



Good Practices and Stories of Change

Nepal Flood Response and Early Recovery (NFRER) Programme 2017/18

Caritas Nepal

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PREAMBLE

Nepal is highly vulnerable to both climatic and non-climatic hazards. After the earthquake in 2015, Nepal suffered again with the heavy flood from 11 to 14 August 2017. The flood affected about 1.7 million people and severely affected 18 districts out of 35 flood affected districts resulting death of 149 people and destroying fully or partially over 190,000 houses. It caused a huge loss on individual shelter, community infrastructures, livelihood, education and WASH.



After the flood, followed by the emergency relief and recovery support, Caritas Nepal (CN) with the help of our regional offices and local partner organizations provided support to the flood affected families for addressing their immediate needs and gradually recovering them from various kinds of livelihood improvement approaches. Despite few challenges, CN with financial assistance of very supportive international partners was able to help support 5,625 families of eight districts to recover from the flood impact to live a dignified life and enhance their resilience to future disasters.

CN has adapted community driven approach in all areas ensuring the inclusion of most vulnerable people and closely coordinated with the local authorities and relevant stakeholders so that the assistance could reach to the most affected families very effectively.

This document is an attempt to describe the effectiveness in various sectors of the recovery project, the learning and good practices of which can be replicated to future projects of similar nature.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Caritas Internationalis (CI) and Caritas Internationalis Member Organizations (CIMOs) who continuously supported us to achieve our success. I am also very thankful to our local partners for their partnership with us to help the flood affected poor and marginalized community people of Nepal.

Fr. Krishna Bahadur Bogati

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is a compilation of 'Good Practices' of the NFRER programme of Caritas Nepal that were found successful in bringing over dozen 'Stories of Change' in the people's life of the flood affected communities, which can be expected to be replicated and or used as a reference material in upcoming projects of similar nature. All the information of this document was collected by Freelance Development Communication Expert, Mr. Toya Gautam on behalf of GrowInnova from 17 September to 2 October, 2018 through field visit and focus group discussions. This was done mainly to get the overall perception of the project beneficiaries and stakeholders towards the programme which was implemented after the devastating flood of 2017 from November 2017 to November 2018.

For the foremost, the hardship of flood affected communities and relevant stakeholders in materializing this project is very praiseworthy. We are very thankful to all field staffs of the project implementing partners and Caritas Nepal for their helping hands and support during data collection and validating them from the field. Special thanks go to the local communities for their valuable time who shared their practical experiences and learning openly despite their busy schedule. We would like to extend our special thanks to the technical team of Caritas Nepal for their valuable inputs and feedback to this document. Finally, Caritas Nepal is highly acknowledged for the financial support to prepare and publish this document.

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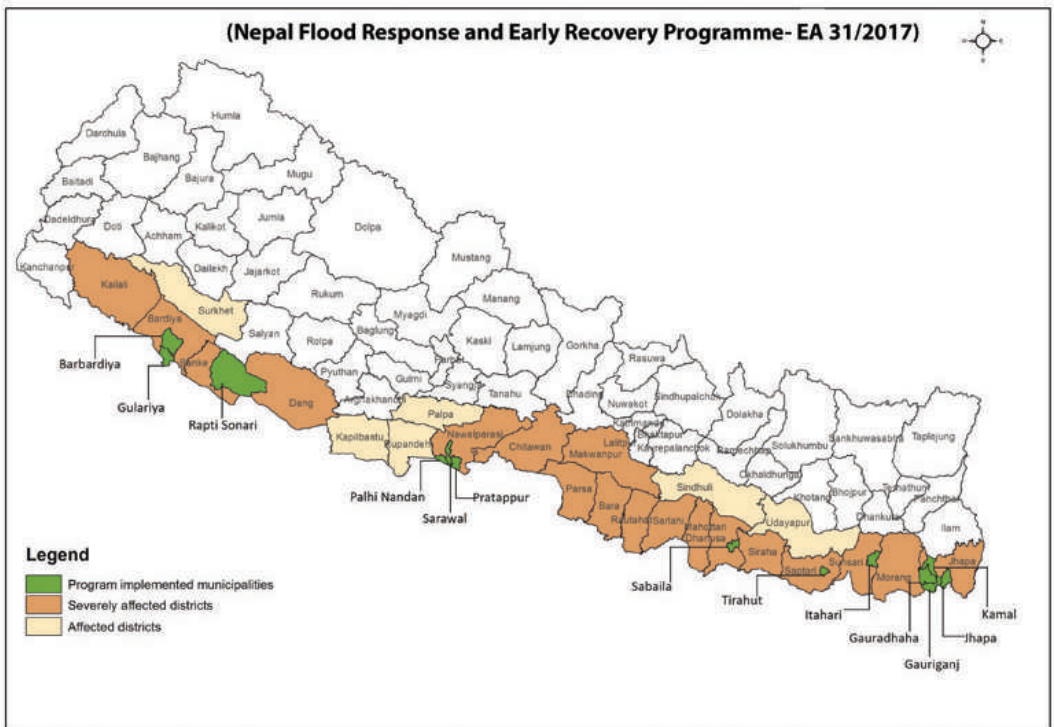
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BACKGROUND

Nepal experienced heavy rainfall from August 11 to 14 in 2017 which was reported to be the worst in the past 60 years. The rainfall resulted in widespread landslides in the hills and severe flooding in the Terai plains across 35 districts of the country, of which 18 of them were severely affected. The devastating flood killed 134 people, destroyed over 43,000 houses, partially damaged 192,000 houses, and displaced tens of thousands of people.

