GENDER AND INCLUSION ASSESSMENT

USAID/NEPAL

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ACRONYMS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
ADS	USAID Automated Directives System
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIN	Association of International NGOs in Nepal
ARV	Anti-Retroviral
ASHA	Advancing Surveillance, Policies, Prevention, Care, and Support to Fight HIV/AIDS
BASE	Backward Society Education
BDS-MaPs	Business Development Services-Marketing and Production Services
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CA	Constituent Assembly
CB-IMCI	Community-based integrated management of childhood illnesses
CBO	Community-based organization
CFUG	Community Forestry User Group
CTO	USAID project officer (Cognizant Technical Officer)
DAG	Disadvantaged Group
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID/UK	Department for International Development/ United Kingdom
EAG	Expert advisory group
FACETS	Family and Community Empowerment Training Systems
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal
FWLD	Forum for Women, Law, and Development
FHI	Family Health International
FNCCI	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries
FSN	Foreign Service National
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GESI	Gender equity and social inclusion
GIA	Gender and Inclusion Assessment
GON	Government of Nepal
HFOMC	Health Facility Operations and Management Committees
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDE	International Development Enterprise
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDU	Injecting Drug User
ILO	International Labor Organization
I/NGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Center
IWID	Investing in Women in Development fellowship program
MCHV	Maternal and Children's Health Volunteer
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MIS	Management Information System
MPC	Marketing and planning committees
MUS	Multi-use (water) Systems
NDHS	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities

NFHP	Nepal Family Health Program
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
NR	Nepalese Rupee (July 2007: US$1 = approx. NRs 65)
ODC	Organization Development Center
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PDQ	Partner Defined Quality
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RFA	Request for Assistance
RFP	Request for Proposal
SAGUN	Strengthening Actions for Governance in the Utilization of Natural Resources
SANDEEP	Sansthagat Deego Pariwartan
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIMI	Smallholder Irrigation Market Initiative
SMC	School Management Committee
SPA	Seven Party Alliance
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Scope of Work
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSCR 1325	United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1325
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCCPJ	Women's Core Committee for Peace and Justice

Executive Summary

This Gender and Inclusion Assessment (GIA) analyzes the impact of gender, caste, and ethnic relations on development outcomes and makes recommendations for program sustainability in the context of Nepal's recovery. Responses for peace-building in the aftermath of the Maoist insurgency must be sensitive to what motivated a large chunk of Nepal's populace to seek social, political, and economic change through armed struggle and social mobilization. To support conditions for a durable peace, actions must be taken to ensure that gender and social inclusion are adequately mainstreamed. Without establishing viable mechanisms for ensuring that excluded groups are included in and benefit from Nepal's recovery, the prospects for peace, poverty reduction, transformational development, and stability will be limited. Drawing on provisions of USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) for gender analysis and USAID/Nepal's Mission Order on Gender, Caste, and Ethnicity, this report offers recommendations for more effectively integrating concerns of gender equity and social inclusion (GESI). It presents an overview of exclusion issues and examines aspects of USAID/Nepal's portfolio, focusing mainly on programs with new solicitations and on strategies for integrating GESI within the Mission. Key recommendations include the following:

General Cross-Sector Recommendations:

- **Social inclusion should not be at the expense of gender equity:** Equal emphasis should be placed on *gender equity* ***and*** *social inclusion* – or GESI – so that the gains made toward gender equality over the past 20 years in Nepal will not be eroded.
- **Concentrate on ways to unite groups:** Social capital builds when groups work together on activities which benefit everyone. Concentrate on activities that promote solidarity by helping individuals identify with each other on a basis of common cause.
- **Tailor activities to the needs of excluded groups:** GESI-sensitive interventions need to be tailored to specific needs in different sites, because different groups face different types of discrimination in different social locations. Critical sites (e.g., the household, community, and state) of disempowerment and social exclusion vary for different categories of people.
- **Disaggregate based on gender, caste, and ethnicity:** Disaggregated data and analysis are essential for tracking inclusion, promoting accountability, and eradicating exclusion. Without this information it will be difficult to gauge whether social, economic, and political change is occurring (and among which groups).
- **Increase voice, agency, and influence through coalitions and federations:** Discriminatory and exclusionary rules will not change unless those in power are compelled to do so. Illiterate, impoverished, and disempowered people cannot do this in isolation as individuals – they need assets and knowledge, access to services and opportunities, the ability to hold accountable the institutions that affect them, and greater voice, agency, and influence through broader coalitions for change.
- **Work with diverse organizations with strong grassroots networks:** There has been a tendency to favor "professional" NGOs and civil society organizations which are located in Kathmandu, and whose leaders have strong English language communication skills. This skews benefits toward Kathmandu-based elites, and limits input and perspectives from other groups, organizations, and regions. Attempts should be made to broaden support among organizations and locations, even if this requires addition support.
- **Focusing on poverty alone is not enough:** A focus on poverty will not necessarily bring about an end to exclusion because of existing norms which reinforce dominant

Hindu values and favor high-caste groups. Poor Bahuns, Chhetris, Dalits, Madhesis, and Janajatis do not face similar problems. Poor Bahuns and Chhetris are not confronted with cultural, linguistic, and religious discrimination, and they tend to have more economic and social mobility opportunities.

- **Avoid an "inclusion-by-numbers" approach that does not address issues of reintegration and reconciliation:** Post-conflict environments are uncertain and tumultuous, providing opportunities and constraints for social change. Increased flexibility in roles, expectations, and relationships can accelerate changes in social norms, but there is also a possibility that loss of status or uncertainty will provoke fear, anger and violence resulting in backlash, resentment, and social sanctioning. One way to minimize this possibility is to focus on projects that benefit all community members, but *especially* excluded groups, and to promote dialogue for reconciliation among all groups.
- **Support GESI in community-based groups:** Decentralization has great promise in Nepal, especially given the extreme social and geographic diversity of the country. But as more and more services are decentralized, it will be important to have checks-and-balances in decision-making procedures. All groups must be able to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens and human beings – regardless of social identities based on gender, caste, ethnicity, language, or religion.
- **Use USAID/Nepal's Mission Order on Gender, Caste, and Ethnicity:** The 2004 Mission Order establishes a policy and organizational framework for gender, caste, and ethnic inclusion into USAID/Nepal's programs and activities. It addresses GESI issues in program design, planning, procurement, selection, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as in program activities and documentation. It also outlines roles and responsibilities for organizational mainstreaming of GESI.

GESI Integration in Programs and Projects:

- **GESI Analysis in RFA/RFP:** Always assess whether RFA/RFPs have the potential to increase or decrease GESI outcomes. GESI-sensitive projects recognize variations in needs and power relations based on socioeconomic status, age, marital status, ethnicity, caste, religion, and client populations of women and men.
- **Evaluation of Proposals:** Evaluation criteria should weigh the activities planned as well as the knowledge, ability, and experience of the staff proposed. There should be demonstrated capacity to undertake proposed activities in a GESI-sensitive manner.
- **Project Design:** GESI-sensitive projects should increase knowledge about rights and responsibilities among all social groups. If all members of communities are knowledgeable about their basic rights and collective responsibilities, they will be more capable of demanding quality services and gaining access to them. Projects should also focus on building capacity among those who have been traditionally disenfranchised, providing the skills necessary for renegotiating relationships and power dynamics.
- **Partner Organizations:** Partner organizations should have a workforce diversity policy, and a strategy for tracking staff compositions to monitor changes over time. Their values, policies, and practices should indicate a clear commitment to GESI, and they should have previously worked with excluded groups in ways which empower these groups and build their capacity to act.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation procedures should be able to track outcomes, including the metrics of social change. Work plans and reporting from partner organizations should demonstrate attention to GESI issues and strategies for collecting and analyzing relevant data. Disaggregated data can provide a better sense of the impact of programs and projects, and whether GESI objectives are being met.

Strengthening GESI Mainstreaming within the USAID/Nepal Mission:

- **Harmonization and coordination:** USAID/Nepal's participation in donor and governmental technical working groups on gender and social inclusion is crucial for coordinating approaches. USAID/Nepal's explicit attention to GESI in its programs and support in publicizing the results and benefits of these efforts will contribute to the sustainability and maturing of the movement toward inclusiveness and equality.
- **Information sharing and communication:** Encourage partner organizations with more experience of GESI to share their insights with other partners.
- **Strengthen the Diversity Action Group in the Mission:** Re-establish the Diversity and Social Inclusion Working Group that was formed in 2003, per the Mission Order on Gender, Caste, and Ethnicity. This group could host forums on GESI issues in various sectors, and be used as a platform for comparing successful tools and methodologies for GESI integration.
- **Human resources and organizational structure:** GESI is about ensuring participation and equal opportunities, without discrimination based on social identities such as caste, gender, and ethnicity. It is about fairness and effectiveness through balance, representation, and diversity. To effectively promote GESI, an organization should be prepared to practice it internally. Experience from other organizations also suggests that consistent and committed leadership is needed from high-up (director level) to make workforce diversity a reality.

Though not explicit, a cross-cutting theme for USAID/Nepal's strategy is the need to win the peace through social, economic, and political inclusion. At present, poverty is exacerbated by urban-centric and inequitable economic growth, the lack of access to basic services and infrastructure, and poor governance. Social exclusion is a social and structural problem that requires institutional changes as well as major shifts in the mindset of Nepal's citizens – from dependency and patronage to individual and collective responsibilities and rights. Now is an opportune time to mainstream GESI within the process of reconstruction, reintegration, and reconciliation. If no change is forthcoming, violence may reoccur.

1. INTRODUCTION

An uneasy peace is now taking hold in Nepal. The Democracy Movement of 2005-2006 helped to end a decade-long civil war and prompted the King to reinstate Parliament. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed between the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the Maoists, followed by agreements to begin demobilization and disarmament (monitored by the UN), and to establish a new interim government and hold Constituent Assembly elections, have helped to stabilize the situation. While these indicate a positive overall trend, doubts remain about the ability of the existing polity to effect the changes needed to address what most observers view as the root cause of the conflict – the systemic discrimination and social exclusion perpetuated by feudalistic and patriarchal social structures.

The purpose of this Gender and Inclusion Assessment (GIA) is to analyze the impact of gender, caste, and ethnic relations on development outcomes and to make recommendations for program sustainability in the context of Nepal's recovery. Drawing on provisions of USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) for gender analysis and USAID/Nepal's Mission Order on Gender, Caste, and Ethnicity, it provides the Mission with a baseline GIA analysis and recommendations for more effectively integrating concerns of gender equity and social inclusion (GESI). A GESI approach is important because in Nepal gender, caste, and ethnic exclusions overlap – cross-cutting different hierarchies, sectors, institutions, religions, and languages. This study will also serve to update the Mission's gender action plan (GAP), and provide background for a new Mission strategy, if one is required in 2007 or 2008.

In April 2006 Nepali people protested en masse throughout the country because they want peace, inclusive democracy, and prosperity. For ordinary people to engage in extraordinary acts of collective action (violent and non-violent) there must be strong motivations. Responses for peace-building in the aftermath of the Maoist insurgency must be sensitive to what motivated a large chunk of Nepal's populace to seek social, political, and economic change through armed struggle and social mobilization. This will require significant changes in opportunity structures that have, for centuries, benefited one group to the detriment and exclusion of others.

In Nepal, relations of gender, caste, and ethnicity are in flux, with concerns of social exclusion receiving extraordinary attention in public discourse and individual consciousness. There is evidence of positive change in mixed (caste and ethnicity) social interactions both in urban and rural areas, especially among youth. Civil society is experiencing an undeniable surge in democratic values, and there is tremendous momentum for social reform. The question is not if different groups should enjoy equal rights and opportunities, but about the best means to achieve this (World Bank and DFID 2006).

USAID (2007) identifies conflict as an inherent and legitimate part of social and political life, recognizing that, while the consequences can be alarming, conflict can also be a precursor to positive change. To support conditions for a durable peace, actions must be taken to ensure that gender and social inclusion are adequately mainstreamed. Without establishing viable mechanisms for ensuring that excluded groups are included in and benefit from Nepal's recovery, the prospects for peace, poverty reduction, transformational development, and stability will be limited. Now is an opportune moment to plan for peace by promoting social and economic justice for all, and a truly inclusive democracy with greater understanding of citizen's rights and responsibilities.

This report is divided into two parts. Part One offers an overview of exclusion issues and disparities based on gender, caste, and ethnicity. In Part Two, aspects of USAID/Nepal's

portfolio are examined with suggestions for mainstreaming GESI. Given the proscriptive orientation of this GIA, analysis is mainly focused on those programs with new solicitations and on strategies for integrating GESI within the Mission.

PART ONE

2. Gender and Inclusion Assessment for USAID/Nepal

In ADS 201.3.12.6 USAID requires activity-level gender analysis concentrating on the following questions: Are women and men involved or affected differently by the context or work to be undertaken? And, would this difference be an important factor in managing for sustainable program impact? The ADS guidelines affirm the importance of gender integration, and define steps for gender analysis at each stage of the programming process. This involves understanding the roles, responsibilities, and relative status of men and women and resulting disparities. Reviews of gendered impacts are expected for Technical Analyses and Strategic Planning; Performance Monitoring Systems; Activity Design and Activity Approval Documents; and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and Requests for Assistance (RFAs).

Drawing on gender analysis frameworks, this study reviews the causes and consequences of inequality in terms of gender, caste, and ethnicity. This is a fairly unique approach within USAID. Most Missions do not examine the impact of discrimination beyond compliance with ADS gender analysis requirements. In the context of Nepal, however, the long history of exclusion and discrimination makes a broader approach imperative. Despite more than 50 years of development activity and poverty reduction strategies targeted at the "poorest of the poor," disaggregated data reveal large gaps in human development indicators based on gender, caste, and ethnicity. Development experience in Nepal suggests that programs and projects that are not designed to be GESI-sensitive risk exacerbating inequalities.

2.1 Methodology

This GIA was conducted from February to June 2007. The research process included key-informant interviews and field visits to 7 different districts (Kaski, Syangja, Rupandehi, Kapilbastu, Banke, Bardiya, and Dang). It is based on a careful review and analysis of relevant documents from the Mission, donors, partner organizations, and the Government of Nepal (GON). In-depth discussions and interviews were conducted with key stakeholders and implementing partners, and with representatives from other organizations who are grappling with how to effectively mainstream gender and inclusion. Interviewees included project beneficiaries, project implementers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society representatives, key USAID personnel, and representatives of other donor agencies. Some group discussions were also conducted in Rupandehi and Kapil Bastu, where members of rural women's federation were met, as well as with a community group which built and manages a multi-use water system in Kaski. The team consisted of Charla Britt, a consultant from Monterey, CA, and several staff within the Mission, especially Kishore K.C. and Amy Paro, as well as Madhuri Rana Singh and Debendra Karki who participated in parts of the field trips. The Scope of Work for this assessment is attached as Appendix B to this report. Appendix C identifies the people consulted and interviewed, as well as projects visited.

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Gender, Gender Equity

Gender refers to identities or roles assigned to *men and women* through early socialization, and how they affect relationships, rights, responsibilities, resources, and rewards. These roles cut across public and private spheres, as well as ethnic, caste, and class identities. They change over

time, and vary by culture and context. Gender equity recognizes that in order to achieve equality a "leveling of the playing field" must be done in order to compensate for gender gaps and the legacy of discrimination. This usually involves a focus on women, because women are almost always in a subordinate position within society.

2.2.2 GESI Analysis

GESI analysis is a methodology for examining the causes and consequences of inequality in terms of gender, caste, and ethnicity. Drawing on gender analysis frameworks, it takes into account differences in roles, responsibilities, rights, decision-making, and access to resources to better understand disparities.

2.2.3 GESI Mainstreaming

GESI mainstreaming highlights the affect of programs, policies, and resource allocations on men and women, and different castes and ethnicities. Mainstreaming includes organizational transformation – in administrative, financial, and organizational procedures, and in projects and programs. Similar gender mainstreaming, if GESI mainstreaming is done effectively the mainstream will reflect an environment much closer to true democracy.

