Community Mobilisation in Nepal

UNV / RADC
NEP/01/V01

"Learning from Experience"

A review of the project, with discussions on:

- Social Mobilisation for remote areas - a new perspective;
- Bringing new ideas to a long-established government institution;
- Microhydro as an energy source for remote villages;
- Gender issues in remote and traditional village communities;
- Implementation/execution arrangements;
- Costs & benefits of a project extension.

This UNV-executed project was funded through the assistance of the Government of Japan, and implemented by the Remote Area Development Committee (RADC), under the Ministry of Local Development of His Majesty's Government of Nepal. It was previously known as 'Community Mobilisation and Support Programme for Remote Mountain Villages', GLO/96/V05 (10) and NEP/99/V01.

The project aimed to support the software aspects of microhydro development in remote districts of Nepal.

UN Volunteers

Final Project Report

1st June 1998 to 31st May 2001

Recognising the poor development status of remote districts of Nepal and the potential of harnessing water-power throughout the region, as well as the difficulties in connecting these remote villages to a national grid, the Government of Nepal is promoting community-owned microhydro electric power schemes.

The Remote Area Development Committee (RADC) is an institution under the Ministry of Local Development, which, since 1978 has been providing services to remote communities in the 22 remote districts, as defined by His Majesty's Government of Nepal. One of their principle activities in these districts is the provision of community-owned microhydros and solar systems.

The Japanese trust fund project NEP/01/V01 "Community Mobilisation in Nepal" has been supporting RADC on the software (community development) aspect of its energy programme in the 22 remote districts of Nepal since June 1998.

This report consists of a collation of contributions from volunteers working in the project under the United Nations Volunteers (Nepal) programme, those affected by the project, and from a small team of evaluators. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily represent those of United Nations Volunteers, United Nations Development Programme, Remote Area Development Committee or His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

Published in August 2001, collaboratively by:

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Front cover photo:
UC members discussing together the workplan during training programme. (Photo: NUNV B.P. Khanal)
A Woman in Timure, Rasuwa District, Learns how to use the new electric Chrka.

Foreword

Learning from Experience - the *Community Mobilisation in Nepal* project has attempted throughout its existence to enable its volunteer team members to learn from each other, and to enable others to do learn from them also. The volunteers have regularly shared experiences amongst themselves and with colleagues in RADC[1], as well as engaging in a number of training programmes concerning the value of Social Mobilisation and the processes involved. Thus, the *CMN*[2] project has achieved not only many of the objectives set out in the original project document, but has also stimulated within RADC and beyond a strengthening of the mission to make development activities more truly people-centred.

The *CMN* project has not engaged heavily in publicity and publications, but has produced mandatory annual reports, and these have been positively received, and commendation given in the CMN Project Evaluation for the quality and openness of these reports.[3] During the final year of the project, however, the Evaluation Team recommended that there be increased focus in documentation; this has been achieved, through the production of two handbooks (one targeted for Microhydro Users Committees, another for RADC staff engaged in Social Mobilisation), the revision of its web-page[4], and also through this small publication **'Learning from Experience'**.

This small booklet is <u>not</u> a formal Terminal Report, and therefore does not follow the usual layout and contents which might be expected in such a publication. Rather, it addresses those aspects of the project's experience which may be overlooked in the project's more formal documentation. What has the project achieved (or failed to achieve) beyond the confines outlined in the project document? What can we learn from the experience of having a small team of United Nations Volunteers working, within a government institution, to support Nepal's remote communities as they tackle the challenges of making optimum and sustainable use of their Microhydros? Are there any lessons learned, which could be of benefit to other government institutions? Or to other organisations working in remote areas, or in the Social Mobilisation field? Could some of the findings of the project be of relevance to alternative-energy programmes being launched in other countries? What is the effectiveness of using microhydro as an entry point to promote remote-area development? The next question which then faced us was: who is going to read this, and (therefore) what kind of language should be used in this booklet?

It was decided to keep the language simple and accessible, using footnotes and appendices to address the more technical issues. And, given the breadth of potential readership, this booklet is designed to be 'dipped' into, as opposed to being read from cover to cover.

Feedback (positive or negative) would be most welcome; and if interesting discussions arise as a result of this booklet, then these could be incorporated in a special section of the project's web-site. (e-mail address: unv.nepal@undp.org.np)

Hemanta Kharel	Simon Forrester	Chris Whitehouse
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RADC, HMG, Nepal	UNDP, Nepal	NEP/01/VO1 Team Leader

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[1] RADC = Remote Area Development Committee (a list of all abbreviations used in this report, as well as definitions of some technical terms, is given on page 4)

[2] Throughout this report, 'CMN Project' refers to the UNV/RADC 'Community Mobilisation in Nepal' project, whilst 'MHP Project' refers to a specific Microhydro project implemented in a specific remote village by RADC.

[3] See Evaluation Report, May 2000.

[4] To visit the CMN Project's web-pages, visit *http://www.unv.org.np/RADC/home.htm*

Abbreviations and Acronyms Used in this Report

CMN	**'**Community Mobilisation in Nepal' project
DDC	District Development Committee
DED	German Volunteer Service
EU-IGA	End-Use Income Generation Activity
HDI	Human Development Index (see below)
HMG	His Majesty's Government
IGA	Income Generating Activity
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
LDO	Local Development Officer
MHP	Microhydro plant
MLD	Ministry of Local Development
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRs	Nepali rupees
NUNV	National United Nations Volunteer
PO	Programme Officer
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RADC	Remote Area Development Committee
REDP	Rural Energy Development Programme
REEMC	Rural Electrification Energy Management Committee
RMF	Repair and Maintenance Fund
SADP	Special Area Development Programme
TOT	Training of Trainers
UC	Users Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteer(s)
VDC	Village Development Committee

Some Definitions

Development Objective: What is the overall purpose of the project, in other words

Objectives: As a means to work towards the overall development objective, what are the separate goals which have to be met?

Activities: What will the project actually do in order to achieve its objectives?

Success indicators: What measures can we use to assess if the activities done have led to achievement of the objectives?

Outputs: What products are there from the activities (in the broadest sense of the word - e.g. documents, buildings, even 'trained people')

Inputs: What did the project provide to enable the activities to take place (e.g. stationery, fuel, UN Volunteers, etc.)

Implementation Agency: Body responsible for the management of the project activities.

Executing Agency: Body held accountable for achieving the project objectives and the resources used for such purpose.

Human Development Index (HDI): Development indicators formulated by UNDP's Human Development Report.

CONTENTS

Introduction

Since June 1998, the *Community Mobilisation in Nepal* project has been supporting village communities in remote areas of Nepal. With funding from the Government of Japan, United Nations Volunteers Programme in Nepal joined hands with the Ministry of Local Development's 'Remote Area Development Committee' (RADC) in promoting community-ownership of the small-scale water-powered village electrification schemes ('microhydro') provided to remote communities by RADC. This has involved engagement not only at the grassroots, but also at the central level.

NUNV Mr. Bharat Prasad Khanal joins a discussion of a Users Committee in the remote district of Mugu

Recognising the need for full community participation in its microhydro (and solar) programmes, RADC had developed this project in partnership with UNV. Since the plants are designed to be community-owned, the beneficiaries need to develop the skills required for running the microhydros efficiently, and organising themselves to enable them to make the necessary decisions concerning their microhydro: community participation in the construction work, equitable and economic distribution of electricity, employment of operator and manager, and so on. A tariff structure also has to be developed to enable the community to cover the running costs, as well as the anticipated repair and maintenance costs.

In each village-project site, a democratic Users Committee or REEMC (Rural Electrification Energy Management Committees) is formed. Its members will draw up their constitution, register as an NGO, learn the necessary skills for running an NGO, hold regular meetings, maintain proper records of membership and keep the accounts in order, respond to any technical or other problems which may arise in their microhydros, and so on..... no small feat for a very remote community whose income level may be very low, and where large numbers of people will be illiterate and uneducated.

The project's aim has been to assist the communities in this endeavour, and also to ensure as far as possible that women or disadvantaged groups in the community can play a full role in the decision-making processes. Through a series of training programmes and visits to the site by the project's National UNV Community Mobilisers, support has been provided to communities in almost all of the 22 districts falling under RADC's mandate.

Project team members have also worked with RADC staff in their offices in Kathmandu and Nepalgunj to strengthen the people-centred approach in its microhydro and solar projects, and, as a means to achieve this, they have helped design prototype UC Constitutions, improved UC/RADC contract documents, upgraded UC financial and account-keeping systems, as well as a Handbook for Users Committees, and a Social Mobilisation manual for RADC staff.

MICROHYDRO IN NEPAL

How it works - from community mobilisation to construction

A democratic USERS COMMITTEE is formed, which will oversee construction and eventually the management and operation of the plant.

A simple CANAL is dug to take some of the water from a mountain stream.

The canal ends at the FOREBAY TANK, where debris in the water is removed.

From the forebay tank, the water rushes down the PENSTOCK PIPE to the generator at the bottom of the hill.

The generator in the POWERHOUSE produces 25 Kilowatts of electricity for the village.

A three-phase LINE provides the community with electric light.

These photographs are of the UNV/ RADC project site in Bagarchap, Manang District, Nepal, taken by National UNV B.K. Acharya (who appears on the right in the group photo above)

'Learning from Experience'

Learnings from the 'Community Mobilisation in Nepal' Project NEP/01/V01

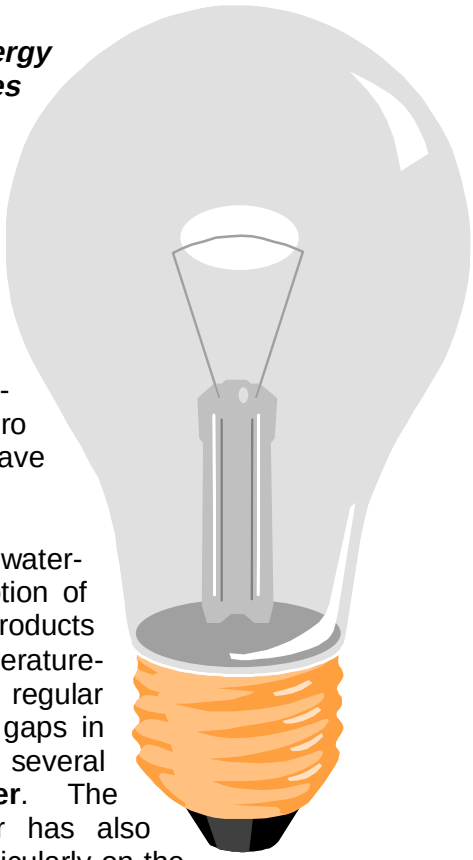
SECTION 1

RENEWABLE ENERGY IN NEPAL

Renewable Energy Sources
Solar and Microhydro Power
End-Uses for Microhydro

Renewable Energy Sources in Nepal

Nepal has a rich potential in its renewable energy sector, and a range of renewable energy sources are being developed in Nepal.



The steep slopes of the Himalayan mountains, combined with the continuous water-flow from snow-melt and rainfall, provide tremendous opportunity for **hydro-power**. These range from full scale multi-megawatt hydroelectric plants, through mini-hydros, microhydros, down to the smallest of all, the pico-hydro. While environmental impacts of the larger hydro projects can be significant, the smaller systems have much smaller impact.

But renewable energy in Nepal is not limited to water-powered systems: there has been extensive promotion of **bio-gas** across the country, drawing upon the waste products of a mainly traditional society. And the temperature-differentiation between high- and low- land creates regular winds upwards and northwards, channelled through gaps in the Himalayan mountains; in such places as Mustang, several projects have attempted to exploit this **wind-power**. The predictability of blue skies for much of the year has also encouraged the exploitation of the sun's power - particularly on the tourist routes, **solar-panel** electrical systems have been installed in a number of villages.

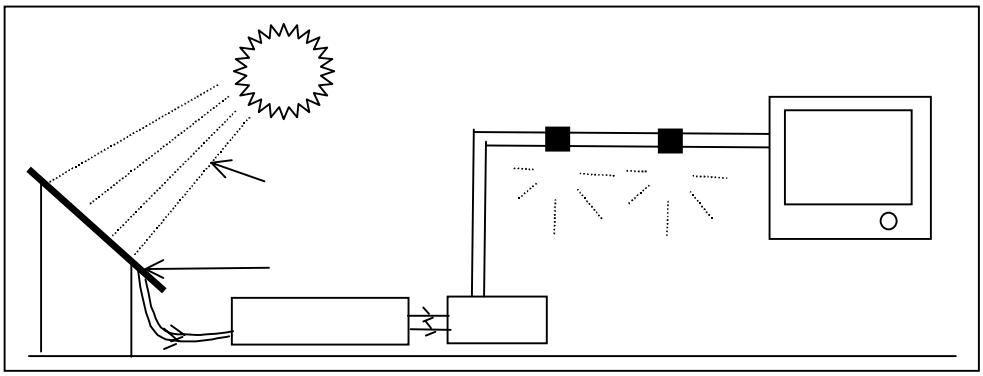
Each technology has its advantages and disadvantages: there will be significant differences in the initial set-up costs, in the running costs, in the reliability, in the frequency and cost of maintenance or repair, in the complexity of technology, in the ease with which transportation of the necessary materials can be made, and in the life-expectancy of the equipment. Some systems (particularly the smaller ones) may be privately owned; the larger systems may be community or cooperatively owned, and the largest may be government owned.

In its energy programme, the Remote Area Development Committee (RADC) has developed an expertise in microhydro, and there are now many village people in the remotest parts of the country enjoying the benefits of this source of electricity. But RADC has also recently been installing solar-panel systems, particularly in those areas where water sources may be insufficient in strength or reliability to enable microhydro to be viable.

More information about renewable energy in Nepal, and organisations involved in this sector can be found by contacting any of the following: Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) and UNDP's Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP).

Solar Power

The principle elements of a solar power system are the solar panels and a battery. As sunlight falls upon the panels, electricity is produced, and stored in a rechargeable battery. During the night-time, householders can use the stored electricity to power



How the Solar System works

an extract from the RADC Users Committee Manual, published in May 2001

electric lights.

Consisting of much smaller parts, solar-panel electrical systems are relatively easy to transport, and installation does not involve significant construction work either. The systems are simple to operate, and maintenance consists of little more than keeping the panels clean and the battery topped up. However, the initial outlay can be expensive.

As a stimulus for development, solar systems have two disadvantages - firstly, while they may provide enough electricity for domestic lighting, they can not power machinery, agri-processing or other potential income generating activities. Secondly, since they will be owned and operated by individual households (or, at most, by pairs of households), the involvement of Users Committees may not be so strong, due to the perception that they will have little more to do than help in the initial installations.

An RADC Solar panel installed in Dho, Dolpa District
photographed by NUNV Chakra Raj Ojha

Microhydro

The mountains of Nepal offer enormous potential for local-electricity production through microhydro. No big dams, no flooding - in microhydro, a narrow canal is dug along the contour of the hillside, diverting some of the water from a mountain stream. At the end of the canal, a 'forebay' tank allows accumulated silt and debris to settle and be removed, before the water rushes down a 'penstock pipe' to the generator in the powerhouse below. The water then rejoins the mountain stream further down, resulting in minimal damage to the environment. The electricity produced by one microhydro plant (generally between 15 and 25 kilowatts) is enough to provide local villages with lighting, and potential also exists for small-scale income-generating industries (or 'end-uses'), using the available electricity in the daylight hours.

There are a number of private companies in Nepal with the capacity to manufacture the required machinery, but the size of the constituent elements can present difficulties in transportation along narrow trails. It is therefore not uncommon for helicopters to be chartered to enable the equipment to be brought to the beneficiary village easily and quickly.

The technology is quite sophisticated, and there are many problems which can occur: transportation of parts may be difficult, the machinery is complex, and there are many parts which can break if not properly maintained (or if the manufacture is sub-standard); too little rain may cause the water flow to be insufficient for power generation; too much rain can cause landslides, which can damage canals, or, worse, can destroy the penstock pipes and power-house. And it can be quite difficult for a remote community to get help when their microhydro breaks down.

However, a successful microhydro can have great impact on a remote village community - not only for lighting, but also, through appropriate day-time use with End Use Income Generating Activities, for giving a community a stimulus for development.

End-Uses for Microhydro

The water might flow 24 hours a day, but electric lighting is needed only in the evenings. So, if a microhydro has been installed in a remote area of Nepal, why not make good use of the unused electricity in the day-time? It is with this kind of thinking that the Remote Area Development Committee (RADC), in collaboration with the *Community Mobilisation in Nepal* Project is encouraging and supporting the installation of appropriate End-Use Programmes.

The populations in the villages of remote districts of Nepal tend to have very low incomes. Yet local resources may be available which can be processed locally before marketing outside. For example, why bear the huge costs of transporting across the mountains large quantities of herbs for processing in the lower lands, if one can carry out some of the processing on the spot, and then only the much lighter-weight product needs to be transported? And with the mountain areas of Nepal so near to the Tibetan Region, there is great potential for marketing products northwards.

In Timure (in Rasuwa District of Nepal), for example, villagers are now able to spin wool using very simple electric 'charkas'. The old and tedious process of spinning by hand has been replaced by a much faster and more efficient system. And the people can use the time saved to knit marketable goods using their fast-spun wool. It is anticipated that neighbouring Tibetan people to the north will soon be bringing their wool down for processing in Timure, before returning to Tibet to make their products. Thus the introduction of microhydro has facilitated the introduction of electric wool-spinning; this in turn has enabled Timure to generate much needed income.

