



Voice, Agency and Participation
South Asia Consultation, Nepal
June 24, 2013

At the end of the World Bank's South Asia Gender Based Violence Symposium, Jeni Klugman hosted a consultation on the Voice, Agency and Participation Report. The consultation attracted around 50-60 participants from the regional symposium as well as local civil society and international organization representatives. Jeni Klugman provided an overview over the report, followed by [Sapana Pradhan Malla](#) (Forum for Women, Law & Development) and [Bandana Rana](#) (SAATHI)—two accomplished Nepalese advocates for gender equality and addressing GBV.

Comments received during the consultation were as follows:

- The report's overall objectives, expressions, and value-added were endorsed and commended by the discussants and the audience.
- The importance of acknowledging that laws are important but often insufficient to change outcomes without strong complementary programs and resource allocations was emphasised by a number of participants.
- Engaging men and boys was identified as an important cross-cutting issue for the entire report, not only GBV - and the need to change both men and women's mind-sets toward gender norms;
- The lack of access to reproductive, prenatal and neonatal health services was recognised as a big issue worthy of dedicated focus in the report;
- It was suggested that the team should look at happiness as an indicator (Jeni agreed, but also mentioned limitations—as women tend to report higher subjective wellbeing given lower expectations);
- The importance of private sector engagement was noted, and emphasis placed on the value of collaborating with the private sector in making progress in many of these domains;
- The need to analyse root causes of poverty and intergenerational transmission of disadvantage was noted.