

AGRICULTURE



Who set an example

Sukabir Khadka

Siradi, Budhinanda Municipality-3, Bajura

Sukabir had a rather big family: mother, himself, wife, two sons and a daughter—total of six. But the land was so small—around 2500 square meters of steep land. What this little land yielded was not enough to feed the family. Then Sukabir left the village—India-bound—to find work. But fate had other things in store: Things did not change wherever he went. Nothing much could be earned in India either. Yes, he made some earning but all would be spent in managing the household expenses and to pay the interest of debt and so on. He was worried. He started to think, what he would do next. He decided that he would do something. This resolve drove him to the office of Peace Win, where he shared all the troubles. The Peace Win—which was working in the livelihood sector—assured Sukabir of

support. He felt reassured and returned home. “I had a nice sleep that night,” he said.

Soon Sukabir received a three-day training from that organization. The training was focused on commercial vegetable farming. He had received somehow similar training from Agriculture Office too but since he did not apply the learning he had forgotten things. After the second training, however, he immediately applied learning in practice. Training was important for him but it was not all that mattered. So Peace Win provided seeds, plastics and the materials to make tunnels, a set of drip irrigation tool. Most important, it also provided a Junior Technical Assistance (JTA), agriculture expert, to him whom he could consult for help.

So things began to change drastically. His hard work began to pay off in form of lush green vegetable farm. The piece of land that he had would yield around 80 Kgs of paddy rice, monetary value Rs 1200. Now the same amount of land started to bring as much as Rs 10,000 income. He has earned Rs 15,000 by selling cucumber. Sukabir shares that all this is the result of experience of the second year, use of productive seeds and fertilizers and technical knowledge.

As the field of others is covered with paddy fields, his piece of field, which stands in the middle of the Jyula plot, is red as the ripe tomatoes replenish the field. While the field of others has wheat plants, Sukabir's is covered with cucumber vines and cucumber fruits. "This makes me so happy," says Sukabir.

It was not so easy for him to replace the main crops and start tomato and cucumber crops. Some people in the village even called him mad for taking that radical shift. His own mother and father also warned him of starvation. But Sukabir did not go after public criticism. He followed his dream and objective. "When the vegetables grew well and I started to make some money, even parents started to appreciate me and they were happy. Other members of the family were also happy. Then they started to support me," said Sukabir. Interaction with JTAs and the training have made him smarter and more skilled. He grows only offseason vegetables. When rest of others

I followed Sukabir

The land I inherited from father is not more than 1100 square meters. How can the yield of that little land provide for the family of eight members? It was really hard for me to provide for the family. I had to walk miles to do wage labors. After seeing brother's (Dai) success, I have also started to grow tomatoes and other vegetables in his support. It has made it much easier for me to feed my family.

Dale Khadka

Brother of Sukabir, Siradi

grow tomatoes, he will have none in his field, so goes with cucumbers. But when he sees that these products are scarce in the market, then he grows them and sells them, for a good profit margin. Kolti is the nearest bazaar for him and it takes around an hour for him to reach there. It is difficult to move to Kolti in raining season—from June to August—for the roads remain obstructed and vehicles cannot run. It is during such times that Sukabir brings out his product. "You cannot bring tomatoes from outside during the rainy season and thus you get a good price," said Sukabir. "I always grow potatoes targeting this season. I have been able to make a very good money."

Siradi is a village with around 120 households, half of them Dalits and remaining half Chhetris. None of the households of the settlement can manage to grow enough crops to feed the family for three months. Amid such situation, Sukabir has emerged capable to feed his family for the whole year from what he earns through the vegetable farming. Sukabir has become a kind of role model. Those who reprimanded and called him mad in the past have started to say "I will follow your example, please teach me." Following his footsteps, Nandaraj Khadka, Dale Khadka and Gagansingh Edi have started vegetable farming. Sukabir says this has given him an immense satisfaction.





Farming is the only option

Dhana Bahadur BK

Birsain, Budhinanda Municipality-5, Bajura

Fresh manure would be spread before plowing. When it came to planting the saplings they would be planted within narrow gaps, hoping that it would bring better harvest. They kept watering the plants and if seeds had to be sowed, they would dig the ground and just sow it. This is how Dhana Bahadur BK had been doing farming all these years. And he only had grievances to share. “We both husband and wife work on the field day in and day out and yet the harvest is so low. It’s even getting difficult to feed the children. What shall I do?”

He began to share his sufferings with others. He was not being able to figure out what exactly to do. Now he would think he would go for foreign employment and the next moment he would decide to continue with

farming. Either way, he needed some money to start with, which he did not have. Dhana Bahadur had nearly given up farming and agriculture. But the same Dhana Bahadur is now very happy with farming because productivity has risen up, which has made living easier. “Now, I can’t imagine doing anything else but farming,” said Dhana Bahadur. This thought reflects on his actions and lifestyle. “I grow tomatoes, cauliflowers, pumpkin, cucumber, chilies and peas, sell them and manage the expenses comfortably,” he said. Dhana Bahadur used to grow these vegetables in the past too but productivity was low. How come it increased now?

He learned the new techniques of farming. When the agriculture technicians, JTAs, started to go to the field themselves to demonstrate how things should

be done under the Farmers School project of Peace Win, Dhana Bahadur gained new confidence. Now whenever he has to plant vegetable saplings he does that by making a bed, he uses manure that has properly decomposed, and he places them round the plants instead of throwing them on the ground randomly. He has realized that these behavior changes have a lot of benefits for him. First, it looks so good with plants on the field. Then when the saplings are planted with some gap between the two, it is easy to weed out later, all plants get proper nourishment, it is easy to identify the plant has been infected. All these contribute to higher productivity. Not only he, 25 other farmers like him have benefited from Peace Win's Farmer School project whereby the JTAs themselves come to the field and demonstrate the farmers how things should be done. The farmers have not only come to know about new methods of farming, income generation, nursery and manure, improving sheds, they have also acquired the skills of making organic fertilizer and pesticides. All this has contributed to the rise of everyone's income, according to Dhana Bahadur. He has acquired much more from Peace Win than this. He has already taken the training of IPAM and nursery from this organization. He has also been provided the logistics and materials



to apply the learning of the training: Drip irrigation set, tunnel materials, mulching plastic sheet, garden pipe, seeds etc. All this has raised his income significantly.

I learned by observing

The JTA of Peace Win would come to the field and tell us how we were doing things, where we had made mistakes and how to do things. They would come to inspect at least once a month, my husband would learn from him. While observing them, I also learned many things along with my husband. Now when I have to do something related to farming, I can do it on my own without having to wait for my husband. Whoever is free does the work. This has given a sense of satisfaction to me too.

Bachu BK

(Spouse of Dhana Bahadur BK), Birsain

Dhana Bahadur inherited only four meter square land in property, where his little hut stands today. He has got no land apart from this. He has the skills of plowing the field but there is no land on which he would apply that skill. Thus he has taken some land on *matte*, the system whereby the land has been acquired for farming because certain amount of money has been paid to the owner, when the landowner returns the money, the land has to be returned to him. Dhana Bahadur took this land from Bijayram Padhya. Now he does vegetable farming in around 2500 square meters of land. This has sustained his family with four children.

Dhana Bahadur is a high school graduate—he has studied up to grade XII. He wandered here and there looking for jobs but found none. He went to Pithauragadh of India and worked there for around three months as a laborer but the earning was not enough even to feed the family, and there was a debt to pay. When all other options failed him, he decided farming would be the right thing to do. Now he has decided that he will not do anything but farming. He is indebted to Peace Win for inducting him into its Farmers School project. He has decided that he would rent more land and expand his farming. "I have no option but only this," he said.



Nursery changed his life

Bude Raut

Gede Gaun, Budhi Nanda Municipality-8, Bajura

Bude Raut tried nearly all options. He herded the cattle of the Janajati Communities. He went to India and did a manual works for six years. He rose up with the larks and worked until dawn but was never paid more than Rs 35 a day for all the work. He could not afford good food for himself and his family, he could not manage good clothes for them either. It was always a misery and sufferings for him. Then he returned to his village from India but could not figure out what to do next. He thought of vegetable farming but then realized that many others were into this enterprise. Farming through traditional style? He would not do it anyway. Starting his own shop would require a lot of money. Finally, he chose a trade that suited him. He started a nursery, which was a new thing for the whole area. The land was suitable because it was rather moist and slope. So fruits like apples could

be grown abundantly but he knew that seeds had to be brought from another district. So he decided that he would produce the seeds himself, that he would produce the saplings as well but fulfill the needs of the whole district. But where would he get the money from? Who would give seedlings and saplings? What type of saplings would he grow? Where is the market? What is the method of planting? All these questions stood before him.

But then solutions were not far behind. When he came in touch with Peace Win, he found the answers of most of these questions. First of all, he took a nursery management training. After the training, he was provided the support assistance to make bar around the nursery. He also received pipes, tanks, sprinklers, tunnel etc. "All in all, Peace Win has lent me goods

worth around Rs 4,00,000 to set up this nursery," he said beaming with happiness.

