

Final Report

Country Strategy Evaluation 2010-15 and Organization Assessment

Lutheran World Services India Trust

5th July, 2016



List of Acronyms

Acronym	Terms/Details
AAP	Annual Action Plan
ACT	Action by Churches Together
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
ARRP	Assam Riot Rehabilitation Project
BCC	Behavioral Change Communication
BDO	Block Development Officer
BftW	Bread for The World
BJP	BharatiyaJanata Party
CAP	Community Action Plan
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CBDRR	Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction
CHSA	Core Humanitarian Standards Alliance
CoS	Church of Sweden
CRP	Cluster Resource Person
CSP	Country Strategy Plan
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CRSA	Child Rights Situation Analysis
CSO	Country Strategy Outline
DMT	Disaster Management Team
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSSQC	Development Support Program for Stone Quarry Affected Communities
DWS	Department for World Services, Geneva
DWU	Domestic Workers' Union
ED	Executive Director
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America
ESAF	Evangelical Social Action Forum
ESM	Executive Staff Meetings
FCRA	Foreign Contribution Regulations Act
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPC	Forest Protection Committee
GEP	Gender Empowerment Project
GUS	Gram UnnayanSamiti
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRD&M	Human Resource Development and Management
IAG	Inter Agency Group
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IGA	Income Generating Activity

Acronym	Terms/Details
IP	Implementing Partner
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
JSY	JananiSurakshaYojana
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
LWSI	Lutheran World Services India
LWSIT	Lutheran World Service India Trust
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MPCH	Mohulpahari Christian Hospital
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	MahilaSamiti
NAWO	National Alliance of Women's Organizations
NCCI	National Council of Churches in India
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NELC	Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
OBC	Other Backward Classes
OLM	Odisha Livelihood Mission
OTELP	Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Program
PE	Participatory Evaluation
PIME	Planning, Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation
PF	Provident Fund
PFG	Priority Focus Groups
PM	Procurement Manual
PMER	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting
PR	Public Relations
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
RBA	Rights Based Approach
RDP	Rural Development Project
SC	Scheduled Castes
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEEPR	Socio Economic Empowerment with Peace and Reconciliation Project
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SHG	Self Help Groups
SO	Strategic Objective

Acronym	Terms/Details
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSA	SarvaShikshaAbhiyaan
ST	Scheduled Tribes
STEER (R)	Social Transformation Economic Empowerment and Risk Reduction Project, (STEER Rural)
STEER (U)	Social Transformation Economic Empowerment and Risk Reduction Project, (STEER Urban)
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TG	Transgender
TOR	Terms of Reference
UDP	Urban Development Project
UELCI	United Evangelical Lutheran Churches India
UN	United Nations
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
WAVAW	Women's Association on Violence Against Women

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Executive summary

The Bracketed numbering refers to paragraphs in the body of the main report.

This document presents the findings of the evaluation of LWSIT's Country Strategy Plan 2010-15 from the perspective of:

- ▶ Assessing the relevance of the Country Strategy to the priority focus groups and in the context of changes in the national and international contexts
- ▶ Determining the extent to which Strategic Objectives of the LWSIT Country Strategy 2010-2015 were met
- ▶ Reviewing the on-going 'Social Transformation, Economic Empowerment and Risk Reduction (STEER) Rural Program' as an integral part of the evaluation strategy (the evaluation also covered the Gender Empowerment Project - Urban and the Normisjon/ NORAD supported Development support programme for the Stone Quarry Affected Communities of Birbhum district- West Bengal and Dumka district - Jharkhand)
- ▶ Assessing the organizational strengths, limitations and challenges of LWSIT

The evaluation adopted a participatory and consultative approach that included participation of various stakeholders during the process of evaluation. The evaluation methodology was based on a qualitative analysis of the available literature and primary data collected during the evaluation. The primary research covered a total of 120 community based organizations spread across project locations and interaction with close to 1500 community members. On concluding the field visits, an interim report on key findings was presented to varied stakeholders, including LWSIT Board and management, representatives of three donors organizations (Church of Sweden, Bread for the World and Normisjon), and field staff. This report was prepared based on the feedback received as per the template agreed upon by LWSIT and the evaluation team. (1.4)

1. Introduction

Lutheran World Services India Trust ("LWSIT" or "the Organization") is a Not for Profit organization registered as a public charitable trust with its head office, located at Kolkata, India. Prior to the creation of LWSIT in 2008, the Organization operated as the India country program (Lutheran World Services India (LWSI)) of Lutheran World Federation (LWF)/Department for world services (DWS), Geneva. It started working in India in 1974 in response to the needs of the refugees affected by the Bangladesh war of independence.

Across the organization's initiatives, its core mandate is "to bear witness to the Indian Churches' commitment to accompany the poor, the marginalized and the excluded in their quest for justice, full realization of human rights and life with dignity". LWSIT now operates pan-India for disaster relief and rehabilitation projects and focuses on several districts of West Bengal, Odisha and Assam for social development projects. LWSIT's country strategy plan for 2010-2015 provides the organizations mandate, mission and vision and strategies for its first six years of operations. (1.1)

2. Review of Country Strategy Plan

This section examines the strategic plan and its various elements, finally focusing on the first two objectives of the evaluation: (1) assessing the relevance of the Country Strategy Plan (CSP) to the priority groups and the changing context; and (2) determining the extent to which the Strategic Objectives of the LWSIT Country Strategy 2010-2015 have been met.

The Evaluation team believes that while the mandate and values were clearly spelled out, with an inspirational vision, the vision lacked the element of achievability within a specified timeframe. The Programme goal adequately captures the challenges that LWSIT seeks to address along with the defined approaches, priority groups and expected impact; however, important terminologies used in the programme goal have not been clearly defined, keeping these expressions vague and difficult to measure. The CSP also does not account for its measurability or the timeframe within which it will be met. The CSP articulates who its Priority Focus Groups (PFGs) are however, the insights it provides on challenges faced by these groups are broad-based. It was further determined that strategic objectives, priorities and the programme goal are aligned and do correctly address the identified problems (2.1)

LWSIT has implemented more than 30 projects during the strategy period, including those on disaster relief. Conceptually, all the projects have been designed within the framework of the CSP and LWSIT has been successful in aligning its projects with the strategic objectives. However, it is challenging to objectively assess whether the objectives of the CSP have been met as firstly, the CSP does not provide any indicators to measure the "evidences of change". Secondly, data collected by LWSIT is only at a programmatic level towards individual programme output. This may also be observed in LWSIT's Annual Reports as well wherein data is reported at a programmatic level; there has not been any attempt to aggregate project level achievements at a country strategy level to successfully monitor strategic progress.

Moreover, although the objective of 'Organizational Capacity Development' was found to be an extremely important objective, there has been little evidence to suggest significant progress in this regard (2.2)

3. Findings and Analysis

Program Evaluation (3.1)

Relevance

Development challenges captured in the Project Document (PD) are broad-based and therefore still valid.

While it is true that PFGs and geographies were clearly articulated, the situational analysis was found to be weak in building a clear perspective on barriers faced by varied focus groups especially within the context of their geography. This finding has been especially surprising considering the depth of knowledge and learning that LWSIT has gathered whilst working for over 35 years with the PFGs within the target geographies. Further, it was found that strategic priorities, objectives and approaches mentioned in the CSP are very much relevant to the project areas across projects. However, deficiency in supply side engagement, especially in terms of the engagement of duty bearers and advocacy with government line departments was found to be a major weakness in the implementation of the strategic objectives and the related modes of operation. Additionally, organizational capacity was perceived to be a highly important requirement particularly in the context of the DSSQC project location, as expected results would be achieved only when the field team is able to understand and articulate the theory of change and the subsequent action points. The Project team across locations lacked clarity on the different approaches articulated in the CSP. Adoption of the Rights Based Approach (RBA) has been a strategic decision; however, it is still at an initial stage of implementation. While there was evidence of improved orientation and attitude related to RBA concepts amongst the staff members which was visible in their approach to the community, critical components such as sensitizing duty bearers, policy advocacy at state and national level, were found missing. Cross-cutting issues, in varying degrees of relevance, have been adopted into organizational programmes and practices. Although the results are yet to manifest clearly, the programmes are in sync with the organizational mandate, mission and vision and contribute towards the organizational goal of creating an empowered society for better quality of life, sustainable livelihood and food and human security. (3.1.1)

Effectiveness

A central aspect of the second criterion, effectiveness, against which the three programs were evaluated, was the examination of the extent to which strategies, approaches and modes of operation adopted to implement planned activities have been relevant, well-designed and effective. While the findings confirm the relevance of these elements, the strategies and activities did not account for differentiation in CBO types, whether SHGs, Youth Groups or FPCs and have not accounted for project related intricacies. For example, in the GEP project, the approaches do not foster the participation of men; in the project area men perceive women as a means to attract project benefits, primarily financial benefits.

An experienced and motivated team with established credibility and well versed in LWSIT's modes of operation, along with knowledge of grass-root realities have been the major internal factors that have influenced project results across all projects. The Government's flagship initiatives and improved access to the communities for such initiatives are the key external drivers contributing to the success of the projects. The evaluation team wishes to highlight that the overall level of engagement of the partner communities in the planning process was visible, exerting a positive impact on the overall effectiveness of the projects. The gender component was also included either directly or indirectly in all three projects. Due to this combination of factors, specific positive changes were observed. The main changes common to all three projects were an increased awareness about the need to take collective action towards social development as well as about the government schemes available. Positive spillovers were also noted in other social groups not targeted by the projects, especially other castes in the case of STEER Rural and transgender communities in the case of GEP. Having acknowledged this, more concrete outcomes, were not possible to be measured due to the lack of baseline studies, weak indicators and due to the fact that development processes take time to be manifested. Additionally, the projects do not have a clear process for measuring outcomes. In the case of STEER Rural, particularly there is disconnect between the two project documents (CoS and BfdW) in terms of the outcome indicators. (3.1.2)

Efficiency

The analysis of the third criterion of efficiency brought out the fact that the core strengths of the organization such as its grassroots experience of working with the Priority Focus Groups and experience of delivering rural and urban development programmes do reflect in the strategic priorities, approaches and cross-cutting issues. The organization has not had much experience in the rights based approach and the mode of operations do not reflect the organization's core strengths as it has had no history of working with civil society and on policy advocacy issues in the past.

The analysis indicated some important trends in the way various resources including human, administrative and financial ones are utilized. In all three projects, while staff was motivated and enthusiastic about their work, they appeared over-burdened, which could lead to a potentially adverse impact on overall quality and efficiency of the projects. Additionally, in the case of GEP, a strong gender imbalance was noted with only one male employed, which may be linked to the limited male involvement in the project. GEP and Stone Quarry continue to under-utilize their funds which could have consequences on the achievement of results. (3.1.3)

Impact

From the perspective of impact, the fourth criterion for evaluating program performance, moderately positive outcomes were observed, despite the still nascent character of all three projects and the difficulties related to quantification of such outcomes. In STEER Rural a visible impact was seen in terms of increased awareness and capacity amongst the communities for addressing imminent perceptible threats caused due to disaster-

primarily floods and cyclones. Glimpses of communities forming into collectives and taking actions for mobilizing services were also observed. However, in the case of 'accompanied communities' where impact could have been gauged (due to association of over 5 years), it was observed that LWSIT does not have any mechanism to report separately on these communities. In the case of GEP, many SHGs and Mahila Samitis have been formed and have attracted large numbers of women as members; most communities were also aware of their rights. Significantly, these communities have also been lobbying with their area specific councilors and corporators to avail their rights, while STEER Rural and DSSQC did not have any component of lobbying or advocacy. As a result of activities under the Stone Quarry project, SHG members were able to avail free medical check-ups and extra coaching for children which has been greatly appreciated among the rights holders. Moreover, the awareness of possibilities of access to credit and various government services, as well as awareness about the mandate of the duty bearers has increased though the project still has a long way to go before creating an environment where the right holders are able to access their rights and entitlements. With regards to the impact of lobbying and advocacy work on the political level across all three projects, it has been negligible as work on these areas itself has not taken place across the three projects. The exception to this has been noted in the GEP project in the localities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, where women are reportedly getting engaged in municipal elections, indicating a discernible degree of change in women's participation in the political system (3.1.4)

Sustainability

The assessment of the three projects against the last criterion of sustainability revealed differing degrees of the likelihood of the positive effects to be maintained over time across projects; they differed from project to project and also on whether communities are categorized as 'good', 'moderate' or 'poor'. In GEP, 'Good' communities have started to take on new responsibilities and project ownership; for STEER Rural, all the communities that have been rated 'good' were found to demonstrate high degree of ownership of the interventions, less dependence on LWSIT and greater group cohesiveness; however the DSSQC still remains at a hand-holding stage.

A few effective measures that have been implemented in order to support the sustainable model can be distinguished. For all three projects, creating viable community funds for the CBOs has been instrumental. To complement this, for GEP and DSSQC, financial linkages between the communities and banks have also been created. For STEER Rural and GEP, increased community participation in planning and implementation and strengthening of the leadership capacities were found to be important aspects contributing to the sustainability of the projects. Notably, GEP and DSSQC both depict diverse partnerships the former including partnerships at the level of the community as well as CSOs. As an additional sustainability component, rights-based advocacy has been incorporated into both STEER Rural and GEP, though focus has largely been maintained at community level only. (3.1.5)

Organizational Assessment (3.2)

Governance and Internal Management, Structure and Culture of LWSIT

The ability to adapt to the changing circumstances without diluting its core principles reflects the strength of an organization. The fact that LWSIT has faced considerable challenges in the last five years but has managed to retain donor relationship and community-connect, proves its resilience in difficult situations. It draws its strength from its culture of service, imbibed through history of practice and its formation. It has a strong relationship with its roots, especially with NCCI and UELCI, which provide for the majority of the board members. However, circumstances require the Board to be responsive to changes and take on increased responsibility in providing direction and supervision. It was noted that the process followed for the Board meetings may not provide sufficient time for the board members to deliberate on critical issues. In addition, there was no evidence to indicate the presence of appropriate processes for the orientation and selection of new Board members, which are important for Board effectiveness. During the evaluation period, several instances were observed where the Board was not functioning at full strength or suffered from inadequate representation or had a lack of quorum. In the latter case, this has implications on the Board ratifications which will need to be re-visited.

LWSIT has, over a period of time, developed adequate internal governance and control mechanisms. However, the present challenge for the organization is both in terms of absence of a few control mechanisms and the effective implementation of the existing ones. There are cases where the guidelines of the Finance and Administrative Manual have not been adhered to, leading to delays in statutory filings such as annual income tax returns and monthly PF dues. There are a few process gaps as well that need to be handled with promptness, with emphasis on the possible mixing of domestic and foreign funds at the project office level. Also, process gaps related to cash and bank management have to be addressed to ensure better financial planning. The organization has taken positive steps in developing the conflict of interest policy which is to be presented to the Board for ratification. (3.2.1)

In the last decade the legal structure of the organization has changed but the mind-set, institutional memory and way of doing things have not changed enormously. The past value system is being carried forward; this necessarily may not hamper the achievement of targets, but it does limit the organization's ability to be responsive to the changing environment. There is still a heavy dependence on the ED/Senior Management

Committee to provide guidance and set the organizational agenda. Consequently, voices of change and reaction from the field units may be lost. Another irony besieging the organization is the limited female staff and female team members, especially considering the fact that the majority of the target group is women. It is important to note that secularism has been and remains a core value, this has been demonstrated time and again within the organization and with its partner communities. (3.2.1)

External Partnerships

The achievement of the objectives espoused in the CSP have been based on the belief that external relations and partnerships would be fostered, thus providing an extended platform for LWSIT to articulate its narrative and champion the cause of the poor and marginalized. At present, the organization has limited capacity to engage with the policy makers on the Right Based Approach. Further, the field team has not been capacitated to engage with duty bearers through RBA. LWSIT also lacks a strategy for building partnerships as well as a strategy / plan for visibility and external communication. They presently work with different Government departments but as a service provider and not as an alliance partner. (3.2.2)

Human Resources

A key strength is LWSIT's dedicated, motivated staff. The changes in the organization have not deterred the LWSIT team, and their commitment is reflected in the low turnover ratio in the past decade despite significant transition periods. However, it was observed that there is lack of clarity on the approaches and do they are comfortable in completing tasks rather than deliberating on the ideas behind planned activities. In the absence of any systematic process of capacity development, these issues are lost in the more immediate goals of completing projects and achieving targets.

The organization has human resource policy and systems, however the effective implementation of these has been more of a challenge. There are several cases where processes are not followed especially in the case of induction and performance management. The organization is cognizant of these issues and is taking steps to address them; however it is important that LWSIT broaden its focus beyond surface issues - changes to policies, systems and even the organizational structure - to the deeper dimension which is the collectively held beliefs, norms and patterns of behavior that maintain the status quo in the organization. (3.3.3)

PMER

PMER primarily focuses on planning, M&E and outcomes at a programme / project level and lacks a coherent organizational wide PMER system. While extensive consultations were held with different stakeholders to develop the country strategy, there is an absence of an integrated organizational operating plan to support and ensure consistency in fulfillment of the mandate of the Country Strategy. Just one resource has been allocated for Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects; there is no mechanism to monitor the strategy and evaluate whether the strategic objectives have been met through milestones, indicators or otherwise. LWSIT's documentation is largely from a programme reporting perspective to donors. Discrepancies and inconsistencies were noted in the data collected. Additionally, data collection templates are long and impede analysis, which is necessary to for decision making and increasing the organization's "learnability". (3.3.4)

Sustainability

At a programme level, LWSIT has taken several measures to ensure programme sustainability. At the organizational level, it has maintained its key relationships with existing donors towards financial sustainability. LWSIT has thus far been comfortable with stability; however in light of a changing environment - both internal and external - a key priority will be to shift focus to build the capacity of LWSIT as an adaptable organization, supported by flexible systems, structures and policies. During the evaluation it was noted, with concern that LWSIT's funding pipeline did not extend beyond 2016. LWSIT must consider a flexible, diversified resource mobilization approach, with systems, processes and a team to support the same, which will allow LWSIT to allocate resources to enhance critical staff capacity, invest in LWSIT as an organization and take advantage of emerging opportunities. (3.3.5)

4. Conclusions and Recommendations (4.1 & 4.2)

- ▶ While LWSIT's ideology and strategic framework have been captured and articulated in the CSP 2010-15, several concepts in the Country Strategy have not been defined or explained thus possibly impacting uniformity in interpretation and consequently, implementation. Additionally, the situational analysis in the CSR is pertinent, broad-based and relevant; it is suggested that going forward, whilst developing its next country strategy, LWSIT leverage its experience, expertise and understanding of community needs to develop a more contextual situational analysis that can be, in turn, also reflected in Project documents.
- ▶ The RBA is a new concept to LWSIT and is therefore still evolving. While developing its new country strategy LWSIT should effectively engage its different stakeholders (internal and external) to assess and review its progress and position on continuing with the rights based approach
- ▶ LWSIT has implemented a diverse range of projects which are in alignment with the objectives of the Country Strategy. However, the Strategy lacks a clearly defined Operational Plan which will provide direction on how the strategy will be operationalized. It is strongly recommended that LWSIT develops a five year operational plan which is aligned with its next strategic plan (2017-22), along with clear milestones and measurable indicators that can be used to monitor the strategy.

- ▶ LWSIT has two Project Documents (PDs) for STEER RURAL to meet different donor requirements. Although reporting requirements vary, LWSIT submits a common report to both donors, without clear attribution of fund utilization. It is recommended that LWSIT take corrective action to integrate its project document and develop common understanding on project results and outcome. Additionally, LWSIT may prepare a logical framework for every project unit with clear, achievable and measurable indicators.
- ▶ While addressing the specific challenges identified in the CSP, project strategies are focused on addressing the demand side barriers rather than the supply side factors. LWSIT can develop a source book on its RBA approach to educate different stakeholders on the same.
- ▶ Field level evidence indicates a sincere effort by experienced and motivated staff members, particularly in capacity building efforts of communities. It is recommended that standardized training modules be developed and further translated into local languages for standardization, efficiency and effectiveness
- ▶ The strategies, approaches and modes of operation adopted to implement planned activities are relevant and well-designed but the effectiveness of the programmes can be improved by strengthening the connection between project strategies, activities and its linkage with expected outcomes. Additionally, it is important that LWSIT reflect and understand why certain activities may not translate to outputs and re-work its approach for the programme to have its intended effect. Further, a viable theory of change for its projects with an intervention logic that is clearly verifiable, would assist with programme attribution.
- ▶ Across projects, the staff to community ratio appears unrealistic, considering the number of targeted communities and the overall work done across thematic areas. It is suggested that a work load analysis be conducted to assess the responsibilities that are being allotted to every team member and prioritize only activities relevant to programme outcomes.
- ▶ LWSIT currently uses the same approach and methods for CBOs of different categories and length of association. This, with the lack of a clearly defined exit plan, may affect effectiveness and sustainability. A robust M&E system needs to be developed to ensure project progress and to be able to adequately assess the same.
- ▶ Seven years after localisation, LWSIT's still functions with a "programme orientation" which is reflected in LWSIT's organization structure. The Country Strategy 2010-15 has already identified organizational priorities towards meeting its organizational goal; it is vital that these are now implemented and incorporated.
- ▶ Currently LWSIT does not engage in strategically planned relationship management efforts. The evaluation team suggests that LWSIT develop a (documented) understanding on the types of partnerships that it wishes to enter into, the rationale behind developing these partnerships along with a communication plan that will build LWSIT's brand, create visibility and showcase its impact.
- ▶ LWSIT's board members understand the LWSIT culture and bring experience from like-minded organizations. It has however faced certain issues during the strategy period linked to Board professionalism and effectiveness. To increase Board effectiveness, the evaluation team suggests that the Board develop a strong orientation process and set systems and processes to ensure that the Board periodically review the Country Strategy and whether its major milestones have been met, in terms of organizational development, capacity development, sustainability, resource mobilization and programme
- ▶ LWSIT has a wide number of controls established for its operations at national and unit offices, however internal controls could be made further effective by strengthening its processes and systems with regard to statutory compliances besides developing policies for management of implementing partners.
- ▶ In accordance with its "line" structure, operations at LWSIT are highly centralized with decision making powers being retained by the senior management and Management Committee. If LWSIT foresees any changes in the scale and scope of its programmes, or wishes to make its management processes more participatory, it is recommended that LWSIT re-visit its decision making structure and processes for delegation of authority.
- ▶ As an organization, LWSIT's culture appears to be one that is reactive, rather than one that is proactive. Going forward, LWSIT should define/refine the cultural traits that it wishes to foster basis its organizational priorities.
- ▶ There has been limited evidence to gauge whether staff capacities adequately meet LWSIT mission and programme goals as HR policies and systems do not actually capture and measure the same. The HRM functions need to be strengthened and attention needs to be directed towards the collective beliefs, norms and patterns of behavior within the organization.
- ▶ At the project level, LWSIT's PMER processes are more streamlined; the project design includes a participatory, gender sensitive approach that factor in the inputs of the community across the cycle. At the organizational level however, LWSIT's PMER efforts must reflect the design and implementation of an organization wide system that effectively monitors and reports on key data to improve the performance and accountability of the LWSIT
- ▶ As long as LWSIT continues to prioritize 'programmes' and programme development over 'organizational development, it will continue to have limited emphasis on developing processes and systems that focus on components that are integral to organizational sustainability. A key priority for LWSIT will be to shift focus to build and sustain the capacity of LWSIT as an adaptable organization. Towards developing organizational

sustainability, the evaluation team recommends that LWSIT develop its brand and market it. Focus also needs to be directed towards components such as organizational identity, nurturing the board of trustees and especially towards creating a long term resource mobilization plan.

- ▶ There is limited emphasis on developing processes and systems that focus on components that are integral to organizational sustainability, such as organization wide PMER and learning, resource mobilization, capacity development, partnerships, etc. A key priority for LWSIT will be to bring focus on building and sustaining the capacity of LWSIT as an adaptable organization, supported by flexible systems, structures and policies. LWSIT senior management should look to develop systems that help its long-term viability while effectively managing its day-to-day operations.
- ▶ Both the Country Strategy 2010-15 and Gender Policy 2004 bring a programme related emphasis on Gender rather than an employee related perspective. The evaluation team recommends that, based on its priorities, LWSIT develops / revises its gender policy that incorporates an organizational perspective, explicitly states its commitment towards gender, provides direction towards building gender related agenda and provides a framework for integrating gender concerns into the organizational agenda.

