EVALUATION REPORT

of the

SOUTH WEST NEPAL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME (SWNCGEP) SAHAKARMI SAMAJ

Commissioned by Social and Health Education Project Ireland
and
ICCO Netherlands

Conducted by a Team of Evaluators under leadership of John Williamson

September 2016

Tribute to Narad Sharma

On November 10, several days after I completed the final draft of this evaluation report I learned that Narad Sharma passed away in Lucknow following brain hemorrhaging. Everyone in the Sahakarmi Samaj family and the network of Community Based Network Organizations are grieving over this loss.

I am grateful to have spent several weeks in September with Narad and his team doing this evaluation. Among the different encounters with Narad during these weeks, I will always remember Narad taking me to a nearby village where Gaini singers were practicing their music and dance.

Narad has been the chief executive officer for Sahakarmi Samaj since it was established in 1997. Narad was unique in that he was both a visionary leader and a leader who very much was engaged in all of the Sahakarmi Samaj's work. He was fully dedicated and committed in his work to uplift the poor and marginalized people in Nepal.

Narad was a champion in Nepal civil society. He was very much recognized for promoting community empowerment process.

My condolences and prayers extend to the Sahakarmi Samaj family and the communities that they are serving.

I am also confident that the Sahakarmi Samaj Board of Directors, along with Amar, Rajaram and all of the staff will continue to do the wonderful work of Sahakarmi Samaj in their process-oriented empowerment approach. May God give you strength and guidance as you continue to build a society of peace and justice in Nepal.

John Williamson

Evaluation Team:

Back Row (Left to Right): Pawan Kumar Baisya, Rupnarayan Chaudary, Prem Bahadur Bista, John Williamson, Dhaniram Acharya, Sundarlal Chaudhary

Bottom Row: Rekha Oli, Nayantara Shrestha, Aradhana Chaudary, Snehalata Sainjoo

Executive Summary

Sahakarmi Samaj (SS), an NGO based in Surkhe District, in South West Nepal, in partnership with the Social and Health Education Project (SHEP) Ireland, and ICCO Cooperation (InterChurch Organization for Development Cooperation – Netherlands), with funding from Irish Aid is nearly finished with the third three-year phase of the South West Nepal Community Governance Enhancement Programme. This evaluation looks at the impacts of this project's third phase. During this three year period (2013-2016), SS staff using the "Facilitating Empowerment for Social Transformation" (FEST) process worked with 179 new community groups in 10 VDCs in Kailali and Jajarkot Districts. Also, during this third phase, SS continued organizational development support with community based organizations (CBOs) that had been formed in the first two phases in Bardiya and Kanchanpur Districts.

This evaluation team (ET) consisted of nine experienced independent community development workers[1] under the leadership of an international consultant. The team met with 38 (20%) of the community groups and used semi-structured interviews and PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) methods with the goal of understanding the impacts to the communities and local government resulting from project inputs. They also met with individual group members, and local leaders. In addition, the team leader met with the boards of the three Community Based Network Organizations (CBNOs) that had been formed in Phase 1 and Phase 2 (2010-2013) in Bardiya and Kanchanpur and a newly formed CBNO in Kailali. Later, he also met with two other older CBNOs that had resulted from SS's earlier efforts some 15 years earlier.

The ET found significant changes to the communities resulting from SS's FEST process. The most significant change is increased respect and inclusion of marginalized communities. Gender and caste discrimination has decreased considerably. Through the FEST process which lasts about two years, marginalized communities form themselves into groups with contracts, and learn skills such as problem analysis, facilitation, action planning, and leadership. These skills, along with increased interactions within their communities and with those outside their communities give them increased capacity to solve their problems, to set vision, and to plan and implement solutions. Many of the activities that these community groups have carried out are documented in SS progress reports. The evaluation team heard of many of these community activities which mobilized local resources, such as cleaning their villages, improving their schools, and fixing their drinking water systems. While the ET focused more on the impacts and outcomes of the project, and not on these community activities, we still realized that all communities have done a lot of important community development and improvements during these past three years.

Approximately 32% of community group (CG) members started income generation (IG) activities, which often involved taking a loan from the CG's savings fund for a small investment

---

[1] These workers all came from other community development organizations or Community Based Network Organizations. No SS staff were part of the evaluation team.

to purchase livestock (goats, pigs, chickens), grow vegetables for sale, or set up shops. Group savings often start slowly with groups, but as they build trust and gain experience, the monthly deposit amounts increase.

Another important impact resulting from empowered marginalized communities is that local government services have improved. Ward-level planning, schools, health posts, community forest user groups are more effective since CG members realize more how their participation improves transparency. These local institutions also make better decisions based on the priorities and needs at the community level. In the past, elites and political leaders had greater influence, which were often based on their self-interests, and not necessarily the community's best interests.

Several members of the evaluation team visited communities which they had visited earlier. After returning to Jajarkot, Rekka Oli said that the changes can be observed visually in the field and she was amazed. She realized that communities brought about change when they really want to, and work together. Another team member, Rupnarayan Choudary had previous experience working in the east part of Jajarkot District. He assumed that lifestyles of people and behaviour would be the same as before. During the evaluation in the SS working area (western part of Jajarkot District) he observed differences in lifestyles which were quite impressive. He found good behaviour and supportive nature of marginalized communities.

SS utilizes a three-tier structure for their community-based organizations: representatives from CGs form Main Committees (MCs) in each VDC (Village Development Committee—the name used for rural municipality), and representatives from MCs form CBNOs (Community Based Network Organizations). This three-tier system has been very effective in other SS project areas, as well as during the past nine years of SWNCGEP. This results in improved monitoring and support of CGs, and accessing VDC resources.

Since the 1990s, SS now partners with 17 CBNOs—organizations that were earlier formed through SS's efforts. These CBNOs are now in the process of registering as a federation.

The ET offers the following recommendations to Sahakarmi Samaj:

1. Continue with FEST process for empowering communities and improving governance.
2. Improve CBNO Interactions and Linkages
3. Set strategy for CBNO Financial Sustainability
4. Supplement SS's proposed Income Generation Strategy by placing Income Generation Facilitator with each CBNO
5. Encourage CBNOs to document and advocate for human rights
6. Develop strategy for SS's assistance for new CBNO Federation
7. Suggest several indicators for future projects

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

CAT	Community Animation Team
CBNO	Community Based Network Organization
CBO	Community Based Organization
CG	Community Group
DDC	District Development Committee
ET	Evaluation Team
FEST	Facilitating Empowerment for Social Transformation
ICCO	Inter Church Organization for Development Cooperation - Netherlands
IG	Income Generation
INGO	International Non Government Organization
JBS	Jaldeep Bikash Samaj
JJS	Janajagaran Samaj
JMS	Janajagaran Multipurpose Co-operative
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Program
LTO	Long Term Objective
MCPM	Minimum Conditions Performance Measurement
MC	Main Committee
NGO	Non Government Organization
NRS	Nepali Rupees (currency)
ODF	Organizational Development Facilitator
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RISMFP	Raising Income of Small and Medium Farmers Programme
SS	Sahakarmi Samaj
SHEP	Social and Health Education Project
SWNCGEP	South West Nepal Community Government Enhancement Programme
UMN	United Mission to Nepal
VDC	Village Development Committee
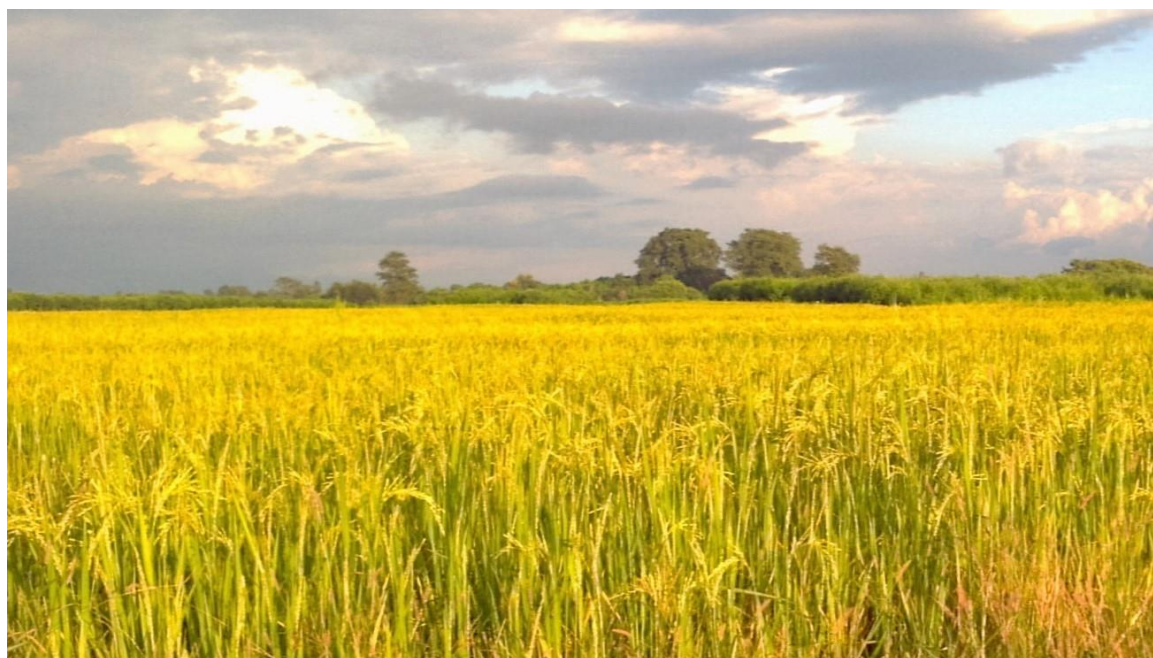
Maps of SS Working Area (Coverage Districts and Municipalities/VDCs)