In the field, where there would not be even be two baskets of corn, there are saplings costing millions. He sold the saplings worth around Rs 1,50,000 only last year. Many other saplings are yet to be sold. He only has to produce the saplings no matter how many, says Bude, he can sell all of them. He says that all the saplings he has in his nursery have been ordered for purchase. He shared that all the saplings of his nursery are purchased by Agriculture Knowledge Center based in the district headquarters and are distributed to various parts of the country from there. The saplings of walnuts, and apple are in higher demand and he has not been able to provide as per the demand rate. Given this success, Bude has planned to expand his nursery in other areas of land as well. Bude has gone on observation visits. He went to Dadeldhura to observe kiwi farming and to Dhangadhi to observe bee farming. He has planted kiwi saplings and also started bee farming. Bude applies whatever he learns during the training. "What use is the training if you do not apply the learning?" said Bude. Bude has a proclivity for innovation and experiment. Some people told him that his land was not suitable for Fuji apple and kiwi. He did not believe in their words. He wanted to experiment and as such he has started kiwi and Fuji apple farming. "Both kiwi and apple saplings are growing well. I will disprove them with deeds," he said. He has also planted saplings of orange, lemon and other fruits. He says that every nursery must have a water tank and a deep structure to store manure. Because Bude has been moving on in line with the learning from Peace Win, he has not had to face any troubles so far. He argues that he has been able to make a good earning because of the help of the JTAs. "With frequent interactions and intimacy with them, I have also become a kind of JTA myself," he said. "My plan is to make the district self reliant on walnut and apple saplings within three years. For this, Agriculture Knowledge Center as well as the Peace Win promised full support to me," he said. "If this materializes, Bajura can make millions of earnings every year by selling fruits and it will also raise the living standard of people here," he added. Bude, who has been running his nursery successfully after

Investment in right man

Bude is a very hardworking and persevering farmer. Peace Win, which has been working in our place for a long time in various sectors, has made the right decision by investing in a man like him. His nursery will prevent the cash of this district from going out.

Premial Lwar

Ward Member, Budinanda Municipality-8, Bajura

receiving treatment from Peace Win, has also acquired the identity of being a trainer. The district-based Agriculture Knowledge Center frequently invites him to impart training on tending apple plants. "I am paid Rs 15,00 a day, and teaching others gives me happiness as well. This has greatly encouraged me," he said. Bude has already bought a big plot of land (around 4000



square meters) with the earnings of nursery. For the first time in his life he has opened a bank account where he has deposited around Rs 1,50,000 rupees in savings. "I have never thought, even dreamed, that I would be able to make such an achievement," said Bude.



The genius par excellence

Balabhadur Khadka

Khadkabada, Budhinanda Municipality-7, Bajura

Balabhadur has a small piece of land—around 2000 square meters—as his possessions but even for that small piece has lacks saplings to plant. That's because young saplings of cucumber, pumpkin, bottle gourd, bitter gourd, tomatoes, snake-gourd were all sold out from the nursery itself, leaving nothing for himself. My calculations went wrong, he thought. "If I knew such a large quantity would be sold, then I would grow more saplings," he said. "Better late, I will work for growing the saplings for myself now."

It is true. No matter how many saplings he produces in his nursery all of these sell like a hot cake. That's because the village is densely populated and nearly nobody else has the skills of producing saplings in nursery. No matter how many saplings Bala Bahadur produces, they all get sold, the reason why he has been so encouraged to produce more saplings. "I am doing a good business because others have not have their own nurseries," he admitted.

At the moment his nursery is filled with the saplings of cucumbers, tomatoes, pumpkin, bitter gourd, snake-gourd, sponge gourd etc. He sold a lot of such saplings, these are the second lot. "I will sell how many of these will be sold. I will keep the remaining with myself and plant them in my field," said Bala Bahadur, which is the evidence of the fact he grows and sells vegetables as well. Thus he is both a nursery runner as well as a vegetable seller. But that is not all. He is a local resource person as well. He received the three day LRP training provided by Peace Win and he has taken similar other trainings related to vegetable farming from Peace Win. As a result, he has learned skills related to project planning, business planning, nursery management, seeds and saplings, irrigation, manure and fertilizer, compost and organic manure, pesticides etc. Because he has knowledge of many subjects he gets invited by the farmers from his village and afar to give them counsel. Also an IPM trained, he goes to various farmers groups and provides them guidance and instructions.



"When I confront the issues I am not familiar with I ask the Peace Win officials and then I teach the other farmers," he said.

Balbahadur has been encouraged also because after receiving various types of training from Peace Win, he has also been provided the logistics support such as tunnel materials, drip irrigation set, plastic, seeds etc. He has learned to make manure from the shed and learned to improve sheds. He is also able to teach others how to do so.

Balbahadur mainly grows off season vegetables. He plans his production in such a way that when there are no vegetables coming in from elsewhere, he will have abundant amount to sell. Thus he does not have to take his produce to a far-away market—even not those lying two kilometers away. His produce, he says with confidence, will be sold in local Chaparukh bazaar and consumed by the local people.

Many in the village envy his hard work, income, perseverance, and progress. Others are trying to emulate him. Lopa Karki and Sher Bahadur Khadka are the examples. They have been inspired by Bala Bahadur and they are now engaged in commercial vegetable farming. Farmers have found in him a resource person in their own village. They don't have to walk all the way

Thank you Peace Win!

Peace Win has been working in our place in health, agriculture, nutrition and hygiene sectors for a long time. In the process, the organization has contributed to women empowerment, trained the farmers, provided them agriculture tools and many more. It has immensely benefitted farmers like Bala Bahadur and this is a great news for the whole village.

We would have to walk all the way up to Kolti, two hours walk from here, to consult technicians if anything happened to our crops or livestock. Not any longer. The farmers get the services at their own doors and this is no small feat. I have also benefitted from the training provided by Peace Win and come to know a great deal about the powers, rights and duties of elected representatives, women's rights and many legal aspects. The learning helped me a lot to fulfill my role as a lawmaker. The initiatives that raise awareness among women, providing tunnel and logistics support to the farmers, all these are very effective programs. In my view, such programs should be given continuity.

Dhansara Jaisi

Ward Member, Ward Number 7,
Budhinanda Municipality, Bajura

up to Agriculture Knowledge Center to enquire about minor issues. They have understood how important the LRP training Bala Bahadur took is. Others are also interested to take such trainings.

Bala Bahadur has some nine cattle in his house. He is a role model farmer. He is educating his two children and managing the expenses of the family solely from the income generated by selling vegetable saplings, milk and vegetables. He says that various trainings that he received from Peace Win and various other support it provided has made it easier for him to stand out and work hard. Bala Bahadur knows something about forest resources, timber and herbs. He plans to pursue works in other sectors as well and raise income. "I will also take on board all those interested people from the village, I will inspire them actually," he said.



Gima got water

Kali Bahadur Karki

Nakharchi, Khatyad Rural Municipality-9, Mugu

Fifteen minutes' walk upward from the Dhude River lies a settlement of 25 households. The residents of this village, Gima by name, depend on this river for drinking water. So that they would be able to get the water from this river, they had built a kind of tap at one corner. But the raging floods last year swept it away. Then they knocked the door of ward office, pleaded and secured Rs 40,000 with which they built another tap, which was swept away by raging river next year. Then they had no option but to get the flowing water of the river directly, take it homes and consume. It mattered little whether the water was muddied or dirtied by livestock's feces.

The residents of Gima were worried and desperate but they were not able to figure out any solutions to the problems. Though the chairman of the Rural

Municipality (Nakharchi) comes from Gami, the village was dying with thirst, like a kakakul bird.

But they found a way as they had a will. RRDC proved to be the savior for the Gima residents. "When we appealed to RRDC and put forward our demands, then that organization came to our place for inspection and expressed the commitment that they would support us," said Kalibahadur Karki, president of Gimagaun Drinking Water Irrigation Project Consumer Committee. It was only then that arrangements were made for providing drinking water and irrigation facilities at Gima village. While the locals donated labors, Rs 5,00,000 budget was obtained and the drinking water project started. The source of water lies around 600 meters from the village and a storage tank, of around 5000 liters capacity, has been built at the top of the village. The Users' committee

has made a plan to equitably distribute the water from the storage tank. Kali Bahadur shared that to ensure that overflowed water does not go in waste, they have built a small pond few meters down the tank to ensure that the overflowed water remains stored, where the water coming out from the individual households after washing and cleaning also come to remain. The plan is to use this water for irrigation in the nearby land. Thus, in this sense, the drinking water project of the Gima village serves multiple purposes: Washing, bathing, irrigation. It has been planned in such a way that not a single drop of water goes in waste. In lack of irrigation the nearby field never produced enough. The locals now hope that something good will come out of it. Gima village lies at around one and half hours walking distance from Ratapani road. Thus mobility from the village to the town and vice-versa is not easy. On the other hand, as there was no irrigation facility no vegetable could be grown, making living even more difficult for the people. "Now I hope we will be able to grow the vegetables ourselves. The prospect makes me feel so happy," said Udaya Karki, a local youth.

Dried taro leaves and dried beans were all that they were using as vegetables. Now that they are getting drinking water as well the prospect of growing vegetables in their own place seem so real. "It feels great to avail such facilities at old age," said Gabdal Karki, 68, smoking hookah.

Various organizations reach out to this village with different projects. Some provide the seeds and saplings of onions and other vegetables. Others are providing support for banana farming. But in lack of irrigation facilities, these vegetables would dry up and die.

We got the mill too

Around 250 households yet no mills nearby. They would have to walk the whole morning to reach the water mill which of course did not process the paddy rice. They had no option to husk paddy rice in home in okhal. Even the water mill would take hours to grind the wheat. It would take the whole day to reach the mill, get the works done and return home. At home, okhal was equally time taking and labor intensive. So we were helpless.

Perhaps RRDC understood our sufferings which is why it supported us to build a mill. Now we don't have to go anywhere for rice mill, wheat mill, and oil mill. It has saved our time and rid us from having to mill paddy rice—from the young to the old—at okhal. Now that the water used for running the mill can also be used for irrigating the field, there is a real prospect of increasing productivity.

Nandalal Rokaya

President, Kutani Pisani Mill Construction Committee, Nakharchi

"Because those supports were not based on our needs, they could not be effective enough. Now we have found what we needed. Now all the projects related to farming will no doubt be effective," said Kali Bahadur, the president of project management committee.





The canal that washed away all miseries

Bharat BK

Kolti, Budhinanda Municipality-2, Bajura

Then: Big chunk of land under Kolti bazaar remained fallow. Nobody cared to plant in the field which depended completely on monsoon rain. They dug, they sowed, they weeded but it never rained and people stopped wasting their labors. While the land remained fallow, people of the village had to go to neighboring India to earn a living. But there were those who were not able to till the field and they were not able to go to India for menial jobs either. The people in the village were in extreme miseries.

