

POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS
FOR THE
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EVALUATION REPORT

UDF-19-859-NEP
Enhancing Gender-Responsive Local Government in Nepal

6 December 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT.....	1
II. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGY.....	5
(i) Development context.....	5
(ii) The project objective.....	5
(iii) Project strategy and approach.....	7
III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY.....	7
IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS.....	8
(i) Relevance.....	8
(ii) Coherence.....	9
(iii) Effectiveness.....	10
(iv) Efficiency.....	13
(v) Impact.....	14
(vi) Sustainability.....	16
(vii) UNDEF value added.....	17
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	18
VI. LESSONS LEARNED.....	21

ANNEXES

- Annex 1: Evaluation matrix with key questions
- Annex 2: Targets v/s status of achievement matrix
- Annex 3: Documents reviewed
- Annex 4: Schedule of interviews
- Annex 5: Acronyms

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluator. They do not represent those of UNDEF or any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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This report was written by Sabina Ahmad.

I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This report is the evaluation of the project entitled “Enhancing Gender-Responsive Local Government in Nepal”. It was implemented by South Asia Partnership - SAP Nepal with an overall objective to work for empowerment of Musahar women focused on strengthening their voice representation in local decision-making processes and promoting gender responsive local governance. The 30-month project (including a six-month extension period) was implemented from April 2021 to September 2023 with a budget of USD 220,000 (UNDEF M&E 20,000 inclusive) in four municipalities (2 rural municipalities: Basbariya and Chandranagar and 2 town municipalities: Haripur and Barhathwa) of Sarlahi district.

The project adopted a human rights-based approach focusing on three outcomes:

- empowerment of Musahar women to claim their rights,
- mutual accountability of local government authorities,
- strengthening multi-stakeholder partnership for consolidated efforts of promoting gender responsive local governance.

Key elements underpinning the project strategy included organizing Musahar women for collective action through creating sustainable structures including the Women Musahar Empowerment Forums (WoMEFs) at the local level, sensitization and capacity building of elected members and government service providers for gender responsive and inclusive planning and governance, as well as extending collaboration and support for collective action through engagement with other civil society actors.

The project aimed to directly benefit 2,070 Musahar men and women as well as local elected officials and government representatives. It envisioned an overall indirect benefit to 38,100 Musahar community members and local CSOs.

Key Findings

The evaluation findings note that the overall project design was *highly relevant*, sought to address the multi-dimensional challenges of intersectionality and marginalization resulting in political and social exclusion of the Musahar women through a three-pronged design focusing on direct engagement with Musahar women to empower them and build their leadership capacity, create and promote structures for their representation, develop the institutional capacity of local actors and stakeholder institutions to become gender responsive and engage with a wider set of stakeholders to promote the change agenda.

The project design demonstrated a *high degree of external coherence* by focusing on gender responsive local governance and tapping into an area already prioritized by the Nepalese government. It was, therefore, able to anchor its capacity building interventions for gender responsiveness governance in a priority area and therefore improving chances for a stronger stakeholder buy-in.

The project **was effective** in meeting its quantitative targets. Targeted numbers for Musahar women mobile trainers as well as creation of WoMEFs in project locations were achieved with

additional numbers. Similarly, all planned event-based activities including trainings, sensitization sessions, policy interaction events etc. were carried out as per the project plan.

The evaluation findings note that the project followed a methodical approach and a thorough planning process with every intervention preceded by a concept note and design document. This approach helped the project remain needs focused and responsive to the contextual realities. It used an effective mobilization strategy by bringing in the National Musahar Association as a strategic ally. It proved very effective in providing direct and easy access to the Musahar community as well as in building their trust and ownership.

Demonstrating a needs responsive approach, the project was swift in adapting its design to include an economic empowerment/ livelihood strand as an entry point in their engagement with the project community and leveraged it successfully to generate and sustain communities' interest in the project objectives.

As part of its support for empowering Musahar women to claim their rights, the project carried out various activities focused on mobilization, organization and capacity building of Musahar women in order to strengthen their representation and promote their inclusion in local planning and governance. However, *effectiveness was limited*, given the fact that Musahar women in the project communities face significant capacity deficits having not been exposed to such opportunities, the capacity building support could be further strengthened and made into a continuous strand rather than being limited to a few trainings.

One of the project outcomes focused on supporting capacity building among elected representatives and public service providers in strengthening gender responsiveness in government planning and governance, and in this case sensitization sessions were followed by active engagement of these authorities in policy advocacy events.

The findings note that the inclusion of citizen led accountability (CLA) monitoring through developing Citizens Report Cards is a particularly useful initiative to promote gender responsive local governance in the project localities, in order for it to be effective and sustainable, capacity of WoMEFs to conduct it independently could be built. This could be combined with increased capacities of government institutions to see the value in CLA and act and respond openly and transparently to the community's concerns.

Examining the element of *efficiency in terms of meeting quantitative targets*, the evaluation findings note that the project was successful in meeting its overall timeline and managed to complete its planned activities during the project time frame. The project successfully leveraged the National Musahar Association as well as its prior program experience of mobilization and working with marginalized groups to access the Musahar community and thus was able to reduce lead time in mobilization which otherwise would have required considerable time investment.

The evaluation findings confirm that the project *generated positive impact* on different levels, from individual level transformation to positive contribution to local development outcomes. Project's efforts to mobilize and organize Musahar women by creating avenues and platforms for voice representation, building leadership skills and political capacity and connecting them with political processes and local governance systems yielded positive results, with 15

Musahar women elected to various decision-making positions in local institutions. The evaluation noted several encouraging examples of increased political participation of Musahar women as a result of project efforts including stories of several women who went on to contest the local ward elections, a first in the history of the Municipalities focused on by the project.

The evaluation findings note a number of *encouraging signs of sustainability* of the project initiatives. The creation of WoMEFs as an inherent part of the design was noted to be a built-in sustainability mechanism in the project. The findings, however, also indicate that keeping the Musahar women mobilized and active would require additional support both in terms of capacity building to enhance individual women's capabilities as well as their ability to participate in collective action. While inclusion of Musahar women in the committees by the local government was noted as a positive step, demonstrating commitment towards gender responsive governance, it remains to be seen how these measures will be institutionalized in the long run.

Examining the aspect of *UNDEF value addition*, the evaluation findings note that engagement with UNDEF proved particularly beneficial in terms of strengthening SAP-Nepal's organizational capacity for reporting and documentation. The project team also shared that the UNDEF support added to SAP-Nepal comparative advantage by providing them an opportunity to engage and work with one of the most marginalized communities in Nepal for their political empowerment.

Key Recommendations

1. Capacity development support for Musahar women to build individual and collective capabilities to demand inclusion and participate in political processes and local development should be further strengthened and made into a continuous strand over a period of time rather than being limited to a few trainings. In particular, build women's capacities in communications and leadership through training, mentoring and coaching to enable their success in leading the women forums.
2. Institutional capacity of government organizations to integrate gender responsiveness and inclusion in their planning processes and overall governance should also be strengthened through focused training and capacity development support to equip government officials with tools and skills to carry out gender responsive planning and governance.
3. The project learnings clearly build a case for evaluating the project design from a needs-based perspective complementing the rights-based approach. Livelihood support interventions can prove to be effective entry points, especially, in the case of extremely marginalized and impoverished communities like the Musahars where economic considerations can take priority over political and community participation. It is worthwhile to incorporate a livelihood component in the project design as an access point to enhance mobilization and support for project objectives focusing on political empowerment.
4. In order for the citizens led accountability monitoring to be effective and sustainable, capacity of WoMEFs to conduct it independently needs to be built. This could be combined with increased capacities of government institutions to see the value in Citizen

Led Accountability (CLA) and act and respond openly and transparently to the community's concerns.

5. In order to strengthen institutional capacity of government stakeholders, there is a need to conduct sensitization sessions on gender equality and inclusion (concepts and application in the project context) and an orientation on gender transformative approaches. This can be supplemented by advocacy for nomination of gender and inclusion focal points in all relevant departments to coordinate gender responsive implementation at the local government level.

