



FORWARD Nepal

Bulletin - 30

July 17, 2023- November 16, 2023

Patronage: Netra Pratap Sen, Executive Director

Publication Committee:

Srijana Neupane, Toya Gautam and Tirth Kumar Timsina

FORWARD Nepal's Bulletin

This 30th 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 first four months of the fiscal year 2080/81 B.S. i.e. July 17, 2023 to November 16, 2023. During this period, we continued with five 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)" and "Grassroots Civil Society Organizations as promoters of Improved Food Systems and Equitable Livelihood Opportunities".

Apart from this, several project concept papers and proposals have been submitted to various donor agencies for project partnerships/funding including USAID local works and women in business to USAID, riverbed farming to USAID Tayar Nepal and some projects are in line for implementation. Participation in meetings, seminars, and training with different donors and development agencies and our project-based staff was held.

The highlights of this period include celebration of 27th FORWARD Nepal's Day on 1st September 2023, staff's participation in regional nutrition annual review meeting in Bangladesh, local food system study in Kapilvastu, renewal of organizational registration, donor visits including CD of WHH, visits for potential partnership by Winrock International and Save the Children, and so on. Newly started projects YUVA and food system of Kapilvastu completed their palika level inception meetings and thus initiated the project activities implementation at the community level. Project monitoring visits by head office staff and concerned project donors were held at different times.

Annual Audit of FORWARD Nepal conducted from September 25, 2023 to October 06, 2023– by a Chartered Audit Firm Sushil and Associates. The annual institutional renewal process was completed on 9th November 2023.

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

Introduction

"Empowering Youth Entrepreneurs through Appropriate Horticultural Interventions in Nepal - YUVA (Youth)" is a research-for-development project being implemented at Buddhabhumi, Sandhikharka, and Tulsipur Municipalities of Lumbini Province, Nepal, from April 2023 to July 2026.

The principal activities of the project in this quarter are:

- **Municipal inceptions:**

YUVA project conducted one-day inception workshop on August 21, 2023, at Buddhabhumi Municipality; August 22, 2023, at Sandhikharka Municipality; and August 24, 2023, at Tulsipur Sub-Metropolitan City to clarify the project's objectives, expected outcomes, and the roles of the municipal stakeholders in the project implementation. The workshop brought together key stakeholders from the municipal sector, aiming to ensure their understanding, commitment, and alignment with the project's objectives, thus facilitating networking and fostering collaboration among the project team and municipal stakeholders. Participants in the workshop were elected representatives (Mayor, Ward Chairs), officials (Chief Administrative Officer and Agriculture Development Section Staff), youth farmers from the project working areas; and other stakeholders. Mr Sandesh Dhital, Chief of planning section from Lumbini Province also graced the workshop as a guest.

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

The questionnaire has been drafted, reviewed, and finalized for mapping livelihood assets, income needs, and aspiration mapping of youth farmers, and the

survey is being carried out by three field officers in their respective locations. Youths from the age of 16-40 are being interviewed and their aspirations are being collected in the survey. The survey is expected to be completed within December. In addition, the questionnaire to explore the orchard leasing mechanism and provisions for land leasing is developed and shared with the team for review and refinement.

- **Open field cultivation research trial**

Research sites are being explored to conduct open-field cultivation research trials in Buddhabhumi municipality and Tulsipur sub-metropolitan city. Youth farmers are being identified and communicated on the objectives and methodology of the research. Fifteen youth farmers from Buddhabhumi municipality and 15 farmers from Tulsipur sub-metropolitan city are participating in the research, they will grow five different crops for trial, and economic data will be recorded using farmers' diaries. The diaries will be analyzed to identify the profitable size and crops. Potential vegetable crops (priority crops-p1) to be grown are discussed in Kapilvastu, which will be finalized later after discussing with farmers in Tulsipur.

