



# **Action and Learning Processes for Common Property Forest Management**

**An Assessment of the current status and impacts of local Action Learning processes for common property forest management developed through a Participatory Action Research Project in Nepal**

**A report prepared by ForestAction, Nepal**

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**NRSP Project PD119: POST R7514 follow-up study**

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## Acronyms

CPFD	Community and Private Forestry Division
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DFO	District Forest Office / District Forest Officer
DIRD	Department of International and Rural Development
DOF	Department of Forests
DYC	Deep Jyoti Yuba Club
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal
FFMP	Forest User Groups Forest Management Project
ForestAction	Forest Resources Studies and Action Team
FRP	Forest Research Programme
FUGC	Forest User Group Committee
FUGs	Forest User Groups
Ha	Hectare
HH	Household
IGAs	Income Generating Activities
LFP	Livelihood and Forestry Programme
NACRMP	Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NRSP	Natural Resources Systems Programme
NSCFP	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project
NTFPs	Non-timber forest products
OP	Operational Plan
PAL	Participatory and Action Learning
PAR	Participatory Action Research
RP	Range Post (sub-district forest office)
SWOT	Strength, weakness, opportunity and threat
VDC	Village Development Committee
IGAs	Income Generation Activities

## Glossary of Nepali Terms

Tole	It is a hamlet or a settlement consisting 10 to 25 families in an area where they have direct conversation, working alliances and informal interaction. In many instants these hamlets form a group based on ethnicity/caste category and work in similar cultural, ecological context. FUG comprises various hamlets depending on the size of forest and accessibility of the users.
Loure Palo	Handing over the stick. FUG members take responsibility of Ban Heralu turn by turn
Ban Heralu	Forest watcher employed by local people or FUGs to protect their common forest.
Dalit	Untouchable caste based on religion (Hinduism)
Birta	The birta is the forest land to service holders and other politically influential people by Rana regime which is inheritable
Chatta	1 Chatta = 9 ft. x 3.75 ft. x 3.6 ft = 25 Bhari approx.
Bhari	Local unit of measuring head load. Approx 3035 kg of fire wood/grasses
Pathi	Local unit of measuring grains. Approx.4 kg rice and similar cereals
Terai	The low land area in the southern belt of Nepal (part of the Gangetic plain)
Khar	Hey grass /roofing meterils
Kami	Black smith caste-an occupational caste group still remained in their traditional employment thus need regular supply of charcoal from the forests
Tham	A pillar or a cross beam of usual size 4'x4''x3''

## Glossary of plant names

Sal	<i>Shorea robusta</i>
Chilaune	<i>Schima Wallichii</i>
Khote sallo	<i>Pinus roxburghii</i>
Rakchan	<i>Daphniphyllum himalense</i>
Jhingane	<i>Eurya acuminata</i>
Gurans	<i>Rhododendron arboreum</i>
Amriso	<i>Thysanolaena maxima</i>
Rai khanyu,	<i>Ficus semicordata</i>
Nimaro	<i>Ficus auriculata</i>
Hade unyu	<i>Dicranopteris linearis</i>

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## **Executive summary**

A study was carried out between February and April 2003, to assess the status of action learning processes in five local forest management institutions (Forest User Groups, FUGs) that were initiated during the previous project (NRSP-R7514) which was undertaken by the DIRD (at the University of Reading) and ForestAction in collaboration with the Environmental Change Institute (at the University of Oxford) and the Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP, Nepal). Both projects were funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) through its Natural Resources Systems Programme (NRSP).

The previous project (NRSP-R7514) aimed to develop methods for facilitating the initiation of group level action and learning processes with a focus on self-monitoring as a crucial link within this. It has developed an action learning process for use at local level as well as the understanding of the local context particularly understanding the limitation and constraints imposed by differences in forest user groups' situation and participation of every house hold in the process which gives rise a scope of adaptation of the process with the wide range of local institutions including forest user groups in Nepal. However, R7514 was not able to test the methodology with the sample groups to verify the process in different context. Also it was comparatively a short period for the project to reflect other stakeholders' perspective regarding the contribution of the project. The process consisted of steps or elements in a sequence of negotiation and information analysis. , which was hoped, would be continued in the case study sites and possibly scaled out in the local area. The follow up study therefore aimed to find out whether or not the processes, or steps within them, have been continued or adapted.

Participatory assessment techniques were used in discussions with FUG committees, monitoring committees, key informant interviews and general observations on group functioning and forest condition as well as a reflective workshop with FUG committee members and research participants from the earlier research (representatives selected in hamlet or tole meetings). Other meetings were also held with local bodies (Village Development Committee members, and other local NGOs and CBOs) in the case study area. Meetings were also held with DFO/LFP staff.

The findings show evidence of continuation of various elements of the action learning processes initiated in these sites. In particular there has been some increased access by individual households in resource sharing because of increased negotiation among the group member through established action learning process and on-going discourse on equity issues within some groups. Also the use of tole representatives to carry out some advocacy and inquiry functions, the spreading of responsibilities for monitoring the implementation of action plans and increased data gathering and analysis has led to an increase in democratic functioning as well as group level learning. The process has initiated many activities that have potential for contributing to the improvement of the livelihoods of members of the groups, including a shift towards more active forest management in some sites. In addition there is some evidence of both spontaneous and facilitated scaling out and up of the process in the local area.

However, the follow up study has highlighted major strength and weakness of the process some recommendations have been made for further enhancing sustained action and learning within the case study area and for wider uptake of the process across Nepal. These are as follows:

To facilitate collaborative planning between the DFO/RP, FECOFUN, VDCs and local NGOs and CBOs for the further scaling out and up of the process in the RP area.

To involve local NGOs and CBOs in facilitation of critical inquiry as an important link in the action and learning process, as well as the identification and interpretation of livelihood needs in these groups in order to link them with forest sector services



In view of a need for better communications between supply and demand for improved collaborative monitoring and planning, further discussion needs to be promoted between other support organisations at the Range Post and district level as to ways in which they can clearly define and communicate their roles and services to FUGs (and other local groups with interests in community forestry),

Further test the facilitation process in differing livelihoods contexts and policy environments (for example in the Terai) and

Need to promote discussions on the integration of these action and learning processes with the government CF procedures (such as Operational Guideline of Department of Forest) and FUG Operational Plans in Nepal, focusing on the development of the planning process prior to FUG formation, and action and learning processes after the formation of an FUG.

## **1. Introduction**

This report describes the objectives, methodology and results of a follow up study (NRSP-PD119) set up to assess the current status of planning and monitoring processes developed through a previous PAR project (NRSP-R7514) in five case study sites in Nepal. This follow-up study was managed by ForestAction - a national non-governmental organisation (NGO). Both this study and the previous project were funded by the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID), through its Natural Resources System Programme (NRSP).

### **1.1. Background**

The earlier Project R7514, "Development of Monitoring Process and Indicators for Forest management, Nepal" was undertaken by Department of International and Rural Development (DIRD, at the University of Reading), and Forest resources Studies and Action team (ForestAction), in collaboration with the Environmental Change Institute (ECI, at the University of Oxford) and the Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP) in Nepal. The main field work for the project took place between November 2000 and May 2001.

#### **1.1.1. Rationale for Project R7514**

Briefly, the original rationale for the project drew on two main research areas.

The first related to issues in community forestry in Nepal that have emerged following its formal inception. Experiences from the field have shown that the decentralization of power has led to new alliances between the target driven forest bureaucracy and the elite members of local communities who benefit from greater political power as FUG leaders.

There are several reasons why elite members are in a better position to ally with government officials: a) while handing over community forestry to the groups, all the members of the groups are not generally informed or consulted b) even if consulted many of the poorer families who are daily wage-earners for their survival, can not commit to be an active member of the group c) In many cases the local elite had already have established good relation with forest officials.

Such alliances have become the main driving force in the community forest hand over and subsequent planning processes, at the expense of the livelihood interests of the poorer groups. These groups, who are often the most dependent on common forests, have been largely marginalized from FUG planning processes. In this respect the project sought to contribute to wider efforts to address this imbalance in terms of increasing the access of the poor to decision-making, promoting more active and sustainable forest management and equitable distribution of benefits.

The second area, and following on from the first, was the recognized need for improved monitoring within and between stakeholder organizations in order to orient planning, service delivery and policy processes towards more equitable, active and sustainable forest management. Part of the rationale for the project was the need for more effective flows of relevant information between the grassroots level and stakeholder organizations at different levels. In this respect the project focused on the demand side at the local level where there is seen to be a critical gap in the monitoring framework. However, as a first step towards this objective, greater emphasis was placed on the development of internal self-monitoring in FUGs with the aim of initiating cyclical action and learning processes at the group level.

#### **1.1.2. The research sites**

In selecting the case study sites for the research the project team needed to reconcile two requirements. One requirement was for diversity in order to demonstrate some of the major characteristics of communities in the middle hills. The other was the need for deeper insight into the relationships between communities (in particular FUGs) and the Range Post staff, as well as to engage

the Range Post staff in the action research process throughout and beyond the project. For the latter it was decided that the project would need to work in one Range Post area. For the former the project team therefore needed to select a Range Post area that exhibits a reasonable degree of diversity. Following discussions with organizations at the district and range post level, Kushmisera RP in Baglung District was selected (see map in Annex I). For details of the physical, social and economic characteristics of Baglung District and Kushmisera Range Post area refer to Malla et al (2002, pp24-26).

Five sites (four FUGs and one non-FUG) were selected for the study following discussions with RP staff and representatives from FUGs. The criteria for selection as well as the basic characteristics of the 5 sites are shown in the table 1 below.

**Table 1.1: Basic information of selected groups**

<b>FUGs/ Characteristics</b>	<b>Pallo Pakha (FUG)</b>	<b>Bhane (FUG)</b>	<b>Jana Chetana (FUG)</b>	<b>Sirupata (FUG)</b>	<b>Jyamire (None-FUG)</b>
<b>Date of Handover</b>	1995/ 2051 BS	1997/ 2053 BS	1999	1995/ 2051 BS	1989/ 2045 BS (CC formation)
<b>HH</b>	84	53	150	150	84
<b>Caste/ ethnicity</b>	Brahmin, Chhetri	Brahmin, Chhetri, Magar	Magar, Chhetri, Kami, Damai	Brahmin, Magar, Sarki	Brahmin, Chhetri, Sarki
<b>No of FUGC members</b>	13	11	15	11	11
<b>Women in committee</b>	2	2	6	11 (Previousl y male)	2
<b>Tole representatives</b>	12	8	14	12	12
<b>Forest type</b>	Sal, Tiju	Chilaune - Katus	Mixed: Rachan, chilaune, khasru, gurans	Pine	Chilaune - Katus, Sal
<b>Forest area (ha)</b>	9	5	105	6.34	10 (approx)
<b>Forest protection system</b>	Loure palo	Watcher	Watcher	Group (not functional)	Group (Previously watcher)
<b>Amount in fund</b>	228,000.00	6000.00	28,000.00	34,000.00*	53,000.00
<b>Benefited HH from fund mobilisation</b>	84	4	14	22 (including FUGC)	23 (including FUGC)
<b>Federation member</b>	RP and district level FECOFUN	RP level FECOFUN	RP level FECOFUN	RP level FECOFU N	No
<b>Resource utility strategy</b>	Equality	Equality	Equal distribution system- modified considering family size	Equality	Equality

For a comparison of the case study FUG characteristics in the context of the middle hills region refer to Malla et al (2002, pp26-27). A brief description of the case study sites is given below.

Bhane FUG comprises 53 households (HH) where the major castes are Brahmin, Chhetri and Magar with 5 dalit caste HHs. The forest area is 5 hectare (ha) where Chilaune (*Schima wallichii*) and Katus (*Castanopsis* spp) are the major species. A forest watcher (ban heralu) has been employed for forest protection. Prior to the research Bhane had experienced considerable difficulties in functioning. There was considerable mistrust within the group particularly with regards to the sale of forest products, and consequently no forest management activities or assemblies had been held for 5 years.

Jana Chetana FUG comprises 150 HH where Magar, Chhetri, Kami and Damai are the major castes. The forest area is 105 ha and the major species are Rakchan, Chilaune, Jhingane and Gurans. A Ban Heralu has been employed for forest protection. They have a system of distributing forest products, especially firewood, according to family size, subject to proportionate labour contributions. In general, at the time of the previous project, the group was already very active with a high degree of participation in meetings and a strong leadership.

Pallo Pakha FUG comprises 84 HH where Brahmin is the major caste (with 1 Chhetri HH). The forest size is 9 ha half of which is dominated by Sal, with mixed Sal and Chilaune dominating the remainder. At the time of the previous project the group had been regarded as one of the most active in the district (having also won a district award for best practice). The caste homogeneity, as well as a history of collective action in a high court case to prevent the forest falling into private ownership has created a considerable degree of group cohesiveness. The group has used a loure palo system for forest protection, and most forest products have been distributed on an equal basis (apart from grass harvesting rights which have been auctioned).

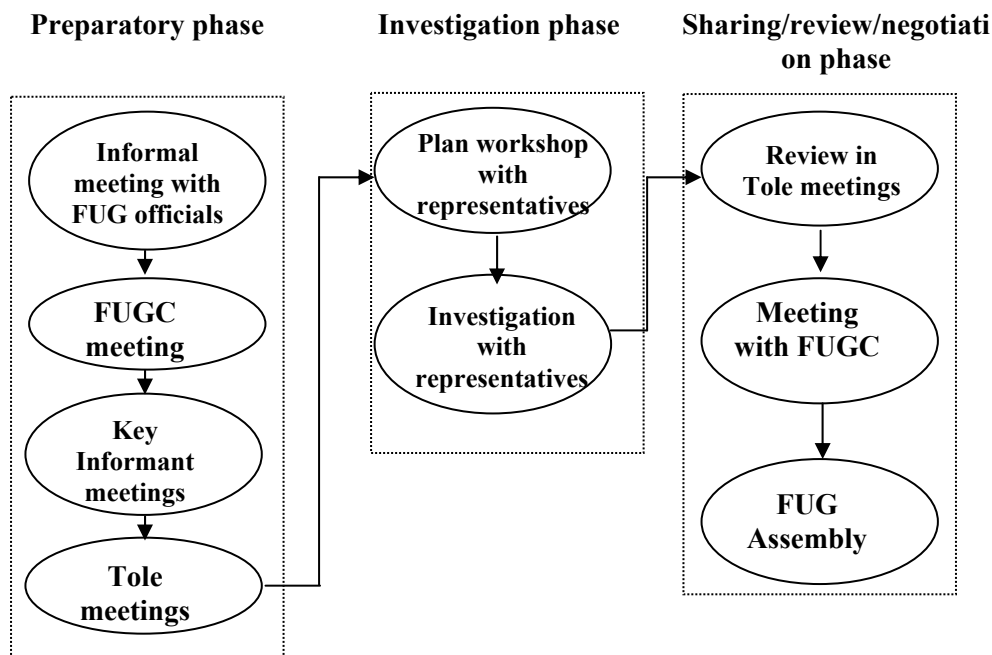
Sirupata FUG comprises 150 HH, most of whom were involved in planting the pine seedlings that currently make up the plantation area, prior to FUG formation. Amongst these HHs Brahmin, Chhetri, Magar and Sarki are the major castes. The forest size is approximately 6.5 ha where Khote sallo is a dominant plantation species. Owing to the small area of the plantation there has not been any significant distribution of forest products and at the time of the previous project there had been an on-going conflict over grazing in CF area.

Jyamire has not formed as an FUG, though there is a conservation committee (CC) with responsibilities for the protection of 8 ha of government forest lying within Ward no.5 of Painyu Thanthap VDC. There are 84 HH within the ward and the major castes are Brahmin, Chhetri and Sarki. The major forest species are Chilaune, Katus and Sal. At the time of the previous project the CC had employed a Ban Heralu to watch the forest. There had been some distribution of dead wood (harvesting of green wood is not permitted in government forests), and hay (khar ghans) and money from the sale of products had been collected in a fund. However, at the time of the previous project there had been considerable conflict over rights to drive cattle and goats through the forest, and mistrust over the whereabouts of large amounts of the fund. In addition, one Brahmin tole had been seeking to form their own separate FUG with part of the forest, according to historic Birta arrangements.