Lessons Learned

1. The project experience clearly indicates that in order to be impactful, the project design should involve multidimensional approaches that address both the practical and structural challenges, ranging from individual capacity gaps to overall gender discrimination and institutionalized exclusion, which constrain women's voice, decision-making and leadership.
2. Women's participation in political change processes not only enhance gender equality, it also makes a positive contribution to local development outcomes.
3. An effective way to address the structural barriers that marginalised women may face in accessing formal political space, is to start with building localized platforms and relevant capacities and gradually scaling up the effort to connect to formal institutional structures.
4. Women particularly from poor or marginalised groups may have very limited capacity or confidence to engage in public life. Support for women's capacity development is therefore critical and needs to be continuous, taking place at multiple levels recognising the linkages between individual and collective empowerment.
5. Supporting government institutions in becoming gender responsive and inclusive requires substantial efforts in institutional capacity building through sensitization, training and equipping government official with tools and skills to carry out gender responsive planning and governance.
6. Livelihood support interventions can prove to be effective entry points in political empowerment initiatives, especially, in the case of extremely marginalized and impoverished communities and should be considered as a strategic approach in project design.
7. Citizen led accountability (CLA) monitoring is a particularly useful initiative to promote gender responsive local governance. However, institutionalizing it requires extensive capacity building of local communities to enable them continuing it independently.
8. Engaging a community representative organization like the National Musahar Association is an effective strategy to build trust and gain access to the project focused community.

II. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGY

(i) Development context

The Musahar community are among the most marginalized sections of society in Nepal. They continue to remain disenfranchised at all levels: socially, politically and economically. According to Nepal Census 2021 data, the population of Musahar is 264,974, about 0.91% of total population of Nepal. Trapped in vicious cycle of poverty and deprivation, most of the Musahar community members are landless, with very low literacy rates, few livelihood opportunities and inadequate access to state facilities.

Ranked among the lowest tiers of the social hierarchy and caste system in Nepal, the Musahar community faces discrimination and exclusion at the societal level, extending into lack of representation at the political level. Despite Dalits making up more than 13% of the population, only 19 of the 275 members of the House of Representatives are Dalits. The proportion of Musahars among these is negligible¹.

Musahar women experience intersectional marginalization. They face the double burden of discrimination as members of an impoverished underclass, as well as being part of a patriarchal system where the societal perception of women is of lower status dependents. Deep-rooted systemic impediments to gender equality continue to constrain the Musahar women curtailing their chances of accessing and participating in education, livelihood and development opportunities, and limiting them from exercising their social, political and economic rights.



Figure 1. Musahar Woman - Barahathwa

The recent electoral policy reform in Nepal have created the space for participation of Dalit women in the political process through affirmative provisions including their representation at local level². For example, for each ward in a local government unit, four members and a chairperson are elected. The current provision requires one seat among the four ward members to be reserved for Dalit women. However, the reform process has yet to achieve its intended outcomes of addressing exclusion. Limited progress is noted particularly when it comes to inclusive decision-making process³.

(ii) The project objective

The project, Enhancing Gender-Responsive Local Government in Nepal, was implemented by South Asia Partnership - SAP Nepal with an overall objective to empower Musahar women

¹ Musahars on the Margins in Nepal: Global Voice. 2022. <https://globalvoices.org/2022/02/03/musahars-on-the-margins-in-nepal/>

² Representation of the Citizens in Nepali Local Governments through the Elected Dalit Women Leaders. Open Journal of Social Sciences. Vol.11 No.10, October 2023

³ Ibid

and enhance their representation in local decision-making procedures for promoting gender-responsive local governance in selected municipalities of Sarlahi based in province 2 of Nepal. The 2.5 year project was implemented from April 2021 to September 2023 with a total grant amount of USD 220,000 (UNDEF M&E 20,000 inclusive).

In order to promote voice representation, increase political participation and enhance inclusion of Musahar women in local governance structures, the project focused on three interlinked outcomes:

- empowerment of Musahar women to claim their rights,
- mutual accountability of local government authorities,
- strengthened multi-stakeholder partnership for consolidated efforts of promoting gender responsive local governance.

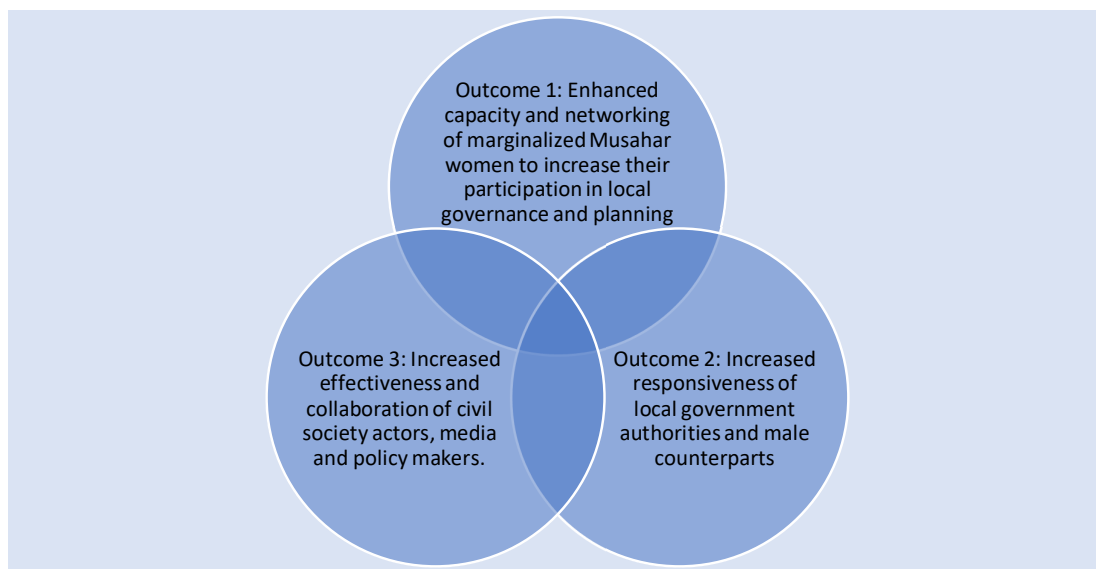


Figure 2. Project Outcomes

A number of interventions were designed to achieve the project objectives. Key project actions included:

- creation of 30 Musahar Women Mobile Trainers and
- networking of 1,500 Musahar women in the form of Women Musahar Empowerment Forums (WoMEFs) along with their active engagement in joint campaigns, policy discussions and social accountability endeavors.
- sensitization of the Local Government Authorities and Service Providers (100 elected leaders and 240 service providers) on gender responsive governance.
- introducing participatory social accountability tools like Citizens Report Card and Public Hearing into the local governance system
- synergizing efforts of CSOs, media and government agencies through organizing knowledge sharing events, campaigns, radio programmes.
- conducting sensitization events for 100 CSOs and media leaders to promote collective efforts.

The project worked with Musahar community in four municipalities (2 rural municipalities: Basbariya and Chandranagar and 2 town municipalities: Haripur and Barhathwa) of Sarlahi district.

(iii) Project strategy and approach

The project followed a human rights-based approach focusing on three operational dimensions:

Empowerment approach: focusing on building individual capacity of Musahar women for strengthening leadership and networking;

Mutual accountability approach: Sensitizing local government authorities on gender responsive local governance and their role in promoting engagement of Musahar women in local decision-making processes including local planning and budgeting;

Multi-stakeholder partnership approach: Joint efforts of civil society and media on raising issues of inadequate representation of Musahar women in local governance as well as helping associations and networks of Musahar women in amplifying their voices.

The project trained 30 Musahar Women Mobile Trainers on key topics including women empowerment, social norms transformation, social accountability tools and local budget planning. The mobile trainers then conducted village level training sessions for over 450 Musahar women. The mobilization efforts culminated in the formation of 30 Women Musahar Empowerment Forums (WoMEFs) with 1,500 Musahar women as members. The WoMEFs received capacity building support through training sessions on various topics including gender equality, women leadership, social accountability, gender responsive planning etc. These initiatives were complemented by community level interventions including sessions on gender transformative social norms behavior changes for men and households in project locations.

