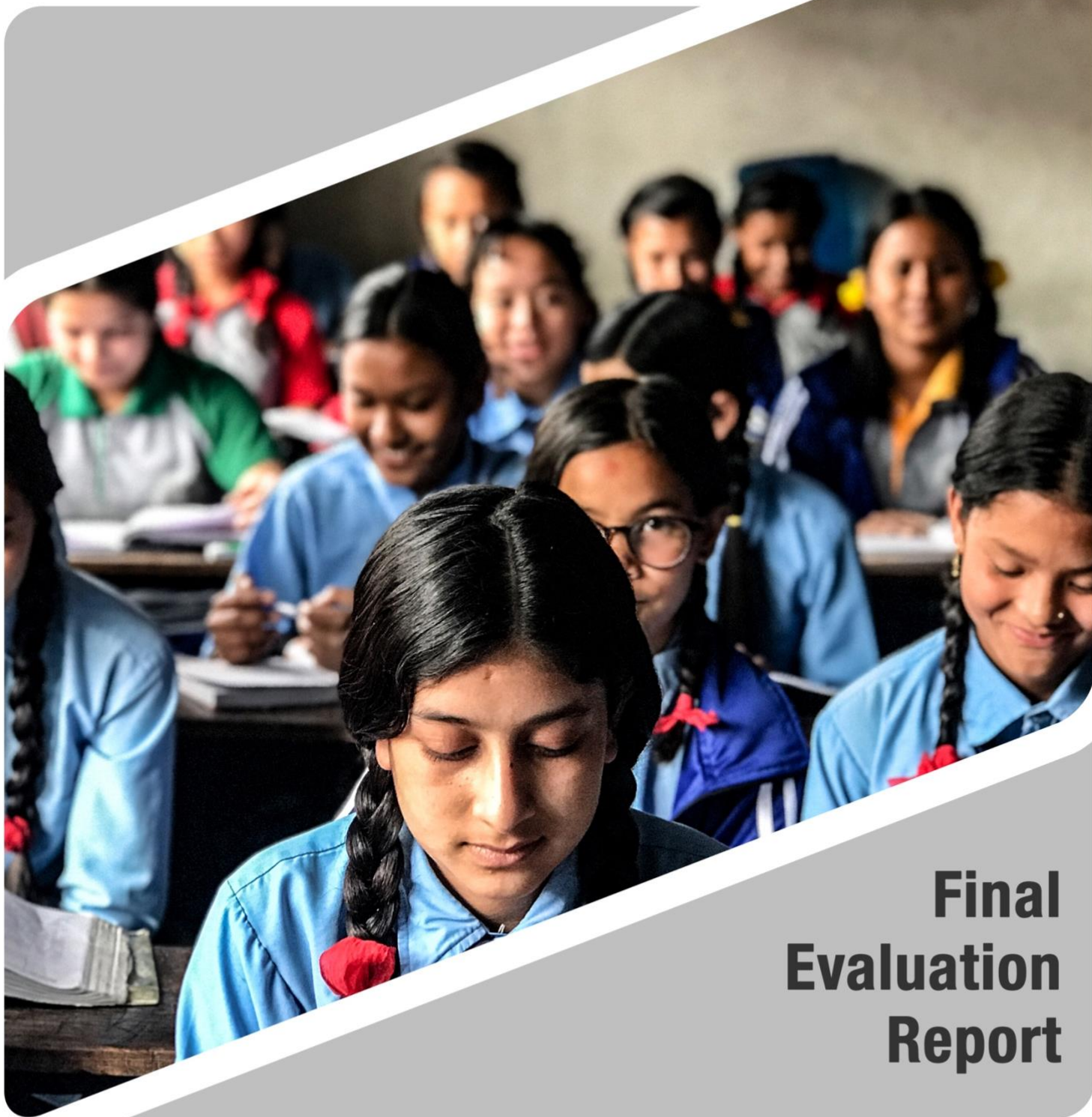


# HAMRO SIKSHYA



## Final Evaluation Report

Submitted to  
Search for Common Ground  
293/2, Nursery Marga Lazimpat,  
Kathmandu



Submitted by  
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# List of Abbreviation

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CCO	Cross-Cutting Objective
CEC	Comprehensive Education Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DoE	Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoGo	Good Governance
GoN	Government of Nepal
HT	Head Teachers
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
KAB	Knowledge, Attitude, and Behavior
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LYC	Local Youth Club
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCE Nepal	National Campaign for Education Nepal
NEC	National Education Commission
NEPC	National Education Planning Commission
NESP	National Education System Plan
NNEPC	Nepal National Education Planning Commission

OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
PEA	Political Economic Analysis
PTA	Parent-Teacher Associations
REEIS	Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability
RLC	Radio Listeners Club
SAT	Social Accountability Tools
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committees
SO	Specific Objectives
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
USOM	United States Overseas Mission
VDC	Village Development Committees
VEC	Village Education Committees

# Executive summary

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Search for Common Ground (Search) Nepal, in collaboration with the National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE Nepal) and Good Governance Foundation (GoGo Foundation), has implemented the project "Hamro Shikshya: Strengthening CSOs' Role in Governance and Accountability of Nepal's Education Sector". This was a 36-month project (April 2016 to March 2019), funded by the European Commission, to strengthen CSOs' role in governance and accountability of Nepal's education sector at the local level. The project focused its activities in a total of 42 selected public schools in the three targeted districts of Province 2 namely, Dhanusha, Mahottari and Siraha. It worked with the school governing bodies, including the School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and Head Teachers (HTs); and the key local education stakeholders, including teachers, students, concerned CSOs, and parents.

The evaluation was conducted by Lead International Pvt. Ltd. (henceforth LEAD). LEAD mobilized a team leader and an evaluation expert accompanied with two researchers to assist the lead evaluator in the field. The further explanation of the survey sampling has been discussed in the separate survey report.

It used a mixed method of data collection, especially desk review, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), case studies and end line survey to ensure participation of the beneficiaries and capture their perspective, analysis and reflection in the evaluation process.

The evaluation was guided by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria namely: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability) in the REEIS framework.

## **Major Findings**

The project was highly relevant as reported by the interviewed stakeholders. The changed context of federalism and the amendments made in the Education Act made the project significant as the intervention made by the project which focused on a range of activities which included disseminating knowledge regarding various provisions of Education Act and Regulation, ensuring proper formation and operationalization of SMC, PTA, and child clubs, formulating mechanisms for grievance hearing – installing complaint/feedback box, and ensuring proper preparation of social audit, were the praiseworthy areas of intervention. The project was also very relevant for the project implementation partners as the approach was very focused to ensure governance and accountability is established in the selected schools

Moreover, the intervention has been found to be effective under the broad category of three specific objectives and one cross cutting objective of Hamro Shikshya. The respondents were highly appreciative of the program design of the project and were overwhelmed by the collaborative work of key education stakeholders that helped in improving the school management. They also highlighted that the project enabled improved information on the issues pertaining to school governance and accountability measures. Likewise, through Hamro Shikshya the stakeholders have become more interactive and communicative with one another regarding the discussions on School Improvement Plan (SIP) development as well as other aspects of school governance and accountability. The fact that the project capacitated a total of 30 CSOs and 40 youth clubs on Social Accountability Tools (SATs), their use in schools, provision of small grants in order to improve school governance points to the effectiveness of the intervention.

The final evaluation team recorded that the project had been impactful. One of the major impacts observed was the increased leadership of the head teachers. The internal governance in the schools has enhanced significantly after the formation of SMC/PTA. Another important impact seen at the community level was that there was a greater awareness among the parents regarding SMC and PTA. The end line survey data depicts that 64 percent of respondents are aware about the existence of SMCs in their community. The final evaluation team also recorded that there is greater accountability as the project implemented schools have started to prepare the code of conduct.

The final evaluation team received an encouraging response regarding the use of existing institutions like CSOs (local NGOs and youth clubs) instead of forming new structures to

implement the project. This utilization of already existing structures led to greater efficiency as resources were mobilized optimally from an economic point of view. The efficiency of the project can also be observed from the different policy related dialogue, capacity building efforts that were undertaken to establish greater coordination amongst various stakeholders. Moreover, the project has successfully laid a foundation for good practices to be continued beyond the program period. The operationalization of Social Accountability Tools - social audit, fact-sheet disclosure, school self-assessment and parental engagement - has made the key educational stakeholders more liable while undertaking their roles and responsibilities.

### **Challenges to the Project**

- The project implementation was delayed due to numerous reasons. One of the major reason was the shift of focus of stakeholders to the local level elections, the project was halted for additional 6 months. Majority of stakeholders such as youth, principal, SMC members, teachers were involved in local government election.
- Despite Department of Education (DoE)'s order to form SMCs in schools as per the amended provisions of the Eight Amendment of the Education Act, it was quite challenging for the project partners to form SMCs. As the local level elections were held during the project phase, most of the leading community members were focused on the elections rather than on the SMC formation process. This also delayed the major objective (forming SMCs) of the project.
- Since majority of stakeholders from the school were engaged in political activities, their interest did not match with those that focused on promoting school governance and accountability. Moreover, these stakeholders also faced various political tensions due to which they could not be open towards the initiative which made implementation of activities very strenuous.
- All the CSOs responsible for implementing the project activities were not equally capacitated. Some of the CSOs did not have proper understanding of education sector and school governance, due to which they remained inactive most of the time. This affected the project impact and effectiveness as even after the implementation of the project, all the schools did not have proper functioning SMCs, PTAs and Child Clubs.

## **Recommendations**

1. The signing of MoU of Hamro Shikshya with DOE took more than six months, which delayed the implementation of the project. Since it is mandatory to get approval from GoN which facilitates the linkage of the project at district level and aligns the activities with the DEOs, Search waited for it to be done before implementing any activities of the project. Therefore, it is imperative that prior to the commencement of the program, a potential mapping of the partners and their respective roles should be determined.
2. As GoN passed its 8th amendment of the Education Act in June 2016, the former SMCs were dissolved, and schools remained without SMCs. This affected the project implementation since members of SMCs are the primary stakeholders and are critical to the success of the project. Therefore, it is suggestive in part of the donor agency to review the policy direction of a program before its launch. Therefore, the agencies must keep into consideration and review the relevant bills or policy recommendations that are tabled in the parliament.
3. The program was implemented only in a few schools of the district due to which its broader impact could not be felt. Few workshops or programs that focuses on enhancing participation and knowledge about school governance and accountability among a larger group of people is thus desirable.
4. Local leaders have always been central in every community and are capable of immense influence over local community members. Therefore, it is recommended that action should consider local leaders as strategic partners while implementing activities at the local level. In order to better capacitate these leaders and to improve governance, intra-state workshop where local leaders of different states come together, need to be implemented that not only facilitate idea sharing but also empower local governments.
5. Such programs should begin during the academic session, that is around Baisakh and continue until Chaitra. As Hamro Shikshya was introduced in the middle of the session, it was difficult for the project partners to measure its impact. Thus, the project must operate for a minimum of an entire academic cycle so as to evaluate the changes and keep track of the progress.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Country Context

### Historical Background of Education

Formal education in Nepal does not have a long-established history. It was only after the democratic movement of 1951 that educational institutions opened up to a more diverse group of population. However, access to education through these institutions were constrained by various economic and cultural aspects. In addition to these aspects, geographical variations also resulted in unequal delivery of education, due to which, the population in remote areas were deprived of access to education.