Now: Dhana Bahadur BK did not keep his land fallow for only two years. Now he has resumed farming and wheat plants dangle in his field. The land belonging to Satdhan BK which used to stand fallow is now full of greenery. Gokule Sahani and Bijaya Puri have turned their land productive enough. There are many others who have resumed cultivation in the land which lay fallow for many

years. Those who took up other pursuits by keeping their land barren have also returned to farming.

How did this happen?

There is no great secret or miracle behind the whole of land areas of Jyula turning into lush green field within a matter of few years. There was no magic, no spell. "When Peace Win offered us assistance to make a canal that started the process of changing the face of this land," said Bharat BK, the chairperson of Kotkulo Irrigation Canal Construction Project. The construction of that canal and its proper maintenance and the irrigation services it is providing is the secret of changes described above.

It is not that there was no canal (or ditch) before. But it was a traditional ditch which did not hold up water

and it leaked. Those having their land in the upper areas could benefit, rest of the farmers looked on with disappointment. Peace Win has renovated that canal by using concrete materials. “Now we get larger amount of water in the canal, it does not leak and even those with their land at the bottom end can benefit. It can irrigate all the field. This is the reason the farmers have been inspired to cultivate the land which they had left fallow for years,” said Bharat BK.

When the water reaches down up to the field, it can water the whole field in short time. Farmers do not have to wait for long either, then others will get their turn. This has saved the time. “Many parts of this field where you see the lush green crops of paddy rice, wheat, potatoes and vegetables used to be the football and volleyball ground. Now the whole field is covered with crops. There is not a space for you to come and squat down when you are tired,” said Tanjan Saki. “I also have a field of 2000 square meters. Now it yields much more harvest than it used to and I am very happy about that.” Tanjan recalls the time when the villagers had to wait for hours for their turn to irrigate their piece of land, when they even had to pick quarrels with the neighboring landowners. When the farmers finally got the opportunity to irrigate their field, it would be too late and plants would either be wilted or grown to maturity. “This canal washed away all those troubles,” said Tanjan. The reconstruction of canal also uprooted the causes that led to the conflict among people in the village and restore harmony among people. The canal can irrigate around 300 ropanis (one ropani around 500 square meters) of land in a very systematic way, says Bharat BK. The canal was reconstructed with the investment of Rs 8,75,000—of which Peace Win had contributed Rs 6,18,000. Locals made voluntary contribution of labors. Bharat has the data of the irrigation canal benefitting around 700 households.

It's very easy now

The whole of Jyula land was parched and dry. The farmers were not able to grow crops and take benefits. This made them very worried. Now that the canal is running well, everyone is happy and they have started to grow crops. Nobody is ready to keep their land, whatever the area, fallow. I also own around 800 square meters of land, which can be irrigated with this canal. This has encouraged me to cultivate the land. When it's easy who would not do farming?

Jayaram Regmi

Staff, Salt Trading Corporation, Kolti

The construction committee had signed a contract with Peace Win to reconstruct 150 meters of the canal but they made 15 meters more, making it 165 meters. The height and width of the canal are also much bigger—40 and 35 centimeters respectively—than agreed in the contract. All this was done to ensure that the canal carried more water and more farmers could be benefitted. This is the evidence of how the farmers were excited to reconstruct this canal. In the past, many gave the land for sharecropping because monsoon was only source of rain. Now they have started to take their land back for farming by themselves. Those who left the land fallow and did other menial jobs in the past have also returned to farming. The farmers used to grow only paddy rice, wheat, buckwheat etc. Now they grow vegetables, off season vegetables. Bharat BK cherished this experience and shared with us.





Denuded hill becomes the apple orchard

Amarraj Baniya

Baratu, Khatyad Rural Municipality-3, Mugu

The top of Baratu village. If you had reached there a year ago and if you visit the place now, you would probably think 'is this the same place?' For it looks like a different place altogether. The hilltop which was denuded is now covered with young saplings of plants. And to water these plants, they have dug a plastic pond a little further up. One might confuse this place for something else.

At the heart of the change is Lamtame Fruit and Vegetable Production Agriculture Group, for which everyone is full of praise. According to Amarraj Baniya, the president of the Group, 370 apple plants have been planted in around 35800 square meters area of the hilltop. The Group, which comprises 38 households, aims to utilize the barren lands through plantation. Of the apple plants growing in this field, 200 were provided by RRDC, others were contributed by Agriculture Office and yet others were provided by individuals. Apart from

that RRDC helped to dig the plastic pond and green house. All these efforts helped to turn this hill into an apple orchard. The Group aims to grow vegetables on the ground, in spaces between the two apple plants. "Our plan is not to leave a single inch of land barren. For this the vegetable seeds are being prepared and the land is being plowed and dug," said Amarraj Baniya.

This is not the first time the apple plants were grown here. In 2007 too, RRDC, WFP, Red Cross and other organizations had provided apple saplings and mobilized the locals to plant them under their food program, when the village was reeling under food shortage. The wall had been put around the land area too. But since the community did not take proper care of the place, the plants could not grow well, livestock and cattle got in and destroyed them. One can see only a couple of those plants standing now. "We will not allow that to happen. The fact that apple farming

and vegetable farming is being done in this place collectively means that everyone in the community is liable to the protection and care of the orchard," said Amarraj. "We have made an arrangement from the new year day (April 14) to assign each member of the community to go and mind the orchard, turn by turn. "This orchard is ours and we are its beneficiaries. If we do not protect it, who will?" he said. They have prepared the vegetable saplings to be planted on the ground. Saplings of tomatoes, bottle gourd, eggplant, sponge gourd, cucumber, bitter gourd, pumpkins are growing in the nursery. People of the community take turns to come tend and water these plants, weed out, use disinfectants if the plants are infested and if greater support is required, they involve other members of the community. This is how the whole community is taking ownership of the apple orchard, which is very positive.

Baratu is inhospitable to farming. The soil is not productive enough, with stones and aggregates, and thus little grows in the land here. The village does not have other source of earning and they have no place to go nearby to go for wage laboring. Thus the locals have no option but to use the local products wisely and eat whatever is available. It is in this context that they have started apple orchard with a long vision. Amarraj Baniya takes it as a huge opportunity for the village to be helped by helping hands like RRDC. Deputy President of the Agriculture Group sees the better prospects and is full of praises for the organizations which have made it possible: "This orchard can be a source of income as well as the source of vegetables for the people like us

We are very happy

Our village stands at a very remote location and therefore it is difficult for people here to access government services. Very few social organizations arrive here to extend help. Perhaps RRDC understood our plight and it provided support for apple farming and vegetable farming. We are thankful to RRDC. Now we have the challenge as well as the responsibility to take care of the orchard, protect it and take maximum benefits from it. I want to express my commitment to shoulder the responsibility. Otherwise, we will be back to square one. All these efforts will go in vain.

Padam Bahadur Baniya

Member, Lamtame Fruit and Vegetable Production Agriculture Group, Khatyad Rural Municipality-3, Baratu, Mugu

who have had no source of other income. These apples can become the source of regular income in a few years' time. It feels so good even to think about it. We are thankful to the organizations which helped us in this initiative as well as all the members of the Agriculture Group. Otherwise, such a good work would not have been possible in this huge area of land."



LIVELIHOOD



Then Sagune became a trainer

Sagune BK

Sherkatiya, Budhinanda Municipality-7 Bajura

Sagune BK was in masonry as early as he was 15 or 16. He is skilled at making walls so he is a mason but he is also a carpenter. Thus he would like himself to be called the house maker, house constructor. House making is a source of his livelihood too.

Sagune would not get enough work to do in his village, so he would have to go to India to find manual work. He would return home after few months and bring whatever money was earned during the period. If he found some masonry work to do in the village, he would stay back, otherwise he would go back to India to find work again.

Times have changed for Sagune. Now he does not have to go to India. He has a lot of work to do in the village itself. He is not young enough to go to India for work either. So how come that he is fully occupied in

the village itself now? This is because he has achieved mastery over skills and he has become fully skilled worker in his field. While in the past, he would be limited to building houses through the traditional technology—making mud houses for example—now he is skilled at working in concrete houses. Earlier he built normal houses, now he builds earthquake resilient houses. “I have forgotten how to build earthquake non-resilient houses,” said Sagune.

The secret of his new found skill is the two-days training provided by Peace Win on masonry. There he learned the skills of making safe and earthquake resilient houses. He learned about laying the foundation, PCR system, the amount of cement, rod, sand and aggregates to be used while making houses. He learned about the designs of pillars, beams, the size of the walls etc. “I used

to do all these randomly,” he said. “I learned from the training that lack of knowledge was one of the reasons for people building unsafe houses.”

Sagune builds houses on contract if somebody wants him to do so or he gets to do so, otherwise he goes to work under other contractors or as the daily wage earners in individual’s house. Sagune has so far built 25 to 30 houses. He earns around Rs 1200 a day on wage, while other masons like him draw not more than Rs 1,000 because they are not trained. “People prefer me even though they have to pay me more, all because of the training,” he shared with happiness.

Sagune was not alone in taking training—there were altogether 30 including him. But he was declared the best learner by the engineer who trained them. His happiness knew no bounds. Then when the engineer went to impart training in Himalil, neighboring rural municipality, he took Sagune along as an assistant trainer. When he trained people in Himali, those who learned from him as well as those who watched it were impressed. He was appreciated by all. Sagune’s is a five members family—two sons, a daughter, himself and his wife. The land he has does not yield enough food to feed even for three months. So he must pursue other enterprises such as making house walls, gabion walls and so on. His skills on these are the source of his livelihood and he has been educating his children and supporting the family with the income he brings from these works. It’s difficult but he has not given up. “You have to work hard, it will pay off,” says Sagune. He believes that if one works with honesty and dedication the work itself becomes easier and one can also earn better money.