In order to promote gender responsiveness and inclusion in planning and governance at the local level, the project organized sensitization sessions for local elected representatives as well as government service provider institutions in the project focused municipalities. Project activities also included strengthening social accountability monitoring using Citizens Report Cards with active engagement of WoMEFs, carrying out policy advocacy and enhancing collaboration for collective action with other civil society organizations.

III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A qualitative evaluation design was used for this study given the nature of the interventions, data availability, evaluation expectations and the collection of primary data. The evaluation was guided by the OECD-DAC criteria.

The evaluation design included a detailed documentation review to collect and analyze relevant data that facilitated the comparison of key indicators of success to determine the achievements against objectives. The qualitative aspect focused on gathering appropriate data

that facilitated a deeper understanding of processes and approaches, perceptions and behavior and other factors that have contributed to the achievement and/or nonachievement of targets.

Data for evaluation was collected through desk review of all available project documents and relevant reports. In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used



Figure 3. FGD Barahathwa

as key instruments for qualitative data collection. The respondents included Implementing Partner staff, selected respondents from elected officials and services providers, WoMEF members and Musahar community members in all four project locations.

A total of 14 KIIs and 6 FGDs with 78 participants from four project focused municipalities were conducted. Two debriefing sessions with SAP – Nepal team, one before the field visit and the other

following it were also conducted by the evaluator. Systematic and structured content and thematic analysis was used to draw inferences from the qualitative data collected through FGDs, KIIs and field notes.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) *Relevance*

The evaluation findings note that the overall project design was **highly relevant**, building on the experience of an earlier UNDEF funded project implemented by Development Exchange Center Nepal (DEC Nepal), an organization affiliated with SAP-Nepal (UDF-17-771-NEP)⁴, with a similar focus working with Chepang women. SAP-Nepal thus, had the opportunity to learn from the implementation experience of DEC in developing the project design focused to engage and empower Musahar women who face widespread gender and caste discrimination as well as exclusion and marginalization as a result of severely imbalanced social, economic, and political power equations. It particularly aimed to address the broader patterns of gender discrimination, inequality, and exclusion that limit political participation and inclusion of Musahar women in state institutions, governance structures, and the larger political sphere.

The project design sought to address the multi-dimensional challenges of intersectionality and marginalization resulting in political and social exclusion of the Musahar women through a

⁴ The project **Helping Young Chepang Women Leaders to Promote Gender-Responsive Governance in Nepal** was a UNDEF funded project implemented by DEC in 2019-2021 with an aim to strengthen gender-responsive democratic local governance that respects the rights of marginalized and indigenous women in two municipalities -- Icchakmana and Kalika -- of Chitwan. The project followed a three-pronged approach of empowerment of rights holders, promoting accountability of duty bearers and increased civil society capacity for promoting social accountability.

three-pronged design focusing on direct engagement with Musahar women to empower them and build their leadership capacity, create and promote structures for their representation, develop the institutional capacity of local actors and stakeholder institutions to become gender responsive and engage with a wider set of stakeholders to promote the change agenda.

In choosing a multi-stakeholder partnership approach, the project made a good selection of stakeholder entities and institutions for engagement: local elected representatives, government stakeholders and duty bearers including public sector service providers at the local level, the National Musahar Association, local government officials, CSOs and media etc. This approach is of particular significance in the project's context involving policy advocacy and reform agenda.

In order to maintain needs responsiveness, key project interventions like development of training modules for Musahar women mobile trainers were preceded by capacity assessment and needs analysis. The training content thus developed was contextualized, created in local languages and made illustrative to match the learning needs of the future mobile trainers who had low levels of literacy. Similarly, the project conducted a Social Norm Analysis Plot (SNAP) to identify key issues/challenges as prioritized by the community focused on in order to develop relevant messaging for the transformative social norms behaviour changes campaigns. Efforts to ensure relevance are also noted in the detailed planning preceding various interventions including the development of a clear set of criteria for participant selection before organizing trainings, awareness sessions, campaigns etc.

(ii) Coherence

The project design demonstrated a high degree of external coherence by focusing on gender responsive local governance and tapping into an area already prioritized by the Nepalese government. The Government of Nepal has demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles in public policies and budgets as per the Constitution of Nepal 2015⁵. It mandates all three tiers of governance to establish gender-responsive budgeting systems and practices to ensure an inclusive planning and budgeting process. The Local Government Operation Act 2017 further explains the functions, roles, and responsibilities of the Local government units (LGUs) in line with the distinctive functions, roles and responsibilities specified in the Constitution of Nepal including the development and implementation of gender-responsive plans and budget. A recent report⁶ presenting the

⁵ The preamble to the Constitution clearly enshrines a commitment to end all forms of oppression and discrimination—class, ethnic, regional, linguistic, religious, and gender. Article 38 of the Constitution stipulates exclusive 'rights of women', under which women are entitled to equal rights and special opportunities on the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion and positive discrimination. The right to equality makes special provisions by law for the protection, empowerment, and development of citizens, including socially or culturally backward women, Dalits, indigenous and minorities, Madhesi, Tharus, Muslims, oppressed class, Pichhada class, minorities, the marginalized, children, senior citizens, gender and sexual minorities, persons with disabilities, and economically deprived (Article 18).

⁶ Nepal Administrative Staff College [NASC]. (2022) – UN Women. Local Governance, Gender Responsive and Socially Inclusive Public Finance Management: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices. Mapping Individual And Institutional Capacities Of Local Government Functionaries In Gender Responsive And Social Inclusion Planning

findings of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion and Gender Responsive Budget survey conducted among elected and administrative officials of the local level jointly by UN Women and Government of Nepal, notes '*a critical need to strengthen the governance capacities of officials at the sub-national level on GESI and gender-responsive and socially inclusive public finance management.*' The project was thus, able to anchor its capacity building interventions for gender responsiveness governance in a priority area and therefore improving chances for a stronger stakeholder buy-in.

As noted earlier, the overall policy context in Nepal is favourable in terms of promoting equality, participation and inclusion of marginalized Dalit community into the political mainstream. Nepal's 2015 Constitution established policies of proportional representation, affirmative action, and other economic development programs for Dalits. Of particular relevance to the project are the Constitutional provisions, particularly Article 38 (3) that highlight developing legal measures *to protect, empower, and advance women who are socially and culturally disadvantaged.* Similarly, landmark legislation including the Dalit Empowerment Act⁷ provides the necessary policy anchor and impetus for the project interventions aimed at promoting political participation of Musahar women in strengthening their voice and role in local governance.

The findings also note that the project leveraged existing institutions as entry points to amplify the impact of its interventions. For example, the project engaged with the Judicial Committees⁸, a newly formed structure to address access to justice issues, to promote gender equality and social inclusion at local level as stakeholder entities sharing a common agenda.

The evaluation also notes a good example of internal coherence as the Project objectives aligned well with the organizational goals of SAP-Nepal focusing on *promotion of democratic governance and civic space at all levels*, thus allowing it to leverage its earlier programme experience, relevant competence and outreach in the project communities.

(iii) Effectiveness

Progress vis-a-vis Targets:

And Budgeting In Three Provinces Of Nepal https://nepal.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Survey%20book%20_Final%20%281%29.pdf

⁷ <https://data.tulsipurmun.gov.np/datasets/dalit-empowerment-law-2079>

⁸ The Constitution of Nepal mandates the establishment of one judicial committee in each of the country's 753 municipalities and rural municipalities to mitigate the inefficiencies of the formal legal system and bridge the formal/informal justice divide. Judicial committees are envisioned as the first line of justice that can link individuals to various justice providers like mediation centers at the ward level, the lowest level court at the district level, the police, government legal departments, and other relevant justice/social service providers. As per Article 217 of the Constitution, each judicial committee consists of three members and is headed by the deputy mayor or deputy chairperson. Operating under the supervision of the district courts, as per Clause 47 (1) and (2) of Local Government Operations Act (LGOA), judicial committees are mandated to settle certain types of disputes, and to refer others to either the district court for formal adjudication or to community mediation centers for mediation.

