

# MID TERM REVIEW OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD PROJECT IN NEPAL (2013-2017)

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# Preface

The evaluation team would like to thank the Right to Food project team as well as the staff from the strategic partners NFGF, CSRC and RtF network for all their hard work and professional collaboration in the preparations and the implementation of the midterm review process. Our gratitude also goes to all the interviewees for their very constructive collaboration during the evaluation process. We met passionate activists who go out of their way to make a positive change for the landless and for small holder farmers and their families. We hope this evaluation will contribute to the strengthening of the Right to Food project as well as civil society organizations working for the right to food in Nepal.

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## List of abbreviations

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>ADS</b>      | Agricultural Development Strategy                            |
| <b>AF</b>       | Advocacy Forum-Nepal   |
| <b>BBC</b>      | British Broadcasting Corporation                             |
| <b>CSO</b>      | Civil Society Organisation                                   |
| <b>CSRC</b>     | Community Self Reliance Center                               |
| <b>DADO</b>     | District Agriculture Development Office                      |
| <b>DANIDA</b>   | Danish International Development Assistance                  |
| <b>DLRF</b>     | District Land Rights Forum                                   |
| <b>DLSO</b>     | District Livestock Service Office                            |
| <b>FG</b>       | Farmers Group  |
| <b>FGF</b>      | Farmers Group Federation                                     |
| <b>FIAN</b>     | Food First Information & Action Network                      |
| <b>GMO</b>      | Genetically Modified Organism                                |
| <b>HuRENDEC</b> | Human Rights and Environment and Development Center          |
| <b>INSES</b>    | Indreni Service Society                                      |
| <b>IFAD</b>     | The International Fund for Agricultural Development          |
| <b>INGO</b>     | International Non-Governmental Organisation                  |
| <b>IUCN</b>     | The World Conservation Union                                 |
| <b>LIBIRD</b>   | Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development |
| <b>LRF</b>      | Land Rights Forum  |
| <b>M&amp;E</b>  | Monitoring and Evaluation                                    |
| <b>MTR</b>      | Mid Term Review  |
| <b>NFGF</b>     | National Farmers Group Federation                            |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>NGO</b>    | Non-Governmental Organisation                                    |
| <b>NLRF</b>   | National Land Rights Forum                                       |
| <b>NPR</b>    | Nepalese Rupee   |
| <b>OKH</b>    | Okhaldhunga  |
| <b>OM</b>     | Outcome Mapping  |
| <b>PCA</b>    | Partner Capacity Assessment                                      |
| <b>PESOC</b>  | Peace Society Centre   |
| <b>PRIA</b>   | Society for Participatory Research In Asia                       |
| <b>RILTAS</b> | Representation, Inclusion, Legitimacy, Transparency, and Synergy |
| <b>RtF</b>    | Right to Food  |
| <b>RtFN</b>   | National Network on Right to Food                                |
| <b>SAHAS</b>  | Group of Helping Hands   |
| <b>ToT</b>    | Training of Trainers   |
| <b>UNDP</b>   | United Nations Development Program                               |
| <b>USAID</b>  | The United States Agency for International Development           |
| <b>VDC</b>    | Village Development Committee                                    |
| <b>VLRF</b>   | Village Land Rights Forum  |

# Executive summary

This report presents the results of the midterm review of the Right to Food (RtF) project implemented by CARE Nepal from 2013 to 2017. The review aimed at assessing the project's performance against its impact goal and domains of change and to make operational recommendations for the second phase of the project. Outcome mapping was also used as a methodological framework for this Mid Term Review. Data collection tools included focus groups, interviews, reflection workshops and collection of most significant change stories. Respondents included representatives from the impact groups (landless and small holder farmers), strategic partners, beneficiaries of small grant programme, technical partners (LIBIRD), CARE Nepal RtF project team and CARE DK. The main conclusions and recommendations in this executive summary are structured according to the main assessment areas of the midterm review:

**Mobilization and empowerment of the impact groups:** The project has been able to contribute towards a strong expansion of functional farmer groups at community level (up to 400 farmer groups and 182 Village Land Rights Fora (VLRf) in 3 project districts by December 2015). There was evidence of positive change in terms of better relations between group members and local authorities, improved agricultural production, and better chances to access land and agricultural services from government. At the same time, the number of farmer groups who engage in cooperative and climate adaptive farming remains limited. It is also rather difficult to assess the scope of progress in the VLRf (e.g. number of VLRf with renewal of membership, number of households that gained access to land or who got involved in livelihood activities.). Also the number of LRF frontline leaders remains limited as well as their technical capacity to mobilise and support VLRf.

## **Recommendations:**

1. **Regarding NFGF:** There is need to pay extra effort to engage a larger number of farmer groups into cooperative farming and climate adaptive practice. This will require the strengthening of the technical agricultural capacity of the farmer group federation at district and VDC level in order for them to support village level farmer groups more effectively. Lessons from LIBIRD pilot projects and relevant small grant projects could be integrated in any future training or peer learning programmes. It was observed that such support can contribute to economic benefits for the farmer group members due to improved agricultural production. This can motivate farmers to pay a membership fee which could become part of an exit scenario towards the financial sustainability of the NFGF whose staff based mobilisation and support system is now still too much dependent on project funding. The small grant scheme should be continued but needs to promote projects that have a direct contribution to the objectives of the project (e.g. scaling up climate adaptive practices among impact group).
2. **Regarding CSRC and LRF:** Within the current number of VLRf covered by the project, there is need to monitor more systematically those progress markers that show change in relation to accessing land through different mechanisms (e.g. accessing land through different access strategies, engagement in livelihood activities, filing cases with local authorities) and progress markers related to engagement in livelihood activities. This will help the project to estimate the number of VLRf where positive change can be observed and to better analyse the effectiveness of the support provided through the strategic partners. In view of future sustainability of the LRF it will be important for the project to pay specific attention towards enhancing the capacity of the DLRf. Appropriate training programs need to be developed for district staff and front line leaders with suitable learning materials that illustrate examples of good practices from the first phase that were effective

in engaging local authorities in prioritizing land issues or to enhance livelihood enhancing activities among VLRf.

**Lobby and Advocacy of duty bearers:** The project through its strategic partners has been able to contribute to important positive changes both in the formulation of new policy as well as the implementation of existing policy related to agriculture and access to land (e.g. inclusion of the right to food in the new constitution). There is evidence that these changes in national policy provide the project's strategic partners with a strong basis to assist the impact group to claim their newly acquired rights as stipulated by these new policies.

**Recommendations:**

3. The current mix of advocacy strategies within a joint action plan which include both cooperative and non-violent protest action implemented in a complimentary way by the three strategic partners and also jointly with other organisations should be maintained in the second phase
4. Supporting the strategic partners in developing and implementing their joint advocacy plans will need to be an important priority during the second phase of the project. Some interesting practices from the first phase could be documented and included as specific examples in guidelines or manuals for effective advocacy work.
5. For the CARE Nepal RtF project team to be able to effectively support the strategic partners in strengthening their advocacy capacity, there will also be need for the team to strengthen its own advocacy capacity. The team's advocacy experts could work out a practical advocacy manual that could be used by other team members and strategic partners.

**Capacity development of strategic partners**

Both CSRC and NFGF have made strong progress in all the measured indicators in the three capacity assessment tools used in the project. Progress for RtFN as measured by the capacity assessment tools has been less pronounced. At the same time a traditional organizational capacity development approach may not do justice to the more complex loose network structure of the RtFN. The gender related progress markers receive the lower scores within the three strategic partners.

**Recommendations:**

6. With CSRC having reached the maturity stage in its organisation's growth cycle and the LRF still in its growth phase, it may be more effective for the project to engage directly with the LRF to support its capacity development.
7. Continued effort towards the empowerment of women will need to remain a working point in the second phase of the project. Particular focus could go to the exploration by the project team and its strategic partners of suitable facilitation techniques that can help women members of farmer groups and land right groups to speak out and actively take part in meetings and decision making processes.
8. Given its specific network structure and challenges observed in relation to capacity development it may be advisable to consider the RtFN as a collaborating or implementing partner. RtFN could then receive financial support when they develop and implement specific campaigns that can contribute to policy change as envisaged by the project. Some limited 'non-activity based' funding could be considered to help sustain its organizational functioning during the second phase of the project and to help RtFN to work on its own exit scenario.

**Monitoring, Accountability and Learning:** The project's strong investment and progress in the implementation of outcome mapping has been remarkable. There is strong evidence that outcome mapping has contributed to a more in-depth development of the project's theory of change and has strengthened results based monitoring with strong participation from the project team and the strategic partners.

**Recommendations**

9. There is need to simplify, where possible, the current monitoring system. This could be done by reprioritizing progress markers and monitoring tools.
10. To help the analysis as well as the reporting of the results there is need to explore different ways of visualising change over time for specific progress markers. The midterm review has done some suggestions to that effect which could be useful for the project to adopt or adapt in the second phase that were shown to need particular focus during the mid-term review.

## 1 | Introduction and background

This report presents the results of the midterm review of the Right to Food (RtF) project implemented by CARE Nepal from 2013 to 2017. The midterm review has the following overall objectives:

- To assess the project's achievements and analyze project's performance against impact goal and domains of change
- To make clear and operational recommendations for the second phase of the project.

This introductory chapter gives a brief overview of the background and context of the project as well as the project's theory of change and its operationalization through the development of an outcome mapping based monitoring and evaluation framework.

### 1.1 Background

The Right to Food (RtF) project is a six-year civil society support project that has been implemented by CARE Nepal since 1 July 2013 with the financial support from DANIDA through CARE Denmark. The project has a national coverage but has extensively been working in Siraha, Udayapur and Okhaldhunga districts.

Compared to the other projects implemented by CARE Nepal, the RtF project is rather unique in the sense that the project follows a rights based approach with a strong focus on lobby and advocacy of government actors and on mobilising the impact groups (small holder women farmers and landless) to claim their rights for better service delivery or access to land from local authorities. Furthermore, CARE Nepal is not the main implementing organization but collaborates with and supports three local civil society organisations who are the strategic partners in the project and who take the lead of the advocacy and mobilization work as part of their own strategic plans.

Halfway its lifetime the project finds itself in a context that offers important opportunities but also poses some considerable challenges for civil society to engage in rights based approaches and policy influence through lobby and advocacy. On the one hand there has been the inclusion in the new constitution (2015) of the right to food as one of the fundamental rights. The new constitution also provides power to the State to implement land reform programmes in favour of poor, landless and Dalit farmers. On the other hand, government continues to favour the work of INGOs that focuses on 'hardware' (e.g. infrastructure, medicines, services) above 'software'

like activities (e.g. advocacy activities, rights based programming, capacity building, awareness raising,). And INGOs are asked to stick to the 60% (hardware) to 40% (software) ratio across their programmes. Also USAID’s civil society sustainability index report (February 2016) reports that civil society in Nepal is in an ‘evolving phase’ (see figure xxx below) characterized by challenges regarding internal democracy, transparency and accountability as well as organizational capacity, service provision, financial viability, infrastructures and public image, but with more favourable scores for advocacy and legal environment.

Figure 1.1 2014 CSO sustainability scores for Nepal (USAID CSO sustainability index report, february 2016)

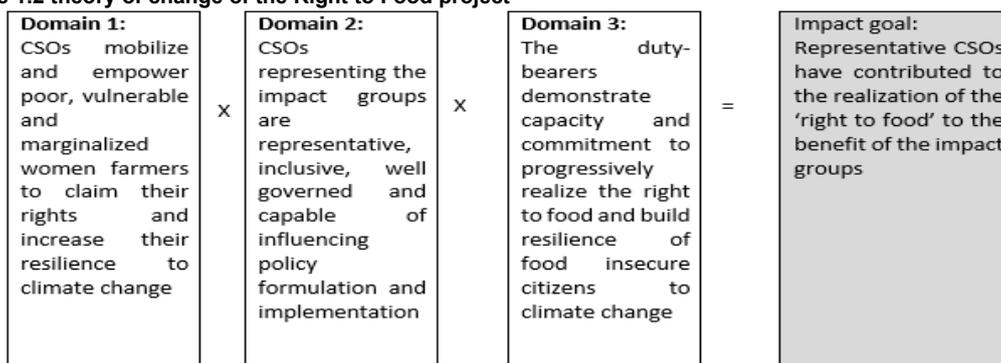


## 1.2 Theory of change of the Right to Food project

The project’s theory of change is summarised in figure 1 below. At an impact level, the project seeks to contribute to the realization of the ‘right to food’ to the benefit of the impact groups. These include **poor and marginalized women farmers**. This includes those who either have a small piece of land (less than 0.2 hectares), tenants or landless. Among them Dalits, Janajatis, female headed households and youth who are often more vulnerable.

In order to contribute towards its impact goal, the project seeks to achieve positive change in the three domains shown in figure 1.1: mobilization of impact groups by CSOs so they can claim their rights and become more resilient to climate change (domain 1), strengthening the capacity of CSOs (i.e. three strategic partners) to become more effective as key change agents in the mobilization of impact groups and in influencing policy formulation and implementation (domain 2). It is assumed that the positive change in domains 1 and 2 will help to contribute towards duty-bearers demonstrating capacity and commitment to progressively realize the right to food and build resilience of food insecure citizens to climate change (domain 3).

Figure 1.2 theory of change of the Right to Food project



CARE collaborates with the following local CSOs as strategic partners in the project:

1. NFGF (National Farmers Group Federation), established only a few years ago, represents small-holder farmers with the objective to voice their concerns and claim their rights from duty bearers.
2. CSRC (Community Self-Reliance Center) was established in 1993 and is today a well-established NGO in Nepal with a mission to empower land-poor women and men to claim basic rights, including rights to land resources.
3. RtFN (The Right to Food Network) is a loose network established in 2007 that seeks to promote the right to food as a human right in Nepal.

Annex 5 explains how the project’s theory of change was operationalized using an OM based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework.

## 2 | Methodology

### 2.1 Evaluation framework

Given the fact that the Right to Food project is using outcome mapping as planning, monitoring and evaluation approach it was decided to also use outcome mapping as a methodological framework for this Mid Term Review. In line with the principles of outcome mapping the methodology for the Mid-term review sought **active participation** from a diversity of programme stakeholders and aimed at promoting **collaborative learning** allowing different perspectives to enrich the learning process. The collaborative reflection on the change process of the different actors as well as the effectiveness of programme strategies is considered instrumental to ensure that the results of the mid-term review are useful for guiding the second phase of the programme. The methodology was finalized in close collaboration with the CARE Nepal project team and involves the following phases.

#### 2.1.1 Preparatory phase: Initial assessment of the project's theory of change through a review of existing programme documents.

During a preparatory phase the available project documents, activity and monitoring reports (e.g. outcome journals), outcomes of review meetings as well as research reports. This resulted in an initial tentative 'secondary' analysis of the reported change within the different actors that the programme is seeking to influence directly (i.e. partner organizations and boundary partners) as well as indirectly (the impact groups). It allowed the review team to analyze to what extent, according to the existing monitoring information, the programme was able to influence these changes. Furthermore the secondary analysis also allow the reviewers to an initial assessment of the extent in which insights from the current monitoring and evaluation system are used by the project to reflect on the usefulness and effectiveness of programme strategies and to what extent these are used to inform future planning.

The preparatory phase involved several skype meetings with members of the project team to discuss preliminary findings of the document review, to prepare for the inception workshop and to develop a draft agenda for the fieldwork. An **inception note** with the results of the preparatory phase was developed and was used as a basis for discussion during the inception meeting with the project team and project stakeholders at the beginning of the field visits.

#### 2.1.2 Data collection and data analysis phase during the fieldwork

The reconstructed theory of change, discussed during the inception workshop, guided the data collection process during the field visits as well as data analysis in collaboration with the project team. It provided a basis to determine together with the programme team who needed to be engaged in the mid-term review process and in what way. The table below provides an

overview of the actors who were involved in the data collection process as well as the methods used for data collection and analytic frameworks that were used to inform data analysis.

| Actor   | Data collection method  | Analytic framework <sup>1</sup>   |
|---|---|---|
| Partner organizations of CARE Nepal (CSRC, NFGF, RtFN)                          | Inception workshop<br>Restitution workshop,<br>Interviews,<br>Focus groups    | Partnership capacity assessment tool;<br>dialogue tool with progress markers on specific priority capacities.<br>Evaluation questions TOR |
| Boundary partners   | Field visits, Focus groups, Face to face interviews, Most Significant Change, | Progress markers and learning questions from outcome journals<br>Evaluation questions TOR   |
| Impact groups ( <i>members of farmer groups and village land forum groups</i> ) | -Field visits<br>-Focus groups<br>-Most significant change                    | Vision statement<br>Evaluation questions TOR  |
| CSOs benefiting from small grants   | -Focus groups   | Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency of small grant mechanism. Evaluation questions TOR   |
| CARE Nepal programme team + CARE DK rep   | - Inception and restitution workshop,<br>Interviews, Focus groups,            | Strategy maps,<br>Evaluation questions TOR  |
| Implementation partners on climate adaptive practice (LIBIRD)                   | -focus group  | Evaluation questions TOR<br>Progress markers of farmer groups   |

A purposeful sampling approach was used to select the farmer groups and the land right forum groups for the group interviews during the field visit by the consultant. Six groups were selected in such a way that they could be visited within the limited time available and that all group categories were represented (i.e. a groups showing strong progress, B groups showing medium progress, and C groups showing low progress). The A, B and C categories are determined by the project team based on the average of the different progress marker scores obtained during the last monitoring cycle (June 2015). Before the consultant's field visit, two students on attachment with CARE Nepal also collected most significant change stories form 6 farmer groups and 6 land right forum groups while they accompanied the CARE Nepal team during their routine field visits. An overview of all the respondents who participated in the Mid-Term review is provided in Annex 4.

### 2.1.3 Agenda of the field work in Nepal

18 April 2016:

- Morning: arrival Kathmandu
- Afternoon: Inception workshop

19 April 2016:

- Workshop with NFGF staff. (at NFGF office)

20 April 2016:

- Morning: Workshop with CSRC (CSRC office)

<sup>1</sup> During the analysis and the collective sensemaking, we also drew upon existing analytic frameworks that relate to specific questions from the TORs: e.g. the different result levels for lobby and advocacy from Keck and Sikkink (2008), the WWF partnership toolbox to reflect on partnerships, outcome mapping usefulness framework (Van Ongevalle et al., 2013).

