

PAHUNCH:

Strengthening the Poor and Marginalized Communities' Access to Justice and Security in Nepal.

Mid-Term Review Report

Submitted to

**Search for Common Ground
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Lazimpat, Kathmandu**

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AG	Attorney General
CeLRRd	Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development
CMC	Community Mediation Centre
COCON	Common Platform for Common Agenda
CPN-UML	Communist Party of Nepal – Unified Marxist-Leninist
CSJS	Centre for Security and Justice Studies
DFID	Department for International Development
DIG/AIG/IG (P)	Deputy/Additional/Inspector General of Police
DJKYC	Dalit Jana Kalyan Youth Club
DLPIC	District Level Project Implementation Committee
DME&A	Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability
DPAC	District Project Advisory Committee
DWCO	District Women and Children Office
ECDC	Environment and Child Development Council
EOI	Expression of Interest
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GoN	Government of Nepal
HMIC UK	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, UK
HUCODAN	Human Rights and Community Development Academy Nepal
HWEPC	Human Welfare and Environment Protection Centre
IEC	Information Educations and Communications
ILT	Institutional Learning Team
IP-SSJ	Integrated Programme for Strengthening Security and Justice
JAWAS	Janaki Women's Awareness Society
JSCC	Justice Sector Coordination Committee
KIIs	Key Informants' Interviews
LGU	Local Government Unit
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MIPP	Modernization and Improvement in Policing Project
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NP-RPD	Nepal Police-Research and Planning Directorate
Pahunch	Strengthening the Poor and Marginalized's Access to Justice and Security in Nepal
RRN	Rural Reconstruction Nepal
Search	Search for Common Ground
SP	Superintendent of Police
UCPN-Maoist	Unified Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist
VDC	Village Development Committee
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
S&J	Security and Justice
TNAs	Training Needs Assessments
UNOPS	United Nations Office of Project Services
VAW	Violence Against Women
VLA	Victim Legal Aid
WWG	Women Watch Group

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Executive Summary

Context

The project was designed in 2014 when the second (term) Constituent Assembly (CA) was struggling to finalize the Constitution of the Country. During the past three years (2015-17), the political and conflict dynamics have changed significantly with the promulgation of the constitution followed by multiple violent protests by the Madhes-based political parties; corresponding 5 month-long Indian economic blockade; change of political alliances and the subsequent change of the guard of the government multiple times. During the project period, the country also witnessed a devastating earthquake that shook the very foundation of government priority, economy, infrastructures, and everyday lives of people. This was followed by a massive flood in early 2017 in the Pahunch project districts.

Despite all these political turmoil and natural calamities, the country witnessed a series of peaceful local government elections for the first time since 1999 and the election of the Federal as well as provincial Parliament. The past two years also saw the gradual implementation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal promulgated in 2015.

As Nepali society and polity have been driven by feudal culture for centuries, the fundamental challenges facing the poor, marginalized, women and rural youth remains unchanged over the decades notwithstanding the democratic transitions. The aforementioned groups were frequently denied access to security and justice services, among others. The lack of public knowledge and trust about police and court processes along with the role of middlemen in the manipulation and exploitation of poor and vulnerable people further prevent the public from easily accessing the security and justice services in rural areas, especially in the Madhes.

Project introduction

Search for Common Ground Search), in partnership with the Centre for Legal Research Resource Development (CeLRRd), Human Rights and Community Development Academy Nepal (HUCODAN), and Centre for Security and Justice Studies (CSJS), is implementing a 4-year project titled *Pahunch: Strengthening the Poor and Marginalized's Access to Justice and Security in Nepal*. With a total budget of GBP 3.44 million, the project is funded by DFID Nepal, which is part of DFID Nepal's Integrated Programme on Strengthening Security and Justice (IP-SSJ). It started on 5th January 2015 and will continue until 31 December 2018.

Project objectives

It aims to improve access to security and justice services for the poor and marginalized communities, specifically women, in target districts. The project is built on five output areas: Output 1: Increasing public awareness on security and justice issues; Output 2: Improving citizen-police relationships and mutual accountability; Output 3: Improving police responsiveness; Output 4: Improving court responsiveness and legal aid and Output 5: Community mediation.

The scope of the project

The project is implemented in 12 districts namely Sunsari, Saptari Siraha, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Rautahat, Kathmandu, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi, Kapilvastu, and Dang. These districts were selected in consultation with the NP-Research and Planning Directorate (RPD), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and DFID, and with reference to the selection of new grantees by the Danish, DFID and Swiss-funded Governance Facility.

Review methodology

The review is based on qualitative interviews carried out in 6 out of 12 Pahunch project districts along with the monitoring data provided by Search DMEA team. A total of 14 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and 24 Key Informant Interviews (KII) and 3 large scale interactions were conducted in those districts with the partners, security and justice stakeholders, media partners and project participants. The review team also looked at a number of documents related to the Pahunch project along with the DFID's Annual Review 2016.

The team reviewed the project under five evaluation criteria: Avenues for continued relevance in the evolving context including the state restructuring process and existing political dynamics; implementation process, effectiveness in achieving the desired results, coordination among partners; and implementation challenges.

Relevance

The project and its interventions are found to be highly relevant in the current context. The project has exhibited excellent adaptive tendencies based on the contextual realities, be it financial or geographic re-scoping, its expansion of stakeholders and relationships following the elections, or alignment with new processes. The government stakeholders, security and justice partners at the central level and the district level, and most importantly the poor, marginalized and women, have lauded the project for its value in helping them build relationships with security and justice officials thereby helping the gradual shift towards improving their access to security and justice services. Further, the importance of the community mediation center was highly appreciated by participants as well as security and justice officials for its role in bringing informal justice services to the citizens' doorstep and saving them from being victimized due to the manipulation of middlemen. This project is also relevant from the point of view of the security and justice agencies as it provided them with a platform to connect, listen and share with the local community, especially the marginalized and women. The Local Government Act 2074 (2017) has formally institutionalized Community Mediation Centers as an inherent part of the local government by making the Centers a complementary organ of the Judicial Committee. The project, by contributing to the emerging practice of robust referral systems, where criminal cases are being referred to the police and civil cases being referred to the Community Mediation Centres, contributes to the integration of the work of security and justice institutions.

Implementation Process

The first year of the project met with two massive earthquakes in Nepal and the entire country suffered in its aftermath. The focus of the government agencies, including that of Nepal Police, shifted to the relief and recovery of earthquake victims. The already-delayed project implementation was further affected by the political protest in Madhes demanding the constitutional amendment. As the demonstration was intense and prolonged, no activities could be implemented during that period. Further, the unofficial economic embargo imposed by the Indian Government after the promulgation of the Constitution on 23 September 2015 prolonged the state of crisis until early February 2016. This tumultuous time was also coupled with the leadership transition in Search Nepal Office. The arrival of new Country Director in Search Nepal coincided with the country preparing for a new phase of the local government election. The election in Province # 2 was postponed, which is where 6 of the 12 Pahunch districts are located. The local government election was held in three phases on 14 May, 28 June and 18 September 2017, which obviously affected the project implementation significantly. This was followed by the National and Provincial Parliament Elections on 26 November and 7 December 2017.

Further, with the implementation of the new Constitution and the formation of new federal and local government structures, DFID and Search decided to revise and re-scope the project to accommodate the needs of the new structures. This process took a very long time and created a period of uncertainty in project implementation. Hence, the Pahunch project implementation was affected mostly by the external challenges/obstacles beyond the control of Search (which DFID knows of) and at least two internal challenges such as the leadership transition and partnership management issue. Despite all those challenges, the project has progressed relatively well. The biggest challenges are noticed in activities related to Nepal Police, especially training, detention center monitoring, tailor-made activities for the justice sector at the central level, street theatre, and tailored training to municipalities with no progress at all or very little progress (less than 10% success) so far.

Considering the federal restructuring of Nepal police and the governance system and structures, the review team found that the restructuring has no impact on the security components of the project. There are few challenges faced by the Community Mediation Centre because of the provision of the Judicial Committee within local government and lack of understanding of the newly elected local government officials on the provision of the CMC in Local Government Act, 2074 (2017).

Progress towards results

The project is progressing well, albeit relatively slowly. At the time of the mid-term review, the project has reached a total of 23,129 people (47% women) from 16 different activities. The mid-term review found encouraging signals of change while gathering information and data from project participants, state stakeholders and implementing partners. There is a good ownership of the project activities among project participants and state stakeholders. The participants of football clinic, drama clinic, dialogue events and other activities said that they have been benefitted by the project activities. Similarly, this was also echoed by the police officers in Sunsari and Rupandehi. The pre and post-test data of various activities revealed that the activities contributed to positive changes in the attitudes towards the police - only 43 percent participating youth felt comfortable to express their opinion or discuss issues with the police before the training, which increased to 91% immediately after the activity.

Similarly, the mediation programmes are well-established in most of the districts. All the Community Mediation Centers that the Mid Term Review (MTR) team visited have been effectively working. They have received high credibility and reputation as an impartial group of people. The success of community mediation in villages has discouraged the role of middlemen and saved vulnerable groups from being exploited by manipulative middlemen. This was corroborated by project beneficiaries and police officials.

The football clinic has been one of the major components of the Pahunch project. So far, the clinics have brought 1,744 youth and police together on a single platform to develop a better understanding of each other, build collaboration, and learn from each other. It has helped build police-youth relationships. While the football clinic focused on improving police youth relationships, the drama clinic helped build relationships, between police and community people, through which 1,288 men and women from marginalized communities came together to identify local issues of contention and used drama as a metaphor to ideas, and strategies to resolve those issues. The data shows significant changes in the overall impression of participants on security agencies as evidenced by the ratio of changes tracked exceeding more than three mean value. There have been 23 district level and 193 village level dialogue sessions held in which a total of 6,777 (49.5% women) people participated. The participants said that it helped them understand the work of police, build relationships with them and overcome prejudice/fear against them and discuss issues of contention in the community.

The research on community policing has been able to influence a few provisions in the recently formulated *Prahari Hamro Tolema* Programme Operation Guidelines, 2074. The research findings were shared with Police Headquarters and other concerned stakeholders and a few recommendations found place in the policy, even though there is no specific mention of the research.

Coordination with Pahunch and IP-SSJ partners

Search has regional offices in Janakpur (Dhanusha) and Butwal (Rupandehi) with locally rooted project coordinators in each district. Search is the only IP-SSJ consortium actor, which has continued and rooted field presence in all 11 districts. The project is being implemented through 32 partner organizations in 12 districts with a four-layer partnership management modality. Despite the temporary partnership challenges, the overall partnership management and programme implementation coordination is found to be good. Most of the partners, except those in Rautahat, said the overall leadership and coordination of Search in the last three years has been quite good.

The monthly District Level Project Implementation Committee (DLPIC) meeting and quarterly partners' reflection meetings led by the lead partner have proved to be an effective mechanism for mutual understanding, better coordination, and sharing of good practices, challenges and learning from each other. The central level biannual project steering committee meeting provides overall guidance, strategic direction, and troubleshooting at the central level. Despite this, some of the outstanding activities have not been moving forward. This has negative implications on achieving the desired burn rate but also programmatic results.

The Pahunch and IP-SSJ coordination meetings are taking place in most of the districts almost regularly. In the eastern cluster, Search has been organizing the Pahunch- IPSSJ coordination and sharing meetings in Dhanusha, Mahottari, Siraha, and Saptari. IPSSJ meetings are also regularly taking place in the districts in the West where other IPSSJ partners including the local partners of the Governance Facility (GF), UNICEF, Pahunch, and RMO are based. There are also some specific examples where Pahunch Partners have been able to organize activities in coordination with IPSSJ partners such as Dang and Rupandehi.

Programme implementation challenges

The project also faced several challenges throughout the project period, many of which were beyond the control of Search. Similarly, some of the challenges associated with Pahunch project implementation resulted from DFID's decision regarding strategic realignment for IP-SSJ synergy. Such strategic changes, political instability, natural calamities as well as some of the internal challenges within Search hindered the timely and smooth delivery of the project activities and results. The massive earthquake of April 2015, the political crisis in Madhes, Indian economic blockade, slow approval and endorsement of some of the activities by Nepal police (for example the ongoing uncertainty over the detention center monitoring/ detention center management support, police training and few other components), programme and organizational leadership transition, partnership stalemate in Rautahat, dropping TV component from the project by DFID, and lack of clear communication regarding the delay and the reasons behind such delay are some of the challenges the project consortium encountered during the last three years. These have contributed to a slowed-down pace of the project implementation.

Conclusions

The transition from a unitary to a federal system of governance is challenging. The operationalization of empowered local governance requires numerous inputs in administration, infrastructure development and service delivery including justice and security. While security and justice are two of the most important requirements for human development, given the conflicting and numerous

priorities for both the service providers and the service seekers, the most marginalized and poor people continue to struggle to access justice and security. The efforts are not enough yet to transform them to a level where people start to feel their warmth and responsiveness. The two areas that the project has focused, security and justice, are two of the major government issues that affect people directly. Yet, people, especially those from rural villages and from marginalized groups, have not got easy access and reliable services. In this context, the review found that the project is highly relevant, to the context and society, from the day of its inception until today. Despite the challenges faced during implementation, the project team has been successful in implementing most of the activities, with some exception either because of the natural calamities or political disturbances or the request for postponement by the donor.

The project has made good progress towards improving access to security and justice services. Project participants said that the project has helped them overcome the traditional fear of police. The stereotypes they were harboring in their heart and mind are slowly fading and positive perceptions are being built. This is a commendable achievement.

The overall project coordination was well appreciated by the partners and other stakeholders. They have been able to develop a good rapport with the district courts, district prosecutors, and police officials from the district to the village level. In a nutshell, the project, despite all the challenges and weaknesses, has been successful in building a good relationship between police, public and judicial actors and has given the marginalized communities a sense of how it is possible to access justice and security services without major obstacles.

Key Recommendations

Based on the findings, the review team has identified the following recommendations that may help Pahunch project implementation team to produce better results in the remaining project period.

- There is an urgent need for Search and its partners to organize project introductory meetings with the newly elected local government officials.
- Search and CeLRRd need to develop a strategy to overcome the potential resistance of the local government officials with regards to the Community Mediation Centers. They should explore the possibility of immediately organizing 2-3 days of necessary training to Judicial Committee members in order to fulfill their mandate.
- Search and CeLRRd should explore the possibility of refresher training to CMC and Women Watch Group members in line with the provisions in the new LGA. The training, if possible, needs to align with the new laws and regulations and should be sequenced after the government-led training for new local government officials.
- It is important that the project consortium, especially CeLRRd and SFCG ensure that the project based Victim Legal Aid (VLA) lawyers and the court-based legal aid lawyers coordinate and collaborate with each other to create synergy to support poor and marginalized groups of people so that justice services can be provided effectively.
- It is urgent that Search and DFID in consultation with the Asian Development Bank organize police training, provide detention center management support and conduct other pending activities as soon as possible.

- Search needs to be more strategic in orienting partners on Common Ground Approach (CGA) and build their capacity to apply CGA in practice.
- Following the success of the Pahunch-IP-SSJ coordination meeting in some districts, Search should take the leadership in organizing similar meetings on a regular basis in the remaining districts.
- Despite recent efforts in strengthening communications channel, Search needs to further strengthen and systematize upward and downward communications in discussions and decisions.
- Search should strengthen the documentation of dialogue sessions, especially the process and the results, to create knowledge as these documents will be valuable evidence of change at the end of the project period.
- Search should continue to keep a close eye on partners with weaker programmatic and financial reporting skills and continue to motivate and orient them towards enhancing their skills.
- Search needs to start developing mechanisms and tools to capture outcome-level data from various activities such as self-defense training, police-community dialogues and application of knowledge and skills learned from training and other clinics into practice.
- Search and the partners need to start planning for the project exit strategies and mechanisms for sustainability of the initiatives beyond the life of the project.
- Finally, given the continued high relevance of the project and its gradual realization of the results, it is recommended that a short reasonable extension of the timeline may help offset the initial delays caused by external factors, but also help institutionalize the gains so far.

CHAPTER-ONE

1.1 Context

During the last decade, the Madhes region, which includes all the Pahunch Project districts, has remained politically volatile and prone to violence most of the time. The political unrest, repeated violent incidents, the manipulation of ethnic differences for political gain and subsequent incidences of perceived prejudice have created a sense of insecurity among minority groups. While the majority Madhesi population remained disenchanted with the ruling political elite, mostly dominated by political elites belonging to Pahadi (Hill origin) community, the entire country was undergoing a prolonged political transition. The economy, social and political dynamics showed a downward trend among the poor and marginalized communities, including women, Dalits, and youth.

The project was designed in 2014 when the second (term) Constituent Assembly (CA) was struggling to finalize the Constitution of the Country. There was intense political bickering among the major political parties in the CA, while the Madhes-based political parties were continuously agitating for more rights and greater recognition of the Madhesi demands in the new constitution of the country. There was a very high level of disconnect and lack of trust between the Kathmandu-centric political elites led by the three major political parties (namely Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and CPN-Maoist Centre); the Kathmandu-based political and civil society elites; the Madhes-based political parties and civil society groups; and Madhesi population.

