Integrity Action

Nepal 16 / Community Monitoring of Nepal's Earthquake Reconstruction
Final Evaluation Report

The Evaluation Team

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ACRONYMS

Cahurast	Campaign for Human Rights and Social Transformation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IA	Integrity Action
KII	Key Informant Interview
NDI	Nepal Development Initiative Consulting Pvt. Ltd
PVF	Pro-Victims Foundation
VDC	Village Development Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the support from Pro-Victimis Foundation (PVF), Integrity Action (IA) implemented the "Nepal 16 / Community Monitoring of Nepal's Earthquake Reconstruction" project (April 2016 – February 2017) in collaboration with local NGO, Campaign for Human Rights and Social Transformation (Cahurast) Nepal, in 3 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and one municipality in Sindhupalchowk district. The aims of this project are 1) Engage communities to ensure they get the help they need; 2) Reduce the failure rate of reconstruction projects; 3) Reduce fraud, corruption, waste, mismanagement and duplication, while increasing efficient use of resources; 4) Enhance trust between donors, implementers and recipients.

This report presents the findings and analysis of the final evaluation of the project conducted by Nepal Development Initiative Consulting Pvt. Ltd (NDI) Nepal. The evaluation was conducted between February and March 2017.

Using a participatory approach to social research, the evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and lessons learnt of the project. A qualitative research design combining key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussion (FGDs) with the desk-based review was applied to elicit information for analysis. A total of 10 KIIs and 5 FGDs were conducted with project beneficiaries and stakeholders and IA and Cahurast staff members in February and March 2017.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Relevance: Sindhupalchowk is one of the highly earthquake affected districts in Nepal where hundreds of non-government agencies have been spending huge money in order to rebuild private and public property. In this scenario, the project is implemented in order to eradicate corruption and increase the accountability of any project. Thus, the evaluation team found that the project is highly relevant to address the issue of transparency, accountability and effective public resource management in Sindhupalchowk district. The 3E approach employed by the project is highly relevant for the effective implementation of the project at the local level.

Impact: The evaluation team acknowledged that the impact is generally a long-term process; therefore most aspects of impact of the "Nepal 16 / Community Monitoring of Nepal's Earthquake Reconstruction" project might not be quite visible right at the end of the project. In other words impact might be more visible over the time as long-term impact of reconstruction work is only visible over time. However, in this evaluation, we assessed the impact of the project dividing it into two categories: a) immediate (short-term) impact and b) progression towards long-term impact. The former reflects immediate changes occurred in system, structures and behaviors as an outcome of the project while the latter refers to potential long-term changes that will appear over time as a consequence of the project intervention.

The long-term impact of the project is hard to assess at this stage. However, if partners and stakeholders work for sustainability of the achievements made by this project, long-term impact may be visible over time. In this regard, there are two issues that merit a discussion. First, long-

term impact of the project, as per its goal, will depend on other factors, for example the political dimension at the VDCs. Though the project has conducted training for 97 local community members before the project implementation; however, it was not able to engage overall community members in the project implemented in the VDCs and municipality in terms of raising awareness on different issues such as transparency, accountable and importance of effective public resource management. Further, the evaluators recognized the importance of greater involvement of community members to have greater impact in the community. Therefore, from the impact point of view, our conclusion is that while immediate impact of the project is likely to achieve the project's four aims (see the introduction section), it is impossible for us to comment on whether the project activities are likely to achieve the overall goal.

Sustainability: The project does not have a consolidated exit strategy; however, the evaluation team found that community monitors are highly committed and would likely help to sustain the project in future. We found that monitoring training and the idea of third party monitoring system is sustainable where local community is mobilized and trained about monitoring. Further, 3E approach will act as an empowering and encouraging factors for the community monitors which enable them to continue the job beyond the project period.