Sagune has an ambition. As he has become trained, he wants to build a house from the foundation to the roof, on his own, or under his direct watch. The house he is dreaming to build will be earthquake resilient, with beams and walls built according to the standards, with sand, rods, cement, aggregates in right quantity and quality, the house that looks so beautiful that people would want to live in it. Such a house. Sagune says this dream of his going to come true very soon. “Then those who want to build a modern earthquake resilient houses, will look for me and come to me,” he said.

Modernization has become a reality in Bajura like in other places. More concrete houses are being built,

Sagune is different

Everybody was willing to work but because few were aware about the modern construction methods, it was difficult to impart masonry training in the beginning. But later they were found very interested to learn and it got easier and easier. Sagune turned out to be different from all others. He was interested to learn and he learned rather quickly. I have encouraged him because of the same different quality he has which others lack. If we can prepare skilled masons like Sagune, then we don’t have to bring in masons from other districts for the development works of this district. And we would not have to pay more those masons as well. That situation would come to an end.

Dipak Raj Bhatta

The engineer who trained Sagune and made assistant trainer

development is taking its own course. Sagune believes that he has to be able to keep up with the new trend, otherwise he will become irrelevant. And he working in his own way to stay relevant and stay fit.





From a pauper to a miller

Bishnu Jaisi

Kolti, Budhinanda Municipality-2, Bajaura

Bishnu Jaisi's life is a struggle incarnate. He lost his father and mother when he was young. When he himself needed care from others, he had to take care of his younger brother. He did not have any other property than around 500 square meters of land he inherited from father. He had no option but work on that land and reap whatever came out of it. Eating good food and wearing new clothes was always a luxury for him.

He worked as a servant in the house of Gyandendra Bahadur Singh, the head master of school, so that he could go to school. Then he got married and had children. But how would he provide for his family. Then he started to work with Peace Win as a volunteer. Later he was promoted to the post of social mobilizer and he was deputed to work in a place called Gotri—which was a one day walking distance from Kolti.

This is Bishnu's past, full of hardships and struggles.

After marriage he realized that it would be difficult to provide for the needs of the family with a modest job that he was holding. He decided to resign from Peace Win, whereby he received Rs 3,32,000 provident fund. This was not enough to start any kind of business or enterprises but then he found a way. With this money he started a mill, grain mill and rice mill. He had started the mill only two years ago, when the misfortune hit him. The mill was making good money but then it was swept away by the floods of August, 2020. Along with the mill that he had set up on Dhupe Khola, all his hard work, hard earned money and dreams were swept away. Bishnu was deeply shocked and he could not figure out what to do next.

He walked from a pillar to post and all the District Administration Office provided was Rs 10,000 as a compensation. Bishnu had lost everything and had become a pauper. What would he do with Rs 10,000? He was already in debt and he would not risk taking more loans. Many months passed. He was not able to decide what to do next.

Then he remembered Peace Win—the organization where he had worked at one time. He went to the office and shared all the troubles he was facing, upon which Peace Win promised to support, for Peace Win knew what kind of person Bishnu was—honest. Bishnu had won the hearts of Peace Win people with his program of promoting crops of the whole district. Peace Win then offered him the assistance of Rs 3,36,000 with which he decided to open the mill again. “It’s those who care for you who help you in time of need,” he said expressing gratefulness to Peace Win.

However, this assistance alone was not enough to operate the mill, though it was a great support. Then Bishnu started to take loans from various cooperatives and groups of which he was a member. He invested around Rs 1.1 million rupees and resumed mill business. He named it Budhinanda Kutani, Pisani, Pelani and Spice Industry. His mills not only process the paddy rice, grind maize and wheat but also crush oil. He says he



Making manure differently

Farming never gave us satisfaction because it would not yield to the proportion of hard work which we had to put in. When we started to explore the reasons behind that we found that the use of fresh manure (fresh livestock feces) was one of the reasons. Then RRDC asked us to use the manure only after it decomposes properly and also provided the tools to facilitate the process. I learned that first of all we need to dig a trench on the ground and started to make manure. Twenty two other households in the village have done the same.

Karna Bahadur Dagar

(Person with full disability)

Dungri, Khatyand Rural Municipality-7, Mugu

used the money provided by Peace Win for buying rice, wheat mill and the parts and machines—such as pulley, generators and other machineries. His own investment, he says, has been used for building construction and management expenses.

The mill that he has set up has benefitted the locals saving their time. People from as far as Kalsen and Kolti bazaar come to his mill. To get the mustard seeds crushed, people from as far as 12 kms come to his oil mill. “I make the savings of around Rs 24,000 a month, of which Rs 11,000 goes in purchasing fuel. Remaining amount is all profit,” said Bishnu. Bishnu pays Rs 18,000 a month as interest money. He is optimistic and knows what he has to do. He knows that he cannot recover investment just by grinding wheat or thrashing rice or crushing mustard seeds. His is one among 32 such mills in the district. Bishnu is still optimistic because he has a plan, a vision—different from rest of the others. What’s than plan and vision? “I want to make it easier for the local people to obtain milling services. But main goal is to brand and market the local indigenous crops such as buckwheat and naked barley. I have already produced sarbottam pitho (nutritious flour) and have started the process of exporting that to the neighboring districts,” he said. “It’s my zeal for doing something new which drove me to start the new enterprise forgetting the loss of the past. All thanks go to Peace Win.”



Where they make juice from rhododendron flowers

Birkha Bahadur Budhthapa

Majhchaur, Khatayad Rural Municipality-6, Mugu

About rhododendron

This red flower of beauty is the national flower of Nepal. It blooms in heights of 1300 to 2500 meters from the sea level. According to the botanists, rhododendron flowers bloom in jungles covering 6, 52,000 hectares of land in Nepal. In Nepal 31 species of this flowers have been found, whereas there are total of 1157 varieties found in various parts of the world.

Khatyad and rhododendron

Khatyad rural municipality, a hill in itself, is surrounded by hills all around. All hills and hillocks here stand above 1300 meters from the sea level. Thus during the blooming season the whole of the hill is enveloped with red. The locals relish the sight of the flowers all around

or make some garlands out of it sometimes. In that sense, millions of rhododendron flowers are going into the waste.

Good news

‘Gone were the days when those flowers in the hills would go into waste. We will use it to the optimum level,’ said Birkha Bahadur Budhthapa. He has been entrusted by Red Panda Agriculture Cooperative Limited to make juice out of rhododendron flowers. ‘We have started collecting flowers, making juice and generating income from that,’ he said. ‘Every blooming season, we will produce juice.’ ‘We have made a good earning in the first year itself. We have been greatly encouraged. I have learned that if we work hard then it pays off.’

How did it start?

For years, the red rhododendron flowers were rotting away, going in waste. So how come they had this idea of making juices out of it? “Yes, we did not know about it but when RRDC suggested that juice can be made of rhododendron and then it provided training regarding how to make it, we came to know about it. Then it also purchased for us the machines needed for making juice. They provided a water tank and a generator. Then we started to make juice,” Birkha Bahadur narrated the story.

Supporting the community

It is actually not Birkha Bahadur as an individual whom RRDC supported. Actually RRDC provided support to the Red Panda Agriculture Cooperative Limited, where there are 45 members and these members took the decision to assign the responsibility of making juice to Birkha Bahadur. He pays Rs 15,000 to the Cooperative per year. “This is the first year, when I make more money I will pay more to the cooperative,” he said.

Production status

The company has been registered under the name of BT Juice and Food Production Industry. It sells 750 ml bottle of juice at Rs 250 and 300 ml bottle at Rs 100.



It pays off

The support provided by RRDC in our village has started to pay off. If coordination with local governments is established and such support is channelized in a better way, we can achieve better outcome. If such support can be tailored with the income of the locals, it will be able to win the hearts of people. It has to be made compatible with the needs and it should be connected with the larger number of people.

Bharat Bahadur Shahi

Ward Chair, Ward Number-6,
Khatyad Rural Municipality, Mugu

For now the bottles have been provided by the RRDC itself making it easier to bring out the production. The Cooperative plans to brand the product, increase the production and export it outside of the district.

Benefits for locals

Some keep cynical views about the support provided by RRDC. ‘So what? What will we gain?’ some people ask in Majhachaur. But when the blooming season arrives and the production of juice actually starts, such criticisms just fade away. This is because first the rhododendrons are found in the high hills and one has to walk up to the hills to pluck them. Those who go to pluck the flowers are paid Rs 500 each per sack of flowers. This year, many plucked rhododendron flowers and made some money. A sack of rhododendron flowers can produce as much as 15 liters of juices, according to Birkha Bahadur. The rule is the persons who pluck the flowers have to wash them and make them ready for processing. “It’s a good source of income when you can go to the forest, pluck flowers, and bring them down to the settlement. Many grabbed the opportunity,” said Birkha Bahadur. We plan to run a publicity campaign about it from the next year so that more and more people will participate in collection of rhododendron flowers. While people can collect flowers in their leisure time they can also earn some money. In some places, the flowers are hanging so low and even the children can pick them, helping the families to raise the income, said Birkha Bahadur.

HEALTH/NUTRITION



A Dalit health volunteer earns respect from Dalits as well as non-Dalits

Bishnukala BK

Siradi, Budhinanda Municipality-3, Bajura

Case one: The non-Dalits of the community stand in an alert position when they see Dalit members walking along or approaching them. They fear being touched by the Dalits or being spoken to them. They try to remain far from Dalits.

Case two: They are the Dalits but the same people who try to maintain distance from the Dalits, want to communicate with and expect some wise advice and counsel. They wish that the Dalits would not go away for some more days or that they remain around or that they could continue to have communication with them.

The first case scenario is prevalent in many parts of Mid and Far-west region of the country. Government and non-government organizations are conducting various public awareness programs to minimize the same. Bishnu Kala is one of those lucky women who has not had to face the situation as shown in the first scenario. She is the representative of people, who despite being Dalits, have

been regarded with respect in the society.

The non-Dalits invite her to the gatherings and social functions. She is the only such Dalit woman of the village who is treated that way by the non-Dalits, while other Dalits are invited only on exceptional cases—the cases where they also have some rituals to perform.