1. Introduction

1.1 LWSIT - an overview

Lutheran World Services India Trust (“LWSIT” or “the Organization”) is a Not for Profit organization registered as a public charitable trust with its head office, located at Kolkata, India. Prior to the creation of LWSIT in 2008, the Organization operated as the India country program (Lutheran World Services India (LWSI)) of Lutheran World Federation (LWF)/Department for world services (DWS), Geneva. It started working in India in 1974 in response to the needs of the refugees affected by the Bangladesh war of independence. The scope of its operations gradually expanded to include issues such as disaster relief and rehabilitation, assisting community empowerment, sustainable livelihood and gender development. Across the organization’s initiatives, its core mandate is “to bear witness to the Indian Churches’ commitment to accompany the poor, the marginalized and the excluded in their quest for justice, full realization of human rights and life with dignity”. Geographically, LWSIT now operates pan-India for disaster relief and rehabilitation projects and focuses on several districts of West Bengal, Odisha and Assam for social development projects.

1.2 Overview of the Country Strategy Plan 2010-2015

The Organization’s mandate, vision, mission, strategic objectives and modes of operations are clearly laid out in its Country Strategy Plan 2010-15 (CSP), which was developed in 2009 and further became operational in 2010. It serves as the single most important guiding document for LWSIT; highlights of the CSP 2010-15 are as follows:

Figure 1: Key components of the CSP 2010-15

Vision	People of India living in just, secular and peaceful societies, in communal harmony and with dignity, united in diversity and empowered to achieve their universal rights to basic needs and quality of life		
Mission	Inspired by God's love for humanity, LWSIT challenges and responds to the causes and consequences of human suffering and poverty with commitment to justice & dignity for all		
Program Goal: Empower men, women and children of disadvantaged communities to enhance their quality of life, through rights based approaches for sustainable livelihood, food and human security			
SO 1: Community empowerment, access to rights and entitlements	SO 2: Food security and sustainable livelihood	SO 3: Disaster Response & Disaster Risk Reduction	SO 4: Organizational capacity development
Communities are empowered to secure rights to improved quality of life	Greater numbers of poor and marginalized people achieve sustainable livelihoods	Communities are prepared for reducing vulnerability to disaster risks, able to respond and recover effectively to and from disasters	Enhance organizational capacity to assure high quality services with accountability and transparency in emerging and challenging contexts
Priority focus groups: The priority focus groups for LWSIT include the marginalized rural and the urban poor, the traditionally disempowered such as the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, other backward classes, dalits, religious minorities, victims of natural and manmade disasters			
Geographic focus areas: West Bengal, Orissa, Jharkhand and Assam			

1.3 Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The CSP 2010-2015 makes a provision for conducting an external evaluation at the end of five years of the strategic period. As per the terms of reference for the assignment, the evaluation is expected to assess programmatic and organizational progress and provide inputs on future priorities towards developing LWSIT’s second country strategy.

The Rationale for conducting the evaluation is to provide a basis for accountability to stakeholders through an impartial and independent review of the work of LWSIT; improve the development effectiveness of future strategies and programs of LWSIT; develop LWSIT’s organisational capacities by gaining an understanding of its current strengths and challenges.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- Determine the extent to which the Strategic Objectives of the LWSIT Country Strategy 2010-2015 have been met
- Assess the relevance of the Country Strategy to the priority focus groups and in the context of changes in the national and international context

- ▶ Review the following projects as an integral part of the evaluation of the Country Strategy 2010-2015
 - *Social Transformation, Economic Empowerment and Risk Reduction (STEER) Rural Program*
 - *Gender Empowerment Project (GEP)*¹
 - *Mid-term review of Development Support Program for Stone Quarry Affected Communities*²;
- ▶ Assess the organizational strengths, limitations and challenges of LWSIT (Organization assessment)

Scope and evaluation criteria

The evaluation covers the LWSIT Country Strategy 2010-2015 and its implementation for the period, January 2010 - June 2015. The evaluation of the strategic plan and programs has been guided by the review criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The criteria for organizational assessment focuses on governance, financial management and internal control aspects along with a review of the organizational structure and culture, external partnerships, human resources, project management systems and sustainability. (Please refer to the ToR- Appendix A for more details).

1.4 Approach and Methodology

The evaluation adopted a consultative approach that included the participation of various stakeholders; the methodology followed was based on a qualitative analysis of the available literature and primary data collected during the evaluation.

The engagement started off with an inception meeting between the evaluation team and the LWSIT team to get a detailed overview and understanding of the LWSIT strategy, programs and organizational processes. Both teams were also oriented in terms of expectations and the engagement scope. Broad contours of the evaluation framework and methodology were discussed during the inception meeting.

Subsequently, a thorough review of secondary literature (for list of secondary literature reviewed, please refer to Appendix D) was conducted. Based on this review, a detailed evaluation framework was prepared along with a tentative sample and field plan which was consolidated in the inception report that was subsequently shared with LWSIT. Following the acceptance of this report by LWSIT, data collection checklists were pilot tested in Kolkata (please refer to Appendix B) and final dates for the field visits to the select locations were determined. The evaluation team visited seven project locations (including the National Office), with evaluation teams of at least 2 members visiting each of the project locations (please refer to Appendix E, F, G). Primary research was conducted through customized interviews and FGD checklists for each group of stakeholders (please refer to Appendix C for the category and number of stakeholders met/interacted with as part of the primary research process).

The primary research covered a total of 120 community based organizations spread across project locations and interactions with close to 1500 community members. The responses from the primary data collection were recorded first as raw notes, which along with a review of secondary literature, formed the basis of analysis and report writing. The evaluation team prepared an interim report on project evaluation and organization assessment that established and highlighted key observations and recommendations. This was presented first to the senior management team of LWSIT and later to a larger group of stakeholders consisting of LWSIT international partners (BftW, CoS and Normisjon), Board of Trustees and unit level team members. Based on the feedback received on the interim report, the Evaluation team requested for additional sets of documents and started working on the final report as per the template agreed between the evaluation team and LWSIT.

1.5 Assumptions and Limitations

1. TTC's views are not binding on any statutory, regulatory or executive authority or Court, and hence, no assurance is given that a position contrary to the opinions expressed herein will not be asserted by any authority and/or sustained by an appellate authority or a Court of law.
2. The review was limited to the records/documents shared with TTC by LWSIT and the field visits conducted. While performing the work, TTC assumed the genuineness and validity of the factual information and the authenticity of all documents. The authenticity or correctness of the same have not been independently verified.
3. The assessment was largely based on information and explanations given to TTC by the officials of LWSIT. Neither TTC nor any of its employees undertake responsibility in any way whatsoever to any person in respect of errors in this report, arising from incorrect information provided by LWSIT

¹ GEP and Stone Quarry projects were not specifically mentioned in the ToR. However, annexure to the RFP and ToR discuss projects under program evaluation and hence have been covered as part of this assignment

² The current phase of the stone quarry project is for the period 2014-2017 and hence this is a mid-term review of the project

4. For STEER (Rural) project the evaluation team observed two separate project documents being followed for two different donor partners (BftW and CoS). This is a design level flaw and created confusion as certain elements that are part of CoS focus were not considered equally important by BftW. As recourse, the evaluation team examined both the documents and wherever applicable used the better of the two or a comparison of two to derive its inferences and conclusions.

1.6 Structure of the report

The report has been structured into four chapters with sub chapters in each section as per the approved TOR format. The “Introduction” sets the foundation for the report and gives the reader a perspective on LWSIT and provides a brief history and background of the organization. The reader is further introduced to the Country Strategy Plan 2010-15 and its various nuances. The purpose and the objectives of the evaluation are spelt out and the approach and the methodology used for the engagement are also elaborated upon. The assumptions and the limitations for this engagement are mentioned at the end of this chapter.

“Chapter 2” of the report includes a detailed review of the Country Strategy Plan 2010-15. Major questions mentioned in the TOR related to the relevance of the CSP to the priority groups and the changing contexts have been analyzed in this section. Important determinants such as the clarity of the CSP in articulating the organizational mission and vision, in understanding the validity of the developmental challenges identified and the appropriateness of the select geographical focus areas have been closely reviewed and elaborated upon in this chapter. The chapter also looks at understanding the changing external environment and of the relevance of the strategic priorities, approaches, objectives and modes of operation that have been identified in the CSP and are being followed by LWSIT in its programs. The current performance and achievements of LWSIT at the end of the strategic period have also been highlighted in this section.

“Chapter 3” of the report includes a deep dive evaluation of the three programs mentioned in the TOR, i.e. the STEER Rural program, DSSQC & the Gender Empowerment Program, under the overall context and framework of the CSP. The program review has been assessed under the five criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Sub-Chapter 3.2 provides an organizational assessment of LWSIT giving the reader a perspective on the organizational strengths and challenges.

“Chapter 4” of the report provides conclusions and recommendations pertinent to the strategy, programs and organizational assessment.

2. Review of Country Strategy Plan

Strategic planning is the means of envisioning an organization's future and determining the steps to get there. For LWSIT, the CSP 2010-15 holds is particularly significant as it is the organization's first strategic plan and hence an important tool for shaping its vision, mandate, strategic approaches, objectives and culture.

The process of developing the Country Strategy was completed by the end of 2009 and the new country strategy has remained effective between the period 2010 to 2015. The process was consultative, with the participation of all major stakeholders, including LWF/DWS, UELCI, NCCI, Northern Partner Agencies, Ecumenical Partners and LWSIT staff members. The evaluation of the CSO 2008 highlighted key issues and challenges related to localization and provided some concrete recommendations for the 2010-15 strategy. Key points highlighted in the 2008 evaluation report included:

- ▶ The framework of vision, mission, values, goal and strategic priorities should be developed after careful *assessment* of the changing external environment and internal strengths, competencies and priorities
- ▶ The *strategy* should look to position the new localized LWSI to offer value added services compared to other NGOs and should be able to 'sell' itself and raise financial support both locally and internationally
- ▶ The *strategy* should be a result of thorough participatory planning and analysis within LWSIT
- ▶ The *strategic* plan should focus on commitment to long term directions, priorities and processes by which sustainable goals can be achieved

2.1 Relevance of CSP to priority groups and changing contexts

For development effectiveness it is important that the organization's strategic objective and priorities should be relevant, realistic and responsive to current and future challenges. While assessing the relevance of the CSP to priority groups and changing contexts, the evaluation team attempted to answer the questions below:

2.1.1 Clarity in articulating the core ideology and vision

LWSIT has retained its identity as a Christian ecumenical institution that believes and propagates the values of justice, democracy, secularism and accountability. The evaluation team noted with appreciation that LWSIT's values have been clearly articulated in the CSP and demonstrated through its staff composition, in the selection of priority focus groups and geography, through LWSIT's choices of projects and its strategic approaches.

LWSIT's mandate is re-enforced by LWSIT's values and its mission that states *"Inspired by God's love for humanity, LWSIT challenges and responds to the causes and consequences of human suffering and poverty with commitment to justice and dignity for all"*. The CSP clearly establishes that LWSIT will take forward the legacy that the India program has created through more than 35 years of humanitarian and development action in the Country, with more opportunities to work towards its core mandate and mission, as a localized entity.

LWSIT's vision statement is aspirational yet utopian. While an aspirational vision is commendable, it is also important to have a vision that seems achievable within a timeframe that motivates and inspires stakeholders to put their best foot forward. Being a newly set up Indian organization, LWSIT has had the opportunity to craft its own vision that provides direction, shapes the organization strategy and empowers people to prioritize their efforts. While the mandate and the vision is clear, the vision and the goals need to be made simpler and translatable to regional languages so that it is easily understood across stakeholders and communities.

LWSIT's goal stems from its mission and is to *"empower men, women and children of disadvantaged communities to enhance their quality of life, through rights based approaches for sustainable livelihood, food and human security"*. Except for the inclusion of rights based approach, the goal is similar to the previous Country Strategy Outline (CSO-2003-08) and captures the challenges that LWSIT intends to address, the approaches, the focus group and the expected impact.

However, it could increase its clarity by articulating clear measures for measuring the achievement of the program goal within a specified time frame, define terminologies used in the program goal such as 'sustainable livelihood', 'quality of life' etc., which are currently vague and difficult to measure. Further, it may be noted that achievements of the program goal in the previous strategy period have not been described, despite the geographic areas and nature of its projects being similar.

2.1.2 Assessment of the development context

One of the key attributes of the LWSIT CSP is its clarity in articulating its priority focus groups (PFGs) and geographies. The CSP provides statistics and qualitative insights on issues faced by its PFGs- tribals, dalits and muslims. However these are offered at a generic level in the national context without highlighting the socioeconomic condition of the priority groups within the context of the particular geographies that LWSIT

works in - Odisha, West Bengal and Assam. The analysis, at the national context, brings out the challenges related to human rights violation or vulnerabilities of Dalits, STs or Muslims; however it does not provide any insights into the causes and impact of such violations/vulnerabilities. Overall, the analysis was found weak in building a clear perspective on the barriers to social inclusion of these focus groups within the context of their geography, especially considering the depth of knowledge and learning that LWSIT has gathered working for over 35 years with the PFGs within these geographies.

The Country strategy identifies and analyses a diverse range of issues as development challenges³. The CSP provides a high level analysis of development challenges and represents broad issues that remain relevant and valid in the current scenario. Most of the issues were already a part of the UN Millennium Development Goals and later the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Poverty, agriculture, food security, health, education and gender discrimination remain a priority of the Government of India and its national flagship programs. The issues identified in the CSP are multidimensional and intricately linked.

In terms of socio-economic and socio-political context the following major changes have taken place nationally and internationally that will have an impact on LWSIT's next phase of the country strategy:

- ▶ There was a change in the National Government in 2014, ending the 10 years of rule of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) becoming the first political party to gain absolute majority in almost 24 years. The new government continues to support major social development schemes and programs and has initiated new campaigns and programs like the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (sanitation, open defecation), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (gender equality) and Skilling India (Vocational Training and Skill Development) to name a few.
- ▶ The new Companies Act 2013 came into force on the 1st of April 2014. Section 135 of the Companies Act 2013, mandates every company having net worth of INR five hundred crore or more, or turnover of INR one thousand crore or more, or net profit of INR five crore or more during any financial year shall spend 2% of its annual profits (average of previous three years) on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Further, it highlights the need for carrying out CSR under a well-defined project/program mode and provides under Schedule VII, a list of thematic areas under which Companies would need to plan these projects.
- ▶ New FCRA Act: The Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has notified amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2011. By virtue of this notification the amended rules shall be known as Foreign Contribution (Regulations) Rules 2015. The key amendments that are noteworthy include; filing of the annual returns under FCRA, 2010 which includes filing of the annual return of receipt and utilization of foreign contribution in form C4 online. Another important amendment to be noted includes the quarterly uploading of grant information by all organizations that have a prior/permanent registration.
- ▶ Year 2015 marked the end of an era that was guided by the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) paving way for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs were officially adopted by the United Nations in 2015 and consist of 17 goals to be achieved over the next 15 years by all partner countries (including India). These goals seek to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of the new sustainable development agenda.

These developments will have an impact on LWSIT's second country strategy and should provide inputs in terms of programmatic direction, resource mobilization and compliances.

2.1.3 Strategic priorities, objectives, approaches and mode of operation

Strategic priorities (SP) determine the critical success factors and key elements that are required to bridge the gap towards achieving the vision and goal and guide the overall objectives. The CSP provides five strategic priorities. Each of them articulates the underlying approaches/values behind LWSIT strategy and is closely inter-woven with LWSIT's strategic objectives.

Strategic objectives

The country strategy has four objectives.

- ▶ *Strategic objective (SO-1)- communities are empowered to secure rights to improved quality of life:* The strategies to achieve SO1 include promoting self-managed community based organizations, building their capacity, strengthening gender balanced leadership, establishing links with duty bearers and increasing community awareness to deal with these duty bearers. The strategies also include specific support

³ Development challenges as identified are (1) Poverty, (2) Agriculture and food security, (3) Natural resources, (4) climate change and disaster, (5) health, (6) HIV and AIDS, (7) Human rights and development, (8) Gender Discrimination and (9) Migration

(knowledge, awareness and asset assistance) on indicators such as health, education, water and sanitation for improving quality of life. The evaluation findings suggest that these strategies are well placed to address challenges related to social discrimination and marginalization. The strategies however appear inadequate in addressing the quality of life related indicators. A missing element in the strategy is its lack of focus on addressing supply side factors, especially in terms of engagement of duty bearers and advocacy with government line departments. The evidence of change is not supported by measurable quantitative indicators and is not supported by factual baseline data.

- ▶ Strategic objective (SO-2) - focuses on creation of sustainable livelihood. The strategies include skill development initiatives, location specific agriculture systems improvement, and adoption of indigenous knowledge; promoting SHGs to manage savings and credits, product marketing; and protection and conservation of natural resources. This is an important objective, considering that sustainable livelihood provides a base for improvement in other quality of life indicators and vice-versa. The strategies are relevant as the priority groups are primarily dependent on subsistence agriculture and there is a high reliability on natural resources. However, the strategies may not be adequate to achieve sustainable livelihood - which is a broader concept and cannot be looked at only in terms of increased income of a few right holders. There is limited connect between these strategies and improved household level food security.
- ▶ Strategic Objective (SO-3) addresses the area of disaster response and disaster risk reduction. Most of the strategies included to achieve this objective are an area of strength for the organization. There is limited clarity on the strategies for climate change adaptation at community level.
- ▶ Strategic Objective (SO-4) focuses on organizational capacity development. The strategies include investment in staff skill development, putting in place HRDM policies, policies and strategies for advocacy work, resource mobilization, communication and visibility. The strategy also includes developing corpus fund for the organization. This is the only SO that focuses on organizational development.

Overall, the strategic objectives are aligned with the LWSIT goal and strategic priorities. The SOs primarily focuses on empowering communities for improved quality of life, securing their livelihood and making them more resilient to disaster risks. While there is definitely a linkage between the problems identified and the strategic priorities, terminologies such as quality of life, empowerment, sustainable livelihood could be better defined in the CSP document.

The CSP provides three strategic approaches; rights based approach, empowerment approach and integrated approach. From a relevance perspective, especially looking at the socio-economic background of the priority communities, all three approaches are relevant and are in sync with each other. Detailed analysis on how these approaches were integrated in LWSIT projects have been provided in Section 3.1.1.

2.2 Performance and achievements against Country Strategy

Evaluation objective: Determine the extent to which the Strategic Objectives of the LWSIT Country Strategy 2010-2015 have been met

LWSIT has implemented more than 30 projects (including projects on disaster relief through ACT Alliance) during the strategy period. LWSIT's coverage and outreach has mainly remained within the focused States of Odisha, West Bengal and Assam; the projects on disaster relief have had a pan India coverage. The table below indicates that LWSIT has been fairly successful in aligning its projects with the strategic objectives and conceptually, all the projects have been designed within the framework of the country strategy. However, an objective assessment of the extent to which the country strategy has been met was difficult to measure as:

- ▶ The CSP does not provide any measurable targets or key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure and monitor the progress and achievement of the strategy. Similarly, evidences provided in the CSP have not been benchmarked and quantified;
- ▶ Project results /achievements are captured in respective project reports and the organization's annual report. There has not been any attempt, however, to aggregate project level achievements at a country strategy level in order to monitor strategic progress;
- ▶ LWSIT has not documented and reviewed the progress of its country strategy; the focus has been more on reviewing individual projects. Further, the evaluation team did not find any documented evidence that suggested such discussions in the meetings of the Board of Trustees.

Table 1: An overview of the bilateral & the core projects

Name of Key Projects	Alignment		
	SO-1	SO-2	SO-3
RDP project in South 24 Parganas	High	Medium	Medium
Resilient Livelihood and Sustainable Food Security (RLSFS) project,	High	Medium	High
Socioeconomic empowerment with peace and reconciliation project (SEEPRP)	High	High	Low
Stone quarry project	High	High	Low
STEER (Rural)	High	High	Medium
STEER (Urban)	High	High	Low
GEP	High	High	Low
ACT ALLIANCE- Disaster relief and response projects (Emergency Relief)			
Odisha Flood Response-2014			High
Humanitarian Assistance affected by Hudhud			High
Cyclone Phailin- IND 134			High
CBDRR in Tsunami affected communities			High
Early recovery support to cyclone Aila			High
Disaster risk reduction and social empowerment- IND 103			High
<i>Source: LWSIT Annual Reports 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014</i>			

LWSIT's mode of operation is still geared towards programs. Strategic planning and monitoring of the strategy is not yet reflected in organizational systems and practices. The findings from the three projects that were evaluated indicate a wide range of activities against the strategic objectives. The objectives of these projects are in sync with country strategy and there have been short, medium and long term outcomes. These nuances have been discussed in greater length in chapter 3.

With respect to strategic objective 4, LWSIT aimed to enhance organizational capacity by investing in skill development for staff, development of an HRD & M policy, developing policies / strategies for advocacy, resource mobilization, communication / visibility and developing a corpus fund for the Trust. Taking on LWSI's legacy as a country programme, LWSIT's focus has been mainly on programme development. Progress on organizational aspects therefore has been slow. This has been further explored and analyzed in section 3.2.

3. Findings and analysis

3.1 Program evaluation

Three projects have been evaluated within the overall framework of the CSP as per the ToR, each of which represents three distinct contexts and theories of change.

- ▶ The STEER (Rural) project is a continuation of the Rural Development Project (RDP) that has been LWSI's flagship initiative for over two decades. The project title - social transformation, economic *empowerment* and risk reduction captures its ideology and philosophy which is reflected in its objectives and approaches. The project is supported by a consortium of donors which includes Bread for the World (BfdW), Church of Sweden (CoS), Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America (ELCA). The project is operational in 9 districts (8-Odisha and 1 in West Bengal) and the current phase is operational for 2014-2016.
- ▶ The second project evaluated was the Gender Empowerment Project (GEP), which is being implemented in the same operational areas as where the STEER (Urban) and the Urban Development Project (UDP) were implemented (urban slums of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Kolkata). The project focuses on identifying gender discriminatory practices and issues challenging women empowerment and addresses these through community based collective action through a rights based approach. The project is being funded by CoS, ELCA, JELA, ECHOLE and is operational for the time period 2014-2016.
- ▶ The third project being evaluated is the Development Support Program for the Stone Quarry Workers (DSSQC) implemented in Birbhum district of West Bengal and Dumka of Jharkhand. The project addresses the problems faced by the communities living in the vicinity of the illegal mines and stone quarries in the area and is being funded by Normisjon. The current phase of the project is operational from 2013 to 2017.

The evaluation has been conducted as per the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. This chapter provides major findings and inferences that have drawn from the evaluation; given the distinct context for each project and the their individualities, the findings have been provided separately, even at the cost of repetitions in order to avoid any inadvertent generalization.

3.1.1 Relevance

Within the context of project/program evaluation, 'relevance' assesses the extent to which the objectives of the project are consistent with the requirements of its priority focus groups, socio-economic need of the target geography, organizational policies and strategies and donor policies and priorities. The Assessment of project relevance was guided by following evaluation questions.

Evaluation question: To what extent are the problems (Development Challenges) identified still valid?

The situational analysis/problem analysis has been captured in the respective project documents. Across projects, the problems identified were indeed found relevant in relation to the LWSIT priority focus groups, the country strategy and are valid in the current context. The Project design could be further improved by including specific problems that are pertinent to the communities/areas.

STEER (Rural) Project

The situational analysis in both CoS and BftW project documents, highlights the key problems intended to be addressed by the project. The project areas/partner communities continue to have a high proportion of SC/ST and excluded communities who face numerous barriers to their social inclusion and integration into mainstream development programming, with socio-cultural barriers being the most deep-rooted.

