

# pratiksha

Newsletter ■ Volume 5 ■ Issue 4 ■ September 2015



## Highlights

- ✍️ Already, it has been an extremely challenging year for Nepal. On *Baisakh 12<sup>th</sup>* (April 25th), in the first month of the Nepali calendar, Nepal experienced one of the worst earthquakes in its modern history. The first earthquake in April was followed by one in June that together claimed over 9,000 lives and injured tens of thousands. Millions of people, mostly in the mountains, were rendered homeless. Yet, in spite of the difficulties, the country has shown a fierce resilience to regain some normalcy.
  - ✍️ PRAN 2 began its demand-side public financial management activities in July 2015 supported by the Multi Donor Trust Fund. CSO sub-grantees with experience working with PRAN earlier have begun their work in 15 districts, including Saptari, Gorkha, Bajura, Rolpa, Banke, Dhanusha, Kapilvastu, Bardiya, Palpa, Dhankuta, Siraha, Dang, Bajhang, Bara and Kailali. Each CSO will cover ten VDCs for a total of 300 VDCs.
  - ✍️ Building upon its earlier collaboration with the Office of the Auditor-General on field-based Performance Audits, PRAN, together with OAG and PPBA, organized one day workshop on 'Advancing Public Participation in the Audit Process in Nepal' on August 12th 2015.
- In addition, to ensure greater transparency, one of the immediate measures citizen groups initiated was the establishment of open data portals to track the accountability of the domestic and donor aid funds contributed and spent in the affected districts.

## Tracking Accountability and Funds through Open Data, Post- Earthquake

*Nepal was quick to respond with relief and reconstruction post-earthquake efforts through the use of Open Data, but its use has not been limited to disaster response. Open data has also been key in tracking the funding received and spent.*

Following the April earthquake, there was an immediate response from Nepal's tech community to visualize the use of data for disaster risk assessment and implementation. The internet became a constant info-hub for many. Data was made available through the Government of Nepal (GoN), as well as development organizations' sites, which included visualization and mapping for easier usage. The GoN established a [disaster data portal](#) and many organizations and individuals produced visual data platforms for public use.

A key benefit of these open data portals is that they have allowed Nepali citizens to make their own informed analysis of such situations based on available and reliable evidence. Direct Relief, a not-for-profit company, has collected such information on its [website](#). By gathering data from the [Prime Minister's relief fund](#), organizations made infographics which have been extremely useful for the media, as well as for immediate sharing on social platforms. Information provided online were vital for GoN [Post Disaster Needs Assessment \(PDNA\)](#) as they assisted in assessing and mapping the areas with critical need for relief or for reconstruction works.



### Open Data: Nepal Earthquake 2015

On April 25, 2015 a 7.8 magnitude earthquake shook Nepal northwest of Kathmandu. A second strong earthquake of 7.3 magnitude struck east of Kathmandu on May 12, 2015. From April to the beginning of June, Nepal experienced 294 earthquakes and aftershocks following the initial massive quake. These quakes also triggered landslides in the Himalayas.

The districts of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Gorkha, Dhading, Makawarpur, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Sindhupalchok, Kabhrepalanchok, Sindhuli, Dolakha, Barmchhap and Chitwan were most affected and are the focus of response and



## Tracking Accountability and Funds through Open Data, Post- Earthquake (Contd...)

Also, this tracking of budget and aid post-earthquake received a lot of critical and appreciative attention during the [International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction \(ICNR\)](#).

### Open Data and Accountability

However, the work of collecting and sharing open data has not stopped with the initial relief distribution and disaster risk assessment. It continues to have a serious and important role to play in following the money and its impact on the actual rural beneficiaries.

One such web application making this possible is [opennet.net](#). By bringing together information on post-disaster funding from various sources, international as well as national, this platform has been keeping account of how much money has been received or pledged so far. It also provides a visually attractive glimpse into the funding through intelligent [infographics](#). Openenet states on its website: "The objective of the system is to ensure transparency and accountability of relief funds and resources to ensure that it reaches to targeted beneficiaries. We believe that transparency of funds in an open and accessible manner within a central platform is perhaps the first step to ensure effective mobilization of available resources."

