

Table of Contents

- I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1
- I. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT 5

- II. PROJECT STRATEGY 8

I. Executive Summary

i. Project Data

South Asia Partnership International (SAP-I) coordinated a project called *Engendering democratic governance in South Asia*, from 1 October 2009 to 30 September 2011. SAP-I had three implementing partners which were SAP national organizations in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.

but USD5,000 under-spent), including USD25,000 for UNDEF monitoring and evaluation.

The overall objective of the project was to contribute to an enabling environment for -making processes in South Asia by developing an informed civil society and by fostering dialogue and discourse d to enhance meaningful and equal participation of women in democratic governance by addressing the issues of gender-based exclusion, violence and discriminatory practices in politics.

To achieve this, it had two central strategies: the project would establish National Democracy Watch Groups (NDWGs) and Local Watch Groups (LWGs) in all three countries to collect evidence-based information and foster dialogue and discussion on gender-sensitive democratic culture and practices; and develop an informed civil society that would promote gender-sensitive practices to enhance the participation of women in democratic governance through knowledge sharing and debate in a series of local, national and regional meetings. The project additionally included a component focusing on sensitizing the media to break down gender stereotypes and feeding them story ideas, interviews and profiles as a basis for features and radio debates.

ii. Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions relating to **relevance** focused on the timeliness of the project activities

governance (for example discussions on a constitution in Nepal, the creation of an Election Commission in Bangladesh), and the nature of the groups established, since they would be key to ensuring the impact of the project. Many interviewees commented on the importance

and local levels, and on the credibility the grantee had built in this area. It was largely as a result of this strong reputation that the project was able to mobilize participants at the highest levels at local, national and regional levels.

effectiveness, it was noted that the project exceeded its aims, with all events taking place as planned. The project reached a significant number of people: the NDWGs attracted 36 high-profile members; the LWGs included 129 key people; 21 national meetings brought together 982 key players and the regional meeting was attended by 153 people. Seventeen advocacy meetings were held to hand over a charter that was adopted by

studies,

outset to build strong groups of people at local and national levels

<http://www.engenderingdemocracy.net> website or using the <http://dgroups.org/Community.asp> D-group facility. Alternatively, free on-line communities such as Google Groups or Facebook groups might be set up.

ii. If resources are available, **bringing together media gatekeepers (editors, sub-editors, executive producers and others in decision-making roles in the media) would further reinforce the mobilization of journalists** in the EDG project and increase the likelihood of their developing gender-should not be promoted as training but might perhaps t which information can be shared and trust built.

iii. Since the EDG project was considered in many ways to be a pilot, and has proved to be a successful one, **consider adapting the methodology to take into account lessons learned (for example, fewer meetings and more emphasis on local-level actions) and extend it to other countries where SAP works.** Alternatively or additionally, consider extending the LWG component into more regions of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal.

iv. **When planning and then managing the budget, emphasis quality rather than quantity** for example, fewer meetings but more support to the NDWGs or support to trained journalists through work with their gatekeepers. Review the budget monthly and, **when it becomes clear that there will be unspent funds, discuss immediately with the donor how these funds might be reallocated within the project** to reinforce other components of the project.

v. **In order to make the Charter more effective in the medium- to long-term, review it in the context of commitments already made by governments in the three countries:** international conventions, national plans of action and legislation. For example, although CEDAW is not region- or country-specific, it would be relevant to reference Article 7, which covers equality in political and public life, in Article 3 of the charter detailing the principles.

For UNDEF

i. **Consider reviewing the way milestone Monitoring and Evaluation exercises are commissioned and carried out in order to maximize the value of these exercises**

opportunity rather than an audit/observation of a single event.

I. Introduction and development context

i. The project and evaluation objectives

The project *Engendering democratic governance in South Asia* ran with UNDEF support from (USD350,000 granted but USD5,000 under-spent), including USD25,000 for UNDEF monitoring and evaluation..

The grantee was South Asia Partnership International (SAP-I) based in Kathmandu, Nepal, which coordinated the project and implemented national actions in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan through country offices of the partnership (SAP-Bangladesh, SAP-Nepal and SAP-Pakistan).