To increase the long-term sustainability of microhydros, **End-Use Income Generating Activities** (i.e. IGAs using spare [day-time] electricity) can be requested from RADC. The choice of the appropriate End-Use will depend on the village concerned, the availability of natural resources (raw materials), of market access, and the village's perceived needs. Already installed (or planned) are grinders, carpentry workshops, bakeries, Nepali-paper-making enterprises, carpet-weaving and wool-processing. The addition of an EU-IGA to a microhydro project can increase community confidence, pride and sense-of-ownership, raise the economic status & independence of the people, and stimulate the development of new skills amongst the villagers. The day-time users of electricity would also pay tariffs, and the increase in tariff income will further ensure the sustainability and economic viability of the microhydro.

A woman in Timure, Rasuwa District, learns how to use the new electric 'charka'

'Learning from Experience'

Learnings from the 'Community Mobilisation in Nepal' Project NEP/01/V01

SECTION 2

THE PROJECT DESIGN

Background and Baseline Information
Project Partners
Project Implementation Team

Background and Baseline Information

Before the onset of this project, RADC had been installing microhydro plants (as well as other infrastructural assistance) in the remote areas of Nepal (as defined by HMG Nepal), for many years, since RADC formed in 1978. However, it was due to the recognition that too little emphasis had been given to the software aspect of community ownership and management of microhydro, that the *Community Mobilisation in Nepal (CMN)* project was initiated.

The project entailed a constructive symbiosis of a long-established semi-autonomous government organisation (RADC), with United Nations Volunteers (UNV). UNV has a long history in Nepal, and has developed both useful experience in the Social Mobilisation field, and also a strong spirit of voluntarism amongst its team of volunteers. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), under which UNV is working, has provided the backstopping and administrative support. The Government of Japan has provided funding under its 'Japanese Trust Fund', a broad programme of support for a number of UNV-executed projects worldwide, which are piloting new initiatives in the *environment and development* field.

The project document was first drafted in 1995, following an initiative from RADC, supported by advice and inputs from Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), and German Development Service (*ded*). A series of adaptations were made before the project was finally approved for funding by the Japanese Trust Fund in October 1997. Approval was then obtained from His Majesty's Government of Nepal in February 1998, and the recruitment process for 6 national United Nations Volunteers (NUNVs) and one international UNV specialist followed.

Objectives of the CMN Project

According to the project document, the project's objectives were as follows:

Development Objective: *to support RADC's Rural Development through Electrification Programme, specifically through the implementation of the Village Training Program (VTP). UNV field workers will mobilise community participation, organise village user committees (UC), identify training needs for the technical and organisational requirements, and identify and develop sustainable end-use programs.*

Immediate Objectives:

1. *To organise and establish functional users' committees in the villages selected as potential MHP sites.*
2. *To assist the users' committees in the eligible villages selected by technical feasibility criteria in developing systems and technical skills required to prepare for MHP unit installation and to operate and maintain the MHP system and applications after installation.*

An evaluation held in the early part of the year 2000 recommended a shift in focus of project activities, and this resulted in an ***additional objective*** *being specified, which was given in the project revision document as:*

3. *To ensure that Permanent RADC Staff are motivated and equipped to be able to carry out Social Mobilisation process effectively, after project closure.*

In the middle of the year 1998, two significant events happened within RADC: firstly, the office moved out from the cramped and sleepy rented premises near Patan Gate to a purpose-built block within the Ministry of Local Development's compound. Secondly, there was the arrival onto the scene of 6 NUNV Social Mobilisers under this project. The change was palpable.

CMN Project History In Outline

On 1st June 1998, the *Community Mobilisation in Nepal* project was launched (although at that time the project had a much longer title, *'Community Mobilisation and Support Programme for Remote Mountain Villages'.*

Initially a 30-month project, an evaluation held in early 2000 and published in May of that year recommended a revision of project activities, and an extension of project-time-frame by 6 months, to enable stronger focus on documentation and training to be carried out.

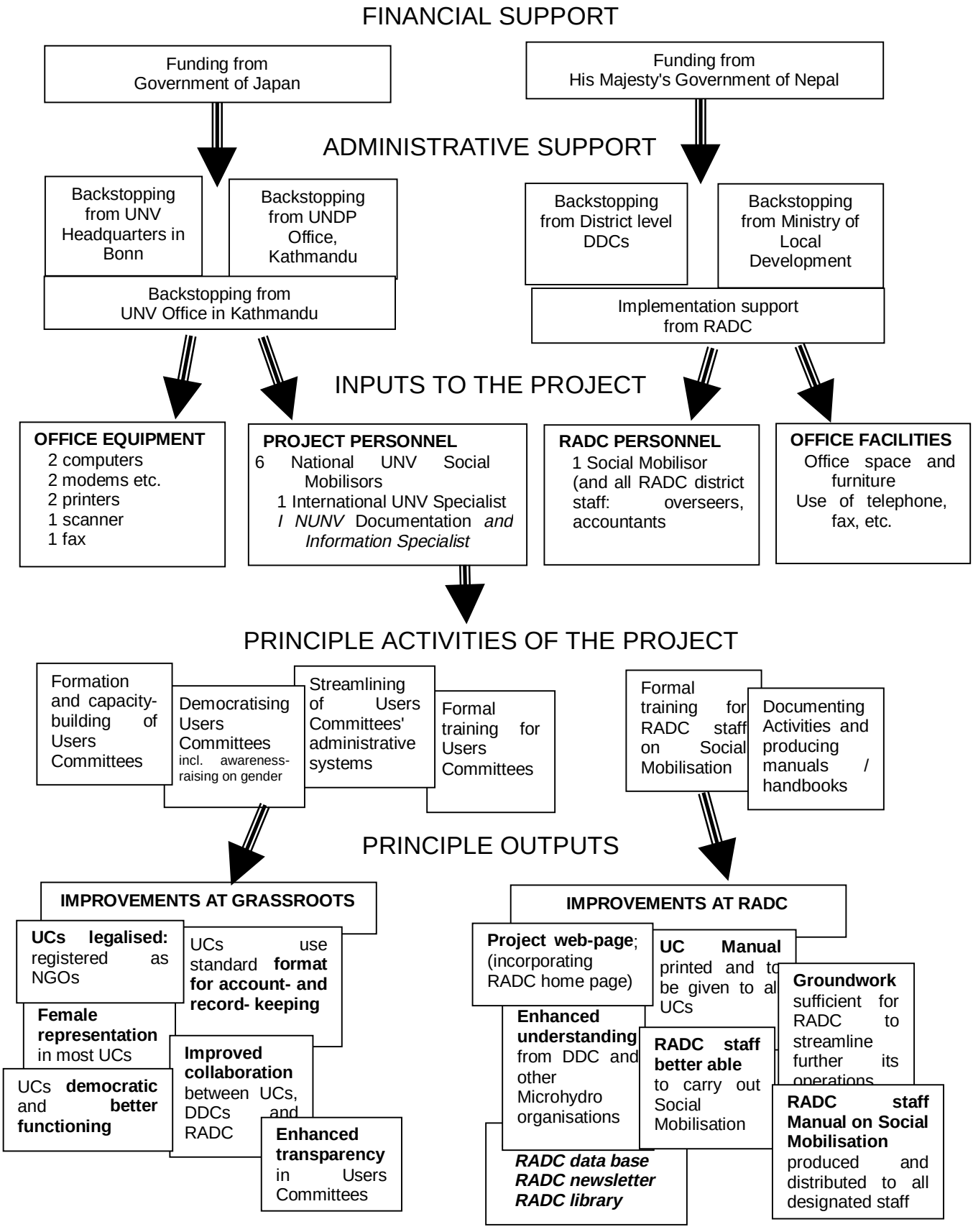
The total project period was ultimately three years, although in fact activities (focusing in documentation and IT training) continue beyond May 2001 through the efforts of the remaining National UNV Documentation and Information Specialist, and extended contracts of 3 National UNV field workers.

Year-by-year accounts of the project's activities during its three-year term can be found by reviewing the annual reports for 1998, 1999 and 2000, where details of activities and challenges are documented. Further details are also given in the appendices at the back of this publication.

CMN PROJECT DIARY

June 1998	Project launched, with recruitment and orientation for 6 NUNVs
Sept. 1998	Project team was joined by 1 international UNV Specialist
Oct. 1998-Nov.2000	Bulk of Project Activities Implemented.
Nov 1999	RADC is requested to take over implementation of Special Area Development Programme, previously implemented by National Planning Commission, and thus expanding its mandate area to 25 districts
Mar/Apr 2000	Independent Evaluation, by 2 national consultants, was carried out, at the request of UNV and RADC, with a view to planning for future activities and revising activities as required
May 2000	Evaluation report published, which recommended a heightened focus on documentation and training of RADC staff in Social Mobilisation processes, and a 6-month extension to enable these extra activities to be completed
June 2000	Draft revision document drawn up for discussion and review with UNDP, HMG, UNV Bonn and the Government of Japan
Jul – Sept 2000	In anticipation of project revision being approved and the time-frame extended, project activities shifted focus towards training and documentation; draft contents for UC Handbook was drawn up.
Jan 2001	Project Revision document signed. Within a week, the new NUNV Documentation and Information Specialist was at his duty station, and duty stations and responsibilities of all NUNVs were adjusted accordingly
May 2001	Publication of UC Handbook, officially launched by UNDP Resident Representative at a Recognition and Presentation Ceremony (25th May), at which certificates of service for the departing members of the implementation team were awarded
Jun - Dec 2001	Documentation and training (on computer use and IT), publication of RADC handbook on Social Mobilisation, launch of RADC newsletter, building up the data-base for RADC activities.

PROJECT MAP - a diagrammatic representation of project inputs and outputs



Project Partners

United Nations Volunteers (Nepal) (UNV)

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) is the volunteer sending arm of the United Nations, set up by the General Assembly in 1970 under the administrative guidance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Its mission is to promote global peace and international understanding and development through its worldwide recruitment and placement of UN Volunteers.

Worldwide, the last three decades have seen expansion and adaptation of the programme to meet the needs of the times. There are currently nearly 5,000 volunteers posted in over 140 nations, with 70% of all volunteers themselves coming from developing countries. There is at present a roster of a further 4,000 men and women specialists in any of 115 professional categories, average age 39, awaiting suitable posts.

The UNV Programme has been an active partner in the development of **Nepal** since 1974, when the first two International UN Volunteers arrived, to serve as nutritionists with the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO). Since then, more than 500 UNVs have served with a range of host organisations and projects, delivering technical expertise in sectors as diverse as climatology to cottage industry, and cultural heritage to community mobilization.

The UNV Nepal Programme is also actively involved in the recruitment and deployment of Nepali nationals to serve overseas as UN Volunteers, and is building on the successful establishment of the National UN Volunteers scheme, which operates within Nepal, and acts as a focal point for the advocacy of voluntarism.

Whilst in earlier years, Nepal was only recruiting UNVs from overseas, the growing capacity of Nepali nationals over the last few years has resulted in a massive shift: there

International and National UNVs share experiences and ideas as the UNV Programme Retreat, held at Dhulikhel Mountain Resort, Nov 20-22, 2000

UNVs serving in Nepal, including the CMN project team, help man the UNV stall at the Volunteer Exhibition in Bhrikuti Mandap, Kathmandu, on the occasion of the launch of International Year of Volunteers 2001 (IYV)

are now many more Nepalis serving overseas as UNVs than there are foreign UNVs serving in Nepal. Furthermore, Nepal was one of the first countries in the world to explore and pilot the 'National UNV' (NUNV) modality - of Nepali national UNVs serving within Nepal - and its success has stimulated growth of this modality worldwide.

For both national and international UNVs, there are two categories: the *UNV Specialist* generally has a minimum 7 years professional experience in a skill area, as well as a post-graduate degree or advanced technical qualification; the *UNV Field-worker* will have a minimum 4 years practical experience in community-based development work, usually with university degree or other tertiary qualification. On average, UNVs exceed the minimum requirements by a significant amount: exactly 50% of 1996 assignees had 11 or more years' experience, for example. The average age of a UNV is 39 years, and in 1996 there were 77 UNVs worldwide aged 61 or more.

Wearing the 'UNV hat' can have a range of positive consequences: UNVs are committed professionals who seek to work on a peer basis. They have a sense of realism and a sense of vision. Through pledging to honour and respect the values both of the UN system and the countries to which they are assigned, UNVs are perceived to be very well equipped to resist political pressures, both local and international.

During their time serving as UNVs, the CMN project team members have supported the UNV Nepal programme in arranging and implementing activities to celebrate International Volunteer Day each 5th December, and also celebrations of the year 2001 as International Year of Volunteers. Without causing disruption to project activities, the UNVs in December 2000 helped organise and man the UNV stall at the launching of IYV in Kathmandu. The Nepalgunj-based UNVs, supported by the Chief Monitoring Officer of RADC in Nepalgunj, also helped the local volunteer community there organise its own volunteer exhibition in March 2001.

Project Partners

Remote Area Development Committee (RADC)

RADC is an autonomous body working under the auspices of the Ministry of Local Development of His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N). Formed in 1978, RADC was given the responsibility to launch special programs for the economic and social development of the people in the places declared as "Remote Areas" by HMG/N.

In an effort to address the low development status of these remote districts, RADC is involved in the following activities.

- **Access**: trails, mule tracks, suspension and suspended bridges
- **Health**: community drinking water projects
- **Agriculture productivity**: irrigation projects
- **Local culture**: repair of gumbas and temples
- **Income generation**: cottage industry
- **General improvement**: village electrification by microhydro and solar systems.

Since its inception, RADC has been offering support to communities in the remote areas of Nepal through the provision of Microhydro, Suspension Bridges, Water and Irrigation Systems, as well as in supporting the upgrading of trails. In the future, as RADC responds to the shifting needs of the remote areas, assistance is likely to be provided in tourism-development, small-scale industry promotion, forest-product and livestock development, marketing and export promotion.

RADC, under the leadership of Member Secretary Mr. Hemanta Kharel, has seen its responsibilities increasing and expanding. With the implementation of the Special Area Development Programme (SADP), previously the responsibility of the National Planning Commission, handed over to RADC in the year 2000, RADC's area of coverage grew to 25 districts.[5]

And in 2001, the government gave RADC the responsibility of implementing the new Basket Fund programme, whose aim is to facilitate speedy development activities in the very least developed and most security-sensitive remote parts of the country.

RADC has a central office in Lalitpur, a Monitoring Office in Nepalgunj, in western Nepal, and has staff based in each of the remote-district centres. RADC has partnerships with a number of organisations, including Care Nepal, and has had support of volunteers from German Development Service (ded) and American Peace Corps.

[5] The additional 3 districts are: Ramechhap, Salyan and Sindhuli.

Of Nepal's 75 districts, 22 are classified as remote:

> *"Remote Areas" are defined by HMG/N as areas of difficult topography, inaccessibility, social backwardness, food deficit, and low economic level. Approximately one third of the country's total area is classified as remote including 13 districts completely, and a further 9 districts partially. The population of the remote region of Nepal is approximately 2 million, in 473 VDCs.*

The listing of districts under RADC's mandate (including an additional three districts included under the government's new 'Special Area Development Programme) are given in the box – see right. Those marked 'FR' are fully remote (i.e. all villages within that district are categorised as remote); those marked 'PR' are partially remote (i.e. only some parts of the district are classified as remote); and those marked 'SADP' are not classified as remote, but fall within RADC's mandate through their inclusion in the Special Area Development Programme. The ranking alongside refers to the Human Development Index given for each district: 1st in this ranking will be Kathmandu** (it has a high development index); 75th is Mugu, the district scoring lowest in terms of HDI.

In terms of Human Development, the remote areas of Nepal score poorly: when ranked according to UNDP's Human Development Index, the bottom ten districts are <u>all</u> remote. The need for extra assistance is clear: the people of Mugu District, which is ranked lowest in terms of Human Development Index, have an average life expectancy of only 36 years, for example, and literacy rates in Rasuwa are only 15%. For women, the statistics are even more worrying, with literacy rates for women as low as 3% in three of our remote districts.

Ranking of RADC Districts in terms of Human Development Index (HDI)

DISTRICT	CLASS	POS^{N} HDI
The 'Bottom Ten':		
Mugu	**FR**	**75th**
Bajura	**FR**	**74th**
Kalikot	**FR**	**73rd**
Bajhang	**FR**	**72nd**
Jajarkot	**FR**	**71st**
Dolpa	**FR**	**70th**
Jumla	**FR**	**69th**
Achham	**PR**	**68th**
Humla	**FR**	**67th**
Rasuwa	**PR**	**66th**
The Other Districts:		
Salyan	SADP	63rd
Dhading	PR	61st
Rolpa	PR	60th
Rukum	FR	58th
Sindhupalchowk	PR	57th
Darchula	FR	55th
Sindhuli	SADP	54th
Manang	FR	49th
Gorkha	PR	48th
Ramechhap	SADP	41st
Mustang	FR	40th
Dolakha	PR	28th
Solukhumbu	FR	24th
Taplejung	PR	18th
Sankhuwasawa	PR	17th

Total number of districts in Nepal: 75, of which 22 are classified as remote

FR: *fully remote* ***PR****: partially remote*
SADP: *districts covered under Special*

Project Partners

Community Users Committees

Kada MHP UC, Bajura

Of course, the most important partners are the people themselves, those remote community villagers who will have the duty and responsibility to keep their microhydro and solar systems running. It is one of the requirements of RADC-assistance that Users Committees (UCs) are formed. For it is they who will own, and be responsible for running, their Microhydro or Solar systems.