- **Case studies related to protected cultivation**

Eight case studies on protected cultivation are collected from the project sites. Some case studies from other relevant places will also be taken before the analysis and preparation of the report.

- **Call for PhD scholar**

A PhD student from Agriculture and Forestry University is expected to join the YUVA project and carry out research throughout the project period. For this purpose, a call has been released and applications are being taken. S/he will work full-time as researcher in the project. In addition, criteria for selection of Masters/PhD student for Trellis Fund Fellowship Program (TFFP) is sent to Project Director, TFFP.

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

"Grassroots Civil Society Organizations as Promoters of Improved Food Systems and Equitable Livelihood

Opportunities," is a BMZ/WHH funded project scheduled from 1st June 2023 to 28th February 2027, spanning 45 months. FORWARD Nepal and Kalika-Self Reliance Social Center (KSSC) are implementing the project in partnership with Welthungerhilfe. It targets three Rural Municipalities in the Kapilvastu district: Mayadevi, Sudhodhhan, and Yesodhara, with a specific focus on the agriculture and nutrition sectors.

The principal activities of the project in this quarter are:

- **Preliminary mapping of smallholders' framers and landless households**

Upon application of Participatory rural appraisal tools PRA, and well-being ranking tools, mapping of smallholder farmers and landless was conducted in all three Rural Municipalities. Data collection templates were provided to gather information from the villages and toles within the 22 wards. The primary data collected focused on identifying the number of households of landless and smallholder farmers. The key objectives of this survey were to gain a rough understanding of the field status and facilitate effective communication between the participants and Community Mobilizers. This survey identified altogether 5138 small holders' framers and 670 landless households from three Rural Municipalities

- **Orientation of Change Agents**

Orientation of 22 selected Change Agents was done on August 20-21, 2023 regarding the organization's policies and nutritional care & hygiene practices. It was a two-day session focusing on essential nutrition and hygiene practices, with organized sessions covering organizational policies, nutrition, hygiene, and health. All of the CAs were female.

- **Palika level Inception meetings and Ward level Inception meetings**

Palika level Inception meetings were conducted at three project working Rural Municipalities on August 14th -19th, 2023. These meetings were marked by active participation from governmental bodies, executive members of Palika, and various CSOs engaged in targeted initiatives meetings. The main objective of these meetings was to introduce the project to Rural Municipalities representatives and to sign an MOU between the NPL 1083-22 Project team and representatives from respective Rural Municipalities. Similarly, ward level Inception meetings were done in each ward.

- **Formation of community groups:**

A total of 182 groups were formed, facilitated by project community facilitators at 22 wards ranging from 8 to 9 groups in each ward constituting 4544 participants. Out of 4544 participants, 144 are male and 4400 are female. Likewise, 507 landless households have been identified.

- **Study on local food system**

The Consultant selection for a technical study on “Study on local food system approaches” has been completed, where Nepal Institute of Research and Communications (NIRC) was selected. The study team started this study at Kapilvastu on the October 8, 2023 and the final Report of this study is expected to be submitted by 22nd November, 2023.

- **Cattle shed improvements**

Selection of farmers for cattle shed improvements is completed, the activity is started from November 2023. Participants will receive up to Rs 12,500 upon paperwork completion, the project officers will verify each structure's adherence to the design estimate. The improved sheds facilitate efficient livestock handling, cow dung, and urine management. This supports cleanliness, reduces disease and pests, and helps to minimize the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizer use.

- **Training of Trainers (ToT) on Good Agriculture Practices**

A three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on Good Agriculture Practices (GAPs) took place at Lumbini Palace Resort, Siyari-5, Rupandehi, in collaboration with WHH, FORWARD Nepal, and KSSC Nepal. The event aimed to equip 36 Change Agents and Community Mobilizers for imparting GAPs in Mayadevi, Sudhodan, and Yasodhara rural municipalities. And the first GAP session has been started from November, 2023.