### **1.1.3. Project methodology**

The methodology is briefly described here in terms of a broad framework of phases and steps that were undertaken in each site (Figure 1.1 below). Within each step, however, the project team experimented and adapted activities and elements within these steps throughout the research period (a description of the variations in activities and elements between each site is given in Malla et al, 2002). The overall process can be broadly divided into three phases: preparatory, investigation and sharing/review/negotiation.

**Figure 1.1 Outline of project field methodology**



Source: Adopted from Malla et al. 2002

The preparatory phase involved four sequential steps and included first an informal meeting with the FUG officials, which was then followed by a formal meeting with the Forest User Group Committee (FUGC) to gain authorization for the research, key informant meetings to gather background information on FUG issues, and a series of tole level meetings. In this step tole representatives were selected to participate in a research workshop. This research workshop was designed to investigate underlying causes and consequences of the issues and problems raised by tole members during tole meetings. The participating tole representatives were assisted in defining forest management problems and issues facing the FUG and possible solutions based on their analysis of the findings. Based on this, the tole representatives then prepared proposals for consideration and approval by the FUG as a whole and leads into the final phase – sharing/review and negotiation phase, that involved two steps - tole meetings and FUG general assembly.

Importantly, this methodology was aimed at covering the planning process as a whole rather than focusing on monitoring in isolation. Thus within this process the project team sought to experiment with different activities and tools at different steps in order to identify appropriate means of initiating group monitoring as the crucial link in the action learning cycle.

#### **1.1.4. The project outputs- what left by the Project R7514?**

Using Participatory Action Research approaches, the project tested and developed a methodology for planning and monitoring processes that are feasible, or adaptable, in the local context of forest management. There were some evidences generated through the project implementation process that the methodology enables wider, more active participation of different groups within forest user groups, and in turn enhance the responsiveness of the leadership to the poorer and disadvantaged groups.

The project team critically assessed more detailed models of monitoring derived from the professional project context in terms of their applicability to the local conditions and thus identify basic or empirical functions of monitoring (those relating to group learning) that could be introduced and subsequently adapted and developed by the groups themselves.

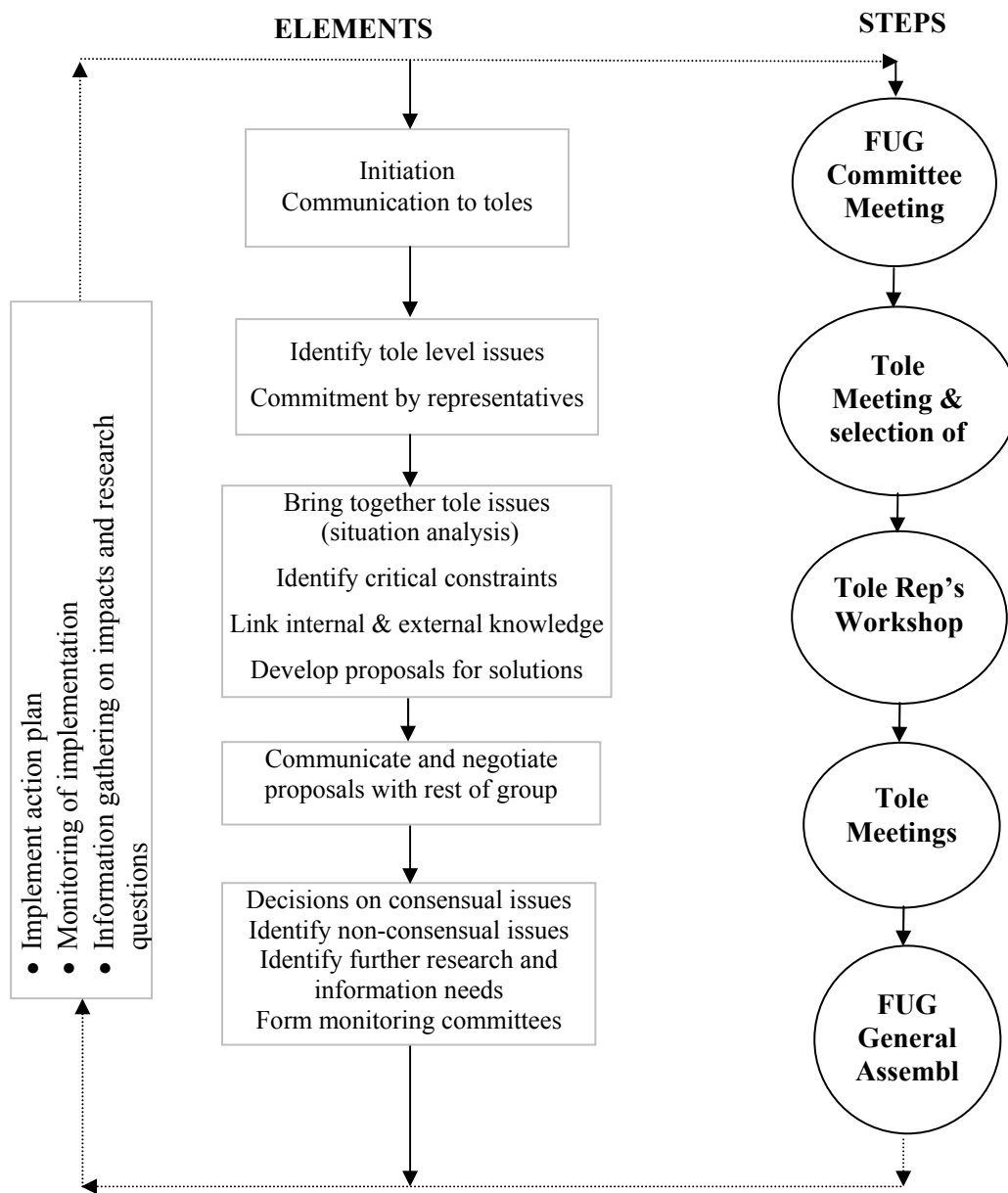
Practically, the planning and monitoring process consists of several elements tentatively organized around a logical sequence. These were actually designed to influence the three fundamental processes underlying FUG institutional development:

- Enhancing awareness and communication
- Addressing power imbalance among forest users
- Promote learning and adjustment

The methodology allowed forest users to achieve these fundamental processes of institutional development by experimenting various issue-based or spatially differentiated sub groups to analyse the information from a wide range of forest management and institutional issues, into a set of clear proposals that can be effectively negotiated at the sub-group (such as tole) and assembly levels. This ‘thinking and negotiating space’ contributed to ensure that decision-making processes are accessible to the wider membership, thus developing the democratic function alongside the executive function of the FUGC. The methodology has an in-built element of on-going monitoring of decisions over time and space which allowed continual review in the light of new ideas, conflicts or implementation experiences. This included a priori identification of information needs at or around the time of decisions and plans.

A schematic diagram of the process, highlighting recommended elements (activities or stages in group discussion and negotiation) at different steps is shown in figure 1.2 below.

**Figure 1.2: Outline of the action learning process steps and elements (Source: Adapted from Malla et al, 2002)**



This process represents a summary of the reflections of the project team and the local representatives deriving from varied experiences from the 5 sites. The elements of the process shown on the left side of the diagram show a recommended sequence of discussion, negotiation and information analysis that it was hoped would enable effective and participatory planning and monitoring to take place.

As regards the steps in the process (meetings), it is important to note that these were carried out within the short period of the project. Principally, this meant that the planning processes were carried out in one continuous period in each site in order to produce annual action plans. The project team had to speculate as to whether or not the groups would be able to adapt the process to a more flexible schedule.

The methodology was informed by an understanding of the opportunities and constraints presented by various institutional and procedural factors as relates to the promotion of collaborative planning and monitoring at the local and district level. Constraints presented by various institutional and procedural

factors were also identified as relates to the promotion of collaborative planning and monitoring at the local and district level. From the institutional perspective, it was clear that the lack of clarity of roles amongst stakeholders and a knowledge gap between the service supply and demand sides presented a constraint to effective planning and monitoring at these levels. Again the project team needed to speculate as to the extent to which the process developed at the local level could reduce this knowledge gap. The project also highlighted the inflexibility of the CF procedures, defined and limited by DFO targets and human resource shortages, as key constraints to promoting FUG action and learning.

At the end of the fieldwork, monitoring sub-committees were formed in each of the sites to oversee monitoring activities as well as provide other observations for the purposes of a follow-up. The meeting of the representatives including the FUGC formed this monitoring sub-committee. Their criteria for selection were; A) fully and actively involved in the research process, B) wit a executive responsibility in the group, C) commitment to continuous follow up. A small amount of money was provided to each FUG considering the time demand of the committee members' involvement in these activities. ForestAction had been liaising with these sub-committees and the groups as a whole, although the subsequent State of Emergency across the country meant that fewer meetings could be held.

Overall, R-7514 applied the action learning process where both action and learning activities were combined in such a ways that it helped solving immediate issues at FUGs as well as establishing a system for future use. As the lesson for future, it identified facilitators' role as crucial. As usual participatory methods are more rigorous and lengthy processes in general and putting local peoples perspectives into context and helping them to analyse and reflect needs a greater patience and sensible facilitating knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Table 1.2 outlines the site-specific status and achievements of the use of the methodology that was put in place at the end of the project (R7514).



**Table 1.2**

<b>FUG</b>	<b>Assembly Decision/ Planned Actions</b>	<b>Achievements/ Status</b>
<b>Janachetana</b>	Equitable distribution of forest products	Forest products were distributed considering the family size.
	Use sample plots to monitor forest condition	Feedback from the regular monitoring of sample plot is considered to develop the strategies for forest management
	Income generation programmes (amriso, alaichi, painyu and medicinal plant identification)	Identified 35 species of medicinal plants in their CF and also established nursery with the support of DFO/LFP to promote awareness and domestication of the species. Plantaion of amriso, alaichi, painyu and fund mobilization for IGAs through tole as well as Committee
	Budget: 25% for lowest wealth rank credit scheme, 50% for community development, 25% for forest development	In total 14 goats (Rs. 28,000.00) were distributed to 14 members of lowest wealth rank of 7 toles out of 8. FUG office building was constructed with expending Rs. 185,000.00. This group is employing a nursery naika (300 per month) and a forest watcher.
	Communicate group experiences and achievements to other organizations	This group has been communicating their experiences and achievements to neighbouring FUGs VDC/wards (ward No. 4,8,9), RP/DFO, LFP.
	6 member committee (from each tole) to inspect the IGAs	A separate monitoring sub-committee formed and given role and responsibility to inspect the utilization of funds and progress in implementation.
	Household records of labour contribution and benefits received from FUG activities	This group provided note copy and pen to every household for recording of labour contribution and benefit received from CF and group activities.
	Scholarships for members of lowest rank.	This group has been providing scholarship (school dresses and cash worth Rs.1500.00) to two excellent and from poor background
<b>Jyamre</b>	Committee re-election (with election of 4 women representatives)	Committee re elected with 4 women members in committee
	Outstanding payments of fines and other dues to be collected before the end of Chaitra, and credit schemes for lowest wealth rank	The group collected fines, previous investments and other dues from the key executive members and distributed to 22 members ranging from Rs. 500.00 - 5000.00 especially the lowest wealth rank.
	Further discussion on the issue of open grazing, to be resolved before the end of Chaitra	This issue discussed in all tole level meetings and decided to close. However, they are re-thinking about a patch of forest for grazing.
	Forest products will be distributed within the confines of legislation	Forest product is distributed on the basis of General assembly decisions.
	Forest protection to be carried out through the self-discipline of the users rather than using a forest watcher	The group decided to stop a forest watcher system for the protection of CF.
<b>Pallo Pakho</b>	Provides Rs 20,000/- (10,000 from FUG fund/ 10,000 from DFO) to 5 members of lowest wealth rank at 5% interest for generating income.	This activity is implemented successfully

	3 members committee to oversee implementation of decisions	There is a five members committee instead of three. This group has constructed prize and punishment system and regularly followed.
	3 member committee for information and communication	This sub-committee is responsible to linkage building and communicate to outsiders
	Additional 3 classes and 1 teacher at school	This has been achieved with an additional teacher and running class up to five.
	Each household to plant 50 income generating tree seedlings on private land	Every household has planted 50 plants.
	Compulsory tole meetings	In initial stage tole level meeting were organized but later stage it turned into a forum of tole representatives and committee members to communicate the message/decisions.
<b>Bhane</b>	Sub-committee (advisory) formation	They had formed different sub-committees for raising awareness, transparency, and participation of women and poorer in forest and group management activities.
	Communicate legislation, rules, regulations and accounts	FUG committee has been sharing about the importance and legal aspects of community forestry. Also statuses of funds have been communicated to all general members in particular income, expenditure and mobilization of funds.
	Annual weeding programme/forest cleaning	Weeding/cleaning the weeds ( <i>Botrychium</i> spp, <i>Eupatorium</i> spp.) in every six month interval
	Plant Amriso, Alaichi and Coffee within Asarh/ Shrawan	Group had planted Amriso ( <i>Thysanolaena maxima</i> ) and Alaichi ( <i>Amomum subaltum</i> ) about 20 and 200 seedlings respectively in 2002.
	Thinning/ pruning/ weeding in block no.2 in Paush/ Magh 2002(Jan/Feb).	Harvest in block 2 in year (Jan./Feb 2003)
	FUG fund will be for credit schemes to people with secure assets lasting for less than 6 months of the year	The group separated Rs. 4000.00 for the credit schemes and provided to four poorest members equally on the basis of wealth rank.
	Regular reflection meetings	Held committee meeting on 20th of every month and assembly every three months.
	Hardeunun ( <i>Botrychium</i> spp) cleared in Phalgun and Jesth	<i>Botrychium</i> spp is being eliminated through cut down before starting the winter season, and second time when it will pick up vigorous growth before starting the monsoon in same year.
	Responsibility for fund decentralized to tole representatives (no bank account)	fund has been mobilized with 24 % interest rate in tolewise basis with giving priority to the lowest wealth rank.
	Punishment for breaching the FUG rules and regulations to be set according to group decisions	This group has constructed prize and punishment system for both good worker and rule breakers.
	Venues for assembly meetings to be changed on rotational basis	This group has decided to hold the assembly in rotational basis with aiming to creating awareness and valuing the tole residents in management of community forest.
	Half of firewood quota to be distributed free of cost, half at 30/-	They had decided two rates for firewood distribution for example very poor (fourth wealth rank) that can get in 50 % lower rate than other upper three ranks.

<b>Sirupata</b>	Plant tree species according to group requirements	They planted seedlings of various locally available/preferable species
	Investigate the roles of other organizations (e.g. LFP)	Coordinated RP/FECOFUN to build linkages with outsiders.
	Communicate forest legislation/ FUG rules and regulations to the whole group	At the beginning Tole representatives and FUGC members involved in tole meetings and discussed about CF rules and regulation.
	Regular tole meetings	It was regular up to beginning of insurgency and also have planned to continue (discussion with FUGC members)
	Ban open grazing in plantation area	The majority of group members had decided to ban open grazing system but did not develop strategies on how to stop the free grazing system.

## 1.2. The follow-up study and its aim

While the PAR study with five groups clearly indicated potentials to contribute to the planning and monitoring process, given the short period of time within which the research was completed, as regards whether the project-induced innovations will be sustained and institutionalized. It was therefore proposed that a follow-up study be undertaken to provide a realistic assessment of the progress made in the 5 case study groups and provide an assessment of sustainability of the processes. The study is designed to generate lessons and insights on the contribution of planning and monitoring methodologies to local level forest governance and livelihoods, as well as evidences of any scaling up (taking up of the process by policy making and program implementing institutions) and scaling out (horizontal spread of ideas across communities).

Based on the analysis of the process, the study also seeks to provide recommendations for further testing and uptake of the process in other areas of Nepal.

