

Towards food and nutrition security resilient society

Stories of how disadvantaged communities in remote mountain districts of Bajura and Mugu in are on their way to becoming food and nutrition security resilient through the initiatives of the SAMPURNA project



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CONTENTS

Agriculture

Who Set an Example?	3
No more Anguish	5
How Nursery Changed his Life	7
Age is no bar for Learning	9
The Canal that Washed Away All Miseries	11
Barren Hill becomes Apple Orchard	13

Livelihood

A Water Project that Solved many Problems.....	17
From a Pauper to a Miller.....	19
Where They Make Juice from Rhododendron	21

Health/Nutrition

A Dalit Health Volunteer Earns Respect from Non-Dalits as well	25
Nutrition Program that is Showing Results.....	27
A model Health Post	29

Disaster Risk Reduction

How a Settlement was Saved from a Disaster.....	33
Sagune can now build Earthquake Resistant Houses	35
Gabion Walls Provide Some Relief to Ranakot	37

Good governance

Containing Social Evils	41
The Office that Mothers Run	43
More Efficient Service to the People	45
Cooperative Building Confidence of Women	47
Determined to Deliver	49

AGRICULTURE



Who Set an Example?

Sukabir Khadka

Siradi, Budhinanda Municipality-3, Bajura

Sukabir Khadka has a rather big family: mother, wife, two sons and a daughter. But the family owns only a small patch of land of around 2500 square meters. The yield from the land was not enough to feed his family. So, he left the village for India to find work.

But even there luck did not favor him. Working in India he used to make some earning but it was all spent in travelling back home and coming back to India and paying the loans he had taken from the local lender. It was a rather frustrating situation for Sukabir.

He, however, decided not to give up but try something else. This resolve drove him to the office of PeaceWin, where he shared his story. The organization—which was

working in the livelihood sector—assured Khadka of the needed support. He felt upbeat and returned home. “I had a nice sleep that night,” he recalls.

Soon after this, Khadka received a three-day training on commercial vegetable farming from PeaceWin. He had attended similar training from the Agriculture Office too in the past. But Khadka had forgotten what he learnt in the training because he could not apply it in practice. This time it was different.

The organization provided seeds, plastics, materials required to make tunnels, and a set of drip irrigation tools. Most importantly, it also arranged a Junior Technical Assistance (JTA) for him to consult with. This

meant that he could apply what he had learnt in the training before he could forget.

After this things start to change for the better. He started farming vegetables of various kinds. He toiled day and night tending the vegetables. Finally, the vegetables were ready to be sold. He earned Rs. 10,000 by selling tomatoes. He used to earn only Rs. 1200 when he sold paddy he grew in the very land. After that he was able to earn Rs. 15,000 by selling cucumbers.

Khadka accepts that this success was the result of using better seeds, fertilizers and technical knowledge that he received from the training.

When the field of other farmers in his locality has paddy plantation, Khadka's field is full of ripe tomatoes. Similarly, his farm is filled with cucumbers when fields of other farmers contain wheat plantation. "Such a spectacle makes me happy," he says with a smile.

In the beginning, however, it was not so easy for him to replace the cultivation of staple crops--which have been grown for generations--with vegetables. Some people in the village even called him mad for taking such a radical shift. His mother and father also warned him of starvation. But Khadka was not deterred by all this. Instead, he decided to put more effort and focus on what he was doing. "When the vegetables started to grow well and I started to make some money, my parents started to appreciate me. Other members of the family also took my initiative in a positive light. Then they all started to support me," Khadka reveals.



I followed Sukabir

The land I inherited from my father is not more than 1100 square meters. How can the yield from that little patch of 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 work on wage. After seeing my elder brother's success, I have also started to grow tomatoes and other vegetables with his support. Doing so has made it much easier for me to feed my family.

Dale Khadka

Brother of Sukabir, Siradi

Interactions with JTAs and training have made him more knowledgeable and skilled. Khadka grows only off-season vegetables. When others grow tomatoes, he will have none in his field. Same goes for the cucumbers. But when these produce are scarce in the market, he grows them and sells them for a good profit.

Kolti is the nearest bazaar for him and it takes around an hour for him to reach there. Transportation is difficult in Kolti in the rainy season—from June to August—as the roads remain obstructed and vehicles cannot ply. It is during such times that Khadka brings out his produce. "You cannot transport tomatoes from outside during the rainy season and hence one gets a good price," he says. "I always grow tomatoes targeting this season. I have been able to make very good money by doing so."

Siradi is a village with around 120 households. The yield from the land cannot feed any family in the settlement even for three months. In such a situation, Khadka has been able to feed his family for the whole year from what he earns from the vegetable farming.

Sukabir has become a kind of role model in the village. Those who reprimanded and called him mad in the past have started to appreciate him. "I will follow your example. Please teach us," they said. Following his footsteps, Nandaraj Khadka, Dale Khadka, and Gagan Singh Adi have started vegetable farming. Khadka says this has given him immense satisfaction.



No more Anguish

Bachu BK

Birsain, Budhinanda Municipality-5, Bajura

Both Bachu and her husband used to toil in the field every day till late hours. But the yield from the land was low. It was difficult even to feed their children. She sometimes thought of sending her husband for foreign employment. At other times, she used to think of abandoning farming and taking up new profession. But money was needed to pursue any new profession. Investment was needed, which she did not have. The hardship and financial insecurity even affected her relation with her husband.

PeaceWin was implementing a project that aimed to support farmers like Bachu do farming in a better way. One day Bachu was invited by the organization to attend Farmers Field School, which was being organized by the organization. Bachu happily joined. . In the Farmers

Field School, the agriculture technicians came to the field and demonstrated modern farming methods and techniques. Thus, the farmers learnt about new methods of farming, nursery and manure and improving sheds. They also acquired the skills of making organic fertilizer and pesticides. 25 farmers including Bachu benefited from it.

Besides the Farmer's Field School, Bachu was also trained in IPM and nursery management by the organization. PeaceWin also provided her with materials and equipment that were needed to apply what she had learnt in trainings into practice. These included drip irrigation set, tunnel materials, mulching plastic sheet, garden pipe and seeds.

These days, Bachu cultivates vegetables using modern farming methods and techniques. For example, she plants vegetable saplings after making furrow. She uses properly decomposed manure. And she spreads the manure around the saplings, and not everywhere in the field.

Planting saplings this way has a range of benefits. Firstly, it is easier to tend as well as for the plants to grow. Secondly, all plants get equal amount of soil and manure. It is also easier to identify infected plants and treat them. All these contribute towards increased yield.

Bachu's family doesn't have land of their own. They have leased a piece of land for vegetable farming. Even though he has to pay for the land, the income from sale of the vegetable is enough to sustain herself and her family.

"Now, I can't imagine doing anything else but farming," she says. "I grow tomatoes, cauliflowers, pumpkin, cucumber, chilies and peas and sell them. The earning from the sale of the vegetables is more than enough to meet my family's expense even after paying for the lease of the land" she says. Thus, earnings that her

I learned by Observing and Participating

The JTA of PeaceWin would come to the field and teach us through demonstration. Later, he used to come to inspect the way we were applying what we had learnt from him at least once a month and give us his feedback. As I we both were equally involved in this process, I got to learn modern methods and techniques of farming. Now I can do farming in a proper way on my own without having to wait for my wife support. Whoever is free does the work. This has given a sense of satisfaction to me.