Effectiveness: The evaluation team found that one of the major achievements of the project is that it envisioned to monitor 30 projects at the beginning, but they ended up by monitoring 47 project activities. Further, the community monitors have been very effective in checking the quality of the work and help in smooth implementation of the work. However, project lacks the involvement of the local communities in their monitoring activities and the evaluation team believes that without raising awareness at the local level by engaging with them, it would be difficult to achieve the project goal and hinders in efforts to make the project sustainable.

Key Conclusions

Overall, the project was successful in achieving its set objectives. Building local capacity in addressing the issues of transparency, accountability and public resource management are the best approach that they project is being able to execute on the ground. This has not only minimized the issue of corruption and transparency but also maximized the likeliness to complete the reconstruction work on time. Further, the community have also gained something from the project as they are now equipped with the human resources which have capacity to monitor the project in future and it will surely help them to check the reconstruction work that might come in their locality.

LESSONS LEARNED

- As the project was implemented in a short period of time, Cahurast didn't have exit strategy in place before the project phased out. As a result, monitors couldn't continue the work in an effective manner in some of the VDCs due to geographical constraints. This clearly shows the need of proper exist strategy beforehand. Had the strategy been in place, monitors would have been able to utilize their time and resources effectively and continue the work. It would have given them clear guidance and a way forward properly.

- All the volunteers had to communicate to the Kathmandu office or office at district headquarters for any queries and support which is time and resource consuming. A field level office in Melamchi would solve the issues in the field immediately and motivate the volunteer more. As the field presence of Cahurast is crucial for successful implementation of the project, it would have been effective had there been a field office.

- The working VDCs of Cahurast are scattered with difficult terrain. It's difficult for the volunteers to monitor the reconstruction work from one VDC to next in one day. It would have been more effective had IA identified the working VDC before the training and select the monitor from each ward of that particular VDC. This would have reduced the time and cost of the volunteer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Though the project has involved several community members in their project implementation; however, we recommend to have overall community members in terms of raising awareness on different issues such as transparency, accountability and importance of effective public resource management. Without involving a wide range of local communities in the project activities, it's difficult to achieve the goal.

- Trust building with local communities: The project should engage with local communities for at least 3-6 months in order to gain their trust over the project activities. While spending a few months at the program location it will enable relevant project staff members in finding the different methods and approach that will be in-line with the bottom-up approach for effective and sustainable project implementation.

- Provide some advance to the monitors for transportation and communication as its hard for them to manage the money for these activities without an advance. Monitors during the FGD expressed that they have been facing a lot of challenges regarding managing the cost of transportation and communication as they don't have regular income.

- Design at least 2-year project to have some impact in the community. Since this project was for a less than a year, it's hard to see the immediate results from the project.

- Make DevelopmentCheck workable during offline. Monitors are having hard time filling out DevelopmentCheck and sending through data card. It takes very long time for them to fill in the data in DevelopmentCheck and send them to Cahurast as the internet is too slow. There is no provision of saving the completed DevelopmentCheck before sending to Cahurast. If it is not sent in one go they lose the whole thing. This causes a lot of hassles to the community monitors.

- The project should have a solid exit plan for its sustainability in future.

- Monitoring others' projects is quite a challenging job itself. Identifying the risk challenges, it is recommended to provide personal security training to the community monitors. The basic personal security training is essential in order to protect themselves while engaging in the project activities. Further, the basic training could include risk assessment, context analysis, actor analysis and power mapping.

- Several training including mediation, negotiation and conflict sensitive approach should be given to the community monitors for effective implementation of the project.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About the Project

Integrity Action implemented the "Nepal 16 / Community Monitoring of Nepal's Earthquake Reconstruction project in collaboration with local NGO, Campaign for Human Rights and Social Transformation (Cahurast) Nepal. The Pro-Victimis Foundation (PVF) funded the project for nine months, between April 2016 and December 2017, with a two-month no-cost extension. The project has worked in 3 VDCs and one municipality in Sindhupalchowk district.

The aims of this project are
1) Engage communities to ensure they get the help they need;
2) Reduce the failure rate of reconstruction projects;
3) Reduce fraud, corruption, waste, mismanagement and duplication, while increasing efficient use of resources;
4) Enhance trust between donors, implementers and recipients.