However, there are a few design limitations that need to be considered:

- ▶ Target geographies and the operational areas are not homogenous and the problems may be manifested differently in each of the operational areas. The reasons for marginalization of Dalits, STs and SCs are also different and hence strategies to address them should ideally be different. The project document lacks an in depth analysis to bring out these peculiarities and does not establish the causalities for the problems identified.
- ▶ The problem analysis lacks adequate references to the baseline survey and other participatory appraisals. The intensity of problems across the operational area (prioritization) has not been clearly elaborated.
- ▶ The operational area includes accompaniment villages where LWSIT has implemented projects before; total years of intervention have been for over 5 years. It is fair to assume that the problems in accompaniment communities would be different than those in the intensive and adoption communities; however the project design does not bring out these differences.

Gender Empowerment Project

The problems highlighted are relevant and valid in the present context. The analysis however is sketchy; it introduces the issue but does not elaborate on the causal factors. As in case of STEER (Rural), there is limited reference to the baseline information.

- ▶ More than half of the GEP priority communities were part of the STEER (Urban) project. The project design does not reflect the experiential learning from the previous engagement with these communities; neither does it provide empirical data on the socio-economic condition of these communities;
- ▶ A missing component is the absence of a gender analysis that brings out the specific constraints and challenges related to gender relations, discriminations and gender based violence. While vulnerabilities for women have been identified, vulnerabilities related to young girls are yet to be identified.
- ▶ Almost 40% of the operational communities live in unauthorized urban slums. There are challenges associated with mainstreaming these illegal slums and the socioeconomic and political context differs. These scenarios are not adequately identified in the project design.

Stone Quarry Project

The situation analysis as provided in the Stone Quarry project document (2013-17) is much more comprehensive than the other projects. Problems were initially identified through a fact finding mission and baseline data was collected based on broad directions of the fact finding mission. Though the baseline data does not necessarily correspond to the overall problems of the area, it does bring out the key issues faced by the population in the project area such as the issues related to education, livelihood and food security, Health, Water & Sanitation, Protection & Management of Natural Environment, Information and Advocacy on Human Rights which are indeed issues relevant in the project area.

Evaluation question: Do the Strategic Priorities, Objectives, Approaches and Modes of Operation correctly address the identified problems?

The selection of the project, operational areas and priority groups are based on an understanding of grassroots realities and within the overall framework of the country strategy framework. The strategic priorities are relevant across the projects; however, with varying degrees of relevance. Social transformation and empowerment, economic empowerment and gender equity are objectives that are relevant across all the projects. Inclusion is an underlying component across projects and is duly reflected in the respective project strategies. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) has varying degrees of relevance across projects- highly relevant in STEER (Rural) operational area, somewhat relevant in GEP and comparatively low in Stone Quarry project. The project objectives for each of the projects are geared towards addressing the identified problems within their specific context of operations.

STEER (Rural) Project

Addressing the problem of social exclusion requires addressing both demand and supply side challenges (lack of infrastructure, quality of service, corruption, bureaucratic hassles etc). Research⁴ shows that even when there have been assured supply of provisions, these have not been accessed by priority social groups because of low levels of awareness or inability to collectively demand their rights.

There is limited emphasis on addressing the supply side factors and limited provisions have been made in the project design to work on awareness and sensitization of the duty-bearers to enable and strengthen their knowledge and capacity to deliver. This can be exemplified in the cases of results areas of health, education, women and child development, and, HIV where the project intervenes on raising awareness/sensitization without making adequate provisions to strengthen the supply side factors.

The project strategies on sustainable livelihood focuses on reducing the capacity gaps through trainings, providing inputs and resource which, if implemented can help create the conditions necessary for sustainable livelihood but may not be adequate to achieve sustainable livelihood.⁵

⁴ Source: An internal research undertaken by the evaluation team members for UNICEF in identifying the barriers to social inclusion for socially excluded communities. 2011-2012

⁵ A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recovers from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation (Chambers and Conway, 1992).

Gender Empowerment Project

The project document identifies a wide range of problems that the target groups (children, adolescent girls and women) face which include malnutrition, fewer educational and employment opportunities, unequal wages, gender based violence, inadequate healthcare and unequal participation in the political and the public space.

The project has four specific objectives which include identification of and collective action being taken by both men and women towards gender discriminatory practices whilst empowering women to fulfill their practical and strategic needs. It also talks about appropriate engagement of and action by key government officials and elected representatives to address gender inequality. Specific focus has been directed towards adequately capacitating the project team so as to ensure that right holders are further empowered.

The strategic approaches and objectives identified for the project are valid since women in the slums have limited access to rights and basic amenities and are disempowered, be it politically, economically or socially. Despite the identification of practical and the strategic needs of women and children related to education, health, malnourishment, MCH related issues and water and sanitation, the project does not have any strategies to work on BCC and awareness generation. Minimal interaction and engagement has been planned with concerned government officials and duty bearers who are accountable for ensuring the rights of women and children within these communities. While the modes of operation are relevant, the project design does not provide clear platforms for interaction that indicate joint participation by men and women.

Stone Quarry Project

It is evident through interactions with the rights holders that alienation and inability to access one's rights have far more serious consequences than simply the lack of physical assets. The issue of DRR as espoused in the CSP is not relevant to the project area since disaster is not a critical factor in this region. The problem of stone quarrying and its disastrous effect cannot be tackled through the strategy as mentioned in the CSP and would require a much more nuanced approach and sustained interaction with the duty bearers. However, in the stone quarry project, the disaster is to be seen from the long-term negative impact of the stone quarry activities (especially illegal mining). The result of this disaster is evident in this generation but would be much more pronounced in the generations to come. The CSP is not prepared to tackle this at present in the project area.

The issue of organizational capacity is highly relevant in the project location. The expected results would be achieved only when the team interacting with the right holders is able to understand and articulate the theory of change. At present, the understanding of the right holders is limited to survival and tackling day to day challenges. There is a need to create a vision of a better future through empowerment. This is something where the LWIST team has to work in tandem with the right holders. Further, this would be successful only when the team is aware of the difference between multiple approaches and is able to clearly visualize the future roadmap.

The mode of operation provided in the CSP is inherently geared towards promoting people's participation in decision making. However, considering the existing situation in the project area where there is a lack of education and awareness, a true form of participation may not be possible and in some cases may not be desirable. Therefore, the team cannot put the entire onus of planning and monitoring on the community. In the field, the participation of the community in the decision making was marginal and ownership of the decisions was absent.

Evaluation question: To what extent does the implementation of programs reflect the Strategic Approaches including the Rights Based Approach

The strategic approaches as per the country strategy include (a) Rights based approach (RBA) (b) Empowerment approach and (c) Integrated approach. The project teams across locations are unclear on how these differ and their programmatic relevance. Adoption of RBA as an approach has been a major strategic decision and has been an area of focus across projects. The application of RBA is still in an initial stage and it will still take some time for the organization to fully integrate RBA concepts and ideology in all aspects of programming. There are evidences across projects on improved orientation and attitude related to RBA concepts amongst the staff members which was visible in their approach to the community. There is an emphasis on raising community awareness and assisting them in mobilizing resources, however other critical components like sensitizing duty bearers and supporting policy advocacy at state and national level were found missing in the programming.

Empowerment is another approach that the country strategy focuses on. The project strategies seem to provide a higher emphasis on creating access to information (and awareness) and on inclusion and

partnerships⁶ but to a much lesser extent on accountability⁷ and strengthening local government organizational capability.

Evaluation question: Have the implemented projects been consistent with the Country Strategy?

The country strategy is operational under the rubric of working for “*the last, the least and the lost*”, the projects implemented are assiduously aiming to achieve the same. While there may be differences in specific objectives, the projects are in sync with the organizational mandate, mission and vision and contributing towards the organizational goal of creating an empowered society for better quality of life, sustainable livelihood and food and human security. Though, the results are yet to manifest clearly, the overall approaches are in line with the country strategy.

Evaluation question: Are the identified rights holders (Priority Focus Groups) appropriate in relation to the problem analysis and objectives

The identified rights holders are indeed appropriate in relation to the problem analysis and objectives. However, for greater effectiveness deeper information is required about the target groups within their communities and changes in the external context. Project specific variations are explained below:

STEER (Rural) Project

The project document defines the target group as the vulnerable communities-Schedule Tribes, Scheduled Caste and other backward communities of eight districts of Odisha and one district of West Bengal. It is stated that more than 90% of targeted household are landless, marginal and small farmers. The identified target groups are appropriate in relation to the problem analysis as well as the objectives. However, the information provided about the target group is insufficient. The project document mentions the number of communities and total number of households but does not provide a break up of these households by Caste or land holding etc. Moreover, SCs, STs and OBCs are clubbed into a single category which may not be relevant as the socio-cultural dynamics at the community level differs widely across locations. In Kendrapada, all OBC households may not be marginalized or disadvantaged. It is stated that women headed households or disabled person (COS project document) will be prioritized, but the project document does not provide any enumeration on the same.

Gender Empowerment Project

The GEP project has identified right holders appropriately. However, within the selected group of right holders, further classification of vulnerabilities has not been done. The Child Right Situation Analysis (CRSA) with a particular gender perspective has also not been conducted; therefore the differentiation between the violation of rights of girls and boys as separate categories has not been identified. Similarly women of different social and economic strata have not been defined and classified. Adding to this is the fact that the target slums are both authorized and unauthorized. It has been observed that government services are comparatively better in authorized slums in comparison to un-authorized slums. However, in both the cases; slums remain a low priority for duty bearers.

Stone Quarry Project

The rights holders are appropriate to the problems identified during the problem analysis. However, the grass-root situation has changed in the project area over time. The emphasis in the stone quarry project was to work with people engaged in the stone quarry or the crushers which is now changing. The rapid mechanization of the crushers is creating unemployment and thus the number of people employed in the stone quarry and crushers is reducing. Therefore, the earlier emphasis of working with the people employed in the crushers may have to be revisited. It was also observed during the field visit that most of CBOs have only few members who are working in the stone quarry. So, there is a need to look at the rights holders in a broader sense of the marginalized community rather than stone quarry or crusher workers.

Evaluation question: Is the cross cutting included in the country strategy relevant and adequately reflected in organizational practices and programs

The cross cutting issues mentioned in the country strategy have varying degree of relevance for different projects and their adoption into the programs differ accordingly.

⁶ Inclusion of poor people and other traditionally excluded groups in priority setting. informed participation usually requires changing the rules so as to create space for people to debate issues and participate directly or indirectly in local and national priority setting, budget formation, and delivery of basic services.

⁷ Accountability refers to the ability to call public officials, private employers or service providers to account, requiring that they be answerable for their policies, actions and use of funds.

STEER (Rural) Project

Sustainable livelihood, food security and DRR are integral components of the project. The project also has a strong focus on women empowerment and gender balanced leadership. Even though climate change adaptation measures are not a priority intervention, it is reflected in the project strategies. The project reports awareness and sensitization activities on HIV, although HIV is not a relevant threat in the project area. The cross cutting issue of peace and harmony are not very relevant for the STEER operational districts and therefore have not been focused upon in the project design.

Gender Empowerment Project

GEP has strong components on gender, sustainable livelihoods & food security and HIV related issues. Despite the fact that most of the communities relocated in these slums are from disaster affected/impacted location, which still have their roots in their villages, DRR has not been adequately addressed in the project. Climate change adaptation and peace and harmony are not relevant issues for the project and have not been added.

Stone Quarry Project

Not all cross-cutting issues have relevance in the project area. This is also reflected in the project's focus on few issues and silence on others. In the stone quarry project, the entire issue of DRR, climate change adaptation, peace and harmony is not relevant at the present juncture and the project's focus on these issues has been limited. In relation, the issue of Sustainable livelihoods and food security, Gender and HIV have strong relevance in the project area. It is to be expected that pan-India, the cross-cutting issues have relevance, but at the micro (project) level only some will be relevant.

3.1.2 Effectiveness

While assessing the effectiveness the evaluation assessed and addressed the following questions:

Evaluation question: Are the strategies, approaches and modes of operation adopted to implement planned activities relevant, well-designed and effective?

Across all the projects, the strategies and activities were found in alignment with the strategies and approaches mentioned in the CSP. Project specific findings are mentioned below

STEER (Rural) Project

The project strategies are in line with the CSP and most of the strategies on community empowerment have been adopted by the project. Components of capacity enhancement and CBO strengthening are strongly reflected in the project activities and have been credited as one of the major project achievements by the communities. There is limited evidence of the project having had established linkages with duty bearers. Additionally, strategies corresponding to promoting functional literacy skills of adult men and women, bringing out of school children into formal schooling could be better designed. The evaluation found a gap between the desired/intended results on education and health and the corresponding initiatives. The modes of operation included in the strategy focus on strengthening civil society organizations, policy advocacy and local self-government organizations. The project does not reflect these elements into its design or implementation.

The theory of change for achieving sustainable livelihood related results is not clearly established. Several strategies are suggested in the CSP like skill development, location specific sustainable agriculture, adoption of indigenous knowledge, marketing of products produced by SHGs and environmental protection and regeneration measures. The project however, focuses primarily on providing inputs, whether training, implements, seeds or IGA assistance. IGA is limited to individual right holders and there are limited evidences where SHGs have received any assistance to start a group based income generating activity. The strategies on DRR are well founded but are applicable only to limited critical geographies. Few other critical findings are as follows:

- ▶ The project lacks a standard definition of CBOs. There are different types of CBOs that are supported with corresponding intensity and nature of support,. The project strategies and activities do not differentiate in terms of how it will engage with all reported CBOs and how such outcomes shall be measured. The number of CBOs reported thus appears inflated. Further, there is no clarity on the status of reported CBOs in the accompaniment communities.
- ▶ The project strategies include creating a vertical network of community based organizations (CBOs) by federating them at Panchayat and district level. The concept is relevant and can be used as an effective tool for advocacy at the grass root level. A clearly defined strategy to mobilize these federated structures would be useful for advocacy purposes.

Gender Empowerment Project

The Project strategies involve formation and strengthening of women groups at different tiers. Within each of these groups (SHGs), two to three leaders are identified and trained, who in turn work with their peers. As a result, each community group has trained women leaders, who are facilitating the process of claiming rights and entitlements (Practical needs) and are also working as an advocate for women's rights within the community at large, which includes the political and social empowerment of women (Strategic needs). These leaders have formed federations in the form of Mahila Samiti (Women's Federation) and WAVAW (Women's association on Violence against Women) in Bhubaneswar and DWU (Domestic Workers Union) in Cuttack.

These women groups are collectively working for the rights of children and women in their respective constituencies. There are reported instances of communities receiving better services and entitlements from the government. However, there is a marked difference in the capacity of women in the new and the old groups and the group leaders vis a vis the rest of the group. Some instances of women fighting municipal elections have also been reported in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack which indicate a positive change in women's participation in the political system.

The project approaches and strategies however are not clearly defined and do not encourage participation of men in the project. In the project area, men are still looking at women as a means to attract project benefits, primarily financial benefits from the project rather than believing in women's rights and respecting gender equality. The project has also been unable to change the mind set of women, who still believe in patriarchal norms and seldom raise their voices against men within their household and society.

As already mentioned, the engagements with duty bearers are seemingly limited. There are limited evidences of advocacy efforts being made by either the project team or by the right holders themselves. A strong outcome of the project could have been advocacy for rights of women living in the slums but the project lacks research and documentation and interventions design for community lead advocacy.

Stone Quarry Project

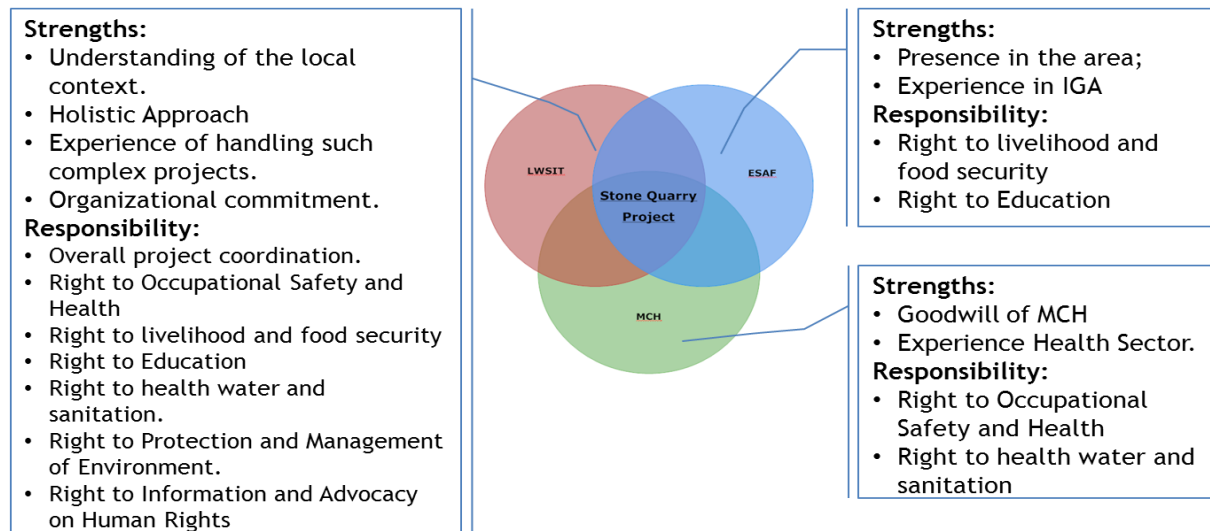
The project has been designed with a few core strategies in mind which include user participation, co-operation with national and local authorities, involving and improving the situation of women, ensuring sustainability in relation to the environment and integrating the different components of the Project. These strategies are very much relevant in the given context; project success is highly dependent on user participation and co-operation with the national and local authorities. In the project area, and given the nature of the project, the strategy of involving the national and local authorities is extremely important. Similarly, involvement of women and collectivization of women in SHGs is a prerequisite for sustainable development. The proposed strategy is also in sync with the CSP as it also espouses the preeminent role of women collectives, and integration of the different project components like education, health, environment, livelihood and food security.

The project strategies were articulated into coherent modes of operation. At the grass-root level the modes of operation included promotion and strengthening of CBOs and Groups, Strengthening Civil Society, Advocacy and Lobbying, and Strengthening Local Self-Government Institutions. From the relevance perspective, these elements are critical and are rightly aligned with the needs of the project area and beneficiary needs. However, these strategies and modes of operation have not been effectively implemented at the ground level. Other than forming the SHGs and village CBOs (promoting collectivization), the rest of the strategies with its accompanying modes of operation were not effectively implemented. The strategy of co-opting national and local authorities in the project, involving strengthening of civil society & PRI, advocacy and lobbying were not effectively implemented.

The experience of the evaluation team while interacting with the other duty bearers reflected a skewed implementation of the project by LWSIT. The local and national authorities were largely ignored as the focus was completely towards building SHGs and village CBOs. Additionally, there is no focused activity to ensure the involvement of PRIs. The PRIs involvement in different awareness activities is either purely incidental or it is due to the volition of the PRI members. As a strategy, the role of the village CBO remains sketchy.

The village CBOs visited by the evaluation team stated that they were not aware about the purpose of the group. They are aware about the thrift and credit groups but not the village development group. Further, the village CBOs are not equipped enough to handle the possible interactions, including conflicts with the PRI members. Creating a parallel structure at the village level is not something which is advisable as its sustainability is usually until the project exists and once the implementation agency exits the project area, such institutions evaporate.

Figure 2: Roles and responsibilities of partners- Stone Quarry Project



The issues of advocacy and lobbying are missing from the implementation plan. While awareness activities have been undertaken at the community level and there have been a few Government-Public interface programs, a planned approach to the entire issue of lobbying is missing from project implementation roadmap. The strategy of integrating the different components of the Project is achieved through partnership with ESAF and MCH. The roles and responsibilities of the partner agencies are provided in Figure 1.

The selected Agencies have a clear mandate and their tasks are defined at the time of preparation of the annual plan. The target for each of the agencies is set at the beginning of the year. There is an in-built coordination mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability for achieving project objectives. There is a regular meeting of the partners to discuss achievements and the way forward. In 2015, there were in all 9 partners meeting held. The community members were also able to clearly recollect the medical camps organized by MCH, although they were not sure whether these should be attributed to MCH or LWSIT.

It is unclear whether these agencies work on the “Rights Based Approach”, which leads to the implication that while LWSIT is working on empowering communities, other agencies are working on service mode or on a needs-based approach. This in the long run would impact project objectives, as it would be difficult for beneficiaries to make the conceptual shift from ‘service recipient’ mode to ‘service demanding’ mode.

Evaluation question: What internal and external factors have influenced the possibility to meet the strategic objectives

An experienced and motivated team well versed in project related strategies and LWSIT modes of operation, with credibility in the community due to prior engagements (direct or indirect) and knowledge of grass-root realities and understanding of the socioeconomic context and dynamics are the major internal factors that have positively influenced the project results across all the projects. The Government’s flagship initiatives and improved access by the communities to such initiatives are the key external factors that have influenced the meeting of strategic objectives.

STEER Rural Project

- ▶ Programs like SSA, JSY, ICDS and NUHM along with Swatch Bharat Mission and other such programs have been able to bring a lot of changes in rural areas with evidence to suggest that these programs are being accessed now by socially excluded communities as well.
- ▶ Most of the SHGs that the project works with were formed under ICDS scheme and are now being supported under Odisha Livelihood Mission.
- ▶ There are perceptible changes in some of the key indicators like enrollment in primary school, institutional deliveries, IMR and MMR etc. Improvement in such quality of life indicators may to a great extent be attributable to implementation of government programs.

Gender Empowerment Project

- ▶ Government’s flagship initiatives: Some of the core project development indicators related to education, health, mother and child care, drinking water and sanitation are also focused indicators under Government flagship program like SSA, NRHM, Swatch Bharat Mission and Janani Suraksha Yojna etc. Success of these flagship programs has a positive influence on the project outcomes

- ▶ The SHG groups in Odisha are being supported under Odisha Livelihood Mission where a cluster resource person is appointed to assist a cluster of 15 SHGs. It has complemented the project activities
- ▶ A slum policy was approved in 2015 in India which ensures “in situ” rehabilitation of slum dwellers. Relocation would be done only if there is any court order or the concerned cluster has encroached a street, road, footpath, park or the encroached land is required by the land owning agency for a specific public project. It was observed that the slum policy is yet to be identified and accessed by both the field team and also the communities. However, this could potentially be attributed to the fact that until now only certain schemes have been identified by the team and these are the only ones being accessed by the communities such as the Right to Education, the Right to Food etc. Once the team is well versed with the Rights based approach in its totality, communities can be then be made aware of the larger gambit of social security schemes and can be directed towards availing the same.

Stone Quarry Project

- ▶ Government’s flagship initiatives: Some of the core project development indicators related to education, health, mother and child care, drinking water and sanitation are also the focused indicators under Government flagship program like SSA, NRHM, Swatch Bharat Mission and Janani Suraksha Yojna etc. Success of these flagship programs has a positive influence on the project outcomes.
- ▶ The new crushers in the area are getting mechanized, thus requiring less manpower. This has led to less number of people being engaged in the stone quarry activity. Therefore there is a considerable requirement of alternate employment opportunities for the community members.
- ▶ Information Communication Technology: Most of the villages may not have proper road but some SHG members now have mobile phones. This is helping them in accessing information faster and connecting with other group members and duty bearers.

Evaluation question: What are the major short or medium term (intended or unintended) outcomes of the project?

The project related outcomes are captured in the annual monitoring reports/annual report that has been submitted with the donor partners.

STEER (Rural) Project

The observation report (appendix E) provides a detailed analysis of the project outcome. The field visits to Kalahandi and Kendrapada project areas gave a wide and varied perspective of project activities and related output and outcomes. Both the operational areas have their own set of challenges and complexities. In Kalahandi, for example, in some of the communities, even getting the communities together for a meeting is an arduous task. The community, mostly tribal, is dependent on daily wage for their livelihood, illiteracy is high, tribal customs and traditions dominate their social interactions and getting their concurrence for capacity development activities and participation in training etc is a tough task. An understanding of these realities and complexities helps in better comprehension of the data and numbers as the significance attached to these numbers and results are much higher. All the results, big or small, achieved by the project have significance and needs to be celebrated.