To overcome these problems and challenges that greatly hindered the growth of education sector in the country, two imperative institutions Ministry of Education (MoE) and National Education Planning Commission (NEPC) were established in 1952 and 1954 respectively. These agencies reviewed the status and situation of education in Nepal and developed new policies and strategies, considering the geographical diversity and complexities that persisted in the sector. These agencies also gave immense importance to civic education, adult education, female education and technical and vocational education<sup>1</sup>.

In 1960, Comprehensive Education Committee (CEC) was formed after King Mahendra's coup and the CEC formulated the first Education Act. Further, in order to develop school curriculum with primary focus on providing vocational education to all, the National Education System Plan (NESP) was initiated in 1971 under the new education act, similarly, District Education Office (DEO) were established in all the districts of Nepal with extensive monitoring and supervision mechanisms<sup>2</sup>. Despite the many reforms, the Education sector in Nepal continued to face numerous challenges. Addressing these problems, primary education in Nepal was made free in 1975 and the government undertook the responsibility of supporting the schools with basic facilities, teachers and education materials. A significant improvement in number of schools and enrollment rate was felt during late 1980s.

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<sup>1</sup> The Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Factbook, "Nepal Education Since 1951," March 27, 2005, accessed April 16, 2019, [https://photius.com/countries/nepal/society/nepal\\_society\\_education\\_since\\_1951.html](https://photius.com/countries/nepal/society/nepal_society_education_since_1951.html)

<sup>2</sup> SFCG, Status of Schools' Internal Governance in Eastern and Central Terai ((Findings from the Baseline Survey Conducted in Dhanusha, Mahottari, and Siraha), report (2017).

With the changed political scenario, the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC), with the help of United States Overseas Mission (USOM), began to expand schooling in Nepal (ibid). After the NESP in 1971, many changes like , introduction of more uniformity to the curriculum, emphasized homogeneity by incorporating people from different language and cultural groups. This was conducted in the name of ‘national integration’ and the government extended the program in 1975 to include free primary education. However, it must be noted, during this period Nepal was governed under a rigid authoritarian Panchayat system, which attempted to homogenize the extremely diverse population into a single national culture and language, and education was considered as a central component in the homogenization process<sup>3</sup>.

In 1990 the National Education Commission (NEC) was formed and NEC embraced the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country and policies that are more inclusive were initiated, including the teaching of primary education in the various mother tongues. The Commission also identified the problem with caste and gender exclusion from education and the necessary steps were suggested to address the needs of women, physically and mentally disabled people, and economically and socially disadvantaged communities.

### **Constitutional and Legal Provisions**

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, 2015 enunciates basic education as one of the fundamental rights of all the citizens. Article 31 of the constitution clearly states that every citizen has the right to get compulsory and free education up to a basic level. In order to realize significant improvements in the education system as demanded by the constitution, the Government of Nepal has initiated educational reforms to not only improve the contents of the school curriculum, but also positively change the structure and power relations within schools by increasing local involvement in the management and governance of community schools<sup>4</sup>.

Similarly, the new constitution of Nepal drafted in 2015 has put basic public education under complete jurisdiction of the local governments which is a major shift away from the traditional system which saw a centralized planning and implementation of education sector policy and

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<sup>3</sup> Nepal, Arpita, and Pratap Jung Khadka. “Cost of Complying with Applicable Regulations.” *Better Education Outcomes Through Education Entrepreneurs*, vol. 2, 2015

<sup>4</sup> Ram Ghimire, *Education Reforms in Nepal: Rhetoric or Reality*(2005)

regulation. In that sense, now is the perfect time for public education to make a new departure towards a system that is transparent, accountable and one that yields graduates that meets the demand side of the market. Under this changed political and legal context, however, the local representatives are going to need all the support they can garner from key actors like civil society organizations to align the vision, interest and resources for a quality and accessible education program.

The Eighth amendment<sup>5</sup> of the Education Act was undertaken with an objective to revamp the education sector in Nepal. The Act has strengthened an enabling environment for school education by providing the basis for structural and functional reforms. It has also realigned the school structure into basic (ECED/PPE to grade 8) and secondary (grade 9 to 12) levels of education.

Likewise, the Education Act gives the School Management Committee (SMCs) major responsibilities for governing and managing schools. However, the extended roles bestowed on local bodies (municipalities and rural municipalities) by the new constitution make it necessary to realign SMCs' roles and responsibilities. Their roles also need realigning by reactivating and strengthening Village Education Committees (VECs). While SMCs need to focus more on school level planning, head teachers will have an increased focus on instructional leadership including reviewing teacher performance, monitoring teachers' time on task and building teacher capacity. SMCs and PTAs are responsible for the internal management and day-to-day functioning of schools while municipalities and rural municipalities are mostly responsible for 'external' administrative and logistical functions, including financing and accountability to provide access to quality education.

## **Contextual Analysis**

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) guarantees education as a fundamental right of citizens and outlines the directives and principles of the federal state, provinces, and local bodies regarding education and the right to education. Education is thus one of the highly prioritized sectors in the country in terms of size of population covered and annual government budgetary allocation (Samridhhi Foundation, 2017). However, given the poor performance of community schools, one may claim that the government has only been focused on providing education to all but has largely neglected the quality of education being delivered in community schools.

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<sup>5</sup> Nepal. Government of Nepal. Ministry of Education. *School Sector Development Plan 2016/17-2022/23*.

Public schools in Nepal are often characterized by the miserable performance of students in national exams, despite significant public investment. The comparison of SLC (School Leaving Certificate) results, an examination that took place in grade 10 until 2017, between private and public school shows that private schools' success rates are significantly higher than that of public schools. Private schools have consistently recorded around 90 percent pass rates for last one decade whereas the result of public schools' hovers around 40 percent<sup>6</sup>. Studies show that poor governance and ineffective management committees are key factors affecting the delivery of quality education in public schools.

The baseline study report of Hamro Shikshya also revealed that out of four million school students, 44 percent are currently enrolled in private schools, as the quality of education and governance is considered substandard in public schools. The findings further showed that the dropout rate of students is 70 percent, and the percentage of students from public schools who failed their School Leaving Certificate (SLC Examination/ Secondary Education Examination (SEE) is 67 percent, compared to an estimated one percent of students from private schools<sup>7</sup>. Various studies<sup>8</sup> conducted in Nepal reveal that the budget and structure of the education system are not the major problem causing public schools to fail to deliver quality education; instead, the problems are mostly associated with poor school governance. The NCE Annual Report (2014) also highlighted that the comparatively lower achievements of public school is due to weak policy execution, an unsatisfactory governance system, and ineffective monitoring mechanisms.

In order to overcome the inefficiency that persists the education system, various international and national agendas that focus on education and school governance have been formulated. The government has implemented the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) with the objective of meeting the goals of the Education for All (EFA) and the fourth agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) four that ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and

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<sup>6</sup> "As Private Schools Hog the Limelight, All Is Not Lost for Public Institutions," The Kathmandu Post, March 21, 2017, , accessed March 16, 2019, <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/printedition/news/2017-03-21/as-private-schools-hog-the-limelight-all-is-not-lost-for-public-institutions.html>.

<sup>7</sup> "Status of Schools' Internal Governance in Eastern and Central Terai ." Hamro Sikshya Baseline Survey Report, 2016

<sup>8</sup> Hamro Sikshya: Quaterly Progress Report. National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE Nepal), 2018, Hamro Sikshya: Quaterly Progress Report; Acharya, Homraj, and Labisha Uprety. Enhancing Public Education in Nepal: Learning from Charter Schools. Samriddhi Foundation, 2016; Mathema, Kedar Bhakta. "Crisis in Education and Future Challenges for Nepal." Fifth Britain-Nepal Academic Council Annual Lecture. Fifth Britain-Nepal Academic Council Annual Lecture, 16 Nov. 2016, SOAS Vernon Square Campus, SOAS Vernon Square Campus

promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Education for All (EFA) is a UNESCO led initiative that aims to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. The EFA is primarily concerned with the governance of the school system in relation to unprofessional management, poor infrastructure, lack of learning resources and child friendly environments. The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDG) sets out a series of eight time-bound targets. The second goal was to achieve Universal Primary Education by increasing the net enrolment ratio and to improve the efficiency and quality of primary education.

The government also initiated educational reforms in Nepal to not only improve the contents of the school curriculum, but also positively change the structure and power relations within schools by increasing local involvement in the management and governance of community schools. The 2001 Education Act initiated devolution of the authority of school management to the community level. SMCs were made mandatory for all public schools to ensure good governance after the seventh amendment to the 2001 Education Act, which also renamed all public schools to "community schools" (The World Bank, 2012). This amendment facilitated local ownership in school management. SMCs, which consists of parents, representatives of local bodies, teachers, and other stakeholders, held significant power in school management, including resource mobilization, the appointment of teachers and formation of PTA (Parents Teachers Association). Despite these provisions in the act, the poor performance of public schools makes it evident that SMCs have not been as effective as envisioned by the act.

Acharya and Uprety (2017)<sup>9</sup>, while examining problems affecting public schools, have identified heavy political infiltration of schools. The authors note that SMC elections in many public schools are considered as important as local body elections, where political party representatives vie over control and management of resources allocated for the school. Such infiltration of SMCs leads to nepotistic recruitment of teachers based on political affiliation. The authors are of the opinion that such nepotistic appointments could also result in the lack of accountability in teachers of public schools. In addition to SMC, which oversees and supervise internal governance, DEO is required to conduct school inspections at least once a month. However, the study finding pointed at lack of active monitoring and evaluation as another challenge facing the implementation of good governance in public schools. The

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<sup>9</sup> Homraj Acharya and Labisha Uprety (2017). Enhancing Public Education in Nepal: Learning from Charter Schools. (Samriddhi Foundation 2015)

research found that a public school, Shree Namsaling Higher Secondary School situated in eastern Nepal, had never been monitored by the school inspector in over 10 years.

