FORWARD Nepal

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FORWARD Nepal's Bulletin

This 35th issue of FORWARD Nepal's Bulletin provides a comprehensive update on project implementation progress in brief. It highlights institutional activities and events from 14th March, 2025, to 16th July, 2025. During this period, we continued with four projects: "Empowering Youth Entrepreneurs through Appropriate Horticultural Interventions in Nepal (YUVA)"; "The Enhanced Rural AI (TERAI) Project for Smallholder Dairy Farmers in Nepal"; and "Grassroots Civil Society Organizations as Promotors of Improved Food Systems and Equitable Livelihood Opportunities". In addition, several project concept papers and proposals have been submitted to various donor agencies for potential project partnerships and funding.

Highlights of this period include the conclusion of the YUVA Project with closeout and social audit events, as well as organization of a national-level workshop held at Godavari, Lalitpur, on 15th July 2025 in collaboration with the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) of the TERAI Project. Milk product diversification training was provided to dairy cooperatives, while enterprise development efforts supported three environmentally friendly ventures super flour (*Sarbottam Pitho*) production, beekeeping, and integrated moringa-cum-fish farming. In addition, diverse nutrition gardens were established with 66 households to strengthen food and nutrition security. The project also successfully completed its target of improving 220 cattle sheds across three municipalities, enhancing livestock management and productivity.

Major project activities conducted

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

Key activities of the project in this period are:

- **Infrastructure and material support to cooperative and private firms for proper management of milk collection and processing:**

The TERAI Project provided dairy equipment to milk producer cooperatives and private firms, encouraging them to become business-oriented and produce value-added products for sustainability. Since dairy industries, including DDC, have not paid cooperatives for months, the project's support helps cooperatives manufacture products to reduce dependency on delayed payments and ensure profitability.

- **Interaction Meeting among the Stakeholders of Agriculture Sector:**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land Management, and Cooperatives (Lumbini Province) held a workshop with agriculture stakeholders to review progress and plan ahead. Hon'ble Minister Mr. Dinesh Panthi acknowledged I/NGOs' contributions to poverty reduction and highlighted innovations such as TERAI's use of ET and sexed semen, GAP promotion by ADRA Nepal/FORWARD Nepal and LI-BIRD, and digital agriculture initiatives by Practical Action. The Ministry shared key accomplishments and emphasized stronger coordination with partners, proposing regular quarterly or semi-annual meetings to align efforts.

- **Field visit by ED and PFP:**

In June, Executive Di-rector Mr. Netra Pratap Sen and Project Focal Person Prof. Dr. Nirajan Bhattarai visited TERAI Project sites with technical staff. They observed equipment at Banganga Milk Producer Cooperative and dis-cussed operations with cooperative leaders. A model farm in Banganga housing 12 cows and 10 heifers showed positive results from sexed semen. They also visited Mr. Ram Adhin Yadav's private milk center in Budhhabhumi, which collects 500–700 liters daily and processes it into *Paneer* and *Dahi* for local markets.

- **Milk Product Diversification Training to Dairy Cooperatives:**

The project organized a four-day training for cooperatives in Rupandehi and Kapilvastu to address issues like milk holidays and delayed payments by teaching milk processing and product diversification. Participants gained hands-on experience in producing *Paneer, Dahi, Kulfi*, and sweets such as *Barfi, Peda*, and Milk-cake. Sixteen participants (13 men and 3 women) attended, and co-operatives now plan to focus on producing high-demand value-added products for local markets.

- **Financial and Compliance Training:**

ADRA Nepal organized a three-day training for its implementing partners, including FORWARD Nepal, to align financial and operational practices and enhance accountability. The training covered Nepal Accounting Standards for NPOs, tax and SWC compliance, fraud prevention, procurement procedures, budgeting, and reporting. Mr. Subhash Chaudhary and Mr. Ram Dayal Tharu represented the FORWARD Nepal/TERAI project, gaining knowledge in financial management, internal controls, governance, transparency, and HR administration.

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- **Staff Capacity Building Training:**

From 9th to 11th July, the TERAI Project organized a staff training in Tansen, Palpa for FORWARD Nepal and IRDC Nepal staff. The sessions covered GEDSI, lesson docu-mentation, coordination, leadership development, and social mobilization. The training aimed to build capacity for inclusive planning, effective coordination, leadership accountability, and sustainable program outcomes. Dr. Subhash Chaudhary participated actively.