The overall objective of the project was to contribute to an enabling environment for political decision-making processes in South Asia by developing an informed civil society and by fostering dialogue and discourse

participation of women in democratic governance by addressing the issues of gender-based exclusion, violence and discriminatory practices in politics.

Since this was a regional project, moreover, it was considered particularly important to identify the extent to which regional synergies were achieved by the project and whether the lessons learned might therefore be relevant in other countries of the region beyond the

ii. Evaluation methodology

An international expert designated to lead the evaluation prepared a preliminary planning note (Launch Note) in January 2012 based on a review of project documentation (see Annex 2). Meanwhile, the national expert began developing with the grantee a schedule of interviews that would take place during a joint mission to Nepal from 12 to 18 February 2012. Because resources did not permit visits to all three participating countries, Nepal was selected for the mission as the base of SAP-I, and interviews with participants in Bangladesh and Pakistan were undertaken by phone and e-mail.

In Nepal, the experts met with SAP-I, SAP-Nepal, women from the three major political parties, members of the national and local watch groups established (men and women activists, politicians and civil servants, lawyers, media representatives and NGO members), media trainees, participants in the national and regional meetings, and relevant staff of UNWOMEN, which had monitored the project at the request of UNDEF at the time of the second milestone event. Meetings comprised a mix of one-on-one interviews and group discussions and presentations. For local-level participants, staff and other participants in Bangladesh and Pakistan, the evaluators sent questions by email and followed up by phone. Information was collected, analysed and is presented in this report according to the DAC criteria of: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The evaluation criteria are outlined in more detail in Annex 1.

iii. Development context

South Asia is one of the few regions to introduce positive discriminatory policies and affirmative action in the form of quota systems and reserved positions for women in politics.

policy makers in political governance amounting to just 16.6 per cent across the region. In the three countries where this project was implemented, it is above the average: at 31

strong determinants of gender exclusion and unequal development outcomes. Ongoing political instability has also contributed to the low HDI ranking in recent years.

The country is going through a critical period in its history. With the end of the decade-long armed conflict in 2006, Nepal has been engaged in developing a new constitution through a

601-

media coverage.

status of women in governance at a time of constitution-building and demobilization of armed wings of the CPN (Maoist) suggested that the time chosen was relevant to feed evidence-based information into the national debate and mobilize key actors to advocate for change.

SAP-I and its three country partners SAP-Bangladesh, SAP-Nepal and SAP-Pakistan saw the EDG project as a pilot, allowing lessons to be learned that might not only be replicable in other countries of the region, but might allow scaling-up of the project in the three original countries.

Mobilizing the right people

SAP- a three-day consultative meeting with potential members of a NDWG in each country. The invitees to these meetings were carefully chosen: at national level, the political party members, members of the parliament or equivalent (in Nepal the CA), lawyers, human rights activists and media who attended are leaders in their fields, positioned to have access to policy- and decision-makers and

The invitees at the meetings chose people (both men and women) from among them who would become founder members of the NDWG 14 members in Pakistan, 11 in Nepal and 11 in Bangladesh.

Urdu, was widely distributed including to the media. Thus links were again strengthened between national advocacy and local realities, with the media key to building bridges of understanding.

Mobilizing the media

While the media were seen as key players in the EDG project, vital to influencing decision and policy makers, they were also seen as part of the problem, rarely co-achievements and perpetuating the traditional image of women as subservient and powerless.

The project therefore integrated senior media personnel into the watch groups and forums, but also organized training for journalists, introducing them to the issues involved and also providing media-specific modules on appropriate reporting and identification of appropriate stories (this facilitated by a senior journalist).

and that the only way to persuade journalists to participate was by taking them away to a resort for three and Bangladesh, in contrast,

possible to ascertain how much they were used. It is likely, however, that use was limited to those in urban areas or able to access Internet at work.

