



SAHAS NEWSLETTER

7th Issue, October, 2011



16th General Assembly

SAHAS- Nepal's 16th General Assembly was held on 23rd September, 2011 at the Local Development Training Academy in Lalitpur. The event was chaired by Mr. Brahma Dhoj Gurung, the chairperson of the organisation. There were altogether 46 participants in the programme. The programme was divided into 2 sessions: the open session and the closed session. In the open session, the progress reports and financial reports of different projects implemented by SAHAS-Nepal in 10 districts of the country were



presented. After the end of the open session, the close session of the programme was held. In the closed session, activity reports of the organisation were reviewed, critically analyzed, and approved by the general members. Valuable suggestions for effective implementation of the organizational programs in future were also given by the members. Continuity was given for the regular appointment of Chartered Accountant as in previous years. The recently drafted 5-year strategic plan of the organisation was also approved by the assembly. The assembly concluded with discussion and appreciation of programs and plans of the organization for the following year. The General Assembly is the highest authority of SAHAS Nepal. It is overall responsible for strategic decisions on organizational management level like approving plans, policies and budgets.

In this issue:

- SAHAS news and activities
- Finger millet: why is it called the miracle grain?
- 31st world Food Day Celebration

Participatory Strategic Planning Workshop

A 3 day participatory strategic planning workshop of SAHAS-Nepal was organised in Hillside Hotel in Kirtipur from September 18 to 20, 2011. After the successful implementation of earlier five-year strategic plan (2006-2010) that achieved all the results as envisaged by the plan, SAHAS EC decided to review its vision, strategies and objectives along with analysis of its organisational capacity in the changed context. The rational aim of the workshop was to develop a five-year strategic plan of SAHAS that ensure the organisational development as well as the effectiveness of its programme. Furthermore, the workshop aimed to achieve its experiential objectives of improved commitment and enhanced ownership of SAHAS members and staff enriching the plan with their valuable experiences.

The basic process of the workshop included situation analysis, visioning, contradictions, strategic actions, strategic directions, one year actions, and quarterly actions. Through the visioning process a communicating vision for SAHAS- Nepal for the next 5 years was set as *"Inclusion of the marginalised community for sustainable development, Programme diversification and strengthened SAHAS-Nepal"*. Following in line with the new vision, strategic actions and directions were determined and yearly and quarterly action plans were finalized by the participants.

Altogether there were 21 participants attending the workshop. The participants of the participatory strategic planning workshop were the chairperson, EC members, general members and some staff members including SAHAS advisor. The workshop was highly participatory. To encourage full participation, facilitators, Mr. Uttam Uprety and Mr. Dammar Rai, used a variety of tools and methods such as brainstorming, group discussion, code, presentations, stories, games and energizers as well as lecture. Various techniques were used to make the session livelier. All the sessions were focused and participatory.



"Inclusion of the marginalised community for sustainable development, Programme diversification and strengthened SAHAS-Nepal"



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Finger Millet: The Miracle Grain

Food security is one of the key factors for sustainable development in Nepal. With global climate change posing a threat to the food security of small farmers in the country, research interventions should employ solutions to increase crop productivity – both quantity and quality - for food security and climate resilience. In this regard, finger millet which is a nutritious cereal crop that forms an important part of diets of people, especially in the mid-hills of the country, holds the key to the problem at hand.

Recent climate modeling findings regarding climate change in South Asia warn against the impact that the predicted modifications in monsoon dynamics will create in the region by the end of this century. These include fewer summer precipitations and longer breaks between rainy periods. Rice and wheat cultivation are expected to be affected in terms of cultivation patterns and yield reduction. Such a scenario calls for urgent and strategic interventions towards adaptive agricultural measures that while ensuring a continued food production to an ever growing population, will buffer populations against the threats of climate change.

Why finger millet?

- **It is a low water consuming crop**

Millets are water saving, drought tolerant crops. While about 4000 liters of water is needed to grow 1 kg of rice, finger millet can be grown without irrigation. This can be an answer to the climate crisis at present. In the rain fed agricultural system of Nepal, where the production of rice, wheat and other major cereal crops suffer due to the erratic monsoon pattern, finger millet can become the food of security.

Crop	Rainfall requirement(mm)
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Finger millet	350
Rice	1200-1300
Maize	500-550
Sugarcane	2000-2200



- **It can grow on the poorest of soil**

Millets can be grown successfully in diverse soils from saline to acidic as well as sandy soils. These thrive well on problem soils where other crops like rice struggle to do well. Poor farmers in rural Nepal own marginal bari lands where cultivation of rice, wheat and maize is near impossible. As such, growing millets on these infertile lands can serve to ensure the production of food and fodder for these poor farmers.

- **It is a storehouse of nutrition**

Compared to the much privileged rice, finger millet has a higher nutritive value. It is many times richer in mineral, iron, calcium and fiber than rice and wheat as we can see in the table.