During the past three years, the political and conflict dynamics have changed a lot: The promulgation of the constitution with an 89% majority of the Constituent Assembly (voting in favour) in September 2015; multiple violent protests by the Madhes-based political parties; the corresponding 5 month-long Indian economic blockade of petroleum products, cooking gas and other necessary commodities; and, the change of political alliances among three political parties and the subsequent change of guard of the government. During the project period, the country also witnessed a devastating earthquake in April 2015 amounting to a magnitude of 7.2 on the Richter Scale and numerous aftershocks that shook the very foundation of government priorities, economy, infrastructures, and everyday life of people. The earthquake killed more than 9,000 people and damaged or destroyed more than 200,000 private houses, government building, and national heritage sites. The country is still trying to recover from the loss caused by the earthquake. This was followed by a massive flood in early 2017 in the Southern belt of Nepal particularly in many of the Pahunch project districts. Despite all this political turmoil and natural calamities, the country witnessed peaceful local government elections for the first time since 1999 and the election of the national as well as provincial Parliament, which also concluded peacefully. The election provided a comfortable majority to the Left Alliance comprising of CPN-UML and CPN Maoist Centre. With these developments, the country is moving towards institutionalizing democracy by ensuring the meaningful implementation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal that was promulgated in 2015.

As Nepali society and polity are driven by feudal culture for centuries, the poor and marginalized, especially the women and Dalits, have always been denied judicious access to security and justice services, among others. Further, the use of police by the government to suppress the political protest in Madhes, increasing practice of corruption, political protection of crime and increasing state of impunity, and

criminalization of politics and use of money, muscle and political power to manipulate government machinery especially among police and judicial agencies, has rendered a blow to the hopes of the poor and marginalized to get access to security and justice services.

Despite the democratic changes, the fundamental challenges facing the poor, marginalized, women and rural youth remains unchanged for decades. Further, the last two decades of divisive politics in Nepal has manipulated and polarized young people in Nepal. Such divisive politics has led to the excessive participation of young people in the forefront of the political violence and potential confrontation with the police during each political activity. This is one of the major causes of the prevailing tension between youth and police.

The lack of knowledge among the community people about police and court processes, their negative perception of police and court officials, the role of middlemen and their manipulation of cases and exploitation of those poor people remain the major factors that prevent rural people, especially women from easily accessing the security and justice services in rural areas, particularly in the Madhes.

In a nutshell, despite the unprecedented political changes in the last three years, the fundamental context related to the access to security and justice for the poor and the marginalized remains the same and the need for initiatives to promote access to security and justice services to poor, marginalized groups, women and youth remain equally important.

1.2 Introduction

Search for Common Ground (SFCG), in partnership with the Centre for Legal Research Resource Development (CeLRRd), Human Rights and Community Development Academy Nepal (HUCODAN), and Centre for Security and Justice Studies (CSJS), is implementing a 4-year project titled ***Pahunch: Strengthening the Poor and Marginalised's Access to Justice and Security in Nepal***. It aims to **improve access to security and justice services for the poor and marginalized communities, specifically women, in target districts**.

With a total budget of GBP 3.44 million, the project is funded by DFID Nepal, which is part of DFID Nepal's Integrated Programme on Strengthening Security and Justice (IP-SSJ). It started on 5th January 2015 and will continue until 31 December 2018. The project was implemented in 8 districts during the first year. In the second year, the project expanded to include four more districts, thereby making it a total of 12 project districts.

The project faced external obstacles such as the political unrest, earthquake and Terai floods even before the implementation started. Thus, Search adjusted the project and made necessary changes based on the feedback and the country context. This was approved by DFID. The amendment to the proposal presents the major changes, adjustments, and amendments that have been made to the original proposal to make it relevant to the current need and context. After a series of consultations with the Nepal Police (NP) and other stakeholders, Search put together a revised work plan for the project, which was finally endorsed by the Modernization and Improvement in Policing Project (MIPP) steering committee on its second meeting on 11 December 2015. The current project implementation is guided by the revised work plan.

1.3 Project Objectives and Desired Results

The project intends to contribute towards increased access of marginalized communities to the security and justice system, especially women and disadvantaged communities, in the project districts. The project design is guided by a set of Actor Based Theories of Change, which identify the gaps/weaknesses of various

actors related to the security and justice sectors and would theorize how these situations/states could be changed positively as a result of the project. It also involves identification of the strengths of the actors in addition to the gaps and weaknesses, taking both their connecting and dividing potential into account. The Actors Based TOC takes into consideration the current state of a number of variables concerning project target stakeholders, envisions further state corresponding to same variables, develops specific indicators to measure the change, and identifies corresponding activities and monitoring tools dividing those variables/indicators into three areas of capability, opportunity and motivation of those stakeholders. The project has identified major actors, considering the women from the marginalized community as a crucial part who require specific intervention. The project identified five actors i.e. security personnel, informal justice (CMC), media, formal justice (court) and marginalized community.

The Madhes socio-political context thrived on mistrust resulting from the years of discrimination, the absence of collaboration and a relatively strong-handed state presence, especially following the mushrooming of the armed groups in the Madhes region after the 2007 Madhes movement. That contributed to further resentment and polarization among the state actors and the people, leading to a sense of hostility towards the security forces which is dominated by people from hill communities. Given the socio-political context in the region, Search took a more explicitly 'relationship building' approach in the first half of 2016 that was aimed at rebuilding an enabling environment for the police and the public dialogue. Such an approach aimed at achieving the following specific results over the course of time:

- Create a platform for different stakeholders to communicate and interact with the police in a more cordial environment, which helps them understand each other better and be more positive towards each other;
- Improve understanding and relationship between communities and police, which in turn helps reduce the risk of violence during strikes and other political activities;
- Help improve the relationship between the police and community, which makes it possible for project activities to be conducted when the stakeholders need to work together to achieve project goals;
- Help spread information and awareness on the security-related services among the citizens, which is also one of the objectives of the project;
- Help increase collaboration- the more the people are aware and have access to platforms to interact with the police, the more they will be able to demand, encourage and collaborate with the police for better services;
- Offer opportunities to exchange experiences of the protests in a safe and non-threatening environment; and,
- Promote integration between security and justice services providers at district and local levels.

1.4 Scope of the Project

In addition to the 8 districts that were set in the original project, 4 districts were added for the commencement of activities from the second year. These were selected in consultation with the NP-Research and Planning Directorate (RPD), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and DFID, and with reference to the selection of new grantees by the Danish, DFID and Swiss-funded Governance Facility. The locations include Sunsari in the eastern region, Rautahat and Sarlahi in the central region, and central level activities in Kathmandu. Sunsari, Sarlahi, and Kathmandu are districts also approved by the MIPP steering committee as districts for additional activities. The final list of 12 districts covering 180 Village Development Committee (VDCs) for Pahunch implementation are:

- Eastern Region: (1) Sunsari, (2) Saptari and (3) Siraha;
- Central Region: (4) Dhanusha, (5) Mahottari, (6) Sarlahi, (7) Rautahat, and (8) Kathmandu;

- Western Region: (9) Nawalparasi, (10) Rupandehi and (11) Kapilvastu;
- Mid-Western Region: (12) Dang.

The following map of Nepal shows the 12 districts covered by the Pahunch Project.



This project is expected to directly reach about 150,000 beneficiaries especially women and members of marginalized communities from Nepal’s Terai. It is also expected to influence the policymakers in the security and justice sectors and the residents of the capital. Furthermore, during the design phase, the program was expected to indirectly reach 3.5 million general public through TV, Radio and Information Educations and Communications (IEC) materials. It is to be noted that the Pahunch reality show TV programme was discontinued after Season One broadcast in 2016, based on DFID’s decision to not fund TV programmes as part of their development support systems globally. However, through Pahunch radio programmes and other IEC materials, thousands of people are reached every year.

1.5 Project Activities

The project is built on five output areas, which are discussed below with the corresponding activities.

Output 1: Increasing public awareness on security and justice issues.

Corresponding activities: Radio Programme, Television reality show, IEC materials production and distribution, Participatory street theatres and social media.

Output 2: Improving citizen-police relationships and mutual accountability

Corresponding activities: 22 youth police football clinics, along with one football clinic with Traffic police and public vehicle drivers, 33 community-police drama clinics, developing police content for school curricula, 72 small grants to local groups, 72 tailor-made interventions, 16 community police dialogues, police-community security scorecards.

Output 3: improving police responsiveness

Corresponding activities: Training local police on respectful behavior and community engagement, training women police officers to deal effectively with cases of SGBV and VAW, recommendations for soft

skill component of police training, monitoring of detention centers in 12 districts, generating evidence and influencing policy.

Output 4: Improving Court responsiveness and legal aid

Corresponding activities: Training lawyers and judicial and quasi-judicial bodies' administrative staff on respectful behavior, victim sensitivity training for lawyers, training and sensitization workshop for criminal justice sector stakeholders on criminal justice, fair trial, and torture prevention, strengthening Judicial Sector Coordination Committee (JSCC) in all 12 districts, and legal aid.

Output 5: Community mediation

Corresponding activities: 154 Community mediation programmes in 12 districts

Besides, there are few additional activities that are to be carried out by the Centre for Legal Aid and Resource Development, one of the national Partners, with the current budget.

- Annual national conference on community mediation
- Documentary on community mediation
- Tailor-made justice sector activities at the central level
- Tailored training to selected municipalities

One additional activity was requested by DFID, for which additional funding was provided.

- Self-defense training to 600 adolescent girls in the 12 districts.

CHAPTER - TWO

2.1 Evaluation's Objective and Methodologies

Even though the project was signed in January 2015, Search Nepal started its implementation process in August 2015 due to the massive earthquake in April 2015 and its subsequent aftershocks. With the completion of the local elections and the continued process of federalization, additional clarity was required for Pahunch to make a catalytic contribution to mainstream its outcomes as key agenda of the new local government, thus contributing to the sustainability of its results. The major objective of the evaluation is to:

- a. Take stock of the results so far and unpack contextual political and bureaucratic challenges as the country transitions into a federal state. The findings shall directly inform Pahunch's adaptive implementation for the remaining period.
- b. Inform Pahunch's sustainability/institutionalization strategy.
- c. Gather data and evidence on Pahunch components to inform the IPSSJ Annual Report and IP-SSJ Mid-Term Evaluation.

The Review was led by Asia Regional DM&E Specialist from Search's Institutional Learning Team (ILT) with the support of Search Nepal's Senior DM&E Officer.

The review fully depended on qualitative interviews carried out 6 out of 12 Pahunch project districts along with the monitoring data provided by Search DMEA team. The review team conducted (group) interviews (2-5 people), KIIs, FGDs (6-12 people) and large groups interactions with CMC members and beneficiaries as well as Women Watch Groups. These qualitative interviews were complemented by the comprehensive monitoring data provided by Search and CeLRRd.

The major tools for the evaluation are as follows:

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with beneficiaries: The evaluation team led by the DM&E specialist carried out FGDs to get a better understanding of a group's perception, attitude or experience on issues around access to justice and security. It also tried to capture how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how this influences their behavior. Moreover, the evaluator and DMEA designed the checklists to capture an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and broad patterns found among the project participants. ***A total of 14 FGDs were conducted in 6 sampled districts with the target groups including marginalized communities, Women Watch Group (WWG), CMC members, project participants from training, football/drama clinic and community-police dialogues as well as legal clinics.***

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): The evaluation team also conducted KIIs to collect information from a wide range of people including police personnel, judges, prosecutors/victim legal aid service providers, government free legal aid prosecutors, District Court's paid lawyers (*baitanik wakil*), implementing partners, CMC and Women and Child Development Officers who have firsthand knowledge and experiences of the project, can provide insight into the existing status of security and justice, and can give recommendations. ***A total of 24 KIIs were conducted in 6 sampled districts with police officials, judicial officials, security partners, judicial partners and radio partners, Search Nepal staff, among others. Besides, three large group interactions were carried out in Rautahat, Rupandehi, and Dang with beneficiaries of legal clinic, community mediation, and drama clinic.***

Document review: The Evaluation Team looked into the following reports/documents:

- Baseline surveys and other qualitative research conducted by Palladium in 2016

- Annual Mini-survey conducted by Search Nepal in 2016
- District Assessment Report conducted by Search Nepal in 2015
- Strategic Review (mediation focus)
- Baseline Survey and other research carried out by the Palladium
- Project proposal and log frame
- Pahunch Project Implementation Plan
- Other documents including the satisfaction survey conducted by Search Nepal and Dang DPO in 2016, quarterly progress reports and partners' reports.

Besides, the review team also conducted few interviews with Search leadership and staff, CeLRRd team and representatives of Center for Security and Justice Studies (CSJS) in Kathmandu.

2.2 Key Review Questions

Search Nepal's approach to evaluation is grounded in the guiding principles of our work: Inclusion and effective participation, cultural sensitivity, commitment to building capacity, positive but also honest and productively critical engagement, valuing knowledge, and approaches from within the context. The review will measure the short-term impact, examine avenues for continued relevance in the evolving context including the state restructuring process and existing political dynamics, effectiveness in achieving the desired results by EoP, and the basis for sustainability in the community. The evaluation will also gather qualitative information against IPSSJ and Search internal logical framework. The key questions for the evaluation are as follows:

1. Relevance:

- To what extent was the project approach as outlined in the project proposal relevant to facilitate the improvement in the justice and security situation through dialogue at the local level? Do the key assumptions which guided our project design hold up to date? If not, how has the change in the assumptions impacted our realization of results?
- What is the degree of satisfaction of stakeholders especially-Nepal Police, formal and informal justice sector actors, and civil society actors?
- How relevant are the project strategies and activities as perceived by the beneficiaries and other community stakeholders? Are radio programmes and IEC materials effective to transfer messages related to justice and security?

2. Implementation process

- Has the project achieved its milestones set for the period in a timely manner? If not, what were the challenges and what can/should have been the mitigation measures?
- Are the partners fully aware of the project (goal, objectives, and strategies) and the Common Ground Approach (CGA) and are all activities implemented within the framework of CGA?
- How should we adjust the implementation plan to ensure that it caters to the emerging needs of a context that is transitioning to federalism – such as the federalization of Nepal Police and the local, provincial and federal structures?
- What is the monitoring mechanism and what are the mechanisms of the reflection and learning process?

3. Progress towards results

- Are there any signals of increased capacities and skills of project beneficiaries such as youth, women, NGOs and media professionals, in particular? If yes, what are they? If no, what could be the reasons behind it? What could be done to increase capacities among the actors concerned?
- What is the early evidence that the project interventions are contributing to improvements in the access to justice and security for the poor and the marginalized?

- What opportunities have emerged to cause more powerful changes as a result of the project till-date?
- Is the project adding value and contributing to the impact alongside the concerned stakeholders, including IP-SSJ partners and media in security and justice?

4. **Coordination within Pahunch and IPSSJ partners**

- How smooth and effective is the coordination, communication, and synergy between Search Nepal and implementing partners, and Search Nepal and other IPSSJ partners?
- Is Search Nepal successful in coordinating its interventions with other relevant organizations including Nepal Police, formal and informal justice agencies, local governance and concerned line agencies?

5. **Programme Implementation Challenges**

- What worked and what did not work? Why? What are the major lessons learned?
- Are there any challenges for early preparations or steps being planned to ensure sustainability of the project?
- How have lessons learned across IPSSJ been incorporated into the programme?

2.3 Scope and Limitations of the Review Process

The Mid-term Review was carried out during the last week of November and the first week of December 2017. The 12 Pahunch project districts were divided into six clusters and one district from each cluster was selected for the field visit. Thus, the field interviews were carried out in Sunsari (from the cluster of Sunsari, Saptari, and Siraha), Dhanusha (from the cluster of Dhanusha and Mahottari) and Rautahat (from the cluster of Rautahat and Sarlahi) and Rupandehi (from the cluster of Nawalparasi, Rupandehi and Kapilvastu), Dang (from Tharu population cluster) and Kathmandu (Central level programme cluster). Thus, Saptari, Siraha, Mahottari, Sarlahi Nawalparasi and Kapilvastu districts were not visited for the field-based interviews considering the similar socioeconomic characteristics of the districts.

Since the mid-term review field data collection was carried out in the above mentioned six districts, the review team has, obviously, presented the findings based on the data generated from the stakeholders and beneficiaries. If there are specific results achieved in the districts which the review team could not visit, these aspects fall outside the scope of this review. Besides, the MTR was done in such a time, when the judicial officials and the police officials were busy preparing security arrangements for the parliamentary and provincial election in the project districts. Thus, the review team was able to meet less number of police officers and the judicial officials than ideally desired.

CHAPTER - THREE

3.1 Evaluation Findings

This section presents the findings generated from the five thematic areas: Relevance of the project and its intervention in the current social, political and conflict dynamics of Nepal's Terai, particularly in the project working districts; implementation process over the last three years; progress towards achieving results particularly focusing on the five output areas as articulated in the revised design document; coordination within Pahunch project implementation consortium partners and the IP-SSJ partners in the districts as well as in Kathmandu, integration and collaboration of the security and justice programme partners at the district and central level; and, Search's overall leadership and challenges and lessons learned so far. Findings related to each thematic area have been presented as one sub-section in this chapter.