So how did Bishnu Kala BK become so popular and praised woman among the non-Dalit people? “I think that’s because I have fulfilled the responsibility of health volunteer well,” said Bishnu.

Indeed, as a health volunteer she has addressed the health concerns of as many as 290 families in Siradi, Dadabada, Meldusko, Jailu and Dhulkhelna villages. She has become indispensable to these people. Bishnu Kala pursues the cases herself. If she comes to know about someone’s pregnancy, or pregnancy complications, or if she comes to know that somebody is ill, she instantly

follows, without waiting to be called. If she cannot solve the issue herself, she refers them to the health posts. She diagnoses the problems based on the symptoms and asks them not to live with the diseases. This is something everyone in the village likes so much about her.

If a pregnant woman has to be taken to the health facility for delivery or if some complications occur in between, all villagers rush to Bishnu Kala. They take her along with them up to the health facility because when she is around they feel assured about everything they believe that the sick person will get an extra care. "They ask me to accompany them on such occasions. If my going there helps them, why not go?" said Bishnu Kala. But she neither demanded nor received any money or gift for providing



services like that. Thus the selfless service is another reason why the villagers treat them with respect. This respect from the community is a great asset for her. She has reached almost every house of the village and she does not have to face untouchability because the villagers need her service and help. "We need to conduct ourselves well. Things like discrimination and untouchability will be slowly minimized," said Bishnu Kala.

As a woman who has been working as community health volunteer for the last 13 months, Bishnu Kala knows a

Bishnu didi has made a difference

Bishnu Kala didi (sister) keeps walking around to the households and when she comes she enquires if anybody has irregular periods or if anybody has any complications. She also enquires if any child is malnourished, whether any sick person went to the health post for treatment or not, or they have taken medication or not. If she finds that people have not gone to the health posts, or that they have not taken medication, then she personally counsels them.

I am a mother of three children. The first child was born in home itself but the second and third children were born in health post. If anybody wants to give birth at home, that's not going to be possible. Bishnu Kala didi will not allow that to happen.

Dhanasha Chodara

Siradi

lot about primary health. But since she has been more devoted to this work now than before, she says that she knows many more things now than in the past. So how did she gain additional knowledge? "Peace Win had given a training on nutrition to the health volunteers. I participated in that training and came to know a lot many things, things that were forgotten had been recalled. This has made it easier to work," she said. The logistic support such as umbrella, bag, fillip chart etc provided to her has made it even easier to inform and train the people. How does she compare herself to the situation when she was not trained and not provided logistic support? "Earlier, we were focused only on issues of pregnant and laboring women. We were engaged with the clinics of the village. No we take particular care about children's nutrition. And if the child is malnourished, we recommend treatment," Bishnu Kala spoke of the differences.

Bishnu Kala's scope of work goes far beyond. She calls the meeting of Mother's Group, advises women about the things they need to do after getting red, yellow cards. She tells the villagers about the importance of consuming green spinach and vegetables and yellow fruits. After the training, she has also been teaching new mothers how to wash hands and how to cook jaulo, soft rice.



Nutrition program is showing results

Sagara Bohara

Gothi, Budhinanda Municipality-8, Bajura

Sagara Bohara is a mother of two daughters—the first one 9 and second 6 years old respectively. While raising these two daughters, she did not follow any special health standards because she did not know issues related to how to breastfeed, how to make lito, baby food, and jaulo (soft rice) and in what quantity. She did what the heads of the family advised or she did what he believed was right. This is how the two daughters grew.

She has a son now—15 months old—but this time she has known that parenting should not be carefree. She follows the standard rules in every step. “For six months, I only breastfed him and I followed a rule. If you tuck the baby on your lap, with feet adjusted backside, both the baby and the mother feel comfortable. Baby’s hands should be placed upon his on chest. While breastfeeding the mother has to look into the face of the baby and baby has to look into mother’s face, this deepens the bond. The whole black

part of the nipple should be thrust into baby’s mouth and then the baby’s head has to be adjusted properly,” said Sagara in detail.

Sagara knows a lot many things about breastfeeding but she actually came to know of all these only recently—during her son’s birth. She looks back to the days when she raised her two daughters. “They grew up on their own,” she said.

Sagara fed lito and jaulo to the baby only after six months. In the past, she would make these things in her own way. There was no standard rules to follow, which she does now. “Back in the past, I had no knowledge of quantity. Did not know about mixing green vegetables and eggs. I just mixed rice with pulses and boiled them. If available some ghee would be added. And the babies were fed the same,” said Sagara. Now she knows about the quantity and the nutrition elements that baby’s food



needs to contain. So how come she has this awakening after the birth of three children?

“The officials of Peace Win and the health volunteers started to provide regular briefing about nutrition to the members of Pragati Health Mother’s Group. Then we learned a lot from this platform,” said Sagara. “The program that was organized every month taught women the right way of breastfeeding, demonstrated how lito and jaulo should be cooked for the babies. “This actually made the program very effective,” he said. Sagara has learnt a great many things from such programs. She knows that the baby has to be breastfed right after an hour of birth, that it has to be breastfed continuously for at least two years or longer and that it should be given additional food apart from breastfeeding. “Because I followed all these protocols, my son is so healthy and well,” said Sagara. The members of mother’s group, including Sagara have acquired the useful information: Such that for the better physical as well as the mental growth of the babies, they need to be fed food three times a day (for the babies from six to nine months), three meals and one snack meal for the babies from nine months to 12 months, three meals and two snack meals a day for 12- to 24 months. After 24 months, supplementary food should be deducted and family food should be given to the baby. They have learned all this from Peace Win. When the Peace Win officials and

It’s very effective

After Peace Win trained us the health volunteers, then we, together with Peace Win officials, organized a program to inform and educate the members associated with mother’s groups. This has not only benefitted the mother’s groups but also us. This program has become very effective and useful especially for new mothers.

Ramila Sahi

Health Volunteer, Gothi

Peace Win itself train the health volunteers they are told about the nutrients that are needed in food: Rice, wheat, pulses, buckwheat, maize, green vegetables, red or yellow fruits. “We have been told that if you have only food grains at home, even if you add some oil or ghee then the same food can be made more nourishing. We do the same,” said Sagara. During the training sessions, the participants are also taught proper hand washing techniques—before and after the meal. Sagar says, as per how they have been taught in those programs, hands should be washed either with soap or it should be kept clean and infection-free with hand sanitizers.

She says something like palm of one hand should rub over the back of the other hand, making sure to clean in between your fingers. Palms should be rubbed together again, rub the backs of the fingers against the opposite palm, interlocking the fingers as you do this, grasp the thumb of one hand with the other hand, and rotate the closed hand around the thumb to clean it, rub the tips of the fingers of one hand on the palm of the other hand, rub and scrub properly and rinse the hands. Sagara has been washing hands according to this method and has been teaching others to do the same.

So when a person should wash hands? Sagara knows it all: “After coming in touch with livestock, after using the toilet, after cleaning the babies’ feces or changing the diaper, after sneezing, picking nose, coughing, sustaining injuries, playing outside or coming home from outside, before cooking, before feeding the babies, before eating and after eating,” she says in a breath.



A tale of two health facilities

Dr Rajuraj Jaisi

Primary Health Center, Kolti, Budhinanda Municipality, Bajura

District Hospital of Bajura stands in Martadi, the district headquarters. But in its emergency ward, there are not enough beds to provide treatment. The few the hospital has are very old. The attendants have to take care of themselves—for there is no bed or such arrangement for the attendant of the patients. Not only the patients but also their attendants seem to suffer inconvenience.

A four-hour walk from the district hospital lies a primary health center at Kolti—Kolti Primary Health Post. And it's a pole apart from the district hospital. There are enough beds in emergency ward, many patients can be treated from there. No patient has to walk away simply because there is a lack of bed. There is arrangement for attendants of patients too. There are beds available for the attendants. The beds can be folded into seats when they are not in use.

“It is in this sense that our hospital is much better and more resourceful than the district hospital,” said Dr Rajuraj Jaisi, the chief of Health Post. These resources have enabled the health post to provide services to the service seekers and it has also made it easier for the attendants. Otherwise, in lack of beds, it was becoming difficult to provide treatment. The Health Post is thankful to Peace Win for all the assistance that it has provided. “Peace Win has done a lot for this Health Post,” said Dr Jaisi. Dr Jaisi argues that the kind of assistance which Peace Win provided during the Covid-19 is unforgettable. Peace Win provided the frontline health workers the safety materials such as PPE set, masks, gloves and sanitizers which helped them a lot in effective service delivery during the pandemic. “They helped us during the times of extreme scarcity. We are very much indebted to them for that,” Dr Jaisi said.

Dr Jaisi has experienced that the health related projects the Peace Win conducted, the training it provided to health workers and health volunteers, and the logistic support it provided to the health post, all that has contributed to enhancing the quality of service that the Health Post provides. Identifying children suffering from malnutrition, administering treatment on them, teaching mothers to breastfeed the babies in the right way, teaching people to wash hands properly—these jobs have been accomplished by the health volunteers making it easier for Health Post. After Peace Win provided training to the health volunteers on such matters more cases are being reported at the Health Post. Dr Jaisi believes that more people coming to the health post for treatment because more people have become aware about their health. Dr Jaisi says the number of patients coming to the Health Post has increased by five to seven percent.

The health volunteers trained by Peace Win and those provided logistics support by Peace Win have been visiting every household to enquire if children are malnourished and if they find them malnourished, they ask the family to take the children to the hospitals immediately. They ask the people to wash hands, and they even teach the way of washing hands. Because of this effective role played by the volunteers people have become more aware about the health issues. Those who never took malnutrition as a disease or a problem in the past have started to talk about it. Dr Jaisi's statement is the proof.

