

Advocacy case studies

Ensuring local budget accountability in Nepal

Country:

Nepal

Themes:

Governance; corruption

Advocacy approaches:

Community mobilisation; educating community members; government budget tracking; social accountability

For a local community to fully benefit from its government's services, it is essential for transparency and accountability to be interwoven in policies and practices. In Nepal, the law says that User Committees should be utilised to ensure community members are properly informed about a project before it begins. User Committees are meant to be fully inclusive of the community and hold overall responsibility for projects within their community.

However, vulnerable people in the community are often excluded from these User Committees, and as a result their voices are not accounted for in this powerful decision-making process for their community. Instead, other elite members of the community who have connections with decision-makers in the Village Development Committees (VDC) and/or the District Development Committees (DDCs) can take control of these User Committees and have excessive influence over the budget and timeline of the projects.

Therefore, Tearfund partner, United Mission to Nepal (UMN), organised training in participatory planning processes for communities in Dhaubadi VDC of the former Nawalparasi district. The training enabled participants to better understand the role of a User Committee and its procedures, and empowered vulnerable community members to be involved in every part of their local User Committee.

As a result, one of the participants of this training, Rupa Rana, returned to her village, empowered vulnerable community members, and together they successfully managed to build a new road for their

village – by securing funds from the VDC and garnering the support of the villagers, who contributed a great deal of time and work to the project.

This community’s transformation of their User Committee to be more inclusive and empowering for everyone in the village has challenged others in Nepal to not tolerate the exploitation of these committees’ project budgets at the expense of the vulnerable.

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