

Ensuring Equitable Access to Land through the Land Rights Movement

2009-2013



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Community Self-reliance Centre
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LAYA PRASAD UPRETY

FOREWORD

Given the fact that land ownership remains the main source of wealth, social status, and economic power in the agrarian social structure of Nepal, the land rights movement program is of paramount importance—a function of the inequity in land resource distribution. It is axiomatic that social and economic transformation remains incomplete in Nepal in the absence of land reform. Social transformation is impossible without the transformation of power relationships (even if state restructuring takes place in the future). There is a need to transform existing land and power relationships due to the following factors: **(a)** unequal land ownership (i.e. five percent control 37 percent of arable land and the ruthlessness of those in control means on average one tenant or landless farmer is evicted everyday as referred to in the 2009 CSRC study on land and tenure. **(b)** high ceiling for landlords as per the 1964 Land Act (16.4 ha for agricultural land and 2.4 ha for homestead), redistribution is impossible without reducing the existing ceiling through scientific land reform to be guaranteed by the to be drafted constitution (because agricultural development is not possible without scientific land reform and industrialization is not possible without the modernization of agriculture); **(c)** absentee landlordism and detachment of the actual tillers and agricultural laborers from land they cultivate; **(d)** gender inequality vis-à-vis land ownership **(e)** unsolved issues of tenancy under both individual and *Guthi* (trust) land tenure; **(f)** endemic problem of landlessness; **(g)** need for the implementation of the national land policy (drafted) and land use policy (approved); **(h)** problems of good governance in land administration (due to the excessive centralization of power and corruption); **(i)** the exploitative socio-economic system (despite legal/policy prohibition on the use of *Haliya* in mid-and far-west Nepal, *Haruwa-Charuwa* in Siraha and Saptari of eastern *Terai*, their

rehabilitation has been a far-fetched dream); **(j)** problem of unregistered tenants under the *Ukhada* (under which cash land tax used to be paid); **(k)** problem of sustained and improved livelihoods of the land-poor; **(l)** influence of globalization (i.e. land grabbing for commodification and losing of land by actual tillers); and **(m)** lack of political commitment (“whose land? “Tillers” has been limited to the slogans of political parties since 1951). Scientific land reform is needed in the country to ensure peace and stability through the equitable redistribution of land resources providing benefits to the poorer and marginalized sections of society. Conclusively, the movement for land rights was, and is, a social movement against injustice, exploitation and poverty in semi-feudal Nepali society which is possible only through the transformation of existing unequal and inequitable power relationships. Thus, the land rights movement is very relevant in the context of Nepal and will continue to be so.

The land rights movement in Nepal has been initiated and led by Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC) in 1995 from two Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Sindupalchowk District of central Nepal and has been supported by five international development partners (IDPs) under a “strategic partnership” during the period 2009-2013 and activity based partnership with ILC and ANGO. There has been a ‘strategic partnership framework’, which involved a multi-donor partnership to jointly fund CSRC through a common co-ordination and management mechanism. Danida Human Rights and Good Governance Advisory Unit (DanidaHUGOU), Action Aid International Nepal (AAIN), Canadian Cooperation Office (CCO)/Local Development Facility (LDF), Care Nepal, MS Nepal (which was subsequently merged with AAIN), and Oxfam had, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) dated 27 January 2009, agreed to support the

Strategic and Operational Plan (StOP), 2009-2013, of CSRC. More specifically, this strategic framework was guided by the commonly accepted 'strategic partnership principles' such as CSRC's ownership of strategies, objectives, priorities and intervention processes; international development partners (IDPs) aligning themselves behind those strategies, objectives, priorities and processes by accepting CSRC's institutional systems; transparency, respect and trust between CSRC and IDPs; focus on results and mutual accountability towards results, and reduction of transaction costs, *inter alia*.

Major activities planned by CSRC were pursuant to the StOP and presented in annual work plans and budgets (AWAB) during 2009-2013. In so doing, utmost attention was paid towards achieving the five outputs manifested in the StOP and prepared in 2009. These comprised: (i) organizing, strengthening, and mobilizing rights-holders to claim and exercise their rights; (ii) developing and implementing clarity and consensus about land reform policy and frameworks suitable to the needs and realities of Nepal; (iii) establishing critical engagement with non-state stakeholders in land and agricultural issues; (iv) learning generated from ground level actions and practices, with knowledge disseminated at all levels; and (v) introducing new land policies guaranteeing women and men equal rights to own land. Succinctly put, the output targets have focused primarily on the land and agrarian rights movement, local initiatives for practice of land and agrarian reform and agricultural cooperatives and productivity, policy discussion and change, human resource development and mobilization, and networking and institutional development.

A final evaluation was conducted at the end of the program. The evaluation of CSRC's performance and strategic partnerships shows that the constituency of the land rights movement, with the leadership of National Land Rights Forum (NLRFF) and facilitation and institutional resources, as well as technical support of CSRC, has phenomenally grown during the program period from 34 to 53 districts making a total of 2,667 Village Land Rights Forums (VLRFFs) with a total

membership of 74,860. CSRC results-based monitoring and evaluation framework data have clearly shown that the land rights movement has the potential of promoting the "security of land tenure" among land-poor women and men (outcomes/objectives) and "securing equitable access to land for ensuring better livelihood of the land-poor" (impact/goal). The evaluation has also shown that CSRC has ownership of setting its own strategies, objectives, priorities and intervention processes under the strategic partnership. CSRC views total support from all strategic partners for this ownership process.

All IDPs had aligned themselves behind the strategies, objectives and priorities of CSRC. IDPs have made coordinated efforts to provide financial and technical inputs to CSRC, to simplify procedures and to share information to avoid duplication. These coordinated efforts were reflected in their basket-funding for financial inputs, support for one account operation, technical and knowledge inputs for the preparation of the StOP, global planning, acceptance of CSRC's internal audit reports, etc. Unlike the project-based approach of the past, information was also shared to avoid duplication of development efforts vis-a-vis the land rights movement. Both CSRC and IDPs have mutual accountability towards outcomes and impacts of the land rights movement program. On this occasion, CSRC expresses its sincere thanks and appreciations to all the IDPs for their support in the land rights movement of Nepal and also hopes to work collaboratively in the future.

Finally, CSRC extends its sincere appreciation to Dr. Laya Prasad Uprety, Professor in Anthropology at Tribhuvan University for accepting the institutional request to undertake the study and producing this monograph. I would also like to thank my team members especially Programme Manager Jagat Deuja for his hard work and support to the evaluation team.

Jagat Basnet
Executive Director
Community Self-reliance Center
December 30, 2013

PREFACE

This monograph entitled ‘Ensuring Equitable Access to Land through the Land Rights Movement’ has been a direct outcome of the evaluation of the land rights movement program implemented by Community Self-reliance Center (CSRC) under the strategic partnership framework during 2009-2013. As the author of this monograph, I hold the conviction that the land rights movement cannot be measured in numerical terms. Rather it must be examined with a view to finding out whether the processes of empowerment have begun and whether this has started working at the grassroots level.

Viewed objectively, empirical data have amply shown four major forms of empowerment among land-poor women and men during the program period, i.e. organizational, economic, social and political empowerment.

Concerning organizational empowerment, members of people’s organizations (i.e. NLRF and D/VLRFs) have been made aware of their land rights (as fundamental components of human rights) and prevailing land laws/policies. Their capacity has been built on context mapping, power analysis, critical thinking, problem identification, advocacy planning, participation in the movement, and techniques and processes of dialogue and negotiation. Concerning economic empowerment, the people’s organizations have been supported by CSRC to link the land rights movement to livelihood issues (through the establishment of agricultural cooperatives, support to agro-based entrepreneurship and community-led land reform practices on public waste land).

On social empowerment, the land-poor women and men have begun realizing their ‘identity’ (associated with land) and gaining social recognition and prestige in the societies in which they live. Again, the social capital which has been formed through the formation of VLRFs has given these organizations wider social recognition in their Village Development Committees (VDCs) and districts. Therefore, these organizations can resist oppression from landlords and atrocious government authorities who are evicting tenants from t lands cultivated for years and landless settlers from public land (living for years and even generations bereft of the alternatives).

On political empowerment (pertaining to the influence on decision-making processes at local and national levels), members of the NLRF and its chapters have now begun meeting political party leaders and government officials from VDC to the national level, debating on the issues of land reform, land policies, tenancy, landlessness and agrarian reform and development. This has already begun demonstrating its effects on the formulation of national level policies such as a national land policy and local level policies (such as the VDC level decision to provide certificates of settlement and tillage to landless settlers and informal tenants, in three out of 53 constituency districts).

Establishment of “movement funds”, “*Muthi Chamal Sankalan*” (collections of handfuls of rice and other foodstuffs from each member of NLRF’s nested enterprise- i.e. VLRFs) and an organizational culture of constructing *Bhumi Ghars* (land homes) at the district and grassroots levels augur well for the indigenization and sustainability of the movement. On the whole, the programs of the land rights movement have actually reached the real hardcore poor target communities in Nepal and hence, its implementers and strategic partners deserve appreciations for their respective contributions. Despite these laudable achievements, the movement led by the NLRF also has a high degree of resource dependence on CSRC. Contextually, a pertinent and serious question arises: how long will CSRC have to support the NLRF?

I am grateful to the Community Self-reliance Centre (CSRC) and Strategic Partners for entrusting me with the responsibility to conduct the study entitled “*Evaluation of CSRC’s Performance and the Strategic Partnership*” and this monograph which has been a direct outcome from the Evaluation.

A number of people have played an instrumental role in supporting me with critical information for the timely completion of this monograph. More specifically, I acknowledge the continuous professional support provided by the management team and staff of CSRC. Similarly, senior officials of DanidaHUGOU, ActionAid International Nepal, CARE Nepal, and Oxfam are also highly acknowledged for sparing their valuable time to share their perspectives on CSRC’s performance and strategic partnership and provide feedback for this monograph. Officials of the central committee of the National Land Rights Forum (NLRF) and District and Village Land Rights Forums (D/VLRFs), frontline leaders of VLRFs, activists, and full-time workers of

D/LRF are also highly appreciated for their support in furnishing the needed information. Finally, I appreciate the full co-operation of all rights holders of the land rights movement for their high enthusiasm despite their heavy involvement in their daily livelihood issues for survival and campaign activities to transform the inequitable power relationships deeply embedded in traditional exploitative social structures. Succinctly put, this monograph would not have been able to be finished without their genuine and generous support. Personally, I accept all of the shortcomings of this monograph in the capacity of its author.

Laya Prasad Uprety
December 30, 2013

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAIN	ActionAid International Nepal	NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ANGOC	Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development	NLRF	National Land Rights Forum
AWAB	Annual Work Plan and Budget	NPR	Nepalese Rupees
CA	Constituent Assembly	PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
CBO	Community-based Organization	SAPA	South Asian Peace Alliance
CCO	Canadian Cooperation Office	SC	Steering Committee
CFUG	Community Forest Users Group	SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency	SP	Strategic Partners
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Accord	StOP	Strategic and Operational Plan
CSRC	Community Self-reliance Centre	ToR	Terms of Reference
DADO	District Agriculture Development Office	VDC	Village Development Committee
DDC	District Development Committee	VLRF	Village Land Rights Forum
DLRF	District Land Rights Forum		
EC	Executive Committee		
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions		
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion		
HLLRC	High Level Land Reform Commission		
HUGOU	Human Rights and Governance Advisory Unit		
ILC	International Land Coalition		
JAR	Joint Annual Review		
LDF	Local Development Facility		
LWFN	Lutheran World Federation, Nepal		
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation		

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background, Objectives and Scope of Work

The land rights movement of land-poor people facilitated and supported by Community Self-reliance Centre (CSRC) during the period 2009-2013 was launched under a 'strategic partnership framework', involving a multi-donor partnership to jointly fund CSRC through a common co-ordination and management mechanism. Danida Human Rights and Good Governance Advisory Unit (DanidaHUGOU), ActionAid International Nepal (AAIN), Canadian Cooperation Office (CCO)/Local Development Facility (LDF), Care Nepal, MS Nepal (which later merged with AAIN), and Oxfam had, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) dated 27 January 2009, agreed to support the Strategic and Operational Plan (StOP), 2009-2013, of CSRC. More specifically, this strategic framework was guided by the commonly accepted 'strategic partnership principles' such as CSRC's ownership of strategies, objectives, priorities and intervention processes; international development partners (IDPs) aligning themselves behind those strategies, objectives, priorities and processes by accepting CSRC's institutional systems; transparency, respect and

trust between CSRC and IDPs; focus on results and mutual accountability towards results, and reduction of transaction costs, *inter alia*.

Following three past joint annual reviews, which demonstrated laudable achievements against the annual work plan targets, which were based on the StOP, two key questions have been posed to problematize the research for this external evaluation. These comprise: (i) to what extent did CSRC's performance during the period of StOP implementation contribute to achieving outputs, outcomes, and impacts?, and (ii) to what extent did the partnership principles such as ownership, alignment, harmonisation, long-term commitment (from IDPs), mutual accountability, transparency, trust and mutual focus on results having been applied in the implementation of the StOP for the land rights movement?

Pursuant to the Terms of Reference (ToR), the evaluation has two dimensions, namely, assessment of CSRC's performance and assessment of the Strategic Partnership itself. The evaluation has the following objectives to assess these two major dimensions.

(i) Evaluation of CSRC Performance

The evaluation has focused on the following dimensions and objectives:

assess the results achieved by CSRC in light of the organisation's RBME Framework and StOP targets;

assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness (efficacy), cost-effectiveness and sustainability;

assess the extent to which GESI conflict transformation and accountability have been mainstreamed in the organisation and into program implementation;

analyse the priorities and activities of CSRC in light of the changing context in Nepal;

assess the progress of CSRC in terms of organisational development by considering such areas as **(a)** institutional governance, including internal and external accountability mechanisms; **(b)** development of constituency and accountability towards this constituency; **(c)** capacity building; and **(d)** linking with other partners as part of synergy building;

assess efforts to achieve joint action with other civil society organizations on key advocacy issues, both at the national and local levels where relevant;

analyse strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities of CSRC as an organisation; and

assess strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities for implementation of the activities.

(ii) Evaluation of Strategic Partnership

This dimension of the evaluation has assessed the Strategic Partnership between CSRC and strategic partners with special focus on the application of partnership principles such as ownership (by CSRC), alignment, harmonisation, long-term commitment (from

IDPs), mutual accountability, transparency, trust and mutual focus on results.

The **scope of work** involved three-phases: **(i) preparatory phase for structuring the evaluation, (ii) fieldwork for data collection;** and **(iii) data analysis and consolidation of findings.**

The **preparatory phase for structuring the evaluation** included: **(i)** start-up meeting amongst the consultants organized by DanidaHUGOU, the management of CSRC, and representative/s of IDPs to discuss the ToR during which clarifications for issues and themes were made by senior advisors; **(ii)** review of CSRC's StOP, Result-based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME), joint annual reviews (JARs) and other relevant documents; **(iii)** development of methodology for the evaluation, including operationalization of the important concepts to be used, an evaluation framework, list of methods used and development of instruments needed for these methods, and development of a field plan; and **(iv)** a second round of meetings with CSRC and IDP representatives to discuss the methodology, instruments and fieldwork plan.

Fieldwork for Data Collection was conducted at three levels, i.e. community , district and central . At the community level, Village Land Rights Forums (VLRFs) were visited for gathering information. Similarly, District Land Rights Forums (DLRFs) were visited for district level interactive meetings for the same purpose. Communities and districts from both the *Terai* and hills were covered from all five-development regions of Nepal. At the central level, concerned officials of the strategic partners, CSRC management team and its staff, and members of the executive committee of the National Land Rights Forum (NLRF) were met for interactive discussions.

Data analysis involved the organization/ categorization of data and searching for the patterns of their relationships (collected through literature review, stakeholder

interviews, and fieldwork). **Consolidation of findings** included preparation of a draft report based on an outline agreed to between CSRC and its strategic partners addressing each of the specific objectives as per the ToR and the sharing this document.

1.2 Evaluation Framework

Figure 1: Evaluation Framework of Land Rights Movement



The facilitating role of CSRC for the land rights movement in Nepal and the role of strategic partnerships to support this had considerable bearing on the implementation of five major outputs, i.e. organizing, strengthening and mobilizing the land-poor, establishing clarity/consensus about land reform and land reform policy, critical engagement with non-state stakeholders, generating learning from actions and practices and disseminations of knowledge at all levels, and introducing new land policies guaranteeing women and men equal rights to own land. This role also dealt with 'promotion of security of tenure of land-poor women and men' (objective/outcome) leading to the accomplishment of 'securing equitable access to land ensuring better livelihood of land-poor women and men' (impact).

1.3 Community Self-reliance Centre: A Brief Introduction

Founded in 1993 through the registration at the District Administration Office of Sindupalchowk, Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC) is a membership-based non-governmental organization (NGO). It was established by the collective effort of a group of school teachers with the aim of changing the existing pattern of elite-dominated inequitable power relationships by organizing and mobilizing marginalized groups of people, especially tenant and landless farmers. CSRC has been engaged in educating and organizing people who are deprived landrights so that they can assert their rights over land resources in a peaceful way. CSRC has been achieving this through strengthening community organizations, developing human rights defenders and social activists, pursuing multi-level dialogues for pro-poor land reform, conducting empirical studies, lobbying for policy advocacy, and strengthening civil society alliances and networks and other initiatives and programs from community to national levels.

The vision of CSRC is a Nepali society where everyone enjoys a secure, free and dignified life. The mission is to empower land-poor women and men to enable them to claim and exercise their basic rights, including their right to land resources. CSRC's goal is to secure equitable access to land for poor women and men, ensuring their freedom and right to a dignified life. Core values include: **(i)** promotion and protection of all rights for all; **(ii)** respect for plurality and diversity; **(iii)** social inclusion; **(iv)** promotion of non-violence; **(v)** institutional good governance; **(vi)** democratic decision-making and implementation; and **(vi)** promotion of genuine equality between women and men.

CSRC's strategic objectives comprise the following: **(i)** organize, strengthen and mobilize rights holders (land-poor women and men) to claim and exercise their rights; **(ii)** establish clarity and consensus on land reform, and develop land reform policies and frameworks suitable to the needs and realities of Nepal; **(iii)** promote critical engagement with non-state stakeholders (such as the IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and multinational companies) involved in land and agrarian issues; and **(iv)** generate learning from ground level actions and practices, and disseminate this knowledge at all levels. CSRC's strategic approaches comprise deprived people-centeredness, participation and empowerment of the deprived, facilitation of rights-based campaigns, cost-effective operations, and partnership and alliance.

By and large, there is a comparatively good reflection of Nepal's social diversity in CSRC's organization. For instance, data made available by CSRC during the evaluation process has shown that it has a total of 30 general members of which 63.3 percent are males and 36.7

percent females. A majority are *Brahmins/Chettris* (60%) followed by *Janajatis* (26.7) and *Dalits* (13.3%). An Executive Committee of seven members is democratically elected by the general assembly held every three years. Of these seven members, four are men and three are women. There are two males and two females from *Brahmin/Chettri* caste groups, one male and one female from the *Janajatis*, and one *Dalit* male. Gradually, the predominance of the *Brahmins/Chettris* has to be reduced for giving space to the *Madeshis* and *Muslims* (who together constitute a sizeable population in the *Terai*) to comply with the inclusive principle of representation in the organization. Similarly, CSRC has a total of 23 staffpersons, of which 60.9 percent are males and 39.1 percent females. If the social group-wise distribution is analyzed, 52.2 percent are from *Brahmin/Chhetri* communities followed by 26.1 percent *Janajatis*, and 21.7 percent *Dalits*. Similar to general membership, there is no representation of staff from *Madeshis* and *Muslims*.

Initiating, organizing and leading the land and agrarian rights movement/campaign from Sindupalchowk district at a very micro-level 18 years ago, CSRC is now an organization of national repute primarily because of its movement/campaign expansion into 53 districts. Of late, CSRC has turned into a resource center and a coordinating organization of the land and agrarian movement/campaign which is being led by the National Land Rights Forum (NLRF--an organization of tenant and landless farmers-- facilitated by a coalition of NGO partners and Community-based Organizations (CBOs).

With the support of strategic partners (SPs), CSRC and its coalition partners channelize financial, institutional and technical inputs to the NLRF (including D/VLRFs) embedded with the objective of strengthening and enabling developing and launching movements/campaigns from village to national levels. As a corollary, a number of achievements have already

been made in the past. These comprise: inclusion of land reform in the interim constitution and Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA), inclusion of land reform in both three year interim plans (2007-2013), recognition of land as a means for protecting human rights and achieving peace, formulation of three major policies (namely, national land use policy, joint land ownership, and bonded labor prohibition in the case of *Haruwa/Charuwa*- ploughman and cattle herder on bondage) and drafting of the national land policy, mobilization of tillers and landless farmers, transfer of land from landlords to tillers, promotion of non-violence and democratic practices, establishment of movement funds, and alliance building and networking.

