

BUILDING A BRIDGE TO CITIZENS IN NEPAL THROUGH STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

“The World Bank Group’s goals are eliminating extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity in a sustainable manner. To realize these goals in Nepal, we need to know from its people what activities are going to have the highest impact. We need to understand the biggest challenges and opportunities to end poverty and promote inclusive development. If we focus our activities to address these challenges and take advantage of those opportunities, we may contribute to faster progress.”

— Ruth Hill, Senior Economist and Co-Task Team Leader,
Systematic Country Diagnostic



Mount Everest; Photograph by Robert Brands

Challenge

Citizen consultations in Nepal provided critical insights into a country’s development challenges and opportunities for the World Bank Group’s country teams who develop the Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) and the Country Partnership Framework (CPF). Nepal is establishing a three-tier federal government structure with the completion of local, provincial, and federal levels in 2017, as mandated by its 2015 Constitution. This turning point marks a substantial shift in the locus of power away from a Kathmandu-centric bureaucracy unable to meet the needs of its ethnically and spatially diverse population to provinces, districts, and local units. Relying only on traditional face-to-face methods for consultations in Kathmandu or in large urban centers missed the voices of spatially diverse groups.

Approach

The World Bank Group deployed a broad range of tools for stakeholder consultations involving government officials, the private sector, civil society organizations, development partners, and thought leaders. They included face-to-face consultations, online surveys, and outreach by radio, SMS, and social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) using translated materials. A deliberate effort was made to seek citizen inputs across the country's seven provinces through field visits by multiple teams and SMS surveys, conducted for the first time in Nepal with questions carefully calibrated to be simple, clear, and short. Radio announcements informed the public about the consultations and SMS survey opportunities.

Results

CONSULTATIONS
HELD IN ALL SEVEN
PROVINCES OF
NEPAL

200,000
PLUS CITIZENS
WERE REACHED -
ALMOST 1 PERCENT
OF THE NEPALESE
POPULATION

The World Bank Group mobilized and heard from more than 200,000 citizens. Farmers and youths represented a large portion of respondents to SMS surveys. The efforts by the SCD team benefited from hearing the voices of Nepali society from across the country. These inputs complemented analytical work and shaped the three priorities identified in the CPF for fiscal years 2019–23: (i) public institutions; (ii) private sector-led jobs and growth; and (iii) inclusion and resilience. Citizen engagement is a core, cross-cutting activity in the World Bank Group's overall support to Nepal's new federal system that can deliver on high sustained growth for poverty reduction, inclusive development, and shared prosperity.



Swayambhunath Temple, Kathmandu; Photograph by Richard Mortel

“Nepal’s transition to federalism is about realizing inclusive and participatory development by engaging citizens from across the country. The opportunity exists for Nepal to shift its development trajectory by breaking away from the past and moving toward higher, sustained growth that further reduces poverty and achieves shared prosperity for all Nepalese.”

— Qimiao Fan, Country Director for Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, World Bank