Status of Women and Youth Leadership in Nepal
(Findings from baseline/endline and internal evaluation- July 2018)

Abbreviations

CDO	:	Chief District Officer
CSPro	:	Census and Survey Processing System
DMEA	:	Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability
LDO	:	Local Development Officer
LDTA	:	Local Development Training Academy
LGU	:	Local Government Unit
MoFAD	:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Local Development
PCL	:	Proficiency Certificate Level
RYC	:	Ratauli Youba Club
SIDS	:	Sindhuli Integrated Development Society
SLC	:	School Leaving Certificate
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Science
UN	:	United Nations
VDC	:	Village Development Committee

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Executive Summary

After many years of uncertainty following the protracted transition from a monarchy to a fully democratic federal republic, Nepal finally drafted the new constitution (2015), and immediately began implementing the restructuring of the state into federal, provincial, and local government units (LGUs). In 2017, all three tiers of elections were successfully completed and resulted in the formation of seven new provincial governments and 753 LGUs. The new constitution mandated the devolution of authority and power, which resulted in the decentralization of executive, legislative, judicial, and financial power from central government control, effectively making the provinces autonomous entities accountable to the central (federal) government.

In 2008, Nepal introduced mandatory quotas for women and marginal groups of a third for the central government, and an unprecedented 40 percent representation for local governments was outlined in the new constitution. Consequently, women's representation increased significantly, and many youth have entered leadership positions at the local level. This development has mostly been acknowledged as a positive move towards a more inclusive and representative democracy. However, many of the newly elected local government representatives, especially women and youth leaders, have limited awareness regarding their mandates, functions, and procedures and have little or no leadership experience, which may hinder them in effectively and efficiently conducting their roles and responsibilities.

Therefore, with funding from Governance Facility, Search for Common Ground (Nepal), in partnership with Ratauli Yuwa Club (RYC) and Sindhuli Integrated Development Service-Nepal (SIDS-Nepal), implemented the 'Promoting Political Leadership of Women and Youth in Nepal, Collaborative Leadership Project' in three LGUs in each of the three target districts; Sindhuli, Dhanusha and Mahottari. The project ran from October 2017 to June 2018, and the selected districts include both Hill and Terai/Madhesh communities from the newly demarcated province two and three.

The primary objective of the project was to contribute to developing collaboration, representation, and the meaningful participation of women and the youth, especially from poor and marginalized communities, and also other stakeholders, such as youth/women wings of political parties, youth networks and women associations, national and local leaders, and local government officials in the governance system and local level planning and decision-making processes. The project focused on three inter-connected and mutually supportive outputs: i) Increased knowledge and understanding among women and youth leaders in local level governance and development; ii) enhanced collaborative leadership and decision-making skills of youth and women in local level; and, iii) strengthened evidence and need based women and youth friendly policy reform and practices.

This report is based on a comparative analysis of the data collected from the baseline and endline surveys, in an attempt to determine the impact the project in the three target districts. The baseline survey was initially conducted to provide accurate information on a number of interconnected indicators to assist in developing various initiatives that would implemented in local communities. The Program was designed to specifically address issues that were hindering women, the youth, and marginal groups from gaining meaningful leadership opportunities in local governance and development. The results from the baseline survey were very concerning, and various themes emerged that were seriously restricting the representation and participation of vulnerable and marginal groups, including women and the youth. Among the many issue highlighted by the baseline survey was the serious lack of awareness and understanding of state restructuring, budgeting, existing programs and training, public hearings to name a few. Another issues that was evident in most of the indicators, was the exclusion of women, the youth,

and marginal groups from obtaining active or productive roles in local development or governance, which resulted in a lack of representation and an inability to directly engage with issues that impacted the lives of all members of local communities.

The endline survey was conducted approximately six months after the baseline survey, and after the introduction of the various initiatives to directly address the issues highlighted by the baseline data. The endline gathered data by revisiting the same target districts and surveying the same respondents, where available, using the same indicators as the previous survey. The purpose of the endline survey was not to test the efficacy of the various initiatives implemented under the 'Collaborative Leadership Project', but to ascertain the actual changes, if any, that had occurred at the community level regarding knowledge of state restructuring, women, youth and marginal groups' inclusion in local governance and development, attitudes and perceptions of women and the youth, and opinions related to changes and improvements to inclusive and participatory democratic practices at the local level. The baseline and endline surveys were extremely timely, as in the relatively short period between the two surveys the local, provincial, and federal elections were successfully completed, and state restructuring was reintroducing local governments after a period of twenty years. In addition, local government units (LGUs) were being introduced in the seven new provinces, as part of the decentralization of the federal government, and many new representatives were elected from local communities.

The key findings from the comparative analysis is that in the short period between the surveys, the respondents have become significantly more aware of state restructuring, local governance and development mechanisms, and the locally available facilities and resources, such as leadership development training programs. The data also indicates that the increased awareness has resulted in a dramatic increase in participation for most of the respondents, including the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The comparative analysis also revealed a notable increase in the confidence of the respondents as not only are they increasingly participating in meetings and discussions, but are slowly beginning to actively engage by offering their opinions and perspectives. However, the participation is not uniform across all the indicators and variables, as many groups are still lacking representation and participation, such as Terai districts, particularly Mahottari, farmers/housewives, students (the youth), women, and in fewer instances, Dalits and the backward castes.

The comparison between the surveys indicates that there are certain patterns and trends that are emerging, and are evident in almost all the indicators, and are extremely positive. Many of the indicators clearly showed a general increase in representation in the various local government and development mechanisms, leadership development training programs, and local groups, forums, and networks. Moreover, the majority of the respondents, including the marginal groups, demonstrate an increased awareness of many issues that impact their daily lives, such as state restructuring, local services and facilities, budget allocation, leadership development training, contacting their elected representatives, gender sensitivity, and valuing the youth as assets. This suggests that with more time, communities will continue to become more inclusive and representative.

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and Background

After a prolonged period of political transition that began with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006, where Nepal had ten governments over an eleven-year period, Nepal is currently restructuring the state after the successful completion of the local, provincial, and Federal elections in 2017. The election alliance formed between the CPN-UML and the CPN-Maoist, and termed the 'left alliance', won an overwhelming victory and have an absolute majority of 63% in the federal government, and in six of the seven provinces. Hopes are high that this is the beginning of the end of the much maligned and protracted transition of Nepal from a monarchy to a Federal republic, which will usher in a new era of good governance and sustainable development. Moreover, the new Federal system will decentralize legislative, executive, judicial, and financial power from central government control to the quasi-autonomous provinces under the Federal government, as mandated in the 2015 constitution.

The new state will consist of the Federal Government at the centre, seven provincial Governments, and 753 local Governments representing the 6753 wards, including six Metropolitan Cities (*Mahanagarpalika*), 11 Sub Metropolitan Cities (*Upa-Mahanagarpalika*), 276 Municipalities (*Nagarpalika*) and 460 Rural Municipalities (*Gaunpalika*). In addition, there are 77 districts that come between the province and local governments, which are still important administrative structures, but have largely relinquished most of their power to the local governments. The districts' specific roles are yet to be finalized, but is widely presumed that they will be predominately concerned with coordinating the activities of the new local government units (LGUs) that are located within their jurisdiction.

In 2008, Nepal introduced First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) and Proportional Representation (PR) elections, with compulsory quotas for women of 33 per cent for the central government. The system indicated that if women did not constitute 33 percent of the government, then the political parties would chose candidates using the PR system to meet their mandatory quotas. Moreover, the new constitution (2015) further mandated that 40 per cent of quotas would be made available for local governments, as after 20 years local governments were finally been reintroduced under the new federal system. The Local Election Act mandates that two women, one of whom must be Dalit, should be included in the allocation of one chair and four ward members.

Limbu (2018) adds that 'the Act stipulates that political parties must field at least one female candidate for the post of either mayor or deputy mayor of a municipality or for chairperson or vice chairperson in the case of a rural municipality. As a result, women now constitute 40.9 per cent of the total 35,041 local government representatives elected across 753 local levels, including six metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 municipalities and 460 rural municipalities'. This resulted in a total of 275 members (165 seats from FPTP and 110 from PR) of the House of Representatives, inclusive of 33%, and 550 State Assembly members (330 seats from FPTP and 220 from PR) being elected in federal and State elections, and a 59-member National Assembly election (37.3% women) for the upper house of the bicameral federal parliament.

However, there are still numerous issues that must be addressed to deliver political stability and a sustainable and durable democracy. Among the many issues that remain is the serious issue of the underrepresentation of women the youth, and marginalized groups in meaningful decision-making positions. Although women and marginal groups are significantly represented in local governments, and at the provincial and Federal level, very few women have key positions or were elected through the FPTP

system, instead gaining their seats from the PR system. Therefore, women and marginalized groups still lack meaningful participation and real decision-making power and authority, and are simply reflecting the rise of tokenistic representation. Moreover, as the majority of women representatives were through the PR system it is clear that many high-caste, and hill women, with political connections are being endorsed and chosen as candidates by their respective parties. This indicates that women are still marginalized and excluded, and this problem is compounded for women from poor and marginalized communities, such as Dalits, Muslims and Madheshis. This is not exclusively a problem for women as many young men also face discrimination, but the youth have no quota to increase representation and share the many same problems as women in obtaining meaningful leadership positions, and becoming actively involved in decision-making at all levels.

Now that women have increased their representation and local governments have been re-established, it is imperative that the newly elected representatives have the requisite skills to conduct their duties effectively. Therefore, it is imperative that civil society, political parties, government and non-government organisations directly support women the youth, and marginalized groups, and equip them with adequate knowledge and skills and encourage and support leaders to make leadership truly inclusive and representative of the complex Nepali population. Active and meaningful leadership positions and adequate training for women and youth are the only way to genuinely address the imbalance in power, empower local communities, and engage local leaders in the governance and development mechanisms.

1.2 Introduction

This report is a comparative analysis of the data collected from baseline and endline surveys conducted in Dhanusha, Mahottari, and Sindhuli. The surveys collected quantitative survey data, and subsequent qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs, to ascertain the knowledge and awareness of locally elected women and youth representatives and other important social actors on a variety of issues related to the new Federal state restructuring, local governance, and development. The objective of the report is not just to determine the impact, relevance, and effectiveness of 'The Collaborative Leadership Project' implemented by Search for Common Ground (Nepal) and its local partners, but also record the local level changes that occurred during the period between the surveys. By conducting a comparative analysis of the data recorded in the baseline and endline surveys, the changes in attitude, opinions, and perspectives of local community members can be determined to ascertain the impact of the seismic political changes that have recently occurred, and the numerous initiatives that were introduced to address some of the most salient issues inhibiting the development of truly inclusive and representative local governance and development structures.

1.2.1 Baseline

The Baseline survey was conducted in November/December 2017 by Search (Nepal) in the three target districts, Sindhuli, Mahottari, and Dhanusha, and ensured that the respondents were represented equally across the three study sites. The survey was designed to collect quantitative data to record the existing experiences and perceptions of the public relating to the leadership of women and the youth, and determine the actual knowledge, understanding, and awareness of newly elected local representatives, and other important social actors among women, the youth, and marginal groups at the community level. In addition, further data was collected by Search using focus group discussions (FGD) and Key Informant interviews (KIIs). The survey was conducted in all 9 LGUs namely Janakpur, Nagraiyan, Mukhiyapati, and Mushariya in Dhanusha; Jaleshwor, Eakdara, and Manara in Mahottari, and Kamalamai, Dudhauli, and Teenpatan in Sindhuli. Among 1,164 respondents, 61 percent were female, and the sample included 26

percent youth leaders/students, 20 percent political leaders, 13 percent of people affiliated with different local structures, and 10 percent of elected representatives.

The survey focused on 12 indicators to determine respondents' perspectives on various topics related to local governance mechanisms, state restructuring, and issues concerning women and youth, representation, and leadership at the local level. The areas examined were: awareness of recent state restructuring; collaboration across the dividing lines; affiliation with local structures; representation in planning and review meetings (VDC level); platform for leadership development at the local level; awareness of Local development budget; public hearings and social audits, public satisfaction towards service providers; perception of adults towards the youth; and the perception of men towards women. In addition, the respondents were divided into six variables based on geographic region, gender, age, position, and caste/ethnicity, and the respondents were further subdivided into categories according to the nature of questions in the survey, and the subsequent questions related to the theme of the main question.

The evidence based information was used to focus the planned initiatives and programs of the Collaborative Leadership Program to help directly address the needs of the people and local communities in relation to local governance and development. It is important to note that during the baseline survey the demarcation of the new wards, local governments, municipalities/rural municipalities, and provinces was incomplete, therefore, Dhanusha and Mahottari are now in province two, the only one with a Madheshi based majority provincial government, and Sindhuli is located in province three.

Overall, the results of the baseline survey were very concerning as they reflected a serious disconnect between the local community members and the local governance and development structures, and highlighted some extremely worrying trends and issues that inhabit women, the youth, and marginal groups from gaining meaningful leadership positions and active decision-making roles. The key findings from the baseline survey are presented below.

- When asked if they were aware of the recent state restructuring, the respondents demonstrated that they were mostly unaware of the state restructuring. Women, the illiterate, and Dalits were the least aware and this indicates that their knowledge of the availability and access to the facilities, resources, and services provided in their communities is severely impaired. Among the respondents who were aware, there was limited knowledge of the actual changes at the local level. Most respondents were aware of the larger issues, such as the formation of local governments, more rights at the local level, and the restructuring of the local government, but few were aware of all the specific changes to the governance structure. The respondents were mostly positive and optimistic regarding the changes having a positive impact on local development, but the responses had an undercurrent of pessimism and lack of trust.

- Regarding the difficulty or ease respondents feel that they can express your opinion or place their vote during the decision-making process, the respondents demonstrated a serious lack of confidence related to expressing their opinions and decision-making, which suggests much more work is required to build confidence to empower people, and make communities and local governance more inclusive and representative.

- The question of whether women and youth in your community work collaboratively with people of different identities showed that an average of about 50 percent of the respondents consider that women and the youth from their communities work collaboratively with people from other social

identities. However, it also highlights a serious division between the Pahade and Madhesi. Moreover, the higher the educational attainment the more perceived collaboration.

- Whether the respondents were affiliated with any group/organization or network also raised concerns as most of the youth were only represented in a few organizations, groups, and networks; namely, gender specific women's or mother's groups or political parties. It was clear that respondents from Mahottari and Dhanusha were much more involved in political parties than those from Sindhuli, which may be a reflection of the increased politicization due to the recent unrest in the Tarai. Respondents, such as elected representatives, people affiliated to local structures, and political leaders were all involved in many groups and organizations. Conversely, farmers/housewives, students, and influential people were much less affiliated with any organizations and groups, which indicates that membership appears to be connected with position and hierarchy in the local community.

  Overall, there is a clear lack of membership from the youth in any local organization and women's membership is meaningless if the representation is not meaningful and lacks active participation. This is evident where many respondents profess to participate in discussions and decisions at the local level, very few claimed that they considered that they moved the arguments forward or were influential in decision-making. This suggests a serious lack of trust in the decision-making process and the general feeling of powerlessness to actively influence decisions by most of the respondents.

- Very few respondents were invited to budget planning meetings at the VDC, with the exception of people who were already affiliated or directly associated with local governance and development, such as elected representatives and political leaders. Therefore, the lack of community member involvement highlights the VDC budget meeting as good example of the lack of transparency and accountability of local governance. This may explain the lack of trust in local decision-making mechanisms and the respondents' general feeling that their opinions have no impact or influence over decisions at the local level.

- The response to whether a respondent participated in the planning and review meeting at the VDC in the last year was very encouraging as the majority of the respondents, or a family member, attended a meeting within the last year, a significant increase in the number of respondents who were invited to the budget meeting at the VDC.

- The majority of the respondents were completely unaware if a group or forum for leadership development had been established in their communities. This suggests that the focus should not just be on whether there are forums and groups for leadership development, but also on how to make people aware of them, and how information is disseminated within communities to the benefit of some and detriment to others, exacerbating social exclusion.

  Among the few respondents who were aware of the forums and groups in their communities, very few attended and those who did were very irregular in their attendance. However, the majority of the respondents reported positive experiences and gained at least a little, if not a lot, of new knowledge and information on women's roles in local development. The data clearly shows that the majority of the respondents who attended were relatively indifferent, but although they mostly supported women in theory and understand their problems, very few stated that they would actively participate or their involvement was important in helping women.

- The majority of the respondents stated that they were completely unaware of local budgeting for women and the youth, especially regarding leadership development training. Moreover, elected representatives, people affiliated with local structures, influential people, and political leaders, the groups who are actively involved in local governance and were invited to budget meetings at the VDC, also appear to be unaware of the allocation of budgets for women and youth leadership development. Perhaps the biggest concern is that most vulnerable and the target of leadership development programs, women, youth, and the poor and marginalized are uninformed of any budget allocation.

- The respondents' knowledge of public hearings is seriously lacking across all the variables, and again the categories that should be more knowledgeable, such as elected representatives, political leaders, and people affiliated with local structures are worrying uniformed. However, the most concerning aspect of the study is that the already marginalized and excluded appear to be the least aware, specifically women, Dalits, and the illiterate, implying that measures and mechanisms that attempt to encourage and enhance social inclusion are underperforming at the local level, predominantly due to the lack of awareness. The respondents who were aware, and had participated, were positive about their experience. However, the farmers/housewives, students, and the youth (15-29 age group) participated much less and may be a concern as these are some of the target groups.

- Most of the respondents could not answer whether the public was satisfied with the service providers as they mostly stated that they either did not know or could not say. This is a very concerning as it indicates a serious lack of knowledge or awareness of the services provided, facilities available, and the fundamental roles of organizations, institutions, or individual leaders/representatives. In addition to the lack of knowledge, there appears to be a similar lack of trust and faith in actual development and local governance. The respondents who were aware of what services are available, appear to consider them just rhetoric or very unsatisfactory as they perceive that the local service providers are not representing, supporting, or providing services to local community members to address issues of exclusion, poverty, and reduce the marginalization of women, youth, and vulnerable communities and individuals.

- Respondents overwhelmingly believed that the youth are not perceived as positive by adults in their communities. In addition, the respondents also think that adults perceive the youths' abilities, knowledge, and importance in local development as different and not as valuable as adults'. This perceived difference has serious repercussions on the youth becoming valuable change agents within their communities, and maximizing and utilizing their leadership potential.

  Most of the respondents consider that male community members have a lack of belief in the value and need for women's involvement in local development. There appears to be a prevailing negativity and entrenched patriarchal view of women in most communities, which seriously restricts women's engagement in leadership activities and local governance and development.

The baseline data indicated that there are many issues related to the selected indicators, as shown above, but perhaps the most pervasive, and possibly egregious problem, is the lack of awareness and understanding of state restructuring, budgeting, existing programs and training, and public hearings to name a few. Limited awareness and understanding is by definition the lack of knowledge and a signifier of exclusion and marginalization, as people are unable to participate or influence the decisions that have serious implications on their everyday lives, or access the very facilities, services, and training that are designed to empower and equip individuals and create genuinely inclusive and egalitarian communities. Lack of confidence, essentially an inferiority complex, is clearly evident in the data as many respondents

demonstrated that they attended meetings and discussions; however, very few actively engaged and consider that their opinions were neither important nor influential. This feeling of powerlessness further perpetuates the alienation of the individuals and undermines their faith and trust in local governance and inclusive decision-making processes. This is indicative of the difference between representation and active meaningful participation, as attendance is insufficient in creating collaborative and productive partnerships for local development.

Another recurring theme suggested by the baseline survey was the continued and pervasive exclusion of women, youth, and the poor and marginalized from any active or productive roles in local development or governance in their own communities. This is directly related to the lack of awareness and understanding, but the ubiquitous exclusion in all areas, as demonstrated by the survey data, is extremely detrimental not only to the individuals but to entire communities as it directly undermines the entire concept of representative local governance and inclusive democracy. Moreover, the perceptions of women and the youth are another component of the continuation and perpetuation of exclusionary practices and discriminatory thinking. The perceptions of *all* community members must be changed to value the potential contribution that women and the youth can make as constructive members of communities, valuable leaders, and agents of change.

1.2.2 The Collaborative Leadership Project

The ultimate goal of the Collaborative Leadership Project was to contribute to developing equal opportunities and the participation of women and youth in leadership and local decision-making processes. It was implemented with the Ratauli Youth Club (RYC) and Sindhuli Integrated Development Services (SIDS)-Nepal, and aimed at contributing to developing equal opportunities and the meaningful participation of women and youth in leadership and local decision-making processes, resource allocation, and policy formulation. The project was designed to focus on three inter-connected and mutually supportive outputs, which resulted in the implementation of modular training programs that covered practically orientated and directly applicable knowledge and skills that leaders require to actively influence local governance processes. This would enable them to better serve their communities and improve the relationship between citizens and the government in the target areas, and lead to more women and youth representation in future.

The three outputs are: output one, increased knowledge and understanding among women and youth leaders in local level governance and development; output two, enhanced collaborative leadership and decision-making skills of youth and women in local level; and output three, strengthened evidence and need based women and youth friendly policy reform and practices.

- **Output one: Increased knowledge and understanding on women and youth leaders:** This output involved activities focused on increasing women and youth leaders' knowledge of local level governance and development, collaborative leadership, as well as Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials intended to educate citizens about women's and youth entitlements. The activities consist of the production and distribution of IEC Materials on youth and women's entitlements; community dialogue between women representatives and public; two-day training to women-led judicial committee and CMCs and Social campaigns - led by women and youth leaders in collaboration with local institutions
- **Output two: Enhanced collaborative leadership and decision-making skills:** This output includes activities related to collaborative leadership modular training, production and dissemination of

500 copies CL handbook and coaching and mentoring to youth and women leaders on their leadership rules and practices. This output provided a 2-day CL training in each municipality targeting 270 people in total inclusive of women and youth associated with IPWA, IPYN, local and district level networks, forestry user groups, cooperatives, WCFs, CACs and WWGs.

- **Output 3: Strengthened women and youth friendly policy reform and practices:** This output includes mobilization of 6 youth interns (three female) for three months' fellowship to explore and study the understanding and implementation on women and youth policies at local levels. This is a qualitative research to have rich and thick description on topic – status of women leadership: factors contributing and hindering the promotion of women in decision making. The fellowship report will be shared with local and district level authorities and elected representatives to make women and youth friendly policies and plans.

The training included activities like community dialogue, training on judicial functions and local governance as per the new laws, guidelines and policies in each district, coaching and reflection, district level policy dialogue, and knowledge production on governance reform to name a few. The training aimed at further creating positive relationships between young men and women, the general public, and the administrative authorities to make them more accountable, inclusive, and responsive for quality service delivery. The training enabled the newly elected youth and women leaders to meaningfully participate and influence local level decisions and resource allocation, which would benefit the most marginalized people and communities. This should have improved the political parties' perception of their young leaders and women, and increase their willingness to engage them in political mainstreaming.

It must be noted that due to the relatively short period of training, approximately 6 months due to limited time, the endline data may not reflect the significant gains recorded in the qualitative data collected from KIIs and FGDs. However, the inchoate nature of the program and the herculean task of providing adequate training and skills to all invested parties and stakeholders are clearly highlighted in the feedback from the participants and are discussed in detail in the qualitative findings section.

1.2.3 Endline Survey

The endline study revisited the three field sites and administered the same survey after the successful completion of the local, provincial, and federal elections. The survey was specifically designed to gather comparable data from the same respondents after the modular training programs were completed. As the training programs specifically targeted collaborative leadership skills, knowledge of local decision-making mechanisms and procedures, increasing collaboration, representation, and the meaningful participation of women and youth in the governance system and local level decisions, the endline data enables a comparative analysis of the respondents to determine the effectiveness of the training and establish whether the many concerns raised in the baseline survey have been addressed or alleviated. The project directly focused on increasing the knowledge and skills of the youth and women in leadership and decision-making that will enable them to practice democratic behavior to bring the common agenda for inclusive governance and effective local development. The data from the endline survey is complemented with additional qualitative data gained from KIIs and FGDs.

1.3 Literature Review

There is an abundance of literature and research on the concept of leadership and political engagement; however, there is a serious dearth of work on youth and women's involvement in leadership, their role in local governance, and the leadership potential of this untapped resource. To examine in detail the

literature relating to youth and women's leadership it is imperative to examine a few major themes that underscore the provide the foundation for the Collaborative Leadership Project. Therefore, this literature review will explore the theoretical and practical components related to the concept of leadership and the consequent training and curriculum development initiatives that are specifically designed to enable, encourage, and support women and youth leaders. The review will illustrate that the theoretical underpinnings and practical modular training activities provided by Search, and their local partners, are firmly located in the most recent evidence based research and the current leadership paradigms.

1.3.1 What is Leadership?

The concept of what constitutes a leader and leadership is highly contested in the literature, but there is a general consensus that the term must be reconsidered and reframed to include potential and active youth and women leaders. According to MacNeil and McClean (2006), the first change must be the famous adage, often used in literature regarding youth leadership, that states that the 'youth are tomorrow's leaders' must be discarded, as they suggest that the youth must be considered as an analytical category and not a future asset. MacNeil posits, 'I believe that our organizations and communities miss out when we simply work to prepare youth for leadership in the future. We need leaders now' (MacNeil and McClean 2006, 100). Furthermore, McNeil (2006) claims that the traditional concepts of leaders and leadership should also be abandoned or updated as they ignore the importance of context and diversity. She further states that although there is a plethora of writing on leadership there is a serious dearth of writing or research on youth leadership. She argues that there is a division in the limited scholarly work on youth leadership that focuses on adult leadership as being based on 'authority' and youth leadership being founded on 'ability'. This dominant discourse must be deconstructed and new definitions should perceive youth and adult leadership as the same.

As critiqued by McNeil, the literature predominantly focuses on the individual and not the position they occupy. She argues that: 'A more modern trend in leadership theory is the movement away from the concept of leadership residing in one person, toward a concept of leadership residing in the relationship between and among individuals' (MacNeil 2006, 28). She concludes that leadership must be reframed as a relational process that combines ability, knowledge, skills, and talents with authority, voice, influence, and decision-making power to positively influence and impact diverse individuals, organizations, and communities. Fertman and van Linden (1999) further expand this idea by stating that leadership is both transactional (doing) and transformative (Knowledge and understanding). They argue that: 'Leaders are individuals (both adults and adolescents) who think for themselves, communicate their thoughts and feelings to others, and help others understand and act on their own beliefs. They influence others in an ethical and socially responsible way' (Fertman, van Linden 1999, 10). Therefore, youth and women's leadership must incorporate a more contextual approach that includes the unique experiences of the individual, the larger context of leadership practice, and the specific opportunities for a more meaningful influence in local decision making and active participation. MacNeil proposes a more accurate definition for leadership that incorporates the emphasis on interpersonal relations, partnerships, and collaboration. She suggests: 'A more modern trend in leadership theory is the movement away from the concept of leadership residing in one person, toward a concept of leadership residing in the relationship between and among individuals' (MacNeil 2006, 28).

1.3.2 Youth Leadership

There are many issues relating to youth leadership that must be addressed and according to Steinberg (2011) the first, and most important problem, is the way that the youth are perceived. She states: 'A fear of youth is part of our fabric. Woven between the threads, young men and women are unloved, often not

understood, and often feared' (Steinberg 2011, 269). The fact that the youth are often portrayed as negative and the cause of problems rather than the solution, results in the belief that if the youth are bad then they will make bad leaders. The negative perceptions and stereotypes must be changed, as the youth require empowerment and inclusion not preconceptions and discrimination.

A study conducted by Thompson and Arsalan (2007) on youth leadership in Jordan highlights the negative perception of the youth as a danger to society as opposed to a positive asset. Jordan has many parallels with Nepal as it has a high percentage of the population between the ages of 10 -24, and three-quarters of the population is under 30. Moreover, they also have a serious unemployment problem among the youth and they have very little representation and few leadership positions. However, they argue that the youth must be seen as a positive element and a benefit for society. They suggest that the youth should be perceived as peacemakers and agents of change, a valuable resource, to fight against the bias and prejudice they face. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of understanding leadership in the context of the culture, community, and society. For example, they argue that the concept of leadership is a 'locally constructed concept' and is therefore contextual and must be understood as such.

They identify some obstacles to youth leadership, such as patriarchy, especially for women, and the lack of diversity. 'After all, "leadership" is a socially constructed concept whose meaning and everyday manifestation is highly dependent on the normative social arrangements within the dominant culture' (Thompson and Arsalan 2007, 54). They argue the youth have a great contribution to make as they also act as a bridge between accessing global culture while preserving their own. They see the role of the youth as essential in creating inclusion, ending marginalization, and promoting a plural society. The research in Jordan clearly demonstrated that youth leadership not only has to be understood in context, but actively address exclusion, especially for the poor and marginalized, and provide a counter-balance to the more traditional and conservative leaders.[1] Furthermore, they state that in the case of Jordan, the middle east, and other countries: 'Never before has there been a more compelling need to expand the youth role in tackling the region's immediate challenges and develop youth leaders with new perspectives on conflict and peace-building. Moreover, serious interventions into youth leadership development will more broadly serve as a foundation for nation-building in Jordan and the larger region' (Thompson and Arsalan 2007, 53)

Another example is provided by Youth Speak out Coalition & Zimmerman (2007), that work with youth-led movements and further emphasizes the importance of diversity and understanding the role of intersectionality[2] when examining youth issues and the complex interaction of different social and cultural categories, as the literature and media continually homogenize the youth as a single category. They state that: 'The success of the youth movement has depended on its ability to connect the dots between issues and constituencies. By exploring the intersections of age and race, gender, class, disability and sexuality'[3] (Youth Speak out Coalition & Zimmerman 2007, 300). Another model developed to address the negative perceptions of youth and promote youth leadership is the 'developmental model'. Kress (2006) promotes

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[1] 'Leaders should have appreciation for and understanding of human and natural/ecological diversity, and have the ability to understand diverse points of view and critically examine their cultural and political positioning. They must guard against decision-making influenced by prejudice or stereotypes. Leaders will need special courage and integrity to promote equity, fairness, and equal rights and privileges for all. They should have a special sensitivity to the weak, vulnerable and historically marginalized with a view towards empowering them. Where there is violence, they will need to reinforce leadership strategies as peace-promoters and consensus-builders' (Thompson, Arsalan 2007, 50-51)

[2] Intersectionality is defined as the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

[3] This is also emphasizes by Barriteau (2003) with regard to women's leadership as she states there is a positive correlation between class, ethnicity, education, background etc. and women in leadership positions.

the 'developmental' model as useful in addressing the perceived negative role of the youth and providing balance by offering alternative and positive outlets for young people. 'What makes the focus on developmental needs compelling is the understanding that if youth are not given positive outlets they may find potentially damaging alternatives' (Kress 2006, 46). However, the development model is extensively critiqued as it is still based on the assumption that the youth are negative and a problem that must be solved.

It is clear that youth leadership is a complex issue that must change the negative stereotypes and biases, disregard the homogenous view and promote and celebrate the diversity among the youth, recognize intersectionality and multiple layers and forms of discrimination, locate the youth within their specific cultural contexts and existing social mores, and access productive and meaningful leadership positions within their local communities and governance systems.

1.3.3 Gender and Women's Leadership

In addition to the multiple issues relating to youth leadership in general, such as intersectionality, negative perceptions, homogenized assumptions, and social and cultural exclusion, women are perhaps one of the most discriminated groups with regard to leadership. Kumar (2008) elucidates this point very succinctly by stating, 'I take women to be the most disadvantaged group in the Nepali political process, as they constitute over 50 per cent of the total population in the country and yet their representation is nowhere near comparable to that of men' (Kumar, 2008, 38). Accordingly, Barriteau (2003) emphasizes that there is even less literature of women's leadership than youth leadership. She further states the importance of looking at the experiences of women in context, such as their social, cultural, political, and economic backgrounds, as these all affect access to and the nature of leadership: 'in patriarchal societies women are not conceptualized as holding power, wielding power, being powerful, unless it is in relation to aspects of the domestic or private domain which as stated already, is seen as the 'natural' location for women' (Barriteau, 2003, 29). Therefore, women's leadership is much more problematic as the prevailing culture adds additional obstacles to leadership opportunities and acceptability. She further states that whatever programs are developed to enhance women's leadership have to consider women's social, political and economic background, and any initiative that ignores this reality would be meaningless. Wilson (2004) continues this discussion and further explains that like the youth, there is a tendency to homogenize women in the literature, and young women do not constitute a homogenous grouping and therefore experience the current challenges in different ways. 'They are impacted on by factors such as regional, location, socio-economic background, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, health, education etc.' (Wilson 2004, 16-17).

Barriteau (2003) further promotes the incorporation of 'transformative leadership' as women are often embedded in a patriarchal structures and social relations that prevent them from occupying positions of leadership. She suggests that women must learn that power and authority, as well as decision-making abilities, are not negative. She examines what constitutes women's leadership and states: 'I theorize transformational leadership as concerned with where power exists, how it is used, for what purposes and who benefits. The woman who practices transformational leadership is reflective. It is a process that requires the individual to evaluate her or his behavior and actions against the principles and values of justice and democracy' (Barriteau, 2003, 16). In this framework, transformational leadership is not as concerned with equipping women to compete at the highest organizational levels of the state and civil society as it is with transforming the gendered discourse, practices, and experiences of power and authority in these areas. Although transformational leaders would see it as critical that women are leaders in the state and civil society, they would consider this as an insufficient condition for transformational

leadership. Women's leadership becomes transformational when it attempts to change the conventional practices and experiences of authority and power, and has a vision of new practices and processes to replace them. This is a theme echoed throughout the literature where women leaders challenge the negative stereotypes and gender biased ideas of 'women's roles' to influence society to become less patriarchal and gender biased.

A good example of women facing multifarious and intersecting forms of discrimination and negative stereotypes that prevent them from becoming effective leaders in conservative or traditional cultures is provided by Harold (2011), who studied women leaders in the UAE. She also expresses the same transformative model that connects leadership to an individual's culturally constructed and socially mediated identity as being an important referential point for their views, ideas, and decisions. This is very similar to the views of Lord and Hall (2005), who propose that a leader's self-identity is a central focus, as it provides a means for the leader to use self-motivation as a potential source for personal material and values that may motivate others. Harold further highlights the many problems young women experience in the UAE, such as traditional gender roles, requiring permission from male household members to engage in activities, the challenge to 'expected' gender roles and biases. In addition, many women leaders are faced with the 'double burden' of trying to balance their leadership roles with their responsibilities at home, like taking care of young and elderly family members, housework, cooking etc. However, as well as facing the intersectional forms of discrimination they also are empowered by leadership positions to challenge the existing preconceived notions. 'From a transformative perspective, they were engaging with critique and possibility and deconstructing and reconstructing knowledge frameworks' (Harold, 2011, 348).

In another ethnographic example of young women leaders, Skalli (2011) examines the media coverage of women political leaders in Morocco. The evidence shows that the media ignored women leaders and the prevailing patriarchal and traditionally male dominated society did not culturally accept women as valuable leaders. The symbolic exclusion of women was a direct reflection of the socially constructed gender roles that legitimated the exclusion and marginalization. 'Women's leadership is invariably seen through a lens that is patriarchal, paternalistic, and patronizing' (Skalli 2011, 488). The analysis of the Moroccan media confirms the difficulty that institutions have in converting institutional support for women's political representation into culturally accepted and tolerated systems of meaning that acknowledges women's leadership. This also demonstrates the media's unwillingness to challenge their deeply ingrained indifference to women's changing socio-political identities and their continued masculine perception of politics, political leadership, and participation. Morocco has a quota system for women in parliament and other political organizations at all levels. However, as the research indicates, the system does not affect the cultural perception and social position of women in Morocco. The institutional support for women political leadership does not translate into their acceptance and recognition at the cultural level. The Moroccan case demonstrates that a quota system may address the institutionalized gender biases in the distribution of political power, but 'quotas alone provide no guarantee for the recognition of gender equality in the cultural sphere of knowledge production and opinion formation' (Skalli 2011, 474-475). Unfortunately, this situation has led to not just women, but also the general youth becoming disillusioned and skeptical about politics.

However, research conducted by Pande and Ford (2011) in India, provides corroborative and contradicting data of the power of quotas. By examining India, they agree that quotas do help institutionally to empower women and help them obtain leadership roles in local politics, which directly addresses the lack of representation. However, they also provide evidence that quotas directly influence the social and cultural perception of women and deconstruct the traditional patriarchal cultural perceptions of

acceptable gender roles. They argue that: 'The Indian evidence demonstrates that quotas increase female leadership and influences policy outcomes. In addition, rather than create a backlash against women, quotas can reduce gender discrimination in the long-term' (Pande and Ford 2011, 1). Similar to the self-identify and the transformative model exposed by Harold and Barriteau, 'quotas can serve to change attitudes of both voters and potential women leaders themselves in ways that could reduce the need for quotas in the long term' (Pande and Ford 2011, 23).

One of the main findings of the research in India was that reservation exposed the general population to women leaders and this decreased the implicit gender discrimination among men. 'Among male villagers, quotas essentially reduced subconscious biases about beliefs on the appropriateness of women being leaders' (Pande and Ford 2011, 23). Also, the so-called 'backlash' theory is also undermined as the data from India found that it took time for voters to adjust to quotas, experience the capacity of women leaders, and modify their beliefs, but the quotas did generate a noticeable change in the attitudes of voters. It was also noted that after some time more men voted for female candidates even when there were no quotas.

Therefore, in addition to the multiple obstacles to youth leadership, women's leadership has many more issues, such as traditional and conservative gender roles, the 'double burden' of balancing leadership responsibilities with unpaid domestic labor, discrimination and marginalization, and patriarchy in their communities, the political systems, and the media.

1.3.4 Leadership Training for Youth and Women

As there is a serious dearth of literature of youth leadership, and even less on women's leadership, it is imperative to closely examine what does exist and look at the suggestions on developing a practical training curriculum and set of practices that is founded in theory, but practically orientated to be applied in real settings to deliver genuine change. This should empower youth and women leaders and provide the skills required to make them confident, capable, and knowledgeable leaders. Training must bridge the divide between theory and practice and actively support and encourage youth and women leaders, and highlight the common thread that connects the various training methods and practices that are directly related to the modular activities run by Search and their various partners at the local level.

Ricketts and Rudd (2002) conducted a thorough investigation of all the literature related to training leadership and leadership skills and developing a specifically youth orientated training approach. They conclude that Kouzes and Posner's (1995) seminal ten-stage model[4] for leadership training can be modified to specifically target youth leaders. Additionally, DesMaria, Yang, and Farzenhkia (2000) emphasize certain elements that are necessary in the development of youth leadership. They listed the critical elements as: 'youth/adult partnerships; granting young people decision making power and responsibility for consequences; a broad context for learning and services; recognition of young people's experience, knowledge and skills' (DesMaria, Yang, and Farzenhkia 2000, 3). Ricketts and Rudd further state the importance of using the aforementioned frameworks, but also specifically targeting youth and women leadership training to include five essential areas: Leadership knowledge and understanding;

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[4] Search out challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate, and improve: experiment, take risks, and learn from the accompanying mistakes; envision an uplifting and ennobling future; enlist others in a common vision by appealing to their values, interests, hopes and dreams; foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trusts; strengthen people by giving power away, providing choice, developing competence, assigning critical tasks, and offering visible support; set the example by behaving in ways that are consistent with shared values; achieve small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment; recognize individual contributions to the success of every project; and celebrate team accomplishments regularly (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, 18).

Decision making skills; leadership attitude, will, and desire; oral and written communication skills; and intra and interpersonal skills. They conclude that the main problem for youth and women leaders is the lack of formal training in the areas mentioned above.