1.2 Evaluation Objectives and Scope

The primary objective of the summative evaluation is to assess achievements of the project, particularly examining its *relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability*. Specific objectives of the evaluation included:

- Identify the project outcomes and impact and discuss sustainability of results achieved
- Record lessons and enable them to be shared
- Enable accountability to local stakeholders for the programme's achievements
- Inform future programme design and management

This evaluation covered the entire project areas, with fieldwork conducted in all VDCs of the project district in March 2017.

1.3 Organization of the report

This report is divided into five sections. Section One provides an overview of the project and the evaluation objectives. Section Two explains the approach and methodology employed to conduct the evaluation. Section Three presents an elaborated analysis of findings from the fieldwork and desk-based review. This is followed by the presentation of conclusions of the evaluation in Section Four. Finally, Section Five documents the lessons learned and provides recommendations that may be useful for Integrity Action and its partners for similar projects in the future.

2 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation Approach

A participatory approach to the project evaluation ensuring the maximum involvement of all the project's relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries underpinned the methodological approach employed in this evaluation. This included collecting the views and narratives of project beneficiaries, stakeholders and project staffs and ensuring a feedback loop and discussion to capture the progress and achievements of the project on the ground. Furthermore, a theory-based evaluation examines the assumptions underlying the causal chain from inputs to outcomes and impact.[1]

2.2 Evaluation Criteria

This evaluation used the criteria recommended by the Office of Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) for the evaluation of projects and programmes. These are relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.[2] **Relevance** refers to the extent to which the objectives of interventions are consistent with the context and the beneficiaries' needs and priorities. Similarly, **effectiveness** refers to the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Likewise, **impact** is defined as tangible and visible changes observed in short-term, as well as long-term, as a consequence of the intervention of the project. In a similar vein, **sustainability** is defined as the extent to which the achievements of the project will continue after the project exits.

2.3 Methods

The evaluation employed a mixed method approach to social research, combining desk-based review of relevant documents with fieldwork in all the project districts in March 2017. A qualitative research design combining key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with the desk-based review was applied to elicit information for analysis. A total of 10 KIIs and 5 FGDs were conducted project beneficiaries and stakeholders and IA and Cahurast staff member in February and March 2017.

VDCs for the fieldwork were selected using a purposive convenient sampling, in consultation with Cahurast, Nepal project staff. In addition to interviews, project documents were reviewed to obtain secondary data to complement the primary data from the fieldwork (please see annex 2 for complete list of documents reviewed).

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[1] Weiss, Carol (1998). *Evaluation: methods for studying programs and policies*. Prentice Hall: New York

[2] OECD (2002). 'Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Result Based Management', Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/2754804.pdf

3 FINDINGS AND ANALSYIS

3.1 Relevance

The project was highly relevant to address the issue of transparency, accountable and effective public resource management in the project implemented district. After the devastating earthquake, several organizations have come to the district with the aim of helping the locals to reestablish their life. Many organizations have supported local communities to strengthen their livelihood and shelters and some have been involved in reconstructing public properties such as schools, roads and drinking water tanks. External monitors to these projects have made implementing organizations as well as local communities to be more transparent and accountable.

A community monitor in an interview stated that:

> *'In one of the schools, we found that contractor was using low quality bricks and rods. We talked to the school management committee and contractors and they agreed to return the poor quality goods. I think in this way, we have been able to prevent school reconstruction which could again be affected with a small earthquake.'[3]*

Further, a school principal in an interview stated that

> *'Community monitors from Cahurast frequently visit the school reconstruction site and enquire about the progress. They also check the quality control. We are very happy that they are doing all this for the benefits of schools and the local communities'.[4]*

In line with the above statement, another school teacher in an interview expressed that