Dahanbahadur BK

Spouse of Bachu BK, Birsain

family makes from vegetable farming has been able to enhance the livelihood of her family. Gone are her days of anguish. She and her family is indeed happy!





How Nursery Changed his Life

Bude Rawat

Gede Gaun, Budhinanda Municipality-8, Bajura

Bude Rawat tried nearly all available options available to him. For instance, he herded the cattle of other farmers. He also went to India and did manual work for six years. While doing all these jobs, he worked very hard but he was not paid more than Rs 35 a day for any of the work he did. He could not afford good food and good clothes for himself and his family. He decided to return home.

He returned to his village from India. But he could not figure out what to do next. He thought of trying vegetable farming. But he soon realized that many others were already into this enterprise. Farming through traditional style? He would not take it up anyway. Starting his own shop/business would require quite an investment.

After much thought, he finally thought of trying nursery. It was a new thing for the whole area. The land in the

district was also suitable because it was a slope with the moist, fertile soil. So, fruits like apples and walnuts could be grown abundantly there. Moreover the seedlings used to be brought from another district. If he could grow them here, he could fulfill the demand for it for his home district.

But it was easier said than done. Many things needed to be sorted out: how to manage the investment needed? Who would provide the seedlings as well as saplings? What types of saplings were best suited? Where was the market? And, what was the proper method of planting?

When he luckily came in touch with PeaceWin, he found the answers to most of these questions. First things first: He was provided a training on nursery management. After the training, he was provided the assistance for fencing the nursery. He was also provided with

pipes, tanks, sprinklers, tunnel materials etc. "All in all, PeaceWin lent me goods worth around Rs. 4, 00,000 to set up this nursery," he said with a smile

Bude now produces the saplings costing tens of thousands of Rupees in a small patch of land. He sold plants worth around Rs. 1,50,000 last year. Many other saplings in the nursery have been ordered for purchase. "Selling (the saplings) is not a problem as long as you can produce them," he says. He also shared that all the saplings of his nursery were being purchased by the Agriculture Knowledge Center based in the district headquarters and were being distributed to various parts of the country. The saplings of walnuts and apples are in higher demand than other similar saplings. But he has not been able to fully meet the demand for it. Thus, he has planned to expand his nursery in the future.

Bude travelled to Dadeldhura to observe kiwi farming and to Dhangadhi to get familiar with bee farming. He has planted kiwi saplings and also has started bee farming. He also applies whatever he learns during the training in practice. "What use is the training if you do not apply what you learn there?" he questions. He also loves to innovate and experiment. Some people told him that his land was not suitable for Fuji apple and kiwi.

He wanted to test if this was true or not. He has started growing kiwi and Fuji apple. "Both kiwi and apple saplings are growing well. It is seemly very likely that the people will be proved wrong," 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. Thanks to the knowledge and skills he learnt from the training provided by PeaceWin, he has been able to solve problems and challenges that come up in his work. He also says that support he has received from the JTAs has helped him a lot.

"With frequent interactions and collaboration with them, I have also become TA of sorts myself," he said. "My plan is to make the district self-reliant on the walnuts and apple saplings in the next three years. Agriculture Knowledge Center, as well as the PeaceWin, has promised full support to me," he said. "If this materializes, Bajura can make millions of earnings every

Investment in Right Man

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

Premial Lwar

Ward Member, Budinanda Municipality-8, Bajura

year by selling fruits and it will also raise the living standard of people here," he added.

The district-based Agriculture Knowledge Center frequently invites him to impart training on tending apple plants. "I am paid Rs. 1,500 a day. Teaching others gives me happiness as well. This has greatly encouraged me," he said.



Rawat has bought a big plot of land (around 4000 square meters) with the earnings of the nursery. For the first time in his life, he has also opened a bank account where he has deposited around Rs. 1,50,000 in savings. "I had never thought or dreamed that I would be able to make such an achievement," Rawat says.



Age is no bar for Learning

Pampha Dagar

Farmer

Dungri, Khatyad Rural Municipality-7, Mugu

The 69-year-old Pampha has 8 members in her family: 3 sons, 2 daughters-in-law and 3 grandchildren. Her husband has passed away and her one son went to India and never came back. Her other son has a disability. Agriculture is the only source of livelihood for her. Though she has to work day in and day out in field, the yield from the farm does not support her family even for 4-5 months. Hence, Pampha's life has been a constant struggle.

"No matter how hard we work, it was difficult to get enough food to feed the family throughout the year," she remembers

There are many reasons why her hard work was not paying her back well. The patch of land her family owns is small. The topography is rugged and the soil is not fertile. However, the main reason was her lack of knowledge on modern farming methods and techniques.



Considering the needs of women such as Pampha, RRDC provided training on modern farming methods. "RRDC gathered us all in one place and trained us on modern farming methods and techniques. Also, later they taught and guide us by visiting us," she recalls.

RRDC's agricultural technicians had trained not only Pampha but also all the farmers of the village on manure management. Information was also given about the benefits of improved cowshed, the benefits to soil and crops by proper use of animal urine and its other uses.

Pampha is now happy that she knows the modern methods of farming. She uses the knowledge and skills she has gained in her farm. She no more wants to use traditional methods. She feels happy to share the knowledge she has gained. "Animal waste should be protected from sunlight and rain water. Hence, they should be kept under the roof. This prevents the loss of nutrients necessary for plants and soil. Also, the waste will rot well. When this well-decomposed manure is applied, the crops grow well."

The Workload of Women has Decreased

The Workload of Women has Decreased
We talk of decrease in productivity but we don't put efforts to find the reason behind it. We are grateful to RRDC who has informed us of the reason behind decreased productivity and provided support we needed. We are now working as per the guidance of the organization, which has led to increase in productivity. RRDC has also provided us drinking water and irrigation facility. It has also provided support for installing a mill in our village. This has made is convenient for us to grind corns etc. This has also reduced the work load of women.

Udaya Karki

Nakharchi, Khatyad Rural Municipality, Mugu

Many of her villagers have built manure management shed with the help of RRDC. Until a few months ago, the heaps of manure that used to be seen in front of the cowsheds. They cannot be seen in the village these days. Pampha says she is confident that the production will increase due to the use of such manure.

Nowadays, Pampha collects animal feces and urine in a pit. "I do not let any nutrients to flow nor to blown up," she says.

The farmers have also been informed about managing the manure by making a roof, which prevents the absorption of nitrogen underground. This also reduces the emission of methane gas and prevent the source of water from being polluted. Not only this, they have also learnt that doing so will also reduce the emissions of greenhouse gas, contributing in increasing the yield.

Pampha is happy that she now knows so many things about modern farming methods and techniques. This is not only made her confident but also increased the productivity of her farm.



The Canal that Washed Away All Miseries

Bharat BK

Kolti, Budhinanda Municipality-2, Bajura

A big chunk of field under the Kolti bazaar remained barren. Nobody cared to plant in the field as everyone had to depend completely on monsoon for irrigation. They dug, they sowed, and they weeded. But if it didn't rain, all went in vain. Thus, farmers stopped wasting their investment and labors. While the land remained barren, people of the village went to neighboring India to earn a living. Those who could not go to India had a very difficult time.