The project outcome indicators for BftW and CoS do not match. There is limited clarity on what the expectations of ELCA are in terms of project reporting and measurable outcomes. The outcomes focuses on incremental values but there is no clarity on the baseline scenario and the basis for calculating the outcome (although mentioned in the project report) remains vague and is not backed by proper evidences and source data. The project data collection overtly relies on FGDs with community as the source of data. This is a flawed technique as the FGDs can provide qualitative insights but is not a correct medium to collect data. Most of the indicators are weak in establishing clear attribution of project interventions (theory of change). The indicators on health, educations etc are broad based and cannot be solely attributable to project interventions.

Gender Empowerment Project

The observation report (appendix F) provides a detailed analysis of the project outcome.

The GEP project works across three different locations, i.e. Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Kolkata which have their own specificities be it social, economic or political. In the absence of standard operating procedure (SOPs), implementation of the project activities across these locations varies. Keeping such factors in mind, achieving the different outputs as has been mentioned in the log frame becomes a big challenge. The outcomes also become difficult to measure since neither the project document nor the annual reports guide such measurement.

It has also been noted that no baseline that has been conducted against the mentioned indicators thus making the measurement even more challenging. Here we can refer to one of the objectives which states that by the end of 2016, 90 % of the total children (boys and girls) in age group of 6-14 would be attending formal schools regularly. Within the communities LWSIT operates study centers that it partly funds along with a minimal fee

that is also paid by the parents of the children who are enrolled there. Here the indicator talks about formal schooling whereas no interventions are targeted towards formal schooling. The study centre is beneficial to the communities but this intervention is a solution to a short term problem rather than a solution that would further go on to influence policy or challenge government authorities. Communities also are content with such solutions since they do understand the needs of their children and are cognizant of the struggle and the wait they may have to face in case they approach the government authorities. The activities or outputs for most of the long term indicators are visible. However, the outcomes are yet to manifest.

There are certain outcomes that are visible and which are related to community awareness on different social security schemes and benefits. Communities are now aware of certain rights such as the Right to Education and the Right to Food. However, communities are yet to be made aware of the larger gambit of the social security schemes that are available to them. Also, it is unfair to attribute the fact that all communities are availing their entitlements only due to LWSIT intervention. The Government is continually coming up with schemes that address the urban and the rural poor.

It has also been observed that the slum dwellers are now aware of the importance of educating their children, providing them nutritious food, about the ills of substance abuse and also about living in a clean and safe environment. As has been reported, 93% children in the communities are now availing primary education. Similarly, 85% people in the communities are now availing health services which goes on to indicate a change in attitudes towards healthier practices. However, again it was noticed that such levels of awareness was greater within the groups than in the larger community.

A lot of the CBO members reported that post LWSIT interventions they have now become more aware, confident and are able to voice their opinions besides lobbying for their rights. A big change that has been noted is that despite the diversity in the slums, people are now aware of the benefits of collective action. Earlier, the communities were afraid to interface with their local councilors/corporators for their rights but are now increasingly lobbying and availing the same.

Stone Quarry Project

The project is spread across different themes with numerous related activities. Considering these factors, the achievement of different outputs is in itself a big task. The annual report provides details regarding the output achieved, but is weak in explaining and highlighting the outcomes. The expected outcomes as per the project report is difficult to measure as the project document nor the annual reports provide any guidance on assessing the outcome level indicators. Even if we consider some level of achievement of the long term objectives as an indicator of outcomes, it is very difficult to assess as there is no baseline on some of those indicators. For example, one of the long term objectives is to ensure that 70 % of the communities would be engaged in environmental regeneration, conservation and protection activities. However, there is no baseline presently on how many people presently are engaged in environmental regeneration. Further, there is no standard definition of what environmental regeneration, conservation and protection activities would mean. In the project, formation of the Forest Protection Group (FPG) is considered as engaged in environmental regeneration. However, the interactions with the FPG reveal that they are aware about the need for environmental regeneration but are not actively pursuing it and are not sure how this would happen. This is true for most of the long term indicators. The activities or outputs are visible, however, the outcomes are yet to manifest.

Some of the outcomes that are visible are related to community awareness on different social development issues. The community members are aware that stone quarry or the crushers cannot be the sole source of employment and they need to diversify. This can be related to improvement in the agricultural practices or can be through other micro enterprises. The community members are keen to pursue the micro-enterprise route provided they are able to earn sufficiently. Again, in this case the project report has not been able to capture the increased income level due to different micro-enterprise activities. It is very difficult to comment whether these enterprises are really profitable or are heavily subsidized by LWSIT.

The villagers now are now aware about the need to educate their children. In most of the villages, the SHG members are ensuring that their children go to school regularly. They want their children to be literate. This is a big change observed in the field while interacting with the SHG members. Most of the SHG members have also mentioned that the project has provided them with a sense of pride and dignity. Earlier, they were afraid to talk to Government officials, but now they are able to articulate their grievances and are able to talk to Government officials confidently.

Evaluation question: Have there been any unintended effects?

The evaluation findings indicate achievement of unintended results across all the projects. Key findings have been highlighted below

STEER (Rural) Project

While the project interventions are targeted to the priority focus group, it was observed that improved awareness and sensitization has also impacted other poor communities who belong to other castes. The services received or mobilized from the Government have helped other community members who are not part of the priority groups. In Kendrapada, most of the SHG groups adopted under the project were found to be receiving support from the State Government through Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM). A cluster resource person (CRP) has been appointed for a cluster of 15 SHGs each. Government support has played a major role in improving the capacity of the SHGs and some of the women leaders have also been able to become CRPs.

The project has supported partner communities in creating assets and funds to improve their disaster risk resilience. These assets, e.g. utensil sets are used by the larger communities for cultural, religious and private functions and are handy in extending disaster response work during emergencies.

Gender Empowerment Project

Besides working with men and women, the GEP project is also working with two transgender groups since 2014 in its project location at Cuttack. This category of beneficiaries is vulnerable and has suspended civil rights. The LWSIT team invited them to be a part of the Human Rights Day Observation thus giving them an opportunity to participate in a mainstream gathering. The project also seeks to improve financial literacy and focuses on creating financial linkages. Many of the communities have successfully availed their rights under the Jana Dhana Yojana Scheme, which includes insurance of upto Rs. one lakh and also ATM facilities. With the creation of financial linkages, the financial status of many families has improved to a large extent. One of the members of New Noapara community managed to mobilize a loan from the state cooperative bank to start a candy factory. The bank also provided entrepreneurship development training to that community. This not only improved the status of the individual member but also created employment opportunities for other members of the community.

As per tradition, funeral rites are performed by men only. In one of the communities in Cuttack where LWSIT is presently working, one of the women CBOs formed the funeral rites of a homeless woman who had died in their community. Women groups are also uniting and are fighting social evils such as domestic violence, alcoholism and also substance abuse. Instances have been reported in the project locations wherein women groups have lobbied with other groups such as SarvodayaSamiti, LWSIT and Project Swarajya and have closed liquor stores down.

Stone Quarry Project

The increased public scrutiny and overall awareness regarding the exploitative work conditions have forced the stone quarry owners to be bit more discreet while approaching villagers for land and labour. Further, they have also invested in improving the technologies associated with crusher and stone quarry work. The aim is to reduce employment of local people, thus in long run reducing the need for spending on the welfare of the workers. The project has also been able to accentuate the awareness about the overall negative health impact of the crushers. This has resulted in reduction of the employment of local people in the stone quarry and crusher activity, leading to a lot of women losing their major income source. This is also critical as it impedes their economic empowerment. Some of the women groups in the village have come up with a novel way to make money by charging “toll tax” from all the trucks that pass through their village.

The truckers have to pay Rs 20 to Rs 50 for plying on the village road. This is something that is being followed in several villages in Birbhum and is supported by the entire village. The group of women (usually 20-30) earn around Rs 100-130 every day through the toll tax. However, for collecting the toll tax they have to stand on the dusty road for the entire day, inhaling the dust and the exhaust from the trucks. This would be having serious health-related consequences. This would have a serious impact on the project as they may not be inclined to undertake any activity that would earn them less than Rs 100. Further, as they have to stand on the road for the entire day, they would not be having sufficient time for learning new skills and marketing products. These factors have to be considered while implementing the skill and enterprise development work.

Evaluation question: To what extent have the partner communities been involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring processes?

The project level systems across the projects encourage community participation at the planning stage. Community contribution is an integral component of the project, so the practice of engaging the communities in developing community action plan has been integrated in the project design. Specific findings for each of the project have been mentioned below:

STEER Rural Project

The project level systems encourage community participation at the planning stage. Field level observation and other documented evidences suggest an active role and involvement of the community members in planning and implementation of project interventions. The CBO level records (resolution book) indicate how many meetings have taken place, member's attendance and summary of the discussion. The project has a strong component of community contribution to ensure their ownership. All IGA support from LWSIT involves

contributions from the recipients. The amount for recipient contribution is decided by the community themselves based on discussions that are captured in resolution notes. The Community action plan (CAP) is an important planning tool. It is a process where the community is facilitated to create a development plan for a period of 3 years at the start of the project. The evaluation team noted that CAP process may be made more effective by including mechanisms to monitor the actions and activities included there in and provide specific trainings based on CAP. While the project encourages participation of the community in the planning, their role in monitoring is limited to tracking IGA beneficiaries for loan recovery or ensuring completion of supported physical interventions.

Gender Empowerment Project

Involving the communities in the planning and implementation of activities is a major component of the project design and adds to the uniqueness of how LWSIT works. To facilitate community participation CBOs have been formed in each of the project locations. However, the outreach of the project is limited within these formed CBOs and fails to include the larger community. The annual action plan that is prepared at the beginning of every financial year is done so in consultation with the communities. The communities endorse this plan. For the same, every year 2 members from every community are called to the unit office and are oriented by the staff on the entire process of preparing the CAP, thus possibly limiting larger community participation. It has also been observed that the CBO members were unable to recall the CAP process, hence defeating the very purpose of this exercise.

Community participation in monitoring is another integral part of the project design. Once the CAP has been collated and the subsequent AAP has been approved by the national office, the same is not shared with the community. This limits the community knowledge of the activities that have been sanctioned which also in turn affects the monitoring of the same. This leads to the activities implemented being largely project driven rather than community based needs. It was also reported that sometimes some activities are not sanctioned and are taken off the AAP. The same yet again is often not communicated to the communities, thus leading to continued lack of ownership and also leads to certain priorities of the communities being compromised. This again goes against the ambit of the RBA.

It has been observed that the mature Mahila Samitis (those that are continuing from STEER Urban) are taking responsibility and are overseeing the functioning of different interventions such as the study centre. These groups not only monitor the functioning of the centre but also select teachers and identify students to be enrolled in the centres. This then creates a sense of community ownership over such interventions. However, it was noted that the study centre primarily caters to the children of the project supported CBOs. This could lead to a certain section of weaker children being left un-served.

The project also has an element of community contribution to ensure their ownership and continued interest in the activities. Most of the activities that are supported by LWSIT involve community contribution be it from the SHG, the community or the individual himself. The amount for recipient contribution is decided by the SHG members through meetings. This is a good system to ensure people participation and ownership. This is typically evident in the study centre being run by LWSIT in the slums. However, in spite of this being a healthy practice to a certain extent, this could also pose a limitation for economically weaker families who are part of the project.

Stone Quarry Project

The design of the project is aimed at involving the partner communities. The project document clearly highlights the need to involve the partner communities in the planning and execution of the project related activities. The project activities in the villages were conceived through discussion with the community members.

Community participation in monitoring has started from 2015 only. Earlier, the monitoring was undertaken by the LWSIT staff only. Even though it is termed as participatory evaluation (PE), the community members are not aware regarding its need, content and follow-up action. As the annual plan is not shared with the community, there is no baseline for the community members to assess the project progress. The PRA and PE exercise at the field level are creating more documentation and work for the staff but is not effectively communicating its importance to the CBO's or SHGs.

The project has a strong component of community contribution to ensure their ownership. Most of the activities supported from LWSIT involve contribution from the community/SHG. The amount for recipient contribution is decided by the SHG members through meetings. This is a good system to ensure people participation and ownership. This is typically evident in the child educational centre being run by LWSIT in the villages. The community members are regularly contributing towards teacher's honorarium and keenly follow the performance of the teacher.

Evaluation question: Has the issue of gender been adequately recognized and addressed under the Country Strategy

Gender is a cross cutting theme as described in the country strategy; and also a strategic priority for the organization. The component of gender is integrated into the project design and its implementation across all projects. Key findings are as follows:

STEER (Rural) Project

The project design incorporates gender in its objectives as a cross cutting theme and it is reflected in some of the project indicators as well. The project has worked to ensure gender balanced leadership in the CBOs and have organized a lot of training and awareness programs on gender sensitization.

The project team is however gender imbalanced with only 19% female staff members in 2015. The overall percentage of female staff came down from 2014, however, in absolute terms it increased from 10 women staff to 12 in 2015. The project has only one female unit manager and the only accounts officer to join the project was in 2015.

Gender Empowerment Project

Despite the specific focus on gender the project document does not provide data on the specific problems that women face in the project locations. Although women have been identified as vulnerable, there is no further classification of the different types of vulnerabilities that exist. Since the slums in both Cuttack and Bhubaneswar are both authorized and unauthorized, the magnitude and the kinds of problems also vary. This component has also not been adequately addressed in the GEP project.

A major component of the GEP project is the engagement with men and boys. A few men's groups have been formed in the different project locations besides forming youth clubs. These male groups are partly working towards resolving community issues collectively but have not been adequately sensitized or oriented towards gender discrimination or empowerment. There is also no evidence that suggests that men and women collectively have been engaged on one platform.

Family level planning has taken place and women are now further participating in issues within the household and outside. However, decision making and income generation largely remains male dominated, thus limiting women's control and ownership. There are continued cases of violence, domestic abuse, and alcoholism amongst other social evils that still need to be tackled. Despite women raising their voices against such social evils, a lot remains to be done to be able to resolve such issues effectively. It is however encouraging to note that some incidences of women coming up and fighting municipal elections have also been reported in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack which indicate significant degree of change in women's participation in the political system.

Stone Quarry Project

All the activities that are being undertaken in the project area directly or indirectly have a component of gender and women empowerment. The fulcrum for development in the project area is women SHG. All the activities in the project area involve these SHGs either as direct beneficiaries like the thrift/credit work or enterprise development, or play an active role in motivating the community members to participate in the project work like environment regeneration, or prevention of alcohol use.

The community based organizations that are promoted in the project area have equal representation of men and women. This ensures that voice of right holders is heard and addressed. There is also an active gender related training of staff members to help them understand and practice gender sensitivity programming at the field level.

3.1.3 Efficiency

The following evaluation questions have been addressed as below:

Evaluation question: To what extent do the strategic priorities, approaches, modes of operation and cross-cutting issues build on the strengths of the organization?

As discussed in section 3.1.2, the core strengths of the organization is its grass root experience in working with the focused priority groups and the organizational experience of delivering rural and urban development programmes. Accordingly, the strategic priorities and cross cutting issues have rightly been developed around the core strengths of the organization. The mode of operations on the other hand do not reflect the organization's core strength as LWSIT has no history of working with civil society and policy advocacy issues in the past. The rights based approach is an area where the organization is still developing its experience and capabilities.

Evaluation question: To what extent have resources (human, financial, administrative, time, etc.) been efficiently utilized and combined to achieve the expected results (Evidence of Change)?

While assessing the efficiency, the evaluation team analyzed project management arrangements including systems for planning, monitoring and reporting, human resources and efficiency of budget utilization.

STEER (Rural) Project

The project is being managed with 64 staff members (including other projects being implemented in the operational districts such as OTELP in Kalahandi). Considering the targeted coverage of 1696 communities and work with more than 3000 community based groups, the project appears to be understaffed (1 staff per 26 communities and 47 CBOs). The staff to community ratio becomes more realistic when considering only the intensive and adoption communities and discounting the accounts officers, unit manager and technical staff from the list; the actual number of staff responsible for field level interventions is around 48 who are managing 599 communities (around 12 communities per staff) in addition to managing the follow-ups in accompaniment communities and taking care of other project activities. Considering an average of 2 CBOs per community this translates to 24 CBOs per staff member. These staff members are responsible for planning, monitoring, organizing community level meetings, meeting duty bearers, monitoring project interventions, providing inputs for unit level reports and documentation at the individual, zonal and unit level. The thematic area of their work is broad and includes components of education, health, livelihood, DRR, governance, rights and advocacy. To conclude, the project staff while motivated and enthusiastic about their work, appear to be over-burdened which may have an adverse impact on overall quality and efficiency of the project.

The project is challenging and requires good knowledge and technical expertise of project management skills, documentation and reporting skills and thematic expertise. Staff capacity development has been an important component of the project and trainings have been provided on issues of sustainable livelihood, institutional strengthening, rights based approaches, project management, gender and DRR. The evaluation team noted that the training does not include exposure visits to other NGOs and communities that have demonstrated impressive results in the area of institutional strengthening and rights based approach. Training on data management and monitoring and reporting is an aspect that the evaluation team did not observe on the ground. There is lack of a structured mechanism that ensures that staffs who attend trainings share and disseminate this information and learning amongst peers.

The project follows a decentralized process of planning. Annual plans are initiated at the community level and aggregated upwards till it is finalized at the national level. LWSIT uses a predetermined template for planning (AAP) that was earlier used by the LWSI program and is based on the guidelines from LWF/DWS, Geneva. The template is detailed but has the potential to be shortened and simplified. For example, there are many fields that are not relevant for the project but are still being used.

Project monitoring is undertaken at the community level by community officers/organizers on a regular basis. A diverse set of documents are prepared and kept at the field level (community level documents, zone and unit) which help ensure transparency and accountability at the operational level. The project prepares quarterly monitoring reports (QMR) that use a similar format as the AAP but do not provide in depth analysis of the variances if any. The QMR also lacks any qualitative analysis of the project achievements in different operational areas. Moreover, there is a lack of a structured approach to data collection and management at all level. There is a tendency to collect a lot of information with a limited understanding of how to utilize and analyze this information. It is unclear as to how the data collected at source is validated before its aggregation at other levels. Further, the evaluation team did not observe a structured approach to monitoring.

The Annual monitoring report is prepared annually and as reported by LWSIT, submitted to all the donors. The AMR primarily uses the indicators as provided in the CoS LFA. The evaluation team also observed a reporting template that is being used for submitting report to ELCA. It was noted that no separate reporting templates/reports are being submitted to BftW even though the cooperation agreement specifically asks for submission of half yearly report and the outcome indicators and objectives are different from the CoS project document. Reporting focuses on accountability; it provides the achievements and the outcomes in percentages but does not provide the relevance or significance attached to these achievements with respect to the priority groups, how it addressed the challenges and how these outcomes are arrived at. There has been no focus on documenting failures, constraining factors and learning.

The project has a budget of approximately 9.85 Cr for three years. Total budgeted expenditure for 2014 was around 3 Cr out of which 2.6 Cr was utilized indicating a budget utilization of 88%. Utilization for 2015 is also on track. Table below provides actual expenditure for 2014 and 2015:

Table 2: Financial report card- STEER (Rural)

SL No	Result Heads	JAN - DEC 2014 (INR)	JAN - DEC 2015 (INR)	Total (2014-2015) (INR)
1	Institutional Strengthening and Advocacy	40,56,927	45,40,739	85,97,666
2	Resource Mobilization	12,80,553	15,29,760	28,10,313
3	Formal Education	36,99,241	40,04,244	77,03,485
4	Health	15,39,266	17,49,357	32,88,623
5	Mother and Child Care	9,10,796	8,25,945	17,36,741
6	Empower Woman's Capacity	7,78,974	8,79,941	16,58,915
7	HIV and AIDS	7,10,669	7,92,632	15,03,301
8	Sustainable Livelihood/Microfinance	49,35,568	55,65,648	105,01,216
9	Natural Resources and Environment Protection	19,95,590	22,61,972	42,57,562
10	Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation	3,85,774	4,28,971	8,14,745
11	Staff Skill Development	3,82,059	5,20,267	9,02,326
12	Monitoring and Evaluation	25,72,710	24,74,501	50,47,211
	Allocation of Head Office Cost	28,49,239	29,68,437	58,17,676
TOTAL Expenditure		260,97,366	285,42,414	546,39,780
<i>Source: Financial statements shared by LWSIT</i>				

As per the allocation of financial resources on different project objectives, almost 50% of the resources have been allocated to meet the first project objective while 38% of the project resources are allocated to sustainable livelihood. DRR received only 9% of project expenditure while 11% each is allocated for meeting objective number 4 and head office allocation. There is a high allocation for personnel salaries and other allocated costs for all the objectives. Being a rights based project with emphasis on capacity development, it is normal to have high personnel involvement. Moreover, the approved budget allows for high personnel and administrative expenses.

Gender Empowerment Project

GEP has a small project team; the major thrust of the unit teams are on strengthening SHGs and other women's federations. For both units in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, the total staff strength is 6 members with one accounts officer who spends fifteen days of the month in Cuttack and the remaining in Bhubaneswar. Besides the accounts officer, the remaining teams comprises all female members. Both project areas have a total of 30 communities each, which are further divided into two zones - Zone A and Zone B, based on their geographical locations.

It emerged that most of the time of the project team is spent on trainings, capacity building, creating bank linkages and providing IGA support. Additionally, the field officers also monitor and interact with the communities on a daily basis. With such an intensive role, field officers are often overworked and the quality of their work may sometimes be compromised. The engagement with duty bearers, which is crucial to the project, remains limited. The project work force indicates a gender imbalanced team with only one male team member who is also shared between the two units in Odisha. Male engagement in the project has been largely limited and this could potentially be attributed to the fact that most team members are female.

At the community level, monitoring is undertaken by the community officers on a regular basis. An extensive set of documents are maintained at both the unit level and also at the project level which go on to ensure transparency and accountability at all levels. Project specific documents that monitor activities such as the QMR (Quarterly Monitoring Reports) are periodically prepared at the unit level and are in a format similar to that of the AAP (Annual Action Plan). However, it may be noted that there were limited evidences indicating the source of the data that was being used to fill up these formats. There is no structured approach or guidelines that monitor data collection or aggregation. There is also limited clarity on how issues such as double counting or manual data entry errors are identified or accounted for. The project specific documents are rather intensive, laborious, and there seems to be no mechanism in place for auto validation of the data that is documented. A large quantum of information is often collected rather than obtaining information using a structured approach against the project indicators.

Annual monitoring report is prepared at the national office and is submitted to all project donors. The indicators of this report are in tandem with those as have been mentioned in the project documents. No separate reporting templates have been observed for the different project donors. The total amount budgeted for the GEP project from 2014-15 was INR1, 85, 92,000 and the actual amount spent against this was INR 1, 65, 22,000.

Table 3: Year wise and project component wise expenditure- GEP

Budget Heads	FY - 14			FY - 15			FY - 14 & 15		
	Budget	Actual Expenditure	Variance %	Budget	Actual Expenditure	variance %	Total Budget	Total Exp	% of total spent
Institutional Strengthening and Advocacy	16.86	12.88	23.59	14.79	12.77	13.68	31.65	25.65	15.52
Education	15.41	14.52	5.76	15.30	16.99	(11.05)	30.71	31.51	19.07
Health	7.03	6.55	6.75	7.36	7.76	(5.35)	14.39	14.31	8.66
Water and Sanitation	6.03	5.35	11.32	2.67	2.64	1.20	8.70	7.99	4.83
Mother and Child Health	2.39	2.37	1.07	3.20	2.83	11.36	5.59	5.20	3.15
Women Empowerment	29.11	21.76	25.25	22.32	21.31	4.49	51.43	43.08	26.07
Staff Skill Development	6.82	2.63	61.37	2.39	2.34	2.20	9.21	4.97	3.01
Monitoring and Evaluation	6.47	5.83	9.82	8.84	8.46	4.27	15.31	14.30	8.65
Head Office Cost	8.89	7.99	10.18	10.03	10.22	(1.87)	18.93	18.21	11.02
Total	99.01	79.89		86.91	85.33		185.92	165.22	100

Figures are in Lakhs

In 2014, there was an overall under spending of approximately 21%, highest (61%) being on spent on Staff Skill Development followed by women empowerment (25.25%) and institutional strengthening and advocacy (23.59%). These variances have not been explained in the project reports. In 2015, the overall utilization improved, however, there was still an under spending of 13.68% on institutional strengthening and advocacy and 11.36% on Mother and Child Health and an overspending of 11.05% on Education that has not been explained. Overall, for both 2014 and 2015, there is under-spending of 26.07%, 15.25% and 19.07% on women empowerment, institutional strengthening and advocacy and education respectively. It may also be noted that, in the first year of the project there was an allocation of INR 6,82,000 for staff skill development against which only INR 2,63,000 has been spent while, in 2015, the total expenditure of INR 2,34,000 has been reported against a budgetary allocation of INR 2,39,000 for the same budget head. This indicates lesser priority on Staff Skill Development.