> *'Many organizations have been implementing their reconstruction project in the VDCs but they lack transparency. They are doing haphazardly. Thus, an organization like Cahurast is very relevant because they can independently monitor the reconstruction sites and raise awareness in the community about transparency and accountability. Their role is very important for the smooth reconstruction work'.[5]*

The above statements are some of the examples in regards to the relevance of the project. In all of the interviews and FGD that the evaluation team had conducted in the project sites, people informed us that the project has been doing a marvelous job in terms of reducing corruption and

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[3] KII with community monitor, male, Sindhupalchowk, 04.03.2017
[4] KII with school principal, male, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017
[5] KII with school teacher, male, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017

increasing transparency. As the major objective of the project is to increase transparency and reduce corruption, the evaluation team now can say that the project has been able to meet its objectives in a greater manner. Strong evidence can be backed up by the primary data where all of the respondents stated that earlier only contractors have an idea about the budget and even school teachers have zero idea and this project has made budgets available for everyone, including the communities. Besides that, the project is also able to stand for quality control.

Figure 1: FGD with contractor and school management committee

The project was highly relevant in producing local human resources in the project implemented district. During the field visit, the evaluation team had met all the community monitors and it was found that they were highly committed in terms of meeting the project objectives. All of them voiced that the project is for a good social cause which tries to eradicate corruption, increase transparency and engage local communities for their empowerment. Further, all of the monitors believed that their professional career has been empowered to some extent, however, they thought they will have to gain more knowledge in future.

A female community monitor expressed in an interview that

> *'This is my first experience working as a volunteer. After engaging with Cahurast, I have come to know about community problems and support provided by different organizations. I have developed my public speaking capacity. Further, I have also developed my networking and building relationships with different stakeholders for the benefit of society. Now, I am confident that I can utilize these skills while working with organizations in future.*[6]

Adopting IA's GESI strategy and selection from the marginalized groups in the project implemented district has been quite relevant. The implementing organizations have developed criteria in order to select the community monitors and they selected 30 monitors based on the criteria. However, it was not seen at the project implemented district. It may be the fact that the number of community monitors have massively declined from 30 to 8. Based on the interview and focus group discussions, the evaluation team have found that the culture of paying to the volunteer by different organizations in the project implementing sites was cited as a major reason for not being able to retain all 30 monitors. Most of the trained community monitors had demanded a monthly salary which was beyond the project budget.

As an example of this, a local partner in an interview stated that

> *'Many NGOs and INGOs have been paying money to their participants as well as volunteers. Because of this trend, the community members perceived that they would receive financial benefits if they were involved in project activities. Most of our trained community monitors had also in mind that they would receive money. It was a big challenge for us to manage. At the end, only 8 remained who did an excellent job in the project implementation in the district.*[7]

Further, the implementing organizations could not have community monitors, such as differently able people, because of the fact that the community monitors must travel a lot by foot. It is very understandable because of the geographical difficulties in the project implemented district.

3.2 Impact

The evaluation team recognized that the impact is generally a long-term process; therefore most aspects of impact of the "Nepal 16 / Community Monitoring of Nepal's Earthquake Reconstruction" project might not be quite visible right at the end of the project. In other words

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[6] KII with community monitor, female, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017
[7] KII with local partner staff member, female, Kathmandu, 01.03.2017

impact might be more visible over time as long-term impact of reconstruction work is only visible over time. However, in this evaluation, we assessed the impact of the project dividing it into two categories: a) immediate (short-term) impact and b) progression towards long-term impact. The former reflects immediate changes occurred in systems, structures and behaviors as an outcome of the project while the latter refers to potential long-term changes that will appear over time as a consequence of the project intervention.

3.2.1 Immediate impact

The evaluation team found that the skills and capacities of the community monitors have increased over the period of project implementation. Trainings and regular mentoring are the reasons for their increasing skills in terms of monitoring. All of the local monitors have agreed that their confidence level has been increasing and now they are fluent to put their concerns to the local elites and political leaders. In other words, they have a share in the decision making processes that affects their own communities.

