



Issue 19, July 2008

# In the Know

UNDP Nepal Newsletter

News of the Month

## Saving more lives with small investments

Sabitri Mahato and Tanka Narayan Chaudhary of the predominantly Tharu community of Divyanagar - 4 in Chitwan district, have a lot to smile about these days. Ever since UNDP's Community Based Disaster Management Project (CBDMP) provided their village, a grant of Rs. 250,000 (US\$ 3,660) through the Chitwan District Development Committee (DDC), the villagers feel secure, free of fear from flooding by the nearby Narayani river. With the money – the villagers contributed free labour to construct stone and wire meshing spurs that directed the Narayani's water flow away from the village and towards the opposite shore, which is uninhabited. In addition, hundreds of saplings were planted along the riverside to create a natural barrier against flooding.

Divyanagar – 4 village is precariously situated on the banks of the mighty Narayani River — a confluence of Trishuli, Rapti, Kali Gandaki and Seti rivers of central and western Nepal.

Ever since Chitwan was opened up for human settlement by eradicating malaria in 1959, deforestation has been rampant. Due to massive loss of forest cover in the past five



Villagers in Chitwan have contributed labour to build a stone fence with gabion wires to prevent flooding

2008 7 10

decades, flooding by the Narayani has become a common occurrence.

Flooding was so severe in Divyanagar that the river now flows on land where 80 houses used to stand until 1993. As the river steadily changed course and neared the remaining 42 houses on the

banks, the villagers had given up hope about saving their village.

With the work done with the assistance of the CBDMP project, the lives and livelihoods, of the inhabitants of the 42 households in the village has been saved from the ravages of flooding. "The security of our and our children's livelihoods and existence have increased, we have a reason to have hopes about the future," remarked Mahato.



A media visit was organised by the CBDMP in July to Chitwan and other flood prone districts

According to the data from the Nepal Red Cross, 62 out of the 75 districts of the country were affected by floods and landslides in 2007. Altogether, 214 people died, 303 were injured, 140 went missing and 25,857 families were displaced. Additionally, 106,214 families and a population of 640,658 were affected.

### Support to the Peace Process

UNDP Support to UNMIN

UNDP dispatched a team of ten case workers in June and July of 2008 to examine and assess all PLA weapons and ammunition stored in containers as well as those used for perimeter security of the camps. During this exercise, the old paper barcodes were also replaced with new polyester barcodes which are resistant to water, oil and chemicals.

To aid this process of 'weapons auditing', UNMIN Arms monitors assisted UNDP caseworkers to collect data regarding the functionality and serviceability of the weapons. The information from the assessments was recorded in order to facilitate the process of monitoring the weapons. As custodian of sensitive data, UNDP is recoding this information into the database for later use.



The team of case workers comprised three females and seven males, and was led by a senior team leader. The team visited the seven main cantonment sites and 21 satellite camps located in different parts of the country. Notwithstanding the heavy rains that caused landslides and floods which made roads impassable in some districts, and the mist/fog in mountainous areas that limited helicopter flights to a few hours each day, the team members managed to visit all the main cantonment sites and their satellite camps.

### Latest News Update



Above: Radio drama discussion in Gulariya VDC of Kanchanpur, participated by the women members of the community organisation of Decentralized Local Governance Support Programme (DLGSP). The BBC World Service Trust provided training to the Social Mobilisers and Local facilitators of DLGSP and Village Facilitators of DACAW (Decentralized Action for Women and Children)/UNICEF in conducting radio discussion.



Above: Training on 'Creative Packaging' for Radio Producers, participated by 16 producers from 8 radio stations.

Rose Aston, instructor from BBC Shropshire provided training to the participants during the two days training. Various trainings have been given to the local media by the BBC World Service Trust as part of the UNDP's *Participation in Peace and Constitution Building Project*.

# Reducing the Risk of Natural Disasters

### “Small additional investment in time and money can save a lot of grief”

Eighty elementary school children in Shramik Madhyamik Vidyalaya of Hetauda Municipality feel more secure and less worried about earthquake when they are in school these days. This is because their classrooms are in an earthquake resistant school building recently constructed with the support of the UNDP Community Based Disaster Management Project (CBDMP). The total cost for the school building was Rs. 650,000 while CBDMP contributed Rs. 250,000, and the rest was contributed by the School Management Committee, Makwanpur District Development Committee, Hetauda Municipality and the local people who contributed their labour. The National Society for Earthquake and Technology (NSET) provided technical assistance .