- **Knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) study on nutrition, hygiene, and sanitation**

The KAP study report was submitted by the Consultant on 10th Sep 2023, which highlighted that community women have good knowledge of health consequences related to nutrition and hygiene. They generally have positive attitudes towards nutritious food and hygiene but face barriers like limited accessibility and resource constraints. Open defecation remains a concern for a portion of surveyed households.

- **Training of Trainers (ToT) on The Community Score Card (CSC)**

A three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on The Community Score Card (CSC) was conducted from October 8-10, 2023, aimed at equipping Project Officers and Community Facilitators with knowledge and skills for effective CSC implementation in their projects. Led by experienced facilitators, Mr. Durga Aryal and Mr. Gunanidhi Bhusal, the ToT provided a comprehensive understanding of the CSC concept, its significance, and practical implementation steps. The session involved 21 participants, with 12 males and 9 females. A practical session on ToT for the Community Score Card was conducted on October 10, 2023, at Yasodhara 3, Hardihwa. Three Community Score Cards (CSC) events were held in November 2023, with one in each Rural Municipality, total 158 participants (42 males, 116 females). In December 2023, 22 CSC events took place, including 8 in Yasodhara R.M., 8 in Mayadevi R.M., and 6 in Suddhodhan Rural Municipality, involving a total of 1,089 participants (249 males, 840 females).

- **CBOs mapping and capacity development**

Consultant selection for mapping existing CBOs using the Participatory Organizational Capacity Analyses Process (POCAP) tool and their capacity development was done on 5th Sep 2023. CBOs mapping was initiated on 20th Sep 2023 at Mayadevi Rural Municipality, on 21st Sep 2023 at Suddhodhan Rural Municipality, and on 22nd Sep 2023 at Yasodhara Rural Municipality. The report is received from the consultant on October 2023.

- **Mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) -Is this FORWARD work? screening of children**

From October 2023, Mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screening was conducted in 22 wards across Mayadevi, Suddhodhan, and Yasodhara Rural Municipalities to identify the MAM and SAM cases. For SAM cases, referral support was provided. In October, referral support was provided for 39 SAM cases, and 12 cases in November.

- **Coordination meeting with CSOs**

The Coordination meeting was conducted with fellow CSOs representatives, actively involved in various projects within Kapilvastu district on August 9th, 2023. Representatives from the following CSOs: UMN, SSDC, LIDO-Nepal, and DSDC were present along with Project members from KSSC Nepal, FORWARD Nepal, and WHH. This meeting

facilitated the exchange of beneficiary data and information about groups established by fellow CSOs operating in Mayadevi, Yeshodhara, and Suddhodhan Rural Municipalities.

- **Community events:**

A total of 49 events including food demonstrations, Quiz Competitions, and Manjari Storytelling events were conducted at 21 wards of three rural municipalities: Mayadevi, Yasodhara, and Suddhodhan in September 2023.

- **Province-level Project sharing meeting**

A Province-level Project sharing meeting occurred in Deukhuri, Dang, Lumbini Province on November 5th, 2023. The project team, comprising representatives from KSSC Nepal, WHH, and FORWARD Nepal, introduced the NPL 1083-22 Project to Secretary Yam Narayan Devkota and his team from the Ministry of Agricultural and Land Reform, Lumbini Province. The Ministry expressed a strong commitment to closely collaborate with the project municipalities, aligning efforts with government initiatives, and Secretary Devkota's assurance was highlighted as pivotal for the project's success.

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:

- **Exposure field visit and LANN+ Practitioner's Learning Sharing Workshop cum Exposure Visit (Madhesh Pradesh)**

The LANN+ practitioner's learning-sharing workshop held in Madhesh Pradesh, Nepal, from November 7-9, 2023, successfully fostered collaborative learning and field observation in Rautahat and Siraha districts aiming to emphasize utilizing the CoP for issue identification, solution-finding, and evidence-based advocacy.