## 1.3. Expected key outputs

The key outputs of the field study were planned to be:

1. Qualitative and quantitative evidence of continuation, adoption or rejection of any of the key components of the planning and monitoring process developed during the project in the 5 case study sites and any changes in the roles of the RP and Federation of Community Forest User Groups, Nepal (FECOFUN), in particular, in forest management planning
2. Some measures of the contribution made by the adoption of this process to improvements in the livelihoods of local people
3. Some measure of the costs of this process to the local people, its distribution throughout the groups and the ability of the groups to bear these costs
4. An understanding of the potential amongst other local institutions in the case study sites both as facilities to the process, and also to alleviate some of the cost burden to the poorer members of the groups.
5. Recommendations for further testing and uptake of the process

### 1.3.1. Major Research Questions

The field study on assessing the current situation of the self-monitoring systems established through Participatory Action Research was carried out based on major three research questions:

- To what extent the process, elements and steps of the monitoring process are being used and adapted? Which elements are rejected and why? Is there any evidence of scaling up and out of any elements of the process?
- Looking into the perceived transaction costs and benefits of the process, does the process seem to be sustainable?
- Can the process be taken up across other sites in Nepal?

### **1.3.2. Linkages between initial project intervention (initiation) and follow-up findings**

In establishing links between the project process and the follow-up findings it is necessary to address two issues:

1. The need to make a distinction between the steps of the process (as shown on the right hand side of the figure 1.2) and the elements of the process (relating to information analysis and knowledge generation). Certainly it is possible that steps could still be carried out in the sites, though the associated elements might not be taking place.
2. The need to screen observations of impacts on group processes, governance and livelihoods to ensure that these are attributable, either directly or indirectly, to the project.

## **2. Follow up study methodology**

Participatory assessment techniques were used to assess the current status of action learning process developed during the project period. FUGC meetings, monitoring sub committee meetings, key informant interviews, observation on group and forest condition, and a reflective workshop with FUGC members and Tole representatives, and meeting with local bodies were organised in the area of the four FUG and one non- FUG site. Similarly, meetings with DFO/LFP staff were also conducted.

The follow up team used a checklist of questions and issues for each activity. The details of each activity are given below. For the detailed checklist refer to Annex III.

### **I Meeting with FUG committees**

Objective of the visit

FUGs ongoing activities

Strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis of the process

Discussion about annual action plan and link with operation plan (OP)

Make arrangement to meet monitoring sub-committee, KIs, Sample HHs (fix time table)

### **II Meeting with Monitoring Sub-Committee**

- Objective of the visit
- Discuss/review monitoring information/OP

### **III. Visit with Key Informants and Selected Households**

- Households selected on the basis of wealth category and Tole
- Discussion on various activities of FUGs and issues and concern of HH
- Transect walk through forest & village with local informants: talk/ find out the major changes in perceptions regarding monitoring (why?)

### **VI. Discuss with Tole Representatives**

- Presentation of preliminary findings
- Open discussion/ find out their reaction
- Commitment to future process/action
- Measure the perception and adaptation level

### **V. Meet with Local Institutions (VDC, CBOs, RP, FECOFUN at RP level)**

- Briefly present follow up findings
- Understand their perception regarding findings as well as any their support
- Discuss institutional support mechanisms to FUG/ sub-groups
- Identify the contribution of the process followed or methodology developed with these sub-groups

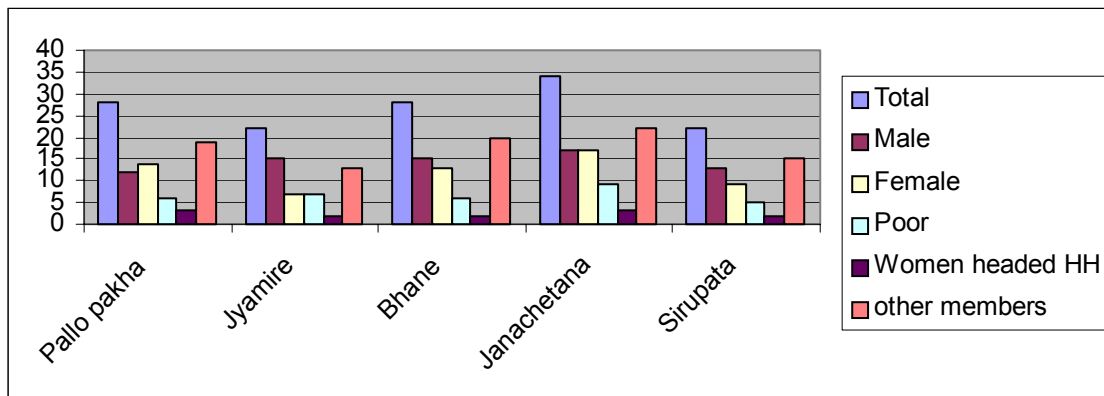
### **VI. Visit/discuss with DFO/LFP at district (also with DOF/NGOs/FECOFUN at Centre level)**

- Briefly present findings of follow up study
- Current status of the monitoring system at district level
- Problem in monitoring / strategy for resolution
- Importance in planning/ process of CF particularly OPs and adaptation

The key informant interviews are the most important part of the study method as it is necessary not only to triangulate information gathered during group meetings and from FUG records with their own views, but also to gain some value based judgments on the costs and benefits of the project process. The key informants list is given in Annex IV.

The key informants were selected on the basis of wealth rank category and gender as well as issue based key informants (particularly where there has been a conflict. In some households both men and women members were interviewed at the same time although the only the name of the household head is given in the list in Annex IV. Discussions were held with a total of 134 participants and informants, out of which 57 were women and 27 were from poor and/or women headed households. Very often men would tend to comment on wider processes or issues throughout the group, whereas women were able to focus more on household and livelihoods issues. Figure 2.1 below shows the different categories of key informant interviewed.

**Figure 2.1: Representation of different categories in key informant interviews in study site**

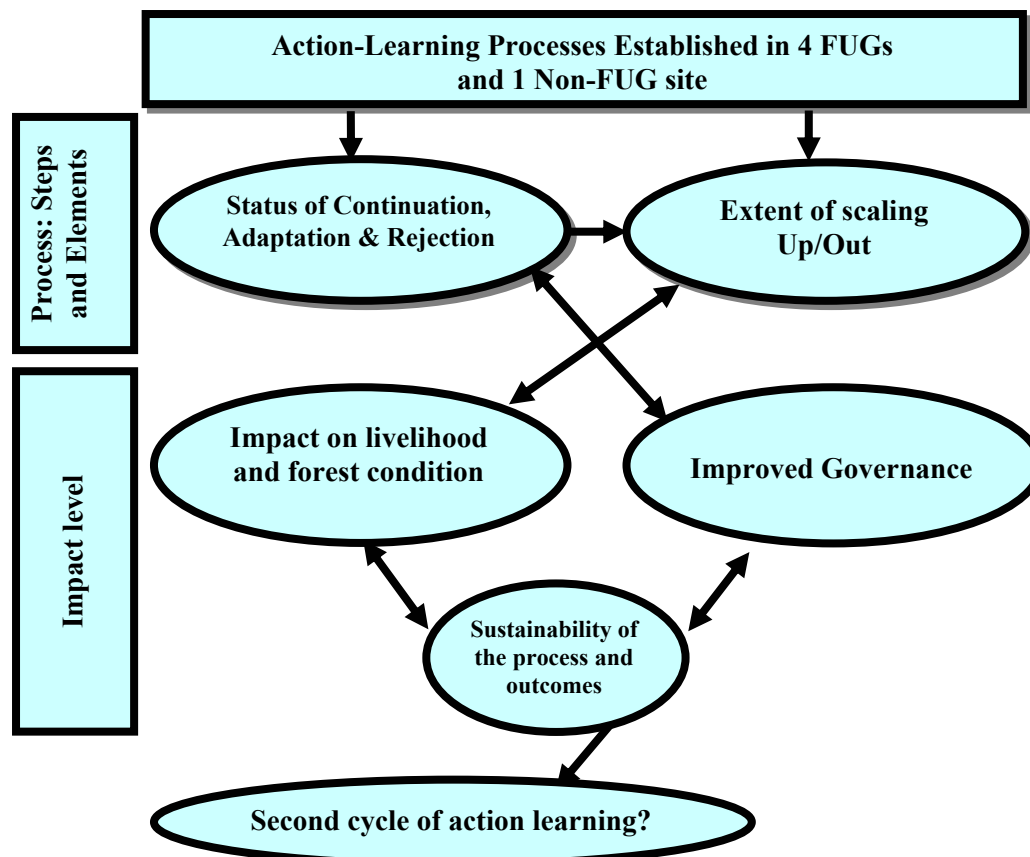


### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. Outline

There are five key areas of findings (see Figure 1.3). We begin with presenting evidence of **continuation, adaptation and non-adoption** of various steps and elements in the action-learning process in the five groups and Kushmisera Range Post that had participated in the research process. For those steps and elements continued and adapted until the time of this study, we also look for evidence of **scaling out and up** of the process or any steps/elements of it outside these institutions. We then analyse the contribution of the process to improved governance (institutional impact) of the five groups based on evidence relating to four key aspects of **governance** - participation, democratisation, transparency, accountability and responsiveness. We then analyse the contribution to **livelihoods** in terms of five capital assets at households as well as community level resulting directly from continued adoption and adaptation of the process steps/elements as well as through their effect on FUG level governance. An analysis of the process **sustainability** is done based on the perceived costs and benefits of the process in a given socio-political context. Finally **opportunities** are identified to enhance sustainability and quality of the on-going process in the site as well as opportunities for **replication** in other areas.

Figure 3.1 Framework for analysis



The various steps and elements of the action learning process are designed to improve awareness and communication amongst forest users, to facilitate negotiation processes and promote learning, all of which are the key factors affecting active resource management, livelihoods and FUG governance.

### 3.2. Continuation, adaptation or non-adoption of action-learning process, steps and elements

As already mentioned in section 1.1.3, the project research processes undertaken in each site were bound by the time limitations of the project itself. One key objective of the follow-up was to find out what has been continued or adapted of the field process (represented in figure 1.2) in the absence of facilitation, compensatory payments and the time limitations set by the project. From this analysis it will then be possible to identify the elements of the process (as described in section 1.2.2) that can be continued unsupported through adaptation of the steps, and those elements and steps that need further support.

**Table 1: Summary of status of continuation, adaptation and non-adoption of action learning steps and elements in the five sites**

Steps/elements	Pallo Pakha	Bhane	Jana Chetana	Sirupata	Jyamire
<b>1.Tole meetings</b>	Some continuation	Some continuation Adapted; in assembly meeting	Continued and adapted as autonomous decision making body at tole level	Continued up to insurgency	Continued and adapted to address other livelihoods issues
<b>Tole representatives</b>	Continued; Adapted; facilitating communication through HH visits	Continued; Adapted; some have become FUGC members	Continued; reelected and act as tole coordinators	Continued; not very active	Continued; represented in CC meetings
<b>Monitoring mechanism</b>	Continued; evaluation committee Various monitoring committees	Continued; monitoring committees	Continued; monitoring committee adapted to monitor tole level meetings	Continued; monitoring committee	Continued; Monitoring committee
<b>Record/document management system</b>	Continued; record are well documented	Continued; records are farley documented	Continued; adaptation-Record are kept at HH level as well	Continued; Few records are kept but not all	Non-adoption; no need of keeping details records
<b>Forest product demand analysis</b>	Continued; demand data collected annually	Continued; collected only one time	Continued and adapted; data collected annually and kept in HH and Toles as well	Non-adoption; little resources to fulfill the demand of users	Continued; once collected data
<b>Household contribution analysis</b>	Continued; records at FUG level – contributed about 25 days (including	Continued; records are kept at Tole level- 15 days contribution	Continued and adapted; records are kept at individual HH level-	Continued; contributed in plantation-but no records 6 days	Continued; contributed 5 days in harvesting including meetings



	school building)	to forest management and harvesting including tole and assembly meetings	contributed 16 days in forest management, harvesting and nursery establishment including meetings	including meetings and assemblies	
<b>Forest product distribution and fund mobilization</b>	Continued and adapted; auction of forest product to raise fund. Fund mobilized	Continued; distributed equally but proposed to collect fees in two category	Continued; distributed forest product considering the family size	Non-adoption; once distributed the forest product but conflict arise. No fund mobilized	Continued with adaptation; forest product distributed in lottery basis. Priority was given to lowest wealth category
<b>FUG plan and decision</b>	Continued; implemented and monitored	Continued; implemented monitored	Continued and adapted; implemented by Toles	Non-adoption; no plan implemented (interrupted due to conflict)	Continued; some implemented and some still going on
<b>Joint meeting of Tole reps and FUGC</b>	Continued; some representatives come to the FUGC meetings	Continued; meeting held prior to assembly meetings	Continued and adapted to in electing new Tole reps and FUGC members of the respective Tole	Non-adoption; no meeting held after first year	Continued; most are CC members
<b>Learning and research questions</b>	Continued with adaptation to collect new issues from Tole reps	Continued with adaptation to collect new issues from Tole reps	Continued with adaptation; Tole raises the new issues and FUGC decide to experiment on it –nursery establishment	Continued; new committee formed to settle the conflict raised	Continued; looking how the group can get recognition of FUG
<b>On going identification of issues and opportunities</b>	Continued; a separate committee formed to search opportunities	Continued; slowly-chairperson is responsible	Continued; a sub committee led by secretary	Non-adoption	Continued; linking FUGs to other village level groups
<b>Wealth rank</b>	Continued	Continued	Continued	Non-adoption	Continued; but still need to keep records
<b>Sample plot</b>	Continued; going to establish by	Non-adoption; no help received	Continued	Non-adoption	Non-adoption

	2003	from RP			
<b>Joint forest visit</b>	Continued	Continued	Continued with adaptation; Tolewise visit every month	Non-adoption	Continued
<b>Joint meeting with RP/RP level FECOFUN</b>	Continued; less frequency after emergency	Continued; less frequency after emergency	Continued; less frequency after emergency	Continued	Non-adoption; no one from RP consults
<b>Analysis of issue based data and presentation in assembly</b>	Continued	Adapted; Tole meet separately and presents	Adapted; Toles come with agenda	Non-adoption; conflicts	Continued

The details of the status of continuation, adaptation and non-adoption of the action learning steps and elements is discussed below:

### 3.2.1. Tole meeting

A key rationale for tole meetings is to institutionalize communication centres that the forest users themselves can identify with. Across all the sites there has been some continuation of this step to varying degrees. It is clear that tole meetings have helped the groups to reduce overall transaction costs in communication and to a certain extent in the decision-making processes.

However, in all the sites the state of emergency made it difficult to hold such meetings on a regular basis.

**Table 3.1: Number of tole meetings held in each site**

	Tole meetings (No. of toles x No. of meetings)				
	Pallo Pakho	Bhane	Jana Chetana	Sirupata	Jyamire
Prior to project	-	-	-	-	-
After	6 x 4	4 x 4	8 x 12/year	6 x 2	4 x 4

Tole meetings have generally been held in the morning or evening to enable women and single-headed households to attend.

In Pallo Pakha some tole meetings have been held on an irregular basis. There is a general impression amongst informants that this has been useful in communicating executive decisions such as for the re-selection of tole representatives, firewood harvesting and distribution, trail construction and maintenance amriso planting activities. It appears that the role of tole representatives has become more prominent in this respect and they have been increasingly communicating through household visits. However, the degree to which either tole meetings or tole representatives have been used to communicate household information up to the decision-making level is less clear. One interviewee from one of the poorer families (Sita Devi Sharma) has said that although she cannot meet her requirements for firewood she feels that there is still no opportunity for her to voice her concern.

In Jana Chetana tole meetings have been held every month in 7 out of the 8 toles in the group. The toles have also been given increased autonomy for mobilizing funds within them.

