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FORWARD Nepal's Bulletin

This 32nd issue of FORWARD Nepal's Bulletin provides a general cumulative brief update on project implementation progress with some of the institutional activities/events for the last four months of the fiscal year 2080/81 B.S. i.e. 14th March 2024 to 15th July 2024. During this period, we continued with six projects *viz*. "Regional Programme for Scaling up the Multi-sectoral Approach for Nutrition Smart Village in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal-Phase II", "The Enhanced Rural AI (TERAI) Project for Smallholder Dairy Farmers in Nepal", "USAID/FtF Innovation Lab for Horticulture South Asia Regional Hub", "Empowering Youth Entrepreneurs through Appropriate Horticultural Interventions in Nepal (YUVA)", "Grassroots Civil Society Organizations as promotors of Improved Food Systems and Equitable Livelihood Opportunities" and "Resilient ecosystems (Climate Change Addressing Interventions) -Riverbed Farming".

Apart from this, several project concept papers and proposals have been submitted to various donor agencies for project partnerships/funding.

The highlights of this period include the celebration of the 27th Extended annual general meeting on 25th May 2024, extension of the Nutrition Smart Community project in Saptari and Rautahat for 15 months, participation of vice-chairperson and South Asia Regional Hub Manager and Vice-chair of FORWARD Nepal at Innovation Lab for Horticulture (ILH) annual meeting in Guatemala, visit of Director and Associate Director of ILH/USA to Nepal, and annual planning and review workshops of YUVA and Food System projects. Project monitoring visits by head office team and concerned project donors were held in various project districts at different times. Financial monitoring was held at both the central office and project offices.

Major project activities conducted

1. Empowering Youth Entrepreneurs through Appropriate Horticulture Interventions in Nepal - YUVA funded by USAID Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture and WHH

Key activities of the project in this period are:

- **Survey of youth for aspiration mapping, livelihood assets, and income needs**

The collected data has been cleaned and is being analyzed by PhD student with the support of the socioeconomic expert of the project.

- **Open field cultivation research trial**

The summer season vegetable trials under open field conditions and data their data recording in farmers diaries have been completed. Cucumber, long bean, capsicum, and tomato harvests are completed, while production of bitter gourd and okra is still ongoing. Fourteen farmers from Kapilvastu and 17 farmers from Dang participated in the trials. Currently, data entry into Excel sheets and subsequent analysis are in progress. Additionally, the research team and farmers are preparing for post-rainy and winter season vegetable sowing. To support this planning, feedback from farmers based on the summer season's results has been collected.

- **Testing of different types of protective cultivation structures and cropping pattern research trial**

After the completion of four rain shelters and three permanent net house structures in April, trials are being conducted inside different protected structures to analyze the gross margin data of five different crops viz. tomato, capsicum, coriander, broad leaf mustard, and garden bean in Sandhikharka municipality of Arghakhanchi district. Seven women farmers have joined the research for the project and are keeping the records in project designed farmers' diary.

- **Students' involvement in YUVA project**

A PhD student from the Agriculture Economics and Agribusiness Management Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry University, Rampur has initiated his research activities in the YUVA project. In addition, two master's students from the same university, each from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management and Department of Horticulture are soon joining YUVA project for their Master's thesis research. Apart from these, four Agriculture Diploma students (three in Dang and one in Kapilvastu) are engaged as Interns.

- **Innovation Lab Council meeting at Kathmandu and field visits**

Feed the Future Innovation Labs Council meeting was held on 22nd to 25th April 2024 in Kathmandu where representatives of GoN, USAID, Development partners, Directors/Principal Investigators (PIs) of Feed the Future Innovation Labs and private sector

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actors have participated. Dr. Bishnu Kumar Bishwakarma, PI participated in the Innovation Lab council meeting and contributed as a panelist in one of the sessions related to inclusive youth agri-entrepreneurship issues and challenges. Furthermore, Dr. Bishwakarma led the field visits of Innovation Council meeting participants (representatives of USAID, Directors and PIs of different Innovation Labs) at YUVA project sites and described the project activities.

- **Visit of ILH Associate Director to YUVA project research sites -** on 22nd May 2024, Buddhabhumi and Sandhikharka on 23rd May 2024

Interacted with farmers and provided feedback for improvements.

- **Field visits to YUVA research sites by YUVA project team from FORWARD Nepal, WHH, AFU and NFGF**

YUVA project team including PI, MEAL Officer, field officers and SA Regional Hub Manager from FORWARD Nepal; Country Director, Research Expert, Technical Advisor (Agriculture and Livelihood), MEAL Officer from WHH visited YUVA project research sites (Buddhabhumi, Tulsipur, Sandhikharka) from 30th April 2024 to 5th May 2024, and were joined by PhD student, Horticulture Expert, Socioeconomic expert of the project from AFU and representative from National Farmers Group Federation (NFGF) on the last day of visit. Farmers warmly greeted the project team and shared their experiences after project interventions. A short interaction with farmers was done in farmers' fields, where they expressed their interests, expectations from the project, and the challenges they are facing on the ground. Meetings with government stakeholders including the concerned Palika Chairmen, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and representatives from Lumbini Province Ministry of Agriculture, Food Technology and Land Management were met, and discussed the research objectives and potential collaboration.

