Community action and participatory land mapping: an experience from Nepal
Context-Informal land tenure in Nepal

• More than 1.3 million families classified as “landless and informal land users;” which means that they either lack formal documentation for the land that they have been living and farming on for generations, or they have no land at all, and are either tenant farmers or squat on government land.

• The current Nepalese Land Administration System (LAS) only deals with the formal or statutory land tenure system. The LAS doesn’t deal with non-statutory or informal land tenure.

• Around 25 percent of the total arable land and settlements are outside the formal cadastre, which is accounting for approximately 10 million physical parcels on the ground.

• This means that a significant amount of the Nepalese population is living in informality without any spatial recognition and without security of tenure.
Participatory Land Mapping-Piloting at the local government unit-Dangisaran

• As part of its CLPI work, CSRC decided to pilot a process it believed might address the problem of landlessness in Nepal locally.

• Dangisaran Municipality has only 4,426 households, but CSRC found that 2,712 of those families - more than half - are landless or lack documents for their lands.

• Dangisaran is a primarily indigenous Tharu community, who are historically marginalized and deprived from the land rights
Major initiatives and strategies

- Partnership with local government, mobilise the representative of local government and financial resource
- 7 community youth “social mobilizers” - easily mobilized community members to come together and create detailed “context maps”.
- Using social and resource map to identify the landless and mapping land through satellite image (2712 families and 1414 parcels)
- Scale up the practice and linking with the government efforts and learning used for the policy feedback
- As part of this mapping, CSRC also led the Tharu communities through a “community origin story” mapping exercise it learned from Rights and Rice Foundation, a Liberian NGO, during the CLPI convening.
- Facilitating for the by laws formulation process including visioning and valuation exercises learning from Namati.
Learnings and future plan

• “community origin mapping exercises,” the mobilizers and the community members really came to understand the historical injustices behind their landlessness, which really motivated them to work hard for this process.

• through “Visioning” and “Valuation” activities, community members identified their concerns about the rapid conversion of agricultural lands to other uses; a decline in available local water resources; and the negative impacts that commercial pesticides and chemical fertilizers are making on their lands and ecosystem.

• The community peoples together with social mobilisers able to documenting the landless families and mapping their parcels using participatory map and satellite image.

• The government has tried for decades to address this challenge, formed a Land Issues Resolving Commission, which has a mandate to provide land ownership certificates to landless families and developing the guideline and define the process what implemented in Dangisaran and lesson learned from the practices.
Visioning Exercises at community level
Community Origin Mapping Exercise
Social map of Dangisharn RM-5 Salaura communities
Resource map of Dangisharn RM-5 Salaura communities