After keeping his land barren for many years, Dhanbahadur BK has now resumed farming. His field is lush green with wheat plant. The land belonging to Satdhan BK, which also used to remain barren, is now full of greenery. Gokul Sahani and Bijaya Puri too have started to cultivate. There are many others who have resumed cultivation in the barren land left uncultivated for many years.

"PeaceWin offered us assistance to reconstruct the canal and make it concrete. All the changes that have come about is due to this," Bharat BK, Chairperson of the Kotkulo Irrigation Canal Construction Project, says.

The canal was originally built using traditional method. It did not hold up water well as it leaked. Those having their lands in the upper areas could get some water. But those in the lower areas could not get water as the water leaked away. The canal has now been repaired using concrete materials. "Now we get more water from the canal as it does not leak and even those with their lands at the bottom end get water. This is the reason the farmers have been motivated to cultivate the land which they had left barren for years," BK says.

"Many parts of this field, where you can see the lush green crops of various kinds, used to be a ground to play

football and volleyball. Now, as you can see, the whole field is covered with crops. There is not a barren space for one to even squat if s/he get tired while working in there", describes Tanjan Saki.

As there is no leakage, the land gets irrigated much faster than before. Thus, the farmers get their turn without much wait. This has saved their time.

Tanjan Sarki recalls the time when the villagers had to wait for hours in the night for their turn to irrigate their land and sometimes they would even pick quarrels with the neighboring farmers due to this. When they finally got the opportunity to irrigate their field, it would be too late and the plants would either be wilted or grown to maturity. "This canal washed away all those troubles," he says. Indeed, the reconstruction of the canal also done away with one of the major causes of conflict among people in the village.

The canal irrigates around 500 square meters of land, benefitting 700 households. Of the total reconstruction cost of Rs. 8,75,000—PeaceWin contributed Rs.6,18,000. Rest was contributed voluntary by the local residents in the form of manual labor.

The agreed length of the canal with the length of 150 meters. But later the committee decided to increase 15 meters, making it 165 meters long. The height and width of the canal are also much bigger—40 and 35

It's Very Easy Now

The entire land was parched and dry. The farmers were not able to grow crops. As the canal is now running well, everyone is happy and has started to grow crops. Nobody is willing to keep their lands barren. 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 so easy, who would not do farming?

Jayaram Regmi

Staff, Salt Trading Corporation, Kolti

centimeters respectively—than agreed initially. All this was done to ensure that the canal carried more water so that more farmers could be benefitted.

In the past, many farmers/landlord gave the land for sharecropping because water was inadequate and uncertain. Now they have started resume farming. Those who left the land barren and took up menial jobs have also returned to farming. The farmers in the past used to grow paddy, wheat, buckwheat only etc. But now they are also growing the vegetables, including the off-season vegetables. "Isn't this amazing?" exclaims Bharat BK.





Barren Hill becomes Apple Orchard

Amar Raj Baniya

Baratu, Khatyad Rural Municipality-3, Mugu

If you had visited the top of Baratu village a year ago and again visit the place now, you would probably wonder if it was the same place. For it looks like a different place altogether. The hilltop that was barren is now covered with young saplings of apple plants. To water these plants, a plastic pond has been constructed a little further up.

At the heart of the change is Lamtame Fruit and Vegetable Production Agriculture Group. According to Amar Raj Baniya, the Chair 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 total apple plants growing in this field, 200 were provided by RRDC. Others were contributed by the Agriculture Office and yet others were provided by individuals. Apart from that, RRDC helped to construct the plastic pond and greenhouse. All these efforts

helped to turn this hill into an apple orchard. The Group aims to grow vegetables on the ground by creating 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," Baniya said.

This is, however, not the first time the apple plants were grown here. In 2007 too, the RRDC, WFP, Red Cross, and other organizations had provided apple saplings and mobilized the locals to plant them under a food program when the village was reeling under food shortage. A wall had been put around the area too to protect the saplings. But since the community did not take proper care of the place, many of the plants were damaged by livestock. One can see only a couple of them standing now.

"We will not allow that to again happen. The fact that the apple and vegetable farming is being done in this place

collectively means that everyone in the community is responsible for the protection and care of the orchard,” Baniya said.

“We have made an arrangement from the Nepali new year 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 questions. They have prepared vegetable saplings to be planted on the ground. The 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 to tend and water these plants and use pesticides if they are infested. If greater support is required, they even involve other members of the community. This is how the whole community is taking ownership of the apple orchard.

Baratu is inhospitable to farming. With stones and aggregates the soil is not suited for farming, and thus little grows in the land there. The village does not have other sources of earning and they have no nearby place 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-term vision.

The Vice-Chair of the Agriculture Group sees the better prospects and is full of praises for the organizations who have made it possible. “This orchard can be a source of income as well as the source of vegetables for the people

We Are Very Happy

Our village is very remote. It is difficult for the people here to access government services. Very few social organizations come here to extend help. Perhaps the RRDC understood our plights and provided support for apple farming and vegetable farming. We are thankful to the RRDC. Now we have the challenge as well as the responsibility to take care of the orchard, protect it and reap 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

like us who have no other source of 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 who helped us in this initiative, particularly RRDC, 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



A Water Project that Solved many Problems

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 depend on this river for drinking water. In order to be able to get the water from this river, the villagers had built a tap in one corner of the village. But the raging floods last year swept it away. Then they knocked on the door of the Ward Office to secure Rs. 40,000 with which they built another tap, which was again swept away by the raging river. They then had no option but to fetch the water from the river directly. Sometimes water was muddied or dirtied by livestock's or human feces.

"We approached RRDC and requested for support. The organization came for inspection and expressed the commitment that to support us," said Kali Bahadur

Karki, Chairperson of the Gimagaun Drinking Water Irrigation Project Consumer Committee. Subsequently, a new drinking project was initiated with a budget of Rs. 5,00,000 mainly contributed by RRDC along with voluntary labor contribution for the villagers.

The source of water lies around 600 meters from the village and a storage tank of around 5000 liters capacity has now been built at the top of the village. The Users' Committee has made a plan to equitably distribute the water from the storage tank. To ensure that the overflowed water from the storage tank does not go to waste, a pond few meters down the tank has been built where the overflowed water gets stored. Also the water coming out from the individual households after washing and cleaning also flows in

the pond. 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: drinking, washing, bathing, and irrigation. It has been planned in such a way that not a single drop of water goes to waste. In lack of irrigation, the nearby field never yielded enough.

“Now I hope we will be able to grow the vegetables as we will have water for irrigation. The very prospect makes me feel so happy,” said Udaya Karki, a local youth.

In the past, the residents of the village had to depend on dried taro leaves and dried beans for vegetables. Now, the prospects of getting drinking water as well as growing vegetables has made them elated. “It feels great to avail such facilities at an old age,” said Gabdal Karki, 68, smoking his hookah.

Various organizations had reached out to this village with different projects. Some provided the seeds and saplings of onions and other vegetables. Others provided support for the banana farming. But due to the lack of irrigation, the vegetables would dry up and die. “Now all the projects related to farming will no doubt be effective,” said Karki, the Chairperson of the Project Management Committee.