- **National-level Workshop at Godavari, Lalitpur:**

On 15th July 2025, the TERAI Project and DLS organized a national workshop on Sustainable Dairy Sector Development with participation from government bodies, research institutions, private companies, cooperatives, and farmers. Chief Guest Dr. Deepak Kumar Kharal (MoALD Secretary) and Chair Dr. Ram Nandan Tiwari (DLS Director General) led the event. The workshop aimed to share innovations, identify priority interventions, and draft a roadmap for dairy sector growth. Presentations covered live-stock challenges (DLS), dairy sector approaches (NDDB), industry and export promotion (NDA), and research innovation (NARC). Group discussions focused on improving production, ensuring milk quality and market linkages, and advancing technology and research.

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:

- **Organic Farming through PGS:**

The project introduced the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) as an alternative to costly third-party organic certification. In three municipalities, 50 farmers received agricultural inputs such as vermicompost, Trichoderma, and azolla beds to support organic farming. A five-day residential training in Chitwan prepared eight PGS inspectors, who will ensure compliance with standards, monitor quality, and help farmers market their products. This system is strengthening consumer trust and opening local market opportunities for smallholder farmers.

- **Enterprise Development:**

Three environmentally friendly enterprises were identified and supported: super flour production (*Sarbottam Pitho*), bee keeping, and moringa cum fish farming. These initiatives are being set up on a cost-sharing basis with local entrepreneurs, helping create jobs and strengthen com-munity-based business models. While enterprises have already begun in Suddhodhan and Mayadevi municipalities, new applications are being solicited in Yashodhara to replace one entrepreneur who with-drew.

- **Nutrition Gardens:**

Diverse nutrition gardens were established with 66 households, supplying fruit trees (such as moringa, papaya, mango, and lemon), sea-sonal seeds, and irrigation pipes. Farmers also received multilayer vegetable farming structures that allow year-round production, even during the rainy season. These gardens improve household nutrition, reduce dependency on market purchases, and serve as visible models for integrated and sustainable food production in the community.

- **Support for Landless and Leasehold Farmers:**

Thirty landless farmers received basic agricultural equipment such as weighing machines and crates as start-up support. In addition, refresher training sessions on vegetable cultivation and fish farming were organized, with exposure visits to model farms. Sup-port is being provided on a cost-sharing basis with local governments to ensure landless families can access land for production. This intervention enhances both skills and resources, enabling marginalized households to generate income from farming.

- **Cattle Shed Improvement:**

The project successfully completed its target of improving 220 cattle sheds across three municipalities. These sheds are designed with urine collection pits, allowing farmers to pro-duce organic liquid manure and pesticides from cattle waste. This approach not only improves animal hygiene and waste management but also reduces dependence on chemical fertilizers, lowering costs and promoting organic farming practices.

- **Irrigation Support:**

Thirteen shallow boring irrigation schemes and one deep boring scheme have been installed, with more planned to reach a total of 22 shallow bores. The project covers 80% of costs, with the rest supported by local governments, ensuring strong ownership. These irrigation facilities are enabling farmers to grow high-value crops year-round and improve water management through user groups that oversee maintenance and collect nominal fees.

- **Market-led Agriculture:**

Farmers were supported with seed and inputs for high-value and traditional crops, including *Kalanamak* rice, *Sabha Mansuli* rice, and marigold. Demonstration plots were established to promote entrepreneurship and encourage market-driven agriculture. These interventions not only pre-serve traditional crop varieties with high market demand but also equip farmers to respond to consumer preferences and enhance their incomes.

- **Off-farm Livelihoods (TVET):**

Skill development training was provided to landless households in areas such as snake rescue, bee keeping, fish farming, traditional music, poultry farming, tailoring, beautician services, and light driving. Participants also received relevant start-up support, such as poultry houses, beekeeping equipment, and musical instruments for Natuwa youths. These opportunities diversify income sources, promote self-employment, and preserve cultural traditions, particularly in landless and marginalized communities.