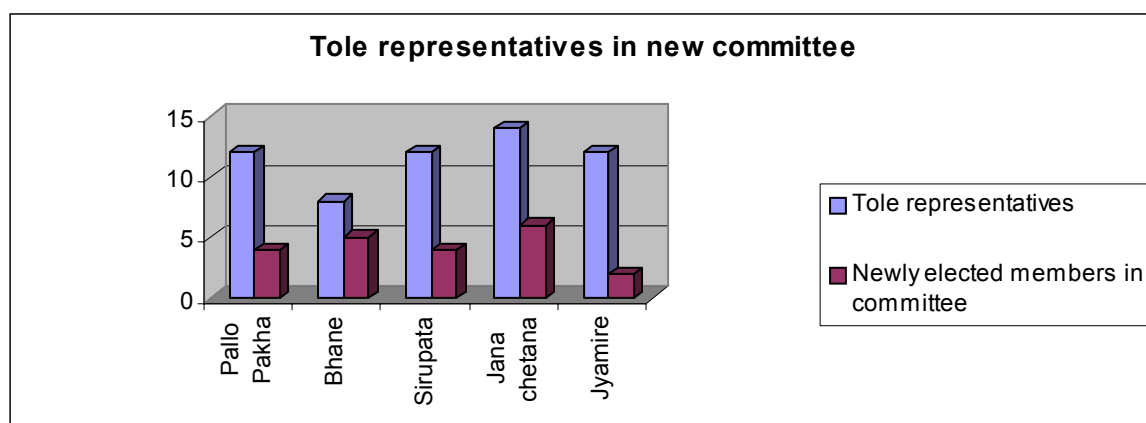
Similar to Pallo Pakho, Bhane FUG members have not held separate tole meetings on a regular basis, but have focused on tole representatives as a means of communication through household visits. However, they have been holding separate tole level meetings during the assembly in order to prepare tole level agendas. These are then put to the whole assembly for decision-making. In this respect there has been some increase in access to decision-making for individual households. The FUGC chairman also highlighted their use of tole meetings as an effective means of containing conflict. One such

conflict between the FUGC and another powerful member of the group was managed initially through a respective tole meeting, though eventually they did need to hold an assembly meeting to resolve it.

Sirupata FUG members continued tole meetings for a brief period. However, it appears that on-going disputes over grazing and fund mobilization and the consequent mistrust in the group have resulted in a loss of interest in holding tole meetings.

In Jana Chetana 86% of tole representatives have been replaced by new representatives through tole meetings. Similarly, in Bhane, Pallo Pakha, Sirupata and Jyamire some representatives have changed. In addition, some of the previous tole representatives have subsequently been selected as FUGC members (see figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1: Number of tole representatives elected to the FUGC after the project**



In Janachetana, they made replacement as the part of on-going leadership development process. Also the process of role division, which allows various members to take responsibilities of different activities. Similarly, in other FUG, this replacement in FUGC is an indication of improved knowledge, skills of the representatives. According to the many interviewees, the representatives have now better understanding of issues, problems and relationships within the groups.

### **3.2.2. On-going review, negotiation and development of new proposals**

These process elements broadly correspond to the original research workshops held with tole representatives as described in Figure 1.2, and the subsequent negotiations in toles. The importance of these elements are that they provide thinking space prior to decision-making at the assembly meeting, in contrast to current CF processes where there is no such provision. As a process step, the research workshop was certainly the most costly in terms of the time contributions by the representatives (reflected in the daily allowances). It took 3-5 full days for the workshop in different sites. For obvious reasons, it is clear that no meetings of such scale have been undertaken in any of the sites since the project. However, in describing the different meetings and discussions that have been taking place in the 5 sites, it is possible to identify whether and how these process elements have been continued or discontinued.

As described in tole representative selection in methodology section, tole members selected these tole representatives considering caste, class, ethnicity and geographical locations in representing the interests of all categories including poor and women headed households. Project team reflected to consider the representation of interest category in each subsequent selection and advised tole members to balance the representation. In this sense, tole representatives are representative of whole group.

In all the sites, there have been some meetings between tole representatives and the FUGC. Informants and workshop participants generally perceive that the tole representatives have a distinct advocacy function as compared to the executive function of the FUGC. It is less clear how this works in practice.

The degree of involvement of the tole representatives in these joint meetings varies considerably between sites. In Pallo Pakho and Sirupata, for example, very often only a few tole representatives go to sit in a FUGC meeting as observers or to make a few comments. In Pallo Pakho, one informant said that most major decisions are still made at the FUGC meetings that the representatives then simply communicate these to the toles.

In Bhane, however, meetings between representatives and the FUGC have been called prior to FUG assemblies to prepare proposals for discussion. In Jyamire, as a non-FUG, many of the CC members are also tole representatives and they have been meeting every month. In this situation the CC have very few executive powers any way and so much of the discussion is on tole level and conflict issues.

### 3.2.2.1. Identification of critical constraints and on-going negotiation

The identification of critical constraints was highlighted by some informants and workshop participants in the previous project as an important element in the earlier research processes (R7514) in Bhane and Jyamire. Principally it provided the representatives with an opportunity to develop a model of the group and discuss conflicts (particularly hidden conflicts) openly and with a positive view towards finding solutions. In these instances decisions were made to put transparent mechanisms in place for negotiation and to explore possible compromises (as described in section 5.2.2.3 below).

Since then, in Bhane most conflicts have been rather more idiosyncratic in nature because of the traditional feudal relations and competitiveness among the elite of the villages. In a situation of open discussion about the relationship, it appeared manageable through tole level discussions and thus this element does not appear to have been repeated. In Jyamire, however, having established a more transparent means of negotiation (through tole meetings and tole representatives meetings), the issue of whether or not to form a FUG has been identified as a critical issue.

This element has been largely absent from the processes in the other sites, though in Sirupata there have been discussions at the tole level in which the need to expand their FUG to cover other forest areas has been identified as a critical issue, as their plantation area is unlikely to yield significant benefits.

### 3.2.2.2. Continued negotiation

As mentioned above, many issues raised in the previous workshops were decided upon by establishing transparent means of on-going negotiation and adjustment. A clear and important example of this is the continued discourse on equity issues. In each site there is a realization that even though equity can be understood as a concept, there is no single and perfect model of equity that can be established within the groups. Rather the concept should be the focal point of continuous negotiation and adjustment.

In Bhane there had been lengthy discussions in tole and assembly meetings as to how to distribute firewood amongst different wealth categories, as well as possible discounts (see Box 1 below). However, despite deciding eventually to distribute firewood equally, informants in the lowest wealth category, as well as the chairman, stated that they were satisfied that options remained open for discussion.

#### Box 1

In Bhane FUG a proposal had been drawn up by tole representatives to distribute firewood to households falling in the poorest category at a 50% discounted rate (50 NRs for 25 bharis).

At the assembly prior to harvesting time, members of the lowest wealth category decided against having a discount. Two of these members (Karna B Thapa and Dharma Raj Thapa) gave a reason that they were wary of taking favours from elite members of the group as they may decide in later years to remove their rights to firewood, or reduce their benefits in other areas. In addition, they said that they appreciated that the group was in its early stages of development, as well as lacking in funds, and so group unity was more important. They said that the 100 NRs rate was affordable as it is lower than the daily labour rate (also, the equivalent cost on the market would have been 1750 NRs).

Similarly, the use of wealth rank categories has stimulated discussion in all sites and has been used as a basis for the distribution of various benefits (such as income generation and scholarship programmes – see section 3.4). In Jana Chetana, Bhane and Jyamire the distribution of funds for credit programmes has been discussed at the tole level. In Bhane, eligible members of the lowest wealth rank discuss between themselves and other members of the tole as to who amongst them is in most need of or would benefit more from receiving credit.

In Jyamire, the issue of rights to drive cattle and goats through the forest had been managed by opening up one block of the forest for access and ensuring regular monitoring of different blocks to assess the impact on regeneration. Similarly, in managing boundary conflicts with members who have private forest land adjacent to the ward forest, these members have been going to these areas with the tole representatives to negotiate the boundary.

In Pallo Pakho, where they have been running a goat husbandry programme, there have been continued discussions on how to deal with problems in paying the loans if the goat dies or does not produce kids. To address this issue, they have decided some criteria to assess whether or not the recipient has made any profit from the goat raising.

### 3.2.3. Identifying options to address the issues

It is clear that in all sites there is efforts underway to identify new options to address the group level issues, though, again, the routes through which these options are explored vary.

In Jana Chetana, new ideas are identified and discussed in tole meetings and various viable options are recommended to the tole representative and FUGC members. Similarly new decisions and opportunities explored by FUGC and its members are discussed in the meeting. In this way, methods of forest product distribution, NTFP management and harvesting, finding outside support in training and income generating activities (IGAs) are being explored as the opportunities. Similar activities are taking place in Bhane.

In Pallo Pakho, a committee has recently been formed to identify issues and opportunities for various community development initiatives e.g. saving and credit schemes, a new dairy cooperative, the management of the FUG school, sewing, bee keeping, vegetable cultivation, human resource development through training and exposure visits. Also, in response to discussions during the project research workshop in which the need to improve private tree resources was raised, members of Pallo Pakho later decided to start thinning and pruning their private trees.

In Jyamire, previous work on action learning helped to generate ideas for integrating other community development initiatives with the conservation committee. It is an influence of R-7514 project.

### 3.2.4. FUG plan and decisions

All of the groups have increased the number of assemblies (FUG meeting for decision making) held since the project, although the state of emergency throughout 2002 made this very difficult (see table 3.2 below). This has meant that there has been a delay in drawing up new action plans. However, in all sites apart from Sirupata the groups have been able complete their previous action plans (see Annex VI). FUG plans and decisions are now primarily based on learning by doing principle. Regular monitoring, reflection at various level and feedback mechanism has improved the planning process and implementation procedures.

**Table 3.2: Number of assemblies (FUG meetings for decision making) held in each sites**

	No. of assemblies held in 5 sites (annually)				
	Pallo Pakho	Jana Chetana	Bhane	Sirupata	Jyamire
Before the project	2	2	2	-	-
After the project	3	3	3	1	1

The table above indicates the increased number of FUG meetings in each site. Previously in PalloPakho, janachetana and Bhane, they were holding such meetings twice a year, however it was held officially to fulfil the requirement of DFO rather for group planning or decision-making. After project intervention, there not only increased number of assembly meetings but also improved the quality of meetings in terms of participation of men and women, proposals for decision and division of role and responsibilities among the members.

### **3.2.5. Information gathering and analysis**

At the end of the previous field research each group apart from Jyamire had made plans to gather standard information sets that would assist them investigating various issues that had been raised in the research process. These were:

Wealth ranking information

Forest product demand analysis

Forest sample and demonstration plots

These sets of information were identified very necessary as to develop plans for distribution of forest products, develop strategies for resource flow (communal as well as private sources) and estimate forest product harvesting in a sustainable basis. A simple method of gathering this information was also discussed in each site.

#### **3.2.5.1. Wealth Ranking**

All the groups have undertaken wealth ranking through tole level discussion (having agreed on basic criteria as a whole group). Most of the informants seemed to understand the objectives of the wealth ranking (particularly in the light of discussions on benefit distribution). However, in Bhane for example, some informants said that there was some confusion as to the criteria and their use. Despite this it appears to have engaged most households in discussion and negotiation in tole meetings and a few adjustments were also made in between. In Jyamire they initially (at the end of the previous project) decided that they would not need to do wealth ranking, but rather they could discuss distribution of benefits in tole meetings. However, they later also decided that wealth ranking would be useful to assist them in decision-making.

The information from the wealth ranking has been kept in written records with the FUGC, which may lead to some access difficulties amongst the illiterate members. However, through gathering this information at the tole level (where all the households are familiar with each other), this has meant that most households can remember what rank they and other members are in and the basis on which the group determined ranks. The groups often had to make subsequent adjustments to make the wealth ranks consistent across the different toles, though there was no mention of any major difficulties in achieving this. Practically, once the wealth rank information is discussed and documented at tole level, tole representatives of the various toles seat together and prepare a comprehensive list of whole FUG members, which then discussed with FUGC and tole members to finalise.

#### **3.2.5.2. Forest product demand analysis**

As with the wealth ranking information, forest product demand information has been gathered through tole meetings in Pallo Pakho, Jana Chetana and Bhane FUGs. In Sirupata, although the representatives appreciated the potential use of forest product demand information it was not carried out because of the limited potential of their current plantation area. Similarly in Jyamire they decided not spend time doing this as they are not yet legally registered with the DFO as an FUG and therefore are not authorized to make any plans for green wood and timber harvesting.

In Jana Chetana demand data for various products have been gathered for a second time. During the discussion, they realized the firewood is not enough to meet household needs therefore, following tole level discussions on this information it has been proposed that the size of the firewood chattas should be increased.

Pallo Pakha members also used the demand analysis to demonstrate the need to promote private tree management in view of the limited potential of their community forest. Also they have decided to distribute 50 Amriso cuttings to each household for planting on private land to increase private supplies of fodder and firewood as well as broom material.

In Bhane, despite the fact that the information was gathered in tole meetings, it appears that this information has not been accessible to most users, and in particular the illiterate members, as this information has been kept in written records with the FUGC.

### 3.2.5.3. Sample plot for forest resource assessment and management

The use of sample plots was discussed in detail in the previous research workshops, and subsequently was highlighted in the context of various research questions identified at the end of the process. It was hoped that through establishing sample plots the groups would be able to investigate both resource potential (using demonstration plots for different silvicultural treatments) as well as particular issues such as grazing (as in Jyamire and Sirupata where this was a particular conflict issue). At the end of the previous project the Baglung DFO had indicated that assistance could be provided to the case study groups in establishing sample plots, though he was subsequently transferred to another area and so no arrangements could be made. The state of emergency and destruction of the Range Post during the conflict also greatly hampered assistance for this.

In Jana Chetana sample and demonstration plots were established during the research workshop and experimentation has continued (see Box 2 below), yielding valuable information for their annual harvesting. In Pallo Pakha sample plots were very recently established (in March 2003) having approached the DFO/RP for technical assistance.

Sample plots have not been established in the other sites although there is still interest in doing so.

#### Box 2

The Jana Chetana monitoring sub committee has been visiting demonstration plots established during the previous project with the aim of comparing different harvesting regimes. In one plot the Rakchan trees were pruned according to the prescription of the ranger (1/3 of lower branches on sapling, 1/2 on pole size and 2/3 on full grown trees). They found that this prescription was not suitable for Rakchan, and the subsequent growth was not as vigorous as in the adjacent plot with their indigenous harvesting regime (2/3 from pole stage upwards).

In addition a NTFP nursery has been established Jana Chetana community forest to raise awareness of various species within the forest as well as to investigate potentials for these species. The idea of establishing NTFP nursery was discussed in previous workshop and demanded support from DFO, Baglung. It is believed that if all the group members are engaged in various activities related to nursery, this will raise awareness about the NTFPs and further commitment to take issues forwards, among the members of the FUG.

### 3.2.5.4. Other information gathering and monitoring activities

In general there have been improvements in record-keeping of FUG income and expenses, in response to demands from the group for greater transparency. During the discussion, many tole members expressed that most of the group members other than FUGC do not have any idea of income and expenditure, product demand and supply, and other incoming and out going information. At the end of the previous project period Jyamire CC had also started to keep records where before there were none (and in fact most of these funds had been distributed to elite households as interest free loans). In all the sites members have been updated at varying intervals on their fund status in assembly meetings (though as already mentioned there is some mistrust in Sirupata in this respect).

Another area in which record keeping has improved is household contributions to meetings and FUG activities. This was highlighted in all sites (apart from Jyamire) during the previous project as an important means of analyzing household costs alongside the benefits arising from the FUG. Jana Chetana FUG has established a system of record keeping at the household level, which is then discussed at tole meetings. In the other sites, however, it is not clear as to how much interest has been taken in analyzing these records.

Alongside record keeping all the groups have established systems of regular forest visits for general observations and reporting of qualitative information on forest condition. In Bhane, for example, one informant said that most of the FUG members walk up and down through the forest every day and yet, prior to the project most people would rarely ever leave the path and observed forest condition



but now they have arranged regular small group to visit forest in rotation and report to tole members and FUGC.

In Jana Chetana forest visits are arranged by individual toles on a monthly rotation. In Jyamire, as mentioned above, CC members and tole representatives have been regularly visiting the forest to discuss boundary issues. In Pallo Pakha a forest monitoring sub-committee has been established. However, there is no such practice in Sirupata.

In Pallo Pakho, Jana Chetana and Bhane various systems have established for monitoring the implementation of different activities. Most of these involve the temporary formation of monitoring committees (see Box 3 below). In Pallo Pakho and Jana Chetana the responsibilities for the monitoring of most activities undertaken at the tole level are given to tole members themselves. This monitoring information is then fed back to the FUG records.

### **Box 3**

There are six separate sub committees in Pallo Pakha FUG namely an overall monitoring committee, evaluation committee for awards and fines, sub committee for income generation, communication committee for establishing relationships with other organisations, forest conservation committee and school management committee. Altogether 39 out of 84 members are engaged in different sub committees including FUGC and advisory committee.

