

CARTA

Citizen Action for Results,
Transparency, and Accountability



Community Action for Nutrition (CAN)

PROJECT DETAILS

PARTNERS

Partnership for Transparency Fund
HELVETAS Swiss Inter-cooperation
Nucleus for Empowerment through
Skill Transfer (NEST)

TOTAL COST

US\$78,135

DURATION

February 2014 - April 2015

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

10 districts

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS

focus group discussions (FGDs), key
informant interviews, field observations

Context

The Sunaula Hazar Din - Community Action for Nutrition (SHD-CAN) Project was designed to address the risk factors of chronic malnutrition in children. The project focuses on the period from conception to the age of 24 months – the First Thousand Days – because damage during this period from inadequate nutrition to physical growth, brain development and human capital formation is extensive and largely irreversible. The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) is implementing this project with financial support from the World Bank in two clusters of ten districts (Cluster 1: Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Udayapur, Saptari and Sunsari; and Cluster 3: Makwanpur, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat and Sarlahi) of Nepal.

From early 2014, Nucleus for Empowerment through Skill Transfer (NEST) undertook independent monitoring of the SHD-CAN project with the support of CARTA/HELVETAS Nepal. It mobilized seven Cluster Verification Officers to monitor the project implementation process and to verify the reports produced. Through a consultative process, NEST developed checklists for field verification of the community Rapid Results Nutrition Initiatives (RRNI) projects. Participatory methodologies such as focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and field observations, etc., were used to collect data and information after the completion of the first cycle and partial completion of the second cycle of RRNI projects.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Community Action for Nutrition (CAN) program's objective is to improve the nutritional practices of women and children. The project employs the rapid results approach, supporting community RRNIs.

Key nutritional challenges are discussed by Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs). The WCFs establish RRNI teams to implement initiatives designed to accomplish nutrition improvement objectives selected from a prescribed list through 100-day initiatives. The process is repeated through several cycles. Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committees (NFSSCs) at the Village Development Committee and district levels approve funding for proposed initiatives, depending on the amount of funding requested. The project also includes support for project management, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation to support implementation.

The CARTA program provided independent third-party monitoring of first and second cycle RRNIs, to provide feedback at the start of the project. The objectives were to:

- Verify that key service providers carried out all the activities for effective facilitation of the RRNI process, assisted by the RRNI teams
- Increase stakeholders' access to project information
- Verify reports prepared by the service providers who support RRNI teams

RESULTS

NEST's monitoring of first and second cycle RRNIs identified several deviations from mandated procedures and inaccuracies in service providers' reports. For example, there were delays in the approval of initiatives, the release of funds and the completion of initiatives; orientation meetings and planned reviews, and monitoring were delayed or not conducted; and public audits were only conducted in 46% of the first cycle cases. The reports were considered accurate in only 62% of the first cycle cases.

In addition to shortcomings, NEST's monitoring identified positive developments:

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The objective of Citizen Action for Results, Transparency and Accountability (CARTA) is to enhance the development impact, sustainability and ownership of pro-poor projects in Bangladesh and Nepal financed by the World Bank (WB), by promoting civil society organization engagement and experience and capacity to demand better governance. The program was funded by US\$1.9 million grant from the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) and administered by the WB.

- Improved sanitation status and behavior
- Increased community awareness of the importance of proper nutrition, family planning, water purification and arsenic mitigation, and other community issues
- Inclusion of excluded populations (e.g. women, the poor/marginalized) in project planning, implementation, & monitoring
- Project transparency and minimization of opportunities for corruption
- Strengthened multi-stakeholder partnerships among health posts, schools, and local CBOs
- Institution of a MoFALD standard monitoring structure at all governing levels

IMPACT

NEST's monitoring and interactions with various stakeholders increased their awareness and strengthened their capacities to carry out their roles in project implementation. Its findings alerted project officials and the World Bank to implementation issues, providing a basis for improvements.