

Field Visit Report



**Nepal Peace Trust Fund
Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation**

Singha Durbaar, Kathmandu
Nepal
www.nptf.gov.np

Date of report preparation: 29 May 2011

Date of field visit: From 19th to 22nd April 2011

Surkhet and Banke Districts

Monitoring Team Members:

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1. Details of the site visit

Activity	Programme/ Project title:	Districts/VDCs visited
Date: 19 April		
Interaction with Police Personnel, contractor and Construction Management Committee members	Police Unit Reconstruction Project	Kohalpur, Banke
Meeting with Dept. Of Road Officials	Road Maintenance Project	Birendranagar, Surkhet
Meeting with Local Cantonment Management Officer (LCMO)	Cantonment Management Project	Birendranagar, Surkhet
Date: 20 April		
Observation of access road and bridge construction in Jhupra and Chinghad	Cantonment access road project	Surkhet
Interaction with combatants, vice commander, doctor, in Dashrathpur Main Cantonment	Cantonment Management Project, CHMPIV	Dashrathpur, Surkhet
Interaction with combatants in Gumi Satellite Cantonment	Cantonment Management Project	Surkhet
Interaction with combatants in Lekpharsa Satellite Cantonment	Cantonment Management Project	Surkhet
Interaction with combatants in Kalyan Satellite Cantonment	Cantonment Management Project	Surkhet
Date: 21 April		
Interaction with Police and Community Members	Police Unit Reconstruction Project	Babiyachaur, Surkhet
Meeting with CDO office staff members and LPC Coordinator	Relief to Internally Displaced Persons; Mine Risk and LPC Project	Birendranagar, Surkhet
Meeting with Dept. Of Health	Drinking Water Support Project	Birendranagar, Surkhet

2. Findings of the Field Visit

Project: Cantonment Management Project:

Activity 2: Visit Dashrathpur Main Cantonment and Gumi, Lekpharsa and Kalyan Satellite Cantonments and meetings with Vice Commander and PLA combatants' representatives

1. In general, the combatants in the cantonments have their basic needs fulfilled and basic living conditions, except in one of the satellite cantonments where the conditions of living and health post was below the minimum standards. In all cantonments, the combatants expressed the need for upgrading of facilities, especially, the temporary shelters needed maintenance and repair; basic food allowance was considered to be very low compared to high inflation during last three years; wages comparatively lower than the Nepal Army despite the agreement to treat them equal to other security forces; problems with payment of electricity and telephone bills (which was now being highlighted in the local media as well) and there is no provision of transportation and allowance for the person accompanying combatants who are referred to hospitals.
2. There is no information provided to the combatants on the peace process, including the rehabilitation/integration process, or what is happening with the needs they report to LCMO (Local Cantonment Management Officer). What they know they get from the media. However, trustful collaboration could be seen between the cantonment commanders and the LCMO.
3. Of the three options that are being currently discussed at the political level, the combatants expressed that they would rather have only two options: first option, on integration for the maximum number of people that is possible as per the state's capacity and second option, guarantee their employment in respectful permanent government services since they had fought for the state. They expressed their dissatisfaction on the use of terminology 'rehabilitation' since they felt that they were neither displaced nor victims of conflict who needed to be rehabilitated. On the other hand, they did not agree on the third option of voluntary retirement because they did not want to be seen as those who had fought for money but for state.
4. In contrast to other divisions visited, this division had set up a separate camp for people with severe injuries and disabilities as a result of conflict. The need and services in the camp may be further explored in future monitoring visits since it was not possible to do it this time due to time constraints.
5. An element of relaxedness was felt in combatants about the presence of personnels from different security forces within the cantonments after departure of UNMIN.

Activity 3– Meeting with representatives from District Road Office and District Health Officer in Surkhet.

6. The team met with representatives from District Road Office, who expressed that the project that they implement for NPTF is similar to their other regular jobs, and the reports for NPTF are even simpler and easier than the reports that they have to prepare for their regular reporting.

7. Currently NPTF Funds make up 1/3rd of total funds of division office for Surkhet, especially due to high budget of two bridges (Jhupra and Chinghad) being constructed in the access road. The year before, the budget of NPTF project was 1/6th of the total budget. All the money that they have received from NPTF has been used to upgrade and maintain the 21 km long access road to cantonment.
8. For this year, 16 firms had submitted bidding for the two bridges. Contracted amount for the two bridges are 17% lesser than originally estimated amount. E-Bidding/ internet procurement was used primarily, and the bidding companies could also submit their bids on hard copies.
9. On site observation of the construction works of both the bridges showed that the progress of the work had been slow which may lead to delayed completion of the works. Inclusion of local community in maintenance works have been found, thus promoting the local employment opportunities and economic support to the villages on the way to cantonment.
10. The monitoring team met with the DHO who was open minded and provided basic information but was unaware of health issues inside cantonment, which he attributed to the fact that he does not receive reports. He expressed his ignorance about the issue of disability issue, facilities inside, kind of demands that are coming up in the cantonments. (1% of the total combatants have to be referred for wounds related to bullets during conflict).

Project: Support to Internally Displaced People:

Activity 4: Meeting with the officials at Chief District Office (CDO)

1. The original of the records of Internally Displaced People (IDP) from the CDO office had been sent to the Ministry of Peace, following which, the records were unavailable in the office. The newly deputed officials at CDO office mentioned that they were not familiar with the details of the program implemented for IDPs, but had recently received and verified applications 507 IDPs.
2. They had sent the records to the MoPR but had not received further instructions. This group of IDPs have been verified by the CDOs and the LPCs. Most of the IDPs that have registered recently were found to have been displaced due to reasons inflicted by the state party, who could reveal themselves now after peace process has been conducive enough for them.
3. Most IDPs have used the money for repayment of loans and a few used for productive purposes as starting a new business or expanding their existing business.
4. Many IDPs in Surkhet have returned back to their homes, especially because their property was returned back to them or not confiscated in the first place.

