
Search for Common Ground – Nepal Key Findings from 2008 External Evaluation Youth in Peacebuilding and Community Decision Making

Search for Common Ground (SFCG), has been working in Nepal since February 2006, with support from the European Commission, UNICEF, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the World Bank. Using media and community-based activities, SFCG aims to foster the participation of key sectors of the population in Nepal in the peacebuilding process, with a particular focus on youth.

In this context, SFCG conducted two-year programmatic evaluation to assess the outcomes, successes and shortcomings of their youth in peace building and community decision making project activities.

KEY FINDINGS

Outcome Level Findings

The SFCG youth program successfully achieved its first behavioral change objective- *rural youth will analyze the pressures on them in terms of what choices they have and how to respond these pressures.*

- The radio drama program- *Nayaa Bato Nayaa Paailaa* and the district level youth leadership for community peacebuilding training substantially helped the rural youth increase their confidence and their ability to communicate with the adults in the community.
- As a large part of SFCG youth program, community youth realized the need to be involved in peacebuilding processes.

The SFCG youth program largely achieved one of its key behavioral change objectives- *rural youth will be organized to address the root causes of conflict at the local level.*

- In general, youth's involvement in peacebuilding activities, conflict resolution, social service, social change, social harmony, and civic education has increased.
- However, several factors such as poverty, unemployment, political exclusion, social disparity, and the lack of education limited SFCG youth program from accomplishing this objective with a greater success.

The third objective of the SFCG youth program- *rural youth will represent and take leadership roles in all levels and types of decision making processes*- seems to have been moderately achieved.

- While the evaluation findings suggest that youth's participation in decision making processes increased, several factors prevented SFCG's youth program from being more effective

The evaluation findings claim that the SFCG youth program positively impacted its last behavioral change objective- *rural youth will utilize the tools of dialogue and discussion to prevent and resolve disputes at family and community levels.*

- While most young people in the communities prefer non-violent tools (dialogues and discussions) of conflict resolution, they often do not find opportunities to utilize the tools, prevented from

participating in these processes by adults who perceive young people as too inexperienced and immature to participate.

Process Level Findings

- While the evaluation noticed some degrees of flexibility in the SFCG's current monitoring and reporting system and that the monitoring and evaluation system adopted by SFCG seemed largely functional and user friendly, it was reported that the feedback given by the field staff is sometimes omitted by the project management.
- SFCG's partner NGOs seemed to be very happy with the freedom and flexibility provided to them during program implementation and reporting. However, they raised an issue of their lack of participation in the planning and programming phase of the project.
- The evaluation team found SFCG staff very motivated and committed. The process followed in staff selection was innovative and appropriate.

Organization Level Findings

- The evaluation team observed self-managed teams at SFCG as by-products of organizational vision, values, strategic orientation, and culture developed at and around SFCG.
- SFCG has adopted a "T Approach" as a guide to designing and implementing its whole program activities.
- SFCG holds strong organizational culture with informal communication, strong ownership, young/energetic and motivated staff, routine review meetings and assertive behaviors. The support system and project management system were remarkable.
- One weakness seems to be with regard to advocacy on knowledge gained during program implementation.

Overall Findings

- The evaluation revealed that SFCG project, particularly the radio program *Nayaa Baato Nayaa Paailaa*, has had a positive impact in building awareness, fostering positive attitudes, and motivating youth towards participating in the peacebuilding process; Youth's knowledge, attitude, and behavior have changed since the baseline survey.
- Youth leadership and community capacity building training programs were found highly effective in developing youth's capacity, establishing youth's clubs and networks, and imparting knowledge on conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

-
- SFCG should incorporate bottom-up planning, opening contact offices, documenting lesson learned, knowledge advocacy, and strengthening internal systems so as to create new sources of public values. For this, SFCG requires focusing on two areas of institutional development: strengthening the internal system, and coping with the ongoing changes.
 - SFCG should carefully capitalize its wider network for tracking funds, monitoring, and implementing programs properly, involving youth clubs as network-type organizations.
 - It is strongly advised that SFCG focus on sustainability issue with strategies including the organizational development of youth's clubs, long term orientation in program design, and motivation of community based organizations and clubs in an entrepreneurial development approach towards a sustainable peace at the community level and more generally at the national level.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation is based on the analyses of data and information obtained from the field survey and secondary sources, especially the baseline survey report. While quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software, qualitative data were analyzed thematically using content analysis techniques. All data received from the field were analyzed and presented in four levels: (a) outcome level, (b) process level, (c) organization level, and (d) overall. Some cases and examples are used to support the major findings and conclusions.

*Source: The majority of this document was taken verbatim from the Evaluation of Search for Common Ground Activities in Nepal in 2008. For the full evaluation o, please refer to:
www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/evaluations.html*