3.1.1 Relevance of the Project to Target Communities/Stakeholders

Despite all the political changes, shifting conflict dynamics and the gradual institutionalization of democracy, the basic foundations of governance and the context around people's access to security and justice services has not changed. Thus, the project and its interventions are considered equally relevant in the current context, if not more. Besides, Pahunch has exhibited adaptive tendencies based on the contextual realities be it financial or geographic re-scoping or its expansion of stakeholders and relationships following the elections or alignment with new processes. Following are the summary points highlighted by the Pahunch partner organizations, state stakeholders, DFID Peace and Conflict Advisor and the project participants to justify the relevance of the project in the current context:

- The project design is very good and activities are extremely relevant and people have valued project intervention because they facilitate access to security and justice services through awareness raising, bringing the community and the justice and security actors together to break the ice between them and creating the opportunity to jointly identify challenges surrounding security and access to justice for the poor and the marginalized.
- The project continues to remain especially relevant and important for the poor, marginalized and women in the rural communities because they are still deprived of security and justice services. The project identifies their challenges and helps address them by empowering the deprived while working side by side with the security and justice stakeholders.
- The relevance of the project is further justified by the data reported by Human Welfare and Environment Protection Centre) HWEPC Dang, which states that only 15% of the population has access to security and justice services. The fact that very few people have access to security and justice services establishes the relevance of the project.
- The Local Government Act 2074 (2017) has formally institutionalized Community Mediation Center as an inherent part of the Judicial Committees at the local government (level?). Headed by the Deputy Chairperson/Deputy Mayor, the 3-member judicial committee is required to set up or collaborate with the community mediators prior to their dispensation of justice. This further justifies the relevance of the project, especially the work with the community mediation centers and their role in delivering justice at the local level by enhancing the justice delivery capacity of local government.

- There is an emerging practice in the project districts, of criminal cases that are referred to the police and civil cases being referred to the Community Mediation Centre thus helping citizens to access the appropriate justice and security service delivery mechanisms. This is dependent on the nature of cases. This depicts that the project is contributing to strengthen the local level justice and security referral networks.

The relevance of the project is also evident in the emergent collaborative practices between the media (especially the FM stations), Nepal Police, CMC and local women watch groups. The project has been successful in aligning different stakeholders towards the goal of strengthening the access to justice and security for the poor and marginalized. This includes creating a platform for police and civil society to work together. The respondents in all the project districts echoed that the police and judicial actors are trying to reach the community and build a better rapport between the police and the local community, especially those who have 'perceived' fear of the police and lack of trust in the judicial process. Pahunch Project has helped them come together and discuss issues, grievances as well as accessibility mechanisms through a shared platform. This highly justifies the relevance of the project. This sentiment is also corroborated by the SP of Sunsari District Police Office, Inspector of Majhgaon Police Station in Rupandehi and the assistant sub-inspectors interviewed during the fieldwork. The SP of Sunsari district said, *"this programme is an excellent approach helping improve access to security services to people from rural villages. It also helped Police Jawans (constables) to learn new things, provided them with the opportunity to interact with people from different communities, which they rarely get to do, and helped strengthen the police-public relationships, especially women. Thus, the project activities are highly relevant in the current context."* This was also echoed by the Manager of Rautahat FM, who said, *"the lack of access to security and justice services for the poor and marginalized groups, especially the women and Dalits is a serious issue. They cannot reach government agencies such as the police and court because of a lack of awareness and confidence in these institutions. They are always manipulated by the middlemen and are financially exploited even if they try to go to these institutions. However, this project has given them a ray of hope and at least those who are part of the project know where to go and how to approach the police or the VLA lawyer at the court"*.

The opinion of the Police was also echoed by the district prosecutors in Sunsari and District judge in Rupandehi. Highlighting the need for a stronger coordination with the government's free legal aid programme, the Prosecutor in Sunsari District Court said, *"The relevance of this project is very high as there are many victim women and marginalized communities to the South of Sunsari district. They do not have easy access to security and justice services because of the middlemen, who are also local leaders. These victims do not reach the government Free Legal Aid service, as they are dragged to the paid lawyers because of their strong nexus with middlemen. Thus, a project like this would be highly relevant and helpful for people in the rural communities, especially among Madhesi communities."* He further said, *"the government's free Legal service and the Project-based Victim Legal aid programme should collaborate more so that all the poor, marginalized men and women are brought into the sphere of the free legal aid service. This is happening without coordination and collaboration, which can be improved and coordinated to make such efforts more effective"*.

The new District Judge #1 of Rupandehi District, also expressed a word of appreciation for the project intervention and its collaboration with judicial agencies in the district as well as elsewhere. Notwithstanding his extremely busy schedule as the chief elections officer, he made time to talk to the evaluation team. He said, *"I am new to the district (only a month in the district) and have heard about the project from the court staff. I am happy to hear about what you are doing and your collaboration with the*

district court. It is really important to collaborate on such initiatives. We also have our outreach activities and you also have similar activities. We need to develop a common agenda for such activities and need to go to communities together and raise awareness about the formal justice support mechanism. I am fully aware of the community mediation activities and it plays an important role in supporting the formal justice sector service delivery". During the conversation, he advised Search and its partners to organize a meeting immediately after the elections and discuss how the collaboration between the Court and the Pahunch Project could be planned and executed. He even mentioned that the regulation requires the formal and informal justice sector to organize regular meetings.

The project partners also elaborated the high relevance of the project. One of the partner organizations implementing security component in Dang district said, *"the USIP research report shows that community people have a negative impression of the police. The political people do not respect police and poor community and women are scared of police, while youth always think of confronting the police and blame the police for every wrong reason. The women and marginalized communities are the ones who have been affected by the security and justice (S&J) issues and services. This project is trying to bring government security and justice services to these groups of people, which justifies the high relevance of this project"*. Another partner in Rupandehi said. *"This is like building bridges between two communities across the river. This is a really good initiative and it will have a lasting impact on the society especially in such a crucial period of social, political and state restructuring"*.

The project design and its high relevance is also acknowledged by DFID, the project funding agency. The DFID Peace and Conflict Advisor said, *"the design elements of Pahunch project are right. If the right balance of these elements is made, then the effectiveness of the community mediation and the community-police engagement in project districts will be better. It will result in better access to security and justice services"*.

The project beneficiaries were highly appreciative of the project. Even women from the community said that the project helped them feel comfortable and confident to approach police officials and the police post. The interactions and exchanges they had with police officers during the drama clinics, football clinics and community dialogues helped them overcome the prejudice and fear of the police. Similarly, the CMC have been very helpful for them as most members of the CMC are their own villagers and they know the story behind their sufferings. The women can also openly explain their cases with the CMC members of their own choice. They also get the opportunity to explain their sensitive cases to (women) CMC members.

Most of the participants, especially women, spoke of the relevance of the project activities from the point of view of its usefulness/benefit for them. One of the women participants said, *"the project is very useful because we do not feel comfortable to go to police station and talk to male police as there are no women police in the nearby police station. However, the drama clinic I participated in helped a lot. Also, we have a mediation center in our ward and there are women mediators and all of us feel comfortable to share our issues with them. We do not need to pay any money for the service of meditation center and it is very helpful for us"*. Another woman in Dhanusha said, *"we have Mahila Nigrani Samuha (women watch group) in our village and we can always discuss our issues and get advice on what we could do and whom we could approach if we have any problem"*. However, the CMC members said that, if the case registered to the CMC was found to be criminal in nature (including cases of domestic violence), the CMC sends them to the nearby police post/station. **The narratives shared by women participants show that proximity of**

the informal justice services, level of comfort to speak with the relevant stakeholders and absence of legal fee makes the mediation services and women watch groups more popular among women.

The review team got to interact with six women members of the community (one *Pahadi Brahmin*, One *Janajati*, four Madhesi) who were all current recipients of the Victim Legal Aid (VLA) support provided as part of the Pahunch Project. All of these women were survivors of domestic violence and were fighting a court case with the help of the free VLA programme. Four of them already got justice from the court, whereas two of their cases were making good progress. They were very thankful to the local justice partner organization Environmental and Child Development Council (ECDC), Rautahat for its continued support to them, without which they would not have gone so far in terms of their fight for justice. One of the women who is fighting her case against her in-laws said that the value of the support provided by the project is unparalleled and she cannot thank the VLA lawyer enough. **These representative examples clearly demonstrate the Pahunch project's contribution to enhancing women's access not only to the informal justice systems but also to the formal justice system.**

The data collected through District Assessment in 11 districts also justified the importance of the project intervention. The data shows that a total of 6509 cases were registered in the court office in the fiscal year 2014-15 in the project districts. Out of which 4049 (62%) were resolved and 2460 (38%) cases were pending in the court process. The proportion of cases pending in the court process and its subsequent financial implications for the citizens, especially poor, marginalized and women communities, also highly justifies the need for informal justice mechanisms that will help mediate local civil cases at the community level, ease the burden of the formal justice system and save people's time, money and mental stress.

The project design was also highly appreciated by partner organizations in all six districts visited. The president of Mandwi, a Rautahat based security partner, said, *"the project design is very good. Even if the project was designed three years ago, it is still very relevant to the local context as positive changes in terms of access to security and justice for the poor and marginalized communities, especially women, have not accompanied the political transformation and institutionalization of democracy."*

During the KIIs and FGDs, the project stakeholders and partners also appreciated **the coherence of the project activities and the adaptive nature of the Pahunch project considering the shifting political dynamics and fragile security and justice scenario**. The presence of the middlemen and their manipulation of the poor and marginalized groups in rural areas of the project districts was also brought up. *"I am highly impressed with the way this project has been designed. Whenever I will design similar projects/activities in the future, I will include many activities from this project into my project design as these activities will be highly relevant in serving the poor and marginalized communities in Rautahat"* says Anju Shah, Chairperson of Mandwi in Rautahat. Similar sentiments were echoed by partners in Sunsari, Dhanusha, Rupandehi and Dang districts.

However, there are also exceptions as in the cases of police officers who were reluctant to cooperate with the project activities or in a defensive mode given their unwillingness or inability to investigate the cases that were brought to their attention. One police officer in Sunsari failed to understand the higher-level coordination between project team and the Police from Headquarters to the district police office and questioned the activities planned with the police, despite full cooperation from the district police office. Despite the challenge, SFCG and Common Platform for Common Agenda-Nepal (COCON) were able to organize project activities in that community. However, this exemplifies how personal interest or disinterest can impact the timely and effective delivery of the activities.

The police and community trust and relationship are often very vulnerable. According to COCON, the Police Post in charge in Sunsari, who refused to cooperate had been accused of denying the investigation of a case related to (physical) violence against a Muslim Woman. He was accused of not registering the case. This negatively affected the relevance and credibility of the project's intention of building police-public relationships. The issue was taken over by the human rights organizations and a case has been registered with District Court, Sunsari.

The frequent transfers of police officers also cause problem. When police officers who are transferred from other districts have not been exposed to such activities and collaboration with civil society, they struggle to see the value of it and need more time and effort to get to know the project and own it. However, this is a regular process, and the silver lining is that more police officers have been exposed to the potential justice and security interventions.

Regarding the Pahunch sponsored radio messages, embedded in the radio programmes including prime-time news, talk shows, entertainment programmes and PSAs, the FM radio stations and the Search staff said that people listen to the radio programmes and Pahunch radio contents have been able to disseminate messages related to security and justice among the community people. They even provided few examples of the impact of the radio messages in relation to people's access to security and justice services, such as people approaching police stations to register their cases after hearing the radio programmes.

The preliminary results of the listenership survey carried out by Search show that approximately 31% radio listeners have heard the messages around security and justice from the FM stations. Security and justice-related programme components and public service announcements (PSAs) have been integrated into their regular talk shows, news, and infotainment programmes. Additionally, data reveals that the public liked the issues around the service provided by Nepal Police (51%), child marriage and dowry (49%), followed by violence against women (VAW) and the legal frameworks governing VAW (37%), service provided by courts (34%), witchcraft (34%) and community mediation center (30%).

However, with the small sample of KIIs and FGDs with the participants during the MTR, the review team did note that none of the people interviewed (during MTR) could recall the radio messages or related programmes aired through any of the radio stations. Many of the community people interviewed said either they do not have a radio at home or do not have time to listen to radio programmes or they just listen to the programmes related to music throughout the day without giving specific attention. On the contrary, the partners said that there is a culture of listening to radio among people in the rural areas and "it is a matter of how we package our programmes and make it infotainment rather than purely message-oriented programmes". Based on the interviews, the review team found it difficult to conclude whether the approach of 'not branding the messages under one particular programme' is effective or a branded radio programme would have been more effective.

SFCG media Manager's Response: We conducted media assessment to check the radio's popularity and explore other options to reach out community at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016 which reveals 72 % listenership of Radio, 30% respondents say their primary source of information is radio, 60% respondents said they knew about the latest incidents through radio. Music programmes ranked second in terms of popularity as per the survey. I also saw the findings of Media and Democracy survey conducted in 2016 by the Share Cast Initiatives with large sample size (nationwide) which indicates a

listenership rate of 74% news and 68% music in Radio. Knowing this fact, we design our programmes to be aired through multiple programmes and formats of radio stations such as News, talk shows, musical programmes, PSAs, testimonials (as the community people's preference was to listen to other stories).

Similarly, the police, Search and partner staff said that people have benefitted from the IEC materials, particularly the sticker having the telephone number of the local police station. Search staff and the police said that there are few incidents where people from the villages called local police station or district police office after knowing the police contact number from the sticker. They said that this was effective because the police themselves visited the communities and pasted the stickers on the walls of the individual houses as well as the public places. The programme Manager of CeLRRd in Dang said, *“even if I am a practicing lawyer and collaborating with Police for a few years already, I was not sure which Police station will receive the telephone call made through the Police Contact number 100. When I participated in this project, I learned that when I call police Number 100, it directly reaches the nearby police station. This was very important information for me as well. I have explained this information clearly to all the people I have interacted with”*. Similarly, there is at least one example where one person from the Eastern Terai used the Pahunch created slogan/messages/illustration (produced by Search) against dowry system by printing it in the cover of the wedding card of his daughter'. This could be one of the examples showcasing the effectiveness of IEC materials.

However, these findings are generated through a small sample of KIIs and FGDs. The actual findings of a quantitative survey, as in the case of the listenership survey, will clarify the actual status of the effectiveness of these interventions. The relevance of these programmes could only be assessed with the help of the fully explained survey results and further interrogation in project districts.

3.1.2 Implementation Process

External/Internal Factors and Project Implementation: The first year of the project met with two massive earthquakes in Nepal and the entire country suffered because of its aftermath. The focus of the government agencies, including that of Nepal Police, shifted to the relief and recovery of earthquake victims. The state of trauma affected the Kathmandu-based Search staff (some of their houses were destroyed) and the project implementation was delayed as Kathmandu office was closed for two weeks, one week each after first earthquake and second earthquake. The already delayed project implementation was further affected by the violent protest organized by the Madhes-based political parties demanding a constitutional amendment. As the demonstration was intense and prolonged, very few activities like the district assessment on security and justice in eight project districts and the desk research on mapping the status of detention centers in Nepal were conducted. However, in the western region, project start-up workshops, District Project Advisory Committee formation, initial coordination and communication with all the IP-SSJ partners and visit to all Area Police Offices in the project districts were undertaken, as this region was less affected by the political protest. Further, the unofficial economic embargo imposed by the Indian Government after the promulgation of the Constitution on 23 September 2015 and subsequent rejection of the demands of the Madhes-based political parties prolonged the crisis until early February 2016.

This tumultuous time was also coupled with the leadership transition in Search Nepal Office with the then Country Director leaving Search Nepal to take a position in Search Nigeria on 30 March 2017 and the arrival of the new Country Director on 1 July 2016, with Director of Programmes assuming the leadership

role in an interim capacity. However, with the arrival of new leadership as Search was expediting the implementation process, the country entered a new phase of the local government election. But, the elections were postponed thrice in Province # 2, where 6 of the 12 Pahunch districts are located. The local government election was held in three phases on 14 May, 28 June and 18 September 2017, which obviously affected the project implementation significantly. This was followed by the National and Provincial Parliament Elections on 26 November and 7 December 2017.

The Pahunch Project was also negatively affected by BREXIT, which resulted in the devaluation of British Pound. According to SFCG Finance Manager, the project suffered anticipated exchange losses worth GBP 295,120¹ (Until December 2017) from the budget agreed with DFID at the time of the contract approval.

Further, with the implementation of the new Constitution and the formation of new federal and local government structures, DFID and Search decided to revise and rework the scope of the project to accommodate the needs of the new structures. Hence, the Pahunch project implementation was affected mostly by the external challenges/obstacles beyond the control of Search and at least two internal challenges (the leadership transition and partnership management), which Search should have managed through smart early warning mechanism and crisis prevention and management strategy(ies).

Annual Plan vs Execution: Despite all those challenges, mostly beyond the control of Search and its partners, the project has progressed relatively well. The following table provides a detailed list of the activities planned for each year and corresponding annual achievement. The activity lines with light brown shade indicate very slow (0-25%) progress (or no progress), yellow shade indicate slow (26-52%) progress while other activities (in white) have been implemented with significant success. However, since the security partner came onboard only in late 2016, their progress of activity implementation is satisfactory. The biggest challenges noticed are in activities related to Nepal Police, especially the training, detention center monitoring which is currently being proposed as detention center management support in collaboration with other IPSSJ partners including UNOPS; tailor-made activities on justice sector at central level; street theater, with no progress at all or very little progress (less than 10% success) so far. Similarly, activities like media training, small grants, district-level community-police dialogues, training about human rights and victim rights for lawyers, judicial and quasi-judicial administrative staff and lawyers, and strengthening JSCC have only achieved around one-third of their respective targets so far. Around 50 percent of the targeted radio programmes, tailor-made events, VDC-level community police dialogues, sensitization workshops on criminal justice, fair trial and torture prevention, and lawyer’s victim sensitivity training have been completed. At least 80 percent or more of the rest of the activities, including the football and drama clinics have been completed. The interview with DFID Peace, Security and Justice Advisor also pointed out that the project was slightly overambitious in the very difficult time and lacked accurate budget forecasting and early warning mechanism. However, it significantly improved in 2017 and DFID is fully satisfied with the progress made by SFCG and its implementing partners.