NEPAL

SS working Districts
SWNGEP Program
Other Program
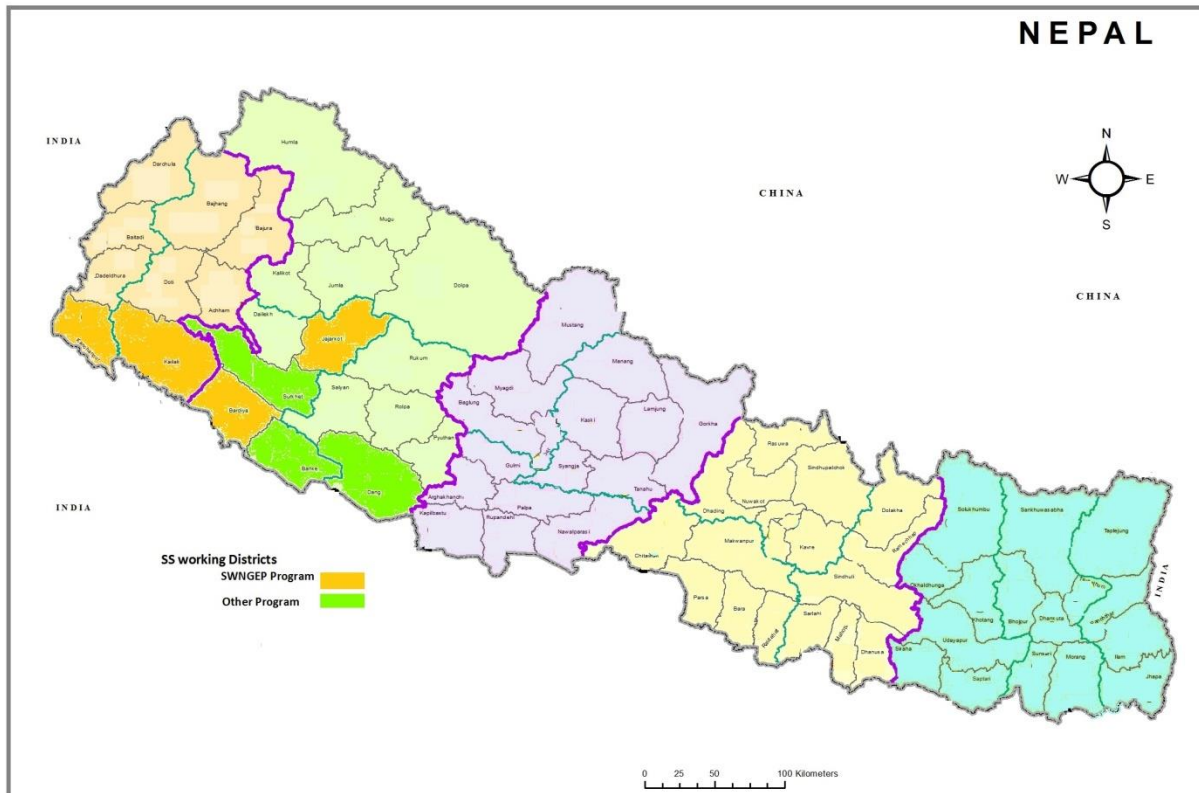
Far-western Development Region	Mid- western Development Region

FAR WESTERN

SS Working Area

MID WESTERN

SS working Districts
SWNGEP Program
Other Program
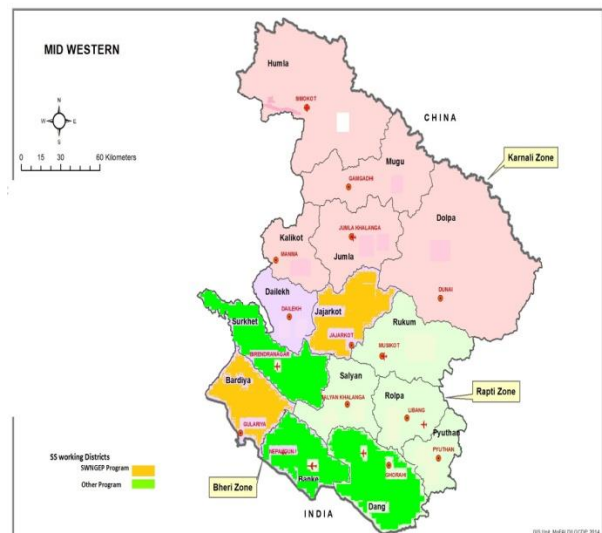
SS working VDCs of Jajarkot Phase -3	SS working VDCs of Kailali Phase -3
Bardiya Phase 1 and 2	Kanchanpur Phase -1 and 2
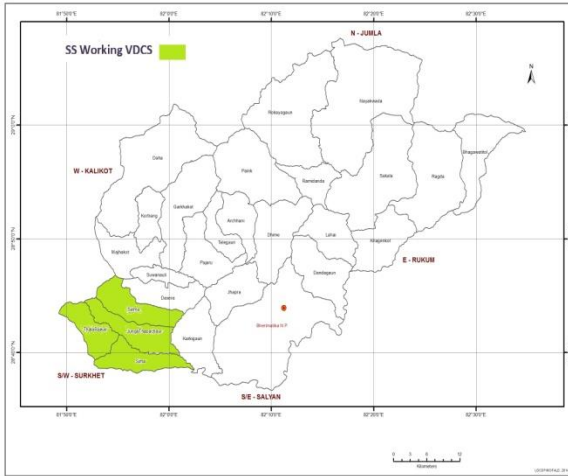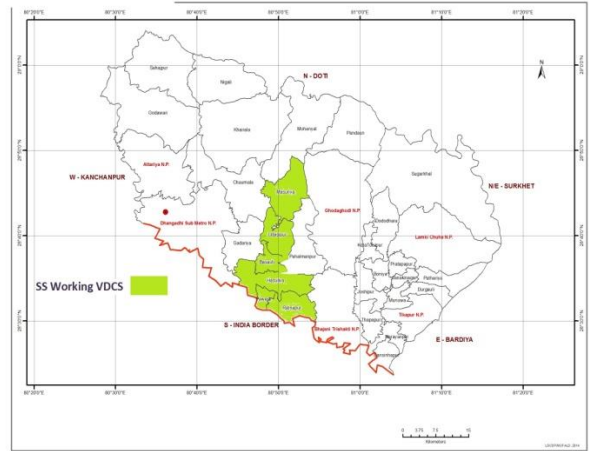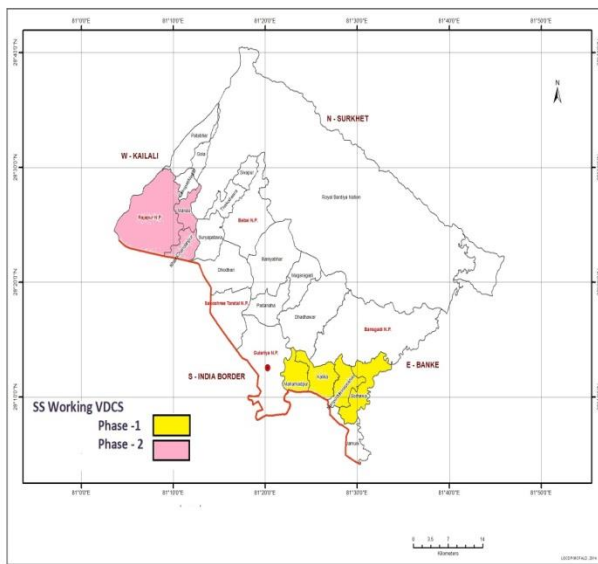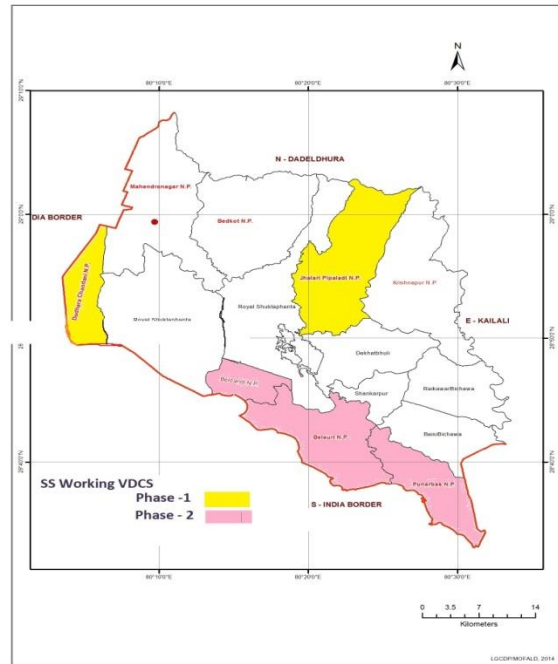
Introduction

Sahakarmi Samaj (SS) is a Nepali Non Government Organization (NGO) based in western Nepal that has been implementing community empowerment projects for the past twenty years. This evaluation report reviews one of their projects, South West Nepal Community Governance Enhancement Programme. This evaluation has been commissioned by SHEP (Social Health Education Project) Ireland and ICCO (Inter Church Organization for Development Cooperation, Netherlands).

Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is four-fold. Firstly, to assess the impacts, and long-term outcomes, and changes in society resulting from Phase 3 SWNCGEP's project areas in Jajarkot (4 VDCs[2]) and Kailali Districts (6 VDCs), where approximately 179 community groups (CGs) in these two districts were formed. Priority is given to assessing and understanding the overall impacts and changes that have occurred by the participating communities resulting from the FEST (Facilitating Empowerment for Social Transformation) transformation process. The evaluation also includes impacts from SS's organizational development support of CBO networks in Kanchanpur (4 CBO networks) and Bardia (2 CBO networks) that were formed in early phases. Secondly, the evaluation team sought to verify reported project results (using Key Indicators of Success for each of the four Long-term Outcomes). The third purpose was to identify changes in policy of local institutions resulting from the project interventions. Lastly, identify changes in health behavior of participants resulting from the FEST group process.

Description of SWNCGEP

SS takes a different approach to community development than most other development organizations. It believes that resources for developing a community are available, and the main problem is that marginalized communities are not mobilizing their own local resources, nor do they have access to outside resources. Based on their experience during the 1990s in the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) Surkhet Project, SS staff and leadership have continued a successful process of empowering marginalized communities from a state of dependency to become independent and later to a stage of interdependence. Instead of providing material or financial resources, this process focuses on communities being able to analyze their problems, make and carry out their own action plans, and set a vision for their community. Marginalized communities begin using new skills and knowledge, gain self-confidence, and make action plans based on their own priorities and needs, starting with simple activities such as cleaning their village to more challenging ones, like protection of river banks, which may often need external resources.

