

Field Report

Shuklagandaki Municipality and Pokhara - Lekhnath Metropolitan City

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PERIOD and LOCATION:	March 31 to April 3, 2017 (inclusive of travel time), Shuklagandaki Municipality, Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City (White Gumba, Dobilla, Ward No 12, Municipality Offices, and Birth Place of Late Poet Lekhnath Poudel),
PROJECT:	Environment Friendly Local Governance Program (EFLGP)
MAIN PERSON (S) CONTACTED:	Executive Officers, Municipality officials, Local Communities and stakeholders, White Gumba Management Committee member, user committees
OBJECTIVES:	To monitor EFLGP field activities To accompany a DFiD monitoring team Discuss EFLGP effectiveness and sustainability Discuss effectiveness of LGCDP Social Mobilisation Process

During the four days visit, interactions with field stakeholders and observation of EFLGP supported ongoing activities were carried out. The following sections highlight the interaction and field observation outcomes.

Alternative Energy (Solar Light) and Bioengineering Work

With the objective of maintaining peace and attracting more and more Pokhara bound tourists, Under EFLG Support, White Gumba (Buddhist Stupa) Management Committee in Pokhara erected a total of nine solar street lights at premises of the Buddhist Stupa, one of the famous touristic sites in Pokhara. Of the total, eight street lights were reported to be functional during the time when the team had visited the site on 2nd April 2017. As said by a Management Committee member, there is an agreement between the Committee and electric vendor for maintaining the lights until next 15 years. Similarly, with EFLGP support, to protect the Gumba from landslide a retention wall was constructed towards north side of the Gumba in 2014/15. The retention wall was found very effective to safeguard Stupa, control landslide and protecting forests, said a local. Therefore impacts of both activities were found very effective. Moreover, it was seen that there were other retention walls constructed in compartment basis by different agencies adjacent to the EFLGP supported structure.

It was reported that more than half dozens of organizations such as Water Induced Disaster Risk Reduction Office, Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management Office, and District Development Committees, among others have invested huge amount of money for constructing retention walls without coordination. It was noted that having concerted efforts of the various agencies could have yielded more promising results. Therefore, stakeholders' coordination plan based on Master Plan of Pagoda Management Committee needs to be prepared.

Despite relevant and effective, sustainability of the activities were in questions. A coordinating framework needs to be developed and implemented under broader integrated planning framework. The team suggested to the Pagoda Management Committee to establish a infrastructure maintenance fund that could be generated by levying minimum entry fee for visitors in the Pagoda premises.

Environment Friendly Ward

With concerted and synergic effects among stakeholders, Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City - 12 was declared as Environment Friendly Ward last year. Environment-health linked awareness raising approach was adopted to motivate and mobilize stakeholders in undertaking various environment friendly development activities as suggested by EFLG Framework in coordinated manner. All the existing women groups, Ward Citizen Forum (WCF), eight WCF Sub-Committees, 18-child clubs, youth, women health workers and 23 Tole Lane Organizations (TLOs) were mobilized to undertake regular cleanup campaign.

According to Ward No 12 Secretary Mr. Shree Kanta Aryal, they have formed sector wise sub-committees and carried out several rounds of site specific mass meetings and environmental awareness campaigns. Environment-health linked messages were brought to household level primarily through teachers and school children. In this way, within a short period of time they were able to change behavior of people at household level. Moreover, regular monitoring mechanism was established and strengthened. With this concerted efforts, the Ward was declared as environment friendly in 2016.

Therefore, the approach of mobilizing all community groups such as WCF, Sub-WCF Committees, Child club, school teachers, women group, TLOs through environment - health linked awareness approach demands worth replications all across the country in Nepal.

To safeguard public places, even a small parcel of land has been utilized in the form of very attractive Park. Sitaldevi TLO has developed a small and beautiful park at the middle of the Tole. Moreover, they have declared domestic dog open defecation free zone, probably the first of this kind of activity in Nepal.