- **Celebrate breastfeeding week (1-7 August)**

During the first week of August, Nutrition Smart Community marked the district celebration of breastfeeding week with various activities aimed at raising awareness about the importance of breastfeeding and its benefits, aligning with this year's theme, "Enabling breastfeeding - making a difference for working parents." In both Rajgadh and Paroha districts, community-level initiatives were undertaken in collaboration with local governments.

- **Refer of SAM cases to OTC/NRH on a need basis**

Identified 243 SAM children were admitted for therapeutic treatment at OTC. Among 243 severely malnourished, 67 convergences to moderately malnourished and 66 to normal condition.

- **Conduct standardization tests and assessment through the child growth Monitor application**

The standardization test, held from July 31 to August 1, 2023, at Rajgadh-3 and Aasiya Party Palace, Saptari, aiming to standardise the enumerators to conduct the CGM data collection. Among the five health workers and two project staff and two health workers successfully passed the standardization test, showcasing their competence. Similarly, CGM data collection continued at Paroha this quarter. Data collection (557) was accomplished during this period.

- **Conduct PLA LANN+ Meetings at Pilot village**

3,600 women and adolescent girls of 206 LANN+ group learned about the causes and solutions of the identified food and nutrition-related problems in the community. Also, understand the importance of the timely introduction of complementary food, food diversity and frequency on the importance of enriching the food. Also, the importance of the kitchen garden for food diversity among family members based on the age group and shared the learning and experience of the PLA cycle through the conduction of 173 PLA LANN+ sessions.

- **Conduction of street drama**

Four Street drama of the "MANJARI" story was played at four different places to aware the community about the immediate and underlying causes of undernutrition. The learning for the under-nutrition management was linked with the agriculture and natural resources management practice.

- **Need-based farmer group meeting/stakeholder**

One seed preservation center in Malekhpur has been started in collaboration with the community. Some agri-tools like seasonal vegetable seed improved varieties, Green hermetic plastic bags, soil pots, kitchen scale, and bamboo have been supported by the project and the community with the local variety of seed preservation centers. Similarly, three Farmer groups have been registered with the local government.

- **Delivering for Nutrition in South Asia: Equity and Inclusion**

The "Delivering for Nutrition in South Asia: Equity and Inclusion" conference, organized by IFPRI and CGIAR in Kathmandu on November 1-2, 2023, aimed to gather evidence and facilitate dialogue on equity and inclusion in nutrition-related platforms. Thematic areas, including Agriculture, Food Environments, Health Systems, Diets, and Social Protection, were explored. The Nutrition Smart Community Nepal presented an abstract on "Promoting Nutrition-Sensitive Sustainable Integrated Farming Systems"

selected for an oral presentation. Participants from academia, implementers, policymakers, and civil society engaged in collaborative discussions, anticipating research-based insights for equitable solutions and context-specific priorities in nutrition.

- **Conduct Seven days of NERP Camp**

Four 7-day NERP camps were conducted with 80.48% recovery rate during the camp. A total of 12.0% of budget expenditure was shared by the local government adopting the NERP approach.

- **Collaborative activities to address Nutrition issues at the local level by Municipal program**

Rajgadh Rural Municipality and Paroha Municipality have printed the Anthropometric tools to conduct Mass screening, Two Grinder support along with Coaching to the LANN+ self-help groups, supported the Nutrition Package (EGG, Sarbottam Pitho, fruits) to identify malnourished children at Malekhpur, continuation of breast-feeding corner and collaborative celebration of breastfeeding week amounting of NPR. 2,54,450.00.

Similarly, a total NPR 5,01,300 lakh in Paroha has been allocated for nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions. This includes the establishment of breastfeeding corners, 7-day NERP camp, Mass screening, FCHV mobilization to follow up the SAM children, establishing a self-help entrepreneur group to produce the Sarbottam Pitho.