1.4 Principal Activities, Budgets and Donors

Major activities planned by CSRC for four and half years were pursuant to StOP and presented in annual work plans and budgets (AWAB) during 2009-2013. In so doing, utmost attention was paid for achieving the five outputs in the StOP prepared in 2009. These comprised: **(i)** organizing, strengthening, and mobilizing rights-holders to claim and exercise their rights; **(ii)** developing and implementing clarity and consensus about land reform policy and frameworks suitable to the needs and realities of Nepal; **(iii)** establishing critical engagement with non-state stakeholders in land and agricultural issues; **(iv)** learning generated from ground level actions and practices, and disseminating knowledge at all levels; and **(v)** introducing new land policies guaranteeing women and men equal rights to own land. Succinctly put, the output targets have focused primarily on land and agrarian rights movements, local initiatives for practice of land and agrarian reform and agricultural cooperatives and productivity, policy discussion and change, human resource development and mobilization, and networking and institutional development.

The overall 'global' budget earmarked by CSRC for the period of four and half years is NPR 194,923,526 of which NPR 155,296,262 (79.6%) had been allocated for program costs and NPR 39, 627,264 (20.4%) had been allocated for operational costs. The SPs who committed financial support as per the MoU included DanidaHUGOU, AAIN, Care Nepal, Oxfam, LWF and SDC generally released financial resources on time (barring a couple of exceptions).

1.5 Data and Methods

The evaluation has used both primary and secondary sources of information. For gathering primary data, a 12-day fieldwork was carried out in 14 districts, namely, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Sindupalchowk, Nawalparasi, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, Kanchanpur, and Baitadi. Key informant interviews (both at national and sub-national levels), focus group discussions (FDGs) with rights holders in visited districts, case studies and observations were the principal techniques of gathering primary data which were predominantly qualitative in nature. The secondary data was obtained by reviewing quarterly and annual progress reports, JARs and other relevant publications/studies from CSRC and strategic partners. Financial and RBME quantitative data were also provided by CSRC for review and analysis. The analysis of large corpus of qualitative data was primarily done using the "thematic classification system". On the whole, a multi-method approach was adopted for the triangulation of data with a view to providing a sound basis of analysis.

1.6 Organization of the Report

The report has been organized into three major chapters. The first chapter presents the backdrop, objectives and scope of review, introduction to CSRC, principal activities, budgets and donors, and data and methods. The second chapter presents elaborate discussion on the analysis and findings on CSRC's performance and strategic partnerships. Finally, the third chapter presents conclusions and recommendations.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter forms the kernel of the whole evaluation. It basically consists of two major sections, i.e., CSRC performance and strategic partnerships. The evaluation of CSRC's performance contains analysis and findings on the achievements of implementation (results, outputs, outcomes, and impacts), most significant changes, unintended outcomes and impacts, efficiency in achieving outputs, effectiveness in achieving outcomes and impacts, cost-effectiveness of outcomes and impacts, relevance of the program, sustainability of benefits and organizational sustainability, mainstreaming of gender and social inclusion, conflict transformation and accountability, organizational development, and good practices and learning points. The evaluation of strategic partnerships includes an analysis and findings on ownership, alignment, coordinated efforts, transparency, respect and trust, focus on results, mutual accountability and transaction costs.

2.1 CSRC Performance

2.1.1 Implementation Achievements

An attempt has been made to assess the results achieved by CSRC in light of the organization's Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) framework. In so doing, analyses of findings have been presented by referring to the baseline figures (where available) and then comparing the total targets of four and half years with their achievements. Results have been analyzed in terms of outputs, outcomes and impacts. In so doing, an attempt has been made to draw extensively on the annual reviews also as mandated by the ToR. However, unlike the reports of Joint Annual Reviews (JARs) where most of the empirical substantiation were also presented under the output-wise analysis, much of these are squarely presented under a different rubric 'the most significant changes' (which was conspicuously missing in the reviews) and other relevant sections in the condensed form of this evaluation report just to avoid tautological expressions. Again the analyses of this section have to be considered

in relation to the other three subsequent sub-sections, i.e., efficiency in achieving outputs, efficiency in achieving outcomes and impacts, and cost-effectiveness of outcomes and impacts.

Outputs:

Output 1: Rights holders (land-poor women and men) organized, strengthened, and mobilized to claim and exercise their rights

Progress data made available by CSRC have amply demonstrated that during the program implementation period (2009-1013), NLRF has been considerably strengthened from its infancy the present land rights movement—a function of the regular facilitative role of CSRC in the process of its institutional expansion. The process of organizing, strengthening and mobilizing to claim and exercise people's land rights has continued throughout CSRC's annual plans. For instance, apropos of organizing, in 2008, there were a total of 34 districts with NLRF chapters, i.e. DLRFs, but now they have increased to 53, which is phenomenal growth. Similarly, there were 257 Village Development Committee (VDCs) with VLRFs in 2008, which increased to 538 during the program period. Similarly, the number of households covered by land rights campaign was only 5, 1035 in 2008, which increased to 23,825. In 2008, there were only 1,328 VLRFs (with 15,035 members), which increased to 2,667 with a total membership of 74,860. Of these 74,860 members, 49.6 percent are females, 42.3 percent are *Dalits* and 24.3 percent *Janajatis*. CSRC mobilized its trained and capable staff/activists for paralegal assistance, alliance building and networking in communities, districts and regions to support the genuine cause of land rights holders. More specifically, there were only 130 trained activists in 2008 but an additional 184 were trained during the program period.

CSRC made an institutional attempt to establish a firm connection between local movements and national policy dialogues

and process (through micro-macro linkage). Gradually, CSRC had been linking the land rights movement with livelihood opportunities and cooperatives. For instance, there were only 13 cooperatives (with 390 members) in 2008, which increased to 82 (with a total of 5,483 members). Indeed, the achievement of targets in this regards had been stupendous (182%). The number of households which benefitted from agro-based entrepreneurship was only 300 in 2008 but during the program period, another 3,407 were reached, which is 35.8 percent achievement of the target. In 2008, the number of petitions filed by tenants was 28,489 of which 14,423 were settled. During the program period, it was planned to have 16,216 petitions filed and 12,645 of them to be settled. But only 3,238 petitions were filed (a minimal achievement of the target, that is, nearly 20%) and only 947 cases were settled. Likewise, in 2008, the number of petitions filed by landless people was 53,096, of which only 66 were settled. During the program period, it was planned to have a total of 43,356 petitions filed and 12,718 of them to be settled. In reality, a total of 112,133 petitions were added, a significant increase but less than half (47.35%) of the targets were settled. Village learning centers established with the institutional support of CSRC had been instrumental in empowering local land-poor communities through critical thinking.

A total of five national campaigns were organized before 2008 with the participation of 28,000 land-poor men and women. These were: **(i)** tenancy case filings and settling campaigns in nine districts (during which 15,296 tenancy cases were filed and 4,145 were settled in 2005); **(ii)** campaign against Land Bank Program of government (2005); **(iii)** a five-day long sit-in by *Haliyas* (demanding their entitlement over land and emancipation from bondage, 2006); **(iv)** national sit-in program in front of the Prime Minister's Office (2007), and **(v)** a 14-day sit-in program held in open theater (2008).

During the StOP implementation, a total of 10 other national campaigns were organized (four more than the six events planned) which

were participated in by more than 100,000 people. These 10 major campaigns included the following: **(i)** campaign for mobilizing the team of Constituent Assembly (CA) members including Vice-Chair of CA, political leaders, media representatives and academicians and organizing them into three groups for visiting CSRC work areas; **(ii)** organizing a sit-in at the District Administration Offices in Siraha and Saptari districts by over 2,000 *Haruwas/Charuwas* demanding a half (1/2) hectare of cultivable land, guaranteeing the right to education for their children and alleviating all forms of bondage debt; **(iii)** a 10-day long bicycle rally for land rights deprived people in Banke protesting against the eviction of tillers from their land; **(iv)** organizing a campaign on the slogan “Stand Up and Take Action” on the occasion of World Poverty Day in various districts; **(v)** organizing the *Kisan Jagaran Yatra* (farmers awareness march) in Baitadi, Kanchanpur, Kailali, Dadeldhura, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Dhanusha, Bara, Siraha and Saptari districts; **(vi)** organizing a rally by *Haruwa/Charuwa* rights forums of Siraha and Sapatari districts for their rehabilitation process; **(vii)** organizing a campaign for visiting the offices of major political parties for alerting them to address the land rights of land poor in the constitution (to be drafted); **(viii)** organizing *Biswash Yatra* (March for raising confidence of the movement for rights) by *Haliya* of Dadeldhura and Baitadi districts; **(ix)** organizing *Hairani Abhiyan* (a form of continuous campaign creating obstacles to the government) was carried nationwide pressurizing for the timely distribution of ‘Landless Identity Cards’ (VLRFs did follow-up on daily basis at landless commissions continuously for 83 days); and **(xi)** organizing campaigns for the protection of *Churiya* and land rights of *Churiya* area inhabitants. In reality, all of these campaigns have succeeded in pressurizing the government to be heedful to the voices/demands of the land-poor and, as a corollary, it was bound to make land rights-related policy initiatives with the potential of ramifications on equitable access to land and tenure security for improved livelihoods (for the land poor).

Output 2: Clarity and consensus about land reform established and land reform policy and frameworks suitable to the needs and realities of Nepal developed and implemented

A national level multi-stakeholder dialogue/interaction was organized by CSRC for policy reform and enactment of new policies/laws, including establishment of a land reform commission. A total of 45 participants (against 33 targets) representing the government, civil society organizations, NLRF, collaborating partners, and CSRC contributed to the dialogue/interaction process. Similarly, district/regional level dialogues/interactions were also organized on the same issues/themes during different years of the program where representation was from the same areas. A total of 369 participants (against a target of 265) from similar areas took part in the deliberations for the same issues.

It has also been ascertained that CSRC had targets to increase its national and international alliances with 10 organizations during the program period. There were only two international organizations in 2008, i.e. the International Land Coalition (ILC) and Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC). This was increased to six other international organizations during the implementation of the StOP, i.e., Forum Asia, Ektaparisad, Leitner Centre, Program on Women’s Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (PWESCR), Initiatives International, and South Asian Peace Alliance (SAPA). The one national organization with which it extended its relationship was Natural Resources Management (NRM) Confederation. Thus, 70 percent of target has been achieved.

There was only one VDC adopting the alternative model of land reform, i.e. Ramche VDC of Sindupalchowk district in 2008. During the program period, another four VDCs were added, i.e., Laxminiya VDC (Mahottari), Hardiya VDC (Saptari), Hansposha VDC (Sunsari), and Gangaparaspur VDC of Dang district. During 2013, community-led land reform has been further expanded in Sahare VDC of Surkhet, Paduka VDC of Dailekh, and Jogbuda VDC of Dadeldhura.

Output 3: Critical engagement established with non-state stakeholders (such as IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and multinational companies) involved in land and agrarian issues

CSRC management stated that it has initiated organizing bilateral and multilateral meetings for critical engagement. These included Asian Development Bank, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Department for International Development and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Food and Agriculture Organization and United Nations Women. There was mutual sharing with these organizations on land and agrarian rights, policies and practices. On the one hand, CSRC, as a civil society organization, was provided with an opportunity to share its national initiatives on land and agrarian rights and on the other, it also succeeded in having access to policy documents on land and agrarian issues. Given the fact that no significant headway was made for achieving the results of this third output (which could be attributed to the lack of CSRC's strategic direction and concrete action and the predominant tilt of non-state stakeholders towards market-oriented economic policies favoring land as a commodity only), the 2012 joint annual review report suggested CSRC to merge this with output 2.

Output 4: Learning generated from ground level actions and practices and dissemination of knowledge at all levels

Prior to the implementation of the program, CSRC had conducted only three issue-based studies for the generation of knowledge as follows: (i) *Haruwa-Haliya -Bonded Labour, 2006*; (ii) *Land Rights in Nepal, Present Reality and Strategies for the Future (2003)*; and (iii) *Land Resource-related Study in Chure (2007)*. Findings were disseminated among stakeholders. During program implementation, another five issue-based studies were conducted as follows: (i) *Land and Land Tenure Security in Nepal (2009)*; (ii) *Empowering the Disempowered Tenant Farmers: A Study of the Impact of People-centered Advocacy for Land Tenancy Rights in*

Nepal (2009); (iii) *Land Tenure and Agrarian Reforms in Nepal (2010)*; (iv) *Women's Access to Land and Land Grabbing (2012)*; and (v) *Converting Agricultural Land to Non-Agriculture Use (2012)*. Eighty three percent (83%) achievement of the target had been made in conducting these issue-based studies during the program period.

There was only one resource centre in 2008 but during the program period four other resource centers were established (this was the target). CSRC was developed as a 'national level resource centre' to promote a culture of learning and sharing amongst activists, researchers, experts and other stakeholders. CSRC had published a total of 89 learning materials in 2008; it added another 45 during program period implementation (78.6% achievement). Succinctly put, advocacy materials, periodic progress reports, journals, bulletins on land rights (i.e. *Bhumiadhhikar*), social audit reports, posters, books, booklets, study reports, and documents on land rights violation cases have played an instrumental role in disseminating learnings generated from the ground. The regular sharing of the weekly email updates among campaign stakeholders is also important for knowledge generation and dissemination.

Output 5: New land policies introduced guaranteeing women and men equal rights to own land

CSRC had only one target of pressurizing the government to enact a new land policy guaranteeing women and men equal rights to own land which was fully realized during the program implementation period — a function of a number of land rights campaign initiatives launched by the NLRF with the support of CSRC and its allies. For instance, in February 2010, regional women's gatherings were organized in Baglung, Banke, Kailali, and Sunsari where more than 600 women participated. The theme was, "Half males half females: Equal rights in land". They ended up in setting a declaration for ensuring the gender equity in the land resource in the constitution (to be drafted). This comprised: (i) full constitutional guarantee of women

farmers' rights including their economic rights; **(ii)** no discrimination in wages for similar labor and social protection; **(iii)** equal rights for women to ancestral land and property; **(iv)** equitable access to land for the land-poor; **(v)** safe housing to all poor; **(vi)** making arable land available to the land-poor for livelihood by the government; **(vii)** joint ownership of land for males and females; **(viii)** discount in the registration of land in the names of women; and **(ix)** 50 percent representation of women in all decision-making bodies of the state from local to the central levels, etc.

Multi-stakeholder dialogues/interactions were exceeded in 14 districts with focus on new land policies to be introduced guaranteeing women and men equal rights to own land. Three major campaigns were organized during the StOP for pressurizing the government to guarantee women and men equal rights to own land. These included the following: **(i)** organizing an 11-day long Rural Women's March to ensure land rights; **(ii)** organizing national land rights movement demanding a timely constitution and land reform including land entitlements to women (with participation of 1000 women frontline leaders of 50 districts in 2010); and **(iii)** launching a joint land ownership campaign in 53 districts (upon the announcement of the government policy in the Budget Speech of 2010/11—an outcome of women's campaigns/gatherings culminating in dialogue with the government in 2010). In 2008, there were a total of 1,032 women with access to land. During the StOP implementation, 1,586 were added. There was no baseline data on the number of families with joint land ownership but during the StOP implementation period, there were a total of 674—a direct function of the campaign.

In September 2005, the first 'National Conference on Women's Rights over Land' was organized (a baseline). The thematic slogan was, "*Rise-up tiller men, rise-up tiller women! Land to the tiller, tiller be the owner*". At this conference there were 250 people from 38 districts and international organization (such as Ekta Parishad India) culminating in the declaration of strategies and further

actions to be undertaken. During the StOP implementation period, a follow-up second 'National Conference of Women Farmers' was held during March 2013 at Thimura, Chitwan with the participation of 162 women from 48 districts. It was jointly organized by the NLRP and CSRC. The focus of the Conference was "*Women's Land Ownership and Identity: Livelihood and Self-dignity*". Major objectives included: **(i)** enhance knowledge of frontline leaders to strengthen the women and land rights campaign; **(ii)** share and exchange learning and experiences of rural women frontline leaders and bring forth the issues of women and land rights; **(iii)** formulate effective strategies and programs for the implementation of joint land ownership campaigns; and **(iv)** initiate a debate to ensure that the issue of women and land rights on policy and planning happens with political parties, concerned stakeholders, agency/organization and media,. The conference was successful in raising the voice of land-poor and women farmers in the domain of ensuring equitable land rights and announcing action points to be followed by the campaign with a focus on gender equity on land as a resource.

Outcome:

The outcome of the program specified in RBME is that, "Pro-poor land reform has promoted security of tenure of land-poor women and men in meaningful participation of their networks and organizations". The number of landless families who had received land before 2008 was 1065. During the program implementation, an additional 9,491 families received land. When the target data on this indicator of the 'number of landless families who received land' are compared with the progress data, CSRC has reached 45 percent of target. Sociologically speaking, the relatively moderate level of achievement of the impact and outcomes can be attributed to a number of issues. 1) the prolonged political transition culminating in the demise of the constituent assembly (without writing the constitution which was expected to comprise clauses pertaining to

scientific land reform which would then result in the amendment of Land Acts favoring CSRC impact/outcomes). **2)** the absence of a democratically elected powerful government resulting in the slow implementation of the agreed 13 point action plan for land reform formulated on the basis of two reports of the High Level Land Reform Commissions (HLLRCs) constituted in the past which are related to CSRC impacts/outcomes. **3)** the dissolution of the landless commission by the current caretaker government and failure of the political parties to translate their slogan “Land to the Tillers” with commitment, etc. These StOP impacts and outcomes could only be realized with higher achievement of targets provided there was synergy of the work of the constituent assembly, political parties, government and civil society organizations.

Another indicator under the outcome used in the RBME framework was the ‘number of landless families productively utilizing public land’. During the baseline, there were only 402 families utilizing public land but this increased to 3,471 during the program period. The comparison shows a stupendous achievement (186.21% or target) for this indicator. This was the direct consequence of the increased awareness of the rights holders on the value of public land through community land reform practices and collective farming initiated with the innovative thinking of CSRC and its support for inputs needed for agricultural development and implementation of the planned activities by the VLRFs and DLRFs under the leadership of the NLRF.

On another outcome indicator, i.e. ‘increased female-headed households with legal entitlement on land and a house’, no significant achievements were recorded. During the baseline, there were a total of 1032 female-headed households with legal entitlement to land and a house, and during the program implementation period, another 1,586 had been added. But when the achievement data are compared with the target data, the progress appears to be nearly 39 percent of target—a function of the difficulty in generating awareness among local community members,

due to the prevalence of strong patriarchal values, at a short period of time and relative weakness of concerted campaign in every cluster of settlements in 53 program districts. Learning from the present experience, CSRC must make a concerted institutional effort for the intensification of the campaign for joint land ownership certificates because what has been achieved hitherto has been only symbolic. There is now a need to increase this up to 10,000 per year by making joint land entitlement an issue of all concerned for women’s economic empowerment. The government must also develop a program to visit villages by its officials for supporting CSRC-facilitated campaigns for a couple of weeks every year through the issuance of joint land certificates. Civil society organizations must also extend their support to translate the government policy into reality. Doing this would help to achieve the realistically set targets. Otherwise, formulation of a policy for joint land ownership alone will not work for ensuring gender equity in land resources.

Another outcome indicator was a ‘decrease in displacement/eviction’. During the baseline, there was zero prevention from displacement and eviction. However, a total of 7,899 families were **prevented from eviction** from their settlements during the program implementation as a result of organization building and empowerment through conscientization on the issues of rights with focus on land rights and legal dimensions/processes in the areas of landless settlements. Another outcome indicator was ‘tenants and landless farmers capable of influencing state policies and laws governing land resources’. During the period of the program, three policies were finalized as follows: **(i)** National Land Use Policy; **(ii)** Joint Land Ownership; and **(iii)** Bonded Labor Prohibition in the case of *Haruwa/Charuwa* (ploughman and cattle herder on bondage). The National Land Policy was drafted and circulated among experts and stakeholders for their review. This was as a result of the land rights movement.

Impacts:

The anticipated impact of the program specified in the RBME is, “The securing of equitable access to land has ensured a better livelihood of land-poor women and men”. RBME data made available by CSRC shows that a total of 14,489 land-poor families had access to improved food sufficiency prior to 2008, and during the StOP implementation another 14,882 families have access to improved food sufficiency. Compared with the CSRC targets, this achievement comes at approximately 60 percent of target, which is indicative of the fact that much remains to be done to realize the future impact. The reasons for this moderate achievement were presented in the outcome indicator section because of their interconnectedness (*see the preceding section*).