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- **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP):**

GAP sessions were rolled out for 4,500 households, with training covering topics such as seed treatment, nursery bed preparation, integrated pest management, post-harvest handling, and sustainable rice cultivation. These sessions build farmers' capacity to adopt mod-ern yet sustainable techniques that improve yields, maintain soil health, and reduce crop losses. They al-so encourage collective learning and adoption of best practices at the community level.

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

Key activities of the project in this period are:

- **YUVA Project Conclusion with Closeout and Social Audit Events**

The YUVA Project officially concluded with a series of closeout and social audit events organized between 24th to 28th April, 2025, in three municipalities of Lumbini Province. The events followed the project's stop work order on 25th January and formal termination notice on 25th February, issued by the UC Davis/USAID and were designed to update stakeholders on the project closure while ensuring transparency through social auditing.

Closeout meetings were hosted in Sandhikharka (Arghakhanchi), Tulsipur (Dang), and Buddhabhumi (Kapilvastu), with active participation from local governments, agriculture officers, NGOs, and social auditors. Key representatives from FORWARD Nepal, including Mr. Krishna Prasad Sapkota (South Asia Regional Hub Manager), Mr. Rishikesh Dhakal (PI), Mr. Ram Dayal Tharu (Senior Admin and Finance Officer), and Mr. Nagendra Bastakoti (PhD Scholar), facilitated the visits.

Independent social auditors in three districts presented their audit findings, highlighting project achievements and financial accountability. The events not only strengthened trust among stakeholders but also reaffirmed FORWARD Nepal's commitment to transparency and collaboration. Local governments acknowledged the project's contributions and ex-pressed readiness for future partnership in development initiatives.

4. Regional programme for scaling up the multisectoral approach for Nutrition Smart Villages in Bangladesh, Nepal and India; phase II in Saptari and Rautahat Districts (NPL 1066-19) funded by BMZ/WHH

The NSC project (NPL 1066-19) reached its planned conclusion in March 2025, having successfully met all of its objectives and delivering its final outputs on schedule. Following a review and handover process, the project was formally closed, keeping mechanisms at community level to ensure sustained impact.

Training/Workshop/Meeting

- On **24th & 25th April 2025:** project staff from NPL 1083-22 and 1084-22 together with WHH held the Annual Review Meeting in Lumbini Province to review the progress and achievements of FY 2024.
- On **2nd to 5th June 2025:** project staff from NPL 1083-22 and NPL 1084-22 along with WHH participated in a staff capacity development program in Lumbini Province focusing on enhancing skills in data analysis, re-port writing, and overall project management.
- On **15th June 2025,** Yasodhara Rural Municipality, KSSC, and FORWARD Nepal jointly organized a validation workshop in Kapilvastu to finalize the Right to Food and Food System Strategy**.**
- On **15th July 2025,** a National Workshop on Sustainable Dairy Sector Development was jointly organized by the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) and ADRA Nepal in Kathmandu, with participation from key government agencies, academic institutions, dairy industries, cooperatives, and farmers.

Staff Turnover

- On **1st April 2025**: Project Coordinator Mr. Amitraj Shah, Field Officer (Nutrition and MEAL) Ms. Manisha Darnal and Project Finance Officer Mr. Mr. Dig Bijay Dhakal completed their tenure following the closure of the NSC project.
- On **25th June 2025:** Mr. Sunil Kumar BK joined the Improved Food System Project as Project Admin and Finance Officer.

Visitors

- **On 16th May 2025**, Prof. Dr. Nirajan Bhattarai, Director of DOREX, AFU, visited the FORWARD Nepal head office regarding his affiliation with FORWARD Nepal as Professional Advisor/ Expert for Livestock and Dairy.

Some Glimpses

Workshop on Food System Transformation in Yasodhara RM

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Submission of strategic food policy recommendations to local governments by Improved Food System Project Team, Kapilvastu

National Workshop on Sustainable Dairy Sector Development in Nepal

Dhaan Diwas 2082 celebrated in Yashodhara RM, Kapilvastu

Joint Annual Planning and Review Workshop 2025 in Lumbini

Support of Azolla to member farmers of the PGS group

Closeout and Social Audit Events of YUVA Project in three Provinces

Female calf was recently born using sexed semen at the farm of a beneficiary farmer in Rupandehi

Three project Rural Municipalities recommending their five-year Food Rights and Food System Strategic Plans

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