
Advocacy case studies

TRAINING COMMUNITIES TO WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NEPAL

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| COUNTRY: | Nepal |
| THEMES: | Governance |
| ADVOCACY APPROACHES: | Community mobilisation; educating community members; government officials: meeting with |

In Nepal, the national government created a law which gave communities a way to participate meaningfully in development work, through the Participatory Planning Process (PPP). Using PPP, Tearfund partner United Mission to Nepal (UMN) supported local communities to participate at all levels of decision-making.

The law stipulated that when local governments allocated funding to development work in sectors such as infrastructure or social, cultural and economic activities, proposals from Village Development Committees (VDCs) had to be taken into account. However, in many cases, decisions were left to a few influential politicians, elites and authorities, and often failed to take account of the community's views and needs.

To reverse this trend, UMN mobilised people from selected VDCs to help increase their participation in this community development work, and trained them in how to gain access to local government funds. At community level, they also encouraged local facilitators to visit each household and invite them to join the initial meeting. The facilitators had a longstanding relationship with their communities and extensive knowledge of the local context. So, this meant they were in a position to encourage poor and low-caste families and other marginalised groups particularly to take part, people who might otherwise not have been included.

At the meetings, communities learnt that the VDC funds for development belonged to them, and they were entitled to have a say in how they were allocated. UMN trained them in the government's process and priority areas, as well as the way proposals were developed. They encouraged the communities to identify and prioritise issues, and discuss possible solutions. They also helped them to consider and find other local resources, and access technical expertise where needed. Ward representatives took the communities' proposals to the VDC.

As a result of this involvement in the local government decision-making process, communities saw funds released to pay for community projects. These included: sewing training for single women, materials for early childhood centres, irrigation channel maintenance, toilet construction, a new church building, and fencing for a cemetery.

This work also proved to be sustainable. VDCs that had participated earlier were then able to be involved in PPP independently, with only minimal support required from UMN.