2.1.2 Most Significant Changes

(i) Macro Level Policy Initiatives by Government

a. Policy Change for the Preparation of the Action Plan by the Government for Land Reform

In 2011, the government belatedly published two reports on land reform prepared by the High Level Land Reform Commissions (HLLRCs) as per the demands of the land rights campaign agreed to by the government. Then, the government issued a policy directive to form a working committee to study these reports by including representatives from both CSRC and the NLRP. This committee developed a 13 point action plan from the main recommendations for their gradual implementation. These 13 recommendations included: **(a)** minimization of inequitable distribution of land; **(b)** tenancy rights and ownership; **(c)** the management of *Guthi* (trust) land and *Guthi* property; **(d)** the management of the registration of unregistered land as per the prevailing law of the land; **(e)** formulation of national land policy and land use policy; **(f)** the management of housing and land use; **(g)** discouragement of

absentee landlordism and emphasis on the utilization of public waste land; **(h)** protection of government public land; **(i)** land market and prohibition of foreign investment in land market; **(j)** professionalization of agriculture and industrialization; **(k)** improvement of land administration and management (with administrative reform, real decentralization of power, legal and judicial reform for land management, and technical reform); **(l)** management of land tax; and **(m)** establishment of land bank based on co-operative.

The action plan contains main recommendations, activities specified for implementing these recommendations, responsible agencies, processes of implementing the activities, period of implementation (short-term, mid-term and long-term), indicators which could be monitored and agencies responsible for monitoring. However, the government has begun the work to implement the first recommendation only by collecting land data from the field—a function of the political transition being prolonged due to the intransigent stance and incessant bickering of the political parties over trivialities. The first recommendation also includes activities for setting a new land holding ceiling, determining the actual size of the land to be distributed (after acquiring the excess land above the ceiling and other land that can be acquired by the state), increasing the access of women to land, increasing the access of landless farmers, agricultural laborers, *Dalits*, indigenous ethnic groups and socially and economically disadvantaged groups to land or housing. Besides land data collection, these other activities are not being implemented.

b. Formulation of National Land Use Policy

One of the demands of the land rights movement to the government of Nepal had been for the formulation of a National Land Use Policy specifying land for farming, housing/settlements, and industrial activities.

Productive arable land is being converted into housing/settlements areas and industrial estates with negative bearing on the production of agricultural commodities needed for feeding a burgeoning population. Such recent trends have also been discouraging farming practices. The government has now formulated a 'National Land Use Policy', approved in June 2013. The policy states that the land of Nepal will be classified on the basis of texture, productive capacity, appropriateness, and necessity within nine years, i.e. by 2022). Land area will be classified as: **(a)** agricultural ; **(b)** residential; **(c)** industrial ; **(d)** forest; **(e)** public use; and **(f)** other (as per the necessity). The land use policy has envisaged a plan for the control and management of land fragmentation through consolidation, planned urbanization, maintenance of greenery areas in the cities and professionalization of agriculture (through professional farming, co-operative farming and farming on lease). The policy asserts that land that remains uncultivated for three consecutive years will be confiscated by the government.

c. Drafting of a National Land Policy

A multi-stakeholder policy dialogue at the national level, including government, for policy reform or enactment of new policies and ensuring the democratic governance in land administration and management was emphasized by CSRC in its StOP. Finally, the government of Nepal has drafted a National Land Policy and shared this among stakeholders (including CSRC and NLRF) and other experts for their inputs. The draft policy includes inputs from CSRC/NLRF, e.g. the goal is the equitable distribution and optimum utilization of land and good governance for economic prosperity and qualitative change in the living standards of people. Of the five objectives, three are directly related to the land rights movement facilitated by CSRC, i.e. **(a)** to ensure land tenure, land ownership and land rights; **(b)** to ensure equitable access of citizens to land; and **(c)** to ensure good governance in land administration and management. This has been one of the significant changes introduced by CSRC

d. Policy Initiative for Joint Land Ownership Certificates

A week-long demonstration in Kathmandu by 1,000 land-poor women backed by 100 men under the leadership of the NLRF with facilitation and resource support from CSRC, compelled the government to agree to begin a policy initiative for joint ownership of land. In the annual plans and programs of the government of Nepal published for the fiscal year 2010/11, a policy was developed for joint land ownership certificates registered in the name of a husband which could be prepared by paying the fee of Rs.100. There is also a discount in the registration fee of land purchased by women (that is, 25 percent in urban areas, 30 percent in Hill areas, and 40 percent in the *Himali* region). This policy of the government has begun to end the gender disparity in land resource ownership and ensure equitable access to land resources for leading a dignified life.

e. Drafting of the Haruwa/Charuwa Policy and Announcement of Program in Budget Speech 2011/12

Both CSRC and the NLRF have been raising their voices against the exploitative social system of employing *Haruwas* (ploughmen) and *Charuwas* (cattle herders) by affluent landlords in Siraha and Saptari districts. With their support, a *Haruwa/Charuwa* rights forum was formed in 2008 to engage in campaigns against these practices. The campaigns took different forms, namely, sit-ins at District Administration Offices, press meetings in both districts, rallies and demonstrations at VDC offices of both districts, dialogues with leaders of different political parties, submission of memoranda with the Finance Minister, the Prime Minister, the Peace and Reconstruction Minister, Land Reform and Management Minister, and the National Human Rights Commission. As an aftermath of a long struggle waged by the *Haruwas/Charuwas*, the government announced a state policy in its budget speech for fiscal year 2011/12 with a clear-cut intention to identify,

prepare data, provide identity cards and plan for *Haruwas/Charuwas* rehabilitation by prohibiting continued feudalistic practices.

ii. Addressing the Issue of Land Reform in the Newly Crafted Agriculture Development Strategy

Albeit the initial reluctance of the government for the inclusion of CSRC (as a representative of civil society organizations working for land rights holders) in the formulation process of a new Agriculture Development Strategy, the organization was later given a space in the land thematic group for furnishing feedback/input—a result of the regular pressure/lobbying with the concerned Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. Finally, the land reform issue was included in the document—a function of incessant follow-up and pressure. The basic logic of CSRC was that any agriculture development strategy that would not entertain the measures for land reform would be a hypocrisy for the development of agriculture.

iii. Beginning of the Linking the Land Rights Movement to Livelihood Issues, Agricultural Women's Cooperatives and Community Land Reform Practices

There has been the realization from an analysis of ground level realities that intensification of the land rights movement/campaign would sustain itself only if it was linked to livelihood issues. Therefore, with the institutional support of CSRC, landless farmers have begun to utilize public land for collective farming where they have grown different types of seasonal vegetables, potatoes, ginger, turmeric, lentils, and wheat. Similarly, land-poor farmers have also begun co-operative farming by leasing-in land from Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) for specified periods with the commitment of paying a fraction of their total annual income, e.g. 10% was pledged by Chandra Surya Land Rights Forum of ward no.1 of Vediya VDC of Saptari district for a period of

10 years where 22 families produced vegetables and cereal crops).

CSRC has also taken community-led land reform practices in five VDCs of five districts, i.e. Gangaparaspur of Dang district of the mid-western development region, Laxminiya of Mahottari district and Ramche of Sindupalchowk district of the central development region and Hardiya of Saptari district and Hansposha of Sunsari district of the eastern development region. Significant outcomes of these practices comprised: **(a)** VDC level land use mapping and subsequent planning for productive utilization of public/waste land; **(b)** identification of landless and tenant farmer households by the VDCs with the participation of various stakeholders, including land rights activists; **(c)** utilization of fallow land to provide genuine landless farmers with land for individual and collective farming; **(d)** organizing regular meetings and dialogues about land reform at community and VDC levels with farmers and politicians; **(e)** development of frontline leaders to enhance knowledge about sustainable agriculture; **(f)** integration of land and agrarian reform processes together in order to develop a model from the ground; and **(g)** development of VDC level land and agrarian reform plans and implementation with the consensus of all political parties (CSRC, 2011:20).

Cooperatives have been the principal means for realizing and sustaining the rights of landless farmers over financial resources which are, the bases of power and self-confidence. Land-poor people from various district constituencies traditionally lack access to financial resources and are deprived of their benefits needed for their livelihood enhancement. Given the fact that capital is an important productive resource and is a source of power in an agrarian social structure, its generation and flow within land-poor communities to develop a self-reliant economy by themselves is of paramount importance (CSRC, 2009).

Field observation showed that most of the cooperatives had been operational in land-poor communities as CSRC institutional policy perspectives/rationale on cooperatives as

articulated above. Put in other words, these were found to be realized at the grassroots level. More specifically, land-poor people were supported for the formation of agricultural cooperatives through the institutional initiative of CSRC. A total of 82 agricultural cooperatives have been organized with a total 5,483 members.

Over the four and a half years period, these cooperatives have promoted economic self-sufficiency for their members (because there has been a reduction in dependence on local money lenders who used to charge exorbitant interest rates, e.g. more than 36 percent per annum; helped livelihood and family systems (through the investment of capital in agro-based entrepreneurship activities such as goat and pig-raising, vegetable farming, fish farming on the commercial scale in the land received under tenancy rights, etc.); promoted self-confidence (that members can also do beneficial economic work independently); developed social capital (in the organization and the embedded relations) and leadership; and promoted peace and camaraderie in member households and communities (because capital needed was available with no difficulty/tension)—a function of self-reliant culture.

More specifically, cooperatives have created opportunities for small savings (ranging from Rs. 5 to Rs. 50 per month including shares of Rs.100). There has been management of necessary capital to develop entrepreneurship (used for income generation as indicated above), increase in production, and contribution to the marketization of agricultural commodities. Additionally, they have helped women to make small expenses available for health, education and other household necessities during exigencies. On the whole, cooperatives have begun to work as “community’s banks” in most of the VLRFs visited.

Field observations have shown that these cooperatives have helped women to maintain their control over economic resources, make independent decisions, change the traditional roles and responsibilities within households and communities (they began often holding

meetings where they actively participated in decision-making at the community level) and realized their potential, i.e. they could also do something). Cooperatives have also changed the perspective of family and community members towards women and helped to change recognition of their potential in economic empowerment and leadership development. Cooperatives have helped to promote camaraderie among women (a form of social capital at the community level), self-confidence, identity and respect. On the whole, members have been motivated to be engaged in this campaign through sustained income where cooperatives had been relatively successful.

However, some of the cooperatives have not been successful in initiating agro-based entrepreneurship and contributing towards the marketization of agricultural products as anticipated at the outset of the StOP implementation. Cooperatives had been found to be largely playing the role of savings and credit groups. This limited role was triggered by a higher degree of focus of CSRC on campaigns and less institutional effort made in linking these groups to government and non-government agricultural offices for having regular access to agricultural inputs needed for the genesis of agro-based entrepreneurs and development.

iv. Initiation of Provisioning the Certificates of Tillage to the Informal Tenants by VDCs

Of late, CSRC has been supporting the NLRF and its district and village chapters for provisioning certificates of tillage to informal tenants (sharecroppers) who might have tilled the land before 1995, to those who have been currently tilling and also to those who have been tilling after 1995. Whatever the case, these farmers are unregistered at the concerned government offices due to a lack of any supporting documents such as receipts from payment of *Kuts* (agricultural rents). As an aftermath of intensive lobbying among major political parties at the district and VDC

levels leading to an all-party consensus (at both levels) on the urgency and immediacy of the need for the verification of the tillage with the issuance of certificates, the process has begun more aggressively in Sindupalchowk (where the work is complete in 10 VDCs), Dang and Sunsari districts. More simplistically, once the VDC level all-party consensus mechanism verifies tillage, VDC secretaries issue certificates and send copies to the District Land Revenue, Land Reform and Cadastral Survey Offices. The embedded objective of this campaign has been to help informal tenants claim their stake in a piece of land tilled for years through the eventual change of policy or government land laws.

v. Fledgling National Land Rights Forum: An Aftermath of Incessant CSRC Institutional Support for its Strengthening

“*Manchle Khutta Teko*” was what the CSRC Program Manager gladly shared during his interaction with the Program Evaluator. His intention was to share the high degree of satisfaction at the end of four and a half years of the land rights movement program because the NLRF (a real land-poor people’s organization) has begun to stand on its own—a result of gaining relative independence in its institutional move (which has always been the goal of CSRC) for the promotion of rights for land-poor women and men. The NLRF’s activities have grown exponentially from 34 to 53 districts in a short period of four and a half years. The Executive Director of CSRC added, “*Until last year, the NLRF officials had relatively high dependence on CSRC for policy dialogue with concerned ministers and policy officials and representatives of major political parties*”. He further added, “*They used to ask CSRC officials the following questions: (i) what should we do?; how should we work?, and what is your suggestion?*”. But now they have gained relative confidence in dealing with top government policy people and political party heavyweights for policy advocacy. However, they also solicit suggestions from CSRC.

Dozens of DLRFs have also started to independently lead the campaign which in the past used to work with the support of collaborating partners. With the organizing support of the NLRF, DLRFs have already organized more than 10 huge land rights gatherings with participation of thousands of land-poor women and men in different parts of the country. The overarching slogan of these gatherings has been “*secure housing to all, arable land to the tillers*”. A total of 13 declarations have been made during these gatherings. In a nutshell, these comprised the following: **(a)** no support to political parties which are inherently opposed to land reform; **(b)** constitutional guarantee of land rights in favor of tiller women and men and clear mention of land rights in the election manifestos of political parties; **(c)** immediate implementation of land reform action plan; **(d)** ensuring fundamental human right to secure housing and food by stopping eviction from settlements and tilled lands; **(e)** immediate distribution of land to landless farmers through landless commissions; **(f)** initiation of debate to implement land reform through local governments and communities by handing over technical responsibilities only to the concerned government offices; **(g)** initiation of alternative community-led land reform (due to the failure of past centralized land reform efforts); **(h)** no agrarian reform without land reform and no increase of agricultural yield without agrarian reform; **(i)** intensification of campaigns in each settlement for joint land ownership certificates; **(j)** no eviction of tillers from land (on whatsoever pretext); **(k)** strong protest against the nominal benefits being given to certified tenants in the guise of reconciliation between landlords and tenants under the auspices of land reform offices; **(l)** no use of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes; and **(m)** immediate suspension of corrupt officials working at the land-related offices (otherwise crusades would be waged against them).

On the whole, the process of institutionalization is moving forward in a positive manner. Both the NLRF and its district chapters have begun and nurtured a mandatory institutional culture of organizing social audits. All district

level executive committees (called district councils in their common parlance), as well as, the central ones are democratically elected by holding general assemblies. A similar process is adopted and practiced at the village/ community level.

vi. Initiative of Collaborative Work and Development of Distinctive Identity of CSRC

There has been an increase in the institutional culture of working collaboratively with other national and international organizations which definitely augurs well for future people-centered advocacy. CSRC and NLRF work with the government for new policy initiatives and their effective and timely implementation (as indicated above) for equitable access to housing and cultivable land for improved livelihood. Government agencies seek suggestions from senior management of CSRC and even use data for new policy/action initiatives. This is a matter of great satisfaction because in the past CSRC's voices were hardly entertained. Both CSRC and the NLRF have begun to link the land rights issue to economic, social and cultural rights of people and have, thus, taken the initiative to work with other national civil society organizations (such as INSEC and FIAN) for the realization of these rights. CSRC also works with the Consortium for Land Research and Policy Dialogue for national level land-related policy debate through exchange of opinions at national level workshops. Both CSRC and NLRF are members of the International Land Coalition (ILC) and Asian Farmers' Association (AFA) for Sustainable Rural Development and this relationship has helped for internationalization of issues pertaining to the land rights movement of Nepal. In this regard, CSRC also works with the Centre for International Human Rights, USA. NLRF has also been linked to an international organization known as the 'Agri-terra'. CSRC (a resource organization for NLRF, an enabler and a facilitator) has gained a distinctive identity both nationally and internationally

as an organization working for people-led agrarian reform for the rights of the land-poor.

vii. Empowerment at the Individual and Community Levels

The process of organizing, mobilizing and educating land-poor women and men has resulted in the empowerment of individuals and communities. Most frequently, during interactions with the Evaluator, local land-poor women and men from Baitadi district, in the far-west, and Morang district, in the eastern most part of Nepal, articulated in an unanimous voice that the whole process of the land rights movement has individually empowered them. Women from Nawalparasi, Kailali, and Baitadi districts shared, "*We were hesitant to share our names with outsiders prior to the joining of the Village Land Rights Forums. We were not allowed to participate in public meetings. We used to spend our time by discharging household chores. We even did not know the location of VDC offices. We were ignorant. Often we were scared to participate in public programs. Now we can clearly articulate our problems/grievances regarding land rights with outsiders, landlords, government officials and representatives of political parties. Now, we threaten the politicians who are opposed to our land rights. All this is the function of the support of DLRFs and CSRC, their regular training support activities, village learning centers and our regular participation in campaign activities. The whole process has emboldened us*".

In Terai districts, there is a traditional system of *Purdha*, (a veil system to exclude women from public life). Participation in public domain activities and interaction with outsiders was diametrically inconceivable prior to joining the land rights forums. Now these traditionally secluded women have been capacitated by the DLRFs, activists, and CSRC as well as their collaborating partners on their rights, critical thinking and peaceful and non-violent resistance. They can easily interact with outsiders (representatives of NLRF, CSRC,

collaborating partners, and government officials); some of them even have been land rights activists and members of D/VLRFs. In some cases, these women have also become the chairpersons of the DLRFs, e.g. in Siraha DLRF. This is one of the greatest changes in women's worlds in one of the most conservative caste-stratified society. These land-poor women feel tremendously empowered in their lives. Individual empowerment can be equally seen among land-poor men. A *Mushar* activist from Saptari said, *"I have the right to public land as a citizen of this country. I can confront the police mobilized for eviction of the poor Mushars. I even had a direct conversation with the Police Inspector. This would have been impossible in the past without my empowerment from the VLRF"*.

Similarly, given the fact that rights holders have been organized, they also feel empowered at the community level because they now have the capacity and spirit to resist the oppression of landlords and government officials such as forest offices, which is a direct consequence of the capacity building efforts by CSRC, activists, and DLRFs, efforts that include contextual and power analysis, identification of land rights issues, critical thinking, and planning at the learning centers (all are ideological moorings of people-centered advocacy). Local unity among rights holders has been their greatest strength. For instance, farmers of Helambu of Sindupalanchok shared that they do not give *Kut* (agricultural rent) to the landlords until they issue receipts. A DLRF woman member of Baridya said, *"I am ready to be arrested by the Chief District Officer in the course of the campaign for fighting for land rights because I know that there is a strong organization behind me which can easily mobilize 5,000 members demanding my immediate release"*. Most *Mushars* (traditional landless agricultural laborers of the *Terai*) living on public land can easily foil the forest department's attempts to evict them forcefully as they are organized in VLRFs and can assert their right to secure housing (a fundamental human right to be given by the state). They unanimously say, *"We are not asking for anyone's mercy and charity. Rather we are demanding our*

rights to be respected and fulfilled". Their local "identity" has been created with the organization and therefore, the traditional disrespectful treatment by the powerful ones (be they local landlords or government officials) is gradually being reduced. Given the fact that they are empowered at the community level, they have succeeded in increasing the wage rate of agricultural labor in villages/communities. (Prior to joining the land rights campaign, on average, Rs.150 used to be paid by local employers. Currently, the average rate has been reported to be Rs.320). At present, they are unwilling to work at the rate of the landlords, a result of the increased bargaining power for their wages triggered by the land rights empowerment process.

viii. Creation of Awareness among the Land Poor for the Acquisition of Citizenship Certificates: A Ripple Effect of the Land Rights Movement

Interestingly, when the land rights movement was intensified in Bardiya district of mid-western *Terai*, through context mapping, leaders of the DLRFs and activists came to know that non-acquisition of citizenship certificates was a serious problem among *Dalits* and *Madeshis*. A citizenship certificate is a must for the registration of land in the names of owners/tenants/settlers. Even tenants with tillage certificates under the 1964 Lands Act did not have citizenship certificates because they were not required until 1976 for land registration. A campaign for the acquisition of citizenship certificates was launched in tandem with the land rights campaign through creation of awareness among *Dalits* and *Madeshis* in their respective settlement areas. This resulted in the importance of citizenship certificates among these land-poor, prompting them to acquire citizenship certificates by fulfilling official formalities at the VDC level. VDCs were also reluctant to certify their residence because they did not have land ownership certificates. But they yielded eventually to the pressure from D/VLRFs. A total of 1,383 men and women

acquired citizenship certificates through the campaign in Bardiya district. It has been learnt that this process has also started in Siraha and Saptari districts of eastern *Terai*.

ix. Local Initiatives for the Indigenization of the Land Rights Movement through the Mobilization of Local Economic Resources: A Ray of Hope for Sustainability

Empirical experiences have demonstrated that externally resourced movements are highly ephemeral. In CSRC's case, local community efforts for the creation of 'Movement Funds' (by collecting financial resources from among the members) for meeting the transportation cost of participants of the campaign and '*Muthi Chamal Sanklan*' (collection of rice, pulse and other needed vegetables by sparing from their regular meager household consumption) for feeding has, to some extent, generated a ray of hope for the indigenization of the land rights movement (because D/VLRFs do not have to depend on others for their organizational campaign activities).