2.2.4 Social inclusion

Social inclusion is a process and an objective. Inclusion is about achieving balance, fairness, representation, and diversity. This requires changes in social and economic opportunity structures that have privileged some individuals and groups to the exclusion and marginalization of others. The "processes" that confer privilege are often invisible to those individuals (the dominant group) who benefit from them. In situations of extreme discrimination, such as Nepal, equal opportunity (regardless of social identity) needs to be aggressively pursued through affirmative incentive mechanisms, and by improving capacity within the state, community organizations, and individuals for social inclusion.

2.2.5 Caste and "Untouchability"

Caste distinctions are common in all Hindu cultures, and strongly linked with beliefs about purity, "pollution," and one's destiny or place within society – past, present, and future. Historically, castes were divided into *Varnas* based largely on occupations or a division of labor. At the top were the Brahmins (referred to as Bahuns, in Nepal), or the priestly caste, with the Kshatriya (Chhetri) or warriors, just beneath them. These two castes were considered high-caste or "twice born." Next are the Vaishya (merchants) and the Sudra (peasants and laborers) or middle castes. At the very bottom were the Acchut – the so-called "untouchables" or occupational groups, such as butchers and blacksmiths, who now call themselves Dalits ("oppressed"). The dominant high-caste groups in Nepal are Bahun, Chhetri, and Newar men of Middle Hill origin.

Dalits exist within different social groups. Estimates about the Dalit population range from 9 to 20% of the total population.[1] The National Dalit Commission defines Dalits as "those communities who by virtue of atrocities of caste-based discrimination and untouchability, are most backward in social, economic, educational, political, and religious fields, and have been deprived of human dignity and social justice." However, most researchers identify Dalits as groups or castes from whom water is not accepted, and whose touch requires sprinkling of water (as defined by 1854 *Muluki Ain* or country code). (Tamang 2006:163)

[1] The percentage of Dalits in Nepal's population is disputed. The 12% figure is used in this report, because it concurs with most reports and the 2001 Census. This number combines Hill Dalits (7%) and Terai Dalits (5%).

In Nepal discrimination based on caste was made illegal in 1963, but it is still practiced. A recent report identified 205 forms of caste-based discrimination, including domination, exclusion, vilification, atrocities, social boycotting, and discriminatory attitudes and practices (Bhattachan et al. 2003). Dalits are often discriminated against within local power structures and in terms of services. Belonging to a "lower" caste can restrict access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and justice.

2.2.6 Janajatis (Indigenous Nationalities)

The term Janajati refers to indigenous peoples or nationalities of Nepal who are outside the traditional Hindu *Varna* caste structure. Janajatis comprise about 37% of the total population. The 2002 National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities Act identifies 59 different Janajatis. Its definition is "…those ethnic groups or communities…who have their own language and traditional customs, distinct cultural identity, distinct social structure, and written or oral history…" (IIDS 2006:141). The Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), an umbrella group for ethnic associations, has divided these groups into five categories: endangered groups, highly marginalized groups, marginalized groups, disadvantaged groups, and advanced groups (Tamang 2006:164). Janajati groups reside in all parts of Nepal – mountains, Middle Hills, inner Tarai, and Tarai. Though many Janajati groups claim to not adhere to the *Varna*-caste hierarchy, others do enforce caste restrictions.

2.2.7 Madhesis

Madhesi is a group mainly defined by region, many of whom are of Indian origin. High and low caste Hindus, Janajatis, and Muslims are part of this group because of they live in Nepal's narrow slice of the Gangetic Plain, an area known as the Terai. Though figures overlap with Janajati population estimates, Madhesis are considered to be about 32% of the total population. This does not include people who have migrated from the Hills to the Terai, even if they have lived in the Terai for several generations. Madhesis have faced discrimination based on language (most speak languages other than Nepali as a mother tongue, e.g. Maithili and Bhojpuri), religion (some practice minority religions), and culture. It is estimated that millions of Madhesis have not been granted citizenship certificates, because Middle Hill civil servants who retain most of the administrative posts (even in the Terai) perceive them as immigrants from India not Nepali citizens. Many Madhesis, especially high-caste Hindus, are often well-educated and better off economically than other groups, but they have been excluded politically. Racist attitudes toward the Madeshis have united them, despite differences and contradictions within the group.

3. Gender and Social Exclusion in Nepal

Social Exclusion in Historical Context

Social exclusion based on social identities and caste distinctions has been perpetuated throughout much of Nepal's history. During the Shah-Rana era (1768 to 1951), the country was consolidated through feudalistic administrative structures which benefited high-caste Middle-Hill Hindus, reinforcing caste connections and social inequality. The 1854 *Muluki Ain* brought Nepal's diverse groups under a single legal system, delineating different privileges and obligations to each caste. Non-Hindu Janajati groups were incorporated into the middle-caste level, as *Matwalis* (alcohol drinking) and subdivided into enslavable and non-enslavable groups (IIDS 2006:127). Punishments for crimes depended on the caste and ethnicity of the perpetrator; the lower the caste the harsher the punishment. A revised country code in 1963 abolished caste-based discrimination. However, the Panchayat period (1962-1990) saw little change in caste restrictions or beliefs, and patterns of exclusion continued.

The 1990 people's movement (*Jana Andolan I*) against the Panchayat Regime prompted the establishment of a Constitutional Monarchy and democratic government. Democracy allowed space for the growth of civil society organizations (including those based on ethnic and caste identity) and the flourishing of a free press, but failed to deliver on the promise of broader social, economic, and political inclusion. Women, Dalits, Janajatis, Muslims, and Madhesis continued to be excluded from access to resources and services, political representation, and educational and economic opportunities. Political party representatives and civil servants remained the product of powerful informal "*afno manche*" networks. Janajatis (other than Newars), with about 32% of the country's total population, occupy just 2% of civil service positions. More than 90% of all civil servants are high-caste males, even though they account for only about 19% of the population.[2] This pattern is repeated within the political parties and in high-status positions. More than 70% of the Central Committee members of all major political parties are reported to be from Middle Hill Bahun and Chhetri backgrounds. Bahuns, Chhetris, and Newars occupy more than 80% of the prominent positions in politics, civil service, and I/NGOs. Dalits, with about 12% of the total population, have practically no representation in positions of power and privilege.[3]

Political leaders did little to address issues of exclusion and inequality, despite the growing discontent of the excluded majority. The "People's War" (which was launched by the Maoists in February 1996) capitalized on sentiments of social injustice. The Maoist's calls for regional autonomy based on ethnic compositions, gender equity, and the end of caste-based discrimination attracted disaffected women, Dalits and Janajatis, particularly in the early stages of the insurgency. Women, especially, were initially won over by the insurgency, because of the opposition to alcoholism, gambling, and polygamy; it is estimated that almost one-third of Maoist cadres are women (Thapa 2003). However, women have also been victims of the violence. They have had to absorb extra workloads, separation from family members, extortion, abuse, the death of friends, community leaders, local teachers, and family members, and the disruption of services, particularly in healthcare and education.

Other events have also exacerbated conditions for civil unrest and political instability over the past decade. Probably most significant of these was the massacre of the Royal Family in June 2001. The unpopular Gyanendra (a younger brother of the late King Birendra) became king in July 2001. King Gyanendra took a much more hands-on approach to politics. Frustrated with the political parties and their leaders, the King assumed Direct Rule in February 2005. A State of Emergency was also declared, with controls placed on the media and civil society organizations.

Brought together by their opposition to the King, political parties joined forces and brokered a peace agreement with the Maoists in November 2005. With little change in the deteriorating political and economic situation, other groups (lawyers and journalists, as well as members of national federations, such as the Federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal) also expressed their support for the restoration of democracy. The *Loktantrik Andolan* (democratic movement) reached critical mass in April of 2006. During 19-days of protests, millions of

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[2] One report noted an "astonishing continuity" in state administration over the past 150 years or so. It explains that in 1854 high-caste groups occupied more than 98% of the top civil service positions; in 1997 this figure was similar with 92% of these positions occupied by the same groups. (IIDS 2006:131)

[3] A 1999 Integrated National Index of Governance noted that except for 4 members of Parliament and 1 person involved in educational leadership, Dalits did not occupy a single position in the judiciary, cabinet, constitutional commissions, elite civil service, security positions, central committees of national parties, and local government. (Lawoti 2005:103-104)

people took to the streets throughout the country calling for inclusive democracy and an end to the King's autocratic rule. In response to this overwhelming public mobilization, King Gyanendra reinstated members of Parliament (who had been dismissed in 2002) and stepped-down as head of state.

A tentative peace is now in place, but deep structural, cultural, and social inequities remain. The *Loktantrik Andolan* unified the country in its demand for real inclusion and real democracy – inclusive democracy. However, the feelings of optimism that pervaded Nepal just over a year ago are now being replaced by cynicism and violence. Groups that were once considered moderate have resorted to destructive tactics in order to press demands with political leaders who appear to have a deaf ear to all but the most radical protest strategies. The women's movement continues to be largely ignored. The promise by the political parties to institute 33% representation of women in political bodies is bogged down by disputes about whether this means reserving spaces for candidates to run for political office or reserving seats in Parliament.

Raised expectations, distrust, and frustration are creating an increasingly volatile situation in Nepal. There has been tremendous civil unrest as different groups fight for their proportion of proportional representation in the run-up to the Constituent Assembly elections. The fear is that if their voices are not heard now, they never will be. While the almost daily protests and almost weekly *bandhs* (strikes or closures) are disruptive, it is important to realize that protests are staged by hopeful, not hopeless, people.

Institutional Context

Despite the uncertain political situation and widespread complaints that little has been done to address issues of social exclusion, there has been some progress on GESI. The GON has begun to disaggregate information and focus on barriers to inclusion caused by geography as well as socially-defined characteristics, such as gender, caste, ethnicity, language, or religion. Moreover, there has been improvement in legal frameworks to protect human rights and end discriminatory provisions. Public interest litigation has been effectively employed to correct discriminatory laws, and to enforce compliance with Nepal's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

However, in practice, socio-cultural norms continue to undermine the implementation of GESI-sensitive policies and the enforcement of court decisions and legislation. Moreover, even with sweeping changes targeted at ending discriminatory provisions, there has been limited success in establishing mechanisms to effect structural change.

3.2.1 Legal Frameworks

Nepal ratified CEDAW in 1991, and signed-on to the Optional Protocol in December 2006 (with reservations for Article 8 and 9, which pertain to human rights abuses). The Optional Protocol allows individuals or organizations to submit written claims of violations to the Committee that monitors CEDAW compliance. It also gives the Committee a mandate to investigate violations in countries that are signatories. As noted, CEDAW has been employed by advocates of women's human rights in public interest litigation. The Forum for Women, Law, and Development (FWLD) has been instrumental in identifying discriminatory legal provisions, and pleading cases before the Supreme Court. CEDAW required Nepal to change about 85 laws and 137 legal provisions. Fortunately, a good number of these legal provisions have been remedied with the passage of the Gender Equality Act in September 2006, and in other newly promulgated acts such as the Citizenship Act, Military Act, and the Interim Constitution.

The 2006 Gender Equality Act made 65 reforms. This Act is a legislative-leap forward. Among other provisions for ending gender discrimination, a daughter can now retain a share of property from her natal home, even after marriage. Daughters also have been included within the definition of "the family" in the Act relating to land. The definition of rape also has been broadened to include marital rape. And the provision that allowed only the most senior male member of the household to register birth and death has been repealed.

However, problems remain in the lack of representation in politics and the civil service. In 1997 the Local Election Act required mandatory representation of at least one woman in local elected government, and set aside 25% of the positions at the ward level for women. However, no provision was made to increase representation at higher levels of decision-making. In the recently passed (June 2007) Act to Facilitate the Constituent Assembly Members' Election, political parties "willing to participate in the proportional electoral system" must prepare a list of candidates for contesting the elections, with at least 10% of the names proportionately divided between women, Dalits, oppressed caste/indigenous ethnic groups, backward areas, Madhesis, and other groups. It remains to be seen how this will be applied in practice, and what this might mean for future Parliamentary elections. In 2005, an amendment to the Civil Service Act included affirmative action policies targeting women, Dalits, and disadvantaged Janajatis for government service positions (for five years). This policy is still being drafted.

The provisions of the United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) are being used to raise awareness about women's experiences of conflict and peace. It spells out actions needed to ensure the participation of women in peace-building and improve the protection of women in conflict zones. It calls on all member states of the UN to increase the participation of women in decision-making and peace processes, integrate gender perspectives in peacekeeping, protect women, and mainstream gender in UN reporting systems and programs. A UN 1325 Peace Support Working Group has been formed, which meets bi-monthly to discuss issues of gender-based violence and women's roles in the peace process. An NGO, Women for Human Rights/Single Women's Group, is offering training programs and giving information about UNSCR 1325 at the community level. However, unlike CEDAW, UNSCR 1325 is non-binding.

3.2.2 Strategic Planning

Development planning in Nepal is done through 5-year plans which strategically identify and prioritize needs. Now in its Tenth five-year plan (2002-2007), Nepal has had almost a half a century of planned development.

The Tenth Plan is also Nepal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). It identifies economic and social inclusion as one of its four "pillars" or core strategies,[4] recognizing that development efforts have "not benefited all Nepalis equally," and "exclusion and deprivation contribute to conflict." The Tenth Plan supports policy-level initiatives to improve public resource allocation and service delivery, including: inclusive programming in all sectors; gender-responsive budgeting; poverty indexing for all block grants to local bodies; developing a framework for addressing the problems of deprived communities and regions; eliminating legal discrimination; promoting affirmative action in public service; generating and analyzing disaggregated data based on gender, caste, and ethnicity; and designing management information systems (MIS) for monitoring output/input indicators as well as development outcomes for disadvantaged groups.

[4] The four pillars are: (1) broad-based and sustainable economic growth that focuses on rural areas; (2) improving access and quality of infrastructure, social and economic services in rural areas; (3) social and economic inclusion of the poor, marginalized groups, and regions; (4) good governance to improve service delivery, efficiency, transparency, and accountability. (NPC 2006: 8)

There have also been a number of initiatives focused on gender equality, largely with support from the UNDP's Mainstreaming Gender Equity Program. The GON introduced a Gender Responsive Budgeting Framework, and formed a committee within the Ministry of Finance to institutionalize the allocation of resources based on the needs of women. The National Planning Commission (NPC) introduced a gender-code classification system for programs and projects, and gender budget audits have been completed in the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, Local Development, and Women, Children, and Social Welfare. Gender disaggregated indicators are largely in place, and a monitoring mechanism is being established to measure outcomes. Also, in 2004, a National Plan for Action for gender equality and women's empowerment was approved, with focal points appointed in key ministries and at the district level (in District Women's Development Offices).

A mid-term review of the Tenth Plan describes results as "mixed." It notes that poverty has declined, but income inequalities have risen and there has been little gain among women, Dalits, and disadvantaged Janajatis. It concludes that targeted programs have been insufficient, recommending that "the needs and priorities of women, Dalits, and Janajatis must be factored into the planning and design of mainstream development programs across all sectors" (NPC 2006:62).

3.2.3 Community-based Groups and Decentralization

The essence of Nepal's decentralization strategy is to shift the balance of power from the government in Kathmandu to local institutions. The Local Self-Governance Act of 1999 further decentralized governance, by creating scope for DDCs, municipalities, and VDCs to mobilize their own resources and receive grants to implement development activities. In addition, the GON is devolving control over the management of services, such as schools and health posts, to communities. The rationale behind these moves is to improve performance and accountability – that local officials should be more responsive to local people, and local groups are more likely to better manage services and resources than the long-arm of the central government.

