

Project profile

Sundar Shanta Nepal: supporting federalism by understanding and addressing marginalisation

Introduction

In September 2017 Saferworld, along with International Alert and BBC Media Action, began implementing the Sundar Shanta Nepal project. Funded by the Conflict Stability and Security Fund, the project supports federalism and inclusive peace in Nepal.

Background

Since the end of a ten-year civil war in 2006, Nepal has made significant progress towards peace. Infrastructure projects have been able to move forward, while an increase in social movements, local elections and the drafting of a new constitution have created space for debates on social issues such as exclusion, minority rights and inequality.

Yet many of the factors that contributed to the conflict – caste-based discrimination, marginalisation of ethnic and religious groups, political instability, inequality and the exclusion of women and young people – have not been adequately addressed and threaten to cause a relapse into insecurity. Nepal's new constitution, which came into effect in 2015, and its transition to a new federal system of governance, have provided a genuine opportunity to address the long-standing grievances among marginalised communities.

With partners, the project consortium aims to support communities across four provinces by addressing the underlying factors of marginalisation, and improving relationships between the government and communities as part of Nepal's federalism. The project will strengthen existing platforms from which women and men from across ethnic, religious, caste and gender lines, are able to develop their understanding of the new federal system and articulate their needs and expectations from the new governance structures, demanding greater accountability from the elected representatives. The project will work closely with communities, political representatives, civil society and the media to achieve its objectives.



Project

Supporting federalism by understanding and addressing marginalisation in Nepal.

Project locations

The project will be implemented in eight municipalities in Province 2, six municipalities in Province 5, and two municipalities in Province 7, with limited media activities in Province 6.

Donor

Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Conflict Stability and Security Fund.

Project duration

September 2017 to March 2020.

Saferworld thematic area

Inclusive political processes.

Project approach

Together with Nepali partners, International Alert, Saferworld and BBC Media Action are working to:

- identify the drivers of marginalisation and the main people and initiatives that can address them
- develop and pilot approaches to address the underlying factors of marginalisation
- develop a robust monitoring and learning framework, based on understanding of how marginalisation persists under the new federal system, the opportunities and barriers to engaging with those involved and the most effective and conflict sensitive ways to support marginalised groups within the new system.

Anticipated outcomes

- Marginalised communities are better able to reap the dividends of federalism through having an improved understanding of the federal structure, being able to articulate their needs, and advocate for responsive, transparent and accountable governance.
- These communities have more confidence in the federal process, as political and elected representatives increasingly reflect and are responsive to the concerns and needs of their constituencies.
- Development partners, the government and other relevant organisations and individuals are provided with evidence-based analysis and lessons from the project on how and whether marginalised communities are buying into federalism and what works to mitigate risks caused by marginalisation.

Key activities

- Support communities, including marginalised groups, to identify, prioritise and analyse their issues and concerns; and develop action plans to engage with local government and organisations to address them.
- Facilitate workshops and use media to build community-level awareness of the decision-making processes within the federal system, and what opportunities citizens have to participate.
- Improve marginalised community representation by equipping community groups, including traditional and religious leaders, with skills, tools and strategies to articulate the priorities of marginalised communities and engage elected representatives and civil society.
- Work with civil society, the media and community members to share lessons on how to strengthen political engagement within all spheres of government.
- Support media to create public platforms for communities and civil society to engage with political representatives and present community perspectives to a wider audience.

- Provide regular mentoring and cross-learning platforms to support selected political representatives, community based organisations and activists to advocate inside and outside government to address marginalised groups' issues.
- Facilitate wider policy interactions and outreach such as public policy debates and dialogues, and interactive community visits for political and elected representatives through media and community platforms, to enable elected representatives to better reflect the needs and concerns of marginalised communities.
- Conduct, analyse and document information through reflective sessions using storytelling methods and other means of qualitative data collection to explore how marginalisation continues to evolve in the federal context, the principal people and processes driving it and the level of community engagement in the federal processes.
- Conduct bi-annual conflict analyses through literature reviews, quarterly context reports and other qualitative data.
- Document project learnings using outcome harvesting sessions to capture what works in addressing marginalisation and maximising peace.
- Conduct learning dissemination events and activities targeting relevant audiences at provincial, federal and international platforms.

Partners

The project is being implemented jointly by International Alert, Saferworld and BBC Media Action, with a number of partners based in Nepal, including: Samagra Janautthan Kendra, Jan Jagaran Youth Club, Support-Nepal, Madesh Human Right-Home, United Youth Community Nepal and Nepal Madesh Foundation.

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Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives.

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