Data made available by CSRC show that during the period of four and a half years, the total collection of movement funds had been NPRs 8,828,586 of which NPRs 6,141,176 had been utilized with the outstanding amount left at NPRs 2,687,410. The value of '*Muthi Chamal Sanklan*' had been calculated to be a total of NPRs 15,005,990. Similarly, local resources had also been mobilized for the construction of *Bhumi Ghars* (land homes) for the indigenization of the land rights movement. CSRC data show that DLRFs of nine districts had built their own *Bhumi Ghar*, i.e. Sunsari, Dhanusa, Mahottari, Sarlai, Rasuwa, Dang, Bardiya, Kailali, and Kanchanpur. The total value of these *Bhumi Ghars*, including the value of land, had been calculated to be NPRs 7,870,000. Similarly, 96 VLRFs had also constructed *Bhumi Ghars* and their value had been calculated to be NPRs 4,800,000. Presumably, this is a rare example of a

movement being launched in Nepal with the mobilization of indigenous resources, leading to the movement's sustainability.

During the past four and a half years, these afore-mentioned changes have been considered the **most significant**. On September 11, 2013, the Evaluator had asked the functionaries of the central executive committee of NLRF about significant changes they have experienced/observed during the same period of time. Albeit tautological, the Chairman, General Secretary and a Member succinctly summarized the changes as follows:

Case Box 1: Synthesized Ideas on Significant Changes in the Eyes of NLRF – the Leadership of the Land-Poor

"Self-confidence has increased to deal with land rights issues both at personal and community levels ever since the process of organizing and capacity building began at the community level. There is no fear among us now to express mundane realities confronted in our daily lives which was inconceivable before the birth of our organization. We have now succeeded in establishing the issue of land reform/rights at the policy level due to our personal and organizational empowerment. Land rights issues initially raised from two VDCs of Sindupalchowk of central hill district of Nepal has now reached 53 districts in the country with the support of frontline leaders, activists and full-time workers of the organization resourced and trained by CSRC. The issue is, for the first time in the land right movement's history of Nepal, being led by the oppressed land-poor themselves by forming an organization of their own. Besides being an enabler, CSRC has developed itself as a resource organization over the years. Joint land ownership certificates, enunciated as the policy of the government as a direct result of the land rights campaign, has begun to empower women at the household and community levels by increasing their self-confidence, social status, and sense of security. Village Land Right Forums have built their '*Bhumi Ghars*' (homes of land rights holders) on their own by mostly using their resources, turned them into learning centers and started to

generate ‘movement funds’— all being indicators of organizational sustainability. Women socialized through the inculcation of the age-old patriarchal values and confined to the four walls of the houses under ‘Purdha’ (veil system) have been organized and trained. They can hold dialogue with outsiders, which indicates an important change in the gendered society. Landless people are ready to fight logically if anyone comes from the government offices or communities (indicating the adversarial landed elites) to evict them without giving alternatives. With the support of CSRC, we have begun to link our land rights movement to livelihood issues such as initiation of women’s agricultural co-operatives, community land reform practices in public waste land, collective farming, etc. There has been an increase in self-employment and agricultural income among households receiving tenancy rights. Access to land has increased social identity and landless farmers have begun receiving certificates of temporary settlement and identity cards from Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Landless Commissions (now dissolved). Even informal tenants have begun to receive certificates of tillage from the VDCs (now in three districts out of 53 constituencies). We have begun claiming resources from local governments and other government and non-government offices for raising our living standard in our respective communities. Above all, organizing itself has been our greatest power ever and our numerical strength has been emboldening our spirits for equitable access to land leading to a free and dignified life. It has been our realization that dialogue backed by non-confrontational campaigns are the only way for sustainable resolution of all issues of the land rights movement in Nepal. We have developed a bottom-up planning process, and have now been nationally and internationally recognized for the issues we have raised. Despite all these changes, our leadership and institutional development processes must be strengthened by CSRC because of our fledgling state of evolution—a function of the conglomeration of poor and uneducated masses, perennially bereft of economic resources”.

2.1.3 Unintended Outcomes and Impacts

Unintended outcomes and impacts have been categorized by stakeholders into two categories, i.e. positive and negative. They have identified one major positive outcome/impact, i.e., the commencement of the system from VDCs to provide certificates, through an all-party consensus, of temporary settlement and tillage of landlords’ land to landless settlers of public lands and informal tenants (sharecroppers) which is yet to be backed up by appropriate policies and laws. This was neither planned nor ever pondered (hence, a serendipitous occurrence of a happening in the land rights program with potential beneficial effects to the land-poor).

Major unintended outcomes/impacts comprise the following:

- (i) Given the fact that the major activities related to the land rights movement and agrarian reform initiatives are related to the constitution of the country and the expectation of CSRC/NLRF (like other ordinary *Nepalis*) that it would be drafted on the stipulated time, setting the agenda of scientific land reform did not occur due to the demise of the first-ever democratically elected constituent assembly. Neither the government took any initiative to amend the existing Lands Act to incorporate such vital issues as land tenancy, security of housing for the landless and other agrarian reforms.
- (ii) Policy restraint for the distribution of 50 percent of land to the tenants under formal tenancy (as per the existing Lands Act) imposed five years ago has not been relaxed by the government, thereby creating an unfavorable situation for CSRC/NLRF to give benefits of the movement to the actual tillers.
- (iii) Slow implementation of the action plan for land and agrarian reform formulated after studying two reports of HLLRCs has also impeded CSRC/NLRF in realizing the goal of equitable access to land.

- (iv) The untimely demise of the ‘Landless Commission’ was unanticipated and this governmental action has been a setback for the distribution of identity cards and land to the genuine landless people, thereby obstructing CSRC and NLRF to achieve their mission.

2.1.4 Efficiency in Achieving Outputs

Efficiency, as analyzed in this evaluation, means the relationship of inputs/resources/procedures with outputs achieved in an optimal way, i.e. the optimal relationship of inputs and outputs of CSRC’s programs. Albeit efficiency in achieving of outputs in totality in CSRC’s program in four and half years’ time was a herculean task, there were a number of cases which showed that these had been achieved optimally during the same period, particularly where achievements were 100% and above. For example, in **output 1**, there had been 118.75 percent achievement in the expansion of districts with NLRF chapters followed by 112.4 percent increase in the number of VDCs with VLRFs. Similarly, there had been 118.56 percent increase in the number of households covered by land rights followed by 105 percent increase in VLRFs. Similarly, 182 percent achievement had been made in organizing agricultural co-operatives. In the same way, under **output 2**, 139 percent achievement had been made in organizing regional/district level multi-stakeholders’ dialogues/interactions followed by 136 percent in national level multi-stakeholders’ dialogues/interactions for policy revision or enactment of new policies and laws. Under **output 3**, there had been 185.4 percent achievement in the number of publications produced followed by 100 percent achievement in establishing resource centers and organizations. Under **output 4**, there had been 216 percent achievement in organizing national campaigns followed by 100 percent success in pressuring the government for announcing the new policy relating to women’s land rights. This empirical data are demonstrative of the fact that the inputs, resources, processes, and procedures used under the program had

succeeded in achieving the outputs in the most optimal way in the four and a half year period.

Regarding program efficiency, CSRC, in its recently prepared partnership completion report, shares, “A total of 9,128 households have received ownership certificates of 1,519.9 ha of land. A total of 894.27 ha of public land has been utilized by 5,754 landless farmer families for long-term purposes to improve their livelihood. The total monetary value of the land is NPR 159,948,245 and landless and tenant farmers gained more than 20 times the value of **investment**. Capacity-building, social prestige and dignity have not been calculated” (CSRC, 1013:12).

2.1.5 Effectiveness in Achieving Outcomes and Impact

Effectiveness, in this evaluation, is the assessment of whether the program has been useful in achieving its anticipated outcomes (objectives) and goals (impact). In other words, the analysis of effectiveness is centered on finding out the contributions of outputs to producing desired outcomes which then leads to impact. While analyzing the effectiveness in achievements of program outcomes, i.e. promoting security of tenure of land poor women and men through land reform, there are mixed results. In an isolated case, there had been stupendous achievement (186.21%) made in one of the indicators of the **program outcomes** (‘no. of landless families utilizing public land productively’). This was the direct consequence of increased awareness of the rights holders on the value of public land (for food security/livelihood) through community land reform practices and collective farming initiated through the innovative thinking of CSRC and its institutional grant supports/ inputs needed for agricultural development and implementation of planned activities by D/VLRFs under the leadership of the NLRF.

But for other indicators of outcome, achievements ranged from low to moderate in scale. For instance, there had been 60 percent achievement during the period of

StOP implementation (moderate) followed by nearly 39 percent achievement (relatively low) in increasing female-headed households with legal entitlements to land and a house and 41.1 percent (relatively low) in increasing the number of families receiving land. There had also been a moderate achievement in **impact** (i.e. the securing of equitable access to land has ensured a better livelihood for land-poor women and men). Data made available by CSRC show that there has been nearly a 60 percent increase in land-poor families having improved food sufficiency, which is due to increased access to land. Explanation of factors triggering the achievement from low to moderate ranges has been furnished in the preceding sub-section 2.1.1.

2.1.6 Cost-effectiveness of Outcomes and Impact

The total income received from the strategic partners during the program period was NPR 163,097,689. The largest chunk of financial resources was contributed by DanidaHUGOU (62%) followed by Action Aid International Nepal (11.9%), and Care Nepal (7.7%). The contribution of other strategic partners, albeit very important, had been relatively small in size (*see Table 1*)

Table 1: Total Income Received from Strategic Partners

Strategic Partners	Income Received
DanidaHUGOU	101,102,000
ActionAid Nepal	19,495,967
MS Nepal	9,600,000
Care Nepal	12,575,500
Canadian Cooperation Office (CCO)	3,928,000
Oxfam	3,098,788
Lutheran World Federation (LWF)	3,069,657
UNMC/MDG	900,373
Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)	8,955,259
Interest Income	372,145
Total Income	163,097,689

Cost-effectiveness has been analyzed by making a comparison of the percentage of budget allocated to program and management costs to percentage of actual expenditures on these headings and completion of targeted outputs within the budgeted limits during the period 2009-2013. Institutional initiatives can be labeled as cost-effective provided the percentage of actual expenditures is within the percentage range allocated in the budget and the targeted outputs are found to be realized within the limits of the budget. Granted this postulated base for the analysis of cost-effectiveness, achievement looks excellent because the degree of overall expenditures have been calculated to be 82.06 percent. The preceding analysis is indicative of the fact that the financial inputs have been utilized to produce the intended outcomes, i.e. promoting the security of the land-poor and impact, i.e. securing equitable access of land for better livelihoods of the land-poor.

More specifically, the degree of utilization of allocated financial resources for the program has been calculated to be 79.61 percent. But the total administrative management cost has been calculated to be 91.64 percent. Again if the total cost is reviewed output-wise, leaving output 3 aside, the degree of utilization is laudable. More specifically, the degree of utilization of financial resources is the highest in output 4 that is 87.32 percent followed by 80.15 in output 1, 68.49 in output 5, and 19.37 in output 3 where no significant headway could be made (*see Table 2*). The contribution to 'movement funds' and "Muthi Sankalan" (collection of foodstuff commodities by the rights holders for the campaigns/movements of all levels) has also been a significant factor to be duly considered for \ cost-effectiveness of the campaign (see the preceding analysis under significant changes).

Table 2: Input Allocation and Degree of Utilization Compared to Program Achievements (2009-2013)

Output/Activity	Budget (NPR)	% of budget	Expenses (NPR)	% of expenses	Degree of utilization % (*)
Output 1	77,714,854	50.04	62,287,632	50.38	80.15
Output 2	27,927,255	17.98	19,867,582	16.07	71.14
Output 3	1,539,000	0.99	298,045	0.24	19.37
Output 4	43,697,753	28.14	38,155,540	30.86	87.32
Output 5	4,417,400	2.84	3,025,329	2.45	68.49
Total Program Costs	155,296,262	100	123,634,128	100	79.61
M&E and Audit Costs	1,593,676	4.02	1,495,658	4.12	93.85
Staff Costs	24,615,966	62.12	22,762,146	62.68	92.47
Office Running Costs	5,976,499	15.08	5,268,617	14.51	88.16
Capital Costs	7,441,123	18.78	6,787,696	18.69	91.22
Total Office Costs	39,627,264	100	36,314,117	100	91.64
Total	194,923,526	100	159,948,245	100	82.06

(*) Expended amount as percentage of budgeted amount. This figure illustrates if the activity spent according to plan (100%), below plan (less than 100%) or is utilizing more than planned (above 100%).

Generally, planned and actual disbursements were made by strategic partners in line with the expected amounts and schedules. However, the funds disbursement pattern table made available by CSRC shows that Oxfam, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), CIDA, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and MS Nepal could not always make the actual disbursements when they were institutionally expected though they provided the committed amount later. DanidaHUGOU, the largest strategic donor, also could not make the planned disbursements on expected dates thrice but it had subsequently nearly doubled the amount. In the first quarter of 2013, it made actual disbursement of large amounts of financial resources when the amount was needed by CSRC to cover its budget deficit, which DanidaHUGOU did paying additional funds through a supplementary memorandum of understanding. Care Nepal also could not make the disbursements on time twice. And finally, AAIN also did not make the

disbursement on the expected date in the second quarter of 2013 (see Annex Table 7). The occasional delay of planned disbursements had also compelled CSRC towards deficit planning also at the beginning of the 2011/12 fiscal year (Uprety et.al; 2012).

It has been learned from the CSRC management team that all activities of the movement/advocacy campaign by Land Rights Forums were performed at low cost because activists lived in villages and ate their own foodstuffs or paid a little amount for this. Programs were organized in villages in ordinary hotels, which could not issue value added tax (VAT) bills; hand-written bills were issued. Generally, ordinary village bills were not recognized by the auditors and this had created a problem for CSRC/NLRF in getting the accounts audited. Often there had been quarrels with the auditors regarding the nature of such bills. There was a need for the reorientation of the auditors on the nature of advocacy campaigns/movements in the

villages and districts and the lack of options for accepting the ordinary bills issued. In other words, auditors who audited the CSRC's accounts should also have their orientation on a rights-based approach where flexibility was necessary to develop strategies as per the unfolding situation. This is also necessary for the future (Upriety et.al, 2012).

2.1.7 Relevance of the Program

Review of the CSRC document on the land right movement (2009) and interaction with CSRC management and central leadership of the NLRP has revealed that the programs of the land rights movement are very relevant for Nepal. It is axiomatic that social and economic transformation remains incomplete in Nepal in the absence of land reform. Social transformation is impossible without the transformation of power relationships even if state restructuring takes place in the days to come. There was, and is, a need to transform existing land relations and power relationships due to the following factors: **(a)** unequal land ownership, i.e. five percent control 37 percent of arable land and the ruthlessness of those in control means on average one tenant or landless farmer is evicted every day as referred to in the 2009 CSRC study on land and tenure security; **(b)** high ceiling for landlords as per the 1964 Lands Act (16.4 ha for agricultural land and 2.4 ha for homestead), redistribution is impossible without reducing the existing ceiling through scientific land reform to be guaranteed by the constitution to be drafted (because agricultural development is not possible without scientific land reform and industrialization is not possible without the modernization of agriculture); **(c)** absentee landlordism and detachment of the actual tillers and agricultural laborers from land they cultivate; **(d)** gender inequality vis-à-vis land ownership; **(e)** unsolved issue of tenancy under both individual and *Guthi* (trust) land tenure; **(f)** endemic problem of landlessness; **(g)** need of the implementation of national land policy (drafted) and land use policy (approved); **(h)** problems of good governance

in land administration (due to the excessive centralization of power and corruption); **(i)** the exploitative socio-economic system (despite legal/policy prohibition on the use of *Haliya* in mid-and far-west Nepal, *Haruwa-Charuwa* in Siraha and Saptari of eastern Terai, rehabilitation has been a far-fetched dream); **(j)** problem of unregistered tenants under the *Ukhada* (under which cash land tax used to be paid); **(k)** problem of sustained and improved livelihood of the land-poor; **(l)** influence of globalization (i.e. land grabbing for commodification and losing of the land by actual tillers); and **(m)** lack of political commitment ("whose land? "Tillers" is limited in the slogans of political parties since 1951). Scientific land reform is needed in the country to ensure peace and stability through the equitable redistribution of landed resources giving benefits to the poorer and marginalized sections of society. Conclusively, the movement for land rights was, and is, a social movement against injustice, exploitation and poverty throughout semi-feudal Nepali society which is possible only through the transformation of existing unequal and inequitable power relationships. Thus, the goal, outcome, and outputs of StOP for the land rights movement for the last four and a half years were very relevant in the context of Nepal and will continue to be so (CSRC, 2009).

2.1.8 Sustainability of Benefits and Organizational Sustainability

Sustainability of Benefits:

Calculating the benefits of the land rights movement in real terms is tantamount to "cracking the hard-nuts" primarily because all benefits cannot be quantified due to intangibility/immeasurability of their nature. However, their benefits can be analyzed qualitatively in the context of the program. Simplistically, benefits can be enumerated as follows: **(a)** land entitlements received under the formal tenancy for cultivation (as per the fourth amendment of the 1964 Land Act) and land entitlements received by the landless

for housing; **(b)** establishment of women’s agricultural co-operatives; **(c)** beginning of the utilization of public waste land through collective farming under community-led land reform practice; **(d)** commencement of agro-based entrepreneurship in the land piece received under the formal tenancy provision (such as goat-raising, buffalo-raising, pig-raising, vegetable farming, fish farming, etc.); **(e)** National Land Rights Forum (the real land poor oppressed people’s organization built from the grassroots level and institutionally strengthened which has begun to lead the land and agrarian movement); **(f)** identity cards of settlement issued to the landless settlers by the Land Commission; **(g)** acquisition of citizenship certificates in the process of the land rights movement; **(h)** certificates of settlement to landless people and tillage to the informal tenants (unregistered ones at the land reform offices) by the VDCs (as per all-party consensus); **(i)** enhanced community power for bargaining higher agricultural wages, **(j)** government formal initiatives for joint land ownership, land reform action plan, land use policy (approved by the cabinet), national land policy (drafted), *Haruwa/Charuwas* policy for rehabilitation and addressing of land reform issues in the newly crafted Agriculture Development Strategy; and **(k)** VLRFs’ institutional capacity to claim resources from VDC block grants – available for agriculture development, and capacity building of women and people from marginalized groups – and other sources, including DDC, for water supply, road construction and electricity are the benefits of the implementation of StOP during the last four and half years. Of all these, as corroborated from field observations, the empowerment of land-poor women and men, both individually and collectively, is highly commended by them. This is made amply clear from their oft-repeated remark (regardless of places) that: “*We are no longer dumb*”.

Benefits from land commodity received under tenancy have been sustained as observed in the communities as land receivers have begun intensive use for self-employment and increased household income. For example, women of Ramche of Sindupalchowk district

(who received land under *Guthi* tenure which was later maintained under joint land ownership certificates) have shared that they had begun vegetable production, i.e. tomato, onions, cauliflower, cabbage, brinjal, etc. for commercial purposes. With the development of irrigation through the support of CSRC and self-labor mobilization, these women had succeeded in productively utilizing their land. They had begun to earn annual benefits from vegetable sales ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs.2,000,000 depending upon the amount of land, its productivity and working hands in

Case Box 2: Sustained Increase of Household Income from CSRC Support through the Land Rights Movement

Bir Bahadur Chaudhary, a member of Kalika Village Land Rights Forum (VLRf) organized by 44 households living in 10.7 ha of public land of Beladevipur VDC of Kailali district, cultivated 0.335 ha of land. CSRC supported this VLRf with a total of Rs. 52,000 for the development of an irrigation system a couple of years ago through the installation of a pump, which was completed, with the mobilization of self-labor given in-kind. With the availability of irrigation at his disposal, Mr. Chaudhary began vegetable cultivation, mainly cauliflower, cabbage, onion, radish, garlic, potato, etc. He had an average income of Rs. 60,000 per year from the sale of vegetables besides the consumption by eight household members. With the income earned from the sale of vegetables, he had been sending his three children (at grade 8,9, and 10) to a private school by paying Rs. 36,000 per year and one child to a government school for higher secondary level by paying Rs. 3,600 per year. He thought that this increased income had been possible because of his involvement in CSRC-facilitated campaigns. Chaudhary was motivated to contribute to the movement because his enhanced livelihood status was a result of the movement.

Source: Fieldwork, August, 2013

the household. The women had also begun to use the benefits from sales for the household's social welfare, i.e. sending their children to schools, treatment of household members, etc. CSRC's financial support to VLRFs of the land-poor living on public land for years for irrigation development had also contributed to sustained increases in household income.

Landless agricultural laborers who have been provided with public land for housing have a sense of security which is itself a benefit that will be sustained. For instance, women and men from 22 *Mushar* ("low caste" agricultural landless laborers) households of Santoshi VLRF from Vatiyatole of Siraha district unanimously shared: "*We are glad because we have got land ownership certificates for housing. Now we will not be driven away by anyone. Our children are also secure. In the future, banks will also issue loans to us because we have land ownership certificates as collateral*". The land rights movement has been linked to livelihood issues and cooperatives at the grassroots level and this has also begun to show the sustainability of benefit (see case box 3). Cooperatives will continue to function as they are being institutionalized. This is also the case of community-led land reform practice because this has been appreciated by land-poor and other stakeholders from the government, development agencies, and civil society organizations who have been seriously following the outcome as this has been an innovation in the context of Nepal.