- Afternoon: Meeting with RtF network (all peasants farmers office)
- 21 April 2016:
- (Morning) Travel to Gaighat, Udayapur;
  - (Afternoon) meeting with INSES (Small grant partner) in Gol Bazar
- 22 April 2016
- (9 AM to 3 PM): Visit of 3 different village land rights forum (1 each from category A, B and C) at Udayapur district.
  - (3 to 5 PM): Meeting with small grant partners in Gaighat, Udayapur.
- 23 April 2016
- (8-9 AM): meeting with LIBIRD in Lahan
  - (9AM to 3 PM): Visit of 3 different farmer groups at Siraha district. (1 each from category A, B and C).
- 24 April 2016: Return to Kathmandu
- 25-26 April 2016: Training outcome mapping for CARE Nepal project staff
- 27 April 2016
- Morning: Restitution workshop
  - Afternoon: departure for Brussels

## 2.2 Limitations of the methodology

To a large extent, the methodology of the midterm review makes use of existing monitoring information which has been collected by the project's strategic partners and their boundary partners as well as by the RtF project team. Hence the quality of the analysis is to a certain extent determined by the quality of the available monitoring data. The quality of the analysis was strengthened however by actively involving the project team and the strategic partners into a critical reflection about the monitoring data during the reflection workshops. This helped to promote the utilization of the conclusions and recommendations of the midterm review process. Furthermore, the collection of primary data during the interviews with impact groups and various project stakeholders, allowed the midterm review team to triangulate certain conclusions using different data collected from different data sources (existing monitoring data, responses from impact groups, responses from strategic partners and responses from project staff).

This midterm review methodology does not claim statistical representativeness of the findings across the impact groups or boundary partners given that full random sampling wouldn't have been possible with the limited means that were available for the review exercise. However, by seeking as much variation as possible in the selection of impact groups, some level of qualitative representativeness could be ensured.

Finally, given the limited time available for the field visits, the methodology for interacting with the impact groups didn't allow for elaborate work in small groups. This may have limited the active participation of all group members in the group interview. This may partly explain why in some groups only a minority of the women were able to speak. This was addressed to some extent by splitting the groups in to two subgroups during most of the group interviews. At the same time even size of the subgroups was not optimal to promote active interaction with all group members.

## 3 | Key findings on the progress of the Right to Food project

### 3.1 Mobilization and empowerment of the impact groups (domain 1)

In order to track progress over time in relation to their mobilization strategy NFGF and CSRC developed progress markers that describe the change process they hope to support at the level of the farmer groups and land right fora at village, district and national level. For the purpose of the midterm review we tried to develop a trend analysis for the various progress markers based on the available monitoring information from the various year reports, Excel cumulative outcome journal database and other project documents as well as data collected during the field visits. In the sections below we use this trend analysis to analyse progress and points of attention regarding the mobilisation and empowerment of the impact groups.

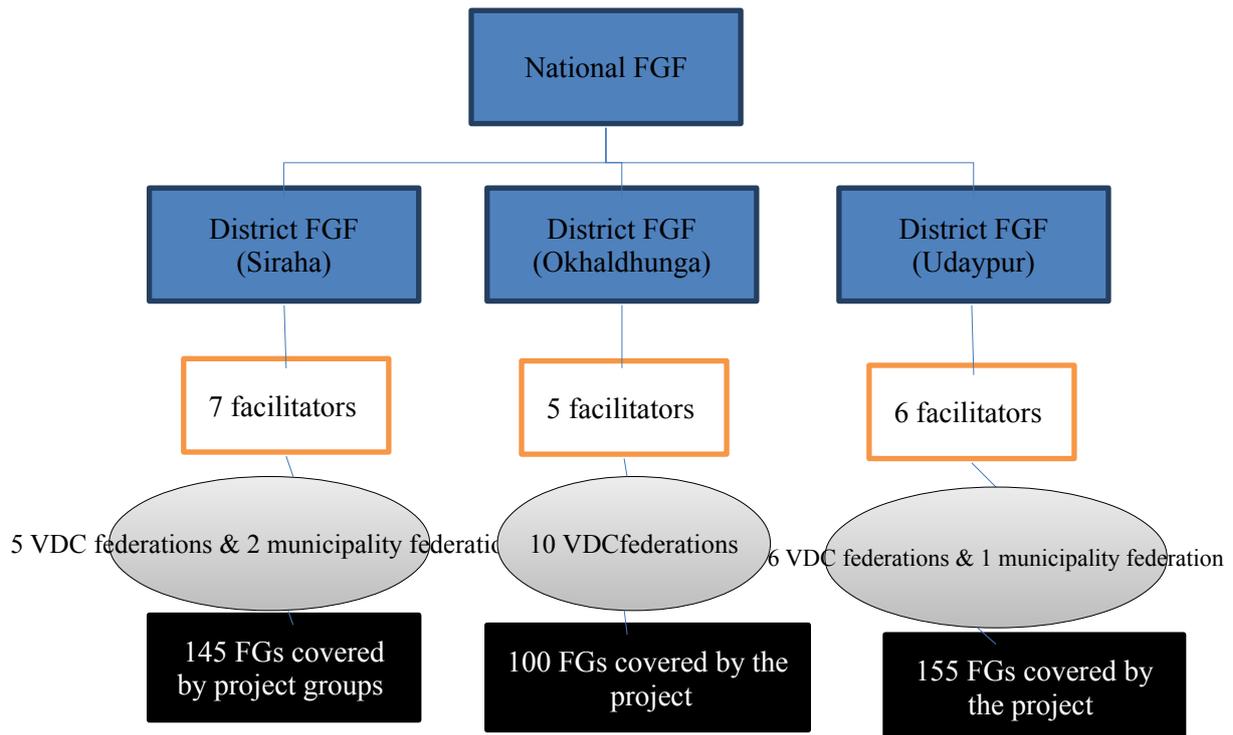
#### 3.1.1 Mobilisation of farmer groups – analysis of progress so far

Mobilisation of the NFGF affiliated farmer groups and their organisation into VDC and district level federations happens mainly through the NFGF’s facilitators (previously called the local resource persons) and the NFGF district committees. The NFGF district committee includes farmers representing the VDC federations. Each district committees is supported by the NFGF district officer who is paid by the project. According to the annual monitoring reports, mobilisation strategies involve regular meetings, training (e.g. leadership training) and the encouragement of farmers to participate in activities of local governments and other



stakeholders. Figure 3.1 below gives an overview of the number of NFGF facilitators in each of the project districts as well as the number of VDC’s and farmer groups that they follow up. According to information provided by NFGF staff during the field visit there were 400 farmer groups in the project, affiliated to NFGF and federated in 27 VDC level federations. .

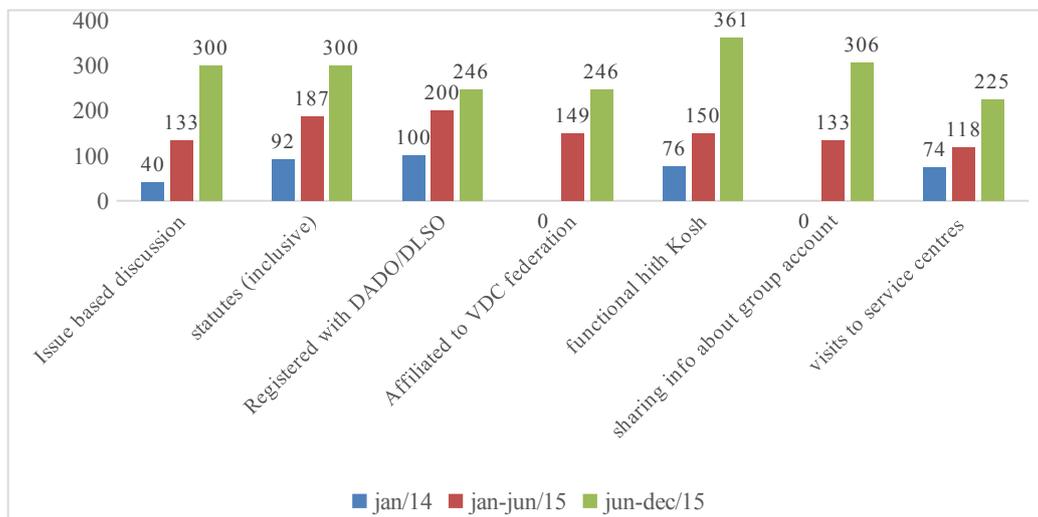
**Figure 3.3** overview of NFGF organogram with numbers of project farmer groups in the three project districts.



Source: reconstructed based on information received by NFGF staff during field visit.

The graphs below show the progress in the mobilization of small holder farmers based on observed changes in the progress markers of the farmer groups.

**Figure 3.4** Farmer Groups - Expect to see Progress Markers



**Figure 3.5 Farmer Groups - Like & love to see Progress Markers**

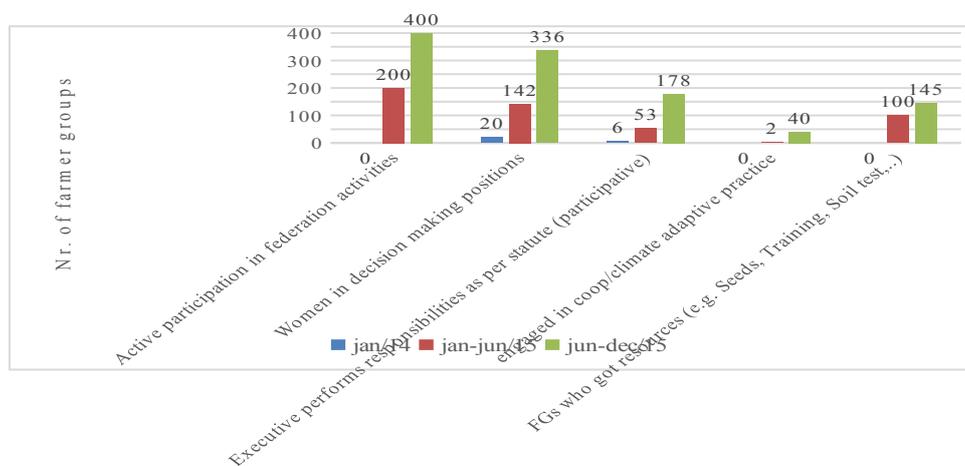


Figure 3.2 and 3.3 illustrate the following strengths and challenges in relation to the mobilization of the farmer groups at community level which were also observed during the field visits.

### 3.1.1.1 Strengths

i. **Impressive expansion of functional NFGF affiliated farmer groups and their mobilisation into VDC level and district level federations:**

The project has been able to contribute towards a strong expansion of functional farmer groups at community level (up to 400 farmer groups covered under the project). This is evidenced by the increasing numbers over time of farmer groups that demonstrate visible progress for the ‘expect to see’ progress markers related to farmer group structural functionality, e.g.:

- Having regular discussions about agricultural issues, (300 groups)
- Have statute that is inclusive and have more than 50% women representation (300 groups).
- Registered with DADO/DLSO which is essential for the groups to be able to successfully apply for agricultural support from local authorities (246 groups). Interviews with the farmer groups learned that their affiliation with NFGF helped them to receive technical training as well as access the necessary information about the registration process and appropriate channels to apply for support services. This helped them become more confident and successful in making their claims with the local authorities. This is illustrated by the testimony below:

▪ *“Before the intervention of NFGF in the farmer group she had not even seen the DADO nor heard of it or the facilities it offered. After the intervention of the project she has been able to speak her mind and she now regularly visits the DADO to gain information about upcoming services and she has received subsidized cereal seeds and free vegetables seeds from doing the advocacy.”*  
 (Manju Dhamala, Suryamukhi Farmer Group)

- 246 groups being federated at Village Development Committee (VDC) level. Also the three NFGF district federations are functional in the three project districts.
- Majority of farmer groups manages a group savings account (Hith Kosh) and communicates transparently about the account with members (361 and 306 groups respectively).

The non-political nature of the NFGF, its specific focus on small holder and poor farmers, the provision of useful services (e.g. different technical trainings, advocacy for services from local authorities,) and the fact that the leadership is made up of volunteers and farmers, helps to explain the strong results in the mobilization of the farmer groups. This provides NFGF with an added value in comparison with other farmer organisations (e.g. associations of tea or coffee producers), farmers wing of political parties and NGO sponsored groups from whom they face stiff competition.

- ii. **Growing representation of women:** There are strong indications that there is growing participation of women within the farmer groups through their membership, participation in group activities and taking up decision making positions (336 groups).
- iii. **Participation in NFGF activities:** By December 2015, all 400 farmer groups have also been actively participating in the activities organized by NFGF. Furthermore monitoring reports show that representatives of most groups have been participating in VDC level council, district council and service center level coordination committees. They have also been involved in various programs organized by different organizations.
- iv. **Growing ability to claim agricultural services and inputs from local authorities:** There is evidence that the farmer groups after being registered become more successful in their application for agricultural support from the government authorities. The monitoring reports show that the NFGF farmer groups are starting to find their way to the government service centres (225 groups) where an increasing number (145 groups) has managed to receive different services (small irrigation, seeds, technical support, training, mushroom seed,...).
- v. **Evidence of impact for individual members of the farmer groups:** Through the collection of ‘most significant change stories’ from individual members of different farmer groups (6 stories collected from 6 different farmer groups) and group interviews with three farmer groups who were not involved in the story collection, insights could be obtained about the impact of the project on individual members of the farmer groups. The main visible changes can be categorized according to the following three interlinked domains of change:
  1. **Self-empowerment:** The feeling of becoming more empowered surfaces in the large majority of the stories and interviews. This is evidenced by the fact that farmers, before becoming a member of the farmer group, were too shy to approach government staff at VDC and service centres and therefore would also not apply for services that they are entitled to. Some even mention that the education they received by the farmer group federation about their rights made them feel empowered, as they now know where to go to and what to ask for. The majority of respondents also refer to the fact that they have become more respected by government officials as well as by fellow community members and even within their own households.
    - *‘Before Galo Wati Chaudhary started farming no one knew her. However, now her successful vegetable farming has made her a respected member of the community. A local radio station even asked her for an interview. Beforehand*

*she always had to ask her husband for money, but now that she makes her own money, she decides for herself on what to use it for and has increased her part of decision-making within the household.’’(Galo Wati Chaudhary, Srijan Kalyan Farmers Group, Siraha district)*

2. **Broader livelihood options:** Gaining technical agricultural skills was considered as an important added value of being a member of the NFGF affiliated farmer groups (e.g. how to make local pesticides, off-season vegetable gardening techniques, growing mushrooms, compost making, new seed varieties ....). It was explained in a majority of the interviews that these skills directly contributed to increased agricultural production and increased income.

○ *‘Although the dryness and lack of electricity in the area where Indra Kumari Phakrin lives, prevents her from becoming a commercial farmer, she still feels the benefits from being part of a farmers group. Whereas before Indra Kumari Phakrin had to buy food 6 months a year, her family now, thanks to her new-found knowledge of improved varieties of paddy, have enough food all year around and she even hands out food to her extended family’’. (Indra Kumari Phakrin, chairperson Jhirhari Farmers Group, Udayapur district)*

### 3.1.1.2 Challenges/points of attention

- i. **Sustainability:** NFGF has employed district project officers at district level and local facilitators in the VDCs to mobilize and empower farmer groups. After having been trained in social mobilization, the facilitators and the district project officers have been very effective in mobilising the farmers as well as in providing them with information. This is evidenced by the fast expansion of functional farmer groups shown in figure 3.2. There is however a challenge of future sustainability of this staff led mobilization model given that it is financed with project money. In view of future sustainability there is need for the farmer group executives and members to take over this staff-led mobilization approach. On the other hand, NFGF is seeking to expand towards other districts and even gets formal requests for such expansion from various district authorities. NFGF has plans to have one person in each district to work as an activist who can link the district to the national and to the VDC level. Activists would get some pocket money but not a full salary. These are interesting options to explore further in the second phase of the project. Given that NFGF is already working in other districts outside the project area, the project can draw on this experience to explore and support specific exit scenarios. Such scenarios could then receive specific support during the second phase of the project. It is important however to keep in mind that NFGF, for it to be able to keep farmers interested to remain member of the NFGF affiliated farmer groups, it will have to be able to continue providing services. So there is need to find a balance between expansion of the federation and the capacity to provide services and support towards its member base (e.g. through information provision, training, advocacy to duty bearers, etc.....). As the federation expands, there may also be need to explore ways to broaden the financial base of the

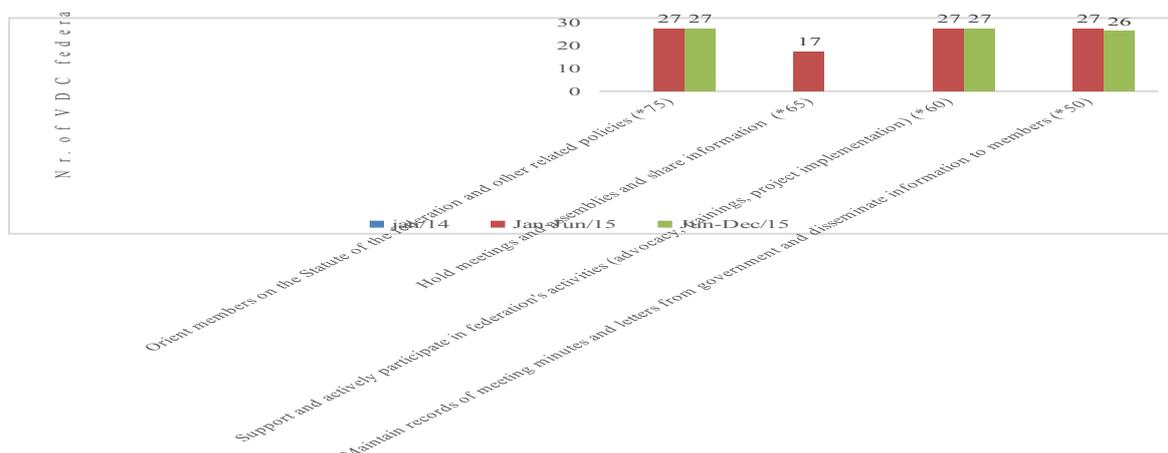
federation, for example through the collection of affiliation fees from the NFGF members. The willingness to contribute such affiliation fee will be determined by the quality and the scope of the services that NFGF will be able to provide.