---

[2] VDC stands for Village Development Committee, but is more of a rural municipality. The original intent of a VDC was to have committee members elected from each of the nine wards of a VDC to govern the municipality. Unfortunately there has not be elections for these VDCs in nearly two decades.
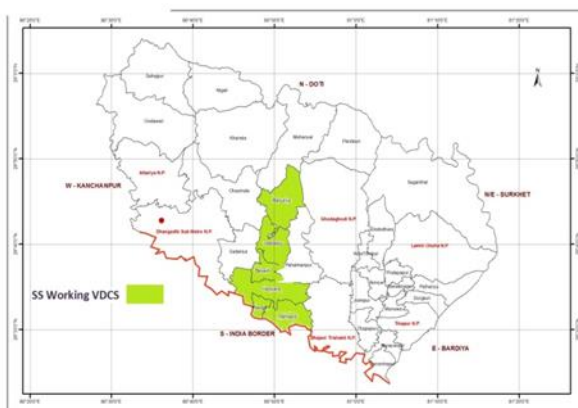
SS Working Areas in Kailali District (above) and Jajarkot District (below)
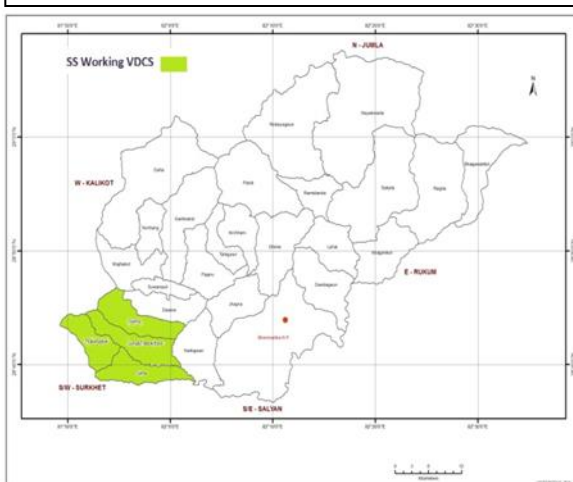
Taking marginalized communities who have been largely excluded from development efforts to become the main actors for their development is challenging and requires a 2-3 year process of group facilitation and empowerment. SS places a CAT (Community Animation Team) consisting of four community educators (two female and two males) who then facilitate empowerment process with neighborhood groups in two VDCs.

In 2006, SS started South West Nepal Community Governance Enhancement Programme (SWNCGEP) Phase 1 in Bardiya and Kanchanpur districts in the South West Terai with the overall aim: "Disadvantaged and marginalized people in SW Nepal will be equal and active citizens in an inclusive, well-governed society." Funding for this project came from Irish Aid through SHEP along with additional funding from ICCO. During this phase, SS formed 136 community groups with 3774 members (91% female) in Bardiya and Kanchanpur Districts. During the second phase with the same funding partners, SS's efforts achieved the emergence of 143 new community groups consisting of 3440 members (86% female).

In 2013, Phase 3 of SWNCGEP shifted to two new districts: Kailali and Jajarkot, while still providing organization development support to the community organizations from the earlier work in Bardiya and Kanchanpur Districts. At the beginning of Phase 3, SS placed three CAT teams (total of 12 community educators) and one district coordinator to work in six VDCs in Kailali District and two CAT teams (8 community educators) and one district coordinator in four VDCs in Jajarkot. In each district, the selected VDCs are in a geographical cluster. The Long Term Objectives for Phase 3 are:

1. Inclusion and respect for all members of the community and family.
2. Marginalized people have developed sustainable means of creating income leading to an increased standard of living.
3. Communities are working together to maximize their use of local and external resources for the benefit of the local community.

4. Government officers understand the value of 'bottom-up' planning and respond appropriately to the local peoples' needs.

SWNCGEP employed the FEST process when they began work in Jararkot and Kailali. This process consists of the following steps:

1. <u>Listening Survey & Social Analysis</u>: Select marginalized VDCs within district and conduct VDC entry process. Facilitate orientation meeting with VDC body. Through community screening process, identify most marginalized communities in VDC. Conduct listening survey to understand the most important generative themes. Perform social analysis and prepare village profile.
2. <u>Group Emergence</u>: Conduct community meetings. Facilitate participatory community situation analysis exercises. Share about SS program process. Facilitate group vision building exercise, and make group contract.
3. <u>Problem analysis, action plan & implementation</u>: Facilitate problem analysis during group meetings using "codes." Groups then implement community action plans using local resources. SS staff provide family mentoring support.
4. <u>Organizational strengthening support</u>: SS facilitates community leadership development trainings and encourages the formation of Main Committees (MC) in each VDC, and CBNOs (Community Based Network Organization) for each group of MCs.

As community groups (CGs) mature, they form Main Committees within their VDC. Each CG has two representatives in the MC, which is a parallel organization to the VDC. The MC meets monthly to discuss issues throughout the VDC and to monitor its groups. The MCs then decide to form a CBNO, consisting of two representatives from each MC. The formation of MCs and CBNOs usually takes place at the end of the first three-year phase. At the end of Phase 1 (2010), ten MCs and three CBNOs in Bardiya and Kanchanpur Districts were formed. Likewise, by the end of Phase 2 (2013), 12 more MCs and three more CBNOs were established in these same two districts.

Now in 2016, with nearing the end of Phase 3, a CBNO in Jajarkot is in the process of being registered. This was formed from four MCs from four VDCs. The CBNO in Kailali District recently was registered and is comprised of six MCs from six VDCs.

For the past nine years CBNOs have been gathering together each year in a "loose forum" to share with each other their learnings and discuss common issues. At the most recent conference, the CBNOs decided to register as a national federation. This is in process.

SS continues contact with each of the CBNOs. Typically, they place an Organization Development Facilitator (ODF) with each newly established CBNO for a three-year period, whose role is to strengthen the MCs and the CBNO through trainings and visits. Each year SS does an organization assessment of all CBNOs. The organizational assessment consists of the

following organizational criteria which are measured and compared to previous years: good governance, resource generation & mobilization, coordination & relationship building, group & MC management, monitoring & evaluation, communication management, record management, planning & implementation, validity, and office management. Later, SS and the CBNO make an annual plan to improve these areas.

The table below shows SS's achievements, including the work they did through the UMN Surkhet Project, since the 1990s:

Districts	Surkhet, Banke, Bardiya, Kachanpur, Dang, Kailali, and Jajarkot
Number of VDCs	78
Number of Active Community Groups	1,094
Number of CBNOs	17
Number Female CG members	17,373
Number Male CG members	6,686
Total Community Group members	24,052
Number of Households	7,743

Current Context of Participating Communities

Since the last evaluation of SWNCGEP, three years ago in November, 2013, several important events occurred in Nepal which has influenced the context in which SS has implemented its project. While the devastating earthquakes that occurred in April and May, 2015 were located near Kathmandu, and far from the Jajarkot and Kailali Districts, the Government of Nepal and many INGO/NGOS shifted their efforts to relief for earthquake victims from their development efforts in the rest of the country. However, there was little effect on SS, since their work is outside of the earthquake affected areas. Other development agencies may have decreased their efforts in these districts.

Since the civil war ended in 2006, Nepal had been without a constitution. After two elections for the members of the Constituent Assembly in 2008 and 2013, finally in September, 2015, the Constituent Assembly approved a new constitution. During the early years (2008-2009) of the constitution writing process, civil society was very much engaged in the constitution forming process. Unfortunately in 2015 when the new constitution was quickly approved, there was little participation from the civil society. The three major political parties agreed to quickly approve the constitution, perhaps to save the country from further violence that was beginning to grip the Terai area. Before and after the approval, Nepal's Madheshi (those living in the Terai) population and Janajati (tribal groups) complained of inequality in the proposed new Federalist structure of seven provinces. Furthermore, there were other complaints concerning

citizen disenfranchisement for Madheshis. In August, 2015, violence flared in Tikapur, Kailali District where ten persons were killed. After the constitution's approval, India, Nepal's neighbor to the south, cried "foul" and continued to agitate the Madheshis. India began an undeclared economic blockade preventing any goods being transported across the Nepal India border. This economic blockade lasted for over four months and caused an economic and humanitarian crisis which severely affected Nepal and its economy during the time when it was trying to recover from the earthquake.

Employment opportunities in Southwest Nepal have increased with the construction of new irrigation and hydro power projects, as well as increased tourism and the opening of new hotels. The construction of two new bridges and improvements of the roads to Jajarkot led to opening up markets for Jajarkot's vegetable and other agricultural products. Unfortunately, with increased traffic on poor roads in Jajarkot, there has been an increase in deadly accidents.

There are 39,759 NGOs registered in Nepal and 189 registered international NGOs.[3] Some of these have become major actors in development, competing for funds for international aid organizations, while many are quite small or completely inactive. However, most of these NGOs have not been active. There is a lot of freedom with establishing NGOs, resulting in a mix of different agendas from politics to making money. They often don't have the best intentions for a community. SS is among a few NGOs in Nepal that is a well-governed and principled organization doing excellent community organizational work.

Evaluation Methodology

---

[3] Karkee, Rajendra , Jude Comport, "NGOs, Foreign Aid, and Development in Nepal" 2016

The evaluators consisted of experienced community development workers from other NGOs and CBNOs[4]. In addition, an assistant team leader was recruited by the Team Leader. For two days (19-20 September) evaluation team members met in Nepalgunj under the leadership of the Team Leader. The initial two-day workshop covered the following topics: introduction to SS, SWNCGEP, and FEST process, evaluation methodology and key questions. Two evaluation teams of two persons each, along with the Assistant Team Leader went to Jajarkot the following day. Likewise, two other evaluation teams with two each traveled to Kailali, along with the Team Leader.

The Team Leader then went to meet with six CBNOs in different phases of growth and development. Each meeting lasted approximately two to three hours with discussion on topics such as CBNO sustainability, partnerships, use of resources, income generation activities, advocacy, and member involvement and impact in other local institutions.

Key questions were developed for each of the four Long Term Objectives to be used by the evaluators in semi-structured interviews and discussions. The teams met with 38 community groups (21% of total CGs), 6 CBNOs, 8 VDC secretaries, 13 political party leaders, 14 local government workers such as teachers and Health Post staff. The Assistant Team Leader also went to Jajarkot District Headquarters, in Khalanga, and met with district officials. The evaluators gathered data to verify Key Indicators of Success for each of the Long Term Objectives, as well as anecdotal information in the form of case studies. PRA methods were also used to encourage discussion.

After five days in the field, the evaluation team gathered again in Nepalgunj for a two-day Reflection Workshop to compile and analyze their findings. Presentations of the findings along with recommendations from the Jajarkot and Kailali evaluation teams, and from the team leader about CBNOs was given to SS senior staff and the leadership of two nearby CBNOs—Janajagaran Samaj and Tribeni Bikash Samaj.

---

[4] Five from the evaluation team are employed by CBNOs, while five (including Team Leader and Assistant Leader) were not. This mix was very helpful, so that those familiar to CBNOs could help educate the others.

Findings

The findings of the evaluation are presented under each of the four long term objectives (LTO), followed by findings related to policy and health. Discussion is first given on findings from the evaluation teams' visits to the community groups in Jajarkot and Kailali Districts, followed by findings from the visits to CBNOs.

LTO 1. Inclusion and respect for all members of the community and family.

