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Results from the “Enhancing good governance and human rights protection programme in Nepal”

Law enforcement and criminal justice actors effectively address root causes of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in Nepal.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

[The Enhancing Good Governance and Human Rights Protection programme](#) built upon previous research conducted in Nepal, which identified seven ‘root causes’ of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment within law enforcement and criminal justice actors forces in Nepal.

These were identified as:

1. poor work environment;
2. inadequate training;
3. professional (dis)incentives;
4. politicisation;
5. defective criminal justice system;
6. attitudes towards human rights, and finally
7. managing social expectations.

The approach of the programme was to support 60 law enforcement and criminal justice officers from Nepal Police, Armed Police Force Nepal, Department of Forests, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation in designing and implementing their own projects at their workstation.

In total, the programme included 57 projects in 28 districts across Nepal.

Traditional approaches to torture prevention in law enforcement agencies, such as the police, have focused primarily on training, education, and external monitoring, which often includes naming and shaming of violators. However, there is limited evidence that this effectively reduces incidents of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in practice.

Acknowledging the shortcomings in these traditional approaches, **this programme took its outset in the local context** and employed a partnership approach that invited the law enforcement and criminal justice actors themselves to identify their problems and develop solutions in collaboration with external partners.

In this programme, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Kathmandu School of Law and the Danish Police supported project implementation and provided technical support to the law enforcement and criminal justice actors. Thanks to this approach, **law**

enforcement and criminal justice actors developed a deep sense of ownership towards protecting and promoting human rights in their daily work.

RESULTS

External evaluations found the programme to be relevant and effective in promoting human rights, and **positive change in organisational culture and in professional practice** within the law enforcement and criminal justice institutions.

These positive changes were created across a broad number of thematic areas important to law enforcement and criminal justice work. The 57 workstation projects included addressing issues relating to, amongst other, arrest and detention, human rights syllabus and work environment.

At national level, an active Steering Committee comprising of leaders of the institutions, as well as senior personnel from the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal and two universities oversaw the programme and provided guidance and feedback throughout the programme including the design and period.

One of the key achievements of the programme was the ability to provide police and security officers **a framework to develop their own workstation projects, which empowered them to identify contextual challenges** and use human rights to develop practical solutions and positive changes for workstations.

The programme documented positive human rights changes have made at three levels:

1. **Changes in attitude:** the internalisation that individual officers are able to make a difference within their workstations and for their staff. Through narrative evaluations, many officers document their awareness of how making incremental positive changes in their institutions can make a real difference in daily work, as well as the importance of maintaining good relations with the public and being service-minded.
2. **Changes in practice:** the introduction of work tools and processes that improve human rights compliance; this included developing monitoring frameworks and introducing new oversight mechanisms. Officers who participated in study tours to the Danish Police benefited from exposure to new thinking/tools.
3. **Changes in knowledge and awareness of torture and improper use of force.** Pre/post questionnaires show improved understanding of how human rights can help rather than hinder law enforcement work and improve relations with the public to whom they serve.

Another key achievement of the programme was that the 60 officers got the unique opportunity to advise their leadership and give them recommendations on how to improve human rights protection and promotion in their institution based on their own pilot projects and learnings.

EXAMPLE OF A WORKSTATION PILOT PROJECT

Nepal Police's project led by Deputy Superintendent of Police, Binod Silwal.

Project objective: The Training Directorate will incorporate more human rights-related training.

Key results: The project studied the emerging human rights issues and incorporated information that was lacking into the existing training manual and made recommendations for additional reform. The project develop Nepal Police's first separate training manual on the protection of human rights during crowd control. Further, the project led a three-day workshop for 40 officers.

Topics included:

- human rights protection and promotion during crowd control
- the investigative process
- search and seizure
- arrest and detention
- custody management.

Post-training, 98 % of the officers were able to relay the protection of human rights during public police confrontation and other notions of human rights into their work. Prior to the training, only 30 % were able to do so.

“THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS VERY SENSITIVE AND EVERY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MUST RESPECT AND PROTECT IT DURING SERVICE DELIVERY. I WILL RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS UNTIL THE END OF MY JOB AND WILL ENCOURAGE MY SUBORDINATES TO DO THE SAME. I HAVE REALISED THAT THE CHANGE MUST START FROM OURSELVES. WITHOUT CHANGING OURSELVES, WE CANNOT LEAD OTHER PEOPLE TO CHANGE.”

Quote from Deputy Superintendent of Police, Nepal's Police, Binod Silwal

To read more about the specific results of workstation projects and officers' recommendations, see the Thematic Results and Learning Papers here:

<https://www.humanrights.dk/projects/enhancing-good-governance-human-rights-protection-nepal>