Who are the people in the UC?

Community-ownership cannot work, unless there is some kind of structure to represent the community. Since it would not be practical to give each householder the right to have the microhydro switched on and off, or to be responsible for repairs and maintenance, there needs to be a limited number of people in control. Conversely, if all the responsibility for operating the microhydro falls upon a single person, (i.e. it is privately owned), then the community can face difficulty due to the great power that this person may now wield. He/She may make the electricity charges very high, may exclude certain members of the community from receiving electricity on a subjective basis, and so on. Or, if this person falls into debt, or leaves the village, then the future for the electricity supply becomes very uncertain.

A Users Committee is a non-government organisation (NGO), where each householder benefiting from electrical supply will be a member. The members will then, at a mass meeting, elect an Executive Committee to look after the microhydro system. There will be a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, plus a number of other executive members. Generally, a UC Executive will consist of 11 people, sometimes more, sometimes less - but usually an odd number of people, so that contentious issues can be settled with a clear majority (rather than tied 6-6, for example).

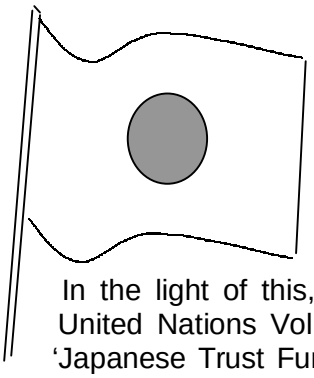
The UC will be responsible for the following:

- Being involved in the decision-making processes from start to finish of the RADC-project implementation;
- Raising the required deposit, which will be put into a special bank account, and from which any repair and maintenance costs can later be withdrawn;
- Arranging labour contribution during project-construction (e.g. for cutting and erecting poles, digging and lining the canal, building the power-house, and so on;
- Hiring an appropriately educated operator (or two, preferably), and a manager;
- Deciding, through village meetings, the tariffs which members will pay for their electricity (tariffs are needed to enable operator and manager salaries to be paid, and for continued growth in the Repair and Maintenance Fund bank account)
- Deciding the times of operation of the completed microhydro, and how electricity use can be measured and controlled (to prevent leakage or theft)
- Other decisions as required, to ensure efficient and sustainable running of their microhydro.

For smooth running of their UC, there will need to be a constitution decided, the UC should be registered as an NGO, they should hold regular meetings, with good records, and have sound financial management. Most importantly, the people must trust them.

Project Partners

The Government of Japan



The Government of Japan has taken a keen interest both in environmentally-sound development programmes, as well as in supporting innovative projects which are breaking new ground. It is also one of the leading global advocates for voluntarism, and a champion of the volunteer ethic.

In the light of this, the Government of Japan has been a significant supporter of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programmes worldwide, most notably through a 'Japanese Trust Fund'. This fund has financed a range of small, volunteer-centred projects executed by UNV in more than 20 countries.

The wealth of activities being undertaken through these projects is illustrated by glancing at the list of project titles, the CMN Project (previously known as *Community Mobilisation and Support Programme for Remote Mountain Villages*, listed below and circled) being one of these.

Global UNV Activities supported by Japanese Trust Fund:

UNV Assistance to Pilot Multisectoral Reconstruction Projects in Croatian and Bosnian Town

Health Manpower Development in Northern Laos

UNV's Collaboration with Japanese NGOs, UN Agencies and Government Institutions

Strengthening of Community Temple Learning Centres (Cambodia)

Assistance to Children within their Families in Lebanon

UNV Support to Public and Economic Reforms of Emerging Economies in East and Southeast Asia (Mongolia)

Multisectoral Assistance to War-affected Populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The NUNV Scheme

Support to the Economies in Transition in Central Asia

Sustainable Human Settlements Development in the Caribbean, Phase 2

Skills Training Programme for the Youth in Asia and the Pacific (Laos and Mongolia)

UNV Assistance to Rehabilitation & Sustainable Development of War-torn Areas in Croatia

Community Mobilisation and Support Programme for Remote Mountain Villages in Nepal

UNV Support to People Living with HIV/AIDS

UNV Support to Grass-roots Initiatives in Rwanda, Phase 2

Volunteer Support to Urban Poverty Alleviation in Thiaroye- Guinaw Rail

Network of United Nations Volunteers for the Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child in Central America

Building on Success: Continuation and Expansion of the Use of Japanese UNISTAR Advisers

UNV Assistance to the Disaster Management Programme of UNCHS (HABITAT) in Nairobi

UNV Support to TICAD II Agenda for Action

Folktale Development for Primary Education in Sekong Province (Laos)

Choose a Future: Empowering Young Women in Under-privileged Palestinian Areas

UNV Support to Emergency Floods Recovery Programme in the Sudan

Sustainable Community Participation in Angkor Park (Cambodia)

Support of the Government of Japan to UNHCR Operations in Response to the Kosovo Humanitarian Emergency

Japan/UNV Facilitation of IYV 2001 Preparation

The CMN Implementation Team

Nine people have served in the CMN project as UNVs. In alphabetical order, they are:

Bal Krishna Acharya has a diploma in Sociology from Gorkhapur University in India. He worked for three years as a Project Coordinator (1990-93) for poverty alleviation projects carried out in Godamchaur VDC in Lalitpur, by Godavari Alumni Association; he was involved in training, and organising small scale farming and other income-generating activities. He then served as a NUNV Domestic Development Service volunteer in Jajarkot (1993-95) and Dolpa (1996-97), under UNDP's NGO Strengthening Programme for the Mid- and Far-West Regions of Nepal. After working for a further year in NGO/CBO strengthening as Assistant Project Director in Nepalgunj, Help/Nepal, he joined this project in June 1998. Bal Krishna has received trainings in PRA, NGO management, base-line survey techniques, project design and formulation, savings and credit, and training of trainers (TOT).

Dhruba Nath Adhikari has a diploma in Political Science and Economics from Gorkhapur University in India. After teaching briefly in Kaski, he worked for two years at Amritdhara Community Dairy Production Association, a cooperative of dairy farmers in the western development region of Nepal. After nearly four years working as Project Coordinator of Child Welfare Community Development Project in Kaski, and at the same time being a UNV DDS co-worker in UNDP's NGO Strengthening Programme for the Mid- and Far- West Regions of Nepal, he became a fully-fledged NUNV, serving as NUNV DDS volunteer in Mugu and Jumla Districts, from 1993 to 1997. He has received trainings in PRA, NGO management, base-line survey techniques, project design and formulation, savings and credit, and training of trainers (TOT). He joined the CMN project on 1st June 1998.

Ram Binod Aryal studied Masters in Political Science (1982), and from 1982-84 studied Sociology in Delhi. After working initially as a teacher (1986-87), he was posted for five years as an Instructor/Training Officer under the 'K-Bird Project, installed at the Women's Training Centre in Surkhet. From 1993-94, Ram Binod worked in the Training Advisory Team under UNDP's Irrigation Sector Support Project WHERE, before serving as a National UNV Small and Rural Business Development volunteer in Jukot, Bajura District, from 1994-96. During 1997, he was Monitoring Supervisor at ADB/CEAPRED in Bara District, before starting his service with this project on 1st June 1998.

Bharat Prasad Khanal initially qualified with a Bachelors in Commerce, but has since received trainings in irrigation and water management, financial management, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and PRA and RRA. As an Association Organiser, he was involved in formation and capacity-building for Water Users Groups and Farmer Irrigation Organisations in the Kapiobastu Ground Water project (ILC) at Butwal, and then similar work in Lamahi, Dang District, and the Atrauli Puttar Irrigation Project. For three years he served as AO and Community Organiser in the ILO Dhaulagari Irrigation Development Project. He joined this project on 1st June 1998.

Sunil Kumar Lama has contributed to the project his skills both as a Social Mobilisor and as an engineer. Sunil scored 92% in his Masters degree in Engineering from Russia, and has worked as an engineer in a consultancy business, and also in a much broader (social mobilisation) capacity for KMTNC (King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation) in its Integrated Community Development Programmes. He has received training in strategic planning, gender-relations-analysis, and site appraisal and pre-feasibility surveying. He joined the project in June 1998, and was then allowed to resign his post in March 2000, as he had been awarded a scholarship to study in Japan.

Chakra Raj Ojha was born in Doti District, and is the youngest member of the team. With a Bachelors in Science, and Masters in Sociology (Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu), he began work in 1994 as Assistant Environmentalist at Agricultural Development Bank's Eastern Regional Training Centre in Morang District, and transferred to the Bank's Small Farmer Development Center in 1995. From 1996 to 1998, he served as Field Officer (Savings, Credit and Social Mobilisation) at the Dadeldhura office of the Community Based Economic Development (CBED) Project executed by CECI. He was promoted to Unit in Charge of this same office in January 1999, before joining the project in March 1999. He has received trainings in PRA, TOT, Participatory Gender Analysis, Community Organisation and Leadership Development, base-line survey training, as well as trainings focused on savings/credit and account-keeping.

Surya Prasad Poudel joined ithe CMN Project in January 2001 for a 9-month contract, specifically to facilitate the project to carry out the activities given in the Project Revision period. Born in Syangja, he has worked for five years as a Computer Instructor in Kathmandu. With a Bachelors of Commerce from Tribhuvan University, and a number of computer-specific trainings to his name, he is well equipped to carry out the printed-publicity, documentation and data-base tasks given to him, as well as to enhance computer literacy levels of the RADC staff and his fellow UNVs.

Lal Bahadur Waiba comes from Sindhupalchowk, and has a Bachelors degree from Tribhuvan University. He worked for ten years at Action Aid Nepal as a Community Development Worker, working in a variety of districts (Sindhupalchowk, Sindhuli and Nawalparasi) assisting in non-formal education, agriculture, health and infrastructure sectors. He then worked for 20 months in Illam, for the Mechi Hills Development Project. He has received trainings in TOT and PRA, as well as Leadership training, training in teaching adult-literacy, post-literacy and child centred learning, entrepreneurship, first aid, proposal writing, gender issues, base-line survey techniques and management. He joined the CMN project on 1st June 1998.

Chris Whitehouse comes from the United Kingdom, and has a Bachelors Degree in Psychology and Philosophy (Oxford University, 1980), and a Masters in Development Studies (Bath University, 1995), Chris has 20 years overseas work experience, much in the voluntary sector. After graduation, he taught English as a Foreign Language in private schools in Turkey and Singapore. He then served in Thailand as a VSO volunteer teacher trainer (1989-91). Then.while serving as a VSO in a refugee settlement in Zambia (1991-94), Chris became involved in many aspects of refugee life: food distribution, community elections, health and sanitation awareness programmes, and the preparations for the repatriation of the refugees back to Mozambique. After completing his Masters Degree, he served in Kenya as a VSO Development Education Coordinator. Chris arrived in Nepal in September 1996, where he served as a UNV Programme Officer for two years, before joining the project team in September 1998 as UNV Community Mobilisor Specialist.

'Learning from Experience'

Learnings from the 'Community Mobilisation in Nepal' Project NEP/01/V01

SECTION 3

PROJECT REPORT

Project Review & Principle Outputs
Project Evaluation
Building Capacity Through Training
Reporting and Information Sharing

Project Review & Principle Outputs

The primary aim of the CMN Project was to support the strengthening of Users Committees (UCs), to promote and support effective implementation of a village's Micro-hydro or Solar project, to assist the UC in its electoral and management processes, and in ensuring equitable distribution of the project's benefits. To enhance sustainability of a microhydro system, assistance was also given in UCs' implementation of a fee (tariff) system, and through encouraging introduction of Income Generating Activities (some of which might use the microhydro's day-time electricity), and building up the community's sense of ownership of its microhydro.

The first two years of the project therefore entailed a great deal of travel across the remote districts of Nepal. The National UNV Social Mobilisors worked with Users Committee executives and RADC district staff to ensure UCs were functioning effectively and democratically, that RADC procedures were being followed correctly, that UCs procured legal status through registering themselves as NGOs, and that UCs were sufficiently informed that they could make appropriate decisions regarding the implementation of End Use programmes, and so on. A number of local level orientation and other trainings were given, and also some training programmes were arranged at Kathmandu and Nepalgunj. This period saw impressive growth in the number of women elected into UC executives, and in the extent to which 'paper-UCs' transformed into more genuine and better-functioning NGOs.

During the final year of the project, the focus of project activities shifted towards capacity-building of their colleagues at RADC, and in documentation of the project activities and of the systems developed over the previous two years. This change in focus was stimulated by the findings of the evaluation team in May 2000. (see Appendix for Evaluation Summary). A series of district level trainings were held for RADC district staff, and through the assistance of a specially-recruited new National UNV Documentation and Information Specialist, a 'Users Committee Handbook' was published in May 2001, aiming enable current and future Users Committees to function effectively. Shortly afterwards, the CMN project published an 'RADC Staff Social Mobilisation Handbook', targeted at RADC staff, primarily those working at district level, to enable them to strengthen their community-participatory approach in their work at the grassroots level.

It has been an exciting challenge to see the introduction of new systems of Social Mobilisation within a long-established 'infrastructure-focused' institution such as RADC. Although initially there was some suspicion amongst a number of RADC staff about the community-focused approach, by the end of the three years there were few at RADC who remained unconvinced about the benefit in involving beneficiaries more in their own development. Indeed, the UNVs serving in the project often found themselves asked to carry out tasks well beyond the project remit - they provided a valuable link between RADC senior management and UCs, they were able to facilitate links between UCs and other local or national level NGOs, and they assisted RADC by drawing up budgets for the provision of End-Uses to selected UCs. Nor was it uncommon for UNVs to be urgently called to visit a site where some technical problem had emerged, or where some natural disaster had caused damage to a Microhydro site, or where a conflict had arisen amongst a UC.

The CMN Project came into existence to support RADC in its activities, and has sought to enhance the accountability, transparency and the quality of people-participation in

RADC's Microhydro/Solar programmes. The project was not designed to re-format RADC; rather, to work with it to improve the service it offers to the people in remote communities. In this regard, the CMN project has achieved the following during its 3-year-period:

The Principle Outputs

Awareness Rising: improved understanding in communities about what microhydro is, the impacts (positive and negative) it may have on a community, and the potential benefits it holds including potentials for income-generating end-use activities. Improved understanding of the respective roles and functions of RADC and of the Users Committee (UC). Enhanced recognition of the practical benefits a community will have from having an effective Users Committee overseeing the microhydro installation and subsequent operation and maintenance.

Enhanced Field-Central Communication: Provision, through reports from NUNVs, of a communication link between UC and RADC, such that RADC better knows and is able to address technical and institutional bottle-necks affecting implementation of the project, and the UC is better informed of RADC's plans and operations. Through NUNV research during visits to Kathmandu, linking with other microhydro organisations, as well as those organisations supporting herbal processing and other potential IGAs.

Completion of Baseline Surveys: Base-line surveys at primary duty stations to determine the socio-economic status of village members, and the needs and potential income-generating activities.

Democratisation of UCs: twenty existent UCs have been reformed, thirteen new UCs have been formed, and the female representation within UC executives has increased voluntarily from less than 2% to over 20% (and a further rise in female representation is anticipated);

- **Introduction of UC Constitution:** Introduction of a UC Constitution (the Project Team drafted a 'prototype' constitution, which was adapted and approved by RADC, and NUNVs have facilitated the UCs to adapt and adopt the constitution as per their requirements)
- **Registration of UCs as NGOs:** Introduction of the concept of UCs registering as NGOs, and facilitating this process in the field (there were no UCs registered as NGOs beforehand)

  Institutionalisation of UCs: fifteen UCs have agreed constitutions and are now registered as NGOs (where previous to project, none were registered); a further eleven UCs are in the process.
- **Gender Awareness in UC Formation:** Introduction of a semi-statutory requirement that at least two women should be included in UC Executives (there are now women in almost all the UCs, which is a fine achievement given the structures of some of the traditional communities; the fact that women's inclusion is not 100% compulsory is due to the recognition that it is better to persuade than insist, for such persuasion may be less than 100% effective, but is much more likely to be sustainable)
- **The UC/RADC Contract:** Designing of a new UC/RADC contract format, with much more detail given about the respective responsibilities of RADC and the UC, and including a workplan format (this has been approved by RADC, and instruction given to district levels to use these new contract formats)

  Enhanced capacities of UCs: The UNVs have arranged/implemented training at site level for UCs - single-day orientations (fifteen sites), UC Management & Leadership Training (sixteen sites), three training for savings and credit group in villages, plus a number of centrally-organised training for UC members have been

arranged collaboratively by RADC and the project. The UCs also now have enhanced capacities for longer term planning.

UC Management & Bookkeeping Formats: Designing of UC management and financial formats, to enable UCs more effectively to keep track of their accounts, of membership payments and tariffs, to record minutes of meetings, etc. These formats have largely been adopted by the UCs in the management and operation of their Microhydros.