Key Indicators of Success:	Actual Number/Percentage	Target after 3 Years (Phase 3)
LT1.1: % stigmatized families (all members) who have been invited to community gatherings	710 / 90%	75%
LT1.2: % stigmatized families who are members of the CG and are listened to and participating confidently.	Not measured	40%
LT1.3: % originally stigmatized families with a member who are taking responsibility within the community.	489 / 62%	30%

Note: Above percentages are based on Evaluation teams meeting with 38 community groups representing 792 families. LT1.1 is based on the number of CG members who attended the CG meetings with the evaluation team, divided by the total number of members. For LT 1.2,

observations of persons were made who actively participated during the meeting. This ranged from 40-60%, but was not compiled. LT1.3 consists of the number of members who recently participated in a community group activity.

SWNCGEP's largest thrust is the emergence of new community groups of marginalized communities and facilitating for empowerment and social transformation (FEST). This process-led approach leads to community development. Since 2013, 179 community groups (CGs) have been formed in the Phase 3 of SWNCGEP in Jajarkot and Kailali Districts with a total number of CG members of 4215 (3620 women and 595 men).

We learned about many changes in CG members' lives through listening to their stories, and participating in group discussions. CG members now respect each other, and have decreased discrimination based on caste and gender, creating greater unity to be able to work together to develop their communities. Women, in particular, now speak and actively participate at CG meetings and other community activities where they had been ignored in the past. CG members said that they live in more harmony with fewer disputes and quarrels. They have adopted more of a sharing nature with others and have more of a sense of community.

When compared with the other three long term objectives, community group members identified inclusion and respect as the most important and greatest change that occurred from the SWNCGEP intervention.

Also at the family level, we heard how husbands and wives have increased mutual respect and understanding for each other, resulting in less domestic violence. Husbands also encourage their wives to participate in community activities.

Visits with the boards of six CBNOs, both old and new, showed that most of the CGs continue to be active in their communities' development. Using the skills and knowledge they experienced through the governance enhancement process, CG members have taken additional responsibility in their communities and other leadership positions to foster community development. They participate in school management committees, community forest user groups, ward committees, indigenous organizations, Health Post Management Committees, and agriculture committees.

One Tharu member of the Shreejansal Samaj in Kanchanpur proudly shared how he was asked by his friends to be nominated for chairman of their large Community Forest Users Group which has 331 families. He was elected among 17 other candidates. His friends recognized his leadership skills that he developed in his CG and Main Committee responsibilities, and wanted him to provide this kind of leadership to the forest users group.

SS staff live with the communities and participate with them planting rice or other community festivals, and demonstrate respecting all and including all. They seek to live the same standard as their community. For example, they either walk or ride bicycle when traveling to other villages, rather than riding motorcycle. SS community educators are experienced and have done this work for many years. They understand and appreciate the rural life, and enjoy seeing how their efforts bring about significant change in people's lives.

Some groups in remote locations mentioned that staff had little time to interact with them since it might take several hours for them to reach their community.

Not all CGs are created equal! Some new groups have been recently formed and don't have the experience or the maturity that groups that have been running for a couple years might have.

While many of the CBNOs have large numbers of women members, in some groups and CBNOs, men seem to speak more and take on more of the leadership proportionally than women do. Several higher caste persons had leadership positions in some CBNO boards.

The ET believes that participating community and family members felt included and respected and that the measured Key Indicators for Success reflect support of this first Long Term Objective. In the group meetings which the evaluators attended, there was high participation from most members. Most were active in their community in activities that they identified and worked at.

LTO 2. Marginalised people have developed sustainable means of creating income, leading to an increased standard of living.

Key Indicators of Success:	Actual Number/Percentage	Target
LT2.1: % families in the community who have started their own income generation project	253 / 32%	50%
LT2.2: % of those families who are still running income generation projects (i.e. are sustainable)	237 / 30%	NA
LT2.3: % families who have food security for 12 months).	617 / 66%	25%

Note: Above percentages are based on Evaluation teams meeting with 38 Community groups representing 940 families. There appears to be much higher numbers of persons who start

Bina Devi Koli is a CG member of Ujjwal Bhavisya Ghumti Kosh. About 8 years ago she took a loan from a businessman at the border town, Chandan Chowki, at an interest rate of 8% per month for NRS 4000 to send her son to India. Every time her son returned home from work in India, the businessman was at border and took all his money that he earned in India. This continued for 4-5 years. She said "I had to pay 170,000 Rupees for that 4000. My son always came home crying from Chandan Chowki. But now since I was involved in community group, with its savings and credit, and now I am free from past loan. I stop taking loan from Chandan Chowki. Not only me, but many of the members of my group stopped taking loan from Chandan Chowki. We are so happy and now we only pay 2% interest for loan which we can get easily at home from our group.

Income Generation (IG) activities following the first phase. This was confirmed in discussions with CBNO board members. While the 50% target for LT2.1 (%families in the community who started their own income generation project) was not met (32%), the ET believes that in the next couple years, participating families in CGs will start new IG activities. There just wasn't sufficient time in this first three-year phase to see results. The third indicator, LT2.3, "% families who have food security for 12 months" may be misleading in comparison with the target. In Kailali District, the evaluators when asking the question about food security, included food that CG members got from their migrant work in India. The baseline information and the household survey that SS does each year does not include food from migrant work in India. Unfortunately we are unable to separate the data to make it more comparable.

Many of the CG members do not have sufficient food, and traditionally traveled to India or other parts of Nepal to get seasonal labor. Since no documents are necessary for Nepalis traveling to India, few reliable statistics are available for migration to India. A majority of the households of CG members send people to India. In addition, for the past ten years, several million Nepali people now live and work in the Persian Gulf countries and Malaysia, sending back remittances to their families. Migrants take out loans at high interest rates to pay for the air ticket and employment agency fees. They return to their homes every two to three years. While this extra income has helped the food security for many families, there has also been much social harm. Often the extra income is used on consumption of televisions or other luxury goods. Leaving one's home to work hard in India or another country, rather than working hard in one's community is a tragedy in Nepal. An increasing number of returning migrants now realize that they can stay home and increase their income through agriculture (vegetables, livestock), or other small enterprises.

Food security is closely tied to available income. CG members told us that when they were out of food and had no money, they borrow money at high interest rates. Interest rates of 5% per month are common.

SS community educators focus about 30% of their community problem analysis and facilitation time on income generation (IG) themes. Each CG has established their own savings and loan funds. Over time, as groups learn of the benefit of these savings funds, monthly

contributions to the funds increase (as much as ten-fold over three years) significantly increasing their fund. SS educators encourage that the 60% of the funds be used for IG activities, but this often does not happen, and funds are used for emergencies, weddings, or other celebrations. As individuals and CGs mature and develop self-confidence from small IG activities, they take on larger activities. Their group savings funds grow over time, providing more access to capital for loans.

CBNO board members from Phase 1 and Phase 2 reported continuing various income generation activities, mostly as individuals or as groups. In a few cases, CBNOs arranged trainings for their members for IG activities such as making dalmot (snack from lentils) or knitting.

The older CGs (from Phase 1 and 2) with increased experience and funds from their own groups, have taken on larger income generation projects. For example, one group from Jana Shakti Bikash Samaj (Bardia) recently built a rice mill using NRS 600,000 from local government and NRS 125,000 from their own contribution. Another group of 27 members took on a large vegetable growing enterprise. They raised NRS 300,000 from local government, along with NRS 300,000 from their own labor and funds to purchase seeds, fertilizer, and renting a field. They made a profit of NRS 1,600,000 which was divided among the members, each receiving NRS 50,000 to NRS 90,000, depending on how much effort they gave.

CBNO board members gave many examples of income generating activities: raising livestock, vegetable gardens, banana plantations, sugar cane production, medical hall, travel expense for going to work in Middle East. Both the increased access to loan capital from their group savings/loan funds and the self-confidence from earlier IG activities leads to increased incomes and higher standard of living.

Several older and more mature CBNOs have formed sister co-operatives. One example is Janajagaran Samaj (JJS). JJS formed as a CBNO in 2002 and has a membership of 2605 persons. Five years ago, JJS members set up a sister co-operative, Janajagaran Multipurpose Cooperative (JMC). In Nepal, co-operatives have a number of benefits, such as access to more capital, security of their own capital (from group savings funds), training, and other programs. In addition, according to government policy, 20% of cooperative's profits must go to social causes, and the rest distributed to the individual members. One year ago, the Banke District Development Committee and the District Agricultural Development Office provided a tractor to JMC and in a year, they made a net profit of NRS 600,000. Last year JMC implemented both a wheat seed production program that produced 1.5 tons of seed and a rice seed production that produced 20 tons of rice seed. This year they are in the middle of a larger rice seed production project. Three hundred JMC farmers are participating. All but one hectare of the project is on land that the farmers own. JMC leased one hectare of land for some landless farmers. JMC provided 40 kg seed at no cost per HA. Later in October at the time of harvest, JMC will purchase the rice from the farmers at 25% more than the market rate. JMC then will process the

seed, bag it, store it, and then in May sell it to the farmers at 20% profit. They are also partnering with a government program, "Raising Income of Small and Medium Farmers Program" (RISMFP), for the production of masuro dal (lentil) seed. They anticipate the production of 170 tons of lentil seed, with 335 farmers participating and earning a 30% profit from the sale of NRS 20,338,000 worth of seed. The government program provided a grant of NRS 6,000,000 matched by similar investment by JMC. This project also is building a production and collection center. Crop insurance, which was introduced in Nepal only two years ago, is also being promoted in this project, with RISMFP paying 75% of the insurance premium and the farmer paying 25% (NRS 15,000 per HA planted) Later, JMC plans to use the profit to build a rice mill. JMC expects to grow its assets to NRS 100,000,000 in five years. Currently it has assets of NRS 15,000,000. JMC plans on adding 15 more staff and other daily wage workers in the next two years.

Transforming peoples' thinking about how to actively increase income from their own resources, when they may own little if any land, is a huge challenge. This transformation process takes time, as evidence from this evaluation shows. Communities are changing their consumption habits, using money wisely. When money is needed for food, instead of borrowing at high interest rates, they borrow from their group savings funds or their cooperative. Working together in IG activities and seeing successful IG activities of other CGs and individuals has led to greater risk-taking and trials. CG members have taken on more livestock (goats, pigs, chickens) using loans from group savings as initial investment. We heard numerous stories of how increased numbers of livestock provide greater security for a family.

Raised income has led to a higher standard of living for families. In the past, families went to India taking their children out of school, to do seasonal labor. This practice has significantly reduced. Now parents are taking greater interest in their children's schools and as a result, school attendance has improved dramatically. Other signs of improved standard of living include that CG members are taking care of their homes, frequently washing clothes, and wearing nicer clothes.

