

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

(Issue 03, August-October 2019)

The Subnational Governance Program in Nepal (SNGP) (स्थानीय सरकार सबलीकरण कार्यक्रम) is implemented through a strategic partnership between the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and The Asia Foundation, in coordination with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration. SNGP aims to promote an enabling environment for the development of strong, effective and inclusive sub-national government in Nepal that benefits all.

Roundtable for Seven Municipalities from Seven Provinces

24-25 September 2019, the Subnational Governance Program supported Waling Municipality to organize a *Municipal Round Table and Learning-Sharing Program*. The event brought together representatives of seven partner municipalities of the program including mayors, deputy-mayors, chief administrative officers, and ward chairpersons to exchange their best practices and learnings. Australian ambassador to Nepal, H.E. Peter Budd; representative of Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), Mr. Resham Kandel; and chief attorney of Gandaki Province, Dr. Rajendra Ghimire also participated in the program. Addressing the participants at the inaugural session, Ambassador Budd pointed out that Nepal has made significant progress towards institutionalizing federalism.

During the first day of the event organized in Pokhara, each municipality presented their most innovative activities implemented in their respective municipalities. The second day of the event was the field visit to Waling Municipality where it showcased the municipality's innovation center, topographic 3D map, solid waste management center, and agriculture products collection center, as some of their innovative practices. Sharing his observation on behalf of MoFAGA, Mr. Kandel appreciated The Asia Foundation's and Waling Municipality's effort in providing municipalities a learning-sharing platform and requested the Foundation facilitate similar activities at least twice a year.

POLICY DIALOGUES

Policy Dialogue on Procurement Reform In The Health Sector

On 1 August 2019, the program co-hosted a Policy Dialogue on *Procurement Reform in the Health Sector with Public Policy Pathshala*. The policy dialogue examined the Public Procurement Act and the scope of the act to discuss opportunities and challenges related to procurement planning and preparation in the context of the health sector's transition to federalism.

Updates on the current status of procurement and supply chain were provided by the Department of Health Services (DOHS), and findings from the government's high-level committee that was formed in 2016 and tasked with evaluating different options to procure high-quality drugs and medical commodities were also presented and discussed. This was followed by a plenary discussion with remarks from Federal Parliamentarians and participants from the Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Health Services, members of the High-Level committee on medical procurement.



Public Private Partnership Trainings for Municipal Staff After Promotional Unit Set Up

For the launch of the Bharatpur Metropolitan City (BMC) PPP Unit, VRock facilitated the workshop on Public Private Partnerships for municipal staff on 23-24 August in Bharatpur. The workshop was attended by the chief administrative officer, administrators and engineers from BMC. The mayor and deputy mayor were also present during the opening session. The PPP unit head from Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) served as a resource person for the workshop where he shared experiences of KMC. The PPP unit head from Waling Municipality also attended the workshop which helped promote cross-learning between municipalities.

Local Government's Ownership of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Forums Playing A Critical Role

There have been notable signs of increasing ownership and commitment from local governments to the community mediation work supported by the Program. For example, the amount of money mediators receive per case has increased between 150 and 500 NPR from the local government. Local governments have provided direct funding to support trainings, refresher courses, and other capacity development support, as well as providing legal books, furniture, and other equipment.

As further demonstration of community use of different platforms for dispute resolution this quarter, a total of 1,126 disputes have been registered in the mediation centers across the seven districts. Out of this, a total of 1,011 disputes have been settled, with a resolution rate of 89%. A total of 1,884 disputants availed of mediation services at the local level—out of which 36% were women and 54% belonged to indigenous or marginalized communities.

Provincial Consultations on Inter-Governmental Coordination Bill Series Complete

In line with the federal spirit of cooperation, coexistence, and coordination, the program partnered with Nepal Law Society (NLS) and National Forum for Parliamentarians on Population and Development (NFPPD) to support the National Assembly's Legislation Management Committee (LMC) to organize a series of consultative interaction workshops on the *Inter-Governmental Coordination Bill*. Seven provincial interaction events were conducted in each province with the objective to enrich understanding of provincial and local government roles and responsibilities on intergovernmental relationship. The comments from provinces and local governments will serve as a reference for revisiting the coordination bill. Currently, under The Asia Foundation and its partner's technical support, LMC has revised the bill and is preparing for submission to Parliament.

High Level Roundtable on Center for Federalism Sets Goals

A dialogue hosted by the Nepal Administrative Staff College on 2 October 2019 helped identify the approach for the Center for Federalism Studies (CFS). CFS is envisioned as a semi-autonomous and dedicated unit at Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) to produce knowledge and build public sector capacity for successful implementation of federalism in Nepal. To achieve perpetual peace, good governance, development, and prosperity envisioned in the Constitution, there is a need to create a knowledge-base on dynamics of system (progress, shortfall, solution) and create an environment to exchange learning experiences, develop institutional capacity to improve delivery, and learn from international practices has been identified. Major functions of CFS will be:

- Capacity Building Initiatives: On federal affairs for officials and people's representatives
- Research: Create knowledge-base on Federalism
- Consulting: System Design and Reform Plan at all levels of government
- Learning Lab: Organize events for sharing experiences and lessons

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

1. Damak and Palpa Municipalities rolled out consumer awareness programs at the ward level.
2. Partner municipalities set up Public Private Partnership Promotion (PPP) units. Bharatpur Metropolitan City has allocated a budget for its PPP unit in the annual budget.
3. The program supported Province 3 data and information requirements through integrated database of local governments, finalization of local human development report, and publication of Midterm Expenditure Framework.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<https://asiafoundation.org/tag/np-subnational-governance-nepal/>