Development of materials for UCs: the project developed and distributed to UCs a pilot Nepali-language booklet containing prototype constitution, and detailed but simple systems for UC record-keeping, planning, budgeting, microhydro-tariff-fixation and account-keeping. These documents are, as per the Project Revision of January 2001, now collated and improved into a full Nepali-language 'Users Committee Handbook' (published in May 2001);

Systems development in RADC: UNVs have supported RADC to develop improved UC constitutions, improved contracts between UC and RADC, streamlining of work planning and of community-involvement in their microhydros before and during installation. As a means to ensure sustainability of the Social Mobilisation processes in RADC, a Nepali-language 'RADC Staff Handbook on Social Mobilisation' is also produced by the project (published in July 2001), as an explanatory guide for the UC Handbook, for the use of all district and central level RADC staff and any other people involved in the Microhydro sector. This process has also seen the design and adoption of new standard formats for undertaking base-line surveys.

Enhanced Publicity: Enhancing RADC publicity and information through designing of a project- and RADC- web page.

Spin-Off Benefits: a number of the more mature UCs supported by the project are now engaged in other development activities in their villages, e.g. promoting cleanliness/sanitation, literacy classes, savings and credit groups.

The principle means to achieve the above have been through the following types of activity:

- Visits to the field, holding meetings with stakeholders and village leaders, holding tole and ward meetings[6], and also of mass meetings
- Formal Orientation and other training programmes held at village level
- Formal trainings for identified UC representatives, held at central level (Kathmandu and Nepalgunj).
- Ongoing and frequent discussions and meetings with RADC staff at both central and district levels.

[6] Each VDC is divided into nine geographical areas called 'wards', and these wards are again subdivided into 'toles'

The Project Evaluation (Spring 2000)

An **independent evaluation**[7] was carried out early in the year which made a series of recommendations both for the project and for RADC as a whole. In the light of this, the focus of project activities were adjusted towards the end of the year in order to put into practice an effective project-exit-strategy; the evaluation clearly recognised the achievements of this Japanese-funded project, and recommended an intensification of training programmes on Social Mobilisation methodologies for designated RADC staff, as well as documentation of project activities. A 6-month extension of the project period was also recommended, and was approved by the Government of Japan and UNV Headquarters in Bonn at the end of the year.

Following the evaluation, published in May 2000, a series of meetings were held within UNV and RADC, as well as a formal follow-up meeting chaired by the Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP, at which a number of organisations associated with RADC or working in the Microhydro sector were invited. It was agreed that the recommendations of the evaluation be adopted, and that application for funding for a six-month extension of the project time-frame be made. Within a week of revision approval being received, the change in duty stations was put into effect (with 4 NUNVs posted to Nepalgunj RADC office, and 2 to Kathmandu RADC office), the new NUNV Documentation and Information Specialist was posted (in Nepalgunj RADC office), and a purchase order for a locally assembled computer for RADC Nepalgunj office was provided through assistance of UNDP Nepal.

Inputs, Outputs and Success Indicators

What has the CMN Project Achieved?

The achievements of a project can be determined by reviewing the project document, and any subsequent revision documents, and assessing the extent to which the project has achieved the planned objectives - and also noting any spin-off benefits which perhaps were not envisaged in the original documents.

As noted in the Evaluation Report of May 2000, the original project document envisaged a working area of only three districts (Jumla, Mugu and Dolpa).

> *The objective, outputs and activities in the project document were basically planned when the project area was limited to 3 districts. Since the UNV project area has been extended to 22 districts, the modality of working has changed. ….. (I)t would be reasonable to make qualitative and subjective assessment of the achievement, because objective assessment is not possible from the available documents and because of the significant changes in the project operation from that of PD*[8]*.*

[7] The Evaluation Report is summarised in this report, but the complete document is available from the UNV Programme in Nepal and on the UNV Nepal website.
[8] see evaluation report, section 2.4

Despite the above, and noting the limited number of objectives, inputs, outputs and activities given in the original project document, it may still be useful to analyse in some detail the extent to which the project has managed to achieve its objectives. This analysis is given in tabular form on the following pages.

Evaluation team members Raghab Raj Regmi and Bhola Shrestha discuss issues at RADC Office, during the course of the Evaluation

EXTRACTS FROM PROJECT DOCUMENT	***ASSESSMENT (2001)***
Development Objective *The main development objective for UNV's participation in this project is to support RADC's Rural Development through Electrification Programme, specifically through the implementation of the Village Training Program (VTP). UNV field workers will mobilise community participation, organise village user committees (UC), identify training needs for the technical and organisational requirements, and identify and develop sustainable end-use programs.*	Done, but not 100% completed: UCs have been formed / re-formed and trained (but not all the UCs of the country, due to lack of reach of NUNV team); technical training has also been organised in a limited number of cases; End-uses have been identified and started.

Objective 1: *To organise and establish functional users' committees in the villages selected as potential MHP sites.*	done (but see below)
Success Indicators:	
a. Village surveys completed of social structure, needs, requirements, present level of capacity and structures; some preliminary surveys completed	done
b. Organisation of users' committees at each site, officers elected, constitutions drafted and submitted to RADC;	done – but it was decided that constitutions be submitted to District Level CDO, for full legal status of UC
c. Inclusion and replication of the "aama toli" (= elderly women's group) concept among local women's groups as a means to involve women in the activities around the MHP units;	this has been done, but in broader nature: women are included in UCs, and accepting UCs are flourishing in women's groups, savings and credit etc., but some resistance to women's empowerment in other places
d. Secondary activities from MHP unit identified;	some active UCs engaged in Savings & Credit groups, literacy groups etc.
e. Realistic and attainable end-use programmes identified, along with establishment of supporting institutional linkages and training;	EU-IGAs identified and many already in place; training given for wool-processing etc., plus some non-electric IGAs (kitchen gardening, etc.)

EXTRACTS FROM PROJECT DOCUMENT	ASSESSMENT (2001)
f. ***(Additional indicator[9])*** *All Microhydro UCs possess a copy of the 'Running a UC Handbook', produced by the project*	By May 2001[10], these handbooks had been produced and were ready for distribution
General assessment for Objective 1: Since principle operations have been with sites where microhydro was being, or had been, installed, UCs were already existent. However, the arrival of the NUNVs stimulated activity in those UCs described as 'inactive'; also the NUNVs have been working to encourage reform of UCs which had not been democratically formed[11], and to introduce elected female members to UCs. Constitutions for the UCs were reviewed (if existent) or drawn up, and registered at District Headquarters. Where current UCs were found to be non-functional or insufficiently representative of the population, new UCs were formed - to avoid conflicts, this may be done in stages, allowing the current UUCto continue with the construction-side of microhydro installation, and a new UC being formed to oversee community management and operation of the completed system - that is to say, the former UC would really be a community-construction committee, while the subsequent UC would be more genuinely a 'users' committee. With regard to secondary activities and identification of end-use programmes: the NUNVs have worked with RADC to explore and pilot end-use and income generating activities (IGAs) with the communities. 'End-use programmes' use electricity in the day-time, and are able to contribute to the costs of running the plant; other IGAs may be non-electric, enabling communities to raise income to help them more easily pay the charges for their night-time electricity. Training, specifically designed for EU- or other IGAs have been organised by the project at a number of villages, as required (e.g. wool processing, carpentry, kitchen gardening).	
Output 1.1	
Formation of a users' committee and other community groups as general representative community forums as platforms to introduce, orient and launch micro-hydro activities in village.	UCs were formed or re-formed, and operations have focused on strong VDC and DDC collaboration. NUNVs tended to play a more facilitating role, rather than a supervisory one; but these outputs were achieved at their village-project sites. Orientations and trainings provided both through central-level training programmes, and also at field level.
Output 1.2	
Labour for the installation is organised by the community members, schedules established and co-ordinated with RADC and manufacturers. Training and record keeping established for successful materials collection and responsibilities for construction determined.	There is considerable variety currently with regards to the community labour input during construction, and it appears that different project sites have interpreted 'labour contribution' differently: while some communities are offering their own labour for free, others are using UC funds to pay for labourers (to construct canals etc.), and others are accessing VDC funds for payment of labourers. The NUNVs encouraged labour contribution, and sought to ensure a clarified system for materials collection and responsibilities for construction. Community participation appears to be particularly weak in those sites where the request for microhydro was made without the full knowledge and con-sent of all the community members.

[9] Additional indicators, activities etc. are those added in the project revision document

[10] The main text of this report was written in May 2001, the final month of the project's principle activities.

[11] In some cases, the VDC interpreted the instruction from RADC to form a UC as simply a paper requirement; such UCs were found to be undemocratic, unrepresentative of the interests of the community, and largely inactive. More discussion on this is provided later in this report.

EXTRACTS FROM PROJECT DOCUMENT	ASSESSMENT (2001)
Output 1.3	
Guidelines outlining operational and managerial systems and strategies in community-managed micro-hydro project. Monitoring and evaluation procedures will be formalised at all levels of participation within RADC mandated area of operations. ***Additional output: Guidelines include all the required information on running a UC (NGO)***	Guidelines, administrative and financial bookkeeping systems were developed by the project team in collaboration with RADC colleagues; the team noted the continued need for improved monitoring and evaluation procedures within RADC, particularly on technical aspects. Guidelines on running a UC (NGO) were published in May 2001. With regards activity 1.3.3, it is highly possible that many of the benefits of introducing this project's activities to RADC microhydro and solar sites could be applied also to other RADC infrastructure projects for community ownership: trails, footbridges, irrigation systems, and so on. This needs to be explored further.

Objective 2*: To assist the users' committees in the eligible villages selected by technical feasibility criteria in developing systems and technical skills required to prepare for MHP unit installation and to operate and maintain the MHP system and applications after installation.*	This has been the primary focus of project activities for the first two years, and has largely been achieved (but please see notes below for relevant sections)
Success Indicators:	
1. Users' committee members identified as technical assistants	Operators identified.
2. Training organised in villages for users' committee	Achieved in many villages, both orientations as well as formal trainings in leadership, UC management, financial management etc. (see appendix for trainings details)
3. Technical and management systems identified and used	Systems have been devised, and all UCs visited have received copies of standard formats for UC management, tariff collection, account keeping application for End Use programme support, etc.
4. User's committee and community actively and collectively co-operate in MHP construction	In many cases, there has been improvement in community participation, but in some cases 'participation' has been interpreted to mean 'paying labourers to do the work'
5. Necessary linkages made with government, manufacturers and INGOs to develop greater collaborations and partnerships.	Links with government and INGOs have been made (and also with national NGOs); enhanced collaboration with manufacturers has not been possible due to all contacts with manufacturers continuing to be made exclusively by RADC itself. This aspect still needs to be addressed, as it also has implications for UC-ownership of its microhydro, and for UC trust in RADC transparency.
6. Successful installation of MHP unit.	n/a - many MHPs successfully installed; others are in process, or are awaiting repair.
Output 2.1	
User's committee introduced to and trained in the necessary technical, management and organisational systems for successful adoption of MHP system. Key people are nominated and approved as focal points for specific training.	See above. It appears, however, that the 'key people' for training are selected by RADC (Member Secretary) on a somewhat ad hoc basis, and that while some UCs' Executive members receive many trainings, other UCs receive proportionately very little

EXTRACTS FROM PROJECT DOCUMENT	ASSESSMENT (2001)
Output 2.2	
Identification of specific end-use development programmes/activities and mobilisation of community participation toward these activities, and preparation of related training in support of same.	End Uses have been identified for 7 sites, and due to time pressure of RADC, the UCs were not fully involved in the decision-making processes. CMN project has devised an application procedure and format for future UCs to apply for End Uses, but it is uncertain if these will be adopted.

***Objective 3**:* Permanent RADC Staff are motivated and equipped to be able to carry out Social Mobilisation process effectively, after project closure.	**This has been the primary focus for CMN project during the final months.**
Success Indicators:	
a. RADC continues software component in its microhydro projects after project closure;	to be assessed…. the positive signs are: RADC district level staff trained at programmes in Kathmandu, Butwal and Nepalgunj, plus district-level trainings held for RADC district staff in 7 districts, and publication of RADC Social Mobilisation handbook. Also, an RADC permanent staff member has joined RADC Kathmandu to take charge of Social Mobilisation aspects.
b. All RADC staff possess and use a copy of the Social Mobilisation Handbook produced by the project;	Later in 2001 these manuals will be distributed…. it is for later assessment to ascertain whether the handbooks are being used.
c. All RADC staff possess and use a copy of the Training Handbook produced by the project;	The training handbook has been incorporated into the Social Mobilisation Handbook - (see above)
d. Information concerning RADC programmes, status of RADC projects and of Microhydro UCs is readily available in RADC Kathmandu, RADC Nepalgunj, District Centres, and at project sites.	Measures are being taken to improve information flow, through introduction of RADC newsletter, and updating the nascent data-base started by the CMN project.
Output 3.1	
Designated RADC Staff understand the importance of, and are fully trained in, Social Mobilisation	Training has been done (see above)
Output 3.2	
Training handbook developed and used by RADC staff involved in Social Mobilisation	Handbook distributed
Output 3.3	
Handbook on Social Mobilisation in RADC Microhydro	Handbook distributed
Output 3.4	
Creation of data-base and information system, enabling RADC in all offices to access and update information on each UC's and each microhydro site's status and history.	In process (by NUNV Documentation and Information Specialist who will be working with RADC up to December 2001)

Note:

Objective 3 above was an <u>additional</u> objective introduced in the Project Revision, which was implemented with effect from January 2001

Building Capacity through Training

Due to administrative reasons, 'trainings' and 'capacity building' will usually be defined as distinct entities: trainings are those capacity-building events with a fixed venue, and fixed curriculum, whilst other capacity-building is on-the-job support and advice given in a less formal setting. The distinction between the two can be unhelpful, however, the two should be carried out in tandem.

At the most informal level, the NUNVs have been bringing ideas and stimulating discussions amongst the communities, as per the needs of the time. Occasionally, these will be formalised as 'orientation programmes' or 'leadership-building programmes'. There may also be full-blooded 'training programmes', for example on financial management of UCs, or providing the necessary skills to those operating or running End-Use programmes.

At the central level, one would include the trainings given in Kathmandu, Nepalgunj or Butwal: the Leadership Training programmes for UC Chairpersons; Financial Management Training Programmes for UC Treasurers and Managers; and Social Mobilisation Training Programmes given for Operators.

But the capacity-building has not been limited to UC members and staff alone; much has been achieved in building the capacities of RADC staff, firstly to understand what Social Mobilisation is, and then to enable them to include this 'software' aspect in their work - i.e. bringing a more people-centred approach to their tasks.

The advantage of the day-to-day on-the-job capacity building, whether of RADC colleagues, or villagers in the field, is that the less formal approach, on a more one-to-one basis, can be well received and more appropriately targeted at the beneficiaries' needs. Plus, of course, they incur much less cost.

<u>Advantages of formal training programmes:</u>

1. **People from different places** are brought together and enabled to share experiences and ideas;
2. **Expert facilitators and trainers** can be made available for the participants' benefit;
3. Formal trainings can serve as a **publicity-tool**, enabling those in central or district level positions of power to know about RADC,

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TYPES OF TRAININGS HELD

In the villages:

- Orientation Programmes
- Leadership Training
- Financial Management Training
- Training for Savings and Credit Groups
- Training on Income Generating Activities

At district level:

- Training/orientation for DDC staff about Social Mobilisation in RADC
- Social Mobilisation training for RADC district staff (overseers and accountants)

At central level: (Kathmandu and Nepalgunj)

- Leadership Training for UC Chairpersons
- UC Management Training for RADC Water/Irrigation Users Committees
- Training of RADC Accountants in Social Mobilisation methodology
- Training of RADC Overseers in Social Mobilisation methodology

Where possible, all trainings incorporate gender-awareness component

about the project, and about the importance of Social Mobilisation and people's participation. Even the media and press can be invited to report on the training programme.

4. There is strong tradition in Nepal that every training programme should have an opening ceremony or a closing ceremony - or both. **It gives the participants a boost to have their training opened or closed by a senior government figure**, and it also allows the government ministries concerned to know about RADC and the project activities.

Disa**dvantages of formal training programmes:**

1. **There is significant expense incurred**, not only for the food and snacks, but also the travel costs to be refunded to participants, the 'training allowance' payment made to each participant for each day of training received, the facilitator allowances given to the trainers, and also the food given out to participants and guests at the opening and closing ceremonies;
2. It is not uncommon for training programmes to be significantly **delayed** due to the late arrival of chief guests at opening and closing ceremonies;
3. The formal nature of the proceedings can **inhibit participants from participating** as actively as they would at a less formal occasion;
4. The **absorption rate of information**, particularly amongst the less educated, may result in inefficiency in such an intensive programme - participants can become very tired, very quickly. An informal training of a few minutes a day might, in many ways, be more effective.
5. The **selection of which people will attend** the training programmes can be a tricky area: due to the training and other allowances to which participants will be eligible, there can be undue pressure to base the invitation list on factors other than simple training needs. Both politics and nepotism can interfere in the process of drawing up participant lists. The fact that this can happen, or, just as importantly, the fact that people may *perceive* that this is happening, especially where the invitation list is drawn up at the central level, may be cause for concern.
6. **Evaluation is important**. Unless sufficient effort is made to carry out a full evaluation of a training programme, weak facilitators (who may be strong in their subject area but weak in training skills, or vice versa) may continue to be rehired, training programmes may be repeated yet always too long or too short, they may omit important aspects, or include irrelevancies.
7. **Pyramid Training**: Unless participants are actively encouraged to pass on their learnings to their colleagues and friends, and also advised about how best to carry out this task, then the benefit of the training may not transfer to others who need to know. Indeed, it can lead to the trainee holding a position of power within his/her community, since he or she is now perceived to know what the others do not. In essence, a training of only a single representative from any UC can create imbalance of power within the UC afterwards.