Table 1: List of activities planned for each year and corresponding annual success rate

SN	Activity	Target 2015-2018	Target 2015	Ach 2015	% success	Target 2016	Ach 2016	% Success	Target	Ach 2017	% Ach	% Total ach
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¹ This is subject to change depending on the fluctuation of the value of GBP against USD.

									2017			
1	Radio programmes	1352	0	0	-	78	75	96%	676	622	92%	52%
2	IEC materials	3	0	0	-	2	2	100%	1	1	100%	100%
3	TV Reality Show	1	0	0	-	1	1	100%	0	0		100%
4	Street Theatre	33				0	0	0%	11	3	27%	9%
6	Media capacity building/ Journalist training	22	0	0	-	0	0	0%	11	8	73%	36%
8	Small Grants (66)	132	0	0	-	22	0	0%	90	36	40%	27%
9	Football Clinic (23)	23	0	0	-	11	9	82%	13	12	92%	91%
10	Drama Clinic (33)	33	0	0	-	11	0	0%	25	30	120%	91%
11	Tailor Made Events (66)	66	0	0	-	22	0	0%	50	30	66%	50%
12	Community Police Dialogues (District level)	88	0	0	-	22	7	32%	50	16	32%	26%
13	Community Police dialogue (VDC level)	330	0	0	-	33	29	88%	220	164	75%	58%
14	Police-Community Accountability Scorecard	22	0	0	-	11	0	0%	11	0	0%	0%
16	Police training -Gender sensitive investigation.	22	0	0	-	11	0	0%	11	0	0%	0%
18	Detention center monitoring	39	1	1	100%	11	0	0%	11	0	0%	0%
19	Generating evidence and influencing policy	2	0	0	0%	2	2	100%			100%	100%
20	Training on human rights and victim rights for lawyers, Judicial and quasi-judicial administrative staff and lawyers	22	0	0	0%	11	6	55%	10	1	10%	32%
24	Sensitization workshop on criminal justice, fair trial & torture prevention	22	0	0	0%	11	6	55%	10	4	40%	45%
21	Lawyer- victim sensitive training	22	0	0	0%	11	6	55%	10	4	40%	45%
22	Strengthening JSCC	16	0	0	0%	6	2	33%	10	4	40%	38%
23	Victim legal aid	1740	0	0	0%	660	578	88%	772	788	102%	79%
24	Community mediation training	94	0	0	0%	70	69	99%	25	25	100%	100%
25	Community Mediation Centre	64	0	0	0%	50	48	96%	16	16	100%	100%
26	National dialogues	8	0	0	0%	4	4	100%	4	3	75%	100%
27	District assessment and baseline	2	1	1	100%	1	1	100%	0	0	0%	100%
28	TOT on Community mediation	3	1	1	100%	2	2	100%	0	0	-	100%

29	Self-defense training	12	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	12	12	100%	100%
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Delay in implementation of some of the major activities with Nepal Police: The partners in the districts and Kathmandu stressed that some of the activities such as the i) police training on gender sensitive investigation techniques, ii) respectful behavior towards public, and iii) detention center monitoring in the project districts had been significantly delayed, as outlined in the quarterly reports. The delays were primarily because of the police reluctance to permit the detention monitoring work, but also a result of IPSSJ efforts to integrate all police training efforts to avoid duplication and reinventing the wheel. During an IPSSJ coordination meeting, it was agreed that the trainings should be pushed back for streamlining across all districts and to the extent possible, already devised training manuals would be used. This insistence stemmed from DFID’s annual review of IPSSJ project which recommended further coordination and synergy among IP-SSJ partners while implementing complementary activities. This recommendation was also supported by the Social Norms Study conducted by Palladium International, a consulting firm hired by DFID for monitoring and evaluation of the IPSSJ project. The police training and detention center management support (delayed due to external reasons), therefore, is being planned in partnership with the relevant IPSSJ partners and DFID, the development partner.

The Center for Security and Justice studies (CSJS) was brought on board as a strategic partner to provide technical guidance and support to Pahunch especially with regards to the access to Nepal Police and understanding the needs therein. CSJS already led two key research studies on ‘Effectiveness of Women and Children Service Center’ and ‘Effectiveness of Community Police’ and led dialogues on Federalism and Nepal Police. However, given the absence of a unified policy on Nepal Police and Federalism to date, the ‘Police in our Neighborhood’ policy has not received adequate support within the Nepal Police rank and file, and therefore Pahunch work on community police is in limbo. CSJS now has limited avenues to provide technical assistance to Pahunch. Keeping this in mind, as part of the Pahunch re-scoping process, CSJS contracts have been foreshortened and their budget has been reduced. Similarly, seven out of the eight national-level interactions were held in Kathmandu. The activities brought prominent stakeholders into the discussions. CSJS now plans to develop summary reports outlining the key points from each of the consultations. The following are the list of activities carried out by CSJS so far.

Table 2: list of activities carried out by CSJS at Central level

SN	Activities	Date	Funding
1	Policing in Nepal: Today and Tomorrow	2 Oct 2015	Pahunch
2	Experience sharing with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), UK	15 Oct 2015	Pahunch
3	Federalism and Police System in Nepal with Retired Police Officers	17 Dec 2015	Pahunch
4	Federalism and Police System in Nepal with Lawyers	24 Dec 2015	Pahunch
5	Federalism and Police System in Nepal in Coordination with UNOPS	06 Jan 2016	UNOPS
6	Federalism and Police System in Nepal with Nepal Police Headquarters	05 Feb 2016	Nepal Police
7	Sharing of survey report on Women and Children Service Centre (WCSC)	9 Nov 2017	Pahunch

Source: Centre for Security and Justice Studies (CSJS), Dec 2017.

CSJS informed the review team that they had NPR 23,00,000 budget left with them and only one dialogue to conduct as per their TOR. However, SFCG informed the review team later that as part of the re-scoping process, CSJS was allowed to make an Annual Work Plan for 2018 with a budget cap of 1,690,000, sparing the rest for the re-scoping. This was mutually agreed upon. SFCG is working closely with CSJS leadership to develop a concrete work-plan for 2018 that includes conducting three additional dialogues on Federalism and Nepal Police at the field level and documenting knowledge generated so far, ensuring value for money.

Partnership modality and implementation process: Partnership modality and partnership management are among the major factors that determine the quality of programme implementation. Search has been implementing this project under a four-layer (Search, Lead Partner, sub-partner and FM station) partnership modality which has brought both opportunities as well as challenges in project implementation. Search has been working with 32 partners (3 consortium partners, 11 security partners, 5 justice partners and 13 FM partners) through this four-layer partnership modality. While DFID appreciated the value added by the engagement of the local media and security partners in enhancing the conflict sensitivity of the project, effective management of these partners has been a challenge throughout the project period. Search expected that the four-layer partnership modality would lessen the burden of programmatic and financial management of the multiple partners while building their capacities. However, this has also created challenges such as complexity in financial reporting as the financial reports have to go through multiple layers from the radio partner to sub-partner, sub-partner to lead partner, lead-partner to Search regional office and Search Nepal office and Search Nepal office to Search Headquarters. In this process, the time taken for the release of funds was an issue stemming from the fact that one delaying sub-partner would delay the finalization of the financial report for all the partners. To add to the complications, some of the partners interviewed did not have a fulltime and/or capable finance staff to manage all those financial reporting requirements and the occasional coaching that the Search Finance Team provided to all the lead and sub-partners finance staff was found to be inadequate. Search staff and partners said, *“It takes at least 45 days’ time to release funds from Search from the day of the report generated from local partners”*. This challenge was also highlighted by DFID Peace and Conflict Advisor during the MTR interview. While she appreciated the conflict sensitivity value brought by this localized partnership approach, she also highlighted the challenges encountered while managing a large number of partners at multiple level.

This created challenges for Search as well as the partners in implementing the project smoothly. As a result, partners and Search, at times, came across unique situations such as the following: When the time is conducive for activity implementation, the money does not reach the ground, and when the money reaches the ground, the timing is not conducive for the activity implementation as the project faced many political challenges and natural calamities.

Search Management Response Regarding the timely Fund Release Challenge: This was discussed thoroughly during the Pahunch all partners meeting in September and October in the West and the East region respectively. The final understanding has been that the partners should strictly adhere to the financial reporting deadlines. In case, a partner is perpetually delaying the submission of the financial reports, then the lead partner should submit all the other partners’ report to Search leaving the delaying partner behind - which will be a penal measure for them to submit complete and timely reports.

Similarly, it was also agreed that the financial request for the 'in progress' lines will be disallowed in case the partners were unable to submit the complete documentation within one month of Search notifying them of the 'in progress.' A letter to this effect has been sent to all the partners

Partnership Management and Implementation Process: The project has multiple activities planned under the integrated thematic areas of security and justice in 12 districts. Thus, Search chose partners for security, justice and media components to implement various activities to facilitate smooth and effective implementation of specific activities. Search itself selected radio partners in September 2016. The district-based sub-partners, who were to implement the security component of the projects, were brought on board later. While the two (radio?) partners were selected separately, the district based-sub partner was assigned the responsibility for financial and reporting oversight and management of the radio partner, while Search looked into the technical (programmatic) quality of the media component. This did not go well with the radio partners as they were selected for the media partnership (by Search) before the security partners, but were later asked to work under the security partners. Drawing from the conversation with Mandwi team, Rautahat FM and Search programme team, this was a simple case of misunderstanding, prevalence of ego (of not feeling second to other) between the sub-partner and radio partner and the lack of the radio partner's ability to prepare finance report systematically as demanded by the lead NGO. This resulted in reluctance on part of the radio partner to comply with Search's financial documentation requirements, the requests for which came through the lead partner. While the sub-partners wanted to push the radio partners for compliance, the radio partners often failed to do so. One of the Search staff said, *"we did not have proper consultation and risk analysis before handing over the radio partner management to security partner, which backfired in at least 2-3 districts."*

Search Management Response: *Before selecting the Radio Partner, Search conducted a comprehensive media survey with the aim of investigating whether the radio is an appropriate tool, its popularity, the preferred radio format and listenership rate of each local FM. Based on the findings, the radio partners were selected in close coordination with the lead partner. During orientation meeting, there were some ego issues among some partners. Some NGO partners and radio partners were reluctant to stay under the lead and NGO respectively, but all these issues were resolved later. In terms of the programme's technical quality management, the Lead and NGO partners are fine with Search managing the radio programme's quality. It is also important to continuously and closely monitor the content of the radio programme, given that most of the Search districts are conflict-prone.*

With the integrated intervention from Janaki Women Awareness Society (JAWAS), Search Regional and Central Office, the misunderstanding between partners has been resolved as of December 2017 and they are working together to implement the activities.

The review team found that Search's decision to let the lead partner manage such challenges at times, did not yield the desired results. One particular case was of Mandwi, the security partner in Rautahat district, and the radio partner Rautahat FM. Mandwi did not get the financial reports from Rautahat by deadline. The Rautahat FM was producing radio programmes regularly as agreed, but was unable to submit the financial report in prescribed format for timely fund release. Mandwi therefore, sent an incomplete report from the FM station to its lead partner Janaki Women's Awareness Society (JAWAS) in Janakpur and JAWAS sent the incomplete financial report to Search Nepal without further scrutiny. This caused an exchange of email and phone calls for months. Though there were visits from Search leadership and programme staff in Rautahat district after knowing this problem, this problem did not find an amicable

solution until November 2017, delaying a number of activities under the security component. The last installment was given to Mandwi in March 2017 and the next installment was released only in late November 2017. There were exchanges and grievances between the partnership layers, none of them taking actual leadership in expediting the crisis management process.

JAWAS, the lead partner, also did not seem to have taken a leadership role in this process. It stated that there is no problem whatsoever and everything was going smoothly in the partnership. However, when the review team met with Mandwi officials in Rautahat, the challenges were enlisted. This was later corroborated by Search team in Kathmandu.

Intra-partners Conflict and Implementation Process: There have been few challenges among partner organizations where intra-organizational conflict has had implications for project implementation. The case with *Dalit Jana Kalyan Youth Club (DJKYC)* in Siraha is facing such a challenge where the Finance Officer and its Programme Coordinator (looking after the Pahunch project) were not cooperating with each other because of their political differences. The inter-personal conflict negatively affected the programme implementation as DJKYC was unable to send reports for the next cycle to ensure timely budget release. A cross verification of this information with the finance data revealed that this is not a constant affair but rather a one-off instance of non-collaboration. Experience, partnership track record and past organizational credibility make DJKYC a capable organization to run the Pahunch activity, but the current performance and their lack of ability in managing intra-organizational conflict did contribute to a setback.

Similarly, the radio programme in *Chhinnamasta* Radio was discontinued during the time of review because of the radio's internal issues. However, the radio has been brought back to life in January 2018. Search Regional team, justice partner HUCODAN and *Chhinnamasta* management collaborated to make the revival of the radio possible. Search Radio partners (such as *Chhinnamasta* Radio, Radio Tulsipur and Rautahat FM) face challenges with regards to programmatic and financial reporting.

Overall Progress of Three Years: However, the Search team has been successful in ensuring the implementation of most of the activities planned so far, with few exceptions. According to the Search Programme Manager, Search and the partners have accomplished overall financial delivery of 53.7 percent in the three-year period. However, looking at the financial delivery of security partners alone, who came onboard just a little above a year ago, this data varies from 48-53 percent. Further, the delivery of the justice component is going well as the justice component partners need little support from Search to implement their components and have the strong institutional capacity within the organization.

Search Management Response: As of January 2018, the financial delivery has increased to 62 percent with the final quarter delivering 84% of the proposed budget.

Partners' familiarity with Project Goals and Objectives: The review found that the partners are aware of the project goals, objectives, strategies and tools. The partners reported that they did not have major roles in the technical aspects of the specific Search-innovated activities (under the security component) such as Football Clinic, Drama Clinic, and community dialogue during initial period, where Search staff played a technical lead and the partners played the role of logistics management. However, in the recent days, considering the need to build and leave local capacities behind gradually, Search has involved more representatives of the local partners in the football clinic and drama clinic facilitation processes and they have been taking a leadership role.

The justice partners have been implementing community mediation capacity building training and practicing community mediation for many years already. Therefore, there is a lesser need for hand-holding and implementation support from Search. However, challenges remain with some of the community mediation committees, where they have been practicing 'arbi-mediation'² rather than full-fledged mediation process.

Partners' Exposure to Common Ground Approach (CGA): Search leadership and regional office staff told the review team that they have been orienting partners on CGA and they are practicing CGA in project implementation. This was found to be partially true and the partners, together with Search staff, are organizing activities using the principles and practices of CGA, guided by SFCG staff. Even though CGA permeates the activities designed under Pahunch which are being regularly implemented by the partners, there is a lack of conceptual understanding among partners on CGA.

Federal restructuring and the project implementation. Considering the federal restructuring of Nepal police and the governance system and structures, the review paid attention to explore if there would be a need to revisit the project implementation modality and mechanism in the future. In the current state of the federal restructuring process, Nepal police officials do not feel that there will be any significant challenges in coordinating with police during the life of the project. Since there is no specific federal police law till date, and it might not be formulated in the immediate future, there is no shift in the police operation and leadership chain. However, Search could always build rapport with the Provincial Police Heads appointed by the Government recently, once they are fully functional in their new capacity. One of the police officers said, *"there might not be a Federal Police Law until the end of the project. So, I do not think that there will be any shift in police structures and communication channels."*

However, the newly formed local government structures and the constitution of the Judicial Committees within the local government structures with the convenorship of the Vice Chairperson/Deputy Mayor of the respective local government unit, has a direct impact on the community mediation programmes implemented by the justice partners. It was reported with some evidence in (Dang, Rautahat, and Dhanusha) that the local government officials have been elected to the office with a gap of almost 20 years. They have many agendas, aspirations, ambitions, more power and will but significantly lack the knowledge and skills required to execute the responsibilities given to them. Many of them do not have a clear idea of the new legal provisions and lack the technical knowledge to fulfill their duty as the heads of the Judicial Committees.

The local government officials, especially the members of the judicial committees are political actors. Therefore, their impartiality while officiating their role as a judicial committee member, may not be recognized as such. The biggest challenge is that almost all of them need to be trained on the current provisions of the Local Government Act (2017) and Mediation act. The LGA has made CMC an integral part of local government. However, the locally elected representatives did not seem to have understood the complementarity of the CMC and how an effective CMC can lessen the burden of local government officials, especially that of the judicial committee. Though there are a few good examples that have been

² Arbi-mediation is a concept where people involved in dispute resolution practice part of arbitration and part of mediation to resolve the issue. Participants accept this as 'win-win' because they do not have knowledge and resources to prolong their cases further through the formal judicial process and the decision links to the guidance of the local elite.

started between CMC and the local government, as has been the case in *Samarimai, Rupandehi*, and *Tanmuna* in *Sunsari*, challenges over collaboration prevail in other places.