According to the Post Flood Recovery Need Assessment Report 2017, the total damage caused by the flood was NPR 60,716.6 (USD 584.7) million which is almost 3 percent of the total GDP. The loss across nine sectors were 32.1% in housing and human settlements by NPR 19,512.7 (USD 187.9) million; 28.8% in irrigation by NPR 17,460.1 (USD 168.1) million; 17.6% in livestock by NPR 10,670.4 (USD 102.7) million; 11.9% in agriculture by NPR 7,213.0 (USD 69.5) million; 4.8% in transport by NPR 2,937.8 (USD 28.3) million; 2% in education by NPR 1,193.8 (USD 11.5) million; 1.5% in WASH (NPR 887.7 (USD 8.5) million;

(Nepal Flood Response and Early Recovery Programme- EA 31/2017)



1% in health and nutrition by NPR 620.0 (USD 6) million; and 0.4% in energy by NPR 220.3 (USD 2.12) million.

In response to this flood, Caritas Nepal (CN) immediately distributed relief materials and launched ***Nepal Flood Response and Early Recovery 'NFRER' Programme*** from November 2017 to November 2018 in eight severely affected districts with the financial support of Caritas Internationalis. The overall goal of the programme was to contribute to recover flood affected 5,550 families as direct beneficiaries and indirectly benefitting to further 1,550 families to live a dignified life and to enhance their community resilience to future disasters. The programme was implemented through five local partner NGOs: ***Abhiyan Nepal*** in Jhapa and Sunsari districts; ***Shreepurraj Community Development Centre (SCDC)*** in Saptari; ***Social Development and Research Centre (SDRC)*** in Dhanusha; ***Centre for Development and Disaster Management (CDM) Nepal*** in Rupandehi; ***Rara Human and Environmental Resource Development Initiative (RHERI)*** in Banke; CN itself in Bardiya and ***Community Development and Advocacy Forum Nepal (CDAFN)*** of Mahottari district.

The programme implemented over a dozen of activities as per plan that developed in consultation with the flood affected communities, local authorities and major relevant stakeholders. The activities were focused on consolidating efforts to flood response and recovery; contributing to children's right to education; improving community people's access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, educating them on sustainable livelihood practices and diversifying choices of livelihoods to cope and recover from flood shocks and stresses; enhancing the capacity of key community members to disaster preparedness and manage future disaster risks; and finally increasing community resilience. Efforts were also given for the sustainability of all programme activities.



GOOD PRACTICES



FORMATION OF LOCAL COMMITTEES THROUGH CLUSTER¹ APPROACH



Prior to implement any programme activities, the project organized a meeting at every flood affected communities and formed local level project management committees representing from female, socially excluded groups and so on considering gender, age, disability, economic disparity and cultural diversity. *'Project Management Support Committee'* in Jhapa, *'Disaster Management Group'* in Banke and *'Local Disaster Management Committee'* in Nawalparasi district are some examples of the committees that were formed at local level during its NFRER programme implementation.

Sooner the formation of these local committees, the members were capacitated in the programme goal and objectives including working approach with sets of indicators and criteria. These committees took initiation in identifying programme priorities, and helped in identifying and selecting most vulnerable households in a very participatory way. Since these committees were the governing bodies to implement, they had taken

1 A cluster is a group of agencies that gather to work together towards common objectives within a particular sector of emergency response. The cluster approach, instituted in 2006 as part of the UN Humanitarian Reform process, is an important step on the road to more effective humanitarian coordination.

full ownership of the programme activities. As a result of which, the committees were very responsive towards responding to community needs locally, and the activities were implemented with active participation transparently.

These committees were also found very instrumental doing necessary coordination and collaboration with the local stakeholders whether that is for leveraging resources or for joint monitoring and evaluation of the implemented programme activities. And there was no dispute in activity implementation. It can be assumed that the programme activities will be continued even after the phase out of the programme in these areas.

DEVELOPMENT OF SAVING CULTURE



During a year period of the programme, the project has formed 40 groups who were encouraged to deposit some portion of money on a monthly basis in order to develop a culture of saving within group members. The groups started saving from NPR 10 to 50 per person depending on the size of household and their capacity in self-initiation. This practice has helped to develop a culture of saving from their earning rather spending unnecessarily. The groups have now been able to lend money or support back to the needy people when need at low interest rate. The groups therefore believe that this practice is very helpful for supporting their livelihoods. They also said to keep continue saving even after the project phase out.

Further, the groups were encouraged to officially register with local government bodies so that they can have access to get some support to continue their regular activity even after the project phased out. Until now, 17 groups from Nawalparasi and 20 groups from Saptari district have been registered at local government bodies of ward level. The registration of farmer groups from other districts are also under progress. The local government authorities have also committed to continue further support to these groups.

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BIOENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY FOR RIVER BANK PROTECTION



The project has given special emphasis on the construction of river embankments using bioengineering technology². It has constructed a total of seven river embankments with a total length of 1150 meter which were eroded by the devastating flood. Of which, five were constructed using bioengineering technology with a total length of 899 meter. Locally available indigenous plant materials which can grow fast and very well were used as far as possible while constructing the river embankments.

Live bamboo pegs were used as the main posts and the embankments were supported with stones and sacs of sandy soils, where shrubs and grasses like Kansh (*Saccharum spontaneum*) and Morning Glory (locally known as Besaram) are planted so that the whole vegetation covered embankment structures can serve as live fence. The use of local knowledge and skills is another aspect of this project so that the local people can manage themselves when regular maintenance of such embankment structures are required.

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- 2 A bioengineering technique is the use of living plant materials either alone or in conjunction with small-scale civil engineering structures mainly to stabilize slopes, shorelines, streambanks, or other eroding areas. As this is very cost effective and highly appropriate for managing locally, it has been used for many centuries.