**ii. Role of the VDC and District level federations in ensuring ongoing support for the farmer groups.**

*VDC level federations*

The internal monitoring reports show that the project managed to achieve its target of establishing 27 VDC level federations and three district level federations (involving 400 farmer groups across the three districts of which 200 are covered by the project). This is an important result that provides an excellent basis for further consolidation of NFGF’s work within the three project districts. This is evidenced by figure 3.3. The figure shows that most of the 27 VDC federations covered by the project show progress within the ‘expect to see’ progress markers which mainly relate to the internal functioning of the VDC federations.

**Figure 3.6 NFGF VDC level federations – expect to see progress markers**



\* Source: outcome journal NFGF – VDC federations (June-Dec 2015). (\*the numeric values highlighted on the horizontal axis for each of the progress markers represents the % score given by the project team during the June 2015 reporting cycle)

However, from the available monitoring information in the outcome journal it is difficult to quantify (and hence analyse over time) the information of the ‘like’ and ‘love to see’ progress markers which relate to important services that the VDC federations can provide towards the farmer groups they represent. Table 3.1 below illustrates an extract from the outcome journal showing the monitoring information for the like and love to see progress markers for the VDC federations for the reporting period of June-Dec 2015.

**Table 3.1 Extract outcome journal NFGF – VDC federations (June – Dec. 2015)**

| Like to see progress marker   |   |
|---|---|
| Conduct regular discussion with NGOs, Govt and political parties in VDC and municipality level on agricultural/farmers issues as required | <b>IN Udayapur :</b> In total 20 representatives from VDC federation have been participate to discussion with NGOs, Govt and political parties in VDC and municipality level on agricultural/farmers issues and discussed on VDC council also. <b>IN Siraha :</b> VDC federations of Siraha has discussed with political parties and VDC office about the mobilization of agriculture budget and Karjanha VDC has discussed and submit the paper to DDV for agri-product collection center <b>IN OKH:</b> VDC member of OKH have been discussed with VDC secretary of Bilandu, Harkapur, moii and disused with service center in Nisankhe (20person). <b>Follow up:</b> <i>Orientation to VDC federation about issues based campaign skill.</i> |
| Represent in VDCs/municipalities committees/agriculture and forest environment committees   | Agriculture, forest and environment committees has formed only in katri of Udayapur and 3 person from VDC federation also represent. The committee has not formed in siraha. <b>IN OKH</b> committee is already formed but representation of VDC level federation not yet but member of VDC federation are engaged. <b>Follow up:</b> <i>VDC &amp; District federation chairpersons &amp; DPO need to raise this agenda to the concerned officials in the district regularly and central federation also need to raise policy level advocacy in center</i>  |
| Love to see progress marker   |   |
| Have access to budget available in VDCs/municipalities on agro activities   | Access to budget available in VDCs/municipalities on agro activities and mobilization has been started. <b>In Udhayapur:</b> VDC federation have been mobilized RS 842200 through 46 groups in udhayapur. <b>IN siraha:</b> VDC federation (10) have been mobilized RS 636000 through different groups in siraha. <b>IN OkH:</b> Different groups of okh have been received tunnel, mobile fund, seed and plant through the recommendation of Taluwa, Diyale, bilandu and katunje. <b>Follow up:</b> Regular lobbying to be done under the leadership of District Federation Chairperson with technical support of DPO.   |
| Have access to service mobilization available in Service center on agro activities  | Access to service mobilization of VDC Federation has been started in Service center on agro-activities. Involvement of VDC federation in the meeting of service center have been started. <b>Follow up:</b> Regular lobbying to be done under the leadership of District Federation Chairperson with technical support of DPO.  |

While the outcome journal reports examples of VDC federations being engaged in some of the activities described by the progress markers, the information does not allow to quantify how many VDCs are actually demonstrating such engagement. This makes it challenging to analyse the effectiveness of VDC federations in facilitating regular discussions with various stakeholders or representing farmers in various committees. It makes it also difficult to analyse their role in facilitating access to agriculture budget from VDC/municipalities and service mobilisation from service centres.

#### *District level federations*

As was the case with the VDC federations, there is concrete progress in the development of the organizational structure of the district level farmer group federations (see annex 1 with outcome journal June-Dec 2015 of the district farmer group federations). There is also notable progress in the district's federations providing

information towards VDC federations and farmer groups about available resources at the level of district authorities (e.g. publication of agriculture information booklet). This access to information was highly appreciated by all the farmer groups that were interviewed during the field visit. There is also evidence of the Udayapur district farmer group federation organizing awareness raising activities during the ‘food day’ celebrations and Siraha district federation playing a lead role in the more equitable distribution of wheat seed by DADO. All three district federations also organised training workshops for the VDC federations. From the monitoring information it seems that these workshops mainly relate to the working and policy of the federation. There is however limited information in the outcome journals about the scope of these trainings (e.g. how many VDC’s were participating,). In addition there is no specific information about the district federation’s involvement in the facilitation of technical training workshops on specific agricultural skills. The availability of such trainings was highlighted during the interviews with the farmer groups as a very important motivational factor for farmers to get affiliated to NFGF. It is therefore advisable to elaborate more in the monitoring reports on the district FGF’s capacity to organize or to facilitate access (for example if they are organized by other actors such as DADO) to such trainings. Finally, the district FGF’s role in the planning processes of local authorities at district level remains limited. Some promising development can nevertheless be observed in Udayapur where the district federation has started to participate in the VDC council meetings. At the same time, no information is available on the outcome of such participation.

**iii. Active participation of women members in meetings and decision making:** There are indications that active participation of women members in the meetings and in decision making remains a challenge in a considerable number of the groups. This is illustrated by the assessment of the following progress marker in figure 3.2, (*the executive performs responsibilities as per statute ensuring active participation by group members*) especially in the newer groups established in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year. From the available monitoring reports it was established that while about 75 % of the 1<sup>st</sup> year groups are participatory, this only applied to around half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year groups and none of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year groups. The challenge of limited active involvement of women was also observed during the focus group interviews during the midterm review where only a small number of women would be able to speak up in public. Of course this could have been influenced by the methodology used during the group interviews which, due to time limitation, didn’t allow women members to discuss specific issues in groups and then bring their points to plenary. Also during the interviews it was explained that decision making in the groups happens on the basis of consensus and if consensus could not be reached that members would make a vote. But it was also mentioned in the three groups interviewed that certain decisions remain difficult to make, especially the allocation of the very limited resources received from local authorities as well as who to select for the trainings offered by NFGF or local authorities. While there is a risk that mainly women in decision making positions in the groups will benefit from these trainings there was also consensus across the three interviews that members who took part in a training would feed back to the group what they had learned. Some women however shared that it would have

been easier if they could read and write so that they could write the things they learned at training and could go through it whenever they needed to. Given the importance accorded to women empowerment by the project there may be need for special attention to be given in the second phase to active participation in the newer groups during support activities as well as during the monitoring process. The project in fact provides a very interesting context to explore and experiment with various facilitation techniques that can help to promote more active participation in decision making processes as well as group activities by a larger number of women members in the farmer groups.

**iv. Limited capacity of local government related to agriculture:** An important challenge that was mentioned during the group interviews was the limited capacity of the local authorities to provide agricultural support. Firstly, there seems to be limited human resource capacity. According to one of the farmer groups there was only 1 service centre with one technician for 7 VDCs. Their VDC alone was encompassing 9 wards and 23 ethnic groups (*Ramjanaki NFGF farmers group, Narhara Regaul-4; Siraha district*). Also the quantity and quality of agricultural inputs or services that can be accessed is limited. All interviewed groups indicated that the inputs that they received would only benefit a very small number of group members. In one case the group only got 5 pockets of seed from ADO which came too late in the farming season. This didn't only pose problems on how to divide these inputs among group members but as was indicated by one farmer group, also posed challenges of farmers from outside the group who were asking access to these inputs. Given the limited capacity of the government to provide agricultural support there is need for the project to ensure that their mobilisation approach is not only aimed at empowering the farmer groups to claim resources from government (which are too limited at the moment) but more so to ensure that they can take initiative themselves to increase their agricultural production (e.g. through technical training, provision of information, etc.....). This also poses questions on the relevance and effectiveness of putting too much focus on lobby and advocacy at local VDC levels given that there is little space for decision making in terms of resource allocation. More impact could possibly be achieved at district level and national levels in terms of advocating for higher resource allocation for agriculture since these are also the levels where decisions can be made. Also the quality of seeds provided by the local authorities was questionable. As discussed in one farmers group, when they got seeds from the DADO after advocating for it, the seed didn't fit their land and they suffered a bad harvest. The group members now seem skeptical about the seeds provided by DADO and were not planning to visit the DADO office for the next agricultural season.

**v. Scaling up collaborative climate adaptive farming practices:** Supporting climate change adaptation is considered as an important objective of the project and has been promoted through NFGF and their partner LIBIRD and SAHAS who specializes in climate change adaptation. The project has achieved considerable progress in piloting different climate adaptive technologies. According to LIBIRDs reports 34 farmer groups involving 856 members participated in the piloting of several of the 12 different climate adaptive technologies explored. Figure 3.5 below provides an overview of the type of technologies and the number of farmer groups involved in piloting them. Evidence of this was also observed in

one farmer group visited during the midterm review. At the same time, the midterm review process could not find convincing evidence that the piloting work by LIBIRD has already resulted in an increased independent uptake of suitable climate adaptive practices by the farmer groups. Figure 3.2 illustrates that by December 2015, only 40 groups have shown some engagement in collaborative climate adaptive practice.

From the available monitoring information it was also difficult to find out what strategies (e.g. training programs or peer learning processes) the project was putting in place to roll out lessons learned from the pilots towards the broader impact group. Furthermore, there was no evidence yet that lessons related to climate adaptive practice that had emerged from the projects funded through the small grants scheme had already been able to inform the project's strategy in relation to promoting climate adaptive practice.

Figure 3.5 Overview of climate adaptive technologies piloted by LIBIRD

| Technologies Intervened |  |          |         |        | Technologies Intervened..   |    |                                     |          |         |        |  |
|-------------------------|--|----------|---------|--------|---|----|-------------------------------------|----------|---------|--------|--|
| SN                      | Technologies                                 | District | Project | Others | Significant benefits  | SN | Technologies                        | District | Project | Others | Significant benefits   |
| 1                       | Grey water collection (cemented and Plastic) | UDP      | 121     | 102    | Reuse waste water. only plastic pond in Lekhani.  | 9  | Integrated Biogas plant             | Siraha   | 12      | 1      | Save fuel and time, clean environment                                  |
| 2                       | Sloppy Ag Land Technology (SALT)             | UDP      | 70      | 20     | Checked soil erosion, improved soil fertility; reduce fertilizer use, fodder for cattle and food for farmer | 10 | Plastic/cemented pond               | Siraha   | 12      | 0      | Reuse waste water for irrigation                                       |
| 3                       | Cattle shed improvement                      | UDP      | 8       | 4      | Cattle urine use to prepare bio pesticides  | 11 | Trade pump                          | Siraha   | 4       | 0      | Small scale Irrigation   |
| 4                       | Fish pond                                    | UDP      | 12      | 2      | Component of home garden.   | 12 | Livestock support with an Insurance | Siraha   | 22      | NA     | Refund cost if loss (7 farmers lost the insurance livestock this year) |
| 5                       | Modern Bee hive                              | OKD      | 17      | 55     | Nutrition and Income generation (NRs 1.2 K per Mana)  |    |                                     |          |         |        |  |
| 6                       | Plastic House                                | OKD      | 21      | 29     | Three crops in a year. produced up to 250 kg i.e. NPR 10 k from a plastic tunnel.                           |    |                                     |          |         |        |  |
| 7                       | Grey water Collection                        | OKD      | 18      | 10     | Use of waste water in irrigation  |    |                                     |          |         |        |  |
| 8                       | Drip Set                                     | OKD      | 18      | 0      | Water efficient upto 75% for irrigation but increased production  |    |                                     |          |         |        |  |



For the second phase it will be important for the project learn more systematically from the results of the pilot projects and analyse what work in what contexts, document important success factors and potential limiting factors. These learnings can then be used to develop mechanisms for upscaling certain technologies that have shown strong potential. From the interviews it was learned that there is high demand among farmers to engage in peer learning processes that would allow them to learn from each other. The project could invest in the exploration and rolling out of suitable peer learning mechanisms such as learning visits, study circles, demonstration plots, development of suitable visual learning materials (e.g. visual posters such as already used by LIBIRD in their current demonstration sites),.... This would allow the project to make a stronger contribution towards broader climate adaptive farming practices. **It will also provide CARE and its partners with an opportunity to position themselves as expert organisations in the vulgarization and promotion of climate adaptive farming practice.** The effectiveness of horizontal learning processes in the form of learning visits is illustrated in the following testimony:

- o *“one family who is not part of our farmer group is now preparing a biogas plant after seeing it in operation here. The work of our group has also stimulated other members of the village to set up their own groups. Before there were only 3 groups but now there are 8 of them. Getting the opportunity to exchange with other farmers is very interesting. During a field visit organized by LIBIRD we were inspired by the extent to which the women we met during the field visit were much more outspoken than us although they lived in a hilly area where there were more hardships than in*

*our area. This helped us to become more confident of ourselves. (extract from group interview with women farmers from Ramjanaki NFGF farmers group, Narhara Regaul-4; Siraha district)*



The project could also explore how to involve local authorities, for instance DADO, in promoting and supporting the climate change adaptation activities. LIBIRD can also play an important role in upscaling climate adaptive practice by analyzing and documenting what works in different settings and areas.

They are well placed to document useful information that could be used in extension work to promote climate adaptive practice with other farmers who were not involved in the pilot projects. Such information could include examples of investments that other farmers made towards new climate adaptive technologies and how long it took for them to start benefiting from these investments, what experiences they gained (both good and bad), etc...Also innovative insurance systems could be explored for climate adaptive investments that need some capital investment (e.g. bio harvesters). Such systems could encourage more farmers to invest given that they would enjoy some level of protection in case their investments would fail.

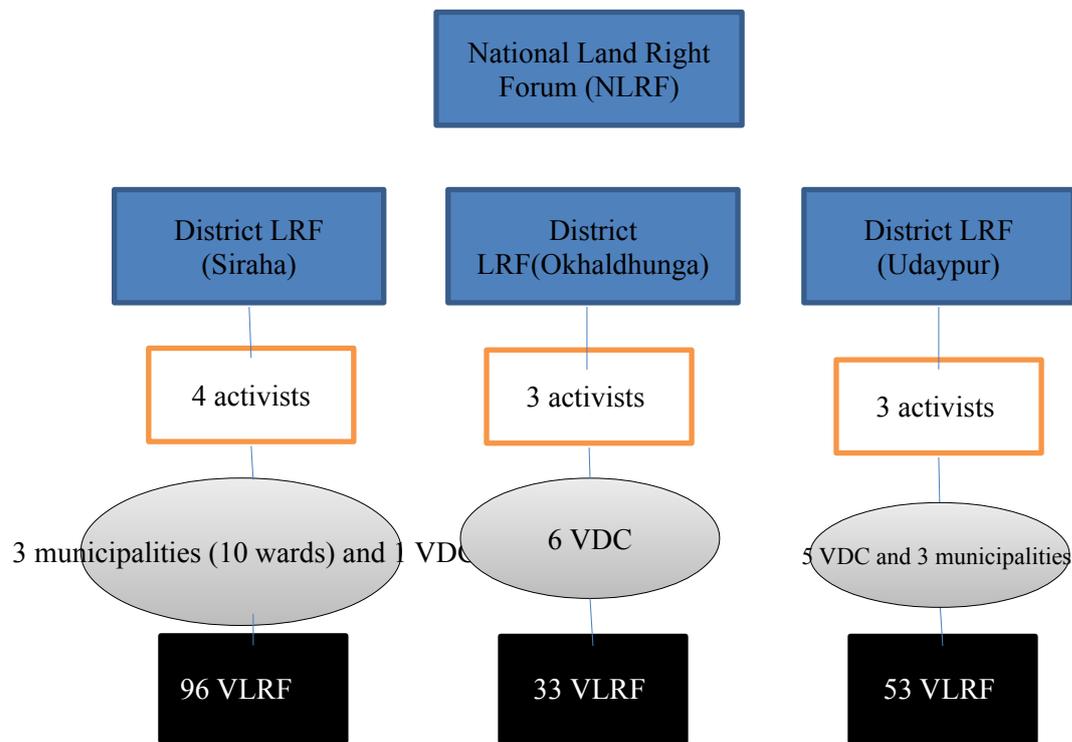
### **3.1.2 Mobilisation of land right groups - analysis of progress so far**

CSRC is implementing its programs in partnership with NLRF and its branches at national, district and community level. The collaboration includes strategic consultation, movement planning, resources mobilization, knowledge generation and application etc. CSRC seeks to support the empowerment of land-poor farmers who through the land right forum can lead a strong non-violent social movement based on democratic and human rights principles that can hold politicians and policy actors accountable. Frontline leaders (i.e. community level volunteers) and activists (i.e. full time staff within the land right forum, who are nominally paid by the project) are the primary vehicle for sensitizing, mobilizing, and motivating land-poor farmers to make them participate in the movement. They also play a critical role in facilitating local level advocacy, lobby and dialogue. Capacity development of activists is an important strategy for CSRC and the land right forum in order to strengthen the movement and to be able to effectively claim the rights of its members.

