

Breakthrough ACTION Nepal Local Systems Strengthening to Reduce Child, Early, and Forced Marriage Project

2021 Social and Behavior Change Capacity Self-Assessment Report (Province 2)

Submitted to: United States Agency for International Development

Submitted by: Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs

October 25, 2021

Cooperative Agreement #AID-OAA-A-17-00017



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Acronyms

CEFM Child, Early, and Forced Marriage

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

NGO Non-governmental Organization

SBC Social and Behavior Change

Executive Summary

Breakthrough ACTION aims to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Nepal's child protection system in social and behavior change (SBC), specifically as it relates to reducing child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM). This two-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development works at both the province and municipality levels with a focus on Province 2.

Under Nepal's newly functioning federal system, provinces and municipalities have the power, authority, mandate, and resources to determine, prioritize, plan, and implement programs to address local issues. However, capacity to use SBC approaches is limited, as is understanding of how SBC can increase positive health outcomes. The overall goal of Breakthrough ACTION in Nepal is to help bridge this gap by working alongside key stakeholders at the municipal and province levels to intentionally and strategically plan, design, implement, monitor, and coordinate evidence-based programs tailored to the needs of their communities.

To establish a baseline and identify key barriers and opportunities for SBC capacity within the child protection system, Breakthrough ACTION helped to facilitate an SBC capacity self-assessment exercise in Province 2 with stakeholders at the provincial level, including four municipalities in Mahottari District (Pipara rural, Matihani urban, Loharpatti urban, and Jaleshwar urban) and two in Rautahat District (Rajapur urban and Durga Bhagawati rural). The self-assessment explored local capacity in SBC program planning, implementation, monitoring, and coordination, particularly for activities to reduce CEFM. The participatory nature of the tool, which requires a great deal of engagement, can help elected members and government staff evaluate their own capacity and take ownership of the process to strengthen their systems.

Due to COVID restrictions, the exercise was conducted using a hybrid model in which some activities were held in person and others conducted virtually via mobile phone and online meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom). The capacity self-assessments used a comprehensive tool for discussion that included asking stakeholders to rate their organization or department's skillsets on a scale of 1 (not present) – 4 (compliant). Please see results in Table 1. Breakthrough ACTION will conduct an endline assessment in 2022 to examine changes in SBC capacity over time.

Major provincial- and municipal-level findings identified from the baseline capacity self-assessment are as follows:

1. Lack of evidence-based planning
2. Lack of adherence to government annual planning processes
3. Lack of community participation or meaningful orientation on gender equity and social inclusion during planning, implementation, and monitoring of any issue, including CEFM
4. Lack of structures with adequate roles, responsibilities, and mandates to address CEFM and associated child protection issues at the municipal and community levels

5. No local (municipal) or ward-level child right committees in any of the municipalities
6. Lack of coordination within the team and municipality and among concerned stakeholders on any issues, including CEFM
7. No monitoring and evaluation system directly related to CEFM

Table 1. Aggregate Scores of Social and Behavior Change Capacity Assessment—Baseline (2021)

Domains	Province 2	Mahottari District Municipalities				Rautahat District Municipalities	
		Rural	Urban			Urban	Rural
		Pipara	Matihani	Loharpatti	Jaleshwar	Rajapur	Durga Bhagawati
Program Planning, Design, and Management	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
SBC Theories and Models	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
Coordination, Collaboration, and Advocacy	1	1	2	2	1	1	2
M&E and Knowledge Management	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Average Score Across Domains*	1.75	1.25	1.25	1.5	1	1.5	1.5

Notes: *Average scores out of four. Overall results indicate that municipalities identified gaps in and room to strengthen their capacity. These scores will be used for comparison at the endline.

Key Recommendations Based on Capacity Self-Assessment Findings

1. Strengthen capacity of municipalities to incorporate evidence-based and gender equity and social inclusion-oriented programs into government planning processes and implementation to reduce CEFM.
2. Strengthen capacity of the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens to conduct evidence-based planning, implementation, and monitoring of programs to reduce CEFM.
3. Facilitate formation and capacity strengthening of municipality- and ward-level child protection structures to enable evidence-based planning, implementation, and monitoring.
4. Assist municipalities in understanding the importance of reducing CEFM and in developing programs to support these efforts.
5. Strengthen capacity via training, coaching, mentoring, and other initiatives for province- and municipality-level stakeholders so that they can design effective SBC programs and activities.

6. Help province and municipalities understand and act on existing policies and guidelines to reduce CEFM and associated child protection issues.
7. Help province- and municipality-level stakeholders develop a simple and easily implemented monitoring and evaluation strategy and tools (e.g., checklists) for social development issues like CEFM.
8. Municipalities can produce local data to help establish CEFM data collection and update systems. The ward child rights committee can be mobilized to collect data from the community and IT officers, with support from the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, to be used in documentation and shared within the municipality and with the province system.

Project Overview and Background

The overall objective for Breakthrough ACTION Nepal's Reducing Child and Early Forced Marriage project is to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of the Government of Nepal in Province 2 to design, implement, monitor, evaluate, and coordinate effective social and behavior change (SBC) activities and strengthen child protection systems for reducing child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) using a community-based, multi-sectoral, and data-driven approach.

A high-quality SBC organization or government structure delivers programs that respond to the needs of clients and communities, adapt to changing environments, identify trends, and anticipate gaps while remaining committed to its mission and purpose. When an organization or entity is positioned to navigate a complex system and deliver effective SBC interventions to meet desired outcomes, the organization is viewed as having programmatic sustainability, which is the goal of Breakthrough ACTION's work with the Ministry of Social Development and municipalities. Understanding the division's strengths at the province and municipality levels and its limitations in SBC and child protection is an important first step.

This report details findings from the baseline capacity self-assessment and outlines recommendations and an action plan for working with the government to address identified gaps in capacity.

After years of effort, age at first marriage in Nepal has increased. According to Demographic and Health Surveys, the percentage of women of reproductive age marrying by age 20 decreased from 75% in 1996 to approximately 55% in 2016.¹ However, CEFM remains a common practice in many regions of Nepal, with 40% of women aged 20–24 married before age 18 according to the most recent Demographic and Health Survey in 2016. CEFM includes child marriage (below age 18), early marriage (before age 20), and forced marriage (without free and full consent of both boys and girls). Reducing CEFM can be facilitated



Nepal (Province 2 highlighted in yellow)

¹ MacQuarrie, K. L. D., Juan, C., & Fish, T. D. (2019). *Trends, inequalities, and contextual determinants of child marriage in Asia*. DHS Analytical Studies No. 69. ICF.

by strengthening the capacity of local ward, municipal, provincial, and other community actors to jointly develop and implement programs and structures focused on this issue.

In recent years, the Nepal government has restructured to adjust to a new federal system under which local municipalities have the authority and financial resources to plan and budget for programs that address local priorities. While these municipalities adjust to the new system, Breakthrough ACTION is ensuring that municipalities can address CEFM. The national government is positioned to make significant strides in addressing CEFM, including the following constitutional laws and policies:

- The 2015 Constitution of Nepal includes a specific provision banning child marriage and making it a punishable act for which the victims (i.e., children) have the right to compensation.
- According to the Family Law provision of the 2017 National Civil Code Act, every citizen has the right to marry, establish a family, and live peacefully. As per the code, marriage is considered a union based on mutual understanding.
- The new criminal code includes a fine of up to 30,000 Rs and three years of prison for anyone involved in or arranging a marriage with someone younger than 20 years old. These marriages will be revoked.
- The 2018 Children's Act is pending endorsement from parliament. If enacted, it will influence provincial and municipal budgets and plans for addressing CEFM, along with the 2072 National Strategy against Child Marriage.

Within the Nepal government, the following entities are responsible for reducing CEFM:

- At the federal level, the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens is largely responsible for addressing CEFM in Nepal.
- At the province level, the Social Development Division of the Ministry of Social Development is responsible for coordinating efforts to reduce CEFM.
- At the municipal level, the Women, Children, and Senior Citizens section coordinates and implements programs that benefit these groups, including reducing CEFM.
- Per the Child Right Act 2077, child rights committees are mandated at the municipality and ward levels as major actors responsible for reducing CEFM and addressing associated child protection issues.

Despite a well-designed system, few activities are aimed specifically at reducing CEFM. The entities listed here were identified as the most appropriate government partners to receive technical assistance from the Breakthrough ACTION Nepal Local Systems Strengthening to Reduce Child, Early, and Forced Marriage Project.

Baseline Capacity Self-Assessment

An important first step in strengthening provincial and municipal government's capacity is the SBC Capacity Self-Assessment. Adapted from the SBC Mapping Tool,² this assessment encourages participants to reflect on their own abilities and limitations in developing, implementing, and monitoring the SBC program for reducing CEFM. This tool integrates CEFM and other child protection system strengthening topics to facilitate a robust, rigorous, and participatory assessment with province- and municipality-level stakeholders. This same tool was successfully implemented in the recent Breakthrough ACTION SBC Capacity Strengthening project in Nepal and adapted for reducing CEFM in Province 2. See Annex 1 for the discussion tool.

Objectives of Capacity Assessment

- Review and discuss existing SBC capacity to reduce CEFM and associated issues within the child protection system of the Social Development Division of the Ministry of Social Development (province level) and Women, Children, and Senior Citizens section (municipality level).
- Understand SBC issues related to reducing CEFM, including opportunities and gaps in the child protection system at the province and municipality levels.
- Develop a jointly agreed upon capacity strengthening action plan for municipalities.

Methodology

Due to the restrictions related to the COVID pandemic, the project used both virtual and in-person methods to interact with executive members of the municipality and with staff. During lockdown, virtual assessments were held via mobile phone and Zoom, and then scoring was conducted in person. When restrictions eased, an in-person workshop was held to conduct assessment and scoring. In addition to self-assessments, the province-level assessment included interviews with local non-government organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations to understand perspectives of local-level, external stakeholders working to reduce CEFM. Table 2 summarizes the methodology.

Table 2. Location, methodological approach, and number of participants in SBC capacity self-assessments

Location	Methodology (in-person or virtual)	Total Participants (men/women)
Province	Virtual interviews In-person scoring and data verification	6/3 2/4
Jaleshwar Urban Municipality in Mahottari	Virtual interviews	2/5

² The SBC capacity mapping approach was developed by the Health Communication Capacity Collaborative led by the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs. It is informed by an understanding of SBC capacity at the individual, organization, and system levels. An important component of designing effective capacity strengthening activities is a robust, rigorous, and participatory examination of an organization's competencies.

Location	Methodology (in-person or virtual)	Total Participants (men/women)
	In-person scoring and data verification	4/3
Pipara Rural Municipality in Mahottari	Virtual interviews In-person scoring and data verification	3/4 11/3
Loharpatti Urban Municipality in Mahottari	In-person	27/5
Matihani Urban Municipality in Mahottari	In-person	21/5
Rajapur Urban Municipality in Rautahat	In-person	20/6
Durga Bhagwati Rural Municipality in Rautahat	In-person	15/6

Virtual Interviews and In-person Scoring and Data Verification

Because COVID-19 cases rapidly increased in Nepal and the rate of new infections peaked in Province 2, virtual key informant interviews were held to understand basic SBC capacity for reducing CEFM and addressing associated issues in the child protection system. Following these virtual interviews, the project team facilitated in-person scoring and data verification in Pipara rural municipality and Jaleshwar urban municipality in Mahottari district and in the province. Recruitment and oral informed consent procedures were followed prior to beginning any data collection (see Annex 2 for examples of consent scripts). Upon agreement from the recruited individual, interviews were audio-recorded to facilitate subsequent analysis.



SBC Capacity Self-Assessment Scoring Verification in Pipara Rural Municipality, Mahottari, on January 26, 2021



SBC Capacity Self-Assessment Scoring Verification in Jaleshwar municipality, Mahottari, on January 25, 2021

Zoom meeting. To ease administration, it was abridged to 18 questions across four domains: (1) program planning, design, and management, (2) SBC theories and models, (3) coordination,

Interviewers took detailed notes during discussions covering a core set of four domains: (1) program planning, design, and management, (2) SBC theories and models, (3) coordination, collaboration, and advocacy and (4) M&E and knowledge management. Cross-cutting issues included community engagement; gender equality and social inclusion; and key principles of the Breakthrough ACTION Nepal R-CEFM project.

The virtual self-assessment tools was shared with participants and then administered via phone or

collaboration, and advocacy, and (4) M&E and knowledge management. after which the findings were synthesized. When pandemic-related lockdowns eased, the findings were presented in-person to municipality executive members and staff for verification. Quantitative capacity scores across the four key domains were identified and agreed upon by participants.

In-person Process

On the first day, participants were given printed copies of the same 18-question self-assessment and then divided into three groups to discuss each question and the status and evidence for their scores. Groups were facilitated by a staff member. On the second day, the findings for all 18 questions and the scores for each group were shared in plenary to build and gain consensus on the results, which would be used to prioritize skills in need of improvement.



Discussion on score and justification for it during group work , Loharpatti municipality, Mohattari district

Participants

The intended audiences of the capacity self-assessment included key stakeholders selected purposely from the provincial and local levels, such as government representatives and external partners. Following consultation with key counterparts at the province level and in focal municipalities (and wards within those municipalities), informative internal staff, executive body members, committee members, and partners working with province- or local-level stakeholders were recruited for participation.

Municipality-level Participants

Capacity self-assessment participants at the municipal level included executive members (mayors; chairs; deputy mayors and chairs; ward chairs; representatives of women and Dalit; chiefs of the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens and Ministry of Education; health coordinators; officers of planning, IT, and social development). Decision makers and bureaucrats were included to facilitate understanding of the capacity of the municipality to create supportive environments, policies, and strategies for developing and implementing activities related to reducing CEFM. Annex 1 includes a list of participants.



Capacity Self-Assessment Workshop, Rajapur Municipality, Rautahat, April 9, 2021

Province-level Participants

Participants at the province level included representatives from different divisions of the Ministry of Social Development and concerned stakeholders responsible for child protection systems for reducing CEFM. Of the 14 interviewees, six were from different divisions of the Ministry of Social Development, including the Social Development division, and two were from the parliamentary committee on women, children, and social justice, which is a province-level entity responsible for reducing CEFM. Six individuals from national and international NGOs were interviewed to gather their insights on the capacity of the provincial government.

Key Findings from the SBC Capacity Self-assessment for Reducing CEFM at the Province and Municipality Levels

This section describes detailed findings for the following domains:

- Domain A: Program planning, design, and management
- Domain B: SBC theories and models
- Domain C: Coordination, collaboration, and advocacy
- Domain E: M&E and knowledge management

Domain findings are summarized, followed by detailed findings for each question at the province and municipal levels for Mahottari district (Pipara rural, Jaleshwar urban, Loharpatti urban, and Matihani urban municipalities) and Rautahat district (Rajapur urban and Durga Bhagwati rural municipalities).

Domain A. Program Planning, Design, and Management

The following summarizes the **general findings for this domain**:

- Most participants noted a lack of government funding allocated to address CEFM at the provincial or municipal level. Some municipalities allocated funds for child protection issues, such as gender-based violence, but generally not directly for CEFM.
- A lack of evidence-based planning was noted, along with not following the government's annual planning process.
- There is no community participation or meaningful orientation for gender equity and social inclusion during planning, implementation, and monitoring of any issue, including CEFM.
- CEFM is considered a common social norm and not a priority.
- There is very low understanding of the importance of SBC and local child protection systems.
- Municipalities do not have a specific structure with adequate human resources, roles, responsibilities, and mandates to address CEFM and associated child protection issues in the planning or implementation processes.

Results for Question 1 Regarding Programs to Address CEFM and Associated Child Protection Issues

The following summarizes the **province-level findings for question 1**:

- Planning does not adhere to the Province Plan and Program Formulation Guideline 2077.
- Most participants noted a lack of programs directly addressing CEFM at the provincial level.
- The province-level “Beti Padhau Beti Bachau Aviyan” (“Educate Girls, Save Girls”) campaign under the chief minister’s office is providing incentive support (e.g., education scholarships) and

in-kind support (e.g., bicycles) to girls. The “Surakshit Beti Abhiyan” program under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law aims to educate and protect girls. Both programs are designed to end the dowry system, but people do not equate them directly with CEFM. Beti Padhau Beti Bachau Aviyan is implemented directly from the office of the chief minister of Province 2, and there is no coordination with the Social Development division.

- Province 2 has no specific budget to reduce CEFM. Child protection activities are incorporated into the annual plan as cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender-based violence, violence against children, child education, and child rights). Such activities are included in the health and education component of the budget but have never been implemented because funds are diverted to infrastructure development used by political leaders to attract voters' attention.
- All participants acknowledged child marriage exists in Province 2. No one mentioned CEFM in their communities because they were unaware of terms or concepts related to CEFM. In their understanding, child marriage means marriage before 20 years of age.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for question 1 for Mahottari district:**

- None of the four municipalities in Mahottari district have programs or budgets to reduce CEFM in the current fiscal year 2077/2078 (2019/2020).
- The Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens is actively implementing other general programs, such as distribution of disability cards and distribution of social security allowances as per government policy and provision. No CEFM activities are in progress.
- NGOs, Ratauli Youth Club, Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC) and Aasaman Nepal are working in Jaleshwari and Matihani to implement CEFM awareness and prevention activities as cross-cutting agendas within their program. They organized rallies using play cards and banners with messages such as “Bihewari Bis Barsa Pari” (“Stop Child Marriage”), they organized street dramas on the topic, and they placed hoarding boards in some places. These activities were conducted separately from the Breakthrough ACTION reducing CEFM project.
- Pipara rural municipality launched the “Adakchhaya Ko Kanyadan Yojana” scheme using its own budget. The scheme is somehow related to reducing child marriage by targeting economically poor and marginalized families who are unable to afford a dowry. It plans to hold a group marriage ceremony for couples once they reach age 20. For this fiscal year, they have planned for at least 10 couples. These activities were conducted separately from the reducing CEFM project.
- Pipara rural municipality has received NPR 50,000 (USD 430) from the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizen as an annual activity fund for a 16-day campaign (November 25th to December 10th) against gender-based violence. During the interaction program, messages related to CEFM were disseminated.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 1:**

- Rajapur urban municipality has not conducted any CEFM programming, but other NGOs (e.g., Aasaman Nepal and Rural Development Center Nepal) have addressed this issue with major

activities such as street dramas and rallies. Reducing CEFM is an agenda item at every regular meeting of the mothers' group where they discuss the consequences of child marriage.

- Durga Bhagawati rural municipality has not initiated any programs with its own funds, but external partners (e.g., UNICEF through Aasaman Nepal) have collaborated with Muslim religious leaders (i.e., Maulana) to reduce CEFM and provide skill training for women.

[**Results for Question 2 Regarding the Design, Development, and Improvement of Programs for Reducing CEFM and Associated Child Protection Issues**](#)

The following summarizes the **province-level findings for question 2:**

- Interdepartmental consultation between various ministries (e.g., Women, Children, and Senior Citizens; Education; and Health) is missing in the annual planning process at the province level.
- They do not follow the Province Plan and Program Formulation Guideline 2077 during annual planning. According to the local-level Annual Plan and Budget Formulation Guideline 2074, the province has only about a month to provide activities and budget proposals to municipalities.
- Relevant department team members meet and decide which activities to include in the annual program plan and then submit it for approval, which usually depends on experience and previous annual plans, rather than on data or need.
- During the approval process, program plans submitted by the departments are often changed and activities removed based on political interest.
- External partners noted a lack of trained human resources in the division to design and develop programs to reduce CEFM.
- The Social Development division lacks understanding of social behaviors and community norms and thus these issues are not considered in the design of child protection programs. They generally plan programs based on personal assumptions and political interests of the respective ministers. They do not reference data related to particular issues.
- Community engagement is missing in the planning process at the province level. The annual planning process is for the local level, not the province level. This process is not mandatory for provinces, and no community consultation occurs prior to planning.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 2:**

- The seven-step planning process for program design and development is not followed. Community members are not consulted. Instead, program design and development are done by the chief executive officer, accountant, influential ward chairs, selected ministry chiefs, and key local political leaders from the ruling party.
- No community engagement or consideration of gender, equity, and social inclusion is done while developing local programs.
- Municipal staff and elected persons do not understand how to use SBC to reduce CEFM or how CEFM is rooted in cultural norms.

- No municipalities are aware of local laws and provisions related to CEFM, and they do not have any special laws, policy, or guiding documents related to this area.
- Reducing CEFM is sometimes included in different protection or gender-based violence documents (e.g., they include child marriage as a form of violence), which has helped in the design and development of local activities.
- External partners feel municipalities should provide financial, logistic, safety, and security support to CEFM programs because it has become a social norm and people protect it.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 2:**

- There is no clear understanding of the plan or work plan and no costed work plan for CEFM.
- A costed plan has been developed for infrastructure-related programs only, and the plan is decided in the executive committee meeting without community participation.

[**Results for Question 3 Regarding Participatory Development and Implementation of a Work Plan and Budget to Address CEFM and Associated Child Protection Issues**](#)

The following summarizes the **province-level findings for question 3:**

- Some participants mentioned the Beti Padhao Beti Bachao Aviyan and Beti Surakshya Karyakram programs under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law, though these program activities were not designed using participatory approaches, and internal coordination between these two programs is lacking.
- Many response-related activities (e.g., informing police, rescuing girls, legal support) focus on the period after a child marriage has happened, rather than on prevention. The responses include action by law enforcement if they receive complaints about child marriage, reports of violence, and requests for legal, medical, and psychosocial support.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 3:**

- All municipalities in Mahottari focus on infrastructure only and do not practice participatory development or implementation of a work plan to address CEFM.
- In Pipara rural municipality and Jaleshwar urban municipality, selected executive committee members, chief executive officers, mayors, and chairpersons discuss and decide on activities and budget and then send it to the respective council for approval.
- Loharpatti and Matihani urban municipalities do not have activities specifically for CEFM. Program plans are submitted with a lump sum allocation of funds, such as for the women's empowerment program.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 3:**

- Rajapur has no plan for reducing CEFM, but there is good practice of involving male and female community members and representatives of minority castes and religions in program planning.

The municipality follows the seven-step planning process and executes programs related to other social issues.

- In Rajapur, 10% of the budget is allocated to social development but there is no plan for CEFM. Social development activities focus on gender-based violence and skill training for women.
- In Durga Bhagawati, the executive committee does all program planning.

[**Results for Question 4 Regarding Gender Equity and Social Inclusion**](#)

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 4:**

- Gender equity and social inclusion issues are neglected in province-level planning processes. Women, girls, minority castes, religious groups, and some geographical locations also are under-represented. A mandatory structural requirement for female representatives is not established for any process, but they are invited as participants during activity implementation.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 4:**

- In Jaleshwar urban municipality, a few ward chairs consult with ward-level children's clubs, women's groups, teachers, and parents while implementing activities. However, no consultation occurs during the planning process.
- In Matihani urban municipality, gender and social inclusion issues are considered during local-level planning. Overall activities not related to CEFM are guided by provisions from ward- and settlement-level consultation. Participation of men and women is considered while conducting training on community programs.
- In Pipara rural and Loharpatti urban municipalities, gender equity and social inclusion issues are not considered during program planning.
- Loharpatti ensures participation of women and marginalized communities during program implementation for the sake of fulfilling procedures.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 4:**

- In Rajapur, implementation of training and orientation in the ward has included the disabled, senior citizens, gender and sexual minorities, all castes, and religions, but only as participants.
- In Durga Bhagawati, women, men, Dalit, Janajati, and other marginalized castes are informally invited to participate in implementation of activities related to skill training, gender-based violence, and other issues.

[**Results for Question 5 Regarding Oversight of Specific Services and Program to Address CEFM and Associated Child Protection Issues**](#)

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 5:**

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law oversees the Surakshit Beti Abhiyan campaign.
- The Office of Chief Minister oversees the Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao campaign.

- External partners (e.g., UNICEF) provide support at the division level via district coordination of social protection whose responsibility it is to support different programs under the *Beti Padhao Beti Bachao* campaign. Protection coordinators support an “insurance program” whereby at age 20, girls receive Rs. 100,000 if they remain unmarried.
- Province 2 plans to establish a separate committee at the district level to respond to gender-based violence, with CEFM as a component in this fiscal year 2077/078 (2020/2021). These committees would be formed in districts province wide.
- No child protection structures exist at the province level, though a child rights committee at province, district, and municipalities levels is mandated in the Province Children Act 2077.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 5:**

- In Pipara and Loharpatti, the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens directly manages related programming at the local level, but there is no specific CEFM program except for the *Kanyadan* program in Pipara.
- Jaleshwar and Matihani have no CEFM-specific programs or activities, though a few NGOs include CEFM messaging in their activities. The Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens, with lead support from the women development inspector and assistant women development inspector, is performing some management duties in Jaleshwar, but the ministry has no dedicated human resource in Matihani. At this time, the public health officer of the Ministry of Health is managing programs and information related to CEFM and associated child protection issues.

The following summarizes **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 5:**

- In Durga Bhagwati, the chief of the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens handles cases but is not trained on the issues, for which there is no separate human resource.
- In Rajapur, the focal person for the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens was transferred, leaving one staff member from the municipality as focal person for child protection issues who was appointed just after the transfer.

[Results for Question 6 Regarding Availability of Structures with Adequate Roles, Responsibilities, and Mandates to Address CEFM and Associated Child Protection Issues](#)

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 6:**

- As part of the child protection system, the Social Development division is mandated to address CEFM and associated child protection issues. However, staff stated they are not allowed to exercise their roles in terms of planning and implementation.
- External partners said they believe the provincial government should clarify their role in addressing CEFM, specifically as it relates to the draft of Province Strategy Against Child Marriage.
- The following summarizes municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 6:

- The Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens, with dedicated staff at the municipality level, is responsible for overall management of women- and children-related issues, including CEFM. In Jaleshwar, Pipara, and Loharpatti, the chief of the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens oversees issues related to CEFM and child protection, but Matihani has no such human resource in place.
- All municipal staff know about child marriage but are unfamiliar with CEFM concepts or terms.
- Priorities are distribution of disability identity cards, reporting of missing children, and women's group capacity building. There are no child protection structures in the municipalities.

The following summarizes **municipality-level results for Rautahat district for question 6:**

- In Durga Bhagawati, the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens is assumed to be responsible for CEFM issues.
- Rajapur has no staff in the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens, and no staff from the Ministry of Social Development is assigned to oversight.
- There is no active structure with adequate roles, responsibilities, and mandates to address CEFM and child protection issues and no child protection structures in the municipalities.

Domain B: SBC Theories and Models

The following summarizes **general findings for this domain:**

- At the province and municipality levels, there is a lack of knowledge about SBC and associated theories, models, and frameworks or how to design effective SBC programs.
- Activities that are merely informational are mistaken as SBC programs.
- SBC models and frameworks are not well understood or followed during program design.
- Government officials do not prioritize SBC for reducing CEFM.
- Province-level SBC programming mostly involves translating, adapting, and rolling out materials developed by the federal government. External partners develop the communication messages and tools, often without involvement from the Social Development division. No pre-testing, community engagement or consultation is conducted with partners or audiences during message development.
- Media reach, access, or popularity are not considered when selecting media to promote messages.
- Municipalities do not develop their own messages and materials for reducing CEFM.
- Despite the popularity of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) among young people, no social media messaging has been developed for reducing CEFM.

Results for Question 7 Regarding SBC Models and Theoretical Frameworks in Designing CEFM Interventions

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 7:**

- Street dramas and radio jingles on health, education, child rights, and similar topics were considered by participants to be SBC activities but were not developed via systematic processes.
- SBC models and frameworks are not well understood or followed while designing programs. Officials of the Social Development division do not prioritize SBC for reducing CEFM.
- Government activities on most social issues (e.g., health, education, women, children, senior citizens, gender-based violence) are based on past experience or previous work plans rather than on need.

The following summarizes the municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 7:

- Participants lack knowledge about SBC and its theory, models, and framework, as well as its importance in all municipalities. Awareness-raising activities are considered SBC activities.

The following summarizes municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 7:

- Participants lack knowledge about SBC activities, theory, models, and framework and its importance in both municipalities.

Results for Question 8 Regarding Designing Communication Messages and Tools for Reducing CEFM

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 8:**

- Province 2 mostly uses materials published by the federal government and adapts them to local languages.
- All social issues including CEFM have external partners supporting the design and implementation of communication messages and tools. They are missing involvement and co-design support from the Social Development division.
- The province contracts others to design and develop communication messages for local radio stations, and those teams develop materials such as radio dramas and jingles. No field testing or community engagement occurs during this process and no consultations are held with partners or target audiences during message development.

The following summarizes **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 8:**

- In Jaleshwar, some participants noted they never designed any communication materials. They mentioned radio jingles and hoarding boards related to child protection and child marriage (not CEFM specifically), which were produced by an external partner, Ratauli Yuwa Club.
- Pipara rural municipality is thinking of developing an information notice on the *Kanyadan* program, the content of which will be determined by executive members of the municipality.

- Matihani municipality has not developed any communication message or tools.
- Loharpatti municipality has not prepared or designed any communication materials on CEFM, though they have developed and distributed materials on COVID-19, which they prepared by requesting proposals from the media and broadcasting those materials after approval by the chief administrative officer.

The following summarizes municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 8:

- In Durga Bhagwati, participants said that they have never developed any communication materials but have disseminated materials related to other issues that were developed by other organizations. In Rajapur, NGOs like Aasaman Nepal and Rural Development Center Nepal have developed awareness messaging on gender-based violence and COVID-19. They distributed the materials in the municipality but were not involved in their development. No CEFM-specific messages have been developed.
- Durga Bhagwati has no local media but does use media from other municipalities and districts (e.g., radio stations Rautahat FM, Sanskriti FM, Rajdevi FM, and Badal FM and print media *Rautahat Janabad* and *Rautahat Daily*) which are used by the municipality to publish and broadcast their media-related messages.

[Results for Question 9 Regarding Popular Media Programming for Reducing CEFM](#)

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 9**:

- There are no social media interventions initiated at the province level for reducing CEFM.
- Local FM, television, and community radio are popular in Province 2.
- Media popularity was not considered when airing messages; other personal or political reasons were important when considering specific media channels.
- Facebook is popular among young and educated community members.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 9**:

- Rudraksh FM, Jaleshwarnath FM, Mithila FM, and Radio Mirchi are the most popular local FM stations in Pipara and Jaleshwar.
- Radio Janakpur, Radio Mithilanchal FM, Kantipur FM, Nepal Television, and Janakpur Today are the most popular in Loharpatti.
- *Tathyā Weekly* (local newspaper), Jaleshwarnath FM, Radio Rudraksha, Radio Apan Mithila, Radio Janakpur, *Kantipur Daily*, and *Gorkhapatra Daily* are popular in Matihani.
- No one knew any popular FM programs or could list any CEFM programs on media.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for the Rautahat district for question 9**:

- Durga Bhagawati has a Facebook page but no CEFM messaging is published on it. Other messaging provided by the province and federal government on coronavirus and domestic violence are published on the Facebook page and municipality website.

- Rajapur has no special programs for reducing CEFM, but other information (e.g., COVID-19, gender-based violence) is broadcast on radio and social media.
- In Rajapur, messaging against the dowry system is disseminated in Jalsa and Istema (Islamic program religious leader and madrasa initiated an event). Muslim religious leaders (Maulanas) formed a committee against child marriage and the dowry system. The committee is chaired by the mayor but not as functional now as it was when it was formed five years ago.

Domain C: Coordination, Collaboration, and Advocacy

The following summarizes **general findings for this domain:**

- A province protection cluster has been formed for emergency coordination of protection-related issues among provincial partners during COVID-19.
- There is no clear system, structure, or platform and no mandate for coordination or communication among federal, provincial, and municipal governments or among divisions and departments. Each level acts independently, rather than based on concerns of the other levels. Political conflicts exist at all levels.
- It was unclear if a coordination mechanism at the district level is still active. Some mentioned a municipal association, but it was not universal.
- IT specialists in every municipality focus on sending municipal activity updates via webpages and Facebook, but no one is tasked with coordination or linking CEFM activities.
- The health and education sectors have feedback mechanisms at the province level, but the Social Development division does not.
- The local government operation law 2074 mentions the need for coordination among all stakeholders but there are no forums or platforms for coordination amongst concerned stakeholders in the municipalities.
- Coordination is missing among external partners (such as UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund, Save the Children, and local NGOs) working in the field of child protection and child marriage. These partners are also not consulted during the planning process.
- Some organizations working on CEFM at the municipal level (e.g., Life Nepal, Ratauli Yuba Club) function separately from the government.
- Neither the province nor municipal level understand advocacy or how to develop and implement advocacy activities on a social issue, such as CEFM, beyond informally asking NGOs to address issues.
- Federal and province-level policies and guidelines to address child rights, child protection, and CEFM issues exist, but few staff are aware of them and implementation is weak.
- Municipalities have not developed their own policies, laws, or guidelines and instead follow federal and provincial policies and laws.

Results for Question 10 Regarding Communication and Coordination with Partners Working to Reduce CEFM

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 10:**

- Child protection and related issues and programs are implemented and managed by the Social Development division of the Ministry of Social Development at the province level.
- Province 2 has formed a province protection cluster for emergency coordination of protection-related issues among provincial partners during COVID-19.
- Most respondents stated there is no clear system, structure, or platform and no mandate for coordination between federal and local governments or among divisions and departments.
- The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education have feedback mechanisms, but the Social Development division has no such mechanism at the province level.
- Coordination is missing among external partners (such as UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund, Save the Children, and local NGOs) working in the field of child protection and child marriage. These partners are not consulted during the planning process.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 10:**

- No formal mechanisms of coordination exist in Mahottari. One participant from Jaleshwar mentioned a municipal-level coordination meeting organized 1.5 years ago but did not remember who organized it, and the work has not continued.
- Pipara and Jaleshwar have no formal coordination mechanisms. They use mobile phones and text messages to communicate with each other and letters for internal communication and coordination. The IT section manages internal and external communication processes.
- One participant from Pipara mentioned a district coordination committee, which meets to discuss district-wide issues.
- One participant from Jaleshwar and one from Matihani mentioned an IT officer that supports municipal-level communication.
- One participants from Pipara mentioned a lack of coordination among elected representatives.
- Loharpatti and Matihani each have IT divisions for communication, but no mechanisms, platforms, or systems of coordination are in place.
- A feedback mechanism for improving programs on any issue is missing at this level.
- External partners note huge communication and coordination gaps in terms of policy and resources across all three levels of government. The province does not consider the concerns of the federal government, and the local level does not consider the concerns of the province. Political conflicts exist at all levels. The Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers is the only forum at the provincial level to address CEFM issues, but it is not functioning properly.
- Loharpatti is a member of the Municipal Association.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 10:**

- There is no formal platform or structure for coordinating with external stakeholders.
- Rajapur and Durga Bhagwati each have IT divisions for communication, but no mechanisms, platforms, or systems of coordination are in place.
- The IT division disseminates information from the higher level to the lower level (i.e., from the mayor and deputy mayor to the boards and wards and finally the community) via email and letters. This mechanism is not used to share messaging, feedback, and comments from the public to leadership, however.

[**Results for Question 11 Regarding Identification and Engagement of Key Partners and Stakeholders to Deliver Services to Reduce CEFM and Associated Child Protection Issues**](#)

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 11:**

- Province 2 has not done anything specific to identify and engage stakeholders working on CEFM. They are coordinating with a few organizations and collecting data on other general child protection issues (e.g., homelessness, living in slums, violence, and sexual abuse).

The following summarizes the municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 11:

- No municipality has proper mechanisms to identify and engage partners. In Jaleshwar, participants mentioned the Ratauli Yuwa Club. Save the Children and VSO are working on child rights issues.
- Pipara, Jaleshwar, and Loharpatti have no identification or engagement of key partners and stakeholders to deliver services to reduce CEFM. The Nepal Police Unit, schools, children's clubs, and health posts are regular partners and stakeholders that deliver services as needed.
- In Loharpatti, some organizations like Life Nepal, Ratauli Yuba Club working for CEFM but had no formal identification engagement with them.
- Matihani has not identified any stakeholders working for CEFM but informally the staff knows about some organizations like Street Child partnering with Aasaman Nepal and JWAS to work for marginalized communities for better livelihood.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 11:**

- Durga Bhagwati has no formal or informal structure or mechanism to coordinate feedback with stakeholders. IT officers communicate with other stakeholders via email for infrastructure-related programs.
- The municipality has not developed any mechanism to identify concerned stakeholders but informally they know that World Vision, UNICEF, Mandavi, and the Social Development division under the Ministry of Social Development are working on CEFM in the municipality.
- Rajapur has no formal or informal structure or mechanism for coordination.

Results for Question 12 Regarding Advocacy for Reducing CEFM and Associated Child Protection Issues

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 12:**

- There is no separate advocacy plan for CEFM. Province 2 lacks a clear understanding of advocacy and advocacy activities.
- They are not using any systematic approaches for advocacy to reduce CEFM.
- Awareness activities are taken as advocacy activities as per the understanding of participants.

The following summarizes **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 12:**

- There is no clear understanding of advocacy, what to advocate for, or how to do so.
- There is no advocacy plan for reducing CEFM or addressing other child protection issues in any municipality.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 12:**

- Rajapur has no clear understanding on advocacy, what to advocate for, or how.
- Durga Bhagawati has no advocacy for reducing CEFM, but they do informal advocacy with organizations such as Aasaman Nepal, World Vision, and UNICEF working on child marriage.

Results for Question 13 Regarding Legal and Policy Arrangements to Address Child Rights, Child Protection, and CEFM

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 13:**

- Provincial-level policies and guidelines to address child rights, child protection, and CEFM issues exist, but implementation is weak. There is no implementation plan or budget.
- Policy examples include Children ACT (approved), child protection policy (underway), province-level ending child marriage strategy (underway), strategy to end gender-based violence(underway), and provincial five-year strategic plan (drafted, but not endorsed)
- Only key staff are aware of policies and guidelines.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 13:**

- None of the four municipalities have local laws or policies but instead follow federal and provincial ones.
- Pipara has working guidelines for the *Kanyadan* program, including a municipality legal document. In general, parents are worried about the expenses required to support the marriage ceremony, including dowry. To support poor parents, the municipality organized a program where many couples from poor families get married at the same time.
- The municipalities follow federal and provincial legal and policy provisions with no local provisions to address child rights, child protection, and CEFM issues.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 13**:

- No policy, laws, or guidelines exist at the local level in Rajapur or Durga Bhagwati. Federal and provincial laws and policies are followed. Rajapur announced they will not register the birth of a child from a mother under 20 years of age but are facing political opposition to this policy.

Domain D. M&E and Knowledge Management

The following summarizes **general findings for this domain**.

- There are no M&E or knowledge management systems to document and disseminate lessons learned, particularly those related to CEFM, at the province or municipality level.
- Information sharing is inconsistent. At the province level, a website offers updates on meetings, decisions, and events. In municipalities like Loharpatti, information officers disseminate notices and share documents on websites and Facebook.
- There are no routine monitoring systems for social development at the province level or across municipalities; no monitoring frameworks or checklists to routinely monitor activities; and no dedicated budget for M&E of social development issues like CEFM. M&E of infrastructure programs is prioritized.
- There is no M&E plan or strategy at the province level. Some activities, such as *Beti Padhau, Beti Bachau*, have a travel budget for monitoring its few executive committee members.
- The province and municipal levels lack a system for quantitative or qualitative data collection or use of information related to CEFM. However, advocacy at the province level has led to the formation of a province-level emergency protection cluster to collect information on CEFM.
- At the province level, internal review meetings occur, but they are not routine. Meetings with external partners are designed to foster coordination rather than provide opportunities for program improvement or learning. Internal review mechanisms do not exist at the municipality level.

Results for Question 14 Regarding Systematic Knowledge Capture, Packaging, and Sharing to Increase Understanding of Social and Community Behaviors for CEFM and Associated Child Protection Issues

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 14**:

- Almost all respondents stated that no M&E or knowledge sharing occurs at the province level.
- Province-level annual review meetings use M&E, preparing and developing annual reports for health and education, but there is no such system in the Social Development division. They do not understand how to use health or education data to develop CEFM programs.
- For general information on province-level activities, the Pradesh Sabha (Province Assembly) website offers notices about province assembly meetings, decisions, and events.
- There is no documentation or knowledge sharing system in the Social Development division.

The following summarizes **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 14**:

- No municipality has M&E or knowledge sharing systems, and no one knows who is responsible for such activities.
- In Loharpatti, an information officer disseminates information and documents incoming information for the municipalities, such as sharing documents on websites and Facebook. However, the officer is not responsible for knowledge management, as defined above.

The following summarizes **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 14**:

- Neither Durga Bhagwati or Rajapur have systems for M&E, learning documentation, or disseminating information.

Results for Question 15 Regarding Planning for Routine M&E of SBC for CEFM Interventions

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 15**:

- There is no mechanism for using M&E frameworks. Progress reviews are not conducted.
- No monitoring checklists are available for programs. Field visits are planned on an ad hoc basis and organized based on events. For social issue activities, they visit the venue and observe but do not document or use a feedback mechanism.
- State monitoring and evaluation directives are available (such as for infrastructure monitoring), but only for social development issues and not for reducing CEFM.
- No separate budget for M&E activities is allocated at the province level for the Social Development division. A lump-sum budget is used for infrastructure-related monitoring, particularly field visits.

The following summarizes **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 15**:

- No municipality has a routine monitoring system. Infrastructure monitoring is the priority. A lump-sum budget is allocated to monitoring but does not apply to social development activities.
- Participants did not understand how to monitor such activities.

The following summarizes **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 15**:

- Durga Bhagwati and Rajapur have no routine monitoring systems.

Results for Question 16 Regarding M&E Strategy, Planning, and Budgeting of SBC for CEFM Interventions

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 16**:

- Provincial level M&E plans or strategies are not available in place.
- The *Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao* (Educate the Girl; Save the Girl) campaign has allocated some of the field visit budget for travel and daily allowances during monitoring visits, as stated in the

campaign's annual plan. The field visit allowance is allocated for the women's representatives from the government ruling party.

The following summarizes **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 16**:

- No M&E strategy exists for either municipality, but a lump sum budget is allocated for M&E activities; all monitoring of the municipality will use this budget. No specific budget is allocated for CEFM in any municipality.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 16**:

- Durga Bhagwati and Rajapur have no M&E in place for programs related to social development. A committee led by a vice chairperson, chief administrative officer, and engineer performs M&E of infrastructure programs, and no further funds will be issued until the infrastructure funds are spent.

[Results for Question 17 Regarding Systems for Qualitative and Quantitative Information on CEFM and Associated Child Protection Issues](#)

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 17**:

- There is no system for quantitative and qualitative data collection and its use.
- The province-level emergency protection cluster has started collecting information on CEFM by developing a Child Protection Database template. The collection process is not mandatory. The process was initiated with support and contributions from Nepal's Reducing CEFM project for documenting the status of children in potential or suspected CEFM.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 17**:

- There is no system for qualitative or quantitative data collection or use in any of the four municipalities.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 17**:

- Rajapur and Durga Bhagwati have no system for documenting information and no data on CEFM.

[Results for Question 18 Regarding M&E of Internal and External Program Improvement](#)

The following summarizes **province-level findings for question 18**:

- There is an internal annual review mechanism at the ministerial level for overall review of the Ministry of Social Development, including ministries of health; education; and women, children, and senior citizens. It is based on the decision of the Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development. However, no review (either division-specific or with external partners) is conducted at the province level. Working groups of development partners may be activated to support this review.

- According to external partners, some cluster meetings have been held regarding child protection and gender-based violence as it relates to COVID-19. These meetings are for coordination only, not for learning or sharing program improvements.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Mahottari district for question 18:**

- No municipality (Pipara, Jaleshwar, Matihani, and Loharpatti) conducts any internal reviews of CEFM activities.

The following summarizes the **municipal-level findings for Rautahat district for question 18:**

- No municipality (Rajapur or Durga Bhagawati) conducts any internal reviews of CEFM activities.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Overall, face-to-face interaction was found to be more effective than virtual meetings in inspiring group ownership of the data because participants could sit together and discuss. Virtual meetings were used to collect information on the current situation, but the team observed that it was challenging because there was less ownership of the findings at the outset.

Domain A: Program Planning, Design, and Management

- There is a lack of evidence-based planning and adherence to government annual planning processes.
- There is no community participation or meaningful gender equity and social inclusion orientation during planning, implementation, and monitoring on any issue, including CEFM.
- There is no government-funded budget to directly address CEFM at the provincial or municipal level. Some municipalities have allocated funds related to child protection issues, such as gender-based violence, but generally not for CEFM specifically.
- CEFM is considered a common social norm and not a priority.
- There is very low understanding about the importance of SBC and local child protection systems.
- Municipalities do not have a specific structure with adequate human resources, roles, responsibilities, and mandates to address CEFM and associated child protection issues in the planning or implementation processes.
- The section chief of the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens is not empowered to lead efforts to reduce CEFM, despite the Government of Nepal mandating it as the responsible section. There is no community participation or meaningful gender equity and social inclusion during planning, implementation, and monitoring.

The recommendations for domain A are as follows:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities in the municipality to incorporate CEFM into government planning processes and implementation.
- Ensure municipalities understand the importance of reducing CEFM and how to develop programs to support these efforts.
- Strengthen capacity of the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens to conduct evidence-based planning, implementation, and monitoring to reduce CEFM. A municipality- and community-level child protection structure can create an enabling environment for this effort.
- Encourage meaningful community participation, gender equity, and social inclusion by helping municipalities (1) identify specific groups (e.g., women, poor, marginalized, and vulnerable populations) and the reasons for their lack of access to services and opportunities; (2) design policy- and program-level responses to address barriers in the program cycle; (3) identify how marginalized and vulnerable people can participate in implementation of policies and program-

level responses targeted to them, and (4) monitor and evaluate effectiveness of planned resources and actions and targeted groups receive benefits.

Domain B: SBC Theories, Models, and Coordination

- The province and municipality levels lack knowledge about SBC and its importance in designing effective programs. Activities that are merely informational are considered SBC programming.
- Government officials do not prioritize SBC for reducing CEFM.
- The province mostly uses program materials developed by the federal government.
- Media reach, access, and popularity are not considered when determining platforms for promoting CEFM messaging. No pre-testing, community engagement, or consultation with partners or audience occurs during message development.
- Province 2 and its municipalities do not develop CEFM messages and materials but instead rely on external partners to do so, often without the involvement of the Social Welfare division.

The recommendations for domain B are as follows:

- Strengthen SBC by conducting capacity-strengthening initiatives (e.g., training, coaching, and mentoring) for province- and municipality-level officials and other SBC stakeholders, including orientation in SBC theoretical models and frameworks and their application in designing effective SBC programs and activities.
- Train key stakeholders on use of the CEFM palika package for robust, systematic, theory-based, and data-informed SBC program planning and implementation to encourage incorporation of CEFM issues.
- Ensure that activities reach the ward and municipality levels that promote gender equity and social inclusion principles and concepts in program planning and implementation.
- Develop an easily accessed digital platform to standardize and minimize redundancy of SBC content related to CEFM at the section and community structure levels.
- Involve the Social Welfare division in program and material development.

Domain C: Coordination, Collaboration, and Advocacy

- Province 2 has formed a province protection cluster for emergency coordination of protection-related issues among provincial partners during COVID-19.
- Each government level acts independently rather in collaboration with other levels. Political conflicts exist at all levels. There is no clear system, structure, platform, or mandate for coordination or communication among federal, provincial, and municipal governments and their divisions and departments.
- The coordination mechanism at the district level may no longer be active. Municipal associations may exist but are not universal.
- At the province level, a feedback mechanism exists in the health sector and education sector but not in the Social Development division.

- Coordination is lacking among external partners (such as UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund, Save the Children, and local NGOs) working in the field of child protection and child marriage. These partners also are not consulted during planning processes.
- Some organizations are working on CEFM at the municipal level (Life Nepal, Ratauli Yuba Club), but they function separately from the government.
- Neither province nor municipal levels understand advocacy or how to develop and implement advocacy activities on social issues, such as CEFM, or other protection issues beyond informally asking NGOs to address issues.
- Federal and province-level policies and guidelines to address child rights, child protection, and CEFM exist, but few staff are aware of them and implementation is weak.
- Municipalities have not developed their own policies, laws, or guidelines. They instead follow federal and provincial policies and laws. Issues around birth and marriage registrations in CEFMs persist.

The recommendations for domain C are as follows:

- Strengthen the system, structure, and platforms for coordination among federal and local governments on CEFM and other child protection issues.
- The province government should explore or identify effective coordination mechanisms at the municipality level, such as district coordination committees and municipality associations.
- Municipalities should coordinate and form a network with active NGO partners working on CEFM issues, such as child rights, and with marginalized communities. The project may be able to advocate that those organizations incorporate CEFM messaging into their existing programs.
- Strengthen advocacy skills at the province and municipal levels to better plan and implement activities to reduce CEFM.
- Take advantage of opportunities to help province and municipalities understand and act on policies and guidelines to address CEFM and associated child protection issues.

Domain D: M&E and Knowledge Management

- M&E systems and knowledge management systems to document and disseminate information, particularly related to CEFM, are lacking at the province and municipality levels.
- Information sharing is inconsistent. At the province level, a website offers updates on meetings, decisions, and events. In municipalities like Loharpatti, information officers disseminate information and share documents on websites and Facebook.
- There are no routine monitoring systems for social development at the province or municipality level. There are no monitoring frameworks or checklists and no dedicated M&E budget for social development issues like CEFM. M&E of infrastructure programs is the priority.
- There is no M&E plan or strategy at the province level, but some activities (e.g., *Beti Padhau*, *Beti Bachau*) have travel budget allocated for monitoring.

- At both the province and municipal levels, there is no system for collecting or using quantitative and qualitative data related to CEFM. However, advocacy at the province level has led to the province-level emergency protection cluster collecting information on CEFM.
- Internal review meetings are held intermittently at the province level. Meetings with external partners are designed to foster coordination rather than provide opportunities for program improvement or learning. Internal review mechanisms do not exist at the municipality level.

The recommendations for domain D are as follows:

- The concerned sections of the municipality should have clear roles for M&E of social development activities.
- The province and municipalities must develop a simple M&E strategy and associated tools (e.g., checklists) for social development issues like CEFM that can be quickly and easily implemented. The strategy and tools can then be tested across municipalities and at the province level and adapted as needed.
- Allocate budget for M&E of social development issues such as CEFM to ensure that monitoring extends beyond infrastructure programs.
- Support local systems in collecting and updating CEFM data. Municipalities have authority to produce local data. The ward-level child rights committee can be mobilized to collect data from the community, and IT officers can document and share data.
- Form a monitoring committee under the chairmanship of vice mayor or vice chair that can be strengthened for social development issues, including CEFM.

Annexes

Annex 1: Discussion Tool/Questionnaire

Annex 2: Consent Script