Many of the central-level trainings held have been cooperatively organised by RADC and the project; indeed, it is in the training programmes that this spirit of cooperation has been the most visible. In some cases, RADC has provided the funding, and the project has provided the organisation and facilitation; in others the roles have been reversed.

There is always room for improvement, however. There is a clear need at RADC for a well-thought-out training programme to be included in a workplan; and there is a need for each site to be eligible for one operator training, one leadership training etc… just as they are eligible for 2 extra screwdrivers and a spanner… it should be part of the package. This would also protect RADC from accusations of favouritism when drawing up participant lists - as mentioned elsewhere in this report, there is a perception that some UCs are invited to many trainings, while others may be ignored. Indeed, one way

to address this perception would be to make training programmes more demand-driven: notice could be given of a planned training, and UCs could compete to have their representative attend - since budgetary constraints can be an issue in whether or not to conduct trainings, RADC might consider requiring the UCs to provide their representatives with the necessary travel and daily allowances.

Reporting and Information Sharing

A balance needs to be struck with regards to the amount of resources used in reporting and publicising a project's activities. The internal reporting structure for the CMN project has been quite rigourous, with NUNVs submitting monthly reports of their activities, site-project-specific reports on their return from each site-visit, as well as the standard UNV reporting requirements. The project has also provided annual reports for outside distribution, and these were well received.

However, external reporting and publicity is also important; it enables experiences to be shared with partner organisations, and also can offer a channel for collaboration and resource mobilisation for projects or sub-projects. External reporting had not been strong in the first years of the project, except for the launch of a project web-site, but, especially taking into account the recommendations of the evaluation report, greater effort was made in this regard in the final months of the project.

Web-site: The CMN project first published its own **web-pages** on the UNV Nepal's internet-site in mid-2000; an improved version appeared in early 2001. (see next page)

Publications: During the final months of the project, there has been a renewed drive to make up for lost time in the documentation arena, with the following achieved (or to be achieved) during the year 2001:

- **Production and distribution of a *Users Committee Handbook***, a simple-Nepali-language 150-page booklet with illustrations, intended for UC executive members to enable them to run their UCs effectively and sustainably;
- **Production and distribution of an *RADC Staff Handbook on Social Mobilisation***, designed as an explanatory support document to go along with the UC Handbook. RADC staff, both at central and district level, may refer to this when engaging with community members or UC representatives, especially when the RADC staff are engaged in support-work for the UCs;
- **A simple Nepali-language brochure** has been drafted, aimed to enable village and district people to know about the services offered by RADC;
- The format for **a Nepali-language RADC Newsletter** has been designed, and the first issue is expected to be produced in late- 2001;
- **This 'Learning from Experience' report** was designed to enable individuals and organisations engaged in remote area community development work and/or in the microhydro field, and/or planning to do so, to learn from the experiences of this project.

The CMN Project on the Web…

The CMN Project's Home-page offers links to many CMN documents: the Project and Project-Revision Documents, all Annual Reports, Evaluation, Introduction to Microhydro and End-uses, Tips on Social Mobilisation, a Photo-Gallery, as well as links to related organisations.

'Learning from Experience'

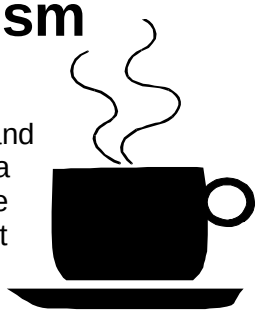
Learnings from the 'Community Mobilisation in Nepal' Project NEP/01/V01

SECTION 4

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION ISSUES

Social Mobilisation Mechanism
Social Mobilisation Process in CMN Project.
The Social Mobilisor at Grassroots Level
The Social Mobilisor at Central Level.
Challenges for the National UNV Field Workers.

The Social Mobilisation Mechanism



The importance of tea-drinking in Social Mobilisation?

There are various thoughts and opinions on Social Mobilisation, and many are confused about the processes involved….. indeed, does a Social Mobilisor do anything more than wander around a village drinking tea with the locals? Tea-drinking can play an important part of the process, but there is much more to it than that!

In order to create a common ground for discussion, let us first define 'Social Mobilisation':

Social Mobilisation is a process of stimulating the motivation amongst community members, and of passing on the necessary skills, such that they can <u>effectively</u> carry out development activities.

Which now requires that we define what we mean by 'effectively': effective implementation of any development activities requires that three basic criteria are met:

No person or group (by caste, gender, religion, ethnic group, age etc.) should be excluded from participation;

The nature, form and process of any development activities must be agreed upon through informed choices decided upon by democratic processes, where each person, regardless of status, has an equal say;

Community members must be empowered and enabled to resist any pressures from outside or within their community, which may be against their own wishes.

As a means to achieve this goal, there are probably as many Social Mobilisation processes existent in the world as there are projects employing the services of Social Mobilisors. In some programmes, the Social Mobilisor will be a local person, from within the community; in others he or she will be an outsider. Some Social Mobilisors will be required to be 'on site' throughout a project period; others will be visiting only occasionally. In some projects, the Social Mobilisors will follow a fixed methodology as determined and required by the project management; in others, they will have the freedom to select the most appropriate processes for achieving their objectives. Indeed, some Social Mobilisors may drink tea; others may have different tastes.

In the RADC context, the Social Mobilisation process can be described as 'open-ended' - or, it may appear to some critics, unplanned and erratic! The CMN project, like RADC itself, has to work within certain constraints - and these constraints are not only budgetary and financial, but also include the geographical, climatic, transportation and communication constraints which any organisation working in remote Nepal has to face.

Before a Social Mobilisor can operate effectively he/she must know clearly the purpose for the mobilisation and the parameters within which he/she must work to achieve this. Is the purpose of the mobilisor to go to a village with a completely open agenda and help the 'beneficiaries' assess their development needs, whatever they might be? Or is the Social Mobilisor's task to 'convince' the 'beneficiaries' to want something they didn't initially think they wanted? Or is it something between the two? Whichever is the case, the Social Mobilisor will need to

(a) Identify 'the community' - is it defined in terms of geographical area? And which people within that area are deemed to be 'in' the community - i.e. are children to be included?

What about the landless, the temporary residents, the officials of government or non-government sector who may reside there? and so on… and

(b) Know clearly the extent to which the task is to persuade, to facilitate, or to listen.

The perception of RADC initially appeared to be that the Social Mobilisor's role was to convince everyone in the community that they did, indeed, want a Microhydro or Solar system, and also to make sure they participated as required in the civil construction work. However, as the RADC staff learned more about Social Mobilisation during the project's period of work, they began to recognise that not only could communities play a very much stronger and pro-active role in supporting the Microhydro/Solar programme in their village, but that their enhanced involvement could actually make things easier for RADC.

Before the CMN Project was launched, RADC had already established the concept of Users Committee (UC); however, due to lack of sufficient back-up and understanding at the district-level, the UC was often little more than a paper-entity. Upon receiving the request letter from RADC, the Local Development Officer (LDO) would write a letter to the concerned village authority (VDC) requesting them to form a UC. The VDC would then supply a list of names, and so the 'UC' came into existence. However, this UC was not in many cases democratic, and so the participation of the community, through the existence of this paper-UC, may be more apparent than real.

The Social Mobilisation Process in CMN Project

As in any collaboration, there has to be a certain amount of compromise between the ideal world and the realities of the real world. There were few areas of contention during the project between the partners concerned - and one of them was the area of coverage for the UNVs, and, relatedly, the nature of the Social Mobilisation process.

There is something of a chicken-and-egg problem is this issue. If, prior to project inception, there had been a common understanding between RADC and the UNV team of what exactly Social Mobilisation was, and, therefore, of how permanent, regular or infrequent should NUNVs be at a single village, then one might question the need for the project in the first place. The fact was, that bringing Social Mobilisors into RADC's Microhydro programme was a very new idea. If there had been full consensus as to the function of Social Mobilisation in infrastructural development work, then the very basis for the existence of the project (and, indeed, for the Government of Japan wishing to provide the finance for such a non-innovative project) could have been invalidated.

It was only through working together during the project period that RADC was better able to understand the principles underlying the Social Mobilisation process, and, in its turn, that the CMN project team members, and the UNV programme itself, could better recognise the factors which RADC was taking into account when seeking to have the CMN project cover all the remote districts. A summary of arguments for and against long-term stay of a Social Mobilisor is given in the box (see page 44)

It is true that the Evaluation team found that the visits from UNVs was infrequent: as they stated (Evaluation report, May 2000, Section 3.1.2):

The UNV project modality of social mobilization has been that of intermittent and episodic input from an outsider. There has been more than six months' gap between two-consecutive visits to a MHP community by the NUNVs. Normally the minimum gap has been at least three months. The users, UCs, NUNVs and RADC district technical staff all do not consider the input at this low frequency and intensity as sufficient. RADC member secretary perceives this nature of input as need-based and delivered according to the need of a particular site.

At present the NUNVs are mobilized from Kathmandu depending upon the need felt by RADC. Optimal utilization of the time of the NUNVs, protection of the NUNVs from being influenced by any local pressure or political interest, and maintaining certain distance from local community (thought to have its own merit/demerit) are some advantages of this modality as felt by the member secretary. But, the team felt that this approach is rather output oriented (i.e. focused on outputs) and it does not allow for a process oriented approach recognized as essential element of an effective SM.

It should be noted, however, the evaluation team did not meet with any UC, or go to any district, where the project was *not* working. If they had, they may have found that the communities there would have liked even just a single two-day visit to help resolve some of their problems!

The evaluation team also offers further justification for a longer-term input (section 3.1.4):

The risk in the SM modality, which RADC is currently using, is that the SM input will be directed to a site where problems and conflicts become visible to the external agency. The problems and conflicts in a community take a deep process and pass through various local dynamics before it becomes perceptible to outsider and an intermittent visitor.

An external social mobilizers making intermittent visits in a long time gap for a short period can only have a very limited perception of local situation. The mobilizers' perception is formed based on who he will speak to, what will be told to him, and people who will proactively want to tell the person. The social mobilizers will be largely able to understand the 'outcome' of the problem and conflict but they will have very little time to get real picture of the problem or conflict. They are very likely to miss out the 'dynamics and process path' of the problem or conflict situation. Any resolution, (no matter how participatory it is) of the community problem and conflicts that proceeds without smoothening its 'dynamics and process path' is likely to produce short term solutions only, leaving the deeper layer of the problem unattended. Hence, the sustainability of such outputs will be questionable. Based on this, the team feels that the current model of social

The argument for a limited area

If a Social Mobilisor is placed in one village on a long-term basis, he/she will be able to know well all the community members, will develop a strong rapport with the people, will be able to assess better the needs of the community and of individuals or sub-groups within that community.

In the event of conflict, the SM will be better placed to recommend solutions. Plus the SM will be able to support community with their broader concerns (and not just their energy needs).
The skilled SM will play a back-up supporting role, to ensure that, when the SM departs, the community will be strong enough to cope without that support.

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The argument for a larger area

The disadvantages of a Social Mobilisor staying in a village on a long-term basis are that the SM may lose neutrality (by developing friendships with certain people or sub-groups), may become (or be perceived to become) politically non-neutral, and for long periods will have nothing to do (as implementation time for Microhydro projects tend to be very long).
It is possible also that communities can become over-dependent on their SM, and that they would suffer when the SM finally leaves.
Plus, if there are only a limited number of Social Mobilisors, it is better that more communities have their support on an occasional basis, than that only a few get their support.

mobilization of RADC is crisis management approach, which has been termed by the team as "hit and run".

RADC MS's (Member Secretary's) view on this is: "it is not a completely random process of instruction; rather, the NUNVs, when they return from a field visit, provide written and oral feedback on their findings. It is on the basis of such reports, as well as on the basis of new situations which can arise (e.g. some misunderstanding between UC members, or some reports from district level of some technical or other issue requiring attention), that decisions are made to adjust the NUNV's planned itinerary. As you will be aware, the NUNVs each have a planned schedule for the coming months, drawn up by them, with support from myself and Chris Whitehouse, as well as from other staff at the microhydro section, and if any change is to be made to that plan, it is made only after full consultation with the NUNV himself. Sometimes, changes in plan are due to circumstances well beyond our control."

The team has not taken this 'hit and run' and "ad hoc" nature of the input in a negative perspective but feels that probably the only possible option of the optimum utilization of the NUNVs in the current RADC MHP context. Team also takes following note in this context :

There are problems of various natures in many sites of MHP, and RADC's focus is to solve the urgent concerns in the UCs so that the MHP's situation could be improved from social perspective.

Wide spread of the UNV-project coverage area and the high intensity of the current social problems have forced RADC to use such approach to bring the immediate problem and conflict situations under control. RADC/UNV project considers this an optimum utilization of NUNVs input.

The current SM process is successful to provide appropriate feedback to RADC on the nature and scope of the SM required for a sustainable community mobilization. Hence, the need of the SM for a 'sustainable institutional development at community level' needs to be made part of the current efforts.

It is clear that any future partners wishing to engage in Social Mobilisation support for infrastructural development work address the issues raised here.

The Social Mobilisor at Grassroots Level

The first task of the CMN Project's Social Mobilisors was:

a. to work with communities to facilitate a reform of UCs which were unelected, unrepresentative and non-functional; or
b. to assist at district and village levels the formation of functional and representative UCs where no UCs had yet been formed.

Sadly, the Social Mobilisor was not often in a position to discuss the community's needs, and assess the extent to which Microhydro/Solar might address these needs, as the decision to provide the Microhydro/Solar had already been made[12].

The other tasks of the Social Mobilisor were as follows:

[12] In fact, this is a common problem found in development organisations which focus on certain specific development activities. If a community's primary concern is literacy, or sanitation, or market access through road-construction, a development organisation specialising in other aspects (e.g. improved farming methods) will often seek to redefine communities' development priorities, albeit through a participatory approach. On their side, communities will often be willing to redefine their needs if the development agency in question is perceived to be offering something for free.

c. where communities appeared to have little idea about what a microhydro or solar system is, to provide the necessary orientation;
d. to assist the UC gain legal status as a registered NGO, which would entail a number of criteria are met (for which the Social Mobilisor could also provide guidance), for example:

    Executive Committee is democratically elected;

    The UC has drawn up and agreed its constitution;

    Financial records are well maintained and transparent;

    Minutes of all meetings are recorded
e. to help the UC develop its own workplan and working methods;
f. to assist the UC organise its membership fee collection and other financial matters;
g. to assist the UC mobilise funds to launch its 'Repair and Maintenance Fund'[13] (RMF);
h. to assist the UC to design its tariff structure, such that salaries for its staff (e.g. operators and managers) would be covered, and that their RMF will continue to grow;
i. to assist the UC in the selection and recruitment of its operator(s) and manager;
j. to assist the UC during the implementation of civil construction work;
k. to assist the UC develop linkages with government and non-government partners at village and district level;
l. to assist the UC ensure equitable and fair distribution of electricity supplies, without loss or leakage, and
m. to assist the UC explore and assess appropriate Income Generating Activities which may enhance villagers' income levels, including those using spare day-time electricity (End Uses)

The Social Mobilisor at Central Level

As well as the standard requirements of any NUNV (of keeping good records and of providing regular reports), the Social Mobilisor has been able to provide many inputs at the central level:

a. working with RADC staff to design and develop prototype UC constitution, UC/RADC contracts, UC bookkeeping and administrative systems;
b. providing training and advice to RADC staff on the importance and methodology of effective Social Mobilisation;
c. enabling RADC central level to know in more detail about the status of various site-projects at any time;
d. facilitating links between UCs and national level organisations and donors;
e. designing and providing trainings at central level (see separate section on trainings);
f. representing to RADC the interests and concerns of UCs who, through their remoteness, may otherwise be unable to approach RADC with their concerns;

[13] One requirement from RADC is that UCs raise, from amongst their members, and/or through contributions from outside organisations, such as VDC, DDC, local NGOs, etc., approximately 1½ - 2½ lakh rupees (US$ 2,000 - $3,500) for a 'Repair and maintenance fund' (RMF), which could be drawn from at a later date to pay for necessary repairs etc.

g. providing information to RADC to enable a strong data-base to be developed of the various projects;

h. documenting their work and Social Mobilisation methodology through authoring the UC Handbook (published in May 2001) and the RADC Staff Handbook on Social Mobilisation (published later, also in 2001).

Challenges For the National UNV Field Workers

The task of a Social Mobilisor is not always an easy one - there may be conflicts to resolve, misunderstandings and confusions to clarify, and there were only 6 Social Mobilisors at any time, covering over 30 site-projects in 22 remote districts.

