

SNGP Bridging Phase

The Subnational Governance Program (SNGP) Bridging Phase, with the four-plus years* of carefully developed understanding of ground realities, remains well-positioned to continue its support in creating an enabling environment for a stable, effective, and inclusive subnational government in Nepal that addresses health and economic security of all, including women and marginalized groups. The Bridging Phase – operational from April 2021 till May 2022 – adopts a politically informed, adaptive, and flexible management approach, developed with a high degree of flexibility in response to Nepal's fluid and complex political environment.

SNGP Phase I: implemented from February 2017 till May 2021 by The Asia Foundation with funding from the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and in coordination with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration.

Dialogue

- The program-supported Dialogue Forums (Sambad Samuha) helped resolve eight contested subnational governance issues; two on vaccination and immediate relief for disabled people. Sambad Samuha has also been coordinating multi-stakeholder meetings to smoothen the vaccination process and ensure supplies of key medical resources for a probable third wave of Covid-19.
- The program established a provincial Dialogue Forum in Province 2.

Mediation

The program conducted three basic mediation training for participants from Bagnashkali Rural Municipality and Rainadevi Chhara Rural Municipality of Palpa District. The training is designed to equip the participants with the knowledge and skills required to practice as mediators. A total of 88 participants received the training, of which 46 (52%) were women and 39 (44%) belonged to marginalized and indigenous communities.



STABILITY

After Tansen, Birendranagar adopts Performance Contracting System

The program has constantly provided platforms for partner municipalities to share their best practices and learn from each other in various areas of governance. Recently, Birendranagar municipality adopted performance contracting system support to improve the service delivery and accountability in the municipality after learning about this system in a 'learning by sharing' event organized by the program. In the event, Tansen municipality, which had adopted the system with technical assistance from the program in the SNGP Phase I, presented its learning and experience of being the first local government to initiate performance contracting in Nepal. Tansen has signed performance contracts between Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and the CAO and 13 section chiefs. The contracts contain a list of activities expected to be implemented by the key municipal staff with a clear performance evaluation system. Other municipalities are also looking to implement the system in the near future.



STABILITY



Initiatives for Better Intergovernmental Coordination

The program in collaboration with various implementing partners held several policy dialogues to further strengthen SNGP's efforts towards bringing clarity on functional and jurisdictional overlaps among the three spheres of governments in the new federal governance system in Nepal. Below are a couple of major initiatives and activities of this quarter:

Role of the Provincial Assembly Members in Promoting better Intergovernmental Coordination organized in coordination with the Province Affairs Committee of Bagmati province, the discussion aimed at bringing coherence in the drafting of legislation and its implementation across the three spheres of the government. The topics under discussion were the roles and responsibilities of the province assembly committee in the implementation process under the Federal, Province and Local Level (Coordination and Inter-relations) Act 2077 and the challenges in strengthening inter-governmental. The event was attended by federal and provincial assembly members and representatives from province ministries, federal ministries such as the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) and constitutional experts.

With technical assistance from the program, implementing partner National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission (NNRFC), submitted its review on the unbundling report to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the three spheres of the government to the OPMCM. The review recommended ways to strengthen the role of local governments in the areas of service delivery catering to legal structures, financial and human resource management, and intergovernmental relations. A virtual interaction session was also conducted to better understand the opinion of the representatives of the local government and related associations on the unbundling report implementation.

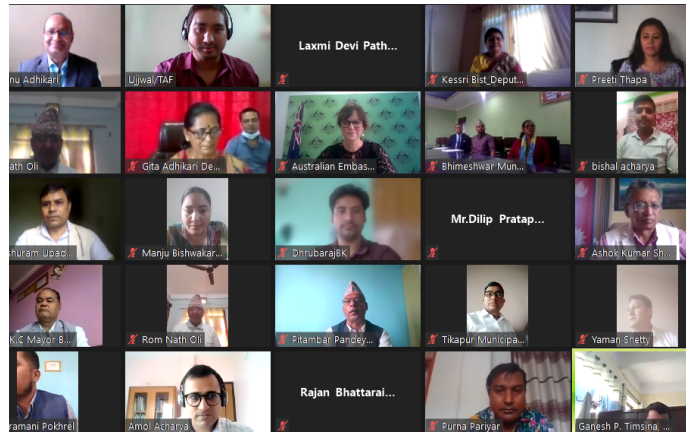
Former Chief Secretary Somlal Subedi and Local Governance Expert Krishna Prasad Sapkota facilitated the event attended by 253 local government representatives.

