

# SUBNATIONAL GOVERNANCE IN NEPAL

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

(Issue 01, July 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 generate evidence and data and improve service delivery to promote inclusive governance at the subnational level.

### GENERATING EVIDENCE AND DATA

In partnership with the Kathmandu University School of Arts and Interdisciplinary Analysts, [A Survey of the Nepali People 2018](#) was released. The nationally and provincially representative survey suggests that Nepalis have growing trust in their local governments attributed by favorable opinions on service delivery, health, education, access to justice, access to information, and improving inter-ethnic relations. Variations across class, ethnicity, caste, and province are fairly pronounced on issues related to gender, identity, and inclusion.

In partnership with Social Science Baha, [The Politics of Change: Reflections on Contemporary Nepal](#) was launched in March 2019. The publication draws upon the findings of the aforementioned *Survey* and other data sources to gauge the country's trajectory towards a new set-up and reflects on the salient issues around politics, governance, gender, economic transformation, inclusion, and borderland dynamics at the subnational level. The publication is available in Nepali and English.

### BEST PRACTICES FOR MUNICIPALITIES

The Municipalities Association of Nepal (MUAN) published *100 Best-Practice Stories of the Municipalities*, aimed to promote innovations in municipal governance. This will provide a platform for the local governments to share their work around governance and motivate others to share and adapt to innovative practices.

The publication was officially launched during MUAN's 26th Anniversary on March 13, 2019, by the Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli. Picture on the right.

#### POLICY DIALOGUES

##### INFORMING SUBNATIONAL GOVERNANCE DISCOURSE

- In partnership with Nepal Administrative Staff College a policy dialogue was convened to deliberate on findings from a study on the *Role of Local Government in Reconstruction*. The forum succeeded in getting the commitment of the Nepal Reconstruction Authority to work closely with the local government in its ongoing reconstruction process.
- As part of the programs' stakeholder engagement strategy, the National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal hosted a policy dialogue to share findings on the health sector landscape assessment conducted by Public Policy Pathshala. The assessment has served to inform policy discourse on health governance needs at the municipal level with federal parliamentarians and policy makers.
- VRock, a partner working to promote subnational economic governance, presented the experiences around the Public Private Partnership initiative and emerging lessons to the International Development Partners Group on April 26, 2019.



## LEGISLATION DRAFTING WORKSHOP

Program partner, Nepal Judicial Academy, in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Attorney of the Gandaki Province facilitated a five-day workshop on legislation drafting processes and skills for elected representatives in Pokhara from June 5-9, 2019.

*“Earlier we used to only worry about legislation we were supposed to draft. Now we have realized that we need to also be wary of federal and local laws, its interlinkage with provincial laws and its potential implications across the spheres of government.” - Local elected representative, workshop participant*



## TRANSFORMING DISPUTES AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

The program continues to support community mediation and dialogue forums (also known as *Sambad Samuha*) as mechanisms to identify and address local conflicts through the use of a structured process and trained facilitators. Currently, the program supports community mediation in 7 districts highly affected by earthquakes: Ramechhap, Sindhuli, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Sindupalchowk, Kavre, and Dolakha. *Sambad Samuhas* are operational in 20 districts across Nepal. The experience in Nepal demonstrates that locally driven inclusive approaches that combine dialogue and mediation have yielded more promising results in transforming complex multi-stakeholder disputes than centrally initiated policy and judicial interventions. This is validated by data produced by the program. Thus far, the program has trained over 4,500 community mediators and resolved over 8,000 disputes with a resolution rate of over 80%. The program is poised to expand mediation services to its seven targeted municipalities: Damak, Kalaiya, Bhimeswor, Waling, Birendranagar, Tikapur, and Tansen. Due to growing demand, the program is also expanding dialogue forums in three new districts.

## OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Political Economy Analysis of [Education Governance](#) and [Post-Earthquake Reconstruction](#) published by Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC)
- Facilitated discussions on Inter-Governmental Coordination Bill through Nepal Law Society.

## LONG-TERM VISION AND PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

With the completion of municipal profiles, the program is now moving forward with the first step of this planning process; the development of comprehensive plans with five municipalities using a partnership model of support. Through its partner, COMMITTED Nepal, the program has successfully established and oriented ward-level planning committees on their role and responsibilities in the strategic formulation of the municipalities' 5-year comprehensive planning document. These committees will be the backbone that facilitates demand driven planning and builds a stronger sense of citizenship for communities in their role to decide and create a vision that reflects the character and needs of their jurisdiction.

Bharatpur Metropolitan City, a partner municipality that has recently enacted the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Act has formally established a Public Private Partnership Promotion Unit within the municipality. The unit represents a joint task force on local economic development made up of municipal officials and private sector representatives that are tasked to implement, facilitate and advise on potential PPP projects. A two-day consultation program held in Bharatpur between the province 3 government and private sector in April to initiate discussions that has allowed the provincial government to assess private sector interests, discuss priority projects and identify policy bottlenecks and constraints while initiating a mechanism to establish a communication channel with the private sector.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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