- **Annual Review and Planning Workshop**

YUVA project conducted it's first review and planning workshop on 3rd May 2024 at Hotel Lumbini Buddha Garden, Rupandehi, where the project team, experts, regional hub manager, and management of FORWARD Nepal and WHH sat together to review the progress, look out for challenges and learned lessons and develop future action plans.

The formal session was chaired by Prof. Dr. Durga Devkota, Chairperson of FORWARD Nepal, while other guests/subject matter experts were Prof. Dr. Arjun Kumar Shrestha, Dr. Ujjal Tiwari from AFU, expert Dr. Stefanie Griebel - WHH, Germany, Shakeb Nabi, Country Director-WHH Nepal and Nabaraj Basnet - NFGF. Dr. Bishnu Kumar Bishwakarma, PI of the project from FORWARD Nepal welcomed the participants and shared the objectives of the workshop. Mr. Krishna Prasad Sapkota, SA Regional Hub Manager, FORWARD Nepal presented on updates of HIL projects awarded in South Asia. Shakeb Nabi, Dr. Ujjal Tiwari, and Nabaraj Basnet shared the mission and updates of WHH, FORWARD Nepal and Nepal Farmers' Group Federation (NFGF) respectively. Dr. Bishnu Kumar Bishwakarma shared the project progress from its initiation till April 2024 and some findings of aspiration mapping survey of 420 youth. Reflections were shared from YUVA project experts based on their visit to research sites. Dr. Stefanie Griebel from WHH, Shakeb Nabi, Prof. Dr. Durga Devkota, and Dr. Ujjal Tiwari shared their field observations. Nagendra Bastakoti, the PhD scholar of YUVA project presented his research proposal to the project stakeholders. Bamdev Regmi, one of the field officers of the project shared field level challenges and lessons learnt.

Furthermore, Dr. Bishnu Bishwakarma shared the plan of the YUVA project till September 2024. Suggestions were made to share an action plan with action points to include in the future. At last, Dr. Arjun Kumar Shrestha summarized the workshop by reiterating the importance of co-design and cocreating and effective communication between the project stakeholders and formally adjourned the workshop.

- **Trellis Fund Fellowship Program**

Mr. Jacob Annan, a doctoral student in Urban Forestry, Environment and Natural Resources at Southern University in Louisianna arrived Nepal on 16th June, 2024 under Trellis Fund Fellowship Program, designed to facilitate the knowledge exchange between students of US-based university and Nepalese university. He arrived to FORWARD Nepal office in Chitwan on 17th June 2024 where an orientation meeting was conducted. After a day of collaborative work and knowledge exchange between two PhD students at FORWARD Nepal office at Chitwan, field visits to Kapilvastu, and Argakhanchi was organized, where TFFP student interacted with staff and farmers in YUVA project research sites. There were field visits observations sharing sessions on 23rd June 2024 and visits to the Agricultural and Forestry University on 25th June 2024. He departed on 27th June 2024 from Chitwan to Kathmandu, where he had meetings at the WHH Office and departed from Kathmandu on 29th June 2024. He has shared his initial draft of case studies and regular virtual meetings are being held for the engagement of the TFFP students in the YUVA

project.

2. Grassroots Civil Society Organizations as Promoters of Improved Food Systems and Equitable Livelihood Opportunities funded by BMZ/WHH

Key activities of the project in this period are:

- **Local poultry breeds support for 170 landless families**

Under this heading, 170 landless households received the local poultry breeds. Those landless who constructed poultry housing were selected to support the local poultry. Each household was provided with 10 chicks, maintaining a hen-to-cock ratio of 8:2. These indigenous breeds possess natural adaptations to local environments, enhancing farmers' resilience against climate fluctuations and disease outbreaks. By promoting these breeds, genetic diversity is preserved, ensuring long-term agricultural viability. Additionally, local chick-rearing diversifies farmers' income streams, strengthening financial stability. Furthermore, supporting local chick production empowers rural communities economically and contributes to food security by providing nutritious poultry products. Overall, the local chicken will supply the year-round eggs and meat for such birds that are rich in protein sources for the 1,000 days women and other members of the households.