Stone Quarry Project

The number of people managing SHGs/CBOs varies across the zone. The maximum pressure is on the Bharkata team, which manages 45 SHGs per person. This creates a situation where, even when most of the staff members are based in the project location, team members are unable to provide considerable time to each of the SHGs and CBOs, particularly in terms of capacity development.

The project work force indicates a gender imbalanced team; at the unit level in 2015, only 7% of the staff members were female. Considering that more than 90% of the right holders in the project are women, the percentage of female staff is very low. The utilization percentage has always been higher than 65%. In the year 2014-2015, the utilization has been the lowest (66.1%). Considering that every year LWSIT is utilizing on 3/4th of the funds, it is necessary to assess the reasons which will have significant consequences on the achievement of results. In the development sector, at times, even a 100% utilization of funds does not guarantee achievement of all objectives implying that it is difficult to achieve all the development outcomes with only 75% of fund utilization.

In the last five years, the programme expenditure was 38% and the administrative expenditure was 62%. This ratio has changed considerably in the year 2014-2015, where the programme to administrative expenditure ratio has changed 26%: 74% as more than 50% of the administrative cost is the salary cost.

This is expected in a right based approach, where grassroots staff is required for hand holding support to the right holders. In the last five years, the administrative spending has remained relatively constant, whereas programme spending has fluctuated a lot. It is evident that year 2013-2014 was a major turning point for the project as considerable spending on programme was undertaken. It is worth mentioning that spending on salary has increased in 2014-2015, and the programme spending has decreased, so the overall efficiency of the project has decreased, as the same number of staff is performing lesser work. This has to be evaluated further to assess the nature of work and reasons for the same.

The project has several development themes, posing a critical challenge in integrating the development activities at the field level. This is also evident in the disproportional spending across different themes, with livelihood and food security receiving 17% of total funding and around 45% of the programme (total funding

minus administration) funding. This is due to the fact that lot of effort has been put into providing skill development trainings and promoting SHGs.

Another theme that has received considerable funding is Protection and management of environment (28%). The majority of expenditure across these two themes has occurred in the year 2013-2014, where there was a sudden spurt in the expenditure. Other all themes constitute about 27% of total expenditure.

The focus on themes is not equal, nor are they comparable. Surprisingly, water sanitation has received only 3%. This is surprising as only a small proportion of the population has sanitary latrines.

The evaluation team also did not observe any standard operating procedure or guidelines for data collection, data entry, its transfer from manual to electronic format and its aggregation at various levels. In the AMR also, there are several inconsistencies and deviations/gaps from the Annual Action Plan. For example:

- ▶ Annual plan has mentioned opening of an Information Centre in the community to access information on sustainable agriculture and livelihood schemes but this has not been mentioned in the annual report;
- ▶ Dry land farming is being undertaken over 20 Acres. This information is provided in the plan and the report, however, in the final report there is no activity mentioned against the same. Further, it is not mentioned whether this was taken up or not;
- ▶ The indicators mentioned in the annual report do not match with the indicators explained in the annual plan;
- ▶ Only half of trainings for craft based, stone cutting and furniture have taken place. There is no explanation in the annual report for this variation.
- ▶ In 'Right to health water and sanitation' few of the annual plan indicators are not mapped with the annual report. For others, the targets have been achieved.
- ▶ Planning at CBO level not completed and there is no mention of the reasons for this variance.

These gaps are indicative of the fact that grassroots activities are not being captured or reported at the organizational and donor level. This has impact on the future planning, as the accurate view of the grass root situation is not visible.

3.1.4 Impact

Impact is the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. While evaluating the impact of the project, the evaluation referred to the following questions:

Evaluation question: What real difference has the work of LWSIT brought about for the rights holders (women, men, girls, and boys)

STEER Rural Project

The LFA (as annexure to CoS project document) provides two impact level indicators:

- ▶ Disadvantaged communities are organized to take collective initiatives to secure their rights and taking actions to improve their socio economic, food security, health and educational status
- ▶ Communities have improved their status to protect themselves from natural and manmade disasters and vulnerabilities

The BftW project document does not provide any long term impact indicators.

With respect to the first indicator, the evaluation team observed glimpses of communities forming into collectives, taking actions/initiatives for mobilizing services related to their basic needs and access to basic amenities. These are however just glimpses and do not indicate or reflect any significant changes in the lives of the beneficiaries (men, women, children). There are certain right-holders who received support in the form of income generation activities or agriculture etc that may have an overall impact on their family and their socio-economic status. However, these are not clearly documented by LWSIT and moreover, since the project is still less than 3 years old in these communities, it would be premature to comment on such impact.

It is also important to note that the significance of change/impact differs across families, communities and operational units. Significance is a relative concept, just like poverty, empowerment or marginalization. Participating in a public rally and speaking to a block development officer (BDO), or starting a village level grocery shop will have much more significance for a rights holder from Junagarh block from Kalahandi than let's say someone from Kendrapada block. While assessing the changes brought about in the lives of people these realities needs to be considered and incorporated into the project design, which unfortunately does not exist in the current project design for STEER (Rural).

The third important aspect is with regard to the accompaniment communities. As mentioned earlier, while assessing effectiveness, the accompaniment communities are those where the project has completed more than 5 years. Their inclusion in the project operational focus is to monitor their growth and provide hand holding assistance. There is no clarity on the changes or impact of project interventions on these communities. LWSIT currently do not have any mechanism to provide a separate reporting of such communities.

With regard to the second indicator, the evaluation team noted a visible impact of LWSIT interventions on DRR aspects in the operational area, especially in the disaster prone coastal area of Odisha, which is manifested in the form of more awareness and capacity amongst the communities for addressing imminent perceptive threats caused due to disaster- primarily floods and cyclones. The evaluation team observed enhanced confidence amongst the community members. In Kendrapada, for e.g. the community members spoke about their despair and how badly they are affected by disasters almost every year which ruin their agriculture, livestock and livelihood. They were unanimous however in attributing LWSIT's years of support in building their capacities and showing them the directions to manage such eventualities and shocks. Going through the rubrics of STEER, responses by the community indicate greater social resilience developed amongst the community. This has been possible however due to a combination of factors (like changes in agriculture practices, government support etc) in which LWSIT role is well acknowledged.

Gender Empowerment Project

The GEP project is at a nascent stage and its goals have yet to be realized in its totality so as to be able to analyze the impact. Based on the field visits and the interaction with the project team it emerged that the project goals of STEER Urban have been realized and are largely still being implemented in the GEP project. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that despite the GEP and the STEER Urban projects being different conceptually; most of the components have remained the same. Talk about transgender and the work that is being done with them.

In spite of the GEP project being at a nascent stage, there have been significant consequences that can be attributed to it. With a maximum focus on institutional strengthening, many SHGs and Mahila Samitis have been formed and are attracting large numbers of women as members. Most of the communities interacted with were aware of basic rights such as the Right to Food, Right to Education and the Right to Health. These communities have also been lobbying for further availing other rights from their area specific councilors and corporators. However, it was observed that communities are yet to be made aware of the larger gambit of social entitlements which they could also benefit from. It has also been observed that not all members of the CBOs were at par with each other in terms of awareness or empowerment. Certain key members such as the president and the secretary are being continually trained and are emerging as leaders within these groups. There is little evidence of larger community engagement, which is a key component of the GEP project design.

Interactions with the CBOs formed are on three levels, i.e. one deals with the provision of benefits, especially material or physical assets. The second relates to training/awareness generation and finally the third one relates to the provision of services. Based on our interaction with the communities, it emerged that the SHG/MS members could recollect the loans that they had taken from their respective groups and were also able to update the team on the current status of the same. Most of the loans have been given to members under the IGA provisions and were being used to improve individual businesses. It was observed that most of these businesses are male controlled leaving women with little or no access to these resources. Women reported having received different kinds of trainings such as pickle making, boutique training etc as part of the project mandate. However, it was reported that due to the absence of backward and forward linkages, women were unable to use the acquired skills to increase their incomes. One major benefit that has been attributed to the GEP project is that of the study centers. Women reported that children in the slums were now taking a keen interest in their studies and were emerging as first generation learners. However, yet again it was observed that LWSIT's role in these centers is limited to sharing the running cost of the centre (which also includes a part contribution by the parents of the children). Also, LWSIT does not have any planned interventions to target formal schooling. This then does not have any impact on policy or also may not be successful in facilitating government action on the same.

Through increased financial literacy and also an increase in income a kind of revenue model is being created. Federations of women such as the WAVAW and the DWU are slowly getting registered and can further be developed as revenue models. Through such developments, the poverty cycle can perhaps be broken.

In the slums where the GEP intervention is targeted, most men and women are unskilled laborers who are engaged as domestic workers, laborers, trolley pullers etc. A major component of the GEP project is to engage men and boys in the whole process of tackling gender issues collectively. Few men's groups and youth clubs have been created. Besides these, the engagement with this category remains limited.

Since 2014, the GEP project has been working with transgender groups in the project location of Cuttack. The LWSIT has created linkages for these groups, built toilets, provided employment opportunities and are also

trying to include them in mainstream activities. This association with the transgender group is encouraging and can further be enhanced through the development of a strategy to engage the groups appropriately.

Stone Quarry Project

It is very difficult to quantify the change brought about by LWSIT work in the project areas and the same has to be gleaned through interactions with the right holders. Any discussion about the change or difference has to consider that not everyone would be impacted equally, and that the project in a real sense is operational for last two years, so any expectation of drastic change or impact would be premature. In view of these limitations it is encouraging to know that most of the SHGs interacted have received some form of information about the need to form an SHG and how it can benefit them. Though, not all the SHGs are deriving the benefits of being part of the group. More than 50% of the Groups are termed as poor, meaning that they are not either meeting or saving money regularly. This is a serious issue, as the entire project focus is on SHGs and it is envisaged that the SHGs are going to bring change.

The project interactions with the SHGs are three folds; one deals with the provision of the benefits, especially physical or material asset. The second relates to training/awareness generation, and finally the third is related to the provision of services. In terms of the material assets, the SHG members are able to recollect some of the material assets provided during the project. However, they were not sure about the present status of the assets and in most of the cases they were not using it either. In case of some of the services provided in terms of free medical checkups are most valued by the community members. The project area is vulnerable to STDs due to a lot of in-migration and existence of the temporary staff working in the crushers or stone quarry. The free medical camps and health awareness camps have improved their health seeking behavior. The community members are aware about critical illnesses, especially related to sexually transmitted diseases.

Another service that is mostly acknowledged as beneficial by the community members is the “Child Education Centre”. It is helping the children to receive extra coaching and in a way taking up the role of formal schools where ever the schools are not functional. Also the constant interaction of the community members with the teacher of these child education centres is creating awareness about need for education in the community.

The change is also perceived in understanding the role of groups in accessing credits or services. The SHG members are now aware that access to credit, Government services and awareness is possible through SHGs. In groups that are functioning properly, the members want to continue in the group and are willing to contribute towards both money and effort towards maintaining the group.

The project has helped in creating awareness about the responsibility of the duty bearers, though it has a long way to go before creating an environment where the right holders are able to access their rights and entitlements.

Evaluation question: What is the impact of the lobbying and advocacy work on the political level?

STEER (Rural) Project

Planned interventions do not relate to lobbying and advocacy at political level, nor was any such impact reported or observed. As reported by LWSIT, there are a number of community leaders including women being elected to the local self-governing bodies (PRIs) during the last elections held in Odisha during 2012. In turn, these elected representatives take an active role in facilitating community action plan and put forth their matter at Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha.

Gender Empowerment Project

Not too much work has happened for lobbying and advocacy work on the political level. In the GEP project very little has been done for advocacy on a local level and even this is limited to availing certain entitlements of individuals via dialogue with local elected representatives (councilors/corporators). No formal research or documentation of evidence based right violation has been conducted based on which community led advocacy could be facilitated. It may be noted that training on advocacy has been conducted for select community leaders which may not have necessarily led to perceivable action.

It has also been observed that the communities and also the unit office teams have very good working relationships with the local municipal representatives and are actively engaged in dialogue with them over various nuances of their respective areas. The women leaders who have emerged are taking a leadership role and are facilitating community development at their own level. To some extent, these women are taking on the responsibilities of the immediate duty bearer and are working for the welfare of the community at large which indicates a shift in gender roles. It is also encouraging to note that some incidences of women coming up and fighting municipal elections have been reported in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack which indicate significant degree of change in women's participation in the political system.

Stone Quarry Project

Not much work has happened in terms of lobbying at the political level. All the work was focused on creating awareness at the community level. The lobbying has happened with the stone quarry owners, though this is not documented. The action plan and the annual report do not have any activities related to advocacy and lobbying.

3.1.5 Sustainability

While assessing the sustainability of project interventions, the review focused on following key evaluation questions:

Evaluation question: To what extent are the positive effects achieved through the Country Program likely to be maintained over time?

STEER Rural Project

LWSIT shared a list of communities that were categorized as ‘good’, ‘moderate’ and ‘poor’ categories⁸. The field visits to the project unit took sample from all three categories and it provides a fair insight on the extent to which the positive effects are likely to be sustained. All the communities that have been rated ‘good’ were found to demonstrate high degree of ownership of the interventions, less dependence on LWSIT and greater group cohesiveness. There is a high degree of possibility that these communities may carry forward the positive outcome and results and sustain the effort. The moderate communities may still take some time to evolve to a ‘good’ status. The communities that have been reported as ‘poor’ are those that have remained non responsive and it would be improbable for these communities to sustain the positive results (if any) achieved through the project.

Gender Empowerment Project

The GEP project works with old communities that are continuing from STEER Urban and has also identified new communities that it addresses. Based on our interaction with the communities and also with the project team it emerged that the mature CBOs are now also producing strong women leaders who are actively participating in the collective space and are working for the larger good of their community. These are women who are informed, aware and have time to devote to developmental activities. These women are also now part of the apex that is being formed. As an immediate duty bearer, the emerging women leaders have started taking small responsibilities.

Through its sustained focus on institutional strengthening and the formation of the CBOs, the GEP project is in turn ensuring its sustainability. With the formation of CBOs and the subsequent creation of financial linkages there is a revenue model that is being put into place. Beneficiaries are now becoming increasingly financially literate, are exposed and are also aware of the importance of the culture of saving and investing.

The mature groups are also assuming responsibilities within their communities and are overseeing different LWSIT interventions such as the functioning of the study centers and also the Anganwadis. This then is indicative of a sustainable model that is being created since these groups can continue to ensure the functioning of these interventions even when LWSIT withdraws in the future.

The exit policies of LWSIT have also been clearly drafted and the same are being followed whilst withdrawing from the target communities. However one important observation is that although extensive work has been done with women and the different groups, limited work has been done with duty bearers, particularly in building their capacities for policy reform both at the policy framework and the implementation level. Without adequately engaging this category, maintaining linkages over a sustained period of time may prove difficult and will also lead to an absence of ownership. Hence, sustainability of the interventions in this regard may prove to be a challenge. The current model of strengthening SHGs and Mahila Samitis and training key members to emerge as leaders is a good model but this may not be very sustainable in case of a disaster or distress, wherein the women leaders may not know how to respond and control may again go back to men.

Stone Quarry Project

At the present juncture, it is premature to comment upon the continuity of the project benefits. The project is not yet completed and there is still enormous work required to build lasting institutions at the community level that would continue the work done by LWSIT. The current CBOs are at a nascent stage and are presently incapable of functioning without the support from the LWSIT staff. Presently, the critical factor is the awareness created by the project on issues that are relevant for the community. Within the community, there is an awareness regarding health and education related issues. Also, there is a considerable evolution of the community members from passive observers to active respondents. They are aware about the harmful effect of stone quarrying and crushers; they are aware of the need for diversifying their income source; they want to

educate their children, and they want to break the barriers of impoverishment. These ingredients, if nurtured actively would create in future a just and developed society.

But the community has not reached the stage where they can demand their rights from duty bearers without project support. The project is heavily focused on creating SHGs as a vehicle for change. It is worth noting that not all SHGs are categorized as “Good” and there is still a large proportion of SHGs that are yet to evolve and create a development vision for its members. The development of the entire project area is possible only when all the SHGs are strengthened and functioning, and the CBOs are able to remain relevant even in the absence of support from LWSIT. Moving forward it would be interesting to note whether the SHGs that are termed as “Good” are able to function effectively with limited support from LWSIT which would be an important test of the project.

Evaluation question: Which measures have been implemented in order to support sustainability of the effects?

STEER Rural Project

The project has undertaken some relevant measures to ensure sustainability. Working with community based organizations is an important aspect of the project as it promotes the participation of the community in planning and implementation and strengthens leadership capacities. Another important measure is the focus on creating a community fund for most CBOs; to ensure that communities are maintaining a fund, the project has created a system where any IGAs supported by the project are considered a loan from the CBO to the recipient. The recipient of the IGA is therefore required to return the capital along with interest or service charges; this serves two purposes- first, it validates whether the recipients have been able to break even and secondly, it serves as an income for the community funds. Community contribution is yet another instrument for ensuring sustainability. The idea is to ensure ownership not just at the community level but also at the individual level. Every right holder contributes and shares the cost of the resource supported partly as per the rules set and monitored by the CBO.

Gender Empowerment Project

The GEP project has taken certain relevant measures to ensure the sustainability of its interventions over time. The project has created financial linkages between the communities and the banks; bank accounts have been created both for the groups and also individual members. The groups have been depositing their savings in these accounts and some groups use these funds for collective businesses. Another major instrument of project sustainability is the project focus on creating viable community funds for the CBOs.

The mature Mahila Samitis (those that have been continuing from STEER Urban) have begun assuming responsibility of overseeing the interventions of LWSIT at the community level. It was observed that Mahila Samitis are actively engaged in the monitoring of the study centers and the anganwadis. The members of these groups appoint teachers, oversee the selection of the students and the general upkeep of these centers. This creates a sustainable model for the continuation of LWSIT interventions even after its withdrawal. Mahila Samitis support new SHGs and some key members have voluntarily become a part of the wider federations such as WAVAW and DWU which are working towards mobilizing resources and also to avail rights and entitlements.

Stone Quarry Project

Over time, the project has managed to effectively engage people whilst creating awareness around issues that are critical indicators of development within the community. With the formation and strengthening of SHGs, target beneficiaries are slowly realizing the benefit of collective action. Communities are now aware of important issues related to health, education, nutrition, livelihoods and hygiene. Based on the field visits it emerged that people are now also looking at engaging in alternative sources of livelihood since they are becoming aware of the ills of stone quarrying and crushing. However, continued support is still required from LWSIT for communities to actively demand their rights from the duty bearers.

The SHGs that are existent in the project location are functional but only a small proportion within those has been categorized as good. Handholding support is further required to ensure that all communities which fall outside this ambit slowly also develop a vision and come to par with other model communities.

As a critical agent of change, the project has created financial linkages between the communities and banks. Another major instrument of project sustainability that has been created is the project focus on creating viable community funds for the CBOs with a system that ensures that communities maintain their funds over a sustained period of time.

Evaluation question: To what extent has LWSIT built effective partnerships for more sustainable results?

STEER Rural Project

Besides successfully partnering with the community itself, the project is weak in creating partnerships or formal structures and platforms for advocacy that can be taken over or carried forward by the CBOs. Going

forward, local partnerships with likeminded NGOs or similar organizations would be an important instrument for sustainability.

Gender Empowerment Project

The GEP project has undertaken partnerships at two levels - one at the community level and the other at the level of CSOs. LWSIT has successfully partnered with the communities that it works in and there is a good level of understanding between both the entities at the ground level. LWSIT has also initiated dialogues with likeminded CSOs on different thematic areas but no formal partnerships or understanding has been initiated with such agencies to carry forward the work. It must be noted that one partnership has been formalized between LWSIT, National Alliance of Women's Organizations (NAWO) and Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in Odisha, wherein SEWA on behalf of NAWO is working towards reducing trafficking in Odisha amongst those women who migrate for domestic work.

Stone Quarry Project

Different types of partnerships were envisaged in the project, and presently, some of them have fructified. The partnership between ESAF, MCH and LWIST has unique as it leverages the organizational strengths of each and is able to deliver effective results. However, this partnership can be improved by getting the partners on the same page in terms of strategic approach and understanding of the theory of change. Also, the issue of 'rights based approach' is yet to be imbibed by each partner. Further, there is a need for joint monitoring of project activities as it would create collective responsibility toward the project goals.

Another aspect that would be important for project sustainability is the linkages between the SHGs. The SHGs federated at the block level would be a potent force for tumultuous positive change. However, the project is yet to start this process, though this is something which is planned to be taken up once the SHGs start functioning actively.

The partnership that has been provided least importance in the project is between the community and the duty bearers. There were few interface programmes that were undertaken in the project to foster such partnership. The right holders and duty bearers are not on the same page while articulating developmental need. There is a need to actively engage duty bearers in the development process.

Evaluation question: To what extent has LWSIT engaged in rights based advocacy work at appropriate levels?

STEER Rural Project

The project strategy on rights based advocacy has been limited to the community level (engagement with right holders). While there is a working agreement with line department and government functionaries, there are limited evidences to indicate any advocacy work with the duty bearers at various levels.

Gender Empowerment Project

The project strategy on engaging in rights based advocacy has been limited to the community level with a large degree of engagement with the right holders, particularly in the case of women. The degree of engagement with the duty bearers continues to be considerably low. A lot of the slums in which the communities live are unauthorized and most residents do not have voting rights. Owing to this situation, the political will of these areas remains weak. Most of these slums remain neglected, lack basic facilities and are not a priority area for the concerned government officials.

It is however encouraging to note that the project has facilitated the interaction of group leaders with Government officials and also with officials of other implementing agencies. Such interactions shall be instrumental in helping the communities to gain confidence in continuing developmental activities even when LWSIT withdraws.

Stone Quarry Project

The project has not made extensive efforts to engage in rights based advocacy at the appropriate levels. The maximum thrust of the project team until now has been on creating awareness at the ground level and also on institutional strengthening. Some reports of lobbying work has been done with the owners of stone quarries across the project locations, however, the same is yet to be documented. It must also be noted that both the action plan and the annual report of the project do not have any specific activities that are directly linked to advocacy and lobbying.

3.2 Organization Assessment

3.2.1 Governance and general management

The central questions addressed while reviewing LWSIT's governance and management, as per the terms of reference, are:

Evaluation question: Does the constitution of the LWSIT Trust provide for an effective, professional and independent governing body to oversee the strategy and overall vision of the organization?

LWSIT's governance and management structure comprises a Board of Trustees, Advisory Committee (AC) and a Management Committee (MC); their roles are clearly laid out in the Trust Deed. It is the duty of the Board of Trustees to constitute an Advisory Committee and a Management Committee. The AC to the Board comprises three persons and was set up in 2015. As discussed with LWSIT management, the process to set up the AC was initiated earlier; however, due to financial constraints the Board was unable to constitute the same.

The Trust Deed provides that, out of nine Board members, six members of the Board should be from NCCI and UELCI, with three trustees representing NCCI, three trustees representing UELCI and three trustees representing civil society. This provides the benefit of Board members who understand the LWSIT culture and bring experience from like-minded organizations.

This section of the Trust Deed also allows UELCI and NCCI to determine its own representatives who shall sit on the LWSIT Board; therefore 2/3rds of Board membership is determined by NCCI and UELCI. Further, there appear to be no guidelines for selection of Board members from civil society.

In the minutes of the Board, there was also no evidence to indicate the presence of appropriate processes for the induction and orientation of new Board members, which are important for Board effectiveness. Additionally, it appears that the process followed is not adequate for the Board to reflect on critical decisions.