Members of the CMC reported during the interviews that they were told that the Gaunpalika does not have enough space to accommodate them in their building (Dhanusha), where they had been housed until recently. Some have been told that the role of CMC is null and void (in one Gaunpalika in *Rupandehi*) after the formation of judicial committee and in one of the cases, the newly elected municipality officials (*Dang*) told that they would not recognize and own the CMC. There is an urgent need that the local government officials should be thoroughly briefed and oriented about the project and the role of CMC in local government as envisioned by the Local Government Act, 2017.

The project was designed when the local government structures were quite small compared to the new local government structures under the new Federal restructuring. Earlier, the programme was being implemented at the VDC level. After the local level restructuring, the Village Development Committees (VDCs) from previous structures have become either one or two wards of the current Village or Urban Municipalities. Hence, even though the population that the project serves has not changed, post-restructuring, the scope of the project seemed significantly reduced as *Pahunch* was operational in scattered wards of multiple village councils. There is a high demand among the local government actors and the local communities that the project coverage should expand across all wards of the local government unit, which is challenging given the project's current financial capacity.

Search Management Response Regarding the Geographic Rescoping and IPSSJ Integration through the Community Policing Thread: Immediately after the MTR field visit, during the Pahunch Steering Committee Meeting on 21 December 2017, it was agreed that a middle ground would be sought and Pahunch will continue some of the community police activities in the wards it planned to leave, where UNOPS is constructing the buildings. DFID has now endorsed Pahunch's proposal.

Communications and Activity Implementation: Similarly, the delay or lack of timely communication regarding the continued postponement of a few project components is causing confusion among partners and staff. Further, these are components which should have been completed by now so that they would contribute to generating results. Such activities include: training local police on respectful behavior and community engagement; training women police officers on dealing effectively with GBV and VAW cases; recommendations for skill competencies for police training; monitoring detention centers in 12 districts; developing Police-Community Accountability Scorecard; and, furnishing recommendations for soft skills component in police training and detention center monitoring. Most of these activities should have been completed already by now if not earlier so that they could play a pivotal role in bringing the desired changes as envisioned in the project design.

Search management response on the delayed activities including the police training on responsive police behavior: As of December 2017, Pahunch management decided that the police training on responsive police behavior, which was aligned with the Nepal Police's community policing guidelines shall be dropped from the Pahunch plans. This decision followed the endorsement of the policy of "Police in our Neighborhood" by the Ministry of Home Affairs which replaced the former community police policy. The Nepal Police rank and file, however, remain divided on the issue. Therefore, as part of the re-scoping process, Pahunch decided to drop this proposed training. Similarly, discussions have advanced with the Nepal Police and ADB with regards to the training on the gender-sensitive investigation. The training

shall start in mid-February 2018. Collaboration has also been initiated with CARE Nepal with regards to the design of Community Score Card (CSC). The final design is being worked on and it is planned that the CSC will be piloted in two districts by March 2018. While the postponement or delays in these activities led to a slow realization of results, they also set examples for IPSSJ coordination and collaboration.

Security Partner Selection and Project Implementation: There was a significant delay in bringing the security partners on board, while the justice partners were onboard at the time of the project design. The security partners were only brought on board during late 2016, almost two years after the project implementation. Search reported that the political instability, earthquake, and Terai floods delayed the implementation of the project. This caused the delay in bringing the security partners on board.

Experiential Learning Process Guidelines and Project Implementation: As already mentioned, Search has included few innovative CGA focused activities (especially under the security component) in the programme design, which need specific capacity building and orientation of implementation partners. There were a few process-related weaknesses mentioned by the field staff and partners such as the delay in finalizing the football clinic and drama clinic guidelines because of which the implementation of the football clinic and drama clinic across districts and locations has not been consistent. These activities were unique and were entirely Search innovations. The implementing partners, as well as a few staff hired specifically for this project, did not know about the unique activities and the implementation methods and modalities. One of the weaknesses of the projects was that there was no specific capacity building component included in the project design. Search did not realize the need to develop such guidelines to harmonize the process and empower the implementing partners. There was no training or formal implementation process orientation to security partners. In an annual planning meeting in December 2016 in Chitwan, the team felt that they needed specific guidelines if they have to implement that activity effectively. It was only after that in May 2017, Search began to draft the guidelines and shared them with the field staff for feedback. While the guidelines for the small grant and tailor-made activities are finalized and shared with partners as of December 2017, there are still a few conflicting opinions around the dialogue guidelines. Search management has set the deadline until the end of February to finalize and share all the guidelines with the partners. The review team feels that these guidelines should have been prepared early in the life of the project, ideally during the planning and preparation phase.

3.1.3 Progress Towards Results

The project is progressing well, albeit relatively slowly. Search and its partners have been successful in implementing a majority of the activities planned so far, with a few exceptions as described in the previous section. This section attempts to capture the indicative results captured so far. The mid-term review, obviously, does not intend to look into the detailed results as many of the activities are yet to be implemented and it will be too early to try to look into the overall project achievements. However, the result trends will definitely speak for what this project might achieve in the remaining project period. The following table below provides details of the output achieved so far:

Table 3: Major activities implemented so far and corresponding outputs (until Jan 2018)³

SN	Activities	Total Outputs	Participants		
			Male	Female	Total

³ The data was provided to MTR team on 4th week of January 2018.

1	Radio programmes	697	NA	NA	NA
1	Football Clinic	22	1006	738	1744
2	Drama clinic	30	602	686	1288
3	Self-defense training	608	-	608	608
3	Dialogue (District level)	23	453	277	730
4	Dialogue (VDC level)	193	2967	3080	6047
5	Journalist training (TOT)	1	17		17
6	Training to Journalists	8	53	84	137
7	Training for lawyers and administrative staff of judicial/quasi-judicial bodies on respectful behavior	7	154	25	179
8	Training to CJS on fair trial and torture prevention	10	280	22	302
9	Training to lawyers on victim sensitivity	10	233	19	252
10	TOT on BMT	3			58
10	Basic mediation training	76	1338	1025	2363
11	Orientation to WWG	55	300	1069	1369
12	Legal information training	44	1061	875	1936
13	Legal camp	70	2686	2450	5136
14	Victim legal aid	-	-	-	963
15	Research and surveys	3	-	-	-
16	Evidence based research	2	-	-	-

The mid-term review team found encouraging signals of change while gathering information and data from project participants, state stakeholders and implementing partners. There is a good ownership of the project activities among project participants and state stakeholders. Participants of the football clinic, drama clinic, dialogue events and other activities said that they have been benefitted by the project activities. Similarly, this was also echoed by the police officers in Sunsari and Rupandehi. The Sunsari District Superintendent of Police said, *“When COCON invited me to attend the dialogue programmes in few villages, it helped me connect with local communities, especially the women. When I was explaining the role of police in community security, people listened to me carefully and asked several questions. I also gave them my mobile number along with district police office number and police hunting line 100. We also distribute stickers with police contact numbers in the walls of people’s houses as well as public places. This has helped build police confidence among the public. In the last one month, I have already received few phone calls from local community members for various cases happening in their communities and asking for support. I also have few volunteer informers from those villages, which helps police to get first hand and immediate information when something happens in the communities”.*

The pre and post-test data of various activities revealed positive changes towards police. The monitoring data shows that only 43 percent participating youth felt comfortable to express their opinion or discuss issues with police before the training. This increased to 91% immediately after the activity is completed, with a sharp rise of 48%. Similarly, after the completion of football and drama clinic, about two-thirds (65%) youth said that they will contact Nepal Police to inform about any criminal cases in their respective communities. Likewise, the clinics helped increase the confidence of youth to go to the police office for registering a case. This increased from 32% (before the clinic) to 86% (after the clinic) who said that they feel comfortable visiting police offices to register a case or inform the police officers about the case.

Similarly, the Police Inspector from Majhgaon Police Station appreciated the project's contribution in minimizing the number of people asking for police intervention in minor cases that can be mediated by the mediation center. In *Majhgaon*, there are 140 cases registered with the CMC and of which 30 cases were referred by Police to the CMC. The CMC in Tanmuna in Sunsari also reported referral of civil cases by the police to CMC and vice versa. This clearly indicates a trend of increasing reintegration and collaboration between police and informal justice system, thus contributing to minimizing the burden on the formal justice system. According to CMC members, police officers and local partners, such an integration is expected to further increase with the new provision of CMC in Local Government Act 2074 (2017), which ensures sustainability of the operation of CMC under the purview of the local Government body.

The project activities have been contributing in empowering local women. The Police Inspector said, *"Women have been able to speak with confidence. Their participation in local programmes has improved significantly. There are many instances when women themselves reached out to me to discuss different issues with me, including cases of violence against women, which was almost none in the past"*. He further said, *"the programme has given a platform to police for building rapport with community people, especially people from marginalized communities and women. There has been some decrease in people's reluctance to go to the police and talk to them. There is also shift in the majority of the police officials that it is important to conduct citizen-friendly activities since this helps the police to do their duties effectively"*. He further requested the placement of a hoarding board with the messages and activities of the project that are being organized in front of the police station. The contribution of CMC in mediating the cases locally is significantly reducing the burden of local police and formal judicial institutions. The Quarterly Progress Report submitted by CeLRRd (Dec 2017) shows that a total of 5,841 cases have been registered with CMCs in 11 districts, of which 4,974 (85%) have been mediated successfully.

There were similar statements coming from women participants from almost every district. Women said that they were scared of the police prior to the participation in the Pahunch project activities. When they were provided with a platform to interact with police and were introduced to the Community Mediation Centre, they realized that it is not a good idea to surrender to the violence and consequent suffering. They have started to go the police themselves. One of the women (with *Ghungat*) in Rupandehi said, *"In the Drama Clinic I participated, I was informed about the 'Police My Friend' Programme and how it works. We sat together with male and female police and participated in many games that helped us understand many new things. It also helped us understand how we can cooperate with each other. After that, I felt that police are also our friend. My fear and mistrust towards police are gone"*. These are few representative quotes heard during the MTR interviews which shows that the project activities are leaving some positive impressions among the participants.

Similarly, the mediation programmes are well-established in most of the districts. All the Community Mediation Centers that the MTR team visited have been effectively working, with one exception in Rautahat, where the CMC is idle for long as it did not get any training support after 2008⁴. They have received high credibility and reputation as an impartial group of people. People are coming to them to resolve their case. In one of the meetings in (the then) Samarimai *Gaupalika-7* in Rupandehi, the MTR team got the opportunity to hear from both the parties in conflict, whose case was mediated by the CMC

⁴ It was old CMC, which was trained on 2008 by ECDC and brought into the scope of Pahunch project but have not received any capacity building support and are not active, according to the members.

successfully. They explained how friendly the mediators were and how they facilitated their conversation and helped them understand each other's problem. A woman whose case related to misunderstanding and separation with her husband was mediated said, *"it was very easy as they listened to our point of view carefully and motivated us to understand. We did not need to spend any money and it did not take many days. Now, I and my husband are very happy and are living together"*. Another woman in Dhanusha said, *"the mediators are from my own village and we feel comfortable to explain our pains and sufferings. They understand our issue very well. It is easy to approach them, get the case resolved (mediated) and we do not need to pay any money, which we need to do in large amounts if we go to police or court."* The members of CMC in Tanmuna (former VDC), Sunsari said that after the mediation center started its work in the village, the role of middlemen and their financial manipulation of the poor community people has decreased. This was echoed in quite a few places during the MTR fieldwork.

Search Reflection in Case of Mediation of Conflict between Husband and Wife: The review team confirmed that it was a simple case of misunderstanding and did not entail violence as Pahunch does not endorse the mediation of cases where violence is meted out.

Highlighting the role of Pahunch Project in minimizing the role of middlemen in negatively exploiting poor and marginalized people, Search Programme Manager in Butwal Office said *"Last month, I met District Superintendent of Police (DSP) Mohan B Khand of District Police Office (DPO) in Nawalparasi⁵. He informed me that there are no more issues of middlemen in the District Police Office"*.

The review team also talked with the members of the women watch groups and found that this is an enthusiastic group of women committed to helping women facing injustice, but lacked requisite knowledge, skills and resources. They said the project has provided them a platform to come together, work closely with CMCs in their village and help women suffering from injustice to access justice. However, they also said that they have not received any specific training and also lack resources to commit and contribute significantly. The project has so far oriented 1,369 women, who have organized themselves in women watch groups.

The football clinic has been one of the major components and the brand of the Pahunch project. Through the clinic, it has so far brought 1,744 youth and police together in a single platform to develop a better understanding of each other, build collaboration, and learn from each other. The football clinic has helped build police-youth relationships. The participants of football clinic summarized their experiences and learning from the football clinic as follows:

- Youth should not be afraid of approaching the police. They are to protect and help us and they are our friends too.
- We learned how to collaborate with police on community issues.
- We can only succeed in our mission if we work collaboratively.
- We need to think and plan before executing any action.
- Referring to a balloon game, a participant said, we should not get excited to break other's balloon (read harm others); rather we should make sure our balloon is protected (read own safety and community's safety).

⁵ Reported by SFCG Programme Manager in Butwal as the MTR team did not visit Nawalparasi district.

- We should identify an appropriate role for each member of the group and implement action by using everyone's strength and covering their weaknesses.
- Planning is very important and we should plan carefully before implementing.
- The football game and team construction gave us a message that police and youth are like members of a football team and we should always cooperate.

Most of the participants that the MTR team interviewed had recently participated in the football clinic and they are yet to apply those learning into practice. One of the participants said, *"people were amazed, baffled and surprised by seeing girls playing football along with police and boys. One of the Myadi Praharis (short-term Policemen) commented that when he saw girls playing football, I he felt that he was seeing a dream"*. She narrated this quote of a local police in a positive framing in the people have started to expect that the girls can also do things that were traditionally thought in terms of singularly being the domain of boys.

A girl participant of the football clinic said, *"after taking part in the football clinic, hearing many presentations and discussions on various issues and hearing and speaking on debriefing sessions, I am more confident in speaking with others, including police, and can express my views without hesitation"*.

The review team also got the opportunity to talk to some of the participants Police-Community dialogue events. There have been 23 district level dialogue sessions and 193 village level dialogue sessions held in which a total of 6777 (49.5% women) people participated. The participants said that it helped them to understand the work of police, build relationships with them and overcome prejudice/fear against them and discuss issues of contention in the community. However, there is no practise of documenting the proceedings of the dialogue sessions. Thus, it was difficult to generate evidence of contribution made by these dialogue sessions in addressing local conflicts or issues of contention.

While the football clinic focused on improving police youth relationships, the drama clinic helped build relationships between police and community people, through which 1288 men and women from marginalized communities came together to identify local issues of contention and used drama as a metaphor to resolve those issues. While speaking to participants of the drama clinic, the participants general response was that while they learned how to develop drama scripts and perform drama, the clinic also helped them build relationships with police and feel confident in approaching the police. The police participants also had a similar response to their participation in the drama clinic. One of the ASI said, *"Such activities help police build rapport with community people, especially women and youth, and help them overcome prejudice and misunderstanding about police. This also provides a platform for police to communicate about duties and responsibilities of police with them and explain various mechanisms and processes for accessing security-related services from the nearby police station/post"*. While the football clinic has a football match at the end of the three day and participants understood the objectives and value of various sessions held over the three days, while enjoyed the football game at the end. This has been a little confusing with the drama clinic participants as the script of the drama was woven throughout the sessions over the three days and participants thought that the objective of the drama clinic was how to develop drama and perform it in the community. It seems that the facilitators should have been more overt in explaining the objectives of the drama clinic and explained it as a means for building better understanding and relationships within diverse community members as well as between the police and the community.

The monitoring data generated by Search DM&EA Department shows significant changes in knowledge and understanding about police and participants' confidence towards the police in comparison to the status before the drama clinic. The overall impression of participants on security agencies has been enhanced, as is evidenced by the ratio of changes tracked exceeding more than three mean value. The data shows that there was a significant increase in public confidence to go to the nearby police post/station to file a case (Pre-4.47 and Post 8.97), and enhanced knowledge about the role and responsibility of a citizen in helping police for crime investigation (Pre 4.50 and Post 8.53). Overall, the clinic was successful in increasing knowledge and understanding of peace and security concerns, increasing confidence towards visiting the nearby police post/station and building trust between citizen and police.

With this, the drama clinic participants from Dang suggested having police officers working in the locality itself rather than from another locality with whom they do not need to interact. A participant mentioned that *"if those officers were from their own community then they would feel more comfortable to approach the police if any incident took place"*. This shows that people want to build relationships with police officers who will be working in their communities after the completion of the clinic, rather than others who will not be available to serve them later.

Some recommendations of Pahunch sponsored studies have found their way into the new policies. For example, the research on community policing has been able to influence a few provisions in the recently formulated *Prahari Hamro Tolema* Programme Operation Guidelines, 2074. The research findings were shared with Police Headquarters and other concerned stakeholders and a few recommendations found a place in the guidebook, even if there is no specific mention of the research. The recommendations included in the guidelines are:

- Provision of mobilizing community police at ward level by dividing Wards into a number of blocks as required;
- The replacement of the NGO model of Community Police Service Centre (CPSC) with a network of organizations (GOs-CSOs) in each level of police units down to the local level, a provision of the formation of *Tole Sudhar Samiti* (Hamlet Improvement Committee).
- The merger of all the small initiatives (police my friend, P2H2, road safety, CSR, school campaign) of Nepal Police into "Police in Our Village". This is to ensure that while the elements of core policing are not diluted, local level security policy and practices are informed by the security needs vocalized by civil society.
- Formation of Local Security Coordination Committee that brings together *Tole Sudhar Samiti* coordinators, local service center officials, local government representatives, educational institutions, local journalists, local NGOs/CBOs, the private sector, transport entrepreneurs, local civil society elite, and other invited members.

