

IN THE KNOW



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Dagtundanda village lights up

Until recently the 765 households of Dagtundanda village, Baglung have relied on batteries, candles and smoky lanterns to light their homes and on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods.

The installation of a micro-hydro plant has transformed their lives as they have clean electric lights in their houses and a host of new opportunities for earning money. Most of the 4,200 villagers are Magars (ethnic community).

The Giringdi river micro-hydro project has been producing 75 kilowatts of electricity for Dagtundanda village since September 2007. The plant was installed at a cost of NR 19 million (\$250,000) of which NR 6 million was provided by **Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP)**. The remaining costs were met from a NR 1.3 million

bank loan, NR 2.1 million of grants from the district development committee and the village development committee, and NR 2.2 million from the community. The local people also contributed NR 6.9 million worth of labour and materials.

This new source of power means that the villagers can now run agro-processing machinery and an x-ray machine. A few enterprising locals have started a carpentry and a metal-working shop and a photo studio. The women are also thinking about starting up a bakery and constructing a community hall where they can see movies. Others are thinking of buying a juice extractor, a ginger processor, a chilling machine and a stone crusher to tap into the new power source. The project has also encouraged this community to build water tanks, an irrigation canal, toilets and other community development works.



The new micro-hydro plant is saving the locals money as they no longer need to buy the three litres of kerosene a month they used to fuel lanterns nor the batteries to power small lamps. The scheme is producing a host of economical and environmental benefits for this remote community.

Started in 1996, currently REDP is implemented in 40 districts by the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (APEC) of the Ministry of Environment Science and Technology. The project is funded by UNDP (US\$ 1.9m) with Government co-funding of US\$ 3.8 million in 2007 through the World Bank.

Since 1996, REDP has helped set up 7225 community organizations to identify local energy needs and has trained more than 25,000 of their members to run micro-enterprises, mobilise resources, run their groups and operate micro-hydro plants. This has led to;

- More than 40,000 households gaining access to affordable, sustainable and cleaner sources of energy
- 243 new micro-hydro power plants and peltric-sets generating 3,903 kW of electricity for 36,000 rural households;
- 2,264 households with new solar lighting systems;
- 4,840 new toilet-attached biogas plants, 11,510 improved cooking stoves and 247 improved stoves in primary schools in remote areas.

Support to the Peace Process

Developing capacity for peace

UNDP's **Assistance to the Peace Process in Nepal (APPN)** project has been providing technical assistance to the peace process since the beginning of 2007. At the request of the Government, the project ran a one-day workshop on 21 February to bring out the priorities and plan of action for formulating a new project to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR), to implement its mandate for a successful peace process.

Senior officials from MoPR including Joint Secretaries Mr. Hari Kumar Shrestha and Mr. Deependra Nath Sharma, UNDP Nepal Country Director Ms. Anne-Isabelle Degryse-Blateau, Ms. Nescha Teckle, UNDP Crisis Prevention and Recovery Team Leader and Regional Advisor in Bangkok, UNDP staff from the Peace

Building Recovery Unit participated in the workshop.

The 27 officials from various divisions of MoPR extensively discussed the findings and recommendations of the report from the capacity assessment that was carried out in August 2008 and prioritized their needs for capacity development.

Mr. Madhav Prasad Ghimire, Secretary of MoPR appreciated UNDP's support for the proposed capacity development framework recommended during the workshop.

A joint team of MoPR and UNDP will finalize the Capacity Development project by mid-March.



Workshop to prioritize plan of action for formulating the capacity development project

A preliminary assessment of the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) was carried out in August 2008 by UNDP with support from its Regional Center in Bangkok at the request of the Government, to identify the Ministry's needs and to formulate a capacity development strategy. A comprehensive MoPR capacity assessment report was prepared then and submitted to the Ministry for further review and prioritization of the ministry's needs for capacity development.

Support to the Constituent Assembly

The **Centre for Constitutional Dialogue (CCD)** since its opening in January has already received approximately 750 visitors, most of them the members of Constituent Assembly (CA) and civil society.

The topics covered so far in the thematic discussion programme for the **Constituent Assembly-Civil Society Forum** include; *Federalism and Systems of Governance: Options for Nepal to Consider, Using Constitutional and International Human Rights to Advance Women's Social and Economic Rights, Review of Party Manifestoes relating to key constitutional issues etc.*

Orientation programmes on CCD were organized for 340 CA members in Jan-Feb including the Chairs of most of the Committees and 70 CA

staffs. A similar orientation programme has been started for the civil society groups, with participation of about 80 NGO representatives so far.

A *Training of Trainers on **Communicating with Authority*** was held from 9-11 Feb followed by pilot training sessions for 13 CA members. These training sessions further included topics such as giving short speeches and answering questions effectively. Small practical sessions were organised on active listening, arguing logically, answering difficult questions, giving a clear message and



Constituent Assembly members attending the discussion programme on federalism

working with the journalists.