#### **3.2.6. Joint meeting with RP/RP level FECOFUN**

In all sites (including Jyamire), representatives expressed commitment to holding regular interactions with RP and RP level FECOFUN (through 4 monthly meetings). However, difficulties during the state of emergency including the destruction of the Range Post office and all the documents inside have meant that these meetings have been impossible. Most of the Forest Guards have had to operate from the office in Baglung and have not been able to go to field on a regular basis. However the RP and RP level FECOFUN were able to jointly organise some meetings to resolve boundary conflicts in Sota Dhurseni, Tar and Gaderi Dhaireni FUGs in Binamare VDC (neighbouring Kushmisera VDC).

#### **3.2.7. Summary**

Although there is considerable variation between the sites, it appears there has been continuation of certain steps in the process in all sites. Most prominent among these steps have been the continuation of tole meetings, the use of tole representatives, the allocation of monitoring responsibilities throughout the group in various monitoring committees and information gathering. The actual uses for the tole meetings and tole representatives has varied within and between sites, and in some cases, such as in Pallo Pakho, they are being used more for communication. However, there is evidence in most sites that on-going review and negotiation processes are continuing through tole meetings and tole representatives. In particular, in Jana Chetana the tole meetings are being used for generating new ideas and options to address the emerging issues.

### **3.3. Uptake of the monitoring process (Scaling out and up)**

The project team has focused on developing planning processes within the confines of five case study sites and their interface with the RP and RP level FECOFUN. As part of the follow-up study it is important to assess the impact that this project has had on the areas surrounding the case study sites as well as the degree to which other institutions in the local area facilitated other groups in different elements of the process. This analysis can provide insights not only as to the value of certain elements of the process but also as to how readily certain elements may be taken without facilitation.

**Table 3.1: Scaling out and up of the process**

<b>Process, steps and elements</b>	<b>Scaling out</b>	<b>Scaling up</b>
<b>Action learning process</b>	Adaptation of key steps of monitoring process by Dairy Milk Production Cooperatives, Drinking Water Group, Small Hydro Power and Rural Electrification Committee and nearby FUGs and communities	Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP) and FECOFUN (RP Level and District Level) have recognized the value of the steps DFO/RP –issued a circular recommending that other RPs adapt the self monitoring system Neighboring FUG (Dhuseni)- have planned to adopt methods during reformulation Local field groups from the District Family Planning Office- having accordingly developed monitoring and reflective processes ForestAction is testing the processes in other forest user groups
<b>Tole level meeting</b>	Adopted by Vrikuti Mother Group, Seed Producing Farmers’ Group, Women Health Group and Farmer Groups (DYC supported)	All the above recognize the importance of this step RP have been holding tole meetings during formation
<b>Selection of Tole representatives</b>	Adapted in the selection processes for Ward Committee, School Management Committee, Drinking Water Management Committee and neighbouring FUG (Sarkuwa VDC)	Adapted by DFO/RP- for the selection of FUGC members during formation
<b>Forest visit and exposure</b>	Adapted by Soil Conservation Group (land slide and flood control) for Rural Energy Development Project	RP level FECOFUN- recognize importance for resolving boundary conflicts
<b>Identification of issues and analysis for presentation in assembly meeting</b>	Adapted by neighbouring FUGs (e.g. Gaja Deurali and Jana Sewa FUG)	DFO/RP and RP level FECOFUN – highlight this as an important step

For the purpose of this study, potential actors for scaling out included neighbouring FUGs, non-FUG communities and other local institutions (NGOs and CBOs) and potential institutions for scaling up were the DFO (RP), Donor Funded Field Projects, NGOs such as FECOFUN and local government. The scaling out effects of the process is encouraging. The various steps of the process followed in the research site have been adapted in various neighbouring FUGs as well as community-based organizations.

ForestAction, the active partner of the research project carried out other scaling out activities, which are as follows:

- National level training on conscious learning and self-monitoring building on the experience of this and other related research experiences (see Brochure of the training attached)
- Publication of an article in Nepal Journal widely distributed in Nepal
- Adaptive application of the methods in Nawalparasi in integrating biodiversity concerns with livelihoods

- Sharing and presentation in various national and international forums as such as CIFOR, ICIMOD etc. (move this to discussion section not appropriate here!)
- Providing services to other projects (such as USAID supported The Asia Foundation Project on strengthening local community federations)

### **3.3.1. Action-learning process**

The follow-up study found some encouraging evidence of scaling out and scaling up of the action-learning process as a whole, as developed by the research project.

Within the process, tole level meetings, the election of tole representatives for effective communication and mobilization and the identification of issues and critical inquiry are major steps and elements that have been adopted by various village level groups including neighbouring FUGs. Examples of these are some FUGs neighbouring Jana Chetana (Gaja Deurali, Janasewa and Kalleri Rayadanda) that have begun to adopt this process following a visit of the FUG members to Jana Chetana FUG. Similarly, members of Painyu Thanthap wards 6,7 and 9 neighbouring or nearby villages to Bhane FUG have had discussions with Bhane FUGC members, though as yet it seems that they wish wait and see how Bhane progresses. Certainly the vice-chairman of Painyu Thanthap VDC has expressed interest in assisting further interactions.

As regards the scaling up of the process, the Baglung District Forest Office has recently issued a circular to RPs across the district recommending the use of tole meetings and tole representatives as well as other components such as wealth ranking, the gathering of forest product demand and supply information in FUG formation and post-formation support. RP staffs have shared this process with more than 20 FUGs around the RP area. RP staff and the RP level FECOFUN committee have held interactions with other institutions such as VDCs, HIMWANTI, village level groups of the PDDP and a pro-poor governance programme run by DYC (a local NGO).

Outside of the district various other projects such as Nepal-Swiss Community Forest Project, Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project, the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation Monitoring Division and Churia Community Forest Project (GTZ) have shown interest in scaling up the process (and are continuing discussions with ForestAction in this respect). ForestAction itself has been testing the methodologies with another forest user group, irrigation user group and women's group in Siraha District (in the Terai region). It has also developed a training package for field level project staff and supporting institutions.

### **3.3.2. Tole level meeting and selection of tole representatives**

Tole level meetings and the selection of tole representatives have been the most widely scaled out element of the process. Various community groups involved in non-forestry activities have been adopting tole level meetings such as the Virkuti Ama Samuha (Mother's Group), a Dairy Production Cooperative in Pallo Pakha, a drinking water committee in Bhane and a village electrification committee in Jyamire.

The DFO and RP have highlighted the value of tole meetings in raising common issues, building on existing communication networks and for working towards consensus on plans and their implementation. Tole meetings have also been adopted by the RP level FECOFUN committee for facilitating conflict resolution in, for example, Sota Dhurseni FUG.

### **3.3.3. Monitoring committees**

One FUG (Sota Dhurseni) has started to use monitoring committees for various activities in the group. Along with circular to follow various steps of action learning while supporting FUG in annual planning, DFO/RP staffs have also recommended the establishment of monitoring sub-committees as a means of effective information gathering and documentation.

### 3.4. Governance reform

As outlined in section 1.1.1, the rationale for the previous project drew on two main research areas, namely the need for improved governance in common forest management and the need to develop monitoring processes as crucial links in group action and learning. These two areas are in fact mutually dependent. Group action learning requires wider **participation** in negotiation. It requires a power shift to a broader base (as **democratisation**) so that members can engage in critical inquiry and review and seek greater equity in benefit distribution. It requires an increased **responsiveness** of those with authority to carry out executive functions. It also requires **accountability** amongst those with responsibilities to undertake particular activities or roles in order to develop mutual trust. In turn, governance also requires improved communication, mutually acceptable means of investigating non-consensual issues and means of monitoring the implementation of decisions.

The follow-up study aimed to address aspects of governance at the FUG level though the trends in governance at the RP level could not be considered in the same depth. Principally this was because the RP is largely constrained by vertical linkages with the DFO. Similarly, governance changes in the RP level FECOFUN committee were not studied in depth.

#### 3.4.1. Participation

Informants and follow up workshop participants in all sites have highlighted tole meetings as a major step in removing some of the time costs of participation as well as creating more opportunities for members to engage in negotiation. In addition individual households can perceive greater benefits from participation (as described in section 3.5).

Since the project groups in all the sites have established sub-committees in response to discussions on the need to spread responsibilities throughout the group, as well as to establish monitoring committees. Table 3.2 below shows the percentage of households that are currently involved in these committees.

**Table 3.2: Household involvement in sub-committees**

HHs involved in different sub-committees (% of total HH)				
Pallo Pakho	Jana Chetana	Bhane	Sirupata	Jyamire
46%	30%	45%	30%	35%

In Bhane, Jana Chetana and Jyamire informants and workshop participants have mentioned that participation in assemblies by both men and women has increased significantly. Table 3.4 below shows the trends in participation in assemblies in Bhane since the project (prior to the project there had been no assemblies held for 5 years).

**Table 3.3: Trends in member participation in Bhane FUG assembly (calculated from average)**

Year	Assembly held	Participation		
		FUGC	Male	Female
00-01	1	7	35	7
01-02	5	8	25	13
02-03	4	9	28	14

As the above table illustrates, the participation of women has increased by 100 % between 2000/2001 (BS 2057) and 2002/2003 (BS 2059).

#### 3.4.2. Democratisation

The project sought to address the need for improved democratic functioning by promoting critical inquiry and media for negotiation at the group level, creating an advocacy function for tole

representatives and increasing the spread of responsibility throughout the group (and the potential for leadership across the group).

As discussed in section 3.2, there are still some media in place for critical inquiry, negotiation and advocacy, particularly in Jana Chetana, Bhane and Jyamire. In Jana Chetana and Bhane the decentralisation of budgets to the tole level has given greater access to decision making for individual households.

The confinement of leadership potential to a small group of elite members (though they may have rivalries between them) has been a key constraint to democratisation in the local community forestry context (as in other sectors). In all the sites there is evidence that the capacity for leadership across the groups has spread through distributing responsibilities (such as through membership of various committees as mentioned above). This holds some potential for promoting a merit driven leadership.

### **3.4.3. Responsiveness**

It would appear that through the medium of tole meetings and the use of tole representatives the potential channels for communication of demand from the household level to the leadership has increased.

These channels have increased in Bhane where tole representatives are doing household visits and holding joint meetings with the FUGC, as well as through holding separate tole meetings in assemblies. Through these channels it has been possible for individual households to communicate to the decision making process in forest product distribution (see Box 1 above), as well as in distributing funds for credit schemes where poorer households have been actively involved in negotiation. Another such example of this has been the response to a specific demand for extra wood for charcoal made by a kami household member. Similarly in Jana Chetana, as mentioned in section 5.2, much of the innovation and generation of new ideas has been arising from tole meetings. In Pallo Pakho it is less clear how the leadership is responding to the demand of members. On the one hand the FUGC had responded to an idea for establishing a dairy co-operative, though in another example one informant (Sita Devi Sharma) has been unable to express her demand for more firewood and lowering of timber prices. It is because she could not attend assembly meetings and could not communicate her demand through tole representatives

In this respect, despite the potential channels for demand, it is less certain how the leadership will respond or indeed what their motives would be to respond. However, as mentioned in the section above, through this action learning process it is clear that the capacity of the wider group members to take on leadership roles is increasing.

The joint learning process between RP staff and FUGs have led to the latter becoming more responsive to FUG demands for services, though this has been constrained to some extent by the state of emergency.

### **3.4.4. Accountability**

Realistically, in the current environment FUGCs are still more accountable to the DFO than to their own users (particularly in forest protection and reporting). However, the presence of tole representatives and various sub-committees has helped to make accountability more dynamic within the group. Also, as described in section 3.2, record keeping has been improved and in some cases decentralised to the tole and individual household level (as in Jana Chetana).

A summary of the status of improved governance is given in annex: V and IX

### 3.5. Livelihood impacts

This section will describe the evidence of potential contributions that can be made by the action learning process to the improvement of livelihoods, focusing on five main forms of livelihood capital (namely natural, financial, human, social and physical capital). However, in a short period of time it is difficult to measure all direct or indirect impacts, furthermore to establish clear cause and effect linkages. Rather, this section draws on the evidence presented by activities that have been generated by the process and their potential for livelihood improvement, and the perceptions of individual informants as to the costs and benefits of the process.

**Table 3.4 Summary status of impact on livelihoods and forest condition**

<b>Capital Assets</b>	<b>Pallo Pakho</b>	<b>Bhane</b>	<b>Janachetana</b>	<b>Sirupata</b>	<b>Jyamire</b>
<b>Natural capital</b>	Increased forest products and active in forest mgt.	Increased in quantity of forest products and active in forest mgt.	Increased in quantity of forest products and active in forest mgt.	Decreased, and passive forest mgt.	Increased forest product (e.g. grass) and passive forest mgt.
<b>Financial capital</b>	Increased fund; mobilized the fund to all households and some fund with giving priority to poor class	Increased fund and it mobilized with giving priority to poor class	Increased fund and mobilized with giving priority to poor class	Static and used by key late FUGC officials	Increased fund and provided who requested fund
<b>Human capital</b>	Increased; about 46% involved in various sub committees and 50% of users have changed to participate in exposure visit, w/s and few in forest mgt. training	Increased; about 30% involved in various sub committees and 50% of users have participated in w/s and few in forest mgt. training	Increased; 45% involved in various sub committees about 35% of users participated in w/s and few in forest mgt. and NTFP trainings	Increased; about 30% involved in various sub committees and about 20% of users participated in w/s and few in forest mgt.	Increased; about 35% involved in various sub committees and 25% of users participated in w/s
<b>Social capital</b>	Increased; able to build linkage with GOs, NGOs, Projects, FECOFUN and received various supports	Increased; able to build linkage with GOs, and received little supports	Increased; able to build linkage with GOs, Projects, NGOs, FECOFUN, VDC/DDC and received various supports	Increased- at once time but in irregular	Increased- at once time
<b>Physical capital</b>	Increased; constructed FUG office building	Increased; started up by drinking water, electrification and toilet construction scheme	Increased; re-constructed FUG office building and toilet construction	Not increased	Not increased

There is an increased trend in all the form of livelihood capitals in all sites however the trend varies among the FUGs. Except in Sirupata FUG, physical condition of the forests, fund mobilization, group activities and networking with other institutions have been increased significantly. The level of awareness, human resource and community development initiatives are progressively achieving.

### 3.5.1. Natural capital

There does appear to be a trend towards more active forest management and increased forest product supply that can be attributable to the project process, though this varies across the sites.

Although most groups have established various means of monitoring forest condition (either through sample plots or observation), it is difficult to measure improvements in the forest condition within an 18 month period. However, since Bhane have begun biannual clearing of weeds (hade unyu, a creeping fern) there has been visible improvement in regeneration from seedling to sapling stage (particularly of katus). Similarly, in Jyamire, following a compromise over the issue of grazing, there has also been an improvement in regeneration all the blocks save the one block left open for grazing. The problem still remains as to how to remove dead and dying trees that account for most of the forest coverage in Jyamire. Following discussions during the project, they do have in mind to set up plots to investigate appropriate thinning regimes that will not cause soil erosion problems, but until they form a FUG they will not have the authority to undertake this.

Through regular monitoring of their forests, groups have been gathering information on species diversity. This information has provided opportunities for members to discuss their interests in different species. In Jana Chetana the group has been raising awareness of medicinal plants within the forest (as well as establishing a nursery). In Sirupata, following the research project, members decided to make records of the different species appearing as natural regeneration, ultimately wishing to promote natural regeneration in favour of the sallo plantation. Discussions have also been underway between Pallo Pakho and Bhane members who have recognised the need for exchange of sal (from Pallo Pakho) and chilaune (from Bhane) between the groups. Sal is used for cross beams, window frames and doors and chilaune is used for poles and agricultural implements.

In all sites apart from Sirupata there has been an increase in the supply of some or all forest product types. Sirupata members are currently struggling to find ways of expanding their FUG to cover other forest areas (in particular the neighbouring Kamere Pakho which is under CC management) as their plantation area does not have any significant potential for forest product supply.

Table 3.5 below shows the trends in firewood supply in each site.