The concept of building the community fund and using this for IG activities is sound, but mobilizing only local resources is not enough. Some CBNOs, MCs, and CGs have done well in linking with other government agencies or organizations that provide technical support, training, and inputs for IG. Unfortunately, some CGs and MCs have not yet made these linkages and have not made significant progress with creating new sources of income for its members.

The 50% target for LT2.1 (%families in the community who started their own income generation project) during the first three years of group formation was not reached yet due to a lack of time during the group formation process. This group formation process, however, lays the foundation for creating IG activities later. From the group discussions with CBNO board members, we learned that most of these members following the first three years had started and continued IG activities.

LTO 3.   Communities are working together to maximize their use of local and external resources for the benefit of the local community.

Key Indicators of Success:	Actual Number/Percentage	Target
LT3.1: % increase in communities using local resources for the benefit of the local community	38 / 100%	70%
LT3.2: % of communities getting resources from outside resource providers and implementing own community schemes	25 / 66%	35%

Note: Above percentages are based on Evaluation teams meeting with 38 community groups.

CGs first start with action plans that require only local resources.   Many community problems cannot be simply solved with locally available resources, and successful CBOs learn how to mobilize external resources. Having strong linkages to VDC, DDC, government line agencies and other NGOs are important for CBOs to solve the more complex and challenging problems they face.

SS strongly believes that external resources are available for marginalized communities, but that these communities do not have access to them. Prior to SS's intervention into communities, CG members often were not aware of VDC budget allocation, trainings from line agencies or other services available from the government. At the same time, government agency personnel are not aware of communities in need of their services.

Following problem identification and making action plans, CGs have found success in cleaning their villages, maintaining their school fields, improving their schools, building new roads, building drinking water schemes, protecting from river erosion, and obtaining electricity. These are just a few examples. These projects build unity and a "We" feeling among CG members, as well as benefiting the community with improvements.

The Prabat Flood Affected Agricultural Group in Basauti VDC, Kailali District cooperated with the District Agricultural Development Office and received seed, training, a power tiller, and irrigation water pump. The group's food security has improved by seven months and income per member increased by NRS 70,000.

A few CBNOs from Phase 1 and Phase 2 that were visited by Team Leader, for the most part, have not followed the example of their Main Committees and Community Groups in utilizing resources (both external and internal) for their CBNO activities. Some have not reached out to other organizations at the district level. There are a few good exceptions, such as Jaldeep Bikash

Samaj (JBS), which has arranged technical trainings for their members on topics such as sewing, making dalmot (a snack from lentils), and care of livestock.

We were told in the CBNO board meetings that many community groups from earlier phases are still active in using both local and outside resources that benefit their local communities. CGs' savings and loan funds are a strong force for keeping CGs together and sustainable, and also are an important local resource for loans. These CG members also are able to influence local VDC-level decisions that may also provide resources for CGs.

Getting government agency stakeholders to visit remote communities is challenging. Even if they have visited the community, then following up with these stakeholders and going to their offices can be difficult. However, some government services are available locally and close to the community such as health posts, veterinarian services, and agricultural extension. CG members reported that, following their FEST process from SS, they are using these services more frequently. This was also substantiated by interviews with service providers.

ET believes that the CGs we met in all phases are working together maximizing their use of local and external resources benefitting their communities. All community groups reported utilizing local resources for their benefit, and 66% were already receiving external resources. Through the FEST process, they are able to analyze their problems, identify solutions, and work together for their community's development.

LTO 4. Government officers understand the value of 'bottom-up' planning and respond appropriately to local peoples' needs.

Key Indicators of Success:	Actual Number/Percentage	Target
LT4.1: % of Community Group Members[5] who participate at ward level in gov. planning process (9 wards in VDC area)	158 / 20%	55%
LT4.2: % VDCs who coordinate with marginalized communities and have started to support some initiatives in the community	36 / 95%	80%

Note: Above percentages are based on Evaluation teams meeting with 38 Community groups and 792 group members.

The result of the first indicator (LT4.1) is significantly lower than the target of 55%. When asked further by ET members, some said that they were not aware about ward level planning meetings. Others felt that committee members who were more confident and active in the group should participate in the planning meetings, as they had other activities that they had to do. According to Programme officer of Jajarkot DDC, only one or two members from each CG participated in ward level planning meetings. He also reported that in the past three years, women participation increased by 20-35% in these ward-level planning meetings.

The key person in bottom-up planning is the VDC secretary. The Government of Nepal has developed a very good policy and slowly adopting the practice for encouraging bottom-up planning with the Local Governance and Community Development Program (LGCDP). This program was established eight years ago. Each ward should have a civic forum that consists of political party and other citizens. Ward-level forums may not occur if there is no interest from VDC secretary or those living in the ward. VDCs are assessed based on how much public participation is involved.

Prior to SS coming to a VDC, there was very little public participation. As a result, the VDC secretary worked with VDC assembly elites to develop a plan and budget which was sent to the District Development Committee. Often additional funds may be available for a VDC from the district if the VDC is eligible for a particular government program. If there is no participation or involvement from local persons, which is often the case, then only the political leaders and elites will know about these additional funds.

---

[5] We have changed this from the original indicator of "households in ward level who participate" to CG members, for the reason that our data came from CG meetings, rather than visiting households within wards. ET members did not have the time to visit households who did not participate in CG meetings.

After community groups became aware about the VDC planning and budgeting process from SS's trainings, they now are active at the ward level and are able to make decisions that support their needs and priorities. Prior to SS's trainings, many VDC elites typically would allocate their development funds for road construction which was not necessarily the priority of the marginalized communities. We heard several times about CG women members, who after learning that VDCs had funds allocated for women's development, began to inquire about how these funds were being used. Later they requested that these allocated funds be used for specific needs of local women.

At the same time, government campaigns, such as Open Defecation Free Zones, were greatly enhanced by involving CGs and MCs. Citizenship, birth certificates, marriage registration at the VDC also increased after CG members learned about the importance of registration. This now gives the government more accurate population census information.

A benefit of community group meetings is sharing information about government services. CG members are now more likely using government schools and health posts. If a birthing center is located in the VDC, most women are now going to the birthing center to deliver their babies. Nearly all children are immunized and their health is checked regularly. CG members are more involved in their school management and health management committees. Their participation has greatly improved communication and overall performance.

All Phase 1 and Phase 2 community representatives that took part in the CBNO board meetings reported that they participated at local government (ward level) planning meetings. There also has been excellent coordination from VDCs for initiatives from community groups. In the past, VDC funds for women's development were not used well, but now women provide plans and are able to get funding for their own

initiatives. One board member from JBS reported, "When I first went to the VDC secretary and asked about the fund for women's development, he got angry with me. But I kept persisting. Now I've learned about the rights and budget allocations for women and I can easily get budget allocated for activities that benefit our women."

During the second year of SS's process, SS staff provide a three-day training, "People Led Development and Community Governance Enhancement Concept," in each VDC, for VDC secretaries, political leaders, Health Post staff, agricultural extension workers, school teachers, as well as community group members. During the third year, this is repeated at the district level, and district level government officers are invited. However, some district government officers in Kailali District did not attend, since they expect to be given an attendance allowance, which SS does not provide.

In Jajarkot District, unlike Kailali District, SS has very good relationships and trust with the district level officials such as the Local Development Officer, District Education Officer, District Agriculture Development Officer, and District Health Officer. They understand and affirm SS's approach.

SS staff regularly visit VDC secretaries to build up trust.   Recently the government has implemented the Minimum Conditions Performance Measurement (MCPM) where VDCs and DDCs' performance is measured according to certain indicators. If a VDC is assessed well, then their budget is increased, and likewise if they receive a poor assessment, the budget is reduced. SS's training and coaching of VDC secretaries greatly improves their performance and opportunity to obtain higher budget allocation.

The only weakness that was observed is that not all stakeholders (local government line agency officials) attend trainings that SS provides. Also, some SS community educators are not fully knowledgeable about Nepal's complex planning system (14 Step Planning Process of Local Level), and sometimes are not told when ward level planning meetings are scheduled. SS community educators want to inform MC and CG members of the VDC planning process but if they don't know this, how can it be done well?

The ET believes that there has been much progress with local government officers understanding the value of "bottom-up" planning and responding appropriately to local peoples' needs. Most CGs have representatives that attend ward-level planning meetings and are able to get programs that coincide with their needs. Both SS's trainings as well as the government's LGCDP have encouraged greater "bottom-up" planning. Yet, it is clear that most CG members do not take the time from their busy schedules to participate in these ward level meetings, and are represented by those CG members who are more active and vocal. It will be interesting to see over time whether this changes.

Policy changes in Local Institutions

Indicator:	Actual Number/Percentage	Target
# CG members elected to leadership for local institutions such as Forest Users Group, School Management Committee, or Health Post Management Committee	63 / 8%	N/A

Note: Above percentages are based on Evaluation teams meeting with 38 Community groups and 792 group members. This indicator was set for the evaluation, and was not used in the SWNCGEP design. Upon further analysis about this indicator, it is not clear as to the percentage of elected positions are filled by CG members. Also, as CG members gain more leadership experience, they are filling leadership positions in these other institutions.

There have not been local elections for Nepal VDCs for over 16 years. However, other local institutions such as community forest users groups, health post management committees and school management committees from time to time have had elections for people to serve on these committees. They can often be politicized by the local political party leaders.

Many of the board members of CBNOs responded that they are also serving in these other community institutions. Some have also begun being active in their local political parties. The skills that they have learned from experience with their community groups, MCs or CBNOs such as problem analysis, facilitation, and leadership are useful with these new opportunities.

Prior to SS coming, people in SS working areas were somewhat passive with their local institutions. They had a fatalistic view about the way things worked. Political party leaders and elites made the decisions. It was not the fate of marginalized people to make change. As community groups went through the FEST process, they realized that they also have power to make changes not only within their groups but with their local institutions. For example, in Jajarkot District, many CG members started a mass movement to reduce bus fares from the district center, Kalanga, to Nepalgunj, Surkhet, and Kathmandu. They also were able to have the social allowance be distributed in four VDCs instead of having to go the district headquarters. In Kailali, to pay their electric bills of NRS 100, electric users paid NRS 200 to travel to the District Headquarters. CG members are campaigning that the electric bills be paid locally thereby saving the high cost of travel.

Changes in Health Behavior

Indicator:	Actual Number/Percentage		Target
Births of CG children in the Birthing Center	82 /46%		N/A
Children who have been immunized	231 / 99%		N/A
Families using toilets	906 / 96%		N/A

Note: These indicators were not measured during the project, but were used by the Evaluation Team to see what kinds of changes in health behavior there might be. There was no baseline to compare with.