- **Cattle shed Improvements**

Altogether 86 cattle sheds have been improved till 15th July 2024. Each participant received a maximum amount of Rs 12,500 upon completion of the shed improvement. Each constructed structure was verified by project officers to ensure they matched the design estimate provided prior. The aim is to utilize urine for *Jholmal* preparation upon efficient collection. This will ultimately facilitate organic crop production and aid in minimizing the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

- **Support of vegetable seeds and Agri tools for nutrition gardens and GAP sessions**

In June 2024, the distribution of seeds, fruit saplings, and other agricultural materials was done to 66 smallholder farmers for a nutrition garden. Bitter Gourd (Pali), Latte (Chaurai), Bodi / Black Eyed Beans, Cucumber, Tomato, Pheromone trap, Yellow Sticky Trap, Organic pesticide (Neem oil and Neemicides), Secateurs (Gardening Scissors), Farm Rake, Dhaincha (for green manuring), Groundnut seed, Sweet potato, Taro, Trimethyl amine and saplings of Moringa, Guava, Banana, Pineapple and Papaya were distributed under nutritional garden support. Different vegetable seeds and agriculture materials were supported for smallholder farmers groups under GAP support.

- **GAP sessions at smallholder farmers' groups**

Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) sessions are intended to ensure that agricultural products are grown, harvested, processed, and transported in a manner that reduces the risks of contamination, environmental damage, and harm to workers and consumers. In total, over a crop cycle, 10 sessions on Good Agriculture Practices will be conducted. Sixth sessions of GAP are being conducted in the field now. During this period, the GAPs on Kalanamak Rice were conducted.

- **TVET on Electrical appliances repairing for 20 landless**

In June 2024, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on Electric Home Appliances Repairing Training was initiated in Yasodhara Rural Municipality. The training was facilitated by Public Technical College, a consulting firm, and followed a CTEVT-approved curriculum. It spans 190 hours, ensuring quality skill development as per the curriculum. Twenty landless individuals from Yasodhara RM were selected to participate in the training. The course content covered Introduction and occupational safety hazards and health, Introduction to Tools, equipment, and materials, fundamentals of electricity, electric circuit diagram, ceiling fan repair, table/stand/wall fan repair, water pump set repair, freezer repair, and electric kettle, rice cooker & iron repair. It also included sessions on Enterprise development and business plan formation.

- **Irrigation Support for smallholder farmer**

Under this heading, a plan is underway to install one deep boring in Suddhodhan RM. The project team published a Terms of Reference (ToR) and solicited quotations, subsequently hiring a builder for the installation. Simultaneously, the project team formed a deep boring user and management committee. This committee was established by smallholder farmers' groups in the locality, along with other active community members. They finalized the location for the deep boring installation and began the process of reaching an agreement with the landowner.

Additionally, the project team submitted a

proposal to Suddhodhan Rural Municipality (RM) requesting cost-sharing support. As a result, the RM has agreed to contribute NPR 80,000 (€570) towards the construction of the deep boring.

- **Paddy Day Celebration at Suddhodhan R. M. and Yasodhara R.M.**

With the slogan "Climate-Friendly Agriculture for Increased Rice Production," the 21st National Rice Day was celebrated in the paddy fields of the New Durgamai Small Farmers Group in Surjwalya, Ward No. 1 of Shuddhodhan Rural Municipality on behalf of project. The Government of Nepal's Ministry of Agriculture marks the 15th day of Asar as National Rice Planting Day to honor farmers and their labor. This day involves planting rice across various regions, symbolizing a commitment to a prosperous harvest. In Kapilvastu district, the day was celebrated with rice planting festivities. The event aimed to raise community awareness about rice planting and good agricultural practices.

- **Annual Review & Planning Workshop**

The Annual Review & Planning Workshop held from 13th to 15th May 2024 began with field visits on 13th May and sharing of the annual progress and strategic plan for the upcoming year was done on 14th & 15th May 2024. The gallery walk session showcased progress on all four outputs, facilitated by thematic officers: Agriculture and Livelihood Officer presented Output 1, the Nutrition and Hygiene Officer presented Output 2, and the Civil Society Mobilization and Advocacy Officer presented Outputs 3 and 4.

3. Regional Programme for Scaling up the Multi-sectoral Approach for Nutrition Smart Village in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal-Phase II funded by BMZ/WHH

The key project activities during the period are:

- **Orientation on Anthropometric assessment for health workers organized by the Municipal office**

The municipal office of Rajgadh RM and Paroha M. conducted a one-day orientation on anthropometric measurement for health workers, facilitated by Amitraj Shah and Deepak Kumar Mandal from FORWARD Nepal, and concluded by conducting the mass screening among 6 to 59 months of children.

- **Conduct Anthropometric Mass Screening by the health worker**

In Rautahat, the Anthropometric Mass Screening was organized by the Municipal office with the technical support of the Nutrition Smart Village (NSC) project. A total of 5,088 children have been assessed through anthropometric measurement by trained health workers. 229 (4.5%) children were identified as severely malnourished whereas 684 (13.4%) were moderately malnourished. The identified SAM children are admitted to OTC and MAM children are counselled at the household level.

- **Conduct Interpersonal Counselling in families with children aged 6 to 59 months**

Community volunteers provided household support and family counselling this quarter in both districts Rautahat and Saptari to promote proper infant feeding, hygiene, and sanitation, with follow-ups for 443 malnourished children, achieving a 43.34% recovery rate, and addressing 14 SAM cases with OTC admission.