We Got The Mill Too

Around 250 households yet no mill nearby! The villagers would have to walk the whole morning to reach the water mill. The water mill did not grind all crops--particularly the paddy. So the villagers had to husk rice at home using traditional device. The watermill was slow and would take hours to grind the maize. It would take one whole day to reach the mill, grind the maize and return home. Grinding paddy using traditional device at home was equally time-consuming and labor-intensive.

Perhaps the RRDC understood our problem, which is why it supported us to build a mill. Now, we don't have to travel far to grind any crop or corn. We can even grind seeds to get oil. The time and labor needed to grind paddy has also been spared. Since the water used for running the mill has been used for irrigating the field, agricultural productivity has increased too.

Nandalal Rokaya

Chair, Kutani Pisani Mill Construction Committee, Nakharchi





From a Pauper to a Miller

Pradeep Jaisi

Kolti, Budhinanda Municipality-2, Bajaura

Bishnu Jaisi lost his father and mother when he was young. He had to take care of his younger brother at the age when he needed care himself. He did not have any property other than a small patch of land that he inherited from his father. He had no option but to cultivate the land. But the yield was not enough.

He worked as a servant in the house of the headmaster of a local school so that he could go to school. He then got married and had children. After marriage, he had to support his family. He then started to work with PeaceWin as a volunteer. Later he was promoted to the post of social mobilizer.

Bishnu later realized that it was not possible to meet the needs of the family with a modest job that had and that

he must find some other source of income. He decided to resign from PeaceWin and try something else. He received Rs. 3,32,000 in provident fund. This was not enough to start any kind of business or enterprise.

Despite the fact that the money was not enough, he went on to start a mill. The mill was doing well. Unfortunately, it was swept away by the flood of August 2020. Bishnu was deeply shocked and he could not figure out what to do next.

He walked from a pillar to a post until finally the District Administration Office provided Rs. 10,000 as compensation. But what could he do with Rs. 10,000? He was already in debt and he would not risk taking more loans. Many months passed by. He was not able to decide what to do next.



Then he remembered PeaceWin—the organization where he had worked sincerely. He went to the office and shared his story of misfortune. PeaceWin promised to support him.

PeaceWin provided him Rs. 3,36,000. He decided to start a mill once again with the money.

However, this support alone was not enough to operate the mill. Bishnu took loans from various cooperatives

and groups. He invested around Rs. 1.1 million and resumed mill business.

His mill not only grinds the paddy, maize and wheat but also crushes mustard seeds for oil. He says he used the money provided by PeaceWin for buying mill and its accessories —such as a pulley and generators. The money he managed through loans has been used for construction and management expenses.

The mill has benefitted the locals and saved their time. People from as far as Kalsen and Kolti bazaar come to his mill. “I earn around Rs. 24,000 a month. I use Rs. 11,000 for fuel. The remaining amount is all profit,” Jaisi said.

He pays Rs 18,000 a month in interest for the loans he has taken. He knows that he cannot recover investment just by grinding crops and mustard seeds. There are 32 such mills in the district.

Bishnu has a plan for additional income generation. “I want to provide milling service to the local people. But I also want 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 it to the neighboring districts,” he says. “It’s my zeal for doing something new which pushed me to resume this enterprise forgetting the loss of the past. All thanks goes to PeaceWin who supported me in time of dire need.”



Where They Make Juice from Rhododendron

Birkha Bahadur Budhthapa

Majhchaur, Khatyad Rural Municipality-6, Mugu

Rhododendron. This red flower of immense beauty is the national flower of Nepal. It blooms in the altitude of 1300 to 2500 meters from sea level. According to the botanists, rhododendron covers 6, 92,000 hectares of land in Nepal. In Nepal, 31 species of this flower have been found, whereas there is a total of 1157 varieties found in various parts of the world.

Khatyad Rural Municipality, a hill in itself, is surrounded by hills all around. All hills and hillocks here stand above 1300 meters from sea level. Thus, during the blooming season, the entire hill looks red with rhododendron. The locals relish the sight of the flowers all around. Some make some garlands out of it. However, the proper use of the flower had not been made.

‘Gone are the days when the flowers in the hills would go into waste. We now use productively,’ says Birkha Bahadur Budhathapa. He has been entrusted by Red Panda Agriculture Cooperative Limited to make juice by processing of rhododendron flowers. “We have started collecting flowers, making juice, and generating selling the juice,” he said. “Every season, we produce juice.” “We made a good earning in the first year itself. We have been greatly encouraged. I have learned that if we work hard, it will pay off.”

For years, the red rhododendron flowers were rotting away, going in waste. “RRDC suggested that juice could be made out of rhododendron. It then provided training on how to make it. The organization also

supported us with machines needed for making juice. They also provided us a water tank and a generator to run machine. After that we started to make juice," Budhathapa shares.

The support was not provided to Budhathapa. It was provided to Red Panda Agriculture Cooperative Limited. The cooperative has 45 members. The members decided to assign the responsibility of making juice to Budhathapa. He pays Rs. 15,000 to the Cooperative per year in compensation. "When I make more money, I will pay more to the Cooperative," he says.



Effective Support

The support provided by RRDC in our village has started to pay off. We can achieve more, if there is coordination with the local government. Also, if such support can be linked with the income generation for the local people, it can also win the hearts of the local people. Thus, support has to be based on needs of the people as well as it should benefit greater number of people.

Bharat Bahadur Shahi

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

His company sells a bottle of 750 ml of the juice for Rs 250 and a bottle of 300 ml for Rs. 100. For now, the bottles have been provided by the Cooperative. The Cooperative plans to brand the product, increase the production and export it outside of the district.

The support provided by the organization has also benefitted other local people. Rhododendrons are found in the high hills and one has to walk up to the hills to pluck them. Pluckers are paid Rs. 500 each per sack of flowers by the company.

This year many local residents plucked rhododendron flowers and sold them to the company, earning for themselves. "It's a good source of income," Budhathapa said.

"We plan to run a publicity campaign from the next year so that more and more people will be aware of this and pluck the flower", Budhathapa shares his plan.

HEALTH/NUTRITION



A Dalit Health Volunteer Earns Respect from Non-Dalits as well

Bishnukala BK

Siradi, Budhinanda Municipality-3, Bajura

Senario One: The non-Dalits of the community stand in an alert position when they see Dalit members walking along or approaching them. They fear of having any sorts of physical or verbal contacts with such members. They try to remain far from the “untouchables” in disgust.

Scenario two: She belongs to the Dalit community, but the non-Dalit people neither ostracize her nor harbor any repulsion towards her. Instead, they love to be in touch with her with the hope of getting some answers and tips.

The first scenario is prevalent in many parts of the Mid-Western and Far-Western regions of the country. Government and non-government organizations are conducting various public awareness programs to minimize the same.

The second one is of Bishnukala BK. She is one woman who have not had to face the situation as shown in the first case anymore. Despite being a Dalit member, she has been regarded with respect in society.

The non-Dalits invite her to gatherings and social functions. She is the only Dalit woman in the village who is not treated in a discriminatory manner by the non-Dalits. Rather she is given preferential treatment by them.

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. If she comes to know that someone has pregnancy related complications or that somebody is ill, she instantly follows him/her, without waiting to be called. If she cannot solve the health

problem herself, she refers the person to the health posts. She diagnoses the problems based on the symptoms and counsels them to get treatment. Such kind and cooperative gestures on her part are much admired by everyone in the village.