The Trust Deed makes provisions for strength of the Board, its requirements for administration and quorum. However, this has not been strictly followed. From 2010 up to the third meeting in 2015, the Board comprised of less than 9 trustees resulting in non-compliance with the Trust Deed, although actions taken and powers exercised by the Board are considered valid. This period also saw inadequate representation as a total number of trustees, inadequate representation from various stakeholder categories (UELCI, NCCI, Civil society) and inadequate women representation from UELCI and NCCI; all of which, from an external point of view, may serve as a reflection on the professionalism and commitment of the Board. As of December 2015, this has been rectified. The Trust deed does make a provision for women representation from NCCI, UELCI and civil society, considering that several of LWSIT's programmes focus on the development needs of women and girls. Women representation from civil society was adequate throughout this period.

On similar lines, there were less than 5 Trustees present at Board meetings held on December 2010, November 2011, October 2014 and December 2014 as well as a lack of Representation from NCCI as per requirements in October 2010, lack of representation from Civil Society in October 2014 and December 2014, resulting in the absence of a quorum. Accordingly, any resolutions passed in those meetings are null and void. The resolutions passed in these meetings shall need to be re-visited and ratified.

Evaluation question: How effective is the governing body in guiding, supervising and supporting the management, strategic outlook and sustainability of the organization?

While the duties of the Board are clearly laid out in the Trust deed, it was observed, based on the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board, that experience and skills that trustees bring, may not be leveraged. The Trustees follow the agenda set for the Board meetings and have been supporting the MC, providing guidance and taking decisions regarding the following: *Replacements for management / extension of service / appraisals / increments, signatories and operations of Bank Accounts, policies, manuals and formats, country strategy development and ratification, financials, annual plans, matters relating to the ED, property matters, compliances and other matters of organizational importance.*

It was observed that discussions on several matters of importance were absent such as: *Long term vision and positioning of LWSIT based on internal strengths, competitive landscape and operating environment, scope and coverage of programmes and focus areas, fund raising and representation of LWSIT to Board members' communities and networks, relationships with regulators, community leaders, politicians, corporate and institutional heads, succession planning and sustainability planning of the organization.* However, discussions with LWSIT brought out the fact that important decisions may be made after consultation with the Board through teleconferences or email communications which may not necessarily be reflected in the Board minutes.

Evaluation question: Does the organization have an adequate conflict of interest policy?

The current perspective on Conflict of Interest mainly relates to staff at LWSIT and does not account for Conflict of Interest related to the Board or its independence. However, discussions with LWSIT Management

brought out the fact that a revised 'Conflict of Interest' Policy has been prepared and will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for ratification on 31st March 2015.

Evaluation question: To what extent is the current Organisational set-up and internal governance systems adequate and effective?

The review team noted that LWSIT has in place a wide number of controls established for its operations at the national and project offices, based on a Finance and Administrative Manual and Procurement Manual.

There is scope for further improvement in terms of their design as well as effectiveness, as provided below:

Design:

The review of controls for different functions at LWSIT reflected process gaps in which are highlighted below:

- ▶ **Cash and bank management procedures**
 - Essential controls have not been defined in the manual such as periodic physical verification of cash, management of fixed deposits
 - Weaknesses in the preparation of Bank reconciliation statements due to inadequate guidelines available in the Finance and Administrative Manual
 - Financial threshold has not been defined for bank signatories or for withdrawal of cash from the bank or for re-order level of cash in hand
 - Lack of financial planning since there is a large balance lying idle in one of the bank accounts
 - Non-compliance of controls defined in the Manual such as cash advances not recorded in books, delays in recording of withdrawal of cash/ incorrect accounting treatment of withdrawn cash
- ▶ LWSIT has updated and revised its procurement policy on August 2015. While the revised policy defines the key steps to be followed for procurement and requires staff to declare business relationship with its vendors, it does not provide for calling of declaration on business relationship from vendors to its staff. Further, LWSIT calls for quotations from the vendor list it maintains in its database, however these vendors have not been reviewed, nor has the database been updated.
- ▶ LWSIT does not have policies on partnership for implementing partners (IPs). The evaluation team noted that LWSIT has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with two IPs for execution of donor funds; it however lacks a policy for management of the project by IPs including selection, disbursement of funds, monitoring and closure of projects.

Further, LWSIT does not have an in-house internal audit unit separate from the finance function to oversee the internal control functions, which although not mandatory, is good practice.

Effectiveness:

- ▶ **Legal and statutory compliances** - The evaluation noted multiple instances of delays in submission of statutory reports/ compliances including delays in submission of annual income tax returns and delays in submission of monthly PF dues. Further, Foreign Contribution Regulation (Amendment) Rules 2015 require that all organizations having prior/permanent registration shall, on quarterly basis, upload their financial information pertaining to the donor and the details of grants received, however the team noted such disclosures were not complied with.
- ▶ **Finance and accounting procedures** - LWSIT Finance and Administrative Manual requires separate money receipts to be issued to donors, vendors, and CBOs for cash collection. However, it was noted that the 80G receipt which is meant to be issued to the donor is issued to the Right Holders (beneficiaries) for people contribution instead of a separate receipt as provided in the Finance and Administrative Manual, highlighting internal control issues. Further, details of cash collected from Right Holders were recorded in the manual cash book maintained at unit offices which is also used for recording funds (Domestic & Overseas) from National office. Recording of cash collection from beneficiaries in the cash book maintained at unit offices may be perceived as mixing of foreign and domestic funds.

Evaluation question: Does the organizational structure and culture reflect the mission, vision and values of the organization?

In its Country Strategy 2010-15, LWSIT has a clearly laid out vision and mission which are reflected in its core values of justice, democracy, secularism and accountability and which have been carried forward from the CSO 2003-08.

Despite transition periods and disruptions in leadership, over 64% of staff that work with LWSIT are from its pre-trust period; mind sets, assumptions and behaviors therefore reflect the culture of the erstwhile LWSI that has been deeply ingrained in LWSI staff and consequently carried forward to the LWSIT.

It may be noted that LWSIT's core value of 'justice' has been strongly ingrained amongst its staff. Field staff, depict a strong 'spirit to serve' and have a strong bond with the "Lutheran" identity. Staff at the unit level seemed content, proud of LWSIT's accomplishments and valued as "soldiers" of LWSIT. It is also important to note that Secularism is a core value, and one that has been in-built into the organization from its days as a Country program. This is a value that persists in the organization and has been demonstrated time and again both within the organization and with its partner communities.

LWSIT maintains a "line" structural hierarchy with functional heads for Programme, Finance and Human Resources who report to the Executive Director. Three program coordinators, responsible for their individual programs of STEER Rural, GEP and DSSQC, report to the program manager. At the field level, the unit manager looks after the functioning of his / her own unit and the project area and reports to the coordinator and program manager. Different project units therefore, function in silos with their own targets and objectives as set by the MC / Program Manager; however the projects recognize this and offer all the unit staffs a platform to transfer information and collaborate at the National Office on a regular basis.

As discussed with staff, LWSIT's culture does not encourage questioning or innovation or a willingness to "disrupt". The evaluation concurs with the 2008 evaluation report which states that *"the current system does not create an open and inviting environment for staff to contribute on organizational issues."* Although LWSIT follows its core value of "accountability", accountability is to donors or to senior management. There is limited accountability to junior staff. For example, in the sample Personnel files reviewed (5), it was observed that 2 employees received increments mid-year without any rationale being provided for the same. Similarly, there is lack of clarity as to how grades are assigned to staff. It may also be noted, that nowhere in the strategy, vision or values, does LWSIT consider performance as a key driver. While field staff is accountable to its Right Holders in intention and spirit, this is not necessarily reflected in actual practices and processes. Employees do not have key result areas or indicators for performance and cannot be held accountable for job performance on an objective basis. The purpose of the appraisal system, apart from gauging training requirements, is unclear.

LWSIT is essentially a donor driven organization, with its processes mainly focusing on programme, donor reporting and suggestions. It has an organization that is primarily 'reactive', versus an organization that encourages proactivity. Based on observations of the 2008 Evaluation that *"there are inadequate conflict resolution mechanisms or grievance procedures"*, a 3 tier Internal Complaints Response Mechanism was set up to receive and handle complaints related to sexual exploitation and abuse, abuse of power, fraud and corruption, but only in 2014. LWSIT does not have an independent Sexual Harassment policy or a Whistle Blower policy, despite a considered requirement for the same. On similar lines, although partnerships are an essential part of its strategy and its approach, the only programme that LWSIT has formed partnerships for, is the Normisjón driven DSSQC project, on the recommendation of the donor.

LWSIT has solid core values and cultural traits that have made it great; however, it also has some historic cultural traits that have not changed; these traits may prove to be a hindrance, particularly if the strategy or the structure changes, or when different levels of performance may be required. On the other hand, its structure is still reminiscent of a "Country Programme" and this may be due to the fact that apart from the Programme goal and the adoption of a Rights Based Approach, the mandate of the organization has remained largely the same as that of the LWSI Country Programme.

Evaluation question: Does the organizational structure and culture promote gender equality and women's rights within the organization?

Although the Country Strategy 2010-15 mentions 'Affirmative action for gender budgeting', both the Country Strategy 2010-15 and Gender Policy 2004 bring a programme related emphasis on Gender rather than an employee related perspective. However, The HR policy 2014 has adopted a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment with an Internal Complaint Mechanism as per Vishaka guidelines.

This is also reflected in the fact that 24% of employees at LWSIT are female and ~ 20% of managers (at the national office and unit level) are female. However, field observations and discussions with employees brought out the fact that female employees were as empowered as male employees in the same position in terms of authority or compensation. Consultations with the senior management revealed that LWSIT is cognizant of the fact that there is a gender imbalance in the structure and is taking measures towards addressing the same.

Evaluation question: Do partner communities and staff have a say in decision making and policy development?

The organization depicts high dependence on the Executive Director to set the tone for the organization and take it forward. In accordance with its "line" structure, operations are centralized with decision making power held by the senior management and Strategic Management Committee (which comprise of the four managers and the Executive Director). The Unit Managers do not enjoy wide leeway in taking important decisions, including recruitment at a local level. This structure (or limitations in delegation of authority) may deter a democratic culture within the organization. Additionally, lack of space for individual leadership and

experimentation at middle management level may limit opportunities for learning.

Project management systems and frameworks at LWSIT allow for strong involvement of the community, particularly at the planning and monitoring levels. The participatory method of planning allows for the community to have a say in the intervention planned for that particular committee. For example, for the water harvesting structure in the DSSQC project, the community was involved in the planning of the intervention and was responsible for mobilizing resources for the intervention. Similarly, communities involved in IGAs are responsible for monitoring and repaying loans. Therefore, communities actively participate and do have a say in decision making for projects at the community level. The evaluation team did not witness community representation in policy development or in LWSIT's internal management systems, however it may be noted that the Trust deed does not make any provision for any such representation.

3.2.2 External Relations and Partnerships

The central questions addressed while reviewing LWSIT's external relations and partnerships, as per the terms of reference, are:

Evaluation question: Does the organization have the capacity and strategies for engaging in rights based advocacy work with policy makers at appropriate levels?

A number of non-profits have been consciously re-inventing themselves as rights based organizations as a more powerful approach to holistic development as opposed to a welfare or needs based approach. This re-invention necessarily brings about certain organizational implications based on the character of the rights based programme that the organization is pursuing and the change it wishes to bring about, which could then lead to new ways of working such as developing capabilities towards advocacy, bringing in of new skill sets and competencies, developing tools for analysis, working with researchers, media or like-minded organizations.

LWSIT's Country Strategy 2010-15 states that, *"by adopting rights based approach, the Trust will strengthen the capacity of community organizations to relate to and negotiate with duty bearers to secure their rights"* and aims to *"support CBOs and groups to establish effective links to different duty bearers"*. LWSIT accepts that *"NGOs and communities have the dual task of collaborating with the government while at the same time engaging policy and decision makers through lobbying, campaign and advocacy processes to influence the policies in favour of the poor and marginalized."*

Broad recognition and understanding of six Foundation areas that are required for successful advocacy⁹ have been analyzed with respect to the Foundation areas in place at LWSIT. The fact that LWSIT may not have capacity in every one of these areas does not signify that advocacy should not be carried out. Rather, these may be seen as areas that LWSIT needs to strengthen for stronger advocacy.

► **Credibility:**

As an advocate, it is crucial that governments, institutions and the communities LWSIT works with trust the organization. LWSIT has a strong track record in its project areas and among other ecumenical organizations, born and nurtured through its programmatic results and strong community engagement strategies. This is particularly true in its disaster affected project areas, where strong relationships have been built and significant work has been done. Among the communities that it works with, Lutheran has built strong rapport and trust, however, this credibility is essentially a function of LWSIT's identity as an organization that is rooted in community level and DRR work.

► **Sufficient resources for advocacy:**

LWSIT affirms that its modes of operating the RBA will include *"strengthening Civil Society, Advocacy and Lobbying"*. Advocacy, therefore, is inbuilt as an essential component of LWSIT's programs and financial and human resources can be allocated towards the same. However, LWSIT's work has mainly comprised community mobilization thus far which implies that human and financial resources will need to be prioritized and re-allocated while strengthening capacities of human resources.

► **Has on-going strong partnerships that can form a broad base for advocacy:**

LWSIT's engagement of policy and decision makers, whether at a national level or a regional level has been minimal; the alliances and associations that it is a part of remain focused around DRR. During discussions, field staff refer to community members as 'right holders' and not beneficiaries, however in light of actual project implementation and outcome indicators, it is clear that LWSIT has been unable to make this conceptual and

⁹ Based on UNICEF advocacy toolkit

cultural shift. For example, the STEER Rural Project Document (2010) identifies PRI and local government functionaries as primary stakeholders of the project, however there is no strategy for sensitizing and building capacity of these duty bearers. Similarly, although there have been mentions of activities/interventions that focus on influencing policies for the poor and the marginalized there is no evidence of active interaction to support the same.

► *Has capacity and skills for advocacy:*

In 2014, LWSIT conducted training on RBA for about 20 employees. Although LWSIT employees have a basic understanding of RBA and concepts, training for staff on this approach has not been consistent. Additionally, LWSIT does not have specialized Subject Matter Experts in the Rights based Approach. Building skills for advocacy will require an organizational commitment to capacity building and promoting staff ability to engage with a wide range of stakeholders.

► *Has the capacity to generate and communicate evidence:*

LWSIT has the capacity to collate a large amount of information which is reflected in the amount of detailed documentation it produces. However, there is a lack of evidence that suggests that this data is utilized and leveraged to make informed decisions and influence stakeholders.

► *Has processes to take appropriate risks for advocacy:*

LWSIT lacks effective processes for risk management and mitigation.

It is interesting to note that LWSIT's alliances still reflect a strong focus on Disaster and Rehabilitation and that it has no affiliations or networks related to Human rights. NCCI and UELCI are Settlor Organizations and provide governance and guidance with 3 members from each organization sitting on the LWSIT Board. LWSIT has been a member of ACT Alliance since 1996 (previously as LWSI) which is a primary source of funding for Emergency and DRR projects. It is also an annual member of SPHERE, AZEECON, CHS Alliance and IAG; these partnerships are leveraged for sharing of skills and knowledge and collaboration in response to disaster. Several international organizations in India such as Save the Children, Oxfam, Action Aid have strong expertise and experience in 'Rights' based work, however there is no evidence of LWSIT collaborating with such organizations for learning and sharing opportunities.

Therefore, although importance has been given to the need for partnerships, alliances and networking in the Country Strategy 2010-15, LWSIT's alliances do not account for partnerships and opportunities that are critical to LWSIT's growth and sustainability.

In recent times, a common concern raised about the rights based approach in India and the feasibility of its adoption by a donor driven Not-for-Profit Agency is that this approach could bring the organization in conflict with the authorities in power. As LWSIT's approach has solely been focused on communities, this has not been a concern for the Trust. However, there is a strong need for more dialogue on LWSIT's identity and positioning internally, with its Board, Advisory Council and its partner organizations and for LWSIT to prioritize its approach, actions and engagement strategies based on what it wishes to achieve.

Evaluation question: Does the organization have a strategy for external communication and visibility?

An integral component of the LWSIT strategy is to create partnerships with like-minded organizations. The Country Strategy states in a generic context that *"LWSIT should therefore in the next 6 years explore all the possibilities to build inclusions to a larger world in existence to address the challenges and issues posed by poverty and collectively find ways to reduce them locally."*

Its organizational priorities include *"institution building, retaining donors' confidence, networking and alliances to learn from experiences of others, diversifying resource base, building visibility, developing relationships with churches and networking"*

As an organization which focuses on empowering right holders and sensitizing duty bearers through advocacy, campaigns and media, a passive approach to external communication and visibility is insufficient. In order to increase LWSIT's relevance and effectiveness, it is crucial to raise awareness about the values and principles that the LWSIT stands for, what it does and how, through a coordinated overarching communication and visibility strategy comprising of a well thought out media mix and representation on national and international forums.

LWSIT currently lacks a communication / outreach strategy or dedicated resources for this purpose. It is recognized that existing staff are already busy and LWSIT's allocated resource for PR and Communication has been on leave for over a year without a replacement for this period.

It is crucial that LWSIT adopts a strategic approach to external communications by prioritizing stakeholders and developing a communications and visibility strategy designed to highlight achievements, respond to both internal and external information needs and carry out advocacy interventions. Greater visibility and engagement in policy level dialogue is equally important. The communication strategy must align

organizational and communication goals to build LWSIT's brand, create greater social impact, tighten organizational cohesion, facilitate strategic partnerships and act as a tool for resource mobilization.

Honing down on key audiences and a prioritized list of issues could LWSIT to 'sharpen and deepen' its visibility that will assist it to be increasingly relevant in the coming years.

Evaluation question: *Does the organization have working relations with relevant departments/agencies of national or local authorities?*

LWSIT has implemented 5 Government supported projects supported by the Government of Odisha, the Government of West Bengal and the Government of India with funding of ~ INR 8.4 million in 2014. LWSIT has done significant work in several areas, particularly on OTELP-Plus in Odisha, Sustainable Energy Development in West Bengal and Shelter for Urban Homeless in Kolkata, which has also been recognized by national and State governments.

However, LWSIT has been unable to build working relationships with government at a national or local level, or at the field level (in its project areas) which is at the heart of influencing upstream decisions that affect education, livelihood, health and the various thematic areas that LWSIT works in.

This may be attributed mainly to the fact that LWSIT does not have a clear, documented objective for partnerships or advocacy. It's mandate is therefore unclear e.g. which government agencies should be targeted and at what level, which are the issues that should be raised, what engagement strategies may be utilized.

Working on RBA may require taking a stand that can go against dominant political or socio-cultural affiliations. The Project staff does not currently understand the intricacies of a RBA; this lack of clarity or understanding is translated into superficial relationship building e.g. inviting a District level Government officer for the inauguration of an LWSIT community initiative. While this is a first step, building and maintaining a foundation for advocacy should be a continuous process, extending throughout the stages of creating and implementing an advocacy strategy.

Evaluation question: *Are the statutory & legal compliances & bye-laws of the project partner in adherence to various laws of country (FCRA, Income Tax Act, Societies Registration Act, etc.) and in adherence with BfdW-EED, CoS and ELCA requirements and in case of bilateral project of Normisjon criteria.*

The evaluation team reviewed the MoUs of existing donors to understand the reporting requirements and regulatory compliances to be undertaken by LWSIT. MoU entered between CoS requires quarterly reporting of narrative and financial reports whereas BfdW requires submission of semi-annual audit report. The evaluation team noted that LWSIT has reported quarterly narrative and financial as per the timelines prescribed in the MOU with CoS. Quarter ending April-June 2015, LWSIT has started reporting semi-annually as per the communication received from CoS. As informed to the evaluation team semi-annual financial reports were submitted to BfdW, however, no documentary evidence has been reviewed by the evaluation team to substantiate this.

Further, clause 5 of the MOU between BfdW and LWSIT (dated 11.12.2013) requires a separate bank account for the project. The evaluation team noted that no such separate bank account was opened by LWSIT. The MoU entered with CoS and BfdW provides for reporting of Interest income and exchange gain on the funds received. Evaluation team noted that LWSIT has current bank account (designated FCRA bank account) to receive the funds, therefore no interest has been reported.

With regards to the exchange gain/loss, at present, LWSIT accounts for receipts from the donor on the basis of amount credited in their bank account and does not have any documented policy to account for the exchange gain/loss arising on account of difference between the donor currency and base currency i.e. Budgeted rate (prevailing at the time of preparation of budget) and actual realization rate of the donor currency.

Memorandum of understanding (MOU) was entered between LWSIT and Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF) and Mohulpahari Christian Hospital, a unit of Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (NELC) for implementation of the Stone Quarry project supported by Normisjon. This is the only project on which LWSIT works with a partner; this particular partnership was entered into on the request of the donor.

The evaluation team reviewed the MOU and noted that certain conditions were prescribed in the MOU such as annual submission of FC-6 to LWSIT and annual audit of project funds by LWSIT. However, FC-6 filed by ESAF (2013-14) and NELC and details of the annual audit conducted by LWSIT, if any, were not made available for review to the evaluation team, despite a request for the same. Further, registration/other statutory documents of NELC were not provided to the Evaluation team despite a request for the same. Hence this evaluation could not ascertain whether NELC is registered as a Trust/ Section 8 Company or society and adhering to the rules of different regulators.

A review of MHA and project partners' websites brought out that ESAF and NELC have not uploaded the quarterly grant information as per the amended FCRA rules 2015.

Evaluation question: Assess the role played by the donor partners beyond fund support. Visiting the projects, sharing views on their findings and suggestions, involvement in developing organizational policies, systems and procedures with sharing of views, suggestions.

From 2012, LWSIT's biggest donors in terms of amount of funding have been Normisjon, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, DanChurchAid, Church of Sweden, BfdW, ELCA and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, all ecumenical organizations. LWSIT is highly dependent on these donors and over the years, as legacy donors, a relationship of mutual trust has evolved.

It was noted by the evaluation team that, LWSIT was receiving funding based on project proposals or agreements as per Donor requirements. However, it is now working towards developing cooperation agreements / MoUs with its donors. Brief interactions and discussions with three donors - Bread for the World, Normisjon and Church of Sweden - brought out the fact that there appeared to be strong donor interest in achieving project effectiveness and efficiency and in improving organizational systems and processes; however these observations cannot be substantiated as LWSIT was unable to provide the evaluation team with any evidence with regard to donor visits, feedback and comments on organizational or project related issues, despite requests for the same.

Overall, the concept of Partnership is a complex web of relationships, which includes like-minded organizations, alliances and movements, government and non-governmental organizations, donors and funding agencies. Although LWSIT may have informally identified and prioritized their stakeholders, there is a lack of (documented) understanding on the types of partnerships that LWSIT wishes to develop and the rationale behind developing these partnerships / relationships. Subsequently, it follows that LWSIT does not engage in strategically planned relationship management efforts. Developing a strategic partnership approach will require not so much radical overhauls as leadership support, a clear purpose and dedicated and competent human resources.

3.2.3 Human Resources Management

A review of the Human Resources Management at LWSIT was undertaken as part of its organizational assessment. The central questions addressed by the review, as per the terms of reference are as follows:

Evaluation question: Does the organization have an adequate number and quality of staff to successfully complete tasks and programmes and achieve the organizations mission?

Organizational Capacity development is a strategic objective for 2010-2015 and strategies to meet this objective include *investing in staff skill development, an effective HRD&M policy, developing policies/strategies for advocacy work, resource mobilization, communication /visibility*.

The strategic importance which has been given to Organizational Capacity Development in the Country Strategy 2010-15 fails to reflect itself in the organization structure at LWSIT which does not account for critical functions that are fundamental to LWSIT's relevance, growth and sustainability. The organizational structure depicts:

- ▶ An absence of certain core functions - Resource Mobilization, Communication and PR
- ▶ Shared resources for certain core functions - Common Resource managing Programme function and Learning & Development function; common resource managing Disaster and Emergency Response and the HR function
- ▶ Understaffing of key programme related functions - Monitoring & Evaluation, Procurement

As an NGO, LWSIT's project scale and staffing is highly dependent on the financial resources it mobilizes. LWSIT currently has a total of 143 staff, out of which 118 employees are allocated to specific projects, across West Bengal, Orissa and Assam. While there has been a decline of 33% in the number of total staff from 2010-2014, this corresponds to the 44% decline in funding and its implications on programme, over that period.