Findings of Interpersonal counseling in families with children 6 to 59 months

	Total	# SAM (%)	# MAM (%)	# Normal (%)
Reached	**1,623**	**163**	**1,356**	**104**
Follow-up (after 3 months)	1,623	92 (5.6)	797 (49.1)	734 (45.2)

- **Participation in National Consultation workshop in Kathmandu**

A National Consultation workshop, organized by WHH and chaired by Hon. Minister Jwala Kumari Sah, was held in Kathmandu, featuring various sessions and discussions on food system transformation and climate resilience, with contributions from community participants and NSC project representatives highlighting best practices and strategies for promoting nutrient-dense crops and addressing climate vulnerability. Project Coordinator, Nutrition cum Advocacy officer-Rautahat along with four community participants have participated on behalf of FORWARD Nepal.

- **Conduct two days of training on seed preservation for seed preservation center group members**

The two-day training on operationalizing the seed preservation center was completed in both Rautahat and Saptari district reaching 36 participants which helped the community to operationalize the seed preservation center in the community.

- **Support Local Seeds to Seed Preservation Center**

Five seed varieties, including paddy, bitter gourd, okra, cowpea, and millet, were supported to seed preservation centers in Rajgadh-5 and Paroha-5, to enhance seed preservation centers.

- **Conduct Village level Nutrition Sensitive Microplanning (NSMP)**

Nutrition Sensitive Microplanning completed collecting 232 plans from 103 villages in Rautahat and Saptari which cover the sectors Agriculture = 43 Plan, Health (Nutrition and WASH) = 121 plans, Infrastructure = 68 plan. Among 232 plans 46 (20 %) have been endorsed at the Municipal level through the local level planning process covering Agriculture = 9 plan, Health (Nutrition and WASH) = 32 plan, Infrastructure = 5 plan.

- **Recruitment of community volunteers**

Altogether 16 (9 in Rautahat and 7 in Saptari) volunteers have been selected to follow-up feeding practices with infants/toddlers and application of hygiene practices (WASH) and Interpersonal counselling in households with 6-59 months of children.

- **NSC Global Exchange meeting NSC knowledge Platform for learning and exchange**

In this quarter learning and exchange sessions for the Global NCS project were on Nutrition Garden. The NSC Nepal reflected on the story Ful Jahan's Diversified Nutrition Garden: A Pathway to year-round sustainable and nutritious food.

Plan for next quarter

- NSC Annual review and lesson learned workshop from 12th to 15th August 2024
- Technical training on seed preservation at the seed preservation center
- Training on operationalization group to LANN Entrepreneur Group and Seed Preservation Center (Skill and Enterprise Development Expert-WHH/MCDC)

4. USAID/FtF Innovation Lab for Horticulture South Asia Regional Hub

The key project activities during the period are:

- **Inception Workshop at Bangladesh Agriculture University**

The PIs of AFU and BAU awardee of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture and Regional Hub Manager visited Bangladesh Agriculture University hosted an Inception workshop on 14th March 2024 which was held in the gracious presence of Chief Guest His Excellency Ambassador of Nepal to Bangladesh Ghanshyam Bhandari, Distinguished Guest Dr Humnath Bhandari, IRRI Representative of Bangladesh and Nepal, Chief Patron VC of BAU, Dean of Faculty of Agriculture/BAU, Director of BAURES/BAU, Department heads, research coordinators, faculty members, students, staffs and media persons. The workshop was chaired by the chair of the Department of Soil science. The regional hub manager shared the journey of the innovation highlighting the locally led and globally supported approach, the archetype that we focused on for South Asia and the subthemes we developed to call the RFP.

- **In-person meeting of ILH South Asia team**

The South Asia project team meeting was organized at FORWARD Nepal on 19th March 2024 in the physical presence of all the staff of the three awarded projects in both Bangladesh and Nepal. Three project members from BAU had visited AFU as part of their activity and we took the opportunity to meet and share the progress, discuss about the annual meeting in Guatemala, approval of restricted goods, visibility documents – brochure, leaflets, factsheet, Branding and communications guidelines. The BAU team had visit to AFU, strawberry farm and discussed about initiating the activities in Bangladesh.

- **Vegetable grafting training by NARC implemented project**

A two-day Vegetable grafting training was held by NARC under mitigating soil borne diseases project of NARC which was chaired by the Chief of Horticulture Department Dr Tika Chapagain, Chief Guest Archie Jarman, station researchers, participants from AFU/TU/KU, DoA, private sector including the nursery owners and media personnel. The technical training led to the formation of network of grafting interest groups to share the resources, expertise and opportunities across them. It was concluded with the development of action plan based on their interests to carry out the initiative forward. South Asia Regional Hub Manager participated in the opening session together with the Associate Director of Feed the Future Innovation lab for Horticulture held at Plant Pathology Centre on 21st April, 2024.