Project: Reconstruction of Police Units:

Activity1: Visit to Kohalpur (Banke) and BabiyaChaur (Surkhet) Police Post and Meetings with Police personnels, contractor, Construction Management Committee Members and community members.

1. The construction works were in its completion stage in both the police posts. These are the only police posts to be rebuilt in the districts through NPTF support. Though initially there had been delays due to rainy season, unavailability of timber in Kohalpur and distance for transporting materials from Nepalgunj to BabiyaChaur, they expected the works to be completed within the given extended contract ending dates. In BabiyaChaur, the progress and quality of construction works of the police unit was reported being much more satisfactory compared to other public infrastructures being reconstructed in the same area.
2. In both cases, the contractor will complete his works within the tender amount, despite the increase in cost over the last year in construction materials. The contractor gave a rough estimate of increase by 10% in Terai region). Since the amount contracted in Kohalpur was notably lower than originally estimated (difference of NRs.400,000), the construction committee members requested the use of surplus amount for boundary wall and landscaping of the place. Community members in BabiyaChaur also requested for additional support to build the boundary wall and make arrangements for drinking water. They also indicated that the size of the female locking room and incharge officer's room in the existing design was very small. Nonetheless, they confirmed that the area police offices that were being reconstructed had better structures than those that were earlier destroyed.
3. Community relations and involvement appear to be good in both cases. Both communities expressed their satisfaction for reconstruction of the police posts in their area. Public participation is quite visible but transparency is limited to the public when it comes to budget issues. It may be worthwhile to assess whether the community would have preferred different kind of contracting or involvement of management committee.
4. The chairperson of the construction management committee of police post in Kohalpur was affiliated to the Maoist party, thus demonstrating an involvement of the both parties of conflict to the reconstruction of public infrastructures damaged during conflict.
5. The reconstruction of the police posts, especially in a remote area such as BabiyaChaur of Surkhet is expected to uplift the local economy by potential opening of banks, administrative offices and small businesses due to increased feeling of security.

Project: Supporting the Local Peace Committees

Activity 5: Meeting with LPC Coordinator

1. The self assessment of LPC of the LPC Coordinator is that this LPC is one of the best functioning LPCs in the Mid Western Region. The LPC has been involved in identifying and verifying the conflict affected people and mediating cases of disputes.
2. They have dealt with a few politically disputed issues successfully in coordination with the CDO office and relevant stakeholders such as human rights organizations.

While working on solving these disputes, all the members are consulted whereas only the most relevant members are involved. There are few cases of disputes since Surkhet is considered by the CDO officials to be comparatively safer district with fewer incidents. However the cases are generally time consuming, many cases they go into proactively, few cases on the request of the disputing parties.

3. Coordination of LPC with CDO office seems to be quite good.
4. Those seeking services of LPCs seem to prefer the informal mediation mechanism of LPC rather than going to the more formal procedures or policing.
5. LPC Coordinator mentioned that the challenge that they faced was related to late provision of budget that they receive much later than the time when they need it for program implementation.
6. In spite of the principal rule of rotation of LPC Coordinator every six months, this rule is not always applied, even if by consensus of LPC members, the Coordinator is requested to stay on. The Coordinator is involved in LPC full time and considers the inability of other members to give full time to LPC to be a barrier in taking up the leadership position.

3. Recommendations

Cantonments

1. The PFS should follow up on the cantonment maintenance project with the implementing agency and plan what can be done to further improve the situation of cantonment infrastructures. In light of the present circumstances, focus can be on the urgent necessities in worse cantonment, before monsoon this year.

Internally Displaced People

2. PFS should follow up with MoPR on the status of IDP project about the way ahead for supporting the additional IDPs registered newly.

Police posts project

3. The PFS should follow up closely with police on public audit for completed police posts.
4. Should the second phase of police unit reconstruction be considered for funding from NPTF, the space allotted for women's cell in Area Police Office should be revisited.

- Itinerary of the monitoring team, Banke and Surkhet

Time	Activity
DAY 1: Tuesday, 19 April 2011	
9.30 – 10.30	Fly to Nepalgunj
10.30 – 11.00	Travel to Kohalpur
11.00 – 13.00	Interaction at Kohalpur Police Post
13.00 – 15.30	Travel to Surkhet
15.30 – 18.00	Meeting with Department of Road Official and Local Cantonment Management Officer (LCMO)
18.00	Check in and stay in Surkhet
DAY 2: Wednesday, 20 April 2011	
07:00 – 9:00	Travel to Dashrathpur Main Cantonment, Surkhet
9:00 – 11.30	Interaction with Combatants
11:30 – 12:00	Travel to Gumi Satellite Cantonment
12:00 – 13.30	Interaction with Combatants
13:30 – 14:00	Travel to Lekpharsa Satellite Cantonment
14:05 – 15:00	Interaction with Combatants
15:00 – 15:30	Travel to Kalyan Satellite cantonment
15:30 – 17:00	Interaction with combatants
17:00 – 18:30	Arrive Surkhet
Day 3: Thursday 21 April 2011	
7:00 – 10:30	Travel to Babiyachaur Police Unit
10:30 – 12:30	Interaction with Police, contractors and community members
12:30 – 15:00	Travel back to Surkhet
15.00 - 17.00	Meeting with CDO office staff members and LPC Coordinator
17:00 – 17:45	Meeting with District Health Officer
DAY 4: Friday, 22 April 2011	
06:00 – 09:00	Travel to Nepalgunj
10:30 – 11:30	Fly back to Kathmandu