The following is a list of the more common challenges and constraints which CMN project Social Mobilisors faced, and which no doubt many Social Mobilisors in other projects and programmes may also face:

1. **Number of Sites:** The CMN project has provided for only six Social Mobilisors. However, RADC has chosen to have a large number of site-projects running concurrently (at any time, there may be over twenty sites 'in process').
2. **Time-frames:** Related to the above, there is a long time-frame for any particular Microhydro or Solar project. This means that there may be several years between the initial survey and the system being installed and becoming operational. The advantage of this is that communities have sufficient time to build up their UCs, and to provide their inputs without negatively affecting their other responsibilities. The disadvantage of this is that communities can become frustrated by delays, and that RADC and its partners are over-stretched, and may fail to give strong enough focus to any one village.
3. **Seasonality:** Village life is seasonal, particularly in the high mountain areas: in the severe winters, many village people will migrate down to warmer areas of Nepal, or even to India, while those remaining will stay mainly indoors to avoid the cold. Meanwhile, the summer monsoons may be busy periods for the farming communities, and the resultant rains can wash away trails and roads, making access to and from the villages dangerous or impossible. On top of this, festivals (which mainly fall in Spring and Autumn) will also cause interruptions.
4. **Development Priorities:** Whilst most of the communities are keen to see electrification coming to their villages, other priorities may sometimes take precedence for these people - this is particularly true at times of food shortage, a sadly common occurrence in many of the remote districts.
5. **Ethnicity and Caste:** Many communities consist of a number of ethnic groups or castes, which can delay or prevent the formation of effective, equitable and representative UCs.
6. **Local Politics:** as a young democracy, Nepal has a very active political scene, both nationally and locally. On occasion, a Social Mobilisor may find him- or her- self caught between two opposing opinions, which may be expressed by local people from two different parties - the challenge for the Social Mobilisor is to remain neutral, and to be perceived to be neutral, to any such political pressures.

7. **Technical Quality:** although the Social Mobilisor is not responsible for the technical quality of civil construction work, or of the machinery itself, the Mobilisor will often be in the firing line, as it were, when they visit a village where there are technical difficulties. The challenge is for the Social Mobilisor to listen to the complaints or problem, without in any way being disloyal to their employer or their colleagues at RADC. Also, when a Microhydro system becomes non-operational, it becomes much more difficult to encourage the community to focus on other aspects which need to be decided (e.g. how much the tariffs should be, or whether an end-use could be appropriate to their needs).
8. **Planning:** Nepal has many strengths and traditions, but planning doesn't seem at first sight to be one of them. There appears to be little requirement from the relevant government ministries for detailed workplans or end-of-year reporting from RADC. The CMN project has had difficulty in finding out from RADC when the successive phases will start for the various projects; rather, RADC has been able to offer status reports (site A is in tendering phase; site B is under construction, and so on). Developing a workable workplan for the CMN project has therefore been a challenge.
9. **RADC Mandate:** RADC does not enter a village with an open agenda, carrying out needs assessment for the priority needs of the village; rather, once the village has been identified as a Microhydro or Solar site, this and this alone will be RADC's responsibility (this means, therefore, that a Social Mobilisor should not be concentrating over-much on non-related development activities to the detriment of the specified project-work.

For the NUNVs in the project, the work has been rewarding, yet challenging. The villages are very remote, each with its own traditions, values, population-make-up, perceptions, each with its strengths and weaknesses. The NUNV Social Mobilisor is an outsider - and it takes time to gain the trust and confidence of the people. In fact the situation of the NUNV visiting a remote mountain village community is not so different from that of a foreigner coming to Kathmandu… as can be seen, there are lessons we can all learn from their experience in the field!

A summary of the role that the Social Mobilisor can play is given in the box on the next page 49.
Articles written by NUNVs can be found towards the end of this publication (see pages 56 to 65)

The Role of the Social Mobilisor throughout a Microhydro Project Cycle

Stages of a Microhydro Project	Who respon-sible	How the NUNV Social Mobilisor can assist…..
Village people discuss; and agree need for a Microhydro	Villagers	This is the most important stage of all: the community must be given **orientation**, i.e. made aware of both the positive AND negative potential impacts a Microhydro can have. Plus they should know what their commitments will be (e.g. labour contribution during construction, and the need to pay tariffs for electricity used, to enable manager and operators' salaries to be paid, as well as to enable the M & R fund to grow)
On behalf of the people, VDC sends a formal request to DDC	VDC	n/a
DDC assesses, and if accepted, will pass on formal request to RADC	DDC	n/a
RADC assesses the request, and if accepted will arrange a **preliminary feasibility study** to be done at the site	RADC	In the past, the feasibility study focused primarily on technical aspects (water flow, head of water etc.); the CMN Project has tried to promote a full **socio-economic survey** as well, focusing on e.g. income levels, hetero- or homo- geneity of community, motivation of community for Microhydro, etc.
If feasible, RADC requests DDC to request that UC is formed	RADC	
DDC write letter to VDC to request UC is formed	DDC	
VDC arranges to have UC formed, and sends list of names to DDC and RADC	VDC	Also important: To be effective, a UC should be **democratic, equitable and effective.** It should have a clear and **agreed constitution**, have an elected and responsible Executive, and the UC should then be **registered as an NGO**. The Social Mobilisor gives guidance on all the above.
RADC carries out a more **detailed survey and cost-estimate**	RADC	
Through DDC, RADC signs a contract with the UC, under which RADC undertakes to supply the Microhydro, and UC undertakes to deposit a certain sumas 'RMF[14],	DDC, RADC and UC	The Social Mobilisor can, in the orientation (see above), share a copy of the standard contract given between RADC and UC. The Social Mobilisor can advise the UC as required, particularly on its responsibilities, on how to **manage the bank account**, and how to calculate appropriate **membership fees and electricity tariffs** for members.
RADC publishes a **tender** notice, inviting tenders from Microhydro manufacturers	RADC	
UC, as per requirement, organises the civil construction work (digging canal, building power house, erecting electricity poles, etc.)	UC (RADC over-seeing)	Although RADC initially saw this as the most important aspect of the Social Mobilisor's work, it is in fact the most straight forward. Past difficulties in mobilising community participation have been caused by the failure to address the Social Mobilisation tasks given above.
Manufacturer installs the Microhydro.	Manu-facturer	
Inspection of Microhydro – is it running as / specifications?	RADC and UC	
Microhydro is **running**	UC	

[14] Generally, the UC will deposit 1½ to 2½ lakh rupees (approx $2,000 to $3,500) into the 'Repair and Maintenance Fund (RMF). This fund is kept in a UC bank account, for the UC to draw from if ever repair or spare parts are needed.

'Learning from Experience'

Learnings from the 'Community Mobilisation in Nepal' Project NEP/01/V01

SECTION 5

LESSONS LEARNED

Recommendations for the Future

Recommendations for the Future

As mentioned earlier in this report, there has been significant success of the CMN Project, and the relationship between RADC and the UNV programme has been very positive throughout. And it is an indicator of the success of this collaboration, albeit on a small scale and for a limited period only, that RADC is now seeking to continue the strengthening of its Social Mobilisation component.

There is a lot that remains to be done: there are still UCs which have not been reached by the CMN Project's mobilisors; others have been reached, but the UCs may still be undemocratic, and many remain to be registered as NGOs. A good start has been made in trying to institutionalise the software component within RADC's activities in the energy sector, but there is much scope for further improvement - indeed, many of the systems developed within the energy sector of RADC's activities could be transferred to its other operations: drinking water and irrigation systems, for example. there are still a (small) number of UCs without any female representation, and there are no UCs where women form a majority of UC Executive members.

RADC would certainly welcome an extension of the CMN project; the UCs would no doubt welcome further assistance from the CMN Team's Social Mobilisors. It is highly unlikely that, even if they had the same skills and knowledge of the departing team of Social Mobilisors, the RADC district level staff would be able to maintain the same level of Social Mobilisation support - they have other responsibilities on the technical and administrative aspects of RADC's district programmes.

The candle has been lit, There is a need and a desire for further support within RADC, particularly in the people's participation and Social Mobilisation aspects. Yet it would be a mistake to merely repeat the CMN project. There are many improvements which could be made to the system of support provided by the CMN project, and RADC may well like to look into some of the issues raised in this publication, as well as in the Evaluation Report of May 2000. Indeed, future collaborations with RADC may be made conditional on some of the perceived weaknesses in the RADC system being addressed.

<u>The following are the key areas which will need to be addressed:</u>

1. The geographical area of coverage of the RADC Energy Programme. Given that the current structure of RADC is centralised, and that all major decisions regarding all projects (energy-related and others) in all districts pass through the Member Secretary, it is not surprising that there are a large number of projects being carried out across the country, and that the speed of progress in each of these projects is slow. It may be more appropriate to plan for a smaller number of projects to be completed within a shorter time-frame, before any new projects are initiated. Over the course of time, there need not be any reduction in the number of projects completed in any one year, and indeed, the quality of service provided by RADC in this more concentrated system may well be much higher - and of course, there will be fewer phone calls and visits from anxious UC Chairmen asking for actions to be taken in their sites.
2. Related to the above, given the extending mandate area of RADC, and the increasing number of programmes it is implementing, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is a need for delegation of responsibility to lower levels within RADC Kathmandu office, if not to the district levels. It is becoming too much for a single man to handle - even with a Member Secretary of the callibre that we have now at RADC.
3. Also related to the above, RADC may find itself better able to monitor the quality of Microhydro equipment supplied by contractors, if at any one time there are only a small

number of projects being implemented. The CMN Social Mobilisors have found their work made more difficult, due to UC misgivings about technical quality of their microhydros.

4. In this regard also, RADC will have to follow its own procedures more rigourously; RADC will need to show that the transparency of its operations which it is seeking to improve will be a reality. UCs will have to be better informed throughout, and more detailed contracts (between RADC and the UC) will have to be used - the contracts drafted by the CMN team, which specified time-frames, roles and responsibilities, as well as itemising all financial components, was accepted by RADC Office in Kathmandu, and instructions were apparently issued to district offices that these new contracts should be used. A year later, and it appears that not a single new-style contract has been signed.
5. Site-selection procedures exist, but need to be followed more rigourously. It is well-known that there may on occasion be strong political pressures (either locally or at central level) to launch a new project at a certain place. this is a reality which all development organisations in Nepal are facing. Yet for RADC to counter this pressure, it needs to strengthen *and implement* its criteria for site selection. In this way RADC may, if it so wishes, resist those pressures more easily.
6. The CMN project team was not distressed in the first months of the project, to find itself 'rescuing' and trying to reform poorly-formed UCs. After all, it was a useful learning experience when devising systems for effective UC formation to observe those UCs already formed but mal-functioning. However, the fact that even the newest of UCs may have their Chairman designated by a District level body, rather than elected as per RADC requirements, is a great cause for concern[15].

If RADC is able to show it is addressing these issues, and a partner organisation is identified to provide support in the Social Mobilisation sector, then <u>the following is recommended for a successor project:</u>

1. The project should focus on a limited number of districts, depending on the resouces available. If Social Mobilisors are to be provided by the partner organisation, it may be appropriate to have teams of Social Mobilisors (perhaps three or four per team), each team responsible for a limited number of districts - perhaps two or three districts, if they are assisting only in RADC's energy sector, or single districts if their mandate includes other RADC activities.
2. The project design could be such that the Social Mobilisors will assess the needs of a site, and on a demand-basis, facilitate RADC's support (or perhaps that of other relevant institutions) in addressing the found needs. If the project can have this freedom in its design, the Social Mobilisors can be provided with a clear and standard system for needs analysis. They can then assist community groups to apply to RADC (or other institutions) for assistance, be it in the form of a microhydro, a grain-storage facility, an irrigation system, seed capital for a savings and credit group, or whatever.
3. Far greater effort should be made in a future project to ensure that the team of Social Mobilisors consists of both genders - it has been a source of some embarrassment that the CMN Project team is male-only. Due to the lack of trained female Social Mobilisors, it may be necessary to recruit untrained but suitably motivated men and women to serve as Social Mobilisors, and to incorporate within the project design a significant training component t enable them to be proficient in their work.

[15] The case referred to is Dharepani, near Bagarchap. for more details see the case study report on Bagarchap given in this publication

4. A future project might well be advised to put more weight in colloboration with other development organisations in related sectors, which are working in remote districts.

   There is indeed great potential for future support to RADC as it strives to provide support to those most in need. A well-planned follow-up programme of support, hopefully with some different emphases than have been given in the CMN Project, may serve to make RADC a leading player in remote area development in Nepal.

'Learning from Experience'

Learnings from the 'Community Mobilisation in Nepal' Project NEP/01/V01

SECTION 6

REFLECTIONS

Articles written by CMN Project Team members

Bagarchap site in Manang – a case study of a broken microhydro *(UNV Chris Whitehouse)*

Decision-making - a traditional method (Naar, Manang) *(UNV Bal Krishna Acharya)*

Role of Community Mobilisors in Participatory Development - with Solar systems *(UNV Chakra Raj Ojha)*

Women Empowerment – an example from Achham *(UNV Ram Binod Aryal)*

An Experience with the People of Remote Areas *(UNV Durba Nath Adhikari)*

People's participation in development *(UNV Lal Bahadur Waiba)*

Exposure visits: how to make these more effective *(UNV Chakra Raj Ojha)*

Bagarchap Microhydro in Manang – a case study

A half-hour's walk up from the river, we were crouched in the stone power-house, where the RADC Microhydro stood silent. NUNV Dhruba Nath Adhikari looked on, as the operator pointed out the problem: through the grille, could be seen the broken fan, its wings lying shattered in the cooling section of the generator. Apparently, on 1st Baisakh, Nepali New Year's Day BS 2058 (mid-April 2001), he switched on the plant in the evening as usual, when suddenly there was a loud crunch as the breakage occurred. But how could such a thing happen?

Bagarchap is a popular stopping point on the 'Annapurna Circuit', a popular tourist trekking route. It lies two days walk up from Lamjung's district headquarters of Besisahar; a half-day's walk further up is Chame, the district headquarters of Manang. The community in Bagarchap earns much of its income by offering hotel rooms, food, guide and porter services to trekkers.

It was back in BS 2048 (1990/91) that Member of Parliament Mr. Palaten Gurung proposed that Microhydros could be installed in two of Manang's remote villages, Naar and Bagarchap. Following the success of RADC's Naar Microhydro, there was high expectation of a problem-free project in Bagarchap. In BS 2052 (1994/95) a technical survey was carried out by RADC overseer (at that time) Mr. Bijay Raj Khanal, and the site judged to be feasible. A year later, the cost estimate had been completed. On 5th Poush 2054 (20th December 1996), the foundation stone was ceremonially laid for the power-house, and civil construction was underway, under the supervision of the RADC overseer at that time, Mr. Chhiring Rapke Lama.

Once the plant was installed, the Users Committee waited eagerly for 6 months for the DDC to formally switch it on. An operator, Mr. Mekharus Tamang, was brought in from neighbouring Lamjung District to operate the plant, and the community chipped in with free labour and/or financial contributions, for a handsome house to be built for the operator, next to the power-house. The operator's house consists of two rooms: a bedroom/sitting room/workroom (where he gains extra income repairing radios and other electrical appliances), and a kitchen.

After 12 months of trouble-free operation, the bearings gave out. Under the authorisation of the DDC, a withdrawal was made from the UC account and paid to the LDO, to enable him to arrange 2-way helicopter transportation of the generator and the necessary repair. Two months later, the Microhydro was back in action.

Mother Khashi Gurung and her daughter Mudha Maya live in a small settlement above and behind the main village of Bagarchap. They were clearly very pleased to be provided with electricity, for its convenience over and above the smoky kerosene lights ; and the electricity was no more expensive: their monthly electricity bill came to NRs 80 to 85 for their five light bulbs, compared to the 3 litres of kerosene they would otherwise use, which at NRs 28 per litre would cost a total of NRs 84 monthly. Plus they could use their radio without batteries. For income, Mudha Maya would make carpets - 9 days' work could produce a carpet saleable for NRs 3,500, with a net profit (after deducting raw material costs) of NRs 1,500 per carpet (i.e. NRs 167 per day, or over NRs 4,500 per 28-day month).

Then, in early 2000, the generator developed a vibration problem. RADC sent its electrical engineer volunteer from Germany (working under *ded* programme), who reported that the foundation base of the plant was not as deep as it should have been, and that the embedding bolts were very much shorter than the design had required. He also noted that, while the turbine appeared to be new, the generator had a distinctly second-hand appearance. Indeed, close inspection of the generator reveals that there is no manufacturer's name plate, serial number, etc., which might normally be expected on a piece of new equipment.

Less than a year after the necessary repairs were made, on Nepali New Year's Day (mid-April 2001), the cooling fan shattered…. The Microhydro is now not functioning.

During the meetings held by NUNV Dhruba Nath Adhikari in the presence of visiting UNV Specialist Chris Whitehouse during May 2001, a number of difficulties with Bagarchap's Microhydro became apparent:

The UC is not registered as an NGO. Attempts at registration have been thwarted by communications from the DDC to the CDO responsible for registration, advising that the UC should not be registered. This advice may well be the result of (a) the reservations expressed by the DDC Vice Chairman, himself a resident in Bagarchap VDC, who took offence when his electricity supply had been cut off after 9-months of not paying his tariffs, and (b) the failure of RADC to clarify who is the owner of the Microhydro at any time, and whether and when a formal handover is required.