Among many measures put in place to ensure accountability and transparency in public schools, an annual social audit is one of them.<sup>10</sup> Social audits are a process of measuring and appraising various aspects of school management through the direct participation of and interaction between school stakeholders. According to Acharya and Uprety (2017), the use of social audits had been limited because of the lack of knowledge about the tool among the parents. Many of the parents who send their children to public school, are in wage labor. Thus, many of them are unable to attend consultations even if the school invites them. The limited practice of social audits further demonstrates the lack of active monitoring and evaluation.

It is evident that provisions for ensuring participatory governance of public schools have a limited translation into practice. The existing problems in public schools, especially in the functioning of SMCs and limited use of social accountability tools, such as social audits point at the need for capacity development of education stakeholders at the local level along with innovative methods to encourage the participation of parents, local bodies, and other stakeholders.

### **Internal Governance of Public Schools in Eastern Terai**

Education is a priority sector of the government as reflected in the large share of the budget allocated to it and the rising level of public investment in education over the past decade. This sector has received largest shares of the government's budget in recent years. Furthermore, public investment in education as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) increased from less than 2.9 percent in 1999 to over 4.7 percent in 2010 (CBS 2012). Considering that Nepal's GDP only grew at around 4.4 percent per year during this period, the increasing share of education in GDP represents a significant increase in investment in absolute terms. More than 80 percent of the government's annual education budget goes to school education (grades 1-12). In addition to this budget, grants at DDC (District Development Committee) and VDC (Village Development Committee) level are allocated for supporting education, as well as significant support by parents and households. Out of four million school students, 44 percent are enrolled in private schools. In comparison to private schools, the quality of education and governance is poor in public schools. Research shows that the dropout rate of students in public

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<sup>10</sup> Agni Prasad Kafle, Darshana Patel, and Sanjay Agarwal. Social Audits in Nepal's Community Schools: Measuring Policy Against Practice. (The World Bank, 2012)

schools is 70 percent and 67 percent of students from public schools failed their School Leaving Certificate (SLC/SEE) examination compared to only a small percent of students from the private schools. Various researches conducted in Nepal reveal that budget and the structure of the education system is not a major problem for failing to deliver quality education in public schools. Instead, the problems are mostly associated with poor school governance. The NCE annual report in 2014 highlighted that learning achievements of public schools are comparatively lower due to weak policy execution, unsatisfactory governance system, and ineffective school monitoring mechanism.

The Fourteenth 3-Year Plan (2073/74-2075/76) highlights policy objectives, strategies, and programs for educational development. For example, the education governance related strategies, as stipulated in the plan, are stated as quality improvement of education, such as regularizing School Self-Assessment (SSA), monitoring the executives and actors involved in school management, strengthening performance-based reward and punishment mechanism, and establishing and running model schools. In addition, importance is to be given to target the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged group of people, provide scholarships for indigenous, marginalized and disadvantaged groups of children, reduce the drop-out rate and increase the completion rate through management of child friendly school environments, improve community schools' achievement by means of mutual collaboration among the schools, maintain good governance through public expenditure monitoring, service delivery surveys and other participatory instruments, implement decentralized planning in education and so on.

Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)<sup>11</sup> in School Governance:

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have been recognized as one of the three basic components of a modern society, the other two being the capital and the state. They are the crucial self-governing bodies of a society that facilitate the interaction between the state and the public. Through their various forms of interventions, CSOs help to ensure the practise of the democratic values in a society. They have a great influential power to shape the notion of values and principles such as that of justice and freedom and they also influence the plans and policies that are developed to guide a nation's way towards development. CSOs empower the community people by ensuring their participation in different processes of governance and development. Nepal saw a significant increase in the number of CSOs/NGOs after 1990. While there were only around 200 CSOs/NGOs registered in the Social Welfare Council in

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<sup>11</sup> CSOs and NGOs are used interchangeably

1990, this number went up to an astounding 35,000 in 2010<sup>12</sup>. All these CSOs have been working in different sectors, while some of them have taken up the work of policy advocacy, others are helping to implement certain project activities in the community level. CSOs working in the similar sector have also started to work in collaboration with each other so that they can learn from each other's mistakes and highlight and share the best practises of their organizational experiences.

While the role of CSOs in ensuring accountability and transparency on part of the governance in a democratic state is absolutely unquestionable, its role in other smaller aspects of the society such as for ensuring good governance of schools is also imperative. When certain policies are formulated to address public issues relating to the governance of community schools, the CSOs can influence the state in formulating, implementing or not implementing those policies through effective policy advocacy on the matters being discussed upon. The various reforms that have been brought over the years for efficient management of schools and to enhance the school governance include decentralization, creation of different public-private partnerships along with various attempts to increase the public participation and local-level monitoring and evaluation of the outcome or results obtained through them<sup>13</sup>. At the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, different international organizations, governments, and other key stakeholders pledged to ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development as one of the important strategies to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals.<sup>14</sup> This shows that the importance of CSOs have been realized by the internationally acclaimed institutions as well. As per a scoping paper written by Action Aid (2001), the works that are carried out by CSOs are more likely to be successful and sustained when there is a stronger democracy and transparency in the society. And if the CSOs function properly, the delivery of rule of law, social justice is likely to be increased and thus even in the case of school governance, the active role of CSOs can help to significantly increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the school governance mechanisms.

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<sup>12</sup> Social Welfare Council (2018). NGOs affiliated with Social Welfare Council. Available at: <http://www.swc.org.np/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Total-NGO-till-Falgun-2075.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000178020>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/education-all-what-difference-can-civil-society-make>



## **1.2 Introduction**

Search for Common Ground (Search) Nepal, in collaboration with the National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE Nepal) and Good Governance Foundation (GoGo Foundation), has implemented the project "Hamro Shikshya: Strengthening CSOs' Role in Governance and Accountability of Nepal's Education Sector". This was a 36-month project (April 2016 to March 2019), funded by the European Commission, to strengthen CSOs' role in governance and accountability of Nepal's education sector at the local level.

The project focused its activities in a total of 42 selected public schools in the three targeted districts of Province 2 namely, Dhanusha, Mahottari and Siraha. It worked with the school governing bodies, including the School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and Head Teachers (HTs); and the key local education stakeholders, including teachers, students, concerned CSOs, and parents.

## **1.4 Project Objectives**

The overall objective of this project was to strengthen CSOs' role in governance and accountability of Nepal's education sector at the local level including the following three specific objectives (SO) along with one cross-cutting objective (CCO);

SO1: To increase key education stakeholders' awareness and skills about legal provisions and requirements, and their roles and responsibilities in school governance and accountability;

SO2: To build the capacity of local CSOs and school governing bodies to apply social accountability (SA) tools to improve compliance, transparency, and accountability of public schools;

SO3: To promote dialogue among all education stakeholders to improve citizen's engagement in governance and accountability of the education system; and

CCO: To strengthen local CSOs capacity in programming, operations, monitoring evaluation, and organizational development.

## 2. Evaluation Methodology

A comprehensive, staged process was put in place in order to undertake the final evaluation, including inclusive planning and preparation, review of relevant documents, undertake data collection and analysis for drawing inferences followed by report writing and submission. The final evaluation framework included the following OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, followed by data triangulation. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant's Interviews (KII) and observation were some methodology of the study and checklists were developed by the evaluation study team to reach out to major stakeholders, immediate beneficiaries, and officials from relevant local bodies.

The following data collection methods was used to conduct the evaluation.

**Desk/literature review:** Documents review was a crucial part of this evaluation. The evaluation team carried out desk research on the project proposal, quarterly progress report, baseline/end line surveys and assessment reports.

**Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** FGDs were carried out among project participants to gain a deeper understanding of a group's perception, attitude, experience, needs and gaps on defined topics. It also captured how the participants derived meaning from their surroundings, and how this influenced their behavior. It also captured an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and broad patterns found among a group of participants. As indicated in the ToR, eight FGDs were conducted by the evaluation team in project districts. OECD-DAC Criteria-wise Checklist for Focus Group Discussion is shared in Annex 1

**Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** The evaluation team conducted KIIs to collect information from a wide range of people<sup>15</sup>, who had firsthand knowledge and experiences of the project's successes and challenges, and who could provide insight into the existing status of the project's short-term impacts, and could give recommendations for the future. KII was conducted with school teachers, head teachers, education resource person, media reporter, CSO representative. The interviewees were purposefully selected and in-depth interviews using a predetermined

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<sup>15</sup> See Annex 1

checklist will be conducted (at least 3 KIIs in each sampled district – Hamro Shikshya: 3 districts of central Terai as indicated in the ToR). OECD-DAC Criteria-wise Checklist for Key Informant Interviews is shared in Annex 2

Case study: Two case studies from each district were collected capturing the details of a particular individual or a group relevant to the purpose of the project. The case studies were collected from the existing ones and new cases. The template for the case study was provided below. Four case studies were conducted. The following criteria were considered:

- The situation/life before the intervention of the project – Knowledge, Attitude, and Behavior (KAB)
- The problem/conflict
- Project intervention
- Changes – current status/situation – link with the problem/conflict
- Overall message
- Concluding remarks

# 3. Evaluation Findings

## 3.1 Relevance

One of the important aspect that showcased the relevance of the project was selection of the three districts of the Eastern Terai and further identification of the schools which were poor in terms of school governance and accountability. The project focused on improving governance and accountability of 42 schools located in remote areas of Eastern Terai – 16 in Dhanusha, 13 in Mahottari and 13 in Siraha, which were (i) public secondary school, as defined in the project document, (ii) located near the Nepal-India border which were much in need of such programs, (iii) the selected schools remained bereaved from the help of other I/NGOs or areas where development agencies are not working, (iv) Recommended schools from District Education Office (DEO), (v) the concept and knowledge regarding governance were minimal in these areas, (vi) citizen engagement and dialogue among actors in the education sector in the selected areas were not evident, (vii) Community people do not know about SMC and PTA, and (viii) selected partners feasibility and cross learning possibilities.

Search Nepal's 2017 report on Status of school's internal governance in these districts has also highlighted that there was lack of awareness among the SMCs and PTAs members in improving the school governance. *"The project was very relevant because SMC in our school was not functional and the SMC were not aware about importance of school governance"* said Gita Devi, SMC Member, Chandra Secondary School, Siraha. Similarly, local Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) were not involved in strengthening and making school body accountable towards the quality education and CSOs participation in improving school governance was not much evident. The project's intervention was to work closely with schools governing bodies and CSOs. In addition to working together, the project also promoted citizen engagement and dialogue among actors in the education sector. *"The project was relevant in terms of bringing all concerned stakeholders at one place, organizing dialogue, and discuss on key aspects like school governance and accountability"* said Sukhchandra Lal Karna, Resource Person, DEO, Dhanusha. The relevance of such engagement was to (i) establish an alliance of selected schools to create an environment to know and to understand about the progress and shortcomings of the practices in the schools, (ii) multi stakeholder policy dialogues at schools and district level for providing further inputs, (iii) sharing of best practices

at local, district as well as in central level, (iv) improving education quality, transparency and accountability.