If some health-related complications occur to a pregnant women, all villagers rush to find Bishnukala. They take her along with them up to the health facility because when she is around they feel assured that the sick person will get extra care.

"They ask me to accompany them in difficult situations. If my doing this helps them, why should I restrict myself?"



Questions Bishnukala. Remarkably, she neither asks for remuneration nor expects any gift for helping those in need. Thus, the selfless service is another reason why the villagers treat her with great respect. Such respect is a great asset for her. She has reached almost every house of the village without facing any discrimination. This is because the villagers desperately need her service and help.

As someone working as a community health volunteer for the last 13 months, she knows a lot about primary health.

Bishnu has made a Difference

Bishnukala keeps walking around the village and enquires after irregular periods or health complications. She also asks if any child is malnourished, whether any sick person went to the health post for treatment or not, or if 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 at home but the second and third children were born in the health post. If anybody wants to give birth at home, that's not going to be possible. Bishnukala will not allow that to happen.

Dhanasha Chodara

Siradi

But lately the level of the knowledge as well as the skills has further increased. "PeaceWin provided training on nutrition to the health volunteers. I participated in that training and came to know many more things. Also, the training refreshed and reminded me of the things that I had forgotten. This has made it easier for me to work," she said.

The logistic support such as umbrella, bag, flip chart, etc provided to her has made it even easier to serve the people. "In the past, we were focused only on pregnant and laboring women and engaged just with the clinics of the village. But now we also take particular care about children's nutrition. For example, if the child is malnourished, we recommend treatment," Bishnukala says.

But she does more than this. She calls the meeting of the Mother's Group and advises women about the things they need to do after getting red and yellow cards. She tells the villagers about the importance of consuming green spinach, vegetables and fruits. After the training, she has also been teaching new mothers how to wash hands and how to cook nutritious food for the infants and pregnant women.



Nutrition Program that is Showing Results

Sagara Bohara

Gothi, Budhinanda Municipality-8, Bajura

Sagara Bohara is a mother of three children: two daughters and a son. While raising the two daughters-aged 9 and 6, she did not breastfeed them the right way. Nor she made the 'jaulo' (nutritious complementary food for infants made with rice, lentils and vegetables) following the proper steps while cooking. She did what the head of her family advised or what she assumed was correct way of cooking.

But when it comes to raising her 15-month old son, the case is quite different. Sagara seems quite aware that parenting needs care and thoughtfulness. That is why she abides by the necessary standards and rules in every step. "For the first six months of his birth, I only breastfed him. While breastfeeding, you have to tuck the baby on your lap with the feet adjusted backside. This way both the mother and the baby feel comfortable," she explains. "The baby's both hands should also be placed upon its chest with the mother looking into the face of the baby.

This is crucial to deepen the bond between the two." According to her, during the process of breastfeeding, it is also important to thrust the black part of the nipple into the baby's mouth and adjust baby's head properly.

She did not know these things while she was raising her daughters. "They grew up without proper care."

"Back in the past, I did not mix the ingredients in right quantity nor did I include all the ingredients. I did not know one had to include green vegetables and eggs jaulo. I used to just mix rice with pulses and boiled them. If available, I would add some ghee. " But today she knows what ingredients are needed and in how much quantity. She also knows about the nutritional elements the baby's food needs to contain according to their age.

The officials of PeaceWin and the health volunteers organized regular briefing programs targeting the



members of the Pragati Health Mother's Group. Through such programs organized every month, Sagara and other participating women learnt these things.

"I now know so many health and nutrition-related things. I sincerely and meticulously put them into practice to take proper care of my son. That is why my son is so healthy and well," she says.

Very Effective Programme

Soon after receiving the training from PeaceWin, we-the health volunteers- together with the officials of the organization, organized a program to inform and educate the members associated with the Mother's Group. This program has become very effective and useful especially for new mothers.

Ramila Sahi

Health Volunteer, Gothi

All the members of the group have learned various tips and techniques for the better physical as well as the mental growth of the babies. These include feeding the babies aged six to nine months three times a day; three meals and one snack meal a day for the babies from nine months to 12 months old, and three meals and two snack meals a day for the 12 to 24 months old babies.

Also, they know that the supplementary food should be gradually reduced and normal home-cooked food should be fed to the babies after 24 months. They also know about the importance of balance diet and how to ensure it in their food. "If we have only cereals at home, food prepared from it can be made more nourishing by adding some oil or ghee," Sagara says.

During the training sessions, the participants are also taught proper hand washing techniques—before and after the meal. This has helped improve sanitation and hygiene of the families in the community.



A model Health Post

Dr. Rajuraj Jaisi

Primary Health Center, Kolti, Budhinanda Municipality, Bajura

The District Hospital of Bajura lies in Martadi, the district headquarters. But in the emergency ward of the hospital, there are not enough beds needed to provide treatment. The few that are available have become old. The attendants have to sleep on the floor as there is no bed for the attendant of the patients.

A four-hour ride from the district hospital takes you to a primary health center-Kolti Primary Health Post in Kolti. Here the situation is entirely different. There are enough beds in the emergency ward. No patient has to walk away because of lack of bed. There is provision of beds even for the attendants of patients. The beds can be folded into seats when they are not in use.

“It is in this regard our health post is much better and more resourceful than the district hospital,” says 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 management of the attendants. In the past, in lack of beds, providing treatment was difficult.

The health post is thankful to PeaceWin for all the assistance it has provided. “The organization has done a lot for this Health Post,” says Dr. Jaisi. According to him, the support PeaceWin provided during the Covid-19 pandemic is also unforgettable. PeaceWin provided the frontline health workers 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 says.

According to him, the health-related programs PeaceWin conducted, the training it provided to health

workers and health volunteers, and the logistic support it offered to the health post have all contributed to enhancing the quality of service it provides.

Identifying children suffering from malnutrition; administering treatment to them; teaching mothers to breastfeed the babies in the right way; teaching people to wash hands properly—all of these have been accomplished by the health volunteers after being trained, making it easier for the health post. More cases are being reported in the health post these days. Dr. Jaisi attributes this to the increasing health awareness among the people made possible by the volunteers trained by PeaceWin. According to him, the number of patients coming to the health post has increased by five to seven percent.

The health volunteers trained by PeaceWin have been visiting households to enquire after malnourished children. If they find them malnourished, they ask the family to take the children to the hospitals immediately. They also urge the people to wash hands and even teach them the right way of washing hands. Because of the effective role played by the volunteers, the people have become more aware about the health issues. Those who never considered malnutrition as a health problem in the past have started to talk about it.

According to Dr. Jaisi, there is a significant decline in the cases of health complications. This can be attributed to the trained health volunteers visiting door-to-door to inform the villagers about the nutrition that has to be provided especially to the children, pregnant women and post-partum women. This has also contributed in the reduction of malnutrition.

There were many people who thought malnutrition was a curse of god rather than a disease. Thus, instead of taking the malnourished children to the hospital, they took them to the local temples and perform rituals for recovery. The health volunteers have been able to reduce this superstition. Now the people take the malnourished children to the hospitals instead of the temples.

Service is Good

My one-month old child is suffering from common cold. So, I have come here to get his health examined. In fact, I come to this health post whenever I face any health-related issues. It has a lot of medical materials as well as a caring doctor. The visitors are treated with great respect and the services are also good. This is the reason why I always visit it.