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

The key project activities during the period are:

- **South Asia Regional Portfolio launch**

The virtual Launch of the South Asia Regional Portfolio was carried out on August 1 with the award of three projects namely to AFU-BAU, NARC and FORWARD Nepal.

- **Postharvest Solutions for Small and Evolving Operations Online Course**

Project representatives from the projects of Innovation Lab for Horticulture participated in the post-harvest course organized by the post-harvest center of UC Davis. The course was organized from June 26-30, 2023 and was facilitated by Professors from various Universities including Beth Mitcham, UC Davis; Mary Lu Arpaia, UC Riverside; Jane Ambuko, University of Nairobi; etc.

- **Inception workshop of ILH awarded SA project at NARC:**

NARC project awarded by Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture was held on 1st September 2023 at Pathology Center. The workshop was chaired by

Executive Director Dr Dhruba Raj Bhattarai and Prof Dr Kalyani Mishra Tripathi, the chairperson of Service Commission and PI of AFU was the chief guest of the event. There was the presence of Director General Dr Hari Bahadur KC; Prof Bhargav Dhital, Dean of IAAS; Mark Wentling, USAID mission in Nepal Representative, Dr Lumanath Pandey, Planning Director, Krishna Kumar Mishra, Finance Director, Distinguished Guest Prof Dr Durga Mani Gautam etc. The event had a video message from Dr Erin McGuire, the Director of Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture, The Regional Hub Manager shared the global objectives and the pathway of the RFP leading to the successful award of the 3 promising research initiatives from 28 applications after rigorous evaluation from the third party coordinated by the Management entity. PI Dr Ram Khadka shared the proposed low-cost and environment friendly research initiatives under the Soil borne disease treatments of vegetable crops.

- **Inception workshop of ILH awarded SA project at AFU:**

Quick Field Research, Desk Review and Regional Consultation Workshop and prioritizing the opportunity to finalize one working agenda to be the increasing production efficiency. The inception was held in the chair of the Vice Chancellor of AFU and was facilitated by CO-PI Praseed Thapa. There was the gracious presence of the Registrar, Dean, DOREX Director, National Project Manager of Higher Education program, AKC Chief, PMAMP Chief, FORWARD Executive Director, PIs from NARC and FORWARD, etc. The event was successful in sharing the proposed research initiatives by PI and Chair of Service Commission Prof Dr Kalyani Mishra Tripathi among the wider stakeholders among and across the university for getting their buy in for the implementation going forward.

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:

- **Local-level Project Advisory Committee Meeting**

Presented the annual progress of TERAII Project during the Local-level Project Advisory Committee Meeting at Sainamaina Municipality of Rupandehi district, and Banganga & Buddhabhumi Municipalities of Kapilvastu district

- **Annual Review and Planning Workshop**

Executive Director, Livestock Development Specialist and Senior Admin & Finance Officer participated in the Annual Review and Planning

Workshop of TERAJ Project from 26th to 27th July 2023 at Hotel Landmark, Sauraha, Chitwan.

- **Capacity Building Program**

Livestock Development Specialist of TERAJ Project participated in the Staff's Capacity Building Program organized from 28th to 30th July 2023 at Hotel Landmark, Sauraha, Chitwan.

- **Interherd+ Database Management Training**

Livestock Development Specialist and Project Focal Person of TERAJ Project participate in the Interherd+ Database Management Training at Hotel Maharaja Resort, Butwal.

- **Interaction programs among dairy value chain actors**

Organized four interaction programs among dairy value chain actors like dairy farmers, milk collectors, and processors of Sainamaina Municipality & Kanchan Rural Municipality of Rupandehi district and Banganga & Buddhahumi Municipalities of Kapilvastu district in order to facilitate establishment of linkages between them.

- **Procurement of forage seeds**

TERAJ Project purchased 500 kg of forage seeds, viz. Ratan variety of Khesari (*Lathyrus* spp.) from Grain Legumes Research Program/NARC, Khajura, Banke for distribution to the farmers.