The evaluation team members found that in those areas where there were birthing centers, there was a very high use of them. Health posts are promoting the use of these birthing centers as well as check-ups of pregnant women beforehand.

Many community groups constructed toilets for their houses. Health workers and the VDCs have been promoting toilets and forming Open Defecation Free Zones, where everyone must use toilets instead of defecating in the forest, rivers, or other areas. These areas are much cleaner now.

Other changes in health behavior include using improved hand-washing methods, using improved cooking stoves and "dry rack" in the kitchen, women having their prolapse uterus repaired, eating nutritious food, regular health check-ups for women and children, proper disposal of waste, and immunization.

While CGs reported many changes in health behavior, these can't necessarily all be attributed to the work of SS workers. Codes about health problems are discussed in groups, and often members will agree to build toilets or do other changes, as a result of a better understanding. Health Post staff and others are also promoting these changes. Other active advertising campaigns are sending these messages to Nepal's population as well.

Conclusions

Conclusions along with discussion are provided for the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and replicability. These conclusions are drawn from the findings above.

Relevance: SWNCGEP addresses the needs and priorities of marginalized communities in the target areas. For years, the Government of Nepal has been committed to improve its services to communities throughout Nepal. Excellent government policies are in place. How well these services are utilized depends largely on the government personnel's willingness to serve and the awareness and demand of local communities. Through SWNCGEP, after marginalized communities become aware of these government services, they begin to use them creating greater demand. As they gain more experience and confidence, those CG members who have learned facilitation skills and experienced leadership opportunities within their CGs, now actively participate on Health Post Management Committees, School Management Committees, Community Forest User Groups, and ward level planning forums. CG members also provide leadership to these local government institutions. This community participation improves overall performance of the government services.

SWNCGEP works in the VDCs which are located in the most remote areas from their district headquarters, where needs are great, and where the outreach of government services is challenging. For example, in Ward 1, Simla VDC in Jajarkot District, there are two communities, one near the road, and the other located approximately six hours walk away. No one, except SS, has visited this remote community for their growth and development.

SS does not set priorities for the communities in their working areas. Instead, through the FEST process, community groups analyze their problems, set their own priorities, and make their own action plans. They then carry out these plans to address their needs. Numerous needs have been addressed by communities themselves that could never be done by outside agencies such as alcohol consumption, domestic violence, gambling, or caste discrimination.

Effectiveness: SWNCGEP has largely been effective in meeting most of the Long-Term Objectives. The FEST process and three-tier structure (CG, MC, and CBNO) was affirmed by all members of the evaluation team.

The project design of SWNCGEP is to provide intensive SS human resources during the initial phase of group formation and empowerment. Some ET members felt that three years was not enough time to effectively accomplish all of the project's objectives. Not all CGs were formed at the same time, and a few that have recently been formed may not have the capacity and experience to continue. According to SS process approach at the end of this initial phase, following formation of CBNO and MCs, SS places an Organizational Development Facilitator

(ODF) with the CBNO for a three-year period, thereby reducing SS presence from 16-20 community educators to just one ODF.

Not all project inputs are under the control of SS. Community success with some of their activities may also depend on other stakeholders, for which SS has no control. For example, successful IG activities depend much on technical resources such as agricultural extension. SS chooses to focus on the community empowerment and transformation process and not to provide this type of technical support. Marginalized people cannot take benefit from improved agricultural practices if no one is available to give training and show how to access the necessary inputs. Many CBNOs and MCs members with access to these services have benefited, but this is not the case for everyone.

The three-tier structure of CBNOs, MCs, and CGs appears very effective, although if there are weaknesses in any of these tiers, it may affect the others. CBNOs should have strong relationships at the district level with government officials and district-level NGOs, and attend district development forums. MCs comprise of CG representatives within a VDC. They have access to VDC-level government officials, such as the VDC secretary, agricultural extension agents, Health Post staff. With good relationships, MCs are an important influence to VDC level institutions. Lastly, CGs are at the ward level. CG members participate in ward level meetings. This three-tier set up encourages the effectiveness of government at each level through appropriate participation and feedback of government service delivery.

Effective CBNOs, such as Janajagaran Samaj and Tribeni Bikash Samaj are active in monitoring their MCs and CGs. Each of the Tribeni Bikash Samaj staff must visit 8-15 groups per month. All CGs get visits at least once every 2-3 months. This enhances greater communication, trust and understanding of the issues that the CGs face. However, if a CBNO is weak, such as Shreejansil Samaj in Kanchanpur, then there will be little contact and monitoring with the CGs which leads to a higher drop-out rate.

The effectiveness of a CBNO is influenced by the partnerships and relations with other organizations. Shreejansil Samaj in Kanchanpur and Jaldeep Bikash Samaj in Bardiya, both stated that apart from SS, they have no other linkages or relations with other agencies. They did say that the MCs in these CBNOs have good relationships with local government at the VDC level.

Efficiency: The project inputs (human and financial) were used very efficiently. At the beginning of the SWNCGEP Phase 3 in Kailali and Jajarkot, all community educators were fully trained and experienced from working in past SS project areas using the FEST process. There was no inefficient hiring and training period. All staff were confident since they had seen success in their earlier work. SS staff salaries are consistent with or lower than others in similar positions with other NGOs.

SS community educators spend a good portion of their time traveling to weekly CG meetings. Some evaluation team members suggested that efficiency could be improved if SS community educators could use motorcycles to travel to meetings in Kailali. SS's policy is that staff live simply, using bicycles, walking or public transportation so that they can more easily relate with communities. SS staff also live with the marginalized communities. Their field offices are simple as well.

Government service delivery and the development planning process also becomes more efficient with the additional involvement of informed participation and involvement of target communities. With increased scrutiny by local people, there is less wastage of government resources. In the past, those living in their VDCs did not know how their development funds were being utilized. Now, they are involved in the planning and budgeting process and know where the funds are allocated. They can monitor the funds as activities are being implemented. One example is a women's group in Purnabas Municipality, Kachanpur which learned that VDC funds for women's development were to be wasted on an unnecessary picnic for political party leaders and government officers. Approximately 200 women blocked the road preventing the vehicle form leaving to attend the picnic.

Impact: Many of the project impacts and changes were identified above in the Findings of the Long Term Objectives. CG members shared with the evaluation team that the most important impact is at the social level with increased interactions and trusting relationships between people who have gained new awareness, self-confidence, and skills such as problem analysis and facilitating. Marginalized people who had limited relationships along gender, caste and tribal lines, now are working together in their communities to overcome their problems.

Communities work together to reduce bad social habits such as alcohol consumption, gambling, and caste discrimination. They also have advocated for such things as lower ticket prices for bus passengers in Jajarkot, and for electricity in Kailali.

Many women expressed the importance of gaining self-confidence and speaking at meetings, and being heard. In their family relationships, too, women have gained more respect and there is less domestic violence.

Before and after the approval of the Nepal constitution there was a lot of violence in some of the Terai districts, including Kailali among Pahardis (those from the hills), Madheshis (those native to the Terai), and Tharus. However, in VDCs within SS working areas in Kailali, there was no conflict among these groups during this period. These groups already had established relationships with each other in CGs and MCs.

Another major impact is the rising standard of living and increased income among the targeted marginalized communities. While only 32% of CG members have started IG activities during

the first three years in Jajarkot and Kailali, we expect that more will start after seeing the success of others.

Sustainability: The fact that the earliest CGs and CBNOs that were organized some 14-17 years ago are still active in developing their communities provides strong evidence of the sustainability of the FEST process.

Evaluation team members estimated that the CGs that were formed in Kailali and Jajarkot over the past three years have a 85% chance of still being active in the next five years without any other support. However, SS intends to provide an Organizational Development Facilitator in the newly formed CBNOs so that they will monitor and support the CGs among their constituency.

Continued capacity building of CBNOs, MCs and CGs based on organizational assessments will continue to improve the sustainability of these community-based organizations.

An important question has been raised as to whether the sustainability of a CBNO is influenced by the number of projects it implements on behalf of outside donors for its group members. Some ET members feel that without these donor-funded projects, CBNOs may not be as strong. CBNO staff salaries, for the most part, come from these donor-funded projects. Since donors come and go, and their priorities change, this may not be a sustainable strategy for a CBNO.

Several mature CBNOs have developed sister cooperatives that can generate income whereas a CBNO by law is unable to carry out business activities. Janajagaran Samaj's board chairman estimated that within five years the profits from their sister cooperative will provide salary for ten social workers for Janajagaran Samaj. This organization also collects annual membership fees from each member and CG.

CBNOs should plan strategically how they might be able to be fully sustainable without being dependent on outside resources.

Replicability: The FEST process used in this SWNCGEP is being replicated in a few other places in Nepal by both SS and a small number of other organizations. The biggest obstacle in the acceptance of FEST process is many people's expectation that development requires "hardware"—outside resources for infrastructure, or trainings or other technical improvements. If people are not committed to SS's approach to focus only on the "software"-social transformation, then it is unlikely that the FEST process can be replicated. In the past, when SS hires new staff, they first provide 24-day basic community development training to people who for the most part have no previous development experience. SS prefers using persons that have already experienced the FEST process through their CGs.

Other organizations that want to use the FEST process must be fully committed to this process, and committed to not introduce outside resources to assist community organizations. Community-based organizations must experience for themselves networking with other service providers, rather than material resources being given to them with little effort.

The evaluation team often heard from community groups recommending that SS should expand to other VDCs, especially those located in remote areas.

Lessons Learned

1. The Evaluation Methodology was tweaked to include visits to the first CBNOs that SS had helped to form, so as to compare with the CBNOs later formed by the SWNCGEP. This provided a longer time perspective to the FEST process and the assessment of the CBNO structure and sustainability.

2. This evaluation focused on the impacts and long-term outcomes resulting from the SWNCGEP and not on objectives (intended project level results). The first two objectives should have been evaluated: i. Marginalized people in the region will have the capacity to identify, analyze and mitigate shared problems through planned collective action and mobilization of resources; and ii. Networking organizations will work autonomously to advocate on behalf of the marginalized people to the government and will provide support for the community groups. Including questions with CGs about what they learned from the FEST process would have been enlightening and helpful to know how well they learned to identify, analyze and mitigate shared problems. Similarly with network organizations, asking about advocacy would also reinforce its importance. Future evaluations should address these two "process" objectives as well as the impacts.

3. CBNOs have a great responsibility for monitoring and supporting their community groups and Main Committees. They also should develop many partnerships with other organizations. CBNO board members and Main Committee members volunteer their time for this important community service. Without staff, CBNOs rely on these volunteers who also have other priorities, and may not be able to carry out all these functions for a CBNO to succeed.