- **Innovation Lab Council Meeting**

The Innovation Lab Council Meeting 2024 was inaugurated on 22nd April 2024 at Malla Hotel in the presence of USAID DC, USAID Nepal, MoALD, DoA, Directors and Associate Directors from 16 different innovation labs out of 21 operational across the globe, development practitioners, private sector, researchers and media personnel. It was chaired by the Director of Food System for Nutrition innovation lab Dr Shivani Ghosh. There were presentations on Localization, Food Security, Food Safety, Scaling of Innovations, Bundling of innovations etc. A series of panel discussions were planned on different themes – climate smart innovations, food safety, reducing loss and waste for ensuring nutrition, food system transformation, private sector investment in agriculture etc. The meeting concluded on 26th April 2024 with a 2-days field visit to three different sites: Rupandehi-Kapilvastu, Chitwan-Makwanpur and

Kathmandu-Bhaktapur-Kavre. The Chitwan-Makwanpur visit unfortunately could not happen due to the cancellation of the flight while the rest got materialized as planned to showcase different initiatives under different innovation labs. It was participated by Dr Ujjal, Dr Bishnu and Mr. Bishal from HIL projects.

- **Social media training by ILH Communications Manager**

A virtual social media training was organized in the lead of Branding and Communications wing of UC Davis in coordination with the ICED, University of Ghana and FORWARD Nepal on 2nd May 2024 whereby all the project participants were invited. The training highlighted the use of social media for amplifying project initiatives across wider stakeholders.

- **Annual Meeting of ILH**

The Regional Hub Manager from South Asia and the Vice-president of FORWARD Nepal and Co-PI as well as an Expert of YUVA project Dr Ujjal Tiwari participated the Annual Meeting of Innovation Lab for Horticulture from 2nd to 8th June 2024 at Antigua, Guatemala. The annual meeting planned to take a deep dive into the implementation course of the projects against the program's goal, objectives, regional objectives and discuss how we want to ensure sustainable impacts of the innovations with our initiatives also highlighting the prospect of collaboration. Each project was thoroughly discussed with the proposal, semi-annual report, factsheet, poster, video progress and the virtual presentation and engagement. The breakout sessions were planned by regions with the engagement of the consortium experts and the International Advisory Board members. The outcome of the break-out session was shared in plenary for feedback again. The internal day consisted of two different parallel trainings on Horticulture Investment Study and Gender Up. The public day, organized as a Conference had the presence of 150 participants including representatives from USAID, government people, researchers, academicians, development practitioners, private sectors and media. The week-long annual meeting was concluded with a field visit to observe the program initiatives and share in different locations.

5. The Enhanced Rural AI (TERAI) Project for Smallholder Dairy Farmers in Nepal funded by JOA/ADRA

The key project activities during the period are:

- **Farmers exposure visits to Chitwan and Nawalpur**

A two-day exposure visit was organized by the TERAI Project in which thirty-five dairy farmers visited Prakriti Agriculture Cooperative Ltd., Madhyabindu-1, Kolhuwa, Nawalpur (East) where they observed the feed plant provided by the previous dairy value-chain project supported by Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA). The farmers also visited Annapurna Milk Production Cooperative Ltd., Bharatpur-6, Kesharbag, Chitwan where they observed the milk collection system, milk product diversification plants, feed manufacturing plant, silage making machine, etc. The visitors were informed about the challenges faced by both the cooperatives in the past and their change stories too.

- **Embryo transfer (ET) training**

TERAI Project organized a six-day embryo transfer (ET) training for three officials from the National Livestock Breeding Offices (one each from NLBO - Pokhara, Lahan and Nepalgunj), two officials from National Cattle Research Program (NCRP) and one from Agriculture & Forestry University (AFU) from 4th to 9th April 2024 at National Cattle Research Program (NCRP), Rampur, Chitwan to enhance their embryo transfer skills. The trainees learned about the methodology of collecting of fresh embryos by flushing the donor animal and transfer them into surrogate animals. Similarly, the participants also learned to transfer frozen embryos into the recipient animals. Forty-four frozen embryos of high genetic merit (imported by TERAI Project) were transferred into 44 recipient animals of different cattle farms of Chitwan and Nawalpur.

- **Input support to Cooperative**

As demanded by the milk collecting cooperatives, viz. Nawa Kiran Agriculture Cooperative, Sainamaina-7, Deuwapar and Sana Kisan Agriculture Cooperative Ltd., Kanchan-1, Belbhariya (Rupandehi), the project supported chilling vats having the capacity of 1,000 liters to both the cooperatives to enhance their milk collection system.

- **Business plan training for dairy cooperatives**

A training event was organized for the executive members and/or managers of dairy cooperatives from 12th to 14th May 2024 at Banganga Municipality-4, Jitpur, Kapilvastu. A total of 29 people from 14 dairy cooperatives participated in the training. The participants of the training learned about strategic planning and business plan of an organization. By the end of the training, the participants also drafted the strategic plan and business plan of their respective cooperatives.