Inaugurated on 19 Jan 2009, the CCD was established with the assistance of the **UNDP/Support to Participatory Constitution Building Project (SPCBN)** and a consortium of donors (**Denmark, Norway, DFID, Switzerland, USAID/OTI**) in close collaboration with the CA Secretariat and civil society.

An improved madrasa— a peace dividend for a religious minority

Children aged between 5 and 15 years are reciting the holy Quran in their madrasa (Muslim school) in Tulsiyahi Nikash village, Dhanusha. Since 2007 this madrasa has been housed in a new building constructed with support from UNDP's **Quick Impact for Peace Support Initiative programme (QIPSI)**. Until then the school had been based in a rented room as the Government had not responded to the community's many pleas to improve the school. Neither was the school officially recognised— meaning that it could not follow the regular curriculum.

Nepal's Muslims number over one million and are one of the most disadvantaged and socially marginalized groups in Nepal.

The government's new policy, since 2007/08, of registering madrasas with the district education boards has provided huge benefits to Nepal's Muslim children, allowing them to study Nepal's regular school curriculum alongside their religious education. The teachers are now provided and paid for by the



Muslim girls studying in Madrasa, built with the support of Quick Impact Programme

Government. The Government's recognition of madrasas and QIPSI's support has met the demands of the Tulsiyahi Nikash villagers. A community member says, "If it had not been for the improvements to our madrasa, we would have had no option but to have picked up arms and joined the Madhesi insurgency to oppose the Government."

The new madrasa cost Rs 406,869 to build of which the programme provided Rs 394,000 with the rest met by local contributions. Sugra Khatoon, a parent, says, "We are very grateful to the programme for giving our children their right to be educated. We now feel that we are a part of the country and not just a marginalized religious minority".

To directly support peace

building, UNDP launched a **Quick Impact and Peace Support Initiative (QIPSI)** initially in the 10 Eastern, Central and Western Terai districts of Saptari, Sunsari, Siraha, Dhanusha, Mahottarai, Sarlahi, Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, and Kapilbastu in late 2007.

These districts were badly affected by the Madhesi conflict. The first phase **QIPSI** was implemented by three existing UNDP-supported projects, the Decentralized Local Governance Support Programme (DLGSP), the Micro-enterprise Development Programme (MEDEP) and the Community Based Disaster Management Programme (CBDMP). UNDP has allocated \$2 million (Rs. 126,000,000) through this project to improve the livelihoods of poor and excluded communities in these districts to help restore peace and social harmony.

In 2008, the Royal Norwegian Embassy and UNDP pledged an additional \$1.5 million (NOK 10 million) to continue the programme in 11 eastern Terai and 9 mid and far western districts, under the DLGSP.



Community building constructed with the support of Quick Impact Programme for Madrasa

Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)

The Country Office hosted a mission by UNDP's **Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)** from 23 Feb- 7 March to provide strategic support in strengthening the crisis prevention and recovery related programmes in the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) and to define the scope and nature of BCPR support in the next two years for Nepal.

The mission reviewed critical challenges to peace-building, including those related to reintegration, livelihood recovery, local-level peace building and support to implementation of the peace agreement. The mission reviewed the Country Office initiative to design capacity building support for the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction and assessed strategic areas for BCPR engagement. The mission also facilitated workshops on technical support to project formulation for conflict

transformation capacity development, Local Peace Committee roll-out and integrating a peace-building perspective into support for national development processes.

The mission undertook field visits to observe some livelihood programmes under the **UNDP/Quick Impact and Peace Support Initiative** programme, and to engage in consultation with UNMIN and Maoist army personnel in Chitwan cantonment, providing valuable inputs to the formulation of a new livelihood recovery strategy focusing on women, youth, and conflict-affected communities. The mission observed the current Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) initiatives and analysis of gaps and priorities of *the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in Nepal (NSDRMN)*.

To have a closer look at the magnitude



BCPR mission with the youth entrepreneurs of Bateshwar -6, Koiriya Tole in Dhanusha district

of the impact of natural disaster, the mission undertook a field visit to the Koshi flood hit area and observed the camps where the displaced families have been staying since August 2008.

Finally, meetings with the NPC Vice Chair Mr. Guna Nidhi Sharma, Secretary of the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, Mr. Madhav Prasad Ghimire, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Krishna Gyanwali provided key inputs for the Strategic Partnership Framework to be developed between BCPR and the Country Office, following the mission.