Crop/ Nutrient	Protein (g)	Fiber (g)	Minerals (g)	Iron (mg)	Calcium (mg)
Finger millet	7.3	3.6	2.7	3.9	344
Rice	6.8	0.2	0.6	0.7	10
Wheat	11.8	1.2	1.5	5.3	41

- **It does not demand synthetic fertilizers and pesticides**

Unlike rice and wheat, finger millet does not demand chemical fertilizers. In fact, under dry land conditions, it grows better in the absence of chemical fertilizers. Therefore, most farmers grow them using farmyard manure under purely eco friendly conditions. These practices make millet production not only eco friendly but also frees the farmers from the burden of buying chemical fertilizers. Besides, pest problem is rarely seen in finger millet. In fact they have excellent anti pest properties and are used as anti pest agents while storing delicate pulses such as green grams.

- **It has multiple end uses**

Millets can be used in many ways. In Nepal, millet is usually ground into flour for making cakes, puddings or porridge. Due to

its nutritive as well as medicinal value, the flour makes a healthy food for babies and people who are sick or weak. A fermented drink or beer is made from the grain. In Nepal, consumption of millet as an alcoholic beverage has a traditional and cultural value. Some people use the straw from finger millet as food for working and milking animals. It has a high fodder value and is much preferred by livestock. It is also used for thatching, for making walls for small granaries as well as for making dishes.

- **It has high storability**

One of the best things about finger millet is that it stores well for long periods of time. That means it can be saved and used when other food supplies are scarce. That is why finger millet is often called a famine crop. Finger millet stores well because it has small seeds that dry quickly. Insects can't get inside them and damage the grain during storage. In a humid area, finger millet will store much longer than larger seed cereals like maize. It doesn't rot when it's stored during the wet months.

Finger millet is a climate change compliant crop

Due to the qualities mentioned above, finger millet remains our agricultural answer to the climate crisis that the world is facing. Climate Change is expected to confront us with three challenges.

- Increase in temperature up to 2-5 degree Celsius
- Increasing water stress
- Severe malnutrition
- Since they are already capable of growing under drought conditions, they can withstand higher heat regimes.
- Finger millet grows under non-irrigated conditions in such low rainfall regimes as between 200mm and 500 mm. Thus, it can also face the water stress and grow.
- It is a storehouse of dozens of nutrients in large quantities. They include major and micro nutrients needed by the human body. Hence they can help people withstand malnutrition.

In Conclusion

Finger millet is well suited to enhance the resilience of local production systems and strengthen food and nutrition security, particularly among the rural poor. Finger millet has a wide genetic adaptation and is able to grow successfully in diverse soils, varying rainfall regimes, diverse photoperiods and in marginal, arid and mountainous terrains where major cereals have low success. They have the potential to thrive with low inputs and can withstand severe edapho-climatic stresses, thus being the best candidates to replace commodities like wheat and rice in areas where such crops may gradually become less competitive due to climate change. These qualities are combined with excellent nutritional values and opportunities for strengthening income generation through value addition.



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"Food Prices- From crisis to stability"

-31st World Food Day



On the occasion of the 31st World Food Day and the 19th Poverty Alleviation Day, the Enhancing Livelihood through Local Effort Project (ELLEP) of SAHAS-Nepal organised an awareness raising folk song competition in Aanbu khaireni, Tanahun, on 17th October 2011. The event was organised to create public awareness on poverty alleviation and food security issues. Altogether 12 groups from Gorkha, Tanahun and Dhading (where the ELLE- project is working) had participated in the competition. Besides the folk song competition, fruits and vegetables grown by the farmers associated with the ELLE- project were also demonstrated in the event.

Government and non government officials, political representatives, stakeholders and the community from Gorkha, Dhading and Tanahun districts were present in the event. Messages including adoption of improved agricultural technologies, solutions for attaining food security, organic farming methodologies etc were given out through the folk songs sung by the participants in the competition.

The winners were awarded with cash prize, shield and certificate. Similarly, farmers with best agricultural products in the demonstration were also awarded. Farmers and the local community were highly encouraged by the event.

31st World Food Day Rally

On the same occasion, the National Network on Right to Food- Nepal organized a rally that started from Shanti Batika, Ratnapark. After doing a round; via Bag bazaar, Vrikutimandap, Shahidgate, Newroad; the rally ended in Ratnapark. Member representatives of the network like, SAHAS-Nepal, FIAN-Nepal, RRN, INSEC, CARITAS, Jagaran-Nepal, All Nepal Peasants' Federation Association (ANPFA) participated in the rally. The representatives from the RtF network delivered speech reflecting food security issues. Approximately 300 participants were present in the event.

The rally was organized to circulate message reflecting food insecurity due to food price hiking compounded by global warming and climate change. The rally reflected Nepal as a victim of food crisis due to climate change. Some causes of food insecurity in Nepal are: climate change, traditional farming practices, encroachment of forest lands for cultivation, lack of awareness among the public, black marketing and lack of proper government policy to support the food insecure communities.



