



PROGRAM FOR ACCOUNTABILITY IN NEPAL (PRAN)



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PRAN

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Accountability in Nepal



OVERVIEW

The Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN) has been crucial in strengthening practical training, action learning and networking aimed at developing the capacity of civil society and government actors to promote social accountability in Nepal.

The program has been designed to respond to a unique opportunity in the process of state building in Nepal. Limited transparency and accountability undermines governmental capacity for service delivery and hampers the implementation of important reforms. Issues of exclusion are especially significant at the district and village levels, with vulnerable groups poorly represented in decision making bodies, prejudiced in their ability to access services and unable to voice their concerns.

In the absence of inclusive participation in governance reforms, mainly hindered by limited knowledge of, and capacity

of promoting transparency and accountability in the public sector, PRAN has stepped in as a strong catalytic partner.

Organized civil society now has an enhanced role in helping to put in place stable, responsive and accountable state institutions. In this situation, strengthening civil society organizations to play a constructive role is a key contribution that can be made by the development partners in Nepal. Nepal has a long tradition of civil society organizations. Their effectiveness, however, is constrained by problems of fragmentation, politicization, limited capacity, insufficient coordination, and uneven links with the state.

There is a broad consensus among political actors in Nepal and development partners that improved governance is the key to setting Nepal on a path to inclusive pro-poor social and economic

development. Good governance requires not only strong and effective government institutions but also active and engaged citizens and civil society organizations. The overall program promotes both the “supply” and “demand” side of good governance and links them together.

With the funding from State and Peace Building Fund (SPBF) and Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), PRAN has been supporting social accountability activities in three focal areas: Public Financial Management (PFM), Municipal Governance and Public Service Delivery (PSD).

Lesson Learned: Turning Information into Empowerment

In Lekhnath Municipality, Western Nepal, women are demanding to be heard and included as a result of PRAN.

Every year, 10% of the municipal budget of the block grant is allocated to women in Nepal. However, the 10% entitlement does not always reach the women as intended. The Lekhnath women were simply unaware such allocation existed and thus,

never had the chance to participate in the municipal budget consultations.

“We were not involved in any of the planning consultations. We did not even know our entitlements. Until we were informed by the Community Communication Centre (CCC) last year, we stayed inside our homes, without a clue about the budget for women. We were missing out on the opportunity to develop ourselves but we won’t let this happen anymore,” says a frustrated 50 year old social worker, Suk Kumari Bishwakarma.

Community Communication Centre (CCC) implemented the project on the use of Social Accountability tool of Public Expenditure Tracking System (PETS) through PRAN. More than 200 women were interviewed to know about their roles in budget planning and 15 focus group discussions were organised. CCC also held six citizen awareness discussions and a public hearing to highlight women’s roles in budgetary planning.

The women want their budget for women-specific programs, such as workshops on embroidery, farming, cash crops etc. They are of the opinion that women can only be equal if they are able to earn just as well as their male counterparts.



PRAN'S THEMATIC AREAS

Good governance requires not only strong and effective government institutions but also active and engaged citizens and civil society organizations.

In Nepal the World Bank's governance program is two pronged:

- (i) strengthening the effectiveness, responsiveness, transparency and internal accountability of state institutions and
- (ii) enhancing Government's accountability and transparency by supporting social accountability mechanisms.

Social accountability refers to approaches that enhance the ability of citizens, civil society organizations, and other non-state actors to hold the state accountable and that also enhance the capacity of the state to become more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs and demands of citizens.

Over the past decade an impressive array of social accountability approaches and tools has evolved globally. These practices have been well honed in countries where they are widely implemented and have become powerful instruments to underpin "demand for good governance".

The World Bank is now supporting the use of such approaches in the programs it supports across the world. The Government of Nepal, for its part, recognizes the need for a demand side to accountability and improved service delivery.

Starting with the Ninth Plan, the Government accorded a key role to civil society in planning and implementing development strategy. It has recently enacted a Good Governance Act and a Right To Information (RTI) Act which, taken together, clearly recognize the need for accountable and



honest government and the right of citizens to be properly informed and empowered to monitor government performance.