The construction of the school building — capable of surviving earthquakes of up to 6.5 on the Richter scale — is especially timely, given that Nepal lies on a seismically active zone where the risk of massive death and destruction from a quake is very real and can happen any day.

The children, community members and construction staff feel that all buildings across the country should be built keeping in mind Nepal’s high susceptibility to earthquakes, especially given that there is little difference in the cost.



Engineer Satya Narayan Sah talking to Kantipur television

**In the case of this school, the total cost of construction of the building in the earthquake-resistant load-bearing style was only 5% more than the cost of constructing a similar building in pillar style, which is not earthquake resistant.**

Rajendra Karki, chairperson of the community-based disaster management group says, “It is hard to communicate to locals here about the importance of building homes and office edifices that are earthquake resistant. However, given that this project was implemented with wide media coverage, we hope that more people will be inspired to constructing earthquake resistant buildings.”

Shambu Dhakal, 14, a student at the Shramik Madhyamik Vidyalaya says,

“earthquakes can occur any time without warning. This step is indeed a sign of more awareness amongst ourselves and the general public.”

Shukra Ram Moktan, a social mobiliser involved in the building construction and a local college student added, “due to the involvement of the community in this project, awareness among locals has certainly been raised on the need to build structures resistant to earthquakes.”

Engineer Satya Narayan Sah, who designed the building, explained that the building took about four months to plan and construct, only slightly more than that for a similar pillar style building. He remarked that the **“small additional investment in time and money can save a lot of grief.”**

## Micro-enterprise for Livelihood

### More opportunity for local entrepreneurs

A micro-enterprise involved in making plum jam has been thriving in Tukucha village of Kavrepalanchowk district. Supported by a grant and technical assistance from the UNDP Micro-Enterprise Development Programme (MEDEP), the enterprise has been involved in producing fresh jam from the plentiful plum that grow in the area during the summer.

The jam making enterprise is led by Uddhav Giri, 35, chair of the jam makers group, and Lal Chandra Giri, 35, in a group comprising six women and five men. The duo and their fellow group members are primarily dependent on agriculture for their income but saw opportunities to improve their income by starting the jam-making enterprise when they were put in touch with MEDEP by a social mobiliser.

After receiving a MEDEP grant of Rs. 40,000 to buy a juicer machine and other necessary equipment, and with a training on entrepreneurship, the group produced 800 litres of pulp during the first year of operation, and another 1,200 litres since early 2008. This has translated



into Rs. 88,000 worth of sales, resulting in a net profit of about Rs.53,000 over a period of one year.

The enterprise is now self-sustaining, but continues to seek and receive guidance and occasional assistance from MEDEP. Requests for such assistance are made at the monthly meetings of the Micro Enterprise Group -(MEG), a larger Micro Enterprise Group Association (MEGA), and a District MEGA (DMEGA).

Uddhav Giri says, "The MEDEP grant and technical assistance to start the jam making venture has helped raise the quality of life for the villagers as well as for

my family. This additional income is especially useful when the harvest for crops is bad."

Most of the jam produced is sold in Dhulikhel, Banepa and Kathmandu with a smaller quantity being retailed locally. A 500gm jar of jam retails at Rs.65. The enterprise also caters to large-scale purchasers of the jam such as military barracks and schools.

The two major challenges, the group now faces are; the safe storage of ripe plum picked in the summer in large containers to allow jam making throughout the year, and the registering the brand name with the Cottage and Small Industries Office in order to maintain the proprietary rights and to secure the trust of the consumers in the brand.



## Environment and Livelihood

### Organic farming on the rise with a new enterprise for women

Elephant jungle safari in Sauraha, one of the most popular tourist hubs of Chitwan National Park is a dream for visiting tourists. There are as many as 165 private and park elephants for jungle safari and other adventures like elephant polo which takes place once a year, with visitors coming from all around the world.