RECOVERING LIVELIHOOD FROM RIVER-BED FARMING



During monsoon, significant area of agriculture land in the Terai region of the country gets water inundated for over months, and is covered by sands and debris. This resulted crop failure and most of the farm lands became inaccessible for agricultural production for a longer period. Consequently, farmers forced to live in a very miserable situation and there was a decline in the agriculture productivity which negatively impacted the livelihoods of vulnerable people. The agriculture land covered with sands also became unsuitable for immediate sowing of crops mostly cereals.

The sand fields, which however when run dry after the monsoon season become suitable for growing crops like cucurbits such as watermelon, cucumber, pumpkin, bottle and bitter gourds. The project therefore selected deprived families of flood affected communities whose lands were completely converted into sand pits. A total of 163 deprived farmers were then capacitated for river bed farming and supported with seeds of cucurbits specially of water melon. The farmers then started river-bed farming from November to May. Ultimately, almost all farmers secured earning from NPR 11,000 to 45,000 a month depending upon their farm size. The programme has thus helped them to recover slowly from the difficult situation.

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REINFORCEMENT OF IPM³ TECHNOLOGY



Caritas Nepal encouraged to adopt IPM technology to all farmers of flood affected districts who received farm input support such as sprayers and improved seeds of vegetables and early maturing varieties of paddy from the programme. The total number of vulnerable households were 3,311 who were trained on IPM technology as it is perceived as very cost-effective and environment friendly. The training was facilitated by the IPM department of Caritas Nepal which gave practical orientation to the farmers particularly for preparing organic fertilizers and pesticides. Since then, the farmers are capable of preparing both the organic fertilizers and pesticides, and used to apply them to repel and suppress pest populations in their crops.

3 Integrated pest management (IPM), is also known as integrated pest control (IPC) is a broad-based approach that aims to suppress pest populations below the economic injury level (EIL). The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization defines IPM as "the careful consideration of all available pest control techniques and subsequent integration of appropriate measures that discourage the development of pest populations and keep pesticides and other interventions to levels that are economically justified and reduce or minimize risks to human health and the environment.

PLANT CLINICS FOR UNKNOWN PLANT PROBLEMS



Mainly because of climate change, new types of plant diseases are being observed these days in many cultivated plants which are not known by many farmers. A number of Plant Clinics were therefore organized upon the request of farmers in close coordination with the agriculture officers and field technicians of the local government. These clinics provided good platforms to farmers and the plant researchers to interact and share their experiences and learning related to varieties of crops' problems. During these clinics, 117 farmers brought varieties of samples of diseased plants, and the plant advisors recommended locally available solutions to overcome their problems on the spot. These clinics also had added advantage of raising awareness among locals about plant health in general as the farmers were able to better recognize symptoms of various plant problems and seek appropriate affordable solutions instantly. Hence, these clinics were found very effective.

HYGIENE PROMOTION CAMPAIGNS BRINGING BEHAVIORAL CHANGES



As stated earlier, flood water gets inundated over a period of months in the Terai. Standing water caused by heavy rainfall or overflow of rivers can act as breeding sites for mosquitoes, and therefore enhance the potential for exposure to the flood-affected population. There was also an increased risk of infection of water-borne diseases through direct contact with polluted waters, such as wound infections, dermatitis, conjunctivitis, and infections to ear, nose and throat. Though these diseases are not prone to epidemic. Floods however can potentially increase the transmission of communicable diseases. Particularly, the water-borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid fever, hepatitis etc., and vector-borne diseases such as malaria, encephalitis etc. were suspected to may happen during floods.

The programme therefore organized a number of hygiene promotion campaigns in different places mainly to raise awareness about the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). In total, 58 hygiene promotion campaigns were organized as per the request of flood affected communities and depending upon their situation, during when various health related Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were

displayed and distributed. More specifically, the programme mobilized local Female Community Health Volunteers (MCHVs) for coaching and demonstrating practical steps and or techniques of hand washing, disinfecting drinking water, menstruation hygiene management (MHM) and sanitation. The IEC materials were also displayed and distributed to the people who visited for personal health check-up and primary treatments during a number of free health camps.

Additionally, Sanitation Management Committees (SMCs) were formed at all flood affected communities, and the group members were encouraged to raise funds for purchasing basic sanitary items to continue their cleaning events every week. For this, SMCs started raising funds at the rate of five (5) rupees from each household heads per month through their self-initiation which still is continuing. These campaigns were thus found very helpful in gradually changing the community behavior towards water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

PROVISION FOR LIVESTOCK INSURANCE AND VACCINATION



Although exact figures are not available, it is estimated that over hundred thousand of livestock were lost or dead during 2017 flood. Losing livestock would mean losing the main source of income and draft power to plough fields for the poor farmers. There was also an increased risk of outbreak of the infectious diseases. In particular, water, feeds and forages for feeding animals were contaminated with the pollutants, and there was a burden of toxicity and parasitic problems. Most of the animals had abscesses on their feet, among other problems. So, the programme started provisioning of livestock insurance so that the farmers can get compensation when they lose their animals accidentally.

Caritas Nepal also supported for vaccination of animals which were purchased by the farmers through the seed money made available to them by the programme. The seed money was provided at the rate of NPR 10,000 each to the farmers who are landless and have no other alternatives for their livelihoods. The seed money however is to be returned back to the community group again after six months so that another farmer could be benefited to start his/her livelihood initiative. This is somewhat like mobilization of community fund which is revolved again to another farmer, and is practiced by the community group on their own-initiation.

Up to the study period, a total of 215 programme supported animals have already been insured, and a total of 286 livestock in Saptari, Nawalparasi and Banke districts are vaccinated, of which goats are vaccinated against *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR) and pigs are vaccinated against swine fever which are reported to be epidemic-prone in these areas.

DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION MATERIALS FOR CHILDREN



During flood emergency, there is a high chance of losing educational items and school dresses, being torn apart or submerged in the flood. As a result of which, many children hesitate or reluctant to go back to school and there is high chance of school dropouts. So, the programme decided to distributing school uniforms and education materials to the children of vulnerable communities contributing to the children's right to education. The programme supported a total of 1042 vulnerable children, of which 524 are girls and 518 are boys of 22 schools, which encouraged them to continue their education.

CASH FOR WORK⁴ FOR IMMEDIATE RELIEF



During a year period, Caritas Nepal invested nearly NPR 10 million (9,730,115) in cash for work and provided temporary employment to 2005 poor people. CFW constructed 71 individual shelters, two disable friendly community shelters, five culverts and 169 raised hand-pumps. This also repaired nine river embankments, rehabilitated five irrigation canals and disinfected 2,905 hand pumps. It can be expected that entire communities of the flood affected districts can certainly derive benefit from the infrastructures built through cash for works.

Since it allowed cash in hand to buy food or other necessities for immediate relief, it was very helpful for the vulnerable people to recover from flood shocks and stresses. This has also enabled people to determine their own priorities and choices, and to increase community ownership towards the program activities.

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- 4 Cash for work (CFW) activity is a short-term intervention to provide temporary employment to the deprived people in infrastructure works such as repairing roads, clearing debris, rehabilitating irrigation canals, re-building community infrastructures etc.

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STORIES OF CHANGE



DISABLED FAMILY STARTED EARNING FROM A SMALL SUPPORT



Kalu Limbu of Jhapa Rural Municipality -1 was born disabled. Turning his head with difficulty, with his legs not responding, he can hardly take a few steps limping. Speaking also poses a serious challenge to him. In the wake of deadly flooding, Caritas Nepal's support has made a difference in Kalu's life, allowing him to support his family.

Kalu Limbu lives in a small hut on the bank of the Kankai river. Every year floods affecting the rural municipality of Jhapa pose a serious threat to the communities living in the area. The latest fierce flood in August 2017 swept away 10 katthas⁵ of Limbu's farmland, leaving behind only one bigha. His family of five – parents, wife and one-year-old son – found themselves in a critical situation, as the remaining piece of land was not enough to feed them and sustain the household. Even though Kalu's father managed to find a job as a security guard in a local bank, his salary did not suffice to meet the family's basic needs.

5 A unit of area mostly used for measuring parcel of land in Nepal, which is one twentieth part of a bigha. 1 Bigha is generally equal to 0.67 hectare and 1 Kattha is equal to 333.2 m².

In the aftermath of 2017 flooding, the project encouraged local people to form a committee with the aim of identifying their fellow community members most in need of livelihood support. Kalu Limbu's family was among them. "As per Kalu Limbu's request, we recommended the project team to provide him with materials and tools worth NPR 10,000 for making **Mudha**⁶" explains Raghu Tudu, the local committee coordinator.

A few years before, Kalu got trained in the art of making **Mudha** with the help of a local social worker. The idea of using this skill to run his own **Mudha**-making business came to his mind right after the flood. Now Kalu produces **Mudha** and sells them in nearby villages, earning an income that supports his family. "It makes a good support whenever my little son is sick, as now we can afford to cover his health care costs" he says. "Now I am very happy because I don't have to stay idle. I have got the opportunity to make **Mudhas** with the financial support of the project" Kalu adds proudly.

What's more, the profit made from the Mudha business allowed the family to purchase a female pig (Bhuni). They hope that by selling its offspring they will be able to generate additional income: "Female pig gives birth to 8-10 piglets twice a year. Baby boars of 2 months can be sold at around NPR 4,000, while gilts at around NPR 2,500" Limbu's mother estimates. Ownership of the pig also makes a difference for Kalu's wife, who suffers from hearing problems and aphasia; and she feels more pride in taking care of her pig. The programme has supported a total of 32 disabled people of eight flood affected districts, of which 14 are female and 18 are male.

6 **Mudha is a traditional Asian stool made of bamboo sticks and ropes.**

STARTING A NEW CHAPTER AS AN INDEPENDENT ENTREPRENEUR



The flood that struck at night of 12 August 2017, washed off the small settlement of Nayabasti, Kamal Rural Municipality-2 of Jhapa district found Ratna Maya Limbu (38) in bed. Suffering from cancer, the woman had no strength to run away and save herself from the dangerous situation. She only escaped death as the neighbours managed to carry her to a safer place.

In the following days, Caritas Nepal distributed relief materials to the people in need. "In addition to the relief materials, upon the community's request, the project provided additional financial support to seven most heavily affected households to help them sustain their livelihoods," explains Lokpriya Khanal, Executive Director of Abhiyan Nepal.

Ratna Maya was one of them identified for support. Being a single woman in an indigenous community with no source of income secured, she was struggling to make ends meet. She actually was not allowed to do physical work because of her ill health. The grant of NPR 10,000 allowed Ratna to open a small grocery shop in her settlement,

providing the necessary goods she could start trading. This way the project helped her to start a new chapter as an independent entrepreneur.

“My brothers are supporting me and my two sons for food, clothes and other domestic expenditures. I have been covering the school expenses of my sons from the earning of my shop. The earning also supports me for my regular medicine and treatment expenses,” Ratna says. “This shop is a big support to me. I couldn’t have done anything without this shop,” she adds.

The shop has not only vastly transformed one’s life, but also had a wider community impact: “Everyone is now relieved as they do not have to go far-away market to buy general things after Ratna Maya started her shop in the settlement,” one of her neighbours explains.

Menuka Kafle, Chairperson of Kamal Rural Municipality, talks about further need for action. She said: “There are many others similar to Ratna Maya who are in dire need of supporting their lives. So, from our perspective, there is a need to expand such support further.”

The project however has supported six others of this community, who are now engaged in various micro-entrepreneurships such as goat rearing, poultry farming, opening a shop of mobile spare parts, and a little café with tea and snacks etc.

