

pratiksha

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PRAN's Announcements

This June is all about the research on Social Security Entitlements. Conducted by one of our partners New Era, the research was carried out in all the MDTF funded districts through the 40 CSOs of PRAN.

We also bring you information on how we are engaging the citizen in Public Decision-Making through our work with the OAG and Performance Audit.

Social Security Entitlements Uplift Status of the Recipients, Research Shows

In a research carried out by New Era- one of PRAN's partners, it shows that Social Security Entitlements (SSE) don't just support the citizens financially, it also changes their family's behaviour towards them. Over half on average reported increased respect or attention after they started receiving regular income as SSE. More specifically 67% of the full disability category said there was increased respect from family members.

These findings were presented at the World Bank office by New Era in Kathmandu on 22 May. Along with the Bank staff, PRAN partners CECI and PRAD Nepal, representatives from the European Union and Danish Embassy were present at the sharing session. The presentation showcased the main findings from the research carried out in 80 VDCs located in 10 districts of Nepal, spread over the western, mid western and far western regions. New ERA was commissioned in December 2013 to assist in merging data collected by 40 civil society organizations (CSOs) working under PRAN.

"The research information collected from 11,158 people through this one-on-one face to face data collection may be considered indicative of the wider societal reality around SSEs under Senior citizen, Widow and Disability categories and hence, fairly representative for the SSE categories surveyed," explains Dyuti Baral from New Era.

Findings of the Research

About 76% reported VDC being the source of information around SSE distribution, with family coming next (43%), followed by media (14%). Interestingly, more amongst partial disability category reported media as the source of information (23%) than other SSE categories (Senior Citizens and Widow).



Audience at the sharing session

Social Security Entitlements Uplift Status of the Recipients, Research Shows (Contd..)

SSE recipients spend the most on basic needs especially on medical needs (35%), food (32%), and clothes (19%). Education of grandchildren (6%), religious activity (5%) and on other (3%) comprised the rest of the spending distribution.

Challenges

- When asked about the problems experienced, most reported the amount was nominal (71%), followed by not timely (53%), not full (11%), difficulty due to mobility issues (38%) and administrative obstacles (25%) including getting citizenship papers, eligibility documentation.
- Overall, findings indicate the 53% are not receiving entitlements on time, about 19% do not know what the full amount or the right amount is, and 11% are not receiving the full amount.
- On the whole there was a high level of satisfaction around the SSE (83%), even if most (87%) would be even more so if the amount of SSE was increased.

Learnings

- The current way (mostly in person) of communication entitlement distribution date is, in general, appropriate as most of the beneficiaries are illiterate.
- Communication about entitlement amount and distribution time is not yet reaching all.
- As most of the VDC offices do not have access to internet, availability of documents in the websites does not mean much to VDCs.
- List of persons receiving entitlements is not generally made public at the VDCs.
- Provisions in guidelines do not necessarily mean actual practice.
- Accessibility to SSE distribution points is not easy - age, health, time, mobility - all challenge the recipient.

Paving Way to Citizen Engagement in Public Decision- Making

The new global trend towards open government and citizen engagement in public decision- making has affected Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) which are now increasingly looking for innovative ways to engage citizens and leverage the capacity of civil society. The Office of the Auditor General of Nepal (OAGN) is no exception.

Since the last few months, a multi-stakeholder working group, consisting of OAGN officials and CSO representative has been jointly developing a framework for CSO



Mr. Lavin (3rd from right) in consultation with the OAGN officials

engagement in order to maximize the efficiency and impact of the Government Auditing in Nepal. To support this new innovative process, PRAN in close collaboration with WBI's Program on Advancing Public Participation in the Budget & Audit process (PPBA) invited **Renzo Lavin**, Co- Director of the Civil Association for Equality and Justice, to support the Working Group in developing this framework of engagement.

The idea of this peer assisted process was to draw lessons from the similar work done by him in Latin America. Mr. Lavin conducted various consultation meetings with the officials from the OAGN, including the performance audit team, CSO members of the working group and other key

relevant stakeholders.

Based on the feedback received during these consultation meetings, he has developed a draft framework that outlines:

- different entry points for OAGN-CSO collaboration,
- method of engagement,
- purpose of engagement by OAGN with the CSOs.

As a next step, the working group, upon review and any necessary adjustments will include it in a strategy paper. The strategy paper will be shared with the Auditor General for his review and consideration on how to formalize the citizen engagement practices in the audit process in Nepal.

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