Critics of Nepal's decentralization policy note inconsistencies between legal and policy frameworks, which leave implementation to the discretion of ministries and their line agencies. While emphasis is often placed on the need for women, children, and marginalized groups to participate in policy documents, there is no guidance on how to do this. Communities are not homogeneous harmonious entities, raising questions about how to guard against power disparities, social fragmentation, and the further marginalization of vulnerable groups. Moreover, about half the population (49%) lives in the Terai, with 44% in the Middle Hills and 7% in the mountains. The variation in terrain and population, and lack of infrastructure in remote regions, skews the availability and cost of providing services. In general, there are more services available in the Terai, which is more accessible, than in the hill and mountain regions.

The transfers of management control to School Management Committees (SMCs) and Health Facility Operations and Management Committees (HFOMCs) have slowed since 2004-2005.[5] There are unresolved issues relating to technical capacity, social inclusion, and the perception that the government is trying to "dump" management on communities. Some SMCs have been accused of the misusing funds, and misallocating scholarships for Dalits. Another concern is the access of children from disadvantaged groups, many of whom are denied "free" primary schooling because of "hidden costs" (including opportunity costs). There is also the need to

[5] Management of just over 2000 schools was transferred to SMCs by 2004. In 2004-2005 1,303 sub-health posts (out of 3,129), 77 health posts (out of 697), and 32 primary health care centers (out of 186) were transferred.

increase the participation of women, Dalits, and Janajatis in the SMCs and Parent Teacher Associations, and to monitor the functioning of SMCs and parents involvement. Similarly, there are reports that HFOMCs have been inadequately prepared for the transfer of responsibilities, and that they are dominated by high caste members. In response, USAID/Nepal's Family Health Program is working with Save the Children US on "partner defined quality" to bring together representatives of marginalized groups and HFOMCs to identify what needs to be done.

Probably the most successful model for community-based groups in Nepal is the community forestry user group (CFUG). After nearly two decades of experimentation, community forestry started to take off in the mid-1990s.[6] Though community forestry is considered one of Nepal's most successful programs, critics argue that CFUG committees are controlled by elites who exclude the disadvantaged from decision-making and restrict their access to community forests. They note that even where there is equal distribution of forest products among households, the very poor, landless, and occupational castes (such as blacksmiths who require charcoal) loose out because their needs are greater.

As with all community-based groups, CFUGs are a product and reflection of Nepali society – with its strengths and weaknesses. Among CFUGs there are good examples of participation and inclusion of all members, just as there are cases where exclusion occurs resulting in the further impoverishment of the very poor. Importantly, however, issues about how CFUGs function are being challenged and exposed – such as the need for transparency, inclusive participation, and the equitable distribution of forest products. USAID/Nepal's SAGUN project has provided support to spread information about good forest governance in over 1,700 user groups (about 27,000 households). It focuses on transparency, accountability, participation, and equity issues, giving emphasis to women, Dalits, and Janajatis involvement in decision-making and CFUG committees. Participatory well-being ranking also is used to identify the very poor and needy within the community, and to support them with group funds. There is evidence that local officials and some CFUG committees are becoming more accountable. In addition, more CFUGs are reporting equity as a basis for distributing forest products, and the increased use of public discussions in general assemblies as the basis for decision-making.

3.2.4 NGOs, INGOs, and Donors

After 1990 the number of NGOs in Nepal increased dramatically. Approximately 18,000 NGOs are registered with the Social Welfare Council, though some sources indicate that the actual number could be closer to 30,000. During the conflict NGOs and CBOs were the primary service providers in most districts, with donors and INGOs generally keeping a low profile. Most NGOs and CBOs recognize the importance of GESI to transformational development, and are committed to working with the disadvantaged. However, a recent report by UNICEF (2006:35) expresses that while local NGOs have successfully channeled resources toward providing different services (especially community health, sanitation, and alternative education), they have been less successful in reaching disadvantaged groups.

This may relate to staff composition. There is a lack of diversity in many NGOs and CBOs. Development work – convincing a family or individual to engage in an unfamiliar activity or adopt new technology – is based on establishing trust and building relationships. This is difficult

[6] There are now about 12 million people involved in community forestry throughout the country, with more than 14,000 CFUGs registered and 1.6 million hectares of forest area transferred to CFUG management. It is estimated that in 2001 as much as US$10 million was generated through CFUG management of community forests (Kanel 2004). Deforestation rates have also declined to about 0.2% per year in the Middle Hills, where more than 90% of handovers have taken place (Kumar 2002:8).

to do in any case, but often made easier if connections are made among "similar" people or groups – that is, those who share basic beliefs, traditions, and practices. In Nepal, an estimated 80% of development workers are high-caste Bahuns, Chhetris, and Newars.

In 2004 there were 125 registered INGOs. The "umbrella organization" for INGOs is the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN). Recently, AIN formalized a series of guidelines for its members. Several related to issues of GESI. One guideline offers that programs must be conducted without discrimination based on ethnicity, disability, gender, nationality, political opinion, race, caste, or religion, and recognizes that affirmative action for poor and marginalized groups may be required. Another guideline mentions that hiring practices should not be influenced by political, ethnic, or religious considerations, and recruitment should be based on merit, qualifications, suitability, and equal opportunity.

Most donor organizations began addressing social exclusion issues only in the last 5 years (or so). Several stand out as leaders. Save the Children USA was probably one of the earliest organizations to embrace and promote workforce diversity, and programming that is gender, caste, and ethnicity sensitive – though many of its programs have been targeted mainly at Dalits.[7] Research for the World Bank and DFID's comprehensive assessment of gender and social exclusion was conducted in 2004 and 2005. The parameters for this report, however, started to take shape as early as 2001-2002, at the same time that the PRSP (with its focus on social and economic inclusion) was being drafted. There has been tremendous interest among donors about this report and its recommendations. More recently, SDC has pursued policies for establishing workforce diversity within their office and partner organizations, and for making budgets transparent to the district level. In all of these organizations there is strong and consistent leadership from the highest levels, in support of inclusion policies and approaches.

In addition, there are increasing efforts to harmonize activities among donors on issues of gender and social inclusion. A Social Inclusion Donor Group was established in 2003. Moreover, the UNDAF (United Nations Development Assistance Framework) is being used to identify specific gender and inclusion targets and activities. One matrix prioritizes "social justice, gender equality, and social inclusion," and identifies concrete actions, responsible partners and GON agencies, and resource mobilization targets. The monitoring and evaluation framework also sets outcomes, indicators with baselines, and sources for verification.

3.3 Disparities in Development and Social Change[8]

3.3.1 Population and Poverty

Nepal is a country of minorities. There are more than 100 different ethnic/caste groups who speak at least 92 different languages. The 2001 Census estimated the population of Nepal at just over 23 million, 86% of whom are classified as rural. Only 4% of the population is over 65 years old, with 41% under age 15.

Recent data indicate that poverty has declined from 42% in 1995-96 to 31% in 2003-04. Except for the rural Eastern Hills (where poverty increased from 36% in 1995 to 43% in 2003), poverty has declined in all geographical regions. However, outcomes are not uniform among social

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[7]Since 1990 it has supported a range of integrated programs targeted at Dalits (Save the Children US: 2005). In 2001 it published a gender, ethnicity, and caste-sensitive manual as part of FACETS (Family and Community Empowerment Training Systems). In 2004 it published a research report on Dalit recruitment policies and practices which was jointly prepared with Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC).

[8] This section draws on information and figures from the following sources: World Bank and DFID 2006; UNDP 2005; UNICEF 2006; IIDS 2006; NPC 2006; NDHS 2006; and NLSS 2004.

groups and regions. Poverty among Bahuns and Chettris declined from 31% in 1996 to 19% in 2004. But almost half of all Dalits (46%) and Janajatis (43%) live below the poverty line. Female-headed households were not found to be particularly disadvantaged (with only 23% below the poverty line), probably because of the remittances sent by absent male household members. In terms of regions, poverty rates are highest in the Mid-Western region at 45% (down from 60% in 1995), and in the Far Western region at 41% (down from 64% in 1995). Most of the poor (90%) live in rural areas. There were modest changes in rural poverty rates (from 43% in 1995 to 35% in 2003), but big gains in urban areas (from 22% in 1995 to 10% in 2003).

3.3.2 Decision-making, Household Assets, and Gender-Based Violence

The percentage of women who jointly decide with their husbands how earnings should be spent has increased from 38% in 2001to 56% in 2006. About one-third of married women (37%) participate in important household decisions (such as healthcare and major purchases). One in five women reports that they make their own decisions about their own healthcare; and one in three offers that her husband makes these decisions mainly by himself.

Most households (77%) are headed by men, but the proportion of female-headed households has risen from 16% in 2001 to 23% in 2006. The rise in female-headed households is more predominant in rural areas, and can be attributed in part to the out-migration of the male population. However, even with this rise, less than 1% of all households report female ownership of all the main assets in Nepal – house, land, and livestock. The percentage of households with land has decreased from 83% in 1995 to 77.5% in 2003, and the average size of agriculture land area has been further fragmented to .8 hectare. Land is inherited almost universally from father to son. Only 11% of households report any land in female legal ownership, with 6% suggesting "some" ownership.

Gender-based violence is common in Nepal. Almost one-fourth of women (23%) and men (22%) ages 15 to 49 believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife.[9] A report by SAATHI (1997) calculated that domestic violence occurs in an estimated 70 to 80% of all households. More recently, discussions with Youth Peace Groups and Peace Committees highlight that the main conflict-related issue they are facing now is domestic violence.

New roles have been thrust on men and women over the past 10 years of conflict. In some ways, women have become more empowered. Many have managed the household independently, or chosen new professions (including joining the Army, Police, or Maoist militia). However, Nepali society remains largely patriarchal, with strong traditions that assign higher status to men. It remains to be seen whether changes in roles, expectations, and relationships will fuel a surge in gender-based violence (as has happened in other post-conflict countries), or trigger its decline. In discussions with women active in rural women's federations in Rupandehi and Kapil Bastu, it is clear that women are resisting abuse by relatives and husbands and have begun to articulate their expectations for rural women in the "new" Nepal. (See Appendix F)

3.3.3 Income, Employment, and the Remittance Economy

In 2004 per capita income was US$300 (MoF 2005). There have been improvements in income, consumption and employment levels, but these increases are uneven. The average per capita consumption for a Bahun/Chhetri household is NR19,105. This is significantly higher than Dalit, Janajati, and Muslim households, whose average per capita consumption is NR10,207, NR12,331, and NR10,909, respectively. The World Bank and DFID assessment examines the gap in

[9] This was based on at least one of the following five reasons: (1) burning food; (2) arguing back; (3) going out without informing her husband; (4) neglecting the children; (5) refusing to have sexual intercourse with her husband.

consumption levels, adjusting for family size, lower levels of resource endowment (including educational attainment), and regional variations through a multiple regression analysis, and concludes that there is a clear pattern of "penalty" attached to social identity (2006:21-22).

Employment patterns are fairly consistent across caste and ethnic groups. Female employment is high (71%), but most women are employed in the agriculture sector and 68% are not paid or paid only in kind. Of men aged 15 to 49, about half (52%) are working in agriculture, and 70% of them earn cash or cash plus in-kind payments. The proportion of men employed in a non-agricultural or "modern" occupation is 21%, but only 6% for women.

The share of non-farm income increased from 39% in 1995 to 52% in 2003, largely as a result of remittances from migration. Remittances amount to about one-third of the annual income for the 32% of households who receive them. Hill Janajatis have the highest average remittance income, and the highest proportion of those migrating to countries which offer the best wages. Women are 11% of the migrants sending money home, but they are 48% of the recipients. While remittances increase household income, the impact of long separations on family structures can be great.

Migration has long been a feature of rural life in Nepal, but the numbers accelerated greatly during the conflict. In particular, young men fled their villages to avoid recruitment by the Maoists or harassment by the security forces, and to find work. Many may never return, which places an extra burden on those who remained – mainly women, children, and the elderly. Displacement separates people from traditional support networks, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and high-risk behaviors, and less able to exercise their rights. Pressures are also placed on basic services, with access to healthcare, education, and the justice system often compromised.

3.3.4 Health

The life expectancy of women is now slightly higher than men (60.7 versus 60.1), but female performance on all health indicators remains poor. Women have a subordinate status vis-à-vis men and senior women in the family, and reproductive roles and cultural practices encourage early marriage and child bearing, as well as food restrictions during pregnancy and menstruation.

Health indicators also reveal clear disparities between groups, especially for Dalit, Janajati, and Muslim populations. A 2001 World Bank study found that caste discrimination by health service providers was a major barrier to accessing healthcare among Dalit women. Similarly, a DFID-supported Safer Motherhood Project found that disrespectful attitudes of service providers towards those beneath them in the caste hierarchy was a major reason that many women did not seek either pre or post natal care or emergency obstetric care (Clapham et al. 2005). (cited in World Bank and DFID 2006)

On average Bahuns and Chhetris live 11 to 12 years longer than Dalits and Muslims. Bahuns, Chhetris, and Newars tend to have the best health indicators for women and the lowest infant mortality rate (52.5, 77.8 and 56 per thousand, respectively, and compared to a national average of 79 per thousand). A Dalit child is twice as likely to die in its first year, than a Newar or Bahun child. The national average of under-five mortality is 105. However, among Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Magar and Tamang this number is 133, and as high as 171 among Dalits. For Bahuns/Chettris and Newars it is 69 and 75, respectively.

Over 6.1 million women are of reproductive age. Recent data suggest a decline in fertility from 4.6 in 1996 to 3.1 in 2006. Fertility rates in rural areas are higher (3.3 births), as compared to urban areas (2.1 births). Access to and use of health and family planning services is lowest among Dalit and Terai Middle Caste women. Contraceptive use among married rural women is lowest among Dalits (28%) and Muslims (15%). The use of professional help for birth deliveries is also low with at least 6 out of 10 births unassisted for Dalits, Janajatis, and Muslims.

3.2.5 Education

Over the past 10 years the net enrolment for girls in the 6 to10 age range has risen to 67%, and is now approaching the rate for boys (78%).[10] This may mean that Nepal will be able to achieve gender parity in enrolment by 2010. However, there are disparities among groups. Less than 30% of Bahun, Chhetri and Newar children do not attend school; this compares with 43% of Hill Dalit, 76% of Tarai Dalit, 62% of Muslim, and 45% of Hill Janajati children. In the conservative Terai Middle Caste groups 94% of the 6 to 10 year old boys are in school compared with only 58% of girls. Participation is also low in the Muslim community, where the number of girls in school in the 11 to 15 age-group remains at 23% (with no change between 1995 and 2003). Some Janajatis groups are lagging behind as well, especially Chepangs and Bhotes with enrolment rates of 14% and 21% respectively. Many Janajati groups live in remote area and do not speak Nepali as their mother tongue, which tend to deter school attendance.

Education will be central to building a more inclusive Nepal. New measures are helping to increase access to education and retain more children. These include the Welcome to School Initiative, outreach and flexible schooling, and an increase in the number of female teachers, latrines for girls, and scholarships for children from disadvantaged groups. The enrolment of Dalit, disadvantaged Janajati, and former bonded laborers (Kamaiya) children has increased. However, monitoring of free textbook and scholarship programs has identified problems of under-funding, delayed availability, no availability, and the misuse of funds.

World Education is tracking school performance through a database they have created which links national and district level census data with program data. The objective is to identify schools with the worst records, in order to improve outcomes, track drop-out rates, and hold the GON accountable. They note that there is no correlation between teacher and student ratios and poorly performing schools. Rather performance problems stem from bad governance, poor parent and teacher relations, and the lack of female teachers.

Education has also been affected by the conflict and disruptions in the post-conflict transition. Although the number of schools that were forced to close during the conflict is small, the number of days that schools have not been in session due to strikes (*bandhs*) is a concern. Some schools have lost 40 to 50 days of the 200 school-day calendar. There is also the problem of education for displaced or relocated children. Most of these children are in the 11 to 15 age range. Some have been able to join schools in areas where they have resettled, but this has also resulted in over-crowding in some public schools. Other reasons for discontinuing studies include post-traumatic stress, financial difficulties, and the lack of documentation for admission.[11]

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[10] Enrolment rate has reached 86-87%, but the NLSS (2004) estimates net enrolment in primary school at 72%. One explanation for this difference is that many children are "technically" enrolled but not attending school regularly.

