



SAHAKARMI SAMAJ
सहकर्मी समाज



SHEP
CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

Partnership Agreement

between
The Social and Health Education Project
&
Sahakarmi Samaj.

June 2018

Aim of this Partnership Agreement

The aim of this partnership agreement is to document the agreed collaboration between The Social and Health Education Project CLG and Sahakarmi Samaj, specifically with regard to supporting marginalised communities in South West Nepal.

Time frame

This is a five year agreement covering the period 1st December 2017 - 30 November 2022.

Background

In 2007 SHEP and Sahakarmi Samaj ('Interdependent Community') entered into a learning partnership. This learning partnership has developed and matured over the ten years.

Sahakarmi Samaj is a Nepalese community development organisation that has worked on community empowerment projects in Nepal since 1998. Like SHEP, Sahakarmi Samaj specialises in the training and deployment in the community of skilled facilitators. The main aim of the organisation is to strengthen and mobilise community groups and networks in order to address social, health and economic challenges.

The aim of the learning partnership during this time has been to work collaboratively as peer organisations to support marginalised communities in South West Nepal.

A key part of the learning partnership has been working together collaboratively on designing, implementing, evaluating and disseminating the impact of three community governance projects (co-funded by Irish Aid and ICCO) during the period 2008-2016.

The Social & Health Education Project CLG

The Social and Health Education Project (SHEP) an Irish voluntary organisation with a commitment to personal and social transformation. SHEP is a values-led organisation that works together with individuals and communities to develop capacities for positive change, to enhance health and well-being and to promote social justice. We do this through a range of integrated, personal, community, environmental and international development initiatives.’ SHEP is committed to

- working in empowering ways
- promoting inclusiveness and opposing unjust discrimination
- facilitating reflective, inclusive spaces
- working in ways which promote the integrity of the natural environment
- being flexible and responsive to emerging needs

SHEP currently works in Counties Cork, Kerry and Limerick. SHEP pioneered the use in Ireland of structured experiential training and participatory group work. We work with people from all backgrounds but seek to ensure the inclusion of people who are experiencing different kinds of disadvantage or distress. SHEP is a charity (Charity No CHY9974) and a not-for-profit company which is limited by guarantee (Registered No. 16782).

Sahakarmi Samaj

Sahakarmi Samaj is a Nepali Non-Governmental organization committed for the process oriented empowerment approach and sustainable development. The organisation was established in 1997 by experienced professionals committed in the field of community empowerment, human rights, peace and reconciliation and organizational development. SS was registered in district administration office Surkhet and affiliated with SWC Kathmandu.

The organisation has been operating in South Western Nepal in a number of districts including Surkhet, Banke, Kanchanpur, Bardiya, Kailali and Jajarkot. It targets disadvantaged communities such as tribal villages or migrant villages and the facilitators spend 3 years living amongst the villagers, in order to facilitate capacity building.

Sahakarmi uses the FEST approach, which is based on a belief that people themselves can bring real change to their lives and that the role of a supporting NGO is to create an enabling environment. Within this approach, communities independently analyse problems and plan and implement responses appropriate to their situations.

The strategy used by SS comprises the following elements with communities:

- Group and network formation
- Building problem-solving skills with the community groups
- Development and capacity building of community groups
- The creation of learning materials
- The creation of a database of local service providers and available resources for use by community groups.

SS has been working in the areas of community governance, organizational development, human rights promotion and sustainable livelihood. SS has implemented various programs to strengthen the marginalized communities in targeted areas over the past 20 years with the support of a range of international donors, including ICCO Co-operation, SHEP, Irish Aid, Lutheran World Federation, the World Food Program, Mercy Corps, and Development Fund Norway.

Shared Commitments & Understandings

The following are commitments and understandings (of SHEP and Sahakarmi Samaj) which are fundamental to our Learning Partnership:

- I. A critique of mainstream 'development' (neo-liberal modernisation) which allows unjust and unsustainable exploitation of a majority of the world's people, as well as of its natural resources.
- II. A commitment to social justice and the achievement of similar levels of dignity, wellbeing, freedom and security by all people.
- III. A recognition of the need to give priority attention to those who are marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable.
- IV. A (humanistic) recognition of the potential of human beings to learn and develop through critical analysis of their experience and on-going 'praxis' (action/reflection).
- V. A recognition that, once critically engaged, it is those directly concerned that are best (and most legitimately) placed to determine what is desirable and appropriate in terms of their development.
- VI. A conviction that, once critically engaged and equipped with self-esteem and personal skills, people can take effective steps, both as individuals and through transformed relationships with others, to enhance their wellbeing, freedom and security. (Also, that they are responsible for doing so).
- VII. An acknowledgement that, because people are often *not* critically engaged or equipped with adequate self-esteem and personal skills, they can think, feel and act in ways that are not constructive for themselves or for their communities.
- VIII. An understanding that inappropriate development interventions can 'disempower' by undermining critical awareness, self-esteem and personal skills, along with a conviction that appropriate interventions can 'empower' by promoting these things.