MacNeil and McClean (2006) highlight the importance of actual experience over classroom training, which is a real concern due to the limited leadership roles for youth and women. The training should be in contexts where youth and women leaders can practice and demonstrate leadership in an authentic and meaningful way. They outline certain aspects that must be addressed to achieve this objective. For example, as well as practical experience, adult leaders must learn to respect and value youth and women leaders, skill based training to enhance and develop youth and women leaders' knowledge and understanding, and inter-personal skills are all essential. Klau (2006) suggests an 'adaptive leadership' model that, similar to Thompson and Arsalan, that begins with the perception of the youth as a positive potential resource and not something that is a problem to be solved. The basis of the theory is that most leadership training programs focus on authority and people are simply told how to be leaders. Alternatively, she suggests that 'authority' and 'leadership' should be separated and Heifetz's Framework should be incorporated. 'He notes that leadership has been exercised in the past by figures such as Rosa Parks and Mohandas Gandhi, who made an impact from a societal position that initially lacked formal prominence, authority, or influence' (Klau 2006, 61). This model promotes the importance of exploring alternative perceptions and social and cultural positions and is highly relevant to youth leadership as the youth are often powerless and lack authority. This will enable the leader to become more aware and understanding of individuals from different social and cultural backgrounds, and enable inclusion and address marginalization based on caste, class, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic position etc. In addition, she also states that encouraging leaders to be more reflective is essential in developing good leadership skills.

Similarly, Libby (2005) asserts that youth and women leaders must work in partnership with adults and adult leaders to be productive and successful. This partnership, according to Libby, will be mutually beneficial and supportive as the youth will learn from the adults' experience, knowledge, and practice and the adults will benefit and learn from the youths' energy, creativity, and openness. Moreover, she sees the youth-adult partnership (Y-AP) as a bridge dividing the generations as adults can help access things such as budgets for youth related topics and issues, and the evidence indicates that this results in better representation and a more inclusive and cooperative environment. This is further supported by MacNeil and McClean, who noted the most common feedback from their training with youth and women leaders, was: 'Training should be made available for both youth and adults to support their work in a youth adult partnership. Repeatedly, youth have told me, "Don't set us up by giving us responsibility without the skills." They have also shared that the adults needed more skills in learning to work with them (particularly around sharing power)' (MacNeil and McClean 2006, 101-102).

London and Chabran (2004) go a step further and posit that youth and women's leadership can break the existing power/knowledge system that creates and recreates negatives stereotypes and biases.[5] They assert this includes issues relating to class, caste, ethnicity, gender etc. The model is firmly rooted in the concept of the youth as change agents and peacebuilders, and Youth REP (Youth-led action Research, Evaluation, and Planning) is a term developed by Youth in Focus (YIF) to describe their work. 'Started in 1989, YIF, originated as a project in Nepal and India to develop a youth-led action research curriculum that fostered language learning, intergenerational communication, and political and historical awareness' (London and Chabran 2004, 45). They assert that the youth are embedded in culture, and context is

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[5] See Pande and Ford (2011); Barriteau (2003); Harold (2011)

essential as they are looking from the inside, and have critical awareness and agency. This makes the youth a valuable asset to communities and for leadership positions. They see the youth and women leaders as invaluable in affecting real change in communities and the training should focus on bridging the gap between knowledge and action. Moreover, the denial of knowledge or leadership positions with a genuine decision-making capacity is essentially marginalizing the youth and women and making them powerless. London and Chabran also emphasize the importance of a safe and nurturing space for the youth and women to express their needs and the solutions, the support from adults, and the meaningful involvement in the planning and decision-making processes. 'Youth-led REP has demonstrated its ability to provide supports and opportunities for positive youth development in the context of building youth power to affect real changes in communities. With greater resources and commitments, youth-led REP may serve as an even more compelling way to support young people as they become well-informed, skillful and creative agents of social change' (London and Chabran 2004, 50).

1.3.5 Policy

To guarantee sustainability it is imperative to strengthen evidence and need based women and youth friendly policy reform practices at all levels. As Thompson and Arsalan point out: 'Youth leadership development must be taken seriously by the highest authorities, and such a commitment must be reflected in policy—not just policies specifically related to youth development, but in long-term strategies associated with public sector reform, private sector development and democracy promotion as well' (Thompson and Arsalan 2007, 63).[6] In addition, Hemer (2017) cites the UN regarding the importance of creating permanent or lasting change by supporting youth and women leaders by policies. Gender mainstreaming is the 'process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programs in all areas and at all levels … [so that] women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated' (UN 1997, 27 cited in Hemer 2017, 294). Therefore, the importance of leadership training to prepare the youth and women leaders and equip them with the requisite skills is unquestionable, but to guarantee a long-term change that continues to focus on inclusion and empowerment of women, youth, and especially the poor and marginalized, there must also be a focus on the policy level and practice of governance.

1.3.6 Summary

As a thorough examination of the literature demonstrates, there is a lack of research regarding the important role of youth and women leaders; however, what is available does demonstrate many recurring themes. These thematic areas and theoretical and practice orientated approaches espoused by the literature are directly applicable to the activities developed to encourage and support youth and women leaders by Search and their partners in Nepal. The program perceives the youth leaders as positive change agents and addresses the negative stereotyping of the youth. The focus is firmly placed on not just increasing representation, but providing equal opportunities and developing productive and mutually beneficial partnerships that encourage cooperation. The modular training and practical activities are firmly grounded in the theory of diversity and plurality, and creating safe and encouraging spaces to include people from poor and marginalized communities and address any discriminatory practices. The training is real practice orientated with the focus on actual skill development that will empower the youth and women leaders with the requisite knowledge and understanding to make competent, confident, and productive leaders in the local governance and development sectors. In addition, the emphasis is on developing meaningful participation, especially with regard to active decision making and contributing to all levels of local engagement to implement real and actual cultural, social, and political change in their

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[6] Subramaniam and Moncloa (2010) also highlight the importance of complete engagement with all levels, including policy

respective communities. Lastly, there is also an emphasis on sustainability by encouraging the strengthening and enhancing of women and youth friendly policies, reforms, and practices.

1.4 Survey Objectives: Methodology

Search Nepal had carried out a mini Survey in November/December 2017 to generate baseline data for the selected indicators of the Project results. The overall objective of the survey was to gather information to enable the appropriate design of project and to measure the changes contributed by the project using verifiable indicators. Additionally, the survey provided to establish the baseline data for the project against the project log-frame (Output and outcome level indicators). At the end of project, Search conducted an endline survey in the same project districts using the same methodologies used during the inception phase. The main objective of the endline survey is to find out the outcome of the project against the baseline indicators and how the project has helped add value among the target groups. The survey will provide comparative assessment of selected demographic and socio-economic indicators of the project considering "before and after" and 'with and without" the project scenarios.

Survey instruments: The survey was designed to broadly cover quantitative modules to capture the existing status of women and youth leadership in the project districts. Additionally, the survey also covered the understanding and opinion of the women and youth leadership concerns among the general public. Although the study has been designed as broadly quantitative in nature, it will also use mixed methods and instruments including a literature review and holding focus group discussions. The household survey questionnaire was developed to gather quantitative data, and the questionnaire was developed based on the key questions below:

- Are the public aware of the recent state restructuring and are they hopeful of seeing positive changes after the state restructuring?
- Do the public, including women and youth, feel comfortable expressing their opinions or placing their votes/arguments during the decision-making process?
- What is the representation status of women and youth in local structures? How do they influence the decision-making process at the local level?
- Are the public, including women and youth, aware of the local level budget? Do they participate in the annual review and planning meeting?
- Are there any opportunities to enhance the leadership skills of women and youth at the local level?
- Are the public aware of public hearings/social audits? Are the public satisfied with the process and its impact?
- What are the perceptions between men and women, and youth and adults?

Sampling: The study employed a two-stage stratified cluster sampling strategy. Firstly, two-three wards from each LGU were randomly selected from each seven sampled districts. Secondly, households were selected from the VDC profile list in each of the three project districts. Sample size was based on a formula to estimate and reflect the proportion in the population. Due to unknown variability, P=0.5 (maximum variability) was assumed and the sample size was calculated based on a 95 percent confidence level and around ±5.0% (0.05) precision by using the formula.

Supervising and field enumeration: Search mobilized an experienced supervisor in each project district to ensure the data quality and provide on-site coaching to the local enumerator. Likewise, six enumerators including three social mobilizes, and three local enumerators from each project district were deployed to

carry out the enumeration work. The supervisor rechecked and reviewed the questionnaire to ensure accuracy and quality of the collected data.

Orientation and field test: Search Nepal finalized the orientation and field plan in consultation with the regional team. It was provided 3-days of training to the local enumerators to enhance their knowledge and skills focusing on the essence of the survey, including data collection techniques, rapport building, and interview skills with respondents. The orientation built on the knowledge and skills of the enumerators in conducting the surveys effectively. Additionally, a pre-test was conducted in each sampled district to test the questionnaires' community acceptability and take corrective measures, essentially in terms of awareness, and presentation of the survey's objectives.

Data analysis: The data collected from the field survey was entered using Census and Survey Processing System (CSPro) software, and then exported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. The data collected from the field survey are presented in tabular and graphical form.

CHAPTER TWO: FINDINGS

2.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

The respondents for the endline survey were chosen to be as representative of the respective districts and have a few caveats that should be noted when analyzing the data. The three districts were equally represented, with a third of the total each, but women are disproportionally represented in the survey with 61 percent compared to only 39 percent men. This is important as the implementation of quotas and the dramatic increase in women in local leadership positions, such as Deputy-Mayors and Vice-Chairpersons that chair the new Judicial Committees, it is imperative that the data reflects the policy of women's inclusion as mandated in the Local Governance Operation Act 2074.

Figure 1: Sampled Respondents by profession

- Farmers/House Wife, 21%
- Student, 26%
- Elected Representative, 16%
- CMC/WWG/JC, 8%
- Affiliated in Local Structure, 8%
- Political Leader, 21%

Figure 2: Sampled Respondents by sex

- Male, 39%
- Female, 61%
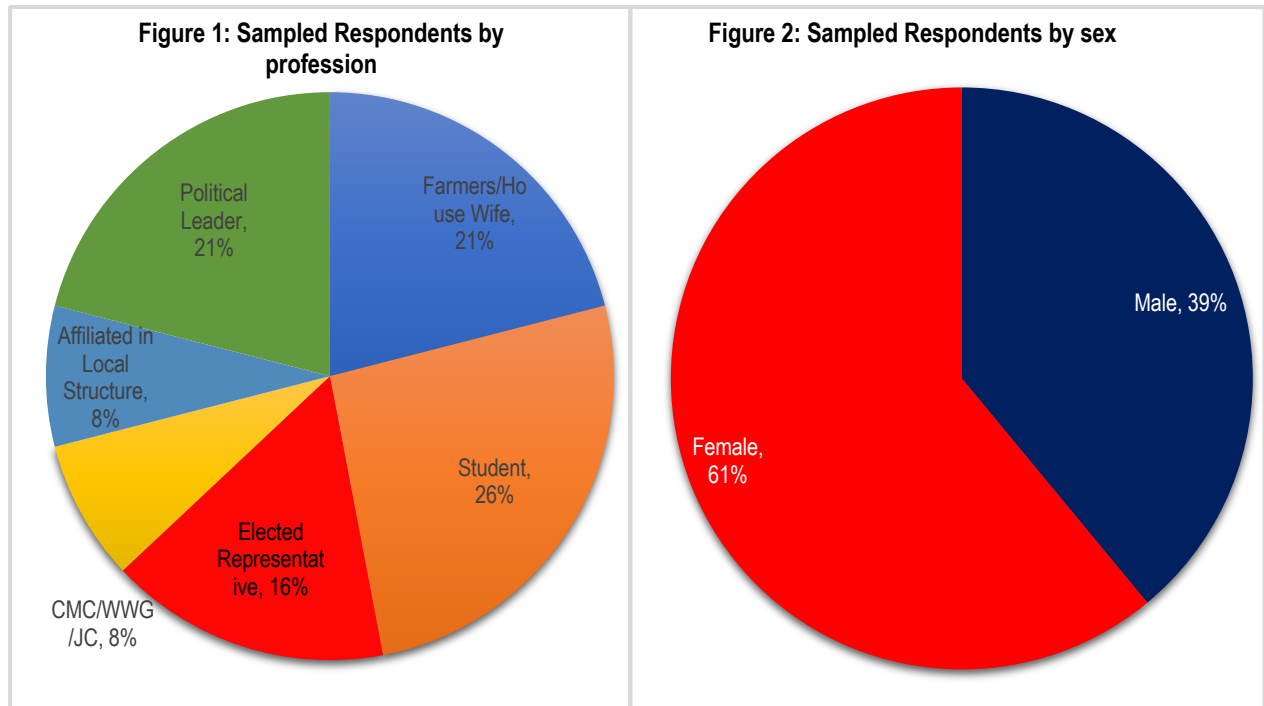
The type of respondent is predominantly farmers/housewives, students, and political leaders, closely followed by elected representatives, of whom, almost half are members and 34 percent are quota members. Most of the respondents are from the 15-29 and 30-40 age groups, and together constitute 72 percent of the respondents. Approximately 20 percent of the respondents have achieved a PLC/+2 and SLC education with the other categories averaging 10 percent. By caste/ethnicity, the respondents are extremely diverse, as to be expected, with the majority being the Others (Terai/Madhesh) category, followed by the Janajati (hills), Dalit (Terai/Madhesh), and Janajati (Terai/Madhesh). Notable is geographic identity, as two thirds are Madheshi (67%) and only a third Pahadi (33%).

2.2 Awareness of Recent State Restructuring

Perhaps the most important indicator relating to the massive political upheaval caused by the implementation of federalism, as mandated by the new constitution, is the decentralization of the state into seven autonomous provinces. This will have a direct impact on the lives of all Nepalis, and including local communities in the process is critical in establishing accountable and representative local governance and development. However, inclusion and participation is impossible without adequate knowledge and

information on the seismic changes taking place in the political sphere. The baseline data demonstrated that the respondents were mostly unaware of the state restructuring, with the most vulnerable being the least aware.

The disaggregated baseline data by district showed that only 56 percent in Dhanusha, 61 percent in Mahottari, and a significantly lower 26 percent in Sindhuli were aware of the recent restructuring. This has dramatically increased in the endline data as now 88 percent in Dhanusha, an extremely high 95 percent in Mahottari, and even higher rise in Sindhuli to a much improved 75 percent, a rise of 50 percent, state they are now aware. The data still indicates that there are variations by district and Dhanusha and Mahottari are still much more aware than Sindhuli, as previously speculated, the disparity may be the result of the ongoing struggles in the Terai districts resulting in more politicized communities and individuals that are more actively engaged in politics and issues of empowerment, self-determination, and inclusion.

Figure (3): Are you aware about the recent state restructuring?
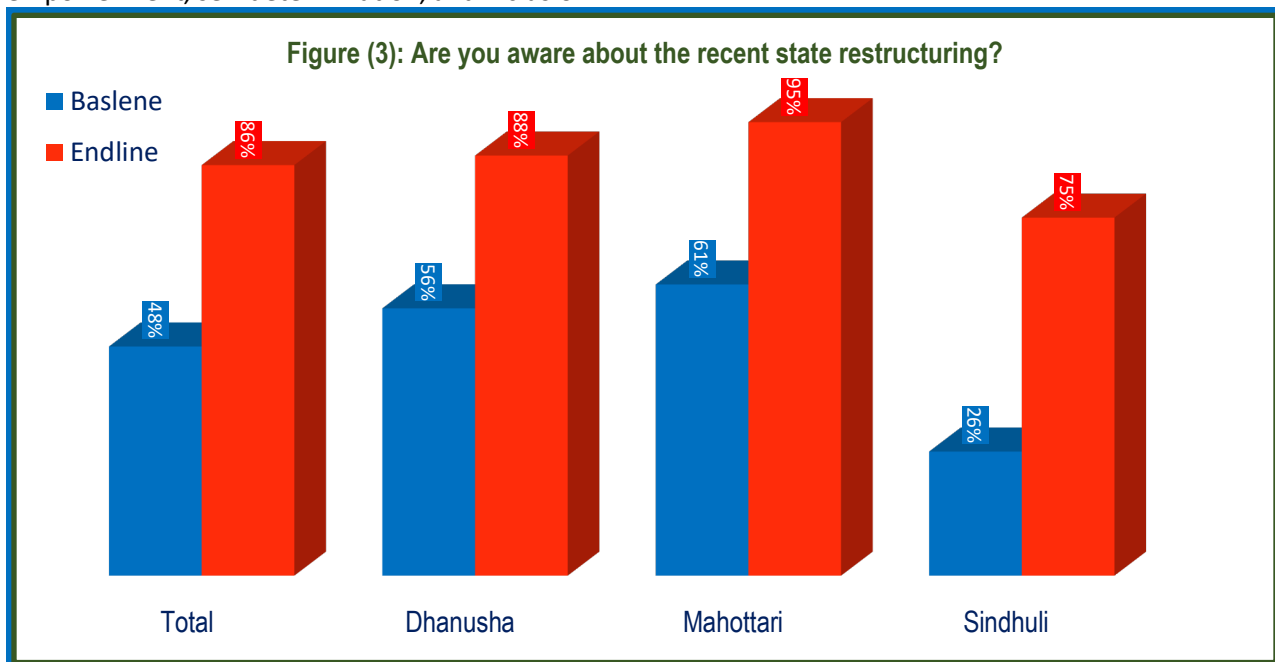
When the data is examined by position the same positive increase is observed, with, as expected, the elected representatives, JC/CMC/WWG members, political leaders, and people affiliated with local structures ranging from 93 percent to 97 percent. Although still much lower, the farmers/housewives (73%) and students (75%) are much more aware than recorded in the baseline data, which is promising as the youth and women are much better informed that previously.

By gender, the increased awareness is also significant, with a very respectable 88 percent of men and 85 percent of women now claiming to be aware of restructuring compared to a low 56 and 42 percent,

respectively, as shown in the baseline data. The awareness of women has doubled in the period between the baseline and endline surveys.

Table (1): Are you aware about the recent state restructuring?

	Survey Period	Farmers/ Housewife		Students		Elected Repres.		Influential Persons		Affiliated in Local Structure		Political Leaders		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	Baseline	50	23%	130	43%	65	57%	91	62%	79	51%	138	59%	553	48%
	Endline	191	73%	238	75%	192	96%	90	93%	98	97%	248	97%	1057	86%
No	Baseline	164	77%	171	57%	49	43%	56	38%	75	49%	96	41%	611	52%
	Endline	70	27%	78	25%	8	4%	7	7%	3	3%	7	3%	173	14%
Total	Baseline	214	100%	301	100%	114	100%	147	100%	154	100%	234	100%	1164	100%
	Endline	261	100%	316	100%	200	100%	97	100%	101	100%	255	100%	1230	100%

When the data is analyzed by age, the respondents maintain similar knowledge across all the age groupings, but the awareness almost doubles for all the respondents regardless of age. This is very important as it suggests that information is equally accessible to all community members regardless of their age.

According to caste/ethnicity, the same pattern emerges as all respondents across all the categories are now extremely aware of the recent state restructuring. Very few of the respondents reported being unaware, with the exception of the Janajatis as a relatively high 22 percent stated they were unaware; however, only 38 percent previously claimed they were aware to a much higher 78 percent recorded in the endline survey, an increase of 40 percent which is similar to the other categories.

The disparities in awareness by education that were clearly indicated in the baseline data appear to have been mostly addressed, as the endline data is much more evenly spread and indicates that the distinct positive correlation between awareness and education has been reduced. Although there is still a correlation, it has decreased from a very concerning 79 percent high for PLC and above to a low of 17 percent for the illiterate. The endline data demonstrates that the differential is now a much more even 91 percent for the PLC and above and a vastly improved 74 percent for the illiterate.

Overall, the data from the endline survey is extremely positive as awareness has significantly increased for all categories of the respondents. The disparities recorded in the baseline data have largely been addressed, with awareness of recent state structuring being expressed by the majority of the respondents. It would be expected that awareness would increase over time as the process of restructuring became evident in local communities; however, it is worth noting that women, the youth, and marginal groups have are no longer lagging behind and this must be attributed to local campaigns and initiatives that specifically target the most vulnerable in society. Among others, the various training programs conducted by Search (Nepal) have clearly had an impact on raising awareness of this target group, and helped reduce exclusion of the most vulnerable groups.

*Table (2): If you are aware, what change do you find at first after the state restructuring? (By district)*

	Survey Period	Dhanusha		Mahottari		Sindhuli		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Local government has been formed	Baseline	63	29%	187	79%	82	82%	332	60%
	Endline	353	97%	349	91%	274	89%	976	92%
Local level has more rights than before	Baseline	49	23%	142	60%	91	91%	282	51%
	Endline	270	74%	188	49%	132	43%	590	56%
Local government has been restructured	Baseline	61	28%	109	46%	72	72%	242	44%
	Endline	245	67%	150	39%	150	49%	545	52%
Federal structure of state has transformed	Baseline	41	19%	85	36%	55	55%	181	33%
	Endline	217	59%	144	37%	143	47%	504	48%
More budget is released than before in local level	Baseline	64	29%	95	40%	48	48%	207	37%
	Endline	256	70%	159	41%	129	42%	544	51%
Judicial committee is formed in local level	Baseline	8	4%	65	28%	23	23%	96	17%
	Endline	115	32%	147	38%	143	47%	405	38%
Structure of government agencies have changed	Baseline	16	7%	67	28%	15	15%	98	18%
	Endline	72	20%	98	25%	71	23%	241	23%
Elected local representatives have more rights than before	Baseline	40	18%	68	29%	30	30%	138	25%
	Endline	44	12%	61	16%	117	38%	222	21%
Local have the authority to manage and utilize local resources	Baseline	26	12%	36	15%	12	12%	74	13%
	Endline	44	12%	59	15%	71	23%	174	16%
Representation of women and marginalized is guaranteed	Baseline	4	2%	31	13%	59	59%	94	17%
	Endline	41	11%	171	44%	57	19%	269	25%
Others	Baseline	82	38%	110	47%	5	5%	197	36%
	Endline	29	8%	121	31%	80	26%	230	22%
Total	Baseline	217		236		100		553	100%
	Endline	365		385		307		1057	100%

The baseline data indicated that the respondents, who stated they were aware of the recent state restructuring, had very little knowledge or experience of the process in their local communities. They were generally aware of the larger issues but lacked knowledge of the specific changes that would directly impact their lives. It is important to note that due to the increased awareness expressed in the endline data the sub-group is much larger than in the baseline data. Moreover, as the local, provincial, and federal elections have been completed when the endline survey was conducted, and the process of decentralization and restructuring was actively underway that should impact the awareness of the respondents.

The disaggregated district data also displays the trend of becoming more balanced; for example, the baseline data demonstrated that when asked if they were aware that a government has been formed Dhanusha was very low capered to the other two districts, as only 29 percent stated they were aware compared to 79 percent in Mahottari and 82 percent in Sindhuli. The endline data is much more positive with an extremely high 97 percent in Dhanusha, 91 percent in Mahottari, and 89 percent in Sindhuli now expressing their awareness. This is unsurprising as the data was collected after the completion of the highly publicized elections.

However, awareness appears to decrease in the endline data, but once you calculate for the significantly larger sub-group, it suggests that the same trend shown in the baseline data is present. For example, respondents are aware of the larger changes but still lack a detailed knowledge of restructuring of the

new Local Government Units (LGUs) at the ward level. Perhaps most concerning, and something that has been directly addressed, is the continued lack of awareness of the guaranteed representation of women and marginalized groups by the new constitution.

Figure (4) If you are aware, what change do you find at first after the state restructuring?
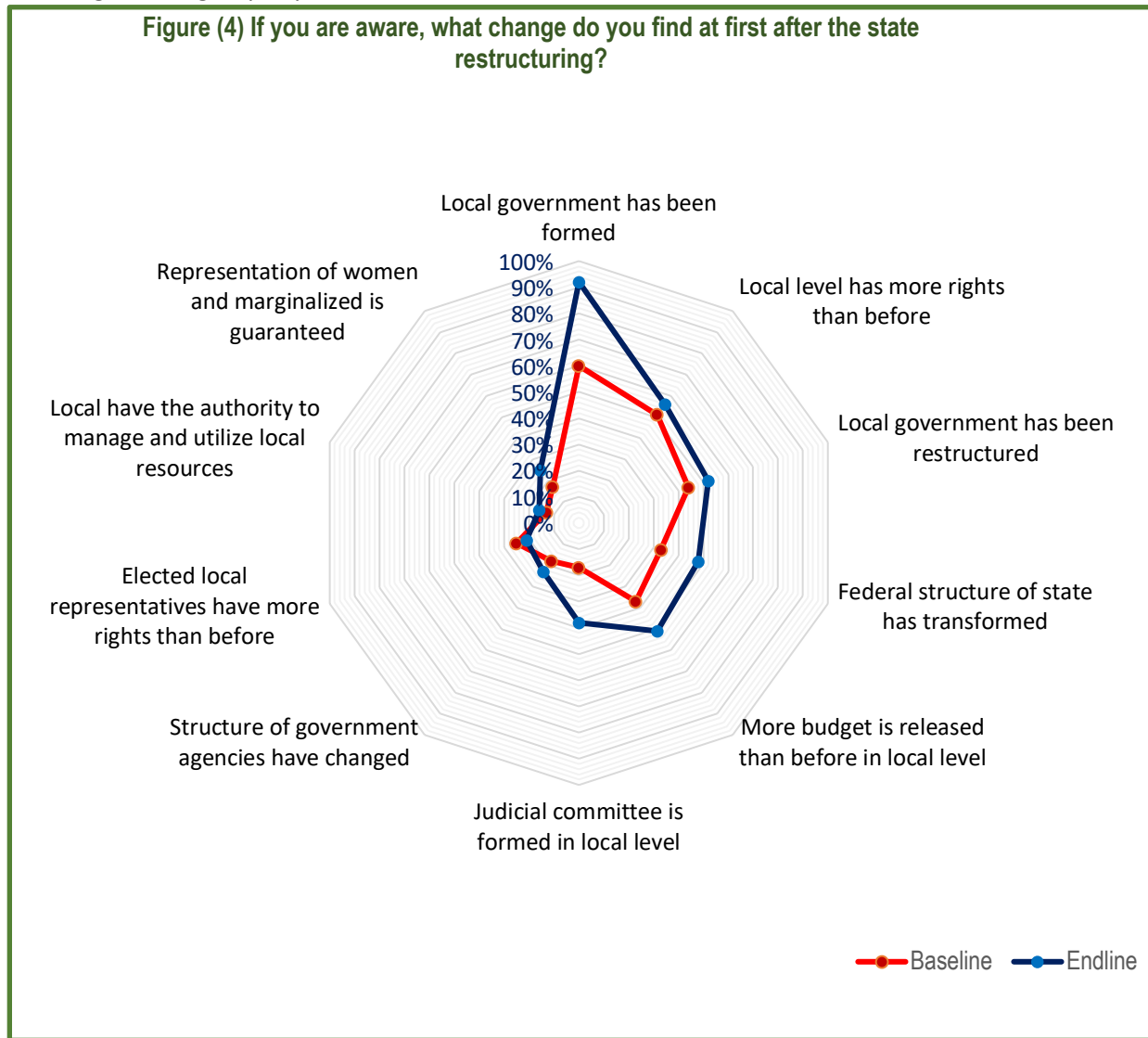
Unsurprisingly, the respondent type also shows that the awareness of the formation of a local government has increased significantly across all the categories, but as mentioned the highly publicized local elections should result in 100 percent in all the categories, so perhaps the question should be how some respondents are still unaware of the formation of local government. Similar to the district data the respondents are much less aware of the other components of restructuring, and worrying is the lack of knowledge of the guaranteed representation of women and marginal groups considering the active promotion of inclusion, proportional representation, and quotas. Most concerning is the lack of the general knowledge of the elected representatives, people affiliated with local structures, and political leaders, and the endline data shows that only 26 percent of the elected representatives and 27 percent of people affiliated with local structures and political leaders were aware of the guarantee of representation of women and marginalized groups.

Table (3): If you are aware, what change do you find at first after the state restructuring? (By respondent type)

	Survey	Farmers/ Housewife		Students		Elected Repres.		Influential Persons		Affiliated in Local Structure		Political Leaders		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Local government has been formed	Baseline	32	64%	66	51%	35	54%	53	58%	56	71%	90	65%	332	60%
	Endline	180	94%	217	91%	170	89%	87	97%	86	88%	236	95%	976	92%
Local level has more rights than before	Baseline	29	58%	57	44%	27	42%	38	42%	48	61%	83	60%	282	51%
	Endline	107	56%	128	54%	108	56%	55	61%	50	51%	142	57%	590	56%
Local government has been restructured	Baseline	20	40%	54	42%	22	34%	32	35%	35	44%	79	57%	242	44%
	Endline	91	48%	125	53%	105	55%	47	52%	41	42%	136	55%	545	52%
Federal structure of state has transformed	Baseline	19	38%	41	32%	19	29%	16	18%	26	33%	60	43%	181	33%
	Endline	97	51%	107	45%	91	47%	44	49%	40	41%	125	50%	504	48%
More budget is released than before in local level	Baseline	18	36%	48	37%	23	35%	35	38%	33	42%	50	36%	207	37%
	Endline	107	56%	102	43%	104	54%	44	49%	45	46%	142	57%	544	51%
Judicial committee is formed in local level	Baseline	11	22%	25	19%	7	11%	13	14%	18	23%	22	16%	96	17%
	Endline	63	33%	87	37%	67	35%	49	54%	47	48%	92	37%	405	38%
Structure of government agencies have changed	Baseline	11	22%	33	25%	7	11%	19	21%	13	16%	15	11%	98	18%
	Endline	32	17%	59	25%	55	29%	22	24%	27	28%	46	19%	241	23%
Elected local representatives have more rights than before	Baseline	13	26%	27	21%	24	37%	21	23%	18	23%	35	25%	138	25%
	Endline	17	9%	46	19%	51	27%	22	24%	23	23%	63	25%	222	21%
Local have the authority to manage and utilize local resources	Baseline	2	4%	21	16%	12	18%	17	19%	9	11%	13	9%	74	13%
	Endline	23	12%	54	23%	29	15%	17	19%	11	11%	40	16%	174	16%
Representation of women and marginalized is guaranteed	Baseline	9	18%	11	8%	14	22%	13	14%	18	23%	29	21%	94	17%
	Endline	42	22%	66	28%	49	26%	18	20%	26	27%	68	27%	269	25%
Others	Baseline	8	16%	50	38%	17	26%	51	56%	22	28%	49	36%	197	36%
	Endline	45	24%	51	21%	42	22%	14	16%	37	38%	41	17%	230	22%
Total	Baseline	50		130		65		91		79		138		553	100%
	Endline	191		238		192		90		98		248		1057	100%

The baseline data indicated that the youngest age group, 15-29, was slightly less aware than older community members. However, the endline data shows that they are now comparable with the 30-40 age group, and generally higher than the 45 and older group. This is a significant change as clearly the youth have become more aware, which is important as the baseline data showed that they were lacking in most areas and this was negatively affecting their ability to obtain meaningful leadership positions in their respective communities.

The data from both the baseline and endline surveys show that there are no significant differences due to caste/ethnicity, and that generally awareness has increased across the categories. However, and indicative of the problem with the larger sub-group, the basined at showed that Janajatis were much more aware of the guaranteed representation of women and marginalized groups with 29 percent reporting

they were aware. Alternatively, the endline data has the backward castes as the highest with 30 percent, Dalits with 28 percent, and then Janajatis with 19 percent. There are two possible explanations for this, as perhaps the increased numbers of respondents who stated they were aware of restructuring were only familiar with various components, or training and awareness programs that specifically target marginalized groups have been successful in raising awareness of certain issues that directly impact these groups.

Surprisingly, the baseline data did not show any consistent correlation between education and awareness of restructuring, with the exception of the illiterate being generally lower. This appears to have been addressed as the illiterate, and the other categories are much closely clustered than previously. It is still relatively low for most of the changes taking place, but the illiterate are still much lower on a few important changes that will impact their lives and local communities. This is a concern as only 4 percent of the illiterate were aware that Local governments have the authority to manage and utilize local resources, compared to 24 percent of the PLC/+2, 17 percent of the SLC/Secondary, and 12 percent of the Primary/informal. Similarly, 9 percent of the illiterate were aware that elected local representatives have more rights than before, with PLC/+2 (24%), SLC/Secondary (22%), and Primary/Informal (22%) were more aware. This demonstrates that there is a positive correlation between education and awareness on certain factors of state restructuring.

Table (3): If you are aware, what change do you find at first after the state restructuring? (By caste/ethnicity)

	Survey	Dalit		Janajati		Backward Caste		Others		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Local government has been formed	Baseline	51	61%	69	64%	103	54%	109	63%	332	60%
	Endline	168	89%	247	91%	75	94%	486	94%	976	92%
Local level has more rights than before	Baseline	37	45%	72	67%	70	37%	103	60%	282	51%
	Endline	94	50%	174	64%	31	39%	291	56%	590	56%
Local government has been restructured	Baseline	35	42%	65	61%	63	33%	79	46%	242	44%
	Endline	91	48%	165	61%	32	40%	257	50%	545	52%
Federal structure of state has transformed	Baseline	23	28%	49	46%	53	28%	56	32%	181	33%
	Endline	73	39%	166	61%	28	35%	237	46%	504	48%
More budget is released than before in local level	Baseline	30	36%	48	45%	77	41%	52	30%	207	37%
	Endline	86	46%	146	54%	27	34%	285	55%	544	51%
Judicial committee is formed in local level	Baseline	17	20%	27	25%	28	15%	24	14%	96	17%
	Endline	63	33%	90	33%	29	36%	223	43%	405	38%
Structure of government agencies have changed	Baseline	9	11%	29	27%	32	17%	28	16%	98	18%
	Endline	49	26%	53	20%	18	23%	121	23%	241	23%
Elected local representatives have more rights than before	Baseline	19	23%	29	27%	46	24%	44	25%	138	25%
	Endline	37	20%	55	20%	12	15%	118	23%	222	21%
Local have the authority to manage and utilize local resources	Baseline	9	11%	13	12%	29	15%	23	13%	74	13%
	Endline	34	18%	41	15%	4	5%	95	18%	174	16%
Representation of women and marginalized is guaranteed	Baseline	13	16%	31	29%	11	6%	39	23%	94	17%
	Endline	53	28%	52	19%	24	30%	140	27%	269	25%
Others	Baseline	37	45%	20	19%	69	36%	71	41%	197	36%
	Endline	51	27%	46	17%	32	40%	101	19%	230	22%
Total	Baseline	83		107		190		173		553	100%
	Endline	37	20%	55	20%	12	15%	118	23%	222	21%

The endline data is somewhat skewed due to the significantly larger sub-group and increased awareness of the restructuring that will be visible and currently underway in local communities. That said, the endline data does demonstrate the same problem highlighted in the baseline data that the majority of the respondents are aware of the major restructuring, but are much less aware of the other components of restructuring, particularly more abstract concepts such as rules, laws, and rights. Similar to the baseline data, the elected representatives, people affiliated with local structures, and political leaders are seriously under informed regarding most of the restructuring and this must be addressed if good and effective local leadership is to be achieved. The endline data suggests that much more work is required to raise awareness in local communities, especially relating to knowledge of the guarantee of the representation of women and marginalized groups if meaningful inclusion is to be achieved. The information gathered from FGDs and KIIs in all three distracts unequivocally praised the various training programs, but the feedback and suggestions all requested further training. For example, participants in a FGD in Dhanusha highlighted, 'we need more discussion and clarity of these topics'. Ram Kaji Ghalan, a FGD participant in Sindhuli, emphasized the benefits of further training to implement the issues raised and increase the effectiveness of the program, he states '*the leadership of women and the youth would increase, which would help in changing society*'.

Figure (4) What changes do you think will occur after state restructuring in the local development?
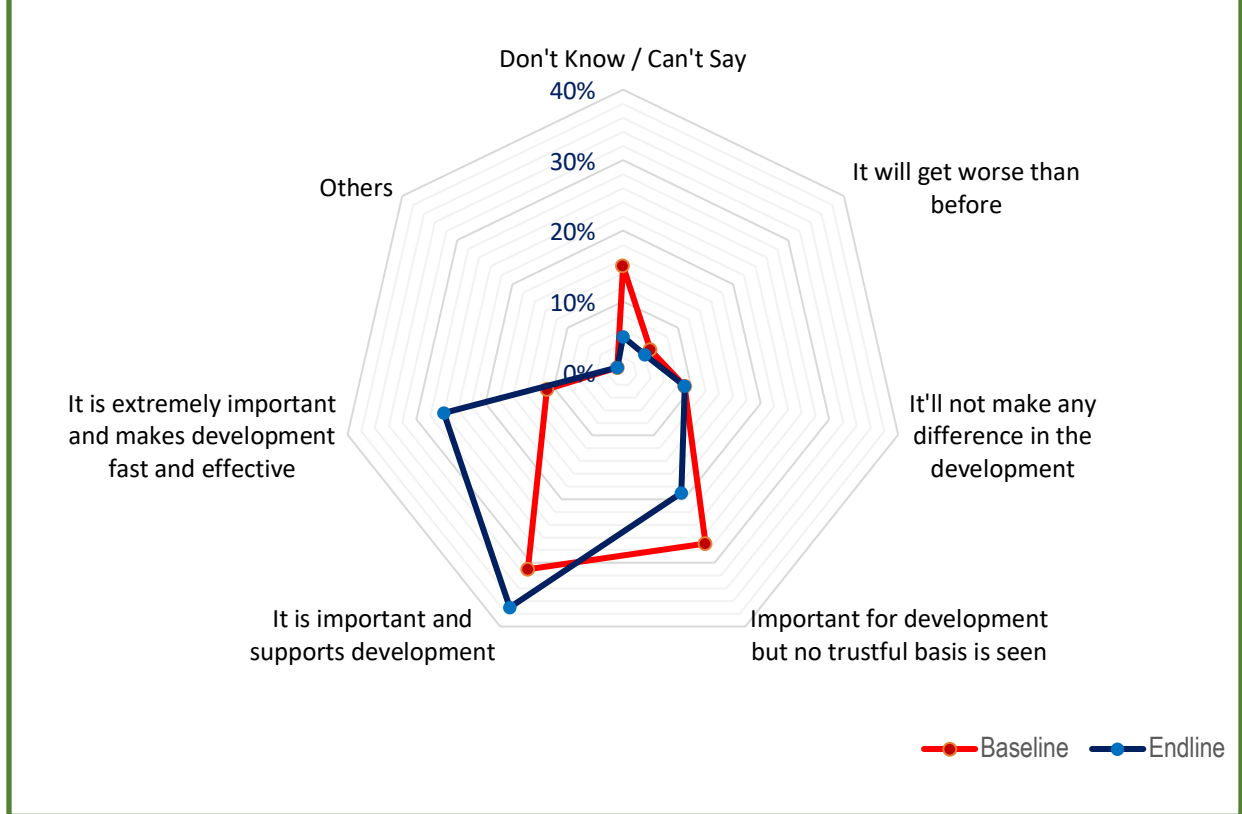
Transforming state restructuring into actual local development is crucial at the early stages of federalism to build trust in local representatives, leaders, and governance. Many of the communities in the three study districts are seriously underdeveloped and various issues, such as conflict, corruption, and inept governance have resulted in fragmented communities and low expectations regarding development and effective leadership.

The baseline data showed almost a third of all the respondents from all three districts claimed that state restructuring was important and support development, and significantly more were pessimistic as only 10 percent in Dhanusha, 11 percent in Mahottari, and 15 percent in Sindhuli stated it was extremely important and makes development fast and effective, and practically no respondents claimed that It is extremely important and makes development fast and effective.

Alternatively, the endline data indicates a resurgence of optimism in all three districts as now the majority of the respondents, Dhanusha (41%), Mahottari (29%), and Sindhuli (41%) report that it is extremely important and makes development fast and effective. More promising, and indicative of the increased optimism in state restructuring in delivering development, is that a low 9 percent in Dhanusha, but much higher 37 percent in Mahottari, and 33 percent in Sindhuli now think that it is. When the data is examined by Respondent type the same optimism is observed as the majority of respondents are either choosing that state restructuring is important and supports development or is extremely important and makes development fast and effective. Approximately half of the respondents for each type are selecting these two options, with a much higher 43 percent and 38 percent of the elected representatives choosing these two statements, respectively. This demonstrates that people from different occupations and social and professional positions are hopeful that state restructuring will deliver local development.