Based on ground level empirical observations, it can be prognosticated that the NLRF and the D/VLRFs institutionally strengthened by CSRC will continue to fight for land rights-related issues in the expanded form only within 53 districts rather than expanding to all 75 districts as demanded by some stakeholders). The continued presence of well-trained and committed frontline leaders and activists in communities will contribute to a long-term benefit from the movement led by the NLRF. Governmental policies and legislative initiatives will bring tremendous benefits to land-poor women and men through equitable access to land, reduction of poverty, gender

Case Box 3: Land Rights Movement Linked with Livelihood Opportunities and Co-operatives: Glimpses of Benefits

A total of 18 landless farmers of Kopila Land Rights Forum and 14 landless farmers from Bikas Land Rights Forum from ward number 1 of Laxmaniya VDC of Mahottari district had the practice of community land reform in 4.7 ha of public wasteland on the banks of a river. The land was equally divided among the members after plotting. The farmers grew cereal crops such as maize, different varieties of pulses, and seasonal vegetables, e.g. gourds, chilies, potatoes, beans, etc. They had started getting gross cash income of up to Rs.5,000 per year from their agricultural production. Some of them consumed the production at home and some of them also sold in order to buy other household necessities. These landless farmers were happy because they did not have such experience in the past, when the sale of labor power was the only property they had at their hands. This was an indicator of success of the land rights movement. A co-operative named *Janasakti* was established which has 75 members. The value of one share ranged from Rs.100 to 500. They had a total of Rs. 34,320 in May, 2012. Of this amount, Rs. 28,000 had been borrowed by its members at a 24 percent annual interest rate. The rest was on the account of Agricultural Development Bank. This helped them to be free from the exorbitant interest rates of local moneylenders who were mostly local landlords.

Source: Uprety et al; JAR report, 2012.

equity, social justice, etc. However, the degree of achievement cannot be predicted at this point. Finally, the empowerment of local land poor will help to sustain the future land rights movement.

Organizational Sustainability

Facts adduced from interaction with representatives from CSRC, NLRF and strategic

partners have given the basis to argue that the NLRF and D/VLRFs will sustain in the future due to the following factors: (i) possession of central *Bhumi Ghar* (land home) by the NLRF at Thimora, Chitawan (which is being renovated and expanded with the recent support of Rs. 1.9 million by the strategic partners where training and accommodation of trainees, activists, frontline leaders, functionaries of all layers of NLRF, etc., will be possible as and when needed); (ii) continuous construction of the *Bhumi Ghars* of D/VLRFs through the institutional efforts of mobilization of their financial resources, contribution of their own labor and approaching local governments and other development agencies seeking for financial resources (both in cash and kind); (iii) setting up ‘movement funds’ from the contributions of land-poor rights holders and their own institutional initiative for “*Muthi Chamal Sankalan*” (collection of food commodities needed for campaign by sparing a handful of quantity every day from daily consumption) for the indigenization and sustainability of the land rights movement; (iv) the presence of well-trained and committed frontline leaders, activists, fulltime work of DLRFs and leaders of all layers from the NLRF and the institutional built-in mechanism for the capacity-building of new leadership for steering the movement; (v) gradual qualitative growth of ideologically-capacitated central and district level leaders of the NLRF with longitudinal experiential learning backed by legal dimensions for land rights for leading and intensifying people-centered advocacy in a non-confrontational way; and (vi) gaining international recognition through membership (such as in AFA, and ILC) which will help to gain international support, on the one hand, and internationalization of land rights issues, on the other. However, there has to be an attitudinal change among rights holders that “*we must ourselves generate resources needed for our movement*” which will help reduce the dependency syndrome.

Increasingly, CSRC is also moving towards organizational sustainability including financial sustainability. CSRC now has a small but highly committed professional team trained in the

domain of people-centered advocacy needed for organizing, capacitating, and mobilizing rights holders for achieving the movement’s goal. The team can work as experts training other civil society organizations (if needed) on a rights-based approach to development to generate financial resources. CSRC is the only civil society organization in Nepal, which is increasingly being effortful for publication of its experiences/learnings of an almost two-decade long movement for land rights and findings of research on contemporary issues of land. This endeavor, if continued, can also generate financial resources but now CSRC’s senior management team and the executive committee must make a concerted effort to turn this further into a true ‘national resource centre’ committed to independent research on land and related rights issues and getting them published and circulated on a wider scale for financial resource generation. CSRC has its office premise, necessary office equipment (computers, photocopy machines, generators, etc.), and vehicle which indicates a move towards sustainability. CSRC has already been a member of the ILC and its focal organization in Nepal from where it gets financial resources on an annual basis for research and advocacy activities. CSRC is also a member of Forum Asia, Asia NGO Coalition (ANGOC), NGO Federation of Nepal, and Natural Resources Management Confederation. Conclusively, its reputation earned so far in the land rights issue is by itself the greatest social capital which can significantly help CSRC to generate tangible benefits and resources.

2.1.9 Mainstreaming of GESI, Conflict Transformation and Accountability/ Impunity

As broadly defined by DanidaHUGOU, mainstreaming of gender and social inclusion (GESI) is a process of consistently incorporating a sensitivity of gender differences and differences in the circumstances of various castes/classes including *Dalits*, *Adibashi Janajatis* (indigenous nationalities), *Madhesis*, Persons with Disability, and people from

remote areas, in policy, planning, budgeting, and implementation of programs. GESI also includes the following ingredients: **(i)** the idea that integrates equality (between men and women and between different groups) perspectives and social inclusion objectives into all areas of policy and practice; **(ii)** a process of assessing implications of planned actions, policies, program activities and administration at all levels; **(iii)** a strategy for making concerns and experiences an integral part of policy and program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and **(iv)** organizational mainstreaming in the areas of culture (vision, mission, goal, objectives, strategies, plans, policies, etc), human and financial resources, governance practices, management systems, communication, program planning and M&E, behaviors and relations, and implementation of activities, communication, behaviors and relations outside the organization (DanidaHUGOU, 2010).

Keeping these things in mind, a brief analysis has been made of CSRC's organizational culture, its dimension of human resources in terms of GESI and achievements made in the program, allocation of financial resources for GESI, and governance practices. Apropos of the organizational culture of CSRC, the organizational vision is to create a society where everyone enjoys a secure, free and dignified life. The mission is also inherently inclusive: to empower land-poor women and men and enable them to claim and exercise their basic rights (including right to land resources contributing to eradicating poverty and injustice). The goal is to secure equitable access to land for poor women and men to ensure their freedom and right to a dignified life. Of the four strategic objectives, two are geared towards the GESI approach. These comprise: **(i)** organizing, strengthening and mobilizing rights holders (land poor women and men) to claim and exercise their rights; and **(ii)** recommending new land policies guaranteeing women and men equal rights to own land.

By and large, there is diversity in the organization. For instance, data made available by CSRC during the evaluation

process has shown that it has a total of 30 general members of which 63.3 percent are males and 36.7 percent females. A majority of the members are *Brahmins/Chhetris* (60%) followed by *Janajatis* (26.7) and *Dalits* (13.3%). An Executive Committee of seven members is democratically elected by the general assembly held every three years. Of these seven members, four are men and three are women. Two males and two females are from *Brahmin/Chhetri* caste groups, one male and one female are from *Janajati* and one male from *Dalit* groups. Gradually, the predominance of the *Brahmins/Chhetris* has to be reduced for giving space to *Madeshis* and *Muslims* (who together constitute a sizeable population in the *Terai*) to comply with the inclusive principle of representation in the organization. Similarly, CSRC has a total of 23 staff, of which 60.9 percent are males and 39.1 percent females. If the social group-wise distribution is analyzed, 52.2 percent are from *Brahmin/Chhetri* communities followed by 26.1 percent *Janajatis*, and 21.7 percent *Dalits*. Like in the general membership, there is no representation of staff from the *Madeshi* and *Muslim* communities.

Data made available by the central office of the NLR (the leading organization of land-poor women and men) show that its central executive committee is also inclusive in its composition. At present, its committee consists of a total of 22 members (including five nominated) of which 54.5 percent are males and 45.5 percent are females. Similarly, 41 percent of members are *Janajatis*, 41.0 percent *Dalits*, and 18 percent *Brahmins/Chhetris*. *Janajatis* and *Dalits* are represented from both the Hills and *Terai* regions. Indeed, *Dalits* from the *Terai* also represent the *Madhesis*—the poorest agricultural laborers. Despite this inclusiveness, *Muslims* are not represented in the central committee.

Observation at the field level show that the D/VLRs are also ubiquitously inclusive in their composition. For instance, the DLR council of Bardiya district of the mid-western development region consists of 11 members of which six are women and five are men who

are elected by the general assembly of the representatives of 81 VLRFs. Similarly, four are *Dalits*, four *Janajatis* and three *Brahmins/Chhettris*. In the executive committee of Shamati VLRF of ward no. five of Belbari VDC of Morang district of the eastern development region, there are a total of nine members elected by the general assembly of 67 member households. Of these eight are women and one is male, four are *Tharus* (the indigenous group of the *Terai*), two hill migrant *Brahmins*, one hill migrant *Chhettri*, one *Madeshi* and one hill migrant *Dalit*.

Achievements made in the program are also to a large extent, inclusively analyzed. It has been learned from CSRC management that land acquisition data has been disaggregated along the lines of gender and the *Dalit* social group. However, CSRC has not yet made any institutional efforts towards disaggregating data along caste lines and ethnicity. When asked the reason for delay in moving along these lines, the Program Manager said, *“Indeed, the issues of landlessness and tenancy are very much related to the issue of class and, therefore, we have worked for the fundamental economic rights of the land-poor regardless of their caste and ethnic status”*. Albeit this position can be agreed, it is professionally good to have disaggregation of data along the lines of caste and ethnicity (given the fact that CSRC has agreed to uphold the basic ubiquitous principles of GESI in its rights-based approach of development). In this regard, DanidaHUGOU also views that the issue of class-caste is a perennial one in both political and academic discourses in Nepal. Therefore, a one-sided class-based approach is not going to be helpful because caste is a cultural construction and its related ideology has concretized into reality so that simply belonging to a particular caste determines a person’s many life chances. In this context, CSRC needs to be inclusion-sensitive so that the inclusionary outcome of the CSRC program can be assessed by evaluators, observers and stakeholders.

Observations have also been made concerning the financial allocation for GESI. Contextually,

of the five program outputs, one is exclusively focused on women’s rights to land, i.e. new land policies introduced guaranteeing women and men equal rights to own land. During the finalization of the StOP, the indicative budget was planned for this output. Similarly, a budget was planned for this output program every year. The partnership completion report of CSRC finalized in August 2013 shows that of the total Rs. 123,634,128 output-wise expenditure from 2008/9 fiscal years to 2012/13 fiscal, 2.44 percent was expended for women-related outputs. Objectively speaking, this allocation is fine but given the complexity of women’s land rights issues in a conservative patriarchal society, the amount allocated can be labeled as *“Hathika Mukhama Jira”*—a *Nepali* aphorism (meaning ‘a drop in the ocean’). Nonetheless, the onset of budget allocations exclusively for women’s land rights issue is itself commendable. Given the fact that GESI is a cross-cutting issue throughout the entire program, it was largely addressed through the annual budgetary allocation for addressing the first output, i.e., rights-holders-land-poor women and men-organized, strengthened, and mobilized to claim and exercise their rights. Of the total output-wise expenditure, a total of 50.4 percent of the budget was spent on this output. Under it, land-poor women and men from 53 districts were organized, strengthened and mobilized which included high castes, *Janajatis*, and *Dalits* from both the hills and the *Terai*. When asked about the inclusiveness of the program, the Executive Director reiterated, *“Given the fact that GESI is a cross-cutting issue, CSRC makes its institutional efforts to make budget allocations to address this. Categorically, we plan and include 50 percent women for each institutional activity.”*

“Conflict transformation” refers to addressing wider social, political and cultural sources of conflict with a view to transforming actual or potentially violent conflict in communities into peaceful processes of social change. “Conflict transformation” involves change along four independent dimensions: (i) personal; (ii) relational (antagonistic/conflictual relationships); (iii) structural (changes in underlying causes of conflict, by focusing on

basic needs and access to resources), and **(iv)** cultural (negotiation for resolving conflicts for land rights peacefully at the community level) (DanidaHUGOU, 2010).

Keeping the above theoretical understanding in mind, the land rights movement facilitated by CSRC and led by the NLRF can be evaluated with evidences vis-à-vis conflict transformation. Inequitable access to land (for the land poor), existence of exploitative feudal systems, lack of women's access to and control over land (gender disparity), low levels of agricultural wages, and denial of settlement rights to landless people in public land were and are principal causes of conflict in the rural areas of Nepal. There has now been the realization among all rights holders (including the leading organization NLRF and D/VLRFs) and CSRC that the actual or the potential conflict in the communities has to be transformed into peaceful processes of social change. It took some time to develop this realization.

There are changes at the **personal level** after joining the movement. The rights holders now have understanding of the following: **(i)** what are land rights and how are they related to human rights (related to economic rights)?; and **(ii)** how can land rights be realized through a social movement? Apropos of the **relational changes**, rights holders, officials of CSRC and NLRF and D/VLRFs used to have generally antagonistic/conflictual relationships with landlords and land administrators during the incipient stage of the movement. This was largely triggered by the lack of sufficient orientation on the 'regime of conflict transformation', 'relative ideological immaturity on people-centered advocacy', and lack of sufficient 'work experience and learning'. Now the oft-reiterated assertion by rights holders associated with all level of people's organizations on the peace process of social change is, "Problems with the landlords cannot be solved through fisticuffs. They are to be solved through dialogue which can turn antagonists into allies. Achievements through dialogues outweigh those from violent or potentially violent expressions". At present, CSRC officials have a similar understanding.

Structural changes have also begun to take place in communities because the causes of conflict are gradually being addressed in the following way: **(i)** land-poor women and men have been provided with land under formal tenancy; **(ii)** landless settlers have been given identity cards by the land commission and certificates of settlement by VDCs; **(iii)** informal tenants (share-croppers) have been provided with a certificate of tillage by VDCs; **(iv)** land-poor voices have begun to be heard by local governments (as evidenced by budget allocations for women, socially and economically marginalized social groups, agricultural development and for community development projects) and also by district level government offices and other agencies; and **(v)** increasing contacts being made by the rights holders to have access to resources to other development agencies (such as Caritas Nepal by the rights holders of Kailali) for the development of their livelihood support systems, etc. Such a gradual access to resources by the land-poor has contributed towards reducing triggers. Finally, at the **cultural level**, as also indicated under the personal level changes, local level efforts are also increasingly made for negotiation between rights holders and landlords. Most negotiations are led by the local leadership of VLRFs with the support of activists who are also equipped with paralegal training for resolving local disputes.

2.1.10 Organizational Development

2.1.10.1 Implementation of Capacity Building Measures

CSRC's StOP had an inbuilt institutional development plan under which capacity building was a major component. In this regard, CSRC, in 2009, wrote, "Capacity building of staff, activists and Executive Committee members is an ongoing process, and is integral to the strategic plan. The strategic plan promotes exposure, training programs and exchange visits as major capacity building measures. These measures will be reflected in annual work plans and budgets". In practice as well, a lot of effort was made

institutionally for the capacity development as stipulated in the StOp.

Succinctly put, capacity-building of Executive Director, Program Manager and CSRC staff through participation in workshops/trainings held in foreign countries was focused on the following: **(a)** land reform monitoring (Jakarta, Indonesia); **(b)** writers' workshop on civil society organization land reform initiatives (Bangkok, Thailand); **(c)** expert group meetings on transparency in land administration (Yogyakarta, Indonesia); **(d)** land and food (Jakarta, Indonesia); **(e)** regional consultation on development and human rights (Bangkok, Thailand); **(f)** hot issues confronting Asian farmers: land, unstable food prices and financing for adaptation to climate change (Cambodia); **(g)** understanding community forest carbon inventory and monitoring: sharing knowledge and skills (Imugan, Santa Fe, Na Nueva Vizcaya) Philippines; **(h)** 5th Asian Farmers' Association General Assembly and 31st FAO-Asia Pacific regional conference (Hanoi, Vietnam); **(i)** Rio+20 People's Summit (Rio, Brazil); **(j)** farmers fighting poverty (Bangkok, Thailand); **(k)** Janasatyagraha (rights holders' movement for truth), 2012 (Delhi, India); **(l)** Asia Land Forum 2012 and Regional Assembly of ILC; **(m)** gender equality mainstreaming training; **(n)** 7th general assembly of Forum Asia (Bangkok); **(o)** global platform planning meeting 2012-15 (Geneva, Switzerland); **(p)** Initiatives International's global platform planning meeting and sharing of non-violent movements (Dakar, Senegal); **(q)** ILC global land forum (Antigua, Guatemala); **(r)** Asian Farmers' Association's 10th annual meeting (Manila, Philippines); and **(s)** regional training program on enhancing civil society land monitoring effectiveness (Bangkok, Thailand), etc. The Executive Director also presented a paper in Chiang Mai, Thailand on "Land Rights Issues and Possible Action on Land Reform in Nepal" and another in Jakarta, Indonesia on "Land and Food". Together with the five representatives of the Ministry of Land Reform and Management, five representatives from Executive Committee/CSRC management made a high-level delegation learning visit to Manila, Philippines.

Besides such international exposures, CSRC staff also participated in workshops/trainings on different themes in Kathmandu. These comprised the following: **(a)** second sub-regional workshop on human rights mechanisms in South Asia; **(b)** building capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergencies; **(c)** sustainable development; **(d)** results-based report writing; **(e)** TOT on conflict transformation and human rights; **(f)** global UN joint program on "accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women"; **(g)** monitoring and evaluation; **(h)** leadership training; and **(i)** English language training (which was also participated in by two board members), etc. The CSRC Executive Committee Chairperson the Executive Director participated in the international meeting of Janasatyagraha, 2012, held in Delhi, India. A coordinator from one resource organization also participated in a workshop program on "participatory approaches of land management programs" held in Tirupati, India. Finally, district coordinators also participated in the workshops held in Nagarkot, Bhaktapur on "Food and Land Advocacy Program in Nepal". Interaction with CSRC staff, members of the executive committee and senior management has revealed that participation in all the above events has tremendously helped to develop their capacity. They feel more knowledgeable and hence are empowered which is good for contributing to the land rights movement sustainability.

As indicated earlier, at the community level, a total of 2,667 VLRFs have been formed with a total membership of 74,860. There is substantial support by CSRC through the leadership of DLRFs, their full-time workers, leadership of VLRFs, local activists, and frontline leaders to develop the capacity of these members. Therefore, they often say, "*We are no longer dumb. Now the movement has helped us to fight until we are emancipated from injustice*". CSRC has also used its human and financial resources for the capacity building of the central, district and village chapters of NLRF, their full-time workers, local activists and frontline leaders. The foci have been on

ideological orientation of advocacy, rights, land-related legal issues, leadership, women's rights to land, etc.

2.1.10.2 Adjustment of Priorities

CSRC has an in-built institutional mechanism for the adjustment of priorities of the land rights movement. Depending upon the programmatic needs, priorities are adjusted through regional quarterly reviews, national half-yearly reviews and annual participatory review and reflections (PRRP) based upon extensive discussion on relevant issues.

2.1.10.3 Strategies and Plans as per Changing Contexts

CSRC's 2009-13 StOP was in response to the changed socio-political context of Nepal, i.e. change of national polity from autocratic monarchy to republican state, conclusion of comprehensive peace agreement after a decade-long conflict, election of the constituent assembly for drafting a new constitution and state restructuring, and a need and an opportunity to work for land and agrarian reform by organizing, mobilizing and strengthening rights holders for equitable access to land for tillers and secure housing for landless settlers. Therefore, the five outputs of the StOP were contextually valid. These comprised: **(i)** rights holders (land-poor men and women) organized, strengthened and mobilized to claim and exercise rights; **(ii)** clarity and consensus about land reform established, and land reform policy and frameworks suitable to the needs and realities of Nepal developed and implemented; **(iii)** critical engagement established with non-state stakeholders involved with agrarian issues; **(iv)** learnings generated from ground level actions and disseminated at all levels; and **(v)** new land policies introduced guaranteeing women and men equal rights to own land.