In the meantime, Ratna Maya dreams about further expansion of her business: “I have already bought additional products to sell. I have been thinking about buying a refrigerator from my earnings to start selling cold drinks too,” she smiles.

CHILDREN ARE NOW BACK TO SCHOOL



On the night of 8 August 2017, Aryan Bhattarai, a fourth-grade student of Juro Primary School of Jhapa district was sound asleep. Suddenly a terrible noise woke him up; that was the flood water of surging Sano Mai stream violently entering his house. Running away, his family left everything behind, including his books and all the educational materials. In the following days, going back to school posed a huge challenge to him.

“Next morning after the flood, when I found my reading and writing materials missing, I cried a lot,” remembers Aryan. Similarly, all school items of little Sony Sahani of Balmiki Primary School of Nawalparasi district were also taken away by the flood. She was reluctant to go to school, as she missed her school uniform and felt ashamed among other pupils: “I was unwilling to go to school at that time, because teachers were asking to come to school wearing uniforms, I however had none.”

As one of the teachers explains, in the aftermath of the flooding schools made no strict dress code requirements, but hoped that parents would be able to supply school uniforms and educational material promptly. For the families struggling with huge

damage and loss, the task often proved to be impossible. A local social worker recalls further: "For the families who have lost food grains, clothes and properties in the flood, it was very difficult to purchase extra educational items for their children. Supplying stuffs for school children contributed a great deal to the children's right to study."

Caritas Nepal provided uniforms and necessary school material to all children in the majority of flood-affected districts, ensuring every child could go back to school in a dignified manner.

Aryan laughs with excitement while telling us about some of the new items received from the project. "Two dozen of pencils, one geometry box, one school bag and a sweater... It was not only easy for me to study, but now I can. I also have a sweater to keep me warm at school in winter" Similarly, Sony is also delighted to go to school in her new school bag and uniform.

FREE EYE-CARE FOR ELDERLY COMMUNITY PEOPLE



Almost every year the rural areas of Tirahut have to face the disastrous impact of floods. As one of the local social workers explains, “Floods are common in our village. The villagers with poor eye-sight have difficulties while evacuating in such situations.” Conducting a free eye camp, the project has responded to the needs of elderly community people in the rural areas of Nepal.

Flood water usually brings about another danger and that is of snakes. Flushed from the Churia⁷ region together with the flood, the creatures easily enter into the houses. Jugal Das (72) had been dreading snake bites as his sight defect does not allow him to spot them in the proximity.

7 Churia is the region of fragile hills close to Terai plains extend over 1,898,263 ha in Nepal, from 80° 9' 25" to 88° 11' 16" longitudes and from 26° 37' 47" to 29° 10' 27" latitudes, and occupies 12.84% area of the country.

Beyond emergencies, a blurred vision also has a big impact on the elderly's daily life. Chandrakala Devi (58) runs a small shop in Bhediya. Once she mistook a note of 500 rupee when handing in change for 10 rupees. When Devi's son noticed the mistake, he bluntly asked the customer to return the excess amount, an incident the village has not yet forgotten.

Jugal Das and Chandrakala Devi both received a free eye check-up during the eye camp. The eye camp held in August 2018 was facilitated by the medical staff of Sagarmatha Chaudhary Eye Hospital and benefited 368 patients of the flood affected areas around the Mahuli River.

Moreover, 26 people who were identified as in need of an eye-surgery, received it free of charge with all the logistics cost covered. Overall, the project supported for all logistics support required for the camp management, covering all the necessary fees, medication, and the cost for meals to all participants.

Having received a free treatment, Jugal Das is no longer afraid of snakes: "I now can spot them easily and I remove them out of my way using a stick," he says. Similarly, Chandrakala says "I now do not have any problem in identifying the currency notes. I also feel very comfortable while doing other household chores".

A STORY OF CHATPATEWALI⁸



Ramwati Devi Das (35) of Tirahut Rural Municipality-5 of Saptari district is now recognized as Chatpatewali. Her story proves that a successful small business run by a determined woman can sustain a family and challenge all existing gender stereotypes⁹.

Roughly every rain, the rain-fed Mahuli river hits the little hut where Ramwati lives with her husband, two children and 70-year-old parents. Her mother neither can speak nor hear. With every flood, the household's situation becomes even more critical, as the family did not own any land they could cultivate. Ramwati sometimes went to other villages to work at the nearby farms. Her husband did not have any stable source of income secured, but would sometimes bring some money home by collecting and selling the firewood from the surrounding Churia forests. Things got more difficult when

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- 8 Chatpatewali in Nepali stands for a woman preparing Chatpate - a spicy snack made of puffed chickpeas and rice with little salt, spice and lemon juice.
 - 9 In Nepal, it is still believed that the responsibility for taking care for elderly parents falls on the son. The birth of a girl is thus often perceived as a curse.

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the government imposed strict control over the collection of woods from the area of fragile hills. So, it was very difficult for the family to make ends meet and Ramwati's old father resorted to begging.

In April 2018, Ramwati received support from the project. A grant of NPR 15,000 contributed her to start her own mobile **Chatpate** business and open a small grocery shop in her own hut. The grant breathed new life into the family. Ramwati prepares **Chatpate** and goes to nearby bazaars to sell them six days a week. Many of those who once tasted her creations come back for more. In the meantime, her father remains busy running the grocery store, while her husband managed to find a job as a **Mistri** – carpenter, helping with woodworks around the municipality.

Running a successful business allows the woman to deposit NPR 600 a month at nearby cooperatives and send her two sons to school. Visibly touched, Chatpatewali tells how crucial the project was in enabling her to look after her elderly parents, "Without the project, I wouldn't be able to support them. Now I make a profit of NPR 150 to 700 a day. Plus, there is additional daily profit of around NPR 150 from the grocery shop."