The evaluator is of the view that **the project was effective** in meeting its quantitative targets. Targeted numbers for Musahar women mobile trainers as well as creation of WoMEFs in project locations were achieved with additional numbers. Similarly, all planned event-based activities including trainings, sensitization sessions, policy interaction events etc. were carried out as per the project plan. Only in a few instances, slight deviations from the original plan were noted in order to address practical considerations. For example, the number of sessions for gender transformative social norms behavior changes (Output 2.1) was increased from the planned five to 15 to manage a reasonable group size and maintain training effectiveness without affecting the target number of 150. Similarly, Output 2.3 which originally envisioned 3-day trainings of the public service providers was modified to 1-day training as it was not possible for government officials to be away from office for three days to attend the training. A shift from the original plan was also noted in case of Output 3.2 where instead of the planned two annual participatory Public Hearing / Public Audit, only one was conducted as the timing for the two was affected by the second COVID pandemic wave. The planned audience number of 100, however, was largely met with 92 participants in the single event conducted.



Figure 4. WoMEF community meeting

Effectiveness of project strategy:

The evaluation findings note that the project followed a methodical approach and a thorough planning process with every intervention preceded by a concept note and design document. This approach helped the project remain needs focused and responsive to the contextual realities. For example, the project carried out a Rapid Capacity Assessment exercise to identify key areas of capacity enhancement before the development of module and materials for the training of Musahar women mobile trainers. Based on the assessment, the project developed content and illustrative training materials based on needs of the participants with low literacy levels. The project also carried out pre and post testing of the training participants to assess the effectiveness of training vis-à-vis knowledge enhancement. Similarly, the sessions on gender transformative social norms behavior changes with the Musahar community were preceded by a baseline using the SNAP (Social Norm Analysis Plot) tool to understand the prevalence of harmful social norms. The findings helped the project develop relevant and appropriate messages for behavior changes campaigns with the project community.

The project used an effective mobilization strategy by bringing in the National Musahar Association as a strategic ally. It proved very effective in providing direct and easy access to the Musahar community as well as in building their trust and ownership.

Similarly, strategic engagement with the media yielded very good results in amplifying voices of the Musahar community and providing them with a platform to address wider audience to promote gender responsive and inclusive local governance and development. Involvement of media in various policy interactions with government institutions and elected officials contributed to enhance public accountability.

Demonstrating a needs responsive approach, the project was swift in adapting its design to include an economic empowerment/ livelihood strand as an entry point in their engagement with the project community. The project was able to leverage it successfully to generate and sustain communities' interest in the project objectives. As the original design did not envision a livelihood component, the project creatively used the allocated budget heads to make provisions for introducing economic activities for the Musahar community. A joint saving fund was thus created by asking women participants contribute part of their travel and logistics reimbursements to the fund. The project also utilized the grant money allocated in the project to support livelihood diversification in the project communities. The saving fund later became the basis establishing Women's Cooperatives, the more formalized and therefore sustainable structures to boost economic empowerment of Musahar women.

Assessment of Implementation of project Outcomes:

Outcome 1: Empowerment of Musahar women to claim their rights

Activities under this outcome mainly focused on mobilization, organization and capacity building of Musahar women in order to strengthen their representation and promote their inclusion in local governance, processes of democratization and trajectories of community development. The project successfully organized Musahar women in the four project municipalities in Women Musahar Empowerment Forums (WoMEFs), providing a platform for voice representation and collective action. Numerous training sessions were conducted to orient them on local government planning and budget demystification.



Figure 5. Community session in progress

The evaluator recognizes these individual capacity building interventions as crucial project input aimed at addressing the structural and practical barriers to Musahar women's political participation and leadership, including barriers related to poverty, illiteracy, gender discrimination social exclusion. However, given the fact that Musahar women in the project communities face significant capacity deficits having not been exposed to such opportunities, the capacity building support could be further

strengthened and made into a continuous strand rather than being limited to a few trainings.

Outcome 2: Responsiveness of local government authorities and male counterparts

While there is ample policy support for gender responsive and inclusive local governance in Nepal, the institutional capacity to translate policy into action remains limited as noted earlier. Evaluation findings resonate with this assertion, noting that even though the political will to address inclusion and gender concerns exists within the local government structures, the organizational capacity to do so is either very low or absent. One of the project outcomes focused on supporting capacity building among elected representatives and public service providers in strengthening gender responsiveness in government planning and governance, and in this case sensitization sessions were followed by active engagement of these authorities

in policy advocacy events. Focused training and capacity development support will, however, be required to equip government official with tools and skills to carry out gender responsive planning and governance.

Outcome 3: Strengthened multi-stakeholder partnership for consolidated efforts of promoting gender responsive local governance.

The inclusion of citizen led accountability (CLA) monitoring through developing Citizens Report Cards is noted as a particularly useful initiative to promote gender responsive local governance in the project localities through Musahar community participation and influence in decision-making. The process of carrying out accountability monitoring itself is empowering, enabling communities to collectively identify the systemic blockages that keep them at the fringes and compel public institutions to be responsive to their needs. However, it requires significant time and capacity building efforts to enable historically marginalized and excluded groups like the Musahars to carry out effective citizen led accountability monitoring. As producing Citizens Report Cards based on research and evidence requires technical expertise, the project formed a team and engaged a consultant to collect the relevant data and develop the complete citizen report card. While this arrangement worked well during the project, it may not sustain in the longer run. In order for the accountability monitoring to be effective and sustainable, capacity of WoMEFs to carry out the data collection and compile the citizen report card independently could be built. This could be combined with increased capacities of government institutions to see the value in CLA and act and respond openly and transparently to the community's concerns.

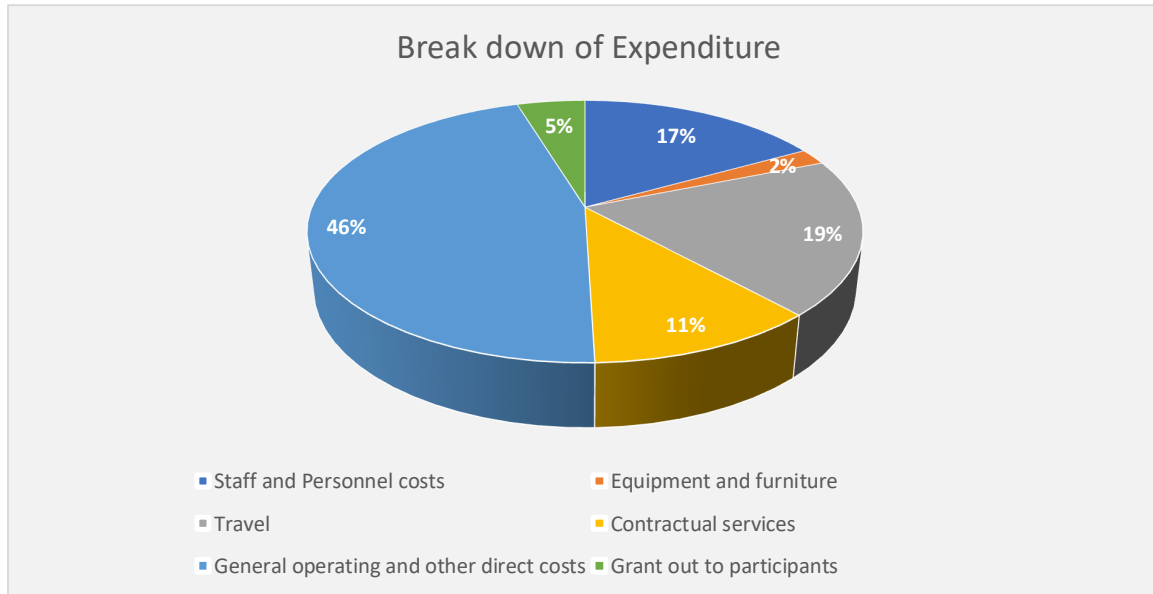
While the project sought collective action through strengthening multi stakeholder partnerships, especially with Target Indicator 3.1 envisioning *at least eight other CSOs start their engagement in increasing leadership role of Musahar women by end of the project*, concrete examples of the joint efforts to strengthen Musahar women leadership and organization were not observed. During the field visit, the evaluator noted a skill development project by one NGO and a girls education initiative by another one in Barathwa, while in Haripur, an NGO had engaged the WoMEF for a campaign against child marriage.

The evaluation findings note that prior to the project, there was very limited presence of other NGOs working with Musahar women in the project locations and hence little to build on by way of collaboration.