- **Support to Municipal Livestock Service Sections**

As demanded by the Livestock Service Sections (LSSs), FORWARD Nepal handed over a mother referee (10 liters) and a digital/visual AI gun each to

Kanchan Rural Municipality (Rupandehi) and Banganga Municipality (Kapilvastu), and a heat detector to Sainamaina Municipality (Rupandehi), in order to strengthen the artificial insemination (AI) facilities and AI services provided by them.

- **Door-to-door Animal Health Camp**

Door-to-door animal health camp was conducted from 11th to 13th June 2024 in Sainamaina Municipality and 14th to 15th June 2024 in Kanchan Rural Municipality of Rupandehi district, in coordination with Faculty of Animal Science, Veterinary Science and Fisheries/Agriculture and Forestry University, Rampur Chitwan. Mostly, the cases of cattle and buffalo had the problems with infertility, post-partum anestrus and repeat breeding. A total of 60 animals were treated and counseling was done for the improvement of the animals.

- **Refresher Training to Artificial Inseminators**

TERAI Project organized an event of Refresher Training on Animal Breeding and Artificial Insemination (AI) for 13 artificial inseminators of the project sites who have already received the basic AI training in the past. The training was organized at National Livestock Breeding Office (NLBO)/GoN, Pokhara, Kaski from 7th to 12th July 2024. The training was organized with the objectives of increasing their knowledge and skills on animal breeding and artificial insemination, to update them on recent advancements/technologies (i.e. use of heat detector, visual AI gun, ultrasonography, etc.) in animal breeding and artificial insemination, to update the participants on the method of semen collection and its processing, to update the participants on pedigree performance recording system (PPRS) for genetic improvement of cattle and buffalo, recently endorsed national breeding policy, etc.

6. Ecosystems (Climate Change Addressing Interventions)- Riverbed Farming

FORWARD Nepal is implementing riverbed farming project in Rajapur, Lamkichuha, and Godawari Municipalities as an economic resilience activity for poor and vulnerable people affected by floods. The Key activities during this reporting period were:

- **Formation of farmers groups**

Till this reporting period, 6 farmer groups are formed in Godawari, 7 farmer groups in Lamkichuha, and 7 in Rajapur Municipalities making a total of 377 beneficiaries (48 males and 329 females). Moreover, there are 23 individual farmers in Godawari Municipality being supported by the project.

- **Farmer Field School (FFS) Training to lead farmers and project staffs**

The capacity building training – Farmer Field School Training to lead farmers and project staffs was conducted for three days from 2nd to 4th April 2024 at Tharu Home Resort, Thakurdwara, Bardiya. The objective of the training was to empower lead farmers and project staff including with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead effective and sustainable agricultural practices, and help them able to conduct farmers field school (FFS) classes in their group. Each municipal official from the agriculture section of the three municipalities was present during the training.

- **Development of climate-smart technologies demonstration sites**

The Climate smart technologies demonstration sites are developed at Toripur, Lamkichuha Municipality-10; Majhra, Rajapur Municipality-10 and Damaura, Godawari Municipality-10. The demonstration site includes various climate-smart technologies like plastic house with green net, plastic mulching, drip and sprinkler irrigation, pheromone traps, yellow sticky traps, biopesticides (*Jholmol*), cucurbits (cucumber, bitter gourd and beans), etc. to exhibit and promote sustainable solutions that mitigate climate change impacts while supporting economic development and social well-being of riverbed farmers.

- **Exposure visits to farmers**

The project conducted two events of learning and sharing visits for the farmers. The first event was conducted with 22 farmers of Godawari Municipality on 20th May 2024, towards Vittariya, ward number 4 and Chhota Paliya, ward number 5 of Kailari RM, Kailali. Meanwhile, the farmers of Lamkichuha and Rajapur visited Rapti Sonari Rural Municipality of Banke and Gulariya Municipality of Bardiya district on 22nd May 2024, which included 39 farmers from Lamkichuha and Rajapur Municipalities. The participants of the visit interacted with the experienced farmers about the production practices such as optimal time for establishing nurseries, sowing seedlings, suitable crop varieties, the technologies being used for production and marketing strategies of farmers.

- **Linkage events with market stakeholders**

FORWARD Nepal completed three events of horizontal as well as vertical linkage for market stakeholders among local government representatives, agriculture development section, disaster management section, market management committee, business person/ vendors, and farmers. The activity was conducted on 9th, 13th & 17th May

2024 at Godawari, Lamkichuha and Rajapur Municipalities, respectively. The total participants of the three events were 57, out of which 31 were males and 26 were females. During the event, there was interaction as well as discussion among the farmers, government representatives and market stakeholders. A commitment has been shared among the participants where all three acting bodies will be working actively for the production and supply to the market.

- **FFS Sessions in each farmers' groups**

The farmer field school is being conducted on 18 farmer groups by the lead farmers. The FFS class had started after the receiving the FFS ToT by the lead farmers. The orientation sessions are being conducted through theoretical group discussions followed by practical works. The lead farmers have conducted eight, four and six FFS orientation sessions in Lamkichuha, Godawari and Rajapur municipalities, respectively. Altogether, 348 beneficiaries (38 male and 310 female) are receiving the orientation session on different topics set up by the project during the FFS ToT Training to the lead farmers and project staffs.