CSRC's primary target groups are community based Village Level Land Right Fora (VLRf). VLRfs constitute exclusively poor and landless tenants. Strategies to sensitise, mobilise and motivate the VLRf members to actively participate in the movement include land encampments, training, learning exchange visits and national and international exposure. The land encampments organized by NLRF are seen as particularly instrumental for the activists and community leaders to organize and mobilize tillers in the struggle for land and agrarian rights.

Figure 3.6 below gives an overview of the number of LRF activists in the project districts as well as the number of VDC's or municipalities and VLRF groups that they follow up. At the time of the midterm review there were 182 VLRF groups across 12 VDCs and 6 municipalities in the three project districts. In each district, the LRF has one district coordinator and one office secretary.

**Figure 3.6 overview of LRF organogram in the three project districts.**



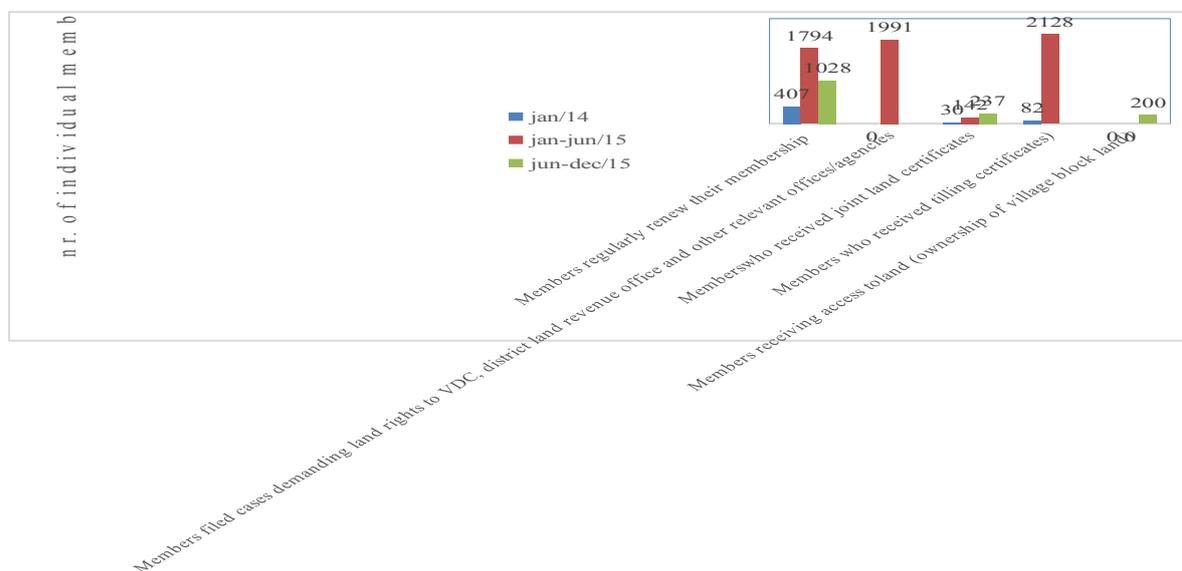
\* Source: reconstructed based on information received by CSRC and LRF staff during field visit.

### 3.1.2.1 Analysis of progress in the mobilization of Land Right Forum groups (VLRF)

The graphs below (fig. 3.7 & 3.8) show progress up to December 2015 in the mobilization of VLRFs based on observed changes in their progress markers. The graphs are made based on the monitoring information in the outcome journal of the VLRF covered by the project. It needs to be said that a trend analysis over time as shown in the graphs could not be done for all progress markers. This is due to the fact that the monitoring information for certain progress markers is rather general without specifying the numbers of VLRF who are showing the change. In other cases the monitoring information mixes numbers of individual members with numbers of VLRF making it again hard to make an analysis over time. An analysis according to the number of VLRF under the project that shows a particular change within the progress markers could have been useful for discussing progress during reflection meetings and for overall project management. Also it might be useful to track the number of additional VLRF that are being established over time. The current monitoring information in the outcome journal didn't provide the necessary information for such trend analysis. In addition it is

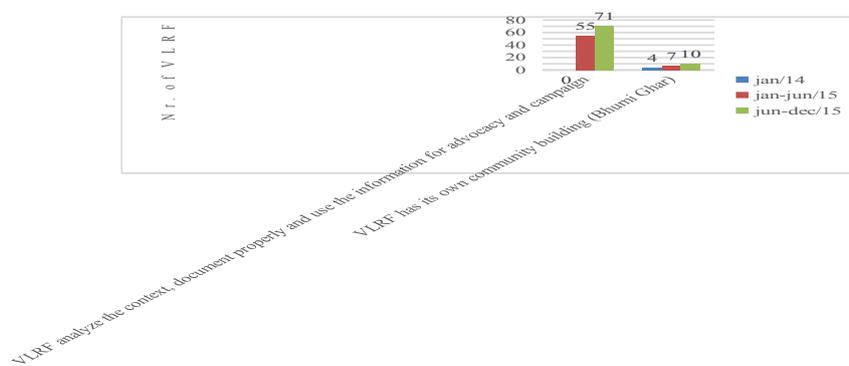
sometimes difficult to figure out if progress for certain progress markers is reported in a cumulative way (building upon the values from previous monitoring cycles) or based on the values recorded during one respective monitoring cycle.

**Figure 3.7 Village level Land Right Forum groups (VLRf): progress according to progress markers (cumulative values)**



\* Source: outcome journal for VLRf - Jan 20114 – Dec. 2015

**Figure 3.8 Village level Land Right Forum groups (VLRf): progress according to progress markers (cumulative values)**



\* Source: outcome journal for VLRf - Jan 20114 – Dec. 2015

**Functionality of the VLRf to advocate for land rights.** The graphs show that considerable progress was achieved in the number of individual members who renew their membership (1794 members in June 2015, up from 405 members in June 2014). At the same time, the graph seems to highlight the challenge of ensuring that members continue to renew their membership. This is illustrated by a decrease in the number of membership renewals (1028 members) in the last monitoring cycle of Dec. 2015 as compared to 1794 members in June 2015. The graphs also illustrate that an increasing number of VLRf is able to help members to claim their right to land. For example, from the June 2015 monitoring cycle it emerged that 1991 VLRf members were able to file land claims. Also, by Dec. 2015, up to 71 VLRf engaged in analysing their context in order to inform advocacy strategies and 10 VLRf have managed to build their own

community building which they use for their group meetings. There is also a notable increase in the number of households that received tilling certificates (up to 2128 households by June. 2015) and up to 237 households who received joint land ownership by Dec. 2015. Also 200 households were in the final stages of getting ownership certificates for village block land.

Reporting about access to land which is an important objective of the project could be improved however in the outcome journal by reporting more clearly and systematically about the different types of access: joint ownership, tilling certificates, ownership of land, ... Currently it is rather difficult to disaggregate and cumulate the numbers of households that received different forms of access to land with information sometimes dispersed or repeated across the journals for VLRf and DLRf. There is also some analysis missing that gives an appreciation if the current achievements are in line with expected progress. As an outsider it is otherwise difficult to judge the significance of the current progress. Such analysis for the three districts could be included in future reports. Given that acquiring formal access to land can be a long and uncertain process it may also be useful to report progress according to some intermediate stages of the process, e.g. submission of application, land measurement,

**Engagement in livelihood activities:** There is also evidence that a growing number of VLRf members are engaging more strongly in diverse agricultural activities (E.g. fish farming, fruit and vegetable farming, broom grass and Napier farming as well as community farming in unregistered and public land. According to the June 2015 report, 44 families from 2 VLRfs have made a profit of 152,000 from growing chilies. Furthermore 450 families are being initiated in commercial farming in the three districts.

**Collaboration with local authorities:** There is evidence of improved relationships between VLRf members and local authorities. This is evidenced by VLRf members in the three districts being more regularly invited to meetings of Ward Citizen Forums. VLRf members are also reported to be involved in leadership positions in various committees at VDC level and above. There is however no information about the number of VDCs where this is the case.

### 3.1.2.2 Evidence of impact for individual members of the VLRf:

Through the collection of ‘most significant change stories’ from individual members of different VLRf groups and through group interviews with VLRf, insights were obtained about the impact of the project on individual members of the impact group. Significant change at impact level was reported around the following areas:

- **Improved relations between VLRf members and local authorities and community members:** Across all the group interviews it was mentioned that being a member of the VLRf had contributed to members being more respected by local authorities and community members and that they can have their voices heard. In the past they would simply be ignored or scolded at. Also when there is conflict with neighbours about land they can now show certificates that proves their entitlement to use the land. This has not only helped to avoid random evictions (even from public land) but has also contributed to neighbours becoming more supportive. Impact in the impact group seems not restricted to the members of the VLRf but also diffuses out to other community members as illustrated by the impact story below related to joint land ownership:
  - “Through a friend that is a member of the Mahila Shasaktikaran land rights forum, she heard about the possibility of getting joint ownership certificates at the local VDC level. She thought that it was an opportunity that she did not

want to miss. Netra Kumari Dhamla shared the information with her husband who was equally enthusiastic about the idea. Before, some of her land was in her husband's name, while some was in her own name. Now they have joint ownership of all the land that they own. Getting the joint ownership certificate has been a great relief for her family as she explains: "It will bring us security in the future for both me and my husband. If one of us die, we will still have the right to all of our land".(Netra Kumari Dhamla, Neighbor to Mahila Shasaktikaran VLRf, Okhaldhunga)

- **Increased empowerment and livelihood options:** Being part of the VLRf and the larger LRF has empowered members to claim and defend their right to land. They feel more united and as a group feel more confident to engage in diverse livelihood activities. Getting more secure access to land opens up more opportunities for engaging in income generating activities which allows them to invest more in the education of the children 'which was a farfetched dream before becoming a members of the VLRf'
  - Lila Maya Dhamala is the member of Sunaulo Pipletar Village Land Rights Forum (VLRf) which has been functioning for the last 3 years. Before her family was solely dependent on the wage that her husband earned as an agricultural laborer. Now after the intervention of the project she grows vegetables on her own and has a big enough harvest to sell part of the vegetables at the nearby market. The trainings that she has received have taught her about vegetable cultivation and about the services that she can claim from the DASO. Last year Lila Maya Dhamala sold tomatoes and cucumbers worth Rs 90,000. The money she now earns means that she no longer has to take credit from local landlords or depend solely on her husband. (*Lila Maya Dhamala, Sunaulo Pipletar VLRf, Okhaldhunga*)

### 3.1.2.3 Contribution of LRF to the reported progress

The interviews with three VLRf groups during the Mid Term Review provided the following feedback from the group members about the strengths and challenges related to the support received from the LRF to advocate for access to land:

#### *Strengths:*

- **Provision of information about land rights** and the procedures to follow to gain access to the land through different channels (applying for tilling certificates, applying for joint land ownership, procedures for land measurement as crucial step to gain land ownership certificates, .).
- **Supporting the groups to engage in concerted action** to claim their rights from local authorities. Across the three groups examples were given of instances where individual members would be turned away by VDC authorities but would be attended to when they engaged as a group with support from LRF (see textbox below).

**Case: claiming land rights through concerted group action:** In Sukumbasi Village Land Right Forum group, three members went to the VDC to deposit the application forms for land settlement after a government announcement that entitled squatters to apply for temporary housing certificates. The VDC authorities however refused to accept the applications and bitter words were exchanged with the VDC executive officer. The day after, the three members returned to the VDC but this time in the

company of the whole VLRG group. It was only thanks to the group mobilization that the VDC officer finally accepted the applications and provided a receipt of submission for which they had to pay 100 roepies. Temporary housing certificates were ultimately received which was seen as a big achievement of the LRF (Interview with SukumbasiVLRG group, Udaypur)

- **Advocate and mediate with government offices on behalf of VLRG.** Across the three VLRG interviewed during the field visit, it was highlighted that improved recognition of the VLRG by government officials is also the result of the fact that the groups can receive back-up from the DLRG if necessary (e.g. in case of evictions or stand-offs with local authorities, ). Also innovative strategies promoted by LRF to facilitate access to land are seen as effective support mechanisms. Examples include the use of temporary housing certificates provided by VDCs (not legally binding but providing some form of land entitlement and protection against eviction). Another example observed was the formal registration of a VLRG group as a ‘tole (settlement) development committee’ at ward level. This allowed VLRG to claim resources from local authorities. Claiming such resources would not be possible as VLRG given that VLRG cannot be officially registered at VDC or district level.

### *Challenges*

- **Balancing growth with adequate support structures:** While the increasing number of VLRG in the three districts is definitely a sign of growing strength of the LRF, ensuring an adequate support system remains a challenge. It was highlighted during the reflection workshop with CSRC and NLRG representatives that the number of frontline leaders remains limited as well as their technical capacity to mobilize and support VLRG. Strengthening the support system in view of the expanding land rights movement will be an important point of attention in the second phase of the project. It’s interesting to note however that most VLRG are able to rely on their own limited resources while the DLRG are more dependent on funds from outside the land rights movement. Given that continued support from the DLRG towards the VLRG will remain essential (e.g. provision of information, training, lobby and advocacy) it will be important for the project to pay specific attention towards enhancing the capacity of the DLRG in order to guarantee its functionality even after the lifetime of the project. The project provides a conducive space for CSRC and the LRF to identify approaches or strategies for group mobilization and advocacy towards authorities that have proven to be particularly effective in claiming access to land and for making an impact to the lives of the VLRG members. These learnings could inform future advocacy campaigns (evidenced based advocacy, helping NLRG, DLRG and VLRG to take up common positions about land issues) but could also be used to produce suitable manuals and guidelines for group mobilization and policy work that are particularly adapted for use by activists and frontline leaders. This could also help to share the knowledge gained in the project area more broadly within the land rights movement.
- **Specific capacity needs around legal expertise and research for evidence based advocacy.** It was highlighted by CSRC staff that legal expertise regarding land issues, the internal research capacity to document field base experiences for more evidence based advocacy as well as the capacity to use different forms of media needed strengthening. These provide potential focus areas for capacity development initiatives during the second phase of the project.
- **Sustaining engagement in the VLRG is a challenge.** It often takes a long time before some kind of access to land is achieved which is often temporary (e.g. tilling certificates, temporary housing certificate,). In some case members may lose hope to

get land and if they get land may become less engaged. Related to this challenge there was a strong demand across the groups for more engagement in livelihood activities next to the advocacy for land rights which remains the main focus of the LRF. In that sense, VLRF members strongly appreciate support from the LRF in mobilizing them to set up saving schemes, community buildings, and cooperative agricultural activities such as community farming, ... During the midterm review there was little reference made by the interview respondents about collaborations between NFGF and LRF in the promotion of these livelihood activities in the VLRF. Such collaboration could be an interesting point of attention during the second phase of the project.

### 3.2 Advocacy of duty bearers in rapid changing context (domain 3)

#### 3.2.1 Analysis of progress related to advocacy of duty bearers

As illustrated by table 3.2 below, the project through its strategic partners has been able to contribute to important positive changes both in the formulation of new policy as well as the implementation of existing policy related to agriculture and access to land.

**Table 3.2 Overview of achievements related to lobby and advocacy of duty bearers by strategic partners (adopted from CARE Nepal 2015 annual report and outcome journals)**

| Partner | CARE input   | Advocacy aim   | Achievements   |
|---------|--|--|--|
| CSRC    | Strategic partner of project: Annual grant was provided on activities and budgets, which are drawn from partner's strategic plan. Other inputs are training, exposure, coaching, review and reflection and feedback. | To organize, mobilize and strengthen rights holders to claim and exercise their land and agrarian rights.<br>To significantly reduce gender inequalities on land ownership by strengthening women rights to land. (CSRC Strategy 2014-2018 ) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborative relationship of NLRF with like-minded organizations such as National Farmers Network, NFGF, Women Rights Forum and National Women Farmers Forum has been further strengthened and expanded.</li> <li>- A total of 1,656 couples have received Joint Land Ownership title covering the area of 476.46 ha of land.</li> <li>- Land Revenue Office, Siraha has removed administration fee to support DLRF Siraha for Joint Land Ownership campaign.</li> </ul>   |
| NFGF    | Strategic partner of project: Annual grant was provided on activities and budgets, which are drawn from partner's strategic plan. Other inputs are training, exposure, coaching, review and reflection and feedback. | To make sure that ADS is smallholders friendly<br>To provide identity card to farmers,<br>To ensure mandatory provision of an agriculture and veterinary technician in every VDC of the country.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The newly adopted ADS has provisioned for identity card to the farmers with classification (high, medium, small holder), establishment of community agriculture service centre in each VDC; provision of peasant commission; restriction on the use of genetically modified seeds; regulation of foreign direct investment in agriculture etc.</li> <li>- Government recognised the need of farmers' ID card and piloted in five districts.</li> <li>- Government decided to place 1 agriculture and 1 veterinary technician in every VDCs of the country.</li> </ul> |
| RtFN    | Strategic partner of project: Annual grant was provided on activities and budgets, which are drawn from partner's strategic plan. Other inputs are training, exposure, coaching, review and reflection and feedback  | To ensure the right to food as fundamental right in upcoming constitution  | As the result of various meeting and workshop with the CA members, joint advocacy (of 3 strategic partners) and media advocacy right to food as a fundamental right has been ensured in the new constitution (section 3 article 36).   |

The inclusion of the right to food as fundamental right in the new constitution and the inclusion of various elements in favour of small holder and poor farmers in the Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) are significant positive changes in the policy framework related to

agriculture and access to land. These changes in national policy also provide the project's strategic partners with a strong basis to assist the impact group to claim their newly acquired rights as stipulated by these new policies. This is evidenced by the number of landless people who, with support of strategic partners, were able to gain access to land (e.g. through joint land ownership, tilling certificates,<sup>2</sup> or who managed to access agricultural services from local authorities (e.g. finances, agricultural inputs, technical advice, compensation from malfunctioning vaccinations).<sup>3</sup> These positive achievements show that the project's strategy to focus its advocacy work at various policy levels (i.e. at National, district and VDC levels) is bearing fruit. Table 3.3 below illustrates some lobby and advocacy activities implemented by the strategic partners.

