The Pathways to Peace program (P2P) was implemented by Search for Common Ground in partnership with Youth Initiative, Association of Youth Organizations in Nepal, Youth Action, and Y! Magazine.

The program sought to **structurally transform the way that youth participate in the civic and political arena** so that they can make a substantial positive contribution to the overall peace and democratic processes in Nepal.

P2P foresaw its strategic results as: **a more politically aware youth; youth inclusion in dialogues on key civic and political issues and youth participation in democratization process from the grassroots to the national level**.

For the purpose of the evaluation, P2P activities were grouped into four activity streams:

- **Civic Leadership School (CLS)** provided leadership training for participants from civil society, the private sector, political student unions and youth organizations, aimed at strengthening their leadership and non-adversarial advocacy skills.

- **College Seminar/Civic Education** organized quarterly seminars on university campuses with the help of campus-based student organizations, on subjects such as democratic institutions, rule of law, constitution development and political affairs.

- **Policy Development and Advocacy** activities mobilized youth organizations and existing networks; P2P sought to make the youth’s voices heard at the central government level and among established civil society.

- **Youth Media** projects included a quarterly magazine and a radio drama.

These were assessed on the basis of effectiveness, contextual relevance, coherence & coordination, and sustainability. The evaluation review employed mixed methods, but was primarily qualitative. Data collection was done through interviews, electronic surveys administered by SFCG, a partner workshop including a PRA exercise, and limited document review. Two urban areas outside of Kathmandu were selected for the qualitative data collection. The program theory of change was assessed through pathway analysis.

**EFFECTIVENESS**

P2P provided youth with the opportunity to gain new knowledge, develop new relationships (primarily with other youth) and organize constituencies around specific topics, such as the drafting of the constitution. The program offered a number of opportunities for broad and inclusive public dialogue but many of these lacked the intergenerational component envisioned originally. Most participants with whom we spoke reported changes in awareness. For CLS participants this was more about changes in self-awareness of their leadership style, rather than political awareness. Non-CLS participants reported changes in knowledge on one or more key topics.

Pathways analysis revealed gaps in the program design between activities and outputs and medium and long-term outcomes. The program did achieve the dependent or outcome variables within the specified program theories of change. However, there may have been additional independent variables at play that were not recognized within the theories – meaning there is still a need to deepen understanding of how things work.

**CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE**

The project successfully brought youth from different sectors, geographic locations, gender, ethnicity and professional background into a consolidated advocacy platform. Evaluators and program participants found the P2P program relevant to the context; however, P2P’s success at addressing process concerns would have been more relevant had it succeeded in engaging political youth more fully and had it engaged the senior political party leadership. The program could have been more relevant in terms of policy by expanding the focus to include power and centralization of political leadership.
COHERENCE & COORDINATION

The coordination among partners was adequate in meeting the program’s needs. P2P identified categories of strategic participants and, with a few notable exceptions, effectively engaged them in the program. P2P participants were the glue that held the different activity streams together. Participants affiliated with youth organizations tended to apply their learning more effectively than non-affiliated youth, raising questions about the most effective multipliers. Initiatives to promote internal coherence between the different activity streams focused largely on the “strategic who,” and missed other less important opportunities for integrating the different activity streams.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project has been only partially successful in ensuring the sustainability of project initiatives that address ongoing needs. Certain initiatives, such as the Youth Charter, were time-bound activities designed to give input during constitution writing and were not intended to be sustained. Other activities such as the CLS and a few college seminars remained active post-P2P. Only the National Youth Alliance (NYA) holds the promise of becoming an ongoing platform.

P2P was very relevant to the current context in Nepal. P2P was effective in the non-violent mobilization of large numbers of youth to engage in policy development and advocacy. The P2P partners did not fully address the coherence and coordination concerns raised by the donor, but were able to implement the bulk of the program activities. The National Youth Alliance and the policy documents facilitated by P2P promise to be P2P’s most lasting legacies.

As a 19-year-old young female and a student activist, I never had an opportunity to understand that I have a say in the constitution building process and can discuss directly with my representatives. I had heard through radio that Constitution Assembly members are coming to solicit suggestions to put in the new constitution. I am happy that I got this opportunity and I will definitely meet the Constitution Assembly members and put forth my agendas to be incorporated in the new constitution.

-College Student

Source: This document is a summary of and taken directly from the report “After-Action Review, an external inquiry grounded in evaluative thinking: Peace Program 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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