With the benefit of these websites, four months after the earthquake, Nepali media has already started to report on the aid spending -- or the lack of it, as seen in this [recent article](#). This recent report was made possible through the use of open data available through the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). It illustrates critically the effective use of aid money through the available on-line data (*figure on the right*).

Also, through the use of open data, [surveys around citizen feedback](#) are now on the public domain for better outreach.

### Lucrative quake business

Chopper	Flying hours	Earned amount (in US\$)
Shree Airlines	149.06	362,267
Air Dynasty	111.08	203,921
Mountain Air	99.37	199,233
Simrik Air	90.25	180,833
Manang Air	65.00	154,580
Fishtail Air	79.35	131,261
TOTAL	594.11	1,232,095

The use of the impressive open data platforms that emerged after the recent earthquakes in Nepal has improved the flow of information and helped raise vital questions of accountability and transparency as never before. They also show that when citizens have access to budget information and meaningful opportunities to use this information to participate in public policy decision-making, as well as to monitor government spending, the result is better policies, improved service delivery and, most importantly, greater, positive impact on people's lives.

## Advancing Public Participation in the Audit Process in Nepal

*"How can CSOs play a vital role in the country's audit process?" The discussions at the workshop often revolved around this question as senior staff from the OAG/N and Social Accountability Practitioners from PRAN's CSOs actively shared their experiences and ideas on August 12th 2015.*

The Office of the Auditor General Nepal (OAG/N), together with Program for Accountability in Nepal (PRAN), and the Program on Advancing Public Participation in the Budget and Audit Process (PPBA), held a workshop "Advancing Public Participation in the Audit Process in Nepal" to further the collaboration with CSOs in performance audit. The main purpose of the workshop was to produce a draft operational manual to guide the OAG/N in engaging CSOs for performance audits in Nepal.



Around 50 participants attended the workshop representing the OAG/N, the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Ministry of Federal and Local Development (MoFALD), the World Bank Group and the MDTF Development Partners. The workshop was financed by the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF).

Ms. Vivien Suerte-Cortez, an expert on citizen engagements in the performance audit, was invited to share the experience of the Philippines' audit process through their renowned and effective Citizen Participatory Audits (CPA) Program. Moderated by Assistant Auditor-General of OAG/N, Mr. Maheshwar Kafle, the workshop was highly participatory and was successful in addressing both the concerns raised by the OAG/N as well as the questions of the CSOs.



## Advancing Public Participation in the Audit Process in Nepal (Contd...)

The OAGN stressed its willingness in engaging CSOs during the execution stage, or when the audit is being conducted at the field level for project validation purposes. Both parties are fully aware that the small steps need to be taken but they both agreed on the benefits and opportunities that their partnership can achieve once the process has been laid out properly. With the approval of the OAGN-CSO Engagement Guidelines, a framework for better engagement is already in place, and would facilitate the process for finalizing an operations manual for participatory audits as proposed in “next steps” below.

Once audit execution starts, CSOs would help the OAGN (1) organize FGDs at the grassroots level, (2) identify appropriate participants for FGDs, and (3) provide relevant information and evidence of audit topics through FGDs. Other areas for engagement may still be identified based on the approved OAGN-CSO Engagement Guidelines and after the conduct of the 2015 Performance Audit activity.

Finally, the support from the Auditor General was reconfirmed during the consultations and discussions held with him as well as firmly voiced by other OAGN representatives, CSOs (which were members of the Working Group that drafted the guidelines) as well as the WB team that interacted with the Philippine expert.

### Next Steps

- **An operational manual** will be drafted which will help the CSOs and the OAGN to collectively work on performance audits. To support them in this process, the team has come up with an initial draft operations manual (see attached) that needs to be developed further by both the OAGN and the CSOs.
- **An agreement** has been reached to work on a TOR which would then be signed from both the OAG and CSO sides. It could clearly state who would work on the main three sectors: education, health and local development.
- **CSOs and the OAG counterparts** will also hold a meeting/workshop to discuss the experiences, lessons learnt and how to forge ahead in the future taking those issues into consideration.

## PRAN Signs Grant Agreement with 30 CSOs

The second phase of the program under PRAN 2 (2015-2017) has been designed to continue to strengthen the capacity of district-based civil society organizations (CSOs) to implement social accountability (SAC) tools in alignment with the national MoFALD LGCDP/LGAF program. PRAN 2 seeks to promote transparency, accountability, efficiency and inclusiveness, particularly in the Public Financial Management (PFM) sector.