**Table 3.3 Examples of lobby and advocacy activities implemented by the strategic partners**

- **DLRF<sup>4</sup>, NFGF and RtFN are working closely in all three project districts. The RtFN district chapter members of Udayapur and NFGF Udayapur have demonstrated a good example of joint activity by celebrating World Food Day and campaigning for 15% budget allocation for agriculture (the 15 % allocation has been cancelled since the start of the project). Similarly, NFGF and RtFN are sharing the same office in Okhaldhunga.**
- **Nepali CSOs led by strategic partner RtFN have organised protest rallies against import of Monsanto GMO. The case was carried out in cooperation with lawyers and taken to the Supreme Court, which ordered the government not to import Monsanto GMO.**
- **The impact groups have been involved in identifying issues for advocacy and have also been mobilised for land encampments, rallies and meetings. CSRS has furthermore adopted an approach to advocate by sending hand-written letters to CA members and heads of political parties written by the impact group. Participatory video practitioners have also facilitated impact groups to share their stories and raise issues for advocacy.**
- **The partner's strategic plans can be seen as advocacy plans (CSRC's strategic plan focuses on the advocacy for Land rights issues, NFGF's strategic plan focuses on the advocacy for farmer rights issues and RtFN formed to advocate on right to food issues). In addition to individual advocacy plan, partners developed and implemented a joint advocacy plan. Partners have taken this approach to draw attention of the decision makers. Joint advocacy has been considered as an effective tool to promote joint ownership among the partners. They organised for example joint visits to the power holders and submitted demand letters to the concerned ministries and the policy makers**

While there are some remarkable achievements in relation to lobby and advocacy there are also some challenges related to advocacy capacity as well as contextual factors that will need specific attention during the second phase of the project.

### 3.2.2 Challenges for lobby and advocacy due to contextual factors

- The government has removed the provision that local government should allocate 15% of its budget to agriculture development. While the budget for agriculture has been increased (current fiscal year: NPR 23.28 billion out of total budget of 618.10 billion and last fiscal year: NPR 21.40 billion out of NPR 512.24 billion), the proportion with respect to total

2 A total of 486 families have received 19.83 hectares of land till July 2015 through the advocacy and support of CSRC and NLRF. Of these, 159 families have received land from landowners under tenancy agreement. Other 15 families have received land through the Haliya rehabilitation, whereas 140 were able to get land certificate from the village block land. This enables them to gain access to services like bank loans, electricity etc. (Annual report of CSRC 2014/15). A total of 1,656 couples have received joint land ownership certificate covering the area of 476.46 ha of land. (CARE Nepal annual report 2015, p.32)

3 The district and VDC chapter of NFGF influenced the district and village planning process respectively. As a result, the farmer groups leveraged a total of NPR 2,910,391 (NPR 959,340 in Siraha NPR 504,864 in Okhaldhunga and NPR 1,446,187 in Udayapur) to implement various agriculture activities in VDCs. Similarly, with the facilitation of DLRF and VLRF, a total of 6,121 families were able to access NPR 17,913,773 from VDC, DDC and DADO for agriculture and land related activities such as installation of small water system, rehabilitation of ponds, sanitation in the village, land-rights campaigns and trainings for income generations, among others (Annual report of CSRC 2014/15). (CARE Nepal annual report 2015, p.32)

4 CSRCs "on the ground" partner.

budget has decreased (Last year: 4.18%, this year: 3.77%). Therefore, the strategic partners with NFGF in particular find it harder to convince VDCs to assign budgets to agriculture.

This is a setback for NFGF given that the local government budget for farmers is managed by VDC and hence farmers have more easy access to this budget as compared to DADO/DLSO's resources. Given that VDCs have very limited capacity to provide agricultural support services (as was highlighted during the interviews with farmer groups and village land right fora), the provision that local government should allocate 15% of its budget to agriculture will probably remain a priority issue to advocate for.



- While the right to food is included in the constitution, the government still lacks resources, institutional support and motivation to implement the policies. Similarly, CSOs also have limited capacities and resources to monitor the implementation of government policies, plans and programs. It is to be expected that advocacy in the second phase of the project will focus particularly on the operationalisation and the implementation of the provisions related to the right of food in the constitution (e.g. follow up on the provision of Agriculture and Veterinary officers (technicians) in every VDC, provision of identity cards<sup>5</sup> to the farmers with subsidy and social security for small and marginalized farmers and to push for provincial legislation regarding the land issue as stipulated in the new constitution, ....).
- The government is not in favour of organizations taking a right based approach to development. In addition, the government expects INGOs to focus on 'hardware' (e.g. infrastructure, medicines, and services) instead of 'software' like activities (e.g. advocacy activities, rights based programming, capacity building, awareness raising,) and stick to the 60% (hardware) to 40% (software) ratio across their programmes. The 'software' is rather the focus of 'the Right to Food' project<sup>7</sup> which could contribute to a negative attitude from government actors towards the project. The government's uneasiness with advocacy programmes also helps to explain why advocacy work is only slowly gathering momentum across the CARE Nepal programmes and why there seems to be limited cross learning around advocacy strategies between the right to food project and other projects implemented by CARE Nepal (indicated explicitly by two interview respondents). Given the strong demand from the strategic partners in the right to food project to further strengthen their advocacy capacity there is also need for the CARE Nepal team to invest in their own capacity related to advocacy. Leaving the technical expertise around advocacy in the hands of one right to food staff member is risky as the expertise may get lost in case the staff member would leave. The second phase of the right to food project provides an excellent context to strengthen the internal capacity of CARE Nepal in advocacy work through cross learning between the various right to food staff members but also between the right to food and other CARE Nepal projects.
- At the local level of local government there are challenges with officials not being present and being transferred frequently .... An interesting priority issue for advocacy and follow up in the second phase....

5 Identity cards: Ministry of Agriculture Development is committed to provide support/grants to the farmers by classifying them into 4 categories i.e. commercial, subsistence, marginalized/ landless and agriculture labor. The lower you are classified the more support you are entitled to. Subsidies and social security forms part of the identity card benefits

### 3.2.3 Strengths and challenges related to advocacy capacity of the strategic partners

#### *Strengths*

- The fact that the three partners have been able to influence the above mentioned policy changes is definitely a sign that the projects focus on advocacy is bearing fruits. Evidence for the results related to advocacy can be found both from the monitoring reports (e.g. outcome journals) and from the interviews with impact groups (e.g. interview respondents from farmer and land right groups giving examples of successfully advocating for services from local authorities). Interestingly there is a conducive mix of advocacy strategies implemented by the three strategic partners which complement each other. On the one hand there is a significant effort towards cooperation with government actors at various levels. At national level, strategic partners are consulted for their technical expertise on land and agricultural issues. Also at local government level, NFGF and CSRC through the land right forum are seeking to be represented in official consultation and planning structures (e.g. various district and VDC level committees). The outcome journals of both CSRC and NFGF show that this representation is slowly increasing in the three districts. At the same time, whenever necessary, the strategic partners are also able to engage in a more confrontational action. Such action has proven to bear fruits when local chapters of NFGF or Land Right Forum support their affiliated groups when they go and confront the local authorities at VDC level to receive services related to agriculture or to land. A non-violent protest rally was also successfully utilized by the Right to Food Network when campaigning against the introduction by Monsanto of GMO's in Nepal. The textbox below illustrates the contribution story of the GMO campaign by the RtF network.

**Contribution of the RtF network in the GMO campaign against Monsanto:** *The outcome to which the RtF network campaign contributed:* In 2014, Monsanto was prevented to distribute GMO food in Nepal due to a case filed at the High court in December 2013 and which was won against Monsanto. *Contribution of the Right to Food network:* In 2013 the RtF network with its network members took the following steps to advocate against the introduction by Monsanto of GMO food products: 1) They compiled facts from the field, brought the issue to the media; 2) Took steps to involve political parties and civil society organisations on this issue; 3) Wrote a position paper on this issue and brought this to the government actors. 4) They made use of ministers with whom they had directed contact as political levers. 5) In December they did a protest rally, during which they invited people of media, and which involved a protest sit-in, in a famous park where many people come and go, so people started to become curious to the campaign slogan, and bystanders started coming and there was eventually huge participation. That was a Friday, and then in the Saturday paper there were lots of articles and the coming week everyone started talking about the GMO case, and then one lawyer saw the case in the paper, became curious and googled the issue and then decided to file the case to the court. The case was finally won against Monsanto. (Source: interview RtF network secretariat 20/04/2016).

- It is interesting to see that the strategic partners are collaborating with each other and other likeminded organizations on issues identified in their joint advocacy plan. Such collaboration is helping increasing their voice, getting recognition of their work and

expertise and increasing access to financial benefits. As identified in the plan, NFGF, CSRC and NLRF have recently started an assessment on the effectiveness of farmer's identity card distribution process, the findings of which will be fed into the improvement of government's guidelines on identity card distribution. Partners are also working to ensure the inclusion of right to food of landless people, small farmers and women farmers in the land use act (that is under formulation). CSRC is leading this process. CSRC, NFGF and AAF worked together for critical review of ADS, which not only provided an opportunity for strategic partners to go through the document but also to improve knowledge on policy review. All the advocacy work contributes to the recognition of CSRC as an expert organization in land right issues whereas NFGF is gaining recognition as a CSO in farmers' issues. This recognition has contributed to CSRC having four development partners (Governance Facility, CARE, Oxfam, and Action Aid) as well as NFGF (IUCN, CARE, FIAN and UNDP) supporting the implementation of their respective strategic plans. This collaboration ensures a sound financial basis that will help to ensure that strategic partners will be able to continue their work even after the end of the right to food project.

### *Challenges*

- At the same time the strategic partners also face challenges in relation to their internal capacity to carry out advocacy work:
  - During the reflection workshops with NFGF and CSRC during the midterm review it was highlighted by both organizations that they face challenges in collecting, documenting and using evidence from the field for stronger 'evidence based' advocacy work.
  - There are also some pertinent challenges in relation to the advocacy capacity of the strategic partners, especially for NFGF and CSRC. Both NFGF and CSRC recognized that their district level structures are weak in relation to advocacy capacity.
    - **NFGF** for example highlighted that the district level federations don't yet have the capacity to identify specific agricultural issues around which they can develop focused advocacy strategies. It was felt that currently they are running behind any issue that is coming up. Hence they want to try to strengthen their capacity to identify and analyse potential agricultural issues to pursue. This challenge is closely linked to their limited technical expertise about agricultural issues. To illustrate this challenge the NFGF chairperson gave the example of one journalist asking him for NFGF's position in relation to the recent split of the ministry of agriculture and his inability to comment since he realized NFGF had not made an analysis about this and had not the technical knowhow to make an informed assessment of this political decision. NFGF is therefore seeking to use the second phase of the project to strengthen its technical knowledge that will allow them to analyse and respond to government programmes. Based on this increased technical knowledge NFGF also seeks to invest in mechanisms (e.g. position papers) to inform its members across the federation about the issues around which the federation is campaigning.

- **CSRC** highlighted their need to ensure that advocacy skills are transferred from the national level to the district level through the land right forum structures. Strengthening the advocacy capacity of full time paid activists at VDC and district level is seen as a potential capacity strengthening priority *“so they know who to meet with and who to collaborate with at government level and how to implement non-violent communication”* (reflection from CSRC team during MTR).

### 3.3 Capacity development of strategic partners (Domain 2)

The RtF project uses the following two instruments to monitor progress in capacity development of its strategic partners:

- **PCA tool:** scoring tool that allows discussion and assessment of the following organisational capacity areas: 1) Participatory Programme Development, Planning and Implementation (4 indicators); 2) Good Governance and Accountability (6 indicators); 3) Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (3 indicators); 4) Gender and Social Inclusion (2 indicators); 5) Finance Compliance and Financial System (4 indicators); 6) Human Resource and Logistics Management (3 indicators).
- **RILTAS dialogue tool:** scoring tool that allows dialogue and joint assessment (strategic partners in collaboration with CARE Nepal staff) of a number of progress markers for the following governance capacity areas: 1) Representation and inclusiveness, 2) legitimacy, 3) transparency and 4) synergy
- **Advocacy capacity assessment tool:** Scoring tool that allows discussion and assessment of the strategic partners in different key areas or indicators of the following advocacy related capacity domains: 1) advocacy leadership (5 indicators); 2) Management practices (5 indicators); 3) Human and financial resources (4 indicators); 4) Building a foundation for advocacy (7 indicators); Advocacy Strategy (5 indicators); 6) External relations and networking (7 indicators); Sustainability (4 indicators).

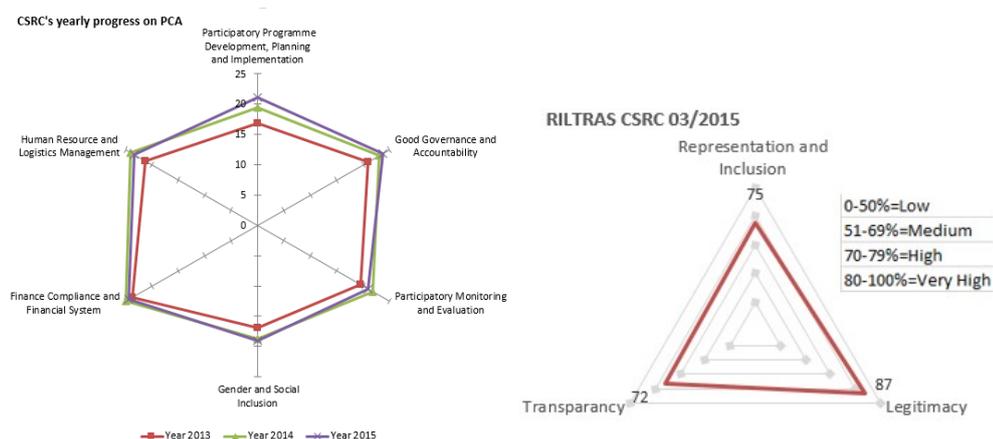
A visual synthesis of the progress according to the PCA tool and the result of the latest self-assessment according to the RILTRAS tool are provided in the figures 3.9 (CSRC) and 3.10 (NFGF). Figure 3.11 shows the RILTRAS results for the RTFN. A more detailed breakdown of the results from the RILTRAS tool for the three strategic partners are visualized in annex 1. Annex 1 also shows the results of the advocacy capacity assessment for CRS and NFGF.

According to the project’s own monitoring reports regarding the results of the capacity assessment tools, both CSRC and NFGF have achieved considerable progress in all the measured indicators in the three capacity assessment tools. These results could also be confirmed by the observations made and the data collected during the field visits of the Mid Term Review. The two previous chapters regarding the partner’s progress in the other two domains of change (mobilisation of the target group and advocacy) provide solid supporting evidence that confirms the progress observed during the self-assessment as well as the remaining challenges in some of the capacity domains. Table 3.3 provides a narrative synthesis of the main strengths, main challenges and priority needs for support in relation to their capacity development processes. Based on these observations we were able to identify for each of the three strategic partners a number of capacity issues (without being exhaustive) that the project may want to focus on during its second phase:

- **CSRC**

The high scores for CSRC in all capacity domains both at the start of the project and during the monitoring cycle of 2015 confirm the fact that CSRC was already a strong organization at the start of the project but was also able to consolidate its capacity during the project's first phase. CSRC scores particularly strong for legitimacy which is evidenced by the broad recognition of government and civil society of its expertise around land. While most progress markers under the legitimacy domain are rated as very high, only the one related to CSRC's support towards the capacity development of the NLRF is rated as medium. This could be an interesting working point to focus on during the second phase. Under the strong recommendation of CSRC, NLRF has been able to participate in the small grant programme in order to develop its capacity. However, it will be necessary for CSRC to work towards support strategies for NLRF that can be sustained even after the project. Gender remains a point of attention in the capacity domain of 'representation and inclusion'. This is evidenced by the gender related progress markers scoring medium while the other progress markers of this domain score high or very high. While progress in representation of women in key positions and meetings can be noted (see also table 3.4) continued effort towards the empowerment of women will need to remain a working point in the second phase of the project. Finally in the domain of transparency a challenge could be noted in relation to the progress marker on active engagement of central committee members in the collection of information about land issues at local and district level and using this for advocacy at national level (evidence based advocacy). This was also recognized by CSRC staff as a weakness during the group interviews during the Mid Term Review. There was a strong desire from CSRC to take advantage of the second phase of the project to strengthen its capacity around collecting evidence from local levels and to document and communicate this evidence better so that it could be used more effectively in its lobby and advocacy work. Rolling out SMS based communication systems and participatory research or participatory video making was suggested by CSRC staff as approaches in which they wanted to grow their expertise.

**Figure 3.9: CSRC progress on PCA and RILTAS**

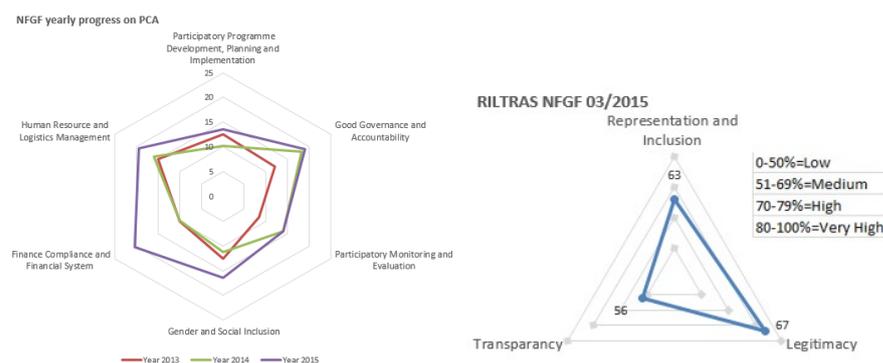


- **NFGF**

The larger part of the project's capacity development support has been directed towards NFGF given that it was still a very young organization at the start of the project. The effectiveness of this support is evidenced by the remarkable progress NFGF has made during the first phase of the project. NFGF managed to move from low to medium capacity in most of the capacity domains that are being monitored by the different capacity assessment tools. Some concrete achievements pertaining NFGF's capacity development as well as remaining challenges and

priority needs for support are highlighted in table 3.3. NFGF finds itself in a transition phase recognized by rapid growth with a fast expanding membership and the ongoing development of organizational systems (e.g. social audits and publication of annual reports in order to strengthen transparency). This fast expansion does contribute strongly to its legitimacy as an influential federation recognized for representing poor small holder farmers. At the same time farmers decide to become members due to the benefits and the services they can receive through their affiliation to NFGF. As was highlighted earlier in the report, farmers strongly value the training, information and advocacy support that they can access through their federation. At the same time it was learned during the Mid Term Review that NFGF still faces challenges in providing the needed support to all its members. Examples of these challenges include limited technical knowledge on climate adaptive practice and government agricultural policy and programmes, limited advocacy capacity as well as finding a common agenda for advocacy across the VDCs and districts. Given that the organizational basis has been established in the first phase of the project, the second phase of the project will provide a good opportunity to consolidate the progress made so far and focus on the strengthening of the technical and advocacy capacity within the different levels of the federation. Given the broad geographical working area, there will be need to explore sustainable training models such (e.g. training of trainers) or peer learning mechanisms whereby farmers can learn from each other (e.g. learning visits, demonstration plots, study circles,). Such horizontal learning approaches may provide a cost effective strategy for upscaling agricultural techniques that have proven to work in specific contexts. Also the exploration of exit scenarios to address the current staff led mobilization model through activists that are paid by the project will need to be prioritized in the second phase in order to ensure upscaling and sustainability of the results achieved so far. Investment in such learning processes instead of investing too much on the development of administrative systems at national level will help to prevent NFGF becoming a large bureaucratic organization that loses the close relationship that it enjoys today with its members. Furthermore, as was the case with CSRC, progress markers related to gender receive the lowest scores in the RILTRAS assessment tool and will therefore remain an important working point during the second phase of the project.