For the last 9 months, the UC has not been allowed by the DDC to collect any tariffs from the households, as the DDC feel that it is inappropriate for the UC to collect funds before the Microhydro is 'handed over' by the DDC to the UC. The fact that, according to RADC policy, the microhydro is not at any time *owned* by the DDC, appears not to be fully understood at district level. Just as importantly, the UC appear not to have been provided full data about their project; they claim that they have not been provided details of costs for anything - they were particularly concerned about the cost of building the power-house. As the evaluation team noted in their report for the the districts they visited, there is a clear need for enhanced transparency particularly at local level, if such confusion is to be avoided.

The Repair and Maintenance fund (deposit account) is seriously depleted: the UC had succeeded in collecting the required NRs 115,000, including contributions from both the VDC and the DDC. Under normal circumstances, it should be expected that the amount in this account will increase month by month, as tariffs are collected and net profits are paid in. Then if repairs are needed, the required cash would be withdrawn. However, in Bagarchap, the balance is now approximately NRs 40,000: withdrawals were made of (a) NRs 22,000 to cover salary expenses (during the period, up to now, when the DDC had banned the UC from tariff collection) and (b) a further 76,000 was used to pay for the repair of the bearings (including the cost of helicopter transportation of the generator to the repair company).

The contractor awarded the tender for the manufacture of the Microhydro was 'Lama Construction', who then sub-contracted the work to petty contractor 'Khanal Construction'. With two contractors involved, and a lack of clarity as to the ownership and responsibility for the Microhydro itself (RADC, DDC, VDC and

UC all have claims to ownership), it is therefore unsurprising that no action was taken regarding the quality of the generator.

HMG Nepal has a policy that, within the next 2 fiscal years (i.e. by mid 2003), all District Headquarters will be linked to the National Electricity Grid. Along the route to Manang's District Headquarters (Chame), all towns up to Bahundanda are connected. Bagarchap lies a little more than half way on the route from Bahundanda to Chame. Future projects under planning are on the same route, and are even nearer to the current reach of the national grid: Dharepani[16] and Khorte, for example.

A fire destroyed the UC office (it started in the neighbouring veterinary office) and burnt its contents in early 2001 - many records were destroyed, and the UC is now short of necessary accounts/bookkeeping books and other stationery. There is, however, no suspicion of foul-play concerning the fire.

So, was it foolish action by an inexperienced operator? Was it sabotage? Or was it one of those normal wear-and-tear problems?

Foolish action: Many people (myself included) have had the urge to see what happens if you put your finger, or a screw-driver, into a running bit of machinery… it is possible that, in the high spirits of new year, Mr Tamang had the same urge, and acted upon that urge, by placing a wooden stick or screw-driver through the grille. However, there was no sign of damage to the grille itself that might be expected as the fan hit the stick. Or perhaps the grille had been removed first? In which case, the operator would have risked his hand, as well as the implement used, being pulled into the fan's path.

NUNV DN Adhikari observes the broken fan in the generator

Sabotage: Mekharus Tamang had not been paid for two months at that time; his wife had left him, and he was unable to find a second wife since there were none of his caste residing in the village. He was an outsider to the community, his house (next to the power-house) was isolated from the village, and he may have been missing home, particularly during the festive period. Others is the community will have been celebrating and drinking the evening before,

[16] There is already a 10Kw plant at Dharepani, but the community is interested to install a 35Kw plant, with reach to further villages. No contract had yet been signed between the UC and RADC, as which of two possible sites for the powerhouse had not been finalised. Yet, immediately after a meeting held in my presence to discuss this issue amongst others, a phone call to RADC Kathmandu revealed that a tender invitation had been issued, and a contract with a manufacturer had already been signed,clearly without the knowledge of the UC. This does not follow RADC's own procedures; nor does the fact that this site is scheduled to be connected to the main grid within 2 years, nor that the UC Chairman was not elected - the DDC designated the VDC Chairman to be the UC Chairman (it is likely that he would have been elected if elections were held, as he is a very motivated man, however).

while he had to stay and look after the Microhydro which provided the revellers with the light they needed. Perhaps Mekharus Tamang became depressed and took out his anger on the Microhydro itself.

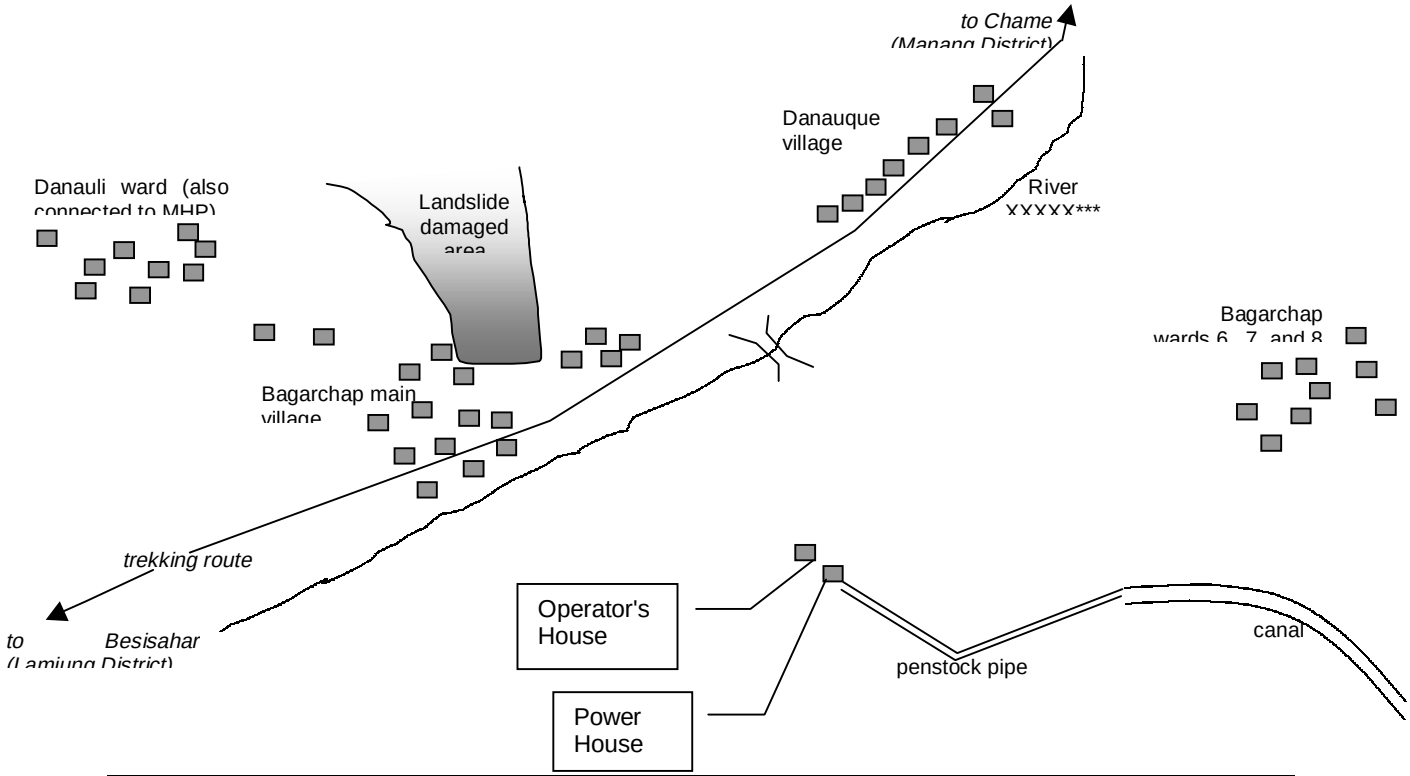
Accidental operator error: it is possible that Mekharus Tamang was trying to solve some problem, perhaps to remove a piece of something dangling dangerously close to the fan. While trying to remove it, the implement he was using may have come into the path of the fan, and the breakage occurred.

Manufacturing fault: all equipment can break by itself, and it has already been noted that the machinery may be second-hand. Plus, any slight unevenness on the weights of the wings of the fan can cause internal vibrations, which may lead to internal stresses in the metal. And at some random time, one part breaks off, and is hit by the remaining wings of the fan, resulting in total shattering of the whole fan. It is possible.

Whatever the reason for the breakage, the community are keen to see the plant operational again. Indeed, the bakery, planned as an end-use for the microhydro is lying in parts ready for construction when the plant is running again. It is therefore a matter of urgency that the following issues be addressed:

To get the Microhydro fan repaired
To have a formal handover of the Microhydro to the Uc
To provide the UC, VDC and DDC with full financial account and budget of the whole project, divided into the constituent elements
To recruit and train a new well-selected local person, identified to serve as operator
To instruct the DDC to retract their ban on tariff collection by the UC
And to do all the above before the National Grid reaches Bagarchap!

Chris Whitehouse
NEP/01/V01



Decision-Making – a Traditional Method

In an article published in UNV Nepal newsletter in 1999, NUNV Bal Krishna Acharya describes his work with a remote community in Nare village of Manang District.

At an altitude of 16,000 feet, the village of Nare has 86 houses, and a population of 450. Located near the Chinese/Tibetan border, in the western region of Nepal, the village is seven days' walk from Pokhara; and, with most young and educated adults migrating for employment in other parts of the country, the village has a disproportionately high number of elderly people, uneducated people, and children. It is unsurprising that traditional methods still hold good in this area.

In the year B.S. 2054, just two years ago, a 25kW microhydro plant was installed in Nare, through RADC, the Remote Area Development Committee, under the HMG's Ministry of Local Development. But the project wasn't running too well, due principally to the lack of a sense of ownership, amongst the community members, for 'their' microhydro. Recognising the problem, RADC requested that two NUNVs, D.N. Adhikari and myself, B.K. Acharya, go up there for a two-month period to try to ease the situation. Two months is not too long a time, and we did not want to delay.

But first of all we needed to acclimatise to the altitude, and were treated for our symptoms with herbal remedies. Then, to work. We met with the VDC Chairman, the Executive Committee of the Microhydro Users Committee, the 'operators' (those local people employed to run and maintain the microhydro system), and also some local school teachers. It was clear that there was, indeed, a problem. The people spoke of their fear that the microhydro could not be sustainable under the current management system, due in no small part to the lack of active interest by the Users Committee Executive Committee.

There were nine members of the Users Committee, of whom only one was active. The other eight were often out of the village, migrating to lower altitudes on a regular basis, and it was agreed that new members should be selected . . . but the question was, how to carry out the selection?

The selection process the community adopted was a lesson for all of us, involving a big pot of wine and some glasses

A young lady came from the village, carrying a big pot of wine, and some cups. She sat down in the centre of the meeting area. Meanwhile, five of the village elders disappeared from the gathering to hold a private discussion. When they returned to the group, they said, "Young lady, pour some wine." The elders then took the cup of wine and presented it to one of the people in the circle. How could a person refuse a cup of wine? And so, how could a person refuse to become an active, dedicated member of a Users Committee? It was through this method that all the members were selected. And no one said 'no', for to refuse a cup of wine would be tantamount to rejection of the whole village.

The men and women so selected within the following weeks resolved many of the issues which were plaguing the project: they agreed the electricity tariffs that users would pay, they drew up a workplan for their activities, they decided the salaries to be given to the employed microhydro staff (operators and manager) and they planned to select the staff in the very near future.

Although plainly a non-democratic selection process, the traditional value system results in those selected as members having a far stronger sense of responsibility (since they were selected in this way, with the wine, by the elders), than if there had been a simple vote, a raising of hands.

NUNV Bal Krishna Acharya

Role of Community Mobilisors in Participatory Development

- with Solar systems

In an article published in UNV Nepal newsletter summer 2000, NUNV Chakra Raj Ojha describes his work with a remote community in Dho village of Dolpa, where Solar systems have been installed through assistance from RADC.

Mid-summer, and up into the hills of Dolpa, away from the heat of the lowland town of Nepalgunj. After a night's rest at district headquarters in Dunai, it was to work: at a meeting with the Local Development Officer and RADC district staff, it was decided that I should go first to the village of Dho, three days' hard walk away; it was here that RADC had recently installed solar-powered lighting systems for the villagers.

There were very few people seen on the way to Dho: the landscape was deserted, and the journey entails one night's sleeping in a cave. All that was to be found on the way was a scenery of high rocky hills, and a few scattered bushes. All our food had to be carried.

I was tired after the walk along the long winding narrow trails through the hills, but I forgot all the fatigue when I arrived at the attractive valley of Dho; it was an uneven valley, surrounded by hills and mountains, with the snow-clad Himalaya to one side. Two small rivers passed through two corners of the valley - it was like a picture on canvas.

Upon my arrival, I searched for a place to sleep. I saw an old woman, and asked her advice. It was difficult for her to understand my Nepali language, and she replied in Tibetan, using quaint terminology from the past Panchayat pre-democracy days: she advised me to stay in "Pradhan's house" (the leader's house), mentioning that usually the government staff ("Raja ko karmachari", or "King's staff") would stay there.

And so I found a place to rest. The next day, the people called a mass meeting, and it was there that I could introduce myself, and present to them the purpose of my visit. The VDC (Village Development Council) leader Mr. Tarke Thapa described the impact of the solar power system in this village. I asked the people what benefits they had got from the system. One woman told me that the village was saving about 1½ lakhs of rupees per year (NRs 150,000, or US$ 2,140), as well as a lot of time: before the arrival of the solar system, they had to use kerosene, which was expensive in terms of time and money. They had to walk three days to Dunai, then buy the kerosene which costs about three times the Kathmandu rate due to the high transportation costs to Dunai, and then another three days' walk carrying the kerosene back to Dho.

Most of the people in Dho were illiterate, but the people pointed out that the children were now able to read during the long evenings, and the women also were able to make use of the longer days: many would spend their evenings now knitting traditional clothes for marketing, and one woman, Ms. Pemma Domma Lama, said that since the arrival of solar system, she had been able to earn NRs 40,000 (over $500) from the clothes she had knitted in the evenings.

The people were very interested to maintain the solar system for as long as possible, and they were careful to be frugal with the use of their lights - due to the very cold climate, the houses had only very small windows, allowing very little daylight in, and they would often be using lights in the daytime too - but they were careful to save the battery for overnight use too.

The solar system brought the people together, too. They recognised that it would be expensive and time-consuming if each householder made the journey to get distilled water from Nepalgunj, so they organised a tariff system: each household would pay NRs 30 (US$ 0.30 cents) every month to their electrification committee, which would make arrangements to bring the distilled water for everyone, and to ensure good maintenance of all the solar systems.

Solar power offers an efficient and simple solution to the energy needs of a remote village, and in a village such as Dho, it is an attractive alternative to other more complex forms of power such as microhydro.

NUNV Chakra Raj Ojha

Women Empowerment - an example from Achham

One of my first tasks as a National UN Volunteer for RADC in Achham was to assist the MHP UCs to involve the women in the executive body of user's group committee. To plead for their equitable representation in MHP/UC was not an easy job. I supported to conduct the mass meeting and asked the women whether they would like to represent in the executive committee of MHP/UC or not. The women were remarkably enthusiastic and assured me that they would attend each and every meeting and would not care for their household work even if they had to walk a kilometre. I therefore recommended the users to select two women members to join in the executive committee. They agreed and through the mass meeting selected two active women to lead women as a whole of the community.

At the same time, to foster women's leadership in full swing they agreed to form a women's savings and credit group to launch a programme of cash collection throughout the village, under the leadership of the newly elected women of MHP/UC. Thus the women became motivated enough to set up their own saving and credit group to promote income generation activities.

After the women became an integral part of the MHP/UC, they played an active role in the implementation of MHP and supported the villagers for construction work. And in MHP/UC meetings, they were amongst the most vocal in pleading for the financial transparency in the UC.

They have drawn up a plan to organise the women in the remote village of Barla into small saving and credit groups and is currently conducting the regular meetings of women for the promotion of socio-economic condition. To date, they have raised about NRs. 40,000 (approx. $550). They plan to open a general store run by the women of the village. They have small groups that meet twice a month to discuss about their common problems and also have established a mobile fund to be used for emergency purposes, explains Mrs. Jaisi leading women of Barla saving and credit group.

When I last visited the District headquarter of Achham, I talked with the MHP/UC president Mr. Janak Lal, and inquired about the programs of women's saving and credit groups and came to know that this small success story was now facing difficulty because of the growing Maoist movement, but that they were confident of keeping up with their programme.

My National UNV position has allowed me to move closer to the community and to discharge the duty what I had been trained to do as a volunteer. Despite the long working hours, and the often difficult or dangerous living situation, I have enjoyed my work with UNV/RADC, so much that I think I've already found my job of interest: working in the field of community development with the rural people. And those moments, like when the women first talked about how their being socially boycotted to participate in the development activities against their desire of building a well prepared home, will never be erased from my memory.

As a volunteer when I visit the MHP site, I can see at first hand how women are kept in low profile and not allowed to participate in public meetings. For this I had have to convince the local influential persons and explain to them about the benefit of involving the participation of women in development activities if they want to build up MHP/UC institutionally strong and mobile. For this some important observations are briefly mentioned below:

1. Institutional mechanism for equal participation and to keep gender balance in the executive committee helped the women to come out of their traditional roles to be active to participate in MHP/UC meetings.
2. A good start to involve the women in decision making process is high. Women are good managers of rural energy resources and adaptation of such technology has a positive direct impact on the life of women.
3. In order to maintain the gender balance more efforts are required to create a conducive environment for women's involvement in development activities, and appropriate training should be given to them.
4. To implement the MHP Plan in holistic matter, women should be included right from the beginning: i.e. from the time of feasibility assessment report.
5. To convince the male members of remote area is a slow process but once they are convinced they can become very supportive for the women's participation in MHP and create a suitable environment for construction activities.