- **Business Induction ToT Training**

Livestock Development Specialist participated in the Business Induction ToT Training organized for project staffs from 5th to 9th at Hotel Maharaja Resort, Butwal.

Training/Workshop/Meeting

- Krishna Prasad Sapkota attended the Food Safety Training for Fresh Produce Growers in Nepal organized by Feed the Future Innovation lab for Food Safety on 29 September 2023 to 1 October 2023 at Diyalo Hotel, Bharatpur. There was the presence of high-level officials from AFU including VC, Dean, DOREX Director, PMAMP Chief, AKC Chief, NARC Scientists etc.

Staffing

- Mr Ganesh Poudel, Community Facilitator (Technical) for the Food System Project in Kapilvastu left the organization from September 27, 2023.
- Mr Om Prakash Baniya, was appointed for the position of Community Facilitator in the Food System project.
- Ms. Kaushila Devi Tamang was appointed as Accounts Officer from 1 August 2023.
- Mr Tirth Kumar Timsina was appointed as Senior

Program Manager from September 12, 2023.

Visitors:

- Mr. Shakeb Nabi, Country Director, WHH and his team paid a visit to FORWARD Nepal Head Office on 14th August 2023 to share and seek feedback for the latest drafted country strategy of WHH.
- Mr. Manoj Ranabhat, chairperson of Bharatpur Metropolitan City ward no 2, and Advocate Jagannath Bhandari, legal advisor of FORWARD Nepal visited FORWARD Nepal head office to attend the formal program of FORWARD day celebration on September 1, 2023.
- Mr Brent Willey and Mr. Prem Prasad Bhattarai, representing Winrock International visited FORWARD Nepal to discuss the possible collaborations on 2nd October 2023.
- Mr Chiranjibi Sharma, acting Chief District Officer visited the FORWARD office for periodic monitoring. While he was here, he learned about the projects and wished for their success.

Institutional activities/events:

- As in the previous years, 27th FORWARD Day was celebrated on 1st September 2023 under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Durga Devkota, Chairperson (virtual), and the presence of chief guest Bharatpur metropolitan city -2 ward chairperson Manoj Ranabhat, and special guest advocate Jagannath Bhandari, legal advisor of FORWARD Nepal. This event was conducted both physically and virtually with the participation of founder members, board members, general members, and staff at the head office. In the morning program held at the head office, the event was inaugurated by lighting a traditional lamp (Panas) and irrigating a plant. A Happy Birthday cake was cut/distributed among participants and wishes of FORWARD DAY to each other were exchanged. A greetings message was also issued jointly by the Chairperson and Executive Director on the occasion of FORWARD day. Similarly, as in previous years, the FORWARD Nepal team visited senior citizens of Devghatdham. A Saha Bhojan (lunch) with senior citizens of the Bridhashram, DADC was done and gifts were given to each senior citizen living in the Ashram.
- Submission of project proposal on riverbed farming to USAID Tayar Nepal
- Submission of project proposal to USAID for locally led business
- Submission of project proposal to USAID on Women in Business

Upcoming institutional major events:

- Annual General Meeting and review of projects
- Visit of Innovation Lab for Horticulture SA Regional Hub Manager and AFU project team to Bangladesh

- YUVA and Food system projects approval from Social Welfare Council
- **Some Glimpses**



Celebration of 27th FORWARD day at FORWARD Nepal head office with founder members, guests and staff



Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture annual meeting at Nairobi, Kenya



Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) Training of Trainers for project staff and change agents under food system project, Kapilvastu



Rally organized by Nutrition Smart Community Phase-II for celebration of breastfeeding week, Raighad municipality, Saptari



Participation of TERAJ project staff at African Jersey forum organized by Jersey Overseas Aid at Malawi



YUVA project focus group discussion with farmers at Gagani, Buddhabhumi municipality-10, Kapilvastu