Various studies and publications<sup>16</sup> had revealed that in context of Nepal budget and the structure of education system are not major problems that have been hindering the delivery of quality education in public schools. Instead, the problems are mostly associated with poor school governance. The NCE Annual Report (2014) highlighted that learning achievements of public schools are comparatively lower due to weak policy execution, unsatisfactory governance system, and ineffective school monitoring mechanism. Majority of the FGD and KII respondents highlighted that heavy political infiltration and rampant corruption in public schools were one of the major problems affecting the delivery of quality education in their community. In such context of political influence and corruption in public schools, the project's relevancy is highly appreciable because it had made efforts to overcome such problems through support to establish, improve and strengthen the SMC and PTA. These two entities are key in the frontline of the school governance. Similarly, supporting local CSOs and enhancing their capacity to act as a watchdog to effectively monitor the schools for better performance.

The Government of Nepal, after the seventh amendment to the Education Act, 2001, made the formation of SMCs mandatory for all public schools. This amendment facilitated local ownership in school management. However, the political interest of SMC members overshadowed the governance aspect of the education system (GoGo, 2071/072): practice of rampant corruption, SMC elections in many public schools were considered as important as local body elections, political party representatives vied over control and management of resources allocated for the school, and nepotistic recruitment of teachers based on political affiliation. Relevance of Hamro Shikshya was echoed through the plan and approach to tackle the issues pertaining to high level of corruption, irregularities and minimal transparency in these schools. Addressing the situation, GoGo Foundation, one of the consortium member,

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<sup>16</sup> **School Education Financing in Nepal Bracket Vs. Blanket Approach A Research Report (2015); The Himalayan Times: Education in federal Nepal: What are challenges ahead? (August 16, 2018); Education Sector: Problems & Challenges [A District Level Workshop- Kaski District] 2012.**

focused on promoting the governance and accountability aspects in community schools of these districts.

Similarly, the changed context of federalism and the amendments made in the Education Act made the project even more significant and relevant as the intervention made by the project which focused on a range of activities which included disseminating knowledge regarding various provisions of Education Act and Regulation, ensuring proper formation and operationalization of SMC, PTA, and child clubs, formulating mechanisms for grievance hearing – installing complaint/feedback box, and ensuring proper preparation of social audit, was therefore commendable.

Scrutinizing on the aforementioned scenario in the selected project districts on Nepal, *Hamro Sikshya* can be rendered as an exceptionally relevant and a strategically sound project. Even for the project implementation partners the project was very relevant as the approach was very focused to ensure governance and accountability is established in the selected schools. *“Hamro Sikshya was a new initiative which was very relevant in tackling the problems in schools of Siraha. The project has successfully brought changes in our schools due to which they have improved to a certain extent.”* Said – Tejlal Lama, staff of GoGo Foundation, Siraha

### **3.2 Effectiveness**

The confrontation of the project team with many natural and political challenges had a significant impact on its effective implementation. However, the project’s quarterly progress report<sup>17</sup> indicates that, despite many hurdles in implementing the project, it successfully managed to bring about remarkable changes in the targeted public schools. The facilitation of strong coordination and communication between different stakeholders of the schools resulted in the improvement of school governance and accountability.

The overall effectiveness of the project can be identified by analyzing the findings under the broad category of three specific objectives and one cross cutting objective of *Hamro Sikshya*.

#### **SO1: To increase key education stakeholders’ awareness and skills about legal provisions and requirements, and their roles and responsibilities in school governance and accountability**

The quarterly progress report (October-December 2018) prepared by NCE Nepal reveals an improved scenario among key education stakeholders like parents, teachers, SMC, PTA, HT,

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<sup>17</sup> NEC, ‘Quarterly Progress Report (October – December, 2018)’ December, 2018

child club and students, regarding awareness and skills about legal provisions and their roles and responsibility towards schools. The end line survey data also substantiates this claim, as the awareness regarding formation of SMC and PTA has increased by 19 percent and 7 percent respectively. Similarly, the proportion of respondents who did not know about the legal provisions and policies of internal school governance has decreased from 47 percent in 2016, to 43 percent in 2019. The data also illustrated that the number of respondents who were unaware of the allocation of the schools' annual budget dropped down by 30 percent from 64 percent to 34 percent. Additionally, the proportion of respondents (25%) who stated that it is easy to access information at any given time has increased by 10 percent from the baseline.

The evaluation team also received positive response from the KII and FGD participants when asked about the effectiveness of the project in terms of awareness and skill about legal provision, their roles and responsibilities. The respondents highly appreciated the design of the project. Majority of FGD participants were overwhelmed by the collaborative work of key education stakeholders that helped in improving the school management and claimed that it was only possible through an initiative like *Hamro Sikshya*.

*Hamro Sikshya contributed tremendously in the management of our schools. Prior to its execution, we did not know how to coordinate and work with SMCs, parents, teachers and other stakeholders. But now, the project not only has been able to increase the awareness regarding such issues but also has capacitated us with skills to collaboratively improve the governance of our schools. – FGD, women's' group Mahottari*

The participants also claimed that SMCs, PTAs and various tools of social accountability existed prior to the program. However, the community was not aware about them and thus their use was very minimal. The respondents also highlighted that, after the project was implemented, the stakeholders were better informed on the issues pertaining to school governance and accountability measures. The effectiveness of the program was reflected through the active engagement of PTA in areas like monitoring the performance of teachers, student's regularity, and parent's concern, which was visible post execution. Majority of the KII respondents clearly stated that if it wasn't for the project, the schools would not be able to do their social auditing in a proper manner. They also mentioned that these activities would be very beneficial to all the schools in the long run.

Similarly, a handbook that pointed out that social audit encompasses the social, educational and physical parameters and not just the financial transactions was distributed amongst the

concerned parties. A school in Siraha has created separate financial, educational, social and physical committees to conduct the social audit while in the other schools, a particular individual bears responsibility for the entire process.

Further, through *Hamro Sikshya* the SMC and PTA have increased the frequency of monitoring in schools which has made teachers and students alert about fulfilling their roles and responsibilities properly. Schools have also started to prepare code of conduct for making the teachers and students punctual in school, wear school uniform, being on time in class and obey all the rules and regulations of the school.

The capacity building training conducted by the implementing partners capacitated SMCs, PTAs, parents, Head teachers, teachers, child clubs, local government representatives and community leaders, regarding their roles and responsibilities in improving governance and accountability. The project was effective enough to flag out the major issues of school governance and accountability like lack of formation of SMC and PTA, inadequate and proficient teachers, punctuality of teachers in school and classroom, lack of code of conduct in school, irregularity of students, lack of child centric teaching learning environment, excessive politics in school, lack of girls friendly environment etc.

In the training conducted by NCE Nepal gave opportunities to the child club members to express the critical situations of schools like high teacher absenteeism, no homework checking, lack of teachers due to which a single teacher is responsible for taking classes of all subjects, no full time class, no capacity building programs for child clubs to lead in the extracurricular activities of school, and no monthly meetings of child clubs. The youth and child club also have perceived teacher regularity as most prominent issue and thus Eighty-one percent of them have helped in improving the same. The child club members interacted by the final evaluation team highlighted that they are part of SMC and PTA meeting, they are able to put their concerns, challenges faced by students, organize different activities in the school. *““child club provided a platform and we received an opportunity to be part of SMC and PTA meeting where we are able to share problems and challenges faced by the students. Such agendas we share are taken positively”.”* highlighted child club members from Shree Juddha School, Siraha. Child clubs actively engaged in ensuring the creation of complaint registration and redressal mechanism. For this, they installed suggestion and complaint box in all the 42 schools which were discussed in the school meetings.



However, the observation of the evaluation team reflects that the aforementioned scenario was not reflected in all the schools. Some schools did not form SMCs and PTAs, which hindered the effective implementation of the project. On the contrary, the schools which focused on formation and proper operationalization of these institutes performed comparatively better. The stakeholders in these schools were found to be more capacitated to use various social accountability tools and to prepare SIPs.

*Greater effectiveness of the project is visible in schools which formed all the required bodies like SMCs, PTAs and child clubs. These schools made sure that all these mechanisms were well-functioning and their initiation and activities were carried forward in a disciplined manner. For example, such schools in Siraha made sure that their child clubs is very active and extracurricular activities which facilitated the delivery of quality education was executed by mobilizing the club members. But, some places did not have SMC and in these schools our activities could not be implemented. The schools where we faced such problems were dropped and an alternative school was selected. Due to such problem all 13 schools could not be benefitted. – Said Tejilal Lama*

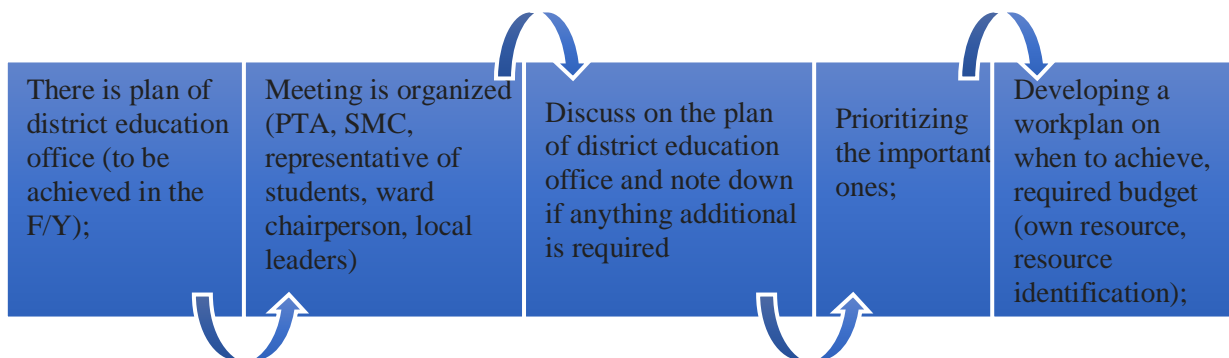
The activities related to media and information campaign, including radio program, IEC material and outreach was also one of the effective tools of the project which successfully increased its' visibility. The respondents also claimed that the use of radio and the formation of listeners' clubs ensured awareness regarding various governance aspect among wider mass.

**SO2: To build the capacity of local CSOs and school governing bodies to apply social accountability (SA) tools to improve compliance, transparency, and accountability of public schools;**

Comprehending to the fact that the newly elected local leaders had no prior experience in leading public education and all the other bodies like SMC and PTA were newly formed, new opportunities in influencing the education actors in improving governance and accountability was realized. The project objectives were changed so as to capacitate the various local politicians, and spread awareness among other key stakeholders. Moreover, under the changed political and legal context, the local representatives were going to need all the support they could garner from key actors like civil society organizations to align the vision, interest and resources for a quality and accessible education program. In that sense, the project was initiated in a perfect time for public education to make a new departure towards a system that is

transparent, accountable and one that yields graduates that meets the demand side of the market.