**Table 3.5: Average supply of firewood in each site**

Supply of firewood (per household)					
	Pallo Pakho	Jana Chetana	Bhane	Sirupata	Jyamire
Firewood Before	1 Chatta free	1 chatta@NRs.10	NRs100/5 bhari	×	Dry wood collected individually
After	2 Chatta free	1chatta@NRs.10	NRs 50/25-30 bhari	×	Dry wood collected collectively

Source: Record books of FUGs

In Bhane the supply has increased 5 fold as the group have begun to harvest green wood (see Box 4 below). Currently households receive between 3-4 months supply of firewood in a year at less than 3 percent of the market price. In the other sites there has been no change as yet, though, crucially, Pallo Pakho and Jana Chetana are both investigating options for more intensive pruning (through demonstration plots; see Box 2 above).

## Box 4

Five years before the project Bhane FUGC members made a decision that half of the firewood harvested from the forest should be kept for the FUGC themselves to sell for private profit (as a ghude bag or special privilege for the officials) and the remainder would then be sold to the group. This subsequently led to a conflict between the FUGC and the rest of the group and as a result no silvicultural or other activities were undertaken for five years. After the project the group was able to reach a consensus that through a commitment to equity they needed to actively manage the forest and begin harvesting. They harvested half of the 1st block and weeded the whole forest area (8 ha) by allocating responsibilities for different areas to different toles. According household interviewees their household supply of firewood from the forest increased 5 fold from the previous year (as they used to gather dry wood only). According to the FUG members they could get increased supply of forest products partly because it was under harvest for long time and partly the proper harvesting of the forest product. Most of the members expressed their happiness that this has contributed to greater trust within the group in future.

The supply of timber has increased in Pallo Pakho and Bhane. In Pallo Pakha most households can now meet their needs for timber from either the community forest or their private trees. One of the objectives outlined in their action plan drawn up at the end of the project was to encourage the FUG members for private tree plantation. Sawn timber (tham) has been distributed to every household in response to concerns that women headed households have difficulties in making arrangements for felling. Agricultural implements (such as ploughs) are distributed as logs to all households on a two year rotation. However, one interviewee had expressed considerable reservations that the FUGC has been sanctioning the felling of large numbers of sal trees for sale outside the group to help meet the costs of running the FUG school which is becoming a costly enterprise to run with the limited financial capacity of the villagers.

In Bhane there have been a few problems with timber distribution. In the light of their need to raise FUG funds it had been decided that timber would be auctioned. One informant (Dharma Raj Thapa) from a poorer household said that he has been unable to get any timber because he cannot raise enough money for bidding.

Jyamire users have been able to increase their supply of khar grass following a ban on grazing in these areas and systematic harvesting. In Jana Chetana separate toles have been establishing fodder plantations (e.g. rai khanyu, nimaro) and khar grass cultivation within the forest.

### 3.5.2. Financial capital

#### 3.5.2.1. Fund mobilisation

Following the development of their action plans in the previous project, credit schemes have been established in Pallo Pakha, Jana Chetana and Bhane, on the basis of wealth ranks (as described in section 3.2). A summary of the IGAs for which these funds have been distributed is given in table 3.6 below. Prior to the project, Pallo Pakha had already established a goat husbandry programme with a view to distributing credit to all households. However, since the project, the use of tole wise organisation as well as a greater spread of responsibilities through various committees for particular activities has facilitated a rapid expansion of these IGAs.

In both Jana Chetana and Pallo Pakho interest rates have been set at 12% per year for lowest wealth rank households, and 24% for other households. In their action plan, drawn up during the project, Jana Chetana members decided to set aside 25 % of the total FUG fund for IGAs, with 50% discounted interest rate for good practice. In Bhane, where priority has been placed on raising the FUG fund, an annual interest rate of 24% has been set for households in the lowest wealth rank as well. However, this compares favourably with the interest rates in the local area, which range from 36-60% per year.



**Table 3.6: Status of fund distribution in various income generating activities**

Activity	Pallo Pakha	Bhane	Jana Chetana	Sirupata	Jyamire
Goat keeping	84 HH	×	21 HH	×	×
Vegetable cultivation	2 HH	4 HH	×	×	×
Banana cultivation	4 HH	×	×	×	×
Ag. implements	×	×	1 HH	×	×
Bee keeping	20 HH	×	×	×	×
Tea/small shop	×	×	1 HH	×	×
Household mgt.	×	×	×	14 HH	23 HH

**3.5.2.2. Trends in FUG funds**

Table 3.7 below shows the changes in funds across the 5 sites. In Pallo Pakho, much of the increase in funds has come from prize money. In the year following the project Pallo Pakho won the national Ganesh Man Singh Award for best practice in community forestry. However, they have to spend considerable amounts of money on the running of the FUG school and it appears that they are only just able to break even now. In Bhane the increase has come about through the sale of firewood and timber and through interest payments on loans. The case is similar for Jana Chetana.

In Jyamire the increase of funds was due to the removal of the cost of the ban heralu having established a system of rotational watching, as well as additional funds from the sale of khar grass, which has been systematically harvested since the end of the project.

**Table 3.7: Changes in FUG/CC funds**

	FUGs				
	Pallo Pakha	Bhane	Jana Chetana	Sirupata	Jyamire
Amount in Fund Before	188,000	3200	12000	35000	23,000
After	228,000	6000	28,000	35000	53,000

**3.5.2.3. Costs**

It is impossible to measure the true costs of participation in community activities as ultimately the decision as to whether to participate in a meeting or not is based on different factors and value systems from person to person. Table 3.8 below shows the average number of days per year contributed by each household in the different sites. However, it is important to mention that the study had to rely on the perceptions of the costs by informants.

**Table 3.8: Household contribution in 2002/2003**

	FUGs				
	Pallo Pakha	Bhane	Jana Chetana	Sirupata	Jyamire
<b>Forest management and harvesting (Human resource)</b>	1 day for pruning and thinning+ 1 day for plantation + 4days for forest protection	4 days for weeding + 4 days for pruning and thinning	10 days for pruning and thinning including weeding	1 day plantation	1 day for grass collection
<b>Planning meetings &amp; interactions (Human resource)</b>	4 days in assemblies and tole level meetings	7 days for assemblies including tole meetings	6 days for Tole level meetings in this year	3 days in assembly meeting	5 days for meeting
<b>Total days contribution</b>	10 days	15 days	16 days	4 days	6 days
<b>Financial contribution</b>	Rs. 100/tham	-	1 -3 pathis grain/year for watcher + 25/HH for firewood	-	-

Negative incentives within groups also need to be considered in this respect. In Bhane a system of fines for absence from meetings has been established. A 50 NRs fine has been set for absence from assembly meetings and 100 NRs for absence from committee meetings. This issue had been raised with all informants in Bhane. However, all of the informants stated that they would still go to the meetings even if the fines were removed.

### 3.5.3. Other capital

Much of the experience described in the preceding sections can provide some evidence of improvements in social capital. Here, it is worthwhile highlighting, briefly, the importance of tole level meetings and tole based mobilisation. A key feature of toles as compared to other geographical or administrative units is that they are identified by the users themselves as a grouping with which they interact on a day to day basis. In developing the role of toles in group's planning processes, individual households have greater access to decision-making by reducing transaction costs.

In addition to this, as described above in sections 3.2.2.1 and 3.3.2, the wider spread of responsibility through establishing sub-committees, and the continued selection of tole representatives, as well as the election of previous tole representatives to the FUGC, has contributed to an increase in the leadership potentials of many members and personal development.

There are perhaps some examples of this namely the adaptation of tole based mobilisation for a drinking water, toilet construction and electrification projects in Bhane, toilet construction in Jana Chetana and the construction of a community hall in Pallo Pakho that had been included in the previous action plans developed during the project period. Similarly, the groups have partly come from increased training and exposure visits, particularly in Jana Chetana and Pallo Pakho.

However, it is very difficult to establish direct links between these increases and the project process beyond speculating about the generation of demand and the identification of opportunities through tole level discussions.

A summary of the status of impact on livelihoods and forest condition is given in annex: V.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1. Sustainability of the Action Learning process**

The follow up study has yielded encouraging evidence that some of the elements of the process are still intact, and in particular the media for continued discourse such as tole meetings and tole representative meetings as well as formation of various sub-committees and some data gathering. This is perhaps all the more remarkable given the limited scope for significant flows of benefits in the short term, and yet it appears that poorer households (and dalit households) are continuing with these meetings.

The evidence of continuation of various elements of the action learning processes in the case study sites as well as that of scaling out and up of some elements in the local area highlighted in section 3 has provided valuable insights as to which of these elements can be initiated or continued with little or no support from facilitators. In this respect, tole meetings and the selection or roles of tole representatives have continued in all the sites and have been taken up by other local institutions. Principally the appeal of these elements is that they represent a reduction in transaction costs for, and thus more effective, communication.

However, these elements alone do not necessarily represent an increase in gross value by default, though they can provide the basis for such benefits. Here more importantly, the transaction costs is an issues to consider determining the effectiveness of the process.

Similarly, there are some evidences of continuation, in various forms, of review and negotiation processes, though this appears to be less prominent. In the more active sites (Jana Chetana and Pallo Pakha) the media of tole meetings and tole representatives has been effectively used for exploring new ideas and thus this has helped to stimulate the imagination and confidences of many members who are able put forward ideas and see them implemented through collective action. It appears that the generation of mental models of group equity has also led to sustained negotiation and adjustments to existing arrangements for benefit distribution in Bhane and Jyamire.

#### **4.1.1. Costs and Benefits of the processes**

There are various evidences of direct/indirect benefits from the process as discussed above. The various elements as the steps of the process are the integral part of the FUG formation, planning and revision activities recognized in FUG constitution and Operational Plans (OPs). Many of these elements are perhaps the least costly of the forms of inquiry within this process element.

However, the critical inquiry in the form of tole representative's reflective workshop is perhaps the most costly in terms of risk and time management particularly to the poorer members of the FUGs and thus it is necessary to explore locally based solutions to alleviating the risks and transaction costs to, in particular, the poorest groups in order that they can actively engage in this process. These options include the involvement of pro-poor NGOs and CBOs in facilitation, establishing networks for risk sharing and negotiating with the VDC to establish a budget for social equity.

Critical inquiry, as an element of the action learning processes for common forest management, need not be restricted to forestry sector alone, and in fact the issues that are raised naturally relate to broader social issues in the local area. Therefore, the overall costs of this element can also be shared across the sectors. The recommended time cost of about 20 days spread through a year in the first cycle of the process has been well taken up by communities, which seems logical given benefits and the ways the process is integrated into the existing social interactions. In addition the opportunity cost of this process is negligible in agriculture off seasons.

## **4.2. Adaptive and Collaborative Interface with organisations at local and district level**

The follow-up study focused on the internal action learning processes of the five case study sites, though it was not possible to look into the collaborative monitoring and planning processes with other local organisations (principally the RP/DFO and FECOFUN) in such detail. However, in defining the key features of these internal processes it is also important to determine its position in the broader framework of the monitoring processes of other institutions. As described in section 1, the initial project specifically aimed at stimulating action learning processes on the demand side of the community forestry process, recognising that, whilst other organisations were attempting to develop their own monitoring processes and indicators, there was a crucial gap in this respect at the local.

There are two main areas that need to be developed in order to create linkages with the action learning processes at the local level. On the left hand side we have identified the need for facilitation of the identification of livelihood needs (through the critical inquiry element mentioned in the previous section), and their interpretation in terms of forest sector services, and on the right hand side the need for greater clarity in defining realistic roles for different support organisations..

It is hoped that the action learning processes have or will go some way to generating realistic demands at the local level (such as for technical support in Jana Chetana and Pallo Pakha, or in FUG formation in Jyamire and Sirupata). This can be further enhanced by involving local NGOs and CBOs in interpreting these demands through their wider knowledge of district and national level support services.

However, experiences from the previous project in particular have shown that few local and district level organisations are able to clearly convey their roles to local people. In particular, the ever increasing remit of the DFO has not only led to confusion as to the role of RP staff in facilitating the CF process, but also means that DFO service delivery is supply driven and based on a series of targeted interventions in sample sites (such as for technical assistance in establishing demonstration plots). A clearer, more realistic demarcation of the role of the DFO, and its services, is needed in order for a wholesale shift to demand-driven service delivery to occur. In turn, channels of demand from the local level could then serve to inform adjustments to monitoring processes and indicators developed by the DFO, as well as in other organisations at the local and district level.

## **4.3. Integration of action learning process with current community forestry procedures**

The follow-up study experiences have shown that there is potential for action and learning processes to be developed prior to and after FUG formation. However, at the present time it is necessary for both this action and learning process and the development of five year Operational Plans to run parallel with each other in the case study sites. The relevance of the Operational Plans has not been enhanced by the action learning processes, and most of the planning activities in the FUGs have made little reference to their Operational Plans.

One possible reason for this is that the process of drawing up Operational Plans is linear and time bound. Forest users are required to make decisions (albeit in participatory fashion) in one sitting, relating to a wide range of issues defined by a checklist in the community forestry guidelines. This method of planning is not compatible with local approaches to decision making. In contrast, the action learning process has been adapted such that relevant issues are discussed at different times of the year and there is scope for incorporating new learning to adjust plans.

The Operational Plan is essentially a legally binding agreement between a FUG and the DFO, and thus there is a need to re-examine the scope of FUG activities that should fall within such an agreement. In order for this to take place there must be a greater preparedness within the DoF to trust the ability of local people to manage their community forests.

#### **4.4. Potential for Scaling out to other areas**

We need also to examine the common characteristics of the case study sites as with those across much of Baglung District in relation to those of other areas in Nepal, in order to identify where adaptations to the facilitation process will be needed as well as to assess the potential sustainability of action learning processes following such interventions in other areas.

There are two key livelihoods characteristics of the case study sites that should be highlighted here. The first is the high degree of monetarisation in the local economy, where foreign employment and subsequent pensions have become a benchmark for wealth. The second is that the average area of community forest per household in the case study sites is much less than the national average (see data in Malla et al, 2002, p26). These two characteristics may well result in there being less overall interest in community forestry than might be exhibited in other areas of Nepal.

The Terai is one region in Nepal where community forestry holds perhaps the greatest potential for improvement of local people's livelihoods, and yet through policy and local governance related factors, lack of access to forest resources is a critical constraint to livelihoods improvement.

The evidences of taking up of the results by various institutions including ForestAction indicate the potential of such process being demanded and spread out. There is a documented evidence showing the effective contribution of the process applied in Sishawar FUG in Nawalparasi (Naupane and Ojha,2002) and Gagan Khola FUG in Siraha (Bhandari,2003).

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Throughout the follow up study there has been some encouraging evidence of continuation of various elements of the action learning process developed in the case study sites during the previous project (NRSP-R7514). Most prominent amongst these has been the decentralisation of negotiation processes and discourse (particularly on equity issues) to small (tole level) units within some of the groups, the use of tole representatives to carry out some advocacy and inquiry functions, the spreading of responsibilities for monitoring the implementation of action plans and increased data gathering and analysis.

In some sites, it is clearly noticed that this process has led to an increase in democratic functioning within the groups for example in Jana Chetana and Bhane FUGs where, there is regularities in group meetings with devolved roles and responsibilities to the toles and tole representatives. Although it is difficult to assess improvements in livelihoods within such a short time period, that could be directly attributable to the project, there are activities underway that, if sustained, present considerable potential for contributing to the building of various livelihoods capitals, including a general shift towards more active forest management in some sites.

There can a debate on whether these changes are of the result of R7514 intervention or the effect of on-going development initiatives. There is no any instant answer for this question. However, many evidences of the positive outcomes observed in the sites indicates that without the R7514 project there is no possibilities of having significant positive changes within the groups.

The evidence indicates that the action and learning process has potential to make significant contributions to the CF process. Looking into the perceived and actual costs relative to the benefits it appears that, for the elements of the process that have been continued in the sites, transaction costs have not been a problem, or indeed they may have been reduced through adapting steps within the process.

The follow up study has, however, highlighted the need for renewed critical inquiry within many of the groups, which has by and large not been continued. This element of the process had been recognised in the previous project as one of the most costly, particularly for the poorer households, in terms of time and risk.

The project R7514 has left a clear methodological procedure to follow by the groups with many immediate positive results. As it was carried out in specific context for a relatively shorter period of time to measure tangible results from it, however, the extent of scaling out and up indicates its significance of contribution to improve monitoring system within FUGs.

