festivals observed by all communities including the indigenous ethnic groups need to be recognized and national holidays and other recognition need to be accorded.
4. The state needs to be obliged to initiate and implement necessary measures to promote, preserve and protect, repair and rehabilitate culture, tradition, monuments and heritage appertained to the rights and dignity of the indigenous peoples.
5. The state needs to be required to provide recognition to religion, culture, customs and customary laws, customary practices.
6. The state needs to be obliged to sponsor/finance studies on traditional resource, knowledge, skill/technology of the indigenous peoples and take special measures to implement projects for uplift of their livelihood.
7. The new constitution should give national level recognition and status to language and script of the indigenous peoples and ensure that these languages are used in official transactions as well.
8. State needs to be required to implement special measures to set up, protect and promote cultural museums to depict and show case identity related objects of the indigenous people.
9. The new constitution should rename the regions/provinces according to languages of the indigenous people while carrying out the restructuring of the state in line with the principle of federalism.
10. The new constitution should require the state to formulate a uniform culture promotion/development policy for recognition and self-respect of the indigenous people.
11. The new constitution should require the state to publicize materials on religion and culture of all the cultural groups.
12. The new constitution should require the state to preserve and protect the endangered culture and communities.
13. The state should implement provision of ILO convention 169 and Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, 2007.
14. The state should implement the provision of the international treaties, conventions ratified by Nepal that have bearing upon the rights and entitlements of the indigenous people.
15. The discriminatory distribution of public services/goods needs to be ended and judicious distribution of goods/services need to be effectively carried out.

Some of the key features of the draft submissions (the National Declarations - 2011)

- On the basis of secularism and the principle of multiculturalism, state should reform/remove discriminatory laws and legal provisions,
- Equal distribution of resources should be adopted by the state,
- The state should provide recognition to the ancestral domain, culture, religion, institutions, knowledge system, etc. of indigenous nationalities and put special attention to protect and promote them,
- The state should implement the convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage and other ratified international instruments to protect intangible cultural heritages and entitlements of cultural rights of indigenous nationalities,
- The state should ensure the rights to self-determination for the betterment of indigenous nationalities,
- The new constitution should guarantee the cultural right as the fundamental right for identity and dignity of indigenous nationalities and ensuring cultural diversity and harmony,

- The state should recognize and oblige to initiate necessary measures to promote and protect language, script, art and culture of indigenous nationalities,
- The new constitution should rename the regions according to the ancestral domains of indigenous communities in line with the principle of federalism,
- The new constitution and the state policy should guarantee the language of indigenous nationalities as official language and school curriculum in their dominant regions/areas,
- The state should formulate and implement law to remove cultural discrimination and violation.

Activity No. 1.2.2 Conduct IDP meeting for strategic inputs to the project

As targeted, a total of 6 meetings of intercultural dialogue panel (IDP) conducted at different locations with 91 (or F 18/M 73) members during the project period.

Topics/activities covered

Purpose of IDP meeting was to conduct policy dialogues and provide strategic inputs to the project. Immediate after the formation on 15 September 2010 IDP at Hotel Tibet, the first meeting was held in the same hotel. In the meeting, an orientation covering the project matter and purpose of IDP organized to inform the members.

Second and fourth meetings of IDP completely concentrated on the preparation and management of policy dialogues I and II respectively. Similarly, third meeting reviewed the progress and carried out on-the-spot field observation of the FTG training held in Dhulikhel. The fifth and sixth meeting were dedicated to the follow up of the Submissions in CA and strategic planning for the remaining activities respectively.

The meeting of IDP was scheduled for about 3 - 5 hours based on intensity of the issues. It was biannual meeting. However, meetings were uneven because of the need of IDP in the project. All the meetings were attended by the majority of the IDP members along with the senior project personnel.

Reason for modification or delay

None.

Results

An IDP of 13 members from different organizational settings formed to facilitate policy dialogues and provided insightful inputs to the project. A total of six meeting conducted to execute policy dialogues, review plans and progresses, observe activity on-the-spot and provide strategic inputs to the project in a regular basis.

IDP successfully facilitated two policy dialogues concluded as the National Declarations on protection and promotion of indigenous/local cultures, cultural rights and diversity, and submitted to the concerned policy making government bodies, i.e., the constitutional committee, concerned thematic committees and the planning commission. Moreover, the IDP has carried out followup for the realization of the cultural issues of the target communities in the new Constitution. Brief information on the IDP meeting is provided below:

Table 5: Brief information on the IDP meeting

SN	Execution location & date	Total no. of participants*			Key agenda of the meeting
		Female	Male	Total	
1	Hotel Tibet, Sep 15, 2010	4	13	17	Formation and inception meeting of IDP
2	Hotel Malla,	3	11		Strategic preparation and execution of policy dialogue I

3	Dhulikhel, 20 March 2011	4	12	16	Progress review and field observation of FTG training
4	IGD on 25 July, 2011	4	14	18	Strategic preparation and execution of policy dialogue II
5	IGD, 2 Feb 2012	2	13	15	Review and planning for year 2012 and followup of National Declaration
6	IGD, Nov 1, 2012	1	10	11	Strategic financial plan for remaining activities
Total		18	73	91	

*figures also include the number of Sr. project personnel attended in the meeting