

प्रतिबिम्बा

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In this Issue

- ✂ John Zutt Visits PRAN's Sub Grantees in Kailali
- ✂ Entitlements Need a Grievance Mechanism
- ✂ PRAN's Way Forward Workshop
- ✂ "The Budget System Process of Nepal" Book Launch

PRAN's Announcements

This month we bring you information on how grievance mechanism can address accountability in social security entitlements and help strengthen governance.

Also, PRAN organized an event in Dhangadhi, Kailali to share experience of its CSOs in order to pave way for the future. 20 participants representing PRAN's 10 MDTF districts gave their opinions and recommendations based on their experience of working at the community level.

John Zutt Visits PRAN's Kailali CSOs

Johannes Zutt, Country Director of the World Bank Nepal, visited PRAN's CSOs from Kailali district on 21 February with Aurelien Kruse, WB Senior Country Economist.

These four Kailali CSOs provided an overview on their FY14 PFM achievements in eight VDCs. The CSOs included: Kamaiya Pratha Unmulan Samaj (KPUS), Rastriya Dalit Network (RDN) Nepal, Rural Development and Research Centre (RDRC) and Samudayik Ban Samanwaya Samiti Mohana (CFCC).

More than 15 beneficiaries, social accountability practitioners and representatives from the government and the media attended the meeting in Dhangadhi. The participants expressed their views about local budget allocation and its procedures, as well as the challenges they face in implementing their plans with the Government. The main topics discussed included: the misuse of local budget, social security entitlements and gaining access to budget information.



(R-L) John Zutt and Aurelien Kruse listening to Bimala SK of Kailali.

"I am very happy to hear from you about these issues," said Zutt. "Although this has begun on a small scale, PFM is one of the most important areas of our work. Accountability ensures people become more aware of their rights as citizens and helps them become involved in budgetary planning and implementation process. This ultimately will lead to reducing poverty, which is the World Bank's main objective in Nepal."

Entitlements Need a Grievance Mechanism

Kristie Druzca's research on Social Security Entitlements in Nepal provides evidence that an individual who receives entitlements increases their personal opportunities, provides a more positive sense of self, and creates a greater cohesion with the state and wider society.

Ms. Druzca is an Australian PhD candidate researching social security entitlements in Nepal. She is exploring the political economy around the GoN's five main cash transfers (entitlements) and how they contribute to building an inclusive state. Some of her interviewees in Sarhali district believe that the universal allocation of these entitlements is a positive sign that the GoN regards the rich and poor equally. VDC secretaries and beneficiaries find the manual delivery of the entitlements to create new opportunities to interact with the government, as well as new avenues to access information and new opportunities for expanded social interaction.



PRAN asked Kristie how a strengthened Grievance Mechanism System could improve the accountability of those entitlements.

"There are many grievances associated with the transfers and these fuel perceptions of discrimination, misconduct and injustice. The government's social security guidelines specify a number of monitoring and grievance mechanisms that are not functional. The entitlements are not regular or predictable as the amounts and payment dates vary. This leads some beneficiaries to suspect misconduct. Also, some beneficiaries cannot access their rightful entitlement and have nowhere – but the VDC secretary – to complain. Many interviewees mistrust the local government and feel that complaining at the district or VDC is futile. A few even suggest a general apathy to the poor's complaints. In the words of one interviewee, "There is no government if you are poor."

"A functional grievance mechanism, therefore, would be a semi-independent body that shared information about the social security guidelines and how local government functions. This body would help citizens resolve entitlement-related complaints. This could reduce perceptions and experiences of discrimination and weak governance. Claimants would feel a sense of justice and that the system of government is working for all citizens."

Events

PRAN's Way Forward Workshop



Mr. Keith D Leslie, PRAN Coordinator welcoming participants at the workshop

What have we achieved so far?

What have we learned?

How do we go ahead from here?

PRAN's two day workshop on 23 and 24 February revolved around these issues in Dhangadi, Kailali.

The event was represented by CSOs from all of PRAN's ten MDTF districts to discuss the findings of VDC level Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) on SSEs and share their experience so far.

PRAN's partners PRAD, New Era, CECI and Pro Public contributed their observations, lessons learned and recommendations to support the CSOs during the workshop.

"The Budget System Process of Nepal" Book Launch

NAREC Nepal, one of PRAN's national sub-grantees, launched its book "The Budget System Process of Nepal" on 20 February in Kathmandu.

The Auditor General of Nepal, Mr. Bhanu Prasad Acharya, was the Chief Guest, in the presence of senior government officials and the media.

A stimulating interaction discussing the relationship among the constitution, development and the national budget followed after the release of the new book.

Please contact us if you would like a copy of the book.

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