A virtual policy dialogue event marked the launch of A study on the Current Status of Legal Development at the Local Level, published last quarter in collaboration with Nepal Consulting Lawyers Inc. (NCLI). Co-author Dr. Bipin Adhikari provided an overview of the major takeaways from the study which was followed by remarks from key commentators such as Honorable Parashuram Meghi Gurung, Chairman of the National Assembly Legislative Management Committee, General Secretary of the Federal Parliamentary Secretariat, Dr. Bharatraj Gautam and Former Chief Justice Kalyan Shrestha among others. The participants of the event included legal and policy experts, subnational government officials, representatives from local government associations and various civil society organizations

Seven online interaction sessions, one for each province, facilitated by sectoral experts saw provincial assembly members discuss the limitations of the different features of the legislation drafting process. The participants of the seven sessions concurred that clarification is required in defining the role of assembly members in the drafting process of legislation.



STABILITY



Municipal Roundtable Event

On July 27, SNGP organized Municipal Roundtable – the first virtual interactive meeting between H.E Felicity Volk, Australian Ambassador to Nepal and the seven partner municipalities of the program. The event held in partnership with DFAT provided a platform for key stakeholders to present the vision and priorities of the government. Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) of the partner municipalities participated in the virtual roundtable. The representatives from the municipalities focused on the following areas in their presentations.

- Experience and major work done during their tenure as the first government under the new federal structure of our country with emphasis on the reflection on the implementation of federalism with regards to intergovernmental coordination, institutional development, gender equality and social inclusion.
- Information on the COVID situation in the partner municipalities, with a special focus on the impact on women and marginalized groups. And the key areas each municipality has been working on in terms of the pandemic response and management.

After the presentations by all the municipalities, Ambassador Volk shared her thoughts and observations. She said, “I am looking forward to having more of such free-flowing conversation with you all in the future. I so valued your reflections from today -- the practical activities you are undertaking, and also recommendations that you made for the program. And the really important philosophical consideration about federalism and inclusion.” On the COVID-19 situation, she pointed out how critical the next couple of years are in terms of recovery. “As we work through the impacts that COVID has had on health system, livelihood, and economy. It is so important that we work together, and SNGP is a fantastic umbrella to bring a lot of different partners together, to learn from each other and to make some important developments to recover both in terms of economy and livelihood,” she said. The program will apply the lessons learned from the municipal roundtable to continue its long-term commitment to trust-based partnerships, responsive programming based on evolving priorities and context-driven adaptive programming. Ultimately, these form the foundational framework for the two core approaches of activity implementation in each program area.

HEALTH SECURITY

Health Entitlement Mapping in Municipality System

A health entitlement mapping system was incorporated in the Municipal Management System this quarter. With this feature in the system, the municipality can now maintain a record and track all the health entitlement recipients. A user can see the list of all the health entitlements on offer by logging into the system. The system will include information on financial coverage, medical coverage, service coverage, and geographic coverage of the beneficiary.



At present Waling municipality has included eight types of entitlements, and the system has provisions to add more entitlements if required.

1. Eye and dental treatment services
2. Health insurance
3. Health screening- kidney screening service for above 40 years
4. Health screening- free screening for uterine issues
5. Home visit-based health care for elderly
6. Home visit-based video x-ray service for pregnant women
7. Nutrition program for pregnant and lactating women
8. Transportation allowance for a health service visit.

Health Service Bill Deliberation in Karnali



of the National Assembly, notable health experts put forth the key features of the Bill and discussed the various features of the health governance and policies in the province. The Health Service Bill 2076 is now under discussion at the Social Development Committee of the province. The endorsement of this bill will bring policies to address a crucial gap and regulate health service delivery at the provincial and local levels..

As part of the program's support towards strengthening public health governance, it organized a workshop for the provincial parliamentarians of the Karnali province to deliberate on the Health Service Bill 2076. At the event, which was organized in collaboration with the National Concern and Coordination Committee (NCCC)



Waling Integrates Public Health Bill

The program in collaboration with program partner Public Policy Pathshala (PPP) provided technical support to finalize the integrated Public Health Bill for Waling municipality. This bill will enable the municipality in establishing a robust health system at the municipal level. Similarly, the program also helped develop public health regulation for six partner municipalities – Damak, Bhimeshwar, Waling, Tansen, Birendranagar and Tikapur. The program team held in-person consultation sessions in each of the six municipalities to garner feedback and suggestions from local government representatives and officials for the drafting of the documents.



ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Local Market & Industry Mgmt in 5 Partner Municipalities

The number of SNGP partner municipalities with Acts and Rules for the local market and industry managements has increased from three to five. This quarter, Tansen and Tikapur municipalities have approved their Local Industry Management Act. The program is also working towards preparing the Local Industry Management Manual in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), the National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN), and the Municipal Association of Nepal (MuAN).



PPP for Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery Support



Under its post-pandemic economic recovery support, SNGP focuses on infrastructure development and financial sustainability at the local level. The program partner VRock supported selected local governments in the planning and implementation of these goals. The first public-private partnership project led by the partner came to fruition this quarter. The Bharatpur Metroplaza, developed under the Project Development Agreement signed between Bharatpur Metropolitan City and Arya Builders was inaugurated by former Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal. The program has already initiated efforts to replicate and scale-up credible and bankable PPP modality projects in other municipalities.

Activities carried out in line with this by VRock as mentioned below:

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and provided project development support to Bhimeswor and Tikarpur municipalities
- Project Development Manual Update

GESI

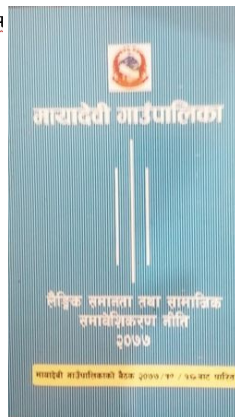
Inclusive Policy Initiatives at Municipalities

One of SNGP partner municipalities, Tansen developed the 'Daughter Education Program' guideline with support from the program. The guideline details the basic operating procedures required to implement programs focused on improving school/class retention of the girls in the municipality. It also includes provisions for a scholarship to the girls from targeted marginalized communities. Meanwhile, the program also provided support to Mayadevi rural municipality in preparing its GESI policy.

श्री शिक्षा सञ्चालन तथा व्यवस्थाप
कार्यविधि, २०७८



तानसेन नगरपालिका
तानसेन, पाल्पा
सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेश, नेपाल



The policy provides specified action plans to address the various challenges (also included in the policy) being faced by women, people with disabilities, indigenous communities, children and senior citizens of the rural municipality. The rural municipality has also prepared programs to implement the policy which will be supervised by its legal adviser. Waling municipality organized a discussion on the National Gender Policy 2077 with the municipality officials to raise awareness and discuss the implementation modality of this recently formulated policy.

GRB Guideline Discussion between Municipalities and Ministry of Finance



The Municipal Association of Nepal (MuAN) held an interaction program to assess the collective understanding of the local governments on the guidelines of the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). The participants from the local governments got a chance to raise their concerns on the failure to integrate disability inclusion and highlighted the importance of integrating DI perspective in the guideline with the Ministry of Finance as Joint Secretary of the ministry Mr Dhani Ram Sharma also joined the event organized with support from the SNGP.

Mr Sharma highlighted how the use of the indicators and coding mechanism in the GRB is expected to support the local government in assessing their plans and budget impact on service delivery, with a focus on the achievement of gender equity and capacity development of women and people from marginalized communities. “To address and mainstream the GEDSI issues in the revenue and expenditure at the local level, these guidelines can be of great support,” added Mr Sharma.

Other Highlights

- The program in collaboration with the Federation of Disabled Nepal (NFDN) facilitated the formation of advocacy forums for disability inclusion in Tansen, Damak and Bhimeshwar municipalities. The 10-member forum will advocate and lobby for the inclusion of issues and concerns of People with Disabilities (PwDs) in the municipality’s planning and policymaking process. The forum includes representatives of local organizations of disabled people, local CSOs, self-help groups, women’s groups, youth groups, mothers’ groups, and local social workers.



- The program, with support from the partner municipalities, has selected seven women from marginalized communities for a fellowship program. These fellows have been posted in different departments in the partner municipalities where they will get a chance to enhance their knowledge and understanding of various aspects and areas of the functioning of a local government.