

2012 THE PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE: BASELINE SURVEY IN NEPAL

Following the end of civil war and signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA), Nepal is still struggling to transition toward peace and democracy. In providing for opportunities for a successful transition in Nepal, 'The Peacebuilding Initiative (TPI)' conducted comprehensive peacebuilding with key stakeholders and independent researchers. Supported by the Royal Danish Embassy, the TPI program aimed to **'promote consensus building among a variety of stakeholders through dialogue, community actions and locally-produced radio programs.'**

Specific objectives include:

- To develop the capacity of key stakeholder groups to engage constructively in the peace process in non-adversarial ways;
- To foster solution-oriented dialogue on key elements of the Comprehensive Peace Accord and peace process at district, regional and national levels, and
- To foster constructive engagement of youth and local decision makers in the peace process at the local level.

Consensus will be achieved through **dialogue and capacity building with key stakeholders and youth groups as well as utilizing the growing media outlet, producing locally aired radio programs.**

In order to assess the impact and progress of 'The Peacebuilding Initiative' a baseline survey was conducted from 30 August-19 September 2011 and involved 806 respondents from four selected districts where the TPI was implemented. Oriented to identify the hierarchy and roles of those directly accountable to the peacebuilding process and youth mobilization, the survey determined the baseline indicators of the program's components. Furthermore, the researchers conducting the survey were given a two-day orientation for training to enhance their skills and techniques. The surveys highlighted a number of issues requiring transformation, and also suggest potential intervention entry points.

COMPREHENSIVE PEACE ACCORD & PEACEBUILDING

While results suggest that community violence occurrences have drastically decreased since the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) was signed, **'a large proportion of people (64%) are unable to make meaningful comments on the CPA and its role in the peacebuilding process.'**

Respondents either didn't know or could not say anything about the peace agreement, with a larger portion being female. Furthermore, the discrepancy in levels of education among the population indicated a lack of awareness of the CPA. Youth were also more positive as regards the importance of the CPA (24%) compared to adults (17%) and elders (11%).

PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS

The overall level of meaningful participation in SFCG and other NGO supported community meetings has significantly increased to 64% from only 33% two years earlier. Women's participation was found to be higher pertaining to less important decision making matters, highlighting the need to expressly include a gender element in the project. Furthermore, as with perceptions towards the CPA, the data indicates an increased level of education results in increased participation in, and knowledge of, community level meetings: 55% of respondents with school/college level education reported attending meetings as compared to literate (53%) and illiterate (36%) respondents. Similarly, one-third of illiterate respondents (30%) stated they were never invited to participate in such meetings, compared with literate respondents (17%) or college-educated respondents (8%).

MEDIA

The greatest influence and credibility among respondents in spreading awareness of issues and positively impacting society has been the media, specifically radio (60%) and television (50%). Two-thirds (67%) had faith in media professionals' contribution to peace in their community, which has significantly increased from two years ago (54%). This positive impact, notwithstanding, very few (7%) perceived the media programs as having a direct contribution in resolving local conflict as well as a distrust in media having a role in addressing root causes of conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are key recommendations for follow-up:

1. Focus on peacebuilding programming activities to generate awareness targeting youth and woman.
2. A continuation and increase of locally produced radio programs should be aired through local radio stations.
3. Peacebuilding programs should place greater emphasis on cultivating interaction and collaboration between the citizens and local government agencies, political parties and local elite.
4. Peacebuilding programs should pay particular attention to increase women's participation in meetings with higher importance in decision making.

5. Peacebuilding programs should mobilize youth groups focusing on bringing together youths from across political lines and demonstrating to adults the positive contribution young partners can make in community level development and peacebuilding.

Source: This document is a summary of and taken directly from the report "Baseline Study Report on The Peacebuilding Initiative in Nepal." A copy can be acquired at <http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/nepal.html> or by contacting Nick Oatley, Director of Institutional Learning at Search for Common Ground: noatley@sfcg.org.

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