Basanta Baduwal

Kapkot, Budhinanda Municipality

People from as far as Mugu and other neighboring municipalities of Budhinanda prefer to visit this health post. The main reason is the availability of comparatively better health infrastructures. Doctors are regular and services are good. Dr. Jaisi gives credit to the support from PeaceWin for this.



DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



How a Settlement was Saved from a Disaster

Hiralal Regmi

Daiya, Budhinanda Municipality-6, Bajura

Daiya is a small village with a total of 55 households. For the residents of this village, the river that flows across the village was a source of constant terror.

The river in the rainy season is so over flooded that it wrecks physical damages. It feels like the river is going to gobble up the entire village and all its dwellers. Years passed amid this fear and terror. "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 as because this is the time of year when we do the plantation. But we never had peace of mind during the season. This is because there was a terror of the raging river destroying our farm lands,

houses, and even human lives," Hiralal Regmi, a local residents says

The locals ran from a pillar to post requesting the authorities to help put an embankment in the river. However, nobody listened to them, not even those political leaders whom they voted to power at both the local and central levels. "We pleaded for help but in vain," he says. According to him, it was PeaceWin who finally came to their rescue. When the organization provided the support of Rs. 8,00,000 for making the embankment on the river, the locals organized themselves and put up gabion walls. They divided 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 benefitted the community in more than one way: It not only provided security to the settlement but created jobs for the local people as well everyone was, therefore, happy.

The locals worked incredibly hard. PeaceWin officials were impressed. Hiralal, who was also Chairperson of the Gabion Wall Construction Committee, said, "Some of us broke down the rocks, others roped the wires, while others put in stones in it. The men and women from all castes and communities worked hard. Consequently, we were able to complete the work in a week!"

The project is also an example of how the locals can manage development works on their own. "We learned that when the development works take place in the village itself, it also helps to raise the standard of living," Regmi says. The 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 human life.

They want to build the walls high so that they can sleep soundly at night. They have been making efforts to gather resources for this from municipalities as well as

Words are not enough to appreciate what PeaceWin has done for us

I am almost 60 years old now. In the past, the water level of the river was quite low. But today due to deposition of sand, rock and soil on the river bed, the water level has risen up. Thus, the river water gets into the fields and settlement. There was the risk of the village being entirely swept away. PeaceWin supported us for putting up 100 gabion walls. This has greatly minimized such a risk. This was a big help for us. Words simply fail to appreciate what PeaceWin has done for us.

Padam Bahadur Rokaya

Local resident of Daiya

other organizations. Though this will take some time, they are confident that they will be able to gather resource to make it happen in the future





Sagune can now build Earthquake Resistant Houses

Sagune BK

Sherkatiya, Budhinanda Municipality-7, Bajura

Sagune BK was engaged in the profession of building houses since he was 15 or 16 years of age. He works both as a mason and a carpenter. Thus, he likes to call himself a house builder.

Even though he has been building house since young age, the houses he built were not very safe. This was because he did not quite know how to make safe houses, especially houses that are earthquake resilient. He used to make houses using mud and boulder, which could collapse if earthquake came.

Thanks to the training he received from PeaceWin, he now knows how to build earthquake-resilient and safe house. During the four day training, learnt about various technical aspects such as laying the foundation,

PCR system, and the use of the right amount of cement, rod, sand and aggregates. He also gained knowledge on designs and size of pillars, beams, walls, etc. "In the past, I used to build houses without having this knowledge," he accepts. "This was one of the reasons why the houses built by me or any other mason for that matter were not safe."

There were 30 participants in the training. He was declared the best learner by the engineer who trained them. His happiness knew no bounds when he knew this. The engineer took him along as an assistant trainer when he had to conduct a training in the neighboring Rural Municipality. He was very happy when the participants of the training appreciated his knowledge as well as his training skills.

Sagune works both as contractor to build houses as well as on wages basis as a mason. He has so far built 25 to 30 houses. He earns around Rs. 1200 a day as wage. Other masons like him who have not attended such training earn up to Rs. 1000 per day only. "People prefer me even though they have to pay me more. This is because I am now trained," he shares, beaming. Thus, because he knows how to build safe and earthquake resistant houses, his employment and income has also increased.

BK harbors a beautiful dream. The dream is to build a beautiful earthquake resistant house from the start to finish. The house will comply with all requirements and technical standards. The house will be so beautiful that people will want to go inside it and savor its beauty. But it will also be safe. "The feeling that people who live in the houses are safe even if earthquake occurs gives me immense feeling of satisfaction. I wish all houses that are built in the future in the district are built in earthquake resistant manner. People's lives matter more than anything else".

Sagune is Different

Everybody who attended the training had working experience. But they all lacked knowledge about and skills required for the modern construction. All were very interested to learn and this made it easier for me to train them. However, Sagune turned out to be different from all others. He was a keen and fast learner. I encouraged him because of this quality he possessed. If we can prepare skilled masons like him, then we don't have to bring in masons from other districts for the construction works of this district and save the costs as masons who are brought in from other districts costs more.

Dipak Raj Bhatta

(The engineer who trained Sagune and made him assistant trainer.)





Gabion Walls Provide Some Relief to Ranakot

Suman Baniya

Ranakot, Khatyad Rural Municipality-3, Mugu

The Gaire River flows by Suman Baniya's house. In the past, 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 about being swept away by the river.

The landless couple have set up a local eatery inside their house they have built in the land provided by a kind local resident. The eatery is the only source of livelihood for them. Thus, if they lost this house, they would lose everything. When the rainy season started, this couple would lose all sleep and peace of mind.

The people of the locality knocked on the doors of the Ward Office and the Rural Municipality Office several times in vain. These offices cited the lack of budget and

said they could not support. It was then RRDC came to their support and helped put up gabion walls in the river, providing some relief to eight households.

"After the 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, it has largely given us a hope that life will be saved. We sleep better now," Baniya says

The locals are now looking up for more support from organizations such as the RRDC or their municipalities to fully protect and save their settlements and farming land. This is not an easy task. But they have not given up hope. They have understood that they should not stay quiet or idle but continue to put on efforts.

Can Sleep Well Now

The Gaire River had been creating a lot of troubles and hardships for us. Eight houses and around 150,000 square meters of land are at risk because of this river. Part of the land here has already turned into the desert of sand. The river eroded my land that yielded at least nine quintals of rice. Others are also losing their land like me. RRDC came to our help in this situation to put up gabion walls. The organization 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 the initiative to put up more gabion walls. The river has done a lot of damage already. Our appeal is for preventing further damages.

Sur Baniya

Chair, Gabion Wall Construction Committee,
Ranakot, Mugu



GOOD GOVERNANCE



Containing Social Evils

Pramila Adhikary

Coordinator, Citizen Monitoring Committee,
Badhu, Himali Rural Municipality-7, Bajur

The girls and women of the village used to seclude themselves during menstruation. They used to fear touching other people. They used to eat after all others had eaten. They used to stay far from the temples or holy places. They were also not allowed to share wells or other sources of water. They used to be ill-treated.

Alcohol and other drinks were prepared in the village and sold. Men used to consume them. They used to go home drunk and beat up their wives. Excessive drinking also brought financial problems in the family and many families had to go through difficult time due to this. The children used to get deprived of education. No money was left for running the household.