- **Joint Monitoring visits with municipal representatives and staff**

Three events of joint monitoring visits with the municipalities have been completed with the active participation of the local government representative (Mayor, Deputy Mayor, ward chair/members), municipal staff from agriculture, disaster management, and administration sections on May and June 2024. The local government representatives and the agriculture section of the municipality have committed to continue the riverbed farming activity by themselves from upcoming year. The farmers were also happy to welcome the local government representatives and municipal staffs.

- **Riverbed farming policy development**

A consultant is hired to draft the municipal level riverbed farming policy under the project. The initial draft is shared by resource person by collecting primary data and reviewing secondary information

7. Effects of male outmigration, and environmental changes on women involved in livestock production in rural Nepal (Grant number 22K05851)

This research project, funded by Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research Japan, is implemented by Hiroshima University with its faculty member Dr. Niraj Prakash Joshi leading the project. FORWARD Nepal is a collaborating partner for its implementation, along with Associate Professor Dr. Shanker Raj Barsila of Agriculture and Forestry University, Rampur, Chitwan. The project aims to explore the status of male outmigration, environmental changes, and their effect on the work of left-behind female members in hilly wards of Icchakaamana Rural Municipality. FORWARD Nepal hired six short-term enumerators, all of whom were master's level students of Agriculture and Forestry University and trained them to orient the questionnaire, field, Qualtrics, and survey. This was followed by the field survey in five hilly wards of the municipality, namely Ward Number 1, 2, 3, and hilly settlements of Ward Number 4 and 5 using Qualtrics. Household data is collected from 284 households. The preliminary findings from the data will be disseminated to the concerned stakeholders by organizing a dissemination workshop in mid of August 2024.

Training/Workshop/Meeting

- Krishna Prasad Sapkota on behalf of FORWARD Nepal attended the conference of Feed the Future Food Safety Innovation Lab at Malla Hotel on 18th April 2024 with the theme Fruit and Vegetable Food Safety – Evidence to Policy Action– National Policy Consultation in the presence of the Director, Associate Director of the Food Safety Innovation Lab, VC, Registrar, Service Commission chief, Dean of AFU, Secretary of MoALD Dr Govinda Sharma, DG of DoA, researchers, development practitioners and media personnel.

- Staff of Nutrition Smart Community along with FtF SA Hub Manager attended a national consultation workshop on Nutrition Smart Community organized by WHH at Malla Hotel on 24th April 2024 in the gracious presence of Minister of Agriculture development Hon. Jwala Kumari Shah, MOALD, NARC, DOA, SAARC Agriculture Centre, GIZ, HKI, Action Against Hunger, Baliyo Nepal, LI-BIRD, RRN, CEAPRED, FORWARD, Aasaman Nepal, Kalika, KIDS, NTAG etc.

- Krishna Prasad Sapkota participated in the 4th Biennial International Conference on Climate Smart and Innovative Agriculture organized by Nepalese Agriculture Professionals of Americas (NAPA) from 24th to 26th May 2024 at Baltimore, USA, and presented a paper on How climate change impacts fruit and vegetable production in Nepal? He also served and shared the initiatives as a panellist on Climate Smart Agriculture on mitigating Green House Gas emissions taking examples from the initiatives carried out in Nepal and Bangladesh under the funding support from Feed the Future Innovation lab for Horticulture/UC Davis.

Staffing

- Mr. Suman Neupane was appointed as Program Officer (Agriculture & Livelihood) in place of Mr. Madhu Sudhan Paudel for the "Grassroots Civil Society Organisations as Promoters of Improved Food Systems and Equitable Livelihood Opportunities (NPL 1083-22) from 20th March 2024. Mr. Bikash Acharya was appointed as the Monitoring, Documentation and Reporting Officer (MDRO) from 7th July 2024 in place of Mr. Binod Pokharel. Mr. Pokharel is going to the USA for his PhD studies.
- Ms. Sakchha Timilsina Subedi re-joined FORWARD Nepal as Assistant Admin Officer at the head office, Chitwan on 26th March 2024.
- Ms. Mahima Dahit was appointed as Community Facilitator (Technician) on 14th May 2024, for the "Resilient Ecosystems (Climate Change Addressing Interventions) – Riverbed Farming" project in Bardiya
- Ms. Manisha Darnal was appointed as Field Officer (Nutrition and MEAL) on 14th May, 2024, and Ms. Sweety Gupta as Agriculture Officer on 19th May 2024, NSC project Phase II (NPL 1066-19).
- Mr. Prabin Paudel was appointed as the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Officer (MEAL Officer) from 10th July 2024 in place of Ms. Srijana Neupane who is moving abroad with her family.
- Dr. Bishnu Kumar Bishwa Karma, Principal Investigator (PI) "Empowering Youth Entrepreneurs through Appropriate Horticultural Interventions in Nepal (YUVA)" project left the organization on 15th July 2024.