The implementation strategy in the new phase of the program has been shifted from primarily empowering CSOs to work with communities to ensuring that these CSOs are instrumental in building sustainable and functional relationships between the local government and the communities.

As part of its new project, PRAN 2 will focus on using Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) in five districts to ensure SSE expenditures reach beneficiaries at the right time, right person, right amount at the VDC level, as well as using the Community Score Cards to improve local school management, particularly in the Maithali region, and assessing the existing GoN grievance redressal mechanism process at the VDC level. Technical assistance will be provided by three PRAN partners, the Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI), Policy Research and Development Nepal (PRAD) and New Era.

Activities with the Office of Auditor-General will focus on development of guidelines to mainstream citizen participation in the performance audit process, building on the approach paper that was prepared during PRAN 1.

The Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) Nepal will continue to serve as the grant-making agency in PRAN 2, as it has since PRAN's inception. Altogether 30 CSOs from 15 districts have signed the contracts under PRAN Phase 2.

Ms. Geeta Adhikari, one of PRAN's experienced Social Accountability Practitioners from the Human Rights Social Awareness and Development Centre, Dhankuta district in eastern Nepal, is quite hopeful of what the program is set to achieve: “Personally, I don't think there is effective use of GoN services if local communities are not aware of those services or even about their rights. PRAN's new program is extremely important to Nepali citizens as we are seeking to expand accountability and transparency at the lowest rungs of the society with the local government Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs).”

## PRAN Signs Grant Agreement with 30 CSOs (Contd...)

The selected PRAN CSOs from MDTF Phase 2 program:

1.	Bajura	Dalit Empowerment Centre	9.	Saptari	Mahuli Community Development
		Human Society for Poor Upheaval			Janchetana Dalit Sangam
2.	Kailali	Rastriya Dalit Network	10.	Siraha	Mahila Udhhar Sewa Kendra
		Kamaiya Pratha Unmulan Samaj			Dalit Samaj Sewa Sangh
3.	Dang	Social Insitution for Skill Employment and Awareness	11.	Dhanusha	Janaki Woman Awreness Society
		Society for Environment Education s Development			Rural Development Foundation
4.	Rolpa	People's Oriented Service Centre	12.	Bara	Rural Region and Agro-Forestry Development Centre
		Human Rights Awreness Centre			Jana Jagaran Youth Club
5.	Gorkha	UN Nepal	13.	Banke	Bageswori Asal Sashan Club
		Awarenss Group of Oppressed Women			Human Rights Protection and Legal Service Center
6.	Kapil-vastu	Shisawa Community Development Centre	14.	Bardiya	Geruwa Rural Awareness Association
		Kalika Sel-reliance Social Centre			Manpur Yuba Samaj
7.	Palpa	Libration of Oppressed Development	15.	Bajhang	Sahara Nepal
		Social Resource development Centre			Sipal Bikas Samaj
8.	Dhankuta	Human Rights Social Awareness and Development Centre			
		Woman Empowerment Support Team			

### Publications: Learning Notes from the first phase of PRAN

**Strengthening Social Accountability in Public Service Provision: Building Constructive Engagement between Service Providers and Service Users.** This document encapsulates how the program has been successful in generating grass-roots demand for improvement of basic services provision. [More...](#)

**Strengthening Social Accountability in Local Development by Focusing on Inclusion in Nepal: What can be done by Civil Society Organizations?** Though Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) approach is being mainstreamed into laws, regulations and initiatives related to local development processes, implementation remains challenging. This Learning Note builds on the prevailing situation in Nepal and the experience of CSOs, supported by PRAN in mainstreaming inclusion in local development. [More...](#)

**Strengthening the Role of Media in Promoting Social Accountability: Ways Forward.** This Learning Note summarizes the experience of CSOs that received grants from PRAN for strengthening the role of media in promoting social accountability in Nepal. [More...](#)

## Nepal Public Financial Management Multi-Donor Trust Fund

Supported by:



Administered by:  
 WORLD BANK GROUP

*Program activities under PRAN are funded by MDTF (Multi Donor Trust Fund)*