The second interim report of Hamro Sikshya prepared in March 2018 claims that the different stakeholders targeted by the project are now more aware about the governance mechanism and the varied roles that they play in shaping up the schools. The evidences that the final evaluation team analysed whether these claims do have supportive evidence or not are: FGD and KII participants have strongly highlighted that because of the project’s intervention they were able to understand their roles and responsibilities towards school governance. Similarly, they also stated that they have increased understanding about the coordination and collaboration with each other for the holistic development of schools. The stakeholders have gained insights and are practicing social audit, developing SIP in a participatory way so as to improve the school governance. Some other evidence that the respondents presented were that the local government units also expressed their commitments (See newspaper coverage) on improving overall education status of the area through formulating strong education policies as per the local need and requirement. However, the final evaluation team did not come across any of such policies developed as per the need and requirements of local level.



NEC Nepal in its progress report has also stated that stakeholders have become more interactive and communicative with one another regarding the discussions on SIP development as well as other aspects of school governance and accountability. Based on the field level interaction with the school representatives including the SMC and PTA about the SIP development process, following is the major finding about the process.



The number of respondents who were positive about at least marginal improvement in the governance system of their community schools have also increased from 51% in baseline survey to 59% in the end line survey. The end line survey also depicts that the respondents who were unaware about the social accountability tools have decreased by 12%. The data shows that public hearing (57%), social audit (57%) and financial audit (52%) are the most effective social accountability tools. As compared to the baseline survey, all the above indicators illustrate considerable increment that attest that these components have brought about collective action for change in the service delivery and information dissemination.

In order to achieve such outcomes, the project focused on conducting four essential activities – trainings of CSOs and youth clubs on social accountability tools; seed grants and technical support to local CSOs and youth clubs to use accountability tool in schools; support to SMCs for developing SIPs, mobilizing QCs and improving financial management system; and complaint registration and redressal mechanism and annual policy dialogues in schools.

The qualitative survey respondents have claimed that the project has capacitated the stakeholders to develop their 5 year SIP plan, perform annual social audit, organize and participate in parents meeting. The concept of School Improvement Plan, its formation process and importance for the overall development of school was disseminated particularly to the members of SMC, parents, child clubs, teachers, HT, youth club and other community members. Regarding the facilitation of the training was done by the resource person of EDCU. The activities conducted through the project was successful to sensitize participants about the importance of SIP in school and its development process.

NCE Nepal worked untiringly to increase awareness among the stakeholders' regarding their roles and responsibility in development, effective implementation and monitoring of SIP.

*The quarterly report of NCE Nepal prepared in December 2018 said, “the trainings were successful to change the mentality of those head teachers and school who used to think SIP give only budgetary plan for school by making them aware that SIP is a matter of serious concern that envisioned and emphasized the improvement of school in financial, managerial, infrastructural and educational aspects. Thus, after the capacity building training on SIP, the stakeholders were capacitated about the basic concept of SIP, its development process, the necessary aspects and mainly the importance of development of SIP in schools.”*

The report depicts that among the 42 schools that had completed the training, 20 schools developed new SIP and 11 schools updated their existing SIPs. The evidence that the evaluation team generated during the field visits that supports these claims were: Majority of the respondents (head teacher and teachers) highlighted that all schools have followed the government policy on developing the SIP and they have understood that it is merely not related with budget part but holistic development of the school. *“SIP is an organized process and is for overall development of school, it also provides strategic direction and act as a guiding document”* said majority of representatives from schools of three project implemented districts. However, budget is one of the important parts and the Education Act mandates that the SMC are responsible for the budget allocation based on the SIP, it is noteworthy that all the PTA/SMC members are well acquainted with this idea. The findings from end line survey highlighted that majority of the respondents stated that the school itself (38%) was responsible for the allocation of the budget followed by the School Management Committee (24%) and through participatory budgeting (22%). Among the targeted districts, the highest respondents who were aware about the allocation of budget by SMC were from Mahottari (35%), Dhanusha (32%), and Siraha (12%).

Amidst the many positive responses of the participants, the key informants of Mahottari however were not very sure about the claims made by other participants. They mentioned that social accountability training and budget tracking training were only moderately effective. The primary reason stated by them were the unequal capacity and capability of all the CSOs regarding the execution of these activities. Only one highly capacitated CSO in Mahottari was able to implement all three activities in a satisfactory manner. This difference between the capacity of different CSOs greatly hampered the effectiveness of the project.

They also said that the community scorecard activity did not perform good in any school. This is also illustrated by the quantitative data, only 16 percent of the respondents know about community scorecard.

### **SO3: To promote dialogue among all education stakeholders to improve citizen's engagement in governance and accountability of the education system**

The project has conducted 69 events which focused on promoting dialogue between all education stakeholders for enhancing their participation in improving governance and accountability of the community schools. These included comprehensive district assessment, multi-stakeholder policy dialogues in all three districts, publication of newsletter, publication

of journals and best school award distribution. These programs pivoted on making the stakeholders aware on the concept and importance of school governance and accountability mechanism, promoting community participation and bridging the gap between local government and school stakeholders in regards to the school governance.

The increased participation of SMC and PTA members, parents, students, youths and local leaders in reform activities that focused on improving school governance and accountability as depicted in the end line survey illustrates the effective implementation of the program. Also, the FGD participants were not only aware about the important roles that SMCs and PTAs had in practicing good governance, they also believed that after the implementation of the project, the involvement of these institute in improving the quality of schools has increased significantly.

*“it was noted that parents are showing increasing interest about the ways and the areas in which the budget is allocated. In one such school, a headmaster had taken money from the school and had no intention to return it. However, due to improved vigilance among the parents, they constantly followed up with the school and when it was guaranteed that the headmaster would not return the money, they sacked him”.* Said Batuk Nath Jha, Reporter, Radio Maithali.

The state restructuring and implementation of Federalism through the 2015 Constitution made the local level government responsible for the overall management of schools. However, these local level authorities had only moderate knowledge about the issue and thus various initiatives to enhance their capacity was required. The multi-stakeholder dialogues conducted through the project was thus very effective in capacitating the local leaders for improving the education system of their community. As per the Interim Narrative Report (2016/17), Interim Narrative Report (2017/18), NCE Quarterly Progress Report 2018 submitted to SFCG by the partners, the project successfully raised issues related to school governance and accountability between local leaders and the head teachers. Such events facilitated intercourse between the two parties where they could discuss about the daunting challenges that persisted in the education system. This not only increased the level of awareness among the local leaders, but also they became committed towards formulating strong policies that was suitable to the local context of these districts. The multi-stakeholder dialogues helped emerge a sense of ownership in community schools such that each stakeholder became determined to strengthen the existing situation of public schools in their community.

To raise further awareness, the project also used tools like newsletter and journals. NCE Nepal stated that the newsletters consisted of the accomplished activities, remarkable outcomes of the activities, various initiatives adopted for promoting the school governance, effort of project for improvement, and challenges faced during the program implementation. The newsletter was planned to be distributed among a wide range of audience to make them aware about capacity building trainings to stakeholders, field visit of different schools for best school award program, mobile applications, radio program and different policy level dialogues. Further, to capacitate the schools with more enhanced knowledge on the governance principles of schools, *Hamro Sikshya Journal* was also published. It included articles of education experts and activists on strengthening public education.

*The journal contributed to bring forward the initiatives, practices, challenges and gaps in regard to school governance in Nepal. The status of Terai in school governance, the role of local level government in school governance, Policy review on School Governance and their Implementation Status, School Governance for Quality Education , School Governance: Who's Accountability?, National and international practices on governance, were the key subjects in which the journals were based. – NEC Nepal*

The newsletters and journals of *Hamro Sikshya* thus promoted ideas that could be adapted by the local leaders as well as key education stakeholders for improving the governance mechanism of their schools. These were also effective in spreading awareness to a large number of people. However, doing the same, with the help of radio partners would be more effective as radio vigilance of the targeted district is higher than those who read newspapers for gaining information.

The introduction of best school award was a very smart move from the project team as such initiations tend to bring a sense of competition among schools. As per the past report of the project, the team experienced improvement in classrooms, toilets, open space and other properties such as ponds and land plots for income generation purpose, basic and essential equipment for science and computer labs, library, formation of child club, etc. It also led to increased participation among the community members and parents.

**CCO: To strengthen local CSOs capacity in programming, operations, monitoring and evaluation and organizational development.**

Many CSOs in Nepal, have adopted diverse methodologies and techniques to help incorporate the purpose of the campaigns in their advocacy work, which directly influences the

development and implementation of policies. Various agencies, both national and international have become an integral part of CSOs, or work closely with them (SFCG, 2017). Similarly, many are also working through the youth clubs. The project has envisioned to strengthen the CSOs and youth clubs that it will work with. Effectiveness of the project in terms of strengthening these local organizations and clubs was also recorded during the final evaluation. Some of the major findings under this particular Cross Cutting Objective (CCO) are:

The project capacitated a total of 30 CSOs and 40 youth clubs on Social Accountability Tools (SATs), their use in schools, provision of small grants in order to improve school governance. Following table provides expected and achieved outcomes related to CSOs and Youth clubs (Source: Second Interim Report 2018).

Table: Overview of target and achievement

<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Achieved Outcomes</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
30 CSOs selected and trained as SA Facilitators	The 30 CSOs knowledge and skills of implementing SA tools enhanced and developed as SA facilitators.	Laxmi Shrestha shared that the SA tools implementation process and techniques under the project was more detailed unlike other. They felt more capacitated and skilled to implement SA tools. <i>“I am working as SA facilitator since a long time, involvement in the project and receiving further skills has enhanced my capacity. The training was more detailed oriented and was an opportunity for me to be part of the project”.</i> Name...Siraha
9 CSOs supported to apply the SA tools in project schools	9 CSOs selected to be awarded with the seed grants to apply SA tools in the schools.	Out of the total 30 CSOs nine were selected based on their capacity, work experience and commitment.
40 youth clubs	40 youth clubs were	Youth clubs were involved in using SA tools

<p>selected and trained on role of youth in promoting social accountability tools.</p>	<p>selected and their skills on promoting social accountability tools promoted.</p>	<p>to promote school governance. <i>“Youth clubs are not only to organize sports but to be involved in social cause, advocacy about local school and act as a watch dog to improve quality of local school”, Ramswaroop Purve of Sunrise Youth Club, Fulgama, Dhanusha</i></p>
<p>40 youth clubs supported to promote the use of SA tools, support the CSOs and conduct outreach</p>	<p>The youth clubs have been awarded with the small grants to conduct community outreach and supported CSOs in applying SA tools.</p>	

1. The CSOs have committed to perform the SA tools not only in the project schools, they also use those tools in the other neighboring schools in the districts.