(iv) Efficiency

Examining the element of efficiency in terms of meeting quantitative targets, the evaluation findings note that **the project was successful in meeting its overall timeline and managed to complete its planned activities** during the project time frame. The project successfully leveraged the National Musahar Association as well as its prior program experience of mobilization and working with marginalized groups to access the Musahar community and thus was able to reduce lead time in mobilization which otherwise would have required considerable time investment.

The evaluation findings note that the overall **budget efficiency was high**. Analysis of the budget allocations for the total project budget of USD 200,000 (excluding the allocation for M&E) shows 100% budget utilization without any significant deviation between the planned and actual spending.



The expenditure analysis shows that almost half of the budget (46%) was consumed on direct project costs⁹. Majority of this expenditure head (86%) included spendings on event-based activities like venue hire and meals etc. during events. Since bulk of the project interventions were event-based activities, these costs appear justified. The overall reported outreach for the training/ sensitization/ policy interaction sessions across all the three outcomes is 4,091¹⁰, making the per participant spending as USD 19. Of the total spending under the travel budget head (19% of the total spending), almost all of the budget (98%) was spent on participants travel reimbursements in order to facilitate their participation.

According to the information available with the evaluator, SAP – Nepal utilized 17% of the total budget spending on personnel costs (a total of 7) which included field supervisors for the selected municipalities as well as project coordinator and other core staff.

(v) Impact

On the basis of independently gathered first-hand evidence, the evaluator can confirm that the project generated positive impact on different levels, from individual level transformation to positive contribution to local development outcomes.

“(Before the project) We had no idea how to access government offices, who to see there and how to present our problems. Now we can approach the Municipality office easily and get heard.”
Woman FGD Participant - Basbariya

⁹ The breakdown includes several heads including spending on venue hire and meals, office rent, audit and Misc.

¹⁰ Evaluator’s calculations based on the reported numbers of each event.

Notably, the project effectively contributed to transformative change at the individual level.



Figure 6. WoMEF members in a rally

Majority of the Musahar women participants of the Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) conducted by the evaluator during visits to the project locations, shared that being organized gave them a shared identity. They felt more confident after being aware about their rights as well as where to go in order to claim their rights. Government officers and elected officials interviewed in the selected Municipalities also confirmed this, sharing that they are regularly approached by the Musahar women and WoMEF

members who bring the various issues to their attention and demand action.

Emerging impact of the project interventions aimed at gender transformative social norms behavior change was also observed during FGDs with the Musahar community where both men and women participants shared increased awareness regarding the widely prevalent issue of child marriage in their community. Women participants from the Haripur group were particularly vocal on the issue and shared their resolve of reporting any incident of child marriage if it occurred in their community.

Project's efforts to mobilize and organize Musahar women by creating avenues and platforms for voice representation, building leadership skills and political capacity and connecting them with political processes and local governance systems yielded positive results with 15 Musahar women elected in various decision-making positions in local institutions including Town Development Committee, Municipal Committee against untouchability, as well as becoming ward members.

The evaluation noted several encouraging examples of increased political participation of Musahar women as a result of project efforts, including stories of several women who went on to contest the local ward elections, a first in the history of the project selected Municipalities. Among them was the inspirational story of Sovita Majhi who contested and won the election as a Ward Member of Ward-8 Haripur.

“Earlier women didn’t have the confidence or awareness of rights to approach the mayor office. Now they come especially with demands to make birth, marriage certificates and citizenship cards.”
Senior elected official - Barathwa

Observing the positive contribution of Musahar’s women organization to local development outcomes, the evaluation found several notable examples including allocation of funds for the Musahar community for the first time by the local government. The Chandranagar WoMEF group reported they received NPR 600,000 (USD 4,493) for livestock activities from the Municipality.

They were also successful in getting the Ward office to allocate NPR 900,000 (USD 6,740) for construction of road in their Ward. On the larger policy level, Chandranagar rural municipality became the first to implement the Dalit Empowerment Act.

Project's efforts to sensitize local government authorities on gender responsive local governance and their role in promoting engagement of Musahar women in local decision-making processes indicated several signs of emerging impact. Women participants of the FGDs conducted by the evaluator shared that they experienced a positive change in the attitudes of government officials while dealing with Musahar community members compared to the past when they faced discriminatory attitude by public service providers when approached.

A positive shift towards gender responsive and inclusive institutions was also noted in members of the WoMEF groups being invited by the local Municipality officials to various local-level planning meetings and selected as members of the Town Development Committee.



Figure 7. Woman shop owner in Haripur

“Government officials were not receptive earlier. They would demand bribes and not cooperate with us.”

Woman FGD Participant - Haripur

Some spin-offs of the project interventions were also observed during the course of evaluation, especially in terms of the economic empowerment aspect. As the project included an economic livelihood

strand as an entry point in their engagement with the project community, many evaluation respondents shared improved practices vis-à-vis saving as well as success in livelihood diversification.

(vi) Sustainability

The evaluation findings note a number of encouraging signs of sustainability of the project initiatives. Some of the measures for project sustainability were consciously built into the project design and proved to be effective in continuity of the project efforts after it closed out. All the 32 WoMEFs, for example were registered in the respective local ward offices and with the agriculture department of their respective municipalities for their institutional sustainability.

This measure has proved to be useful in formalizing Musahar women's organization by giving them a platform for representation and collective action. The findings, however, indicate that keeping the Musahar women mobilized and active would require additional support both in terms of capacity building to enhance individual women's capabilities as well as their ability to participate in collective action. This is particularly relevant in the current context as for the majority of Musahar women in the project communities, this is the first time they have been organized for political participation.

The evaluation notes several examples of sustainable actions which have continued beyond the project duration. For example, the establishment of the Musahar women led cooperatives in 2 municipalities (Haripur and Chandranagar), with over 250 participants as a culmination of project's entry point economic empowerment efforts, demonstrates a good example of sustainability where the community itself actively participates in when sufficiently motivated.

Similarly, promising signs of sustainability of the project efforts in organization of Musahar women for collective empowerment are visible in consolidation of the WoMEFs in Municipal as well as District level Musahar Women Empowerment Network formation. Additionally, Musahar women's political participation will also receive a further boost with the National Musahar Association agreeing to establish a District level women wing for the Association.

While limited initiatives by the other CSOs were observed in terms of collaborative efforts to promote Musahar women's political empowerment and enhancing participation in local planning and development, some examples of NGOs reaching out to the Musahar women in the project municipalities for development interventions were noted. These mainly included projects in girls' education and livelihood development.

SAP-Nepal team reported to keep their engagement with the women groups active even after the project closure giving the recent example of a financial literacy training which they conducted with the same groups as part of another project.

While inclusion of Musahar women in the Town Development Committee by the local government was a positive step, demonstrating commitment towards gender responsive governance, it remains to be seen how these measures will be institutionalized in the long run.

(vii) UNDEF Value added

Examining the aspect of UNDEF value addition, the evaluation findings note that engagement with UNDEF proved particularly beneficial in terms of strengthening SAP-Nepal's organizational capacity for reporting and documentation. The project team shared that UNDEF provided helpful input in project development based on its vast programming experience on promoting inclusion of all groups in democratic processes. The project team shared that they were able to implement the project independently, with the flexibility to adjust interventions based on contextual needs (for example, using livelihood activities as entry point). The project team also shared that the UNDEF support gave SAP-Nepal an opportunity to engage and work with one of the most marginalized communities in Nepal for their political empowerment.

