

LOCAL GOVERNANCE BODIES ALLOCATE BUDGET FOR STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE AND GENDER RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY SECURITY

In Nepal, as per the Local Body Resource Mobilization and Management Procedure- 2069 B.S. (2013), local bodies such as the District Development Committees (DDCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Municipalities are required to earmark and spend 50 percent of their budgetary grant allocations for targeted groups/areas¹. DDC, VDC and Municipality Grants are provided for different purposes, including income generation trainings and small scale development initiatives. However, allocating budget for addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV), domestic violence and other security issues faced by communities within the purview of grant eligibility criteria as such is overlooked and often pushed to the backburner. The issue of violence against women is considered a domestic issue to be dealt with at the household level and not a broader security issue affecting the whole community. For example, when domestic violence is neglected considering it a domestic issue, it is not repressed at household level. A culture of violence against women is silently promoted which will later surface in the form of violation of women outside home. Neither the issue of violence against women nor broader security issues are accorded due priority.



WDO Bara, Ms Niru Laxmi Shrestha was sensitizing on women and children issues especially on rape cases repeatedly happened in Bara. © Bajjanti Singh Giri/UNDP/AVRSCS

With the implementation of the Armed Violence Reduction and Strengthening Community Security (AVRSCS) project, a joint undertaking by UNDP and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Government of Nepal, women's and security issues have started gaining more prominence both at community and administrative levels. As part of the UN WOMEN and UNDP joint programme Ensuring Participatory and Secure Transition (EPST) funded through the UN Peace Fund for Nepal (UNPFN)², the AVRSCS project has been facilitating development and implementation of community security plans in the project districts. Consultation meetings with village elders, mother groups, local clubs, students, Nepal Police representatives and administrative officers played a

key role in changing perceptions about how violence of any form at personal or family level soon escalates into violence at community level.

Community security plans (CSP) are being developed with active participation of local stakeholders inclusive of government security agencies' officials, VDC secretaries, representatives of ward citizen forums, women activists, single women, youth, local leaders, teachers, traditional leaders, and representatives of vulnerable groups. As a result, some Village Development Committees (VDCs) and

¹ Local Body Resource Mobilization and Management Procedure- 2069 B.S. mandatory allocation breakdown out of total local bodies grant; 10% for children, 10% for women, 15% for disadvantaged groups and 15% for agriculture.

² This project is financed by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, a global UN multi-donor trust fund supported by over 50 international donors. These funds are managed through the UN Peace Fund for Nepal.

Municipalities in the AVRSCS project districts have already allocated and spent budget specifically targeting security of women, children and vulnerable groups, taking it as an issue of broader community security.

In Bara district, following the development of a CSP encompassing four VDCs, annual budgets allocating NRs 230,000 (2300 USD) to carry out activities to improve the security of women, children and vulnerable groups were approved by the respective VDC councils. The committed budget was spent to implement the community security plan. As part of it, it was agreed to conduct an orientation to community people, local leaders and women human rights defenders (WHRDs) on legal provisions relating to GBV, child marriage, dowry, domestic violence, etc. During May-June 2015, awareness raising events including street-dramas were conducted in all the four VDCs through joint funding by the AVRSCS project and the four VDCs (NRs 110,000 from AVRSCS and NRs 190,000 from VDCs).

We would rarely see any community security initiative like this earlier in our VDC, so we would spend budgets earmarked for women and children in trainings and other initiatives but not to directly address the issues of insecurity faced by women and children. I am so happy that I was part of this whole participatory community security planning process. This provided me with an opportunity not only to contribute something to my community as a responsible citizen but also to understand as a government staff the importance of VDC funding to implement the community security plans and build a secure and gender-sensitive community. It is very obvious that development is not possible without security.

--Umesh Kumar Pasman, Secretary, Prastoka VDC Bara district

Likewise, in Kanchanpur district, three VDCs and a Municipality have committed to allocate in the next fiscal year over NRs 2,2m (22,000USD) specifically for women, children and security issues. In Kailali district, Attariya Municipality has committed to allocate budget more than NRs 1,600,000 (16000 USD) for women, children and security, to be implemented through the AVRSCS project. In Banke and Bardia districts, some VDCs and Municipalities have pledged some budget for similar activities. The allocated budgets will be spent as per the needs of local community by preparing plans in coordination with local youth clubs and groups ensuring community ownership.



Inarwasira VDC, Bara, May 26, 2015: A women speaks against child marriage, dowry and rape. ©Jiyalal Sah /UNDP/AVRSCS

Both the community and government representatives now recognize gender-based violence as a key community security issue. This is the reason why VDCs have started partially funding the implementation of community security plans.

Whilst mobilization of local resources creates sustainability, it is always difficult to find those resources. In this context, AVRSCS project's successful lobbying work to secure local grants for community security initiatives building upon the seed grant from project itself is a step towards creating a sustainable mechanism to address armed violence and security at the community level. As Nepal endeavors to gradually transition into peace, successful community security initiatives such as the above will contribute to the country's overall peace-building efforts as well as strengthening rule of law.