A community monitor in an interview stated that

> *'Before this project implementation, we could not speak up even if we knew there was corruption involved in reconstruction work. This project not only has given us the platform but also equipped us with necessary skills for monitoring. Thus, we are now able to speak up against corruption and results are magnificent as the level of corruption has decreased in the reconstruction project in our locality.*[8]

The evaluation team believes that community ownership towards projects has also increased as these community monitors belong to the same locality. This will definitely help the project be sustainable beyond the project period.

Further, the evaluation team found that the immediate impact can be seen among the concerned stakeholders, such as school management committees, contractors, and local political leaders in regards to importance of being more transparent and accountable.

A school principal stated in an interview that

> *'We have very little trust over the work of non-government organizations as we have a perception that they are not transparent. Now the perception has changed because they are becoming more and more transparent in terms of budget and expenditure as well.*

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[8] KII with community monitor, female, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017

Further, Cahurast has played a tremendous role in order to raise awareness about the importance of transparency and accountability.'[9]

The community monitors has been playing a key role in transforming community perception. Alongside, they are also working with local contractors to make them understand how to use high quality materials for reconstructing school or drinking water tank reconstruction. They have been able to get buy-in of contractors and school management committees by highlighting the importance of making earthquake resistant infrastructures.

A community monitor in an interview stated that

'In every visit, we have been meeting the members of school management committees and contractors to receive more information about the reconstruction activities. We always highlight being more transparent or using high quality goods. Now, the contractors have felt that if they do something wrong then they will have to face trouble from the school management committee because monitors will definitely communicate. Thus, they are now using high quality materials.'[10]

Another community monitor in an interview stated that

'We have tried our best to contribute in reducing fraud, mismanagement, and corruption by providing more information to the communities about the reconstruction projects. Now there is a widespread perception that someone is watching reconstruction work. So it has increased the quality of the materials as well as efficiency.'[11]

Further, the evaluation team found that the project had envisioned to monitor only 30 reconstruction activities with the help of 30 monitors. Despite of the reduction in number of community monitors, the project has been able to monitor 47 project activities. The evaluators found that the project is highly efficient in terms of its implementation.

The partner organizations collectively voiced that

'We had set the project target to monitor 30 projects, which increased to 47. So we have achieved beyond our target.'[12]

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[9] KII with school principal, male, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017
[10] KII with community monitor, female, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017
[11] KII with community monitor, male, Sindhupalchowk, 04.03.2017
[12] KII with local partner staff member, female, Kathmandu, 01.03.2017; KII with Integrity Action staff member, female, London, 03.03.2017

The evaluation team found that there is a high level of motivation among the community monitors in monitoring the reconstruction activities. This is another reason for the project being able to achieve more than it intended.

Figure 2: FGD with community people

3.2.2   Long-term impact

The long-term impact of the project is hard to assess at this stage. However, if partners and stakeholders work for sustainability of the achievements made by this project, long-term impact may be visible over time. In this regard, there are two issues that merit a discussion.

First, long-term impact of the project, as per its goal, will depend on other factors, for example political dimensions at the VDCs. The limitation of this project is that it did not engage with the overall community members in terms of raising awareness on different issues such as transparency, accountable and importance of effective public resource management, although it would be extremely necessary to have greater impact at the local level. Second, without involving a wide range of local communities in the project activities, the aim of the project, which is to *engage communities to ensure they get the help they need* looks either too ambitious or unrealistic. Therefore, from impact point of view, our conclusion is that while immediate impact of the project is likely to achieve the project's four aims (see the introduction section), it is impossible for us to comment on whether the project activities are likely to achieve the overall goal.

3.3 **Sustainability**

Integrity Action realized the role of citizen monitoring to minimize the corruption and increase the accountability in the reconstruction work. It organized a training on citizen monitoring which raised the awareness and understanding at the grassroots level around Community Integrity Building and the need for monitoring to ensure that reconstruction efforts are effective and corruption is reduced. It built the capacity of 30 monitors on monitoring the reconstruction work. Though only 8 volunteer are continuing the monitoring work after the training, all eight were found to be committed to continue the work even after the project phased out.