Four Musahar women from the Women Empowerment Forum (WoMEF) groups in Barathawa were elected as members of the Town Development Committee of Barathawa Municipality and subsequently notified as members of the Musahar Women Town Development Committee.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>1. The project design was highly relevant, built on good understanding of the context marked with the broader patterns of gender discrimination, inequality, and exclusion that limit political participation and inclusion of Musahar women in state institutions, governance structures, and the larger political sphere.</p> <p>The project design had a dual focus: promoting women’s political participation through building women’s capacity and awareness of their rights and influence, connect them to key decision-making spaces and processes (demand side) as well as support government institutions in becoming gender responsive and inclusive in their planning and governance (supply side). While the project interventions were preceded by needs assessment identifying significant capacity gaps both on the demand and supply side, the capacity building component could be strengthened to address them comprehensively.</p>	<p>Musahar women in the project communities face significant capacity deficits, having not been exposed to opportunities to build individual and collective capabilities to demand inclusion and participate in political processes and local development. Capacity building support for them, therefore, should be further strengthened and made into a continuous strand over a period of time rather than being limited to a few trainings.</p> <p>Institutional capacity of government organizations to integrate gender responsiveness and inclusion in their planning processes and overall governance should also be strengthened through focused training and capacity development support to equip government officials with tools and skills to carry out gender responsive planning and governance.</p>
<p>2. The project design demonstrated a high degree of external coherence by focusing on gender responsive local governance and tapping into an area already prioritized by the Nepalese government.</p> <p>The findings note that while the current policy scenario appears cognizant of the importance of gender equality and inclusion as a pre-requisite to development planning to benefit all, however, little has translated into actual practice. In cases where the political will to address inclusion and gender concerns exists, the organizational capacity to do so is low. One of the project outcomes focused on supporting capacity building among elected representatives and public</p>	<p>Building on the recommendation above, the Implementing Partner should carry out a prior organizational needs assessment for targeted and needs based institutional capacity development for government organizations and develop capacity building measures and tailored support to enable them in becoming inclusive and gender responsive institutions. This can include providing technical assistance to compile, adapt, disseminate relevant tools (e.g. participatory consultation) for promoting gender and social inclusion tailored to local context.</p>

<p>service providers, and in this case sensitization sessions were followed by active engagement of these authorities in policy advocacy events..</p>	
<p>3a. The project was overall effective in meeting its quantitative targets. Examining the effectiveness of the project strategy, the findings note that the project followed a methodical approach and a thorough planning process with every intervention preceded by a concept note and design document. This approach helped the project remain needs focused and responsive to the contextual realities.</p>	<p>It is worthwhile to invest in a thorough planning process before implementing project activities as it helps in designing responsive and needs focused interventions.</p>
<p>3b. Demonstrating a needs responsive approach, the project was effective in adapting its design to include an economic empowerment/ livelihood strand as an entry point in their engagement with the project community. The project was able to leverage it successfully to generate and sustain communities' interest in the project objectives. As the original design did not envision a livelihood component, the project creatively used the allocated budget heads (for example, by encouraging Musahar women to put unused portions of obtained travel compensation in the cooperative fund) to make provisions for introducing economic activities for the Musahar community.</p>	<p>The project learnings clearly build a case for evaluating the project design from a needs-based perspective complementing the rights-based approach. Livelihood support interventions can prove to be effective entry points, especially, in the case of extremely marginalized and impoverished communities like the Musahars where economic considerations can take priority over political and community participation. It is worthwhile to incorporate a livelihood component in the project design as an access point to enhance mobilization and support for project objectives focusing on political empowerment.</p>
<p>3c. The inclusion of citizen led accountability (CLA) monitoring through developing Citizens Report Cards is noted as a particularly useful initiative to promote gender responsive local governance in the project localities through Musahar community participation and influence in decision-making.</p> <p>However, effectiveness was limited, as it requires significant time and capacity building efforts to enable historically marginalized and excluded groups like the Musahars to carry out citizen led accountability monitoring. For producing</p>	<p>In order for the accountability monitoring to be effective and sustainable, capacity of WoMEFs to conduct it independently would need to be built. This could be combined with increased capacities of government institutions to see the value in CLA and act and respond openly and transparently to the community's concerns.</p>

<p>evidence-based Citizens Report Cards, the project formed a team and engaged a consultant to collect data and develop the citizens report card. While this arrangement worked well during the project, it may not sustain in the longer run without the Musahar community taking the lead in the development of the report card.</p>	
<p>4. Project efficiency was noted to be high. The project was successful in meeting its overall timeline and managed to complete its planned activities during the project time frame. The project successfully leveraged the National Musahar Association as well as its prior program experience of mobilization and working with marginalized groups to access the Musahar community and thus was able to reduce lead time in mobilization which otherwise would have required considerable time investment. The budget efficiency was also noted to be high.</p>	<p>Project efficiency especially in terms of time can be enhanced through identifying institutional access points for better mobilization and outreach in the communities.</p>
<p>5. The project generated positive impact on different levels, from individual level transformation to positive contribution to local development outcomes. Notably, the project effectively contributed to transformative change at the individual level with the Musahar women in project locations reporting increased self-confidence and sense of identity.</p> <p>Project's efforts to mobilize and organize Musahar women by creating avenues and platforms for voice representation (WoMEFs), building leadership skills and political capacity and connecting them with political processes and local governance systems yielded positive results.</p> <p>A positive shift towards gender responsive and inclusive institutions was also noted in members of the WoMEF groups being invited by the local Municipality officials to various local-level planning meetings.</p>	<p>As noted earlier, in order to enhance the project impact in terms of empowering Musahar women to claim their rights and participate in local development, significant investment will need to be undertaken to build individual women's capabilities as well as their ability to participate in collective action. Efforts to this end need to be continuous, consistent and carried over a longer period of time for impact.</p> <p>In particular, it is recommended to build women's capacities in communications and leadership through training, mentoring and coaching to enable their success in leading the women forums.</p>

<p>However, it remained somewhat limited, owing mainly to lack of institutional capacity for gender responsiveness.</p>	
<p>6. The evaluation findings note a number of encouraging signs of sustainability. The creation of WoMEFs as an inherent part of the design was noted to be a built-in sustainability mechanism of the project.</p> <p>While inclusion of Musahar women in various committees by the local government was noted to be a positive step, demonstrating commitment towards gender responsive governance, it remains to be seen how these measures will go beyond one-off measures and are institutionalized in the long run.</p>	<p>In order to strengthen institutional capacity of government stakeholders, conduct sensitization sessions on gender equality and inclusion (concepts and application in the project context) and an orientation on gender transformative approaches.</p> <p>Advocate for nomination of gender and inclusion focal points in all relevant departments to coordinate gender responsive implementation at the local government level.</p>

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

1. The project experience clearly indicates that in order to be impactful, the project design should involve multidimensional approaches that address both the practical and structural challenges, ranging from individual capacity gaps to overall gender discrimination and institutionalized exclusion, which constrain women’s voice, decision-making and leadership. In the present case, the Implementing Partner was successful in maintaining a dual focus on promoting women’s political participation through building women’s capacity and awareness of their rights and connecting them to key decision-making processes on the one hand and engaging with the Musahar community, particularly men, to address gender discrimination through sensitization sessions.
2. Women’s participation in political change processes not only enhances gender equality, it also makes a positive contribution to local development outcomes. The present project experience clearly demonstrates the transformative impact of women’s inclusion in local development in the shape of a number of local needs-based infrastructure schemes undertaken by the Women Musahar Empowerment Forums in their Municipalities.
3. An effective way to address the structural barriers that marginalised women may face in accessing formal political space, is to start with building localized platforms and relevant capacities and gradually scaling up the effort to connect to formal institutional structures. In the present project, this was demonstrated successfully by the creation of the local Women Musahar Empowerment Forums which were eventually scaled up to district level platforms as well as connected to the National Musahar Association.

4. Women particularly from poor or marginalised groups may have very limited capacity or confidence to engage in public life. Support for women's capacity development is therefore critical and needs to be continuous, taking place at multiple levels recognising the linkages between individual and collective empowerment. In the present case, while the Implementing Partner had undertaken some individual capacity building initiatives, there is clear case that these efforts need to be continuous, consistent and carried over a longer period of time for impact.
5. Connected support to enhance individual women's capabilities and empowerment is important for women's collective action. Support to build individual women's leadership capacities is particularly important to build leadership skills and political capacities in order for them to work effectively with existing systems and political processes. In this case, while the Implementing Partner was successful in mobilizing and raising awareness for collective action among the Musahar women, focused support to build women's capacities in communications and leadership would have further enhanced their ability to lead the women forums.
6. Supporting government institutions in becoming gender responsive and inclusive requires substantial efforts in institutional capacity building through sensitization, training and equipping government official with tools and skills to carry out gender responsive planning and governance. In the present project, while the project was successful in sensitizing local government officials, focused institutional capacity building could have contributed to a more impactful and sustainable change.
7. Livelihood support interventions can prove to be effective entry points in political empowerment initiatives, especially, in the case of extremely marginalized and impoverished communities and should be considered as a strategic approach in project design. The present project experience clearly builds the case for linking economic and livelihood interventions to political empowerment evidenced through the successful establishment and continuation of the Musahar women led Cooperatives.
8. Citizen led accountability (CLA) monitoring is a particularly useful initiative to promote gender responsive local governance. However, institutionalizing it requires extensive capacity building of local communities to enable them continuing it independently. In the present case, while the project piloted a Citizens Report Card successfully by acquiring a consultant, the knowledge and skill transfer to the community for developing it independently and regularly would have made it a locally driven and owned, as well as sustainable.
9. As the project experience indicates, engaging a community representative organization like the National Musahar Association is an effective strategy to build trust and gain access to the community focused on by the project.

