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27 February 2014

Dear Ms Emma McKenzie

CSCF 0459: ACCESSING DISABILITY RIGHTS IN BIHAR AND JHARKHAND

Thank you for the Project Completion Report (PCR) and evaluation report for the above project.

Triple Line Consulting/Crown Agents are contracted by DFID to review all Civil Society Challenge Fund progress reports.

The PCR provides a comprehensive overview of the project. The project appears to have achieved results for people with disabilities (PWD) in Bihar and Jharkhand by increasing their knowledge of their rights, their ability to organise and to access benefits such as education, disability certificates and livelihoods. The external evaluation is very positive about the project, referring to its achievements as remarkable, and commenting on the acceptance and credibility of the project amongst its target communities. It is clear from the report and evaluation that the project has made a tangible difference to the lives of PWD in the project areas.

PROJECT AIMS

This project aimed to support PWD in 20 blocks in Bihar and Jharkhand to claim their rights under the provisions of the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act). By raising awareness of the Act among those with disabilities the project aimed to ensure more disabled people would receive disability certificates so they could claim free education, quotas for government jobs, scholarships and subsidies in government programmes. As the PWD Act covers all disabilities equally, people of all ages and religions living with a wide range of disabilities including physical, mental, sight, speech and hearing would benefit. The project intended to bring a range of benefits and changes to the lives of PWDs including increased self-confidence and skills, access to government programmes and jobs, the opportunity of membership of micro-credit groups to help increase incomes, and more disabled children and young people attending schools and colleges.

KEY RESULTS

People with disabilities have improved capacity to contribute to local decision-making, and their voices are now heard in local and state forums: By forming disabled people's organisations/ federations at village, block, district and state level, the partner organisation Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK) created a structure enabling PWDs to come together to learn about their rights and take action to claim them. There are now 326 Disabled People's Self Help (micro-credit) Groups and 27 federations run by PWDs (20 at block level, 5 at district and 2 at state level). PWDs now attend village meetings. Their own advocacy organisations (the federations) lobby officials for improved services and access to

rights such as monthly pensions, quotas for disabled in government jobs, and inclusion in schemes such as Indira Awas (housing grants for Below Poverty Line (BPL) families).

PWD have improved access to rights and services: 32,817 PWD were identified; the proportion with disability certificates rose from 18% to over 90% (29,860), and at the end of the project 51% (16,810) were claiming one or more entitlements. 2,580 children with disabilities are now enrolled in school due to the project. Prior to the project disability assessment camps were held monthly at district hospitals but often doctors failed to attend; now due to pressure from the project, camps are held at block and even panchayat level and instead of months passing between assessment and issuing of the disability certificate, this takes one month or less.

Reduction in the stigma associated with disability, and a positive change in attitudes: PWD are called by their names and listened to when coming to district hospitals for medical assessments, whereas they were previously ridiculed. Their social status has also changed, and PWD are now invited to social gatherings such as village meetings, marriage or birth ceremonies and have a say in family decision-making processes. This is connected to an extent with PWD now contributing to family income, often for the first time, due to increased income from the monthly disability pension and microcredit through Disabled People's Self Help Groups. Almost 17,000 PWD now receive a small monthly pension of £4 in Jharkhand and £3 in Bihar. 266 received loans to start small businesses.

OUR FEEDBACK ON KEY RESULTS

In addition to the above results, federation members were also consulted on the new 'Jharkhand State Policy for the Persons with Disability', which came into force in November 2012, as well as for a new act to update the PWD Act 1995. This policy engagement was not anticipated at the outset of the project and it underlines the respect the project has earned from state authorities during the course of implementation.

The evidence stated to support your second result in particular (improved access to rights and services) is very clear, and gives a good sense of the project's success. Sources of evidence include federation and project records from monthly assessment camps, general project and field records of activities and trainings, a sample survey taken in 40 villages during the final evaluation to assess awareness levels of the PWD Act, media, photographs and interviews during the evaluation, self-help group membership records and microcredit fund records, and school enrolment records. During the project meeting (more below) it will be helpful to discuss the evidence which supports the reduction in the stigma associated with disability.

ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE AND EVIDENCE

The assessment that the project has exceeded expectations seems an appropriate reflection of the results for the outcome and output 1 which focused on PWD advocating for their rights and realising entitlements. The other outputs overall met expectations. The logframe design had clear outputs and indicators, while targets were clear for some indicators but not all. For future work or projects, setting clear targets will help AVI and partner organisations to assess to what extent the project met, exceeded, or did not meet expectations.

RISK

Your reporting on risks was comprehensive. The project appears to have anticipated potential risks well, and to have mitigated against them effectively.

VALUE FOR MONEY

You have provided good evidence on value for money. Overall, the project was effective in achieving its aims reaching a significant number of PWD (32,817). The project recognises the need to be more effective in including women (36% of beneficiaries) and people with a

wider range of disabilities, particularly severe disabilities. The project was efficient, with most staff based locally. In terms of economy, the project had procurement policies in place to ensure inputs were secured at a good price – although in practice the project depended on very few procured items. In terms of sustainability, federation members (disabled people supported by the project) have gradually taken on paperwork and support responsibilities from project staff. However, federations/DPOs will need further support to ensure sustainability to continue providing a platform for PWDs.

BENEFICIARY DATA

The presentation and quality of reporting on beneficiaries was good. In addition to 32,817 PWD (adult men and women, and children), the project also engaged with or benefited family members, neighbours, community members, government officers, doctors and media in the project area. A figure is not included for these wider beneficiaries or participants. For future work, it would be worth considering the impact of the project on their lives as well.

LEARNING

The project appears to provide good learning to others in its success in increasing access to government support for PWD. Some of the impacts listed (for example on family income, or on inclusion in household decision making) did not have logframe indicators at the outset, and it would be useful to highlight this lesson in designing future interventions. The lesson on inclusion of women and people with a wider range of disabilities in future projects is important and the key issue is to identify what approaches work and what constraints need to be addressed and overcome.

FINANCE

The final financial report is considered complete and all financial issues resolved. Thank you for the follow up with the Fund Manager to clarify and address the queries raised.

PROJECT MEETING

As the project has now ended, we feel it is important to have a final meeting with you to bring the project to a close. The meeting will give you an opportunity to explain the achievements of the project and any challenges faced. We may also discuss: approaches, lessons, impact on beneficiaries, gender, evidence, sustainability, and unintended consequences of the project. DFID are interested in our final meetings with projects and may also attend. Janet Glover, Civil Society Consultant, will contact you following this letter to arrange a date and time for the meeting.

We hope you find the above feedback useful. If you have any questions on the feedback provided, please contact Triple Line Consulting at cscfreports@tripleline.com or by telephone on +44 (0)20 8788 4666.

Yours sincerely,



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