**Figure 3.10: NFGF progress on PCA and RILTRAS**



- **RtFN**

Being a large network it is not surprising that the RtFN follows a rather different capacity development trajectory than SCRC and NFGF. Certain capacity areas such as the participation and meaningful contribution from all members of the network (representation and inclusion) will fluctuate depending on the issue that is being advocated for at a certain moment in time. Different members of the network have their own thematic priorities and might not always be

easy to mobilise around the issues that are of interest to the Right to food project. Instead, different organisations will mobilise at different moments around different issues that concern them at a particular time. This can even give birth to other networks (e.g. the network that emerged around the agriculture for food campaign). A traditional organizational capacity development approach would not do justice to the complex network structure of the RTFN. Its strength lies much more in its strong capacity to mobilise complementary action by different member organisations who have their own specific expertise around a specific issue. This is evidenced for example by the significant contribution of the RTFN towards the successful lobby against GMO food as well as the inclusion of the Right to Food in the new constitution. Coordination of this complementary action is an endogenous process from within the participating organisations who mobilise on a voluntary basis because it serves their own purpose and objectives. In that sense it is not too much of a problem that such network or parts of the network or not always active or engaged in activities. The specific issue and context will determine who in the network becomes activated and such action may not necessarily be around the priorities that are advocated for by the Right to food project. In that sense it might be necessary for the project to reconsider its relationship with the RTFN. Given its network structure it might be more cost effective to collaborate with RTFN around specific policy issues that concern the project and for which concerted advocacy action is needed. Instead of a boundary partner or strategic partner, the RTFN would then become a collaborating partner who could receive some financial support to develop and implement specific campaigns that could contribute to policy change as envisaged by the project.

Given the fact that policy influence remains an important objective in the second phase of the project and given the strong capacity of the RTFN to mobilise its members for political action around the right to food, the RTFN will remain an important partner for the Right to Food project.

Figura 3.117: RTFN progress on RILTRAS

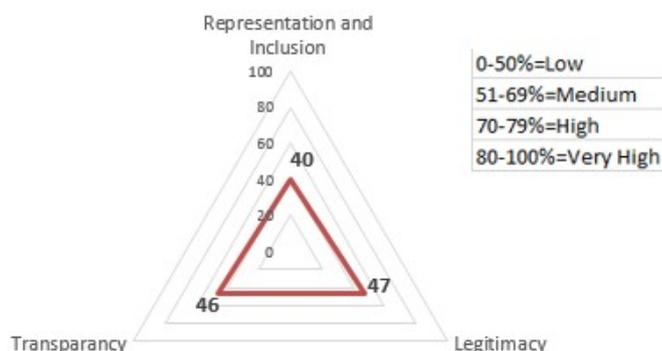


Table 3.4 overview of strengths, challenges and needs for support (based on the results of the reflection workshops with strategic partners)

|       | Strengths  | Challenges   | Need for support  |
|-------|--|--|---|
| CSR C | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 (3 in key positions) out of 25 of the central staff is now women, including 8 janjati and 6 dalits.</li> <li>Annual general meeting has now 35 Dhalit members while CSRC aims to increase this number to 50.</li> <li>Increasingly using media as well as SMS system to dissipate information to impact group</li> <li>Developed new partnerships and projects in</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low capacity of new dhalit members in general meeting</li> <li>High staff turnover due to low salaries.</li> <li>CSRC has been strategically engaging with the government, but still needs to define a clear strategic engagement.</li> <li>Advocacy skills to be transferred to</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal capacity</li> <li>Internal research capacity and documenting evidence (e.g. Participatory video training, case studies, peer learning)</li> <li>Continue to support development of policy</li> </ul> |

|          |  |   |   |
|----------|--|---|---|
|          | <p>cooperation with other organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jointly position paper has also been delivered to the ministry. CSRC has been strategically engaging with the government and delivering joint position papers</li> <li>Significant progress in the capacity of CSRCs partner NLRF/DLRF who now hold national level meetings and events, active participation of members and women at al. levels and playing active role in protecting landless people from eviction in 18 districts.</li> </ul>   | <p>district level and not only stay at national level: who to meet with? Who to collaborate with at government level? Non-violent communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited legal capacity</li> <li>Limited research capacity to ensure evidence based advocacy</li> <li>Not only track the number of trainings for VLRF but need to also follow up on the outcomes of those trainings...</li> </ul>  | <p>plan and facilitate meeting with other stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued support for joint advocacy and lobby.</li> <li>Explore exit scenario's to strengthen financial base of LRF at district level (VLRF are mostly self-sustaining)</li> </ul>  |
| NFG<br>F | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fast expansion of NFGF as young organisation from 8 districts in 2013 to 44 districts in 2016.</li> <li>Policies and systems in place for accountability, representation, inclusion and transparency (e.g. General assembly, central committee, social audit, annual report, group mobilization guideline developed)</li> <li>Gender equity and social inclusion mandatory with focal person appointed to monitor inclusion.</li> <li>NFGF increasingly recognised as influential development actor (more media attention and invited by government offices to present their views)</li> <li>Increasingly working in synergy with other organizations (e.g. joint advocacy).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited technical capacity to analyse and take position on government agricultural programs or policy</li> <li>Limited technical capacity around climate change remains</li> <li>Advocacy capacity remains weak</li> <li>Staff led mobilisation model mainly financed by RtF project</li> <li>Besides positive developments in gender equity, organisation remains men dominated (31% of central committee represented by women)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to learn more about suitable climate adaptive practices they can advocate for.</li> <li>Strengthening advocacy capacity (especially district level)</li> <li>M&amp;E and learn about peer learning methods.</li> <li>Support in rolling out ToT for activists</li> <li>Exploring exit scenario's to sustain financial base after end of the project.</li> </ul> |
| RTF<br>N | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong advocacy capacity at national level (e.g. GMO, Right to food in constitution, ...)</li> <li>Recognised as influential actor regarding right to food (sit in the steering committee of the ADS formation),</li> <li>Strong presence in media. Made BBC documentary</li> <li>Strong technical knowledge about land issues among members of the network.</li> <li>Loose network but with general assembly and membership profile system and strategic guidelines.</li> <li>Partnership with other funding organisations beyond RtF project, e.g. IFAD project</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited advocacy capacity at district level</li> <li>Diversity of priorities from different members contributes to limited ownership of the issues the network advocates for.</li> <li>Limited financial base to mobilise internal technical and advocacy capacity without external funding.</li> <li>Indications that network remains men dominated although 33 % of women and marginalized groups is ensured in the general assembly.</li> <li>Difficult to sustain secretariat without external funding.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need financial support to advocate for appropriate bills and bylaws to translate the inclusion of RtF in the constitution into reality. (Apparently there are 23 points in constitution which are in conflict with current local authority law.)</li> </ul>  |

## 4 | Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter aims at providing a summary of the main strengths, challenges and recommendations pertaining the main assessment areas of the midterm review. The recommendations are presented as possible lines of actions that can be reflected upon critically by the RtT project team and its partners. Such reflection can then determine to what extent some of these recommendations can be adopted, adapted or ignore.

### 4.1 Mobilization and empowerment of the impact group (domain 1)

#### 4.1.1 Mobilisation of small holder farmers by NFGF

##### *Progress so far*

Remarkable progress has been achieved in the mobilization of the farmer groups through NFGF. This is evidenced (see also fig. 3.3) by the majority of the 400 farmer groups covered in the project by June 2015 who were able to strengthen their internal functioning. There are also indications that a growing number of groups were able to claim agricultural services and inputs from local authorities (145 groups by Dec. 2015 up from 0 groups in June 2014) and to empower women to participate increasingly in group activities and to take up decision making positions in the groups (336 groups in Dec. 2015 – up from 20 groups in June 2014). Based on the impact stories collected during the midterm review it was also established that the impact of

this mobilization for individual members situates mainly around an increased confidence to interact with government officials or community members (higher self-esteem) as well as increased livelihood options (through accessing government resources or through the implementation of new agricultural methods in which they got trained).

#### *Points of attention*

While the internal functionality of the farmer groups has increased strongly, the number of farmer groups that take initiative around cooperative farming or climate adaptive practice remains limited (only 40 groups by December 2015). While the monitoring reports as well as the observations made during the field visit provide evidence that various support strategies (e.g. providing information, training in group mobilization and agricultural methods) are indeed provided by NFGF, it is difficult to assess its scope. For example, the available monitoring information (e.g. in the outcome journals) of both the VDC and District level farmer group federation doesn't allow to determine how many VDCs were participating in certain mobilization strategies or services facilitated by VDC or district level FGF. It is also difficult to estimate the number of VDC federations that represent farmers in different committees or who facilitate access to government resources. Similarly it is difficult to determine the number of VDCs that participate in the training workshops organized by the district federation related to group mobilization and the working of the federation. ,...). There is also no specific information about the district federation's involvement in the facilitation of technical training workshops on specific agricultural skills which were rated as highly relevant and effective during the interviews with the farmer groups.

#### *Recommendations*

1. The project needs to pay extra effort in mobilizing the current farmer groups into more cooperative engagement in livelihood enhancing activities and climate adaptive practice. For this to happen the project will need to analyze what has worked well in certain farmer groups that have already taken up cooperative climate adaptive practices and then develop strategies for upscaling these lessons learned to other farmer groups. Suitable horizontal learning approaches could be explored that would allow farmer groups to learn from each other (e.g. learning visits, study circles, community fairs,).
2. Also, the project will need to invest more strongly in the development of the technical capacity of the farmer group federation at district and VDC level. This could be done through a train the trainers model that NFGF was already planning to implement (see table 3.3). Lessons learned from the LIBIRD pilot projects could be integrated in the training programme. This capacity strengthening will help NFGF to provide the necessary support to the farmers to engage in suitable climate adaptive agricultural practices that can result in economic benefits for the group members.
3. Having more access to economic benefits can help to ensure that farmer group members continue to renew their membership and may also motivate the groups to consider contributing an affiliation fee for the farmer group federation. **The gradual introduction of such affiliation fee could be considered during the second phase of the project as part of an exit scenario to safeguard the financial basis of the farmer group federation. At the moment NFGF's staff based mobilization and support system for the farmer groups depends too much on the financial support of the project which is not sustainable in the long run. It would also be interesting for the project to analyse how NFGF's support systems for the farmer groups are working in other districts not covered by the project. This could provide additional useful information to inform future exit scenarios.**

#### 4.1.2 Mobilisation of landless and tenants by the Land Right Forum with support of CSRC

##### *Progress so far*

As was the case with the farmer groups, there is also evidence of rapid expansion in the number of landless or tenants in the project districts who became member to the Land Right Forum through the successful mobilization of the land right forum activists (1794 members in June 2015 up from 407 members in June 2014). There are also indications that the mobilization of landless and tenants in village level land rights forum groups increases their chances to access land and improves their self-esteem and relationship with local authorities and community members and also gives them economic benefits through increased engagement in income generating activities. These positive trends were confirmed during the various interviews held during the midterm review. Mobilization strategies from LRF that were highlighted by the VLRF members as particularly relevant and effective included the provision of information about land rights, supporting the groups to engage in concerted action to claim their rights from local authorities and to advocate and mediate with government offices on behalf of VLRF. Also trainings that could help members to engage in income generating activities (e.g. vegetable gardening without land,) were seen as highly effective to sustain and renew membership.

##### *Points of attention*

- The available monitoring information does not allow to get a clear picture about the scope of progress so far. For example, due to the mixing of monitoring information from individual level and group level (VLRF) it is difficult to estimate the change over time in the number of VLRF where renewal of membership is happening and who are actively involved in the filing of member's cases with local authorities.
- Similarly, the different categories of accessing land (e.g. tilling certificates, joint land ownership, village block land ownership, temporary housing certificates) and the number of households (or the number of VLRF) who benefited from these, are reported in a fragmented way across different outcome journals from the VLRF and DLRF. There is also limited analysis about the degree to which the level of achieved access to land across the different land-access categories is satisfactory or not.
- Ensuring an adequate support system (supporting the facilitation of group meetings, training, providing information, lobby and advocacy) remains a challenge, given that the number of frontline leaders remains limited as well as their technical capacity to mobilize and support VLRF.

##### *Recommendations*

4. Focus the monitoring on a limited number of progress markers that are then monitored in more systematic way allowing a more quantified analysis regarding the number of VLRF that show positive change for those progress markers: e.g. accessing land through different access strategies, engagement in livelihood activities, filing cases with local authorities,
5. Given that continued support from the DLRF towards the VLRF will remain essential it will be important for the project to pay specific attention towards enhancing the capacity of the DLRF in order to guarantee its functionality even after the lifetime of the project. As was the case with NFGF, there is need for NLRF together with CSRC to analyse what approaches have shown to work so far in terms of advocating for land and enhancing livelihood activities. These learnings can inform appropriate learning materials with cases/examples of innovative and effective practice to engage local authorities in prioritizing land issues or to enhance livelihood enhancing activities.

These learning materials could then be used by activists and front line leaders as well as for horizontal learning (peer learning) between VLRf members. Using informal learning groups or study circles might be helpful (see barefoot guide pg. 160 for an example of this).

#### 4.1.3 Aligning the small grant scheme to the objectives of the project

##### *Progress so far*

- Based on the evaluation of the small grant scheme carried out in 2015 (Dhakal, 2015) and based on the observations made during the midterm review there is evidence that the grant does have good potential to mobilise a broader group of CSOs to work around the Right to Food issue. Several beneficiaries of the small grant scheme managed to include the right to food into their strategic plan and started rolling out RtF related activities with their target groups hence contributing to the overall reach of the project (e.g. PESOC sharing interesting climate change related research results to government officials and members of RtFN; ACDC Nepal whose integration of the right to food in its strategic plan helped them to win an agricultural project with UK based GRM.)
- Also the diverse backgrounds of the beneficiaries of the scheme gives opportunities for interesting innovations that can contribute towards the achievement of the project's objectives (e.g. taking up RtF in educational programme of INSES, or innovating lobby and advocacy approaches adopted by HURENDEC after a learning visit to PRIA in India, , ....).

##### *Points of attention*

- Besides an evaluation report from 2015 (Dhakal, 2015), there is limited evidence that the project strategic partners and the CARE Nepal project team makes use of the outputs of the small grant scheme.
- It is not clear to what extent the small grants related to capacity development activities resulted into changed practice of the small grant beneficiary and how this contributed to the project objectives. Having new policies or strategic plans does not always ensure that this will result in changed practice, especially if there is no subsequent funding to implement such plans or policies.

##### *Recommendations*

6. Continue the small grant scheme but try to support proposals with potential to lead to innovative actions that could benefit the RtF project: e.g. testing innovative horizontal learning (peer learning) strategies that can help to upscale climate adaptive practices and innovative research projects. Supporting CSO's with small grants for their own capacity building without some concrete outreach action that is in line with the objectives of the RtF project seems less relevant.
7. Ensure a more in-depth analysis of the extent to which the results of the individual small grant projects can contribute to the objectives of the Right to Food project. The following actions could help to do this: 1) Include a specific question around this in the end of project reporting format for the grant beneficiaries. 2) The RtF project team could organize a learning conference to allow the sharing of lessons learned from the small grant projects among small grant beneficiaries and other stakeholders such as government authorities, other donors and the project's strategic partners. A learning brief could then be published that provides an overview of lessons learned and how

these can strengthen the RtF project. The first phase has shown that such exchange of lessons learned will not happen automatically but will need some purposeful facilitation.

## 4.2 Lobby and Advocacy of duty bearers

### *Progress so far*

- The project through its strategic partners has been able to contribute to important positive changes both in the formulation of new policy as well as the implementation of existing policy related to agriculture and access to land. The inclusion of the right to food as fundamental right in the new constitution and the inclusion of various elements in favour of small holder and poor farmers in the Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) are significant positive changes in the policy framework related to agriculture and access to land. These changes in national policy also provide the project's strategic partners with a strong basis to assist the impact group to claim their newly acquired rights as stipulated by these new policies. This is evidenced by the number of landless or small scale farmers who, with support of strategic partners, were able to gain access to land or who managed to access agricultural services from local authorities (e.g. finances, agricultural inputs, technical advise, compensation from malfunctioning vaccinations). These positive achievements show that the project's strategy to focus its advocacy work at various policy levels (i.e. at National, district and VDC levels) is bearing fruit. The conducive mix of advocacy strategies within a joint action plan which include both cooperative and non-violent protest action implemented in a complimentary way by the three strategic partners and also jointly with other organisations should be maintained in the second phase

### *Points of attention*

- Both NFGF and CSRC/NLRF still face challenges **pertaining the collection and documentation of evidence and using this for evidence based lobby and advocacy**. Both organizations also recognize challenges in developing a clear advocacy strategy as well as streamlining **advocacy issues and strategies between their national, district and local levels**. Particularly NFGF is still scoring low regarding its advocacy capacity (see spider diagram on advocacy capacity in Annex 1).