"With the support of Caritas Nepal, my daughter saved me from begging and made me the manager of the grocery shop. Nowadays, I do not need to roam the streets asking for money," her father says with a great relief.

CLEAN DRINKING WATER FOR DHANPURI VILLAGE



In August 2017, the Mahuli river flood waves broke into all homes of Dhanpuri village in Saptari district, leaving the water levels remaining at the level of one meter for over two weeks. But unfortunately, all pumps in the area were constructed at the ground level, or raised not exceeding half a meter. The flooding at all settlements led to a water crisis mainly because all water pumps were contaminated with flood pollutants.

80 households were deprived of access to clean drinking water and were forced to head to nearby villages to search for alternative sources. They had to walk nearly a kilometer carrying heavy water tanks, wading in flood water checking the way forward using a stick not to fall into holes on the road hidden under the water surface. Getting permission of other inhabitants to fetch water from their sources posed yet another challenge. The water crisis further increased the workload for women as fetching water is usually done by a woman in the Terai¹⁰.

10 Terai is a lowland region in southern part of Nepal that lies south of the outer foothills of the Himalayas.

At the wake of this disaster, the project responded aiming at securing people's access to safe drinking water sources. In May 2018, three hand pumps were reconstructed raising over 1.5 meters on concrete platforms above the ground level. The water fetching points were made easily accessible by adding additional steps around them.

Bhimsen Chaudhary, Programme Coordinator of Shreepurraj Community Development Centre (SCDC) in Saptari District, talks about the second component of the project, for disinfecting all the existing water pumps that got contaminated by the floods. The activity was followed by a round of training sessions aiming at showing the inhabitants of Dhanpuri village how they can disinfect water coming from the hand pumps themselves.

The local community was asked to make a decision about the further use of the newly erected infrastructure. The villagers collectively decided to use the new hand-pumps for drinking water only, and keep the old low ones for hygiene, washing clothes and other purposes.

As one of the community members notes, the project has significantly contributed to raising health and hygiene standards in the settlement: "In the past we were drinking contaminated water from the hand pumps placed at low levels, so many people in this settlement used to get ill during the flood period," he recalls. "After using of drinking water from the newly raised hand pumps, less cases of diarrhea, dysentery and cholera have been reported in our settlement."

FREE HEALTH CAMPS BRINGING BEHAVIORAL CHANGES



Outbreaks of contagious diseases severely affect communities living in flood-inundated areas of Nepal. Lack of clean drinking water and sanitation contribute to spread of cholera, diarrhea, dysentery, fever, eye infections and other serious conditions. Further to the 2017 floods, the communities of Khairawona village in Dhanusha district reported an increased in the number of cases of diseases related to flooding and inundation.

Responding to the community request, health camps – mobile clinics – were set with the aim of supporting flood affected communities of Khairawona and neighboring villages mainly to overcome the health problems they were facing in the wake of the changing circumstances. 109 local community members participated in the camp activities in March 2018.

Dr Anil Jha, a medical doctor involved in the health camps, explains the root causes of the problem: “90% people coming to health camp were affected with the contagious diseases caused by the lack of pure drinking water and sanitation facilities.”

The project conducted awareness raising campaigns by displaying a number of visual posters and flexes related to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) placed around the working sites, that conveyed six messages crucial for maintaining good health – drinking clean water, the importance of proper nutrition and hand-washing, menstrual hygiene, using clean latrines, and proper waste management. The people waiting for their turn were then requested to have a look at the key messages in a friendly manner.

The project also funded free medical check-ups providing necessary medicines to the beneficiaries. Jugeswor Mukhiya from Khairawona had suffered from persistent fever: “In the health camp, doctors distributed medicines to the people in need after detailed examination. I took the medicines prescribed by the doctor and got better after some days.” Next to the treatment of flood-related diseases, the health camp also counseled beneficiaries suffering from chronic conditions such as fluctuating blood pressure, calcium deficiency and common reproductive problems. “I learned many things from the posters displayed around, and I got treatment for my myself” states Runu Devi Mukhiya, one of the beneficiaries. The camp thus educated on the measures people can undertake to protect themselves from contagious diseases following a flooding.

Mamata Mahato, Programme Coordinator of Social Development and Research Centre (SDRC), indicates that since the health camp, many improvements in the field of health and sanitation have been noticed in Khairawona and neighboring villages. The feedback gathered amongst the population states that health camps of this kind should be integrated as a part of an immediate disaster response following the floods.

SECURING RICH HARVEST FROM THE FLOOD AFFECTED AREAS



On 18 August 2017, right after midnight a violent flood hit Khairawona village of Dhanusha district. The spate waters of Charnath River burst into 65 houses, washing away two of them; the flooding destroyed private property, food items and all the farm inputs. The paddy fields remained inundated for over two weeks. After the waters receded, the inhabitants of Khairawona found their fields completely covered with sand. The food crisis was inevitable.

The programme provided immediate relief materials to the flood affected farmers. In January 2018, the beneficiaries received farm inputs such as sprayer tanks and improved seeds of cucurbits such as watermelon, cucumber, pumpkin etc., followed by a training on riverbed farming. Sabitri Mukhiya, a local farmer said “the project supported us in riverbed farming so that we can cultivate cucurbits in such a difficult situation”.

The farmers reported that riverbed farming brought on a significant increase in their income over a few months, mentioning the amounts varying from NPR 20,000 to 35,000. Jugeswor Mukhiya whose fields got severely affected reports with a smile, “I earned

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around NPR 45,000 from watermelon farming from the sand-covered field of five kattha". The income generated from the farming activities allowed them to buy food items and other essentials for the households.