Dr Jaisi also has the experience of lowering cases of health complications. And this started after trained health volunteers started to visit door-to-door to tell the villagers about the nutrition that has to be provided especially to children, pregnant women and post-partum women. Besides, this has also contributed to reducing the chances of malnutrition. As the people with malnutrition can get timely cure, the situation can never spiral out of control, according to Dr Jaisi. All this is the result of the knowledge and training the volunteers received and application of that in practice, said Dr Jaisi.

There are many people in this area who think that malnutrition is a curse of God rather than a disease. Thus people tend to take the malnourished children to the local temples, praying and making offerings, making pledges, instead of taking them to the hospital. The health volunteers have been able to change this

Service is good

My one month old child has a cold. I have come to get his health examined. I come to this health post whenever I face any health related issues. This health post has a lot of health materials. There is a doctor too and they treat people with respect and the services are also good. This is the reason why I always come here.

Basanta Baduwal

Kapkot, Budhinanda Municipality

wrong notion. Now the people take the malnourished children to the hospitals instead of temples. "I have no hesitation to say that the number of malnourished children coming to health post is increasing all because of health volunteers are raising awareness and driving people to take their kids to the hospitals," said Dr Jaisi.

People from as far as Mugu and other neighboring municipalities of Budhinanda prefer to visit this health post. In fact, they choose this health post over others. The main reason is the availability of health infrastructure. Doctors are regular and services are good. Dr Jaisi admits that Peace Win is largely to be credited for these good things.



DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



How a settlement was saved from the disaster

Hiralal Regmi

Daiya, Budhinanda Municipality-6, Bajura

Baddi is an honorific word in the dialect spoken in western Nepal. Guard, as the word goes in English, refers to a security person. There is a strange combination of these two words in Baddiguard, the name of the river, which always threatened the security of the local people.

The raging river, in the rainy season, goes so wild it wrecks damages and it feels like it is going to gobble up the entire village and all the people. Years passed amid this fear and terror of being swept away by the river. "We would stay awake the whole night fearing that we would be swept away by the river. We, the farmers, should be happy when the rainy season comes for this is the season when we plant but we never had a peace of mind during the rainy seasons. How would we, for there

was a terror of the river raging down destroying land, houses and lives?" said Hiralal Regmi.

The locals ran from a pillar to post requesting the authorities to help put embankment in the river but nobody listened to them, not even those political leaders whom they voted to power in local levels as well as the center. "We pleaded for help but in vain," he said. According to him, it was Peace Win which finally came to their rescue. When Peace Win provided the support of Rs 8,00,000 for making embankment on the river, the locals united and put up gabion walls. They formed themselves into different groups, and each group took the responsibility for putting up gabions. They decided that they would put up 100 gabion walls. This did the community good in many ways: It provided security to

the settlement, created jobs, and the money would not go out of the village. Everyone was, therefore, happy.

The locals worked incredibly hard. Peace Win officials were impressed. Hiralal Regmi, who was also the president of Gabion Wall Construction Committee, said: "Some of us broke down the rocks, others roped the wires, others put in stones in it. Men, women, from all castes and communities, they all worked hard. Everyone worked. The result: We were done and dusted within a week," said him in a breath.

The Gabion Wall Construction project of Baddiguard river is also an example of how given the will the locals, without the help of outsiders and tools, themselves can carry out the development works on their own. Locals spent the money for themselves and they also got jobs. "We learned that when the development works take place in the village itself, it also helps to raise the standard of living," shared Hiralal Regmi. Locals know that the gabion walls alone won't be able to save the village from the raging river but they consider it as a step toward the right direction to save the settlement,



land and life. They want to raise the walls high so that they can sleep well in the night. They have been making efforts to gather resources for this from municipalities as well as other organizations. Daiya is a village with total of 55 households. Most of the people here are poor and the land they have is not enough to feed themselves even for four months. Thus the locals here, for the sake of earning living, either have to run towards cities in

Words fail to appreciate Peace Win

I am nearing 60. Earlier the river was way below. Later it started to erode the land in the upper level. As years passed, the sand, stones and mud raised the level of the river. Then the water began to get into the field and settlement. This invited the risk of the whole settlement and the land being swept away. In such situation, Peace Win supported us for putting up 100 gabion walls so as to save the settlement and land. This was a big help for us. Words fail to appreciate Peace Win.

Padam Bahadur Rokaya

An affected resident of Daiya

India or to Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. This is their compulsion. They had a plot of land down the Baddiguard river, which the river was eroding and they were deeply worried about the situation. Now the locals say that Peace Win has helped them to drive away their fear and worries to some extent. At the other side of this river, gabion walls are being putting up. The one million rupees project is funded by Province government. But Hiralal and the people there have accomplished similar project in less than Rs 2,00,000 and set an example. "It is about safety of our own village. We worked hard," said Hiralal. "If we get even little budget, we will show more work with it."

The locals of Daiya village are forced to work for the safety of their fertile land and their own settlement. As the bridge, the only one, that connects their village with other parts of the country is in the risk of collapse they have the added responsibility to save it. Last year in August, raging flood had swept away the wheat mill (ghatta), and the miller Jumi Lohar. There is a fear that such incidents might recur and there is a responsibility to prevent such incidents from recurring. "There is a risk to life as much as to the land, houses and bridges. Thus there is no thinking who will benefit more. There is no ifs and buts when it comes to safety. We do not allow anybody's interests to impair the safety," said Hiralal Regmi.



Gabion walls provide some relief to Ranakot

Suman Baniya

Ranakot, Khatyad Rural Municipality-3, Mugu

Gaire River raged right beneath the house. And Suman lost sleep: The raging river could erode her house and pull it down altogether. Thus when it rained, or when the sky was overcast or when they saw the signs of rain, both Suman and her husband would be deeply worried: What will happen to our house and life? The couple have no children yet. They have not had land of their own either. They built a small house over a piece of land that was provided to them by a Bache Baniya, a local. They have put up a small eatery in that house and this is the source of livelihood for them. If they lost this house, they would lose everything. The couple's worries were valid. But would they be able to control the river, which along with it brought stones and sand as it ran through its course? They lived with worries but yet lived in that house. Where would they

go? When the rainy season started this couple would lose all sleep and peace of mind.

Now the situation has changed a lot. "After RRDC put up gabion walls on this river, we have felt a great relief. Though more gabion walls have to be put up to prevent the damage from the river, largely it has given us a hope that life will be saved. We sleep better now," said Suman.

Upward is Gaire river and downward Khatyad river. There are as many as seven houses, including that of Suman, which stand in this precarious situation. From either way there would be the risk of erosion and inundation. These rivers have turned hundreds of acres of fertile land into the riverbank. Where there was a field that produced quintals of rice and wheat and

fed the families, there stands a huge boulder. There is no prospect for agriculture nor the possibilities of preventing the probable disasters. Thus not only Suman but other households of the village as well are deeply worried about the situation.

When it rains the river literally flows past Suman's house, even flowing inside her house through the windows and door. Thus she always lived with this worry that someday this river would not only sweep away the house but the lives as well. "May be we will be safe now because of the gabion walls, says Suman. "I wish more gabion walls could be put up."

The affected people knocked the doors of the ward office and the rural municipality office several times but they were not provided assistance. They always cited the lack of budget and said they could not do anything. On the other hand, Gaire River was threatening to erode the land as well as the house. It was in this situation that RRDC came to their support and helped put up gabion walls in the river, providing some relief to eight households. "Not sure about the farmland. I only wish the lives would be safe. Let's see may be somebody will come for help," said Suman.

The locals are looking up for some assistance from organizations like RRDC or their municipalities to save their settlements and farming land. The affected people themselves have not been idle either. They have been

Can sleep well now

Gaire River has been giving us a lot of troubles and hardships. Eight houses and around 150,000 square meters of land are under risk because of this river. Some of the land here has already turned into the desert of sand. The river eroded my land that produced at least nine quintals of rice. Others are also losing their land like me. RRDC came to our help in this situation and put up gabion walls. It has done us a great favor. It has helped a great deal in reducing the risks of disasters but this is not enough. This is why we are making appeals for help to other organizations as well. I wish this organization (RRDC) would also take initiative to put up more gabion walls. We would at least get to sleep without worries. The river has done a lot of damage already. Our appeal is for preventing further damage.

Sur Baniya

President, Gabion Wall Construction Committee, Ranakot, Mugu

enquiring wherefrom they could get support and making appeals. They have not given up hope. They have understood that they should not stay quiet, blame the fate but take some initiatives by themselves.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

अभ्यास र कार्ययोजना
महानगरपालिका-५, बिरसेन

क्र.सं.	कार्यक्रम	कार्यकर्ता	कार्यकाल	कार्यस्थल
1	समाजिक न्याय कार्यक्रम	समाजिक न्याय अधिकारी	प्रतिवर्ष	समाजिक न्याय कार्यालय
2	स्वास्थ्य संरक्षण कार्यक्रम	स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी	प्रतिवर्ष	स्वास्थ्य कार्यालय
3	शैक्षिक संरक्षण कार्यक्रम	शैक्षिक अधिकारी	प्रतिवर्ष	शैक्षिक कार्यालय
4	व्यवसायिक संरक्षण कार्यक्रम	व्यवसायिक अधिकारी	प्रतिवर्ष	व्यवसायिक कार्यालय
5	पर्यावरण संरक्षण कार्यक्रम	पर्यावरण अधिकारी	प्रतिवर्ष	पर्यावरण कार्यालय

बुढीनन्दा नगरपालिका
बडा नं. ५, बिरसेन, बाजुरा

दिनांक : १५ जुलाई २०२०

क्र.सं.	विषय	संस्थागत/व्यक्तिगत	समाप्ति मिति	अंका	टिप्पणी
1	समाजिक न्याय	समाजिक न्याय अधिकारी	२०२०	१०	समाजिक न्याय कार्यलयमा सेवा राम्रो छ।
2	स्वास्थ्य संरक्षण	स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी	२०२०	८	स्वास्थ्य संरक्षणमा थप काम गर्नुपर्छ।
3	शैक्षिक संरक्षण	शैक्षिक अधिकारी	२०२०	८	शैक्षिक संरक्षणमा थप काम गर्नुपर्छ।
4	व्यवसायिक संरक्षण	व्यवसायिक अधिकारी	२०२०	८	व्यवसायिक संरक्षणमा थप काम गर्नुपर्छ।
5	पर्यावरण संरक्षण	पर्यावरण अधिकारी	२०२०	८	पर्यावरण संरक्षणमा थप काम गर्नुपर्छ।

People are testing the government

Angaraj Padhya

Birsain, Budhinanda Municipality-5, Bajura

Location: Office of Ward 5, Budhinanda Municipality
Date: April 7, 2021
Program: Sharing Learning and Experience with Citizen Level Ward Committee

OnonesideareseatedthemembersofCitizenMonitoring Committee of Ward 5, Budhinanda Municipality and officials of Community Score Card. On the other side are seated the members of similar committees of Ward 7, Badhu of Himali Rural Municipality. In between are seated the elected representatives of both wards.

