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FACT SHEET

Democracy and Governance Program Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes Project

Nepal's Constituent Assembly (CA) dissolved on May 27, 2012 after it failed to promulgate a constitution despite multiple deadline extensions, consequently continuing the country's political vacuum. The second CA election was held on November 19, 2014 and there is broad national consensus on the need to propel the peace process forward, particularly with respect to local elections, enacting a constitution, and state restructuring. However, there is a paralyzing lack of compromise by political parties on the details of the process forward. The political process is crucial to the unfolding of these steps forward. Effective political compromise and public participation will be critical in determining the legitimacy of the new constitution and the future of the country's political stability.



Briefing on voter education

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes (SPPELP) project is a five-year, \$26.5 million effort that supports political parties, electoral institutions, legislative processes, and civil society organizations to promote a more stable and peaceful democracy in Nepal. The project is designed to restore public confidence in democratic processes and institutions and to promote greater political participation, especially that of marginalized populations.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Promote and Strengthen Broader Political Processes:

The project provides tailored support through training and technical assistance to the thirteen largest political parties of Nepal in order to promote and strengthen their democratic operations and procedures. This support works to improve party governance capacity, enhance intra-party communications, improve financial transparency and disclosure, develop political leaders from historically marginalized groups, and promote an inter-party women's alliance. The inter-party women's alliance is a coalition of local women, political members and activists giving voice to and advocating for disadvantaged and marginalized women. Similarly, activities promote the electoral competitiveness of parties by providing training on candidate selection methods, supporting campaign seminars and candidate debates on public policy issues, and campaign planning and strategy.

Training is also provided to journalists to help build their reporting and investigative skills, thereby improving party accountability. The Future Leadership Academy, launched by the project in 2012, continues to provide valuable leadership, negotiation, and coalition building skills of young political leaders, aged 18 to 39, which they can take back to their parties.

SNAPSHOT

Life of Project: August 2010 to August 2015

Goal: To build a more stable and peaceful democracy in Nepal

Implementing Partners:
Consortium of Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS):
National Democratic Institute (NDI)
for International Affairs and
International Foundation for Election
Systems (IFES)

Geographic Focus: National

USG Contribution: \$26.5 million

Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes:

SPPELPP supports the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) to strengthen its electoral planning and management capacity, and offers training and commodity support to conduct voter education and registration in support of credible and legitimate elections. The project will also support participation of marginalized groups in national and local elections. It expects to train and deploy domestic election observers when local elections are expected to be called in 2015.

Improve the Democratic Functioning of the CA/Parliament:

SPPELPP will work to build the CA's capacity to effectively institute checks and balances in terms of the executive and judicial branches as deliberations on the new constitution evolve. It also provides training and expert advice to Members of Parliament on effective communications with constituents, representing constituent demands in parliamentary debates, and advocating for new laws and policies that protect and ensure the welfare of constituents. The project provides technical assistance to the Constituent Assembly members and the Parliamentary Secretariat to strengthen parliamentary committees and constitution drafting.

KEY RESULTS

Election Program

- Strengthened the capacity of 47 local Nepali Civil Society Organizations to promote electoral reforms and/or improvements in the electoral system. Strengthened the capacity of almost 70 CSOs on political participation and voter education.
- Strengthened 24 electoral administration procedures and systems, including ECN's ability and processes to conduct voter education, develop and print ballots, manage polls, manage cascade trainings from the central to VDC level and decentralize its procurement system.
- Trained nearly 90,000 short- and long-term electoral consultants hired by ECN in voter registration and election preparation and management processes to prepare for the November 2013 polls.
- Supported 1,051 persons with disability – across 120 VDCs of six districts – to register and vote for the first time during the November 2013 CA elections.

Political Process and Legislative Parliament Program

Through its network of 198 local NGOs, sub-grantee Democracy and Elections Watch-Nepal, fielded nearly 6,000 observers (of which 42% were women) using a communication call center (in support of the November 14, 2013 elections) and mobile phone survey technology (to record input from its observation of June 22, 2014 by-elections).

- Conducted community dialogues in ten districts: Dhankuta, Surkhet, Kanchanpur, Bara, Dailekh, Doti, Siraha, Syangja, Kapilbastu and Nuwakot. The dialogues provided an effective forum for parliamentarians to listen and respond to local citizens' concerns. As a result of their efforts, in the district of Syangja a cold storage facility is currently under construction and in the district of Dailekh, a five-year tourism master plan was developed.
- Supported a series of policy dialogues with first-term parliamentarians and experts on a variety of subjects, such as the power-crisis. Following this dialogue, the members of the Sub-committee on Energy issued a report on Nepal's power crisis. The Training of Trainers program trained 310 Master Trainers from 10 political parties. Political parties gave their time and other resources, replicating 28,000 trainings in 42 districts across the country.
- The fourth Future Leadership Academy (FLA) program resulted in 34 of 48 FLA members actively seeking office for positions on their central committee, as a candidate for CA elections, or as convention representatives.
- SPPELPP in coordination with the Inter Party Women's Alliance (IPWA) established district sub-committees in 15 districts and the IPWA successfully lobbied for funding from District Development Committees to promote women empowerment. For example, in Baitadi, IPWA has built a safehouse for women affected by domestic violence.

CONTACT

U.S. Agency for International
Development
G.P.O. Box 295
Brahma Cottage, Maharajgunj
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 977-1-4007200
Fax: 977-1-4007285
Email: usaidnepal@usaid.gov
www.usaid.gov/nepal
www.facebook.com/usaidnepal
www.twitter.com/usaidnepal

Implementing Partner

Consortium for Elections and Political
Processes Strengthening (CEPPS).
Contact: Sondra Govatski
Email: sgovatski@iri.org