The disaggregated gender data in the baseline study showed that men and women were relatively optimistic, but the trust deficit was evident in the responses. The endline data is much more positive, and like the other variables, there is a notable shift in selecting that statement that state restructuring is important and supports development, men (31%) and women (40%), and 36 percent of the male and 20 percent of the female respondents agreeing that It is extremely important and makes development fast and effective. Compare this to only 15 percent of the men and 8 percent of the women selecting this option in the baseline survey and it is evident that trust has increased that local governance and the new state structures will deliver local development. It is worth noting that women are less positive than men, but this may be due to less involvement in community activities outside the family home, limited education, and restrictive social and cultural practices.

Table (4): What changes do you think will occur after state restructuring?

	Survey	15-29		30-40		40-45		Above 45		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know / Can't Say	Baseline	43	19%	21	13%	10	16%	7	7%	81	15%
	Endline	21	5%	15	4%	5	3%	15	11%	56	5%
It will get worse than before	Baseline	15	6%	6	4%	2	3%	4	4%	27	5%
	Endline	17	4%	14	4%	3	2%	3	2%	37	4%
It'll not make any difference in the development	Baseline	28	12%	7	4%	8	12%	8	9%	51	9%
	Endline	40	10%	45	12%	12	7%	3	2%	100	9%
Important for development but no trustful basis is seen	Baseline	73	32%	42	26%	14	22%	21	22%	150	27%
	Endline	80	21%	68	19%	28	17%	21	15%	197	19%
It is important and supports development	Baseline	57	25%	62	38%	16	25%	38	40%	173	31%
	Endline	153	39%	129	35%	57	34%	49	36%	388	37%
It is extremely important & makes development fast and effective	Baseline	15	6%	22	13%	11	17%	15	16%	63	11%
	Endline	77	20%	93	26%	61	37%	46	34%	277	26%
Others	Baseline	0	0%	4	2%	3	5%	1	1%	8	1%
	Endline	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Total	Baseline	231	100%	164	100%	64	100%	94	100%	553	100%
	Endline	390	100%	364	100%	166	100%	137	100%	1057	100%

The baseline data by age demonstrated that the youngest age category, 15-29, were by far the most pessimistic, as the younger respondents appeared to have much less trust in state restructuring delivering local development. This may be due to the lack of opportunities for younger community members to gain leadership opportunities and participate in development planning and implementation. All the age categories were similar and were hopeful but not overtly optimistic in their views. However, the endline data shows that although there is still an issue concerning trust, the majority is now much more positive regarding local development. Most notable is the 15-29 age group, as even though they are still lower than the other age groupings, 20 percent now agree that It is extremely important and makes development fast and effective, compared to 26 percent of the 30-40, 37 percent of the 40-45, and 34 percent of the 45 and above age groups.

The baseline data on caste/ethnicity also shows the same pattern of a lack of trust resulting in a degree of reserved optimism, with Dalits being the least trusting and optimistic. Conversely, the endline data clearly indicates a dramatic increase across all the caste/ethnic groups, but is most evident among the Dalits. For instance, the baseline date showed that only 19 percent of Dalits considered that state restructuring is important and supports development, and 6 percent thought it is extremely important and makes development fast and effective. The endline data has increased these percentages to 44 percent and 20 percent, respectively. The data may reflect the continuing work by Search, and many government and non-government organizations, to uplift the Dalit communities, and empower and include members in local governance and leadership positions.

By education the same patterns emerge with the exception of the illiterate who disproportionately (34%) stated they don't know/can't answer. Moreover, the illiterate were much less inclined to be positive on the prospect of state restructuring resulting in local development. This may be a result in the lack of information and social exclusion that may result from being illiterate. Again, the endline data displays the general increase in optimism and trust. Although still significantly lower, the illiterate who claim they don't know/can't say has dropped to only 14 percent, and 38 percent now agree that it is important and supports development.

The results from the endline data are extremely positive as the increase in optimism that state restructuring will deliver local development is high. After 20 years of central government control the prospect of gaining a degree of autonomy and self-determination appear to have revitalized community spirit and the hope has eroded the entrenched pessimism displayed in the baseline data. The endline data strongly suggests that the most venerable, women, the youth, marginal groups, and the illiterate have made the most gains and their knowledge and awareness has notably increased to almost match the other respondents in the study. However, the elected representatives, local leaders, and governance must continue to consult collaboratively with community members to plan and deliver sustainable development for the betterment of all community members, or the optimism may quickly evaporate and deliver a return to apathy and pessimism in its wake.

A FGD conducted by Search, after local governance management training had completed in Mahottari, ward present, Raihan Raijan Sahu, stated 'in the past, plan selection was done haphazardly and with the concern for people. But now, after training, people's opinions and needs are focused upon.' Therefore, the focus on the actual needs of the community and collaboration during the planning stage must be continually emphasized to make local development a reality, and continue to build community harmony and trust in local governance, especially for the most vulnerable groups.

2.3 Confidence to Express Opinions during the decision-making Process

The ability to express your opinion and have your views valued and considered as valid is an integral aspect of inclusion and active meaningful participation in local governance and development. However, having the confidence to express your opinions among community members is often prevented by a lack of education, restrictive cultural and social mores, lack of knowledge and information concerning the issue, discrimination, or the belief that your opinion does not matter and will simply be disregarded. To engage communities in all aspects of governance and development, it is essential that all members are confident and capable of providing their opinion and actively participate in decision-making process that will have an impact on their lives.
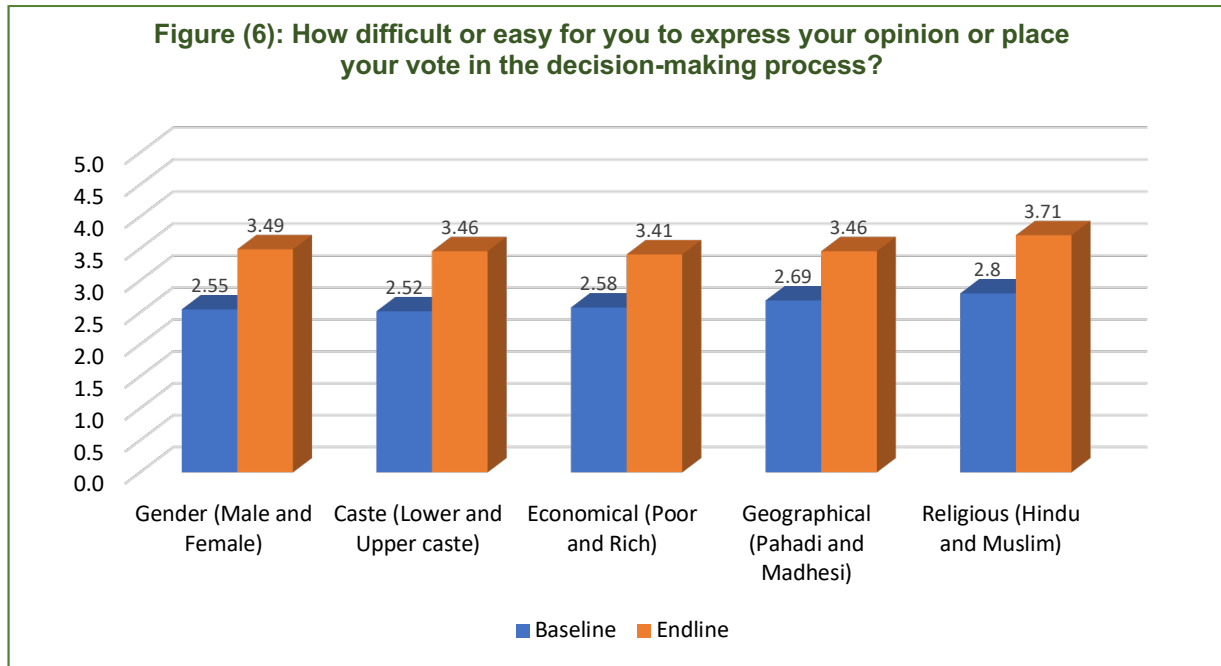
The baseline date regarding a respondents' ease at expressing their opinion or casting a vote during the decision making process was not encouraging. The respondents were categorized by gender, caste/ethnicity, economic situation, geographical identity, and religion and more than a quarter of all the respondents claimed they don't know, with 29 percent of the men and women, and a very high 35 percent of Pahade and Madhesi saying they don't know. The majority of the respondents found it difficult, and very few found the process easy or very easy. The endline data shows a pronounced improvement as very few respondents now claim they don't know and approximately a quarter of all the respondents across the categories stated it was either easy or very easy.

Table (4): How difficult or easy for you to express your opinion or place your vote in the decision-making process?

	Survey	Don't Know (0)		Very difficult (1)		Difficult (2)		Neither difficult nor easy (3)		Easy (4)		Very Easy (5)		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender (Male and Female)	Baseline	340	29%	160	14%	279	24%	216	19%	113	10%	56	5%	1164	100%
	Endline	81	7%	160	13%	145	12%	157	13%	344	28%	343	28%	1230	100%
Caste (Lower and Upper caste)	Baseline	292	25%	170	15%	293	25%	242	21%	121	10%	46	4%	1164	100%
	Endline	95	8%	139	11%	154	13%	203	17%	327	27%	312	25%	1230	100%
Economical (Poor and Rich)	Baseline	280	24%	174	15%	296	25%	207	18%	140	12%	67	6%	1164	100%
	Endline	94	8%	153	12%	155	13%	217	18%	298	24%	313	25%	1230	100%
Geographical (Pahadi and Madhesi)	Baseline	409	35%	182	16%	199	17%	141	12%	135	12%	98	8%	1164	100%
	Endline	206	17%	145	12%	124	10%	181	15%	268	22%	306	25%	1230	100%
Religious (Hindu and Muslim or others)	Baseline	318	27%	166	14%	241	21%	164	14%	144	12%	131	11%	1164	100%
	Endline	124	10%	100	8%	117	10%	182	15%	315	26%	392	32%	1230	100%
Total	Baseline	1639	28%	852	15%	1308	22%	970	17%	653	11%	398	7%	5820	100%
	Endline	600	10%	697	11%	695	11%	940	15%	1552	25%	1666	27%	6150	100%

The disaggregated baseline data by region and using the same categories indicated that there were large disparities between the regions. Across the three district gender and caste were generally in the middle between difficult and neither difficult nor easy, and a respondents economic situation varied from being less restrictive in Dhanusha to more problematic in Sindhuli. However, the most notable variation is between Dhanusha and Sindhuli regarding geographic identity and religion. A large disparity of 3.57 for both geographical region and religion compared to a very low 1.98 for the same categories in Sindhuli. This implies that is was much more difficult for these groups to express their opinions and cast a vote in Sindhuli compared to the relative ease in Dhanusha.

The endline data is much more promising, and clearly reflects a lot of effort, and training, in addressing this problem, particularly in Sindhuli. Almost all the respondents from all five categories and across the three districts fall into to the neither easy nor difficult range, with the exception of economic situation in Mahottari that remains quite low with only 2.83 compared to the average of 3.41.

Figure (6): How difficult or easy for you to express your opinion or place your vote in the decision-making process?

Average Value of 1 to 5 (1: Very difficult, 2: Difficult, 3: Neither difficult nor easy, 4: Easy, 5 Very Easy

When the same categories are disaggregated by respondent type the baseline data revealed that most respondents found it difficult to express their opinion or cast a vote, with the elected representatives responding more positively across all the categories, above average. The exception by category was religion, as both elected representatives (3.57) and influential leaders were much more at ease and claimed the process was neither difficult nor easy.

Again, the endline data shows a significant improvement across all the categories as the averages have all increased by almost an average value point. For example, 2.55, 2.52, 2.58, 2.69, and 2.80 have increased to a much more respectable 3.49, 3.46, 3.41, 3.46, and 3.71, respectively. The religion category maintains a higher average, but this may be that more accustomed to voicing their opinion in customary and traditional social environments.

By gender, the baseline data demonstrates the same difficulty for men and women across all the categories as the responses were predominantly negative, with the men only marginally being more at ease. The endline data clearly shows a noticeable increase similar to the previous variable, as the average totals have all increased by almost a whole point, but the patter remains consistent with men still being slightly higher than women.

The baseline data disaggregated by age and divided into the same categories, displays an almost identical trend of almost all age groups and categories with most respondents stating it was difficult. There is an exception of the 30-40 age group being slightly higher than the other groupings and by geographical identity and religion they are 3.00 and 3.08, respectively.

Table (4): How difficult or easy for you to express your opinion or place your vote in the decision-making process?

	Survey	Farmers/ Housewife	Students	Elected Repres.	Influential Persons	Affiliated in Local Structure	Political Leaders	Total
		Avg Value	Avg Value	Avg Value	Avg Value	Avg Value	Avg Value	Avg Value
Gender (Male and Female)	Baseline	2.05	2.34	3.03	2.87	2.57	2.66	2.55
	Endline	3.19	3.18	3.86	3.74	3.45	3.78	3.49
Caste (Lower and Upper caste)	Baseline	2.16	2.27	3.17	2.87	2.60	2.48	2.52
	Endline	3.20	3.20	3.70	3.89	3.26	3.72	3.46
Economical (Poor and Rich)	Baseline	2.20	2.34	3.19	2.96	2.70	2.51	2.58
	Endline	3.12	3.15	3.62	3.79	3.25	3.73	3.41
Geographical (Pahadi and Madhesi)	Baseline	2.39	2.42	3.58	3.17	2.63	2.58	2.69
	Endline	3.18	3.18	3.64	3.75	3.25	3.86	3.46
Religious (Hindu and Muslim /or others)	Baseline	2.43	2.46	3.57	3.37	2.77	2.78	2.80
	Endline	3.48	3.42	3.92	3.90	3.68	4.02	3.71

Interestingly, the endline data increases al the categories into the neither difficult nor easy option, but also brings the 30-40 age group more in line with the other age groupings. When analyzed by caste/ethnicity, as most of the other variables the majority of the respondents in the baseline data they found it difficult, but based on economic situation, geographical identify, and religion the Backward castes claimed it was neither difficult nor easy.

The endline data, once again demonstrates the increase in comfort of ease in expressing opinions and casting votes for most of the respondents. However, the Dalit only reported a slight increase of 2.84 by caste and 2.92 by economic situation, and now the backward castes record a decrease by caste and economic situation with 2.75 and 2.88, respectively, which is significantly below average and must be examined in further detail as they constitute marginalized and excluded groups.
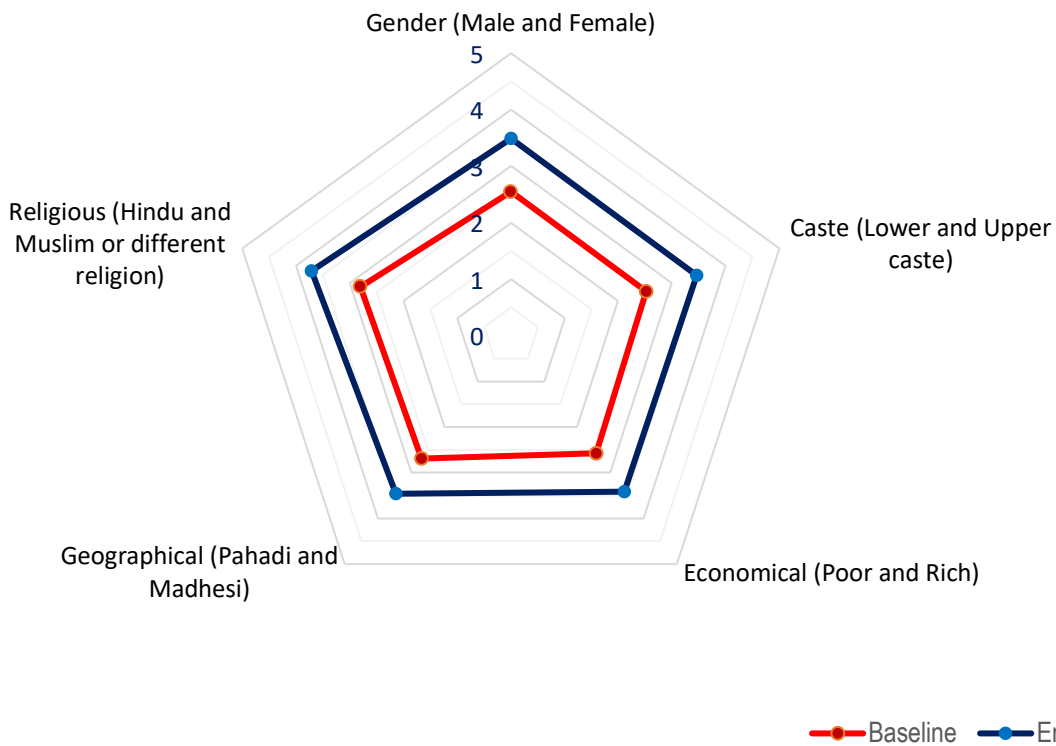

When examined, the baseline data by education initially appears to be relatively evenly spread, as were the other variables, but there is a notable distinction with respondents with a PLC and above as they are generally higher than the other educational grouping, particularly regarding economic situation, geographic identity, and religion.

The endline data shows that the PLC and above continue to be higher than the other groupings and are relatively evenly spread from 3.94 – to 4.14. However, the most concerning aspect is the regression of the illiterate to remain, and even decrease in confidence and ease in expressing ideas and casting votes. With the SLC/Secondary and Primary/Informal following the prevailing trend and increasing by approximately one value point, the PCL and above and the illiterate appear to be in an inverse correlation. This is extremely concerning as it suggests the information and training is not empowering the illiterate and appears to be resulting in them being pushed further in to powerlessness, silence, and exclusion.

Figure (4) How difficult or easy for you to express your opinion or place your vote in the decision-making process?

Overall, the endline data is generally very encouraging. The many perceived and real divisions among community members that prevent them from becoming active in the decision-making process appear to be reducing, which will not only help maintain social cohesion and promote harmony, but encourage inclusion and make planning and decision-making more representative of local communities. This can only be attributed to various training programs and awareness raising initiatives conducted by numerous organisations, including Search. Although the endline data does strongly suggest that the majority of respondents are gaining confidence to express their ideas and cast votes in the decision–making process, there are some glaring problems as some of the most vulnerable groups appear to be left behind despite being targeted by various initiatives. Dalits and Backward castes have issues relating to caste and economic situation, and the illiterate are in serious danger of being severely excluded from having a voice in the general governance and development of their communities.

Perhaps more targeted training should be provided to marginal groups, as during a FGD in Mahottari a participant, Shri Narayan Mandal, stated that the local government management training had focused on gender and social inclusion, as the 'state ensures the representation of women, Dalits and minorities at both the higher and lower level.' However, more focus could also be placed on other initiatives to guarantee inclusion and active participation, as during the same FGD Ram Bilas Ray discussed consumer committees as one potential way to involve all community members, he said that 'women, Dalits, and minorities are all included in consumer committees. In this way, they all take part in community development.'

2.4 Collaboration across the Dividing Lines

Most Nepali communities are heterogeneous and consist of people from various ethnic/caste backgrounds, religions, languages, and political allegiances. As such, any initiatives and programs must be collaborative and bridge the many dividing lines that may prevent meaningful local development. Therefore, the respondents were asked if women and the youth in their communities work collaboratively with people from different social and cultural identities.

According to the district data, the baseline survey indicated that between 40-55 percent of all the respondents across the three districts perceived that women and the youth worked collaboratively with people from other social identities. The one exception was Sindhuli that considered that they worked more with people with political differences (59%), and less with people with different geographical identities (31%). This may be related to the fact Sindhuli is a hill region as opposed to both Dhanusha and Mahottari that are both Terai districts.

Table (5): Do women and youth work collaboratively with people of different identities?

	Survey	Dhanusha		Mahottari		Sindhuli		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Work collaboratively besides political differences	Baseline	201	52%	165	43%	229	59%	595	51%
	Endline	292	71%	231	57%	330	80%	853	69%
Work collaboratively besides ethnic differences	Baseline	198	51%	162	42%	157	40%	517	44%
	Endline	313	76%	254	63%	333	81%	900	73%
Work collaboratively besides geographical difference (Pahade, Madeshi)	Baseline	166	43%	166	43%	119	31%	451	39%
	Endline	234	57%	174	43%	309	75%	717	58%
Work collaboratively besides lingual difference	Baseline	168	43%	158	41%	173	45%	499	43%
	Endline	321	78%	214	53%	317	77%	852	69%
Work Collaboratively besides gender difference	Baseline	192	49%	159	41%	219	56%	570	49%
	Endline	318	77%	271	67%	299	73%	888	72%
Work collaboratively besides religious difference	Baseline	192	49%	153	39%	162	42%	507	44%
	Endline	315	76%	209	52%	308	75%	832	68%

The endline data does show a perceived increase in most of the categories, with a few anomalies, such as Sindhuli now addressing the previous issue with geographic identity, and displaying remarkably high results with the from the lowest 73 to the highest of 81 percent. Dhanusha also has a reasonable even spread with most results being in the 70 percent range, with the exception of geographic identity that is only 57 percent. Mahottari is much more uneven and appears to have some issues with linguistic (53%), religious (52%), and political differences (57%). Most notable is the very low 43 percent for geographic identity, which all suggests that the recent turmoil and social and political upheavals in Mahottari, and to a lesser extent Dhanusha, have resulted in less trust and collaboration between women and the youth at the community level.

By respondent type the baseline data showed that the farmers/housewives were much lower than the other categories, which may be explained by the lack of exposure and being restricted to the family home for many housewives. There are concerning trends outlined in the data, one is that elected representatives, people affiliated with local structures, and political leaders are not as high as would be expected as they are supposed to set an example and work with all community members. The most worrying trend is that almost all the respondents, regardless of position, stated that they did not work with people with different geographical identities, with the average only being 39 percent.

Table (5): Do women and youth work collaboratively with people of different identities?

	Survey	Farmers/ Housewife		Students		Elected Repres.		Influential Persons		Affiliated in Local Structure		Political Leaders		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Work collaboratively besides political differences	Baseline	75	35%	142	47%	83	73%	61	41%	98	64%	136	58%	595	51%
	Endline	186	71%	181	57%	148	74%	71	73%	71	70%	196	77%	853	69%
Work collaboratively besides ethnic differences	Baseline	62	29%	131	44%	67	59%	63	43%	91	59%	103	44%	517	44%
	Endline	180	69%	210	66%	150	75%	78	80%	76	75%	206	81%	900	73%
Work collaboratively besides geographical (Pahade, Madesh) difference	Baseline	47	22%	137	46%	62	54%	62	42%	60	39%	83	35%	451	39%
	Endline	128	49%	175	55%	119	60%	67	69%	56	55%	172	67%	717	58%
Work collaboratively besides lingual difference	Baseline	56	26%	141	47%	65	57%	57	39%	75	49%	105	45%	499	43%
	Endline	166	64%	217	69%	135	68%	68	70%	66	65%	200	78%	852	69%
Work Collaboratively besides gender difference	Baseline	79	37%	157	52%	72	63%	59	40%	89	58%	114	49%	570	49%
	Endline	186	71%	207	66%	151	76%	71	73%	70	69%	203	80%	888	72%
Work collaboratively besides religious difference	Baseline	63	29%	129	43%	68	60%	59	40%	81	53%	107	46%	507	44%
	Endline	165	63%	195	62%	145	73%	66	68%	68	67%	193	76%	832	68%

The endline data does demonstrate a significant increase in the perceived collaboration of women and the youth regardless of social identity, with the political leaders now reporting much more collaboration. However, divisions and lack of collaboration with people with different geographic locations is still evident and much lower than the other categories. The average is still only 58 percent and indicates there are still problems between the Madhesi and Pahade community members. This may be related to historical and recent unrest over identity and representation, and political agitation for more inclusion and equality that could be creating a lack of trust that reifies local divisions based on geographic identity.

The disaggregated baseline gender data showed that men and women have a low perception of collaboration ad that there was very little difference between male and female respondents. Notably, female responds followed the prevailing trend that geographical difference was the biggest obstacle with only 36 percent stating that women and the youth collaborated across this dividing line.

The endline data is much more positive, but men are not men are much higher than women, this suggests this suggests that men are benefitting more from programs and initiatives to raise awareness and the importance of collaboration for local development. Women are still much lower regarding geographic difference as 70 percent of men and only 51 percent of female responds perceived collaboration across the Madhesi/Pahade divide. This may, as previously mentioned, simply be the result of limited exposure due to many women predominantly engaging in household tasks.

When examined by age group, the baseline data reflects the same low perceptions, with slightly more positive responses from the 30-40 and 15-29 age groups. The older respondents appear to think there was less collaboration due to geographical, linguistic, and religious differences, but these low responses may be the result of their own experiences creating a cognitive bias. The endline data is again much more positive as almost all the responses fall between 60 to 80 percent; however, the Madheshi/Pahade divide is still clearly evident across all age groups and implies there is much more work required to cross the dividing line to truly deliver functioning pluralistic and diverse communities.

The caste/ethnicity data in the baseline followed the same trend as most responses were relatively low with the Janajati grouping perceiving the most collaboration, especially political differences (60%) and

gender differences (63%). However, the Dalits' perception was much lower in almost all categories and possibly implying that members of the Dalit community have much less experience of collaboration with other social identities. The endline data continues to show a clear increase in the positive responses, especially for the Dalits who are much more positive, although still well below the average. Interestingly, the Madeshi/Pahade division is still evident, but the Backward castes are now much lower with only 34 percent compared to 50% reported by the Dalits and an average of 58 percent.

The baseline data on education demonstrated a positive correlation between education and perceived collaboration with people with different social identities. The respondents with a PLC or above were much more positive, and as educational attainment decreased the perception of collaboration also decreased. This resulted in the illiterate being almost half the value of the responses given by the PLC and above.

Figure (8): Do women and youth in your community work collaboratively with people of different identities?
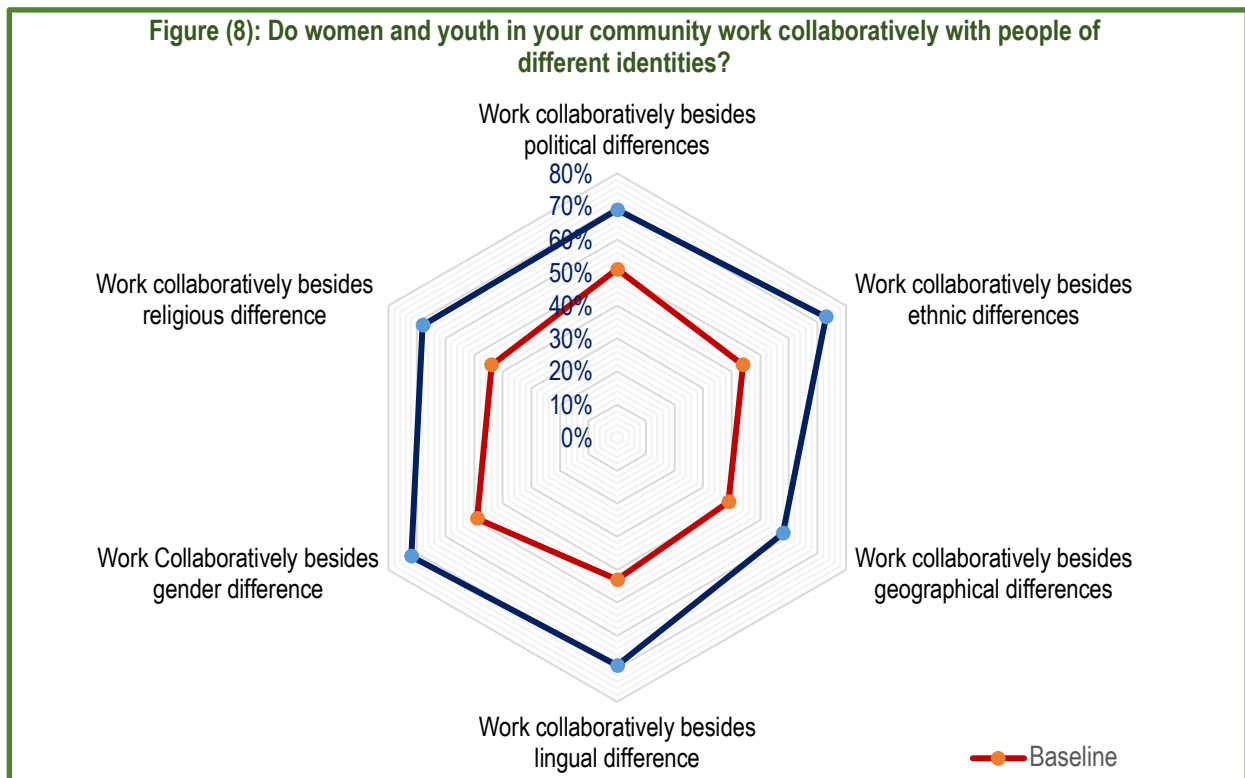
The endline data demonstrates the same increase that has been evident with all the variables, but with the highest perception of collaboration recorded by the PLC and above with a range from the 77 to 83 percent. The positive correlation remains but is much weaker as the other educational groups are much closer than previously and the illiterate are much closer to the average percentages. Perhaps the most interesting, and potentially important aspect, is that the most salient division evident across all the categories is the Madhesi/Pahade divide; however, this is no longer present in the PLC and above. For example, 80 percent of the PLC and above perceive collaboration of women and the youth across geographical difference compared to SLC/Secondary (55%), Primary/Informal (57%), the Illiterate (25%), and an average of only 58 percent.

On the one hand, the endline data appears to reflect a general increase in collaboration and cooperation between women and the youth from different social and cultural backgrounds, but on the other hand, there are echoes of lingering animosity and fragmentation at the community level. More work is required to bring communities together and encourage collaboration across the many social and cultural dividing lines. The one divide that most responds perceive as problematic is geographic identity, and this divisive

issue must be addressed to ease the recent tensions and create harmonious and peaceful communities. Interestingly, the solution may have presented itself, as the endline date strongly suggests that higher educational attainment eliminates this bias and encourages collaboration. This could equally be achieved with targeted training programs to directly address this issue.

The conclusions from the analysis of the endline data are supported by additional information from FGDs and KIIs. For instance, during a KII, a participant of the collaborative leadership program in Dhanusha, Bindu Kumari Yadav, stated that 'collaboration between several groups and individuals is often needed to address the issues of their communities.' However, as the endline data indicates, even after the training social divisions exist that prevent collaboration to address local development issues. During a FGD in Sindhuli, Tek B Pariyar suggests a possible solution. 'Only elected representatives were able to take part in the training. But if all people from the village were able to get such training, it would be better.' This may be logistically impossible and beyond the scope of most organisations, but perhaps more training to various local groups and the utilization of other existing networks would be productive in establishing more collaboration between people with different social identities, specifically the potentially volatile Madhesi/Pahade divide.

2.5 Affiliation with Local Structures

Being a member of a local group, organization or network in your community is very important to maintain social ties, obtain knowledge on community affairs, gain exposure to alternatives views and opinions, and develop a feeling of belonging and responsibility to your community. In addition, many groups can provide invaluable advice and support, or permit local people to engage in politics in a peaceful manner. Alternatively, a lack of membership of any local groups may lead to isolation, social exclusion, and a lack of awareness on important community activities and development programs.

Figure (3): Are you affiliated with any group/organization or network?
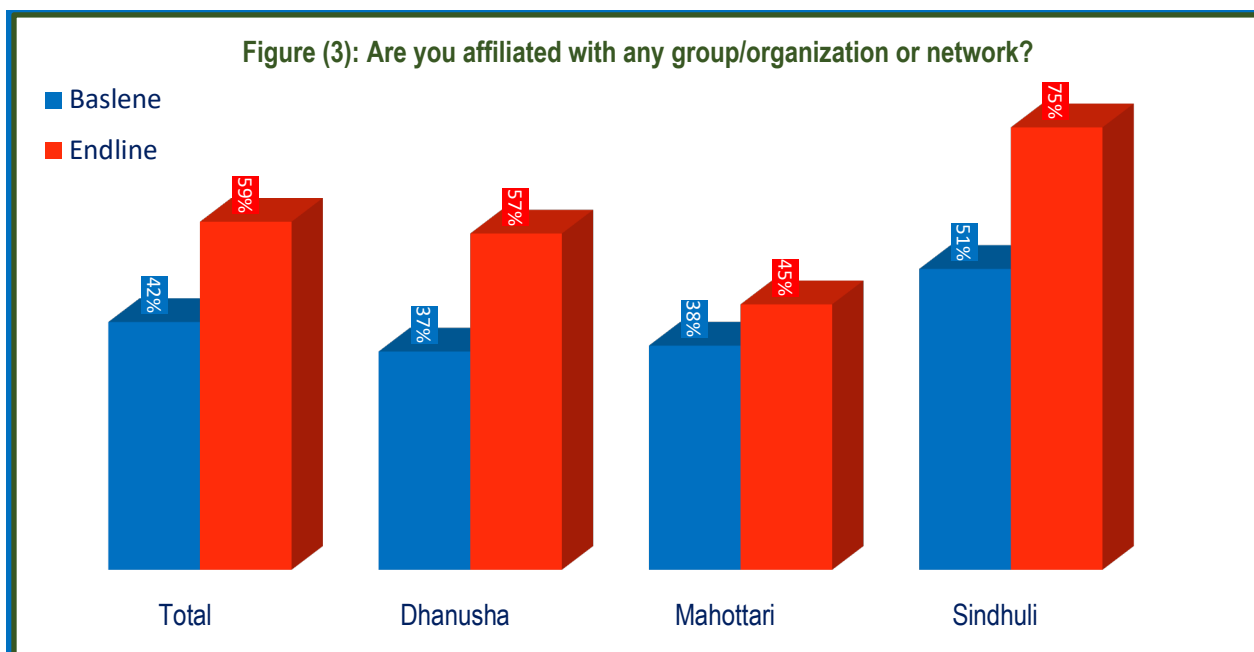
The disaggregated baseline data by district was very disappointing as only 37 percent in Dhanusha, 38 percent in Mahottari, and a slightly higher 51 percent in Sindhuli were members of groups, organisations, or networks. The endline data, although an improvement, was still relatively low in Dhanusha (57%) and Mahottari (45%) compared to a much improved 75 percent in Sindhuli.

By respondent type, the baseline data showed that farmers/housewives and students were seriously underrepresented in membership with only 12 percent and 9 percent, respectively. Influential leaders were not much better with only 22 percent claiming membership, and those affiliated with local structures claimed 100 percent membership, as expected.

The endline data shows a small incremental improvement with a significant increase in influential people (82%), and a smaller improvement in the membership of farmers/housewives (42%), and students (27%). These results are concerning as even with the increased membership the farmers/housewives, and especially the students, are well below average and risk further social exclusion and marginalization.

When the baseline gender data was analyzed it showed that women (47%) were more involved in groups, organisations, and networks than men (35%). This is not a surprising as it may appear as there are many female orientated micro-finance organisations, mothers' groups, and women's networks in most villages across the study districts. The endline data, as now expected, does show an increase in membership for men (56%) and women (61%), but not as notable as previous indicators and not as high as desired to decrease social exclusion.

The baseline disaggregated data by age shows the same worrying patter of the younger respondents, the 15-29 age group only having 21 percent of membership, and the other three groups are much higher with 63 percent for the 30-40, 45 percent of the 40-45, and 58 percent for the 45 and above age groups. The endline data is also an improvement but still not as high as expected, especially for the younger respondents who still only report 43 percent membership compared to the other older three groups all having 69 percent membership. This is very concerning as the youth appear to have limited membership to groups, organisations, and networks that will restrict their involvement in the community and deny them an active voice, leadership opportunities, and the potential to participate in decision-making.

The baseline data by caste/ethnicity is much more even but still very low, particularly the Backward castes that record only 38 percent membership. The endline does record an increase in membership, but this is still very low considering the important role groups, organisations, and networks can make in contributing to the reduction of discrimination and inclusion. The baseline data on education showed that respondents with Primary/Informal education were more likely to be members with 53 percent reporting membership of a group or organization compared to only 39 percent for the PLC and above, 37 percent for the SLC/Secondary, and 39 percent for the illiterate.

As expected by the previous variables, the endline data shows there is a small increase in membership across all the education levels. Interestingly, the respondents with Primary/Informal education are again the highest recorded membership with 70 percent. The reason for high rate of membership among the respondents with Primary/Informal education is unclear at this stage and may be explained in the subsequent data.

The baseline data showed that membership of groups, organisations, and networks, was low among all the variables; however, unlike the previous indicators, the endline data only highlighted a small increase in membership. This is a worrying scenario as membership to a group or organization can help alleviate or prevent isolation and social exclusion, and maintain strong community ties. Most concerning is the continued low membership of the most vulnerable, such as women and marginalized groups, and the very low membership of the younger respondents, essentially the youth, who are all at risk from becoming dislocated from their respective communities that further perpetuates the lack of representation, participation, and meaningful leadership opportunities.

The type of groups, organisations, networks that respondents are affiliated with is also important and indicates how connected they are to their communities, and how much they participate in addressing issues related to their specific communities.

Table (6): If yes, in which group/organization or network are you affiliated with?

	Survey	Dhanusha		Mahottari		Sindhuli		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ward Citizen Forum	Baseline	13	3%	12	3%	17	4%	42	4%
	Endline	16	7%	22	12%	94	24%	132	18%
Women Group/Network	Baseline	42	11%	4	1%	94	24%	140	12%
	Endline	26	11%	48	27%	183	46%	257	35%
Mother Group	Baseline	6	2%	12	3%	47	12%	65	6%
	Endline	22	9%	14	8%	134	34%	170	23%
Community Forest User Group	Baseline	1	0%	0	0%	32	8%	33	3%
	Endline	6	3%	0	0%	130	33%	136	19%
Tole User Committee	Baseline	16	4%	0	0%	9	2%	25	2%
	Endline	8	3%	4	2%	155	39%	167	23%
NGO	Baseline	2	1%	9	2%	24	6%	35	3%
	Endline	31	13%	9	5%	145	37%	185	25%
School Management Committee	Baseline	3	1%	2	1%	23	6%	28	2%
	Endline	3	1%	9	5%	110	28%	122	17%
Local Security Committee	Baseline	0	0%	0	0%	5	1%	5	0%
	Endline	0	0%	1	1%	88	22%	89	12%
Inter-party Women Network	Baseline	7	2%	11	3%	12	3%	30	3%
	Endline	2	1%	14	8%	87	22%	103	14%
Political Party	Baseline	54	14%	83	21%	75	19%	212	18%
	Endline	100	42%	47	26%	138	35%	285	39%
Local Peace Committee Task Group	Baseline	2	1%	1	0%	2	1%	5	0%
	Endline	17	7%	0	0%	73	18%	90	12%
Others	Baseline	8	2%	18	5%	39	10%	65	6%
	Endline	45	19%	32	18%	38	10%	115	16%
Total	Baseline	144	100%	149	100%	197	100%	490	100%
	Endline	238	100%	181	100%	307	77%	726	100%

The disaggregated baseline data showed that most of the membership was of women's groups/networks and political parties. However, Mahottari appears to be different than the other two districts as only 1 percent of the respondents reported being members of women's groups/networks compared to 11 percent in Dhanusha and a much higher 24 percent in Sindhuli. Alternatively, Mahottari has the highest membership of political parties with 21 percent, and Dhanusha and Sindhuli have 14 and 19 percent, respectively. This may be due to the recent unrest in Mahottari resulting in increased political activism and awareness.

The endline data is much more promising as there is much more membership of a range of groups and organisations, but membership in Dhanusha and Mahottari is much lower than in Sindhuli. Membership of political parties has notably increased in Dhanusha (42%) and Sindhuli (35%), but only slightly in Mahottari (26%). Similarly, membership of women's groups/networks has increased in Sindhuli (46), and dramatically in Mahottari (27), but has remained the same in Dhanusha (11%). Overall, the endline data suggests that respondents from Sindhuli are engaging much more in community related issues, or perhaps

there are more groups and organisations available in the local communities, but it is clear the Terai districts are seriously lacking membership that may damage social cohesion and social inclusion.