### *Recommendations*

8. **Supporting the strategic partners in developing and implementing their joint advocacy plans will need to be an important priority during the second phase of the project**. The CARE's advocacy experts, in strong collaboration with the strategic partners, could develop a plan of action for this specific capacity development process which may include an in-depth needs analysis and a tailor-made support strategy for each of the strategic partners. Examples of specific capacity needs that emerged during the midterm review included **a more effective use of appropriate communication tools for remote data collection from the field (e.g. sms systems, participatory video, ...)** and for **communicating messages towards different target groups (social media, TV, radio, ...)**. CSRC in particular wishes to strengthen and mobilise its research capacity in order to **engage more strongly into evidence based advocacy**.

9. Some interesting practices from the first phase could be documented and included as specific examples in guidelines or manuals for effective advocacy work. **Examples include the various ways of using media** (BBC documentary, newspapers, radio ....) as well as the collaboration with lawyers in the GMO campaign.
10. Given the strong contribution of the RtFN towards the achievement of the advocacy results during the first phase of the project, **modalities will need to be found to continue collaborating with this network.** At the time of the midterm review the formal collaboration between the network and the RtF project had stopped due to the network's secretariat being housed by an organization with a strong political orientation which conflicted with CARE's policy of political neutrality.
11. For the CARE Nepal RtF project team to be able to effectively support the strategic partners in strengthening their advocacy capacity, **there will also be need for the team to strengthen its own advocacy capacity.** The team's advocacy experts could work out a practical advocacy manual that could be used by other team members and strategic partners. In fact there is a good opportunity for the RtF project to help in broadening advocacy capacity in the broader CARE organization. **This could be done by allowing the RtF staff members responsible for lobby and advocacy to also provide input in the advocacy components of other CARE Nepal projects.**

### 4.3 Capacity development of strategic partners (Domain 2)

#### *Progress so far and main challenges*

- Both CSRC and NFGF have made strong progress in all the measured indicators in the three capacity assessment tools used in the project.
- Progress within NFGF has been particularly strong in the organisational and institutional strengthening of the farmers group federation at national, district and VDC levels. Engagement in concrete independent actions (cooperative farming, climate adaptive practice, ....) at local level was however still a challenge among the majority of the farmer groups.
- CSRC as organisation is now scoring high on most capacity domains. The only domains with medium scores relate to the capacity development of the LRF and progress markers related to monitoring and evaluation.
- Progress for RTFN as measured by the capacity assessment tools has been less pronounced. A traditional organizational capacity development approach may however not do justice to the more complex loose network structure of the RtFN. Its strength lies more in its capacity to mobilise complementary action by different member organisations who have their specific expertise and skills instead of its operation as a formal organization with central secretariat and staff.
- The gender related progress markers receive the lower scores within the three strategic partners.

#### *Recommendations*

12. With CSRC having reached the maturity stage in its organisation's growth cycle and the LRF still in its growth phase, it may be more effective **for the project to engage directly with the LRF to support its capacity development process. This may involve a shift in the current strategic partnership with CSRC who could become more of an**

- implementing partner or expert organization (like LIBIRD in the case of NFGF), towards a more strategic partnership with the LRF.
13. Given that the organizational basis of NFGF has been established in the first phase of the project, the second phase of the project will provide a good opportunity to consolidate the progress made so far and focus on the strengthening of the technical (in the field of agriculture) and advocacy capacity within the different levels of the federation.
  14. While progress in representation of women in key positions and meetings can be noted in all strategic partners, continued effort towards the empowerment of women will need to remain a working point in the second phase of the project. Particular focus could go to the exploration by the project team and its partners of suitable facilitation techniques that can help women members of farmer groups and land right groups to speak out and actively take part in meetings and decision making processes.
  15. Given its specific network structure and challenges observed in relation to capacity development, it may be advisable to consider the RtFN as a collaborating or implementing partner. RtFN could then receive financial support when they develop and implement specific campaigns that can contribute to policy change as envisaged by the project. Some limited ‘non-activity based’ funding could be considered to help sustain its organizational functioning during the second phase of the project and to help the RtF network to work on its own exit scenario.

#### 4.4 Value addition in partnerships

##### *CARE Nepal’s definition of partnerships*

At the time of the midterm review, CARE Nepal as an organization was still in the process of clarifying their own definition of the different types of partnerships in which they engage with partner organizations. Annex 2 shows CARE Nepal’s current definition of strategic and implementation partners. It is interesting to note however that the RtF project’s approach to support its strategic partners in the implementation of their own strategic plans is not yet common practice among the whole CARE Nepal. Hence the experiences from the RtF project may eventually influence the ultimate definition of different types of partnerships by CARE Nepal as a whole.

##### *Strategic partnerships in support of joint capacity development*

Feedback from the interviews with the partner organisations and CARE project staff during the midterm review provides evidence for the existence of a true partnership between CARE Nepal RtF team and the partner organisations it supports as well as with CARE DK. The following observations provide evidence for this conclusion:

- CARE Rtf staff members have strong professional and personal qualities but are also humble enough to listen to their partners and to adjust their support according to their partners’ needs and particular context. Hence the relationship is less about control but more based on mutual trust and looking for ways to support each other in the best possible way and a good level of transparency around budget issues. (The text box below shows an extract from NFGF’s assessment of its partnership with CARE Nepal as provided during the group interview with NFGF staff).

**NFGF’s reflections about its partnership with CARE.** ‘NFGF sees CARE as promotor, co-organiser not only as money giver.... Because the close working there is

some informal relationship which is very useful which wouldn't have been possible with only grants, this promotes transparency and friendship. Flexibility of CARE support is good and should remain. Strategies currently used, e.g. going together to the field, to select the staff, making policies, giving grants, to have contacts with agencies.... This combination is found very useful, should continue in the next phase but CARE in the next phase should focus on building capacity so they become more independent and capable so they can start looking for new resources (how to monitor this? Funds? Diversification funding....?)

- The open and participatory project management style with the partners is also reflected in the reflexive and self-critical functioning of the CARE RtF team. For example, the team has weekly meetings which are formally planned and timed allowing them to have in-depth reflections about their work, provide peer coaching and explore new innovative ideas (e.g. visioning sessions on the project's dream for the next year, peer coaching sessions where team members present personal development plans to each other and then as a team follow up and assist their implementation, OM training, ....).
- CARE project staff also values their current relationship with CARE DK. The support received by CARE DK is seen as very helpful (e.g. technical support in facilitation, advocacy, M&E, field visits, provision of reading materials ...). The flexibility of CARE DK is also highly valued as it allows necessary changes in budget allocations as required by changing local needs and contexts.

#### *Recommendation to CARE DK*

16. For the second phase the project team is looking for continued support from CARE DK in their own capacity development with a particular focus on advocacy skills as well as facilitation skills. An additional need includes strengthening the skill to analyse the rich monitoring information that is already being collected and using this analysis to draw lessons about progress and about what is working in which context. Such analysis is necessary to upscale those strategies that have shown to work in the various project domains of change. The analysis of progress over time visualized in the various graphs in this midterm report may help the team to carry out a similar trend analysis in future monitoring cycles. Some short term external help could be considered as it may help to consolidate the good progress that the project has already made in terms of monitoring and evaluation.

#### **4.5 Monitoring, Accountability and Learning:**

##### *Progress so far*

The project's strong investment and progress in the implementation of outcome mapping has been remarkable. The process of introducing and adapting outcome mapping as well as the various components of the project's monitoring system are well described in a case study that was developed in 2015 (case report RtF CARE Nepal). In this section we summarize the main strengths and challenges of the current M&E system as well as some recommendations for the project's second phase.

##### *Strengths:*

- There is strong evidence that outcome mapping has contributed to a more in-depth development of the project's theory of change as well as its shared understanding by the various project stakeholders. A strong added value of the outcome mapping based theory of change is that it makes explicit the various local actors whom the project can realistically influence directly (i.e. the boundary partners) in order to work towards sustainable change at the level of the impact group (i.e. landless or small holder farmers). The project's focus to influence change at the level of the boundary partners who will continue to be there even after the project, strongly enhances the sustainability of the project's results.
- The actor focus of the OM based theory of change has helped the project to make a clear distinction between project activities which are under the control of the project and changes in the behavior or practices of its boundary partners which are under the project's direct influence. These changes in the boundary partners constitute important developmental results and the project together with its strategic partners have put considerable effort in monitoring these changes in a systematic way twice every year. The effectiveness of the project's monitoring efforts is clearly evidenced by the fact that the midterm review team was able to use the available monitoring information to work out a trend analysis of the change so far achieved in the boundary partners in preparation of the field visits.
- Also the strong participation of the boundary partners in the monitoring process both in the collection of monitoring information as well as in the reflection meetings with the CARE Nepal team can be commended as good monitoring practice that is not seen as an administrative add on but as part and parcel of sound project implementation and shared learning (between CARE Nepal and its strategic partners). This investment in shared learning provides a conducive basis for promoting mutual responsibility of CARE Nepal and its strategic partners for achieving results but also for strengthening processes of accountability among project stakeholders. (Eyben, 2006).

### *Challenges*

- While lots of useful monitoring information is being collected, there is a risk that the monitoring system may become too heavy. For domain 1 (mobilizing impact groups) and domain 3 (lobby and advocacy), there is a rather large number of boundary partners to be followed up, each with a considerable number of progress markers. Also for domain 2 (capacity development) there are three different tools that are currently used (RILTAS dialogue tool, PCA capacity assessment tool and advocacy capacity tool). The three tools together contain 79 indicators that need to be tracked. In addition the project is also trying to use the strategy journal tool to promote reflections about the effectiveness of the project's support strategies towards the boundary partners.
- Analysing change over time (e.g. trend analysis for specific progress markers) and visualizing this change remains a challenge. The fragmentation of the monitoring information across the different monitoring tools also poses challenges for the project team to make a comprehensive analysis across the various types of monitoring information. Furthermore, the monitoring information for certain progress markers in the cumulative outcome journal is sometimes rather general without specifying the numbers of groups who are showing the change. In other cases the monitoring information mixes numbers of individual members with numbers of groups or mixing numbers with percentages making it again hard to make an analysis over time.

### *Recommendations*

17. There is need to simplify, where possible, the current monitoring system by reprioritizing those progress markers that need particular monitoring. Those that have less priority could then be left out. The results of the midterm review might provide

guidance to prioritise progress markers that need particular focus during the second phase. *(for example, changed active engagement of farmer groups and how they benefit from this will need to be monitored systematically and related progress markers should receive particular focus during the monitoring activities in the second phase. Also the type of support provided by NFGF at district and VDC level could also be tracked more systematically so the project can learn about the effectiveness of its capacity development strategies towards NFGF).*

18. To help the analysis as well as the reporting of the results there is need to explore different ways of visualising change over time for specific progress markers. The midterm review has done some suggestions to that effect which could be useful for the project to adopt or adapt in the second phase (see for example the graphs 3.3, 3.4, 3.7 and 3.8 as well as the outcome journal with color code in annex 1). It would also be helpful to record monitoring information for progress markers in the cumulative outcome journals in a consistent way (not mixing number of members with number of groups or total numbers with percentages, etc....). Some short term external support could be helpful to do this.
19. There is also need to reprioritize the current monitoring tools and consider leaving out those that are of lower priority. If leaving them out is not an option then it might not be necessary to use all of them during every monitoring cycle. For the midterm review the cumulative outcome journal and the RILTAS tool were the most useful for the midterm review. Possibly these two tools could also be given more priority during the second phase as compared to some of the other tools.

## 5 | Consulted documents

- Advocacy capacity assessment tool monitoring reports.
- Annual review meeting reports
- Assessment of interventions from the climate component of the Right to Food project. By Fie Friis and Sanne Boeskov Christensen. For CARE Nepal and partners. Powerpoint. “Presentation of preliminary findings. CARE DK field visit reports
- Dhakal, S. (2015) Assessment of Small Grant Mechanism of Right to Food Project. Commissioned by CARE Nepal.
- Eyben, R. (2006) Relationships for aid. Earthscan, London UK.
- INTRAC 2009. Capacity building in network organisations (weblink)
- LIBIRD activity reports
- PCA capacity monitoring reports Right to Food Project document.
- Right to food project Annual Report 2015.
- Right to Food Annual Report 2014 USAID CSO sustainability index report, february 2016
- Right to Food Cumulative Progress Markers monitoring report (June 2015 & Dec. 2015).
- RILTRAS Dialogue Tool monitoring reports
- Strategy journal review meeting reports
- Van Ongevalle, J., Peels, R. (2014). The Outcome Mapping Usefulness Barometer. How useful is Outcome Mapping to help us deal with complex change? OMLC (weblink)
- WWF (2009) the partnership toolbox (weblink)

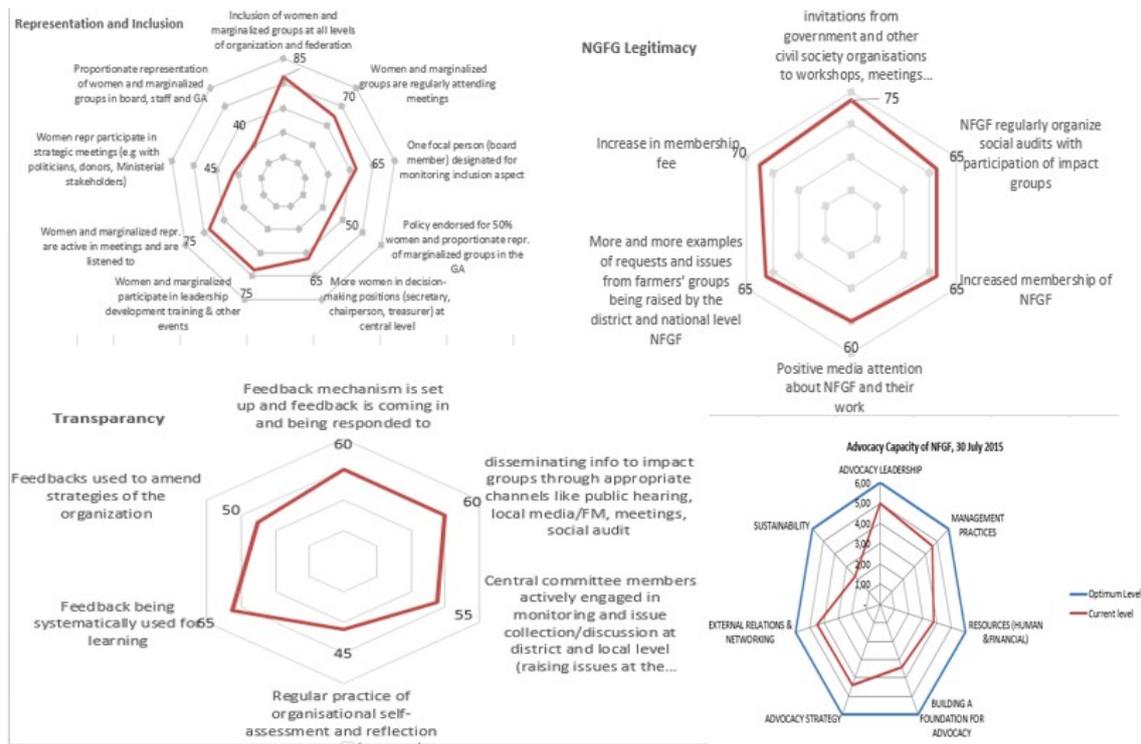
**- ANNEXES -**

# Annex 1 : outcome journal June-Dec 2015 of the district farmer group federations

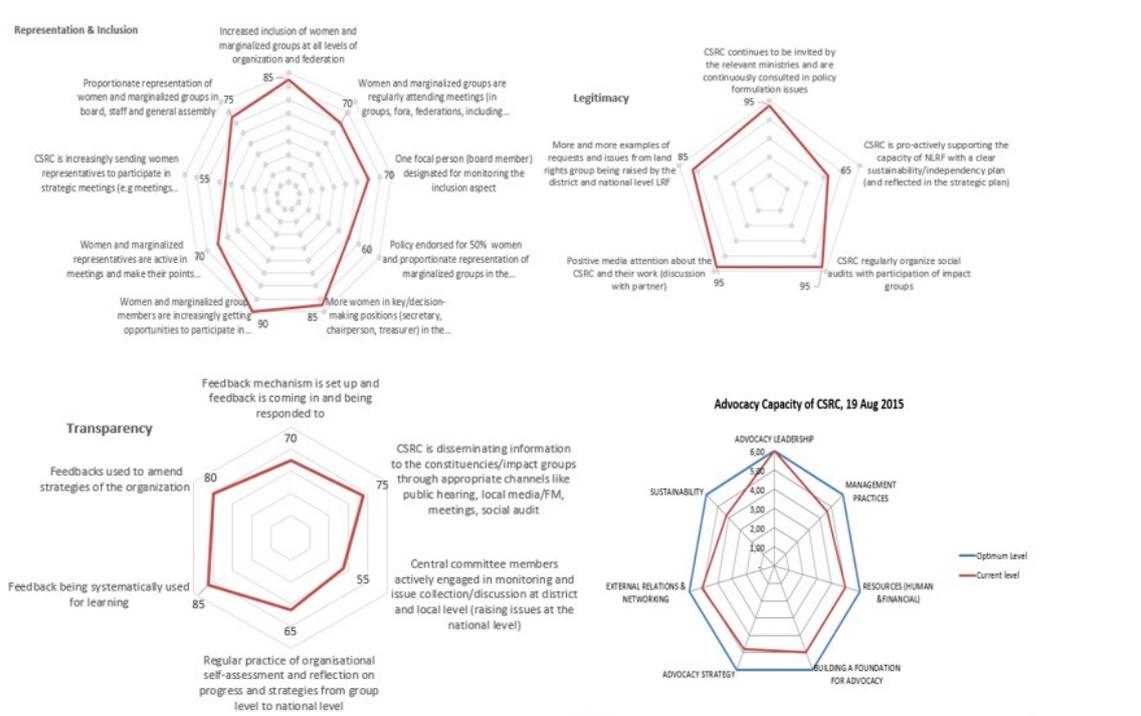
|   | jan/14         | jan-jun/15  | Follow up  |       |
|---|----------------|---|--|-------|
| Expect to see   |                |   |  |       |
| Federate VDC/municipality federations in district level   | Not yet formed | IN okh : 27 VDC level federation, In Siraha : 26 VDC level federation In Uaypur: 27 VDC level federation are federated.   | Need to federate plan for coming year and implement also.  | 80    |
| Support VDC/Municipality and National federation and actively participate in their activities   | NA             | Started providing necessary support to VDC/Municipality and National federation. District federation have been facilitated on vdc level annual advocacy plan preparation process, annual council and different issues. And started to support national level council and other organizational activities) | Need to play facilitating role . Need to monitor the type of support and how it is being implied   | 70    |
| Conduct regular meetings, assemblies and follow other organizational processes.   | NA             | Conduct regular meetings, assemblies and follow other organizational processes . All 3 district conducted assemblies, annual council, membership renewal.   | Need to provide orientation about issue based advocacy to district members. Need to monitor the quality and outcome of frequent meeting held and how it is capacitating the members.   | 65    |
| Like to see   |                |   |  | Score |
| Keep updated record of available resources and budget in district level NGOs/INGOs and government line agencies and share it with VDC level federations regularly | NA             | All 3 districts have been started published agriculture information booklet including record of available resources and budget in district level NGOs/INGOs and government line agencies and share it with VDC level federations and farmers also..   | Need to capacitate members on advocacy, proposal writing, Documentation etc. Need to properly share and disseminate the updated record regularly with concerned groups.  | 60    |
| Love to see   |                |   |  | Score |
| Can facilitate training and workshops, can develop and support in drafting policies and procedures.   | NA             | All 3 district have started to facilitate about Federations policies and guideline ( example: VDC level policy orientation was facilitated by district member)  | Need to provide facilitation capacity development training and need to provide opportunities in policy formation sub-committee of central NFGF.Need to build capacity of district member about training/workshop facilitation and organizational policy, guideline preparation also. | 55    |
| Play lead and decisive role in district in agriculture and other related issues   | No             | NA  | Regular lobbying to be done under the leadership of District Federation  | 25    |
| Play decisive role in planning process at district level  | NA             | NA  | Regular lobbying to be done under the leadership of District Federation  | 25    |