Men used to do second marriage, get drunk and beat their wives. The women used to suffer a lot due to this. They used to live like second grade family members.

Not only this, child marriage was rampant. But nobody dared to do anything about it. Young girls used to become daughters-in-law at a very young age. They then soon gave birth to children. This deteriorated their health. The children also did not used to be very healthy. The young mothers could not earn to support the family. This created conflict in the family.

Pramila Adhikary wanted to do something about this. She wanted to end such a pathetic situation. She, along with other women from the locality, tried to discuss this in various platforms. However, nothing concrete materialized." We wanted someone to help us find a way to solve this. But we could not figure out who would help us or how we can approach such organization. It was a helpless situation," she remembers.

When PeaceWin came to know of this, it came forward to work together with the local people there to tackle

the problems there, including that of alcoholism. The organization first organized training for the women. The training provided the women crucial information about the legal as well as other important information about the issues concerned. It also motivated the women's group to fight against malpractices such as drinking and discriminating women during menstruation. The organization also provided training to the local elected representatives making them aware of the negative consequences of such malpractices and what role they can play to contain them.

In the training, the women were also trained about how to present their demands to the local government and what processes need to be completed for them to be fulfilled. PeaceWin also provided them the list of potential support they could get from the local government. This apart, the organization also provided financial support to the women's group as well as cooperative, enabling them to be more resourceful.

"We started approaching and contacting our Ward Office and Municipality after we attended the training. We now work together with the official and elected representatives of the local government. They seek our support. We too need them", Pramila says.

Pramila has also been elected as the Coordinator of the Citizen's Monitoring Committee formed with the

We also benefitted

Ours is a remote place. We were suffering from myriad social ills. After RRDC organized various awareness programs against such evils cases of alcoholism, child marriage, gambling etc. cases of such social evils have reduced. This apart, the barren hills have turned into apple orchard. This is simply great!

Rambahadur Baniya,

Baratu, Khatyad Municipality-3, Mugu

support of PeaceWin. The Committee monitors the work, activities and performance of the Ward Office. But it also monitors malpractices and social evils such as alcoholism, child marriage, caste-based discrimination and polygamy. When the Committee learns of such a case, the members of the Committee led by Pramila, counsel the concerned person and warn him/her of the legal consequences if s/he does not rectify his/her action. This has led to significant reduction such malpractices in the village. "This was possible thanks to the training provided by PeaceWin as well as the support we have received from the organization", she says.





The Office that Mothers Run

Dhanu Pandit

Badhu, Himali Rural Municipality-7, Bajura

What activities does one expect to see in a room of a school building? They are obviously related to teaching learning students playing, teaching meeting and discussing etc. But one of the rooms in Janata Primary School presents a different picture altogether. One of the rooms of the building is not for learning and teaching. It's an office of mothers, belonging to Suntala Swasthya Aama Samuha (Suntala Health Mother's Group).

An office setting in most villages comprises some tables and a set of chairs. But this office is different in that respect too. Here you can find a computer set, a photocopy machine, a printer, tall table and chairs and a solar system. Quite impressive indeed! "Our office is well equipped

because the PeaceWin provided us the equipment. These equipment have made it easier for us to perform well. At the same time, it has supported the programs that we run as well," said Dhanu Pandit, secretary of the Group. "People don't have to walk for one- and- half hours to get photocopy and printing services anymore. On the other hand, the Mother's Group also gets source of earning by providing the services," explains Dhanu.

The Group does much more than providing secretarial services to the local people. "We have been fighting against the social evils. 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," Dhanu says.

Indeed, the women, together with the Citizen Monitoring Committee of the Ward, have been monitoring and evaluating the services provided by the Wards offices. 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 are also actively involved in reducing alcohol consumption and human trafficking. They speak against 'Chhaupadi' (malpractice of discrimination women and girls during menstruation) and polygamy and, encourage people to build toilets. They provide support to those who have no resources to build them.

Dhanu gives all the credit for the good work they have been doing to PeaceWin. Various good governance and women rights related trainings and orientations that PeaceWin had provided them in the past made the mothers more aware and watchful, according to her. "PeaceWin tells us that a mother is the first school of a child. We tell PeaceWin is the first school for us--the mothers," says Dhanu.

The mother's group is well-known not only among the women of Badhu but also elsewhere. The group, which started with just 13 members in the beginning, has now been expanded to 45. Today many women are so

When Women are Active

The women of this Ward are very active and watchful. The works and campaigns that the Mother's Group and the Citizen Monitoring Committee run have contributed towards improving the services provided by the Ward Office. Community score card, in particular, is more effective. We have been able to ban alcohol, resolve problems through public hearings, and work for environmental preservation. This all was possible because of the activeness and awareness on the part of the women. 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

interested to join the group. The members of this group save regularly. The saving amount was initially fixed at Rs. 10 per month per member which now has been increased to Rs. 50. Notably, they have been saving continuously for the last three years.

As a result, they now have a total savings of Rs. 1,07,000. "We lend this money to the women of our group who want to start small enterprises, such as goat farming, vegetable farming, grocery or vegetable shop," says Dhanu.

Dhanu and other members of the group are initiating efforts for constructing building for their group. They are approaching PeaceWin and Rural Municipality for this. They think having an office building of their own will make their organization sustainable. They are hopeful that they will be able to gather resources needed for constructing their own building in the near future.





More Efficient Service to the People

Gobinda Bahadur Malla

Dulachaur, Himali Rural Municipality, Bajura

It has only been three years Nepal adopted federalism. Therefore, not all local governments are totally equipped with the tools and infrastructure required to institutionalize the federal system. Even the provincial capitals lack the needed infrastructure and the government has not been able to do much about it. No wonder, Bajura district, which lags far behind in the Human Development Index, has not been able to do much in this respect.

As such, the Himali Rural Municipality of Bajura was not being able to actively fulfill its role as a local government unit. It did not have its office and was using the temporary camps set up by the Nepal Army for road construction to function. Municipality was not being able to provide effective service through its

Ward Offices. “We had no option but to provide services with whatever little resources we had,” accepts Gobinda Bahadur Malla, the Chairperson of the Municipality.

Things in the Ward Offices of this Rural Municipality have now changed considerably. The offices are managed more efficiently and their service delivery capacities have also been enhanced. The service seekers say that since the office became technology-friendly, the overall quality of services has been enhanced. Everyone who comes says, ‘Oh, it’s a lot better now!’

“We really were suffering from resource constraints. New as we were, we did not know what we should do the next. We had little resources but were obliged to address the numerous expectations of the people.

The things actually started to change after PeaceWin provided electronic gadgets to all the Ward Offices of the Municipality,” says Malla.

Thanks to the computer and printer, typing and printing recommendation letters as well as to keeping records have become efficient. Solar panels have been installed for power back up. Mobile phone and camera sets have also been provided to the Municipality.

PeaceWin has provided other kinds of assistance to the Ward Offices as well. It has provided training to the elected representatives. It has provided a copy of the Constitution to each household. PeaceWin’s training made the elected representatives well aware of their roles, functions, powers and responsibilities, the jurisdiction of local government, legal matters, and so on.