When the baseline data was examined by respondent type, it became evident that the majority of the respondents had no membership of any local group or organization. The largest membership was the elected representatives, people affiliated with local structures, and political leaders, who were members of mother's groups and most significantly political parties. The farmers/housewives and students, some of the most excluded and vulnerable respondents, were severely underrepresented in any local groups and organisations.

Table (6): If yes, in which group/organization or network are you affiliated with?

	Survey	Farmers/ Housewife		Students		Elected Repres.		Influential Persons		Affiliated in Local Structure		Political Leaders		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ward Citizen Forum	Baseline	2	1%	1	0%	4	4%	3	2%	18	12%	14	6%	42	4%
	Endline	13	12%	18	21%	33	26%	10	13%	22	22%	36	16%	132	18%
Women Group/ Network	Baseline	9	4%	2	1%	15	13%	3	2%	72	47%	39	17%	140	12%
	Endline	48	44%	23	27%	54	42%	18	23%	58	57%	56	25%	257	35%
Mother Group	Baseline	1	0%	1	0%	12	11%	11	7%	23	15%	17	7%	65	6%
	Endline	21	19%	24	28%	39	30%	13	16%	26	26%	47	21%	170	23%
Community Forest User Group	Baseline	3	1%	0	0%	5	4%	0	0%	12	8%	13	6%	33	3%
	Endline	5	5%	12	14%	38	29%	17	21%	16	16%	48	22%	136	19%
Tole User Committee	Baseline	2	1%	0	0%	5	4%	2	1%	13	8%	3	1%	25	2%
	Endline	12	11%	14	16%	43	33%	24	30%	14	14%	60	27%	167	23%
NGO	Baseline	1	0%	4	1%	8	7%	6	4%	8	5%	8	3%	35	3%
	Endline	18	16%	26	31%	42	33%	25	31%	26	26%	48	22%	185	25%
School Management Committee	Baseline	2	1%	3	1%	5	4%	2	1%	6	4%	10	4%	28	2%
	Endline	8	7%	7	8%	42	33%	15	19%	13	13%	37	17%	122	17%
Local Security Committee	Baseline	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	3%	1	0%	5	0%
	Endline	2	2%	6	7%	35	27%	10	13%	11	11%	25	11%	89	12%
Inter-party Women Network	Baseline	0	0%	0	0%	5	4%	0	0%	19	12%	6	3%	30	3%
	Endline	1	1%	7	8%	33	26%	8	10%	9	9%	45	20%	103	14%
Political Party	Baseline	5	2%	1	0%	48	42%	2	1%	25	16%	131	56%	212	18%
	Endline	4	4%	15	18%	69	53%	18	23%	16	16%	163	74%	285	39%
Peace Committee Task Group	Baseline	1	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	2	1%	5	0%
	Endline	1	1%	5	6%	29	22%	16	20%	6	6%	33	15%	90	12%
Others	Baseline	5	2%	18	6%	6	5%	8	5%	17	11%	11	5%	65	6%
	Endline	8	7%	35	41%	16	12%	35	44%	14	14%	7	3%	115	16%
Total	Baseline	25	100%	27	100%	73	100%	33	100%	154	100%	176	100%	490	100%
	Endline	110	100%	85	100%	129	100%	80	100%	101	100%	221	100%	726	100%

The endline data shows that all the respondent types have increased their membership, but most notable are the farmers/housewives and students that have now become members of numerous local groups and organisations. For example, farmers/housewives now report 44 percent membership of women's groups/networks, 19 percent for mother's groups, and 12 percent for ward citizen forums. Similarly, students also claim 27 percent, 28 percent, and 21 percent membership for the same groups, respectively. Additionally, membership for NGOs has also increased with the farmers/housewives (16%) and students (31%). This suggests that programs and initiatives in the local communities is having a positive impact in

encouraging people to join groups and organisations; however, it must be mentioned that although all respondent types have increased their membership, especially farmers/housewives and students, they are still lacking membership other important local groups and organisations, such as school management committees, local security committees, inter-party women's networks and political parties. Interestingly, 18 percent of the students do now claim membership of political parties, which is an improvement, 41 percent also state they are members of other groups, perhaps youth or school/college organisations.

The baseline gender data confirms the lack of membership of both male and female respondents, with the exceptions being mother's groups and political parties. As expected, many more women (19%) were members of mother's groups than men (1%), but the female respondents (20%) were also more involved with political parties than male respondents (15%). This data must be interpreted with caution as the role and position within the groups may be passive affiliation as opposed to meaningful participation.

The endline data shows a positive increase in membership, of both men and women, across a range of groups and organisations. Although commendable that men have increased their membership, unfortunately, a gender division is becoming more pronounced as men are predominantly members of management committees, such as 30 percent membership of tole users committee, 22 percent of ward citizen forum, and a half of men are now members of political parties compared to only 32 recent of the female respondents. Alternatively, women dominant the membership of gender specific groups and organisations, such as women's groups/organisations (55%) and mother's groups (34%). This is a concerning development as membership appears to be following the established gender roles and division of labour, and rather that deconstructing gender discrimination, membership of local groups may be perpetuating the inequality and prevent meaningful inclusion. However, it must also be noted that the presence of NGOs has made impact as a quarter of both male and female respondents are members, which may help to redress the inequality and promote gender mainstreaming.

The baseline data based on age groupings also demonstrated the same pattern of very low general membership of any groups or organisations, and the recorded membership was predominantly limited to women's groups/networks, and political parties. Although the limited membership is concerning in itself, the most worrying aspect was that the 15-29 age group had very little membership of any group or organization, and were much lower than the older respondents. This exemplifies the problem with youth exclusion in all community affairs, and demonstrates that the youth are socially, culturally, and politically excluded.

The endline data, again, shows a large increase in membership of all the age categories among the various local groups and organisations. Most notable is the dramatic increase in membership of the younger age group, 15-29 year-of age. The data indicate a much more even spread of membership with youth membership being slightly lower, equal, or even higher, such as NGOs with 29 percent membership compared to the 30-40 (23%), 40-45 (26%), and the 45 and older (25%) age groups. Like the disaggregated gender data, this indicates the important role NGOs are having in increasing membership of the most socially excluded groups. Although the youth do now have 21 percent membership of political parties it is still more than 50 percent less than the other age groups, demonstrating membership of political parties must be increased to make local governance much more representative. Similar to the students, 30 percent of the 15-29 age group claim membership of other groups and organisations, which may be youth orientated groups and networks.

The baseline data on caste also shows a serious lack of membership of local groups and organisations, with women's groups/organisations and political parties having the most members, but the number of

members for each group was still very low. Similar to the other variables, the endline data shows that membership of all the different groups and organisations has significantly increased. Although women's groups/networks and political parties are still have the highest membership, the Janajatis and the Others category appear to much better represented in almost all the groups. Interestingly, the membership of NGOs, something that addressed the exclusion of women and the youth, appears to be less balanced in the case of marginalized groups. Dalits (14%) and Backward castes (7%) are extremely underrepresented in relation to NGO membership, compared to 33 percent of the Janajatis and 28 percent of the Others group. This must be addressed as the remit of the NGOs is predicated on increasing inclusion of the most marginalized groups, and this appears to failing respondents from low and vulnerable castes.

By education, the baseline data showed that, as expected, that membership was generally very low, and women's groups/networks and political parties have the most membership. There appears to be a correlation between the lower a respondent's educational attainment and higher membership, and this is particularly evident with the Primary/Informal educated group claiming 27 percent membership of political parties compared to a much lower PCL or above (14%), SLC/Secondary (16%), and the Illiterate (14%).

Table (6): If yes, in which group/organization or network are you affiliated with?

	Survey	Dalit		Janajati		Backward Caste		Others		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ward Citizen Forum	Baseline	10	4%	11	4%	13	4%	8	3%	42	4%
	Endline	16	13%	46	21%	6	13%	64	19%	132	18%
Women Group/Network	Baseline	27	10%	47	17%	20	6%	46	15%	140	12%
	Endline	39	31%	90	41%	10	22%	118	35%	257	35%
Mother Group	Baseline	7	3%	30	11%	5	2%	23	7%	65	6%
	Endline	30	24%	67	31%	3	7%	70	21%	170	23%
Community Forest User Group	Baseline	3	1%	24	8%	1	0%	5	2%	33	3%
	Endline	17	13%	56	26%	2	4%	61	18%	136	19%
Tole User Committee	Baseline	5	2%	6	2%	7	2%	7	2%	25	2%
	Endline	20	16%	59	27%	4	9%	84	25%	167	23%
NGO	Baseline	7	3%	15	5%	4	1%	9	3%	35	3%
	Endline	18	14%	71	33%	3	7%	93	28%	185	25%
School Management Committee	Baseline	6	2%	13	5%	4	1%	5	2%	28	2%
	Endline	14	11%	45	21%	2	4%	61	18%	122	17%
Local Security Committee	Baseline	2	1%	1	0%	0	0%	2	1%	5	0%
	Endline	11	9%	36	17%	1	2%	41	12%	89	12%
Inter-party Women Network	Baseline	4	2%	11	4%	8	3%	7	2%	30	3%
	Endline	14	11%	39	18%	4	9%	46	14%	103	14%
Political Party	Baseline	57	22%	50	18%	44	14%	61	20%	212	18%
	Endline	49	39%	94	43%	19	42%	123	37%	285	39%
Local Peace Committee Task Group	Baseline	1	0%	0	0%	2	1%	2	1%	5	0%
	Endline	14	11%	30	14%	1	2%	45	13%	90	12%
Others	Baseline	14	5%	20	7%	13	4%	18	6%	65	6%
	Endline	15	12%	37	17%	4	9%	59	18%	115	16%
Total	Baseline	113	100%	126	100%	117	100%	134	100%	490	100%
	Endline	127	100%	218	100%	45	100%	336	100%	726	100%

The endline data for most of the other variables showed an increase in membership for all the groups and organization and a more even spread of membership, with most claiming membership of mother's groups/networks and political parties. The educational attainment data does display the same trend, but at the expense of the illiterate that have an extremely limited increase in membership of most groups and organisations. The PLC and above, SLC/Secondary, and Primary/Informal groups are much more even regarding membership, with the exception of the women's groups/organisations where the Primary/Informal maintain a much higher membership of 57 percent with an average of only 35 percent. However, there are two notable anomalies; firstly, the illiterate appear to have become much more political as they record the highest membership of political parties, 42 percent, just higher than the PLC and above (38%), SLC/Secondary (40%), and the Primary/Informal group (38%). The second anomaly is perhaps more concerning, as similar to the data on caste/ethnicity, it appears that NGOs are not encouraging or including the illiterate as members, which will have an impact on their overall inclusion in community affairs and local development. The illiterate have a very small 4 percent membership of NGOs that is well below the average of 25 percent. Conversely, PLC and above claim 35 percent, and 24 percent of SLC/Secondary and 28 percent of Primary/Informal are members of NGOs.

The general pattern displayed by the endline and baseline data, and evident across most of the variables, is that that more respondents are mostly members of mother's groups/networks and political parties. The endline data highlight that general membership has dramatically increased over a relatively short period of time, which encourages optimism regarding increasing social and political inclusion and more representative and egalitarian local communities. However, there are still certain vulnerable groups that appear to continue to be isolated and lack representation in local groups and organisations. Farmers/housewives and students, the youth, and the illiterate continue to be underrepresented in most local groups and organisations; however, perhaps the most concerning results from the endline data is that NGOs, which are supposed to encourage membership and equality as demonstrated by the gender and the age variables, appear to serious lack membership of respondents from Mahottari, farmers/housewives, Dalits and Backward castes, and the illiterate. This suggests that NGOs must become more representative to local demographics and actively encourage more membership of the most vulnerable groups in society.

Table (8): What would be your role in such discussion?

	Dhanusha		Mahottari		Sindhuli		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know/ Can't Say	29	20%	47	32%	16	8%	92	19%
Do not express opinion during participation	7	5%	8	5%	59	30%	74	15%
Speak only sometimes	39	27%	33	22%	26	13%	98	20%
Usually participate in discussion and decision	52	36%	39	26%	75	38%	166	34%
Take argument forward while making decision	12	8%	17	11%	15	8%	44	9%
Influence the decision-making process	5	3%	5	3%	6	3%	16	3%
Total	144	100%	149	100%	197	100%	490	100%

Being a member of a local group or organization is extremely important in addressing social exclusion and empowering community members to engage in decision-making that impacts their communities and local development. However, simply being a member and passively attending meetings is insufficient, as the members must actively participate and in the decision-making process and offer their opinions and views regarding local issues.

The disaggregated baseline data showed that the many of respondents from Dhanusha and Mahottari stated that they don't/know or can't say, 30 and 30 percent respectively, with only 8 percent from Sindhuli agreeing with this statement. The majority of the respondents from all three districts, claimed that they either spoke only sometimes or usually participated, in discussions and decisions. Notable, is that very few respondents, from all the districts, considered that they took the argument forward while making a decision or that they influenced the decision making process.

The data collected by the endline data is much more positive and also shows a more even response from the three districts. Although the majority of the respondents now profess to usually participating in discussions and decisions, Dhanusha (30%), Mahottari (40%), and Sindhuli (39%), a significantly higher number now believe that they take the argument forward while making decisions and that they now also influence decision-making process. Twenty-one and 13 percent in Dhanusha, 20 and 18 percent in Mahottari, and 19 and 18 percent in Sindhuli, respectively, now agree with these statements.

Figure (10): What would be your role in such discussion?
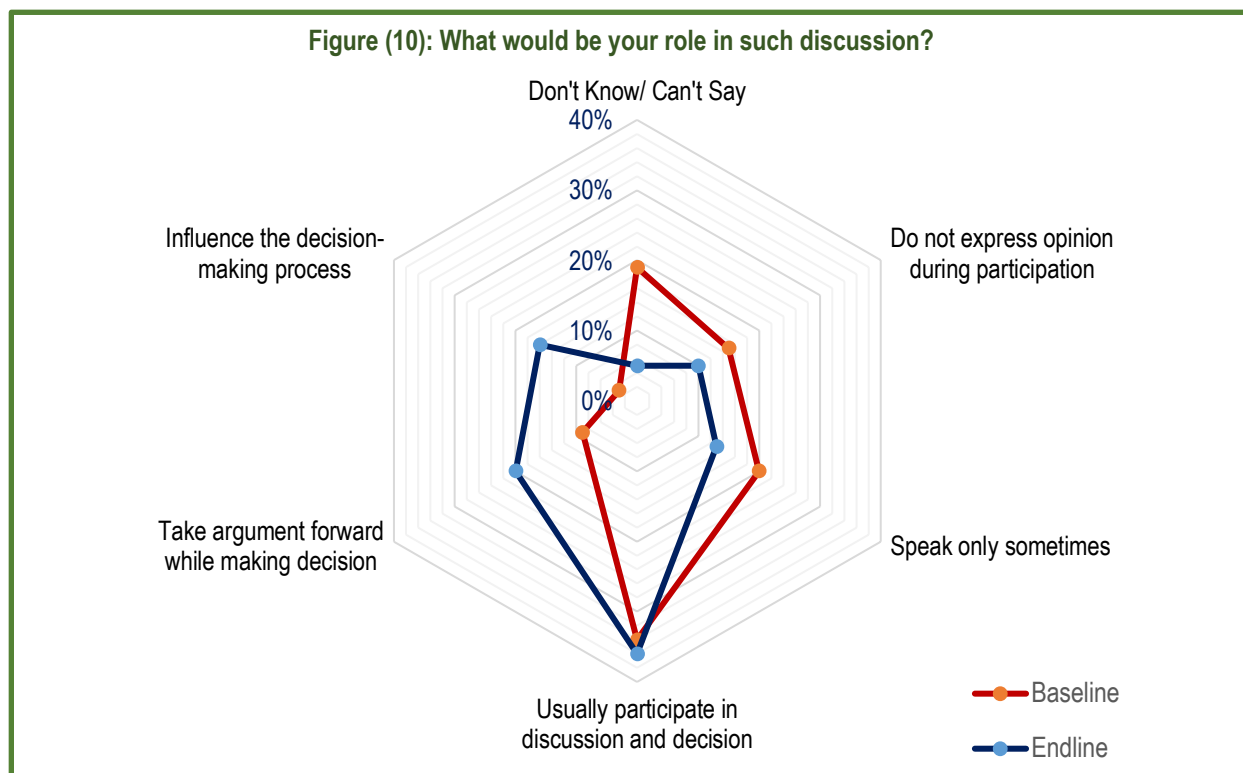
When the baseline data was examined by respondent type, the data initially appears to be positive as more than a third of the respondents, with the exception of influential people with on 21 percent, claimed they participated in meetings. However, once analyzed in more detail it becomes clear that the respondents were participating, but making a meaningful contribution to the meetings. Very few respondents stated that they took the argument forward while making decisions and even fewer thought that they influenced the decision making process, with a very low average of 9 and 3 percent, respectively. It is interesting to note that farmers/housewives recorded the highest participation (40%), and highest number who thought they took the argument forward while decision making (16%).

The endline data shows that participation has increased for most categories, particularly for influential people (46%) and political leaders (40%), but a small decrease is evident in the farmers/housewives (39%).

The respondents are also much more evenly spread, with a 20 percent average, on whether they take the argument forward while making decisions, but it appears that thinking that you influence the decision-making process has increased for people with higher social or cultural status; for example, 22 percent of elected representatives, 21 percent of influential people, 21 percent of people affiliated with local structures, and 17 percent of political leaders all agreed with this statement, but a very low 7 percent of farmers/housewives and students agreed. This is worrying as indicates that farmers/housewives and students are participating but believe that they have no voice, or impact on the local decision-making process.

Table (9): What would be your role in such discussion?

		Male		Female		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know/ Can't Say	Baseline	31	20%	61	18%	92	19%
	Endline	12	4%	23	5%	35	5%
Do not express opinion during participation	Baseline	25	16%	49	15%	74	15%
	Endline	16	6%	54	12%	70	10%
Speak only sometimes	Baseline	17	11%	81	24%	98	20%
	Endline	22	8%	75	16%	97	13%
Usually participate in discussion and decision	Baseline	56	35%	110	33%	166	34%
	Endline	105	39%	158	34%	263	36%
Take argument forward while making decision	Baseline	18	11%	26	8%	44	9%
	Endline	62	23%	81	18%	143	20%
Influence the decision-making process	Baseline	11	7%	5	2%	16	3%
	Endline	51	19%	67	15%	118	16%
Total	Baseline	158	100%	332	100%	490	100%
	Endline	268	100%	458	100%	726	100%

The baseline gender data showed similarly negative results, as the majority, about a third, of both male and female respondents claimed that they usually participated in discussions and decisions, with the remainder mostly stating they don't know/can't say, do not express an opinion during participation, or speck only sometimes. Only 11 percent of the men and 8 percent of the women thought they took the argument forward while decision making and 7 percent and 2 percent believed that they influenced the decision-making process. Although there was no difference by gender, the results did indicate that both men and women were limited to participating, and did not feel that their opinions were considered during the decision-making process.

Alternatively, the endline data demonstrated much more meaningful participation for both men and women, as most of the responses are now clustered within the more positive statements. Participation is still just over a third of the respondents, but now 23 percent of the male, and 18percent of the female respondents think that they take the argument forward while decision-making, and 19 of the men and 15 percent of the women also believe that they now influence the decision-making process. This is a notable improvement over a short period of time, and although men are slightly ahead of women, the difference is not significant.

By age, the baseline data demonstrates the same trend relatively good participation, but very low actual influence in meetings, and an extremely low belief that their opinions or views influence the decision-making process. The lower age group, 15-29 years-of age, appear to be much less engaged in meetings as almost half of that age groups stated they don't know/can't say or they do not express their opinions while participating. Moreover, their participation was also much lower as only 24 percent said they usually

participate in discussions and decisions, compare to 38 percent of the 30-40, 30 percent of the 40-45, and 40 percent of the 45 and over age groups. This is similar to the other indicators that show the youth are either excluded, apathetic, or lack the opportunity to meaningfully participate in their communities.

Conversely, the endline data shows a dramatic increase in the youth participation, and a belief that they are making a meaningful contribution to discussions and decision-making. All the age groupings display much more positive responses regarding meetings, but the 15-29 age group is now more equal to the older respondents. The 40-45 (20%) and 45 and older (24%) age groups think that they influence the decision-making process more than the 15-29 (15%) and the 30-40 (13%) groupings, the youth record a slightly higher, 22 percent, regarding taking the argument forward while decision making compared to the other age groups. This implies that the youth are becoming more optimistic and believe that their opinions and perspectives are not being ignored, which will progressively encourage more participation and active involvement in local decision-making processes.

The baseline data showed that by caste/ethnicity, Dalits and Janajatis appeared to be much less involved with only 27 percent of the Dalits and 29 percent of the Janajatis stating that they usually participate in discussions and decisions. The Backward castes (39%) and the Others (40%) participated much more, and were also slightly more positive about the impact of their views and opinions. The Janajatis (37%) that did participate mostly stated that they did not express their opinion during the meetings, with the average being only 15 percent. Clearly, there are issues relating to caste/ethnicity that limits participation in meetings and the belief that they have an impact in discussions and decision-making.

Generally, the endline data is more positive and does follow the established pattern of increasing the active participation of respondents during meetings. Janajatis have now become much more engaged in the process with 39 percent stating they usually participate in discussions and decisions, almost equal with the Backward castes (40%) and Others (38%), but Dalits continue to lack meaningful participation with only 27 percent agreeing with the statement. Interestingly, of the Dalits who do usually participate in discussions and decision making, a relatively high 17 and 13 percent now agree that they take the argument forward while making decisions, and influence the decision-making process, compared to 13 and 14 percent of the Janajatis, 18 and 13 percent of the Backward castes, and 25 and 20 percent of the Others, respectively. Therefore, the Others are much more positive in their active participation in meetings and influence during decision-making, but the few Dalits who do participate are also much more confident that their participation is meaningful.

The baseline data showed a positive correlation between higher educational attainment and more positive statements regarding the respondent's active participation in meetings. The PLC or above are demonstrably more optimistic and confident in taking the argument forward while decision-making, and also influencing the decision-making process. For example, 18 percent of the PLC or above believed that they took the argument forward while decision-making, and only 11 percent of the SLC/Secondary, 6 percent of the Primary/Informal, and 1 percent of the illiterate agreed. This is perhaps to be expected, as confidence in vocalizing your opinions and being more informed is often attributed to higher levels of education.

Although all the educational levels are more positive and confident in their responses, the positive correlation remains, as the claims of usually participating in discussions and decisions is relatively even, the PLC and above are still significantly higher regarding taking the argument forward while decision making (26%) and influencing the decision-making process (24%), compared to 22 and 15 percent for the

SLC/Secondary, 15 and 14 percent for the Primary/Informal, and only 8 and 4 percent for the illiterate groups, respectively.

Overall, the endline data does encourage optimism as the responses are much more positive than recorded in the baseline data. Not only have many more respondents now become members of local groups and organisations, they have also demonstrated that they are taking a much more proactive and meaningful role in discussions and the decision-making process. With the relatively short period between the endline and the baseline surveys, it is possibly overly optimist to expect to reduce the disparities between all the categories and variables with limited time for protracted initiatives and sufficient training programs. Some categories, such as the farmers/housewives, students, Dalits, and the illiterate are still seriously underrepresented in the decision-making process and appear to not be benefitting from any initiatives or training, as they remain voiceless and disenfranchised in their own communities.

The data shows that much has been achieved over a small period of time, and with the continuation of awareness raising and collaboration, it is fair to assume that local communities will continue to become more representative of community members, and further develop a more inclusive decision-making processes for local governance and development. As the training and knowledge is disseminated and adopted by community members, the membership of groups, and meaningful participation, should increase. A FGD conducted in Mahottari, indicates that this is already happening, as Indrajit Raut recounted his experiences of applying the knowledge he gained from the Collaborative Leadership Training to make the decision-making process more inclusive and representative. He states that, 'in a ward level plan selection meeting, I listened to everyone as I knew about people's different perspectives, Firstly, I gathered their opinions, and presented my own view, and eventually it was successful as we all agreed on the same solution.'

2.6 Representation in Planning and Review Meetings (VDC level)

Being invited to budgeting meetings at the VDC is important for community members, as it includes communities in the allocation of resources that will be utilized for local development and other community related issues. Moreover, it encourages accountability and transparency that will result in increased local ownership and the reduction of corruption. It must be noted that the VDCs were dismantled during the state restructuring process and districts Local Government Units (LGUs), districts, and wards are now the primary social, political, and geographic divisions.

The disaggregated baseline data by district showed that very few respondents were invited to budget planning meetings at the VDC. Mahottari (17%) was much lower than Dhanusha (29%) and Sindhuli (28%). Interestingly, almost a third of all the respondents from all three districts claimed they could not remember. There is a significant improvement shown in the endline data, especially in Sindhuli with 58 percent of the respondents saying they attended a meeting. Dhanusha (33%) and Mahottari (32%) are much lower, but Mahottari is much better represented then in the baseline data. There is still a much better response from the hills than the Terai districts indicating there is still a lack of cooperation between community members and local authorities in the Terai.

The endline data by respondent type demonstrated that people with some connection to the local authorities, or occupy a higher social position, were invited to more meetings. Fe example, elected representatives (51%), people affiliated with local structures (37%), and political leaders (42%) were invited more, compared to only 11 percent of farmers/housewives, 7 percent of the students, and 19

percent of influential people. This demonstrates the lack of representation of community members at the budget planning meetings.
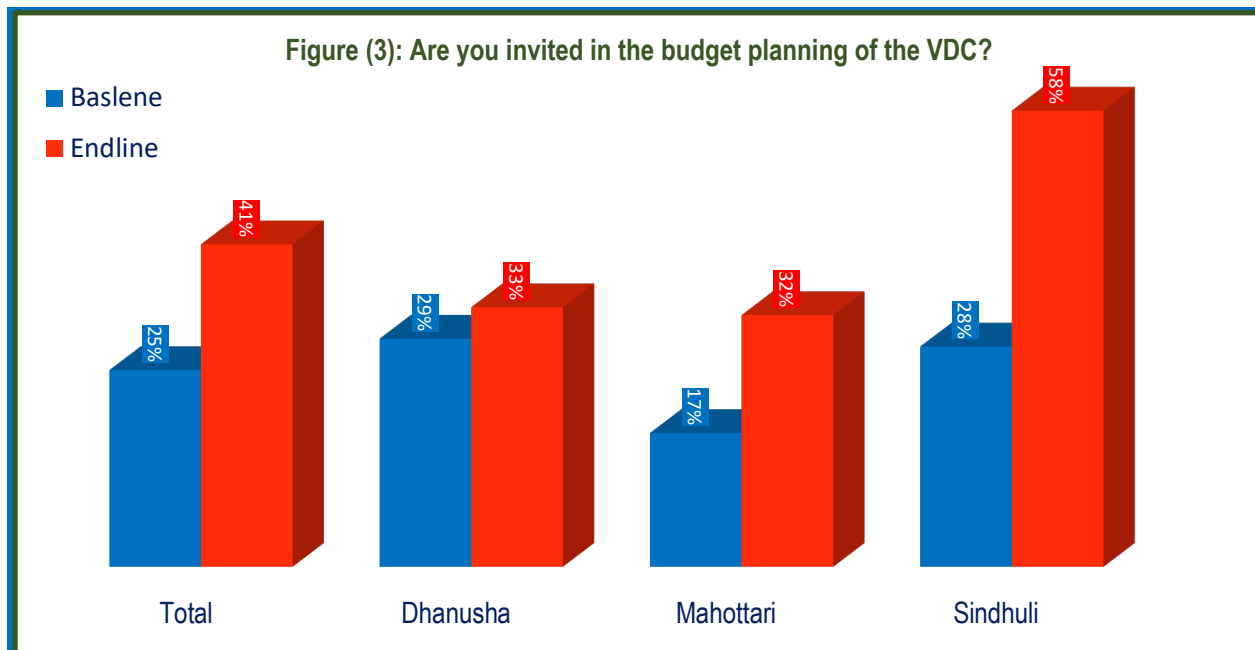
The endline data shows that the situation has been slightly addressed with more invitations for all the respondents, but the data actually accentuates the lack of representation of the students and farmers/housewives. Influential people (56%), now join the people affiliated with local structures (55%), and the political leaders (49%), with about half of the respondents stating they were invited, but the elected representatives reported a very high 80 percent, compared to the extremely low 25 percent of farmers/housewives and 14 percent for the students. The endline data continues to show that the youth and women are seriously underrepresented at the meetings, which further exacerbates the exclusion of these vulnerable groups.

According to the baseline data by gender, the data shows that more men than women were invited to the meetings, but is worth noting that both were very low with only 31 percent and 20 percent, respectively. The same pattern is shown by the endline data, as men are still invited more than women, as both increased by 16-17 percent to a slightly more respectable 48 percent for the men, and a still low 36 percent for the women. Similar to the previous variable, women appear to lack representation at the meetings and continue to be excluded.

The results from the baseline data were not very positive regarding representation, as approximately a third of the 30-40, 40-45, and 45 and above age groups were invited to meetings. However, only 14 percent of the youngest age groups, 15-29, were invited. Similar to the gender data, the youth continue to be excluded from participating in important community affairs.

The situation with the endline data is indicative of the other variables, as all the age groups recorded an increase without bridging the gap between the youth and the older respondents. Exactly a quarter of the 15-29 age group was invited, which is less than half of the 40-45 (58%) and 45 and above (58%), and much lower than the 30-40 age group (44%).

The baseline data by caste/ethnicity continues to indicate a serious lack of representation as the highest response was the Janajatis, with only 30 percent, followed by the Backward castes (28%), the Others (22%), and lastly by the Dalits (17%). The endline data confirms a rise in representation with the Others (45%) group now being the highest, followed by the Janajatis (40%), Dalits (37%), and the Backward castes (32%). Although the results are more positive, particularly for the Dalits, as most of the groups did show an increase, representation is still much lower than expected and does indicate much more work is required to bring representation to a more acceptable level.

By education, the baseline data again shows that the illiterate are excluded, as only 14 percent of the illiterate were invited to budget planning meetings, with the PLC and above (34%) being the highest, and SLC/Secondary (25%) and Primary/Informal (24%) both being in the middle.

According to the endline data, the Primary/Informal became the highest represented educational level with 53 percent, compared 48 percent of the PCL and above, 34 percent for SLC/Secondary, and the low 26 percent of the illiterate. Although, all the educational levels did increase their representation at the meetings, but the illiterate continue to be excluded from the meetings with only a quarter of the illiterate respondents being invited.

During the short time period between the baseline and endline surveys, the overall representation of the respondents did increase, which must be attributed to the restructuring of the state and the promotion of more representation and inclusion by numerous government and non-organizations, including Search. However, the general representation increased but the pattern of representation and exclusion remains, as the endline data clearly shows that the most vulnerable and marginalized community members remain excluded from important budget planning meetings that directly impact local communities. Therefore, as the state restructuring continues it is imperative to increase the representation of farmers/housewives, students, the youth, Dalits, and the illiterate.

Table (X): Did you participate in the planning and review meeting VDC last year?

	Survey	Dhanusha		Mahottari		Sindhuli		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't remember	Baseline	7	6%	4	6%	5	5%	16	6%
	Endline	286	69%	277	69%	172	42%	735	60%
Yes (myself)	Baseline	46	41%	44	68%	93	85%	183	64%
	Endline	80	19%	79	20%	220	53%	379	31%
Other family member	Baseline	18	16%	7	11%	1	1%	26	9%
	Endline	14	3%	10	2%	12	3%	36	3%
No	Baseline	41	37%	10	15%	10	9%	61	21%
	Endline	34	8%	38	9%	8	2%	80	7%
Total	Baseline	112	100%	65	100%	109	100%	286	100%
	Endline	414	100%	404	100%	412	100%	1230	100%

Similar to actively participating in local group and organization meetings is important, attending planning and review meetings at the VDC is also integral in developing trust and cooperation between local authorities and communities. Being invited is only the first step in developing a productive working relationship between the local authorities and community members.

The baseline data showed that participation was much higher in Sindhuli (85%) than in Mahottari (68%) Dhanusha (41%), although Dhanusha had more of the respondents' family members participating the

number was still very low. Participation is clearly more of an issue in the Terai than in the hills, and may be due to the lack of trust in local authorities as indicated in other indicators.

The endline data shows that Sindhuli continues to record more participation, but participation had decreased in all three districts, and that the majority of the respondents could not remember with 69 percent in both Dhanusha and Mahottari, and 42 percent in Sindhuli claiming they could not remember. This is probably due to the state restructuring and the fact the VDCs were reorganized into LGUs.

The baseline data by respondent type showed a high attendance by most of the respondents except the students (32%), with the people affiliated with local structures (82%) being the highest, then farmers/housewives (74%), political leaders (68%), and elected representatives (50%). However, the students may not have participated personally, but 27 percent of them stated a family member had attended which makes their family participation a much more respectable 59 percent.

Similar to the disaggregated district data, the endline data shows a decrease in attendance and increase in respondents claiming they do not remember. Interestingly, 67 percent of the elected representatives still state that they participated, which is much higher than the average of only 31 percent. This further indicates that the drop in participation and the increase in respondents claiming they cannot remember is due to state restructuring that was underway during the endline survey. The meetings may have become temporarily private until the new governance mechanisms are established, which would explain how the elected representatives continue to participate.

The baseline data demonstrated that there is no difference by gender, as both men and women participated equally with 64 percent each. The endline data continues to show the same pattern of decreased participation and a dramatic increase in respondents saying they do not remember, and may be due to the reasons mentioned previously, but the endline data does show that men (38%) are now participating more than women (26%). However, it is should also be noted that the significant rise in the number of people recorded in the endline survey that may have been invited but did not or could not participate in the meeting would also explain the disparities in the data.

The baseline data by age is relatively evenly spread across all the age group with the exception of the 45 and above that appear much higher with 74 percent, compared to 54 percent of the 15-29, 66 percent of the 30-40, and 57 percent of the 40-45 age group all stating they participated. The endline data shows the same pattern, the respondents' responses, although much lower, are relatively even for the older respondents, but the 15-29 age group has dropped to only 15 percent saying they participated and 76 percent claiming that they don't remember. This is a concern as the youth appear to lack participation in meetings that plan and review local development that will impact their daily lives. According to the baseline data the Backward castes (54%) participated much less than Dalits (73%), Janajatis (80%), and the Others (61%). Even taking the other family members who participated into consideration, the combined family participation is still only 62 percent, and the family total for the Others is 73 percent.

Disregarding the same pattern as previously mentioned, the Others (36%) now record the highest participation, and the Dalits (25%), Janajati (29%), and Backward castes (20%) all report very low participation. It should also be noted that very few respondents state that they did not participate, just very high reports of not remembering if they had participated or not.

The baseline data by age is relatively evenly spread across all the age group with the exception of the 45 and above that appear much higher with 74 percent, compared to 54 percent of the 15-29, 66 percent of

the 30-40, and 57 percent of the 40-45 age group all stating they participated. The endline data shows the same pattern, the respondents' responses, although much lower, are relatively even for the older respondents, but the 15-29 age group has dropped to only 15 percent saying they participated and 76 percent claiming that they don't remember. This is a concern as the youth appear to lack participation in meetings that plan and review local development that will impact their daily lives.

The disparities between the data from the baseline and endline surveys and the recurring pattern of significantly reduced participation and increased responses of not remembering indicates that there is potential problem that makes the ability to conduct a comparative analysis impossible. Either the restructuring of the state and dismantling of the VDCs has temporarily disrupted the planning and review meetings or the increase in the number of people being surveyed dramatically increased the number of respondents, an increase of almost a thousand, has made the comparison of the baseline and endline data inaccurate and misleading.

However, ignoring the baseline data and examining the endline data it is clear that there are issues with participation in planning and review meeting. The respondents from the Terai districts participate less in meetings, which may indicate there are continuing trust issues between the respondents and the local authorities. Women and the youth, the 15-29 age group, appear to participate much less than the other respondents, especially the youth compared to the older age groups. The data on caste/ethnicity showed very low participation for all categories, which is also the case for education level, but particularly for the illiterate. The endline data, on its own, is very worrying as the majority of the respondents stated they could not remember or did not participate, and the most vulnerable community members all appeared to participate much less than the other respondents.

2.7 Platform for Leadership Development at the Local Level
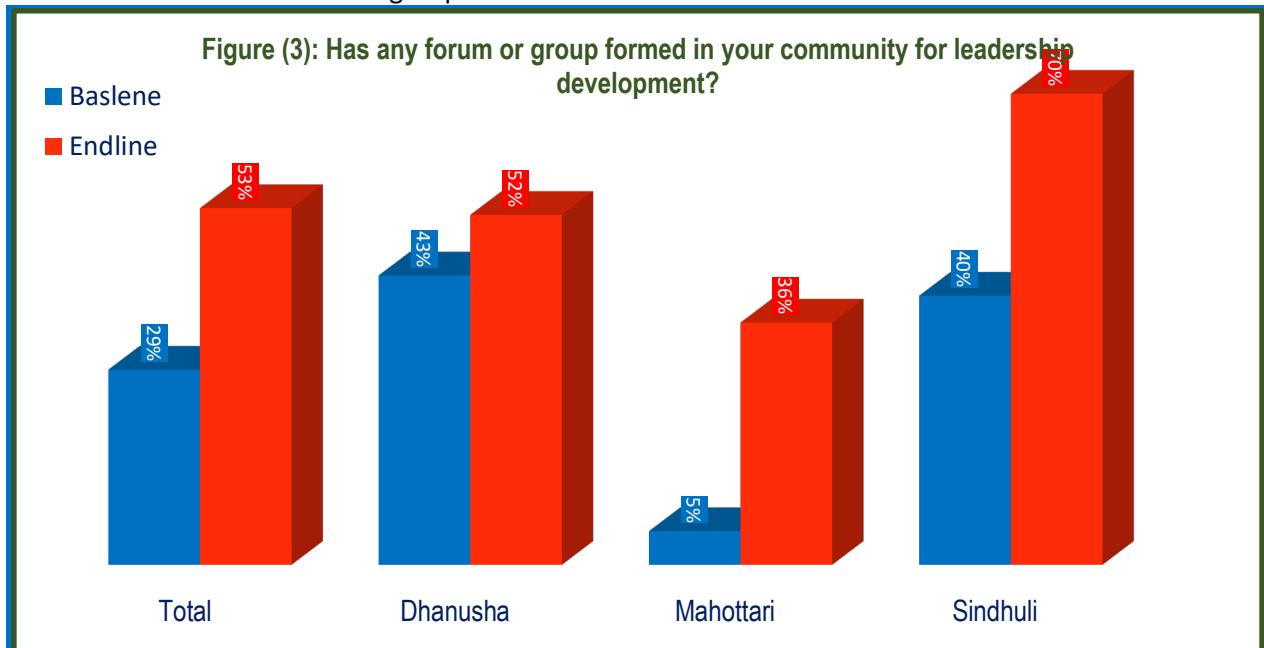
Encouraging local leaders to emerge organically and develop their skills locally to address the needs of their communities is an essential part of creating strong and effective leadership from among the community members. However, many vulnerable and marginal groups lack the skills and knowledge to become competent leaders, and may require additional training to build their capacity in order to realize their potential. Establishing leadership development groups or forums locally is an important step in empowering and equipping the emerging leaders, especially for women, the youth and marginal groups, to ensure leadership positions are occupied by a representative sample of the local community.

The baseline data by region showed that almost half of the respondents from Dhanusha (49%) and Sindhuli (48%), and a much higher 61 percent from Mahottari, were unaware of the formation of any groups or forums for leadership development in their communities. However, the most concerning regional difference was that a very low 5 percent from Mahottari said a group of forum had been formed, compared to 43 percent in Dhanusha and 40 percent in Sindhuli. Mahottari continues to demonstrate a lack of facilities and initiatives to empower the local community members, and seriously lags behind the other two districts.