Sauraha however, suffers from the unmanaged waste of elephants. Each elephant produces 130 kgs of dung a day, resulting in 165 elephants producing 21.5 metric tonnes of dung a day. This is generally a nuisance and dumped in a place called 'Malkhad' to dry naturally. The dried dung is later burnt, emitting CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere.

With the support of UNDP and Global Environment Facility/Small Grants Programme in partnership with an NGO-Pesticide Monitor Nepal—12 local women of the village have found a way of getting rid of this unmanaged waste by producing vermicompost from the elephant dung. These 12 women are responsible for the overall management of compost production at the community level which is giving rise to organic farming.

The semi-digested elephant dung is very good feed for vermis (earthworm) and produces vermicompost. The project trained these women on vermicompost techniques, and also constructed a vermicomposting shade house for the worm and compost production. The project partnered with some Users Committee at the local level to manage the worm shade house. "It was a really slow process" recalls Prof. Dr. Ananda Shova Tamrakar, team leader of the Project, "but the effort paid off in 45 days as one tonne of vermicompost was produced. One hundred kilos of elephant dung gives 60 kilos of organic manure. Within the next 8 months the worm population increased seven fold," she added.

In May-June, the women sold 2 tonnes of vermicompost earning Rs. 24,000. After seeing the success of the initiative, 60 other women have also started vermicomposting in their own houses. The vermicompost shade house is a good learning place for visiting tourists also. The villagers feel that this initiative is a good start to replace chemical fertilizers and save the cost of importing the fertilizers.

Paryabaraniya Krishak Manch is a forum of farmers to promote organic farming and is initiated by the Bird Conservation Society, partner of the vermicompost project. The use of chemical fertilizers greatly pollute rivers and wetlands, and as a result, the birds which feeds on fishes are suffering. Hence the project has not only contributed to organic farming but has also helped to promote bird conservation.



*Vermis (earthworms)*



*above: Local women using elephant dung and vermis to produce vermicompost*



*The final product-vermicompost*

## Climate Change Mitigation

### Ryutaro Hashimoto Asia Pacific Forum for Environment and Development (APFED) Award 2008

UNDP GEF/SGP grantee, Manahari Development Institute-Nepal, has won the 'Ryutaro Hashimoto Asia Pacific Forum for Environment and Development (APFED) Award 2008'—a GOLD (1st) prize in recognition of the outstanding contribution in promoting environmental management and sustainable development. The award was given in the 4th Plenary Meeting (award giving ceremony) at Davao, Phillipines on 25 July 2008.

The project entitled 'Mitigation of the Effects of the Carbon dioxide and other Greenhouse Gases by Controlling Slash-and-Burn Farming', is funded by UNDP/ Global Environment Facility/Small Grants Programme.

The project has supported Indigenous Chepang and Tamang Communities to rehabilitate the slash-and-burn (shifting cultivation) land by converting a slope and steep land into productive agro-forestry land. Previously the villagers used to grow maize, black gram, mustard and horse gram in this steep land and the yield was really low, hardly sufficient to survive and declining every



Above: Mr. Khop Narayan Shrestha, Programme Co-ordinator, MDI (Right) receiving Ryutaro Hashimoto APFED award 2008 from Mr. Masayoshi Namiki, Vice Minister of Environment, Government of Japan- organized in Davao, Phillipines in recognition of the 'Climate Change Mitigation Project' supported by UNDP/GEF/ Small Grants Programme.

year due to soil erosion and impoverishment.

After terrace improvements and with active support from the community, the project introduced agro-forestry by planting over 600,000 saplings of banana, pineapple and other fodder trees. 438 hectares of steep land were brought under the agro-forestry benefiting 1089 households. Out of these 1089 households, 480 are Tamangs, 489 are Chepangs and 20 are Dalits coming from the poor and

indigenous community. The farmers collectively are now earning up to Rs. 4 million and the income ranges from Rs. 1,000 to 45,000 per household.

This gold APFED Award established by the Asia Pacific Forum for Environment and Development in memory of former Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto carries a purse of US\$20,000. It also consists of 2 silver prizes of US\$7,000 each and 5 incentive prizes of US\$ 2,000 each.