In the next phase, training sessions for leader farmers were provided. The selected beneficiaries learnt about improved methods of agricultural practices, such as use of manure, management of crop pests and diseases etc. The lessons learned encouraged them to act as multipliers in their communities for increasing the agricultural production.

Similarly, in May 2018, the farmers were supplied with a variety of paddy seeds. Shyam Sunder Adhikari Danuwar a local resident of the neighboring area explains, "This variety of paddy can be planted in sandy fields and gives good yield because of its long seed grains. This now is ready for harvest earlier than other variety because of its early maturing character."

The project is said to have a long-term impact on the local farming communities. Jagdish Mukhiya, a representative of the local government, says: "The project delivered many things which could be applicable to farmers in the future as well. I can say that the project contributed a great deal towards sustainable farming in the project area."

IT IS WONDERFUL TO HAVE NEW HOUSES AND COMMUNITY SHELTER



Ram Preet Kewat (70) and his wife found themselves without a roof over their heads when the flood strokes their village and washed away their thatch-roofed hut. Squeezed between the debris of the house, Kewat got seriously injured during the flood casualty of August 2017. Jobless and homeless, the couple had to roam around seeking shelter at friends' houses and borrowing money from their neighbors.

The above story reflects the post-flood reality of many families of Fatki village of Pratappur Rural Municipality-8 in Nawalparasi district that were unable to restore their livelihoods and rebuild destroyed houses. Sudama Koiri, Chairperson of the local Community Disaster Management Committee explains, "Three houses at Fatki including the one of Ram Preet Kewat's were completely destroyed by the flood. Sixteen houses got severely damaged. Among 120 houses in this settlement, there was not a single one that remained unaffected by the flood. Flood water from nearby streams suddenly entered the houses and flooded everything. The area remained under water for over a month". He added, "People took shelter in a cowshed, a commercial space constructed at a higher level, spacious enough. Everyone luckily managed to escape".

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Having provided immediate relief, Caritas Nepal supported for the re-construction of three completely destroyed houses, providing corrugated galvanized iron (CGI) sheets for the roofing. Kewat – with the neighbours' support – secured other construction materials, such as wood, bamboo and dried grass. She says "It is wonderful to have a new house. We are very happy and thankful for this support".

The programme also supported for the construction of a concrete building to serve as a community shelter house, developed in cooperation with the local government and community donations, to create a safe space for the people seeking refugee during a disaster. The shelter is equipped with separate washrooms for men and women, and raised hand pumps for drinking water provision. It also caters the needs of differently able people, as it has a ramp making it easily accessible for people on wheelchairs. This can accommodate 100 people inside and an additional hundred on the roof. The people can also benefit from the space using it for various social and cultural events.

The local community expresses their hope related to the new building. "Now, we will be safe during flooding," says one of the locals. "The building, its drinking water sources and toilets facilities will not be inundated, so it will be a convenient place for shelter to all" adds another.

TAILORING A NEW LIFE



Following her husband's death eight years ago, Shreekanti Chaudhary of Pratap Rural Municipality-3 in Nawalparasi district was left alone with a little son. The Dhanewa River flood not only spread havoc in her house, but also turned her land into a sandpit, making it unable to farm. She was not able to find a temporary job and suddenly faced a question of even more uncertain future. Following the recommendation of the local community disaster management committees, the project distributed small-scale grants to create sustainable livelihoods for flood-affected communities.

Shreekanti had learnt sewing back at her family home from a relative. She however was not economically strong enough to buy a sewing machine. An idea to use her skills to make a living crossed her mind after the 2017 flood. When the project team identified her skill for securing sustainable livelihoods, she was supported by a new sewing machine worth NPR 10,000. She soon negotiated the terms of using space at one of the tailor shops owned by Mr. Subash Harijan at the local market called Somani Chaurah bazaar. In April 2018, she then launched her own tailoring as a small-scale micro-entrepreneurship.

People from nearby villages now come to Shreekanti to get clothes tailored. She takes the

measurements at home and then heads to the tailor shop to make dresses like blouses, underskirts and shirts. If a particular design proves to be too complicated, Mr. Harijan gives her a helping hand. In such cases, they share the income equally. If Shreekanti creates a piece of clothing fully on her own, she keeps the entire amount. Mr. Harijan says "I am very happy that I could help a flood affected woman by providing her a space to work at my tailor shop".

Shreekanti estimates that she now makes seven to eight thousand rupees a month from tailoring. The amount does not only suffice to make a living and pay for her son's fee, but also allows her to put some money on the side. Visibly touched, she adds: "In the difficult situation I was in, the project supported me a lot. Now I can cover not only daily expenses, but also save. I am very grateful for this."

TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE



The rural municipalities of Pratappur, Palhinandan and Sarawal are amongst the most disaster-prone areas in Nawalparasi District. After the newly formed federal structure of Nepal government in 2017, the rural municipalities took a new shape that did not overlap with the previous structures in terms of area covered, geographical plans, population numbers and leadership. In this context, there was a need of developing new local plans related to disaster preparedness and risk reduction for securing livelihoods.

The programme therefore supported in developing Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plans (LDCRPs) for the above rural municipalities. These documents are prepared in line with the new government directives, and based on a detailed study of the local contexts. While preparing these documents, all relevant stakeholders including representatives of local government, likely minded NGOs, and disaster-affected communities were involved. These plans clearly describe the need and importance of the formulation process, findings of vulnerability assessment, major disasters that the region is prone to, strategies, actions and activities with example of responses and budgets including timeline to be implemented to disaster preparedness, response and mitigation.