DFID also believes that Pahunch project has been successful in creating a trustworthy conflict management and risk mitigation platform while it comes to issues related to security and justice at local level. It has also created a space where police and local community at the local level where they can continue to work together while the project ownership has been built at HQ level. Search has earned a higher level of credibility to forge partnership with Nepal Police. DFID believes that Search is one of the most trusted international organizations to work with Nepal police. It has also been successful in facilitating dialogue between stakeholders working on security and justice issues in project districts as

well as national level. DFID also believes that the Pahuch project has been successful in maintaining political impartiality and thus, has greater credibility among local stakeholders⁶.

3.1.4 Coordination within Pahunch Project Consortium and Across IPSSJ Partners

As discussed above in the section on ‘implementation process,’ the Pahunch project is being implemented through 32 partner organizations in 12 districts with a four-layer partnership management modality. Despite the challenges or hiccups in relationships between a few partners, the overall partnership management **and programme implementation coordination is found to be good**. Most of the partners, except those in Rautahat, said the overall leadership and coordination of Search in the last three years has been quite good. However, the periodic fund release takes quite a long time after submission of the report by the district-based partners. Pahunch management states that this is because of the incomplete submission of documents and the time taken for the rectification.

Search has regional offices in Janakpur (Dhanusha) and Butwal (Rupandehi) with locally rooted project coordinators in each district to coordinate with district level stakeholders and to provide technical support to partner organizations. Search is the only IP-SSJ consortium actor, which has continued and rooted field presence in the 11 districts. Similarly, Search has a media expert stationed in its Kathmandu office to provide mentoring, content feedback and approval of the media content. The radio partners reported that the technical support provided by Search has helped them improve the quality of their media programming. The Project Coordinator and Programme Producer in Rautahat FM said, *“The recruitment of the media consultant and his regular feedback on programmes content has been very helpful. This value added by the recruitment of the media consultant and his critical input was also echoed by the programme producer of the partner FM station in Dang, Radio Naya Yug.* Further, the Project Manager and Programme Coordinator stationed in Kathmandu Office provide overall technical guidance and coordination support to the project teams in the fields even though the Regional Office directly reports to the Country Director.

In some of the districts, the security and justice partners were housed in same building (such as in Sunsari), which facilitated better coordination and sharing, while in other districts, they share the work through monthly DLPIC meetings as well as the reflection meeting or other informal meetings as they have offices close to each other. **The monthly Project Implementation Committee (PIC) meeting and monthly partners’ reflection meetings have proved to be an effective mechanism to enhance mutual understanding, better coordination, sharing of good practices, challenges and learning from each other.** Further, over the period, District Project Advisory Committee (DPAC) meetings have also contributed to enhance the ownership of the project among government officials and other concerned stakeholders. There is an occasional central level coordination meeting between Search and other implementation partners as well as among IPSSJ partners. There is a struggle among all the IPSSJ partners to share their plans with each other. Despite the development of the website for sharing the plans, it has not been effective. As Pahunch is a smaller component within IPSSJ framework, one cannot expect Pahunch to take the leadership role in this, unlike the district level IPSSJ coordination meeting. The central level biannual project steering committee meeting provides overall guidance, strategic direction and troubleshooting at the central level. Despite this, some of the outstanding issues such as the detention center management support, police training on respectful behavior, and training for police officers on GBV related issues have

⁶ Based on the interview with DFID Peace and Conflict Advisor

not been moving forward. This has negative implications on achieving the desired burn rate but also programmatic results within the life of the project.

The evaluation team found two factors contributing to this delay. First, Search established a partnership modality that requires multiple layers of report approval, which, obviously takes longer time frame. Second, the partners, especially the radio stations, do not have the required financial management and pragmatic reporting capacity and organization culture. This caused incomplete report submission to the next level of partnership and the subsequent layer forwarded incomplete reports to the upper layer without further scrutiny. Such a lack of timely response by each designated partnership, including Search, caused a delay in fund release which ultimately caused a delay in activities implementation, although there was a favorable environment for activity implementation.

Besides, Search regional offices also organized quarterly regional level reflection and review meeting among implementing partners and Search staff to assess the progress, challenges, and opportunities for programme improvement. Such events are also complemented with periodic review and reflection meetings hosted by Search which brings all security, justice and media partners together on one platform for further discussion on opportunities and challenges and seeking solutions to enhance programme implementation.

Formal and informal meetings with police officials and the court officials of Search as well as the partners further facilitate a collaborative culture among all the concerned stakeholders. The culture of consulting District Police Office and Court officials, including the District Judge, along with the periodic courtesy calls and debriefing of the project with Chief District Officer (CDO) and the Local Development Officer (LDO), has helped communicate the message among concerned government officials. Search and its implementing partners have been able to communicate the message that they understand the challenges faced by the Police and the court officials in building public relationships and they are working to enhance the positive image of police and formal justice system among rural citizens, especially youth, women and members of marginalized communities. Search and its partners place special emphasis on publicizing Nepal police's national programmes such as *Police Mero Sathi* so that people become aware of the programmes.

Search and its partners also ensure that they invite court officials and police officials in the programmes organized by Pahunch project beside the football and drama clinic, where police participation is a prerequisite of the project implementation. Search and its partners also make sure that district judges and Senior Police officials are invited in various activities where they use the platform to communicate with the public and explain the process and mechanisms on how to approach them. The Court appointed free legal aid prosecutor in Sunsari said, *"I have been invited to a programme in Itahari, Sunsari, where I was asked to explain how the court supported free legal aid service for the families with less than 40,000 annual income. I was happy that I was able to explain and since then, many people are coming to me seeking the free legal aid service."* However, he said that there needs to be a better coordination between Pahunch supported free legal aid support and the court supported free legal aid support through which they can serve the poor and marginalized groups even better. He said, *"I know the CeLRRd Lawyer for last 10 years and we have never talked about this thing for the last one year, where we both are providing similar service to a similar group of people in the same court"*.

The project has helped enable coordination, rather than the integration of services, between the Nepal police and Community mediation center. While this is not yet true everywhere, there are specific

examples of police CMC coordination and complementarity. In *Majhgaon*, out of the 140 cases registered with CMC in the last 16 months, 30 cases were referred by Police to the CMC. The police-CMC collaboration and synergy was quite obvious while talking to both sides separately.

All the partners interviewed said that **they have strong coordination** while organizing bigger events, (which they call mega events) such as football clinics and drama clinics. This is evident in partners collaborating with each other by exchanging facilitators from one district to other district and vice versa. Partners do not overlap mega events and also invite resource persons from organizations from other districts. The security partner in Sunsari said, “we invite resource persons from Sabal (Saptari-based security component partner) and vice versa without too much dependency from Search for technical support so that our capacity is enhanced and we complement each other in executing our activities effectively and smoothly”.

The Pahunch and IP-SSJ coordination meeting are taking place in most of the districts. In the eastern cluster, Search has been organizing Pahunch- IP-SSJ coordination and sharing meetings in Dhanusha, Mahottari, Siraha, and Saptari with the presence of GF local partners, UNICEF, Pahunch local partners, and RMO. ADB and UNOPS representatives were not present during the IPSSJ meeting. Search Regional office in Janakpur even provided the copies of the minutes to the review team as evidence of such meeting actually happening. However, SFCG has not been able to organize the IP-SSJ-Pahunch meeting in Sunsari, Sarlahi, and Rautahat until now. Further, Pahunch implementing partners in Sunsari have been coordinating and organizing sharing meetings with other DFID funded projects such as with Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN). They have tried to create synergy and learning from each other as much as possible. Search Sr Field Coordinator in Sunsari said, “*Whenever we are informed by IPSSJ partners that they are visiting the, we meet with them informally and discuss how they are working and share what we are doing*”. The leadership demonstrated by Pahunch project in hosting frequent IPSSJ coordination meeting in various project districts was also recognized and well appreciated by DFID Peace and Conflict Advisor during her interview with the Review Team.

Similarly, in the western cluster, Search has been participating in the IP-SSJ coordination meetings on a monthly basis during the DLPIC meeting. Representatives of UNICEF, UNOPS (now moved out), WCDO, GF funded partners Sathi and other participants in the DLPIC meeting in project districts. One of the partners’ representatives in Rupandehi said, “*If we had such meeting on a regular basis in all districts, it would be very helpful in complementing each other’s’ work and creating synergy*”. There are also some specific examples where Pahunch Partners have been able to organize activities in coordination with IPSSJ partners. One specific example comes from Dang district where the Pahunch’s security partner, HWPEC in collaboration with Women and Children Office (DWCO) and UNICEF launched a campaign and declared the former Gadhwa VDC (now Gadhwa Gaunpalika-6) as GBV-Free Ward on 20 December 2017. Similarly, Search jointly organized mini dialogues in collaboration with UNOPS team at Majhgaon of Rupandehi and Bhaluwang, Dang.

Most of the partners and participants said that one football clinic, one drama clinic, and one community police-dialogue were not enough to sustain the change. The project has envisioned these activities in a continuum. Football and drama clinics are organized for breaking the ice and bringing the divided communities and security actors together, followed by community-police dialogues, which culminate into joint action plans, which are supported through flexible tailor-made and small grants. It is expected that the joint action plans mobilize other local resources and leave sustainable local initiatives in place.

However, the understanding of the partners and the beneficiaries was found inadequate as they still seem to consider these as one-off events.

However, the security partners, especially, mentioned that the frequent transfer of police officials (which is beyond their control) creates a challenge while coordinating with district police office as they have to start briefing them about the project and build a rapport all over again.

3.1.5 Programme Implementation Challenges

As already mentioned, the project faced several challenges throughout the project period, many of which were beyond the control of Search and few of them were within Search control. Similarly, some of the challenges associated with Pahunch project implementation resulted in DFID's decision regarding strategic realignment for IPSSJ synergy. Such strategic changes, political instability, natural calamities as well as some of the internal challenges within Search hindered the timely and smooth delivery of the project activities and results. In particular, there were following challenges:

- a) The earthquake: The massive earthquakes on 25 April and on 12 May 2015 and the subsequent aftershocks affected the entire country and the implementation for next three months at the least. In the aftermath of the earthquake, field activities were not possible as the priority of the government, security actors, district administration and civil society groups shifted to relief, recovery, and reconstruction.
- b) The political crisis, protests, and blockade: The political protests, that began soon after the three major parties floated the eight province models on 7 June 2015, continued for a long time in the eastern and central Terai. Beginning July, the situation worsened. There were *bandhas* and other incidents of violence. While Madhesi parties were agitating, the new Constitution was promulgated on 20 September 2015. The political unrest resulted in activities in the entire field being suspended and staff mobility restricted to district HQ. This was further exacerbated by the economic blockade of petroleum products and necessary commodities at the main border points with India for about five months, until early February 2016, especially in Eastern and central Terai. It took a while for the country to come back to normalcy, even after the blockade was lifted unofficially. There were frequent clashes between the police and the public. The turbulence severely limited the consortium's ability to implement the project activities.
- c) Approval and endorsement from the Nepal Police: Search sought the approval and endorsement of Nepal Police for the Pahunch project to give it ownership and institutional support of Nepal Police. With the change-over in the leadership of the focal unit, Research and Planning Directorate, in February 2015, and the pressures of the disaster response soon after, months slipped by before a final agreement was reached with the Nepal Police to make the necessary adjustment to the project design and get their approval and endorsement. To avoid the risk of damaging relationships in the key Pahunch partnership, Search delayed the roll out the project activities in the districts in order to get the approval from the Modernization and Improvement of Policing Project (MIPP) Steering Committee.
- d) Staffing and leadership vacuum: The project envisioned a capable and technically sound team leader to provide overall management and technical oversight of the project, which would have been instrumental for the efficient and effective management of the project. However, for some practical reason, Search could not hire a Team Leader. It instead decided that the Director of Programmes will

directly oversee the project and the regional managers reporting to the DOP (and later to the CD directly). During the three years of the project, Search Nepal saw three leadership transitions with the Country Director, who envisioned the project, taking over the Country Director's role in Search Nigeria, appointment of the then Director of Programmes as an Acting Country Director for interim period and then appointment of current Country Director. According to partners and Search staff, the project suffered the most during the leadership gap between the departure of the earlier CD until the arrival of the new CD. The unfavorable political challenge and natural calamities, as explained earlier, also caused further delay in bringing the project implementation on track. However, DFID also acknowledged that the arrival of new Country Director helped overcome a number of challenges related to programme implementation and project implementation has been quite smooth over the last one year.

- e) The state of stalemate with Mandwi in Rautahat: As mentioned above, Mandwi's inability to secure adequate financial reports from Radio Rautahat before submitting the overall financial report to JWAS, and subsequent delays from Search in releasing the funds until complete financial documents were received – led to a stalemate that lasted from March 2017 until November 2017. Though it was the primary responsibility of the lead partner (JAWAS), Search should have played the role to facilitate the process to resolve the dispute on time. The money was only released a week after the mid-term review team visited Rautahat and Mandwi did not get the project implementation funds for six months until November 2017. During this whole process, Search, JAWAS, Mandwi and Rautahat FM had their own logic, argument, and grievances against each other without serious leadership from anyone to resolve this issue in a timely manner.
- f) Delay in activity implementation and lack of communication between partners: There were few key activities planned in the beginning such as Police training and Detention Center Monitoring in 12 districts. DFID's Annual Review 2016 recommended that IPSSJ partners are working in isolation and there needs to be harmonization of the partners' activities while working with Police. Based on the recommendations furnished by this review, DFID advised Search to postpone the two police trainings to create synergy among IPSSJ partners. There was an agreement that Asia Development Bank (ADB instead) has done a lot of work with Police especially around training on Gender-Based Violence (GBV instead) and other components and, hence, DFID advised Search to talk to them regarding manual development and other training requirements. It was decided that the training will only be delivered upon finalization of the training manual and other requirements in consultation and collaboration with ADB. As stated in the DFID Annual Review⁷, *“two programme partners - UNOPS and ADB – are planning to conduct Training Needs Assessments (TNAs) with the Nepal Police. There could be a risk of duplication, so it is positive that discussions are happening with police interlocutors to ensure complementarity is clearly explained and tracked. These efforts on coordination will need to continue to help ensure value for money and that the assessments are mutually reinforcing. DFID should encourage the partners to work together to develop a joint Terms of Reference or coordinated work plan that incorporates common IP-SSJ relevant issues. Even if specific tasks within this are then given to different consultants, there should be a common methodology and a joint product”*. With these recommendations, Search was advised to hold the process, even if they had already completed the process of bringing the training partner onboard. While the delays in this process seems logical, lack of progress with the training until the end of year 3 and lack of communication with the partners about the reasons for postponement and progress made so far in this regard, has created a communication vacuum in the project team. As of December 2017, Search had finalized an updated

⁷ iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati_documents/5312900.odt (Not dated)

concept note in consultation with ADB agreeing to use the manual and curriculum devised by ADB and Nepal Police for the training on gender sensitive investigation.

- g) Dropping out the television component: The decision of DFID to drop out the TV component altogether from the project was a setback for Search in its effort to create mass awareness and buzz around the work of the police through the television viewership. However, this was a blessing in disguise, as it provided some additional budget to enhance other activities.
- h) Uncertainty over the Detention Center Monitoring – Detention center management support: The project design envisioned the detention center monitoring to be done by CeLRRd. However, Nepal Police did not agree with the concept that an NGO will be doing the monitoring of the detention center without fully understanding the police constraint around detention center management. This was also triggered by the fact that Nepal police had a bitter experience of detention center monitoring with a human rights' NGOs a few years back, which portrayed the dire conditions of the detention centers' without understanding the constraints of budget and space in comparison to the volume of detainees. Under these circumstances, Nepal police did not approve the proposed detention center monitoring programme. Actually, there was no clarity in project design on what constitutes detention center monitoring and how it will be done. Originally the project envisioned that the work would be led by security advisor and the Centre for Security and Justice Studies (an organization run by retired senior police officials). However, the budget holder was CeLRRd and that caused management challenges that required the involvement of CeLRRd in the process. There were multiple rounds of conversation with police leadership on how to take this forward. In October 2016, it was agreed that the detention center monitoring will be done in coordination with Attorney General's (AG's) Office. When the MoU was being finalized with the AG's Office, DFID expressed its reservation citing double funding to AG's office as Government Facility (GF) was already funding AG's office. This stalled the process but the conversation continued to find the way out. It has now been agreed that the activity will be reframed as Detention Centre Management support. Search developed a separate concept note for this, which has now been shared with DFID and UNOPS with the intention that the work will be jointly carried forward as part of IP-SSJ integration.

However, it was also observed that there was a difference in the understanding between DFID and Search in this aspect. While the original project document clearly mentions detention center monitoring as one of the activities, DFID has a different understanding. The DFID Peace and Conflict Advisor said that the detention center monitoring was never in the planning and it was always detention center management. Had this confusion been sorted out earlier, many challenges around this confusion would not have continued for so long despite this issue being raised as early as July 2016.

According to the Search program team, a desk review report on the status of the detention center, had provided the basis for designing this leg of work. The report included the mapping of stakeholders who are involved in detention center monitoring, the methodologies adopted by these organizations and the major findings and recommendations to improve the condition of detention centers.