Employees at the field level may appear overloaded; however an increased number of resources may not necessarily lead to increased effectiveness and impact as part of this overload may be due to unrealistic reporting targets and consequently, data collection. For example, the STEER RURAL project reports that 1696 communities are being managed by 64 staff. It would be extremely challenging for an employee to singly handle over 26 communities while investing the time and effort to meet the twelve Project Result areas i.e. Institutional Strengthening and Advocacy, Resource Mobilization, Education, Health, Mother and Child Health, Women Empowerment, HIV and AIDS, Sustainable livelihoods, Disaster Preparedness and mitigation, Climate Change, etc. While it is natural that organizational priorities would give precedence to donors' priorities in terms of project related impact and outcomes, it is of equal importance that LWSIT assess that its Strategic objectives and programme goals are realistically set and intrinsically linked with institutional capacities and capabilities.

It may be noted that despite its transition period, more than 64% of staff are from its pre-Trust period, which

is a significant achievement for LWSIT. With over 45% of employees being associated with LWSIT for more than 15 years, the staff has the benefit of strong experience, an understanding of the LWSIT culture and familiarity of working with its communities.

On the other hand, the staff also carries the legacy of the LWSI culture that was inherited from its history as an international aid agency managed from Geneva. While the Country Strategy 2010-2015 adopts a rights based, empowerment approach, many employees, due to their long association with LWSIT, still carry the legacy of a needs based approach. While there is a basic understanding amongst the staff of LWSIT's vision, mission and programme goal, discussions with project staff revealed variance in the understanding of these concepts and limited clarity on how to implement them. Terms such as "empowerment", "rights based approach", "sustainable livelihood, food and human security" that are core to LWSIT's strategy need to be clearly defined, communicated and reinforced consistently amongst project staff, so that they in turn are able to mobilize duty bearers and empower right holders to understand and claim their rights. It also raises the challenge of limited exposure in terms of external developments and lays an onus on LWSIT to build employee capacities to ensure that existing financial and human resources are optimized.

There has been limited evidence to gauge whether staff capacities adequately meet LWSIT mission and programme goals as HR policies and systems do not actually capture and measure employee skills or facilitate a linkage between organizational strategies and plans on one side and individual work planning and performance on the other. For example, the Skill Matrix reviewed by the evaluation team lacks a skill-gap analysis which evaluates current organizational capacities and skills compared to attributes and skills that LWSIT currently needs / will need in the future; nor does it state how it intends to make the transition towards those capabilities.

Similarly, it is not obvious that all the work, while satisfying to the employees, has any direct relation to the overall LWSIT mission and Programme goal. The Job Description of the Programme Manager lists out key tasks such as "*Develop Project Documents, Project Proposals and Budgets as per need of the Organization time to time*", however it noticeably lacks provisions for strategic planning. LWSIT must utilize this transition phase (prior to the development of its new Country Strategy), to assess whether employees are working towards clear results which align with the LWSIT mission and gauge the percentage of employee time that may be spent on non-value added tasks. Taken together with an unstructured induction process at LWSIT and the lack of a systematic capacity building programme, this is a major deterrent towards achieving the mission and programme goals as laid out in the Country Strategy 2010-15.

Evaluation question: Are there adequate human resource management policies and systems in place?

Given its importance as a strategic objective, there is little evidence that HRM has been considered a strategic activity up to this point. The Human Resource Management (HRM) Function at LWSIT is managed solely by the Manager - HR and appears to be fundamentally administrative in nature. At this point, it may be emphasized that the discussion is around the management of HR at LWSIT and not the role of the HR function per se. Over the past year, LWSIT has attempted to strengthen its HRM function through its HR Policy (HRP) 2014, development of Job Descriptions, etc. Various components of the Policy such as Staff Service Rules 2009 and Gender Policy 2004 need to be reviewed and aligned with the HR Policy 2014.

The HR policy 2014 adequately addresses the various components of Human Resource Management, such as recruitment and selection, induction, interim positions, annual performance appraisals, promotions, salary and compensation, benefits and other administrative issues but lacks Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be followed under each policy. For example, while the objectives and process for induction of a new employee are laid out in the HR policy, discussions with employees brought out the fact that the induction process may not be consistent for all employees. Similarly, the evaluation team did not observe any induction deck or material prepared for induction of employees.

Evaluation question: Is the recruitment process gender sensitive, documented, transparent and competitive?

Although the Country Strategy 2010-15 discusses 'Affirmative action for gender budgeting', both the Country Strategy 2010-15 and Gender Policy 2004 bring a programme related emphasis on Gender rather than an Organizational or employee related perspective. Gender representation at LWSIT has potential for improvement with 24% of employees at LWSIT being female and women representing 21% of management at National Office and Project level. Discussions with LWSIT brought out the fact that the management is looking to address this through gender friendly recruitment strategies.

Currently, the Recruitment process as laid out in the HR Manual provides direction in terms of recruitment and selection to fill in a vacancy at LWSIT with the objective of transparency in recruiting and selecting employees without any bias or discrimination. LWSIT's process allows for recruitment from within the organization or externally. For internal applicants, LWSIT may open the position through an internal notice followed by the normal interview process or through the decision of the Executive Director or MC. For external candidates, a public notice is issued through advertisements in newspapers, electronic media, etc. with the interview conducted by a panel of LWSIT senior officials. A Reference check is mandatory for all candidates.

This process could be further strengthened with greater clarity in terms of the selection process, involvement of the Line Manager in recruitment and recording of supporting documentation. In the sample personnel files reviewed by the evaluation team, there was no record of interview evaluation forms or reference check forms.

Evaluation question: Is the compensation and benefits package consistent with the provisions of the national labour law?

LWSIT's compensation and benefits package is in accordance with the National Labour Law. Guided by its HR Policy 2014, LWSIT's salary component includes basic pay and other allowances like cost of living allowance, house rent allowance (HRA), medical allowance (MA), and conveyance allowance (CA). As per Income Tax Act, 1961, HRA, MA and CA are tax saving components and employees can benefit through proper tax planning, resulting in greater pay outs to employees. A hardship allowance is also paid to those employees who are engaged in emergency response. Additionally, LWSIT provides social security benefits to staff which is a part of the regular payroll and have completed one year of service. LWSIT has obtained mediclaim and accidental policy for all its employees on annual basis expenses related to major ailments and accident related cases. Further, employees have also been provided loan and one month salary advance by LWSIT to meet immediate emergency and unforeseen needs. Employees are entitled to annual earned leave, sick leave, casual leave, maternity leave and compensatory leave. Women employees resuming duties after the first maternity leave are given additional allowance of Rs. 1000 per month till the child attains 1 year.

Evaluation question: Are there adequate strategies for staff development?

LWSIT does conduct training programmes for its employees, however, the lack of a structured capacity building programme may limit growth opportunities for staff and lead to irrelevant training programmes being conducted, which in turn could result in employee obsolescence / career plateaus. Lack of a structured capacity building agenda also hampers the identification and development of a much required second line of leadership at the Trust.

As per discussions with the Manager - Program, who also has the responsibility for Learning & Development at LWSIT, trainings are conducted mainly on the basis of feedback received during performance appraisals, informal discussions with employees and their supervisors and during Management Committee meetings. At the time of evaluation (February 2016), a needs assessment for 2016 had not been conducted nor had a training calendar been drawn up for the year. Further, although several trainings have been conducted through the years, it is not an integrated process which feeds into the development of employees on a continuous basis. The 2008 Evaluation Report reads... *"In recent years it seems that staff energies have gone into maintaining field operations at a time of declining income, adjusting to changes in leadership and.... It is not surprising that organizational learning and development has time and again been given second priority in the face of more urgently pressing demands upon scarce manpower and time resources."* It is interesting to note seven years later, that LWSIT appears to be at a similar stage of fire-fighting operations.

LWSIT maintains an annual performance appraisal system, which offers a performance appraisal form, guidelines, inputs for training requirements and is followed annually. The Performance Appraisal form is vague, does not focus on the Key Result Areas emanating from the Job Description and allows for a large amount of subjectivity. Further, when its actual usage at LWSIT is explored, it may be noted that the performance appraisal may not be linked to any management decision processes such as rewards, trainings or promotions, which renders it irrelevant and ineffective. LWSIT's performance management system is not working to differentiate performance; as a result, a significant degree of underperformance or non-performance may not be addressed

Several of these issues have already been identified in the 2008 Evaluation Report *"The absence of up-to-date job descriptions, an unclear and incomplete organogram, an ineffective management information system, and the somewhat dysfunctional climate within the senior management team are major weaknesses that require urgent rectification."* From the management interviews conducted as well, it is understood that many of the issues relating to HRM have been identified and analyzed.

However, seven years later, it is clear that the progress has been slow. LWSIT faces the risk of tending to focus on surface issues by making changes to policies, systems and even the organizational structure while paying insufficient attention to the deeper dimension, which is the collectively held beliefs, norms and patterns of behavior that act as the glue that maintains the status quo in the organization.

3.2.4 Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning

As Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) at a project level has been captured in section 3.1.3, this section looks at PMER and learning from an organizational point of view and aims to answer the questions below:

Evaluation question: Does the organization have a well-designed participatory and gender sensitive system for PMER?

As per the Country Strategy 2010-15, *“LWSIT will follow the LWF/DWS guidelines ...This means that a Country Strategic Plan is prepared with participation of senior staff ...Within this framework LWSIT shall prepare detailed Planning and Monitoring Documents for the programmes for implementation.”*

The Country Strategy itself brings forth a largely programmatic focus in its strategic objectives and priorities. Despite being a newly localized Trust, reflecting a focus on the Rights Based approach, an empowerment approach and an integrated approach, the strategy itself reflects a limited emphasis on organization related objectives and priorities, apart from capacity building.

PMER therefore primarily focuses on planning, M&E and outcomes at a programme / project level and lacks a coherent organizational wide PMER system.

Planning:

As per the Country Strategy, *“Women and men will be motivated to participate actively in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the development initiatives.”* In its annual activity Plans and reporting targets, LWSIT does set specific targets for both men and women.

In the planning of the country strategy, extensive consultations were carried out with stakeholders. Similarly, at the project level, the planning process is participatory, gender sensitive and factors the inputs of the community and the units which are then integrated at the national office at a programme or project level. The field visits conducted by the evaluation team suggest that communities are interested and involved in planning and implementation of project interventions. Projects also have a strong component of community contribution to ensure their ownership. However, there is a notable absence of an integrated organizational operating plan to support and ensure consistency and fulfilment of the mandate of the Country Strategy.

Monitoring & Evaluation:

As per the Country Strategy, *“Executive Staff Meetings (ESM) are held at least twice in a year when senior project personnel and members of the Management Team jointly review project progress.”* There is no mechanism to monitor the strategy and evaluate whether the strategic objectives have been met. Each strategic objective is supported by ‘evidences of change’, however there is no evidence that suggest that the ‘evidences of change’ are being monitored through milestones, indicators or otherwise. At the project level, M&E is more streamlined and data is being captured. However, at the national office level, with just one resource has been allocated for M&E of all project areas.

Reporting

Project monitoring is largely conducted from a project level- Donor reporting perspective as opposed to a perspective of accountability to its stakeholders and learning.

The Evaluation also observed non-compliance with the donor’s reporting requirements. For example, the STEER RURAL project has two separate Project documents for its donors - CoS and BfdW. BfdW requires semi-annual reports on project implementation and financial management of projects. The reporting indicators for CoS and BfdW vary, although they are not mutually exclusive. Based on discussions with LWSIT, it submits a single report, on an annual basis, to both donors, which contains details on aggregated fund utilization of both donors and aggregated project results, without clear attribution.

Overall, there is lack of evidence that establishes a clear linkage between project activities and impact / outcomes; the major challenge lies in the absence of a mechanism to validate attribution (total or partial) of project activities to its outputs and of outputs to outcomes.

Further, although LWSIT compiles its various project level activities in its Annual Report, LWSIT’s PMER efforts do not reflect the design and implementation of an Organization wide reporting system that can reliably monitor and report on key data to improve the performance and accountability of the LWSIT to its stakeholder communities and as a key player in the field of humanitarianism / human rights / rights of Dalits and other minority groups.

Evaluation question: To what extent does the organization incorporate learning from evaluations into organizational practices and programme activities?

It may be noted that LWSIT has successfully incorporated recommendations from the previous evaluation (2008) into the development of its country strategy and programmatic focus. For example, it has successfully dealt with apparent issues of dis-trust at the time between field staff and management. Field Staff interviewed seemed content and proud to be associated with LWSIT. Programme Coordinators also visit the field areas frequently, leading to greater involvement and engagement.

In the development of the Country Strategy as well, this process did involve participatory planning; however it is unclear whether this has translated, as intended, into stronger ownership of the strategy, its implementation and outcomes by the Board and staff. Similarly, several recommendations with regard to the programmes itself have been taken into consideration and implemented, although the majority of them were

already in sync with LWSIT's current work.

However, LWSIT has been less successful in incorporating learning from the Organizational issues and recommendations on this whether with regard to documentation, MIS, effective HR systems and frameworks, management styles, external visibility, etc.

Evaluation question: To what extent do the staff and management reflect upon and analyze experiences and data for decision making relating to management practices and programming?

In the Country Strategy 2010-15, reference is made for LWSIT to “strengthen as a learning organization”. On the basis of the evaluation findings, a great deal must be done if this ambition is to be realized.

For an organization to ‘learn’ there must be focus on the organization and organizational capacities. The orientation is currently “individualistic” to each programme rather than “collectivistic” from an organizational point of view which implies that employees are less prone to collaborate and to see their success / areas of improvement through the lens of the organization.

Activities continue to be undertaken in the same manner as during the pre-trust period. For example, although current data collection, reporting processes and templates are cumbersome and not conducive to collation or analysis for decision making and learning, they continue because that is “the way things are done”. In line with this, a key question that LWSIT needs to consider is its flexibility to respond to the external environment - the continually evolving demands of rights holders, competitive pressures for funds, technology advancements and macroeconomic developments that affect every NGO - and the ability to change itself accordingly, in order to remain relevant.

A key element to the successful implementation of the Country Strategy will be PMER's efforts to continue to build and strengthen an organizational level planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting process and practice that supports quality service delivery, learning and accountability in programmes.

3.2.5 Sustainability:

As per the ToR, the evaluation reviewed LWSIT's sustainability to answer the following questions:

Evaluation question: To what extent are the organization management systems and structures flexible and adaptive to programme scale and changes in strategic direction?

The concept of change in programme or scale, particularly for organizations that focus on community mobilization and change can be daunting. The first step is to understand what the change in strategy, scope and scale means and what it takes to get there, all of which must be laid out in a detailed operational plan that will support the revised strategy.

As a country based programme prior to 2008, LWSIT continues to bring in a ‘programme’ related focus rather than an organizational focus. Understanding what it takes to make the required changes to scope or scale will be the first step for LWSIT which may require a fundamental paradigm shift in the design and implementation of programme initiatives. This may require guidance at the highest level, with a diverse board that has been selected based on the specific competencies it brings.

LWSIT's structure is centralized, with authority and decision making being concentrated in the hands of the senior management committee, many of who are at the core, programme-oriented. A change in programme scope or scale will require LWSIT to be cognizant of fact that, either:

- ▶ Operations may require increased delegation of authority. This requires a change in the current organizational structure, mindsets and culture, and increased capacity building of middle management and other staff which can only be brought about by a “defined” culture, its constant communication and reinforcement as well as a well-thought out capacity building programme; or
- ▶ That it will require sufficient management capacity to keep operations on track and the staff capacity to implement effectively. This will require an in-depth analysis into the skills, knowledge and capabilities needed and significant capacity building towards the same. While capacity building is an important strategic objective, LWSIT currently lacks a capacity building policy, strategy or plan.

Most organizations avoid starting from scratch when it comes to beginning operations in new geographical or programmatic areas and tend to select well-established lead organizations which will facilitate their expansion into new programmatic areas, and strengthen their capacity by bringing in extensive place-based experience, in the case of geographically focused initiatives (e.g., deep pre-existing networks of relationships and an intimate knowledge of local social and political issues), or extensive policy experience and political contacts. LWSIT has not built significant partnerships for programme implementation till now, apart from partnerships for the Stone Quarry Project, which have been largely donor driven. LWSIT also lacks a policy for management of the project by implementation partners, including selection, disbursement of funds, monitoring and closure

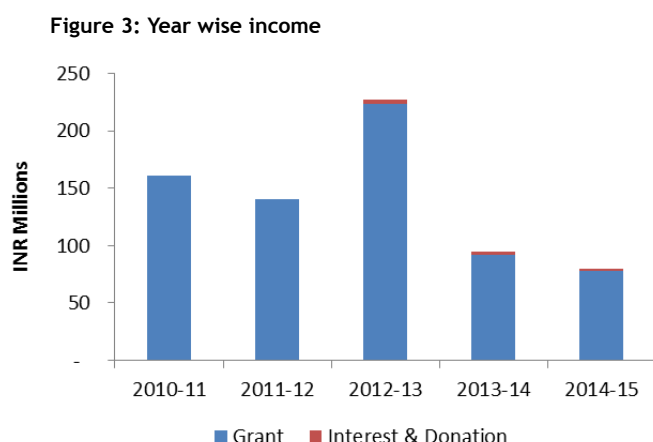
of projects.

While LWSIT's forte lies in data collection and documentation, it will have to learn how to utilize and leverage data as a driving force to take internal decisions, build community support, inform the general public, influence, policymakers, design and modify strategies, and track and communicate results.

In terms of internal controls, apart from the issues pointed out section 3.2.1, LWSIT has adequate systems for internal governance and controls. However, keeping in line with its programmatic focus, LWSIT continues to maintain its financial records at a programme level and does not have mechanisms to provide an organization wide overview.

LWSIT has thus far been comfortable with stability – with a culture that focuses on maintaining consistency, predictability and controlling exposure to the external environment. This acts as a deterrent to innovation, openness and a longer- term perspective - all of which are required for LWSIT's sustainability. A key priority for LWSIT will be to shift focus to build and sustain the capacity of LWSIT as an adaptable organization, supported by flexible systems, structures and policies, rather than focusing on programme sustainability alone.

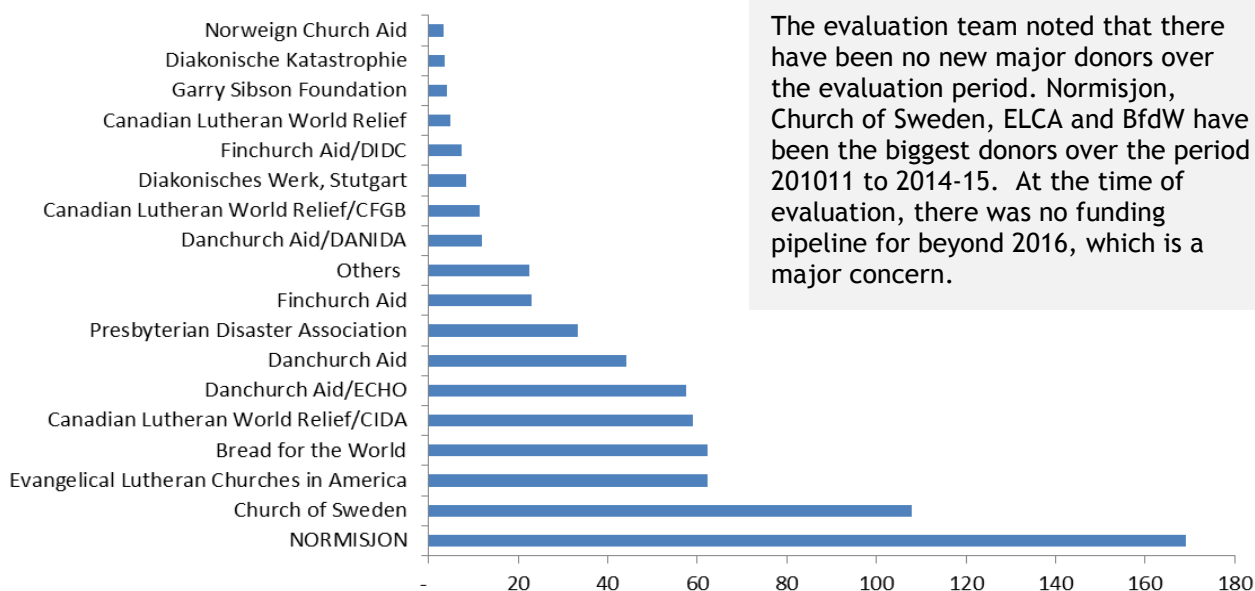
Evaluation question: Does the organization have policies, strategies and mechanisms to ensure financial sustainability of the organization?



Through the years, LWSIT has been receiving funding primarily from ecumenical, foreign organizations. Income received has been declining over the years with a decrease of over 50% from 2010-11 to 2014-15, except for a sharp increase in 2012-13. Additionally, the majority of funds have been grants (restricted funds) with minimal donations - 2% to 3% of total income.

STEER RURAL has been a major programme for LWSIT with fund utilization increasing from 15% of total funds in 2011-12 to 36% of total fund utilization in 2014-15

Figure 4: Total funds mobilized / donor from 2010-11 to 2014-15 (INR million)



The evaluation team noted that there have been no new major donors over the evaluation period. Normisjon, Church of Sweden, ELCA and BfdW have been the biggest donors over the period 2010-11 to 2014-15. At the time of evaluation, there was no funding pipeline for beyond 2016, which is a major concern.

LWSIT has been functioning on the faith that the good work that it does will continue to receive funding from its resource partners. LWSIT must consider a flexible, diversified resource mobilization approach, with systems, processes and a team to support the same, thus allowing LWSIT to allocate resources to enhance critical staff capacity, invest in LWSIT as an organization and/or take advantage of emerging opportunities. Flexible funding to respond to a changing context - external and internal - system wide alignment of strategies and goals, and the right combination of partners, funding and supporting capacities are critical decisions that will need to be carefully and systematically considered.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 Country Strategy

1. LWSIT's ideology and strategic framework have been captured and articulated in the CSP 2010-15 and flow from the erstwhile LWSI. The Country Strategy 2010-15 provides a direction as to where LWSIT is headed along with its priorities, strategic objectives, approaches and modes of operation. LWSIT's vision statement is inspirational; however there is potential to refine the vision statement to make it more tangible and achievable within a timeframe that motivates and inspire stakeholders to put their best foot forward. Practically, several concepts that are core to the vision and strategy such as 'sustainable livelihoods', 'food security', 'quality of life' are understood in varying forms by different stakeholders due to complexity, vagueness, lack of orientation or difficulty in translating into regional languages, which in turn, has implications on programme design, implementation and outcomes.
2. The Country Strategy remains relevant as identified issues are pertinent, broad-based and enduring in India. The strategy is clear in identifying its target group and geographies. LWSIT has extensive experience and expertise in working in the target geographies and communities and has developed a deep understanding of community needs. However, this localised understanding has not been adequately reflected in the situational analysis for the Country Strategy, which would have enhanced the overall relevance of the Strategy and all the programmes and plans that emanate from it.
3. The strategic priorities and cross cutting issues are relevant and have been developed around the core strengths of the organization. The RBA is a new concept to LWSIT; understanding of concepts and its application is therefore still evolving. It will therefore require some time to embed the RBA in actual implementation, based on a conscious organizational decision and requisite efforts towards the same.
4. LWSIT has implemented a diverse range of projects; the projects under evaluation have shown a high level of alignment with the objectives of the Country Strategy. Significant work has been done and progress has been made, as reported in the annual reports. While the strategy provides a broad perspective on what needs to be achieved and the evidence of changes, it is not supported by an Operational Plan for implementation and monitoring of the strategies laid out within the Country Strategy Plan. Moreover, it is challenging to objectively assess the extent of achievement against the strategies as the 'evidences of change' lack milestones and measurable indicators. There is therefore limited perspective on how to monitor the strategy.

