

Melamchi Social Uplift Programme

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Objectives and Methodology

The Melamchi Diversion Scheme (MDS) aims at improving supply of drinking water to Kathmandu by transferring water from the Melamchi River to the Kathmandu Valley through a 28 km long tunnel. The Social Uplift Programme (SUP) has been established to mitigate direct and indirect impacts of this project and to improve the living conditions of people in the Melamchi Valley. The SUP aims to ensure that affected people benefit from the project through development of five components: Buffer Zone, Health, Education, Income Generation and Rural Electrification. SUP is planned for a seven-year period and builds on the recommendations of MDS Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and extensive consultations with all affected stakeholders from central government authorities to farmers.

SUP Organisation

No new organisation is to be created for the SUP. Instead, support will be given to central, district and local institutions through training and supervision by experts, NGOs and local consultants during implementa-

tion. The overall responsibility for the SUP during pre-construction and construction will be with the Melamchi Water Supply Development Board (MWSDB) but during the operation phase the district will assume full responsibility for activities. NGOs and CBOs will play a vital role in facilitating projects in co-operation with VDCs in the Melamchi Valley. A central aspect of the SUP is capacity building in the form of institutional strengthening of government organisations and in the form of confidence building for local villagers and community organisations. The aim is to ensure that there is sufficient capability and experience in government to take full responsibility for the SUP after the 7 years. Monitoring will include a Geographic Information System (GIS) database for analysis and planning, a Qualitative Monitoring Unit and external monitoring by the donor.

Buffer Zone Component

The preservation of the natural environment from possible impacts from the MDS and influx of workers and camp followers is the overall goal of the Buffer Zone to be established adjacent to the Langtang National Park. Langtang NP extends to the bor-

der between Nepal and Tibet (China) and its highest peak reaches 7.234 m.a.s.l. This park is of national and global significance with a variety of climatic zones and high biodiversity. Maintaining the natural environment is essential for the economic well being of the Helambu communities.

Proposed activities are:

- Establishment of a Buffer Zone Team that includes NGOs and a new Park Ranger station at Timbu
- Detailed catchment and tourist plan
- Environmental awareness programmes and monitoring of contractors
- Measures to protect forests, and the establishment of nurseries and wood lots
- Tourism promotion activities and cultural preservation group

Health Component

Improving health facilities is a major concern of the people of the Melamchi Valley and there are high expectations. The emphasis is on improving existing health options rather than create new facilities. The interventions aim at improvement of health conditions as well as at coping with the influx of workers and camp followers for the construction period.

Proposed activities are:

- Establish a Health Team consisting of district personnel, NGOs and consultants and draft a detailed action plan
- Health education programmes
- Reproductive health (maternal health and birth control promotion) and STD control.
- Infectious disease control (sanita-



tion, safe drinking water, malaria control)

- Upgrading of existing facilities and training of staff

Education Component

Education is also an area of high priority. Proposed activities include:

- Establish an Education Team consisting of district personnel, NGOs and consultants and draft a detailed action plan
- Upgrading of existing facilities and teacher training
- Grants for disadvantaged groups, adult literacy and skills training
- Women's awareness and child concern programmes
- Proposed technical centre for training in co-operation with district

Income Generation Component

The Local Governance Programme (LGP) will play a central role in this component through its social mobilisation of villagers, Local Trust Fund and capacity building at the district level. Proposed activities are:

- Establish LGP Team for mobilisation of villages into credit and savings groups for realising individual or group schemes

- Establish the Local Trust Fund (LTF) to finance initiatives
- Support for district agricultural programmes, veterinarian services and cottage development
- Agreements with contractors for handing over project buildings to the communities

Rural Electrification Component

With only a small portion of the Melamchi Valley benefiting from electricity, there is a need for expansion. Since the MDS requires large amount of electricity, there will be ample electricity available for expansion during and after construction. Proposed activities include:

- Establish a Rural Electrification Team consisting of NEA personnel, NGOs and consultants and draft a detailed action plan
- Identification of potential customers and agreements with communities about payments and contributions
- Community mobilisation, training and supervision of installation
- Safety courses, follow-up training and monitoring

The SUP is planned for a seven-year period. Financing is through NORAD and ADB.