- i) Lack of trust in government structures among community people: According to the implementing partners of Pahunch, it was challenging to convince people about the fairness of the government structures and make them understand the process. Their reliance on middle men was therefore common. However, this is changing as stated unanimously by the project beneficiaries interviewed in Sunsari, Rupandehi and Dang districts – who claimed that with the active functioning of the CMC

in their own villages, the middlemen did not get an opportunity to intervene in their cases. This was also corroborated by some of the project beneficiaries in Sunsari, Rupandehi and Dang districts. A few beneficiaries said that with active functioning of the CMC in their own villages, the middlemen did not get the opportunity to intervene in their cases.

Further, the lack of awareness among people on how to access the security and justice (S&J) services in a free and fair manner was a significant challenge in making people understand the importance of improved S&J services in their lives. However, there is visible change in the level of awareness and willingness to access S&J services as expressed by the beneficiaries, especially women.

- j) The fragile trust in police: The police and community relationship is volatile and often individual incidents can topple the balance after which it is always difficult to rebuild the trust. It is difficult to convince people about the effectiveness and credibility of the police department in a fragile political environment like Nepal's Terai. When people slowly start to trust the police, it is important to manage this (rebuilt) credibility with utmost care. In Sunsari district, Muslim women were not allowed to be involved in the project activities in the beginning. However, with continued conversation and trust building efforts with local community leaders, some of them were allowed to participate in the Pahunch project activities. However, an incident took place in Sonapur Village where a Muslim woman was severely beaten by a neighbor in the accusation of having a (perceived) suspicious relationship with a neighboring man. The attack on that woman occurred with the involvement of recently elected Gaupalika member. Further, they made her stand and carry a pile of bricks the whole night. Next day, she tried to register a case in the police office but the Police post-in charge did not register the case. This resulted in a bad reputation of the police among women. There was a lot of noise in social media and later HR organizations intervened. She has been placed at a Women and Children Office Shelter and the case has been registered with the district court now. This not only damaged the reputation and impartiality of Nepal Police but also created negative buzz against the project efforts of bringing the community women and police together.

These were some of the challenges the project consortium encountered during the last three years, which have contributed to slowing down the pace of the project implementation.

CHAPTER-FOUR

4.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the conversation with more than 150 stakeholders and project participants, review of various documents and monitoring data, the mid-term review team has drawn a number of conclusions based on which, it has furnished a number of recommendations for the effective implementation of the rest of the project components.

4.1.1 Conclusions

The entire project period from the day of its inception to date was marred by political protest and violence, international economic blockade, natural calamities such as floods and earthquake, among other direct and indirect challenges. It was designed in such a time when the country was in a prolonged transition and there was an absence of an elected local government for more than 17 years. With the promulgation of the Country's new constitution, the election of the local governments as well as the Federal and Provincial parliaments, the country is moving forward politically. However, one cannot expect an overnight change in the overall governance and government service delivery with the same set of government machinery and human resources. The state of governance and government service delivery is still the traditional one, where power, access, and money matter a lot, despite efforts to modernize them and make them people friendly. The efforts are not yet enough to transform them to a level where people start to feel their warmth and responsiveness. The two areas that the project has focused on, security and justice, are two of the major governance issues that affect people directly. Yet, people, especially those from rural villages and from marginalized groups, have not received easy access and reliable services. In this context, the review found that the project is highly relevant, to the context and society, from the day of its inception until today.

There was unanimity among all the stakeholders interviewed, including the project participants, security, and justice stakeholders, and partner organizations that the project is highly relevant in Terai region despite the country making major progress in political front with promulgation of the constitution and holding of the local, provincial and national elections. The review echoes with the DFID annual review that a substantial degree of ownership for the programme exists from the primary GoN partner agencies: the Nepal Police and the judicial actors, especially the district court. The increasing collaboration of CMC with judicial actors and the integration of CMC and the local police is praiseworthy. Most of the people credit such collaboration and integration to the Pahunch project. Further, the value highlighted by the district judge and other prosecutors about the need for integrating judicial outreach activities and the Pahunch project activities are very encouraging for the remaining project period. Similarly, the Nepal Police has appreciated the role of Pahunch project in bringing police to public. This justifies the high relevance of the project in creating a positive environment for improving access of poor and marginalized groups to S&J services, especially women and youth.

Despite the challenges faced during implementation, the project team has been successful in implementing most of the activities, with some exception either because of the natural calamities or political disturbances or the request for postponement by the donor. However, some delay was also caused by Search's internal management challenges, which could have avoided with effective management and timely planning and adjustment of the plan. The postponement of some of the major

activities such as the detention center monitoring and police training has had a negative implication on generating better results.

The project has made good progress towards improving the access to security and justice services. Many rural women and members of Dalit, Muslim and other marginalized groups, including youth, said that the project has helped them to overcome the traditional fear of police. The stereotypes they were harboring in their heart and mind are slowly going away. This is a commendable achievement. One of the major achievements of the project and project team is that of ownership of the project by the police, justice agencies (at district level⁸), partner NGOs and, importantly, the participants. The monitoring data shows that the project has been able to mediate 3000 cases until December 2017. Similarly, it has reached 14,500 community people/youth through dialogue and capacity building and 1500 police through football clinic, drama clinic, and community dialogue. Among those, 49% of participants were women. Even during the mid-term review interviews and FGDs, there were a large number of women present to talk with the review team who were open to sharing their perspective, learning and offering suggestions. Though the review team believes that it is still early to make an attempt to draw conclusive results, there are enough early signals of momentum towards achieving the desired results set up at the beginning of the project. The success of the project was also vindicated by the opinion that it has created space for police and local community to collaborate with each other, facilitate dialogue between S&J stakeholders, and provide security and justice services to poor and marginalized at local level.

The overall project coordination was well appreciated by the partners and other stakeholders. Most of the partners said that Search is providing good leadership role as the project lead and supporting the partners well when required. The project coordinators and regional staff have been supportive of the partners. They have been able to develop a good rapport with district courts, district prosecutors, and police officials from district to village level. The higher level of buy-in of the project by the police and judicial actors is also an indicator of good coordination by Search and district level partners. Search needed a different level of coordination and support to security and justice partners. The justice partners have been doing community mediation programmes for many years in the past, have expertise in their work. Thus, they did not need any support from Search in implementing community mediation activities. However, the security partners are new in the activities designed for the security component and needed the full support of Search staff in implementing their activities. They said that Search support in executing activities such as football clinics, drama clinics, and community dialogues between police and citizen. Similarly, the support provided to media partners in integrating common ground journalism in their work was appreciated by the media partners.

However, there were some issues around partnership management in Rautahat district, where Search could have taken a more proactive role and resolved the issue without prolonging it for a significant amount of time. This caused sustained grievance of the partners and erosion of trust towards Search. As a result, programme implementation suffered for almost 5 months in the district.

The five-layer partnership modality has been a boon as well as a bane because of the poor financial management and reporting skills of some of the partners, especially the media partners, and the multi-layer approval process that consumes (according to partners) around 45 days to release funds after submitting the reports and submit fund request for next quarter. Many partners expressed their concern

⁸ The review team did not get opportunity to check this at central level

about this lengthy process and its consequences on programme implementation. However, these challenges have been overcome in many districts over the last few quarters, while prevalent in a few others. The MTR team feels that the only solution to this challenge is to stick with the timeline by all partners concerned.

The new local government structures, especially the formation of a judicial committee within local government mechanism, has created a few challenges in the smooth implementation of the community mediation programme and their handover to the local government as envisioned by the law. However, most of these challenges are caused due to the lack of understanding of the Mediation Act, 2068 and the Local Government Operation Act, 2074 as a large majority of the officials are elected for the first time in their life and have very little understanding of the legal provisions.

It was also reported that frequent transfer of police officers in the districts and local offices also poses challenges to maintain the rapport built with previous officials. However, starting mid-2017, Pahunch folders have been kept in the local government offices/agencies that Pahunch works with. These folders are updated periodically by Pahunch partners responsible for the activities. Similar challenges apply in cases of judges too.

In a nutshell, the project, despite all the challenges and weaknesses, has been successful in building relationship between police, public and judicial actors and has given a sense to the marginalized communities and women that it is possible to access service from police and judicial actors without major obstacles.

4.1.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the review team has identified following recommendations that may help Pahunch project implementation team to produce better results in the remaining project period.

- There is an urgent need for Search and its partners to organize a half-a-day orientation of local government officials on the project concept, objectives, and activities as well as CMC provisions laid down in the Local Government Operationalization Act, 2017 (2074 BS). It would be extremely helpful in smooth collaboration with local government officials and further enhance the effectiveness of the CMC at the community.
- Search and CeLRRd need to work together to develop a strategy to overcome the potential resistance of the local government officials towards Community Mediation Centers. The judicial committee formed in the convenorship of Vice Chairperson of the Gaunpalika and Deputy Mayor of the Municipality should be provided with 2-3 days of necessary training in order to fulfill their mandate; and help them understand the roles of Community Mediation Centre (CMC) in easing the role of the Judicial committee.
- Search may facilitate a process that enables local judicial committees and the community mediation center to hold regular dialogues and coordination to support each other, which they can later sustain.
- There were multiple requests from the participants for refresher training. In the remaining project period, Search and CeLRRd should explore the possibility of refresher training to CMC members and Women Watch Group members to instill behaviour level change within them and help community members, thereby resulting in a sustainable impact. This training needs to be aligned

with new laws and regulations and be sequenced after government-led training for new Local Governance Operationalization Act, 2017.

- It is very urgent that Search and DFID, in consultation with ADB, organize the police training, detention center management support and other pending activities.
- It is important that the project consortium, especially CeLRRd and SFCG ensure that the project-based VLA Lawyers and the court-based legal aid lawyers coordinate and collaborate with each other to create synergy in supporting the poor and marginalized groups of people to access justice services effectively.
- Search needs to be in continuous touch with the local partners in order to avoid management challenges. It needs to develop a system of maintaining institutional memory on project related knowledge, decisions, and processes so that the project implementation and partnership challenges could be managed well. Despite recent efforts in improving the communications channel, Search needs to further strengthen and systematize upwards and downwards communications on discussions and decisions.
- Search should develop a mechanism to promptly address the challenges and proper handling of partners' grievances. As a leader of the Pahunch consortium, Search needs to take the leadership in improving the relationship among all partners and address their grievances amicably so that programme quality can be further enhanced.
- The review team felt that the central level activities and some of the tailor-made activities could have been planned and organized with a better strategy to make them more meaningful. Timely finalization of the guidelines on tailor-made activities would have added to the clarity and higher-level synergy could be created.
- For the remaining period, Search needs to work strategically with security partners to build their knowledge on activities implementation (especially of football clinic, drama clinic, and dialogue) so that they can also continue such activities in their future projects resulting in the sustainability of Search initiatives. This is in line with the DFID Annual Review 2016 recommendations.
- The review team found that the participants are not fully aware of the objectives and intended results of the football clinic and drama clinics. It is important for the facilitation team to articulate the project objectives and intended outcomes very clearly among the participants so that the linkage between the activities and the embedded messages precipitates to more people through a multiplier effect.
- The Pahunch project is conceptualized within the framework of the Common Ground Approach (CGA). However, the review team found that the conceptual understanding of the CGA among partners is still weak, even if they implement the project activities within the framework, as guided by Search. So, Search needs to be more strategic in orienting partners on CGA and build their capacity to apply CGA in professional work as well as personal life.
- The review team felt that the participants understood the project activities as one-off events rather than understanding it as part of the continuum, building on one another for the creation

of sustainable local level initiatives. Thus, the implementers need to pay special attention to highlight the linkages of the project activities and their complementarity to cause sustained changes.

- Following the success of the Pahunch-IPSSJ coordination meeting in some districts, Search should take the leadership in organizing similar meetings on a regular basis in the remaining districts so that sharing, learning, and complementarity of the activities could be ensured.
- Search should strengthen the documentation of the proceedings and results of the dialogue sessions to create knowledge as these proceedings will be valuable data source for capturing changes at the end of the project period.
- Search should continue to provide financial management coaching to local partners, especially the radio partners, on a regular basis. Search Programme Manager and Partnership Management Coordinator need to identify partners with weaker programmatic and financial reporting skills and keep a close eye on their reporting process so that challenges are addressed before they are blown out of proportion.
- Search needs to start developing mechanisms and tools to capture outcome-level data from various activities such as self-defense training, police-community dialogues and application of knowledge and skills learned from the training and other clinics into practice.
- Search and the partners need to start planning for the project exit strategies and mechanisms for sustainability of the initiatives beyond the life of the project, especially for the security component of the project.
- Finally, given the continued high relevance of the project and its gradual realization of the results, it is recommended that a short reasonable extension of the timeline may help offset the initial delays caused by external factors, but also help institutionalize the gains so far.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of people Interviewed (Project Participants, Partners, SFCG Staff)

SN	Name of the Interviewees	District	SN	Name of the Interviewees	District
1	Manikram Chaudhary	Dang	78	Krishna Karki	Dhanusha
2	Shiv Kumar Chaudhary	Dang	79	Punam Sharma	Sunsari
3	Ashok Kumar Yadav	Dang	80	Amali Sharma	Sunsari
4	Numa Tharu Kumal	Dang	81	Gita Swaraskar	Sunsari
5	Saraswati Paith	Dang	82	Smita Uranw	Sunsari
6	Shanti Devi Yadav	Dang	83	Kalpana Raj Dhami	Sunsari
7	Shakuntala Chaudhary	Dang	84	Satish Shah	Sunsari
8	Amina Kumari Tharu	Dang	85	Srijana Shrestha	Sunsari
9	Basanti Chaudhary	Dang	86	Bhumika Thapa	Sunsari
10	Sushila Chaudhary	Dang	87	Dipashree Niraula	Sunsari
11	Barsati Loadh	Rupandehi	88	Manish Pariyar	Sunsari
12	Basu Mallah	Rupandehi	89	Samjhana Chaudhary	Sunsari
13	Abdullah Rafiq Musalman	Rupandehi	90	Mince Khanga	Sunsari
14	Kallu Loadh	Rupandehi	91	Prakash Nath Tabdar	Sunsari
15	Abdesh Nau	Rupandehi	92	Pramila Chaudhary	Sunsari
16	Purai Chamar	Rupandehi	93	Ranghiya Paman	Sunsari
17	Ram Dayal Kurmi	Rupandehi	94	Sushila Chaudhary	Sunsari
18	Bal Kishun Mallaha	Rupandehi	95	Lina Chaudhary	Sunsari
19	Binda Harijan	Rupandehi	96	Bimala Tabdar	Sunsari
20	Murli Chamar	Rupandehi	97	Shiv Narayan Chaudhary	Sunsari
21	Laxman Neupane	Rupandehi	98	Krishna Kumar Chaudhary	Sunsari
22	Shree Narayan Yadav	Rupandehi	99	Kalsu Prasad Mauni	Sunsari
23	Jagannath Prasad Kurmi	Rupandehi	100	Hari Kumar Thapa	Sunsari
24	Faudar Kurmi	Rupandehi	101	Shanta Devi Murab	Sunsari
25	Ramesh Prasad Yadav	Rupandehi	102	Dev Laxman Sah Teli	Sunsari
26	Abdul Sakur Musalman	Rupandehi	103	Bhola P Dahal	Kathmandu
27	Mahendra Kumar Yadav	Rupandehi	104	Sachchi Ghimire Karki	Kathmandu
28	Shiv Prasad Mallaha	Rupandehi	105	Niresh Chapagain	Kathmandu
29	Chanda Bishwakarma	Rupandehi	106	Prativa Rai	Kathmandu

30	Pramila Mallaha	Rupandehi	107	Aayush Joshi	Kathmandu
31	Balram Prasad Kurmi	Rupandehi	108	Kiran Shrestha	Kathmandu
32	Kripa Nath Yadav	Rupandehi	109	Ananta Ram Bhattarai	Kathmandu
33	Suryaman Chauhan	Rupandehi	110	Niti Aryal	Kathmandu
34	Lal Ji Mishra	Rupandehi	111	Ram Mani Gautam	Kathmandu
35	Prahlad Kohar	Rupandehi	112	Sukadev Sapkota	Kathmandu
36	Maya Yadav	Rupandehi	113	Dipendra Panta	Kathmandu
37	Asgar Musalman	Rupandehi	114	Mahendra Mahato	Kathmandu
38	Anjani Loadh	Rupandehi	115	Alok Thakur	Dhanusha
39	Munabasi Mahak	Rupandehi	116	Bijaya Jha	Dhanusha
40	Indra Bahadur Sahani	Rupandehi	117	Jiwanta Wagley	Rupandehi
41	Mubarak Musalman	Rupandehi	118	Shram Ram Tharu	Rupandehi
42	Seshmani Gard	Rupandehi	119	Rajendra Adhikari	Dang
43	Saroj Kumar Chaudhary	Rupandehi	120	Bir Narayan Majhi	Sunsari
44	Sani Lila Rakuwa	Rupandehi	121	Manjita Upadhyay	Sunsari
45	Susmawati Harijan	Rupandehi	122	Samjhana Choudhary	Sunsari
46	Ainullah Khan	Rupandehi	123	Kamal Koirala	Sunsari
47	Ishara Kurti	Rupandehi	124	Krishna Thapa	Sunsari
48	Shakuntala Mairya	Rupandehi	125	Lalit Kumar Choudhary	Sunsari
49	Kaushila	Rupandehi	126	Subhadra Pyakurel	Sunsari
50	Arjun Kurmi	Rupandehi	127	Birendra Basnet	Sunsari
51	Janardan Gupta	Rupandehi	128	Megha Raj Neupane	Sunsari
52	Binod B.K.	Rupandehi	129	Khadga Narayan Uraw	Sunsari
53	Manila Neupane	Rupandehi	130	Balendra Mehta	Sunsari
54	Sita Dahal	Rautahat	131	Rajan Nepal	Dhanusha
55	Milla Devi Yadav	Rautahat	132	Sudip Thakur	Dhanusha
56	Lalita Kapar	Rautahat	133	Pushpa Thakur	Dhanusha
57	Pabitra Devi	Rautahat	134	Anju Shah	Rautahat
58	Laxmi Thapa	Rautahat	135	Kanchan Jha	Rautahat
59	Kusum Kumari Sada	Dhanusha	136	Anil Kumar Thakur	Rautahat
60	Ful Kumari Singh	Dhanusha	137	Chanchal Jha	Rautahat
61	Shova Singh	Dhanusha	138	Dharmendra Paswan	Rautahat
62	Radhika Lama	Dhanusha	139	Gopal Krishna Jha	Rautahat
63	Laxmi Dev Kapar	Dhanusha	140	Sone Lal Paswan	Rautahat
64	Jebri Devi Singh	Dhanusha	141	Narishwor Bhandari	Rupandehi
65	Jayapati Devi Patri	Dhanusha	142	Hema Neupane	Rupandehi