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“During the flood of last year, we very much felt the absence of such plans,” explains Raj Kumar Sharma, Chairperson of Pratappur. “Acting on an ad-hoc basis without contingency plans in place, we were risking the effectiveness of our actions. But there was no choice, we had to act and respond immediately”. Mr. Sharma further adds, “Now it will be easy for us to work in such case of a disaster like flood. This plan has clearly identified the vulnerability areas and priorities of our works as well as the mechanism of leveraging resources. We also have the technical know-how to tackle with the disaster. Further, the village council and ward communities are also committed to implement and revise these plans periodically. The project has thus helped us very much in developing our capacities on to disaster preparedness and response”.

COMMUNITY FUNDS FOR SUSTAINABLE MICRO-ENTREPRENEURSHIPS



Lautan Tharu (45) is one of the farmers of Bhagawanpur in Bardiya district who was heavily affected by the Rapti river flood of August 2017. The water broke into his house when he was in sound asleep, forcing him to leave all the possessions behind. Following the heavy toll of destruction, the family found shelter in a school and received immediate relief items from organizations that were present at that moment. After the flood water receded, what remained in paddy fields was not enough to manage his family living.

In the flood aftermath, the people of Bhagawanpur (Rapti-Sonari rural municipality – 4), requested to provide seed money mainly to start community initiatives for securing sustainable livelihoods. Having received the support, the community promptly started managing the resources and distributing the money in response to the most pending needs. The fund provides soft-loans to the needy people, who have to return back at the conditions specified by the group.

In April 2018, Lautan Tharu received NPR 10,000 under a condition returning the whole amount to the community fund within a time span of six months. He decided to invest

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that amount for two female goats for breeding, which were insured and vaccinated by the project. A few months later, Lautan welcomed the twin off-springs. "The male got castrated and sold at NPR 15,000 to pay the money back. He also sold the female at NPR 5,000. He estimates that with proper care, his goats will give birth to 6-8 babies, providing him with earning ranging from NPR 80,000 to 100,000 a year". Looking at the off-springs playing in his field, Lautan has more confidence in the future: "These goats will allow me to cover my daughter's educational expenses".

Similarly, two other members of this community known as Ms. Parbati Tharu and Ms. Janak Kumari Tharu have started pig keeping and tailoring respectively. They also have already managed to return the borrowed amount. In total, the project has supported to 262 people of five flood affected communities who are now engaged in various kinds of micro-entrepreneurships.

In a conversation, a local social worker explained that such initiative enhances sustainable management skills amongst the community members, as the money comes back to the common pot to further benefit others when in need. This way, local people can stand back on their own feet and support others during emergencies of the flood like disasters.

SIPHON FOR REGULAR IRRIGATION



The canal supplying water from the Rapti River to Kamaiya Dada village of Rapti-Sonari Rural Municipality in Banke district would periodically get damaged by the floods occurring in the region. The 2017 flood was no exception. As per the demand of the local community, the programme implemented cash for work (CFW) activity to construct a 35-meter-long concrete siphon to avoid from future deterioration at a piece of canal damaged by the flood. The construction work took about two months to complete which started on 22 April and was completed on 13 June 2018. This also enabled the local community to get additional income opportunities.

Padam Bahadur Pariyar, one of the beneficiaries of the cash-for-work activity, was devastated by the flood, which severely damaged the canal and his land – with the sand and debris brought about by the flood and no water for irrigation. Since the rainfall during the monsoon was not enough for cultivating crops, made him worried about the future of his family.

Pointing towards his field, that is now irrigated by the water delivered through the siphon, Padam proudly said, “Now we do not have to depend on rain water, we can cultivate many crops throughout the year, even vegetables and wheat in winter. We constructed this siphon with our own hands. So, we do believe it is strong enough to last for at least fifty years”.

The canal is now running below the natural stream with the help of the siphon and is DRR friendly. “Our irrigation problem is now solved,” comments Ms. Durpati Tharu, Chairperson of the local Disaster Management Committee. She further adds “Nearly 600 flood affected households are benefited from this siphon as we can irrigate fields and cultivate crops as and when required.

NEW EMBANKMENT SECURING TRAIL FOR MOVEMENT



Since the erosion tore away the banks of Babai River, the communities of Dhungrahi-Pahadipur, Barbardiya Rural Municipality-2 in Bardiya district have been struggling with floods. The raging river kept on destroying crops and houses. Many casualties have been reported. The last flood of August 2017 also seriously damaged a trail that served over 91 households in the area.

The trail which once used to be a gravel road is now expanded to a big stream. The disappearance of the trail and a progressing erosion of the river banks forced people to walk over cultivated fields. Bicycles, which normally serve as a main mean of transportation in the area, were useless. Even ox carts for delivering commodities could not get through. Lal Bahadur Khatri, a representative of a local community, says, "Accessing to schools, health posts, or local markets was very difficult."

The construction, repair and maintenance of road or trails is normally done by the local government, but in the eve of the flooding there was no sufficient budget available to respond to all needs on the ground. This is when Caritas Nepal stepped in. So, local

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people raised the issue of urgent need for trail construction with the project personnel. There was a need of retaining wall through gabion revetment where trail existed earlier and filling over about 97 meters long around the embankment with earth and stones was realized. Caritas Nepal proposed to work for supporting labor cost of 25 people for 15 days under 'Cash for work (CFW)' program, which was instantly accepted by the people of local residents.

The construction of trail began with building new stone-filled gabion boxes. To kick-start the work, 25 local people were employed within a framework of the CFW programme component. As a local social worker recalls, people were encouraged to construct the trail themselves, an important step that lead to join hands with other local government offices. "We also approached a nearby government irrigation project and received the gabion wire free of cost. As soon as the embankment was filled with soil and stones, local businessmen supported us with leveling the trail and helped us to finish the works". With more support coming from different stakeholders, the damaged trail was reconstructed in July 2018.

The local community representatives emphasized the impact of programme made in the area: "We had faced difficulties for many months. The trail made our lives much easier. We now do not need to be afraid of the next possible flood to move around freely."



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