Subsequently, the priorities of CSRC's people-centered advocacy campaign activities were

adjusted in light of changing contexts, e.g. prior to the demise of the first constituent assembly, the NLRF was supported by CSRC to undertake national campaigns in Kathmandu with the key theme "**Promulgate Constitution: Implement Land Reform**". The campaign made interactions with responsible officials of major national and regional political parties possible. The interactions primarily focused on the incorporation of issues of land rights/scientific land reform in the constitution (to be drafted). This was, indeed, a timely planned event. Succinctly put, the major priorities accorded in the 2009-13 fiscal years for rights holders comprised the following: **(i)** continuous NLRF strengthening; **(ii)** continuous special orientation to all frontline leaders; **(iii)** continuous forming and strengthening DLRFs; **(iv)** continuous capacity building of NLRF and DLRF staff and activists in the areas of advocacy, paralegal skills, and networking and alliance building; **(v)** mainstreaming action-reflection-action model of popular education (through the support of activists, formation of agricultural co-operatives, and facilitation of REFLECT circles); and **(vi)** context mapping as well as power analysis. The overall emphasis had been on the institutional development of rights holders to intensify the local, district and national level land rights campaigns in 53 districts by working collaboratively with civil society organizations, political parties, local governments (VDCs, municipalities and DDCs), strategic partners and their collaborating NGOs, and policy and program people at the concerned ministries and departments. With the policy directive on joint ownership certificate of land at hand, activities were also prioritized to focus on dialogue and pressuring the government to implement policy and program on women's access to land. Local campaigns in this regard were equally underscored. CSRC has developed an institutional culture of conducting scenario planning by considering rapidly changing socio-political contexts and adjusting their priorities accordingly. For instance, scenario planning helped CSRC to revise its annual plan and budget (once there was a deficit) through consensus with strategic partners. A few years

ago, the government was asked to publish the reports of the HLLRCs and now CSRC has begun pressurizing the government to implement the **action plan** prepared for land reform (Upreti et al. 2012).

2.1.10.4 Constituency Development

Constituency is a group of people or a community who have a common concern and whose interests are advanced by organizing and engaging in advocacy to solve that problem. Constituency-building is critical for advocacy and refers to the activities aimed at strengthening the involvement of those most affected by an issue in the design and leadership of advocacy. Effective constituency-building enhances the organization and firms up a political voice (pertaining to decision-making) of people, and lends legitimacy and leverage to change efforts. Active involvement of people is needed to benefit them from a policy change. People must be able to set their own advocacy agenda. For advocacy to be effective, a holistic approach is critical, particularly if advocacy is to get direct involvement from the poor and voiceless it aims to serve. Organizing and constituency-building is a must. To be effective, advocacy must be supported by a critical mass. The poor must not only understand the issues, they must also own them. This means that the issues concerned must be at the forefront of advocacy. If this is so, community groups will lead, and not simply support advocacy. Public education is essential. Participatory approaches need to be balanced with outputs. In other words, while participatory methodologies are critical to ensuring that the poor steer the advocacy process, advocates equally need to be able to respond quickly to specific situations. When advocacy does not have a meaningful base across the country, it is easily dismissed by decision-makers. Negotiation skills are a must as negotiations will inevitably happen at some stage in a successful advocacy. The advocates need to be armed with negotiating skills, a clear grasp of the issues at hand, a clear position, and the necessary data to back up that position.

The important thing is the recognition that advocacy is a never-ending task (Veneklasen and Miller, 2002: 59-76).

The centrality of the above arguments is the emphasis on strengthening the involvement of those most affected by an issue in the design and leadership of advocacy. Keeping this in mind, CSRC had emphasized considerably on constituency building. As analyzed in the preceding section, a sizable proportion of financial resources had been planned and invested in constituency development. With the total support of CSRC, VLRFs were established at the community level. Officials of CSRC and the NLRF central committee have revealed that the process of constituency development was gradual and there was no imposition from above for the formation of VLRFs. It is not that VLRFs in 53 districts were formed because there was a program supported by the strategic partners. In other words, formation or non-formation of VLRFs depended on the local situation/context. Until the time of evaluation, the land poor were organized once they had a problem/issue, which could only be solved through collective advocacy and other efforts (as per local needs). This is indicative of the fact that the focus was more on the local process of organization building or constituency-building.

In the whole process of constituency development, the oppressed land poor, began getting organized through discussion/analysis of the problems/issues with the participation of either CSRC or NLRF (who could play an instrumental role in facilitating this process). Definitely, the trained activists/frontline leaders working in the area worked to catalyze the process of group formation. Upon the completion of the formation of VLRFs, frontline leaders, activists, DLRF's leaders and full-time workers, and officials of the NLRF and CSRC supported them with orientation workshops for developing their political consciousness, i.e. their understanding of the issues using a rights-based perspective, legal/policy dimension of the land rights issues, contextual analysis/power analysis, critical thinking through the learning centers with the use of REFLECT approach, planning and mapping advocacy

strategies, etc. Given the fact that a total of 20 VLRFs is needed for the formation of a district council of a DLRF, there were only 47 district councils during the time of evaluation. In the other six districts where there were less than 20 VLRFs, the NLRF established contact offices. These processes of constituency development are continuing. CSRC and NLRF officials have made up their minds to work intensively in these 53 districts using a results-based approach instead of expanding the movement into all 75 districts. This is a correct institutional decision because an increase in the sheer size of the constituency alone without sufficient CSRC facilitation, an NLRF-led campaign (which is itself in a fledgling state) would be counterproductive.

2.1.10.5 Institutional Governance Mechanisms

On the issue of governance, there is a strong institutional culture for fulfilling internal accountability. More specifically, apropos of the reporting systems and practices, the program staff report to the management which, then, reports to the CSRC executive committee. It has been revealed that the DLRF chairpersons report program status to Regional Coordinators who, then, report to the CSRC Program Manager/Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. Once the Program Manager reports to the Executive Director, he reports this information to the executive committee. All program-related issues requiring urgency and immediacy of solutions are discussed in the executive committee and decisions are made accordingly which are, then, implemented by the management through support staff and D/VLRFs. Reportedly, there is an actual delegation of authority to respective program staff/coordinators vis-à-vis their roles to be punctiliously discharged. Similarly, there is also an organizational culture of internal monitoring mechanisms, i.e. members of the executive committee make periodic field visits in program districts, interact with rights holders, learn the status of the program (including the emerging issues and problems) and shares this with

the management which, in turn, informs the staff for the improvement of the program performance. Finally, it has been learned that there is 100 percent compliance with official policies and procedures, i.e. administrative and financial management guidelines by the staff, senior management team and executive committee members (therefore, there is no impunity at all). All these sets of qualitative information are suggestive that the existing institutional governance practices are on the right track. But as the DanidaHUGOU coordinator aptly remarked on the day of the 2013 social audit, “*It is not the time for CSRC to relax because there are many challenges ahead*”. CSRC must not be complacent with its hitherto achievements in the regime of good governance but be effortful to improve this continuously to gear its movement for the realization of its goal based on daily experience and institutionally embedded learning.

CSRC has also developed an institutional culture of meeting external accountability to strategic and collaborating partners, rights holders, concerned government ministries and departments, civil society organizations and other coalition partners by organizing a ‘social audit’ every year, since 2008. The social audit has a view to promoting transparency and accountability as well as receiving suggestions to increase the quality and effectiveness of the land rights movement. CSRC considers social audits as a participatory process for monitoring and evaluation. and organizes this after the completion of all planned activities in the fiscal year. Its principal partner organization, NLRF and district chapters also follow a similar approach of organizing social audits. During the social audit, CSRC makes presentation of its policies, institutional rules and intervention processes, completed planned activities, achievements, challenges and learning, total budget, and budget allocations from strategic partners. There is, then, open discussion on all related issues and CSRC’s institutional performance. Participants including the representatives of strategic partners express their opinions on the institutional role of CSRC on the land rights movement, and its programmatic and financial mobilization.

Critical reviews are made on strengths and areas for improvement by concerned stakeholders, which may work as guidelines for the future. Besides organizing a 'social audit', CSRC also meets other external accountability requirements, such as submission of quarterly financial reports, annual work plans and budgets, annual progress reports, annual audited account reports and annual joint review reports to strategic partners within a stipulated timeline.

2.1.10.6 Networking and Synergy Building

Coalitions and alliances bolster advocacy by bringing the strengths and resources of diverse groups to create a more powerful voice for change. Although coalitions involve long-term relationships among members (which give clout and leverage), alliances are of short-term relationships among members on a specified objective. Networks tend to be loose, flexible associations of people and groups brought together by a common concern or interest to share information and ideas (Veneklasen and Miller, 2002). More simplistically, following Veneklasen and Miller, generations of more resources to accomplish the goal, increased credibility and visibility, higher numerical strength, broadening the base of support, creation of opportunity for learning, broadening the scope of each organization's work, and contribution to the long-term strengths of civil society are the powers of networking.

Within the organizational development plan of the StOP, CSRC wrote in 2009, "CSRC is a member of most of the national level alliances and networks. It is also a member of a number of international alliances and networks such as the ILC (based in Italy), Land Watch Asia (Manila, Philippines), Forum Asia (Thailand), and Consult on Women and Land (India). CSRC will continue networking with these alliances and networks, and will also identify other relevant networks and alliances and be part of them" (CSRC, 2009). As per the StOP's

purpose, it became a member of the National Alliance for Land and Agrarian Reform (made up of CSRC's strategic partners). This has created synergy in the land rights movement, i.e., the issue of CSRC is also taken by the strategic partners with their own partners. In the case of CSRC, 'Land Tenure and Agrarian Reform Study' was jointly assisted by ActionAid International Nepal, Care Nepal, CCO/CIDA, DanidaHUGOU, Oxfam and ILC. In the past, DanidaHUGOU organized several synergy workshops of its partners including CSRC which contributed to mutual learning from each other's sharings. The whole process also resulted in the development of a joint action plan (which remains to be implemented). CSRC has also been a member of the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Confederation which consists of six members, namely, Federation of Nepal Community Forest User Groups, National Land Rights Forum, Federation of Community Electricity Users, Federation of Sanitation and Drinking Water Supply Users, and Himalayan Grassroots Women's NRM Association. This Confederation is supportive of each member's advocacy issue in the regime of natural resources.

2.1.10.7 Organizational SWOC Analysis

CSRC has recently conducted an in-depth analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) vis-à-vis its four and a half years' StOP. The major strengths include: **(a)** institutional capacity of mobilizing resources due to the presence of qualified and committed staff; **(b)** distinct institutional identity with expertise to work on the issues of land; **(c)** direct work with the hard-core poor in rural communities; **(d)** co-work and good working relationship with Ministry of Land Reform and Management, Department of Land Reform and Management, Department of Cadastral Survey, *Guthi* Corporation, and District Land Reform and Land Revenue Offices; **(e)** inclusiveness of members in the Executive Committee and their representation on a regional basis; **(f)** institutional capacity of expanding national and

international relationships; **(g)** specific roles of the functionaries of the Executive Committee and the staff without duplication; **(h)** full compliance with institutional rules/norms by functionaries of the Executive Committee, members of the organization and the staffs and transparency (of each of them); **(i)** institutional culture of study and documentation of issues of the movement, their publication and dissemination; **(j)** clarity in strategy and goal; **(k)** institutional ownership of the building and other physical properties (such as vehicles, computers, generator, photocopy machines, etc.); **(l)** cost-effectiveness of expenditures and economical use of resources; **(m)** accountability and transparency towards rights holders and other stakeholders; **(n)** a stringent fiscal system and high level of performance (vis-à-vis utilization of financial resources to achieve program outcomes and impacts); and **(o)** use of effective advocacy methods and better mobilization of rights holders.

Weaknesses include: **(a)** insufficient manpower compared to the amount of work to be discharged; **(b)** lack of qualified staff with expertise on agriculture and law (who are needed to expedite agricultural entrepreneurship and legal issues at the grassroots level); **(c)** inadequacy of the existing baseline; **(d)** inadequacy of the dissemination and distribution of land rights movement-related materials published by CSRC; **(e)** low level of legal skill of activists and little skill for documenting land rights violation cases; **(f)** less involvement of the functionaries of the executive committee in monitoring program activities for giving feedback to formulate or revise organizational policies and improve field level performance (but the organizational policy does not require them to be involved in direct implementation); **(g)** partnerships initiated and maintained with many relevant agencies but lack of institutional capacity and mobilization mechanism for enhancing effectiveness; **(h)** institutional inability for monitoring and evaluation as per the necessity of the work area; **(i)** less manpower compared to the higher coverage of working constituencies; **(j)** institutional need of enhancing English language skill of staff;

(k) less spending of days in the field by staff for streamlining advocacy work; **(l)** less number of general members of the institution (CSRC) with awareness of the complexity of land issues; and **(m)** institutional inability to increase the relationship of the functionaries of the executive committee with the general members (of CSRC).

Opportunities include: **(a)** countrywide identity, recognition and network of CSRC; **(b)** readiness of strategic partners for extending co-operation; **(c)** beginning of the development of cooperatives, initiation of community-led land reform, intensification of the campaign for joint land ownership certificates, agricultural entrepreneurship, and utilization of public waste land; **(d)** countrywide expansion of strong NLR formed with the facilitation of CSRC; **(e)** establishment of working relationships with international organizations and consequent support for the internationalization of land rights issues; **(f)** relationship with government agencies; **(g)** formulation of government policies for joint land ownership certificates and land use (on the basis of which people-centered advocacy can be done); **(h)** possibility of accepting issue-based partnership support besides the support of basket funding; **(i)** possibility of launching the campaign with the support of qualified frontline leaders by entrusting them with this responsibility; **(j)** opportunity of people-centered advocacy from the grassroots to the policy level; and **(k)** co-work (albeit minimal) with academic sector on land rights-related issues.

Challenges include: **(a)** occasional forced eviction of *Sukumbashis* (landless squatters) by community forests, community-managed schools, district forest offices, local *Zamindars* (landlords), and National Wildlife Management offices; **(b)** potential of having influence/intervention by political parties during the process of forming people's organizations (both at district and grassroots levels); **(c)** pervasiveness of land grabbers/speculators and consequent grabbing of the public/waste lands, establishing settlements on them and alienation through plotting; **(d)** wrong

impression in communities about launching the campaign for joint land ownership while there is no land, i.e. why this campaign when there is no land in the community; **(e)** inadequate knowledge among activists for making the land-poor understand about the ways of acquiring and owning land legally; **(f)** orientation of donors towards the objective of the land rights movement, i.e. securing tenure of land and the possibility of other institutions for joining this movement (the challenge is how to capitalize on this situation); **(g)** issues of land reform gradually being left by political parties and the possibility of an unstable political context; **(h)** aggressiveness vented towards the government by rights holders and their allies including CSRC due to the failure of making anticipated achievements happen and consequent tiredness; **(i)** less understanding on the issues of land rights by landless settlers and small farmers, less effective leadership and escape from the campaign (occasional); and **(j)** potential danger of high-jacking the benefits by fake landless settlers who have surreptitiously infiltrated in the association of 'genuine landless settlers.'

2.1.10.8 Activity Implementation Based on SWOC Analysis

Interaction with CSRC senior management and program officials has revealed that institutional initiatives have already been underway to address some of the weaknesses (after the institutional SWOC analysis) in the planning process. Staff of CSRC and officials of NLRF have been oriented with a view to preparing them to contribute to the rectification of these weaknesses. CSRC has recruited one Assistant Resource Officer (publication and dissemination), one Advocacy Officer (women's land rights /land reform issues) and one Facilitator for Resource Centre 6. A couple of trainings have already been imparted to activists with a focus on themes of 'conflict transformation', 'human rights' and 'case documentation skills'. Efforts are underway for increasing the role of functionaries of the executive committee in field level monitoring

of program activities and enhancing their interactive relationships with general members of CSRC. Officials of CSRC have also been provided with opportunities to participate in the national and international trainings for improving the partnerships of the organization.

NLRF has also taken the initiative to develop its own baseline information for all 53 program districts. It has also begun the documentation of cases of land rights violations. Central leadership has also been made active with the support of CSRC in the monitoring of activities of D/VLRFs for tracking the changes and addressing the problems on the spot for yielding better results. In doing so, leaders of the NLRF also identify micro level issues as well as evidence for initiating and intensifying people-centered advocacy. Likewise, cross-learning of the DLRFs has also been initiated (under which the functionaries of one DLRF visit another DLRF and its constituency for learning positive achievements with a view to building their capacity and also replicating in its constituency). The process also gives an opportunity to critique the lacunae of the visited DLRFs which helps in subsequent improvement of its activities. Similarly, the community frontline leaders are also given the opportunity for monitoring purposes. They are given opportunity by CSRC to make visits to other VLRFs with a view to learning from their interactions with them which they share in quarterly meetings and annual PRRPs organized by CSRC. Such independent observations, with no imposed agenda and framework, have been effective in monitoring the actual situation of the land rights movement at the grassroots.

CSRC has also made a strategic plan for addressing a few other weaknesses in the next phase of the program. These include the recruitment of officials with advanced educational background of agricultural science and law, and increasing the coverage of baselines with sufficient indicators.

2.1.11 Best Practices and Learning Points

Best Practices:

- a) Community-based encampments had been a very effective practice for the capacity development of rights-holders on a host of issues such as contextual /power analysis, planning of people-centered advocacy on land issues, legal dimension related to land rights, human rights (including land rights as an economic right), women's right to land, co-operatives, community land reform, livelihood issues, critical thinking, etc.
- b) Land-poor women and men had, with an increased access to and control over land, begun to switch to agricultural entrepreneurship gradually through the establishment of agricultural co-operatives and the practice of community land reform in public waste land.
- c) Mobilization of community leaders for the monitoring of local VLRFs (other than the ones to which they belonged to) in the neighborhood/district and sharing of observations in the quarterly review and annual PRRP meetings and subsequent critical analysis had been useful for both capacity development and giving inputs for the improvement of the local program. Indeed, such cross-learning had also been practiced between the DLRFs for the same purpose.
- d) Involvement of VLRFs/DLRFs in micro-level research (such as on landlessness) in specific VDCs to enhance the capacity of community leaders/activists/frontline leaders, and also to help them make use of collected evidence for the intensification of the campaigns.
- e) The incessant construction of the *Bhumi Ghars* (land homes) of the VLRFs and DLRFs by mobilizing their own financial resources, contributing their own labor and taking support from local government offices (VDCs/DDCs) and other agencies had been a good practice. Establishment of 'Movement Funds' by the contribution of rights holders themselves and their initiation of the institutional culture of "*Muthi Chamal Sankalan*" laid the foundation for the indigenization and sustainability of the land rights campaign. Initiatives of taking the financial resources from the VDCs by the organizations of rights holders to be allocated to the poor and socially excluded people also became a new good practice (the organized rights holders became successful in sending their representatives to the VDC councils for claiming their stake in financial resources to be allocated for the poor and socially excluded people and women from the annual VDC block grants). Maintaining relationships with international organizations (such as AFA and ILC) by the NLRF for international recognition of land and related issues has also been a good practice for internationalization of land rights issues to seek support for Nepal (Uprety, et.al, 2012).
- f) CSRC has developed an institutional culture of organizing 'social audits' every year (starting in 2008) with a view to promoting transparency and accountability as well as receiving suggestions to increase the quality and effectiveness of the land rights movement. Social audits are considered as a participatory process of monitoring and evaluation.
- g) Micro-macro linkage established through regular exchange of information on locally identified issues (through contextual analysis/problem analysis) and their connection to national level advocacy campaigns strengthened and expedited the process of achieving results.
- h) CSRC must not conclude 'financial partnerships' with collaborating partner NGOs (which worked as the resource organizations during the StOP implementation). However the partner

Key Learning Points:

- h) CSRC must not conclude 'financial partnerships' with collaborating partner NGOs (which worked as the resource organizations during the StOP implementation). However the partner

NGOs were not ready to live up to the accountability requirement. More specifically, the collaborating partners could meet the targets by using the financial resources provided to them, but also failed to report on time regarding their progress. The whole burden of fulfilling the accountability was to be shouldered only by CSRC. However, there can be partnerships on technical domains based on areas of relative expertise on the issues.

- i) DLRFs must be provided with financial support for the campaign which cannot be managed by their own resources. DLRFs must manage their time for intensive discussions on advocacy issues and on planning as necessary (otherwise, they would just spend time to utilize financial resources given by CSRC with no serious deliberation).
- j) More results were yielded by the campaign in the issues which were backed up by the richness of empirical evidence at the grassroots level. For instance, CSRC had the research data on *Haruwa/Charuwa* from six VDCs (two from Saptari, two from Siraha, and two from Sarlahi) with specific numbers and livelihood activities. The government accepted this data and used it as the basis for policy pronouncement prohibiting debt-bondage, issuance of identity cards and subsequent rehabilitation. Similarly, CSRC's study entitled 'Land Tenure and Agrarian Reforms in Nepal' conducted in 2009 in 16 VDCs of 16 districts showed that there were a total of 22.7 percent landless households, 6.2 percent households renting-out land, 20.6 percent households renting-in land, 2.4 percent registered tenants, 14.5 percent sharecroppers, 23.3 percent households occupying and squatting on public land, and 16.2 percent women who had registered land in their names. The government accepted this data, which were later incorporated in the reports of government land reform commissions. Subsequently, the gravity of this data was taken into account while formulating the '13-point action plan' for the implementation of land reform which underscores equitable access to land (for the land poor). In the case of *Haliyas* in mid and far-western Nepal, not all succeeded in receiving identity cards because there was no reliable study showing their number in the different hill districts.
- k) It has been learned that advocacy campaign on different issues such as tenancy, landlessness, *Guthi* land tenure and *Haruwas/Haliyas* cannot be run simultaneously in a district. Better outputs can be produced if one campaign is launched for one issue at a time. There is the need to develop an understanding among members of the NLRF on issues such as climate change, food security, and agrarian reform/improved agriculture because these issues have started to be discussed often among network partners (there has been realization among NLRF members that understanding on land rights alone cannot help to lead the campaign/movement effectively without proper understanding of interrelated variables as specified above). Intensification of land rights campaign/movement is possible only if it is linked to livelihood issues. For instance, groups with cooperatives, vegetable production and fisheries are ahead of others in making their local campaigns/movement more effective due to their enhanced income (because land-poor people feel encouraged with the improvement of their livelihood which is triggered by the campaign/movement). The degree of oppression gets reduced along with enhanced consciousness among members, i.e. the group of landless and tenant farmers. For instance, eviction of landless farmers from occupied public land and tenants from tenanted land has been checked considerably with the support of conscious members of organizations/forums. Finally, events of injustice multiply in the absence of people's organizations at the local level (Uprety et al. 2012).