[11] Though in 2005 the Department of Education instructed schools to admit children even without official transfer certificates and citizenship documents, there are still reports of children being denied enrolment, especially low-caste children. (Pers. Comm., February 2007)

PART TWO

4. USAID/Nepal's Strategy: Programs and Initiatives[12]

USAID/Nepal's programs support peace and democracy, with a medium-term goal of laying the foundation for transformational development. The aim is to increase government effectiveness, improve the provision of law and order, and expand the delivery of public goods and services. Central to this is USAID/Nepal's commitment to supporting initiatives that will improve GON legitimacy in the eyes of the Nepalese people, by increasing political, economic, and social opportunities for marginalized populations and excluded groups. USAID/Nepal is providing assistance in five priority objectives:

- Peace and Security
- Governing Justly and Democratically
- Investing in People
- Economic Growth
- Humanitarian Assistance

4.1 Peace and Security: Peace-building Programs

This program recognizes that the negative effects of the conflict need to be mitigated through peace-building efforts that provide quick and visible benefits to under-served and conflict-affected populations. Support assists the implementation of initiatives at the national and community levels including:

- Technical assistance and training to GON and civil society networks to design and implement peace and development initiatives.
- Initiatives that promote cohesiveness and healing by uniting people around activities that benefit local communities.
- Literacy, life skills, and vocational training linked to employment, and training to increase agricultural productivity and raise rural incomes. Also, scholarships for disadvantaged youth, and cross-cutting peace education to develop skills for conflict resolution.
- Rehabilitation of torture survivors and providing comprehensive medical and psychosocial care for them and their families.

Several projects have focused on issues of social inclusion and the psychological and economic consequences of the conflict, targeting at-risk youth and women. Most take an integrated community-level approach to peace-building. Probably the most striking example is Ujyalo (meaning "light") for which a large consortium of INGOs and NGOs (headed by Save the Children US) work together. The main objective is to improve relationships between castes and ethnicities through a combination of activities focusing on psycho-social counseling (especially for conflict-affected youth), income generation, peace education, scholarships, and small infrastructure. About 44% of the beneficiaries were from disadvantaged groups.

A broad-based approach is also being taken with the launch of SAHAYOG – a women's peace network supported through AED. This "umbrella" network focuses on expanding women's effectiveness in the peace process by drawing together a diverse coalition of women's groups. There are 505 member organizations involved with a total of 24,000 members spanning 67 districts. Most members are women but, importantly, a few of the groups also include men. Other impressive aspects of this network are: the inclusion of Dalit, Janajati, and single-women identity-based organizations, and the incorporation of previously-established women's peace

[12] This section draws on USAID/Nepal's Performance Management Plan (2006), Strategic Statement Summary (March 2007), and USAID/Nepal (2007).

networks, such as Shanti Malika and Nagarik Awaz. The core group, known as the Women's Core Committee for Peace and Justice (WCCPJ), oversees a provision for the distribution of small grants.

Women often play decisive roles in negotiating peace, but they are usually left out of formal peacemaking activities and tend to be sidelined in reintegration and reconstruction. The women's movement in Nepal has been fairly successful in achieving many of its aims through the Interim government. It has negotiated changes in legal frameworks, ending many discriminatory provisions. However, it has been less effective in negotiating a foothold for women's political representation, and the movement has the reputation of being notoriously fractious.

The conflict was gendered, and so must be Nepal's recovery. Because of the important role that women can play in winning the peace, it is crucial that activities are geared toward uniting the women's movement. Establishing trust and good communication links between networks will be necessary to maintain momentum. Given heightened sensibilities, it will also be important to consider "which women" and whether they are able to represent the concerns of Janajati, Madheshi, and Dalit women. The identification of credible and effective representative leaders will be essential to building social capital and a sense of solidarity among diverse women's groups and networks.

Support has also been provided to youth groups and local Peace Committees through various projects and programs. The focus on youth is essential, as they are the future. Almost half of Nepal's population is under age 18. Many of these youth lack skills, and have missed out on education because of the conflict. The steps taken by youth groups to reconcile differences between factions within their communities have helped to raise awareness about non-violent conflict resolution. From field visits it is clear that many young people are no longer following traditional caste restrictions, but that definitions of "masculinity" and "femininity" continue to reinforce gender discrimination.

The focus of activities is now shifting toward skills development as part of the new solicitation "Education for Income Generation and Conflict Mitigation in Nepal." This program will combine literacy and life skills education with technical and vocational training linked to employment as well as increased agricultural productivity and targeted scholarships. The aim is to reduce the potential for future conflict with interventions that improve incomes for youth, as well as enhance local capacity to mitigate conflict at the community level. The program will also provide peace-building training and may, at some point, integrate former combatants from one or both parties of the conflict. To the design team's credit, the importance of addressing the legacy of socio-economic exclusion by targeting disadvantaged groups (Dalits, women, and Janajatis) and conflict-affected youth is clearly stated throughout the RFA. This emphasis will hopefully also be evident in the technical evaluation of the proposals, with GESI-related criteria heavily weighted (perhaps amounting to as much as 40% of the total).

As noted in the RFA, an important consideration will be to avoid stereotyping in the types of life skills and technical or vocational training programs provided. This was successfully done in the Combating Trafficking program which is now being phased out. In this program, unconventional or non-traditional skills training was undertaken, with Dalit girls trained as bakers and massage therapists – thus, challenging caste restrictions about being touched and accepting food or water. However, in discussions with youth groups in Banke, when asked "What do you want to do when you grow up?" responses were invariably gender-stereotypical. It should be part of the

new contractor's mandate to find ways to assist young people in imagining a non-stereotypical future – through careful coaching and offering information about alternatives.

Clearly defined GESI-related indicators should be identified in the work plan and for monitoring and evaluation. Below are some suggestions for the new solicitation, most of which were modified from those identified in the RFA. Proxy indicators, which should be decided in consultation with the contractor, will also be useful in tracking GESI-related outcomes.

Box 1

Education for Income Generation and Conflict Mitigation:
Possible GESI Indicators

# of youth attaining literacy and numeracy skills at a sufficient level to prepare them for future employment, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of targeted beneficiaries completing life skills courses in preparation for further agricultural or technical training, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of literacy and life skills trainees entering self-employment or starting small businesses, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of youth trained in local-level conflict mediation and other related skills through peace building training, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of youth graduating from vocational training classes, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
% of training course graduates securing quality employment based on skills attained, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
% of youth employed in non-traditional and non-stereotypical occupations based on skills attained, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of youth graduating from training courses to improve agricultural productivity, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
% of youth from disadvantaged groups graduating from training courses to improve agricultural productivity, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of primary and secondary-level scholarships extended to disadvantaged and/or conflict-affected youth, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of college-level scholarships for Dalits enrolling in studies for I.Ed. diploma, disaggregated by sex and district.

4.1.1 Promising GESI Practices

- UJYALO and new solicitation: Flexible approaches to increasing skills and generating income for at-risk conflict-affected youth and excluded groups, with attention to improving relations between castes and ethnicities
- SAHAYOG: Working with broad-based and diverse grassroots groups and networks

4.1.2 General Recommendations

- Concentrate on ways to unite different groups working on peace-building
- Expand work with groups that have vibrant grassroots networks in the districts
- Continue to support alternative education and out-of-school literacy programs for VOCs, child workers, and others who have been excluded from formal education

4.1.3 Possible New Entry Points

- Consider working with the disabled, especially disabled VOCs
- Include GESI-sensitivity training in psycho-social counseling

4.2 Governing Justly and Democratically: Democracy and Good Governance Programs

Nepal is in political transition, and there is a need to support the re-establishment of representative democracy and restore the public's faith in political institutions. Support builds

consensus and commitment to an inclusive multi-party democracy by strengthening capacity for good governance and the rule of law, including:

- Improving administration of and access to justice.
- Sustainable and democratic management of community-based forest and water user groups to benefit all members of the community, especially women and low castes.
- Supporting the Election Commission in conducting a credible and transparent Constituent Assembly Election, promoting public awareness of political rights through civic education, and assisting civil society groups to monitor and report on elections.

Much effort is currently focused on the constituent assembly (CA) elections, which will most likely occur in November 2007. NDI is implementing a program in the Karnali Zone to educate voters about what a constituent assembly is and why it is important. This area has one of the greatest concentrations of Dalits – almost one-third of the population in some districts. Monitoring and evaluation should track whether the beneficiaries reflect district population profiles, especially in reaching Dalits.

While the CA is obviously a priority given the timeline and importance to Nepal's political future, fundamental institutions for consolidating democracy in Nepal remain fragile and non-inclusive. As noted, women, Janajatis, Dalits, Madhesis, and youth are critically under-represented in governance. USAID/Nepal's program for political party reform ended in February 2007, but there are plans to perhaps start new activities in 2009. In the future, projects to reform political party structures, and training programs for women's political leadership (from diverse backgrounds) should be prioritized.

In order to garner trust and gain legitimacy, Nepal's political parties must begin to operate in a more inclusive and participatory manner. This may be impossible with senior political leaders whose power-base stems from the status quo. New training programs should focus on women, youth, and young leaders – especially those from traditionally excluded groups. Content should cover not just the mechanics of how to be a good leader or how to get elected, but different election and party structure modalities (especially those which are better at inclusion and ensuring that an elected representative's loyalty and accountability will be to his or her constituency – not to political party bosses). Effective GESI-sensitive training modules should be also considered. While securing the entry of a sufficient number of women into positions of political power and influence is an important step toward challenging inequalities, questions of representation will remain because of the divergent interests of different groups of women. The entry of more women into positions of power is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for GESI.

In rural Nepal probably the best democratic referent most people have is the community forestry process of inclusive group formation and decision-making. Support for good governance within community forestry groups should continue, as the results have been tangible. As mentioned, one of the sub-grantees of the SAGUN program, FECOFUN, was instrumental in mobilizing its extensive grassroots network in favor of *community forestry and democracy* during the *Loktantrik Andolan*. Recent research indicates that forest users were motivated to participate in the *Andolan* mainly because of perceived threats to community forestry poised by autocratic rule (Britt 2007). At least 700,000 forest users in 24 districts were involved (in some places as much as 6 months before protests reached critical mass in Kathmandu in April 2006). Of the top 10 districts (based on media estimates of forest user participation in rallies), 40% are located in Nepal's Mid-Western Development region – the main area for the SAGUN program implementation. This suggests that a rights-based civic

understanding is beginning to take hold in rural Nepal. In future, however, more emphasis should be placed on understanding civic responsibilities.

Past rule of law activities (2004 to 2007) focused on anti-corruption, access to justice, and on-the-job training in archiving. In addition, efforts were made to increase legal aid for women and disadvantaged groups, and to increase the number of women law graduates in the judiciary (less than 2% are women). The orientation of most judges is patriarchal and conservative. Decisions taken in cases of domestic violence are often very unsympathetic to women; this might begin to change if more women join the judiciary.

A new solicitation, "Strengthening the Rule of Law," will focus on building the capacity of institutions in the justice sector, promoting alternative dispute resolution, and improving access to justice. The objective is to address weaknesses in the Nepalese justice system – namely the lack of: judicial enforcement of rulings, judicial accountability and integrity, and legal aid and public defense for the poor and disenfranchised.

One set of activities promotes the creation of a more professional and qualified corps of justice sector professionals (judges, prosecutors, public defense lawyers, and administrators, and a core group of reform-oriented lawyers). These individuals should be offered GESI-sensitivity training. In addition, given the lack of diversity among justice sector professionals, it will be important to support affirmative action mechanisms for women, Dalits, and Janajatis, as well as different kinds of mentoring and mutual support activities to reduce feelings of isolation and alienation.

Another set of activities encourages alternative dispute resolution through court-referred and commercial mediation to reduce case backlog and speed-up resolutions. The new contractor should demonstrate acute awareness of power-imbalances (differences in socio-economic status, gender norms, and the ability to articulate a grievance or defense) which may skew outcomes, especially in rural areas where strong advocates may not be available. Moreover, there is the possibility of bias in favor of business owners in commercial cases (where like-minded FNCCI members mediate disputes) and gender-bias (in cases where mostly male members of the judiciary or FNCCI may rule against women). Mother-tongue language barriers, and the timing and location of hearings or mediations may also be problematic – especially for women, Janajatis, and more patriarchal and conservative groups, such as Muslims and Madhesis. E*specially w*omen, poor, and disadvantaged groups need effective advocates for justice to be served.

The last set of activities aim to increase access to justice for women, poor, disenfranchised, and children by piloting a public defense organization and linking privately-supported legal services for the poor to public and private service networks. However, in the RFA, just two indicators relate to this: (1) improved institutional capacity for legal aid for disadvantaged groups; and (2) number of women and disadvantaged that received free legal aid. Given the weaknesses within the justice system, more robust and revealing GESI indicators will be required – measuring not only numbers, but improvements in legal literacy (awareness of legal rights). This is especially important given recent changes in legislation, and difficulties in communicating and enforcing new legal frameworks. Modalities for changing discriminatory cultural norms should also be explored (e.g., the expectation that women should forego their right to family property). Moreover, given the degree of neglect in the districts, it will be important to design geographically-inclusive initiatives, which can strengthen access to and administration of justice for the targeted beneficiaries at the local as well as national level.

Box 2

Strengthened Rule of Law: Possible GESI Indicators

# of individuals receiving free legal aid, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of cases mediated at the district level involving DAGs, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of members of the judiciary who received GESI-sensitivity training, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of mediators who received GESI-sensitivity training, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
% of new justice sector professionals, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
% of women, Janajatis, and Dalit mediators;
# of women with increased awareness of the new legislation and resulting legal rights for women.

4.2.1 Promising GESI Practices

- SAGUN: Creating a basis for solidarity and good governance in diversity; working with a national federation with an extensive and active grassroots base
- Women's Caucus: promoting dialogue among women leaders of different political parties

4.2.2 General Recommendations

- Work on public interest rights issues that are shared by the excluded majority
- Emphasize the inclusion of youth, women, Janajatis, and Madhesis in preparations for the Constituent Assembly, and the monitoring and reporting on elections
- Rights-based approaches should also emphasize civic responsibilities
- Support advocacy and lobbying to institute affirmative action mechanisms
- Monitor the results of decisions taken by judges to determine whether discrimination or abuse of authority were a factor in the decision (particularly in cases of divorce, rape, domestic violence, and caste-based atrocities)
- New training programs for the justice sector should include ways of securing the enforcement of new laws
- New training programs to increase women's political participation should include excluded groups and GESI-sensitization modules

4.2.3 Possible New Entry Points

- GESI reform within political parties, and political party structures
- Strategic framing (action plans) to establish inclusion mechanisms (affirmative action), particularly in governance-related bodies (political parties, parliament, civil service, and the judiciary)
- Support GON efforts to be more responsive and accountable through social audits, citizen report cards, and client satisfaction surveys
- Include GESI-sensitization strategies in "truth and reconciliation" programs
- Disseminate information through the media about women's legal rights, particularly the Gender Equality Act and other legislation that eliminated many discriminatory provisions

4.3 Investing in People: Health and Family Planning Programs

Health has traditionally been USAID/Nepal's biggest program, and it is one of the largest donors this sector. Though most activities focus on women and children, the Health Office is attuned to issues of GESI. Programs support quality health services *for all* and protection for the lives of Nepali family members, including:

- Expanding access to and the use of quality voluntary family planning services.
- Supporting the MoHP efforts to effectively decentralize healthcare services.
- Reducing child mortality by increasing access to quality selected maternal and child health services.

- Preventing the spread of and controlling HIV/AIDS by enhancing the prevention-to-care continuum, and treating other sexually transmitted diseases among most at-risk groups.