Gender-sensitive Democracy Charter

The two regional events organized a regional conference and a regional workshop in Kathmandu and Lahore respectively -- were also used as the culminating events in the preparation of a regional *Gender-sensitive Democracy Charter* on which the NDWGs had worked. The Charter was presented to the regional conference in draft form and finalized with input from participants. It was intended as a guide, a blueprint for a range of constituents to advance the status of women in governance. It includes an agenda outlining the actions that governments, national legislative bodies and the regional body, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), should undertake.

The intention was that each recipient would use the principles in the charter and the guidance provided to develop an individual workplan (SAP-I is developing its own workplan based on the charter) and that political parties and governments in particular would consider the charter in revising structures and policies.

Regional nature of the project

Given that the project was implemented in three countries, it is important to assess to what extent it was a regional project. In fact, at many levels the project was essentially three national projects running alongside each other, with agreed methodologies and approaches. This was potentially useful, if SAP-I then takes a comparative approach to assessing the lessons learned from the project over time (for example, if the NDWG concept works in all three countries, is it sustained in all countries?) Bringing together the three country projects in a regional conference and regional interaction were most obviously linked to the desire to develop a regional charter that could then be presented to SAARC as a regionally relevant blueprint. Beyond the conference and charter, however, there were no regional activities nor regional outputs. There was, however, and still is potential for more regional added-value to be achieved:

The NDWG in Nepal, for example, said that they had benefited greatly from meeting NDWG members from Bangladesh and Pakistan at the regional conference, and wondered whether they might in future be able to form a three-country advocacy network, sharing experiences and information, developing joint strategies and working together (for example continuing to lobby SAARC). An NDWG member from Pakistan echoed this interest. Similarly, journalists in Nepal saw great potential in being part of a subregional network of journalists interested in

12 LWGs were formed and active throughout the project (details in body of report; 129 members total)

Meetings and events

The watch groups formed the core of a number of meetings and events that were organized. Having been chosen for their ability to reach out to different constituencies, they were vital in mobilizing participation in the meeting and also helped set the agenda and contribute as speakers. The implementing organization seems to have recognized this from the beginning and its attention to maintaining the interest of watch group members and engaging them fully and an indicator of good planning.

12 local interactions were organized with 402 participants (Pakistan 124; Nepal 158; Bangladesh 120)

3 national interactions took place with 230 participants

3 national workshops were organized with 181 participants (Pakistan 49; Nepal 77; Bangladesh 55)

3 national discourses were organized with 169 participants (Pakistan 70; Nepal 46; Bangladesh 53)

17 national meetings were held to hand over the Charter to key policy makers: Election Commissions (3), political parties (9), SAARC (1) and press (4) involving 125 people

1 South Asian regional conference was organized with 153 participants

The regional
clear

outcomes. In particular, there is great potential for a regional network to be created bringing together the members of NDWGs in the three countries.

Training and media outputs

The media training that was organized was well received and following this up by helping journalists to find good stories was an intelligent move. There is clearly continuing interest from journalists in the issue of women in democratic governance, and this might be nurtured by feeding story ideas, interviewees and profiles to the journalists. Such media engagement could certainly not have been achieved if element (commonly including sending out press releases and organizing occasional press conferences).

103 media personnel were trained (Pakistan 35; Nepal 32; Bangladesh 36)

72 case studies were developed to be share 0 1 137.42 327.05 Tm[()

A web-based discussion group was activated to allow participants to interact: <http://dgroups.org/Community.asp>

A brochure was produced in 4 languages summarizing issues discussed at the local interactions and national workshops

A *Gender-sensitive Democracy Charter for South Asia* was developed, translated into 4 languages and 1,500 copies were widely distributed and used as an advocacy tool at national and regional levels.

There were a number of unplanned outputs and, precisely because they were not firmly rooted in the overall project design, these were potentially less effective:

A daily conference newsletter was published at the Lahore and Kathmandu national workshops and, while useful to the participants, did constitute a drain on personnel resources

300 posters were produced, with English, Nepali, Bangla and Urdu text and its message was not tested.