To sustain the achievement, they have started recycling waste plastic products such as bags, chaumin wrappers etc. in the form of various handicrafts. Ms. Dhana Gurung, a retired School teacher hailed from Ward No 12 of Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City and Chairperson of Environment Sub Committee of WCF of a Mother Group had showcased waste plastic containers and she told the initiatives helped raising income of the Women Group. Moreover, she has been facilitating cleanup campaign at local level in Ward Number 12 of Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City. An arrangement has been made by the Municipality so as to promote and market plastic made handicrafts

such as bags, cups, dhakki etc. With this waste plastic has become a regular source of income to



Dhana Gurung, Trainer in preparing container



Seedling in Memorial Park, Pokhara

local women. The strategy ultimately helps sustaining various initiatives undertaken in Ward No 12.

Public Land Conservation - Memorial Park and Gabion box

A memorial park was established in Dobillaa settlement of Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City in 2015. With an objective of maintaining greenery, safeguarding public land and adjoining villages from possible flood disaster, EFLGP has supported the local communities with fencing and seedlings to maintain a Memorial Park at the bank of Seti River. While observing the site, it was noted that varieties of plant species like sissoo, prunus, and gymnosperms have been planted. The plantation following memorial approach was found very effective to safeguard public land and thereby contributing to climate change adaptation.

Some of the plants were found dead even engravings in name plates were eroded that needs early replacement. To protect the park, EFLGP also extended support of embankment wall at the bank of Seti River. The money generated from plant owners has been deposited in the Park Management Committee's account that has been utilized to maintain the park.

Alternative Energy (Solar Lamp) and Bioengineering Work in Sarangkot

With EFLGP support, Sarangkot Park Management Committee has erected nine solar lamps at Sarangkot View Tower premises, another famous touristic place for viewing sun set and sun rise in Pokhara. According to a local, most of the solar poles were in need of repair and maintenance. Provision of maintenance fund has not been made. From tourist entry fee in the view tower premises, Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City collects annually Rs. 35,00,000 to Rs.4,00,000.

A toe wall was also constructed underneath of the Sarangkot hill top to safeguard the view tower. The supporting wall was constructed with financial support of Rs. 11,00,000 from EFLGP and technical support from Soil Conservation and Watershed Management Office. The wall was found very effective for safeguarding view tower as well as controlling possible landslide disaster at underneath villages. According to local, with this supporting wall about 10 household below the hill are secured from possible landslides now.

Though the supports for both activities were found relevant, effectiveness of solar lamp was not at par the expected level. There is not mechanism of investing part of the revenue into the sources management.



Landslide control activity and interaction at Sarangkot

EFLGP Duration Extension Request

It was noted that almost all the hardware activities such as park construction and pond maintenance were already contracted to user committees in Shuklagandaki Municipality. However, the financial progress of the Municipality was below 5% during the time when the monitoring team visited the Municipality Office on 31st March 2017. The issue of low expenditure was discussed at multiparty mechanism's meeting in the Municipality. Announcement of local election, frequent transfer of Executive Officer and recent strike of municipality staff were the major causes of low expenditure. The multiparty mechanism expressed strong commitment for 100% expenditure by the end of FY2016/17. Further, they have requested to continue the program for another few years as the EFLGP activities are very relevant towards developing Green and Clean city of Shuklagandaki Municipality.

Disaster Risk Reduction Program -Water Diversion Canal at Armala

A water diversion canal has been constructed all along both sides of motorable road in Armala Village for safeguarding lands from water induced disasters. With the water diversion canal - 250 ropani agricultural land and 500 household were safeguarded. Of the total 500 meter length canal, 200 were maintained from EFLGP support and were reported as very effective.

More than 60 sink holes were suddenly emerged in Armala Village of Kaski District in May 2014. Over exploitation of sand gravel and stones by local has caused water to flow underground and this is responsible for emergence of the sinkholes in Armala, said local knowledgeable people. According to Armala Disaster-Induced Concern and Construction Committee (ADICCC), no sinkholes have formed since April this year. One of reasons of this was the effectiveness of the water diversion canal.