In the last decade Nepal has made great progress in key health areas, but discrepancies remain between rural and urban areas, and among different social groups. The GON has acknowledged the need to ensure and improve access to healthcare for poor and vulnerable groups, but it has not offered any concrete recommendations.[13] Forms of exclusion or self-censorship can be subtle and difficult to monitor. Individuals may decide to not seek service for fear of being slighted, ignored, mistreated, or otherwise made unwelcome. There is also the issue of ritual "pollution," by touching or being touched by a Dalit. Touch is central to the delivery of healthcare, and this needs to be addressed by the healthcare system. Any effort to improve the quality, acceptability, and accessibility of services must take into account GESI opportunities and constraints.

The Health Office has been providing support to the GON to conduct its Demographic and Health Surveys (NDHS). The NDHS is an essential source of information, and should be supported fully. However, most of the data is disaggregated only by sex, age, region, and location (rural vs. urban). Data from the 2001 NDHS were subsequently analyzed based on other social characteristics, such as caste, ethnicity, and religion, but this information was not included in the main report. Although efforts were made, it was also not possible to include this analysis in the recent 2006 NDHS Report. A special report on the effect of ethnicity and caste on key health and other political and economic indicators is expected by the end of 2007. The Health Office has worked diligently with the National Planning Commission, the MoHP, the World Bank, Macro International, New Era, and other partners to ensure that specific attention is given to differences in health outcomes based on caste and ethnicity. With the recent publication, there was concern that additional analyses (based on caste and ethnicity) would delay the publication and dissemination of the main report. As the NDHS is published only every five years, it will be important to start planning to include this information within the main report – which tends to receive more attention and publicity – for the next NDHS of 2011.

USAID/Nepal is supporting integrated HIV-related services through FHI and the ASHA project. This project builds on USAID/Nepal's experience of technical assistance for HIV programs, and includes components for increasing capacity, advocacy, policy reform, surveillance, and prevention-to-care service delivery for most-at-risk groups. It works in 29 districts, through about 40 different NGOs. According to the deputy director (who is now the country director), there is a contradiction between the objectives of building capacity, meeting targets, and addressing inclusion because of workload demands placed on FHI as a technical agency. High performance expectations among the streamlined staff at FHI necessitate the hiring of the "most qualified and experienced" – most of whom are high-caste males. Mentoring or bringing on board less-experienced individuals to increase workforce diversity is not considered an option. FHI must concentrate on the results and indicators outlined, which apparently do not include deliverables that address social inclusion. These types of constraints are worth further examination, especially in light of the new solicitation (discussed below).

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[13]The Second Long Term Health Plan (1997-2017), notes the need to "improve the health status of the population particularly those whose health needs often are not met: the most vulnerable groups, women and children, the rural population, the poor, the underprivileged and the marginalized population." One objective of the Nepal Health Sector Program Implementation Plan (NHSP-IP 2003-2007) is to "Ensure access by the poor and vulnerable to essential healthcare services… [and to] increase the coverage and raise the quality of essential healthcare services with special emphasis on improved access for poor and vulnerable groups." However, there are no actionable recommendations with deadlines and responsibilities.

Nepal has a concentrated HIV/AIDS epidemic. Among the 70,000 estimated infections the bulk are clients of female sex workers (19%) and seasonal labor migrants (46%), with potential transmitters breaking down among IDUs (9%), men having sex with men (4%), and female sex workers (2%) (MoHP 2006). USAID/Nepal's strategy has been to prevent transmission by focusing on potential transmitters of the virus. Populations considered at "low risk" by the MoHP are women – in both urban and rural areas. However, in future, it is expected that the thrust of this epidemic will be heterosexual transmission through migrant and transport workers, especially in the Far and Mid-Western regions. Though estimates are difficult to confirm, approximately 20% of HIV-positives are rural women and homemakers. Many of these women are isolated and powerless. They are also generally not aware of HIV and the availability of ARV treatment and services. Most ARVs (82%) have been provided to men over the past two years. This reflects the epidemiology of the disease in Nepal, with the early contractors of the virus having been IDUs and migrant workers (both groups tend to be mostly male). However, as the epidemic progresses, it will be important to increase awareness of ARV treatment and services among rural women, especially given the important reproductive role that women play in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

There remains a tendency to interpret gender as a "women's issue." One project visited during the field trip was Naulo Ghumti, which works strictly with male IDUs. Initially, they indicated that they experience few gender or inclusion issues because they work only with men. Based on our discussions, however, they later decided to incorporate two gender modules in their training for social mobilizers who work with local communities. This is a positive step, but it still neglects the male IDUs who spend 90 days in rehabilitation treatment and would benefit from GESI-sensitization training. After treatment these young men return to their families and communities, hopefully better prepared to deal with the demons that confront them. Their attitudes towards other family members and different social groups within their broader community could establish a more positive and healthy trajectory for GESI-sensitivity in social interactions and other life skills.

Because women are largely subordinated within Nepali society, many programs and projects concentrate on women. However, male gender issues also need to be considered. Key questions include:

- What are the changing roles and identities for men in general?
- How are changes in social structures affecting men?
- How do risky behavior, HIV/AIDS, and substance abuse affect men's human capital?

Given the diversity of Nepal, these considerations should also be analyzed in terms of differences in responses based on caste and ethnicity. Gender affects both men and women, and there is growing recognition that men need to be more actively involved in challenging the values and practices that create gender discrimination; they need to be sensitized as "agents of change," rather than targeted as "objects of blame." At issue is building a better understanding of the ways that *men can be involved in transforming the gender disparities and inequalities that currently privilege them* (UNDP 2000, emphasis mine).

A recent pilot-project, Men as Partners, worked with men to increase their involvement in reproductive health, including delivery and post-natal check-ups. The emphasis was on behavior change with messages delivered through the media and peer education. This kind of approach, which challenges traditional notions of "masculinity" and men's roles, and supports models for "positive deviance," should be continued. The involvement of men, however, must be done

carefully. For example, in the past, efforts to include men in family planning initiatives in other countries have inadvertently sent messages that reinforced stereotypical attitudes of men as the sole decision-makers, thereby reducing women's reproductive choices. Emphasis in outreach should be on the importance of shared decision-making among couples for family health. Fortunately, the latest NDHS indicates that shared decision-making between husbands and wives is on an upward trend in Nepal. However, a reversal could easily occur (especially given the changing roles and relationships and possibilities of backlash in response to uncertainties or loss of status in post-conflict transition), and this trend is uneven among different social groups.

The new solicitation, the Nepal Family Health Program – Phase II (NFHP-II), is a 5-year consolidated program of $30 million which expands the depth, reach, and impact of family planning, maternal, newborn, and child health, and related social services. It will build on the successes and lessons learned from past activities and programs, and aims to sync synergies with projects supported by other USAID/Nepal offices for multiplier effects in direct and indirect health benefits and livelihood opportunities. The scale for some programs will continue to be national, including Vitamin A, FCHV, Family Planning, Safe Motherhood, and CB-IMCI (community-based integrated management of childhood illnesses). At present, over 3 million children between the ages of 6 to 60 months receive Vitamin A supplements every six months, averting approximately 15,000 child deaths each year. The most recent distribution reached 98% of Nepali children under the age of five in all of Nepal's 75 districts. A network of 50,000 FCHVs (roughly one for every VDC) distribute capsules, assisted by more than 100,000 health staff, teachers, local non-governmental organization member, politicians, and other community leaders. FCHVs come from different social groups, including Janajatis and Dalits, and are generally more representative of local community populations than are government workers.

One concern about large-scale grants is that smaller innovative projects and activities may be sidelined. Hopefully the new contractor will allow scope for working with smaller national NGOs and community-based groups in pioneering new pilot-projects. A small grants program to support community-based activities (about $500 to $5000 per grant) is included in the design. However, just $100,000 has been set aside for the life of the project. This amount should be increased, if community-based demand-driven activities warrant it. The RFA also identifies a number of technical and program areas already being pilot-tested in a limited number of districts, which may become suitable for national scale-up. These include: community-based maternal neonatal care; strengthening HFOMCs; supporting family planning and reproductive health outreach to adolescents of socially marginalized groups; improving management in District Public Health Offices; working through Mothers' Groups to identify community-based health priorities, extend health messages, and advocate for social change; girls and women's literacy; and increasing access to quality voluntary family planning services.

GESI concerns in the new solicitation mainly focus on strengthening GON capacity to provide effective, equitable, and high quality services – by ensuring that the poor and vulnerable have access to essential healthcare, and increasing community participation, transparency, and accountability in the management of local healthcare facilities. As the grassroots frontline for healthcare provision, special attention should be given to HFOMCs, MCHVs, and FCHVs.

Addressing quality healthcare for all – regardless of gender, caste, or ethnicity – takes on additional significance as the GON extends its policy of decentralizing healthcare. In the past three years, the management of all sub-health posts, selected health posts, and primary health care clinics has been transferred to communities in 28 districts. At present, members of HFOMCs are provided a two-day training course, developed and carried out by GON, on their

respective roles and responsibilities in health facility management. Decentralization is meant to improve the quality of healthcare, make health care providers accountable to the people they are to serve, and give local people a greater say in how funds are allocated. However, as mentioned, there are concerns about how much input the poor and excluded will have in the decisions taken by committees. Evaluations suggest that many HFOMCs are inactive or ineffective, because of inadequate training, poor participation, and lack of representation within the committees.

To address this issue, USAID/Nepal has supported an additional three-day course for HFOMC members on the practical aspects of health facility management in selected districts. Also, NFHP has been working on ways to improve capacity of HFOMCs, in collaboration with Save the Children US and CARE. In the last year, these efforts have combined the Partner Defined Quality (PDQ) approach, which aims to facilitate dialogue between community members and health facility staff to identify priorities, and a process known as REFLECT, which teaches communities to analyze their health and social conditions, learn about their rights and local resources, and identify ways to improve community health, to improve capacity of HFOMCs. While these types of "social engineering" methods can be labor-intensive initially, they usually save time, money, and effort over the longer term. As noted previously, communities are not harmonious homogeneous entities. They need support to negotiate power-imbalances and devise effective, participatory, and transparent procedures.

GESI should be integral to any method or curriculum used for training activities. However, as noted in the RFA, these should not promote a "TA/DA culture" which takes people away from their primary responsibilities for long periods of time. A balance must be sought between the need for new training, and the need to provide healthcare services. As mentioned, harmonization to avoid duplication among USAID/Nepal, GON, and other donors will be key, as will the development of new approaches for on-the-job training and on-site coaching.

GESI-sensitive communication and management techniques could be applied through on-site coaching and focus-group facilitation to increase accountability of service providers and provide insights into the relationship between GESI and improving healthcare for all. This should include information about the ramifications of exclusion – on relationships, human sexuality, families, and communities. Different sites of communication could be discussed – such as, negotiations between sexual partners and in households, and ways of communicating with FCHVs, MCHWs, and members of HFOMCs.

GESI-sensitive management training could also help women and men of different castes and ethnicities participate more effectively in HFOMCs – encouraging them to exercise their agency and share their knowledge about impediments (intentional and unintentional) to accessing healthcare. Key questions to consider include:

- What is the effect of gender, caste, and ethnic relations on decision-making ability, freedom of movement, control over finances, legal rights, and access to health services?
- How can communication strategies take into account differences in resource attainments, such as literacy levels, empowerment or confidence levels, and access to media and schools?
- How can management strategies be more inclusive and welcoming for community members (women and men) from different castes and ethnicities?
- How can barriers be reduced? (such as, unequal access to and control over money for services; ability, time, and transport to get to services; opportunity costs in terms of lost wages and childcare; and women's multiple productive and reproductive responsibilities)

- How can GESI be effectively incorporated as an integral part of training in family planning, maternal child health, and reproductive health?

In addition, cross-fertilization based on some of the governance lessons learned from other community-based groups may be applicable. Characteristics of good governance that could be integrated into GESI-sensitization training programs and/or monitoring of HFOMCs include:

Box 3

Identifying Good Governance

Participation: is the committee representative of members of the community (young and old, men and women, and different social groups) and do all committee members participate in decision-making?
Consensus-orientation: do members attempt to reach decisions based on widespread agreement?
Transparency: are members open to scrutiny about their decisions and decision-making processes?
Responsiveness: do members listen and respond to the healthcare needs of community members?
Efficiency and effectiveness: are basic healthcare services available?
Equity and inclusion: are all members of the community receiving healthcare services, especially those who are more vulnerable and marginalized?

The RFA notes that gender equality and social inclusion of marginalized groups is a core development issue and objective. It recognizes the implications of widespread gaps in access to and control over resources, economic opportunities, and political influence on the health and well-being of men, women, and children, and expressly states that a successful applicant will involve marginalized groups in staffing, partnerships, program planning and implementation, as well as in program evaluation. This approach is excellent. The best way to achieve GESI is to lead by example. Anecdotal evidence suggests that projects with a diverse staff are more effective and tend to be more respected by communities. The challenge to achieving this degree of GESI mainstreaming, however, will be ensuring adherence to these goals, given the realities of depth and breadth of activities, time constraints, and results orientation. Under these pressures, the more process-oriented approaches that are often required for effective GESI integration are generally given short shrift. The RFA also provides a list of technical and general skills required for staff. Included in this list should be knowledge of GESI issues and concerns.

With a few exceptions, most of the indicators identified in the RFA are not disaggregated by caste and ethnicity. Clearly defined GESI-related indicators should be identified in the work plan and for monitoring and evaluation. Below are some suggestions, most of which were modified from those indicators identified in the RFA. Proxy indicators should be decided in consultation with the contractor based on more detailed knowledge of the parameters of the project, as these can be useful in tracking GESI-related outcomes.

Box 4

Nepal Family Health Program-II: Possible GESI Indicators

# of postpartum/newborn visit within three days of birth in USG-assisted programs, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
#of people trained in maternal/newborn health through USG-supported programs, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of people trained in child health and nutrition through USG-supported programs, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of newborns receiving antibiotic treatment for infections from appropriate health workers through USG-supported programs, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
# of cases of child-pneumonia treated with antibiotics by trained facility or community health workers in USG-supported programs, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;

% of families in CB-MNC districts following key essential newborn care practices (early breastfeeding, delayed bathing, drying, wrapping, proper cord care), disaggregated by caste, and ethnicity;
% of expected births with early postpartum visits by FCHVs in CB-MNC districts, disaggregated by caste, and ethnicity;
% of marginalized groups on HFOMCs, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
% of marginalized persons using key health services, disaggregated by sex, caste, and ethnicity;
% of young women in the ward systematically engaged in safe motherhood and reproductive health discussions, disaggregated by caste and ethnicity;
# of newly literate girls enrolled in formal education, disaggregated by caste and ethnicity;
% increase in reproductive health knowledge and selective behavior change of newly literate women one or more years after course completion, disaggregated by caste and ethnicity;
% of life skills course or activity graduates/participants actively engaged in structured outreach messages to other community members, disaggregated by caste and ethnicity;
% of community opinion and behavior change on selective reproductive health behaviors, disaggregated by caste and ethnicity.

4.3.1 Promising GESI Practices

- NFHP support for HFOMCs to improve services and address inclusion issues
- ASHA approach of working through smaller NGOs
- MAP focus on behavior change and increasing men's involvement in reproductive health

4.3.2 General Recommendations

- Work with MoHP to include GESI-sensitization components in training programs
- Work with MoHP to track healthcare service delivery and correlate with population profiles (at the ward level, if possible)
- Work with MoHP to establish incentives for inclusive healthcare service delivery
- Be clear about the definition of DAGs with partner organizations
- Continue to include men in health outreach messages and approaches, but in ways that promote dialogue and shared decision-making between men and women
- Expand information-sharing and promote synergy with other programs and community-based groups (e.g., CFUGs, Peace Committees, Youth groups, and agriculture and marketing groups) through GESI-sensitive messages on health (reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, and healthcare delivery)

4.3.3 Possible New Entry Points

- Develop and conduct community-based social audits of healthcare delivery
- Track data on healthcare service delivery, disaggregated by gender, caste and ethnicity and correlated with VDC population profiles
- Expand HIV/AIDS support to include the changing profile of the infected population
- Promote equal access to healthcare and health awareness through GESI-sensitive communication and management training programs

4.4 Economic Growth Programs

Approximately 44% of Nepal's labor force is semi- or underemployed. An estimated 300,000 people reach working age every year. Programs address the sources of Nepal's fragility, such as the lack of economic opportunities for conflict-affected rural populations, inequitable growth, and social exclusion, with support for:

- Temporary employment for the rural poor in conflict-affected areas to construct medium to small infrastructure projects.
- Poverty reduction and social inclusion through local enterprises that create opportunities for poor rural farmers to improve their lives through micro irrigation and marketing interventions.