10. Strategic engagement with the media can yield good results in amplifying voices of the marginalized, providing them with a platform to address wider audience to promote gender responsive and inclusive local governance and development. In the present case, the project engaged the media successfully to widely disseminate the project initiatives as well as leverage it as an accountability mechanism for following up with government officials on their promised actions in promoting inclusive local governance.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix with Key Questions

DAC Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Data collection method	Limitation
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to the context and needs of the beneficiaries? ▪ Were the project objectives and activities relevant to address the core needs and issues of the group focused on by the project? ▪ Why or why not? What could/have been done differently? ▪ Which activities of the project showed greater relevance for the beneficiaries? And why? ▪ How was the needs assessment for the project conducted? ▪ How was the baseline/ rapid assessment/ SNAP analysis information utilized in the project design? ▪ How was the project targets and strategy developed? What was the rationale behind the three project approaches (empowerment of Musahar women, mutual accountability of local government authorities and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnership)? ▪ Were the relevant government institutions involved in planning and implementation of the project? ▪ What were the major risks identified which could impact project implementation and what measures were taken to address them? ▪ What were the unanticipated risks and challenges (encountered during the project implementation and how were they managed)? 	<p>Documentation Review</p> <p>In-depth Interviews</p>	<p>Documentation review is dependent on quality and timely availability of organized documentation</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Coherence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How well did the project “fit”; i.e. to what extent was the project compatible with other projects and programmes in the country, sector or institution? ▪ What makes the project a good strategic fit? How does it fit in with/ contribute to the overall context vis-a-vis the rights of Musahar women in Nepal? ▪ Did the project collaborate or establish linkages with other national/ district/ local projects/ programs of similar nature/ focus by other CSOs/ donors? ▪ Did the project collaborate or establish linkages with any government initiatives with similar objectives/ targets? ▪ Did the IP leverage its own programs/ linkages/ networks in the implementation of the project? ▪ How were the project objectives aligned with the organizational goals of the IP? ▪ Did the project carry out any stakeholder mapping and identify key govt and non govt actors? ▪ Were they reached out by the project? How were they engaged? ▪ What were some of the challenges faced in reaching out to other stakeholders? 	<p>In-depth Interviews and FGDs</p>	<p>Support of IP is required in contacting and interviewing relevant stakeholders</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals? ▪ Detailed output wise assessment of project implementation based on the project results framework. ▪ Verification of targets achieved. ▪ What was achieved/ what was not and why? ▪ To what extent did the activities implemented contribute to the 	<p>Documentation review</p> <p>Interview with UNDEF team</p> <p>Interview with IP</p> <p>Interview with selected respondents- Musahar women leader/ trainers- trained by the project</p>	<p>Documentation review is dependent on quality and timely availability of organized documentation</p> <p>Support of IP is required in contacting selected respondents and ensuring availability for interviews/ FGDs</p>

	<p>expected outputs, giving early signs of outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What were the M&E measures in place and how were the project activities monitored? ▪ Did the project change / adapt the implementation strategy due to any change in the operational and policy context? What was changed? ▪ What were the key challenges in project implementation? 	<p>Interviews with selected respondents – Govt officials and elected representatives – engaged by the project</p> <p>Interview with selected stakeholders – media and CSOs, National Musahar Association – engaged by the project</p> <p>FGD with men and women beneficiaries from Musahar community, WoMEF members</p>	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts? ▪ Did the IP have the requisite technical capacity and expertise to carry out the project? ▪ Was any initiative taken to enhance the capacity? What steps were taken and how successful were they? ▪ Was sufficient time allocated for carrying out the project activities? ▪ Were budget allocations sufficient to carry out the planned project activities? If not, how was this challenge addressed? ▪ Were any partnerships / collaborations with other stakeholder institutions established for carrying out the project activities? How was other support leveraged? ▪ Did the IP leverage any of their comparative advantage (access to the community, already established linkages with govt 	<p>Documentation Review</p> <p>Interview with UNDEF team</p> <p>Interview with IP</p>	<p>Documentation review is dependent on quality and timely availability of organized documentation</p>

	<p>departments, prior work experience, strong credibility etc.) in order to implement the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective was the coordination and communication between UNDEF and IP? Were there any challenges? 		
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy? Outcome level assessment. What change has the project effected at various levels: awareness, capacity development, institutionalization of the structures (WoMEFs) created? What are the positive and negative, intended, and unintended, changes produced by the project? How is the change perceived and experienced by the project beneficiaries? Are there any changes on the policy/ systematic/ institutional level? How do they contribute to gender equality and inclusion in democratization processes, participation in planning and development trajectories and promotion of rights of Musahar women in Nepal? How has the project contributed to the overall UNDEF goals? What are some of the examples which demonstrate the impact of the project interventions? 	<p>Interview with UNDEF team</p> <p>Interview with IP</p> <p>Interview with selected respondents- Musahar women leader/ trainers-trained by the project</p> <p>Interviews with selected respondents – Govt officials and elected representatives – engaged by the project</p> <p>Interview with selected stakeholders – media and CSOs, National Musahar Association – engaged by the project</p> <p>FGD with men and women beneficiaries from Musahar community, WoMEF members</p>	<p>Support of IP is required in contacting selected respondents and ensuring availability for interviews/ FGDs</p>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development? Were sustainability measures built in the project design? What were 	<p>Interview with UNDEF team</p> <p>Interview with IP/s</p> <p>Interview with selected</p>	<p>Support of IP is required in contacting selected respondents and ensuring availability for interviews/ FGDs</p>

	<p>those measures and how have they developed over time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What steps were taken by the IP in order to sustain the project momentum and continue the initiatives in the long run? ▪ Are there any commitments/ actions taken by other stakeholder institutions which can contribute to the sustainability of the project efforts? ▪ Did the project plan and implement an adequate transition and exit strategy that ensures a longer-term positive effect? 	<p>respondents- WoMEF members</p> <p>Interviews with selected respondents – Govt officials – engaged by the project</p> <p>Interviews with selected respondents –CSOs– engaged by the project</p>	
UNDEF value added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors? ▪ Are there any examples of knowledge transfer to the local partners by UNDEF? ▪ How was the technical expertise/ similar program experience of the UNDEF team (made available in person through the project officer but also via the online platform <i>undeflessonslearned.org</i>) leveraged and utilized in the design and implementation of the project? ▪ Were any linkages between the Pakistan project and other similar UNDEF initiatives (locally and internationally) developed? 	<p>Interview with UNDEF team</p> <p>Interview with IP</p>	

Annex 2: Targets v/s status of achievement matrix

Outcome/ Output and Targets	Reported Status of Achievement	MoV made available to the Evaluator	Deviations from planned
Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity and networking of marginalized Musahar women to increase their participation in local governance and planning			
Output 1.1: Illustrative training module and materials developed	Module developed	Hard and soft copies of module	
Output 1.2: Two Trainings of Trainers for 30 Musahar Women Mobile Trainers conducted (3-day in Year 1, and 2-day in Year2)	Two trainings with 32 Musahar women capacitated as mobile trainers	Training reports, attendance sheets and pictures	
Output 1.3: 15 Village level budget demystifying trainings for 450 Musahar women conducted	483 women capacitated on local government planning and budget through 13 one-day trainings	Training reports and pictures	2 events were combined for easier access to the groups bringing the total to 13 from the planned 15. Target was overachieved with additional numbers
Output 1.4: 30 Women Musahar Empowerment Forums (WoMEFs) established with 1,500 Musahar women (50 per WoMEF)	32 WoMEF groups (10 groups were formed in Haripur, 17 in Chandranagar, 1 in Basbariya and 4 in Barathawa Municipality) established with 1,546 Musahar women members	Excel sheet comprising of membership details for all 32 WoMEFs WoMEFs establishment Report	Target was overachieved with 2 additional WoMEFs and 46 more members compared to plan
Output 1.5: Scaling up of WoMEF Association <i>(NEW OUTPUT (Project Extension period activity))</i>	Municipal level network of all four municipalities formed Musahar women led cooperatives established in 2 municipalities (Haripur and Chandranagar) with more than 250 participants	Municipal level network strengthening report District level Musahar women network formation report	