And the program started. When it did, Angaraj Padhya, the committee coordinator of Bhdunanda Municipality-5 spoke: We could only award 8 points out of 10 full marks

on recommendation service provided by the ward office. That's because in the absence of ward chief, the service seekers have had to deal with a lot of hassles. Then the coordinator of Badhu and also the member of group Pramila Adhikari followed. She said: Last year we awarded 9 points. But this year the service quality has deteriorated and therefore we have reduced it to 8 points. There is no secretary in our ward office, which is why people did not get satisfactory service with regard to recommendation.

Then Angaraj spoke again: We could not award more than 3 points because project monitoring was weak. Pramila said that she could not award more than 2 points because the vital registration (of birth, death, marriage etc) was not satisfactory.

Rule was made whereby the service providing entities, the ward offices themselves, could also award scores. Budhinanda Ward had awarded 10 out of 10 on recommendation service and 6 on project monitoring. Local representatives of Badhu had awarded 9 points for their service delivery and 6 points for vital registration.

It was the best example of testing the annual performance of the ward offices, in terms of service deliveries, both by the service providers—the elected representatives—and the service seekers, the people. This program is under operation in Budhinanda Municipality and Himali Rural Municipality of the district. The above mentioned program was testing the performance of a ward each from both municipalities. The officials, the people and their representatives sat opposite each other discussing strong and weak aspects of the service delivery by the ward offices. “This helps the service providers to know their weaknesses and on the other hand the service seekers also become alert and conscious. This ultimately ensure people’s access to the services and services also become more effective,” said Angaraj, highlighting the importance of the program. He shared that the interactions between the two municipalities also help to know each other’s strengths and weaknesses, learn the best practices and correct the shortcomings.

Not only vital events registration, points are awarded on various performance indexes of the services provided by the ward offices. They include project selection, public hearing, monitoring of project, community mobilization, alcohol sale control, forest and environment, awareness campaigns, disaster reduction and so on. “Award point is not only about flattering them or discouraging them,” said Pramila, “we also tell them the reasons behind why the services provided were good or bad. This helps them to correct the mistakes.”

Provisions have been made to stick the score card (board) on the ward offices, in support of Peace Win. Service providers and service seekers both can learn from this. Such program also helps the service providing authorities correct their shortcoming. “This has helped us make some tangible achievements,” said Anagaraj highlighting the effectiveness of the program.

Peace Win has been launching various programs to enhance good governance. It has been conducting public hearings, broadcasting materials related to

Peace Win’s work is really effective

Pace win has been conducting various programs in this village. They include evaluating the performance of the local government, providing various types of training to the elected representatives, 1000 days of awareness programs for mothers and so many other public awareness programs. They have been really effective. In the context of Covid-19, the organization availed a water tank for our school and also taught students proper methods of hand washing apart from providing soaps. There is a grievance that such assistance program has not benefitted the needy. These shortcomings need to be corrected. Then Peace Win’s assistance will be even more effective.

Dal Bahadur Malla
Principal, Bhawani Secondary School,
Dhulachaur, Bajura

good governance through the radios, informing people about the services provided by the local governments, mobilizing community and groups in project planning and so on. Score board is one of such good governance programs. Under its information dissemination program, Peace Win has distributed copies of the constitution of Nepal in 8,000 households in places covered by the project. This has been seen to be effective.





The office that mothers run

Dhanu Pandit

Badhu, Himali Rural Municipality-7, Bajura

What does one expect to see in a room of a school building? Learning, teaching going on, students being seated etc. But one of the rooms in Janata Basic School presents a different picture to the visitors. One of the rooms of that building is not for learning and teaching. It's got an office of mothers. It's the office belonging to Suntala Swasthya Aama Samuha (Suntala Health Mother's Group).

An office setting in most villages comprises some tables and sets of chairs. But this office is different in this respect too. Here you see a computer set as well, a photocopier machine, a printer and a high-end table and chairs and as electricity supply is unpredictable there is a solar system attached. How come the office

of the Mother's Group attain all such amenities? "Our office looks enriched because the Peace Win provided us such machines in assistance. These machines have made it easier for us to perform various activities. At the same time it's supported the other programs we run as well," said Dhanu Pandit, secretary of the Group. How so? "When we provide photo copy and print services we charge money. People don't have to walk all the way for one and half hours to get these services. On the other hand, mother's group is also getting a source of earning," explained Dhanu.

But why did Peace Win provide support to her Mother's Group? She has a clear answer for that too: "We have been fighting against the social evils. We are in this

campaign. We are working to make the services provided by local governments more effective. We have taught and encouraged women to do saving and help them out in times of need. Perhaps they helped us to further encourage us to do the good work.”

Indeed, women like Dhanu have been doing a great job. They, together with Citizen Monitoring Committee of the ward, have been monitoring and evaluating the services provided by the wards and they exert pressure on these bodies to make the services more effective. They advocate against child marriage and prevent it from happening in their village. They hate Chhaupadi practice, they encourage people to build toilets and, to those who cannot, they themselves provide support to build it and they do not allow bahubibaha (marrying more than one wife) to take place. “We go to the ward office, the offices of local organizations, enquire about the budget allocated and check if the works are being done according to the budget. Earlier we were ignorant about which authority did what kind of work, how much fund was being provided. Now we keep interest in such things and enquire about such things,” said Dhanu.

Dhanu gives all the credit for this new awakening to Peace Win. Various good governance and women rights related training and orientation which Peace Win provided has made the mothers more aware and watchful, according to her. “Peace Win tells us mother is the first school of a child. We say to Peace Win, Peace Win is the first school of we the mothers,” said Dhanu.



When women are active

The women of this ward are very active and watchful. The works and campaigns that Mother’s Group and Citizen Monitoring Committee run have always made the ward mindful to perform better. Community score card in particular is more effective. We have been able to ban alcohol, resolve problems through the public hearings and work for environmental preservation all because the women are active and aware. The system of awarding points has enabled us to check whether we are on the right track or not.

Jaya Bahadur Adhikari

Ward Chair, Ward-7, Himali Rural Municipality, Bajura

That’s because they have learned things and become watchful all because of Peace Win. This Mother’s Group is well known not only among the women of Badhu but also elsewhere. The Group which started with 13 members has expanded to 45. Other women are so interested to take the membership of this group. Dhanu, who is a high school graduate (proficiency certificate level degree), says that the good works they do have impressed everybody. Another secret of the fame of this Group is regular saving which all the members do. They started with Rs 10 saving per month per member, now that has reached Rs 50 and they have been saving continuously for the last three years. As a result they have Rs 107000 in their fund now. “We lend this money to those women who are in trouble, who want to start small enterprises such as keeping goats, running a small grocery or vegetable shop and so on. All this goes to the members of the Mothers Group,” said Dhanu.

Dhanu and other members of the Group have started the initiative of making the office building of their own. They are approaching Peace Win and Rural Municipality for that. Dhanu and other members believe that if they can do so, it will make their institution sustainable and they will be able to work more for empowerment of women.



How technology changed the ward office

Gobinda Bahadur Malla

Dulachaur, Himali Rural Municipality, Bajura

The local government is called a government because it has all three powers that a government enjoys—legislative (the right to formulate laws), executive (the power to execute those laws) and judicial (resolving judicial issues), which is done by the Judicial Committee. It's only three years since the country actually started to practice federal set up and therefore not all local governments are equipped with tools and infrastructure. Even the provincial capitals lack needed infrastructure and the government has not been able to do much about it. No wonder Bajura district, which lags far behind in Human Development Index, has not been able to do much in this respect.

As such, Himali Rural Municipality of Bajura was not being able to fulfill its role of the local government

actively. It did not have its office and it was using the temporary camps set up by Nepal Army for road construction for office purpose. There was no question of the Municipality being able to provide effective service through its wards. "We had no option but to provide services with whatever little resources we had or in whatever conditions we were," said Gobinda Bahadur Malla, the Chairperson of the Himali Rural Municipality.

Things in the ward offices of this Rural Municipality have changed considerably. The offices are more managed and their service delivery capacities have also been enhanced. The service seekers themselves say since the office became technology-friendly the quality of services has been enhanced. The service is smooth and swift. Everyone who comes says, 'oh, it's a lot better now.'

So how did the things change? “We were living through lacks and deprivation. New as we were, we did not know what we should do next. We had little resources but we were to address the huge expectations of the people. Things actually changed after Peace Win provided electronic gadgets in assistance to all the wards of the municipality,” said Gobinda Bahadur Malla, the chairperson of the Rural Municipality.

Whoever goes to any ward office of this Rural Municipality can see computer, connected by the printer, on the table of the ward chief. It has made it easier to type and print the recommendation letters as well as to keep records. Because hydroelectricity is not available in all ward offices, and even if it is, not so reliable, solar panel has been installed in every ward office as a backup. All this is done to ensure that these electronic devices can be operated when needed. Mobile phone and camera sets have also been provided to each municipality.