- Training and technical assistance to change the GON's regulatory framework and create opportunities for private sector investment and increase access to electricity and economic opportunity in remote regions.

Under the new strategy road-building infrastructure projects and hydropower initiatives are being phased out. The focus of activities will be on improving agriculture production and opportunities for income generation through export and local enterprise development.

Coffee has been grown in Nepal for over 30 years, but had never expanded beyond the modest domestic market. The Coffee Global Development Alliance (GDA) has established a strong and growing specialty coffee industry in Nepal with links to export markets. Over $1.7 million of tea has been exported from Nepal and new coffee buyers include the Holland Group, which supplies Starbucks. Support is being provided for production, processing, and marketing. Coffee is generally produced on marginal land that is steeply sloped, shady, and not irrigated. This is the type of land that poor and disadvantaged smallholder farmers cultivate. Since 2002 the number of families producing coffee commercially has grown from 3,650 to 14,400 (benefiting about 90,000 people). The industry is also generating the equivalent of about 350 full-time jobs – in nursery operations, rural pulping centers, transportation, and for the final sorting, hulling, processing, and export. Coffee exports are growing at over 30% per annum and it is expected that as many as 150,000 households (nearly one million people) could benefit within 10 years.

From a GESI perspective it will be important to consider what kinds of "extension" methods are being used for coffee production, and the extent to which these accommodate the specific needs, interests, and skills of different social groups. As noted, the number of female-headed households is increasing in Nepal. This has implications for sharing information and interactions with social mobilizers or extension agents. Moreover, as noted, there is a widespread tendency to pay women lower wages than men for equal work. It would be useful to monitor the wages of women and men, and encourage equal pay for equal work.

The Smallholder Irrigation Market Initiative (SIMI) addresses poverty and social inclusion by promoting micro irrigation technology among diverse groups of poor farmers. It is working with 31,000 smallholder families (over 200,000 people) to increase incomes by at least 50% through the production and sale of high-value crops. In addition, Multi-use (water) Systems (MUS) are being built at low cost for drinking water and irrigation. Families with access to water through these MUS have reportedly increased their earning by more than $200 per year, a 100% increase. Without MUS only a limited number of households with access to water are able to adopt micro irrigation for both productive agricultural and domestic use. During the field visit it became apparent that the MUS are also uniting diverse members of some communities around the construction, maintenance, and use of these systems.

Micro irrigation and agriculture supply chains and marketing channels are helping poor farmers to take advantage of off-season vegetable production and sales in South Asian markets. A value-chain or business development services approach is being used to make links, and establish marketing and planning committees (MPCs). Over 70 MPCs (representing 180,000 people) have established 80 collection centers. MPCs are explaining how markets work to rural populations, and advocating for local development projects with line agencies and local government. One objective is to build the capacity of MPCs as citizen lobbyists to advocate for better agricultural policies. This could be critical for the 70% of Nepal's population who are farmers. As in community forestry, this shows promise for supporting solidarity among different social groups.

Inclusion is identified as a "strong focus" of program activities, especially addressing the lack economic opportunity among vulnerable populations. Many of the beneficiaries are women, Janajatis, and Dalits. There is also a tendency to have separate groups. The nurturing of Dalit and women's groups is probably necessary in order to build confidence without being dominated by high-caste groups or men. However, once empowered, projects and activities that bring different social groups together should be emphasized.

During the field trip there was no evidence that the MUS systems were being placed in the communities in a way that would reinforce exclusions. However, in the past, water taps have been used as tools of exclusion, with higher-caste members refusing to share taps with Dalit members of the community, and Dalits self-censuring by choosing to seek water from other sources. It is therefore extremely important to monitor whether water systems are reinforcing conditions for exclusion or inclusion.

Another concern is that most of the middlemen traders involved in the marketing chains are men. It would be useful to craft incentives for breaking male domination in this business, and finding appropriate ways to increase the involvement of women. Gender and social mobilization training programs are being conducted through the BDS-MaPs project. While this is meant to address issues of economic and social inclusion a report on one training mainly focused on issues faced by men and women, with concerns of excluded groups not identified or delineated.

Infrastructure (roads, ropeways, or river transport) is critical to market access which, in turn, is vital to improving rural incomes. At present, SIMI/BDS-MaPs work only with families who live no further than two hours' walk from a road. This excludes a large number of Nepal's population. Future initiatives should introduce strategies for improving livelihoods for more-distant smallholder farming families.

4.4.1 Promising GESI Practices

- SIMI: focus on social and economic empowerment through local enterprise development, and uniting communities around small-scale infrastructure (e.g., multiuse water and irrigation systems), with the majority of beneficiaries being women, Janajatis, and Dalits

4.4.2 General Recommendations

- Support GESI practices and incentive-mechanisms in agricultural production, sales, and marketing
- Continue to support low-tech and local resources mobilization for the poorest of the poor and excluded groups (e.g., off-season vegetable production, sustainable collection of medicinal herbs, and value-added production)
- Small infrastructure projects should benefit all members of a community, and in no way be used as a tool of exclusion – this is especially critical around issues of water sharing in resource scarce situations

4.4.3 Possible New Entry Points

- Expand support for and awareness about fair business practices, particularly between small farmers and middlemen (e.g., weighing produce for remuneration rather than the tradition of "eye-balling" a crop, and seeking alternatives to middlemen who provide advance credit below market value)

- Develop agricultural enterprise activities that are viable for communities or groups who reside further from the road
- Explore support for "safe migration" visas to promote legal employment in other countries

4.5 Humanitarian Assistance: Foreign Disaster Assistance

The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) works throughout the South Asia Region, responding to natural, human-made, and technological disasters. Its mandate is to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the economic impact of disasters. In Nepal, activities focus on support for conflict-affected communities, and the mitigation of effects of natural disasters on rural households including:

- Increasing earthquake awareness and preparedness, by coordinating a long-term earthquake risk reduction plan for Kathmandu Valley.
- Creating a large pool of trained instructors from emergency response agencies, with the ability to address collapsed structure search and rescue, medical first responder, and hospital emergency preparedness.
- Work in 15 conflict-affected and food deficit districts to establish an emergency response network of local NGOs and community-based groups to implement preparedness and relief activities, as well as provide small grants to local NGOs and stockpile locally-procured relief items for use in emergencies.

Humanitarian efforts are frequently criticized for being gender-blind, as they often neglect the extra physical security precautions necessary for women and girls. In Nepal, it is important for programs, projects, and policies for humanitarian response must be examined through the lenses of gender *and* social inclusion.

Unfortunately, during the research and field work for this GIA none of OFDA activities were evaluated or even discussed with key informants. From a GESI-perspective, however, key questions to consider in responding to disasters and providing humanitarian assistance in the context of Nepal are:

- Who are the recipients? And do they adequately represent the profile of those groups affected by the disaster?
- Who determines who gets assistance and on what basis? Are there "gate-keepers" who are controlling the flow of assistance, and excluding certain social groups?
- Are policies in place to address the specific needs of women and girls? Particularly, in the distribution of food assistance and other forms or aid, and in refugee or IDP camps, are gender considerations and the vulnerabilities of women and girls being taken into consideration?
- Do the leaders of community-based groups represent the interests and concerns of all social groups within those communities?
- Is information being adequately shared and communicated in a timely manner to all members (all social groups) of the community?

4.5.1 Promising GESI Practices

- Disaster and Conflict Preparedness: working with local NGOs and community-based groups through small grants mechanism to prepare vulnerable communities in case of disaster.

4.5.2 General Recommendations

- Work with the excluded groups especially (who tend to live in more vulnerable disaster-prone locations)
- Be alert to the increase in number of de facto female-headed households – and the implications of this in the provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance

4.5.3 Possible New Entry Points

- Include GESI-sensitization as part of reintegration and re-entry life-skills training programs
- Design programs to address gender-based violence, which often increases in post-conflict and natural disaster transitions

4.6 Transition Initiatives

The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) started a two-year $15 million program in August 2006. The goal is to bolster the current peace process, strengthen governance mechanisms, and support positive, non-violent community engagement in the country's political, social, and economic future. Objectives include increasing:

- access to information and diversifying public debate on issues critical to the political transition; and
- effectiveness of key political transition institutions.

OTI employs a flexible in-kind grants mechanism, providing small grants that support quick responses to emerging peace and transition issues. It is supporting a wide variety of activities, including information dissemination, radio transmission and inter-station infrastructure, and media programming to promote and diversify debate. Recently, OTI supported Nepal's first national toll-free call-in radio show providing listeners throughout Nepal real-time access to elected representatives, government officials, and civil society leaders. It also funded an awareness drive during the voter registration period. Moreover, in response to the deteriorating situation in the Terai last winter, OTI aired several PSAs with political and civil society leaders promoting communal harmony amid fears of rising ethnic tensions.

OTI has an inclusion objective. Balance and diversity are crucial, along with aims to avoid bias and strengthen opportunities for under-represented groups. They work with DAGs directly, with groups that are trying to bring other groups together, and with mixed social groups. They do not track the social identities of the groups they are supporting, other than disaggregating by sex. They review all agendas, billboards, signs, and pamphlets make sure that appropriate non-partisan and anti-discriminatory messages are being conveyed. They do not look at the staff composition of partner organizations, largely because the grants are usually of no more than 3 to 6 months duration. At least 40 grants have been given since the office was established, with most of these undertaken in Kathmandu, Kailali, and Morang.

The short-duration and number of grants given make it more difficult to monitor activities and the workforce composition of the organizations supported. However, this information is useful for tracking impact and balance among social groups. From a GESI perspective this information could and should be required as a part of the procurement process in the proposals submitted for support.

4.6.1 Promising GESI Practices

- Use of a fast-response small-grants mechanism
- Emphasis on promoting dialogue and diversifying debate within media

4.6.2 General Recommendations

- Support proposals which demonstrate sensitivity to GESI
- Track the support given (based on types and locations of NGOs or CBOs, as well as proposed beneficiaries of the activity)

4.6.3 Possible New Entry Points

- Work with do-gooder Nepali celebrities who are willing to provide sound-bites or photo-ops as role models for GESI "positive deviance"
- Promote stories of empowered role models from socially excluded groups, and GESI-sensitivity in the media
- Support free concerts throughout the country which send the message of the connection between GESI and peace and prosperity in Nepal.

5. Recommendations for USAID/Nepal[14]

5.1 Cross-Sector Recommendations

The following are general GESI-related recommendations which can be applied across sectors:

- **Social inclusion should not be at the expense of gender equity**

Some observers caution that by combining gender with caste and ethnicity, the gains made toward gender equality in Nepal over the last 20 years will be eroded. This is certainly a risk, and it is why this report urges equal emphasis on *gender equity* ***and*** *social inclusion* – or GESI. Women must participate in peace-building, conflict mitigation, and management efforts at all levels. When they are not involved, the views, needs, and interests of half of the population are missing and the interventions will most likely not be appropriate or enduring. However, there are also benefits to taking a more expansive or "inclusive" GESI approach. A focus on gender *and* social inclusion changes the crux of the debate about women's rights as a "westernized" feminist issue, positioning women's rights within a broader strategic framework of unequal power relations, human rights, and citizenship.

- **Concentrate on ways to unite groups**

Social capital builds when groups work together on activities which benefit everyone. At the community-level examples include collective action around resource management and use, such as community forestry, or small infrastructure projects, such as the MUS which are being introduced through IDE. Solidarity can also form at the national level based on strategic issues which instill a sense of common cause. Examples include issues of equal rights and equal opportunity (i.e., affirmative action, and access to education and healthcare). Community forestry has also succeeded in establishing a broader feeling of solidarity among a diverse constituency. Following the formation of FECOFUN, individual forest users all across the country began to identify with each other – not on the basis of caste, ethnicity, or class, but based on a shared identity as forest users.

- **Tailor activities to the needs of excluded groups**

GESI-sensitive interventions need to be tailored to specific needs in different sites, because different groups face different types of discrimination in different social locations. The World Bank and DFID assessment (2006:13-14) emphasizes that *critical sites* (such as the household, community, and state) of disempowerment and social exclusion vary for different categories of

[14] Some recommendations are adapted from IGWG (2000), DevTech (2005), and World Bank and DFID (2006).

people. For example, the family or household may be the most problematic for women, whereas for Dalits the community-level is the most difficult and for Janajatis the interface with the state are problematic. In order for women to exercise their agency changes in the norms, beliefs, and behaviors within the home and family are needed. For Dalits change is needed within the local community, because this is where caste-based discrimination is likely to be most strongly enforced and harshly experienced. For Janajatis, the most problematic site is the state – in terms of laws, policies, resource allocations, and political representation.

- **Disaggregate based on categories of gender, caste, and ethnicity**

Programs and projects should disaggregate data and, if appropriate, support the GON's efforts to disaggregate data in national surveys. Disaggregated data and analysis are essential for tracking inclusion, promoting accountability, and eradicating exclusion. Without this information it will be difficult to gauge whether social, economic, and political change is occurring (and among which groups). (See "Monitoring and Evaluation" below, which offers guidance on recommended categories for disaggregation).

- **Increase voice, agency, and influence through coalitions and federations**

Discriminatory and exclusionary rules have been created and perpetuated because they benefit the powerful. They will not change unless those in power are compelled to do so, and illiterate, impoverished, and disempowered people cannot do this in isolation as individuals – they need assets and knowledge, access to services and opportunities, the ability to hold accountable the institutions that affect them, and greater voice, agency, and influence through broader coalitions for change. Moreover, social transitions should be mutually reinforcing in order to reduce possibilities of backlash. There is safety and effectiveness in numbers. For example, Acharya and Bennett (2006) estimate that more than 80% of Nepalis support equal rights,[15] concluding that "…a coalition of more than 80% of the population seeking the realization of equal rights and equal representation in governance will be difficult to ignore."

- **Work with diverse organizations with strong grassroots networks**

Voice, influence, agency, assets, skills, and services are clearly lacking for Nepal's margins – both geographically as well as in terms of gender, caste, and ethnicity. Sensitivities about exclusion issues are running high. In the development field there has been a tendency to favor "professional" NGOs and civil society organizations which are located in Kathmandu, and whose leaders have strong English language communication skills. This skews benefits toward Kathmandu-based elites, and limits input and perspectives from other groups, organizations, and regions. Attempts should be made to broaden support among organizations and locations. This may require addition support for groups that are less skilled at writing grants or communicating in English. The lack of English language capacity should not automatically lead to the exclusion of groups or organizations whose grassroots reach and community-based work, particularly among marginalized groups, are exceptional. The SANDEEP program, with its emphasis on building the capacity of truly grassroots NGOs and CBOs could perhaps be used as a model.

- **Focusing on poverty alone is not enough**

A typical response when discussing issues of social inclusion is that there are extremely poor Bahuns and Chettris. There is no doubt about this, and is one reason why wealth-ranking and social identity criteria are important in defining DAGs. However, a focus on poverty will not necessarily bring about an end to exclusion because of existing norms which reinforce dominant

[15] Bahun, Chettri, and Newar males are about 19% of the population. Within this group there are many men who are committed to gender equity and social inclusion, hence the figure of "more than 80% of the population."