NUNV Ram Binod Aryal

An experience with the people of remote areas

The mobility for people of remote areas from one part of the country to another is very difficult because of inaccessibility. This has clear implications on health and sanitation, income and economic status of these people.

One cannot get timely treatment and lives can be lost because of the lack of the necessary facilities. Yet to enhance the economic status of people is problematic because of insufficient food production. Only the few influential and clever people who are residing in remote areas are benefiting themselves, while the majority are compelled to live in poor conditions. Since only few people are interested in development activities, and most of the people are not social uplifted, it is not possible at all. There is the need to support the people not only for the production purposes but also for social purposes.

The concept of social mobilisation has a significant scope and separate prospects for income generation and for employment opportunities to the people residing in remote areas. But getting the people to participate effectively and unitedly presents a great challenge in remote parts; and RADC is not the only development organisation to have to address this issue. There is apathy due to lack of faith and trust in both local leaders and the influential people. If this is the case the people are not in the slightest interested in the development work or processes. Instead a group of privileged individuals with a vested interest will take a lead role and compute activities to its own advantage.

If the RADC and, indeed, any project, wants to strengthen group capacity and create an environment of trust and faith in its work then it must adopt social mobilisation and should involve NGOs in development sector.

NUNV Dhruba Nath Adhikari

People's Participation in Development

People's participation is essential in any development programme run in a village setting, and where it is planned that the community as a whole is to benefit. People's participation is therefore the bringing together of community members, often into an organisational structure.

People's participation will encourage the development of new ideas, as well as stimulating courage within the community for its actions. For the change of economic condition and life style, the community needs to think about efficiency and efficient use of resources, equity, sustainability, empowerment. They can discuss about the problems facing the community, and these can be solved by different groups present in the community.

People's participation is the core point in any development programme. Local community involvement is a necessary component for any programme of local development. Without community involvement at is impossible for most types of programme to succeed. The community members will play important roles in the programme from start to end phase. Even after the programme is implemented, people's participation will continue to be needed to monitor, manage and operate this programme.

When engaging in this type of program, all community member will work hard - and this dedication and commitment will result in their greater love for the end-product, and they will take greater care to protect their project from destruction, mistakes and any loss of this programme.

The task of a Social Mobilisor to encourage people's participation is therefore to:

- Encourage local people, to form community organisation.
- Make people aware about the importance of community organisation to initiate development work through self-help approach.
- Mobilise community resources and skills to undertake the other community development initiatives.
- Enhance skill and capability of community organisation and functional group to manage and utilise the various development activities.
- Promote self-governance by empowering the local community through resource mobilisation and human resource development.

NUNV Lal Bahadur Waiba

Exposure visits: how to make these trips more effective

"Seeing is believing" should be the guiding principle of any group visit. The purpose of exposure visits is to acquaint people with new places, practices and to meet people from whom they can learn and adapt their methods and ideas to their own local context. Each year in every sector, hundreds of such visits are organised by both government and non-governmental organisations. Below, I shall explore the role of Exposure Visits as a training tool in the farming sector.

Many visits are made to those places where development interventions have improved farmers' quality of life, perhaps through commercialisation of farming and adapting new development systems. **Indeed, it is rare to organise such visits to places where the development interventions have failed - yet visits to such place should also be organised**.

Common problems found in the past:

It is not uncommon for people who have taken part in a visit to have neither been able to fully comprehend the benefits themselves nor passed on their knowledge to their respective groups. This suggests there are serious shortfalls in the planning and implementation of exposure visits. Some of the common causes of failure are as follows:

Too many objectives: Experiences of group visits indicate that they often try to address too many objectives, and that the learnings from the visits will cover many different aspects and disciplines.

Too many places: Exposure visits which attempt to include visits to a large number of places results in a great deal of time spent in travelling and little time is left for learning. The visit should provide sufficient time for visitors to learn from field realities. **Visiting people should get time not only to hear the progress of the progressive people but also interact with other people of the area.**

Inappropriate selection of sites: Climatic variation across places provides varying opportunities and constraints for development. Places to be visited must be consistent with the purpose. By doing so, these visits can become a vehicle for transferring technology.

Top down selection: more often than not, when exposure visits are planned, farmers are selected by the development workers rather than by the farmers' group or community. Consequently user committee members close to the development worker are usually selected. This creates a gap between development workers and the users group, because those group members perceived by the development worker to be trustworthy are, in many instances, those least trusted by their group.

Too short time: Past experience indicates that user groups or the community are informed at short notice, i.e. just a couple of days before departure. This provides little time for user members to discuss the problem to be solved through the visits. In a number of cases, the community is not fully informed about the places to be visited nor about the objectives of the visit.

Recommendations for the future:

1. **Clarity of purpose and sites:** While planning such visits, the number of objectives should be limited to a maximum of two and these should be finalised jointly in association with the participation of user groups representatives. Places to be visited should not be many and should be very much specific to the purpose of the visit.

2. **Bottom up participants selection:** Proper selection or representation from the community is the first necessary step to make visit productive. Minimum time should be given to user group to discuss their matters in the light of set purposes and the places to be visited. Places to be visited should be jointly identified through participatory discussion among field staff and user groups representatives. User group should receive letter of invitation in advance at least a week prior to the meetings. Meanwhile user can set themselves to discuss about the potential sites. It is always beneficial to arrange visit to the places where users are knowledgeable. The field staff can contribute in the discussion is vital. Since they may overtook the technical aspects.

continued next page…

3. **Proper representation of gender:** There is a tendency among development workers to select men in the visits as they are easy to communicate, approachable and eager to visit outside. Since women contribute more than men in some development activities, their representation in the visit is absolutely essential. An invitation letter of the field staff should clearly indicate the number of women to be included in the visit. It is advisable to include two women from groups instead of just one because the selected women feel secure when she has her friend from the same group.

4. **Pre-departure orientation and group size:** All the groups letter mentioning participants name social and educational qualifications and the major issues of the groups should arrive at the organisation office at least three days prior to the visit. The field staff will collate all information particularly number of men and women nominated by the groups and the visit of issues the groups would like to address during the visits. Then the field staff should brief five issues common to every groups. The field staff will prepare a checklist of this issues during the visit. The participate should be flexible to ask their specific issues that have not been included in the visits agenda. Participants can ask their issues individually.

   The field staff should brief the participants about the rules and the expected disciplines that need to be maintained during the visit. Visit programme should be circulated to each participants.

5. **Pre inform key actors:** The staff should inform the visit schedule to all hosts in advance. If possible, send the agenda of the visit to each host so that they could be well prepared. Any changes in the schedule before or during the visit should be informed to the concerned.

An Exposure Visit of Microhydro UC Leaders to an RFDP Microhydro site in Tanahu District

6. **Review outcomes every day:** Communities learn different aspects of development. Review of each days outcomes is very necessary. It doesn't only remind people to be attentive in the visit but also help people to brief the visit outcomes to respective groups upon his/her return.

7. **Punctuality and flexibility:** The visit has limited budget to undertake the lack of efficiency in managing the visits may delay programme which increases the cost. As a result there is not only waste of the organisation's resources but questions the credibility of the visits and organisations.

   The organiser should try to be strict on the duration of the visit. However adequate flexibility time should be adjusted within the visit period too. Adjust some time to visit important religious and market centres along the route. Ignoring of such aspects may be counter productive since people wouldn't actively participate in the discussion. Also consider some time for unavoidable reasons such as bus and road conditions which may delay visit schedule from one place to another. It is always wise to inform the host immediately if there is change in visit schedule.

8. **Appreciate hosts:** Don't forget to acknowledge hosts for their time and information.

9. **Post visit presentation:** Post visit discussion should be held at two level-- the organiser's level and the group level. At the farmer strength & weakness of the visit should be reviewed and course of actions for future visits should be minuted. While at the later, outcomes and the lessons of the visit should be briefed by the visitors to the group. Then action plan should be developed to incorporate experiences of the visit in their workplan. In the group level briefing, presence of all group members is helpful to share experiences of the visit.

10. **Logistics:** Good logistics management of contributes to efficiency of the visits. Bus should be in good condition knowledge of driver along proposed route and places would be advantageous. a first aid kit is equally necessary during the visit since among others headache, diarrhoea, fever can occur to participants during the visit.

NUNV CR Ojha

Appendices

I. Evaluation Report, Executive Summary (May 2001)

II. CMN Project Activities in the field.

Evaluation Report May 2000
Executive Summary

RADC was established in 1977 by HMG with the aim of social and economic development of the 22 remote districts. The areas in these districts are isolated, with little basic services and generally bypassed by development program. The livelihoods of people in these areas are based on animal husbandry, subsistence agriculture, trading with the bordering Tibet, and migration for employment.

The micro hydro program in RADC began in the early 90s. RADC's other regular projects are mule trail, suspension bridges, irrigation and drinking water. RADC has 42 MHP projects (costing[17] approx. 2 million US$) in various stages of implementation, which in number is second largest in Nepal after Rural Energy Development Program/UNDP program. Until the UNV project began, the concept of social mobilization was absent in the RADC program.

In the past years, RADC seem to have realised its MHP program to be a most demanding task. This is made more difficult by the circumstances[18] in which RADC has to operate. RADC also realised that social mobilization was a missing component in their program, so a request was made to UNV for support for social mobilization component.

The UNV project began in June 1998 with the recruitment of 6 NUNVs supported by a UNV Social Mobilization Specialist. This project, originally planned for only three districts (Mugu, Dolpa and Jumla), was extended to all the 22 district early on as it was realized that there was not sufficient volume of work to engage two NUNVs in one district. This also enabled this support to be made available to all other RADC MHP projects too.

The objective of the UNV project was to support RADC's MHP program in the social mobilization of the community, to enhance their sense of ownership of the project.

The mid term evaluation is carried out particularly to assess the achievements against the objectives and to "…ensure sustainability of the (UNV) project's benefits, both to beneficiary community, as well as institutionally within RADC" and recommend "…ways in which the software aspect of the RADC's operations can be enhanced and institutionalized…" beyond the UNV-project period (November 2000).

The methodology applied for this evaluation were – review of project related documents, meetings and interviews with related people, project staff, users committees. Unstructured interviews and discussion were also made with UN projects having NUNV experience; UNDP, UNV program office and the UNV project team. All together three sites were visited, out of which one was operational, another broken and another under construction.

From the project document, "The main development objective of this (UNV) project is to support RADC's Rural Development through Village Electrification Program specifically through the implementation of the Village Training Program. The NUNV will mobilise community participation, organise village users committee, increase their capacity through training program, help identify and introduce end use program."

Based on the annual reports, the UNV project has been able to make significant achievement and it has achieved a number of the planned outputs as well as some that were not in the project document. The main achievements are establishing and capacity building of UC through series of training programmes, institutional development of UC by registering them,

[17] Assuming average 15 kW per site and 3000 US $ per kW

[18] these circumstances are described in observations , findings section and in various parts of the report

contribution to RADC systems and procedures for MHP planning and implementation. Also, proposals for 6 potential end use were drawn up and funding secured.

Observations, Findings, Conclusions

While the number of outputs is significant, which is mainly due to the good team spirit and cooperation among the project parties, the field visits indicated that the quality and intensity of NUNV input were insufficient. It was noted that there is wide acceptance of social mobilization in RADC program at all levels – center, district and MHP-project site. The Social Mobilization (SM) approach has to be process oriented rather than focusing on the output alone. The initiative to institutionalize the SM component in RADC had begun but its detailed plan of operation was not yet developed.

The MHP sector has noted the difficulty of achieving financial and institutional sustainability of MHP projects. The efforts made by REDP as implementor and recently Danida ESAP MHP sector support program are targeted to address these issues. Lately, RADC has made significant strides to improve its project management and support. However, the support required for 42 MHP projects at various stages is much more demanding than what present the set up can offer.

There is little sign of sustainability of RADC MHP projects so far as perceived from the field visits and from discussion with NUNV, LDO, DDC chairperson on the state of MHP. The revenue from electricity barely meets the salary of operators at both sites; the UC had little sense of ownership in one of the running plants and the technical condition of both running plants was found critical. The site selection of one of the visited site (Simigaon) was found to be very appropriate (ability to pay, local organizational capacity and sense of ownership) – a signal of a series of recent improvements and capacity building taking place within RADC.

The UNV project has made significant contributions. It has improved community participation and transparency in the MHP projects, increased capacity building of UCs and users, increased their understanding and contribution to the MHP projects, and has made significant progress towards institutionalization of UCs, increase of women membership in the UCs and in the training program.

Good coordination and communication between RADC at center and district and with LDO is maintained. The UNV project has good rapport and coordination with UNV PO.

While some of the DDC chairpersons interviewed expressed reservations on the RADC modality of service delivery to remote areas as it contradicts the decentralization act, some noted its comparative advantage over DDC in that it implemented projects more efficiently than DDC.

The process of MHP-project selection was perceived by the Evaluation Team (team) to be supply driven, which is one of the main reasons for lack of ownership of the MHP-projects among UC, VDC and DDC. This is also the reason for conflict between the users and UC, UC and RADC district staff.

The guidelines, tender documents and agreement document have been improved during the recent years. However, confusion exists because there is inconsistency in the actual implementation of these guidelines and conditions in the tender document. Such inconsistencies have further contributed to a lack of trust and motivation among RADC staff, UCs and Users. NUNVs have been facing problems as they stand between them. Cases of disputes and breaking of contract agreements have been noticed due to ambiguous terms and conditions in the contract paper and superseding of delegated authority in some cases. RADC is aware of this and is taking corrective measures.

The extent of the utilization of various UNVmodlities in projects implemented or supported by UN systems and UNDP is at a low key, while the direction of current activities of UNV PO

contributes to the spirit of CCF and UNDP. The process and communication for recruitment of NUNV and UNV were clear, categorical and appropriate to attracting quality people. The ratio of female candidate fell far below the male recruitment however. The concept of NUNV is very appropriate as it provides young people with an opportunity to work in an international work culture environment and local condition simultaneously. The project funding by UNV is an example of a proactive response from UNV to meet a request from a government agency like RADC; this has also contributed to keeping the NUNV concept and its marketing alive.

Recommendations

TO UNV PROJECT/RADC: To consolidate project approach with immediate effect and concentrate its efforts at two levels: 1) the capacity building of the new RADC assistant social mobilizers, 2) institutional strengthening of the SM process within RADC for the rest of the project period until November 2000.

For beyond the project phase, UNV Project and RADC should jointly develop an "RADC Institutional Strengthening Project" as a follow up project. In its absence, the UNV project should still continue for a year from now (including the extension of six month) with the same objective of capacity building of the newly recruited Assistant Social Mobilizers in RADC and institutional strengthening of social mobilization in RADC on the condition that RADC commits to take serious measures as recommended in this evaluation. An international UNV is recommended to head such a project as the presence of expatriate has its own merit in the Nepali context.

TO UNV: Continue NUNV mobilization activity as it contributes to developing young professionals. Proactively promote the use of UNV/NUNVs in the UN supported projects. UNDP should increase its support to UNV by making use of UNV/NUNV in its own projects or that of UN systems. A number of recommendations have been made in the main text for the NUNV mobilization.

To RADC: Commission a socio-technical review of all its MHP sites and develop and implement site specific rescue plans to improve the sustainability of the MHP plants. Give priority to the MHP-projects that are already under construction and put on hold approval of any new projects until the ones that have been completed or begun are consolidated and their sustainability improved. Review the appropriateness and rationale of MHP in the RADC context and consider alternatives to MHP. Strengthen in house technical capacity through continuous training and improve the overall quality of MHP project process from survey, design, installations to post installation supports.

Develop participatory and transparent project intake process and improve MHP-project selection criteria. Ensure compliance of the guidelines in the implementation. Consider upgrading and reconstitution of the board – say for prime minister or NPC Vice Chairperson to sit in the chair, and include DDC representative through DDC federation or direct nomination, independent professionals and women experts in order to enhance the role of RADC as a professional development agency specialized in remote areas.

Improve communication, documentation and sharing of its experiences through introduction of newsletters, annual report.

May 2000
Mr. Raghav Raj Regmi, and Mr. Bhola Shrestha

CMN PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD

	(pre-project)	1998/1999	2000	mid-2001	Total for the period 1998 - 2001
Number of UCs visited by NUNVs during the year	0	34 (19 districts) incl. 1998	35	(no formal visits were made; but contacts were maintained with UCs, and UC representatives also attended trainings)	
… of which how many were visited for the first time	n/a	34	13	n/a	n/a
Number of UCs registered by December of this year	0	11	14	15 (another 11 in process)	15 (another 11 in process)
Number of UCs with women represented in executives	2 (total 4 women)	29 (total 54 women)	all except 4	all except 4	all except 4
Number of formal site level trainings held	0	16	3	none – but 7 district trainings were held, and were attended by local UCs	
Number of RADC Microhydros operational by December of this year	8	12	17	18	18
Number of End-Uses supplied by December of this year	0	0	7 (of which 3 are operational; the other 4 are at site, ready for installation)	7 (of which 3 are operational; the other 4 are at site, ready for installation)	7
Number of RADC Solar systems operational by December of this year	0	2	3	3	3