4.1.2 Programs

5. The rights holders selected by the project are appropriate in relation to the problem identified. While the challenges faced by its priority focus group are indeed valid at a broad level, the situational analysis and implementation strategies in the Project document do not reflect the varied requirements of different geographical locations and issues of different groups at a grassroots level.
6. In case of STEER RURAL Project, LWSIT has two separate project documents in order to meet different donor requirements, in the case of CoS and BfdW. The reporting indicators for CoS and BfdW vary, although they are not mutually exclusive. LWSIT submits a single report, on an annual basis, to both donors, which contains details on aggregated fund utilization of both donors and aggregated project results, without clear attribution.
7. The project objectives and approaches are in alignment with the components of country strategy and incorporate various components to a varying extent. While addressing the specific challenges identified, the project strategies have a strong focus on addressing demand side barriers (access to information, knowledge, capacity) but are weak in addressing the supply side factors (engagement with local government agencies and other duty bearers). Additionally, the specificities and nuances of different strategic approaches are not understood by the field level staff.
8. Field level evidence indicates a sincere effort by experienced and motivated staff members which is an organizational strength. LWSIT has made progress in empowering target communities, particularly through its capacity development programs and has developed strong linkages with its communities. A special mention may be made of LWSIT's interventions on the DRR Project in its operational areas where the evaluation team observed increased confidence and social resilience among community members. This can be exemplified by the coastal area of Kendrapada, where communities were unanimous in attributing LWSIT's years of support in building their capacities and guiding them to manage such eventualities and shocks.
9. The strategies, approaches and modes of operation adopted to implement planned activities are relevant and well-designed but the effectiveness of the programmes can be improved by strengthening the connection between project strategies, activities and its linkage with expected outcomes. Effectiveness of programmes is highly dependent on the understanding of the PFGs and their limitations, as well as the flexibility of the programme to respond to factors that may hamper the effectiveness of the project. For example, LWSIT has been very effective in implementation of activities, such as awareness generation camps. However, in both the STEER RURAL and GEP programmes, communities had limited

recollection of the topics discussed in the awareness creation camps or where they had been conducted. In short, these activities have not translated to outputs and the reasons for this may be many i.e. quality of intervention, frequency of activities, or the absorptive capacity of the PFG. Whatever the reason, it is important that LWSIT reflect and understand why its activities have not translated to outputs and re-work its approach for the programme to have its intended effect.

Additionally, the projects lack a mechanism to gauge whether outcomes can be wholly or partially attributed to LWSIT. Although LWSIT has done significant and important work in its project areas it is difficult to ascertain impact as the programmes are in their nascent stages (less than three years). In STEER (Rural) project LWSIT categorizes ‘accompaniment’ communities as those which it has been associated with for over five years. However, there is lack of clarity on the changes or impact of project interventions on these communities as LWSIT does not account for separate reporting of these communities.

Additionally, baseline data is not effectively used to capture outcomes and indicators for impact are not objectively verifiable. To summarize, a lot of activities are being conducted with visible outputs and there is a lot of data collected that reports on these activities, however it is difficult to capture and report on outcomes due to the weaknesses in its project management processes.

10. The specificities and nuances of different strategic approaches are not understood in totality by the field level staff misinterpretation which in turn, has implications on project implementation. Various components of RBA - primarily advocacy, campaigns, policy dialogue, mass mobilization and engagement and sensitization of duty bearers have not been incorporated into the project design and are not being implemented.
11. Across projects, the staff members to community ratio appears unrealistic, considering the number of targeted communities and the overall work done with these communities which include components of education, health, livelihood, rights etc. As per reported figures, staff may be over-burdened which may, in turn, have an adverse impact on overall quality and efficiency of the project.
12. LWSIT currently uses the same approach and methods for varied CBOs which have differences in terms of their categorization (good, poor, etc.), their capacities and their period of existence. This, combined with the lack of a clearly defined exit plan, may have implications of programme effectiveness, measuring impact and gauging sustainability of LWSIT's efforts.

4.1.3 Organizational Assessment

13. Seven years after localisation, LWSIT's still functions with a “programme orientation” which is reflected in LWSIT's organization structure. Therefore, little progress has been made on its organizational priorities as laid out in its Country Strategy 2010-15 strategy such as “becoming a learning organization, institutional building to build assets, diversifying resource base, building visibility and networking.”
14. There is a lack of (documented) understanding on the types of partnerships that LWSIT wishes to develop and the rationale behind developing these partnerships / relationships. Subsequently, it follows that LWSIT does not engage in strategically planned relationship management efforts. Its partnerships and alliances continue to reflect a strong focus primarily on DRR and ecumenical organizations. LWSIT has also been unable to make in-roads into developing a strategy or bringing in expertise for advocacy, communication / outreach and visibility.
15. LWSIT's strong ecumenical identity is reflected in its Board composition and associations with UELCI and NCCI. This provides LWSIT the benefit of Board members having an understanding of LWSIT culture and who bring experience from like-minded organizations. However the Board has, during the country strategy period, faced several issues such as inadequate Board strength and representation, absence of quorum and limited oversight in several important matters relating to LWSIT as an organization (such as long term visioning, resource mobilisation, strategic partnership, succession planning, sustainability planning and review/monitoring of the country strategy etc). . The evaluation team further noted that matters related to Board strength and representation appears to have been rectified as of December 2015.
16. LWSIT has a number of internal control measures established for its operations at national and unit offices; however a few limitations were noted with regard to managing its statutory and regulatory compliances especially related to FCRA and accounting of ‘people's contribution’. It was also noted that LWSIT did not have any policies in place with regard to conducting due diligence and managing the implementing partners; LWSIT also did not maintain documentation with regard to legal registrations and statutory and regulatory compliances of its implementing partners
17. LWSIT maintains a “line” structural hierarchy and depicts high dependence on the Executive Director to set the tone for the organization and take it forward. In accordance with its “line structure, operations are highly centralized with authority being retained by the senior management and Strategic Management Committee. This structure creates high dependency on senior management and may also implications if LWSIT wishes to expand its geographical / functional reach.
18. As an organization, LWSIT's culture appears to be one that is reactive, rather than one that is proactive. For example, although partnerships are an essential part of its strategy and its approach, the only programme that LWSIT has formed partnerships for, is the Normisjon driven stone quarry project, on the

recommendation of the donor. LWSIT has strong core values and cultural traits that have made it great; however, it also has some historic cultural traits of a country programme that have not changed; some of these traits may prove to be unhelpful particularly if the strategy or the structure changes, or when different levels of performance may be required.

19. The HRM function at LWSIT is managed by a single resource only who also shares the additional responsibility for managing the DRR Programme.
The HR policy 2014 adequately addresses the various components of Human Resource Management, such as recruitment and selection, induction, interim positions, annual performance appraisals, promotions, salary and compensation, benefits and other administrative issues. While there are certain evidences of the new HR policy being rolled out, its efficacy still remains to be seen.
There has been limited evidence to gauge whether staff capacities adequately meet LWSIT mission and programme goals as HR policies and systems do not actually capture and measure employee skills or facilitate a linkage between organizational strategies and plans on one side and individual work planning and performance on the other. Combined with the lack of a structured capacity building programme, there may be a disconnect between Strategic objectives, programme goals and institutional capacities and capabilities.
20. At the project level, LWSIT's PMER processes are more streamlined; the project design includes a participatory, gender sensitive approach that factor in the inputs of the community across the cycle. At the organizational level however, there is a notable absence of an integrated organizational operating plan and processes to monitor, document, analyse and report data to support the mandate of the Country Strategy.
21. There is limited emphasis on developing processes and systems that focus on components that are integral to organizational sustainability, such as organization wide PMER and learning, resource mobilization, capacity development, partnerships, etc.
22. Both the Country Strategy 2010-15 and Gender Policy 2004 bring a programme related emphasis on Gender rather than an employee related perspective. Although there is gender imbalance at LWSIT in terms of male to female ratios at managerial and staff levels, there is pay parity between male and female staff. Based on discussions with LWSIT management, there is awareness that there is gender imbalance in the organization with is being addressed through gender friendly recruitment strategies.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Country Strategy

1. **Recommendation #1: (Priority: Medium; Intended audience: LWSIT and Board of Trustees)**
While developing its next country strategy, LWSIT should consider refining its vision and goal, to make it simpler, measurable and translatable to the relevant regional languages so that it is easily understood and motivates its stakeholders, including staff and communities.
2. **Recommendation #2: (Priority: Medium; Intended audience: LWSIT management committee, project coordinators and field staff)**
The development context for the next Country Strategy should be analysed in relation to LWSIT focused geography and PFGs and the issues identified should be carefully analysed and prioritised. While analysing issues, LWSIT should leverage its existing experience, expertise and understanding of the needs of the communities that it works with to enhance the relevance of the Country Strategy and provide a platform for a robust planning framework.
Additionally, LWSIT while developing its next Country Strategy, should consider the new developments in the external environment such as the newly elected Government in India and its focus areas, the CSR law in the Companies Act 2013, updates in FCRA and the newly developed Sustainable Development Goals that may influence its Strategy in terms of programmatic direction, resource mobilization and internal controls.
3. **Recommendation #3: (Priority: High; Intended audience: LWSIT, and Board of Trustees and Donors)**
The RBA often requires taking strong and contrary positions that may not always be in line with the dominant political perspectives. While the organization has not experienced any such scenarios or have taken any such stand yet, it must introspect on the character of the rights based programme that it wishes to pursue based on the opportunities and risks that come with it, on the basis of consultations and consensus of its primary stakeholders, particularly donors, Board of Trustees and senior management.
4. **Recommendation #4: (Priority: High; Intended audience: LWSIT and Management Committee)**
While strategy provides direction, effective implementation requires a strong element of planning at all levels- operational, financial and organizational. It is strongly recommended that LWSIT develops a five year operational plan (year wise) that is aligned with its next strategic plan. The operational plan should clearly define the critical success factors or key elements for implementing the strategy, identify key programs corresponding to each strategic objective and define KPIs for each strategic objective.
While determining whether to initiate or continue with a program LWSIT should consider the following questions:

- ▶ Does it advance its mission/vision and helps in reaching desired impacts/outcomes?
- ▶ Is it aligned with LWSIT's niche and identity (innovative, creative, and positive)?
- ▶ Is there a clear impact to be achieved and is LWSIT positioned to achieve it (as opposed to other stakeholders in the space)?
- ▶ Does it respond to the needs of our desired constituents?
- ▶ Is it achievable and do LWSIT have the capacity to implement it?
- ▶ How much - tentatively - will it require in terms of funding?

Additionally, LWSIT should develop systems to monitor and review its country strategy on a periodic basis and update the board of trustees periodically on achievements as per strategic objectives.

Project documents must reflect the experience and expertise that LWSIT has working in the project areas and with these community groups. Planning and design has to be data driven and based on evidence collected from the community to reflect specific issues and needs as per different project locations and different community groups.

4.2.2 Programs

5. **Recommendation #5: (Priority: Medium; Intended audience: LWSIT and Management Committee)**

It is recommended that LWSIT prepare a logical framework for each project unit with clear, achievable and measurable indicators; while defining indicators on project results, its attribution to the project activities should be clearly established. The customized location specific project document should clearly identify duty bearers and action plan to engage with the duty bearers using rights based approach and provide clear visibility on project coverage in terms of direct interventions and roles and responsibility of each project staff members. The project documents should clearly identify and mention risk and mitigation measures that are dependent on local context.

The project plan has to incorporate stakeholder perspective, including both the problem identification and possible solutions. Every project should have a component of mid-term review to assess the relevance of the project related activities and make mid-course corrections if required.

With respect to GEP project, design should include a clear narrative around gender that needs to be mainstreamed during the project planning. The project also needs to identify clearly attributable implementation strategies for authorized and un-authorized slums, as nuances of both are different, so are the priorities and processes for claiming rights/entitlements.

6. **Recommendation #6 (Priority: Very high; Projects: STEER (Rural) Intended addressee: LWSIT and donor partners for STEER (Rural))**

It is recommended that LWSIT take corrective action to integrate its project document and develop common understanding on project results and outcome. It is unrealistic to expect two different outcomes through same set of activities. There is a need to rationalise the overall outcome expectation from the project. The expectation of different project partners have to be coalesced to create a uniform roadmap for community development. Its programmes should have clearly verifiable indicators that match with the country strategy.

7. **Recommendation #7 (Priority: Medium; Projects: All; Intended addressee: LWSIT, BoT and Donors)**

LWSIT may consider developing a source book on project design and implementation that clearly specifies the approach and clear guidelines to educate the project stakeholders on various nuances of human rights and entitlement that the projects are advocating. The source book should identify other civil society organizations that are working on RBA in and how to create linkages with these organizations. The source book should also provide clarity on ways and means to engage with government and various duty bearers for strengthening the program as well as policy advocacy at state and national level. The source book should also include guidance notes for project partners and other stakeholders.

8. **Recommendation #8 (Priority: Medium; Projects: All; Intended addressee: LWSIT)**

Capacity building is the most important strategy and LWSIT has made considerable progress in developing the capacities of communities. To standardize capacity building among its communities and make the process more efficient, the project may consider developing standardized modules for regular trainings like book keeping, PIME, women leadership, SHG management etc. These should be available in local language and should be preceded by a Training of Trainer program.

9. **Recommendation #9 (Priority: High; Projects: All; Intended addressee: LWSIT and Donors)**

LWSIT must work towards developing a viable theory of change for its projects. The selection of issues and activities and the resultant indicators should be based on intervention logic that is clearly verifiable and positively attributable to project activities.

It is strongly recommended that LWSIT strengthens its M&E systems by focusing on the following:

- ▶ Define all project related indicators and the process of collection, aggregation and collation of monitoring data at each level. Define the roles and responsibility of the M&E officer and designate one M&E champion at each project location
- ▶ Develop a training plan that includes staff involved in data-collection and reporting at all levels in the reporting process and ensure that all relevant staff have received training on the data management processes and tools

- ▶ Designate a senior staff member with proficiency in data management who will be responsible for reviewing the aggregated numbers prior to the submission/release of report from the Unit offices.
 - ▶ Prepare standard guidelines for project M&E and train project staff members in various components related to M&E
 - ▶ Clearly define standard source document (e.g. project registers, etc.) to be used by all service delivery points (community, CBO, Zone office), at the unit level, to record service delivery. Identify standard reporting forms/tools to be used by all reporting levels.
 - ▶ Ensure that all source documents and reporting forms relevant for measuring the indicator(s) are available for auditing purposes (including dated print-outs in case of computerized system).
 - ▶ Prepare clear written procedure for data aggregation, analysis and/or manipulation steps performed at each level of the reporting system. The procedure should also address late, incomplete, inaccurate and missing reports; including following-up with sub-reporting levels on data quality issues.
 - ▶ Clearly define and ensure that quality controls in place for when data from paper-based forms are entered into a computer (e.g., double entry, post-data entry verification, etc).
10. **Recommendation #10 (Priority: High; Projects: All; Intended addressee: LWSIT)**
 There is a need to improve the field staff's understanding of RBA in its totality and for the project to begin generating evidences of change at the field level. A Lot of reporting has happened in all the projects and there are several success stories that were generated through project interventions. These evidences can be used to build awareness at state and national levels. Additionally, LWSIT could identify communities or CBOs that are functioning successfully with limited support from LWSIT, develop these CBOs as models and build an advocacy and awareness campaign around these model CBOs.
11. **Recommendation #11 (Priority: Medium; Projects: All; Intended addressee: LWSIT)**
 LWSIT should conduct a work load analysis to analyse specific number of communities and CBOs being managed by each staff members. The relevance of the project activities have to be assessed through discussions with the project staff members and irrelevant activities have to be stopped by providing proper justification. It would save precious time and resources for the organization and bring greater efficiency.
12. **Recommendation #12 (Priority: Medium; Projects: All; Intended addressee: LWSIT)**
 LWSIT may consider improving programme effectiveness by differentiated management methods as per their categorization, capacities and period of existence; development of a clear outcome based assessment on withdrawing support from performing CBOs to check their sustainability (exit plan); and developing a detailed roadmap for strengthening SHGs/CBOs that are not functioning well.
 Clear operating guidelines for creating and managing SHGs will also be a useful tool for LWSIT to assess which IGA activities are making an impact and creating positive change.
 As right holders are collectivized through SHGs/CBOs/Federations, it is important to develop a clear plan as to how these would be sustained. CBOs as a stand-alone entity in absence of block or state level confederations may not be sustainable; it would be useful to assess the communities where the project has already completed 4-5 years and are demonstrating evidence of change (Category 'Good'); all the projects can then look to developing these communities as role models within each location.
 There is also a requirement for a sustainable business plan for federations to sustain project initiatives. Federated structures at the GP and District level may be strengthened and integrated with platforms created which also engage duty bearers.

4.2.3 Organization Assessment

13. **Recommendation # 13 (Priority: High; Intended addressee: LWSIT Management Committee and Board of Trustees)**
 The Country Strategy 2010-15 has already identified pertinent organizational priorities towards meetings its organizational goal; it is vital that these are now implemented and incorporated. LWSIT is no more a country programme and this must be reflected in its focus in building a relevant, sustainable organization. While its financial constraints and programmatic priorities are well understood, building up its organizational capacities in human resource management, learning and development, resource mobilization, partnerships and communication must be focus areas going ahead.
14. **Recommendation # 14 (Priority: High; Intended addressee: LWSIT Management Committee)**
 Partnerships and alliances are key to an organization that focuses on a Rights Based approach and to any organization that focuses on learning and knowledge sharing. The evaluation team suggests that LWSIT develops a strategic partnership framework that establishes a clear rationale for partnerships and guidelines for executing the same. Simultaneously, it may consider the development of a communication strategy that will promote LWSIT's brand, create greater visibility and showcase LWSIT's impact.
15. **Recommendation 15(Priority: Medium; Intended addressee: Board of Trustees, LWSIT Management Committee)**
 Towards Board effectiveness, the evaluation team suggests that based on its organizational goals the Board incorporate appropriate process for the induction and orientation of its members. Additionally, it is vital that LWSIT set systems and processes to ensure that the Board periodically review the Country Strategy

and whether its major milestones have been met, in terms of organizational development, resource mobilization, strategic partnerships and programmes.

16. Recommendation 16 (Priority: Very High; Intended addressee: LWSIT Management Committee, Board of Trustees)

LWSIT's should strengthen its internal control systems to ensure timely and appropriate compliances particularly with regard to the FCRA, annual income tax returns and monthly PF dues and develop and clear policies/guidelines for accounting of 'people's contribution' and due diligence and management of implementing partners.

17. Recommendation # 17 (Priority: Low; Intended addressee: LWSIT Management Committee and Human Resource Management Team)

If LWSIT foresees any changes in the scale and scope of its programmes, or wishes to make its management processes more participatory, it is recommended that LWSIT re-visit its decision making structure and delegation of authority; this will also address work overload at senior management level. However, this must be accompanied by appropriate capacity building exercises in terms of managerial functions and leadership

18. Recommendation # 18 (Priority: Medium; Intended addressee: LWSIT Management Committee and Human Resource Management Team)

While LWSIT has a long and proud history, heritage and culture, changing organizational and programmatic priorities may not ipso facto bring about a change in the culture and style of working. Going forward, LWSIT must define / refine the cultural values it wishes to propagate based on its organizational priorities; these in turn must be consistently reinforced through structured induction programmes, demonstrated actions and through LWSIT's systems and processes.

19. Recommendation # 19 (Priority: High; Intended addressee: LWSIT Management Committee, Human Resources Management and Learning and Development team)

HR has become an increasingly specialized function. LWSIT should consider adding to current HR team capacities by developing specific career opportunities or paths for those staff who may wish to progress their careers in this area. LWSIT may also consider the engagement (full time or part time) of HR professionals with experience of implementing organization wide strategic HR change initiatives. Going forward, LWSIT should develop a strategic focus on HRM to move beyond compliances and its current emphasis on surface level issues towards more proactive action to meet its organizational goals, with emphasis on capacity building. The Executive Director, together with the Management Committee, needs to be seen to 'own' and 'drive' HR reform within and throughout the organization. Mid-level management Managers (Program coordinators, Unit Managers) should play a key role in 'bringing HR policies to life' and critically influencing staff commitment and motivation.

LWSIT must assess if its Strategic objectives and programme goals are intrinsically linked with current institutional capabilities with an onus to build employee capacities and ensure that existing financial and human resources are optimised.

20. Recommendation # 20 (Priority: Very High; Intended addressee: LWSIT Management Committee, Program and Finance Teams)

LWSIT's PMER efforts must reflect the design and implementation of an Organization wide system that can reliably monitor and report on key data to improve the performance and accountability of the LWSIT and strengthen its organizational "learnability"

21. Recommendation # 21 (Priority: High; Intended addressee: LWSIT Management Committee and Board of Directors)

A key priority for LWSIT will be to bring focus on building and sustaining the capacity of LWSIT as an adaptable organization, supported by flexible systems, structures and policies. LWSIT senior management should look to develop systems that help its long-term viability while effectively managing its day-to-day operations.

The evaluation team puts forth the following components that are essential to the sustainability of an organization:

Component	Recommendations
Organizational identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve messaging of strategic framework throughout the organization, within communities and other partners by simplifying, translating into regional languages and consistent reinforcement - Invest in developing the LWSIT brand, visibility, communication and partnerships
Long term strategy and operational plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop yearly operational plans (for the strategy period) that will support strategy implementation - Development of quantifiable, time-bound objectives to reach each goal and benchmarks to measure progress
Annual financial planning and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop organization plan i.e. program and finance for next coming years over to 3-5 years period based on the donor commitments and linked to operational plan.

Component	Recommendations
periodic monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of periodic financial reports to track actual status of budget and expenditure and variance analysis of such review should be documented - Separate internal audit unit from the finance function to oversee the internal control functions - Management committee should maintain a database to ensure timely statutory compliances such as FCRA, income tax, etc. are done by the finance unit
Long term resource mobilization plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify potential diversified sources of support by leveraging existing organizational and individual relationships. - Prioritization of existing donors and relationship management through regular feedback, reporting etc. - Leveraging current donors to access new networks - Increase accountability of the Board and senior management for lead generation - Develop processes and systems to support resource mobilization plan - Identify dedicated resources for fund raising; build capabilities and competencies - Measure and track the success of resource mobilization plan through defined metrics e.g.no. of leads generated by donor category, percentage of leads converted, cost per proposal, etc. - Funding Pipeline analysis
Nurturing the Board of Trustees	<p>Creation of an annual Board Development Plan that encompasses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs Assessment - linking the expertise of each Board member to specific organizational requirements - Orientation of Board members on LWSIT country strategy plan, strategic approaches and programme interventions - Yearly Self-evaluation of Board to gauge effectiveness in terms of assisting with resource mobilization, providing access to partnerships, monitoring financial health, etc. - Maintenance and team building - The Executive Director and Management committee may create an engagement plan that ensures that each member of the Board is engaged in the organization's work, feels valued and appreciated - Plan Board meetings that empower the Board to provide strategic guidance in term of long term goals, financial monitoring, succession planning, sustainability, etc.
Staff development and organizational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a skill matrix (required skills vs. current skills) that flows from organizational and programmatic requirements - Training needs assessment exercise - Structured and consistent capacity building exercise - Meaningful performance appraisal, review and feedback system - The Executive Director and Management Committee may develop mechanisms to regularly assess the staff perception of organizational culture and external reputation of organization

22. Recommendation 22: (Priority: Low; Intended addressee: LWSIT Management Committee)

The evaluation team recommends that, based on its priorities, LWSIT develops / revises its gender policy that incorporates an organizational perspective, explicitly states its commitment towards gender, provides direction towards building gender related agenda and provides a framework for integrating gender concerns into the organizational agenda. Additionally, LWSIT could strengthen its gender focus by incorporating organizational systems and processes and implementing initiatives that encourage women representation, participation and decision making. It is equally important that this Gender focus be communicated to staff at all levels through orientation and training.

Appendix A Terms of reference

Attached separately

Appendix B Tools and checklist used for evaluation

Attached Separately

Appendix C Meetings held and persons met

Attached Separately

Appendix D List of documents referred

Attached Separately

Appendix E Country Program Strategy 2010-2015

Attached Separately