The endline data is much more positive, but Mahottari still appears have less groups or forums than the other two districts. A very high 47 percent of the respondents in Mahottari still claim that they don't know/can't say, but the number in Dhanusha (24%) and Sindhuli (19%) has decreased since the baseline survey. A much more respectable 70 percent of the respondents in Sindhuli now say that a group or forum has been formed, but just over half the respondents in Dhanusha (52%) and about a third in Mahottari

(36%) know about a groups or forum being formed locally. The endline data still indicates that the Terai districts, especially Mahottari, are still not as developed as the hills.
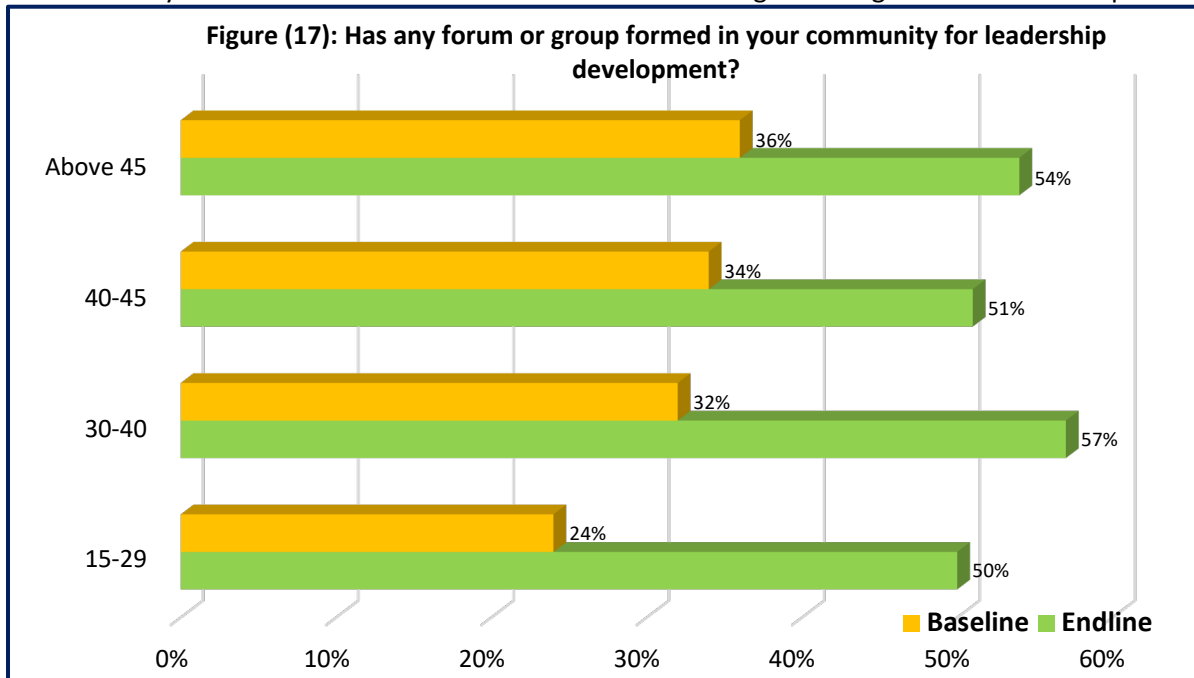
The baseline data by respondent type showed that 48 percent of the elected representatives, 34 percent of people affiliated with local structures, and 44 percent of political leaders stated that a leadership development percent group/forum has been formed in their community. This was much higher that the farmers/housewives (21%), students (19%), and influential people (23%), and combined with the fact that 71 percent of the farmers/housewives said they didn't know/couldn't say suggests that it is more a lack of awareness than lack of groups or forums.

Figure (3): Has any forum or group formed in your community for leadership development?

- Baslene
- Endline

District	Baseline	Endline
Total	29%	53%
Dhanusha	43%	52%
Mahottari	5%	36%
Sindhuli	40%	50%

Many more of the respondents in the endline data claimed that a group/forum had been established, especially the influential people that record the highest responses of 73 percent saying yes, which is even higher than the elected representatives (64%), people affiliated with local structures (59%), and political leaders (61%). Farmers/housewives (40%) and students (41%) continue to lack awareness of the founding of groups and forums, and this is a problem as they are the principle targets of the leadership development groups/forums.

The baseline gender data demonstrated a lack of awareness of both men regarding the founding of groups /forums, as 45 percent of men and 57 percent of women stated that they didn't know/couldn't say. There was no notable gender disparity as slightly more male (34%) than female (27%) respondents claimed to be aware of the formation of groups/forums.

Similar to the previous variables, the general awareness of the formation of groups/forums had increased in the endline data, but is still low with just over half of all the respondents, 56 percent of the men and 51 percent of the women, now state that a group/forum has been formed in their community. Awareness, and perhaps more groups/forums, has increased but the percentage of respondents who are aware of them is still very low and indicates that information and knowledge is failing to reach all the respondents.

Figure (17): Has any forum or group formed in your community for leadership development?

Age Group	Baseline	Endline
Above 45	36%	54%
40-45	34%	51%
30-40	32%	57%
15-29	24%	50%

The baseline age data also indicated that approximately half of the respondents were not aware of groups/forums in their communities, regardless of age. However, the youngest age group, 15-29 years of age, were the least aware and only 24 percent said they knew about groups/forums. The older respondents, although still very low, were slightly more aware, as 32 percent of the 30-50, 34 percent of the 40-45, and 36 percent of the 45 and above age groupings stated they knew about the formation of groups/forums.

The endline data confirms a general increase in awareness, and a much more even spread across all the age groups. About half of the respondents stated they knew about the groups/forums, with the 15-29 (50%), 30-40 (57%), 40-45 (51%), and 45 and above (54%) all falling between 50 and 57 percent. Regardless, the number of respondents who claim to be aware of the formation of groups/forums in their communities is still very low.

In the baseline data, Dalits were much less aware of the formation of groups/forums, with a very low 15 percent claiming that there are groups/forums in their communities. Compare this to 36 percent of the Janajatis, 35 percent of the Backward castes, and 30 percent of the Others group, and it is clear that Dalits were seriously uninformed about the initiatives that were designed to specifically targeted Dalits and other marginal groups.

The endline date shows a significant improvement in the awareness of Dalits, as they are comparable with the other groupings. Fifty percent of Dalits are now aware of the formation of groups/forums, with 54 percent of the Janajatis, 41 percent of the Backward castes, and 55 percent of the Others group also saying that they knew about the formation of a group/forum. Again, a significant improvement in awareness was

recorded in the endline data, particularly for the Dalits, but the fact that approximately half of the respondents remain unaware of any groups/forums is a big concern.

Table (X): Has any forum or group formed in your community for leadership development?
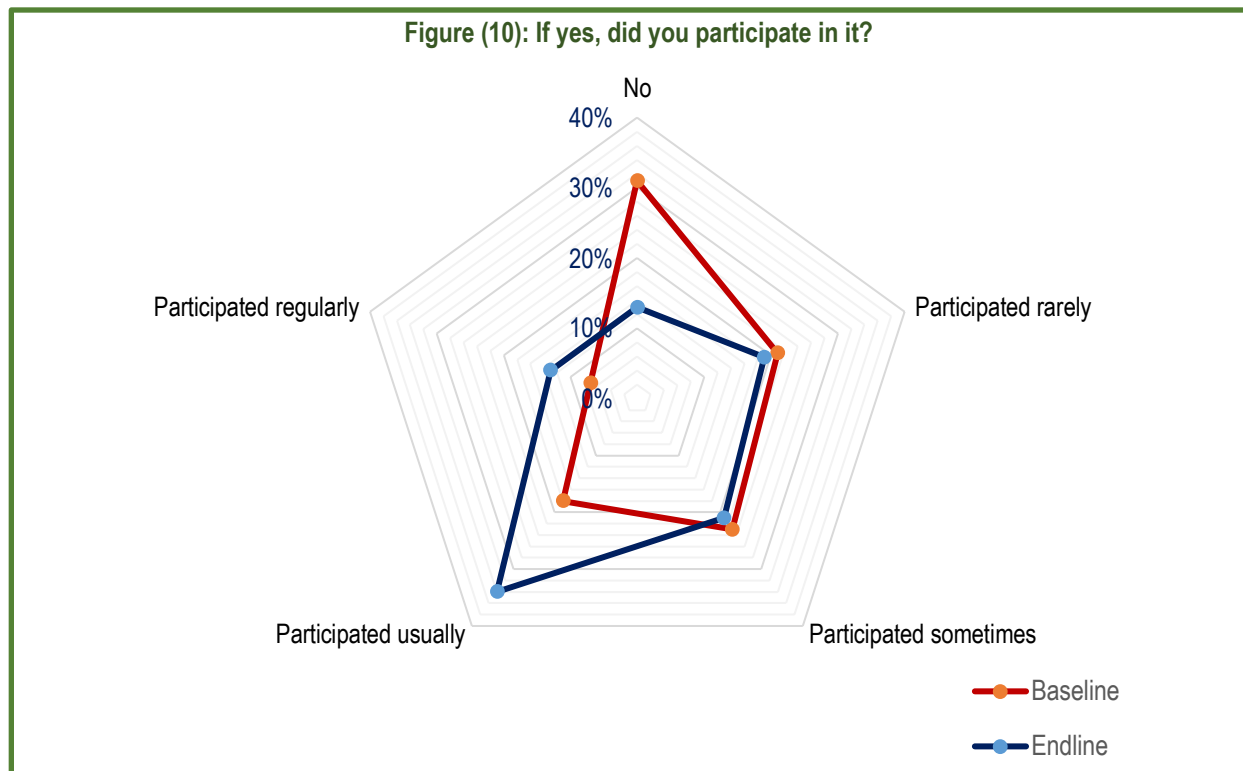
	Survey	Farmers/ Housewife		Students		Elected Repres.		Influential Persons		Affiliated in Local Structure		Political Leaders		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't know/ can't say	Baseline	152	71%	174	58%	43	38%	81	55%	81	53%	81	35%	612	53%
	Endline	118	45%	113	36%	40	20%	14	14%	25	25%	62	24%	372	30%
Yes	Baseline	44	21%	56	19%	55	48%	32	22%	53	34%	102	44%	342	29%
	Endline	105	40%	131	41%	128	64%	71	73%	60	59%	156	61%	651	53%
No	Baseline	18	8%	71	24%	16	14%	34	23%	20	13%	51	22%	210	18%
	Endline	38	15%	72	23%	32	16%	12	12%	16	16%	37	15%	207	17%
Total	Baseline	214	100%	301	100%	114	100%	147	100%	154	100%	234	100%	1164	100%
	Endline	261	100%	316	100%	200	100%	97	100%	101	100%	255	100%	1230	100%

The baseline data showed that regardless of the education level of a respondent, the awareness of the formation of groups/forums was very low. The higher levels were slightly higher with 39 percent for the CL and above, 30 percent for the SLC/Secondary, 24 percent for the Primary/Informal, and 25 percent for the illiterate. However, further analysis of the data showed that the illiterate were actually much less aware as 68 percent stated they didn't know/couldn't say compared to the average of 53 percent.

The endline data continues the same pattern of more respondents becoming aware of groups/forums, but the overall percentage remaining relatively low. The PCL and above (63%) are now higher that the SLC/Secondary (51%), Primary/Informal (55%), and almost twice as aware as the illiterate (33%). The number of the illiterate who are aware of the formation of groups/forums only increased by 8 percent from the baseline data and further highlights the problem of local information not reaching all the community members equally, and the potential of social exclusion and lack of representation continuing for marginal groups.

In the period between the baseline and endline surveys more groups and forums for leadership development were established, but unfortunately the formation of the groups/forums appears to be uneven, which is leaving many respondents without access to an important facility. Moreover, knowledge and awareness of the establishment of groups/forums is limited and marginal and vulnerable groups are the least aware. For example, there are much fewer in the Terai districts, especially Mahottari, and this is very concerning as the recent social and political upheavals in the Terai districts suggests that more initiatives and programs are required to encourage the emergence of more local leaders to better represent their communities. Although the general lack of awareness, or lack of groups/forums, is a concern, the most issue worrying issue is the lack of awareness among the farmers/housewives, students, and the illiterate who already lack representation and participation in leadership positions, and are some of the respondents most in need of the groups/forums.

Figure (10): If yes, did you participate in it?

Regular participation in any locally established leadership development groups or forums is the most efficient way to enhance existing, or develop new, skills and knowledge related to leadership, and forge networks that can collaborate across the many dividing lines, such as caste/ethnicity, gender, religion, and age. For community members that may be excluded from leadership opportunities due the assumed lack of knowledge and experience, these groups or forums can be invaluable in gaining recognition of their potential and capacity, that may help traverse the many obstacles to obtaining meaningful leadership positions.

The disaggregated endline data by region was not very positive as it appears the Terai districts are much lower, but, once the data is examined in detail it is clear that all regions had low participation as when the respondents that said no, and participated rarely are combined, then approximately half of the respondents of all three districts did not or rarely participated. Therefore, Dhanusha (46 and 5 percent), Mahottari (44 and 11 percent), and Sindhuli (13 and 38 percent), respectively, all have limited participation, but more respondents in Sindhuli stated that usually participated or regularly participated. The data confirms that participation in the Terai districts was much less regular, with the majority of the respondents only participating sometimes.

Before examining the endline data is important to note that due to the increase in respondents becoming aware of groups/forums in their communities, there are more than three hundred additional respondents represented in the endline data, and this will impact the comparison between the baseline and endline data for the additional sub-questions relating to the participation in leadership development groups/forums.

The endline data is generally much more positive, as among the respondents who were aware of the formation of groups/forums, most of them did participate in some capacity. Sindhuli (19%) still has the

highest number of respondents that regularly participated, but Mahottari (16%) is now much higher with Dhanusha (3%) still lacking regular participation. The majority of the respondents said that they sometimes or usually participated, with an average of 21 and 34 percent, respectively. Although the Terai districts have increased participation, respondents from Sindhuli are still participating more, albeit irregularly.

The endline data by respondent type showed that, with the exception of people affiliated with local structures (9%), and the political leaders (12%), many of the respondents did not participate even though they were aware of the groups/forums. Farmers/housewives (61%) participated the least, followed by students (48%), elected representatives (44%), and influential people (34%). Similar to the district data, the respondents that did participate stated they did so rarely, sometimes, or usually, as only an average of 7 percent regularly participated.

The endline data does record a general increase in participation, but most of the respondents continue to participate rarely, sometimes or usually. The exception is the people affiliated with local structures, as 27 percent of them said they participated regularly, much higher than the average of 13 percent. However, the farmers/housewives and students are still participating much less than the other respondents, and when they do participate it is much more irregular, which indicates that awareness is not necessarily the main problem, as perhaps work commitments, school/college work, and family obligations are preventing regular participation.

The baseline data by gender showed that women tended to participate less, and when they did participate it was less regular than the male respondents. For example, 25 percent of the male, and 35 percent of the female respondents said they did not participate. Additionally, only 14 percent of the women and 24 percent of the men claimed that they usually participated, with a very low 15 and 12 percent of men and women, respectively, said they regularly participated.

The results from the endline survey indicate that men and women's participation in groups/forums is much more even than the endline data. Participation has increased for both male and female participants, and now 36 percent of the men and 33 percent of the women claim that they usually participate. Moreover, 15 percent of the male, and 12 percent of the women also state that they regularly attend, which is a big improvement. Similar to the previous variables, participation has significantly increased, but regular participation is still very low.

The baseline data by age showed that the age of the respondent did determine how regularly they participated in groups/forums. The younger the respondent the less likely they were to participate, and the majority of all the age groups were clustered in the rarely and sometimes participate choices, with an average of 21 and 23 percent, respectively. However, the positive correlation between age and participation becomes most pronounced in the respondents who stated that they usually participated, as only 10 percent of the 15-29, compared to 19 percent of the 30-40, 20 percent of the 40-45, and 29 percent of the 45 and above age groups agreed with this statement. Very few of the respondents claimed to participate regularly, with an average of only 7 percent.

The endline data follows the same pattern of a general increase in participation across all the age groups, but also continues to show a correlation between the age of a respondent and participation. The majority of the respondents are clustered between rarely, sometimes, and usually participating, but the when you add the number of respondents who stated that they usually and regularly participate, the 15-29 age group only has 38 percent, compared to a much higher 49 percent of the 30-40, 54 percent of the 40-45,

and 60 percent of the 45 and above age groupings. The data demonstrates that the youth are still seriously underrepresented in leader development groups/forums, and this is worrying as encouraging youth leaders is one of the reasons for forming the groups/forums.

According to the baseline data, the participation of respondents based on caste/ethnicity is much more varied, as 50 percent of the Backward castes and 37 percent of the Others group said they did not participate, and only 18 percent of the Dalits and 12 percent of the Janajatis did not participate. In addition, 45 percent of the Dalits claimed they participated sometimes, much higher than the average of 23 percent, and 48 of the janajatis said they rarely participated, also much higher than the average of 21 percent. Very few respondents from any group agreed that they usually participated, and an average of 7 percent regularly participated.

The endline data continues to show an increase in participation and a much more even spread across all the groups. The majority of the respondents, like the other variables, stated that they sometimes or usually participated, with a combined total of 67 percent of Dalits, 55 percent of Janajatis, 54 percent of the Backward castes, and 42 percent of the Others group all agreeing with these two statements. Although very few of the respondents regularly participated, the Others group (18%) were higher than the average of 13 percent, which explains why they were lower in the combined sometimes and usually categories.

Education level made no significant impact in participation in the baseline data, as approximately a third of the PCL and above (38%), SLC/Secondary (32%), and the illiterate (37%) stated they did not participate, with the exception of the only 18 percent of the Primary/Informal who agreed. The rest of the respondents were relatively evenly spread across the other categories and, as with the previous variables, only an average of 7 percent claiming to regularly participate. The illiterate do appear to participate less frequently, as 33 percent stated they rarely participated compared to the average of 21 percent.

The endline data does show the same increase in participation, but the PLC and above and Primary/Informal appear to have much more regular participation in groups/forums. For instance, combining the usually and regularly participate variables shows that the PCL and above have a combined total of 52 percent and the Primary informal have a total of 58 percent compared to the much lower 39 percent of the SLC/Secondary and 39 percent of the illiterate. Frequency of participation has increased across all the education levels, but the illiterate continue lack regular participation and this will directly impact their ability to obtain local leadership positions.

A worrying, and recurring, pattern is emerging across the indicators that the most vulnerable and marginal groups are continually lacking representation and participation in local governance and development, and the participation in leadership development groups/forums suggests that may continue as farmers/housewives, students, the youth, and the illiterate are not regularly participating in the groups/forums. This is a serious concern as encouraging local leaders from within the marginal groups is essential if representation at the community level is to be achieved. Moreover, the groups/forums are specifically targeting the aforementioned groups, but appear to be failing to reach them, which will result in a lack of confidence and a skill deficit that will prevent the most vulnerable respondents from achieving meaningful leadership positions. It should be noted that there may be logistical issues, as previously mentioned, relating to work, school/collage, or other restrictions that are preventing people from attending groups/forums regularly and these should be examined in detail when planning groups/forums.

Table (14): If participated, have you realized increment in knowledge and understanding about role of women in local development than before?

	Survey	Dalit		Janajati		Backward Caste		Others		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Can't say	Baseline	3	9%	4	4%	1	2%	2	3%	10	4%
	Endline	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	2	1%	3	1%
No	Baseline	0	0%	3	3%	2	4%	1	2%	6	3%
	Endline	3	3%	4	2%	2	7%	5	2%	14	2%
Realized little bit of new knowledge and understanding has increased than before	Baseline	13	39%	32	35%	15	28%	17	29%	77	33%
	Endline	13	14%	21	12%	5	18%	33	12%	72	13%
Realized that few new knowledge and understanding has increased than before	Baseline	6	18%	24	26%	13	24%	18	31%	61	26%
	Endline	25	26%	39	23%	6	21%	65	24%	135	24%
Realized that many new knowledge and understanding has increased than before	Baseline	8	24%	22	24%	19	35%	16	28%	65	28%
	Endline	40	42%	65	38%	11	39%	91	33%	207	37%
I have become able to take capable leadership in local group	Baseline	3	9%	6	7%	4	7%	4	7%	17	7%
	Endline	14	15%	39	23%	4	14%	78	28%	135	24%
Total	Baseline	33	100%	91	100%	54	100%	58	100%	236	100%
	Endline	95	100%	169	100%	28	100%	274	100%	566	100%

The leadership development groups or forums have the potential of educating communities about the skills and experience that women can bring to local development. As one of the most excluded groups, and with the new elected representatives, many of whom are female, it is essential that traditional values that may hinder women leaders must eroded to slowly bring gender mainstreaming and acceptance.
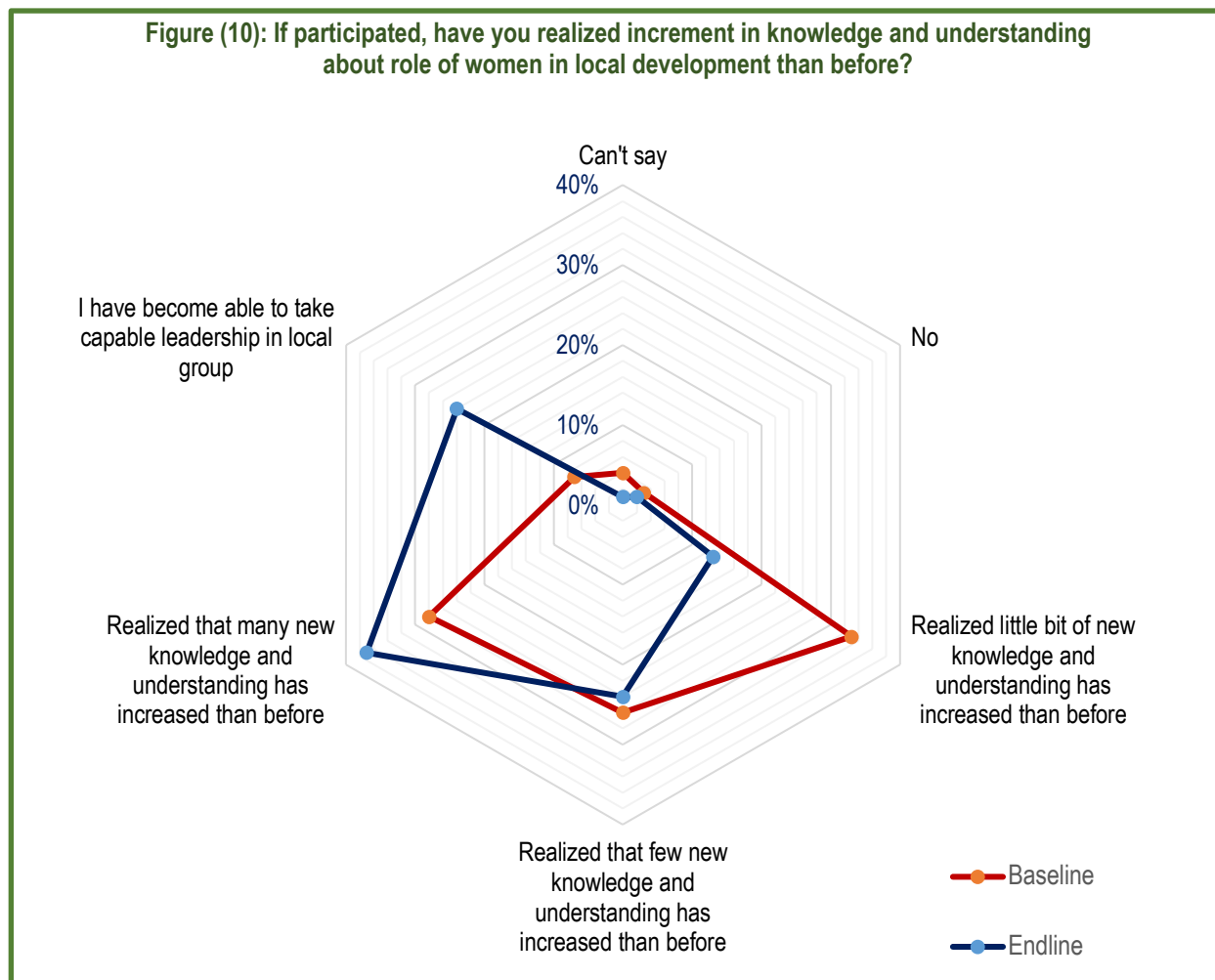
The disaggregated baseline data by district showed that the respondents were divided between realizing that they had gained some, a little, or a lot of new information and understanding that before participating the leadership development groups/forum. The Terai districts appeared to have gained the most with 40 percent in Mahottari, 31 percent in Dhanusha, and only 24 percent in Sindhuli stating that their knowledge and understanding had increased a lot. However, very few of the respondents thought that they were now capable of leading a local group, but this is understandable as the survey was conducted at the very beginning of the training groups/forums.

It is worth remembering that due to the increased awareness, there were almost double the number of respondents surveyed during the baseline survey, and this may skew the comparison slightly. Moreover, some of the respondents may be relatively new to the training and it should not be assumed that they have attended the training for its entire duration, and it should also be acknowledged that according to the previous indicator the attendance was irregular for many of the respondents.

The endline data shows the expected increase in knowledge acquisition that the training should provide, as 33 percent of the respondents from Dhanusha, 37 percent from Mahottari, and 39 percent from Sindhuli now agree that they have gained some new knowledge and have a better understanding than before. However, The Terai districts do not appear to be progressing as much as the respondents from Sindhuli, as 38 percent in Sindhuli now state that they are capable of leading a local group, compared to a much lower 9 percent in Mahottari, and only 6 percent in Dhanusha. This could be related to the

regularity of attendance or the quality and delivery of the syllabus, regardless this is concerning as the primary objective of the groups/forums is to provide the respondents with the capacity to become confident and effective local leaders.

The baseline data by respondent type shows a much wider spectrum of responses depending on the position of the respondent in their respective communities. Farmer/housewives (47%) and the students (45%) appeared to only learn a little new information and gain a little understanding, with other categories and the 33 percent average being much lower. Alternatively, the elected representatives, people affiliated with local structures, and the political leaders were much more evenly spread in their answers. Forty-three percent of the influential people claimed they their knowledge and understanding had increased a lot, followed by 34 percent of the political leaders, 29 percent of the elected representatives, 19 percent of the people affiliated with local structures, and only 17 percent of the students and 12 percent of the farmers/housewives. It could be argued that as the questions specifically ask about 'new' knowledge and understanding that respondents, who already have developed skills and information, would register as low, as they are not learning anything new. However, the average of only 7 percent for all the respondents that think they have the capacity to lead a local group indicates that this is not a concern.

Figure (10): If participated, have you realized increment in knowledge and understanding about role of women in local development than before?

The endline data continues to show that social position is an important factor as many farmers/housewives and students still claim to have acquired a little or some new knowledge, and

although much higher than the baseline, they are significantly lower than the other categories. However, the most worrying aspect is that 35 percent of the elected representatives, 31 percent of the people affiliated with local structures, 30 percent of the political leaders, 22 percent of the influential people all state that they are now capable of leading a local group, but only 18 percent of the students and none of the farmers/housewives felt capable. This may be explained by the lack of regular attendance by the farmers/housewives and students, but this is a concern as implies that few local leaders will emerge from these vulnerable groups, which will result in limited representation and no voce in community affairs.

The disaggregated baseline gender data demonstrates that men appear to have learned more from the leadership development groups/forums than women, as 40 percent of the women and 25 percent of the men stated that they gained a little new knowledge and understanding. Alternatively, 37 percent of the male, and 19 percent of the female respondents reported gaining a lot of new knowledge and increasing their understanding. As expected in the early stages of the training, very few of either thought they were capable of leading a local group. The gender disparity may be explained by different levels of education or other socio-cultural factors that prevent women from maximizing their potential, as suggested by the other indicators.

The endline data address the gender imbalance a male and female respondents provide almost identical responses. The data is much more encouraging as 38 percent of men and 36 percent of women now state that they have gained a lot of new knowledge and increased their understanding. Perhaps more interesting is that both 24 percent of male and female respondents stated that they were capable of leading a local group. This is encouraging as the initial issues appear to have been resolved, and almost a quarter of the respondents now state that they are capable becoming local leaders, which is very promising considering the relatively short period between the baseline and endline surveys.

The baseline data, as expected due to the groups/forums just being established as the survey was conducted, also shows that most of the respondents reported gaining a little, some, or a lot of new information and a better understanding. However, the youngest age group, 15-29 year-olds, reported that they mostly gained a little or some new knowledge, as only 17 percent of them said they had gained a lot of new information and knowledge, compared to 27 percent of the 30-40, 32 percent of the 40-45, and 39 percent of the 45 and over age groupings. This may be the result of this groups consisting of many students, who were very irregular in their attendance. As expected in the early stages of the training groups/forums, very few of the respondents considered themselves capable of leading a local group.

Similar to the previous variable, the respondents are much more evenly spread in the endline data, and the 15-29 age group is now slightly more positive than the 30-40 group. More than a third of all the respondents now report that they have learned a lot of new knowledge and gained a better understanding

of leadership, with an average of 37 percent. In addition, 20 percent of the 15-29, 17 percent of the 30-40, 36 percent of the 40-45, and 39 percent of the 45 and above all not state that they are capable of leading a local group. The endline data clearly indicates an incremental improvement in the acquisition of knowledge and gaining a better understanding of leadership, but the most important results are the many respondents, from all the age groups, that claim that they are capable of becoming local leaders.

There are no great disparities in the baseline data by caste/ethnicity, as the majority of the respondents are following the pattern that emerged in the other variables. The majority of the respondents from all groups state that they gained a little new knowledge from the groups/forums. The Backward castes (35%) are slightly higher in reporting that they gained a lot of new knowledge, compared to 28 percent of the Others group, and 24 percent of Dalits and Janajatis. Very few of the respondents thought they were capable of leading a local group at that time.

The endline data continues to show a notable increase in knowledge acquisition and confidence, as 42 percent of Dalits, 39 percent of Backward castes, 38 percent of Janajatis, and 33 percent of the Others group all reported gaining a lot of new knowledge and a better understanding of leadership. However, only 15 percent of Dalits and 14 percent of the Backward castes claimed they were capable of leading a local group in their communities, compared to a much higher 23 percent of the Janajatis, and 28 percent of the others Group. This indicates that all the groups are learning new skills and gaining a deeper understanding of leadership but Dalits and the Backward castes appear to lack the confidence to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills.

The baseline data show that educational attainment is positively correlated with gaining new leadership skills and knowledge, as the Primary/Informal (44%) level and the illiterate (47%) reported mostly reported that they gained a little new knowledge, which was much higher than the average of 33 percent. Conversely, 40 percent of the PCL and above, 30 percent of the SLC/Secondary, 26 percent of the Primary/informal levels, and only 6 percent of the illiterate stated that they gained a lot of new knowledge. It is clear that the higher the education level of a respondent the more they appear to learn, which may be a result of familiarity and comfort in the teaching environment, or possessing a better foundational knowledge before attending the groups/forums. Regardless, the data implies that respondents with little or no formal education may lack the requisite skills and confidence to become local leaders in their communities, restricting their representation and perpetuate social exclusion.

The endline data shows a significant improvement in the knowledge acquisition and understanding of leadership of the Primary/Informal and illiterate respondents. The Primary/Informal now report the highest for gaining a lot of new knowledge and a better understanding of development, followed by the PCL and above and the illiterate with 36 percent each, and the SLC/Secondary with 33 percent. In addition, 29 percent of the PCL and above, 21 percent of the SLC/Secondary, 28 percent of the Primary/Informal, and an exceptionally low 2 percent of the illiterate now state they have the capacity to lead a local group. The illiterate appear have an issue with actual leadership, as learning and understanding leadership is clearly not a problem, which suggests that perhaps there are other factors that are preventing them from developing the confidence to physically lead a local group.

The leadership development groups/forums appear to be working for most respondents, and the more time they have to adjust to the training, as reflected in the endline data, the more the disparities between the groups appear to reduce, making the results much more uniform. However, there appears to be an issue regarding the respondents from the Terai districts, farmers/housewives, Dalits and Backward castes, and the illiterate, as these vulnerable groups have made remarkable gains in gaining knowledge and

developing a better understanding of leadership, but serious lack the confidence to implement their newly acquired skills and knowledge in practice. The leadership development groups/forums are equipping, but failing to empower, these groups to become local leaders in their respective communities. There are clearly confidence issues that are likely interconnected with existing forms of discrimination and cultural restrictions, and if this is not properly addressed by the groups/forums the emergence of local leaders from these marginal groups is highly unlikely, regardless of how capable they may be at leadership.

Table (X): What kind of role you should have for making meaningful participation of women in overall local development?

	Survey	Male		Female		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know / Can't Say	Baseline	33	22%	53	28%	86	25%
	Endline	18	8%	22	7%	40	7%
My involvement does not make any difference	Baseline	7	5%	10	5%	17	5%
	Endline	13	5%	30	9%	43	8%
Understanding them is enough	Baseline	37	24%	65	34%	102	30%
	Endline	55	23%	82	25%	137	24%
Others role is more than mine but my participation has to be there	Baseline	67	44%	56	30%	123	36%
	Endline	128	54%	152	46%	280	50%
My active participation should be there	Baseline	9	6%	5	3%	14	4%
	Endline	24	10%	40	12%	64	11%
This is not possible without my active involvement	Baseline	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Endline	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Total	Baseline	153	100%	189	100%	342	100%
	Endline	238	100%	327	100%	565	100%

Achieving meaningful participation in local development, as opposed to simply being represented, women require the support of the entire community. As Nepal is considered a male dominated society and politics and leadership is dominated by older men, educating and empowering women is only half the solution. Raising awareness of all the community members is essential if gender discrimination is to be reduced, and women are to become accepted and valued as active contributors and decision-makers in local development.

The baseline data shows that the respondents in Dhanusha and Sindhuli much less aware of their potential role in helping women's participation in local development. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents in Sindhuli and 24 percent in Dhanusha stated that they didn't know/couldn't say what their role was, and not one respondent in Dhanusha agreed. In addition, more than half of the respondents in Mahottari (56%) agreed that that other people's role was more important but their participation was important, compared to 43 percent in Dhanusha, and only 26 percent in Sindhuli. Interestingly, not one respondent from any of the three target districts considered that women's participation in local development was not possible without their active involvement. The baseline data indicates that the Terai districts appear to support women's involvement in local development more that the hills, but very few respondents from any district thought that actively participating to help women would be beneficial.

The endline data demonstrates that the majority respondents have become much more supportive of women's participation in local development, but continue to think that their support or secondary participation in sufficient to empower women. For example, 43 percent of the respondents from

Dhanusha, 54 percent from Mahottari, and 52 percent from Sindhuli agree that they should participate but other people's contributions are more important. Interestingly, more respondents from Sindhuli (19%) think that their active participation is important, with only 8 percent from Mahottari and 3 percent from Dhanusha agree. The hills appear to have become more proactive than Terai districts, but worryingly, there are still no respondents that consider that their active involvement is required to help women participate in local development.

The disaggregated baseline data by respondent type is very concerning, as the majority of the respondents state that they didn't know/couldn't say, understanding women was enough, and other people's roles are more important but I should participate. Perhaps most worrying was that almost half of the people affiliated with local structures (49%) and 38 percent of the political leaders agreed that understanding women was enough, and more than half of the elected representatives (56%) and 45 percent of the political leaders considered that other people's roles were more important but their participation was important. Very few of the respondents thought that their active participation was important, and no one agreed that women could not become involved in local development if they did not actively participate to help.

The endline data is slightly more positive, but continues to indicate an inactive support for women in local development. An average of almost a quarter, 24 percent, of the respondents still think that understanding women is enough, with the students (39%) and political leaders (27%) being above average. However, the majority of the respondents, 59 percent of the elected representatives, 56 percent of the influential people, 54 percent of the political leaders, 49 percent of the people affiliated with local structures, 39 percent of the students and 34 percent of the farmers/housewives agree that other people's roles are more important but they should participate. A few of the respondents, an average of 11 percent think that they should participate, and one elected representative thinks that women's involvement in local development is not possible without their active participation. The endline data appears to be more positive, but in most of the respondents still consider that their passive support or participation is sufficient in helping women engage in local development, and this is particularly true for the farmers/housewives.

The baseline gender data showed that women were slightly more passive in their support than the men, as 24 percent of the male, and 34 percent of the women respondents stated that understanding women was enough. Moreover, 44 percent of men and only 30 percent of women agreed that other people's roles were more important but the participation was important. Very few respondents, an average of

four, stated that their active participation was necessary, and no one considered that women's involvement in development was not possible without their active involvement.

The endline date continues the passive support for women, but does show that men and women's opinions are much closer as 23 percent of the men and 25 percent of the women think that understanding women is enough. Additionally, approximately half of the men (54%) and women (46%) now agree that other's roles are more important but their participation is important. Interestingly, a small percentage, 10 percent of the male, and 2 percent of the female respondents now agree that their active participation is important, but not one respondent thinks that their participation is essential in helping women become involved in local development.

The baseline age data suggests much more uncertainty by the youngest age group, as 41 percent of them claimed that they didn't know/couldn't say compared to the average of only 25 percent. The majority of the respondents were clustered in the understanding them is enough and other people's roles are more important but I should participate categories, but the 15-29 age group are notably lower than the other age groups. For example, only 29 percent of the 15-29 age groups thought that other people's roles were more important but they should participation 43 percent of the 30-40, 33 percent of the 40-45, and 40 percent of the 45 and above age groupings. Very few respondents considered that their active participation was important or essential.

The endline data shows a much more even spread across the age groups, with the 15-29 year old group becoming equal to the older respondents. Approximately half of all the respondents, 48 percent of the 15-29, 50 percent of the 30-40, 47 percent of the 40-45, and 55 percent of the 45 and above age groups agree that other people's roles are more important but they should participate. The number of respondents that consider their active participation is important is slowly increasing, with an average of 11 percent, and one older respondent thinks that their active participation is essential in helping women engage in local development.

The baseline data by caste/ethnicity showed a similar pattern of many respondents stating that they didn't know/couldn't say, with an average of 25 percent. Interestingly the respondents were divided between two categories, as 48 percent of Dalits and 42 percent of Janajatis thought that understanding women was enough, but only 16 percent of the Backward castes and 25 percent of the Others group agreed. Conversely, 45 percent of the Backward castes and 42 percent of the Others group stated that other people's roles were more important but they should participate compared to only 20 percent of Dalits and 27 percent of Janajatis. As expected very few respondents thought that their participation was important and no one considered it essential.

The endline data continues to demonstrate that the respondents are much more even across the variables, and most of the respondents reported that other people's roles are more important but their participation is required. Approximately half of all the respondents, 47 percent of Dalits, 49 percent of Janajatis, 54 percent of Backward castes, and 50 percent of the Others group opted for this statement. Interestingly, 16 percent of the Others group, compared to the average of 11 percent, agreed that their active participation was necessary. However, the same passive pattern of support and limited participation is evident across all the caste/ethnic groups.

The endline data by education is extremely similar to the data on caste/ethnicity, as the average number of respondents that claim that they don't know can't say is also 25 percent, and the majority of the respondents are clustered in two categories. The same unusual patter is evident where two of the

variables are high for one statement and low for the other, and vice-versa. For instance, a relatively low 22 percent of the PCL and above and 21 percent of the SLC/Secondary agree that understanding women is enough, compared to a much higher 44 percent of the Primary/Informal and 43 percent of the illiterate. Alternatively, 50 percent of the PCL and above and 38 percent of the SLC/Secondary think that other people's roles are more important but they should participate, with a lower 30 percent of the Primary/Informal and a very low 14 percent of the illiterate. Also, very few of the respondents considered their active participation as necessary, and no one thought it was essential.

The endline data also follows the same pattern of the respondents' responses became much more uniform over time. The illiterate remain the exception, as about half of all the respondents, 53 percent of the PCL and above, 51 percent of the of the SLC/Secondary, and 50 percent of the Primary/Informal all claimed that other people's roles are more important but they should participate, but only 30 percent of the illiterate agreed with this statement. It is notable that 16 percent of PCL and above considered that their active participation was necessary compared to the average of 11 percent.