	District level Musahar Women Empowerment Network founded District level women wing of National Musahar Association formed	Sensitization of National Musahar Association for creation of District level women wing report)	
Outcome 2: Increased responsiveness of local government authorities and male counterparts			
Output 2.1: Five separate sessions of gender transformative social norms behavior changes for four sub-groups within 150 selected Musahar household held	15 Sessions on gender transformative social norm behavior change conducted for 760 Musahars belonging to 150 selected households of four municipalities of Sarlahi	Sessions on social norm transformation report	Number of events was 15 instead of 5 sessions because only 10 households/ 50 participants were trained in each event to manage a reasonable group size and enhance training effectiveness
Output 2.2: Four sensitization events (one day) for 100 elected local authorities (25 per event) held	5 events with 166 participants conducted	Report on sensitization event for elected authority	Target exceeded
Output 2.3: Eight 3-day village sensitization events for 240 service providers (30 per event) held	Eight 1-day events conducted with a total of 292 participants 145 service providers in the first event and 147 judicial committee members in the second event	Report on sensitization event for public service provider	3-day event was converted to 1-day due to government officials' unavailability to attend longer sessions
Output 2.4: Municipalities websites with additional information of Musahar women updated	Official websites of all four municipalities updated with information on demographic data of Musahars, policy brief highlighting the issues of the Musahars and UNDEF project interventions	MOUs with respective municipalities for website update Website links Policy brief for Musahar community upliftment submitted to respective municipalities in Nepali	

Output 2.5: 16 WoMEFs lead joint social campaigns at municipal levels held	16 WoMEFs led social campaigns, conducted with total participation of 2,283 people.	WoMEFs led joint social campaign reports	
Output 2.6: Website and online platforms updated with Musahar Women Advocacy Content	Webpage developed and uploaded on SAP-Nepal's website	Website link	
Outcome 3: Increased effectiveness and collaboration of civil society actors, media and policy makers			
Output 3.1: Social accountability monitoring using Citizens Report card with active engagement of WoMEF conducted	6 members team including local CSO, local government representative, Musahar leader, and SAP Nepal representative was formed at municipal level to conduct CRC assessment in all 4 municipalities focused on by the project	Citizen Report Card (report synopsis)	CRC was a consultant-led exercise
Output 3.2: Two participatory Public Hearing / Public Audit on annual basis with 50 people each organized	1 event conducted with 92 participants	Public Audit Report	1 event conducted instead of target 2 because activity timeline was affected due to second wave of Covid pandemic. The target number, however, was largely met in the single event with 92 participants Appears to be a showcasing event of the project
Output 3.3: Sixteen Municipal Level policy discussions led by WoMEF held	16 events conducted in four rounds. First Round: 153 Second round: 173 Third round: 154 Fourth round: 791	Municipal level policy discussion report	

Output 3.4: Two (annual) province level policy and practice interactions among 50 CSOs, media, policy makers held	Two events with 132 participants organized	Provincial level policy and practice interaction report	
Output 3.5: 150 community radio episodes broadcasted together with local media	150 community radio episodes broadcasted together with local media partner, Radio Ekata 12 episodes per month throughout the project period beginning from December 2021 until 30 September 2023	Youtube link of Radio Ekata Profile of strategic media partner Radio Program Format and radio episodes report	
Output 3.6: Learning visit to learn from best practices conducted	1 learning visit of 32 WoMEF members conducted	Learning visit report	
Output 3.7: Two “learning from the project” television programs broadcasted	Two “television programs broadcasted by ABC Television	YouTube links of television programs	
Output 3.8: Preparation and printing of project learning materials <i>(NEW OUTPUT)</i> <i>(Project Extension period activity)</i>	300 copies of project learning document and citizen report card handbook prepared and circulated.	Project Learning Document Citizen Report Card Handbook	
Output 3.9: National Knowledge sharing event <i>(NEW OUTPUT)</i> <i>(Project Extension period activity)</i>	National Knowledge sharing event conducted with 141 participants	National Knowledge Sharing Event Report)	

Annex 3: Documents Reviewed

Project documentation:

Title of Document			
1	Project Document for UDF-19-859-NEP	11	WoMEF establishment report
2	Final Narrative Report (FNR)	12	All event reports
3	Project Closure Checklist	13	Rapid Assessment of Municipality Report
4	Final Financial Utilization Report (FFUR)	14	Policy Brief
5	Narrative Progress Report (NPR M2)	15	MoUs with Municipalities
6	Desk Study Report	16	Guidelines for Citizens Report card
7	Rapid Capacity Assessment Report	17	CRC Report synopsis
8	Training Manual for mobile trainers	18	CRC handbook
9	All concept notes for various interventions	19	Various Event and Workshop Reports
10	WoMEF lists	20	Project Learning document

Other documents:

Musahars on the Margins in Nepal: Global Voice. 2022.

<https://globalvoices.org/2022/02/03/musahars-on-the-margins-in-nepal/>

Representation of the Citizens in Nepali Local Governments through the Elected Dalit Women Leaders. Open Journal of Social Sciences. Vol.11 No.10, October 2023

Nepal Administrative Staff College [NASC]. (2022) – UN Women. Local Governance, Gender Responsive and Socially Inclusive Public Finance Management: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices. Mapping Individual And Institutional Capacities Of Local Government Functionaries In Gender Responsive And Social Inclusion Planning And Budgeting In Three Provinces Of Nepal https://nepal.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Survey%20book%20_Final%20%281%29.pdf

Annex 4: Schedule of Interviews

Kathmandu			
July 7, 2024			
1	Narendra Joshi	Executive Director	SAP-Nepal
2	Janak Karki	Program Coordinator	SAP-Nepal
3	Archana Chaudhary	M&E officer	SAP-Nepal
4	Rukmani Karki	Finance Officer	SAP-Nepal
Chandranagar			
July 8, 2024			
5	Raj Kumar Mahato	Chief Executive	Chandranagar Municipality
6	Pachu Majhi	Secretary – National Musahar Association	
7	Ritu Raj Rishi –	Chairperson Musahar Association (District level)	
8	FGD	10 participants from Musahar community (Female)	
Barathwa			
July 9, 2024			
9	Kalpana Kumari Katuwal	Mayor	Barathwa Municipality
10.	Ram Babu Prasad	Deputy Mayor	Barathwa Municipality
11.	FGD	23 participants from Musahar community (Female)	
12	FGD	10 participants from Musahar community (Male)	
Basbariya			
13.	Sarita Kumari	Deputy Chair	Basbariya Municipality
14.	FGD	8 participants from Musahar community (Female)	
Haripur			
10.07.24			
15.	Binay Paudel	Chief Information Officer	Haripur Municipality
16.	Ashok Kumar Thapa	Social Development officer	Haripur Municipality
17.	Narayan Pajiyar	Former Ward Chair	Haripur Municipality
18.	FGD	16 participants from Musahar community (Female)	
19.	FGD	9 participants from Musahar community (Mixed)	

Annex 5: Acronyms

CLA	Citizen led accountability
CRC	Citizens Report Cards
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEC	Development Exchange Center Nepal
FFUR	Final Financial Utilization Report
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FNR	Final Narrative Report
Govt	Government
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IDIs	In-depth Interviews
IP	Implementing Partner
LGU	Local government units
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPR	Narrative Progress Report
SAP	South Asia Partnership - Nepal
WoMEF	Women Musahar Empowerment Forum
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund