

**Strengthening Federated Groups through Institutional  
Development and Advocacy Capacity Building in Udayapur,  
Saptari and Panchthar Districts, Eastern Development Region**

**A Final Report**

*Submitted to:*  
**UNICEF ER – FO, Biranthnagar**

by  
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## Executive Summary

Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) has been implementing a programme, 'Strengthening Federated Groups through Institutional Development and Advocacy Capacity Building of PCRW Federated Groups in eighteen Village Development Committee (VDC) areas in three districts of the Eastern Development Region. The three districts are Udayapur, Saptari and Panchthar, financially supported by the UNICEF Eastern Region Field Office (ER-FO). The programme is aimed at the institutional development of the federations formed under the Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW) programme in Udayapur and Saptari and under Mechi Hill Development Program (MHDP) in Panchthar district. The main objective of the programme was to strengthen the capabilities of the women members of the PCRW programme to establish grass roots institutions and to undertake women and child development activities.

Initially the project was designed for a period of one year effective from 15 December 2001. With the successful implementation of the first year program, IIDS again continued the same project in eighteen federations (three federations in Saptari, five in Udayapur Municipality area and ten in Panchthar districts) up to January 2003. With the aforementioned objective of the same project in the second year, IIDS expanded it not only under PCRW programme but also in the areas phased out by MHDP program in Panchthar district. This report presents the short-term outcome of the programme for a period of one year. The programme has helped the participating groups federated under the PCRW programme and its members to identify their advocacy needs and the possible solutions for improving women's conditions and position in the society; to understand the importance of the parental role in child development; and to understand the importance of institutional development of women's organizations. In this regard, a wide range of knowledge and skills related to these subjects were imparted to the participating members through orientation-cum-planning workshop at regional level, federation level training, monitoring and follow up activities at concerned VDCs/Municipality areas, mid-term review meeting and finally district level reflection workshop. All these activities were accomplished through preparation and implementation of the plan of actions prepared during the federation level. The participating federations members were encouraged to carry out different activities such as door-to-door visits as a part of awareness-raising; perform street drama against girl and women trafficking and other cultural programmes; develop linkages with different development agencies; take advocacy actions on some pertinent issues, etc. Advocacy actions were taken on some of the major issues such as discrimination against girls in education; inadequate parenting role in childcare; and violation of women's and children's rights. The participating members from federations successfully organized several public events during the one-year programme period.

The institutional support under this programme has eventually helped to enhance the federations' women members' access to various economic opportunities and resources, enhance their

decision-making capability and equip them with advocacy skills to advocate for their own rights. It has also sensitized the male members of the community towards their parental role. The participating women have been successful in registering the federated groups under the Cooperative Act and have established their own cooperative institutions. Of the eighteen federations covered by the programme, only six were registered as cooperative institutions before the implementation of the programme. The four federations were registered after the programme intervention. The remaining eight federations from both Saptari and Panchthar has been trying to register their grass roots based institutions in the cooperative. However, in the case of Panchthar under DDC, the representation from all the six federations had no any structure as in PCRW federations. Despite accomplishment of all the activities within time frame in Panchthar district, IIDS could not continue the program after successful monitoring and follow up at Pheden and Chandani Savings and Credit Women Cooperatives because of some reasons. The main reasons were the high intensity of Maoist insurgency at respective VDCs, the period of imposing emergency or *Sankatkal* and the dissolving of DDC personnel in the mean time that caused the program being unable to be implement both by the DDC and IIDS. Hence, UNICEF did not suggest IIDS to proceed the remaining program activities in six VDCs (Amarpur, Nagi, Panchami, Limba, Durdimba and Shubhang) in Panchthar district. Owing to above mentioned reasons the IIDS could not do further monitoring and follow up activities, mid-term review meeting and district level reflection workshop in aforementioned VDCs. At the same time the regional field office of UNICEF-Biratnagar suggested IIDS to conduct federation level training in Labhrekoti Women Cooperative at Chokmagu VDC and Ravikiran Women Federation at Ravi VDC under PCRW program where Decentralized Action for Child and Women (DACAW) program were to be launched later on. These two training were conducted with the surplus fund of program activities of monitoring, mid-term review meeting and district level reflection workshop. The members of the cooperative institutions have become able to identify different advocacy issues relevant to their lives as well as their possible solutions. In this context, different types of advocacy actions related to several social malpractices, gender inequality, accessing to and benefiting from different resources and services etc. were carried out by the participating women members. Women now feel encouraged to undertake future community development endeavors with greater participation. They have increased their linkages with different development agencies such as the District Development Committee (DDC), Municipality, VDC, District Forest Office, District Cooperative Office, Banks, local NGOs (HURENDEC and SWS), Schools, Cottage industry, District Education Office, Veterinary and Agricultural Development Unit etc.



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