World Food Day is celebrated every year on 16 October to commemorate the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 1945. World Food Day aims to heighten public awareness of the plight of the world's hungry and malnourished and to encourage people worldwide to take action against hunger. More than 150 countries observe this event every year. First observed in 1981, each year World Food Day highlights a particular theme on which to focus activities.

"Food prices – from crisis to stability" was chosen as this year's World Food Day theme and has been successfully celebrated in Nepal. In the last 18 months, the price of maize increased by 74% while the price of rice increased by 166 %. Such increase in food price represents a major threat to food security in a developing country like Nepal. Therefore, the aim of the World Food Day this year was to find out the causes for the fluctuation in food price and do what can be done to mitigate its impact on the weakest members of global society.



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Capacity Building Training

A four day capacity building training was conducted from August 5-8, 2011 in Nepalgunj for CEFALS project staff members. The training was also conducted in Pokhara from 21st July to 24th July for the staff of ELLE- project. Both trainings were facilitated by Mr. Dambar Tembe. There were 38 participants from CEFALS project and 26 from ELLE project. The four day training provided an opportunity for the staff members to enhance their facilitation skills. It also provided a platform where the staff members of different districts could discuss the problems faced in the field level and the programs being implemented. The participation of the staff members during the whole training was found encouraging and they believed that the knowledge and skills learned during the training would augment their performance in the coming days.



Civic Education Project, III^d phase extension

Nepal is still in the transitional phase as peace and constitution processes are yet to be concluded. Hence, there is need of the vigil civil society to carry out lobby and advocacy works to the CA members and political leaders in order to make the pro poor and excluded people's constitution within the extended timeframe of the CA in Nepal. As regards this scenario, under the legal holding of SAHAS-Nepal and in collaboration with Sasthagat Bikas Sanjal and Shtrii Shakti, the Civic Education Project (CEP) Ist and IInd phase have been implemented successfully from April 2007 to August 2011. Furthermore, the CEP III^d phase has been extended from September 2011 to August 2013 and is implementing in 15 districts of Nepal in collaboration with these 3 organisations supporting to participatory constitution making process in Nepal. And strengthening of the Civic Watch Groups/Network at district and national levels, carry out lobby and advocacy and sensitize on the rights of the communities in new constitution are the major thematic working areas of the project.

Photography training

With a view to produce quality photographs of different activities at community level, a one day photography training was given to the staff of SAHAS- Nepal on September 2, 2011. Altogether 21 participants were present in the training. The training was given by an amateur photographer, Hari Shrestha, at the central office of SAHAS- Nepal in Lalitpur. Participants expressed that taking quality photographs of activities at community level was important for effective record keeping and

documentation of field experience. Therefore the photography training was gladly received by the staff who felt that the training had not only provided information about general handling of digital cameras but also provided them an insight about taking high quality pictures which they believed will be very helpful in the coming days.

Climate Change Concept Training

A 3 day training on climate change concept was given to the staff of SAHAS- Nepal focussing particularly on the staff of LIFT project. The training organised with support from USC Canada was held from August 22nd to August 24th in SAHAS- Nepal's office at Lalitpur. Pratap Shrestha and Bharat Bhandari from USC Canada served as resource persons in the training. Altogether 12 staff had participated in the training. In the training, participants learnt about the concept of climate change and its implication on our day to day life. Participants were also given information on how we could mitigate the adverse effect of climate change in the community through our project activities. A discussion followed by formulation of action plans for the coming days to address this issue was observed at the end of the training.

Success story from Dailekh makes it to German Churchletter

With support from the Nepalteam Germany, SAHAS-Nepal has been implementing the IFCO (Improving Food Security through Community Organising) project in 4VDCs and 1 municipality of Dailekh district. In March, 2011, when representatives from Nepalteam visited the district, they were highly appreciative of SAHAS-Nepal's work in the district. As a result, in their newsletter, a success story from Dailekh was published. Below is the success story that was published.

Born to a muslim family in Kurahama, Badalamji-5, Dailekh, Mr. Mantaz Miya is a member of "Chure parbat pragatishil" group. After attending the 35 day VAHW training in Pokhara, he established an agrovet in his own village. He started making home visits in the group for the treatment of sick animal. Today he has become a popular figure among the group members due to his hard work.



These days, he receives many calls/ requests for animal treatment from the neighboring VDC-Chamunda, Basi, Rawatkot and Bhairikalikathum.

Mantaz says "After my attempts to pass the SLC failed, I decided to go to India. But it was very difficult over there and so I decided to return back to Nepal and do something in my own village. I joined the group formed by SAHAS Nepal and one day I got a chance to participate in a 35 day VAHW training. Earlier, I used to have no work but now I am very busy. Despite being a Muslim, I do not hesitate to treat pigs. People in my village respect me for my hard work. Now I earn more than Rs. 3500 per month. And this income has been very helpful to meet my family expense."