Additionally, during the life of the project:

SAP-I wrote and published a book covering the issues and challenges identified at the regional conference: *Engendering democratic governance in South Asia*

SAP-Nepal wrote and published a compilation of case studies, *Incidents that changed the course of women politicians*.

iii. Efficiency

Budget

The budget was acquitted and an underspend of USD5,000 was notified to UNDEF. However SAP-I advised that they had underestimated the cost of translation for the products and were obliged to cover these costs themselves.

There were some delays in transferring funds to SAP-Bangladesh because of complex requirements in receiving external funds in that country. Additionally, SAP-I expressed some frustration that national partners did not acquit funds promptly and were slow to report until funds had been transferred.

Activities

Within 24 months, there were many meetings -- variously called conferences, interactions, discourses and workshops at local, national and regional levels. These were both time- and resource-consuming, although all were carried out as planned. Participants interviewed confirmed that the meetings were valuable sources of evidence-based information, and helped with networking. However it must be asked whether it was necessary to have so many meetings, often bringing together some of the same players. SAP-I agreed that it would have been possible to reduce the number of meetings. Combining some of the national meetings would have freed up funds for other purposes for example increasing the number of regions in which the project was piloted from four to five in each country, or holding a networking event bringing together the LWGs in each country.

iv. Impact

Positions of influence

A number of interviewees noted the high level of credibility of SAP-I and its ability to mobilize people from a range of sectors at the highest levels. Although there are many NGOs working -I is known for being at the forefront of understanding in relation to women in politics, the obstacles they face and the issues to target in order to promote change.



Media as partners

The inclusion of journalist training and engagement in the project increased the likely impact of the project by building an important bridge between the high-profile participants at both national and local levels, and the communities who ultimately must vote for and support change.

While the immediate impact of the media component of the project can be seen in the large numbers of articles and features that appeared in all three countries, the longer-term impact

up their preliminary training. Additionally, one NDWG member in Nepal, herself a senior journalist, identified the next step as bringing together senior journalists and female politicians, with a view to helping the women to learn how to interact with the media and gain confidence. This, she believes, would help female political leaders to more regularly offer

Another factor affecting the impact of the journalist training and mobilization is the attitude of media houses – the editors, sub-editors and executive producers who ultimately run or do not run a story that a journalist has developed. All the journalists interviewed mentioned this, with those from independent outlets suggesting that their editors mig

attractive venue) themselves. Working with gatekeepers in the state-run media is more difficult because it is seen as attempting to influence policy, and may not be possible at this time in any of the countries involved in the project.

NDWG members in Nepal said that the group had many good ideas and high expectations. They had put together a plan of action and met almost monthly for the 24 months of the project but were disappointed that, since the project had ended, SAP-Nepal had not convened a meeting. They are still ready, they said, to work on the issue of women in democracy but, as busy people, they need to be motivated. A regular meeting, they said,

hands of key players, the work is done. In fact the Nepal NDWG was for a five-year strategy to be drawn up so that the group would have direction and be re-

As noted above, also, there is clear potential to keep the trained journalists in Nepal engaged in the work begun by the EDG project. This must be tapped soon, however, if the interest

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions

General evaluation question categories

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<p>Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context?</p> <p>Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? <i>Why?</i></p> <p>Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? <i>Was the project overly risk-averse?</i></p>
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<p>To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not?</p> <p>Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives?</p> <p>What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?</p>
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<p>Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs?</p> <p>Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability?</p> <p>Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?</p>
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting	

Annex 3: People Interviewed

Activity	Dates
Preparatory phase start	January 2012
Travel to/from Nepal	12/19 February 2012
Effective mission dates	13 – 17 February 2012
Reporting	1 st week March 2012
13 February 2012	
Dr Rohit K. Nepali, Executive Director, SAP-I Overall Programme Coordinator	Presentation/Q & A Group discussion
Ms Shanti Uprety, PLAN International Former SAP-I Programme Officer Ms Sandhaye Paudel, SAP-I	Group discussion

Annex 4: Acronyms

CA	Constituent Assembly (Nepal)
CEDAW	UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CPN	Communist Party of Nepal
DAC	