Based on the findings and its analysis some recommendations have been made for further enhancing sustained action and learning within the case study area and for wider uptake of the process across Nepal. These are as follows:

1. To involve local NGOs and CBOs in facilitation of critical inquiry as an important link in the action and learning process, as well as the identification and interpretation of livelihood needs in these groups in order to link them with forest sector services.
2. Facilitate discussions between DFO/RP, RP level FECOFUN, VDCs and local NGOs/CBOs to develop strategies for the further scaling out and up of the process in the local area
3. To promote further discussion with other support organisations at the Range Post and district level as to ways in which they can clearly define and communicate their roles and services to FUGs (and other local groups with interests in community forestry). This also relates to opening up communication channels between the demand and supply sides that can inform adjustments to their existing self-monitoring systems as well as those of the local communities

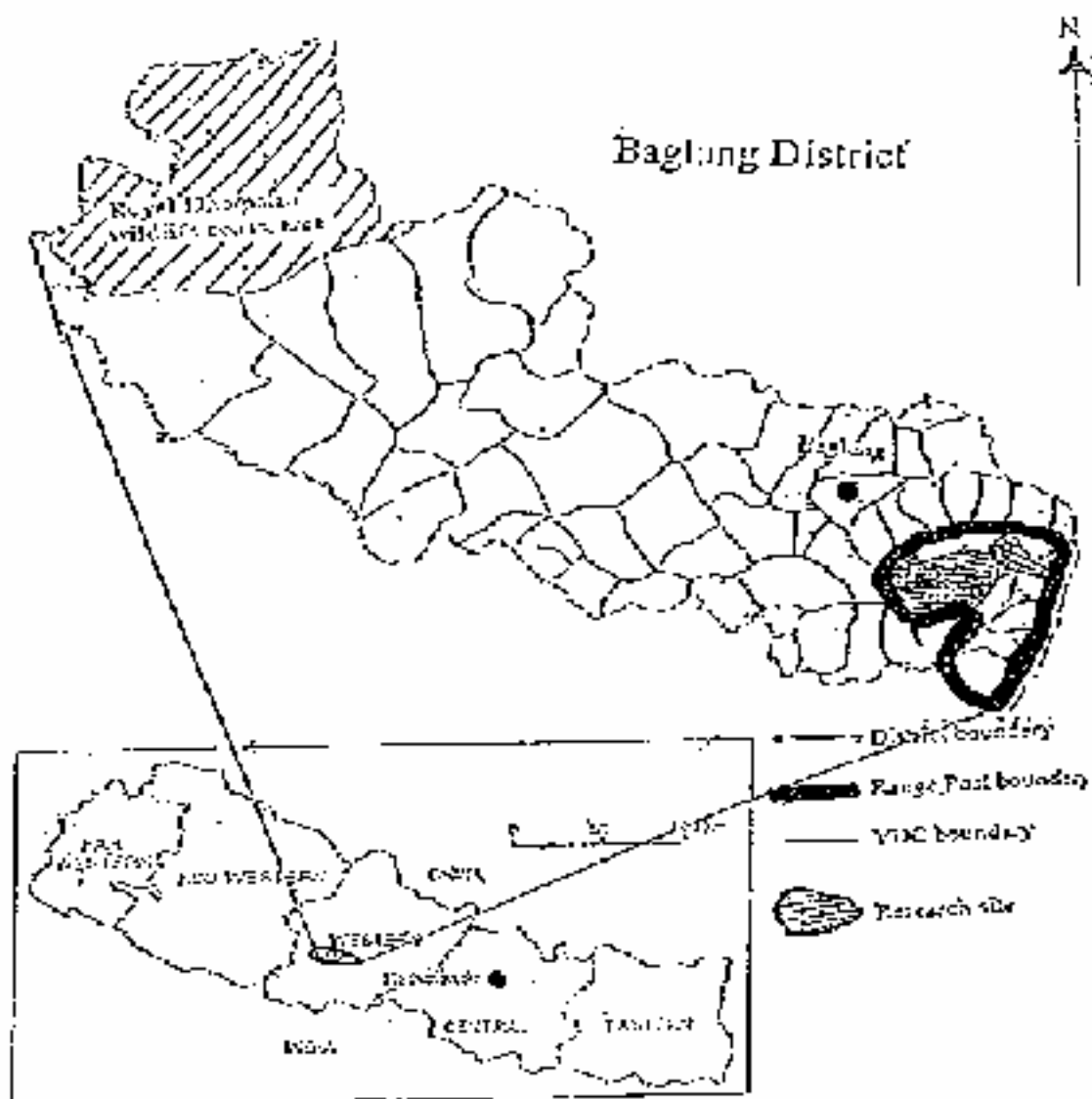
4. Further testing of the facilitation process in differing livelihoods contexts and policy environments (for example in the Terai) and
5. Discussions on the integration of these action and learning processes with the current CF procedures, focusing on the development of the process prior to FUG formation as well as a review of the scope and function of the Operational Plan.

## **6. References**

Malla, Y; Barnes R; Paudel, K P; Lawrence A;Ojha H; Green K 2002. Common property forest management in Nepal: Developing monitoring systems for use at the local level, A research report, IRDD, the Reading University/ForestAction/ECI, Oxford University, Reading UK  
(Naupane and Ojha,2000, Promoting Community Actions for Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihoods-a case study of Sishwar Community Forest, Nawalparasi, ForestAction Nepal and Whiteley Awards Foundation, UK  
(Bhandari,2003, case study report on action learning process in Gagan Khola Community Forest User Group SALGA project (draft)

## 7. Annexes

### Annex I: Map of Nepal showing location of research site





## Annex II: Time plan

Day	Date	Activity
Day 1	Jan 28, 2003	Preparation for field visit
	Jan 29, 2003	Field visit
	Jan 30- Feb. 3, 2003	Meeting with FUGC Pallo Pakho,
Day 8	Feb 4, 2003	Sirupata, Bhane and Jyamire
		Review and reflection
Day 9	Feb 10,	Field visit – Kushmisera Range post
	Feb 11	Arrangements/planning with RP staff
Day 11	Feb 12	Workshop with selected representatives Pallo Pakho
Day 12	Feb 13	Meet with Pallo Pakho monitoring sub-committees SSI with key informants
Day 13	Feb 14	Workshop with selected representatives Sirupata
Day 14	Feb 15	Workshop with selected representatives Jimire
Day 15	Feb 16	Meet with jimire monitoring sub-committees
Day 16	Feb 17	SSI with key informants- Jimire
Day 17	Feb 18	Workshop with selected representatives Bhane
Day 21	Feb 19	Meet with Bhane monitoring sub-committees Meet with Painyu VDC
	Feb 20	SSI with key informants-Bhane
	Feb 21	SSI with Pallopakho
Day 23	Feb 22	Back from the field
Day 25,26		Report preparation.
Day 27		Visit to Janachetana
Day 28	March 2, 2003	To Jana Chetana Meet with Jana Chetana CFUG
Day 29	March 3	Workshop with selected representatives
Day 30	March 4	SSI with key informants- Janachetana
Day 31	March 5	Meeting with mon. sub committee , VDC
Day 32	March 6	Back to Sirupata
Day 33	March 7	Mon sub committee meeting with Sirupata
Day 33	March 8	SSI with key informants- Sirupata
Day 34	March 9	Meeting with RP, VDC/FECOFUN
Day 35	March 10	Back to KTM
Day 42		Draft Report preparation
Day 55	11th April, 2003	15 UK visit 16 days in field for reflection
16 days to visit field site		

	4 day	Travel to site and Baglung and back
	1 day	Workshop preparation with RP
	7 day	Workshop at 5 site and travel
	1	Joint workshop
	1	Meeting with LFP and DFO
	2	Reflection writing

## **Annex III: Study Method and checklists**

### **Tentative Check - List**

#### **I Meeting with FUG committees**

- Objective of the visit
- What, how and why: are doing in the FUG?
- SWOT analysis of the process
- Ask about their annual action plan
- Make arrangement to meet monitoring sub-committee, KIs, Sample HHs (fix time table)

SWOT analysis of the monitoring process/ activities

- Strength and weakness of the components of monitoring
- Continuation or reject to continue component(s): why
- Additional new learning in their experiences in monitoring

#### **II. Meeting with Monitoring Sub-Committee**

- Objective of the visit
- Discuss/review monitoring information/OP
- What information are they getting?
- How did they get information ? (Action learning process)
  - Tole meeting: is it continuing? who and why participate?
  - Planning w/s: is it necessary? why ? Is working group functional?
  - Assembly: is it continuing? do you feel more realistic information came from the tole mtg. to planning w/s; planning w/s to assembly?
- How do they analyze the information?
- What is change before and after intervention of this project especially cost /benefit of process based on their observation?
  - Have FUG been used their fund in monitoring activity?
  - How do you record those changes?
- Do your group incorporate the changes in OP?
- Does monitoring help to resolve the conflict?
- Involvement of poor households/lowest wealth category (in monitoring process or in overall FUG activities)
- Involvement of Range Post/FECOFUN

#### **III. Visit with Key Informants and Selected Households**

- Households select on the basis of wealth and tole
- Find out decision making process and compare past and present differences
  - Who and why participates?
- Cost/benefit of process for them- quality verses quantity
  - No. of days spent for monitoring
  - Have FUG been used their fund in monitoring activity?
- Transect walk through forest & village with local informants: talk/ find out the major changes in perceptions regarding monitoring (why?)
  - Forest mgt : what is change in protection system?
    - management: activeness, planning,
    - utilization: access- products/fund, input
  - Group mgt: change in decision making process, committee composition,

- conflict/dispute: membership, elite & voiceless, committee & group
- how do you find/realize?
- how do you feel?
- what is other members' reaction?
- Do you feel monitoring really contribute in the group/forest mgt.
  - an improvement in the livelihoods of the poorer households?
  - increased biodiversity or its conservation?
  - increased flow of forest products?
- Are you participating in tole level meeting or planning w/s? why?
- Is it change in planning process or do you know any changes in OP?

#### **IV. Discuss with Tole Representatives**

- Presentation of preliminary findings
- Open discussion/ find out their reaction
  - tole meeting: do you participate previous tole meeting? why or why not?
  - planning w/s: do you participate previous tole meeting? why or why not?
  - what is the benefits from tole and planning w/s? are they really beneficial to take decision in assembly?
- Commitment to future process/action
- Measure the perception and adaptation level

#### **V. Meet with Local Institutions (VDC, CBOs, RP, FECOFUN at RP level)**

- Briefly present follow up findings
- Understand their perception regarding findings as well as any their support
- Discuss institutional support mechanisms to FUG/ sub-groups
- Identify the contribution of the process followed or methodology developed with these sub-groups

#### **VI. Visit/discuss with DFO/LFP at district, (also with DOF/NGOs/FECOFUN at Center level)**

- Briefly present findings of follow up study
- Current status of the monitoring system at district level
- Problem in monitoring / strategy for resolution
  - Support from other local service providers
- Importance in planning/ process of CF particularly OPs and adaptation

#### Annex IV: List of key informants

S.no.	Name of Interviewee	Member representation	Type of respondent
<b>Pallo Pakha FUG</b>			
	Seeta Devi Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Chandra Devi Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Dandapani Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Geeta Devi Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Kalabati Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Tikaram Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Ghumkumari KC	Member	HH Interviewee
	Balkrishna Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Sabitra Sharma	Member of Coordination and Communication Sub-committee	W/S Participant
	Kirtinath Sharma	FUGC member	W/S Participant
	Tarakhar Sharma	Chairman	W/S Participant
	Hari P Sharma	Treasurer	W/S Participant
	Liladhar Sharma	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
	Dilli P Sharma	Vice-chairman	W/S Participant, M Sub-committee
	Moti P Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Hari P Upadhyaya	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
	Purna P Acharya	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Ram P Paudel	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Tulasidevi Sharma	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
	Radhadevi Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Dhakadevi Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Seetadevi Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Til kumari Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Bishnudevi Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Som P Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Sabitrivevi Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant M sub committee
	Krishna P Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant M sub committee
	Laxmidevi Sharma	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
<b>Jyamire non FUG</b>			
	Man B Thapa and his wife	Member	HH Interviewee
	Puspa Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Jit B Nepali	Member	HH Interviewee
	Raju Basel (Nepali)	Member	HH Interviewee
	Balu Nepali	Member	HH Interviewee
	Ganga B Nepali	Tole Representative	HH Interviewee
	Ganesh Dhungana	Member	HH Interviewee
	Gaurishowr Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Achhyaradevi Sharma	Member	HH Interviewee
	Chintamani Sharma	CC Member	W/s Participant, M sub. committee
	Ohmkar Nath Upadhyaya	Tole Representative	W/s Participant
	Tarakhar Upadhyaya	CC Member	W/s Participant
	Nandikishowr Upadhyaya	Vice-chairman	W/s Participant. M

			sub. committee
	Narishowr Upadhyaya	Tole Representative	W/s Participant
	Hasta B Thapa	CC Member	W/s Participant
	Shiva P Dhungana	Tole Representative	W/s Participant
	Jamunadevi Sharma	CC Member	W/s Participant
	Rupadevi Nepali	Tole Representative	W/s Participant
	Ratnakala Devi	CC Member	W/s Participant
	Sushila Devi	Tole Representative	W/s Participant
	Humkala Devi	Tole Representative	W/s Participant
	Thaniratna Padhyaya	Tole Representative	W/s Participant
	Buddhisagar Sharma	CC Chairman	W/S Participant
<b>Bhane FUG</b>			
	Umakanta Sapkota	Chairman	W/S Participant
	Sher B Chhetri	Vice-chairman	W/S Participant
	Sher B Hamal	Secretary	W/S Participant Msub committee
	Khadak B Thapa	Treasurer	W/S Participant
	Seeta Hamal	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
	Maharaj Kanel	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
	Ratikala BK	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
	Narayan P Kanel	FUGC Memebr	W/S Participant
	Sumitra Khatri	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
	Chandrikali Thapa	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
	Devi Sapkota	Member- FECOFUN	W/S Participant M Sub-committee
	Lalit Rana	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Lila Devi	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Hiradevi Kanel	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Madan Kanel	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Basundhara Kanel	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Laxmi Dahal	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Yamuna Thapa	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Thaniraj Bhusal	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Jamansingh Thapa	Vice-chairman of Painyu Thanthap VDC	HH Interviewee
	Dharmaraj Thapa	Member	HH Interviewee
	Ramchandra Kanel / his wife	Member	HH Interviewee
	Premnath Kanel / his wife	Member	HH Interviewee
	Kalabati Khatri	Forest watcher	HH Interviewee
	Karna B Thapa	Member	HH Interviewee
	Ratikala BK	Member	HH Interviewee
	Tulasi Kanel /her mother-in-law	Member	HH Interviewee
	Chakra B Thapa	Tole representative	HH Interviewee
<b>Jana Chetana FUG</b>			
	Amrita BK	Member	HH Interviewee
	Kali Darji	Tole representative	W/S Participant, HH Interviewee
	Padam B GC	Tole Representative	W/S Participant, HH Interviewee
	Bal B GC	Member	W/S Participant, HH Interviewee