Hindu values and favor high-caste groups. Poor Bahuns, Chhetris, Dalits, Madhesis, and Janajatis do not face similar problems. Poor Bahuns and Chhetris are not confronted with cultural, linguistic, and religious discrimination, and they tend to have had more economic and social mobility opportunities (e.g., observe the overwhelming number of Bahun and Chhetri males in the civil service). As noted, women are usually in the subordinate position within society. In Nepal, however, a composite empowerment and inclusion index ranked Dalit men below women (other than Dalit women) in all other categories (Bahun-Chhetri-Newar, Terai Middle Castes, and Janajatis), suggesting that caste and ethnic identity is a more powerful predictor of empowerment and inclusion than is gender (World Bank and DFID 2006:36-38).

- **Avoid an "inclusion-by-numbers" approach that does not address issues of reintegration and reconciliation**

One of the strengths of USAID/Nepal's portfolio is the extent to which most programs (especially the new solicitations) are addressing issues of exclusion and discrimination by creating opportunities for women, Dalits, and under-represented Janajati groups. However, it will be important to include GESI-sensitivity and empowerment training whenever possible. As noted, post-conflict environments are often uncertain and tumultuous, providing both opportunities and constraints for social change. Increased flexibility in roles, expectations, and relationships can accelerate changes in social norms, but there is also a possibility that loss of status or uncertainty will provoke fear, anger and further violence resulting in backlash, resentment, and social sanctioning. One way to minimize this possibility is to focus on projects that benefit all community members, but *especially* excluded groups, and to promote dialogue for reconciliation among all groups. Activities that help to eliminate barriers and increase access to opportunities among those who have been negatively defined and excluded should also be supported. This would help to address the need for social inclusion at the "system" or "structural level" (in the institutions that determine the distribution of assets and opportunities).

- **Support GESI in community-based groups**

Many services and activities are now being devolved to the local level, and implemented through health clinics, schools, and community-based groups. In some ways this is a continuation of traditional forms of community cooperation that used to be quite common. More recently, however, the ties that bind (social capital) have weakened as a result of urbanization, poverty, and the conflict. Nevertheless, new community-based groups are proliferating largely with outside support. Examples include savings and credit, community forestry, mothers' groups, water supply, irrigation systems, and adult literacy. These self-help or user groups are widespread, and often well-organized, with some forming federations at the ward, district, and national levels. Decentralization has great promise in Nepal, especially given the extreme social and geographic diversity of the country. But as more and more services are decentralized, it will be important to have checks-and-balances in decision-making procedures that empower the poor and excluded. All groups must be able to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens and human beings – regardless of social identities based on gender, caste, ethnicity, language, or religion.

- **Use USAID/Nepal's Mission Order on Gender, Caste, and Ethnicity**

The 2004 Mission Order establishes a policy and organizational framework for gender, caste, and ethnic inclusion into USAID/Nepal's programs and activities. It addresses GESI issues in program design, planning, procurement, selection, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as in program activities and documentation. It also outlines roles and responsibilities for organizational mainstreaming of GESI.

5.2 GESI Integration in Programs and Projects

5.2.1 GESI Analysis in RFA/RFP:

Always assess whether RFA/RFPs have the potential to increase or decrease GESI outcomes. GESI-sensitive projects recognize variations in needs and power relations based on socioeconomic status, age, marital status, ethnicity, caste, religion, and client populations of women and men. Key questions include:

- What are the GESI objectives for this project?
- How can GESI be enhanced through different activities?
- Have similar projects in the past eroded or enhanced GESI?

5.2.2 Evaluation of Proposals:

Evaluation criteria should weigh the activities planned as well as the knowledge, ability, and experience of the staff proposed. There should be demonstrated institutional capacity to undertake proposed activities in a GESI-sensitive manner.

- **What to look for in activities:**
    - Quality of GESI-relevant research, background analysis or assessments, and consultations
    - GESI-analysis as part of activity design and training as part of procurement actions (e.g., subcontracts, task orders, SOWs for consultants)
    - Attention to gender, caste, and ethnic participation in different aspects of the activity
    - Disaggregated data for indicators and targets
    - GESI criteria in evaluation of project progress and impact

- **What to look for in staff qualifications:**
    - Key personnel who have demonstrated sectoral and GESI-analysis skills
    - Position descriptions (including leadership) that that explicitly require knowledge of problems of gender, caste, and ethnic discrimination in Nepal

- **What to look for in institutional capacity:**
    - Demonstrated institutional commitment to GESI issues in previous contracts, cooperative agreements, or grants
    - Gender-equitable and workforce diversity policies and mission statements, including equal opportunity employment practices
    - Publications on gender, caste, and ethnicity issues
    - Experience in participatory methodologies, working with diverse constituencies, and ensuring stakeholder participation
    - Undertaking GESI training for staff and collaborating partners

- **What to look for in terms of review panels/technical evaluation committee members:**
    - The RFA/RFP review panel should have at least one member with knowledge or experience with the legacy discrimination to rate proposals for their technical quality on GESI issues. That person should ideally be a voting member, though the chair of the panel could invite someone with GESI expertise to serve as a nonvoting member.
    - In order to better respond to client and field needs and promote more public review, another option would be to constitute an expert advisory group (EAG)

as part of the evaluation team. EAG members would have to recuse themselves from bidding on any relevant RFA/RFP in order to mitigate conflicts of interest.

Box 5
Sample Evaluation Form for RFAs/RFPs

Evaluation Criteria

Applicant: _____ Evaluator:_____

The following are illustrative evaluation criteria that may be helpful in assessing the degree to which GESI considerations have been integrated into a proposal. Depending on the context and sector, some suggestions may be more appropriate than others. Review panels and design teams should select those that are most applicable, and use them with other criteria that are specific to the RFA/RFP.

Maximum Possible Points

A. Technical Approach

Technical and creative merit of proposed plan for:

(1) Achieving intermediate results, including creative integration of GESI-sensitive strategies __ ( )
(2) Monitoring and evaluation, including appropriate use of GESI-sensitive methods and indicators __ ( )
Overall Technical Approach __ ( )

B. Personnel

Successful experience among key staff in:

(1) Analyzing and designing activities that respond to GESI opportunity and constraints for achieving project intermediate results __ ( )
(2) Applying participatory methodologies and ensuring stakeholder involvement from diverse constituencies throughout (project inception to evaluation) __ ( )
Overall Personnel __ ( )

C. Institutional Capacity

(1) Demonstrated institutional commitment to GESI and expertise through continuous staff training __ ( )
(2) Existence of GESI organizational policies and procedures __ ( )
(3) Demonstrated history of providing equitable opportunities for women and other excluded groups at all levels of organizational management __ ( )
Overall Institutional Capability __ ( )

D. Past Performance

(1) Level of technical expertise in the implementation and use of state-of-the-art approaches, including GESI-sensitive strategies __ ( )
(2) History of publications on gender, caste, and ethnic issues in programs or projects __ ( )
(3) Successful history working collaboratively public and private institutions, including organizations with proven GESI expertise __ ( )
Overall Past Performance __ ( )

OVERALL TECHNICAL RATING _____ **(100)**

5.2.3 Project Design

GESI-sensitive projects prioritize the participation of DAGs in design, decision-making, priority setting, implementation, and evaluation. They also build links with civil society, and include a variety of constituencies and stakeholders. They attempt to instill a sense of project ownership by participants, which grows as the project develops. Key questions include:

- How to involve different stakeholders in designing, implementing, and evaluating the project? (The choices made for individual involvement and whom they represent should be expressed through unambiguous and transparent criteria.)

- How to build the capacity of beneficiaries, advocates, NGOs, CBOs, and community leaders to participate more effectively? By forming coalitions? By forming or working with federations? Or by providing training in advocacy?
- What kinds of data, research, and presentation skills do advocates need to work effectively? And, if need be, how can these be developed or imparted?
- Are there grants mechanisms within the project to help address disparities in resources attainment (including education and confidence-levels), opportunity costs, and communication, advocacy, or reporting skills?

GESI-sensitive projects should also increase knowledge about rights and responsibilities among all social groups. If all members of communities are knowledgeable about their basic rights and collective responsibilities, they will be more capable of demanding quality services and gaining access to them – such as schools, courts, vocational and technical training programs, and healthcare. GESI-sensitive projects will be prepared to build capacity for change among those who have been traditionally disenfranchised, providing the skills necessary for renegotiating relationships and power dynamics.

5.2.4 Partner Organizations

Work with partner organizations who ideally demonstrate the following:

- **Workforce diversity:** They have a workforce diversity policy, and are tracking staff compositions to monitor changes over time.
- **Values:** Their values, policies, and practices indicate a clear commitment to GESI.
- **Working style and approach:** They have previously worked with excluded groups, in ways which empower these groups and build their capacity to act independently and as part of a broader coalition.

5.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation procedures should be able to track outcomes, including the metrics of social change. Work plans and reporting from partner organizations should demonstrate attention to GESI issues and strategies for collecting and analyzing relevant data. Disaggregated data can provide a better sense of the impact of programs and projects, and whether GESI objectives are being met. Below are example criteria for defining DAGs, and recommended categories for disaggregation:

- **Defining DAGs:** Certain groups and regions have been discriminated against or otherwise excluded throughout much of Nepal's history. However, there are extremely poor individuals among *all groups* with pockets of absolute poverty everywhere. The term "Disadvantaged Groups" (DAGs) is increasingly being used for disaggregating data, but there is often a lack of clarity about who belongs to this category. This study recommends that DAGs be defined based on *social and economic* criteria as follows:

Table 1
DAGs: Social and Economic Criteria[16]

Discriminated Groups	
Caste	Dalit, Madhesi/Terai caste
Ethnicity	Janajati, Madhesi/Terai ethnic group, ethnic minorities
Gender	Women
Poor Groups	
Household	Food sufficiency less than 6 months, or income less than $1 per day

[16]This is adapted from a model developed by the Swiss Development Cooperation in Nepal (SDC 2007:6).

Non-Discriminated Groups	
Caste	Bahun/Chhetri/Thakuri
Ethnicity	Newar
Gender	Men
Non-Poor Groups	
Household	Food sufficiency greater than 6 months, or income greater than $1 per day

- **Disaggregating by Categories:** Only in 1991 did data on caste and ethnicity begin to be compiled in Nepal. The 2001 Census identified 103 social groups, based on caste, ethnicity, religion, and language. This kind of diversity can make meaningful analysis difficult. In general, however, national surveys have begun dividing populations into 6 or 10 major categories.[17] Critics posit that these categories are not accurate and do not reflect the diversity within. While this is true, it is important to realize that classifications of disadvantaged castes and ethnicities will never be absolute, because group identities change as do financial, health and education outcomes. Thus, classifications will need to be updated periodically to reflect new social realities. This report recommends using the following categories:

Table 2
Recommended Categories for Disaggregation[18]

Categories	**Delineation**
Dalits	Members of the so-called untouchable caste
Women	All women
Disadvantaged Janajatis	Janajati groups who are below the national average on poverty, health, and education (based on Census, NLSS, and NDHS)
Other Disadvantaged Groups	Muslims and certain Terai Middle Caste groups whose poverty indicators are below the national average
Non-Excluded Groups	Bahuns and Chhetris, Newars, Thakalis, Gurungs, and Terai Middle Caste groups whose poverty indicators are above the national average

5.3 Strengthening GESI Mainstreaming within the Mission

The following are recommendations for mainstreaming GESI more effectively within USAID/Nepal and among and between other donors and partner organizations:

- **Harmonization and coordination**

USAID/Nepal's participation in donor/government technical working groups on gender and social inclusion is crucial for coordinating approaches. As Nepal moves through this period of transition, the status of gender, caste and ethnic relations are central to the peace process. USAID/Nepal's explicit attention to GESI in its programs and support in publicizing the results and benefits of these efforts will contribute to the sustainability and maturing of the movement toward inclusiveness and equality. There is significant donor harmonization occurring on GESI issues. Donors and international organizations are increasingly emphasizing social inclusion in their policy and strategy frameworks. Networking and collaboration among these organizations and with key ministries will help in the exchange of information and methods.

[17] The social groups that fall into the 6 major categories are: Bahun/Chhetris, Terai Middle Castes, Dalits, Newars, Janajatis, and Muslims. In the 10 category definitions, Hill and Terai groups are analyzed separately: Hill Bahuns/Chhetris, Terai Bahuns/Chhetris, Terai Middle Castes, Hill Dalits, Terai Dalits, Newars, Hill Janajatis, Terai Janajatis, Religious Minorities, and "Other."
[18] This is adapted from World Bank and DFID 2006.

- **Information sharing and communication**

Encourage partner organizations with more experience of GESI (e.g., Save the Children US) to share the insights of their GESI experience with other partners. An annual meeting of partners could also be used as a forum to exchange GESI best practices and lessons learned.

- **Strengthen the Diversity Action Group in the Mission**

Re-establish the Diversity and Social Inclusion Working Group that was formed in 2003, per the Mission Order on Gender, Caste, and Ethnicity. This group could establish a process for reporting within the Mission on GESI integration. The monitoring of portfolios for GESI integration combined with reporting requirements will help to build in accountability. Also, the group could host forums on GESI issues in various sectors, and be used as a platform for comparing successful tools and methodologies for GESI integration.

- **Human resources and organizational structure**

GESI is about ensuring participation and equal opportunities, without discrimination based on social identities such as caste, gender, and ethnicity. It is about fairness and effectiveness through balance, representation, and diversity. To effectively promote GESI, an organization should be prepared to practice it internally. A gender audit approach may be a useful methodology for USAID/Nepal to assess whether its organizational structure and policies reinforce equality or inequality.

Recommendations for accomplishing GESI in human resources include:

- Develop a holistic strategy (including incentive structures) for affirmative action in all programs and projects
- Increase diversity of workforce as positions become available, especially in professional positions and supervisory levels
- Survey changes in workforce diversity at least every year, and publicize the data
- Interview committees should include expatriate staff on a rotational basis, especially those knowledgeable about issues of exclusion
- Look for personal competencies, with hiring criteria adjusted to emphasize the importance of diversity as well as capacity and qualifications
- Advertise in newspapers which have a larger and more diverse readership, such as Kantipur
- Access websites which list biodata of Dalit graduates (e.g., Dalit Welfare Organization website) and contact organizations with diverse workforces (such as, Save the Children USA and SDC) for recommendations about potential candidates
- Conduct a USAID/Nepal GESI sensitization training

Experience from other organizations also suggests that consistent and committed leadership is needed from high-up (director level) to make workforce diversity a reality.

5.4 Recommendations for Cross-cutting Themes and Issues

Though not explicit, a cross-cutting theme for USAID/Nepal's strategy is the need to win the peace by addressing discrimination and creating opportunities for women, Dalits, and under-represented Janajati groups. In the context of Nepal's recovery this is essential. Equality (through GESI) is crucial to broad-based poverty reduction, transformational development, and lasting peace. At present, poverty is exacerbated by urban-centric and inequitable economic growth, the lack of access to basic services and infrastructure, and poor governance.

In Nepal, social exclusion is a social and structural problem that requires institutional changes as well as major shifts in the mindset of Nepal's citizens – from dependency and patronage to individual and collective responsibilities and rights. At present gender relations and caste restrictions are being challenged by the new roles that women and members of marginalized groups assumed during the conflict. Now is an opportune time to mainstream GESI within the process of reconstruction, reintegration, and reconciliation. If no change is forthcoming, stability will be threatened and violence may reoccur.