Chairperson Malla says this is a very important contribution PeaceWin has made. He argues that this has helped to enhance his performance and other Ward



Can't Forget Peace Win's Contribution

PeaceWin has provided various electronic devices such as computer, printers, solar panel, camera, etc. to our Ward Office. This has made it much easier to provide swift and smooth services to the service seekers and has also enhanced the work performance of the office. PeaceWin has helped to connect the Wards of the remotest Rural Municipalities through technology. Words simply fail to appreciate the contribution of the organization. The assistance and facilitation offered by PeaceWin to the locals during the Covid-19 lockdown and project formulation are other valuable contributions made by it.

Surendra Bahadur Malla

Ward Chair, Ward No. 6,
Himali Rural Municipality, Bajura

Chairs of his Rural Municipality. Malla thinks that making the representatives aware of the rights of women, Dalits, disabled people, and children through training is a great contribution. “Words fail to appreciate PeaceWin 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.



Cooperative Building Confidence of Women

Kalpana Kumari Malla

Phaiti, Himali Rural Municipality, Bajura

Two years ago, whether you came for depositing money or taking loan, you would have to sit on a mat. There was no tables and chairs in the cooperative. Lack of furniture made it difficult to provide and/or receive services in convenient manner.

Today, the Cooperative has the furniture it needs. There is also a separate cupboard to keep file and documents. There are separate chairs for the service providers as well as service seekers.

Currently, the Cooperative has also its branch office at Dhulachaur, the headquarters of the Rural Municipality, where a personnel has been appointed to run the office.

These improvements have been possible through the

support provided by PeaceWin, according to Kalpana Kumari Malla, Chairperson of the Cooperative. Such material assistance has not only made the office look very attractive but also helped better organize documents, accounts, and records of income and expenses of the Cooperative and keep them safely.

The organization also provided accounts training to the Cooperative officials and staffs. By attending the training, they have learned to keep the accounts in a proper manner. They were also trained on other crucial aspects such as savings, project formulation and budget allocation, among others, which have helped enhance their performance. After attending the training provided by PeaceWin, the Cooperative has started providing various trainings and orientations to

its members—solid evidence of how the Cooperative is becoming capable and self-sustaining.

"When PeaceWin imparted training related to the cooperative sector and other related topics, our capacity was built. We then became able to provide such training to others. We have provided women empowerment training to our members in coordination with the Rural Municipality," says Malla. "We have also been running an awareness campaign for the Dalits."

This all-women Cooperative has 95 members in total as its shareholders and boasts of a total savings of around Rs. 9,00,000. Loans are provided for running small businesses and purchasing livestock. Almost all of the saved money has been mobilized through loans. On the one hand, the Cooperative makes earning from the interest paid on the principal amount. On the other, the members benefit from the loan they get.

While providing loans, those who are really in need are given priority. This is a rule of the Cooperative. Everyone has liked this rule. Though the transactional activities are carried out in Phaiti only once a month, the main office based in Dhulachaur carries out transactions on a daily basis.

They have launched various schemes to attract deposits such as Youth Saving, Children's Saving, and Senior Citizen Saving. It lends money to the people at

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 loans. But there was a time when we did not have a chair for our clients to sit when they came to our office. We had to spread the mats on the floor to sit. PeaceWin understood our problem and provided us the furniture. This has made our work easier and, at the same time, helped us to keep our accounts safely and with accuracy, thereby improving our governance. I want to extend my sincere thanks to the PeaceWin for all the support it has given to us.

Rup Chandra Sarki

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

the interest rate of 12 percent. Such low interest has attracted many people to the Cooperative.

The Cooperative has building of its own. The building has two office rooms and a meeting hall. But a few days ago, the windstorm blew away the tin roof of the building, putting a halt to the regular services provided by the Cooperative. Malla plans to generate resources and repair the building soon.

PeaceWin started to extend support to institutions such as cooperatives, Dalit networks, women's rights forums, etc. with the aim of promoting good governance. Many institutions of the Budhinanda Municipality as well as Himali Rural Municipality have benefitted from such support. Of the beneficiaries, Debdhara Women Agriculture Cooperative has established itself as the center of excellence. Chairperson Malla says that they have planned to manage/govern the Cooperative so effectively and efficiently that it will become both more prosperous and popular in the future.





Determined to Deliver

Hiradevi Shahi

Rikihya, Khatyad Rural Municipality-11, Mugu

The day was April 12, 2021. A refresher training on the participatory planning and project implementation process for the local elected representatives was going on in Majhchaur, the headquarters of the Khatyad Rural Municipality. Most of the participants were listening to the trainers without speaking much. An elderly lady attending the training kept asking questions and requesting for clarifications to the trainer: The roads and trails have not been built in our own Wards, whom shall I complain to? What has to be done to ensure that there are vital medicines available in the health posts? The trainer kept responding to these queries of hers. However, she quickly came up with new ones.

The elderly lady is Hiradevi Shahi, 61, from the Khatyad Rural Municipality-11. She is a member of her Ward

Committee. She was obviously too energetic and zealous for her age.

The lady says that this was her second time attending such training. She had attended a similar training in the past, both of them organized by RRDC. She says that the second training was crucial for her to get deeper insights and broaden her understanding about the participatory planning process at the local level, and roles and responsibilities of elected local representatives.

"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. In the past she used to visit the Ward Office without considering the calendar of the planning process.

These days, when the Rural Municipality fixes the date and location for project planning meeting, she informs all the people of her village and encourages them to participate in the meeting at the designated time and place, and she herself does the same. She also urges her fellow Ward residents to identify the projects that are relevant and necessary for them. She then tries her best to include those projects in the plans of the Municipality.

Mrs. Shahi enumerates various other things she learnt in the trainings: "We should not take internal disputes of our village outside as far as possible. The internal disputes of the village should be resolved in the village itself. Likewise, it is important to get the disaster bags ready in the event of a disaster," she says.

"Even with regard to the development works, plans should not be imposed from the top but should be formulated on the basis of need of the people. Account projects should be maintained in a transparent manner. Any work undertaken should be sustainable. Good governance can be achieved only after ensuring these things," she adds.

That she loves to speak, one might take her as a woman who only talks. However, Hiradevi is a woman of action as well. It is because of her initiative that two more rooms have been added in the school in her Ward. She is also taking initiative to get electricity in the school. Similarly, two houses for the health post have already been constructed and the process for running a birthing center has started. But Ms. Shahi wants to do more.

The path from her village to the school is difficult. It takes whole morning to reach the school and return. She wants reconstruct the path. Likewise, she also plans to plant seasonable fruits in the fields and barren lands and introduce a self-employment program in the village. "There is a pond in the village. I want to launch fish farming project there," Hiradevi says. "If we can bring electricity in the village, employment opportunities for youths could be created as well as some initiatives for income generation could be undertaken", she contemplates.

Mrs. Shahi is thankful to RRDC for providing the trainings where she learnt many things and received

I Learned a Lot from the Training

I have gained a lot after participating in that training organized by PeaceWin for the elected local 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 procedures and project formulation apart from the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the elected representatives. We did not know about many of the legal processes as well. The training has made everything clear to us. Big thanks go to PeaceWin! If refresher trainings are organized in the future, the performance of the elected representatives will be enhanced significantly.

Ramesh BK

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

new information and knowledge. She wants to deliver during her tenure as a Ward Member. "If I deliver, people will remember me for my work. Also, it would be a way of proving myself worthy of the trust people put on me by electing me in this position", she says.