	Bhadrikala Bahik	FUGC member	W/S Participant, HH Interviewee
	Jalapi Chhantyal	Member	HH Interviewee
	Ganga BK	Member	HH Interviewee
	Man B Thapa	Member	HH Interviewee
	Dilli Gurung	Vice-chairperson	W/S Participant, HH Interviewee
	Amar B Pun	Member	HH Interviewee
	Manamaya Bhujel	Member	HH Interviewee
	Purna B Pande	Member	W/S Participant
	Pahal sikh Chhantyal	Member	W/S Participant
	Jayaram Chhantyal	Member	W/S Participant, M sub.committee
	Man B Bahik	FUGC member /Forest Watcher	W/S Participant, M sub committee
	Dil B Chhantyal	New reps	W/S Participant
	Karna B Pun	FUGC Chairperson	W/S Participant
	Chandra B Chhantyal	FUGC treasurer	W/S Participant
	Harka B Bahik	Old reps	W/S Participant
	Elia BK	New reps	W/S Participant
	Parbati Pande	FUGC member	W/S Participant
	Lila Chhantyal	New reps	W/S Participant
	Nanda B Chhantyal	New reps	W/S Participant
	Rupa Bahik	New reps	W/S Participant
	Krishna Chhantyal	New reps	W/S Participant
	Jun B Chhantyal	New reps	W/S Participant
	Til B Chhantyal	Old reps	W/S Participant
	Krishna Bujel	FUGC secretary	W/S Participant
	Kamala Chhantyal	Old reps	W/S Participant
	Til Kumari Gurung	New reps	W/S Participant
	Yammaya Bahik	Old reps	W/S Participant
	Raimati Pande	FUGC Member	W/S Participant
	Radha Chhantyal	Old reps	W/S Participant, m sub committee
	Khagisara Chhantyal	New reps	W/S Participant
	Yammaya Chhantyal	New reps	W/S Participant
<b>Sirupata FUG</b>			
	Homanath Paudel	Advisor	W/S Participant, Interviewee
	Mahendranath Padhya	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Khem Bdr Thapa	Tole Representative	W/S Participant, M. sub. Committee, Interviewee
	Gum aThapa	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Shyam Kala Thapa	FUGC member	W/S Participant
	Kumari Sharma	FUGC Chairperson	Interviewee
	Krishna Kumari Chapagain	FUGC member	W/S Participant
	Meena Thapa	FUGC member	W/S Participant
	Krishna Kumari Sharma	FUGC treasurer	W/S Participant, M. sub. committee
	Purna kala Sharma	FUGC member	W/S Participant

	Yam Kala Thapa	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Khima Devi Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant, Interviewee
	Parbati Harijan	FUGC vice-chairperson	W/S Participant
	Dhan kala Thapa	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Meena Thapa	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Hari Thapa	FUGC member	W/S Participant
	Khima Thapa	FUGC secretary	Workshop Participants
	Laxman Sharma	Tole Representative	W/S Participant
	Rajendra Sharma	FUGC Advisor	W/S Participant, M. sub. committee
	Kul Bdr Thapa	FUGC Advisor	Workshop Participant
	Dhana Pati Sharma	Member	Interviewee
	Chhitra Prasad Sharma	Member	Interviewee
<b>Other individuals/institutions</b>			
	Yeindra Paudel	Range \post staff	Interviewee, Workshop Participant
	Ram Bdr. BK	Range \post staff	Interviewee, Workshop Participant
	Ganga Bdr. KC	Range \post staff	Interviewee, Workshop Participant
	Krishna P Paudel	Range \post staff	Interviewee, Workshop Participant
	Sabitra Sharma/Hom Nath paudel	Range post level FECOFUN	Interviewee, Workshop Participant
	Jaman singh Gurung	VDC vice chair –Painu Tanthap	
		DYC member/staffs	
		CYC	
		DFO -Baglung	
		LFP-Baglung	
		DoF-MoFSC	



## Annex V: Summary of observations made across the sites

Elements	Descriptions
<b>Process -continuation, adaptation</b>	<p>The critical awareness among the users is growing particularly to look at different options and opportunities.</p> <p>Until the emergency situation, FUGC and tole representatives was very active and participated joint meeting however, given the situation of emergency, many planned meetings and forest management activities could not be organized.</p> <p>Process of self monitoring is continuing, tole meetings, tole reps and committee interaction and assemblies are held regularly</p> <p>Many of the tole reps were elected as the committee members.</p> <p>Wealth ranking was used in forest product distribution and benefit sharing it has been adjusted to support poorest families (except in Sirupata FUG)</p> <p>Increasingly users are reflecting the values of action learning</p> <p>Adapted tole meeting as the communication centre (Pallo Pakha)</p> <p>Increased access to decision-making of the individual households</p> <p>Monitoring sub-committee functioning and many other sub committees are formed</p> <p>FUG members have expressed the view as the developed process is very useful particularly the tole level interaction and role of tole reps. to raise the issue, communicate with FUGC, and negotiate their interests.</p> <p>New tole reps were elected-Jana Chetana (initiation of second cycle of the process)</p>
<b>Governance issues</b>	<p>The committee is more responsible and accountable. The tole representatives are now participate in FUGC meeting and advocate on behalf of users, facilitate tole meeting and involved in subcommittees</p> <p>There were no or few women in committees but now there is increased number of women in committee as well in participation in meeting at toles and assemblies.</p> <p>There is no forest watcher, all the users are taking the responsibility of watching turn by turn (Jyamire).</p> <p>There is improved communication, information flow, raised poor focus issues such as equity, quality participation, transparency in decision making and fund mobilization, increased trust of the committee members and overall accountability of leadership</p> <p>Some vested interests and the weak committee (Sirupata) many good decisions could not be implemented</p>
<b>Livelihood impact</b>	<p>Users collectively carried some forest management activities, the distribution of firewood and grasses and other forest product were carried out considering the wealth rank priorities.</p> <p>There is changed perception on fund use. The fund now has been mobilized among the users for various IGAs</p> <p>Group has managed to raise funds (e.g. increased fund from NRs 23000 to NRs 53000 within this period in Jyamire)</p> <p>Creation of tole fund and mobilization within the toles (Janachetana)</p> <p>Schoolteacher selection</p> <p>Intensified discourse on equity: The equitable distribution of forest products issue has been proceeded in both committee meetings and general assemblies since beginning of the Monitoring study at this FUG.</p> <p>Though the resources is not enough in the forest except in Janachetana) however, the forest is very important to the users hence there is no other forest area near by.</p>

<b>Scaling out</b>	<p>The process is being followed in other community issues such as electrifying, drinking water and non-formal/adult literacy</p> <p>Near by villagers also willing to learn from the ways these FUGs organizing themselves and managing groups and forests</p> <p>It is being used to identify of users in various activities.</p> <p>Share with Mother Group (Virikuti) regarding fund mobilization</p> <p>Increased dialogue with other neighboring communities and negotiation on resource sharing ideas/rights</p> <p>Process diffused in varying scale in other groups such as seed production group, newly formed forest user group (Sota Dhurseni FUG)</p>
<b>Scaling up</b>	<p>The Range post staffs and FECOFUN members are realizing the importance of the self monitoring process as the appropriate tools to create awareness, develop understanding about the community forestry and resolve the conflicts (boundary, interests in terms of visioning).</p> <p>Share in RP and DFO staff meetings. DFO circulated RPs and staffs to follow similar process while supporting FUGs</p> <p>Interact with other communities through RP, FECOFUN, DFO Share in RP staff meeting</p> <p>Range post and Range Post level FECOFUN sharing with other neighboring FUGs and other institutions such as VDC, HIMWANTI, Village level groups of PDDP, local NGO-DYC, Community enabling center - pro poor governance programme of DYC</p> <p>Appreciation of the action learning processes by various institutions, projects and testing it by Forestaction in different places.</p>
<b>Recommendations for Sustainability</b>	<p>Selection of new tole representatives as the continuation of the process</p> <p>Equitable benefit sharing readily activates users to participate in group and forest management activities</p> <p>Increased Activeness, unity and coordination among the users, sub committees, and FUGC</p> <p>Provision of Tole representatives and tole meeting/interaction/communication</p> <p>Created an enabling environment to bring up individual interest/ideas in negotiation, generation of on-going discourse about the process, delegated roles and responsibilities Institutionalising interest groups across FUGs (network)</p> <p>Monitoring of forest management activities, harvesting, and product distribution by Monitoring sub-committee</p> <p>Transparent process and accountable system enhances the active forest management at FUG level.</p> <p>Regular support by RP staffs in the process and forest management and exchanging ideas and information related to resources and support in Identification of medicinal herbs in community forest by the help of RP staff</p> <p>However, there need to be some group of people who fully involve to lead the FUG</p> <p>Similarly, Tole reps is the key in this process therefore need to develop some criteria to select the reps.</p> <p>Need to replicate and test the methodology developed (suggestions by outsiders)</p>

## Annex VI: Summary status of improved governance at FUGs and RP level

<b>Elements of Governance</b>	<b>Pallo Pakho</b>	<b>Bhane</b>	<b>Jana chetana</b>	<b>Sirupata</b>	<b>Jyamire</b>	<b>RP and RP level FECOFUN</b>
<b>Participation</b>	Increased at all level and of various category	Increased at all level and of various category	Increased at all level and of various category	Increased women participation but still problem	Increased in some specific activity only	Increased in frequency of RP staff visit to FUGs
<b>Democratization</b>	Increased but still power remains with elite of the villages	Increased where power shifted to young and active members	Increased and exercised fully- Tole are treated as independent body to decision making	Increased but power shifted to women but male /elite dominated them	Increased but still power remains with elite	Still RP staff have power but they respect the users
<b>responsiveness</b>	Increased	Increased	Increased	FUGC was felt but still problem	Try to make transparent in decision making and fund	Increased
<b>Accountability</b>	FUGC was not fully accountable with users	FUGC are accountable with users	FUGC are accountable with users	Some users do not believe FUGC	Committee is more accountable with RP staff	RP staff are not accountable with users

## **Annex VII: The Potentials of the Action Learning process in case study sites**

### **1. Pallo Pakha**

Pallo Pakha is a relatively homogenous group in terms of caste and kin and combined with its history of collective action in forming their FUG. Combined effects of these elements, it has been widely recognised as a highly cohesive and active group. However, this group cohesiveness has in part led to greater power for those at the centre particularly who had historical hierarchical power and involved actively in the process.

The follow up findings have provided some evidence that the research process has contributed to tangible benefits in the group, either directly or synergistically. However, despite many informants highlighting tole meetings and tole representatives as the most important contribution made by the process in terms of facilitating communication and mobilisation, it is clear that there are still weaknesses in communication from the household level to the decision making processes. It is observed that there exist a kinship relation among the tole members which makes difficult to in communicating power related issues at household level interactions. This in turn has largely inhibited the processes of critical inquiry within the group and much of the decision making is still being done by the FUGC, though this is less so since the project, with tole representatives communicating these decisions to the tole level. It appears that much of the group activeness has been due to the continued benefits that members have been able to receive through participating, and this has been facilitated by the immense organisational skills of the vice-chairman and the dedication of the chairman. There has been little or no challenge to the centralised decision-making processes because the majority of members are satisfied with the continued flow of benefits through credit schemes. This makes it all the more difficult for a minority of members who are unable to meet their requirements for forest products to voice their concerns.

During the research process with Pallo Pakho the project team focused on appreciative methods of inquiry, which, combined with improved communications, and the creation of some discussion forum at the tole level, had helped the members to focus on setting objectives and monitoring progress towards them. However, this may have simply accelerated many of the processes that were already underway. As an overall reflection and lesson for future adaptation in other sites it may be necessary to focus facilitation skills on promoting critical inquiry to address hidden conflicts within the group, before proceeding onto appreciative modes of inquiry.

### **2. Jana Chetana**

Similar to Pallo Pakho, Jana Chetana is, and was at the time of the previous project, a highly active group with an inspiring leadership. It differs from Pallo Pakho in that it has far greater potential still to be explored for benefits from its 105ha of high altitude forest. It has been systematically harvesting and distributing forest products every year since its formation, with few grievances. It differs from Pallo Pakha in that it is a highly heterogenous group in terms of caste and ethnicity. It also differs in that there had been a history of conflict and uncontrolled felling by various households around the forest and other powerful members, and the formation of the FUG came at the end of a long process of reconciliation and trust building that had been instigated by a few members of the community. The result was a highly plural FUG leadership and a well functioning group with high attendance at assembly meetings.

As with Pallo Pakho, the research process focused on appreciative modes of inquiry. However, this came about through a careful process of identifying the priorities of the representatives. Given that there was already a fairly robust democratic system within the group, discussions focused on how this could be made more effective and certainly, as the findings demonstrate, the members have eagerly taken up some of the communicative aspects of the process such as the use of tole meetings for the

generation of new ideas. It could be said that, in the absence of major conflicts or failings of trust, there need not be an emphasis on critical inquiry.

In fact, at the research workshop, the representatives' interests focused on more detailed appraisal of the forest resource and its potentials and much more of the discussion related to developing methods for exploring new options and experimentation (including the establishment of sample plots in all the blocks and a set of demonstration plots). Thus one of the major contributions made by the project research process in this situation was in developing methods for detailed information gathering.

Whilst there is a clear role for RP staff in assisting this kind of research, it is necessary for the facilitation team to be multi-faceted and to ensure that the representatives' priorities are established at the outset.

### **3. Bhane FUG**

Bhane FUG was the first case study in which the project team rapidly recognised the need for more critical modes of inquiry. As mentioned above experiences with PalloPakha FUG with an appreciative inquiry approach in a context of homogeneous and kinship relation among the members of the FUGs could not rise the conflicting issues of power relation and decision making.

As a group that had undergone five years of latent conflict (as described in Box 4 above) the project team realised that the building of trust was a priority. However, as distinct from the preceding sites, the team found it necessary to focus on a very narrow set of issues that were clearly priorities for the representatives, rather than using a checklist to stimulate discussion. In addressing these issues the team facilitated the representatives in developing mental models of group dynamics and identifying critical information needs that would help to initiate the building of trust within the group. In promoting holistic thinking of the group the representatives challenged their own assumptions and personal recriminations and developed a package of proposals for group norms and actions as well as a system of checks and balances (through increased access to information) that would stimulate interest amongst the rest of the group.

With various adjustments, many of these group norms and checks and balances are still in place, and the actions identified (relating to collective action for forest management as well as working towards equitable benefit distribution) have been carried out, or are on-going. Where steps have been modified, such as where the tole representatives have been holding household level discussions rather than full tole meetings, this appears to have been a combination of a lack of clear agendas for such meetings and an attempt to reduce transaction costs.

However, the adaptation of assembly meetings to allow for separate tole level discussions indicates that the group have internalised some of the elements that originally took place in tole meetings, and to a certain extent the tole representatives' research workshop, and this is certainly a very encouraging sign.

It still remains to be seen, however, whether these checks and balances would automatically initiate a renewed process of critical inquiry should major conflicts and mistrust arise in the group. There are also areas where further support may be required to facilitate the poorer households in engaging in more active negotiation. This would require some means of risk sharing in order to reduce transaction costs.

### **4. Sirupata FUG**

Sirupata FUG was formed following a plantation scheme that had been instigated by a trainee in nursery establishment. It seems to be the case that rhetoric, political rivalry and a fear that the DFO would subsequently block access to the plantation, rather than livelihood concerns, had been the primary factors leading to the formation of the FUG.

The project research process with Sirupata was not as clearly structured as it had been with the other sites partly due to the fact that the project team were wary of taking too much time with the tole representatives, in view of the lack of potential benefits from their current community forest. Through visits by the tole representatives to the other case study FUGs, as well as in identifying critical constraints it would appear that the process did initiate discussions at the tole level, primarily related to exploring options for establishing a community forest in the neighbouring Kamere Pakho. Owing to the short time of the project, the project team had to avoid addressing this issue directly due to a conflict on this matter, involving more than 500 households.

It is possible that the reformulation of the FUGC, and the subsequent plans to reselect tole representatives may stimulate new discourse on the potentials of community forestry. From the perspective of the action learning process, however, it is clear that there could be little sustained action unless the priority issues of the group were directly addressed.

## **5. Jyamire CC**

In Jyamire, as an identifiable group that has not as yet formed a FUG, the research process presented opportunities to draw on both the combined experiences of the previous case studies, as well as some of the surrounding institutional and procedural issues that were beginning to emerge during the project. A key issue was the problems with both the way in which demand for community forestry is generated (as primarily an interest of the elite sections of communities), and the subsequent linear planning processes that lead to FUG formation and that are largely inaccessible to the majority of users. In this respect the project team wished to examine methods of establishing at least some elements of democratic functioning and action learning that would enable the members to steer themselves towards more appropriate arrangements for community forestry.

Despite the narrower scope of executive powers and potential activities that can be undertaken in Jyamire as compared with the other case study FUGs, the research process was, in many respects, similar to that in undertaken in Bhane. Again the process focused on critical inquiry and facilitating tole representatives in developing mental models of their group in order to address critical conflict issues and the causes of mistrust within the group (such as the issues of grazing rights and fund misappropriation). For example, The tole representatives developed consensus to allocate a block of forestland for grazing purpose and decided to compare the regeneration with other restricted areas.