Those CSOs who were partners in this project are also working with other schools and shared that they are willing to use the SA tools in future programs while working with schools. The data from end line survey depicts that public hearing (57%), social audit (57%) and financial audit (52%) are the most effective social accountability tools. As compared to the baseline survey, all the above indicators illustrate considerable increment that attest that these components have brought about collective action for change in the service delivery and information dissemination.

2. The trained youth clubs have been effective in engaging communities to collaborate among for the school planning and operational issues. The youth club members have been supporting the schools and local stakeholders in reaching out to the out of school children and bringing them back to schools. Unfortunately, the respondent was not able to provide the actual number of children who were brought back. However, this has



contributed to the government's strategy of Education for All, equity strategy and national framework of child friendly schools.

3. The project briefed representatives of the local CSOs in all project implemented districts on their roles and responsibilities, aspects that they need to focus to make the schools in their area more accountable and responsive towards both students and parents. Similarly, such organizations were also provided further information and enhanced their capacity in applying social accountability tools, fact-sheet, involvement of parents on SIP, monitoring of school management.
4. Social accountability tools prevailed even before the implementation of the project. However, these tools were used randomly without proper instructions and guidelines. Through Hamro Shikshya, the implementer (CSOs) were instructed on the particular parameters on which the tool need to be used. It systematized and streamlined the already existing tool and thus, enabled the CSOs to assess the weakness of the schools and operate the tools as per their need. The effectiveness of SA tool could also be depicted from the end line survey data which demonstrates that social audit is the most implemented social accountability tool. The findings show that the local leaders (90%) highly emphasized SA tool, followed by PTA/SMC (74%) and youth/child club (67%). Effectiveness of this tool is further reflected through PTA/SMC which have been concentrating their efforts in the implementation of the social accountability tools, with considerable focus on financial audit (74%) and public hearing (71%).

### 3.3 Impact

It was envisaged that after the completion of the project, the awareness, capacity and dialogue between the various educational stakeholders along with the CSO will have strengthened. Similarly, capacity of local CSOs and school governing bodies will be strengthened to apply SA tools to improve compliance, transparency and accountability of public schools.

The anecdotal evidence reflected that the educational stakeholders were increasingly aware about their roles and responsibilities regarding school governance and accountability. Through the project, the teachers have enhanced their knowledge and skills about their roles, mandates and deliverables in school governance and management. The service delivery of the teachers has substantially improved with the initiation of regular teachers' meeting, preparation of lesson plans, and administration of attendance system in the schools. Moreover, the teachers not only are more sensitive towards the students but also are engaged to build upon their capacities.

*'Through Hamro Shikshya, the teachers are vigilant towards their responsibilities and understanding towards the needs of the students. The teachers have ceased to use excessive force and instead have resorted to provide counselling to students who have left school. In order to capacitate the students, the teachers have also begun to take monthly tests so as to evaluate the learning of their programs.'* – **Pawan Kumar Mandal, Head Teacher, Shree Janata Secondary School, Giddha Belapatti, Dhanusha**

The evaluation team further verified this claim with other students and teachers as well and found that this was a genuine claim. The teachers and student's response echoed the head teacher's claim. Similarly, the SMC also stressed that teachers are becoming more responsible.

Following are some of the impact recorded during the field visit:

1. One of the significant impacts observed was that the good leadership of the head teachers contributed in the enhancement of learning outcomes and governance system in school. In Shree Janata School of Giddha Belpatti, Dhanusha the good leadership of HT contributed in establishing a good governance system and accountability. Teachers come to school on time, regular meeting of SMC and PTA takes place and decision are made. Financial details are well maintained and NPR. 300,000.00 was generated from various properties of school within three years' time. Similarly, in Chandra Secondary School, Siraha also the teaching and learning outcomes are highly appreciated by the

community. The governance system has been strengthened. Both SMC and PTA are active and contributing in the enhancing the quality of the school.

2. Internal governance in the schools has enhanced significantly after the formation of SMC/PTA. In majority of the project implemented school both SMC and PTA were not active. In schools where these entities were active lack the internal governance and accountability as representatives were not familiar with the functioning aspects related with the schools. In the baseline survey only, 24 percent believed that SMCs had moderate role and 12 percent believed that they have a good role in improving the school governance. Similarly, awareness regarding role of PTAs has also increased significantly as in baseline report, only 14 percent of respondents believed in PTA to be important for school sector reform. Key respondents from the school visited by the final evaluation team highlighted that SMCs and PTAs administer regular meetings where they discuss plans and programs for maintaining the school governance, has brought about substantial impact in the accountability of the rest of the stakeholders.
3. Through the formation of child club there was active participation of students. Every month they organize child club members meeting, they have agendas on challenges and problem that the students are facing, also opportunities to enhance the learning environment. Similarly, members of child club were able to share their grievances with the teachers which was not evident before the project implementation. This has resulted in the improved prospect of completing their basic education and continue to further education and leading a decent life.
4. Before the project intervention, in the selected schools the social audit was not implemented properly as the parents lacked awareness and the SMC members weren't completely aware about the standard operating procedures. Social audit in their understanding was related with financial part only. The impact of the project seen particularly in this area was that majority (30 out of 42) of the schools are practicing and continuing the audit. Such audit unlike in the past not only assesses the financial transactions, but also includes other parameters such as rate of enrollment, re-enrolment, drop-out, promoted to next class, repetition of the student, extra curriculum activities.
5. Another important impact seen at the community level was that there was a greater awareness among the parents regarding SMC and PTA. The end line survey data depicts that 64 percent of respondents are aware about the existence of SMCs in their community. The figure of informed respondents has increased sharply from the

baseline, as only 43 percent respondents were aware about the formation of SMCs in their community in 2016. Similarly, the end line data depicts that 26 percent (compared to 19% in baseline survey) of the respondents are aware about the formation of PTA in their community. The evaluation team during the field level discussion also recorded that the parents have begun to partake in school activities, they are more inquisitive about the policies. Parents are making sure that the schools are exhibiting the desired performance. The end line data illustrates enhanced knowledge among the respondents regarding legal provisions and policies on internal governance of school. The proportion of respondents who did not know about the issue has decreased from 47 percent in 2016, to 43 percent in 2019.

6. Realization by the stakeholders about the importance of SIP and its implementation, schools involved in the process for developing their respective SIP and implementation was some of the notable impact. 11 out of 42 schools updated the existing SIP while the rest of the schools prepared the same.

### 3.4 Efficiency

Hamro Shikshya was implemented in 42 secondary schools across three Central Terai districts of Province Two. The project witnessed a delayed start along with challenges in terms of coordination as well as change in the structures and functions of the SMC. However, the project partners successfully formed over 50% of SMCs/PTAs in the schools. A total of 22 out of 42 SMCs were formed in three years even though there existed procedural hassles.

The final evaluation team received an encouraging response regarding the use of existing institutions like CSOs (local NGOs and youth clubs) instead of forming new structures to implement the project. This utilization of already existing structures led to greater efficiency as resources were mobilized optimally from an economic point of view. During a KII with the member of a CSO in Siraha, it was reported that Hamro Shikshya efficiently sourced trainers with an already existing skills set. These people were mostly coached by other NGOs with similar project modality that provided them with various capacity building trainings and field experiences in different Terai districts. As project team tracked such people, they did not have to go through the cumbersome process of capacitating them regarding the specific details of the project. This not only facilitated the cost-efficient implementation of the project but also helped the project to expand its reach by leveraging the connection of the participants.

Likewise, the project also achieved results beyond the scope with the formation of Radio Listeners Club (RLC). It was envisioned that there would be a total of 42 RLCs, yet the numbers almost doubled and reached 78 at the end of the program. This exhibits great efficiency in part of the project partners. Additionally, among the 42 schools, 10 schools already had installed the complaint and suggestion boxes while the remaining did so during the project implementation phase. Also, due to low cost associated with their installation, 20 additional complaint and suggestion boxes were installed in other schools in the three respective districts.

As per the quarterly report of Hamro Shikshya, the project partners have actively engaged and collaborated with various government agencies such as Ministry of Education, Department of Education, local government units, and political leaders. Some evidence to support these claims are:

1. A three days capacity building training on “School Accounting and Procurement Management” in joint coordination with the Ministry of Education and Department of Education along with the partnership of the European Union, Search for Common Ground and GoGo Foundation.

2. Continuous coordination has been done with the district coordination committee of Dhanusha, Mahottari and Siraha district by insuring their participation in the cluster and district level programs.
3. Policy dialogue program (total four) to discuss with the policy makers and leaders on the issues related to school governance and accountability in Nepal.

This has enabled the partners to accommodate the political and administrative restructuring of the education sector in line with the identified needs of the federal context and has established a joint coordination mechanism amongst the stakeholders, thereby ensuring efficiency. For example:

1. Through different policy related dialogue, capacity building programs efforts has been made to establish coordination mechanism amongst various stakeholders.
2. Implementing partner organizations had enhanced capacity of the newly formed local government representatives to align the vision, interest and resources for a quality and accessible education program.

Similarly, enhanced coordination with the media during the program execution has widened the reach of the information to a larger mass. The data from the end line survey depicts that media (newspaper, television and radio) has been a major source of information dissemination related with the project. Among these sources radio has shown increment of 14%, from 9% to 23%. Some of the findings related with media coverage that contributed to project efficiency are:

1. Media coverages of various policy dialogues, trainings, and other activities not only highlighted about the project but also at the same time disseminated information in large scale to make people more aware about the education status of the Terai area.
2. Media also played important role in publicity, visibility and promotion of the project both at local and national level.
3. During the project phase 52 episodes of ‘Appan Shiskshya’ was aired from Radio Mithila that covers the districts of Dhanusha, Mahottari, Siraha as well as some parts of Sarlahi and Sindhuli. The program also covers Madhubani and Sitamarhi that are located near the Indo-Nepal boarder.

4. Collaboration with online and print medias assisted in escalating the project activities implemented so that large mass of people understands the current issues of the schools and what could be done and how project intervention is supporting to overcome such issues.

Both the quarterly report and the KII signify that the events conducted by NCE Nepal under the project were featured in ‘Appan Shikshya’– a radio program that broadcasts in Maithili language- which enabled direct access to a wider audience. The fact that the program are broadcast in the local language has sensitized maximum people.