4. One reason for the success of the project is the SS community educators that work with the communities. They are committed and passionate, well trained, experienced, and fully knowledgeable about the FEST process. SS staff receive continued training and opportunities for reflection. SS staff have wonderful rapport with their communities. They live simply, and take part in community activities such as traditional celebrations and rice planting.

5. Nepal government policies for delivering services and planning fit well with SS's approach of empowerment and social transformation of communities. These policies encourage community involvement and participation. Following SS's intervention,

communities change from passive involvement to actively participating in planning, managing, providing feedback to the local government.

6. After community groups emerge, members learn skills such as analyzing their problems, facilitation, and leadership. These skills and new knowledge gained by members of marginalized communities have been very beneficial. But, greater power is achieved through the increased interaction of members among themselves in their own neighborhood, and meeting new people from other areas. They learn to trust and respect each other.

Recommendations for Sahakarmi Samaj:

1. **SS should continue with FEST process for empowering communities and improving governance**. SS should continue to promote FEST process with other organizations, and continue implementing similar projects in other remote areas in South West Nepal districts. No major changes to this 3-year process are suggested. However, SS should always be open to suggestions and new ideas from their staff and visitors about the FEST process.

2. **SS should improve CBNO interactions and linkages:** SS has already been instrumental in assisting with organizing the annual informal national meetings of CBNOs. These have been good opportunities for CBNOs to learn from each other. Some CBNOs only have outside partnership with SS.   SS should help facilitate exposure visits of new CBNOs to more mature CBNOs might be helpful. Few INGOs are aware of the growth and development of CBNOs. SS should inform Nepal-based INGOs about CBNOs and encourage new relationships between INGOs and CBNOs. Partnerships of CBNOs with INGOs can create meaningful mutual opportunities for meeting common goals. CBNOs must be careful to make sure that their values and needs are not compromised when partnering with an INGO.

3. **SS should encourage CBNO financial sustainability**: CBNOs should develop strategies to increase financial sustainability, so that they need not depend on donors or outside resources. Establishing sister cooperatives appears to be an excellent strategy. SS during their annual assessments of CBNOs should discuss strategies for improving CBNO financial sustainability.

4. **SS should improve its Income Generation strategy**: Increasing income should continue to be a long term objective that SS seeks in its programs, since this is also an important need and priority of rural Nepalis. SS should consider new strategy for increasing the income of its CG members. Income generation should be a cross-cutting theme during the first phase of community group emergence. During the next three-year period SS should place an IG facilitator in addition to an OD facilitator in a CBNO. This IG facilitator can develop linkages in support of IG activities with other NGOs and government agencies.

5. **SS should assist CBNOs in their documentation and advocacy of Human Rights**: CBNOs are peoples' organizations and are an important part of civil society. An essential responsibility for a well-functioning civil society is the advocacy of human rights and documentation of violations. If CBNOs become aware of human rights violations such as abuse of migrant workers, violence against women, early child marriage or child labour, then these need to be documented and proper guidelines for advocacy should be followed.

6. **SS should encourage and assist with the registration for new CBNO Federation and developing strategy on how SS can assist the new Federation**: An ad-hoc committee has been established by the national "loose" network of CBNOs to work on its registration. This registration process for federation is challenging and requires Nepal Cabinet approval. SS will need to continue to monitor this situation and assist as needed. SS needs to develop a strategy together with this federation on how it can assist and build its capacity.

7. **Indicators for Future Projects**: For future projects of a similar nature, the following indicators are suggested to be considered is shown in this table:

Long Term Objective:	Suggested Indicator:	Discussion:
LTO1: Inclusion and respect for all members of the community and family	Percentage of CG members that stop following caste rules within their group	During the CG process, as members build trust with each other, they begin to stop following caste rules, drinking water and eating together.
LTO2: Marginalized people have developed sustainable means of creating income leading to an increased standard of living	Average of number of different food items consumed in past 24 hours	Most people can recall what they have eaten in the past 24 hours. The more food items they eat (rice, bread, lentils, vegetables, meat, fruit), the higher standard of living, and probably better food security.
LTO3: Communities are working together to maximize their use of local and external resources for the benefit of the local community.	None suggested. The existing indicators are sufficient.	
LTO4: Government officers understand the value of 'bottom-up' planning and respond appropriately to the local peoples' needs.	# of VDCs that pass MCPN (Minimum Conditions Performance Measurement).	This annual assessment done by the government has the following indicators: planning and budget approval, annual program evaluation, utilization of grant & record keeping, final audit, inventory management, social security programme, and management of staff

Appendices

1. Terms of Reference
2. Schedule of Work
3. Key & Guiding Questions

1. Terms of Reference for Evaluation of The South Western Nepal Community Governance Enhancement Programme (SWNCGEP)

Date: 20 June 2016

By John Williamson

1. **Introduction**: I was requested in email dated April 18 by Leonie Lynch to prepare a draft Terms of Reference for evaluating Phase 3 of the abovementioned project. Ms. Lynch also sent me Phase 2 Evaluation Report and Irish Aid assessment of this evaluation, along with logframe of Phase 3, and recent Result Framework. I also met with Narad Sharma on 20 April, 2016 to discuss this evaluation. Since sending the first draft, I have received some comments and these have been incorporated into this TOR. Further revision was made to this after receiving comments to Draft 2.

    Sahakarmi Samaj (SS) has been implementing Community Governance Enhancement for Social Transformation (CGEST) programmes since 1997. Irish Aid in collaboration with SHEP (Social Health Project) and ICCO Netherlands have partnered in this project for three phases of three years each in South West Nepal.

    The first and second phase of this project was implemented in the 21 VDC (Village Development Committees/Areas) of the Bardia and Kanchanpur Districts. Phase Three, which began in December, 2013 is a three-year project working in 4 VDCs in Jajarkot (Salma, Thalaraikar, Jungathapachaur and Sima VDCs) and 6 VDCs in Kailali Districts (Masuria, Udasipur, Basauti, Hasuliya, Pabera and Ratanpur VDCs).

    SS field teams, each team consisting of 4 Community Educators (CE) facilitators work in two VDCs as the one community animation team. At the end of Year 2, these SS field teams facilitated the formation of 175 community groups in the 10 VDCs. 4,028 Community Group (CG) members, compriseabout 33% of the households of these 10 VDCs. These groups meet weekly and participate in the action plans, training, interactions, discussions and problem analysis sessions. According to the SS Narrative Report for 2015, these CG interventions "have transformed the systems, structure and culture of peoples' participations within the VDCs and approximately 45,000 people in the working VDCs are benefiting indirectly."

    In addition to the formation of CGs in these 10 VDCs, SS staff continue to provide organizational strengthening supports to the Community Based Network Organisations (CBNOs) established in Phase 1 and Phase 2. During these first two phases, six CBONs were formed in Bardia, and Kanchanpur (two in Bardia and four in Kanchanpur) Districts.

    This third phase project has the following Long-Term Outcomes:
    5. Inclusion and respect for all members of the community and family.
    6. Marginalized people have developed sustainable means of creating income leading to an increased standard of living.

7. Communities are working together to maximize their use of local and external resources for the benefit of the local community.
8. Government officers understand the value of 'bottom-up' planning and respond appropriately to the local peoples' needs.

2. **Purpose of Evaluation**: Assess the impacts, and long-term outcomes, and changes in society of Phase 3 SWNCGEP in Jajarkot (4 VDCs) and Kailali Districts (6 VDCs) (approximately 175 CGs in these two districts were formed), and CBO networks in Kanchanpur (4 CBO networks) and Bardia (2 CBO networks). The evaluation team will seek to meet with 20% of participating CGs and 40% of participating CBNOs . Priority is given to assessing and understanding the overall impacts and changes that have occurred by the participating communities resulting from the CGEST transformation process.

3. **Items to be assessed during evaluation**:
The Evaluation Team will seek to assess the following during the evaluation:
   - Verify reported project results (using Key Indicators of Success for each of the four Long-term Outcomes.
   - Identify some of the specific changes in income, changes in policy, and changes in health behavior of participants resulting from the CGEST group process.

4. **Make-up of EvaluationTeam:** The evaluation team will consist of half approximately half who are familiar and have experience of the CGEST transformation process coming from other CBONs, while the other half, not have this experience. This will provide a balance of both familiarity and skepticism. I recognize that the CGEST transformation process is unique and that persons not familiar with it may have a somewhat long time to understand this process. Those who are familiar with the CGEST process from other CBNOs will have the advantage of knowing what to look for, and at the same time have a learning opportunity to share with their CBNOs what they have learned. An evaluation team of two persons (ideally one female, and one male, and also one from a CBNO and one not familiar with CGEST) will create a good learning tension, and we hope also an objective approach to the study. A lot will depend on the introductory workshop for training the field teams before they go to the VDCs.
   - Team Leader: John Williamson
   - Assistant Team Leader: Snehalata Sainjoo (See attached resume)
   - 8 Field Workers (Ideally, half would be from CBO Networks familiar to CGEST process from other districts, and the other half would be from other local projects, not familiar with the CGEST process, evenly divided male & female)
   - SS Logistics Supporter

5. **Evaluation Process and Schedule:**
   - June: SS will send detailed progress reports of project to be reviewed by Team Leader.

- July: SS staff will prepare detailed and updated report of all data (outputs and activities as per objectives, key indicators of success, and LT Outcomes by each participating CG and CBO networks during the three-year period. This report will be sent to Team Leader.
- August: Team Leader will develop Key Questions and Guiding Questions" and evaluation methodology. Methodology will include both meetings with groups with open-ended questions, and also verification of achievements of groups.
- September 18-30 Consultant Schedule and Field Schedule:
  - September 15 Consultant arrives in Nepal
  - September 16 Meeting with ICCO Netherlands (Bidhyanath Bhurtel)
  - **Day 1 (September 18)** : Fly to Nepalgunj
  - **Day 2-3**: Evaluation Preparation Meetings at Nepalganj with evaluation team and SS. During this time, evaluation team will become familiar with evaluation methodology and their specific assignments. They will become familiar through earlier progress reports what has been accomplished in their evaluation areas.
  - **Day 4-8**: Field visits to districts by teams. Approximately half of the VDCs will be visited. Team members will meet with several CGs in each VDC, using open ended "key questions and guiding questions" which seek to identify and verify project impacts and changes to their families and societies through group participation methods. Other VDC and district officials and non-project participants will also be interviewed.
  - **Day 9-10**: Reflection Workshop in Nepalganj. Results from evaluation teams will be shared and analyzed. Conclusions and Recommendations will be developed and shared with SS senior staff.
  - **Day 11 (September 28)**: Return to Kathmandu and meet with ICCO.
- Before October 15, draft evaluation report will be completed and sent to SHEP. Final report will be written within a week after receiving comments, if necessary.