Visitors:

- Prof. Dr. Anwaral Abedin, Department of Soil Science, and Dr. Md Golam Kibria, Associate Professor of Soil Science from Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh and Prof, Dr. Kalyani Mishra Tripathi, Bishal Shrestha from Agriculture and Forestry University visited FORWARD Nepal central office for SA regional hub in person meeting on 19th April 2024.
- Mr. Nagendra Chaudhary, ex-minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Bijay Kumar Shrijurwa visited FORWARD Nepal office to discuss the recent projects and major activities ongoing in those projects.
- Dr. Stefanie Griebel from WHH, Germany and Shakeb Nabi, Country Director of Welthungerhilfe paid a short visit to FORWARD Nepal office on 28th April 2024 to discuss on YUVA project recent events.
- Nirajan Pokhrel from RRN, and Pratigya Kattel and Sunaina Khadal from Welthungerhilfe visited FORWARD Nepal for the financial monitoring of WHH projects account on 5th June 2024.
- Four Masters students Will Anderson, Jeanne Zeihen, Edouard Baudot, and Baptiste Lesieur from Sorbonne University, France visited FORWARD Nepal office for interaction with FORWARD Nepal team and briefing on their video documentary project on 'Permaculture' on 6th June 2024.
- Mr. Kishor Bagale, President of Chitwan Dairy Association, Shiva Lal Kandel and Bhagirath Timalsena of Annapurna Dairy Cooperative visited FORWARD Office to discuss on the dairy related projects and potential collaborations with FORWARD Nepal.
- On 12th June, 2024 Mr, Chiranjibi Sharma, Assistant Chief District Officer, Chitwan visited FORWARD Nepal head office for regular organizational monitoring.
- On 19th June 2024, Mani Kumar Tamang, Finance Officer and Hari Shrestha, Human Resources Officer of WHH visited NSC-II project office at Saptari to discuss projects HR mobilization and operational issues.
- Mr. Keshab Dawadi, Regional Agribusiness Director; Nawaraj Acharya, and Shanti Ale from USAID Agricultural Inputs visited FORWARD Nepal's office to discuss the potential collaboration and share updates on USAID funded projects implemented by both organizations.
- On 21st & 22nd June 2024, CA, Prakash Datta Bhatta, a member of Monitoring and Evaluation team from the Social Welfare Council (SWC) and Niraj Babu Shrestha from Welthungerhilfe visited FORWARD Nepal for the audit of the WHH funded "NPL 1058-18", "NPL 1059-18" and "NPL 1066-19" project's account.
- On 26th June 2024, Mr. Surendra Gautam, Regional Director of AWO International, while returning from his visit to AFU, visited FORWARD Nepal to learn about the current initiatives of FORWARD Nepal and discuss the potential collaborations.
- On 11th July 2024, Ms. Biju Dangol, WASH Expert from WHH visited NSC-II project office at Saptari for project monitoring and focus on the sustainability, knowledge management and documentation of best practices and lessons learned.

Institutional activities/events:

On 25th May 2024, FORWARD Nepal celebrated its 27th Extended Annual General Meeting at the Narayani Resort, Gaindakot, Nawalparashi. The event was chaired by chairperson Prof. Dr. Durga Devkota and Mr. Manoj Ranabhat, Ward Chairperson of Bharatpur Metropolitan City, Ward No. 2, Chitwan was Chief Guest. There was auspicious presence of Prof. Dr Nabaraj Devkota - VC Gandaki University, Prof. Dr Madhav Kumar Shrestha - Past President of FORWARD Nepal, Parbati Ghimire Dawadi - President of NGO Federation, Prof. Dr Sunila Rai from AFU, along with founder members, general members, staff and well-wishers of FORWARD Nepal. Annual reviews of all projects, updates on past, current and pipeline projects, and an evening reception were organized on the same day.

Upcoming institutional major events:

- WHH partners' semi-annual review and project design workshop at Mulkot.
- Annual report publication and release.
- NSC project lesson learned workshop in Saptari
- HU research project dissemination workshop in Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality and Reporting
- Annual review and Planning workshop of TERAI project.

Some Glimpses

Visit of Innovation Lab for Horticulture Associate Director Mr. Archie Zarman to research site of Sandhikharka municipality. Credit: Nagendra Bastakoti

Trellis Fund Fellowship student Mr. Jacob Annan learning and sharing in the field at Buddhabhumi municipality. Credit: Nagendra Bastakot

Agriculture and Livelihood Officer of Food system Project sharing target versus achievements from Food System annual review and planning workshop.

Hand-over of AI Equipment to the participants of AI Training by Mayor of Sainamaina Municipality, Rupandehi

AI Refresher Training to AI Technicians at NLBO, Pokhara

Group photo taken during 27th Extended Annual General Meeting of FORWARD Nepal

YUVA project annual review and planning workshop, Lumbini

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