In order to address the priority thematic areas, Public Financial Management (PFM), Municipal Governance and Public Service Delivery, the program concentrates on these components:

Public Financial Management

- Independent budget analysis (by CSOs, think tanks, research institutes, etc.)
- Demystification and public dissemination of budget information
- Raising levels of public awareness and budget literacy
- Participatory expenditure tracking

Municipal Governance

- Formation of civic unions (to interface with municipal authorities)
- Establishment of social contracts (between municipal authorities and citizens)
- Mechanisms for regular dialogue between citizens and municipal government
- Mechanisms for enhanced municipal transparency and “downwards” accountability
- Participatory municipal planning
- Participatory budgeting

Public Service Delivery

- Use of community scorecards (and other participatory M&E methods) to monitor services.
- Citizen report cards
- Community management and/or oversight committees.
- Public posting of entitlements and fees by service providers.
- Citizen charters
- Social audits
- Introduction of effective complaints mechanisms.

PRAN's Success:

Use of Community Score Card

21 community schools in 13 villages of Nawalaparasi District helped improve services to students through the use of Community Score Cards over 10 months under PRAN.

The Community Score Card (CSC) involved a 6 step process, the most important of which was getting agreement between all stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, MoE officials, SMCs and PTAs) on the issues that needed to be addressed.

The exercise is a valuable mechanism to get agreement from service receivers and service providers on an action plan. The use of the CSC in Nawalparasi did three things:

The CSC ensured it got agreement from all stakeholders about the important issues affecting education.

It presented service providers' and service receivers' points of view to the other.

It ensured a joint commitment to an action plan for the issues both agreed were important.



PRAN'S APPROACH

To achieve its program objectives, the PRAN has the following components, each managed by a Nepali partner organization.

Capacity Development and Awareness Raising

Through this component, the program supports:

- a) Training in social accountability techniques for both civil society and government practitioners;
- b) On-the-job mentoring and coaching;
- c) Exchange visits and scholarships, and;
- d) Special programs for targeted audiences.

PRAN's capacity development activities target civil society and government practitioners. They aim to enhance skills in social accountability methods already in use in Nepal and, where appropriate, to adapt and apply global practices that have been tested and proven effective elsewhere. Participants in capacity development activities

are selected based on objective criteria and using a process which is transparent. Demands for training and capacity development will be assessed through a series of national and sub-national consultations, and the program will remain flexible in order to tailor capacity development activities and respond over time according to expressed demand.

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Grant Making for Action Learning
This program component supports:

- a) Grants for pilot social accountability projects (up to \$50,000) and,
- b) Small grants for tool development and action research (up to \$15,000).

Civil society organizations that receive grants will be provided mentoring and coaching by experienced advisors while implementing their grants

activities. Grants will cover the costs of developing and testing social accountability tools for Nepal and adapting them to the Nepali context, monitoring their implementation, and disseminating the results as case studies to guide further operational and capacity building initiatives.

Knowledge sharing and Networking

This program component supports:

- a) Knowledge management services
- b) Mutual support networks and coalitions for social Accountability

Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

This component supports:

- a) Monitoring, impact evaluation and learning – including the development of an ongoing “learning by doing” strategy for the PRAN and independent evidence-based research to

monitor and evaluate program-supported activities and to distil lessons of relevance for strengthening social accountability in Nepal.

- b) Other special studies - PRAN supports research on topics that warrant further study in order to guide and enhance the practice of social accountability in Nepal over time.

Program Leadership and Administration

Finally, a central but small, PRAN Coordination Unit (PCU), located in the World Bank Nepal Country Office, is responsible for coordinating program activities. The PCU is also responsible for making sure that programs are carefully monitored, and experience gathered and lessons learned are fed back into strengthening the PRAN, as well as serving as a basis for mainstreaming social accountability activities in the World Bank's Country Program in Nepal.





Program activities under PRAN are funded by State and Peacebuilding Fund (SPBF) and Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF).



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May 2013

*Photo courtesy: The World Bank
and Pro Public*