Supporting the localization of Millennium Development Goals

A joint mission from UNDP Regional Centre Bangkok and SNV Asia Regional Office, Vietnam under the UNDP-SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation) partnership for cooperation agreement - **Strengthening local level capacities for achieving the MDGs**, visited Nepal from 14-23 February. The UNDP-SNV partnership has been supporting the ongoing project **Localization of MDGs in District Planning and Monitoring** in Nepal. This project is implemented by the Ministry of Local Development in 5 districts- Jumla, Humla, Mugu and Dolpa and Taplejung.

The mission undertook a field visit to Taplejung and observed the progress of the project and held meetings with representatives of different political parties and local authorities. They also held interactions with the civil society organisations, local NGOs, community organisations, human rights organisation, Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCI) and some private-sector associations of the district.

The Ministry of Local Development expressed its commitment to operationalize the District Poverty Monitoring and Analysis System (DPMAS) focusing on a set of key MDGs indicators in 6 programme districts, design a standard format for profile of 75 DDCs and all VDCs and make its template available in MLD's web site and lastly update the Periodic District Development Plan Guidelines for local bodies to address gender and social inclusion and other MDGs goals. The mission held meetings with the National Planning Commission (Poverty and Monitoring unit), Ministry of Local Development and some donors. They met with the Local Governance Associations (ADDCN, NAVIN) and Local Development Training Academy (LDTA) to get information on different types of programmes being run for capacity development of local bodies.

Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development (RIPP)

A mission from UNDP Regional Centre Bangkok, **Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development (RIPP)** Programme visited Nepal to consult different stakeholders on the best way to carry out an assessment on the needs and opportunities on communication and information of Indigenous Peoples.

The assessment will start with an initial workshop in the first week of April. The **RIPP** will also be conducting trainings on human rights based approach jointly with National Human Rights Commission and ILO.

" I have found a mission for my life"

Satpal B.K 37, HIV positive has started working with *Helping Hands Nepal*. People in the village recognize him as a person who works for HIV awareness rather than as an HIV positive person. Satpal says, " I have found a mission for my life".

Going back to his old times, Satpal says, "life had become very difficult without sufficient income for a decent living. With my wife and three sons, I couldn't think of any better option than migrating to India to look for employment. During my 10 years in India, I moved from place to place. With no knowledge that I would ever acquire HIV/AIDS, and being away from the family for so long, my friends and I started going to 'kholis' (brothels)."

In 2008, when Satpal was on his way towards his home in Bardiya for holidays, he saw a Voluntary

Counseling and Testing (VCT) centre in Gulariya established by an NGO called GERUWA (Rural Awareness Association), supported by UNDP. There he was attended by a counselor who provided him all the basic information about HIV and AIDS. After undergoing a test, Satpal discovered that he was HIV positive.

Satpal's life took a very difficult turn because he was not able to disclose his HIV status to the family members. As the days passed by, his wife also started becoming sick but Satpal could not reveal her the reasons. He decided to take help from the VCT counselor of GERUWA again. When he brought his wife to the Centre, and after going through the test, she was also found to be HIV infected. The counselor referred both of them to the Bheri Zonal Hospital for necessary treatment. When Satpal publicly disclosed his HIV status—he only found himself ignored

and discarded by his relatives, friends and neighbours. Satpal again visited the counselor and disclosed the situation looking for ways to regain the trust and dignity that he had lost. The counselor put him in touch with outreach workers, peer educators, social workers, teachers and other respected sections of the society.

Satpal also joined the HIV awareness campaign in his village. A successful campaign launched in the village by the GERUWA helped Satpal to regain a place for himself in the village.

Now, Satpal and his Counselor Sudhansu Prakash Sharma are jointly working to form groups of People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) in the district and are searching for some initial funds to start off this group. This is the first time that a PLWHA group is being formed in the village.

Integrating disaster risk management into development planning

The UNDP **Disaster Risk Reduction in Nepal (DRRN)** project organised a five-day (20-24 Feb) national level training in partnership with the **Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (APDC)** on *Integrating Disaster Risk Management into Development Planning* with the assistance of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department.

The training aimed at enhancing the capacity of Government officials of ten ministries to plan and implement disaster risk reduction initiatives to complement the national level efforts in preparedness and mitigation. Additionally, the longer term expected outcome of this training is to integrate disaster risk management in development planning both at the national and local level.

Altogether 27 participants comprising chief district officers, local development officers, executive officers of municipalities and district planning officers and disaster risk reduction focal desk persons of ten ministries were trained, as part of the implementation of the priority action of the draft *National Strategy for Disaster Management of Nepal*. The training focused on stakeholder analysis, building alliances and partnerships, understanding the disaster risk management decision making process in Nepal, integration of risk reduction in priority sectors and mainstreaming disaster risk management in local Government sector. A half-day field visit to Dhulikhel municipality, community hospital and district education office was also organised as part of the training to see if disaster preparedness has been integrated into their development plans and to identify the gaps.



Disaster Risk Reduction

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