A male community monitor in an interviewed voiced that

> *'I am confident that I will monitor the project beyond the project period.'[13]*

Because of the physical terrain, it would be difficult for the monitors to cover all project VDCs, however, they assured that they would continue monitoring the nearest VDCs.

A community monitor during FGD reiterated that

> *'We are really committed to continue working with this organization and we will continue beyond the project period. Cahurast has shown us the path and we will follow that path. In future, managing money would be a great challenge in our path. But we will definitely conduct little monitoring. But we may not able to travel far in order to monitor.'[14]*

The idea of a third party monitoring system is sustainable where local community is mobilized and trained about monitoring. Cahurast has developed 3E approach to work in the community in which they select community people and Educate them about monitoring, Empower and Engage them. With the empowerment through training, monitors continue the work beyond the project period.

A local partner staff in an interview expressed that

> *'3E- Educate, Empower and Engage - best approach of the project adopted which will help to make project sustainable beyond the project period.'[15]*

Even though the project has been completed, the monitors are still engaging themselves and they are sending reports. The 3E approach has made the project sustainable beyond the project period. Money doesn't matter for some of the monitors. They want to work for the cause.

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[13] KII with community monitor, male, Sindhupalchowk, 04.03.2017
[14] FGD with community monitor, mixed, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017
[15] KII with local partner staff, female, Kathmandu, 01.03.2017

A community monitor in an interview stated that

> 'I just received 12 thousand (equivalent to EURO 108) in these 8 months, but I really want to continue this work because it developed my personality and could eradicate corruption. I like this because it is beneficial for communities.'[16]

However, Integrity Action is trying to receive more funding and is trying to assure a donor for it. International organizations are happy about it and there is a possibility that they will fund in future. Swiss Solidarity has assured IA for funding. In this case IA will mobilize the same volunteers in the future if the volunteers agreed. IA will start implementing the 2nd phase very soon and is developing a mobile app. They will conduct new refresher training and probably we will most likely start from March 2017. This will make the project sustainable as the monitoring work will continue for quite some time in future.

3.4 **Effectiveness**

Third party monitoring has proven to be effective as the local community is trained and mobilized. Cahurast's 3E approach to work in the community is very effective. Through this approach they Educate, Empower and Engage the local community.

A community monitor in an interview expressed that

> 'The project was very effective in terms of improving the qualities of bricks in some of the construction areas.'[17]

A school principal in an interview expressed that

> 'Within the short span of time they also asked several questions to engineers and they report to their people. Cahurast suggested having good quality bricks and we followed that. Their suggestions were very helpful.'[18]

However, by the time the monitoring training was conducted, most of the selected projects were near to completion stage i.e. 60 to 80 % of work has been completed and some were about to start. So, the project only contributed to the projects that were about to start or the ones which were half-way through. Nonetheless, in the initial visit the monitors could not find much information and analyzed only the context and stakeholders of the projects. With frequent visits to the construction sites, the monitors gained trust and openness with the contractors which helped them to acquire the information they needed during the monitoring.

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[16] KII with community monitor, male, Sindhupalchowk, 04.03.2017
[17] KII with community monitor, male, Sindhupalchowk, 04.03.2017
[18] KII with school principal, male, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017

A male community member during FGD stated that

> *'We praised that Cahurast's work has been able to raise awareness on transparency which is ultimately beneficial to community. Further, they help us (Cahurast) increase transparency and it is beneficial to local communities.'*[19]

Though there are only 8 monitors actively monitoring the reconstruction project at the moment, their intervention has yielded effective results in the community.

A community monitor in an interview voiced that

> *'We have supported for transparency and accountability of the reconstruction projects. Because of our monitoring the contractors are now afraid of us, thus, are using high quality materials. We are appreciated by the school principal and teachers and they asked us to do more monitoring.'*[20]

The monitors have been involved in checking the quality of work which has helped in smooth implementation of the work. Cahurast expressed "their (Monitors') work helps to improve the quality of goods used for our school reconstruction."