- IX. A recognition that there are usually valuable resources (natural, human, financial, infrastructural) available locally to support development action, even in disadvantaged communities, and that optimisation of these resources is important for both sustainability and autonomy.
- X. A recognition that national and local government, as well as certain non-government institutions, have a role and a responsibility to create an enabling environment for community-led development, to provide fair access to necessary external resources, and to uphold legal protection of human rights.
- XI. A recognition that humanity can be nurtured in all people, whether their starting position is that of 'marginalised' or that of 'oppressor', and that social transformation requires change on all sides.

Shared Commitment to the FEST Approach

Sahakarmi Samaj and SHEP remain fully committed to the use and dissemination of the (Facilitation for Empowerment and Social Transformation (FEST) approach.

The FEST approach has been developed by Sahakarmi Samaj. The FEST approach which is based on a belief that people themselves can bring real change to their lives and that the role of a supporting NGO is to create an enabling environment. Within this approach, communities independently analyse problems, make plans, and implement responses appropriate to their situations. FEST has a number of specific commitments, as follows:

1. Prioritising the marginalised and disadvantaged
2. Combating dis-empowerment
3. Building deliberative capacity
4. Building organisational capacity
5. Developing an enabling environment
6. Promoting sustainability

FEST does not provide a blueprint to be directly replicated in all situations. Instead it suggests a range of understandings, values, and principles that must be respected in the design and implementation of programmes designed to bring about empowerment of the marginalised and wider transformation in society. Related approaches have been used by other organisations in other settings.

Importance of Promoting the FEST approach in Nepal

Our partnership is based on a deep commitment to working in Nepal where the FEST approach is more important than ever.

Nepal has been a monarchy throughout most of its history. However, a decade-long Civil War by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) during the 1990s, meant that many of the community institutions (user-groups, savings groups, etc.) that had been initiated by International NGOs collapsed following their forced withdrawal. These events left Nepal with a greatly impoverished institutional infrastructure, both in local communities and in local government. They also left the country with a legacy of division and bitterness which has been an obstacle to the revival of collaborative deliberation, planning and development.

“Nepal is transiting into federal democratic republican order. It’s the biggest transition in Nepal’s history” (*The Republica*, 23 Nov 2017). Local elections in May 2017 elected local bodies for the new federal order with greatly increased powers, responsibilities and resources to help local communities attain their rights to health, education and other services. However, these bodies lack clear operating guidelines and policies to govern at the local level, and methods for engaging with local communities are not clear. There is an urgent need for the vacuum to be filled, to bridge the gaps between communities and local elected bodies, and within local elected bodies.

Commitment to a ‘Learning Partnership’

Our partnership with Sahakarmi Samaj is a ‘partnership of equals’. It is a learning partnership whereby both organisations learn from and benefit from the partnership. SHEP has opted for this model believing that local communities and organisations which can better understand, represent and address local issues will allow for more effective and sustainable development.

The relationship is characterised by mutual respect, an openness to learning from each other, and a shared deep commitment to addressing inequalities and disadvantage.

This two-way process creates a lasting relationship where both organisations can work as peers to support community development.

Roles & Responsibilities of SHEP

General

- Learning Exchange
- Project Development Support
- Organisational Development Support
- Donor Liaison
- Fundraising
- Development Education

Funded Projects

- Project Oversight
- Project Monitoring
- Overseeing Project Evaluation
- Liaison with/Reporting to Funders
- Dissemination and Development Education

Roles & Responsibilities of Sahakarmi Samaj

General

- Learning Exchange
- Project
- Donor Liaison
- Fundraising
- Development Education

Funded Projects

- Project Implementation
- Project Monitoring
- Liaison with/Reporting to Funders
- Dissemination of impact and model in Nepal

Benchmarks

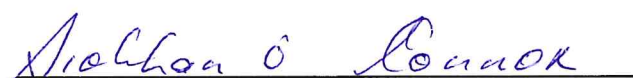
The following are the key benchmarks for this five year period:

- MOUs agreed and in place for all multi-partner collaborations
- Grant agreements agreed and in place for specific projects
- Learning Visit to Ireland completed (2018)
- Learning Visit to Nepal completed (2020)
- Successful completion of a fourth Irish Aid CSF Project
- Successful application for a fifth Irish Aid Project (2021)

Review

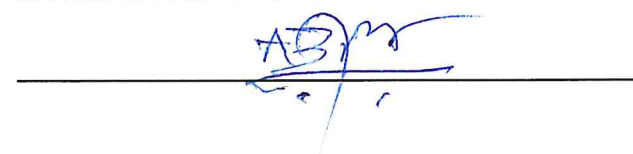
The terms of the partnership will be subject to review and endorsement every two years.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE SOCIAL & HEALTH EDUCATION PROJECT CLG



Date: 21/06/2018

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF SAHAKARMI SAMAJ



Date: 21/06/2018