# Annex 2: Results RILTRAS capacity monitoring tool

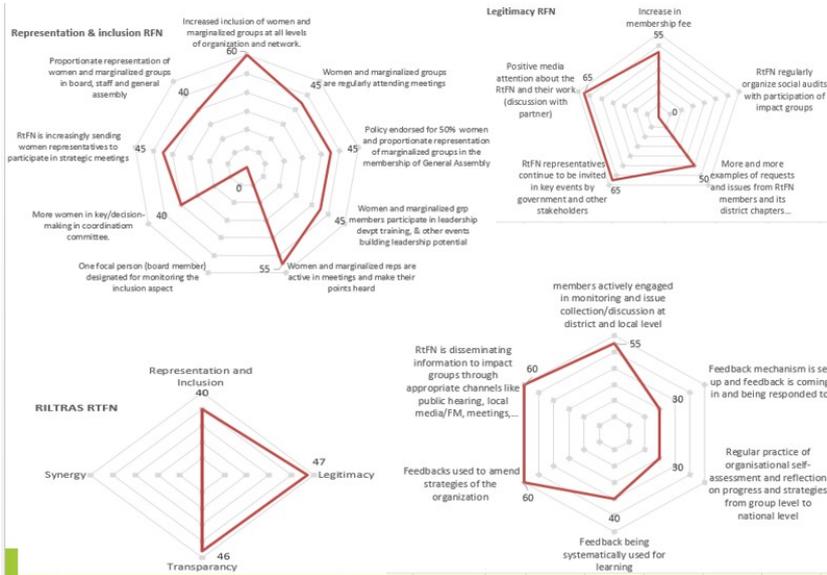
Figur 5.8: NFGF progress on RILTRAS (March 2015) and Advocacy Capacity Assessment tool (July 2015)



Figur 5.9: CSRC progress on RILTRAS (March 2015) and Advocacy Capacity Assessment tool (July 2015)



**Figur 5.10: RTFN progress on RILTRAS (March 2015)**



## Annex 3 CARE Nepal's definition of partnerships

CARE Nepal defines partnership as “ *Partnership is a formalized institutional relationship between two or more organizations committed to working towards mutually defined and shared development or humanitarian goals that bring about positive and lasting change to the lives of impact groups.*”

CARE Nepal's partnership strategy distinguishes between two main types of partnership in practice

### **Strategic Partners (financially resourced or non -resourced):**

A strategic partnership implies a relationship between two organizations based on trust, mutuality and complementarity. The leadership of the organizations will commit to the partnership based on joint vision, shared values and common goals. The organizations will influence each other's strategies and plans and will commit to joint learning and sharing. The partnership is beyond project funding and implies a program level commitment with equal power balance in setting the partnership agenda. Similarly, enhanced capacity of one of the partners will result in enhanced capacity of the other through their mobilization for peer to peer support mechanism. Strategic partnership will often be of longer duration as the nature of the joint work will often be long-term, though strategic partnership can also be shorter term. However, “long-term” does not automatically mean “strategic”.

Strategic partnership can be formalized through signing a MoU between two or more organizations. Besides the MoU, CARE Nepal and its strategic partner might enter into partnership grant agreements for specific funded interventions. When a partnership include an exchange of resources, the partners will strive towards an equal power balance, and CARE will exhibit flexibility and willingness to align with partner policies, procedures and practices if these are assessed to be living up to donor requirements and applicable government regulations.

The decision to enter into strategic partnership should be made by the Decision Making Committee (DMC) and informed by the program objectives. The decision cannot be made by an individual, project or program teams; although strategic partnership could develop out of projects and design processes with an existing implementing partner and the beneficiaries of its implementation area.

### **Implementation Partners(resourced):**

Implementation partnerships are relations which go beyond sub-contracting in the sense that there is a level of shared vision and objectives; mutual capacity building; influence, accountability and learning. Implementation partnership will always have defined and agreed results, targets, outputs, budgets and time-bound to a specific project or funding source. Implementation partnership can be shorter or longer-term. The process of selecting implementation partnership is guide by partner selection guideline of CARE Nepal .Implementation partnership will always have a partnership grant agreement as per the Sub-Grant Agreement Management Guideline

CARE Nepal can also undergo in consortium partnership at the time of project design. The purpose of consortium partnership is to increase access to resources and to undertake a specific initiative which requires skill and resources, which are not fully possessed by any individual parties of consortium. CARE Nepal enters into consortium partnership with like minded organizations by signing formally stated agreement to bring a value-added approaches to program.

CARE Nepal has not defined the network partnership explicitly but has been working with the loose networks. These loose networks are constituted of the Civil Society Organisations. to administer the project, CARE intervenes through a secretariat which is a legitimate member of the network.

## Annex 4: overview of interview respondents

### Group interviews with farmer groups and Land Right forum groups

| Group                      | Date    | Location                      | No. of interviewees | Male | Female |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|---------------------|------|--------|
| 1. Sukumbasi VLRf          | 22/4/16 | Sundarpur-8, Udaypur          | 22                  | 4    | 18     |
| 2. Shangharsasil VLRf      | 22/4/16 | Triyuga Municipality, Udaypur | 24                  | 8    | 16     |
| 3. Dihabar Baba VLRf       | 22/4/16 | Triyuga Municipality, Udaypur | 16                  | 8    | 8      |
| 4. Ramjanaki FG            | 23/4/16 | Narhara Regaul-4, Siraha      | 35                  | 2    | 33     |
| 5. Laxmi Narayan Mahila FG | 23/4/16 | Narhara Regaul, Siraha        | 17                  | 3    | 14     |
| 6. Parwati Mahila FG       | 23/4/16 | Bhagwanpur, Siraha            | 22                  | 3    | 19     |
| 7. Belkarani FG            |         | Rampur Thokzilla, Udaypur     | 14                  | 7    | 7      |
| 8. Singha Devi FG          |         | Mainamaini VDC, Udaypur       | 7                   | 0    | 7      |
| 9. Srijan Kalyan FG        |         | Lahan Municipality, Siraha    | 22                  | 9    | 13     |
| 10. Durga VLRf             |         | Siraha                        | 10                  | 4    | 6      |
| 11. Sunaulo VLRf           |         | Kuntadevi VDC, Okhaldunga     | 28                  | 7    | 21     |
| 12. Women Empowerment VLRf |         | Kuntadevi VDC, Okhaldunga     | 10                  | 1    | 9      |
| 13. Suryamukhi FG          |         | Katari Municipality, Udaypur  | 21                  | 12   | 9      |
| 14. Pabitra FG             |         | Katari Municipality, Udaypur  | 16                  | 10   | 6      |
| 15. Anmol FG               |         | Katari Municipality, Udaypur  | 30                  | 7    | 23     |
| 16. RamJanaki VLRf         |         | Dhangadi Municipality, Siraha | 10                  | 3    | 7      |
| 17. Sita VLRf              |         | Dhangadi Municipality, Siraha | 15                  | 0    | 15     |
| 18. Dinabhadri VLRf        |         | Dhangadi Municipality, Siraha | 15                  | 6    | 9      |

### Interviews with CARE staff

- Kafle Prakash: CARE Nepal RtF project manager (26/4/16)
- Lene Anderson: CARE DK project advisor (lobby and advocacy) (21/4/16)
- Morten Fauerby Thomsen: CARE DK project coordinator (12/4/2016)
- Jyoti Baidya: CARE Nepal RtF M&E coordinator (21/4/16)

### Participants to the reflection workshops

- Inception workshop (18/4/16)
- Reflection workshop NFGF (19/4/16)
- Reflection workshop CSRC (20/4/16)
- Reflection workshop Right to Food Network (20/4/16)

- Restitution workshop (27/4/16)

### **1. Restitution Workshop (27/4/16)**

| S. No  | Name of Participants  |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1  | Thakur Chauhan        |
| 2  | Lene Andersen         |
| 3  | Prakash Kafle         |
| 4  | Jyoti Baidya          |
| 5  | Krishna Hari Paneru   |
| 6  | Hansh Raj Joshi       |
| 7  | Binisha Shrestha      |
| 8  | Lora T Wuennenberg    |
| 9  | Popular Gentle        |
| 10   | Julie Gurung          |
| 11   | Maiken Larsen         |
| 12   | Pragya Pokharel       |
| 13   | Jagat Basnet          |
| 14   | Garima Adhikari       |
| 15   | Kedar Koirala         |
| 16   | Bhakta Bahadur Basnet |
| 17   | Jan Van Ongevalle     |
| <b>Total Participants: 17 (8 female, 9 male)</b> |                       |

### **2. Right to Food Network Meeting (20/4/16)**

| S. No  | Name of Participants  |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1  | Lene Andersen         |
| 2  | Prakash Kafle         |
| 3  | Krishna Hari Paneru   |
| 4  | Jyoti Baidya          |
| 5  | Dr. Keshab Raj Khadka |
| 6  | Birendra Adhikari     |
| 7  | Balram Baskota        |
| 8  | Yogita Rai            |
| 9  | Gokarna Gyawali       |
| 10   | Binod Bhusal          |
| 11   | Jan Van Ongevalle     |
| <b>Total Participants: 11 (3 female, 8 male)</b> |                       |

### **3. Meeting with CSRC (20/4/16)**

| S. No | Name of Participants |
|-------|----------------------|
| 1     | Lene Andersen        |
| 2     | Prakash Kafle        |
| 3     | Thakur Chauhan       |
| 4     | Jyoti Baidya         |
| 5     | Krishna Hari Paneru  |

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 6  | Jagat Basnet        |
| 7  | Jagat Deuja         |
| 8  | Geeta Pandit        |
| 9  | Kalpana Karki       |
| 10   | Garima Adhikari     |
| 11   | Ramita Shrestha     |
| 12   | Som Prasad Bhandari |
| 13   | Lyam Bahadur Darji  |
| 14   | Gopal Thapa         |
| <b>Total Participants: 14 (6 female, 8 male)</b> |                     |

### **3. Meeting with NFGF (19/4/16)**

| <b>S. No</b>                                      | <b>Name of Participants</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1   | Lene Andersen               |
| 2   | Prakash Kafle               |
| 3   | Thakur Chauhan              |
| 4   | Jyoti Baidya                |
| 5   | Uddhav Adhikari             |
| 6   | Kedar Koirala               |
| 7   | Ishwari Neupane             |
| 8   | Dilip Shah                  |
| 9   | Devi Thapa                  |
| 10  | Bhakta Bahadur Basnet       |
| 11  | Pancha Kaji Shrestha        |
| 12  | Nawaraj Basnet              |
| 13  | Muna Bishwakarma            |
| 14  | Ram Hari Sharma             |
| 15  | Rabina Maharjan             |
| 16  | Geeta Bhujel                |
| 17  | Rita Bastakoti              |
| 18  | Shova Giri                  |
| <b>Total Participants: 18 (7 female, 11 male)</b> |                             |

## Annex 5: Operationalising the project's theory of change through an OM based M&E framework

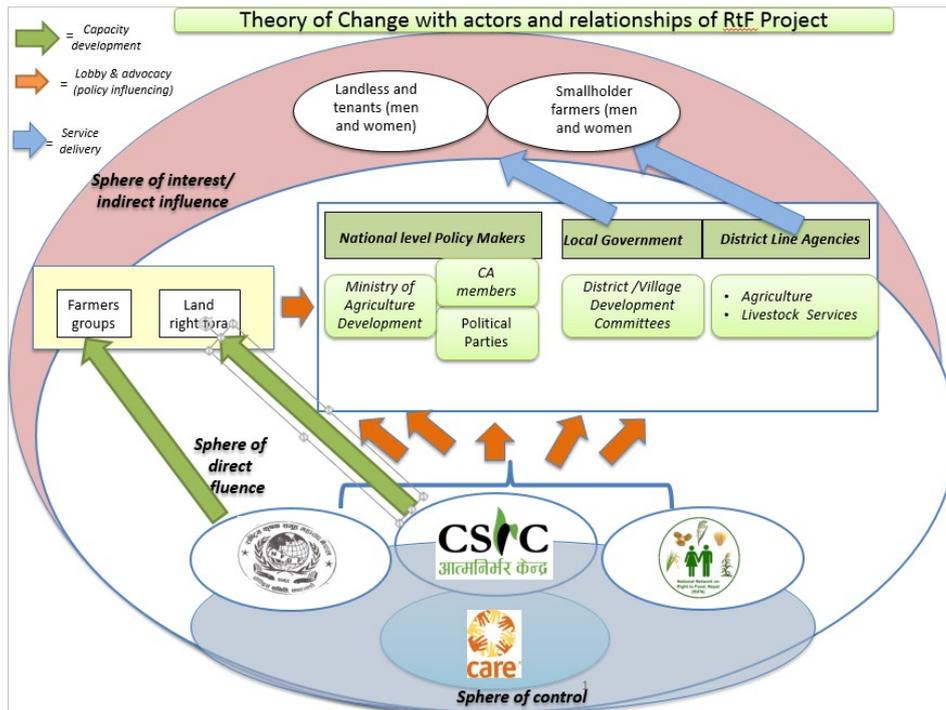
In November 2013, the theory of change of the project was operationalized through the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework based on outcome mapping. This happened in a participatory way with the active involvement of CARE staff as well as representatives of the strategic partners. The resulting M&E framework was then used in subsequent six-monthly monitoring cycles to track the progress of the project. It resulted in the following essential building blocks of the project's monitoring and evaluation framework:

- i. *A shared vision about the project's intended impact:* The project's vision provides a more detailed description (as compared to the initial impact goal) of the overall aim of the programme, the challenges it seeks to address and the impact it seeks to contribute to (see textbox 1)

**Textbox 1: Vision of the Right to Food Project:** Small holder and landless farmers and among them women, Dalits, marginalized groups, disabled, elderly, etc. have sufficient access to food throughout the year (from their own land and other resources, sustainable agriculture practices) and are better able to utilize food (and awareness about what nutrition is required for different people and age groups). The groups have access to resources and services, know their rights and have the capacity to claim their rights. Women farmers and landless are empowered and active in decision-making committees of local groups, federations, civil society organizations, and government structures at different levels. The groups are united and able to claim fair wages and equal wages for equal work. The government is pro-active and responsive in fulfilling people's rights and implementing laws and policies guaranteeing the right to food.

- ii. *Actor map according to the spheres of influence tool:* The mapping of the project actors according to the spheres of influence tool helped to identify the actors that are situated within the project's sphere of control, sphere of influence and sphere of interest. This mapping exercise proved essential to differentiate clearly between project activities which are in the project's control (i.e. activities carried out by the actors in the sphere of control) and the changes that the project hopes to influence directly in the actors that are situated in the project's sphere of influence (i.e. boundary partners) and indirectly in the actors situated in the project's sphere of interest (i.e. impact groups). Figure 1.2 below shows the actor focused theory of change that emerged from this mapping exercise and which has been fine-tuned during the project implementation.

Figure 5.11 Actor mapping according to spheres of influence tool.



- iii. Progress markers for each boundary partner. Progress markers describe the changes in practice or behavior that the project hopes to influence within its boundary partners (i.e. the actors who are situated in the project's sphere of influence). Progress markers describe the envisaged change process of the boundary partners moving from initial more easy to achieve changes (expect to see progress markers) to deeper changes that may take more time to materialize (like to see progress markers) as well as the ideal behavior that would demonstrate that the boundary partners is well on its way to contribute optimally to the project's vision (love to see progress markers). Since these changes in behavior are not under the control of the project but represent outcomes that contribute directly to the achievement of the impact goal, they constitute important development results that can be monitored in order to learn about the project's progress.