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[19] FGD with local community member, mixed, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017
[20] KII with community monitor, female, Sindhupalchowk, 05.03.2017

4 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the project was successful in achieving its set objectives. Building local capacity in addressing the issues of transparency, accountability and public resource management are the best approach that the project is being able to execute at the ground. This has not only minimized the issue of corruption and transparency but also maximized the likeliness to complete the reconstruction work on time. Beside that, the project's 3E approach has been effective for the constructive engagement of the local human resources for the project implementation. Further, community have also gained something from the project as they are now equipped with the human resources which have capacity to monitor the project in future and it will surely help them to check the reconstruction work that might come in their locality. However, the likelihood of engagement of these human resources beyond the project timeline is questionable given the limited resources that they will have and also because of the geographical constraints in the project implemented VDCs. Nevertheless, the community monitors have been empowered and motivated through regular mentoring by the project staffs; the involvement of them in monitoring the reconstruction activities beyond the project timeline is still possible.

5 LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Lesson Learned

The data and analysis presented above draw a number of lessons learned that may be useful in the future or can be replicated elsewhere. Below is a summary.

- As the project was implemented in a short period of time, Cahurast didn't have an exit strategy in place before the project phased out. As a result, monitors couldn't continue the work in distant VDCs effectively. This clearly shows the need of proper exit strategy beforehand. Had the strategy been in place, monitors would have been able to utilize their time and resources more effectively and continue the work. It would have given them the clear guidance and way forward properly.

- All the volunteers had to communicate to the Kathmandu office for any queries and support. It was time and resource consuming. A district level office in Melamchi would solve the issues in field immediately and motivate the volunteers more. As the field presence of Cahurast is crucial for successful implementation of the project, it would have been effective had there been a field office.

- The working VDCs of Cahurast are scattered with difficult terrain. It's difficult for the volunteers to monitor the reconstruction work from one VDC to the next in one day. It would have been more effective had IA identified the working VDC before the training and select the monitor from each ward of that particular VDC. This would have reduced the time and cost of the volunteer.

5.2 Recommendations:

Based on the findings and analysis presented in this report, we provide the following recommendations intended for Integrity Action, its project partners and Pro-Victimis Foundation, in particular, and others willing to engage in similar projects, in general. As the project has already ended in February 2017, the recommendations provided in this section are mainly futuristic in the sense that these have significances for redesigning of a similar nature of the project in future.

- Though the project has involved several community members in their project implementation; however, we recommend having overall community members in terms of raising awareness on different issues such as transparency, accountability and importance of effective public resource management. Without involving the wide range of local communities in the project activities, it's difficult to achieve the goal.

- Trust building with local communities: The project should engage with local communities for at least 3-6 months in order to gain their trust over the project activities. Spending a few months at the program location will enable relevant project staff

members in finding the different methods and approach that will be in-line with the bottom-up approach for effective and sustainable project implementation.

- Provide some financial cash advance to the monitors for transportation and communication as it is hard for them to manage the money for these activities without an advance. Monitors during the FGD expressed that they have been facing a lot of challenges regarding managing the cost of transportation and communication as they don't have regular income.

- Design at least a 2-year project to have some impact in the community. Since this project was for a less than a year, it's hard to see the immediate results from the project.

- Make DevelopmentCheck workable during offline. Monitors are having hard time filling out DevelopmentCheck and sending through a data card. It takes a very long time for them to fill in the data in DevelopmentCheck and send them to Cahurast as the internet is too slow. There is no provision of saving the completed DevelopmentCheck before sending to Cahurast. If it is not sent in one go they lose the whole thing. This causes a lot of hassles to the community monitors.

- The project should have a solid exit plan for its sustainability in future.

- Monitoring others' projects is quite a challenging job itself. Identifying the risk challenges, it is recommended to provide personal security training to the community monitors. The basic personal security training is essential in order to protect themselves while engaging in the project activities. Further, the basic training could include risk assessment, context analysis, actor analysis and power mapping.