However, the involvement of a number of youth clubs to strengthen the school governance and accountability was not deemed to be the most efficient way as it not only added supplementary layers in the project but also increased cost by adding a significant proportion of youth clubs that were idle. The project could have, thus, increased its efficiency if it would have involved a smaller number of clubs rather than 40 youth clubs. A KII respondent from Siraha said, ‘there existed a total of 13 local youth clubs and 3 CSOs for 13 schools in Siraha district. Due



*to the presence of high number of clubs, each school was allotted with one club. However, both these clubs and the CSOs did not have significant work to be performed. This led to wastage of resources and hampered the efficiency of the project. ’*

Efficiency of the project is also reflected through change in the project design and execution modality as per the situation. During the project implementation phase, there was a major shift in terms of traditional system towards centralised planning, policy and regulation because of amendment of the Education Act where the power of designing educational policies have constitutionally been delegated to the lower level limiting the power of the centre to make

policy decisions. The change in the political domain affected actors who were directly or indirectly related to education sector. This posed a serious threat to *Hamro Sikshya* as the implementation partners were supposed to work with the SMCs which were reformed by the amendments. However, on a timely manner project design and execution structure was changed to meet the objective of the project.

### **3.5 Sustainability**

Hamro Shikshya envisaged to strengthen the role of CSOs in governance and accountability of Nepal's education sector at the local level. Their utmost priority lays in sensitizing the stakeholders regarding the governance, transparency and accountability of public schools. Even though the project was designed around planning for capacity and institutional development of the stakeholders, it failed to institutionalize sustainable strategies and approaches for educational development into medium and long term.

Since the signing of the MoU with Department of Education (DoE) took more than six-months, the project implementation period was delayed. This meant that the broad-ranged project activities had to be compressed and dictated within the project cycle. Although an exit strategy was present on the papers, it was not administered efficiently in practice. This prevented the beneficiaries to undertake the project learnings, activities, and practices beyond the life of Hamro Shikshya.

*'A great deal of effort was invested to capacitate the stakeholders and we are elated that we were able to achieve 80% of our predetermined targets. However, the abrupt conclusion along with lack of clear exit strategy resulted in the inability to realize the projected impact of Hamro Shikshya. If only the project received continuation, it would have been able to leave a lasting impression in the educational setting.'* - **Tej Lal Lama**

The project has successfully laid a foundation for good practices to be continued beyond the program period. The operationalization of Social Accountability Tools - social audit, fact-sheet disclosure, school self-assessment and parental engagement - has made the key educational stakeholders more liable while undertaking their roles and responsibilities. As the proportion of respondents who are aware about such accountability mechanism has increased by 12%, the SMCs and PTAs have put additional efforts to maintain compliance and transparency. During the evaluation team's interaction with a KII participant, *"There is an increase in the number of queries from the parents about the ways and the areas in which the budget is allocated by*



*the school.*” This growing awareness among the parents is a major factor that has compelled the primary educators of the project implemented areas to give continuity to the audit system. Moreover, the quantitative data from the end line survey depicted that 76% of respondents had participated in the implementation of social accountability tools. The fact that there is a high degree of community involvement in planning and execution of such tools indicates that the stakeholders are capacitated to implement and continue them even after the conclusion of Hamro Shikshya.

*‘CSOs were first trained on social audit procedure, tools and mechanism with an intent to capacitate the participants who would then go on to facilitate the same trainings at the schools. This was done to enable all stakeholders (SMC, PTA and school administration) to implement accountability and provide them with necessary tools needed’- Khimu Shrestha, CSO participant*

The project not only has sensitized the people at the ground level, but also has enabled the successes and proven results to be reproduced in new settings. The narratives from the FGD at Mahottari revealed that the District Education Office has recognized the initiatives of Hamro Shikshya and has encouraged the expansion of similar practices in other schools of the district. Given that the project builds upon organizational capacities in programming, operations and monitoring and evaluation, the DEO has requested the CSOs to lead the assignment. Another a KII participant conveyed that there was an effective exchange (what works to make the project effective, how to overcome challenges, sharing of good practices) of project learning among the CSOs. As there was an excellent coordination among the various CSOs, they engaged in frequent school visits where each party shared their knowledge regarding their best practices. Thus, the project has encouraged systematic replication of best practices rather than a reinvention of the wheel.

The involvement of various stakeholders of the community has enabled them to take ownership to continue and reform and, if need be, different aspects of the project. One such instance is the initiation taken by the local government of Siraha that funded schools that were not covered by the project to help them through SIP and SA processes. Likewise, the schools that were involved in the project will continue the good practices and use of social accountability tools to develop the SIP, social audit. Likewise, a model school- Shree Janata Secondary School- in Dhanusha took the initiative and coordinated funds with the help of primary educators as well as local government to construct a classroom worth Rs. 50 lakhs. This was resulted because of the projects contribution towards enhanced capacity of the school related with good governance and accountability. Correspondingly, the school has also appointed 13 additional teachers from

the funds accumulated from private sources. All these activities have been undertaken as part of the initiative to continue the good practices of the project.

## 4. Challenges

1. The project implementation was delayed due to numerous reasons. The signing of MoU of Hamro Shikshya with DOE delayed the execution for more than six months. Moreover, owing to the focus of stakeholders being shifted to the local level elections, the project was halted for additional 6 months. Majority of stakeholders such as youth, principal, SMC members, teachers were involved in local government election. This precipitated multitudinous challenges during the initial phases of the project. Furthermore, all the public schools of the project district remained closed for nearly one and a half months (July – mid September, 2017) because of floods in Terai.
2. The new Constitution of Nepal (2015) and the eighth amendment of the Education Act, to resolve the overarching issues of the education system, kept basic public education under complete jurisdiction of the local governments. This was a major shift away from the traditional system, which saw a centralized planning and implementation of education sector policy and regulation. These changes in the political domain of Nepal shuffled the roles and responsibilities of politicians, regulators, teachers, students, parents and civil society actors. This posed a serious threat to *Hamro Sikshya* as the implementation partners were supposed to work with the SMCs which were reformed by the amendments.
3. As the Eighth Amendment of the Education Act dissolved the former SMCs, this affected the project to a great extent since members of SMC and PTAs are the primary stakeholders of the project and the project is mainly designed to capacitate them and to improve the governance of public schools. Despite DoE's order to form SMCs in schools as per the amended provisions of the act, it was quite challenging for the project partners to form SMCs. Moreover, as the local level elections were held during the project phase, most of the leading community members were focused on the elections rather than on the SMC formation process. This also delayed the major objective (forming SMCs) of the project.
4. Some schools did not have the capacity to operationalize the project which caused considerable problem while project implementation. The schools where SMCs and

PTAs were not functional or did not have appropriate infrastructures were not able to implement the various social accountability tools. Thus, the schools which were already superior in comparison to other schools realized greater benefit than the schools which actually required intervention bought by the project.

5. Since majority of stakeholders from the school were engaged in political activities, their interest did not match with those that focused on promoting school governance and accountability. Moreover, these stakeholders also faced various political tensions due to which they could not be open towards the initiative. Dealing with individuals who had such mindset and influencing them was a very tough task. Implementation of activities thus became very strenuous.
6. The project focused on capacitating a large number of CSOs and Local Youth Clubs (LYC). There is indeed an urgent need to, and a clear advantage to capacitating these actors esp. considering the new political shift in Nepal (including governance and regulation of education sector). Having said that, engaging a multitude of partners all at the same time can lead to some challenges in terms of coordination. It is challenging but absolutely crucial that all partners are kept on the entire communication loop and everybody is on the same page. Some of these challenges to handling multiple partners seems to have permeated into Hamro Shikshya as well.
7. The coordination between major implementation partners – GoGo Foundation and NCE Nepal – was good in the initial phases. However, after the coordinator of NCE Nepal was changed, it had some bearing on future collaborations. Usually, when organisations do not have a solid framework for preserving and transferring institutional memories and networks, new team members can find it difficult to gel with the partnership culture. This can lead to small communication lags which can, nonetheless, have big impact on the partnership. For instance, the case of confusions among other partners – the fact that NCE provided travel allowance and GoGo Foundation did not, discouraged the stakeholders from attending meetings. These issues were never solved during the project implementation.
8. All the CSOs responsible for implementing the project activities were not equally capacitated. Some of the CSOs did not have proper understanding of education sector

and school governance, due to which they remained inactive most of the time. This affected the project impact and effectiveness as even after the implementation of the project, all the schools did not have proper functioning SMCs, PTAs and Child Clubs.

9. The fact that all the decisions were made by SFCG severely delayed project implementation. Moreover, payment to the partners were also delayed due to which they could not perform the activities effectively. The district coordination offices were not of much use and was rendered as unnecessary as all partners used to directly communicate with SFCG.
  
10. Often times, the school management wasn't cooperative. In a particular school in Siraha, the social accountability practitioner was stopped from meeting the head of the SMC. Additionally, the school management opposed their behavior and stated that the practitioners could not interfere in the internal matters as it did not fall within their scope of work.

# 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

## 5.1 Conclusion

Hamro Sikshya was a commendable initiative, whose immensity echoed through the plan and approach to tackle the issues pertaining to high level of corruption, irregularities and minimal transparency in 42 schools of Central Terai. Several stakeholders involved in the project perceive it to be extremely relevant in the targeted districts as it focused on solving the pertaining problems in their schools by implementing a range of activities - disseminating knowledge regarding various provisions of Education Act and Regulation, ensuring proper formation and operationalization of SMC, PTA, and child clubs, formulating mechanisms for grievance hearing – installing complaint/feedback box, and ensuring proper preparation of social audit.

In the three years of its operation, *Hamro Sikshya* has been able to create adequate impact in the education sector of Siraha, Dhanusha and Mahottari. The project was effective enough to flag out the major issues of school governance and accountability like lack of formation of SMC and PTA, inadequate and proficient teachers, punctuality of teachers in school and classroom, lack of code of conduct in school, irregularity of students, lack of child centric teaching learning environment, excessive politics in school, and lack of girls friendly environment. Additionally, through the implementation of the project, the teachers have enhanced their knowledge and skills about their roles, mandates and deliverables in school governance and management. The service delivery of the teachers has substantially improved with the initiation of regular teachers' meeting, preparation of lesson plans, and administration of attendance system in the schools. The project has also successfully laid a foundation for good practices to be continued beyond the program period. The operationalization of Social Accountability Tools - social audit, fact-sheet disclosure, school self-assessment and parental engagement - has made the key educational stakeholders more liable while undertaking their roles and responsibilities.

However, Hamro Sikshya operated in a very challenging scenario. The changed context of federalism and the amendments made in the Education Act severely affected the implementation of the project. Moreover, the fact that the newly elected local leaders had no prior experience in leading public education and all the other bodies like SMC and PTA were newly formed, made its execution more difficult. These problems along with coordination

difficulty with implementing partners led to consistent delays and hampered the effective and efficient implementation of the project. It is praiseworthy that the project implementation team took these hurdles as new opportunities in influencing the education actors in improving governance and accountability and implemented it in the best way possible. The project was viewed to be even more significant and relevant. In that sense, the project was initiated in a perfect time for public education to make a new departure towards a system that is transparent, accountable and one that yields graduates that meets the demand side of the market.