Overall, the baseline and endline data show that in a relatively short period of time, five-six months, the respondents across all the variables become slightly more proactive in their support of women becoming involved in local development. The significant differences and disparities between the variables appear to become much more uniform and clustered around the agreement that other people's roles are more important but they should participate. This is both promising, as it suggests a slow and progressive move to becoming more aware that their participation is important, and worrying as no variable has moved from passively supporting women to actively participating to support women in engaging meaningfully in local development. Perhaps the most interesting question is who are the 'other people', who appear to play such a significant role compared to the respondents, as almost half of all the respondents conceded that other people's roles were more important than their own active participation. This was also evident in the responses from elected representatives and political leaders, that further begs the question of who are these 'other people' that are apparently more important in helping women participate in local development. The data subtly indicates that with time the respondents will become more active and less passive in their support of women, and in the process will realize that they have agency and that their participation is essential in helping women become meaningfully involved in local development.

2.8 Awareness of Local Development Budget

A VDC allocating a separate budget specifically for women and youth leadership development is an essential component in addressing the lack of women and youth leaders at the local level. In addition to encouraging more active participation and representation, many newly elected representatives are female and may lack the requisite skills to conduct their duties effectively. Moreover, having a budget allocated for leadership development will encourage more programs and initiatives to be conceived and managed by women and the youth, that will address the issues and concerns of this previously ignored section of the community.

It must be noted that at the time of the endline survey, state restructuring was demarcating new LGUs within the districts and combining and expanding many of the existing ward. This resulted in VDCs being replaced with the new federal structures, and possibly a period of uncertainty until the inchoate LGUs became functional, which may be reflected in the endline data. Moreover, the data may be misleading as it is not how many respondents state they yes or no but the number who don't know that is important, as the VDC may or may not have allocated a budget for youth and women's leadership development.

Figure (3): Did VDC allocate budget for women and youth leadership development last year?
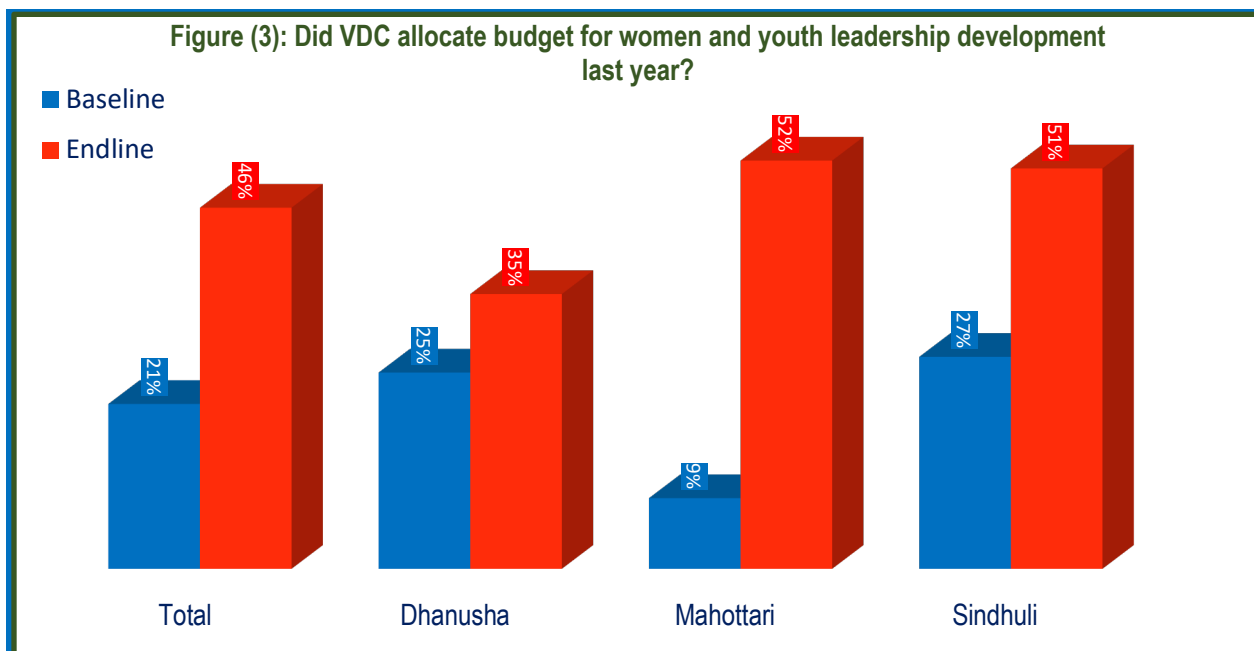
The baseline data by district showed that the majority of the respondents were not aware of any budget being allocated for youth and women's leadership development, with an extremely high 64 percent in Dhanusha, 75 percent in Mahottari, and 67 percent in Sindhuli all stated that didn't know. However, about a quarter of the respondents from Dhanusha (25%) and Sindhuli (27%), but only 9 percent in Mahottari, claimed they were aware. Although most of the respondents were unaware, Mahottari appears to much less aware of the VDC budget allocation.

The endline data demonstrates a significant increase in awareness, and the initial impression is that respondents in Mahottari have become much more aware, and are now comparable with Sindhuli. However, a closer analysis of the data shows that Mahottari, although much more aware that recorded in the baseline data, is still lower that the other two districts. For example, 43 percent of the respondents in Mahottari state that they don't know, compared to only 39 percent in Dhanusha, and 34 percent in Sindhuli. Moreover, by combining the respondents that say yes and no, the respondents that are aware of whether the VDC allocated a budget or not, and it becomes clear that Mahottari continues to be less aware than the other districts. The combined total for Mahottari is 57 percent, and Dhanusha (62%) and Sindhuli (66%) are still marginally higher.

Table (X): Did VDC allocate budget for women and youth leadership development last year?

	Survey	Farmers/ Housewife		Students		Elected Repres.		Influential Persons		Affiliated in Local Structure		Political Leaders		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know	Baseline	181	85%	247	82%	58	51%	95	65%	93	60%	125	53%	799	69%
	Endline	140	54%	194	61%	30	15%	33	34%	21	21%	57	22%	475	39%
Yes	Baseline	23	11%	28	9%	40	35%	27	18%	44	29%	77	33%	239	21%
	Endline	94	36%	72	23%	130	65%	54	56%	61	60%	153	60%	564	46%
No	Baseline	10	5%	26	9%	16	14%	25	17%	17	11%	32	14%	126	11%
	Endline	27	10%	50	16%	40	20%	10	10%	19	19%	45	18%	191	16%
Total	Baseline	214	100%	301	100%	114	100%	147	100%	154	100%	234	100%	1164	100%
	Endline	261	100%	316	100%	200	100%	97	100%	101	100%	255	100%	1230	100%

By respondent type, the baseline data shows that most of respondents are unaware of the VDC budget allocation, including respondents connected with the local authorities, as 51 percent of the elected representatives, 65 percent of the influential people, 60 percent of the people affiliated with local structures, and 53 percent of political leaders stated they didn't know. However, a much higher 85 percent of the farmers/housewives and 82 percent of the students said they don't know. Ironically, the two categories that have the least awareness of a VDC budget allocation for youth and women's leadership development are the respondents intended as the primary recipients.

The endline data is much more positive as the number of respondents that claim they don't know has dropped significantly, especially for the respondents with connection to the local authorities , such as the elected representatives (15%), people affiliated with local structure (21%), political leaders (22%), and influential people (34%). Although much more aware then previously, the farmers/housewives (54%) and students (61%) are still much less aware then the other respondents. This is a concern as the targeted group is mostly unaware if the VDC has provided money for youth and women's leadership development.

The disaggregated gender data also shows that the majority of the respondents stated that they didn't know about the VDC budget allocation. More women (74%) than men (74%) claimed they didn't know, which is worrying as the women are clearly targeted, but no information appears to have been provided to them concerning the budget for the program.

The endline data is much more positive as the general awareness of all the respondents has increased and the gap between the men and women has decreased. Only 32 percent of the male, and 43 percent of the female respondents now state they don't know, which means the combined total who are aware has increased to 68 percent of the men and 57 percent of the women.

The baseline data by age is actually more positive as approximately half the respondents claimed that they don't know. The 15-29 age groups were slightly higher with 58 percent compared to the average of 53 percent.

The endline data shows a notable increase in awareness for all the respondents except the 15-29 (51%) group, as half of the youngest respondents continue to be unaware of the VDC budget allocation. The older respondents, the 30-40 (32%), 40-45 (29%), and the 45 an above (31%) age groups, have become much more aware in the short period between the two surveys. The fact that the youth continue to be the least aware is worrying as they are the intended recipients of the program. The baseline data by caste/ethnicity also shows that most of the respondents are unaware of the VDC budget allocation, but Dalits appear to be the least aware. Eighty percent of Dalits reported that they didn't know, much higher than the Janajatis (60%), Backward castes (66%), and the Others group (69%).

The endline data demonstrates that the respondents' awareness has significantly increased, particularly Dalits, who are now as aware as the other caste/ethnic groups. The combined total for all the respondents that definitively reported that the VDC has or has not allocated a budget for youth and women's

leadership development has increased dramatically from the baseline data. Sixty-one percent of the Dalits, 57 percent of the Janajatis, 57 percent of the Backward castes, and 65 percent of the others groups are now knowledgeable about the VDC budget allocation.

Table (X): VDC allocate budget for women and youth leadership development last year?

	Survey	PCL or Above		SLC/Secondary		Primary/ Informal		Illiterate		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know	Baseline	401	76%	180	59%	84	64%	134	67%	799	69%
	Endline	126	34%	159	38%	79	31%	111	58%	475	39%
Yes	Baseline	72	14%	86	28%	33	25%	48	24%	239	21%
	Endline	202	54%	178	43%	141	56%	43	23%	564	46%
No	Baseline	54	10%	39	13%	14	11%	19	9%	126	11%
	Endline	46	12%	76	18%	33	13%	36	19%	191	16%
Total	Baseline	527	100%	305	100%	131	100%	201	100%	1164	100%
	Endline	374	100%	413	100%	253	100%	190	100%	1230	100%

The disaggregated baseline date by education shows that there is no correlation between a respondent's education level and their awareness of VDC budget allocation. The PCL and above report a very high 76 percent, followed 67 percent of the illiterate, 64 percent of the Primary/Informal, and 59 percent of the SLC/Secondary that all claimed they didn't know.

The endline data; however, follows the pattern of the responses becoming more uniform, with the exception of the illiterate that appear to continue to lack awareness as 58 percent still state they don't know. The combined yes and no data shows that 66 percent of the PCL and above, 61 percent of the SLC/Secondary, 69 percent of the Primary/informal, and a much lower 42 percent of the illiterate now demonstrate that they are aware of the VDC budget allocation.

For clarity, it must be reiterated that a respondent being aware of VDC budget allocation is the core of the question, and to interpret the data to determine that more youth and leadership development programs were established locally because the endline data has an increase in the respondents for a particular category now saying yes, would be erroneous. For example, the disaggregated data by respondent type did not determine that more programs had been founded because the elected representatives now predominantly say yes, but did confirm that the elected representatives were more aware of budget allocation and actual initiatives in local communities. Therefore, the data confirms an increase in awareness, not the number of programs, and as a consequence, being more aware of a local program means the respondent has a choice to participate and explains why a lack of awareness is potentially detrimental to an excluded group.

The endline data is a significant improvement from the baseline data that indicated the majority of the respondents were completely oblivious of whether the VDC had allocated a budget for youth and women's leadership development training. Notably, the endline data indicated that many of the outlying categories, often vulnerable and marginal groups, had not only increased their awareness, but also matched the other categories making the responses much more uniform. This is evident with the Terai districts, female respondents, a Dalits, but not for the farmers/housewives, students, and the illiterate. Overall, the improvement is palpable, and the majority of the respondents, including many marginal groups, had become much more aware of the VDC budget allocation of leadership development. However, there continues to be a problem in reaching all the vulnerable respondents and suggests that information is not

reaching all the community members equally, and is especially problematic when the people that lack awareness are the primary target of the initiative, such as farmers/housewives and the youth (students).

Table(X): If yes, did you benefit from a program?

	Survey	Dhanusha		Mahottari		Sindhuli		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't remember	Baseline	7	7%	4	11%	12	11%	23	10%
	Endline	40	28%	8	4%	4	2%	52	9%
Yes (Self)	Baseline	40	41%	8	23%	61	58%	109	46%
	Endline	64	45%	28	13%	155	74%	247	44%
Other family members participated	Baseline	5	5%	4	11%	5	5%	14	6%
	Endline	13	9%	46	22%	39	19%	98	17%
No	Baseline	46	47%	19	54%	28	26%	93	39%
	Endline	26	18%	130	61%	11	5%	167	30%
Total	Baseline	98	100%	35	100%	106	100%	239	100%
	Endline	143	100%	212	100%	209	100%	564	100%

If the VDC allocated a separate budget for leadership development the direct beneficiaries would be women and the youth. It is also important to note, that many women and the youth are members of marginal groups; therefore, the benefits will extend beyond empowering women and the youth, but should also directly address marginalization and social exclusion of any vulnerable groups within a local community.

It must be noted that the endline data, due to the increase in awareness and the number of initiatives, have almost twice the respondents than the baseline data. In addition, there is no way of determining how regularly the respondents attended, or whether they have just recently joined the programs, which would both considerably distort the comparison between the baseline and endline data.

The baseline data shows that more respondents from the Dhanusha (47%) and Mahottari (54%) stated that they did not benefit than the respondents from Sindhuli (26%). Once adjusted for the respondents that didn't remember or a family member participated, Mahottari (23%) benefitted much less than Dhanusha (41%) and Sindhuli (58%). The Terai districts continue to benefit less than the hill districts, but this may be explained by the previous indicator that showed that they were less aware of local leadership development programs or the fact that Mahottari has much fewer respondents that than the other districts.

The endline data is much more complicated as the increase in respondents, which may explain the much higher number of respondents in Dhanusha (28%) that now state they can't remember, and the large increase in respondents in Mahottari will also distort the comparison. However, by combining the number of respondents that personally benefited and the number who state a family member benefited, it becomes evident that there is a serious problem with the leadership development training in the Terai. The combined total of the respondents that stated that they, or a family member benefited in Sindhuli is an extremely high 93 percent, compared to a very low 54 percent in Dhanusha and 35 percent in Mahottari. It appears that the Terai in general, particularly Mahottari, are not benefiting from the leadership development programs.

The baseline data by respondent type some respondents benefitted more than others, as 68 percent of the students, 57 percent of the people affiliated with local structures, 48 percent of the

farmers/housewives, 42 percent of elected representatives, 40 percent of political leaders, and 22 percent of the influential people stated that they benefited from leadership development programs. This is extremely positive as many of the programs would have been relatively new during at the time the baseline survey was conducted, so they appear to have had an immediate impact on local communities.

The endline data, similar to the previous variable, appears to show that some groups have benefited much less that claimed in the baseline survey. However, by noting that the respondents have more than doubled, and the data is difficult to compare, it does generally appear that more respondents, or their family members, have benefited from the program. Initial analysis of the data may appear that the farmers/housewives and students have decreased significantly in how much they claim to have benefitted from the programs, but once you take family members into consideration, the data is much more positive. In addition, if the respondents that state they did not benefit, then it becomes clear that the majority of the respondents were positive, as the average for not benefiting was less than a third (30%). The combined totals are much more representative of the number of respondents that benefited, as the 59 percent of the farmers/housewives, 57 percent of the students, 63 percent of the elected representatives, 72 percent of the influential people, 64 percent of the people affiliated with local structures, and 57 percent of political leaders stated that they, or a family member, directly benefited from the leadership development programs.

The disaggregated baseline data shows that there was no significant difference between the genders, as 45 percent of male, and46 percent of men, both with 6 percent of their family member each, stated they benefited from leadership development programs. The endline data continues to show no difference between the genders, and once family members are considers, is slightly more positive. Forty-four percent of both men and women claimed they had befitted, with an additional 18 and 17 percent of their family members also benefiting, respectively. The data suggests that the programs are having a positive impact on the respondents, and their families. The baseline data based on age shows very little variation in the number of respondent who claimed that they benefited from the programs. For example, 51 percent of the 15-29, 40 percent of the 30-40, 42 percent of the 40-45, and 50 percent of the 45 and above all agree that they had benefited, and once the additional family members are added, approximately half of the responds were positive about the impact of the programs.

The endline data also indicates that more family members are also benefitting, and by examining the number of respondents that claim that they did not benefit, the younger respondents appear to be personally benefitting than the older respondents. The combined total of people who state that they benefitted is 61 percent of the 15-29, 64 percent of the 30-40, 61 percent of the 40-45, and 55 percent of the 45 and above age groupings. Therefore, the combined respondent and family member data suggests that even with an increase in respondents, the leadership development programs are continuing to have their positive impact on local communities

The baseline data by caste/ethnicity is much less evenly spread, as even adding family members, the number of respondents that agreed that they benefitted from a program is much lower for the Backward castes and the Others group. Dalits appear to be low with 43 percent, but 22 percent of their family members also benefitted, compared to 63 percent of the Janajatis, and lower 35 percent and 34 percent of the Backward castes and Others group, respectively.

Table(X): If yes, did you benefit from a program?

	Survey	Dalit		Janajati		Backward Caste		Others		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't remember	Baseline	1	4%	10	12%	3	4%	9	16%	23	10%
	Endline	21	21%	8	6%	2	5%	21	7%	52	9%
Yes (Self)	Baseline	10	43%	53	63%	26	35%	20	34%	109	46%
	Endline	38	38%	72	55%	9	24%	128	43%	247	44%
Other family members participated	Baseline	5	22%	1	1%	6	8%	2	3%	14	6%
	Endline	18	18%	25	19%	9	24%	46	16%	98	17%
No	Baseline	7	30%	20	24%	39	53%	27	47%	93	39%
	Endline	24	24%	25	19%	18	47%	100	34%	167	30%
Total	Baseline	23	100%	84	100%	74	100%	58	100%	239	100%
	Endline	101	100%	130	100%	38	100%	295	100%	564	100%

The endline data follows the pattern of a significant increase in family members also benefitting from the groups, but even with this increase the Backward castes are still lower than the other groups and the Janajatis are now much higher. The combined totals of Dalits (56%), Janajatis (74%), Backward castes (48%), and the Others group (59%) is promising as it implies that the programs are expanding beyond the respondents to include more family members. The combined totals of respondents and family members demonstrates an incremental increase in the number of people benefiting from the leadership development programs, but the Backward castes appear to benefit slightly less from the programs, but there is good reason to assume that they will slowly gain more benefits as the programs continue to expand.

The disaggregated baseline data by education appears to have a negative correlation between the higher the education level and the lower the benefits gained from the leadership development programs. Excluding family members, only 30 percent of the respondents with PCL and above agree that they benefited from the program, compared to 47 percent of the SLC/Secondary, 52 percent of the of the Primary/Informal, and 79 percent of the illiterate. This negative correlation may be explained by the possibility that higher education levels have more existing knowledge and training and may not consider that the programs are teaching them as much new knowledge and skills than the lower education levels.

The endline data follows the positive patter of more family members becoming involved and benefiting from the leadership development groups, but also show that the illiterate respondents claiming they benefited has dramatically decreased. Forty-two percent of the illiterate now claim that they did not benefit from the program compared to an average of only 30 percent. However, the other groups have increased, and the combined totals of the Primary/Informal is 75 percent, followed by the PCL and above (60), SLC/Secondary (58%), and the Illiterate (37%). The decrease in the rerecorded benefits by the illiterate group in inexplicable, as the other variables have shown some similar trends, but not as

pronounced, which may be related to confidence, regularity of attendance, or existing form of discrimination, but is most likely the result of their inability to read and write.

Generally, the differences between the baseline and endline data is very positive as in the relatively short period between the two surveys the number of people benefitting has increased, and the potential benefits have clearly been communicated within families as the endline data show a notable increase in family member participation. However, there is a serious problem in the Terai districts as both Dhanusha and Mahottari have much fewer people claiming to have benefited from the program. This is extremely concerning, particularly for people from Mahottari that should benefit more than the other regions due to the recent unrest, but this can only be explained by the lack of quality programs, uneven teaching, inconsistent syllabi, infrequent attendance, or perhaps a lack of interest; regardless, the situating must be addressed if leaders from Mahottari are to become more representative of the local communities and specific issues and problems affecting the district are to be discussed and resolved locally. The other anomaly was the illiterate group, but this is possibly easier to explain, as by definition the illiterate respondents' inability to read and write would severely limit their active engagement in the programs, and unless the programs were interactive and did not rely on reading materials and writing, the illiterate will continue to report few benefits from the programs. However, the leadership development programs are having a notable and positive impact on communities and have the potential to increase representation of local people in local governance, and develop leaders from within local communities.
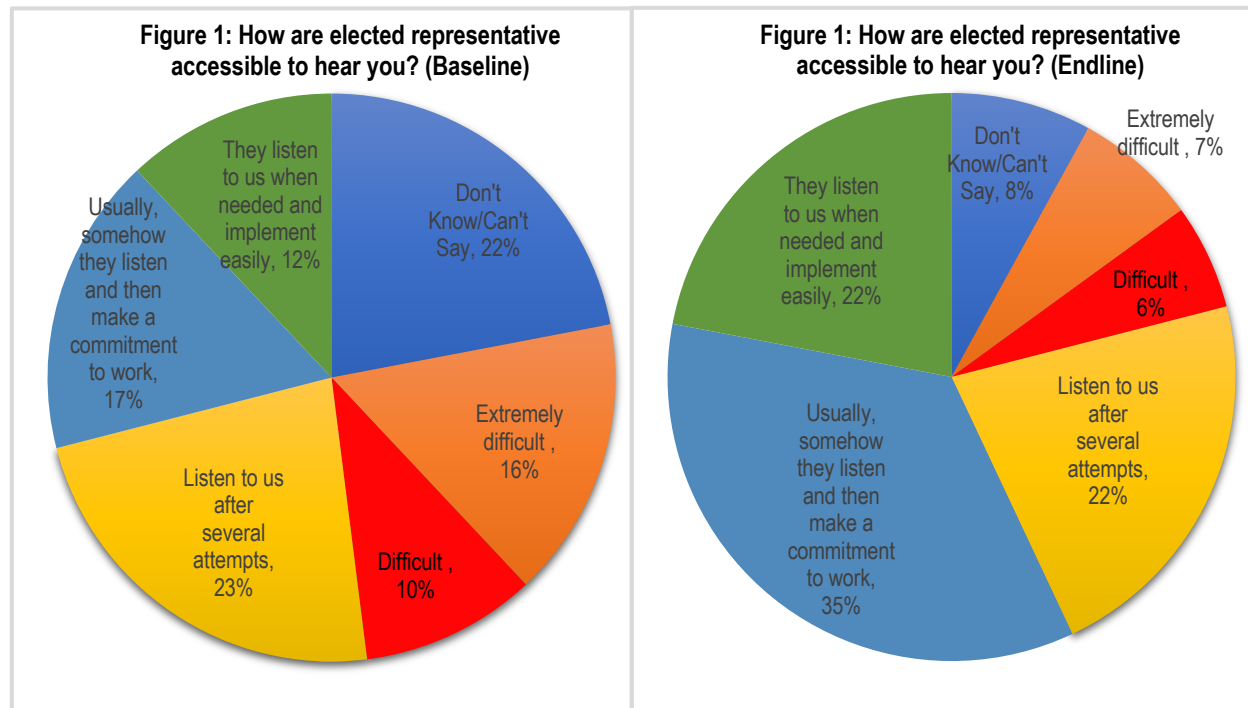
2.9. Access to elected political leaders

Having access to an elected representative is essential for many community members who are experiencing problems or issues that cannot be resolved by other means. The definition of a representative is an official that can act on your behalf to address contentious issues that may beyond the knowledge or jurisdiction of local organisations. It must be noted that local governments have only recently been reestablished, and the easy access to newly elected local representatives may not be fully established.

According to the baseline data, access to political leaders differed across the three target districts and Sindhuli appeared to find is easier as 26 percent stated that they listened when needed and easily addressed the issue, compared to only 9 percent in Dhanusha and a very low 3 percent in Mahottari. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents in Dhanusha said that they do listen after several attempts, but in Mahottari only 11 percent and agreed with this statement. Mahottari, as with many of the previous indicators, appear to have much less trust and connection with local authorities and representatives, and Sindhuli further emphasizes the easier access for the hiss than in the Terai.

Although the endline data continues to show that it is slightly easier to get elected representatives to implement their commitments in the hills, as Sindhuli (31%) is higher than Dhanusha (11%) and Mahottari (24%), gaining access has clearly become much easier in all three districts. Very few respondents thought it was extremely difficult or difficult, and in Mahottari the situation has dramatically improved. Gaining access is more difficult in the Terai but the persistence of the respondents appears to get results, as 21 and 42 percent in Dhanusha, 27, and 33 percent in Mahottari, and 17 and 31 percent in Sindhuli stated that they listen after several attempts and they usually listen and make a commitment to help, respectively.

By respondent type, the baseline data also showed high instances of respondents saying they don't know, can't say, especially for the farmers/housewives (26%), students (36%), and the influential people (22%), and the same respondents were also responded much more negatively with more stating it was extremely

difficult or difficult. It is not surprising that the elected representatives (30 and 29 percent), people affiliated with local structures (17 and 17 percent), and political leaders (29 and 18 percent) were much more positive by claiming that they usually listen and make a commitment to help or that they listen and provide assistance, respectively, compared to only 8 and 5 percent for the farmers/housewives, 10 and 5 percent for the students, and 15 and 11 percent for the influential people. This demonstrated that it was access was dependent on your social position and existing connections with the governance structures.

Figure 1: How are elected representative accessible to hear you? (Baseline)

Figure 1: How are elected representative accessible to hear you? (Endline)

The endline data shows a pronounced improvement in the groups that were the most negative in the baseline data, as the 30 percent of the farmers/housewives, 29 percent of the student, and a much higher 44 percent of the influential people claimed that elected representatives usually listened and made a commitment to help. However, the farmers/housewives and students are much lower than the elected representatives (43%), influential people (19%), people affiliated with local structures (20%), and the political leaders (27%) in getting them to listen when needed and provide assistance with only 14 percent of the farmers/housewives and 13 percent of the students agreeing with this statement. The data continues to show that farmers/housewives and students may eventually be able to access their representative, but find it much more difficult to get the assistance they may require.

Table (X): How are elected representative accessible to hear you if you go with a problem or issues?

	Survey	Male		Female		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know/Can't Say	Baseline	92	20%	166	23%	258	22%
	Endline	31	6%	69	9%	100	8%
Extremely difficult (they do not want to meet)	Baseline	70	15%	114	16%	184	16%
	Endline	33	7%	50	7%	83	7%
Difficult (They show their commitment but cannot meet)	Baseline	42	9%	75	11%	117	10%
	Endline	29	6%	43	6%	72	6%

	Survey	Male		Female		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Listen to us after several attempts	Baseline	93	20%	171	24%	264	23%
	Endline	85	18%	184	24%	269	22%
Usually, somehow they listen and then make a commitment to work	Baseline	97	21%	100	14%	197	17%
	Endline	171	36%	265	35%	436	35%
They listen to us when needed and implement easily	Baseline	60	13%	84	12%	144	12%
	Endline	128	27%	142	19%	270	22%
Total	Baseline	454	100%	710	100%	1164	100%
	Endline	477	100%	753	100%	1230	100%

The disaggregated baseline gender data found that both men and women had difficulty in accessing their local representatives, but women (14%) found it more difficult to get a commitment to help from them compared to men (21%). A very low 13 percent of the men and 12 percent of the women stated that they listened when needed and provided assistance. The data does show a significant difference between access and gender, but does demonstrate that difficulty in easily accessing elected representatives.

Although still much lower than expected, the endline data does show that ease of access of elected representatives has increased for both men and women. For example, 36 percent of male and 35 percent of women now agree that they usually listen and make a commitment to help. However, more men (27%) than women (19%) are able to get elected representatives to listen when needed and actually provide assistance when required. There is a notable improvement in both men and women gaining access, but the lack of access is still concerning as few of the respondents appear to find the process easy or satisfactory.

The baseline data by age continues to show that many respondents stated that they didn't know couldn't say, with the 15-29 age group being the highest with 28 percent. The responses are low for most of the respondents, but the youngest group appears to find it slightly more difficult to get their elected representatives to make a commitment to help. Only 12 and 7 percent of the 15-29 year olds stated that they could unusually get them to listen and make a commitment to help or they listened when needed and provided assistance, compared to 13 an 20 percent of the 30-40, 21 and 6 percent of the 40-45, and 19 and 17 percent of the 45 and above age groups, respectively. The data suggests that the older respondents find it easier to get a commitment or actual assistance from their elected representative.

The endline data is much more positive and uniform across all the age groups, as the majority of the respondents are clustered into two responses. A much higher 41 percent of the 15-29 age group reported that they usually listen and commit to providing assistance, followed by 40 percent of the 40-45, 38 percent of the 45 and older and 27 percent of the 30-40 age groups. The 15-29 (11%) age group appears to find it more difficult to gain actual assistance if required, compared to more of the 30-40 (22%), 40-45 (16%), and the 45 and above (27%) age groups. The youngest respondents find it much easier to gain access to their local representatives and gain a commitment to help, but he the older respondents find it easier to get actual assistance if required.

The baseline data by caste shows that many of the respondents agree that they listen after several attempts, but the Backward castes found were much higher with 30 percent compared to the average of 23 percent. The Backward castes (40%) and the Others group (38%) found it easier to get a commitment to help than Dalits (14%) and Janajatis (13%), and the Others group (27%) and Janajatis (22%) state that

they would listen if required and provide assistance, compared to only 11 and 16 percent of Dalits and the Backward castes, respectively.

The endline data continues to show that most of the respondents now find it much easier to access their elected representative, as 41 percent of the Dalits, 27 percent of the Backward castes, 40 percent of the Janajatis, and 38 percent of the Others groups now state that they usually listen and commit to providing held. However, the Janajatis (22%) and Others groups (27%) continue to find it easier to get actual help than Dalits (11%) and the Backward castes (16). Although the access to elected representatives has become much easier getting actual help when required is still more difficult for some vulnerable groups. the disaggregated baseline data by education, relatively even responses across the education levels, with the exception of the illiterate (39%) that appear to find it much more difficult to access their elected representatives and claim they do listen after several attempts, with an average of 23 percent. The PCL and above (19%) and the Primary/Informal (16%) level respondents find it much easier to get actual assistance if required, compared to 8 percent of the SLC/Secondary and 7 percent of the illiterate. Over all the illiterate found it much more difficult than the other respondents to gain access, a commitment to help, and actual help if required.

Similar to the previous variables, the endline data is much more positive and the majority of the respondents now state that they can gain access after several attempt and they usually listen and provide a commitment to help. However, in getting the elected representative to provide assistance if required, the illiterate found it much more difficult with only 9 percent agreeing with this statement, compared to 24 percent of the PCL and above, 23 percent of the SLC/Secondary, and 26 percent of the Primary/Informal levels. Gaining access to elected representatives has unquestionably become easier, but for the illiterate, getting assistance if required .was much more difficult than the other education levels

Gaining access to elected representatives appears to have become much easier in the period between the baseline and endline surveys, and many more respondents claim to be able to gain access with a little persistence, and even obtain a commitment to help or actual assistance. It must be noted that the high number of respondents stating that they don't know or can't say is perhaps a result of never having needed, or attempted, to contact their local representative at the time of the baseline survey. In the Terai districts there is a pronounced improvement from the baseline data, particularly in Mahottari that demonstrated a serious disconnect between local authorities and communities in many of the indicators. Perhaps the biggest concern is that the most vulnerable and marginal groups find it much more difficult to get assistance if required, as the farmers/housewives, students, women, the youth, Dalits and Backward castes, and the illiterate all found it was that this was difficult. However, elected representatives becoming more accessible is very positive, but the number of respondents who can easily access them and gain assistance is still low. This situation may be resolved by the reimplementation of local governments and the vast number of newly elected local representatives, many of whom are women or from marginal groups.

2.10 Public Hearings and Social Audits

Public hearings and social audits are an integral component of democracy, and being aware of their existence is important for community members to access various services that may not be available locally. This is particularly true for marginalized and excluded groups that may lack alternative means, or funds, for the same services provided elsewhere. Additionally, they are also important in maintaining social cohesion and harmony, and as a means of disseminating valuable information.

The baseline data by district that the majority of the respondents were unaware of public hearings, as a high 59 percent in Dhanusha, 62 percent in Mahottari, and 58 percent in Sindhuli stated that they didn't know/couldn't say. Mahottari was again the lowest, as only 17 percent claimed they were aware of public hearings, compared to the average of 25 percent.

Figure (3): Do you know about public hearing?
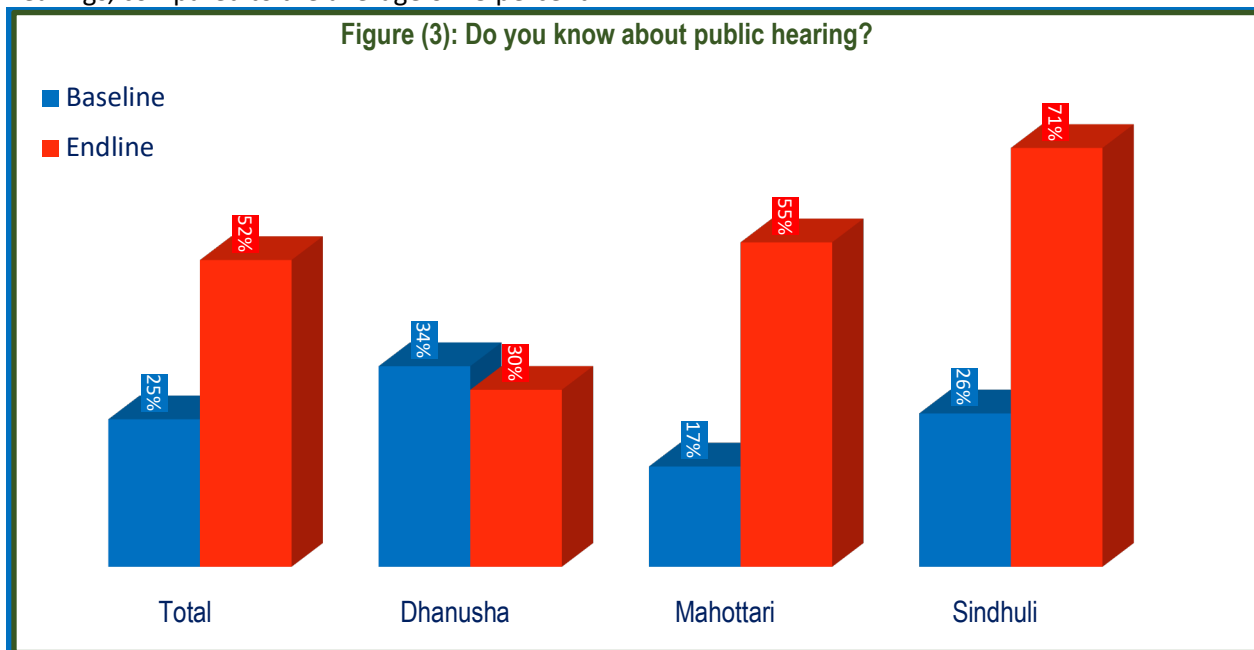
The endline data continues to demonstrate a notable improvement in the hills, but not the Terai. A high of 71 percent in Sindhuli, and much lower 55 percent in Mahottari, and only 30 percent in Dhanusha were aware of public hearings. Mahottari continue to be the most confused as 35 percent of the respondents in Dhanusha categorically stated no, compared to the average of 16 percent, but 43 percent of the respondents in Mahottari still claim that they don't know/can't say, with of average 32 percent. Regardless, the Terai districts still appear to have issues regarding awareness of local governance mechanisms and procedures.

The baseline data shows a significant difference between the genders as more women (67%) than men (48%) stated that they didn't know/couldn't say, and 34 percent of the male, and only 20 percent of the female respondents reported being aware of public hearings. This further implies that women are much less aware of community affairs and local governance.

The endline continues to show the gender disparity, despite more respondents becoming aware of public hearings. More women (38%) still claim that they don't know/can't sat than men (23%), and a much higher 62 percent of male, and 45 percent of female respondents state that they are of public hearings. The endline data is still a concern as the fewer women that are aware of public hearing the fewer that can benefit from them, which will restrict women's active and meaningful participation in community affairs that impact their daily lives.

The baseline data by age follows the familiar pattern of the majority of the respondents claiming they are unaware of public hearings in their communities, regardless of age. Sixty-one percent of both the 15-29 and the 45 and above age groups, and 56 percent of the 30-40, and 55 percent of the 40-45 age groups all stated they were didn't know/couldn't say, which indicates they are unaware of public hearings in their communities. The endline data continues to display a degree of uniformity that confirms there is only a

slight correlation between awareness and age. Just over 50 percent of all the respondents are aware of public hearings, with 59 percent of the 45 and above, 56 percent of the 40-45, 51 percent of the 30-40, and 49 percent of the 15-29 age groups reporting that they were aware of public hearings in their communities. Although there is a notable increase in awareness, the number of respondents that claim to be aware of public hearings is still very low.

The disaggregated baseline data by caste shows that Dalits (71%) and Backward castes (60%), compared to 53 percent of the Janajatis and 55 percent of the Others group stated they didn't know/couldn't say. In addition, a very low 12 percent of Dalits, 26 percent of the Others group, 30 percent of the Janajatis, and 31 percent of the Backward castes claimed to be aware of public hearings. Apart from the very low awareness of all the respondents, Dalits are extremely low with only 12 percent, which will seriously impair their ability to participate in important local public hearings.

The endline data is similar to the previous variable on age as almost half of all the respondents not claimed to be aware of public hearings. Most importantly, Dalits are now on a par with the other groups, with 48 percent, compared to 58 percent of the Others group, 46 percent of the Janajatis, and 45 percent of the Backward castes. The increase in awareness and the Dalits now matching the other groups is very promising, but the general awareness is still low for such an important aspect of community management that impacts all community members.

Table (23): Do you know about public hearing?

	Survey	PCL or Above		SLC/ Secondary		Primary/ Informal		Illiterate		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know/ Can't say	Baseline	93	39%	210	54%	229	69%	159	77%	691	59%
	Endline	63	17%	138	33%	80	32%	116	61%	397	32%
Yes	Baseline	119	50%	96	25%	55	17%	25	12%	295	25%
	Endline	279	75%	196	47%	135	53%	28	15%	638	52%
No	Baseline	26	11%	80	21%	49	15%	23	11%	178	15%
	Endline	32	9%	79	19%	38	15%	46	24%	195	16%
Total	Baseline	238	100%	386	100%	333	100%	207	100%	1164	100%
	Endline	374	100%	413	100%	253	100%	190	100%	1230	100%

Interestingly, the baseline data by education displays a positive correlation between education and awareness of public hearings; with 50 percent of the PCL and above stating that they were aware, followed by 25 percent of SLC/Secondary, 17 percent of the Primary/informal, and a very low 12 percent of the illiterate levels. The number of respondents that are aware of public hearings is very low, but most worrying is the illiterate, as they are extremely low and risk further social exclusion as being unaware means being unable to participate

The endline data is much more promising as awareness has increased across all the education levels; however, unlike Dalits, the illiterate have not become any closer to the other levels, but have remained extremely low. A very high 75 percent of the PCL and above, and lower 47 percent of the SLC/Secondary and 53 percent of the Primary/Informal now state they are aware of public hearings. Alternatively, only 15 percent of the illiterate now claim to be aware, which is very concerning as they are essentially excluded by their lack of awareness from very important mechanism of managing community affairs, participating in community activities, and having the capacity to make decisions that will impact their daily lives.

Awareness of public hearings has increased in the period between the baseline and endline surveys, but the many of the respondents are still unaware of their existence. Public hearings are important in local communities to manage community affairs by providing all the community members the opportunity to effectively audit various programs and initiatives. However, a lack of awareness instantly translated into an inability to participate and make decisions on important community matters. Similar to many other indicators, the Terai districts were much lower than the hills, especially Dhanusha, which suggests the respondents are not as informed as they should be, and may result in very low levels of participation. It is not clear why the Terai districts are much less aware, but it may be related to the recent social and political turmoil that have left an indelible mark on community and local authority reactions. In addition, many of the same vulnerable and marginal groups continue to be less aware of important facilities and mechanisms that are designed to decrease social exclusion and encourage representation of all community members. Farmers/housewives, students, and the illiterate, but surprisingly not Dalits, all displayed much less awareness This is very concerning as the public hearings actively encourage meaningful participation and public discussions, debate, and decision-making, but are rendered completely redundant all members of local communities are not equally aware.

*Table (X): Did you participate in it when it held in your community?*

	Survey	Male		Female		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know/ Can't say	Baseline	12	8%	17	12%	29	10%
	Endline	3	1%	7	2%	10	2%
Yes	Baseline	95	61%	93	66%	188	64%
	Endline	243	82%	276	81%	519	81%
No	Baseline	48	31%	30	21%	78	26%
	Endline	51	17%	58	17%	109	17%
Total	Baseline	155	100%	140	100%	295	100%
	Endline	297	100%	341	100%	638	100%

Similar to the other community meetings and groups, participation is extremely important for all community members. This is particularly true for women, the youth, and marginal groups that lack participation in many other public meetings. It must be noted that the number of respondents has more than doubled due to the increase in awareness, and may distort the comparative analysis slightly.

The disaggregated baseline data by district shows that respondents participated in public hearings much more in hills than in the Terai, 77 percent of the respondents in Sindhuli said they participated compared to only 56 percent in Dhanusha and 59 percent in Mahottari. The lack engagement of respondents from the Terai districts has been evident across many of the indicators and must be addressed to empower individuals and entire communities through participation.

Interestingly, the endline data a dramatic increase in participation across all the districts, but Dhanusha demonstrates the biggest improvement with 82 percent of the respondents now participation in public meetings, compared to only 62 percent in Mahottari. However, an extremely high 95 percent of the respondents in Sindhuli now state that they participate in public meetings. Mahottari continues to lag behind the other districts, and perhaps it is due to the recent upheaval that makes any improvement slower, but it worth examining the initiatives and programs in Sindhuli and Dhanusha to determine if lessons can be learned and alternative approaches can be adopted to bring Mahottari n a level with the other districts.

Figure (10): Did you participate in it when it held in your community?
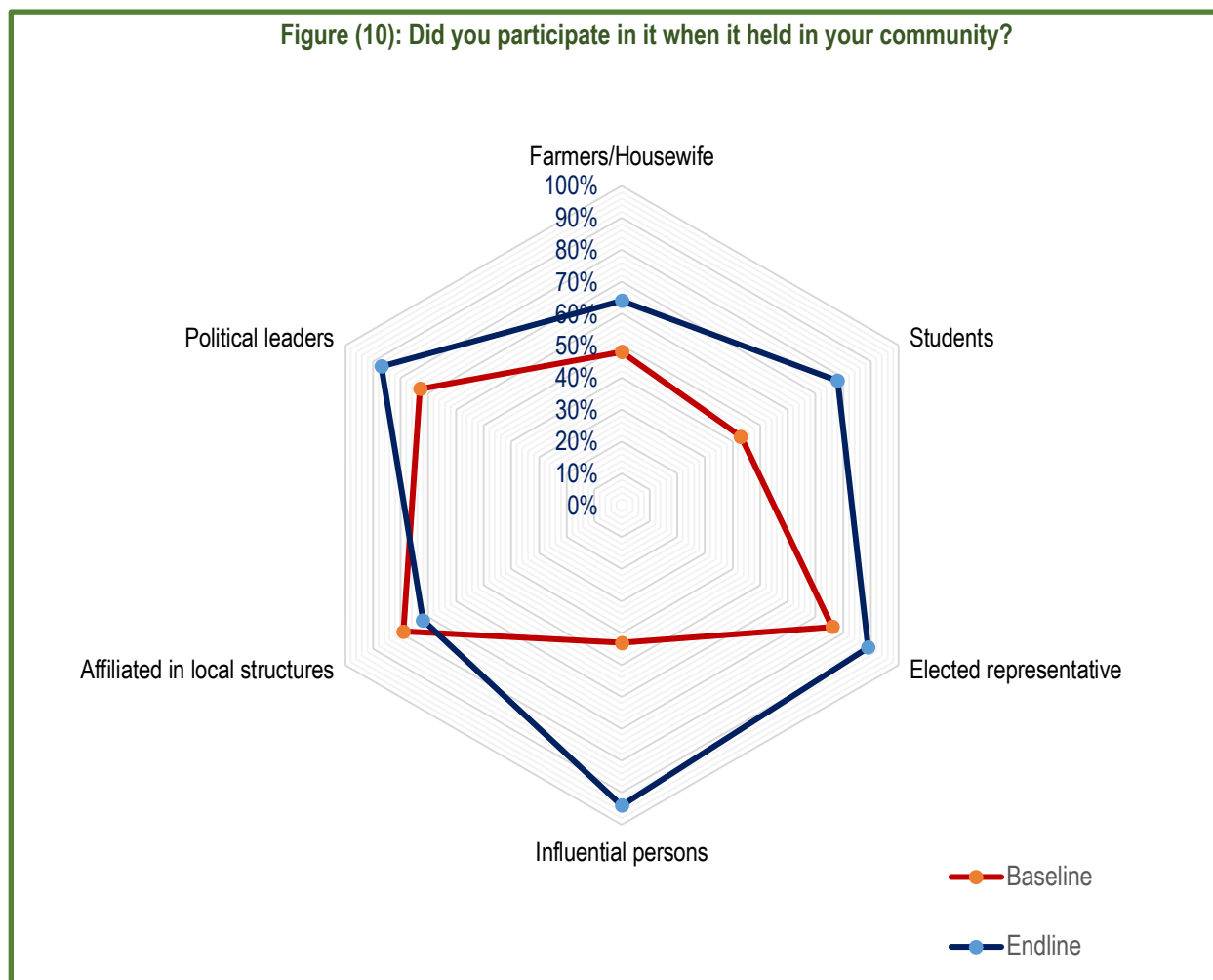
By respondent type, the baseline data showed, as expected, that more elected representatives (76%), people affiliated with local structures (79%), and political leaders (73%) participated in public meetings, compared to only 48 percent of farmers/housewives, 43 percent of both students, and influential people. For the public meetings to be effective and representatives, the latter groups, with less than 50 percent of the respondents who are aware of public hearing physically participating, must be increased.

The endline data is much more positive as the majority of the respondents now participate in public hearings, and although the elected representatives (89), people affiliated with local structures (72%), and political leaders (87%) are still high, the highest participation is now reported by the influential people (94%). In addition, 64 percent of the farmers/housewives and 78 percent of the students are not participating in public hearings, a significant rise but still much lower than the other categories. The disaggregated baseline data showed that there notable differences between the genders as women reported participating slightly more than men. A respectable 66 percent of the female and 61 percent of the male, respondents actively participated in public hearings in their communities.

The endline data indicates a steady and equal increase in participation, with 81 percent of women and 82 percent of the respondents that stated they were aware of public hearings actually participating in local meetings. This is very promising as the steady and incremental increase in participation should hopefully continue, and may result in women achieving equal representation in other public meetings.

The baseline data by age showed that younger respondents participated much less than the older respondents, only 47 of the 15-29 age group, compared to 72 percent of the 30-40, and 78 percent of both the 40-45 and 45 and above age groups actively participated in public hearings. This is a concern as the youth are already considered as a vulnerable group, and their participation should be encouraged.
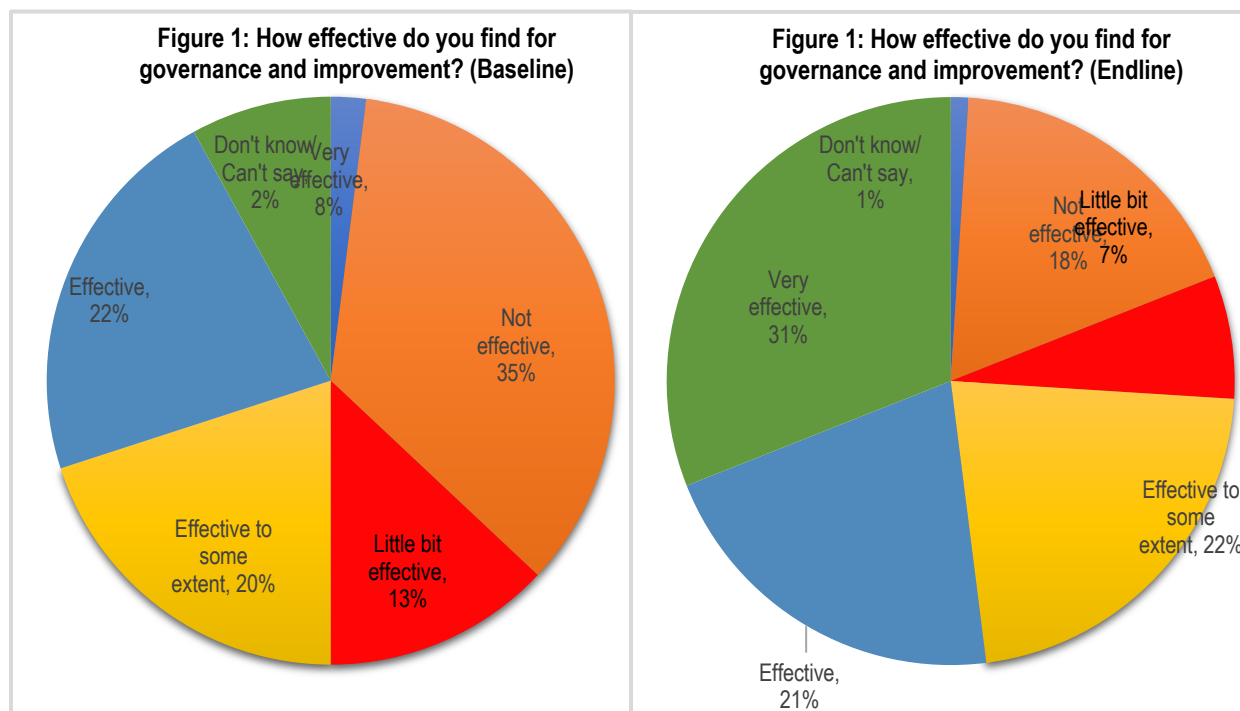
The endline data shows a much more even spread of responses across the age groups, and the participation of the 15-29 age group has significantly increased to a much higher 77 percent. The older respondents continue to participate more than the youth, but the difference has been reduced, as 84 percent of the 30-40, 80 percent of the 40-45, and 88 percent of the 45 and older all stated that they participated in public hearings. The change in the baseline and endline data indicates that participation will continue to increase and the youth will slowly become equally represented in public hearings. The baseline data by caste/ethnicity showed that most of the respondents who were aware of public hearings actually participated, with the exception of the Others group (52%) that reported much less participation compared to the high 70 percent of Dalits, 74 percent of Janajatis, and 62 percent of the Backward castes.

The endline data follows the same pattern that emerged in the other variables, as all the caste/ethnic groups increased their participation, and the Others group now appear to participate as much as the other respondents. Janajatis (88%) reported the highest participation, followed by Dalits (81%), the Others group (79%), and the Backward castes (76%). The results by caste/ethnicity continues to indicate that with time, representation and participation will keep increasing and public hearings may become truly representative of local communities.

The disaggregated baseline data by education is very uneven, as 84 percent of the respondents with a Primary/Informal education reported that they participated in public hearings. The second highest was the illiterate (68%), followed by the SLC/Secondary (60%) and PCL and above (56) levels. There is no apparent explanation why participation in public hearings was so high for respondents with a Primary/Informal education compared to the other education levels.

The endline data continues to demonstrate a large increase in participation for all the respondents, and a much closer grouping of the responses. The respondents with a Primary/Informal education level are still inexplicably higher than the other groups with 93 percent, but the other respondent are much closer than in the baseline shown in the baseline data. Eighty percent of the respondents with an education level of PCL and above and 76 percent with a SLC/Secondary level of education, and 79 percent of the illiterate report that they participate in public hearings in their respective communities.

Of all the data, this sub-question demonstrates the most positive and consistent improvement during the period between the baseline survey and the endline survey. In a reasonably short period of time, the number of respondents, who not only become aware of public hearings, but physically participated, increased significantly. There are still areas that must be addressed, such as the much lower participation of respondents from Mahottari compared to Dhanusha and Sindhuli, and the relatively low participation of Farmers/housewives, students, and women, generally considered as excluded and vulnerable groups, but the other variables strongly suggest that over time, respondents from these groups will increasingly participate and make the data much more uniform and representative of all the community members. This situation was evident in the endline data on caste/ethnicity, age, and education, and it is reasonable to assume that a similar trend will happen across all the variables. Moreover, the opportunity to actively participate in, what is in essence a public meeting, may also build the confidence of the respondents, and any knowledge and skills acquired as a result of meaningfully participating in public hearings, may be directly transferrable to other public discussions, debates, and decision-making.

Figure 1: How effective do you find for governance and improvement? (Baseline)

Figure 1: How effective do you find for governance and improvement? (Endline)

The effectiveness of public hearings is highly dependent on the participation of the community in raising their concerns and issues. Moreover, having an opportunity to offer your opinions and grievances is inconsequential if the issues are not addressed, as this would eventually result in feelings of powerlessness and lack of trust, and significant decrease the interest of community members in participating in future meetings.

It must be noted that, again, due to the large increase in respondents reporting that they were aware of public hearings the number of respondents for this sub-question has increased by more than three hundred people, which may have an impact in the comparative analysis.

The disaggregated baseline data by region showed that the responses varied significantly among the respondents and between the districts. For example, the majority of the respondents in Sindhuli stated that the public hearings were not effective, compared to only 7 percent in Dhanusha and 1Most respondent 3 percent in Mahottari. Alternatively, most of the respondents in Dhanusha reported that they were somewhat effective and effective, with 40 and 41 percent, respectively, and the respondents in Mahottari were more spread across the categories with many, 40 percent, claiming that they were a little bit effective. This suggests that the public hearings are either extremely different across the districts or are more, or less effective in dealing with some local issues as opposed to others.

The endline data is very different than the baseline data, some aspects are still evident albeit much less pronounced, such as 30 percent of the respondent in Sindhuli stating they are not effective compared to only 4 and 3 percent in Dhanusha and Mahottari, respectively. However, the general pattern is that the respondents are becoming more positive in their responses. For example, 44 percent of the respondents in Mahottari, and 33 percent in Sindhuli now claim that the public hearings are very effective, but Dhanusha is less positive as most the respondents are still clustered around the somewhat effective (47) and effective (26%) options. The data indicates that the public hearings appear to becoming more

effective in the perspective of the respondents, but the respondents in Dhanusha still positive, just not as positive as the other districts.

Table (X): If yes, how effective do you find for governance and improvement?

	Survey	15-29		30-40		40-45		Above 45		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't know/ Can't say	Baseline	1	2%	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%	3	2%
	Endline	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%	1	1%	3	1%
Not effective	Baseline	18	33%	22	33%	13	46%	12	31%	65	35%
	Endline	26	15%	33	19%	21	24%	14	18%	94	18%
Little bit effective	Baseline	8	15%	11	16%	2	7%	4	10%	25	13%
	Endline	26	15%	9	5%	2	2%	0	0%	37	7%
Effective to some extent	Baseline	14	26%	11	16%	4	14%	9	23%	38	20%
	Endline	52	29%	39	22%	11	13%	11	14%	113	22%
Effective	Baseline	9	17%	16	24%	5	18%	12	31%	42	22%
	Endline	37	21%	37	21%	19	22%	18	23%	111	21%
Very effective	Baseline	4	7%	6	9%	4	14%	1	3%	15	8%
	Endline	38	21%	54	31%	33	38%	36	45%	161	31%
Total	Baseline	54	100%	67	100%	28	100%	39	100%	188	100%
	Endline	179	100%	174	100%	86	100%	80	100%	519	100%

The baseline data by respondent type shows the same variation in responses, but the most of the respondents appear to think that public hearings are not effective, with a few exceptions. For instance, 45 percent of the farmers/housewives, 32 percent of the students, 26 percent of the elected representatives, 25 percent of the influential people, 50 percent of the people affiliated with local structures, and 31 percent of the political leaders all stated that the hearings were not effective. Interestingly, 27 percent of the farmers/housewives considered them as very effective compared to an average of 8, and 32 percent of student thought they were somewhat effective with an average of only 8 percent. As to be expected, the people with existing connections to local authorities were generally more positive in their responses.

The endline data is much more uniform and even, as the majority of the respondents claim that they consider public hearings as somewhat effective, effective, or very effective. For example, 28 percent of the farmers/housewives, 17 percent of the students, 46 percent of the elected representatives, 31 percent of the influential people, 37 percent of the people affiliated with local structures, and 28 percent of the political leaders all agree that public hearings are very effective. The anomaly of the students is concerning, as 33 percent still think that they are only somewhat effective. The data could be interpreted as reflecting the increase in participation and representation, as it would take time to accommodate the multiple perspectives, but indicates that the more representative respondents will have a positive impact on the effectiveness of public hearings.

The disaggregated baseline data showed a gender disparity, as men appeared to be much more positive in their responses. Forty-four percent of women and only 25 percent of women stated that public hearings were not effective. Conversely, 36 percent of the male, only 9 percent of the female respondents considered them as effective. The endline data continued to demonstrate the positive trend and leveling of the responses, as now 24 and 32 percent of the men and 19 and 30 percent of the women state that public hearings are effective and very effective, respectively. Similar to the previous variable, this may be explained by the many new respondents actively participating to make the hearings more representative and effective, which would take time for their impact to be truly appreciated.

The baseline data by age did not show any notable differences in the respondents' responses by age, as 33 percent of the 15-29, 33 percent of the 30-40, 46 percent of the 40-45, and 31 percent of the 45 and over age groupings all stated that the hearings were not effective. There were some anomalies, but nothing significant, such as 31 percent of the 45 and over age group that claimed that public hearings were effective, compared to an average of 22 percent.

The endline data was much less clustered, and more evenly spread than the previous variables. However, the younger respondents were notably less positive in their responses, with only 21 and 21 percent of the 15-29 age group agreeing that the public hearings were effective or very effective, and 31 and 31 percent of the 30-40, 22 and 38 percent of the 40-45, and 23 and 45 percent of the 45 and over age groups all chose these options, respectively. The youth may be slightly less positive as may not have overcome the deeply embedded cultural values that dictate that older people should be respected and not contradicted, which would take time to deconstruct, and may explain why they feel less positive about of the effectiveness of the public hearings.

Table (X): If yes, how effective do you find for governance and improvement?

	Survey	Dalit		Janajati		Backward Caste		Others		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't know/ Can't say	Baseline	0	0%	0	0%	3	5%	0	0%	3	2%
	Endline	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	2	1%	3	1%
Not effective	Baseline	5	22%	46	73%	7	12%	7	17%	65	35%
	Endline	6	7%	45	32%	1	3%	42	16%	94	18%
Little bit effective	Baseline	6	26%	5	8%	8	13%	6	14%	25	13%
	Endline	11	13%	9	6%	2	7%	15	6%	37	7%
Effective to some extent	Baseline	5	22%	8	13%	18	30%	7	17%	38	20%
	Endline	30	35%	28	20%	5	17%	50	19%	113	22%
Effective	Baseline	3	13%	2	3%	22	37%	15	36%	42	22%
	Endline	22	26%	22	16%	11	38%	56	21%	111	21%
Very effective	Baseline	4	17%	2	3%	2	3%	7	17%	15	8%
	Endline	17	20%	36	26%	10	34%	98	37%	161	31%
Total	Baseline	23	100%	63	100%	60	100%	42	100%	188	100%
	Endline	86	100%	141	100%	29	100%	263	100%	519	100%

The baseline data by caste/ethnicity is very varied and has no discernible pattern, but the majority of the respondents appear to be more negative than positive about the effectiveness of public hearings. For example, a very high 73 percent of the Janajatis, and only 22 percent of Dalits, 12 percent of the Backward castes, and 17 percent of the Others group stated that the hearings were not effective. Alternatively, just over a third of the Backward castes (37%) and the Others group (36%) agreed that they were effective, compared to only 13 percent of Dalits and 3 percent of Janajatis agreed with that statement.

The endline data was more even and positive, but the Janajatis are still more negative, with 32 percent claiming that public hearings are not effective, compared to Dalits (7%), the Backward castes (3%), and the Others Group (16%). However, the majority of the respondents agreed that the hearings were somewhat effective, effective, or very effective, but more respondents from the Backward castes (34%) and the Others group (37%) consider public hearings as very effective, compared to Dalits (20%) and Janajatis (26). The emerging pattern suggests that the respondents are becoming increasingly more

positive about the effectiveness of public hearings, and this may continue as participation from all members of local communities increases.

The disaggregated data by education shows that respondents with PCL and above or SLC/Secondary education levels were much more positive about the effectiveness of public hearings. As 36 percent of the PCL and above and 24 percent of the SLC/Secondary stated that they were effective, with only 4 percent of the Primary/Informal and 12 percent of the illiterate, agreeing. Conversely, 76 percent of the illiterate and 51 percent of the Primary informal claimed public hearings were not effective, and only 16 percent of the PCL and above and 31 percent of the SLC/Secondary stated they were not effective. The baseline data appears to be divided between the more positive respondents with a higher educational attainment, and much more negative perspective of the respondents with less education.

The endline data continues to imply that a pattern is slowly emerging that with time, the majority of the respondents are become more positive about the effectiveness of public hearings. Similar to previous variables most of the responses fall into the somewhat effective, effective, and very effective. For example, 18 and 35 percent of the PCL and above, 23 and 26 percent of the SLC/Secondary, 23 and 31 percent of the Primary/informal, and 27 and 18 percent of the illiterate agree that public hearings are effective or very effective, respectively.

The effectiveness of public hearings is difficult to determine, especially when based on the perspective of extremely diverse participants with different expectations and objectives. However, with the exception of a few persistently negative variables, such as Dhanusha and Janajatis that are inexplicably more inclined to report that public hearings are not effective, the general trend outlined in the endline data is very positive. It must be noted that the number of respondents that have become aware of public hearings, and are now actively participating, has dramatically increased over a very short period of time, approximately six months. This supports the emerging pattern of the respondents' responses becoming more clustered around the three most positive statements, and the more uniform spread of the data, compared to the rather erratic baseline data. The pattern indicated in the endline data suggests that with more time the respondents will continue to influence the public hearings and provide a more accurate representation of the multitude of local perspectives and voices, which initially may appear to be rather chaotic, but will continue to coalesce around the more positive responses, and both public hearings and the respondent benefit from the experience.

2.11 Public Satisfaction towards Service Providers

The satisfaction of the general public with their service providers is imperative to maintain trust and good relations between representatives, local leaders, and government organisations. After 20 years of effectively being governed from Kathmandu, the new LGUs are in a unique position to cater to the needs and demands of local communities, and address specific local issues and concerns that may be inhibiting social cohesion and inclusion.

The baseline data was extremely negative as almost half of all the respondents stated they don't know, including elected representatives, government officials, political parties, and NGOs. The rest of the respondents, from all backgrounds and positions were equally divided between no programs/activities, not satisfied, and they talk but do not work, with an average response of 19, 14, and 16 percent, respectively. Very few respondents were positive, and not a single respondent stated that they do almost everything they say. This is possible the most negative of all the baseline data and is unquestionably a result of the lack of local governments and accountability to local communities.

Table (26): Public's perception towards service providers

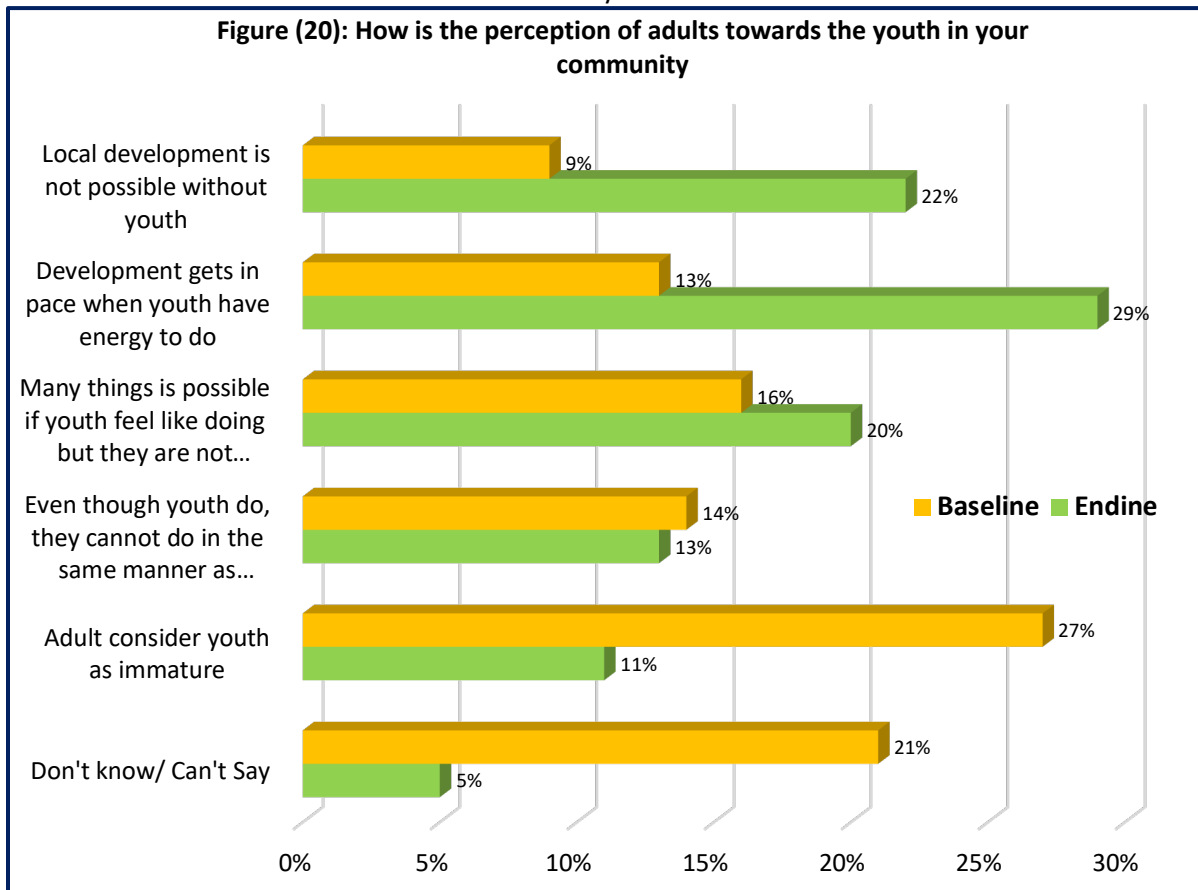|	Survey	Don't Know (0)		. No program/ activities		Not Satisfied		Talk but do not work		Does few portion as they talk		Does almost everything as they talk		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Political Parties	Baseline	595	51%	196	17%	125	11%	185	16%	63	5%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	197	16%	188	15%	339	28%	362	29%	144	12%	0	0%	1230	100%
Youth network or club	Baseline	554	48%	227	20%	145	12%	176	15%	62	5%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	305	25%	175	14%	212	17%	360	29%	178	14%	0	0%	1230	100%
Women Development Office	Baseline	508	44%	242	21%	188	16%	169	15%	57	5%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	307	25%	176	14%	214	17%	387	31%	146	12%	0	0%	1230	100%
Media sector	Baseline	597	51%	207	18%	147	13%	138	12%	75	6%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	368	30%	208	17%	224	18%	308	25%	122	10%	0	0%	1230	100%
Rural or Urban Municipality	Baseline	570	49%	207	18%	117	10%	239	21%	31	3%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	164	13%	222	18%	260	21%	437	36%	147	12%	0	0%	1230	100%
Non- Governmental Organizations	Baseline	607	52%	187	16%	144	12%	197	17%	29	2%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	285	23%	185	15%	213	17%	399	32%	147	12%	1	0%	1230	100%
Elected representatives (Female)	Baseline	544	47%	175	15%	189	16%	189	16%	67	6%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	215	17%	167	14%	229	19%	435	35%	184	15%	0	0%	1230	100%
Elected representatives (Youth)	Baseline	564	48%	174	15%	137	12%	221	19%	68	6%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	154	13%	193	16%	293	24%	428	35%	162	13%	0	0%	1230	100%
Elected Representatives (Others)	Baseline	592	51%	181	16%	154	13%	195	17%	42	4%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	171	14%	219	18%	327	27%	398	32%	115	9%	0	0%	1230	100%
Government Officials	Baseline	561	48%	223	19%	167	14%	184	16%	29	2%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	194	16%	320	26%	246	20%	375	30%	93	8%	2	0%	1230	100%
Total	Baseline	5692	49%	2019	17%	1513	13%	1893	16%	523	4%	0	0%	1164	100%
	Endline	2360	19%	2053	17%	2557	21%	3889	32%	1438	12%	3	0%	12300	100%

The most notable difference in the endline data is that the number of respondents claiming that they don't know has decreased significantly to an average of only 19 percent. The majority of the respondents are quite evenly spread between the 'not satisfied' and' they talk but do no work' statements, with an average of 21 and 32 percent. Initially, the data still looks very negative, but once examined it is clear that the respondents are displaying much more awareness and have higher expectations than during the baseline survey. This is an important development as the pessimism has clearly dissipated and trust is waiting to be earned, and as restructuring is still relatively new and implementation is inchoate, once fully operational the service providers should be in a much better position to cater to the local population.

The importance of being satisfied with your service providers cannot be overstated as well as developing trust and cooperation between service providers and users, the services available are critical in addressing economic hardship, access to justice, inclusion, and providing other invaluable services. Due to very recent state restructuring, and the implementation of the new governance and development structures, it is not surprising that there is still some dissatisfaction with the service providers. However, the endline data does indicate a positive trend that should continue as local service providers become established in local communities. It is fair to assume the work by many organisations, including search, in providing people with information on what services are available and how to access them, is responsible for the increase in satisfaction. However, until awareness, infrastructure, and facilities are firmly established, satisfaction will remain relatively low.

2.12 Perception of Adults towards the Youth

Adults' perception of the youth is an often overlooked, but critical factor, in the opportunities that the youth have in their local communities. If the youth are perceived negatively it becomes extremely difficult for them to become active members of groups and organisations, and almost impossible to gain meaningful leadership position in local governance and development. Nepal public and private life is traditionally dominated by older men, and the youth have little authority in their local communities, which seriously inhibits accessing and utilizing the valuable resource that the youth represent.

According to the baseline data by region, many of the respondent stated they didn't know or couldn't say how adults perceived the youth. However, there was a distinct difference between Dhanusha and Mahottari, with Sindhuli coming in between the two extremes. Mahottari was much more pessimistic and thought that the adults perceived the youth much more negatively than the relatively positive Dhanusha. For example, 41 percent of the respondents in Mahottari stated that they believed adults perceived the youth as immature, and 17 percent agreed that the youth can't do things the same as adults, compared to 15 percent for both statements in Dhanusha. Alternatively, the many respondents in Dhanusha thought many things were possible if the youth are committed (21%), and believed development gains pace when the youth have the energy to become involved (20%), and only 12 and 9 percent in Mahottari agreed. This may have been the result of the unrest in Mahottari before the baseline survey, as social and political disturbances in the Tarai is often blamed on violent youth.

Figure (20): How is the perception of adults towards the youth in your community

	Baseline	Endline
Local development is not possible without youth	9%	22%
Development gets in pace when youth have energy to do	13%	29%
Many things is possible if youth feel like doing but they are not…	16%	20%
Even though youth do, they cannot do in the same manner as…	14%	13%
Adult consider youth as immature	27%	11%
Don't know/ Can't Say	21%	5%

The endline data shows a much more positive perspective of the youth, especially in Mahottari and Sindhuli. Although Mahottari (23%) is still well above average (13%) in thinking adults perceive the youth as not being able to do things the same as adults, 21 percent now believe that the youth are perceived as

helping development gain pace, and a further 23 percent state that local development is not possible without the youth. Thirty-one and 13 percent in Dhanusha, and a high 34 and 30 percent in Sindhuli, respectively, agree with the statements. This demonstrates that the respondents consider that adults perceive the youth much more positively, and this indicates a lot of targeted youth work must have been conducted in Mahottari and Sindhuli by various organisations.

The baseline data by respondent type showed that many more farmers/housewives and students claimed they didn't know or couldn't say, and appear to be much more negative in their belief that adults perceive the youth as negative. However, the students are clearly divided among themselves as they are comparable with the much more consistently positive other categories. For instance, 13 percent of the students agreed that adults believed that development gained pace if the youth are involved, and 7 percent stated that local development was not possible without the youth, compared 18 percent of the elected representatives, 12 percent of the people affiliated with local structures, and 16 percent of the political leaders, indicating that the latter categories were much more consistent and positive in their responses.

The endline data reflects a much more positive and even spread of responses from all the respondent types, with a few notable exceptions, as the majority of the respondents now consider that adults perceive the youth as positive. The farmers/housewives (25% and 15%), students (26% and 16%), and elected representatives (27% and 27%) are much more inclined to think that adults believe that development gains pace if the youth are involved and local development is not possible without the youth. However, 45 and 20 percent of influential people, 33 and 31 percent of people affiliated with local structures, and 32 and 29 percent of political leaders agreed with this assertion. This is an important development as indicates that respondents may be more willing of having the youth in leadership positions, and implies that local communities may also be more accepting of youth driven initiatives and programs.

Table (X): How is the perception of adults towards the youth in your community?

	Survey	15-29		30-40		40-45		Above 45		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't know/ Can't Say	Baseline	127	24%	58	19%	16	12%	39	19%	240	21%
	Endline	22	5%	21	5%	11	6%	11	7%	65	5%
Adult consider youth as immature	Baseline	151	29%	87	29%	34	26%	45	22%	317	27%
	Endline	67	14%	35	9%	19	10%	14	9%	135	11%
Even though youth do, they cannot do in the same manner as adult do	Baseline	62	12%	46	15%	27	21%	25	12%	160	14%
	Endline	64	14%	59	14%	23	12%	17	11%	163	13%
Many things is possible if youth feel like doing but they are not committed	Baseline	88	17%	45	15%	21	16%	32	16%	186	16%
	Endline	91	19%	95	23%	32	17%	24	16%	242	20%
Development gets in pace when youth have energy to do	Baseline	70	13%	38	12%	15	11%	34	17%	157	13%
	Endline	140	30%	119	29%	54	28%	44	29%	357	29%
Local development is not possible without youth	Baseline	29	6%	31	10%	18	14%	26	13%	104	9%
	Endline	90	19%	80	20%	54	28%	44	29%	268	22%
Total	Baseline	527	100%	305	100%	131	100%	201	100%	1164	100%
	Endline	474	100%	409	100%	193	100%	154	100%	1230	100%

The endline data by gender shows that slightly more men than women thought that adults perceive the youth positively, but they both consider that adults mostly perceive the youth negatively. Twenty-five percent of the male, and 29 percent of the female respondents agreed that adults consider the youth as immature. Alternatively, 18 percent of the men stated that adults think development is faster if the youth

are involved, compared to only 11 percent of the women, but a very low 9 percent of both men and women considered that adults think development is not possible without the youth.

The endline data is generally more positive, and men are still slightly more optimistic as 33 percent of the men and 27 percent of the women think that adults believe that development would go faster if the youth were more committed, and a much higher 28 percent of the male and 18 percent of the female respondents think adults believe that local development is not possible without the youth. The Gender data is clearly more positive than the baseline data, but people, both man and women, generally think that adults perceive the youth as not committed to local development.

The endline data, perhaps rather surprisingly, does not indicate a significant difference between the way the younger and older responds think the youth are perceived by adults. An average of 19 percent the respondents stated they didn't know/couldn't say, but the highest for all the age groups was the belief that adults think the youth are immature, with 29 percent of the 15-29, 29 percent of the 30-40, 26 percent of the 40-45, and 22 percent of the 45 and above all agreeing with this statement. Conversely, an average of only 13 percent believed that adults considered development would go faster if the youth were committed, and an average of only 9 percent agreed that adults think local development is not possible without the youth.

The endline data continues to show an positive increase in the way respondents think that adults perceive the youth, although many respondents still think that adults think the youth lack commitment, the majority of all the age groups now state that they think adults think that local development would move faster if the youth were committed and that local development is not possible without their commitment. The combined total of these two categories for the 15-29 is now 48 percent, compared to the baseline data with a total of only 18 percent. This is also true with the other age groups as the combined total for the 30-40 (49%), 40-45 (56%), and the 45 and above (58%) age groups also demonstrates the belief that the youth are perceived more positively by adults. This clearly shows that the respondents think that engaging with local development would be much easier for the youth, and would be encouraged more by adults now that they are perceived more as an important asset.

The baseline data by caste/ethnicity was also very negative as very few of the respondents thought that adults thought development went faster if the youth are committed or that local development was not possible without the youth. Almost half of all the respondents stated they did not know, particularly Dalits with 31 percent compared to the average of 21 percent, or they believed adults in their communities consider the youth as immature. 24 percent of Dalits, 33 percent of Janajatis, 26 percent of Backward castes, and 27 percent of the Others group agreed with this statement. This is highly problematic as members of these groups would unquestionably be discouraged from engaging in local development if they think that they are perceived as immature.

As expected, the endline data provides a much more positive picture, but is much more evenly spread than the other variables. However, this does indicate less of the respondents are positive in how they think adults perceive the youth, as an average of 13 percent still think the youth as seen as immature, and an average of 20 think they are perceived as not committed. Approximately half of the respondents from the Janajati and the Others groups think that adults now think that development will move faster if the youth are committed and that development is not possible without the youth, but this combined total is slightly lower for the backward castes (42%) and Dalits (40%). It is evident that many more of the respondents now believe that the youth are perceived as positive and important for local development by the adults in their communities.

As expected, the baseline data by education level also shows that many of the respondents either didn't know/couldn't say or thought the youth were perceived as immature, with an average of 21 and 27 percent, respectively. That said, 23 percent of the PCL and above thought that adults believed that development would go faster if the youth were committed, much higher than the 13 percent average. The illiterate are also marginally more pessimistic in the way they think the youth are perceived, but a very high 31 percent stated that they didn't know/couldn't say.

The endline data continues to follow the pattern of respondent increasingly thinking that the youth are perceived positively by adults, with the exception of the illiterate (21 and 22 percent) that still mostly think they are perceived as immature or not committed. The disaggregated data by education records the highest combined totals of respondents that think that adults believe development would move faster is the youth were committed and that local development is not possible without the youth. A combined total of 64 percent of the PLC and above, 50 percent of the SLC/Secondary, 50 percent of the Primary/Informal, and only 28 percent of the illiterate agree that with these statements. The positive correlation between education and how respondents think adults perceive the youth in relation to local development is generally positive, but the illiterate are much less optimistic in their opinions.

The endline data is much more positive about how respondents think adults perceive the youth than the baseline data. There are certain groups that are much more negative, such as the farmers/housewives, students, and the illiterate, but they still recorded much more positive responses than during the baseline survey. It is essential that all community members perceive the youth as positive and a valuable asset for local development, as youth participation is minimal and will not increase if they feel that they are simply seen as immature or uncommitted. Similar to gender, traditional values and cultural restrictions that negatively impact the perception of the youth must be slowly eroded to encourage the youth to directly engage in initiatives and programs in their communities, especially related to local governance and development.

It is evident that much work has been conducted in the three target districts in the period between the baseline and endline surveys. Various community level initiatives conducted by numerous organisations, including Search, have had a notable impact of the way that communities perceive the youth. Changing negative perceptions and stereotypes is critical, and is the first step to increasing youth involvement in local development. Additionally, once the youth meaningfully participate in active leadership roles, they can continue to bring the concerns and issues that directly impact the youth to the forefront of local debate and discussions. This was highlighted by a participant during a FGD in Sindhuli, Buddha Nepali commented that 'youth targeted programs have been successful. They have made the stakeholders answerable, and now issues relating to women and the youth are staring to be noticed.

2.13 Perception of Men towards Women

The perception of men towards women is one of the most fundamental obstacles to women gaining equality, inclusion, and meaningful leadership opportunities in their communities. Women face numerous challenges in Nepal, such as traditional and entrenched patriarchal values, male dominance in the public sphere, restrictions outside the family home, the burden of caring for the young and the elderly, and a male dominated political culture. The new constitution (2015) mandated for quotas, reservation, and participatory representation (PR) in an attempt to address these issues. However, legislation and policy can ameliorate the most egregious inequality, but changing how men perceive women is the only way to

achieve sustainable change, and directly improve the lives of women embedded in local communities and social relations.

Analyzing the baseline data by district, Sindhuli appears to be much more positive in the way women are perceived by men. For instance, 32 percent in Dhanusha and 41 percent in Mahottari think men perceive women as not able to do anything, compared to only 13 percent in Sindhuli. Additionally, a very low 3 percent in Dhanusha and no one in Mahottari think men believe development is not possible without women, and Sindhuli is much higher with 22 percent. This clearly indicates that the districts in the Terai think men perceive women as a liability to local development rather than an asset. This may be due to embedded traditional and cultural mores that are less restrictive in the hill districts.

Figure (20): How is the perception of men towards the women in your community
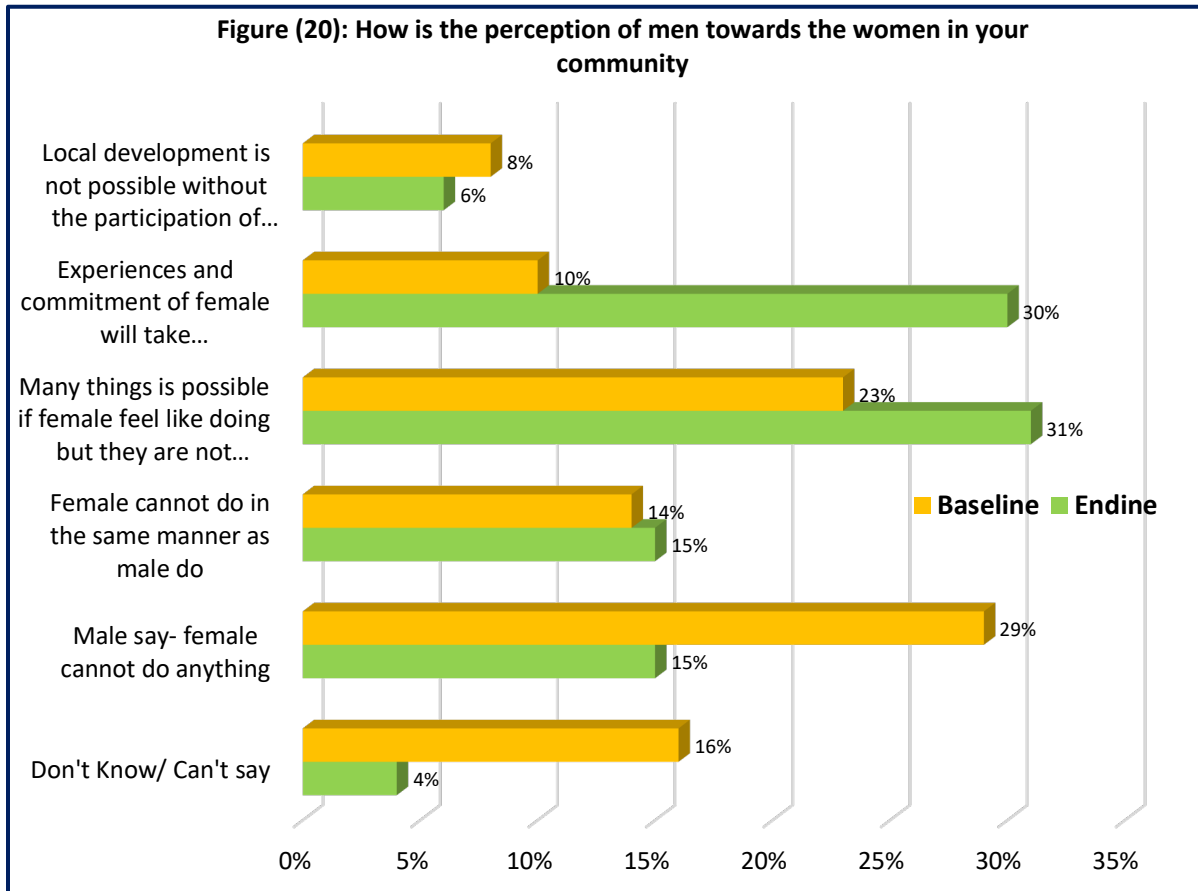
The endline data is much more evenly spread with the majority of the respondents thinking, slightly negatively, that men perceive women in development as making many things possible if they feel like it but are not committed, Dhanusha (28%), Mahottari (30%), and Sindhuli (36%), and that women's experiences and commitment will make development move faster, Dhanusha (35%), Mahottari (21%), and Sindhuli (33%). These results are interesting for a number of reasons, as it implies that more respondents think women are valuable to local development, but are not committed. However, it must be noted that the respondents are stating how they think men in their communities perceive women, and as such, it is clear that they feel that most men consider women as disinterested in local development, and suggests there are gender restrictions that may inhibit and discourage women meaningfully engaging in local development.

The baseline data also showed that there were differences by respondent type, as the many of the respondents, across all the categories, believed that men perceived that women were not capable of

anything (29 percent average), or that many things would be possible if women felt like it but they are not committed (23 percent average). The farmers/housewives were the most pessimistic, and the most positive were the elected representatives (15%), the people affiliated with local structures (14%), and the political leaders (14%), who were all above the average of 8 percent in thinking men thought local development was not possible without women.

The data from the endline data shows that that the responses are much more evenly spread and with the same pattern emerging, as most of the respondents fall into the belief that men think that many things are possible if women felt like doing it but they are not committed, and women's experiences and commitment would move development forward. The elected representatives, people affiliated with local structures, and the political leaders are still slightly more optimistic than the other respondent types, but are less positive as they were in the baseline study, as now only 7, 2, and 9 percent, respectively, believe that men think local development is not possible without women's participation.

The disaggregated baseline data by gender showed the same negative view of men's perceptions of women persists, with women being slightly more pessimistic than men. Thirty-two percent of the female respondents thought that men though women could not do anything, compared to only 24 percent of the men, and 29 percent of the men believed many things would be possible but women are not committed to only 20 percent of the women agreeing that this is how men perceived women.

Table (28): How is the perception of men towards women in your community?

	Survey	Male		Female		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Don't Know/ Can't say	Baseline	63	14%	118	17%	181	16%
	Endline	18	4%	26	3%	44	4%
Male say- female cannot do anything	Baseline	109	24%	227	32%	336	29%
	Endline	41	9%	141	19%	182	15%
Female cannot do in the same manner as male do	Baseline	60	13%	100	14%	160	14%
	Endline	64	13%	123	16%	187	15%
Many things is possible if female feel like doing but they are not committed	Baseline	130	29%	141	20%	271	23%
	Endline	175	37%	211	28%	386	31%
Experiences and commitment of female will take development into pace	Baseline	58	13%	63	9%	121	10%
	Endline	155	32%	208	28%	363	30%
Local development is not possible without the participation of female	Baseline	34	7%	61	9%	95	8%
	Endline	24	5%	44	6%	68	6%
Total	Baseline	454	100%	710	100%	1164	100%
	Endline	477	100%	753	100%	1230	100%

According to the endline data, women are still very pessimistic regarding men's perspective of women, but both men and women are slightly more positive. Although 19 percent of the women still think men consider women incapable of doing anything, 32 percent of the male and 28 percent of the female respondents now agree that men think women's experiences and commitment would make development more efficient.

The baseline data indicated that there was very little difference between the responses of the respondents based on age. The older respondents were slightly more positive, but the majority of the respondents though that men perceived women as unable to do anything (29 percent average), women can't do things the same as men (14 percent average), or many things are possibly but women not committed (23 percent average).

The same pattern emerges in the endline data as the previous variables, as the majority of respondents, regardless of age, are now clustered between thinking that men believe that many things are possible but women are not committed, and women's experiences and commitment will make development faster. This is an interesting juxtaposition, as it appears that the respondents consider men's perspective of women's roles in development as contingent on their commitment and not external factors, such as discrimination and exclusion.

An analysis of the baseline data by caste/ethnicity shows the same pessimism in the perceptions of men towards women's ability to engage in development activities. However, 25 percent of Dalits stated they didn't know/couldn't say compared to the average of only 6 percent, and 32 percent though men perceived women as unable to anything, second only to the Backward castes (39%), and higher than the Janajatis (21%) and the Others (23%). The Dalits appear to be reluctant to comment or unaware of how men perceive women in their community.

As to be expected, the same pattern is presented by the endline data, as the majority of the respondents agree that men perceive that many things would be possible if women were committed and that women's experiences and commitment would speed up development. The Dalits are now much more in line with the other caste/ethnic groupings, but the data is still relatively negative regarding men's perceptions of women's potential contribution to local development.

Education follows the same pattern, according to the baseline data, as the responses are extremely negative of men's perceptions of women in development. There is a notable correlation between higher educational attainment and more positive views, as the illiterate are much more negative than the respondents with a better education background. Although all high, 41 percent of the illiterate think men perceive women as unable to do anything, compared to 30 percent of the Primary/Informal, 26 percent of the SLC/Secondary, and 21 percent of the PCL or above.

The positive correlation between higher educational level and a more positive view of the way men perceive women in development is continued in the endline data. The respondents with lower education levels are more inclined to think men believe women can't do anything or women can't do things the same as men. Interestingly, excluding the illiterate that continue to be very negative, the other three education levels are very similar, as approximately a third of PLC or above, SLC/Secondary, and Primary/Informal stated that men consider that many things would be possible but women are not committed, and women's experiences and commitment will make development faster. Similar to the other variables, very few respondents considered that local development is not possible without women's participation.

Overall, the data on how men perceive women in local development is initially worrying as very few respondents considered that men believed local development was not possible without women's participation. Most of the respondents were divided between thinking that men perceived women as not committed or that their experiences and commitment was made development more efficient. Some groups, such as Dalits, Backward castes, and the illiterate were very negative in their views, but generally, the endline data did show more positivity. The fact that most of the respondents were clustered around the same two options is a concern and appears to reduce the issue to men thinking women are either committed or not committed, which places the lack of inclusion and active involvement in local development as the choice of women. However, it is possibly the result of the initiatives and training that exposed many of the respondents to the extent of the gender bias and discrimination women experience in their daily-lives. The respondents are reporting how they think men perceive women, and their

consequent role in development; therefore, it would be expected that an increased awareness and a better understanding of the many obstacles preventing women from actively engaging in development activities in their local communities would also result in more respondents reporting that men perceive women negatively. During a KII in Mahottari, Tahir Kawari, explained how the training made them aware of the existing inequality and male dominance in their local community, which prevented women becoming involved in development. 'In the past, women, Dalits, and others were confined to their houses. Moreover, men always pushed women behind so they couldn't move ahead, so women took part in other activities.'

CHAPTER THREE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusions

This report is the result of a comparative analysis of data collected from a baseline and endline survey to determine the situation of women, the youth, and marginal groups in relation to exclusion, representation, and participation in local governance and development. In the relatively short period between the surveys, Search implemented the Collaborative Leadership Program that consisted of various initiatives that were aimed at empowering potential local leaders and equipping newly elected representatives, and other important social actors, particularly women, the youth and marginal groups. The baseline data revealed many issues that had to be addressed to achieve inclusion of all community members in local governance and development. The endline survey, and the additional KIIs and FGDs, recorded any changes in the range of topics covered by the 12 indicators, after the completion of the numerous programs under the Collaborative Leadership Program.

The results of the comparative analysis are resoundingly positive, as many of the issues highlighted by the baseline data have either been directly addressed or showed a significant improvement. However, there are still many issues to be addressed if meaningful participation in local governance and development is to be realized by all local community members. Regardless, the general trend that emerged from the analysis is that the optimism triggered by the reestablishment of local governments and the degree of autonomy and self-determination promised by decentralization has resulted in a fertile environment for the introduction of initiatives, such as the Collaborative Leadership Program, that provide the skills and knowledge to enable the most vulnerable community members to actively engage in meaningful leadership positions.

The key findings of the endline survey, after comparison with the baseline data, are arranged in the sequence of the indicators, and are presented below:

1. **Are you aware about the recent state restructuring?** Overall, the data from the endline survey is extremely positive as awareness has significantly increased for all categories of the respondents. The disparities recorded in the baseline data have largely been addressed, with the majority of the respondents stating that they are now aware of the recent state structuring. It would be expected that awareness would increase over time as the processes of restructuring became evident in local communities; however, it is worth noting that women, the youth, and marginal groups are no longer lagging behind and this must be attributed to local campaigns and initiatives that specifically target the most vulnerable in society to reduce social exclusion.

   If yes, what change do you find at first after the state restructuring? The endline data is somewhat skewed due to the significantly larger sub-group and increased awareness of the restructuring that will be visible and currently underway in local communities. That said, the endline data does demonstrate the same problem highlighted in the baseline data that the majority of the respondents are aware of the major restructuring, but are much less aware of the other components of restructuring, particularly more abstract concepts such as rules, laws, and rights. Similar to the baseline data, the elected representatives, people affiliated with local structures, and political leaders are seriously under informed regarding most of the restructuring and this must be addressed if good and effective local leadership is to be achieved.

What changes do you think will occur after state restructuring in the local development? The results from the endline data are extremely positive as the increase in optimism that state restructuring will deliver local development is high. After 20 years of central government control the prospect of gaining a degree of autonomy and self-determination appear to have revitalized community spirit and the hope has eroded the entrenched pessimism displayed in the baseline data. The endline data strongly suggests that the most venerable, women, the youth, marginal groups, and the illiterate have made the most gains and their knowledge and awareness has notably increased to almost match the other respondents in the study. However, the elected representatives, local leaders, and governance must continue to consult collaboratively with community members to plan and deliver sustainable development for the betterment of all community members, or the optimism may quickly evaporate and deliver a return to apathy and pessimism in its wake.

2. **How difficult or easy is it for you to express your opinions or place your vote in the decision-making process?** Overall, the endline data is generally very encouraging. The many perceived and real divisions among community members that prevent them from becoming active in the decision-making process appear to be reducing, which will not only help maintain social cohesion and promote harmony, but encourage inclusion and make planning and decision-making more representative of local communities. This can only be attributed to various training programs and awareness raising initiatives conducted by numerous organisations, including Search. Although the endline data does strongly suggest that the majority of respondents are gaining the confidence to express their ideas and cast votes in the decision–making process, there are some glaring problems, as some of the most vulnerable groups appear to be left behind despite being targeted by various initiatives. Dalits and Backward castes have issues relating to their caste and economic situation, and the illiterate are in serious danger of being severely excluded from having a voice in the general governance and development of their communities.

3. **Do women and the youth in your community work collaboratively with people with different identities?** On the one hand, the endline data appears to reflect a general increase in collaboration and cooperation between women and the youth from different social and cultural backgrounds, but on the other, there are echoes of lingering animosity and fragmentation at the community level. More work is required to bring communities together and encourage collaboration across the many social and cultural dividing lines. The one divide that most responds perceive as problematic is geographic identity, and this divisive issue must be addressed to ease the recent tensions and create harmonious and peaceful communities. Interestingly, the solution may have presented itself, as the endline data strongly suggests that higher educational attainment eliminates this bias and encourages collaboration. This could equally be achieved with targeted training programs to directly address this issue.

4. **Are you affiliated with any group/organization or network?** The baseline data showed that membership of groups, organisations, and networks was low among all the variables. However, unlike the previous indicators, the endline data only highlighted a small increase in membership. This is a worrying scenario as membership of a group or organization can help alleviate or prevent isolation and social exclusion, and maintain strong community ties. Most concerning is the continued low membership of the most vulnerable, such as women and marginalized groups, and the very low

membership of the younger respondents, essentially the youth, who are all at risk from becoming dislocated from their respective communities that further perpetuates the lack of representation, participation, and meaningful leadership opportunities.

If yes, which group/organization or network are you affiliated with? The general pattern displayed by the endline and baseline data, and evident across most of the variables, is that that more respondents are mostly members of mother's groups/networks and political parties. The endline data highlights the dramatic increase in general membership over a relatively short period of time, which encourages optimism regarding increasing social and political inclusion and more representative and egalitarian local communities. However, there are still certain vulnerable groups that appear to continue to be isolated and lack representation in local groups and organisations. Farmers/housewives and students, the youth, and the illiterate continue to be underrepresented in most local groups and organisations; however, perhaps the most concerning results from the endline data is that NGOs, which are supposed to encourage membership and equality as demonstrated by the gender and the age variables, appear to serious lack membership of respondents from Mahottari, farmers/housewives, Dalits and Backward castes, and the illiterate. This suggests that NGOs must become more representative of local demographics and actively encourage more membership of the most vulnerable groups in society.

What would be your role in discussions? Overall, the endline data does encourage optimism as the responses are much more positive than recorded in the baseline data. Not only have many more respondents now become members of local groups and organisations, they have also demonstrated that they are taking a much more proactive and meaningful role in discussions and the decision-making process. With the relatively short period between the endline and the baseline surveys, it is possibly overly optimist to expect to reduce the disparities between all the categories and variables with limited time for protracted initiatives and sufficient training programs. Some categories, such as the farmers/housewives, students, Dalits, and the illiterate are still seriously underrepresented in the decision-making process and appear to not be benefitting from any initiatives or training, as they remain voiceless and disenfranchised in their own communities.

5. **Are you invited in the budget planning of VDC?** During the short time period between the baseline and endline surveys, the overall representation of the respondents did increase, which must be attributed to the restructuring of the state and the promotion of more representation and inclusion by numerous government and non-organizations, including Search. However, the general representation increased but the pattern of representation and exclusion remains, as the endline data clearly shows that the most vulnerable and marginalized community members remain excluded from important budget planning meetings that directly impact local communities. Therefore, as the state restructuring continues it is imperative to increase the representation of farmers/housewives, students, the youth, Dalits, and the illiterate.

Did you participate in the planning and review meeting VDC last year? The disparities between the data from the baseline and endline surveys and the recurring pattern of significantly reduced participation and increased responses of not remembering indicates that there is potential problem that makes the ability to conduct a comparative analysis impossible. Either the restructuring of the state and dismantling of the VDCs has temporarily disrupted the planning and review meetings or the increase in the number of people being surveyed dramatically increased the number of respondents,

an increase of almost a thousand, making the comparison of the baseline and endline data inaccurate and misleading.

However, ignoring the baseline data and examining the endline data it is clear that there are issues with participation in planning and review meeting. The respondents from the Terai districts participate less in meetings, which may indicate there are continuing trust issues between the respondents and the local authorities. Women and the youth, the youth appear to participate much less than the other respondents. The data on caste/ethnicity showed very low participation for all categories, which is also the case for education level, but particularly for the illiterate. The endline data, on its own, is very worrying as the majority of the respondents stated they could not remember or did not participate, and the most vulnerable community members all appeared to participate much less than the other respondents.

6. **Did VDC allocate budget for women and youth leadership development last year?** In the period between the baseline and endline surveys more groups and forums for leadership development were established, but unfortunately the formation of the groups/forums appears to be uneven, which is leaving many respondents without access to an important facility. Moreover, knowledge and awareness of the establishment of groups/forums is limited, and marginal and vulnerable groups are the least aware. For example, there are much fewer in the Terai districts, especially Mahottari, and this is very concerning as the recent social and political upheavals in the Terai districts suggests that more initiatives and programs are required to encourage the emergence of more local leaders to better represent their communities. Although the general lack of awareness, or lack of groups/forums, is a concern, the most issue worrying issue is the lack of awareness among the farmers/housewives, students, and the illiterate who already lack representation and participation in leadership positions, and are some of the respondents most in need of the groups/forums.

If yes, did you benefit from the program? A worrying, and recurring, pattern is emerging across the indicators that the most vulnerable and marginal groups are continually lacking representation and participation in local governance and development, and the participation in leadership development groups/forums suggests that may continue as farmers/housewives, students, the youth, and the illiterate are not regularly participating in the groups/forums. This is a serious concern as encouraging local leaders from within the marginal groups is essential if representation at the community level is to be achieved. Moreover, the groups/forums are specifically targeting the aforementioned groups, but appear to be failing to reach them, which will result in a lack of confidence and a skill deficit that will prevent the most vulnerable respondents from achieving meaningful leadership positions. It should be noted that there may be logistical issues, as previously mentioned, relating to work, school/collage, or other restrictions that are preventing people from attending groups/forums regularly and these should be examined in detail when planning groups/forums.

If participated, have you realized an increment in your knowledge and understanding about role of women in local development than before? The leadership development groups/forums appear to be working for most respondents, and the more time they have to adjust to the training, as reflected in the endline data, the more the disparities between the groups appear to reduce, making the results much more uniform. However, there appears to be an issue regarding the respondents from the Terai districts, farmers/housewives, Dalits and Backward castes, and the illiterate, as these vulnerable

groups have made remarkable gains in gaining knowledge and developing a better understanding of leadership, but serious lack the confidence to implement their newly acquired skills and knowledge in practice. The leadership development groups/forums are equipping, but failing to empower, these groups to become local leaders in their respective communities. There are clearly confidence issues that are likely interconnected with existing forms of discrimination and cultural restrictions, and if this is not properly addressed by the groups/forums the emergence of local leaders from these marginal groups is highly unlikely, regardless of how capable they may be at leadership.

What kind of role should you have in supporting the meaningful participation of women in local development? Overall, the baseline and endline data show that in a relatively short period of time, five-six months, the respondents across all the variables become slightly more proactive in their support of women becoming involved in local development. The significant differences and disparities between the variables appear to become much more uniform and clustered around the agreement that other people's roles are more important but they should participate. This is both promising, as it suggests a slow and progressive move to becoming more aware that their participation is important, and worrying as no variable has moved from passively supporting women to actively participating to support women in engaging meaningfully in local development. Perhaps the most interesting question is who are the 'other people', who appear to play such a significant role compared to the respondents, as almost half of all the respondents conceded that other people's roles were more important than their own active participation. This was also evident in the responses from elected representatives and political leaders, that further begs the question of who are these 'other people' that are apparently more important in helping women participate in local development. The data subtly indicates that with time the respondents will become more active and less passive in their support of women, and in the process will realize that they have agency and that their participation is essential in helping women become meaningfully involved in local development.

7. **Did VDC allocate budget for women and youth leadership development last year?** The endline data is a significant improvement from the baseline data that indicated the majority of the respondents were completely oblivious of whether the VDC had allocated a budget for youth and women's leadership development training. Notably, the endline data indicated that many of the outlying categories, often vulnerable and marginal groups, had not only increased their awareness, but also matched the other categories making the responses much more uniform. This is evident with the Terai districts, female respondents, a Dalits, but not for the farmers/housewives, students, and the illiterate. Overall, the improvement is palpable, and the majority of the respondents, including many marginal groups, had become much more aware of the VDC budget allocation for leadership development. However, there continues to be a problem in reaching all the vulnerable respondents, which suggests that information is not reaching all the community members equally, and is especially problematic when the people that lack awareness are the primary target of the initiative, such as farmers/housewives and the youth (students).

If yes, did you benefit from a program? Generally, the differences between the baseline and endline data is very positive as in the relatively short period between the two surveys the number of people benefitting has increased, and the potential benefits have clearly been communicated within families as the endline data shows a notable increase in family member participation. However, there is a serious problem in the Terai districts as both Dhanusha and Mahottari have much fewer people

claiming to have benefited from the program. This is extremely concerning, particularly for people from Mahottari that should benefit more than the other regions due to the recent unrest, but this can only be explained by the lack of quality programs, uneven teaching, inconsistent syllabi, infrequent attendance, or perhaps a lack of interest; regardless, the situating must be addressed if leaders from Mahottari are to become more representative of the local communities, and specific issues and problems affecting the district are to be discussed and resolved locally. The other anomaly was the illiterate group, but this is possibly easier to explain, as by definition the illiterate respondents' inability to read and write would severely limit their active engagement in the programs, and unless the programs were interactive and did not rely on reading materials and writing, the illiterate will continue to report few benefits from the programs. However, the leadership development programs are having a notable and positive impact on communities and have the potential to increase representation of local people in local governance, and develop leaders from within local communities.

8. **How are elected representative accessible to hear you if you go with a problem or issues?** Gaining access to elected representatives appears to have become much easier in the period between the baseline and endline surveys, and many more respondents claim to be able to gain access with a little persistence, and even obtain a commitment to help or actual assistance. It must be noted that the high number of respondents stating that they don't know or can't say is perhaps a result of never having needed, or attempted to contact, their local representative at the time of the baseline survey. In the Terai districts there is a pronounced improvement from the baseline data, particularly in Mahottari that demonstrated a serious disconnect between local authorities and communities in many of the indicators. Perhaps the biggest concern is that the most vulnerable and marginal groups find it much more difficult to get assistance if required, as the farmers/housewives, students, women, the youth, Dalits and Backward castes, and the illiterate all found it was that this was difficult. However, elected representatives becoming more accessible is very positive, but the number of respondents who can easily access them and gain assistance is still low. This situation may be resolved by the reestablishment of local governments and the vast number of newly elected local representatives, many of whom are women or/and from marginal groups.

9. **Do you know about public hearing?** Awareness of public hearings has increased in the period between the baseline and endline surveys, but many of the respondents are still unaware of their existence. Public hearings are important in local communities to manage community affairs by providing all the community members the opportunity to effectively audit various programs and initiatives. However, a lack of awareness is instantly translated into an inability to participate and make decisions on important community matters. Similar to many other indicators, the Terai districts were much lower than the hills, especially Dhanusha, which suggests the respondents are not as informed as they should be, and may result in very low levels of participation. It is not clear why the Terai districts are much less aware, but it may be related to the recent social and political turmoil that have left an indelible mark on community and local authority relations. In addition, many of the same vulnerable and marginal groups continue to be less aware of important facilities and mechanisms that are designed to decrease social exclusion and encourage representation of all community members. Farmers/housewives, students, and the illiterate, but surprisingly not Dalits, all displayed much less awareness This is very concerning as the public hearings actively encourage meaningful participation

and public discussions, debate, and decision-making, but are rendered completely redundant if all the members of local communities are not equally aware.

Did you participate in it when it was held in your community? Of all the data, this sub-question demonstrates the most positive and consistent improvement during the period between the baseline survey and the endline survey. In a reasonably short period of time, the number of respondents, who not only become aware of public hearings, but physically participated, increased significantly. There are still areas that must be addressed, such as the much lower participation of respondents from Mahottari compared to Dhanusha and Sindhuli, and the relatively low participation of Farmers/housewives, students, and women, generally considered as excluded and vulnerable groups, but the other variables strongly suggest that over time, respondents from these groups will increasingly participate and make the data much more uniform and representative of all the community members. This situation was evident in the endline data on caste/ethnicity, age, and education, and it is reasonable to assume that a similar trend will happen across all the variables. Moreover, the opportunity to actively participate in, what is in essence a public meeting, may also build the confidence of the respondents, and any knowledge and skills acquired as a result of meaningfully participating in public hearings, may be directly transferrable to other public discussions, debates, and decision-making.

If yes, how effective do you find for governance and improvement? The effectiveness of public hearings is difficult to determine, especially when based on the perspectives of extremely diverse participants with different expectations and objectives. However, with the exception of a few persistently negative variables, such as Dhanusha and Janajatis that are inexplicably more inclined to report that public hearings are not effective, the general trend outlined in the endline data is very positive. It must be noted that the number of respondents that have become aware of public hearings, and are now actively participating, has dramatically increased over a very short period of time, approximately six months. This supports the emerging pattern of the respondents' responses becoming more clustered around the three most positive statements, and the more uniform spread of the data, compared to the rather erratic baseline data. The pattern indicated in the endline data suggests that with more time the respondents will continue to influence the public hearings and provide a more accurate representation of the multitude of perspectives and voices, which initially may appear to be rather chaotic, but will continue to coalesce around the more positive responses as both public hearings and the respondents benefit from the experience.

10. ***Public satisfaction of service providers:*** The importance of being satisfied with your service providers cannot be overstated, as well as developing trust and cooperation between service providers and users, the services available are critical in addressing economic hardship, access to justice, inclusion, and providing other invaluable services. Due to very recent state restructuring, and the implementation of the new governance and development structures, it is not surprising that there is still some dissatisfaction with the service providers. However, the endline data does indicate a positive trend that should continue as local service providers become established in local communities. It is fair to assume the work by many organisations, including search, in providing people with information on what services are available and how to access them, is responsible for the increase in satisfaction. However, until awareness, infrastructure, and facilities are firmly established, satisfaction will remain relatively low.

11. **How do you think the youth are perceived by adults in your community?** The endline data is much more positive about how respondents think adults perceive the youth than the baseline data. There are certain groups that are much more negative, such as the farmers/housewives, students, and the illiterate, but they still recorded much more positive responses than during the baseline survey. It is essential that all community members perceive the youth as positive and a valuable asset for local development, as youth participation is minimal and will not increase if they feel that they are simply seen as immature or uncommitted. Similar to gender, traditional values and cultural restrictions that negatively impact the perception of the youth must be slowly eroded to encourage the youth to directly engage in initiatives and programs in their communities, especially related to local governance and development.

12. **How do you think men perceive women in your community?** Overall, the data on how respondents think men perceive women in local development is initially worrying, as very few respondents considered that men believed local development was not possible without women's participation. Most of the respondents were divided between thinking that men perceived women as not committed or that their experiences and commitment was made development more efficient. Some groups, such as Dalits, Backward castes, and the illiterate were very negative in their views, but generally, the endline data did show more positivity. The fact that most of the respondents were clustered around the same two options is a concern and appears to reduce the issue to men thinking women are either committed or not committed, which places the lack of inclusion and active involvement in local development as the choice of women. However, it is possibly the result of the initiatives and training that exposed many of the respondents to the extent of the gender bias and discrimination women experience in their daily-lives. The respondents are reporting how they think men perceive women, and their consequent role in development; therefore, it would be expected that an increased awareness and a better understanding of the many obstacles preventing women from actively engaging in development activities in their local communities would also result in more respondents reporting that men perceive women negatively.

The endline data, once compared to the baseline data as shown above, is unquestionably more positive, and indicates that many of the more egregious issues exposed by the baseline data have either been addressed or are much less pronounced. Compared to the baseline data, the endline data clearly shows that the general disconnect between community members and the local governance and development structures, has been significantly reduced, and the lack of awareness and understanding of state restructuring, budgeting, existing programs and training, and public hearings to name a few, has been replaced by a growing awareness of almost all the respondents. Consequently, representation and participation has dramatically increased for the majority of respondents, including the most excluded and marginalized. The data does not indicate that communities have become genuinely inclusive and egalitarian, but implies that there is a distinct and positive improvement in representation and participation in local governance and development.

The data also shows a notable increase in the confidence of the respondents as not only are they increasingly participating in meetings and discussions, but are slowly beginning to actively engage by offering their opinions and perspectives. The data demonstrates that active participation is relatively low, and may not be considered as meaningful participation, but the pessimism, negativity, and lack of trust in local governance and inclusive decision-making processes, that was clearly evident in the baseline data,

has been replaced by tentative optimism that with time may result in collaborative and productive partnerships for local development. However, the participation is not uniform across all the indicators and variables, as many groups are still lacking representation and participation, compared to other respondents. The Terai districts, particularly Mahottari, still appear to have much less trust in local authorities and generally much less participation and optimism than the hills, and this is an ongoing concern as social cohesion and collaboration with local authorities is extremely important for communities that have recently experienced devastating social and political unrest. Moreover, the vulnerable and marginal groups, although significantly better than indicated in the baseline data, participate less and continue to appear socially excluded, they include the farmers/housewives, students (the youth), women, and in fewer instances, Dalits and the backward castes. It is imperative that this issue is resolved if truly inclusive communities, and representation and meaningful participation of all community members, is to be achieved.

The comparison between the surveys indicates that there are certain patterns and trends that are emerging, and are evident in almost all the indicators, which are extremely positive. Many of the indicators clearly showed that most of the groups that were excluded in the baseline data have gained much better representation in the various local government and development mechanisms, leadership development training programs, and local groups, forums, and networks. Moreover, the majority of the respondents, including the marginal groups, demonstrate an increased awareness of many issues that impact their daily lives, such as state restructuring, local services and facilities, budget allocation, leadership development training, contacting their elected representatives, gender sensitivity, and valuing the youth as assets. However, the most prominent pattern that emerged in the endline data was not only the increase in positivity and awareness relating these issues, but the clustering of responses that included the previously excluded variables, specifically the most vulnerable and marginal groups. This was very pronounced in some of the indicators, but evident in all the endline data, which suggests that with more time communities will continue to become more inclusive, and representative. It is not overly optimistic to assume that even the most intractable and culturally entrenched divisions in communities, such as caste, age, and gender discrimination will slowly erode, as the data already shows that the respondents' perspectives and opinions are also changing.

Due the relatively short period between the baseline and endline surveys, the improvements across most of the indicators, as demonstrated by the endline data must be attributed to local level initiatives and programs implemented by numerous government and non-government organisations. Although no single organization is responsible for the significant improvements presented by the endline data, Search certainly played a crucial role in addressing many of the issues highlighted in the baseline data. The qualitative data better reflects the impact of The Collaborative Leadership Project, and its various initiatives, in empowering women, the youth, and marginal groups, equipping local leaders with the requisite skills and knowledge to perform their duties and responsibilities more effectively, and training potential new leaders to engage with local governance and development. One example is sufficient to demonstrate the impact that short training programs, such as the Collaborative Leadership Program, can have on an individual, in the words of Goma Pradhan, a Ward member from Sindhuli, *'we females are backward as we are not able to put our views forward. Despite having skills and dedication, we are not confident enough to speak in front of many people. Even when we speak, we speak with nervousness and a trembling voice as if we have done something wrong. This is because of lack of public speaking experience. This is also one of the causes women are lagging behind. Because of this program, I have now built my confidence in public speaking and have been actively participating in programs.'*

3.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings from the baseline and endline surveys, and the subsequent comparative analysis this section highlights the following action-related recommendations that are imperative in effectively designing, implementing, and evaluating any programs or initiatives that are attempting to increase inclusion, representation, and the meaningful participation of women, the youth, and marginal groups in local governance and development. Many of the recommendations are the same as the ones developed from the baseline data, as they are still relevant and important to the current situation as many of the issues have not been adequately addressed or require further work. Other recommendations are based on the endline data and are specifically related to the results of the comparative analysis.

1. The lack of awareness of the restructuring of local governance due to federalism and decentralization must be addressed at the community level. The specific details of the restructuring and the implications on the lives of local community members must be communicated in a simple and clear manner. Perhaps a help centre can be established in communities to explain any issues and answer any questions that people may have. In addition, regular meetings and community discussion should be held to reiterate the new structures and how to access them.

2. People must be made aware of the details of the new local powers and regulations, especially relating to the local authority over the allocation and management of resources, and the guarantee of representation for women and the marginalized, as this will inform people of the resources and services they are entitled to, how and where to access them, and empower the excluded. Policy is powerless without implementation and information. Awareness could be raised by the aforementioned help centre, or with public discussions and meetings focused on very specific topics. Additionally, as most respondents were members of political parties, mother's groups, or women's groups, these should be utilized productively to run workshops or pass information on planned events. Also, government representatives should plan a school program and run mandatory classes for students as the information will then pass into their respective families.

3. Awareness of the services and facilities available from service providers must be increased as it is imperative that local communities are made aware of what they are entitled to receive and from whom. The same mechanisms as outlined in the previous recommendations should be employed with one caveat, the service providers are obliged to inform the general public of their exact role in the communality and in what areas they can help.

4. Service providers should also be held accountable as the lack of trust and disillusionment in them is palpable, and a system of checks and balances should be developed and implemented to increase accountability and transparency. In addition, punitive measure should also be introduced to punish those abusing their power or neglecting their duty.

5. An accurate demographic cross-section from all occupations, castes, ages, and genders must be invited to VDC budgeting meeting to ensure more accountability and transparency. These meetings should be regular and continual, with a particular emphasis placed on women, youth, poor and marginalized members of communities. This will address the lack of faith and trust in local governance and encourage more interaction and relationships between the local government and communities.

6. Programs, training, groups and forums that are established in communities must advertise in local newspapers, local radios, communal meeting places, schools, and all organizations, political parties, and networks must also be informed to pass the information to their members and their families to guarantee maximum coverage. Moreover, as the youth are one of the most excluded groups, multi-media and social media should be used to disseminate information to directly access the youth.

7. How information in communities is disseminated and received must be critically examined to determine whether information is including some and excluding others. Hoarding boards or posters are not sufficient as the illiterate are immediately excluded.

8. Meetings, groups, training and forums must be sensitive to people's schedules and attempt to run their programs at a time that is convenient for most people. This will change due to seasonal labor demands so the programs must also be flexible to accommodate the attendees, by perhaps running the same meeting at different times to attempt to address timing issues. Venues should also be easily accessible, comfortable and safe environments so people feel comfortable participating. Also, maybe using multiple venues to address people's access problems and make it as convenient as possible to guarantee attendance.

9. Meetings should actively encourage women, youth, poor and marginalized to participate by guaranteeing that there are no discriminatory practices, and demonstrating that their views and opinions are valued.

10. Meetings should be assessed to guarantee quality in content and delivery, and perhaps uniform guidelines can be developed for training programs. The people holding meetings must be skilled and knowledgeable of the subject and treat all members equally. Perhaps a training program for the trainers can be organized (similar to teacher training) to guarantee good practice. Training should also be regular and strongly encourage people to attend regularly to maximize the benefits from the programs.

11. Training should be provided that focuses on confidence building and actively participating in meetings. These classes could be held in schools, mother's/women's groups, community centers, and any other regular gatherings to empower people to assert their opinions, give their perspective, and have an influence in decision-making processes.

12. Sensitivity training should be provided to encourage people from different communities, social identities, religions, and ethnicities to work collaboratively together by developing partnerships and good working relationships for the shared benefit of the entire community. This is especially important between the Pahade and Madhesi communities.

13. Groups, organizations, and networks should actively attempt to recruit the youth as members by perhaps having an open day at the local schools or holding after school activities. Social media and multimedia should also be utilized for this purpose. Youth clubs and other youth orientated organizations should consider working with other socially aware and conscious organizations, clubs or groups.

14. Communities lack leadership, organization, and mobilization on issues such as helping women enter leadership positions or the development process. Therefore, a program for local leaders should be established to translate the mental support for empowerment and inclusion to actual practical support by planning programs, initiatives, and activities at the community level. The focus should be on women and the youth by developing working partnerships with other community organizations, political parties, elected representatives and the local government. The

assumption that 'others' participation is more important than my participation' must be changed to my participation is valuable and important.

15. Perceptions of the youth as being immature and inadequate compared to adults must be changed by empowering the youth to take the initiative within their communities. Similar to the local leadership program, the youth should be encouraged, supported, and even funded for initiatives that benefit their communities. Perceptions will not be changed by meetings; therefore, the youth should be encouraged and enabled to participate in community oriented action and development to demonstrate their capabilities, skills, energy, and enthusiasm.

16. Perceptions of women must be changed as the entire community requires gender sensitivity training, specifically men, as the prevailing negativity and entrenched patriarchal view of women is highly detrimental to women's empowerment. Women should be actively encouraged to enter local development and take leadership positions. Similar to the youth, gender sensitivity training will help, but actual exposure to competent and capable women leaders will slowly erode the underlying patriarchal structures within local communities. Therefore, women must also be supported, encouraged, and trained to demonstrate they are capable of being an asset to local development and governance.

17. As much of the data was a complex mix of opinions and perceptions, subsequent qualitative research is required to gain a deeper understanding of various issues and contextualize the information. Quantitative data is incapable of explaining opinions, emotions, and perceptions so should be complimented, where required, by additional methods, such as interviews, discussions, observation, and focus group discussions.

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