- Several trainings including mediation, negotiation and a conflict sensitive approach should be given to the community monitors for effective implementation of the project.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Guiding questions

Relevance

1. Who are doing reconstruction in your community and what are they?
2. Are you (communities) satisfied with the reconstruction activities? If no, why not?
3. Are the project's objectives in line with the needs and interests of the local communities?
4. Has the project been able to empower communities and strengthen their capacities in monitoring and decision-making for more transparent, accountable and effective public resource management? Give some examples
5. Has the project sufficiently involved marginalized groups / household? If yes who were they (Hint: try to dig out relevance of the project in terms of gender, age, social/ethnic/religious background, and disabilities).
6. Have you found any obstacles while implementing the project? If yes, how and If no, why? (This question is to direct to project team, partners)
7. Do the other project partners think this project is contributing to enhance the reconstruction work?

Impact

1. What are the immediate achievements made by the project in terms of enhancing local capacity to monitor reconstruction effort? (ask for some examples)
2. Has the project been able to achieved target/aim? Could you give some examples (For project staffs and volunteers/ mobilizers)
3. Did the partners and the beneficiaries who participated have support in the implementation of this project? (please give some specific examples)
4. How has the project contributed in strengthening governance, transparency, reduce fraud, mismanagement, duplication and increasing efficient use of resources?
5. Have you seen any unintended impact or consequence of the project? (These impacts could be negative or positive). If negative, what are these? If positive, what are these?

Effectiveness

1. What approaches did you take to implement the project and how effective were they? (For project staffs and volunteers/ mobilizers)

Sustainability

1. In your opinion, will community members continue monitoring the reconstruction activities even after the project completion? Why and how?
2. Did the project represent good value for money?
3. Was the sustainability aspect of the project discussed with partners and stakeholders? What measures have been taken by the project to ensure sustainability?

4. Has the project prepared exit plan/ strategy before the project phases out?

Lesson learnt

1. What lessons can be drawn from the project to improve project management in future?
2. Which aspects of the project, and which of the approaches used by the project, were most successful/innovative in bringing about change?
3. Have any good practices, success stories, lessons learned or transferable examples been identified? If so, what?

Annex 2: Brief bios of the evaluation team

Ms. Rita Khatiwada

Ms. Rita Khatiwada is a development professional with expertise in the areas of monitoring and evaluation, women empowerment, gender equality and social inclusion, community mobilization, value chain, collaborative leadership and dialogue. In the last 7 years her major focus has been on capacity building especially in peace building, conflict transformation, and promotion of gender equality. She is currently involved in the Baseline Survey of DFID WASH project for CARE Nepal as a Research Officer. She recently conducted a final evaluation of the Generation Amazing program and Inclusive Resource Management Initiative (IRMI) for Mercy Corps Nepal. She has also taken the responsibility of monitoring and evaluation for both UNDP, Safeworld and other reputed organizations. In her association with international development agencies, she has contributed in capacity building of government agencies, development partners and civil society through trainings and development and implementation of policies, strategies and guidelines. She holds a Master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, Japan.

Mr. Ramesh Shrestha

Mr. Ramesh Shrestha has conducted several qualitative and quantitative research projects in Nepal and Sri Lanka in various issues related to conflict resolution, peace-building and democratic reform which contribute in lasting peace. Some of the research areas include civil society strengthening for peace-building, reintegration of former combatants, Security sector reform, democratic transformation, justice, gender based violence, youth participation in local development processes, women insecurity at work place, masculinity, conflict analysis, sexual harassment and impact of humanitarian assistance in earthquake affected communities. While conducting these researches, he was responsible for the development of the methodology, questionnaire, selection of the qualitative tools, and training to researchers, field data collection, management of the data, developing analytical matrix, development respondent list, coding of the respondents and finally writing up the analytical reports. He completed his MA in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies from TU, Kathmandu and University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka.