

प्रतिबिम्ब

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PRAN's Announcements

This month, we bring you updates on PRAN's work with community radios through ACORAB, information about our recently published case study on the use of Community Score Card (CSC) and an event with parliamentarians - organized by one of our national sub - grantees Freedom Forum.

Public Hearings on Accountability Through Community Radio

In Haramtari, Gorkha district, the Government of Nepal had committed Rs. 13 lakhs to build a public toilet. The amount was provided three years ago, but the toilet is still not constructed.

Similarly, the Kundurtar Irrigation Project began 12 years ago in Gorkha. It was estimated that it would irrigate 500 hectares of dry land within five years - but even after spending 350 million rupees, only 15% of the project has been completed. This project was aimed at uplifting the historically marginalized Kumal community by supporting their agricultural production.

A local community radio station, "Radio Gorkha", recently held public hearings where these issues were raised and debated with the local authorities. They learned that local consumer groups had not been very active while the construction company and the GoN staff were not coordinating. Through these two public hearings, the local authorities have now committed to build the public toilet and investigate the delays in the irrigation project.

Through the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB) Nepal, PRAN has implemented public hearings in ten MDTF districts, along with informative weekly broadcasts on Public Financial Management (PFM) beginning in September 2013.

"The live broadcasting of these district-based public hearings through community radio has had a real impact," says Soham Subedi, Coordinator of Community Information Centre of ACORAB. "The commitments made by these Government officials on these issues were recorded publicly thereby promoting community-level monitoring and accountability. Furthermore, this has engaged other media in the district resulting even in national coverage of this event."



Kumal Community at the Public Hearing. (Photo Courtesy: ACORAB)



Article Published in the National Daily - Nagarik on 21 February 2014.

What Can a Community Do to Hold a School Accountable?

A case study in western Nepal says the answer could be the Community Score Card (CSC) – one of the most effective local social accountability tools used in Nepal.

A recent PRAN case study gives an overview of how the tool was used to counter mismanagement, the irregularity of staff, as well as the lower quality of education provided in 21 community schools in Nawalparasi district.

The CSC is a participatory mechanism through which citizens monitor the quality of community-based public services. The CSC provides the opportunity for citizens to analyse any particular public service based on their personal experiences and knowledge to express their dissatisfaction or to provide encouragement for good work. The CSC tool also can suggest further measures to be taken if the flaws still remain.



Ritu Kumal had to interrupt her post-school education because of her marriage, but now hopes for a better education for her young daughters at the Shree Shiva Higher Secondary School. She expressed her opinion during the CSC scoring, commenting on the weak ability of the school administration to control and discipline the teachers. "The CSC should be applied in all of the community schools of the district and all over the country, if the present education system is to be changed. This method will certainly help reduce the difference in school quality between poor children and those who can afford expensive private schools," she explained.

The case study was implemented by one of PRAN's sub-grantees, the Vijaya Development Resource Center (VDRC) during November 2011 – October 2012. The aim of this Case Study was to explore the impact of the application of the CSC method on the quality of education in rural communities in Nepal, and in particular its effect on the problem of teachers' attendance. Specifically, the case study analyses the community's experience in achieving a greater level of accountability within their community schools. There are 28 different accountability indicators that were used and scored through the implementation of CSC.

While ensuring a transparent budget process and improving the school management (among other irregularities of the school) are the main areas explored in the study, the study also captures the hidden, yet essential, issues of parental empowerment through the use of the CSC tool and how it has helped to promote trust between the parents and the school. The public commitment of the local authorities at the community, as well as district, level to improve the school management is another major result of the study. Through the use of CSC, it was possible to receive a clear commitment from the service providers to immediately take important steps to improve the local education system in these rural VDCs.

Click here for the full report: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/what-can-community-do-hold-school-accountable>

Events

Interaction Held on Parliament's Role in PFM

One of PRAN's national grantees - Freedom Forum - conducted an interaction on parliamentary oversight on the budget process in Kathmandu on March 17th, 2014.

Parliamentarians, officials from the Parliament Secretariat, representatives from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) and economic journalists took part at the interaction.



The interaction focused on the existing structure and practices of the Economic Committee and Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Legislature-Parliament itself regarding the national budget process.

Taranath Dahal, Chairperson of Freedom Forum, pointed out the need for preparing a pre-budget statement at least a month before the submission of the executive budget proposal to the Parliament. He said: "This is the entry point towards establishing meaningful participation of parliamentarians in the budget process right from the stage of budget formulation." He added that establishing a distinct Budget Committee and the Budget Act are other important agendas for enhancing Parliament's oversight in the budget process.

There were also concerns raised on the weak institutional capacity of

the Parliament Secretariat, the low level of understanding on critical budget issues among parliamentarians and the lack of response from the Executive. Questions were also raised on the quality of existing audit reports.

The journalists specifically criticized the role of Parliament saying the MPs do not actively take part in the budget discussion. The media suggested appointing resource persons as their assistants as a possible low cost option that will contribute to making the MPs presence meaningful at the Parliament.

In turn, the parliamentarians said that they would lobby for an early pre-budget statement and promised to meaningfully take part in the future budget discussions. They requested the GoN to expedite such initiatives in order to make more of the new parliamentarians aware of the essence of the budget process.

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