Innovative Practice 2019 on Independent Living and Political Participation

# Engaging persons with disabilities in all levels of politics

# Nepal / Disable Empowerment and Communication Centre

## Summary:

### Disable Empowerment and Communication Centre–Nepal (DEC–N), an NGO working to empower persons with disabilities, is undertaking a multi-method programme to include people with disabilities in policy-making and to increase their representation in Parliament. DEC-N conducts regular dialogue with political parties and local public and non-government bodies to encourage inclusive policies, and an organizational taskforce supports voter registering and participation. Since 2012, some 200 people with disabilities have participated in local planning, 1,055 have registered to vote, and seven have moved into federal Parliament positions.

## Problems Targeted:

### Local policies are often ineffective in enabling independent living due to the exclusion of people with disabilities in local planning processes and elections.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact:

### DEC–N conducts ongoing dialogues and advocacy efforts with civil society, political parties, and government bodies to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the development of policies that affect their lives and to increase their political representation. In 2017 it set up a specialized taskforce with responsibility to push for the accommodation of people with disabilities in voting processes, such as promoting voter registration and advocating for accessible voting booths.

### DEC–N successfully advocated for people with disabilities to take part in local planning committees, including those for government bodies responsible for the implementation of local development plans, such as the Integrated Planning Committee and the Social Security Recommendation Committee. As a result, since 2012 some 200 people have participated in local planning processes, 1,055 have registered to vote, seven now hold seats in the federal Parliament and five are members of their provincial Parliament. Further, 62 have been enlisted as community disability mobilizers, whose duties include facilitating the obtaining of disability ID cards, promoting voter registration, and advocating for voter rights.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability:

### The project began in 2012 with an annual grant of $25,000 from the Open Society Foundation. This contribution has increased with support from Humanity & Inclusion Nepal and CBM, with annual project funding totalling $175,000 in 2018.

### The project was initially undertaken in the rural municipality of Banke, but has since been replicated in Dang District in the same province, with a focus on the capacity-building of rights holders and project personnel for increasing political participation.

### DEC–N will continue to work with the government and other bodies to create change in local planning processes, as well as to support community disability mobilizers to create change in their own communities.

## About the Practice at a Glance:

### NAME OF INNOVATIVE PRACTICE: Fostering accountability through inclusive planning processes

### ORGANISATION: Disable Empowerment and Communication Centre–Nepal

### COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION: Nepal

## Facts and Figures:

### The project has helped seven people win seats in the federal Parliament, and five to win seats in their provincial Parliament.

### Sixty-two people with disabilities have been enlisted as community disability mobilizers to assist in promoting voting rights.

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### [Disable Empowerment and Communication Centre–Nepal Website](http://www.decnepal.org.np/)

## Quote:

“The project has supported the promotion of human rights as inscribed in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – particularly the right of social and political participation – which became possible by the engagement of rights-holder.”

—Devidatta Acharya, Executive Director, DEC–N

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