Apart from providing material support in form of computers and printers, Peace Win has provided other kind of assistance to the ward offices as well. It has provided training to the elected representatives. It has provided a copy of constitution to each household. Peace Win’s training made the elected representatives aware about their roles, functions, powers and responsibilities, the jurisdiction of local government and legal matters and so on, at a time when they lacked knowledge about all this. Chairperson Malla says this is a very important contribution Peace Win has made. He argues that this



has helped to enhance the work performance of his own and the ward chairs of his Rural Municipality. Malla thinks making the representatives aware about women’s rights, rights of the Dalits, rights of the disabled people, children’s rights, domestic violence etc through training is a great contribution in itself. “Words fail to appreciate

Can’t forget Peace Win’s contribution

Peace Win has provided various electronic devices such as computer, printers, solar plant, camera etc to our ward. This has made it much easier to provide swift and smooth services to the service seekers and work performance of the office has also been enhanced. Peace Win has helped to connect the rural municipalities with technology. Words fail to appreciate them for that. The assistance and help they provided during the Covid-19 lockdown and facilitation they provided to the locals during project formulation are other unforgettable contributions of Peace Win.

Surendra Bahadur Malla

Ward Chair, Ward Number 6,
Himali Rural Municipality, Bajura

Peace Win for educating us about the rights, powers and duties of the judicial committee,” said Malla. This has helped the Municipality to resolve legal issues and deliver on justice and ensure good governance. Ward number 1, 2 and 3 are the remotest wards of this district. It requires days of walks to reach some of the villages from the Rural Municipality office. In such situation, neither do the government officials want to go there nor do people have access to the government offices. We had no option in such situation than appeal to the organization like Peace Win. “Peace Win’s good governance related programs are more effective in those areas,” said Malla. “If Peace Win did not provide assistance, many people here would be deprived of services.”

There is no government presence in all parts of Bajura which borders districts like Humla, Mugu, Kalikot and Bajhang. Some of the villages of the Rural Municipality are so far from the municipality office that it takes three days to reach from there. Gumba, located in ward number 33, is one such village. In such situation, the Rural Municipality alone won’t be able to do anything. “Peace Win has done us a great favor by serving the people of the remote places,” said Malla.



Cooperative building confidence of women

Kalpana Kari Malla

Phaiti, Himali Rural Municipality, Bajura

Two years ago: Whether it came to depositing money or taking loan, if you were there you would have to sit upon a mat. Both the service providers as well service seekers felt inconvenience while working. The cooperative had only just started, it was not furnished with tables and chairs but the services had to be provided anyway, for which works had to be done anyway.

Now: The officials sit upon chairs, with piles of files and documents on the table. There is a cupboard to keep files and documents. There are chairs for the service seekers to sit on. Now while the officials can provide services with ease, the service seekers, those who go to deposit money or take loan, also receive services with ease.

The situation and changes described above is the reality of Devidhura Women Agriculture Cooperative Limited

located in Phaiti of Bajura district. Now it has its branch office at Dhulachaur, the headquarters of the Rural Municipality, where a personnel has been appointed to run the office. All these changes are because of the official materials and gadgets provided to them by Peace Win, says Kalpanakumari Malla, the president of the Cooperative. While on the one hand, it has made the office look very attractive it has also helped to keep the sensitive documents, accounts and records of income and expenses of the Cooperative safe. Peace Win has done much more for this Cooperative than what has been described above. It provided accounts training to the Cooperative officials and staffs through which they have learned to keep the accounts in much better way. Besides Peace Win's training was also focused on other issues such as savings, project formulation, budget allocation among others, which have helped enhance

their performance. Inspired by the training of Peace Win, the Cooperative itself has also been providing various trainings and orientations to its members—one evidence of how the Cooperative is becoming independent.

“We knew nothing in the beginning. When Peace Win imparted training related to Cooperative along with other types of training and we also became able to provide such training. We have provided women empowerment training to our members in coordination with Rural Municipality. We have been running the awareness campaign for the Dalits in their communities. We happen to be doing some or other thing for the members of our Cooperative,” Kalpana elaborated the deeds of her cooperative.

This all-women Cooperative has 95 members who are its shareholders and it has the savings of around Rs 9, 00,000. Loan is provided from here for running small businesses and purchasing livestock. Almost all of the saved money has been mobilized through loans in investment. The Cooperative makes earning from interest paid to it by the borrowers and at the same time it also helps solve the problems of the members or non-members. Kalpana Kumari would like to describe this as the mark of success of the Cooperative. They have made a rule that while providing loan, those who are really in need are given priority and everyone has liked this rule. Though transaction is carried out in Phaiti only once a month, the main office based in Dhulachaur runs a daily transaction. They have launched various schemes to attract saving: Youth saving, children’s saving, senior citizen saving are the examples. It lends money to the people at the interest rate of 12 percent. Kalpana Kumari says that because of these rules and disciplines, the Cooperative has been liked by all.

Thank you Peace Win

We have around one and half million rupees savings in our cooperative at the moment. This is why members keep coming for transaction— depositing money or taking loan. But there was a time when we did not have a chair to offer to our clients where they could sit on for few moments. We spread the mats on the floor and there we sat. So the customers would not stay in the office for long, they would hurry to return. We were really worried. Peace Win understood what we were going through and it provided us tables, chairs, racks etc. Now this has made our work easier and at the same time it has also helped us to keep our accounts safely and with accuracy, contributing to the good governance practice of the office. I want to extend my sincere thanks to the Peace Win for all the support it has given to us.

Rup Chandra Sarki

President, Samaj Sudhar Savings and Credit Cooperative Limited, Dhulachaur, Bajura

The Cooperative has been able to build the office building of its own with the assistance of Rs 6,00,000 from Rural Municipality and Rs 7,00,000 from Province government. The house has two office rooms and a meeting hall. But a few days ago, the windstorm blew away the tin roof of the house and so the office has not been operated from the new house. Kalpana plans to garner sources and repair the house to operate services from her own office building. “Then we will work to make the cooperative an example of good governance,” said Kalpanakumari.

Peace Win started to extend support to the civic institutions such as cooperatives, Dalit networks, women rights forums etc with the aim to promoting good governance. Many institutions of Budhinanda Municipality as well Himali Rural Municipality have benefitted from such support. Of the beneficiaries, Debdhara Women Agriculture Cooperative has established itself as the center of excellence. Kalpana Kumari says that they have planned to make the cooperative better managed, better governed, prosperous and popular.





The spirit of grandmother

Hiradevi Shahi

Rikihya, Khadyad Rural Municipality-11, Mugu

This was on April 12, 2021. The refresher training on inclusive project planning and implementation was going on for the local elected representatives in Majhchaur, the headquarters of Khatdyad Rural Municipality. Many participants were just listening to the trainers. But then there was an elderly lady who kept interrupting in between and kept asking questions: The roads and trails have not been built in our own wards, who shall I complain? What will ensure that there are vital medicines available in the health posts? The trainer kept responding to those queries. She never stopped asking.

She was one among the participants who were into this training for the last two days. She was Hiradevi Shahi, 61, from Khatyad Rural Municipality-11, who is also a

member of her ward. The way she asked questions and sought answers of those questions, it felt as if she was the lady in her early thirties. Everyone in the training, including the trainer, felt this difference.

This, however, was not the first time she was receiving the training provided by RRDC. She believes that the second phase of training helped her to hone up her learning. Earlier she would come to the Rural Municipality office when she had some development issues to raise. She would plead for assistance. "Now that I have taken such training I know that I need to come to my ward office in a designated time and during the project planning phase, where I can put my concerns beforehand," she said. This is the understanding she has had after the training.

When her Rural Municipality fixes the date and location for project planning, she informs all the people of her village and encourages them to identify the projects which are relevant and necessary for them. She then goes to the Municipality to push for the projects most demanded by people in her village. Hiradevi has learnt a great many things from the training. She can enumerate it: We should not take the disputes of our village outside of it as far as possible, and if we do it harms us more than others. Therefore, the disputes of the village should be resolved in the village itself. Likewise, to save oneself from the possible disasters, we need to get the disaster bag ready. Even in development works, we should not wait for the programs that will be imposed from above, instead we need to put in priority what is needed and in exactly which place. When we demand for projects, you have to fulfill some processes. And the accounts have to be transparent. Works have to be sustainable. Only then there will be good governance. So on and so forth.

The way Hiradevi shared the learning she acquired from the training, it felt like she had become a mature woman. People may think of her as a gossip but the truth is otherwise. In her initiative, the women of the village have been able to add two more rooms to the local school. They are trying to get electricity connected to the school. Two houses for the health post have already been constructed and the process for running the birthing center has started. Hira Devi has been able to accomplish a lot many things but she is not happy with what has been achieved. The path to Radi village from the village's school is too difficult to walk through. It takes the whole morning to walk to the school and get back. She has to do something about it. Likewise, she plans to replant seasonable fruits in the fields and lands which are fallow. She also plans to introduce self-employment program in the village. "There is a pond here. I want to grow fish there," said Hiradevi. "If there was electricity in the village, perhaps some employment opportunities for youths could be created or some source to generate income could be managed."

Hiradevi is thankful to RRDC for providing training on issues relating how to abolish violence against women, the rights, duties and powers of the ward members and so on. She served for long as a health volunteer and she wants to set a record so that the people will remember for that and she would be able to pay back to the

I learned a lot from the training

I have personally gained a lot since I participated in that training imparted by Peace Win for the elected representatives. I am able to plan the budget of the ward as well as the rural municipality, formulate programs and execute them. I learned a lot about financial procedure, project formulation apart from powers, duties and responsibilities of the elected representatives. We did not know about many of the legal processes. Now the training has made everything clear to us. These were very necessary learnings, thanks to Peace Win for providing this to us. I believe that if similar refresher trainings are conducted in the future, the work performance of the elected representatives will be enhanced significantly.

Ramesh BK

Ward Chair, Ward Number-4, Himali Rural Municipality, Bajura

voters for electing her. She is actively working for the development of her village, though she is the mother of seven sons and a daughter. Hiradevi walked up to this training spot for two hours and she will return home on foot, down the hill and up the hill again.

