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*Advocacy toolkit case studies*

# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT PLANNING IN NEPAL

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<b>THEME:</b>	<b>Governance</b>
<b>ADVOCACY APPROACHES:</b>	<b>Educating community members</b> <b>Government budget tracking</b> <b>Government officials: educating</b> <b>Research and analysis</b> <b>Social contracts and social accountability</b>

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Nepal has a national planning law that is meant to be inclusive, allowing local communities to contribute to local and district plans and budgets. While central government is still able to develop its own priorities, the law provides a mechanism to empower local communities to assert their own priorities and have their concerns formally heard. Unfortunately, commitment to this process has been low. Many communities are not even aware of this opportunity and decisions are often made by a small self-selected group of politically influential men.

One Tearfund partner, United Mission to Nepal (UMN), heard about the law and realised that it related to the work they were doing with local communities around issues of good governance. As a result, they did some research about the law, using the internet, contacting government departments and asking other agencies what they knew about it. This helped them understand why commitment to the law was weak, and enabled them to think of ways to ensure its implementation.

They also decided to raise awareness about the law, in order to facilitate community input into the local planning process and to improve local government transparency and accountability. They did this through community meetings involving community members and leaders, representatives from political parties and the media, as well as through training workshops.

After learning about their right to participate in local planning, communities were supported to develop proposals which reflected community needs and priorities and to present them in accordance with the law. These participatory meetings ensured that all voices were heard and that the proposals selected truly represented the community's concerns. They also led to the community members, newly empowered, continuing the process themselves after the support had finished.