6. **Report Outline:** Similar to Phase 2 Evaluation Report. Evaluator will seek to substantiate hard evidence of changes at the outcome level and that conclusions clearly present strengths and weaknesses of the approach based on evidence. The report will be approximately 30-40 pages in length. More specifically, the report outline will be as follows:

Executive Summary: Principal findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned will be concisely presented, recognizing that many readers will only look at this section.

Introduction: The purpose of the evaluation will be presented, along with a brief description of the SWNCGEP project (including CGEST process). The current context of the participating communities will be briefly described.

Evaluation Methodology: Evaluation criteria, principal questions for each long term outcome to be addressed, and methodology used will be presented. Evaluation will focus on impacts and "big picture" changes resulting from the project.

Findings: These will be grouped according to each of the four long term outcomes. Case studies will be used as anecdotal examples in support of the findings for each of the outcomes.

Conclusions: Conclusions from the evaluation findings will be provided on the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, replicability.

Lessons Learned: The report will list what the evaluation team has learned about the project which is useful for future projects.

Recommendations: Recommendations based on the conclusions will be provided for future projects.

7. **Responsibilities of consultant (team leader):**
   - Select Assistant Team Leader.
   - Correspond with local NGOs in Kailali District to select four members of evaluation field teams that are not experienced with CGEST, and work together with SS to select other members of field teams
   - Further develop the evaluation methodologies and share with SHEP and ICCO.
   - Meet with ICCO before and after field work.
   - Facilitate the preparatory workshop with the team members. Have discussion with the ED of SS and other senior management team about the evaluation methodology.
   - Visit field with team members for data collection.
   - Facilitate the Reflection workshop at Nepalgunj and do the interaction with stakeholders.
   - Prepare and submit the draft report of programme evaluation by 15 October 2016.
   - Prepare and submit the final report of programmeevaluation by 15 November 2016 considering the feedbacks/comments.

8. **Responsibility of Sahakarmi Samaj:**
   - Assist Consultant with recruiting members of evaluation teams
   - Provide logistic support to the team members in Nepalgunj and in the respective field visit areas.
   - Manage the accommodation and food for consultant and evaluation team in Nepalgunj and field area.
   - Provide an orientation to evaluation team members about the programme process that SS has been undertaking.
   - Provide feedbacks and comments on evaluation methodologies and draft reports as well as provide information needed on the way of programme evaluation.
   - Pay Nepali evaluation team members their stipends as per agreed budget.
   - Arrange local travels for Team Leader and Assistant Team Leader to and from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj.

9. **Responsibility of SHEP and/or ICCO:**
   - Prepare contract with Consultant (team leader)
   - Provide feedback and comments on evaluation methodology and draft report in a timely manner.
   - Provide payment to Consultant (team leader) as per following schedule (Airfare when contract is signed; 75% following completion of draft report; 25% following completion and acceptance of final report)

2.   Schedule of Work

September 19-20: Two day preparation workshop in Nepalgung for all Evaluation Team covering the following topics: Team members introduction game; Why Evaluation? Introduction to SS, SWNCGEP and FEST process; evaluation methodology, key questions, role plays.

September 21: Teams travel to Jajarkot and Kailali; Team leader meets with Tharu Community Development Forum and board members of Chetna Bikash Samaj at Basuti VDC, Kailali—a newly formed CBNO. Later, meeting with board members of Shreejansil Samaj in Kanchanpur.

September 22-25: (Travel on September 25)

Evaluation Teams	Location	Meetings:
Snehalata Sainjoo(Assistant Team Leader)	Seema VDC & Jajarkot HQ	2 CGs, interviews with 2 individual CG members, 1 VDC secretary, 1 political party leader, 1 DDC officer, 1 NGO federation officer, 1 journalist, 1 CBNO/MC member
Rekha Oli & Prem Bista	Thalaraikar and Jungathapachaur VDCs, Jajarkot District	8 CGs, interviews with 2 VDC secretaries, 3 school teachers, 2 political party leaders,
Dhaniram Acharya & Rupnarayan Chaudhary	Salma VDC, Jajarkot District	6 CGs, interviews with 1 VDC secretary, 2 school teachers, 1 Health Post staff, 3 political party leaders, and 1 CBNO/MC member.
Pawan K. Baisya & Aradhana Chaudhary	Ratanpur and Hasuliya VDCs, Kailali District	11 CGs, Interviews with 2 VDC secretaries, 1 school teacher, 4 health staff,4 political party leaders, and 1 CBNO/MC member
Nayantara Shrestha & Sundar Chaudhary	Masuriya, Udasipur, and Basauti VDCs, Kailali District	11 CGs, Interviews with 2 VDC secretaries, 1 school teacher, 2 health staff, and 3 political leaders
John Williamson (Team Leader)	Dhangardi, Kanchanpur, Bardiya District, Banke District	Meetings with Jaladeep Bikash Samaj CBNO, Janashakti Samaj CBNO, Tribeni Bikash Samaj CBNO, and Janajagaran Bikash Samaj CBNO, and Sahakarmi Samaj senior staff

September 26-27: Reflection Workshop in Nepalgunj. Data collection & analysis. Findings from evaluation teams, discussion on conclusions and recommendations, presentations by district evaluation teams.

3. Key & Guiding Questions

Key Questions are listed below with each of the LT Objectives.

Long Term Objective	Indicators of Related Impacts	Key Questions	Which Stakeholder
1. Inclusion and respect for all members of the community and family. (relevant for all Phases)	LT.1.1: % stigmatised families (all members) who have been invited to community gatherings. LT1.2: % stigmatized families who are members of the CG and are listened to and participating confidently. LT1.3: % originally stigmatized families with a member who are taking responsibility within the community	Who are the participants in the CGs (Ethnicities and caste, gender)? What groups or people who have not participated in CGs/CBON? Why? Observe discussions in groups. How many and who are participating? With confidence? How has CG participation benefited members personally and socially? Observe Behavior within CG: Does a few dominate conversation? Does everyone participate? Is everyone opinions valued? Or just a few? To what extent have stigmatized persons benefited from CG process? What changes have they made? Any change in numbers of stigmatized families participating in schools, health posts, ag extension, other activities. Also, has the quality of the involvement changed? How many persons have dropped out of CGs or	Observation of CGs Village leaders, CGs, VDC Secretary CG discussion CG discussion and CG members CG discussion CG members & CG discussion Teachers, health post workers, village leaders, VDC secretary CGs, CBONs,

		CBONs? Why?	
		Are there CG members who are unable to attend meetings (due to accessibility—perhaps due to disability, stigma, etc.)? Who and Why?	
2. Marginalised people have developed sustainable means of creating income leading to an increased standard of living. (relevant for all Phases)	LT2.1: % families in community who have started their own income generation project LT2.2: % of those families who are still running income generation projects (i.e. are sustainable) LT2.3: % increase in food security in the community (% families who have food security for 12 months	How many families have started IG activities since being in CG? What kinds? What resources have families utilized for these IG activities? How much income has been generated? # Days of work? Have any CG members become employed? Where? Income? Are they still on-going? Why/Why not? How is extra income being used? How many months food security is your family? How has it changed over past 2 years? (Project related, migration, other?) More details on experience of agro-business: investment, profits, income, # of persons employed?	CG discussion Individual CG members CG discussion Individual CG members CG discussion Individual CG members CG discussion Individual CG members HHs engaged in agro-business
3. Communities are working together to maximise their use of local and external resources for the benefit of the local community. (relevant for Phase 2&3 – Phase 1 covered by Obj.	LT3.1: % increase in communities using local resources for benefit of local community LT3.2: % of communities getting resources from outside resource providers and	To what extent are CGs able to identify, analyze causes of problems that affect them? How are they trying to solve these problems? Over past six months, what activities has CG done that benefit local	CG discussion Individual CG members CG discussion Individual CG members

		community? What local resources were used? What changes have occurred in the community?	
O1)	implementing own community schemes		CG Treasurer, CG discussion
		CG fund. Total in fund. Monthly contribution by members? How else are funds raised? How many have taken loans? How are loans used? Repayment of loans?	CG discussion Individual CG members
		What external resources were used? How did the CG benefit?	
4. Government officers understand the value of 'bottom-up' planning and respond appropriately to local peoples' needs.	LT4.1: % of Households (HHs) in ward area who participate at ward level in gov. planning process (9 wards in VDC area)	How many CG members participated in most recent ward-level meeting? What resulted from CG members' participation?	Village leaders, CG members, CG discussion
	LT4.2: % VDCs who co-ordinate with marginalized communities and have started to support some initiatives of the community	Has there been a difference in ward meetings following CGEST process? What?	VDC officers MC officers
		How aware are CG members of government services? Do they participate? Which services? Health, Agriculture? Schools? Etc.? How have these services affected CG members?	CG discussion, Individual CG members Teachers, health post workers, village leaders, VDC secretary
		How many CG members have (don't have) citizenship cards? Birth registrations? Marriage registration?	CG discussion
		How has behavior/conduct of local government officials changed?	CG discussion, Individual CG members Teachers, health

		How has behavior/attitude of CG members changed towards government services?	post workers, village leaders, VDC secretary
		How have MCs and CBONs advocate and secure outside resources for CGs?	MCs, CBONs and VDC Secretary, Village leaders
Identify Specific Changes in Policy		How have local government (district, VDC, ward) policies, actions, strategies changed since CGEST process?	VDC secretaries CG members & groups MC
		How have political parties' policies, actions, strategies changed since CGEST process?	Political Party Leaders, Village leaders
		What impact has CG members have on local government and political parties?	Political Party Leaders
		Have CG or MC members stood for elections? (or plan to stand)	CG discussion, Political Party Leaders
		What kinds of advocacy have MCs and CBONs have promoted? Have they been successful?	MC, CBONs, government workers
		Have CGs/MCs or CBONs joined local decision making bodies?	
Identify Specific Changes in Health Behavior		% of births at Health Posts past year? % of births at home? % participation in immunization program? % of toilets used? % of CG members who have learned about hygiene? % of under 5 children attending clinics? Other health behavior changes? How many meals & what food groups have CG	Health Post staff, CG members Observation

		members eaten in the last 24 hours?	
Identify Specific Changes in Income		What Income from past month from a CG activity? How much?	CG members
			CG members
		Overall income past month from other activities? (non-CG related) Example: labor	
			CG members
		What new sources of income has CG member obtained?	CG members
		What sources of income, if any, have been discontinued	
For CBONs		What kinds of future plans? Related to CBON sustainability? (revenue generation/business, etc.)	