2.2 Strategic Partnership

Presenting the conceptualization of ‘strategic partnership’ and its *raison d’être* in a nutshell is contextual before being effortful for its evaluation. Barring an exception to a few examples of international support, most development support by international organizations has been largely *ad-hoc*, short-term and project-based requiring local NGOs (such as CSRC) to spend most of their time preparing project documents. Doing so takes a lot of time which would otherwise go for developing constituencies, strengthening internal accountability mechanisms and developing a more strategic, coherent and a long-term approach. The principal challenges under a project-based approach generally comprise: **(i)** ownership (more donor priorities); **(ii)** high transaction costs (due to the high costs of producing proposals, documents and demanding relationships that trigger the draining of resources); and **(iii)** fragmentation (reduced impact on the ground due to competition and lack of cooperation between donors). The principle of the ‘strategic partnership’ was to address the challenges faced by both donors and civil society organizations. Therefore, the *raison d’être* of the commencement of the strategic partnership had been the donors’ alignment behind CSRC’s goals and objectives, and enhancement of the harmonization of support to CSRC primarily for improving aid effectiveness and reducing transaction costs.

The key principles of the ‘strategic partnership’ comprise the following: **(i)** development of multi-year strategic partnerships by CSRC with a group of international partners; **(ii)** provisioning of the support to CSRC for developing its vision/mission statement, a multi-year strategic plan (together with indicative budget and annual work plan); **(iii)** development of a plan for institutional development; **(iv)** donors’ commitment to core funding for the organization and financial support for the implementation of the strategic plan and institutional development on a multi-year basis; and **(v)** donor’s commitment to standardized reporting (one quarterly and

annual narrative and financial report, one joint annual audit, one annual review of progress, and one annual policy dialogue between CSRC and the group of donors), and signing of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) by CSRC and a donor consortium (to achieve specified objectives of strategic partnership which both sides committed to). Central to a strategic partnership between CSRC and donors has been long-term commitments agreed to by each donor (with foci on CSRC’s mission, respect, trust, transparency and recognition of CSRC as the owner of the process, and contribution to CSRC’s core budget and acceptance of the framework of the partnership’s co-ordination and management mechanism). Fundamental to the strategic partnership concept was that CSRC and strategic donors had taken collective responsibility for achieving the specified results. Similarly, establishment of mutual accountability was also an in-built mechanism (DanidaHUGOU, 2009).

Against the above backdrop, interaction was made with both CSRC and the strategic partners to understand their perspective on the innovative idea of strategic partnership. CSRC has understood that money, as a resource, alone cannot accomplish the goal of the land rights movement. Therefore, there was the expectation of CSRC for the donors coming together with a unified approach, common understanding and basket funding (to reduce the transaction costs) for a relatively long period of time with a firm commitment so that there would be no duplication of efforts/ resources and the movement would not be divided as happens naturally in a project-based approach. CSRC views that donors have their institutional leeway to make resources available to other civil society organizations for the movement but there had been a common understanding that it would be done only by linking the NLRF to such initiatives. The land rights movement would not be what it was if donors had scattered resources outside of the mainstream movement (in other words, it would be the squandering of financial resources). With the onset of the strategic partnership four and a half years ago, global

planning for issue-based advocacy had been the inherent characteristic approved by both CSRC (a facilitator/enabler/resource organization to NLRF) and five strategic partners.

Strategic partners have also expressed their positive opinion on the performance of CSRC under the strategic partnership. This is primarily attributable to CSRC's in-built institutional culture of fitting empirical evidences into a strategic policy framework and linking local communities of land-poor men and women with the state in a non-confrontational way (without weakening the state) in the process of owning and implementing the basic principles of strategic partnership. CSRC has also been fairly successful in agency-building of land-poor men and women as strategic partners have been enthusiastic since the very beginning. However, practice showed that there were institutional excuses for non-compliance with some basic principles by strategic partners themselves. In isolated cases, there were internal bureaucratic requirements (of financial reporting) among some strategic partners which could be discussed internally within the respective organizations before agreeing to the basic principles of strategic partnership and signing the standard agreement (so that the implementation could be free of problems).

Conclusively, interactions with strategic partners has revealed that they are committed to citizen's rights over natural resources including land. They emphasize equal access of all concerned to resources. This has been primarily so because land is as much an anti-poverty issue as a rights one. More specifically, land rights is pertinent for poor people at the grassroots level for their socio-economic identity because land works as a means for livelihood (given the fact that unjust power relations exist in the regime of land in a predominantly semi-feudal society). The support for strengthening the NLRF leads to its engagement with the government for policy initiatives and their implementation. Similarly, on the one hand, CSRC/NLRF have upheld the 'theory of change' by basically emphasizing a human rights-based

approach and transformation of unequal and inequitable power relationships. On the other hand, CSRC/NLRF has emphasized agency-building through organizing, enabling, empowering, conscientizing and building solidarity of oppressed land-poor. There is the realization for the need of consolidating the 'politics of knowledge' (generation of knowledge related to land rights issues and the associated governance for the transformation of inequitable power in a peaceful and non-violent way) and the 'politics of mobilization' (by building and strengthening the agency of the oppressed land-poor which could not be made in the last 60 years because the sister organizations (peasants' organizations) of different political parties worked merely as 'instruments of oppression' by not representing the communities of oppressed land-poor and articulating their interests). Therefore, it is relatively recently that the NLRF has been developed with the institutional support of CSRC which needs substantial institutional strengthening, including leadership as a 'process' and 'function' in the days ahead.

The next sections furnish succinct analyses on a host of basic principles of strategic partnership by integrating the evaluative opinions of CSRC and its strategic partners.

2.2.1 Ownership

Interaction with CSRC management and program officials and representatives of the strategic partners has revealed that CSRC has ownership of its own strategies, objectives, priorities and intervention processes. CSRC views total support from all strategic partners for this ownership process. More specifically, CSRC took its own institutional initiative to craft its strategic and operational plan (StOP) with its strategies, objectives and priorities through visualization/conceptualization. CSRC organized regional workshops and participatory review and reflection (PRRP) sessions for finalizing the StOP. There were five rounds of discussions for giving the final shape. Strategic partners provided their knowledge and technical inputs for reorganizing the proposed

StOP. More specifically, originally CSRC had prepared only four outputs, but latter, they were advised to add one, that is, women's land rights. They also gave their inputs for crafting the institutional development plan with the inclusion of internal good governance policy and human capacity development. Analogously, inputs were also furnished for the allocation of indicative budget for the implementation of the StOP. Technical assistance was also provided to improve the institutional reporting system.

Strategic partners also viewed that annual planning and budgeting system itself contained the intervention processes of CSRC which were approved by the strategic partners meetings held on half-yearly basis. Problems and challenges were also reported by CSRC during the meetings which were discussed extensively by owning them with a view to giving inputs for their solution/address. All this is appreciated by CSRC in setting the priorities of the land rights movement and these comprised: (i) promotion of D/VLRFs and the NLRf, (ii) non-violent mobilization of land-poor people for policy change and its implementation; and (iii) opinion building on land and agrarian reforms (knowledge-building or research) - the last one suggested by strategic partners. Intervention processes were largely determined and led by CSRC. However, intervention processes were, as indicated above, shared in half yearly strategic partnership meetings where CSRC senior management used to make the presentation with a view to soliciting suggestions accepted for the revision of the intervention processes. In the process of implementation of the StOP, strategic partners, in tandem with CSRC, worked to pressurize the government through leading delegations for the materialization of land reform efforts through the continuation of HLLRC until the report detailing the measures of scientific land reform was prepared. When there was a financial resource crunch for the continuation of intervention processes of CSRC, DanidaHUGOU played an instrumental role in securing financial resources from the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC). Strategic partners have also expressed their views on human rights (such as by DaniaHUGOU)

and people's organization by ActionAid International Nepal (AAIN) during the trainings and conferences organized by CSRC in the process of intervention activities for achieving the goal of the land rights movement.

2.2.2 Alignment

Interaction with CSRC management, program officials and representatives of strategic partners has revealed that all IDPs had aligned themselves behind the strategies, objectives and priorities of CSRC. They did not create financial problems but rather asked CSRC to work incessantly in pursuit of long-cherished goals. For instance, when there was a financial resource crunch for CSRC last year to complete its planned activities, DanidaHUGOU provided an additional Rs. 7 million. During the joint annual review of 2012, CSRC decided to merge output 3 (critical engagement established with non-stakeholders) with output 2 (clarity and consensus about land reform established, and land reform policy and frameworks suitable to the needs and realities of Nepal developed and implemented) which was unanimously agreed and accepted by all strategic partners. More specifically, the IDPs had supported the institutional operation systems of CSRC. For instance, during the organizing of social audits by CSRC, they had represented their respective organizations to express opinions on CSRC's performance and expressed solidarity with the land rights movement.

2.2.3 Coordinated Efforts

CSRC views that IDPs have made coordinated efforts to provide financial and technical inputs to simplify procedures and to share information to avoid duplications. These coordinated efforts were reflected in their basket-funding, support for one account operation, technical and knowledge inputs for the preparation of the StOP, global planning (shared in half-yearly strategic partnership meetings to solicit views from strategic partners), acceptance of CSRC's internal audit reports (despite occasional

audits by the AAIN/Care financial officials), etc. Unlike the project-based approach of the past, information was also shared between and among the IDPs to avoid duplication of development efforts vis-a-vis the land rights movement. CSRC also shared information with strategic partners through weekly/monthly updates, quarterly bulletins, half-yearly reports, and social audits.

Strategic partners, mainly, DanidaHUGOU and Oxfam, have their institutional culture of working for the 'synergy exercise' by creating a congenial ambience for mutual sharing among their own funded partners. For example, DanidaHUGOU organizes such synergy exercise 5-6 times every year where its NGO partners learn from each other's strategies, programs and experiences. Oxfam also has an institutional culture of organizing a synergy exercise for its funded NGO partners through its review and reflection process. AAIN has a long culture of organizing PRRP and social audit where it invites its partners for reflections and learning from each other's experiences. Chief benefits of such exercises include: (i) knowing the participating organizations and their missions; (ii) participating in each other's trainings, reviews and giving critical inputs; (iii) expressing solidarity in each other's missions/movements, etc. Joint action plan of the NGOs participating in the synergy exercise of DanidaHUGOU was also made but it remained unimplemented (presumably due to the lack of commitment of the organizations participating in the exercise).

Despite general recognition by all strategic partners for CSRC's ownership of its StOP, CSRC has, based on the last five years' experience, the feeling that not all strategic partners have uniform understanding of the 'basic principles' of strategic partnership and its 'spirit'. Categorically speaking, DanidaHUGOU has supported CSRC as per the 'basic principles' and 'spirit' of strategic partnership. But despite the unequivocal support of the top leadership of AAIN and Care Nepal on strategic partnerships at the time of agreement, subsequent demands for separate financial reports by their concerned officials disregarded CSRC's

system of financial reporting as principally agreed. This is a glaring example of the lack of uniform understanding of strategic partnership 'principle' and 'spirit'. Such spirit does not simplify CSRC's institutional procedures and is demonstrative of the fact that there are occasional problems in this coordinated effort.

2.2.4 Transparency, Respect, and Trust

It has been ascertained that there is transparency, respect and trust between CSRC and IDPs. CSRC shares its budgetary allocations among all strategic partners, the NLRF and collaborating partners. CSRC gets its activities of the land rights movement evaluated in different ways such as PRRPs, joint annual reviews, final evaluation, etc. But it has developed an institutional culture of organizing a 'social audit' every year promoting transparency and accountability as well as collect suggestions to increase the quality and effectiveness of the land rights movement. CSRC considers social audits as a participatory process of monitoring and evaluation and organizes social audit after the completion of all planned activities in the fiscal year. Its principal partner organization, NLRF and its district chapters also conduct similar social audits. Landless farmers and the land-poor involved in the land rights movement, land rights activists as well as leaders and frontline leaders of NLRF participate in the event. Likewise, government officials, media persons, representatives of collaborating partners, regional resource centers/organizations, political parties, and civil society, members of the CSRC board/executive committee, CSRC staff, representatives of strategic partners, independent researchers and interested persons are invited in this social audit. During the social audit, CSRC makes presentation about organizational policies, institutional rules and intervention processes, completed planned activities, achievements, their effects on land-poor men and women, challenges and learning and total budgets available from strategic partners. There is open discussion on related issues of the land rights movement

and CSRC's institutional performance. Participants including the representatives of strategic partners express their opinions on the institutional role of CSRC on the land rights movement, and its programmatic and financial mobilization. Critical reviews are made on strengths and areas for improvement. Suggestions/comments made by government agencies, representatives of civil society, strategic partners, political parties, and land rights oppressed communities are accepted because they are generally useful as guidelines of work for making future land rights movement activities even more effective. CSRC makes its requests to participants to express their opinions openly on the following: (i) which directions would help CSRC to bear the fruits of the land rights movement?; and (ii) what different roles should CSRC play in reaching its goal? Generally, critical opinions, advices and suggestions are expected. A review report is generally prepared a week after the social audit and distributed among the participants.

Strategic partners are also transparent in their activities. For instance, DanidaHUGOU shares its annual planning to NGO partners every year. AAIN also organizes its social audit every year where CSRC is invited. Care Nepal also invited CSRC in the program sharing of 35 years of its work in Nepal. It has also shared its package of planning and activities of its six-year long "Right to Food" project but the institutional total budget was not shared. CSRC is a potential partner NGO of this new Care Nepal project where it was involved right from the time of proposal development to the development of monitoring and evaluation framework. Oxfam also invites CSRC to its annual sharing program organized for partners where total budget allocated for land rights is shared (albeit total institutional budget is not shared). Lutheran World Service also invites CSRC in its quarterly review meetings on planning and budget and its social audit where discussions are openly held.

Generally, there is respect and trust between each other. CSRC views that there is zero imposition of views on it by the strategic partners and neither do they complain about

its *modus operandi* in the field. Partners often ask CSRC to meet their representatives wherever there is an issue to be discussed. They send their visitors to CSRC for learning. Representatives of CSRC are also asked to share their land rights movement experience in trainings. All this gives CSRC management and its staff a sense of respect. CSRC also respects institutional positions of strategic partners in the process of their support. CSRC views that they have continuous support primarily because of trust--a major cognitive social capital. The Executive Director of CSRC says, "CSRC is given money by the strategic partners once an email is written. It is independent of implementing its intervention activities as per its plan. Newly planned program proposals are also given a "go ahead" signal. For instance, when requesting support for construction of the central office of NLRF at Thimora, Chitawan, strategic partners instantly provided a total of Rs. 1.9 million. All this is due to trust of each other".

2.2.5 Focus on Results

CSRC has result-based planning, monitoring and review/evaluation systems which are recognized and backed by the IDPs. Functionaries of both CSRC and the NLRF hold regular team meetings with their homework and review seriously about their achievement/failures. During the regular review meetings, there is serious discussion on four questions: (i) what was the initial plan?; (ii) what has been achieved at individual, group and institutional levels?; (iii) what have been the failures?; and (iv) what are the reasons behind the failure?. Even the staff are required to write in their yearly appraisal reports about their contribution to achieve a particular result or some combined results of the planned institutional activities and their vision for next year's planning. Both CSRC and NLRF have their institutional culture of conducting quarterly reviews with focus on objectives, their achievements, problems, and their solutions subsuming the contemplation of the next planning. Albeit CSRC is effortful

for the realization of the results, it takes time to realize the goal/impact. It has also been learned from strategic partners that it took almost a year to develop the results-based benefit monitoring and evaluation framework with the development of measurable/verifiable indicators for comparison with the baseline data to analyze the changes induced by the intervention processes. There was substantial support from strategic partners, particularly from DanidaHUGOU. The two strategic partnership meetings held each year also focus on achievement of the program results.

2.2.6 Mutual Accountability

There has been the understanding that both CSRC and IDPs have mutual accountability towards outcomes and impacts. Contextually, as analyzed in the preceding sections in greater detail, the outcome of the land rights movement is 'to promote security of tenure of land-poor women and men through pro-poor land reform in a meaningful participation of their networks and organization'. Likewise, the impact is 'to secure equitable access to land for poor women and men for ensuring their freedom and right to a dignified life'. CSRC publishes 'Reflections' every year where output-wise analysis is presented as per the StOP demonstrating the gradual achievement of the outcome.

Policy changes by the Ministry of Land Reform and Management to register *Birta* land of Rasuwa district in the name of tenant farmers, publication of HLLRC reports and preparation of a 13-point agenda action plan (with inputs from CSRC) of land reform, drafting of the *Haruwa/Charuwa* bill, formulation of land use policy, obtaining of tenanted land (from the *Raikar* land, *Guthi* land, *Birta* land,), the village block land and other public lands by the land-poor, identity cards given to the landless squatters by the landless commissions constituted by the government of Nepal, beginning of the maintenance of records at the VDCs of unregistered tenants, certification of the settlement of land-poor on public/

wasteland by the VDCs and the implementation of joint land ownership certificates for women and men, etc; are the outcomes achieved—a function of the persistent efforts made by both CSRC with the unflinching commitment of IDPs through the total institutional and financial support to NLRF and its district as well as village chapters. The institutional educating, empowering, mobilizing and strengthening of the NLRF are the functions of mutual accountability of both CSRC and IDPs.

Despite the fact that impacts cannot be analyzed in totality right after the completion of the program, some sustained effects (impacts) have begun to be seen in a positive direction. These include equitable access to tenanted land, public/waste land for the use of productive purposes (such as for community land reform practice and collective farming) for increased income of households and groups, freedom from indebtedness of local landlords (who used to charge exorbitant interest rates as high as 36% or more at times) due to the establishment of women's agricultural cooperatives, personal and community level empowerment of the oppressed land-poor (who have begun to consider themselves as dignified individuals because they put forward their opinions in front of their adversaries, government officials, and officials of CSRC and IDPs) and increase of women's empowerment due to the joint land ownership/entitlement by increasing their self-confidence/self-identity and sense of security with the implication of the increase of their influence in the household and community decision-making process. These are the results of implementation. The results of CSRC affect the strategic partner's own performance (because they are the indicators of their performance through support) and *vice a versa* (the level of support of strategic partners also affects CSRC's performance in yielding better results). Succinctly put, the process of accountability from both sides is mutually reinforcing.

2.2.7 Transaction Costs

Reduction of transaction costs has been one of the prime objectives of strategic partnership because of donor's commitment to one of standardized reporting, including; **(a)** one quarterly and annual narrative and financial report; **(b)** one joint annual audit; **(c)** one annual review of progress, and one annual policy dialogue between CSRC and the supporting group of donors, based on the review report and the plan/budget for the coming year (DanidaHUGOU, 2009). More specifically, due to this commitment, CSRC and the IDPs have the realization that this strategic partnership has been instrumental in reducing the transaction costs of the program of the land rights movement because fewer number of personnel within CSRC can operationally support the program system because one review/evaluation report, one monitoring mechanism, one training for the organizational system operation, one account, and one internal audit (by a professional chartered accountant) can help to maintain the whole program system. CSRC has been using the system-generated financial reporting mechanism and has used the software called 'Famas' since April 2009 by spending Rs. 1,60,000 received from the basket funding. However, it has also developed an institutional mechanism for a manual double entry accounting system with appropriate ledgers, books of accounts and voucher files which can be done by one or two personnel. The overall financial system is considered flawless, effective and efficient because of the systemic automatic generation of financial reports as well as bank reconciliation at any point of time and regularity of updating of entries at the central level. All this process has helped to save time. Initially, two senior administrative and financial staffs were given 'Famas' operations training by the service provider which was followed by a 3-day long refresher training.