Integrated Activities in Late Poet Lekhnath Poudel Museum Premises

With EFLGP support, the Late Poet Lekhnath Poudel Museum Management Committee carried out various environment, livelihood and climate change resilient activities such as gardening, maintenance of trails and solar system, pond maintenance, solid waste management, construction of water harvesting tank, home garden maintenance, chautari maintenance, Gabion Wall Construction to name few at the home yard of Late Poet Lekhnath Poudel at Archale of Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City. According to Municipality Officials, EFLGP was highly relevant as it has supported local demand of maintaining cleanliness of the city. Moreover, having diverse nature of investment activities, local communities demand for agricultural activities, forest management and livelihood improvement activities are supported from this program.



With the integrated program support, tourism value of the site has been increased immensely, said Mr. Bishwomani Lamichhane, Chairperson of the Museum Management Committee. He further

said, awareness on importance of poetic value of the site among local people have risen considerably. With the initiation the land value increased that will help reducing rural urban migration in the future. The other impact of the work in the site include students come for educational tours, teashops are being opened, few modern houses are being constructed in the village. Having higher tourism potential of the site, a tourist resort is being constructed a few meters away from the Museum. Sanitation situation of the village is improved greatly.

To sustain the ongoing work the Museum Management Committee has established ticket system at the entry point. Entry fee per person Rs. 10 for student and Rs. 20 for others have been fixed and with this scheme the Management Committee have raised about Rs.25,000. As the entry fee system is being taken positively by visitors and based on willingness to pay more, the committee has planned to increase the entrance fee in the near future. Based on the work in the site, it is learned that site specific integrated activities should be implemented to showcase impact of any development activities.

Issues

The key challenges faced by local government to smooth implementation of the EFLGP activities includes, i) announcement of local election and need of adoption of election code of conducts, ii) municipality staff strike, iii) merging of Lekhnath municipality and Pokhara sub Metropolitan City, iv) inadequate technical capacity with municipality for timely designing and survey of infrastructure development activities, v) changing signatures and lengthy banking administrative process for releasing fund, and vi) Engagement of community people specially construction committee members in the election

Lesson Learned

- Successful coordination among stakeholders while implementing EFLGP activities has yielded promising results in Ward no 12 of Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City. The approach of raising environmental awareness through environment-health linked campaign is worth replicating elsewhere in Nepal.
- To minimize duplication of work and ensure efficient use of resources, MoFALD should promote preparing an integrated planning and implementing framework for newly formed local government units.
- Late Lekhnath Poudel Museum management Committee has initiated levying entry fee for visitors. Similar approach of generating fund from visitors could be adopted in White Gumba and elsewhere.
- Waste plastic can be an alternative source of income to local communities if skill enhancement trainings are given to right person and promotion and marketing is supported by Municipality.
- Maintenance of water diversion canals is found very effective to address the issue of water logging and control water sink holes in Armala VDC of Kaski District
- To ensure sustainability of infrastructures development activities such as solar street lamp and bioengineering work, a maintenance fund should be created from the very beginning of the construction process

- Maintenance of greenery in public land through establishment of memorial park was found very effective tool to safeguard public land and addressing the issues of climate change adaptation and mitigations

Recommended Action Points

- Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City should initiate charging entry fee to White Gumba bound tourists. The White Gumba Management Committee, should establish solar light maintenance fund to ensure its sustainability. Also ban in taking plastic water, coke bottles, and food items inside gumba.
- Municipality should promote and market conversion of waste plastic into useful plastic containers
- White Gumba Management Committee as well as Late Poet Lekhnatha Poudel Museum management committee should undertake infrastructure development activities based on a clear design and master plans. Pokhara-Lekhnatah Metropolitan City should ask Late Poet Lekhnath Poudel Museum Management Committee to prepare Master Plan before doing any activities in the days ahead
- Municipality should replace the dead and dying plant seedlings in Memory Park at Dobilla in Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City. Also, it is necessary to update the name plates.
- Immediate action should be taken towards fixing the problem of solar light and maintaining greenery in Sarangkot by Pokhara Lekhnath Metropolitan City
- All the environmental activities from line agencies and ministries should be aligned in a single framework for effective implementation and for zero duplication.

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