



## SUCCESS STORY

### Mobilizing Youth for Local Development Initiatives in the Terai



USAID/Nepal

The YMC from Basatpur in Bara district conducted a free health clinic. The group coordinated the event without additional assistance from OTI.



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With a few hundred dollars in support from OTI, and another \$250 from the community, the Bagahi YMC coordinated the rehabilitation of the local health post.

**May 2009** – A year after the Constituent Assembly elections, little progress has been made toward peace, security, and development in Nepal. The constitution-writing process has been slow, and the law-and-order situation remains volatile.

Peace in Nepal is heavily dependent on community involvement in, and ownership of, the peace process, and youth are critical actors for motivating Nepali communities to participate positively in efforts to establish an enduring peace. At a time when government structures seem ineffective or nonexistent, mobilizing youth on behalf of their communities can bring their positive energy to the process.

To engage youth in community development, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) has supported local partners in the Bara district of the central Terai to establish Youth Mobilization Committees (YMCs). Through these groups, which are part of Village Development Committees (local-level administrative entities), youths identify small-scale development projects during consultations with communities.

OTI provided material assistance of 25,000 Nepal rupees (about \$370) to each YMC with two preconditions: (1) communities must contribute their own resources and (2) local youths must actively participate in the projects. Communities in the Bara district responded with enthusiastic support for the projects, which are commonly known as Community Development Funds (CDFs). As a result, youths have not only coordinated the planning and the community funding but also implemented projects.

In one community, the YMC's work with transparency, planning, and community mobilization prompted an additional grant of 130,000 rupees (about \$1,700) from an international organization to further capitalize on the CDF project. In another community, the enthusiasm and commitment of the YMC convinced residents to adopt the CDF model of community participation and contribution for the construction of a health center. In addition, one of the YMCs organized and ran a health camp for nine days, providing residents with health information and medications without charge.

YMCs have earned acceptance by working to better their communities, and some—through their own initiative—have built on their experiences and gone on to manage projects that do not depend on OTI assistance.