CSRC has also made an institutional initiative for the capacity building of responsible officials of partners on financial management, NLRP and its district chapters, and regional resource organizations/collaborating partners at the centre with specific focus on financial

management, reporting, budgeting, budget revision, tax system, monitoring of finance, etc. Refresher trainings are also occasionally provided at each region as per the need. This has eased to maintain the uniformity in the financial reporting system. CSRC has also the bitter experience of non-acceptance of one financial report (notably by AAIN and Care Nepal) despite their adherence to the basic principles, i.e. one global planning and financial report which resulted in the compulsion for CSRC to generate individual donor specific reports in line with their Gregorian Calendar. Finally, CSRC has been bound to reverse its original policy of preparing their financial report in the Nepali calendar since the 15th of July 2013 and has begun reporting as per the Gregorian calendar to suit the interest of some strategic partners. However, DanidaHUGOU, Oxfam and LWFN did not have the problem in this regard. Additionally, unlike in the project-based programs, one field visit by one official of CSRC for observation/monitoring of program activities and one program specific training/workshop in a district/site on a particular program also reduced program costs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Major Conclusions

- i) The land rights movement facilitated by CSRC and led by NLRF during the last four and half years of StOP implementation has demonstrated the potential for empowering land- poor women and men to ‘promote the security of tenure of land’ (outcome) and ‘secure equitable access to land’ (impact). These outcomes and impacts cannot be achieved in the short span of time of program implementation in a predominantly semi-feudal society where there is a complex web of inequitable power relationships deeply entrenched historically in its political economy.
- ii) Given the fact that most of the indicators of the program’s outputs have had excellent accomplishments, CSRC’s performance has definitely been commendable in gearing up the land rights movement one step further qualitatively at the national level through the creation of distinctive identity in the domain of land rights and its concomitant internationalization.
- iii) The phenomenal growth of the NLRF and D/VLRFs has itself been the greatest example of the achievement of the land rights movement during the last four and half years. The fledging nature of NLRF for leading the issues with its initiatives has been another matter of satisfaction, a result of the facilitative and institutional capacity-building support of CSRC.
- iv) Changes in macro-level policy initiatives had been possible as the direct functions of the leadership of the land rights and related issues taken by oppressed land-poor rights holders themselves and consequent seamless mobilization of them through the appropriate facilitative support of civil society (CSRC) for dialogues and negotiations with concerned government officials. The policy directive for the preparation and implementation of the action plan for land reform, formulation of national land use policy, drafting of national land policy, policy pronouncement for joint land ownership, policy initiative prohibiting the use of *Haruwa/Charuwa* and their rehabilitation, etc. have had the potential of far-reaching repercussions on equitable access to land and promotion of security of land tenure. If honestly implemented by the government in collaboration with civil society organizations, with support

of international development partners as necessary, land-poor women and men will get their livelihood improved significantly.

- v) CSRC's concerted institutional support to land-poor women and men and to link the land rights movement to livelihood issues (agro-based entrepreneurship), agricultural co-operatives and community land reform practice, through the utilization of public waste land, has been crucially important for economic empowerment at the grassroots level. This is indicative of the sustainability of the movement for an improved livelihood system.
- vi) CSRC's regular institutional strengthening support to NLRF and its chapters has its bearing on the empowerment of land-poor women and men at individual and community levels-- another important achievement of the land rights movement. Ability to interact and express opinions in front of oppressors, outsiders, authorities/ political parties has been the function of individual empowerment (through conscientization). Collective resistance/ bargaining in a non-confrontational way with landlords and state authorities and the ability to dialogue/negotiate have been the functions of community empowerment.
- vii) The institutional development of CSRC with the support of strategic partners has also had a preponderant influence on better performance of its staff roles in strengthening the land rights movement.
- viii) The growth of CSRC's distinctive national image and identity on land rights issues is also the function of its institutional policy promoting external accountability towards strategic partners, rights holders, civil society organizations, and concerned government officials through various ways, including the 'social audit'.
- ix) Given the fact that strategic partners have upheld the theory of change by basically emphasizing a human rights-based approach and transformation of

inequitable power relationships through agency-building for social justice, there is the realization of the need of consolidating the 'politics of knowledge' (generation of knowledge related to land rights issues and the associated governance for the transformation of inequitable power with peaceful and non-violent ways) and 'politics of mobilization' (by building and strengthening the agency of the oppressed land-poor) through the 'strategic partnership'.

- x) Uniform understanding on basic principles of 'strategic partnership' and their implementation in true sense by the strategic partners has the potential of reducing the transaction costs further and improving the aid effectiveness.

3.2 Recommendations

There are two types of recommendations, i.e. CSRC's performance and strategic partnership (see below).

CSRC Performance:

- i) Despite significant achievements made laudably as presented in the immediately preceding chapter, there are a host of challenges ahead. Most notably, these would be the following: (i) what is the next intervention process after the acquisition of land (because land is not the end but a means to promote the livelihood of poor people)?; (ii) how can rights holders use land productively and sustainably for self-employment and income generation by using irrigation and modern technologies/ inputs and agricultural cooperatives without fragmenting the limited holdings they have had?; and (iii) how can people continue identifying government and other development agencies resources and make use of them optimally for improving their livelihood? Those who have access to land as a resource through the land rights movement must now begin defining their own livelihood agenda. This must

not be detrimental to environmental sustainability and this is indicative of the fact that the role of CSRC will also have to change in such case from supporting to have land rights to improving/furthering the living standard of land-poor critical masses through necessary support in collaboration with relevant governmental and non-governmental agencies. In so doing, the DLRFs can play an instrumental role in facilitating the process for VLRFs and, therefore, CSRC must play a critical role in strengthening them where they are relatively nascent bereft of experiential learning. The priorities of the integrated land rights movement must now be fixed by the land-poor themselves with the facilitative/technical support of CSRC. However, both CSRC and NLRF have to think of new slogans that link the land rights movement with livelihood issues which can potentially revitalize the spirit of the on-going movement.

- ii) Albeit many good things have been achieved in the CSRC-facilitated land rights movement in the period of 18 years or so, CSRC should further its efforts to institutionalize the culture of good governance at all levels of the movement to check possible temptation among leaders and activists for self-aggrandizement, which movements of its kind run the risk of. Non-compliance with good governance principles will trigger the debacle of organizational credibility. Therefore, a concerted effort must be made by CSRC to get all its members, and new entrants, to strictly comply with the rules of good governance (both administrative/managerial and financial).
- iii) There is an institutional need to add expert officials in the field of agriculture and law. The land rights movement is being linked to livelihood issues and land-poor men and women have already begun agricultural enterprises in a limited scale, which require technical support to sustain the initiatives. At the moment, CSRC does not have specialized human resources for such technical support, and therefore, there is now the need to appoint two agricultural experts with relevant degrees. Similarly, CSRC also does not have legal experts to contribute to continuous legal awareness building among the oppressed land poor, frontline leaders, activists, full-time workers of DLRFs, and functionaries of DLRFs and NLRF and file petitions for land rights at the concerned government offices including the courts and represent cases on behalf of the oppressed land-poor. Hiring other professional lawyers for filing petitions and representing cases of plaintiffs is a very expensive business and therefore, it would be reasonable for CSRC to appoint two such legal experts with graduate level qualification who would remain at the organization permanently. They can be used to train 'paralegals' in communities such as local schoolteachers who are generally the most permanent dwellers. Upon completion of the training, they can help the oppressed land-poor men and women in related legal issues.
- iv) Given the fact that the cases of land rights violation continue to be unabated, CSRC needs to develop an internal institutional mechanism for documentation of cases of land rights violations, and a plan to fight for their redress in a sustained way.
- v) CSRC must make concerted institutional efforts for intensification of the campaign for joint land ownership certificates (for men and women) because what has been achieved hitherto has been only symbolic. For instance, the achievement of four and half years has been 1,586. Now there is a need to increase it up to 10,000 per year by making this joint land entitlement an issue of all concerned for women's economic empowerment, i.e. the government must also make the program to visit villages by its officials for supporting CSRC-facilitated campaign for a couple of weeks every year through the issuance of joint land certificates and civil society organizations must also extend their support to translate the government policy into reality.

Otherwise, formulation of a policy for joint land ownership alone will not work for ensuring gender equity in land resources.

- vi) Given the fact that 18 years have elapsed ever since the commencement of the land rights movement from Kiul and Helambu VDCs of Sindupalchowk district and CSRC has begun generating learning with policy implications from its movement worth documenting and sharing with wider audiences, CSRC must now think critically and meticulously to develop 'learning model villages' (up to 10) in mountain/hill and *Tarai* regions where professional researchers, rights activists, strategic partners, donors, policy makers and implementers, academicians and university graduate students can spend some time to learn from them on a host of issues. These might be facets of strong people's organization of the land-poor, community land reform practices, sustainable agricultural development (including cash crop farming), patterns of movement fund generation for the indigenization of land rights movement, agricultural co-operatives and their concomitant impacts on living standard of land-poor men and women (mainly in schooling of children, health and sanitation, efficient bio-energy consumption, community development, etc.). Together with the establishment of the 'learning model villages', CSRC can also support the NLRF and its district chapters to establish their own "farm houses" in all program districts, which gradually can be offices for CSRC/NLRF district chapters where activists/frontline leaders, full-time workers of DLRFs, CSRC officials, and participants of the campaign can spend their nights by consuming agro-products from the farm houses instead of spending nights at expensive hotels/lodges of urban/semi-urban areas. They can work in the farms tending crops/vegetables/fruits and rearing livestock during their leisure. This will also be an indicator of sustainability in the future.
- vii) Given the fact that sustained political

commitment is imperative (CSRC, 2009), together with NLRF and like-minded national and international civil society organizations with the support of strategic partners, CSRC has to make concerted institutional effort for the days to come to pressurize the incoming constituent assembly (whose election is scheduled for November 2013) for the writing of the new constitution including suggestions and measures offered by land reform commissions of the past vis-à-vis the issue of landlessness and tenancy rights (including those of the unregistered ones). Similarly, pressure is also needed to be exerted on the government for timely implementation of land use policies and the action plan for land reform.

- viii) CSRC has to craft an institutional policy of expanding the NLRF, not in terms of regions/areas but in terms of the number of committed mass of the land-poor. The *raison d'être* of this recommendation is that government listens to the voices of the oppressed land-poor people only if they succeed in exerting tremendous pressure. Therefore, the NLRF should be strong enough numerically and qualitatively to mobilize a sizable number of its members when needed to pressurize political parties and authorities into fulfilling the demands of the land-poor.
- ix) Based on past experiences, CSRC has to make concerted institutional efforts to develop a small 'national resource centre' within CSRC where it can accommodate research professionals, academicians, and land policy and agrarian policy specialists as experts/resource persons. On the one hand, they can carry independent studies on the land and agrarian movement by generating analytical learning on the NLRF and D/VLRFs community initiatives for land reform, co-operatives, gender justice vis-à-vis land entitlement, sustainable agriculture development, and improved living standard of the land-poor (as a function of land and agrarian movement) for sharing with wider audiences at

academic centers, relevant governmental institutions and international development institutions (INGOs, bilateral, and multilateral agencies) and their governance practices with a view to generating wider academic, professional and policy debates. This is basically a knowledge generation part.

This whole process of knowledge generation can contribute to the ‘politics of knowledge’—knowledge that can ultimately and potentially help to trigger the transformation of inequitable power relations vis-à-vis land. Such knowledge may be generated from both the national land and agrarian movement as whole and CSRC’s ‘model learning villages’. On the other hand, they can also give policy feedback to the government and national as well as international development organizations on the land and agrarian movement based on the knowledge generated. CSRC must also think scrupulously as to how its new ‘national resource center’ on the anvil can maintain its collaboration with the universities of Nepal for collaborative research for knowledge generation and its publication with the academic standard (to the extent possible). In the event of the failure of linking with universities and institutions, individual academicians can be accommodated for carrying out the said research activities for materialization of the knowledge generation part. In the long run, provided things move in the most concerted way, it can be turned into ‘South Asia Land Resource Centre’—a centre of learning on the land rights issues. Ultimately, the knowledge part of the ‘National Resource Centre’ can contribute to the ‘politics of mobilization’, i.e. identifying the issues through studies/researches and building their capacity for the intensification of the campaign. The overall emphasis of the centre must be on the innovativeness—be it in the regime of knowledge or in the regime of mobilization for transformation. The whole issue of the land rights movement must be holistically linked to the wider national development discourse/strategy for the reduction of poverty, injustice and discrimination unlike the hitherto made sectoral efforts (for instance, how joint land

ownership certificates also help women to have access and control over land, reduce discrimination and domestic violence at the household and community levels in the Nepali patriarchal society, to enhance their self-confidence and social identity attached to the land, to enhance their access to education, etc; how land rights of the land poor is related to education, governance, access and therefore, such a holistic perspective has to be in the priority of the centre). The ‘national resource centre’ can play a role to link and balance the ‘politics of knowledge’ and ‘politics of mobilization’. Efforts are to be made to link the ‘movement for land and agrarian reform’ to ecological justice, i.e. poor minority people must not be deprived of their rights to the natural resources of the areas where they are residing).

- x) CSRC must craft its new strategic policy for motivating and mobilizing all its members for the land and agrarian movement by building their capacity through the orientation on people-centered advocacy for the transformation of inequitable power relation relationships vis-à-vis land in this agrarian society predominantly characterized by semi-feudalism (given the fact that not all members are active in achieving the mission/goal).
- xi) Given the fact that land-poor men and women involved in the land rights movement (including activists/full-time workers) have now got either only homestead land or limited amount of cultivable land under tenancy rights (and will have a similar situation even in the future), it would be advisable for the NLRF to take institutional initiatives to organize and impart ‘skills development training’ related to agricultural production sector depending upon the context of local job markets with the support of CSRC and other related organizations specialized in this field (like Helvetas’ franchising-skill to the poor). This will help these people to earn income to meet their livelihood needs and as a corollary of it, one of the household members (either husband or wife) can give more time in the land rights

movement. This has been recommended that a generality of these land-poor men and women involved in the VLRFs/ DLRFs have to survive on their agricultural wages. This can be done on a pilot basis for helping people to realize their economic rights and if successful results are seen in a couple of years, institutional efforts are to be made for their up-scaling.

- xii) Albeit micro, meso and macro level agency-building process of land-poor men and women (the oppressed communities) is on the rise and expansion is going on in 53 districts, there should be additional support for the development of the training centre of the NLRF at Chitwan (where the landless and land-poor get more rigorous orientation and training on issues related to people-centered advocacy, leadership and dynamics, financial management, legal knowledge, agricultural entrepreneurship, co-operatives, community land reform, collective farming, region-specific cash crop farming, etc/), which will eventually result in making their organization even stronger through 'ripple effects'. NLRF, with the support of CSRC (which is supported by the strategic partners) must also begin pondering over whether regional training centers are also necessary, and initiate a process to develop them in a gradual manner.
- xiii) To the extent possible, given the low educational level of the leaders of NLRF, both CSRC and NLRF must hold a constant dialogue on how to develop the capacity of the latter in the regime of proposal writing to independently seek funds in the long run. If organizational sustainability is the prime concern of both, then it is recommended to agree on, and begin, a process of recruiting a promising young professional with M.A in Social Sciences (preferably in Sociology, Anthropology, Development Studies, Economics, Human and Natural Resources management, etc.) on a competitive basis and CSRC must play an instrumental role in the selection of the person and allocation of funds for his/her work incentives. Initially, on-the-job training is also to be imparted and his/her job performance must also be overseen by CSRC top management to ensure the quality of outputs. This young professional will have to develop proposal seeking suggestions from the functionaries of the central executive committee as per the demand of the possible funding organization. Albeit CSRC will have to remain a major resource organization for some years to come, this new initiative will also be a suitable move towards the organization's financial sustainability.
- xiv) Given the fact that the issue of land rights movement has now been fully established by the fledging agency of the land-poor themselves with the support of CSRC at the national level, now there is the point of departure. More efforts are to be institutionally made by CSRC to strengthen the organization through civic education for developing their critical thinking so that they can also set their norms within the organization that help to show how they are different from other conventional NGOs. The overall emphasis has to be on the 'quality of leadership' at different levels of the people's organization. Indeed, leadership must be taken as the 'function', which can ensure the condition of providing support to the movement for land rights as per necessity (such as idea/knowledge, etc.). Definitely, the whole process of agency-building will be sustainable if efforts are made to make the process even more collective and participatory.
- xv) Given the fact that officials of DLRF and NLRF have experienced that regional resource organizations (which also worked as collaborating partners) could not be as effective to support the DLRFs to streamline the land rights campaign at the district level (by channeling financial resources as and when needed by the DLRFs) as anticipated, CSRC must, by respecting the voices of the people's organization and its district chapters, begin

channeling financial resources directly through strengthening its resource centers to DLRFs (because NLRF maintains the working principle of a bottom-up approach). For getting this materialized, CSRC may have to add responsible officials at the regional centers or the central office (given the paucity of the manpower at the centre) for helping transactions done efficiently and professionally.

Recommendations on Improving the Strategic Partnership Modality

- i) Different IDPs under strategic partnership must specify one timeframe for financial support (be it for 3 or 5 years with specified amount as done by DanidaHUGOU for four and a half years) at the beginning of the program so that CSRC can begin planning its activities accordingly for the agreed timeframe.
- ii) It has also been experienced that one strategic partner, Lutheran World Federation, Nepal (LWFN) explicitly indicated its potential financial support to CSRC provided the latter worked in its program district such as Lalitpur. Such conditional support was against the spirit of strategic partnership modality. CSRC must be left independent in selecting its program areas.
- iii) There has to be an understanding among strategic partners on a lower limit of financial support for the program, that is, 10 percent at the minimum of the total amount to be allocated for the program for the specified period. If the strategic partners are unwilling to provide support at this minimum level, CSRC wants them to support it from outside without being involved in the strategic partnership.
- iv) Given the fact that a synergy workshop is beneficial to the actors involved, the strategic partners must make institutional decision to increase this exercise.
- v) Given the fact that strategic approach (as recommended by Mohan M. Thapa in 2011) is highly relevant as it complements government's development policies and efforts and caters to the needs of the target groups in Nepal and improves aid effectiveness by reducing transaction costs, all strategic partners must, like DanidaHUGOU, make their institutional efforts to replicate the experiences of the strategic partnership with CSRC among other partners so that the limitations of the project-based program would be addressed in Nepal. All this would help them to address the challenges of the convergence of donor's diversity (given the fact that they lack clarity on the way forward, have not been able to forge a common understanding in the convergence of diversity, and come up with minimum requirements that all of them need to adhere to, i.e. harmonization of requirements), harmonizing funding commitments, disbursements and reporting as per the national calendar, joint advocacy and synergy building (because they lack strategic direction and action plan in critical issues of advocacy and synergy), and measuring performance and impact (because duplication of projects leads to double counting of achievements and impact attribution and little translation of learning to become more effective). Done so would help international donors supporting NGOs to overcome their *ad-hocism*, short-term perspective of program, and donor-driven nature of project implementation, increase local ownership, reduce high transaction costs, help NGOs to develop long-term strategic plans with vision, mission, goals and objectives, promote alignment and harmonization of donors in line with partner NGO's policies, develop institutional policies and systems of NGOs to be results-oriented and promote mutual accountability to achieve program goals (Thapa, 2011: 16-18). CSRC concurs with these fundamental conclusions and recommendations furnished by the

DanidaHUGOU consultant Mr. Mohan M. Thapa.

- vi) Albeit land rights issues of CSRC are whole-heartedly owned by all five strategic partners, there was a problem in accepting the reporting system of CSRC (such as the financial reporting requirements to be made in the Gregorian Calendar as per individual requirements of some donors-- which is against the principle of reporting under strategic partnership). This is indicative of the fact that the strategic partnership system is not fully owned by all in practice. This suggests the need for more homework and discussion among strategic partners themselves to find ways to address some pressing organizational obligations.
- vii) For further strengthening collaborative partnerships, the relatively nascent collaborating partners, who are also fighting injustice facing the disadvantaged social groups in their program areas, should strengthen their advocacy skills by linking them to the 'learning center's of NLRP formed and strengthened with the support of CSRC.
- viii) Talking to responsible officials of Care Nepal and Oxfam has given the impression that despite the commitment to strategic partnership of the top management of both organizations, much remains to be discussed on the basic principles within respective organizations and internalized by them. There is the urge from them that CSRC must be willing to work under both basket funding (of strategic partnership from their core funding) and specific issue-based partnership sponsored by different international donors (which does not fall under the ambit of strategic partnership). Even though it sounds practical from their organizational point of view, it is against the spirit of strategic partnership. Therefore, given the fact that strategic partnership has helped CSRC to lower its transaction costs and increase aid effectiveness while strengthening the land rights movement, it is strongly

recommended to initiate specific issue-based partnership between these organizations and CSRC under the larger framework of strategic partnership only (because there cannot be two models of partnership with CSRC which is now fully committed to the full implementation of strategic partnership). Once CSRC adopts a new strategic plan for another five years, strategic partners such as Care Nepal and Oxfam must have their alignment behind CSRC's objectives and strategies.

- ix) Strategic partners must also link the issue of land rights to their own regular program and must also engage other international partners in it.

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