## **5.2 Recommendation and Future Strategies**

6. The signing of MoU of Hamro Shikshya with DOE took more than six months, which delayed the implementation of the project. Since it is mandatory to get approval from GoN which facilitates the linkage of the project at district level and aligns the activities with the DEOs, Search waited for it to be done before implementing any activities of the project. Therefore, it is imperative that prior to the commencement of the program, a potential mapping of the partners and their respective roles should be determined.
7. As GoN passed its 8th amendment of the Education Act in June 2016, the former SMCs were dissolved, and schools remained without SMCs for XXX period. This affected the project implementation since members of SMCs are the primary stakeholders and are critical to the success of the project. Therefore, it is suggestive in part of the donor agency to review the policy direction of a program before its launch. Therefore, the agencies must keep into consideration and review the relevant bills or policy recommendations that are tabled in the parliament.
8. The project has used various tools like radio, newsletter and journals to aware more people regarding improvement of school governance and accountability. The report depicts that radio programs have been most effective in disseminating the related information. This can be attributed to the vigilance of people to programs that were broadcast in their local language. Thus, public programs, which aim to engage and aware a greater mass of people, should be conducted in the local language. On the contrary, the reach of newsletters and journals for spreading similar information were minimal. People living in remote areas often render reading newsletters and journals to obtain information as cumbersome. Consequently, a more innovative approach like

preparation of infographics, pamphlets or videos in local language could attract a wider range of audience and also serve the purpose of spreading awareness among larger groups.

9. The involvement of various CSO partners/intermediaries and youth clubs have added to the already existing layers. Since, both CSOs and youth clubs worked around the same objectives, it would be more effective if their roles and responsibilities were made clear before the launch of the project. The task breakdown of different CSOs and youth clubs on the basis of specific governance improvement activity could have yielded better results.
10. As mentioned by the KII respondent in Mahottari, some of the activities initiated by Hamro Sikshya could not be implemented effectively. The end line survey also indicates minimal participation in key activities like public hearing, community scorecard, and interactive programs. For greater success of similar interventions in the future, it might be beneficial to focus on enhancing the administrative capacities of the local implementing partners through strategic matching between local partners and specific activities they undertake on the ground. When one partner has to focus on only one kind of activity, results could be richer. Project could focus on building dedicated programs for specific stakeholders. Both end line and qualitative survey results also depicted that among the various social accountability tools, financial audits were most effectively implemented (a 32% increment from baseline), whereas trainings on social accountability and budget tracking were only moderately effective. This was mainly because an autonomous local body, due to which their accountability is tied to their performance, operationalized it. The effective use of other social accountability tools can thus be realized through a similar method, where the project assigns the responsibility of each tool to a certain stakeholder. This not only will capacitate the stakeholders, but also will create a check and balance mechanism that will enhance their performance.
11. The implementation partners of the project faced numerous difficulties while executing the project. This was mainly due to the inconvenient coordination mechanism among all the involved parties. They were often unaware about each other's' roles and responsibilities and everyone did not have a common understanding about the design



and implementation of the project. As shared by key informants, this led to complete inactiveness of few CSOs and youth clubs. Such complications could be easily mitigated if a meeting with all the partners was conducted prior to project execution. It is recommended that an integrated plan for all the partners should be prepared in any undertaking of similar nature in the future. This would help all partners understand where they fit in the entire intervention picture.

12. A few structural changes in the project could improve both efficiency and effectiveness of the project. If the project would have been given entirely to one organization, it could have yielded better results and become more effective. However, since the project mobilized a large number of CSOs and LYCs, it created spaces for some coordination lags. Despite the fact that CSO and LYC had different responsibilities, the partners believed that if all the activities were implemented by only one organization, it would have been easier.
13. A few CSOs believed that the school that they worked with were already functioning well and they did not have to put a lot of effort. The teachers and the management committees were already conscious of their responsibilities and were highly committed. Thus, if schools that were in dire need of being rescued was chosen, they would have been able to quantify the changes and create greater impact.
14. The program was implemented only in a few schools of the district due to which its broader impact could not be felt. Few workshops or programs that focuses on enhancing participation and knowledge about school governance and accountability among a larger group of people is thus desirable.
15. Local leaders have always been central in every community and are capable of immense influence over local community members. This study also indicates that local leaders are key in influencing stakeholders in the education sector as well. Therefore, it is recommended that action should consider local leaders as strategic partners while implementing activities at the local level. In order to better capacitate these leaders and to improve governance, intra-state workshop where local leaders of different states

come together, need to be implemented that not only facilitate idea sharing but also empower local governments.

16. Since, the country held local level elections in 2017, most of the leading community members were focused on the elections rather than on the project implementation. The implementation of a well-structured political-economic analysis (PEA) would have enabled the rolling parties to foresee this major affair and indulge in a background research of the stakeholder engagement. Additionally, this study would have led to a better identification of the political and personal interest of the stakeholders which would have further enabled the project to incentivize the participants in a more streamlined way, where their personal interests aligned with the project concentration.
17. The partners highlighted the fact that despite the numerous complaints made to GoGo Foundation regarding the coordination problems and the rising conflict between various partners, they did not put an effort to address the issues. Thus, regular update meetings where all the partners could meet and resolve their issues would have been fruitful. Moreover, redressal mechanisms for such inevitable issues should have been developed.
18. If a similar program is to operate in the future, it must begin during the academic session, that is around Baisakh and continue until Chaitra. As Hamro Shikshya was introduced in the middle of the session, it was difficult for the project partners to measure its impact. Thus, the project must operate for a minimum of an entire academic cycle so as to evaluate the changes and keep track of the progress.

### Annex 1: Key Informants Interviewed

S.No	Name	District	Organization	Gender
1	Pavan Kumar Mandal	Dhanusha		Male
2	Batuk Nath Jha	Dhanusha	Radio Mithila	Male
3	Sukchandra Lal Kam	Dhanusha	DEO	Male
4	Khim Shrestha	Siraha	Mahila Uddar Sewa Kendra	Male
5	Dipesh K. Singh	Siraha	Mahila Uddar Sewa Kendra	Male
6	Jibaneshwor Yadav	Siraha	Siraha Municipality	Male
7	Ram Vinay Yadav	Mahottarai	Education Consultancy	Male
8	Tejilal Lama			Male
9	Laxmi Shrestha			Female

## Annex 2: Focus Group Discussion (Siraha)

S.N	Name	Address	Organizaion	Sex
1	Madhusundan	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male
2	Bibek Kumar Singh	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male
3	Hari Chandra Yadav	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male
4	Shanti Kumari Yadav	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Female
5	Susan Kumari Yadav	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Female
6	Sima Kumari Yadav	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Female
7	Pradeep Kumar Yadav	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male
8	Md. Waywl Haque	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male
9	Ram Babu Mahaseth	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male
10	Mahendra P. Singh	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male
11	Lalita Devi Pakhan	Siraha	PTA	Female
12	Hari Narayan Yadav	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male
13	Khim Shrestha	Siraha	Mahila Uddar Sewa Kendra	Male
14	Dipesh Kumar Singh	Siraha	Mahila Uddar Sewa Kendra	Male
15	Jibaneswan Yadav	Siraha	Siraha Municipality	Male
16	Dr. Hawin Kumar Yadav	Siraha		Male
17	Gita Devi	Siraha	SMC	Female
18	Raj Dev Yadav	Siraha	PTA	Male
19	Jeeten Yadav	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male
20	Rajiv G	Siraha	Chandra Tec. Sec. School	Male

### Annex 3: Focus Group Discussion (Dhanusha)

S.N	Name	Address	Organization	Sex
1	Gadhey Shyam Goite	Dhanusha		Male
2	Jay Ram Mandal	Dhanusha		Male
3	Atim Lal Mandal	Dhanusha		Male
4	Pramod Kumar Mandal	Dhanusha		Male
5	Ram Sagar Mandal	Dhanusha		Male
6	Laxman Pasma	Dhanusha		Male
7	Sukudev Sadar	Dhanusha	GoGo Foundation	Male
8	Subodh Kumar Yadav	Dhanusha		Male
9	Bijendra Pandit	Dhanusha		Male
10	Bisheswor Prasad Sah	Dhanusha		Male
11	Sheetal Yadav	Dhanusha		Male
12	Hari Narayan Mandal	Dhanusha		Female
13	Jay Chandra Chaudhary	Dhanusha		Male
14	Mahendra Sah	Dhanusha	Girija Ma. Vi. Fulgama	Male
15	Kul Bahadur Sah	Dhanusha	Girija Ma. Vi. Fulgama	Male
16	Ram Udil Sah	Dhanusha	Girija Ma. Vi. Fulgama	Male
17	Ram Sworup Purbe	Dhanusha	Sunrise Youth Club	Male
18	Jibachi Devi Sah	Dhanusha	Srota Club	Female
19	Ram Chandra Sah	Dhanusha	Srota Club	Male
20	Ram Bahadur Mandal	Dhanusha	Srota Club	Male

#### Annex 4: Focus Group Discussion (Mahottari)

S.N	Name	Address	Organization	Sex
1	Jitendra Yadav	Mahottarai	School	Male
2	Jay Prakash Yadav	Mahottarai	School	Male
3	Nilam Yadav	Mahottarai	School	Female
4	Kiran Yadav	Mahottarai	School	Male
5	Chunchun Kumari Sah	Mahottarai	Child Club	Female
6	Nilu Kumari Yadav	Mahottarai	Child Club	Female
7	Niroj Kumar Chaudhari	Mahottarai	Child Club	Male
8	Rakesh Pasonan	Mahottarai	Child Club	Male
9	Joginder Sada	Mahottarai	Radio Club	Male
10	Dasramo Deri Sada	Mahottarai	Radio Club	Male
11	Ful Kumari Sada	Mahottarai	Radio Club	Female
12	Lalo Devi Sada	Mahottarai	Radio Club	Female
13	Ratiya Devi Sada	Mahottarai	Radio Club	Female
14	Baiynath Saah	Mahottarai	School	Male
15	Jarina Khatun	Mahottarai	School	Female
16	Surita Devi Sada	Mahottarai	PTA	Female
17	Ram Rati Devi Mahra	Mahottarai	SMC	Female
18	Pradip Singh Tharu	Mahottarai	School	Male
19	Umesh Raut	Mahottarai	School	Male
20	Raj Kishor Majhi	Mahottarai	PTA	Male
21	Basudev Pasonan	Mahottarai	SMC	Male
22	Gajendra K. Mahato	Mahottarai	N.Y.C	Male