The following are recommended cross-cutting issues which should be integrated into programs and projects:

- Social, Economic, and Political Inclusion
- Gender Equity
- Transparency and accountability
- Building partnerships with organizations truly committed to all of the above.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

Statement of Work (SOW):
Gender and Inclusion Assessment for USAID/Nepal

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APPENDIX C

People Consulted

USAID offices and staff

Office of the Director
- Sheila Lutjens, Deputy Mission Director

Program and Project Development
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- Shoba Lama, Inclusion Specialist
- Roger Hodgson, Ujyalo Project Director

Academy for Educational Development
- Kanti Risal, Program Coordinator, Nepal Women's Peace Net Support Program
- Sujan Rai

Nepal Family Health Program
- Ashoke Shrestha, Deputy Director of Program

Winrock International
- Dr. Luke Colavito, Agriculture Program Coordinator for South Asia, SIMI Team Leader
- Dr. Ram Chandra Bhusal, Monitoring and Evaluation Team Leader
- Narendra K. Rasaily, Monitoring and Evaluation and DAG Program Team Leader
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World Education
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Ratna Shrestha, Advocate and Human Rights Lawyer
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South Asia Partnership-Nepal
Geeta Pradhan
Institute of Human Rights Communication Nepal
Shova Gautam, President
The World Bank
Dr. Lynn Bennett, Lead Anthropologist, Social Development Department
Action Aid
Pankaja Bhattarai, Senior Theme Leader on Gender, Human Security, and Governance
Sarita Karki, Senior Team Leader
SDC
Dandi Ram Bishowkarma, Senior Program Officer
Dibya Gurung, Senior Program Officer
Sarita Moktan, Head, Personnel and Administration
UNIFEM
Ananta Risal, Senior Program Officer
Sharu Joshi Shrestha, Regional Program Manager for Migration
Dr. Chandra Bhadra, Consultant
Institute of Development Management Studies, ODC/Nepal
Anima Singh, Deputy Director
FECOFUN
Ghanshyam Pandey, Chairperson, former Program Coordinator of the Policy Advocacy Campaign Program
Bhim Prasad Shrestha, Former Chairperson (2001-2006)
Apsara Chapagain, Program Coordinator for Women's Education Program

Field Visit – Kaski and Syangja Districts
SIMI/BDS-MaPS
Jeevan Thapa, Project Manager
Guru Dhatta Dahal, Field Supervisor
Gopal Thapa, District Manager (SIMI)
Sabina Regmi, District Staff
Prakash Subedi, District Manager (BDS-MaPS)
Govind Baral, NTFP Enterprise Development (BDS-MaPS)
Namuna Poudel, Agricuture Enterprise Officer (BDS-MaPS)
Hari K.C., Chairman Collection Center
Maya Subba Gurung, Leader Farmer, Cellar Store, Putali Bazaar
DCDO Program, Purna Bandari
Andhikhola Agri-product Marketing Committee
Durga BK and members, Fulbari Women vegetables farmers group
Single Women Groups
Parmila Tajya and members of Women Community Awareness Society-WOCAS
Ghari Patan, Pokhara Municipality
Dhana Maya Gurung and Members, Dhunge Patan, Lekhnath Municipality
SORUP Nepal Kaski
Birendra Phunyal and Members, Kitchen gardening and MUS

INF/Paluwa
- Yajna Sharma, Client Reception and Legal Assistant
- Buddhi Bal Ramtel, AIDS Care Officer

Naulo Ghumti
- Ram Prasad Gyawali, Executive Director
- Som Lal Ojha, Program Manager

Field Visit – Rupandehi, Kapilbastu, Banke, Bardia and Dang Districts

WATCH
- Sarmila Shrestha, Chairperson and Program Manager
- Dr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Volunteer Advisor
- Sanchit Dongol, Project Coordinator
- Jagriti Mahila Sangh members
- Asha Jyoti Sahayog Samaj members
- Rural Women's Federation members in Rupendehi, Bangali and Kerwani VDCs
- Gramin Mahila Jagaran Sastha, Bordagoan/Pipara- Kapilbastu

World Education
- NECOS, Farmer Field School Group, Mashina VDC, Rupendehi
- SANJIBINI Children's Class, Peace education for traumatized children, Bardia
- Childhood class for girls (Kisori Kakshya), SADIKA, Dang
- SDIKA, Dang (Suman Ghale, Padhan Singh, Kanti Gurun, Radheshyam Chaudhari)

Women's Peace Net
- Pushpanjali Upadhyaya and Rama Aryal, Rupendehi, potential AED partner

Save the Children US, SANDEEP
- Ratna Baba, SANDEEP Project Coordinator
- Tharu Mahila Uthan Kendra, Bardia, Prisma Singh Tharu and members
- BASE, Tulsipur, Dang (Churna Bahadur Chaudhary, Director, and his team)

Save the Children US, UJYALO
- Child Protection Committee members and Samjhana Youth Club members, Bardia
- BASE, SANJIBINI, Dang (Rajendra Dangi, psychosocial counselor)

MercyCorp, Youth for Peace
- Lokendra Rai

CARE
- SAGUN, Forestry User Group, Kohalpur, Banke
- SAMARPAN and UJYALO Human Welfare and Environment Protection Centre (HWEPC), District Advocacy Forum for Women, Dang
- FECOFUN, District Branch, Dang
- Social Protection Forum, Dang (Krishna Gopal Gupta and members)

Appendix D

USAID/Nepal: Past Activities Related to Gender, Caste, and Ethnicity

USAID/Nepal has been at the cutting edge of WID (women in development) and GAD (gender and development) initiatives since the early days of the Agency's work in these areas. In the late 1970s, USAID/Nepal funded a comprehensive study on the status of women. Eight in-depth ethnographic studies focused on women roles and responsibilities among different castes and ethnicities, examining marriage and residence patterns, the division of labor, household decision-making, mobility, and access to resources and income. This was probably one of the first studies to draw comparisons between the experiences of women from different castes and ethnicities.

USAID/Nepal's first WID Action Plan was drafted in 1988, with revisions in 1989. Based on this Plan the Mission decided to fund programs for women's literacy and income-generation, and began devising ways to better integrate women into different sector programs. In 1995, USAID/Nepal became the first Mission to establish a program for women's empowerment at the strategic objective level. SO3 consolidated ongoing projects in literacy, economic participation, legal rights, and advocacy as the Women's Empowerment Program (WEP).

The premise of WEP was that literacy needed to be combined with economic and legal rights knowledge for women's empowerment, so women themselves would be able to address resource allocations in the household and take more active roles in their community. This approach was modified in 1997 for phase II to include microfinance institutions through savings-led credit and village banking, and the mobilization of women for collective action on issues of local concern. Gender-focused synergies between SOs were also explored, with programs in health and agriculture crafting women's literacy materials to contain key information about these sectors.

In 2000, an assessment of SO3 concluded that the WEP program was successful, effective, replicable, and should be continued. However, because of severe budget cuts, the decision was made to close-out SO3. USAID/Nepal made the decision to mainstream gender into its SOs and SpO (rather than specifically targeting women), building on the lessons learned from SO3. (Gender Assessment 2001:15-16)

USAID/Nepal has also facilitated the sharing of information about gender and development with other donors. Since 1997, it has coordinated the Donor Gender Working Group which usually meets every two or three months. In the past four years the meetings have been hosted on rotation at different agencies. This group offers a forum for discussing operational issues, sectoral strategies, and program concerns related to gender. Updates about new initiatives, best practices, and gender mainstreaming are also discussed. A database on gender is maintained through the group.

In 2001, a Gender Assessment (GA) and Gender Action Plan (GAP) were conducted with technical support from USAID/Washington. The GA examined gender issues in USAID/Nepal's strategic framework, results framework, programs, and activities. The GAP outlined a programmatic and organizational "road map" for gender integration. These documents address gender as a cross-cutting issue, and identify potential entry points for incorporating gender. They raised the profile of gender concerns both organizationally and operationally within the Mission. One of the most significant outcomes from the recommendations given by the GA and GAP was the finalization of the Mission Order on Gender in 2003.

More recently, however, USAID/Nepal has started to shift its focus towards inequalities in terms of gender, caste, and ethnicity. From 2002 to 2004 the Mission contracted an Investing in Women in Development (IWID) fellow as a gender adviser to support efforts to mainstream gender as identified in the GA and the GAP. In conjunction with other Mission staff, she conducted a three-day gender sensitization training. However, it also became clear that there was a need to examine problems of discrimination and social exclusion. In August 2003 a Diversity and Social Inclusion Working Group was formed to discuss ways to more effectively incorporate concerns of gender, caste, and ethnicity, both

within the Mission as well as within partner organizations and programs. It was decided that awareness-raising needed to start within USAID/Nepal.

From 2003 to 2004 the Mission sponsored a number of events about human rights, Dalit oppression, and violence against women. These included lunch-time "film festivals," reading and discussion groups, as well as lectures and seminars by prominent Nepali intellectuals, activists, and academics. In 2003 the Mission also undertook an analysis of its own staff profile, which revealed that 88% of FSN positions were held by Bahuns, Chhetris, and Newars (who represent about 35% of the population in Nepal), with Janajatis representing just 12% of the workforce and no Dalits on staff. (At this time there were two Madhesi on staff, but they were not identified as a separate category. The Madhesi, who are Bahun, were included in that group.) Out of this women occupied just 17% of the total number of positions, and mostly at the secretarial level. A recent survey (2007) indicates some change. Bahuns, Chhetris, and Newars currently occupy 80% of FSN positions, with Janajatis making up 15%, Madeshis 3%, and Dalits 2% of the workforce composition. The percentage of women has risen to 22%, with 37% occupying professional positions.

In 2004, USAID/Nepal's Mission Order on Gender (2003) was modified to become the Mission Order on Gender, Caste, and Ethnic Inclusion in Programs, Documentation, and Activities (see Appendix D). The purpose of the 2004 Mission Order is to establish the policy and organizational framework for gender, caste, and ethnic inclusion in USAID/Nepal's programs and activities at every stage – in design, planning, implementation, documentation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs and activities. It states that problems of persistent poverty and other inequities are reflected in Nepal's socio-economic data, noting that the low-status and exclusion of women, low-caste, and under-represented ethnic groups are impediments to economic growth, empowerment, and democratic governance. It also asserts that "The sustainability and impact of USAID/Nepal programs and projects depend on the ability to more effectively identify, analyze, and integrate gender, caste, and ethnicity..." (USAID/Nepal 2004:1-2).

This GIA builds on the learning from these earlier initiatives. Unfortunately, some of the momentum from the 2001 to 2004 period has been sidelined due to the exigencies of the conflict and workload burdens. The Diversity and Social Inclusion Working Group (which met several times in 2003 and 2004) and the Gender Equality Team (which was spelled out in the GAP in 2001) are moribund. USAID/Nepal staff members do recognize certain individuals as focal points for gender, but there seems to be little opportunity to meet and discuss programmatic and organizational concerns.

The objective of the GIA is to better understand to what extent programs have been effective at incorporating concerns of gender, caste, and ethnicity, and to explore what this might mean for program sustainability in the context of Nepal's recovery. There are strong correlations between social inclusion, gender equality, human rights, and poverty reduction. A GESI-sensitive approach is about achieving fairness and effectiveness through balance, representation, and diversity.

Appendix E

MISSION ORDER
USAID/Nepal

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Appendix F

Rights of Rural Women in Naya Nepal (New Nepal)

Twenty-nine representatives of the "Our Iron Fists Campaign" from 17 districts met in WATCH's Training Centre in Bengali, Rupandehi District, for five days to discuss the rights of rural women and how to move ahead for the Constituent Assembly. Dr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, of WATCH, facilitated the discussion. The following decisions were made by the group, which also decided to begin an awareness raising campaign at the local level.

Reproductive Rights:

- The reproductive rights should be with women.
- The provisions made by government to give birth safely should be implemented strictly and followed up.
- There should be legal provisions for women to remain healthy and clean during the menstruation and birth delivery. (No chhaupadi, and seclusion in goth.)
- The right to abortion should be with women.
- The right to having sex should be with women.
- The decision making rights should be with women regarding matter of their children.
- There should be provisions for safety and services for women at times of menstruation and delivery.
- There should be provision for vaccination services in the VDCs to prevent children from common diseases.
- There should be provision for protecting girl children, also before birth.
- The government should guarantee for healthy and safe birth of baby.
- Women should get, at least 90 days, of rest and recovery after delivery in the family as well as in the work place.
- There should be provision for well managed and healthy baby care services
- The government should provide free education to the women and girls children to the maximum level they want.

Marriage:

- There should be strict legal provisions for marriage age differences between male and female not to exceed more than 10 years.
- Polygamous marriage should be prohibited. There must be strict legal provision for the punishment against polygamous marriage.
- There must be provision to reward inter-caste (between untouchable) marriage and widow marriage.
- There should be a provision that the first wife gets 50% of property and 50% of income in case of a second marriage.
- Girl's age should be at least of 20 years, and even after that there should be a provision to get married only according to her interest and decision.
- On divorce, women's interest should be given high priority.
- There should be equal rights between male and female on parental property.
- Women should be allowed to make decisions regarding her private property (*Pewa* given by her parents).
- There should be dual rights of husband and wife on the family property.
- Dowry system should be banned as illegal, with those who give and who take strictly punished.

Wages (Remuneration):

- Make provision to ensure skill development training and facilities are provided to those who work in the real field (concerned persons).
- There should be provision for equal opportunity to do work/job and to have equal wages.

- There should be provision to count 7 hours works as equal to one day's work, and more than 7 hours of work should be compensated accordingly.
- The professions/works should not be differentiated between men or women. There should be provision of women's quota for training, education and job opportunities to increase women's participation in every occupation proportionally within 10 years. There should not be gender discrimination in any occupation.

Political Participation

- There should be reservation quota and provision of facilities for women in order to make women's participation proportionate within next 10 years – from the local to the ministry or policy level, and in other social and political institutions.
- Positions or Posts also should be provided using alternative process: divide positions alternatively among sexes.

Education:

- There should be provision of quality and practical education.
- Those who have missed schooling should be provided with opportunities to join schools through NFE classes or functional and skilled education for jobs.
- There should be provisions of quota for women in technical and managerial education up to 10 years so that women have proportionate representation in those fields.
- Curriculum should include sex education, sexuality and, civic education.

Natural Resources Management:

- Women should be recognized as head of households.
- There should be provision for women's proportional representation in user groups formed to manage resources or conduct development activities.
- Women should have alternate office holder positions, and candidates changed each year by assembly.
- At least 50% of income from resource management should be allocated for women-related development activities.
- At least 50% of development budget should be allocated for women-related development activities.
- There should be a powerful commission comprised of women to monitor and to direct women-related development activities and the implementation of legal provisions.
- Trafficking of humans should be declared as a national offense, with traffickers punished with life imprisonment.
- There should be provision for making use of unutilized natural and community resources for productivity and for income of needy and poor women.

Religion:

- Discrimination and exploitation imposed on women in the name of religion and so-called religious acts should be abolished.
- Torturing of women in the name of witchcraft should be stopped.
- Women and so-called untouchables should have full rights to take part in religious, cultural and social activities; barring them should be a punishable offence.
- Enslavement of women in the name of God should be stopped.

APPENDIX G

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion:
Key Questions and Some Guidelines

	Key Questions to Ask	***Guidelines***	***Documents and Activities***
Analysis	Who benefits and how? What are the implications of differential benefits? Are there specific criteria for evaluating and monitoring social inclusion?	*Highlight the need for social inclusion from the very beginning. *Apply specific and significant social inclusion evaluation criteria. *Partners may need to revise survey questions, interview techniques and mannerisms, sex, caste or ethnicity of interviewer, timings of meetings, and research approaches.	RFPs, RFAs, Proposals, SOWs, Program Descriptions, Baseline Surveys, Monitoring and Evaluation Plans, Work Plans.
Implementation	Who participates? Why are there differences in rates of participation? What can be done to address imbalances?	*Require a holistic account of activities and participants. *Activities should have diversity in the proportion of women, low-caste, and under-represented ethnic groups.	Work Plans, Progress Reports, program activities
Monitoring and Evaluation	How can progress be measured? What indicators best reflect results, difference, and impacts?	*Disaggregate by gender, caste, and ethnicity (do not conflate into one category, e.g. "Women and Disadvantaged Groups"). *Triangulate results. *Devote sufficient time to data collection and analysis in order to identify meaningful indicators. *Apply proxy indicators, to evaluate impacts whenever possible.	Monitoring and Evaluation Documents.

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