66	Gauri Devi Yadav	Dhanusha	143	Radha Bhattarai	Rupandehi
67	Mithila Shrestha	Dhanusha	144	Padma Raj Thapa	Rupandehi
68	Prayag Kumari Singh	Dhanusha	145	Laxman Neupane	Rupandehi
69	Manik Lal Moktan	Dhanusha	146	Tirtha Santoshi	Dang
70	Jagdev Thakur	Dhanusha	147	Sri man Neupane	Dang
71	Bir Bahadur Lama	Dhanusha	148	Radha Adhikari	Dang
72	Dilip Lama	Dhanusha	149	Gir Raj Bhatta	Dang
73	Laxmi B. K.	Dhanusha	150	Laxmi Man Choudhary	Dang
74	Gayatri Shah	Dhanusha	151	Bashanta Choudhary	Dang
75	Sema Kumari Mandal	Dhanusha	162	Rima Sharma	Dang
76	Sunita Mijar	Dhanusha	153	Dasharath Ghimire	Dang
77	Bimala Pariyar	Dhanusha	154	Mohan P Dhital	Dang
			155	Mette Neilson	Kathmandu

Annex 2: Terms of Reference (ToR) for the MTR of Pahunch Project

1. Background

1.1 Organization background

Search for Common Ground (www.sfcg.org) is a leading international peacebuilding and conflict transformation organization, working in 36 countries across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. It strives to transform the way that the world deals with conflicts away from adversarial approaches, and towards collaborative solutions. Through various multi-faceted approaches, media initiatives and collaboration with local partners in both government and civil society, Search Nepal aims to find culturally appropriate means to strengthen the capacity of society to deal with conflict in a constructive manner – by understanding differences and acting on commonalities.

Search Nepal has been working in Nepal since early 2006 and has collaborated with a broad range of stakeholders, including local Government agencies (including Nepal police), non-government organizations, local government, media, and educational institutions to support peace, good governance, and solution-oriented approaches to resolving conflict at local, regional, and national levels.

1.2 Project summary

Since 2015, Search has been implementing an innovative 4 years DFID/UKAID funded project ‘Pahunch’ ***strengthening the Poor and Marginalized’s Access to Security and Justice in Nepal*** in partnership with the Centre for Legal Research Resource Development (CeLRRd), Human Rights and Community Development Academy Nepal (HUCODAN), and Centre for Security and Justice Studies (CSJS). The project aims to improve access to security and justice for poor and marginalized communities especially women in Nepal.

Search works in 11 districts of Terai⁹ region and in the Kathmandu valley. Out of the 12 districts, Pahunch covers one district in the Province One, six districts in Province Two, Kathmandu valley in Province Three and four districts in Province Five. The project works in 11/12 districts. The primary target groups of the project are poor and marginalized groups especially women, including the Madhesi and Dalit communities. The project directly reaches about 150,000 beneficiaries, especially women, and indirectly reaches 3.5 million members of the general public through TV, Radio, and IEC materials. The secondary target groups are the security and justice sector actors, including the NP, District Bar Associations, judges, lawyers, and public prosecutors, journalists, and national decision-makers (around 5,000 officials and activists). Search also implements few strategic central level interventions in Kathmandu to elevate the profile of the organization’s work through national dialogue with policymakers in the security and justice sector.

⁹ i) Sunsari; ii) Saptari; iii) Siraha; iv) Dhanusha; v) Mahottari; vi) Sarlahi; vii) Rautahat; viii) Nawalparasi; ix) Rupandehi; x) Kapilvastu; and xi) Dang

The **outcome** is that "the poor and marginalized communities, specifically women, will have improved security and access to justice" with the following five **outputs/deliverables**:

- Output 1: Citizens have increased knowledge about existing legal provisions, systems and procedures around security and access to justice.
- Output 2: Citizen and police have improved trust and mutual accountability.
- Output 3: Improved responsiveness from the police in providing necessary information and services to the public, specifically the poor, marginalized and the women.
- Output 4: The poor and marginalized communities (esp. women) have improved access and responsiveness from the formal justice system including the court officials and legal aid.
- Output 5: The poor and marginalized communities (including women) have increased access to community mediation services.

2. Evaluation's Objective and Methodologies

Even though the project was signed in January 2015, Search Nepal started its implementation process from August 2015 due to the massive earthquake in April 2015 and its substantial aftershocks. With the completion of the local elections and the continued process of federalization, additional clarity is required for Pahunch to make a catalytic contribution to mainstream its outcomes as key agenda of the new local government - thus contributing to the sustainability of its results. The major objective of the evaluation is to:

- a. Take stock of the results so far and unpack contextual political and bureaucratic challenges as the country transitions into a federal state – the findings shall directly inform Pahunch's adaptive implementation for the remaining period.
- b. Inform Pahunch's sustainability/institutionalization strategy.
- c. Gather data and evidence on Pahunch components to inform the IPSSJ Annual Report and Mid-Term- Evaluation.

The Review will be led by Asia Regional DM&E Specialist from the Search's Institutional Learning Team with the support of Search Nepal's DM&EA Manager. The major tools for the evaluation are as follows:

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with beneficiaries: The evaluation team led by the DM&E specialist will carry out FGDs to get a better understanding of a group's perception, attitude or experience on issues around access to justice and security. It also captures how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how this influences their behavior. Moreover, the evaluator and DMEA will design the checklist to capture an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and broad patterns found among the project participants. ***(At-least 10 FGDs will be conducted in 5 sampled districts with the target groups including marginalized communities, women, CMC members, project participants from training, football/drama clinic and community-police dialogues)***

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): The evaluation team led by the DM&E specialist will conduct KIIs to collect information from a wide range of people including police personnel, judges, prosecutors, implementing partners, CMC and Women and Child Development Officers who have firsthand knowledge and experiences of the project, and who can provide insight into the existing status of security and justice, and can give recommendations. ***(At-least 20 KIIs will be conducted in 5 sampled districts.)***

Document review: The Evaluation Team will conduct a comprehensive document review including but not limited to the following reports/documents:

- Baseline surveys and other qualitative research conducted by Palladium in 2016
- Annual Mini-survey conducted by Search Nepal in 2016
- District Assessment Report conducted by Search Nepal in 2015
- Strategic Review (mediation focus)
- Social Norms Study.
- Baseline Survey
- Project proposal and log frame
- Pahunch Project Implementation Plan
- Other documents include the satisfaction survey conducted by Search Nepal and Dang DPO in 2016, quarterly progress reports and partners' reports.

3. Key Evaluation Questions

Search Nepal's approach to evaluation is grounded in the guiding principles of our work: Inclusion and effective participation, cultural sensitivity, commitment to building capacity, positive but also honest and productively critical engagement and valuing knowledge and approaches from within the context. The evaluation, led by Asia Regional DM&E Specialist, will measure the short-term impact, examining avenues for continued its relevance to the evolving context including the state restructuring process and existing political dynamics; effectiveness in achieving the desired results by EoP, and the basis for sustainability in the community. The evaluation will also gather qualitative information against IPSSJ and Search internal logical framework. The key questions for the evaluation are as follows:

1. Relevance:

- To what extent was the project approach as outlined in the project proposal relevant to facilitate the improvement in justice and security situation through dialogue at the local level? Do the key assumptions which guided our project design hold up to date? If not – how has the change in the assumptions impacted our realization of results?
- What is the degree of satisfaction of stakeholders especially- Nepal Police, formal and informal Justice sector actors, civil society actors?
- How relevant are the project strategies and activities as perceived by the beneficiaries and other community stakeholders? Are radio programme and IEC materials effective to transfer messages related to justice and security?

2. Implementation process

- Has the project achieved its milestones set for the period in a timely manner? If not, what were the challenges and what can/should have been the mitigation measures?
- Are the partners fully aware of the project (goal, objectives, and strategies) and the Common Ground Approach (**CGA**) and are all activities implemented within the framework of CGA?
- How should we adjust the implementation plan to ensure that it caters to the emerging needs of a context that is transitioning to federalism – such as the federalization of Nepal Police and the local, provincial and federal structures?
- What is the monitoring mechanism and what are the mechanisms of the reflection and learning process?

3. Progress towards results

- Are there any signals of increased capacities and skills of project beneficiaries such as youth, women, NGOs and media professionals, in particular? If yes, what are they? If no, what could be the reasons behind it? What could be done to increase capacities among the actors concerned?
- What is the early evidence that the project interventions are contributing to the improvement of the access to justice and security for the poor and the marginalized?
- What opportunities have emerged to cause more powerful changes from the project to date?
- Is the project adding value and contributing to the impact alongside the concerned stakeholders including IPSSJ partners and media in security and justice?


4. Coordination within Pahunch and IPSSJ partners

- How smooth and effective is the coordination, communication, and synergy between Search Nepal and implementing partners, and Search Nepal and other IPSSJ partners?
- Is Search Nepal successful in coordinating its interventions with other relevant organizations including Nepal Police, formal and informal justice agencies, local governance and concerned line agencies?

5. Programme Implementation Challenges

- What did work and what did not work? Why? What are the major lessons learned?
- Are there any challenges for early preparations or steps being planned to ensure sustainability of the project?
- How have lessons learned across IPSSJ been incorporated into the programme?

4. Proposed timeline

SN	Plan	Deadline	Lead by
1	Draft ToR for the mid-term evaluation	 20 October 2017	DMEA Manager
2	Incorporation of feedback from lead evaluator and project team	25 October 2017	DMEA Manager
3	Incorporation of feedback and consent from DFID and Regional Director	15 November 2017	Country Director/ Project Manager
4	Finalization of evaluation tools	25 November 2017	DM&E Specialist with support from DMEA Manager
5	Field visit (Eastern Cluster)	27 Nov- 1 Dec 2017	DM&E Specialist, support from regional staff and partners
6	Field visit (Western Cluster)	11-15 December 2017	DM&E Specialist, support from regional staff and partners
7	Preliminary findings and sharing among project team	25 December 2017	DM&E Specialist
8	Finalization of report	15 January 2017	DM&E Specialist

Annex 3: Data collection tools

A. Questions for Participants

1. What was your participation in the project? Did it benefit you in any way?
2. Do you believe that the current project and its activities are relevant to help facilitate better access to security and justice services to poor and marginalized groups in your district or community?
3. The project believed that there is lack of easy and affordable access to security and justice services to poor and marginalized people. Do you believe that this statement is still true in your community and district?
4. If not, what has changed in the last 2 years and how has it impacted the access to S&J services for poor and marginalized groups like you?
5. How satisfied are you with the project intervention and the project team? Why?
6. Do you think that the radio programmes and IEC materials are suitable to transfer messages about security and justice services?

Effectiveness

- In your opinion, how has the project contributed in increasing access to security and justice for you?
- How has football clinic, community dialogue and radio programmes and IEC material contributed to this?
- How has the project activities contributed to increasing your knowledge and skills on acquiring S&J services?
- What did you learn from your participation in the project and how did it help you?
- Is there any evidence that the project interventions are contributing to the improvements in access to justice and security for the poor and the marginalized?
- What additional things the project could have done to serve the poor and marginalized in the locality?
- Is this project doing something new and unique that others have not done so far?
- Is there any visible contribution of the project that has brought positive shifts in terms of the police and justice sector officials serving the poor and marginalized?
- In your opinion, what worked in this project and what did not?

B. Questions for Police and Justice sector and civil society actors

- How are you linked to this project?
- In your opinion, how relevant is the project to facilitate the improvement of the justice and security services to the poor and marginalized? Did it play the role of facilitator in any way? Is this project strategy, conceptualization still relevant to the current context?
- Do you think that any or all of the project's activities were relevant to serve the needs of the poor and marginalized communities' access to S&J Services?
- If you have listened to the radio programmes and IEC materials that were developed and disseminated through the Pahunch project, how are these actions helping to achieve project objectives?
- How satisfied are you with the project team, its strategies, and implementation mechanisms?
- How is the planning process and its execution mechanism? Is there any room for improvements? If not, what were the challenges and what should have been mitigation measures?
- How should we adjust the implementation plan to ensure that it caters to the emerging needs of a context that is transitioning to federalism – such as the federalization of Nepal Police and the local, provincial and federal structures?

- Have you noticed any mechanisms for learning and reflection? Have you been part of such activities?
- To what extent are the members of your institution familiar with the project goals, objectives and the Common Ground Approach? How do they reflect after coming back from their participation in project activities such as football clinic, community dialogue, and other joint initiatives?
- Have the project activities contributed to increasing the knowledge, skills and capacity of participants from your institution? Have you noticed them applying that knowledge and skills to practice? Have they shared that knowledge and skills with other colleagues within the organization?
- How did it help improve the relationship between community stakeholders and S&J state actors such as police-youth relationships, judicial actors' community relationships, etc.?
- What could the project do better to help achieve its objectives?
- Is there any indication or evidence that the project interventions are contributing to the improvement of the access to justice and security for the poor and the marginalized?
- Has the project been successful in making any meaningful change in the field of S&J in project areas? Are the projects adding any unique value in the field of S&J service delivery to poor and marginalized?
- How effectively is Search coordinating with your organization? What is the coordination mechanism and how do you rate it? Is the project creating any synergy in S&J service delivery?
- In your opinion, what worked in this project and what did not?

C. Questions for Search staff and Partners

1. Relevance:

- To what extent was the project approach, as outlined in the project proposal, relevant to facilitate improvement in justice and security at the local level? Do the key assumptions which guided our project design hold up to date? If not, how has the change in assumptions impacted our realization of results?
- What is the degree of satisfaction of stakeholders especially- Nepal Police, formal and informal Justice sector actors, civil society actors?
- How relevant are the project strategies and activities perceived by the beneficiaries and other community stakeholders? Are radio programmes and IEC materials effective to transfer messages related to justice and security?

2. Implementation process

- Has the project achieved its milestones set for the period in a timely manner? If not, what were the challenges and what can/should have been the mitigation measures?
- Are the partners fully aware of the project (goal, objectives, and strategies) and the Common Ground Approach (CGA) and are all activities implemented within the framework of CGA?
- How should we adjust the implementation plan to ensure that it caters to the emerging needs of a context that is transitioning to federalism – such as the federalization of Nepal Police and the local, provincial and federal structures?
- What is the monitoring mechanism and what are the mechanisms of the reflection and learning process?

3. Progress towards results

- What did you achieve so far? What are the major results that you feel proud of?
- What are the early signals of increased capacities and skills of project beneficiaries such as youth, women, NGOs and media professionals, in particular? If yes, what are they? If no, what could be the reasons behind it? What could be done to increase capacities among the actors concerned?

- What is the early evidence that the project interventions are contributing to the improvement of the access to justice and security for the poor and the marginalized?
- What opportunities have emerged to cause more powerful changes from the project to date? What is Peace-Writ-Large so far?
- Is the project adding value and contributing to the impact alongside the concerned stakeholders including IPSSJ partners and media in security and justice? If so, how?

4. Coordination within Pahunch and IPSSJ partners

- What is the overall coordination mechanism and process?
- How smooth and effective is the coordination, communication, and synergy between Search Nepal and implementing partners, and Search Nepal and other IPSSJ partners?
- Is Search Nepal successful in coordinating its interventions with other relevant organizations including Nepal Police, formal and informal justice agencies, local governance and concerned line agencies?
- What were the coordination challenges and how were they overcome or do they still persist?
- What could have been done better?
- How satisfied are the police, formal and informal justice institutions and implementing partners with overall coordination, collaboration, and synergy creation?

5. Challenges and lesson learned

- What worked and what did not work? Why? What are the major lessons learned? To what extent was your planning executed? Was the plan ambitious, or just good?
- What is the progress towards creating a sustainable mechanism so far? Are there any challenges for early preparations or steps being planned to ensure sustainability of the project?
- How have lessons learned across IPSSJ been incorporated into the programme?
- What is the major lesson learned so far?