

Report on Mid-term Evaluation of Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation Project



Submitted to:
SAHAS-Nepal (Group of Helping Hands)
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Acknowledgement

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation (LIFT) Project has been implemented in three districts, namely, Okhaldhunga and Udaypur districts of Eastern Development Region, and Lalitpur district of Central Development Region of Nepal. The project has been implemented by SAHAS-Nepal, a national level NGO, with the financial support of EED, Germany (currently known as Bread for the World - BfdW). The first phase of the project started from January 2011 and ends by December 2013. The second phase (2014-2016) has already been approved by the BfdW. The major objective of the project is to improve food security, income, health, education, organizational capacity and environment conditions of the poor and socially excluded communities in Okhaldhunga, Udaypur and Lalitpur districts of Nepal. The project has 8 Outputs, as specific objectives.

The target of the project includes: the poor men, women, school students, and socially excluded segment (Dalit, Janajati, etc.) of the society, covering a total of 4499 households (HHs) beneficiaries (See table 1). The social composition of the beneficiaries has been presented in Table below. The project has been implemented through community based organizations (CBOs) and their network organization being formed by the beneficiary communities themselves in facilitation of SAHAS-Nepal. It is through these CBOs that the target beneficiaries participate in the project activities. Additionally, the project has also worked in close coordination and cooperation with other stakeholders such as local governments (Village development Committees, and District Development Committees), district based sectoral line agencies such as District Agricultural Development Office, District Livestock Service Office, etc.

Table 1: Social composition of the beneficiaries

District	Households (HH)						Total (Households)
	Dalit		Janajati		Others		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Okhaldhunga	321	46	1060	429	227	49	2132
Udaypur	199	74	511	246	151	38	1219
Lalitpur	7	8	433	273	252	175	1148
Total	527	128	2004	948	630	262	4499

Source: Semi-annual Progress Report (2013), LIFT Project

2 Mid-Term Evaluation

2.1 The Mid-Term Evaluation

SAHAS-Nepal, at this point of time, has planned to undertake a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the above mentioned project, i.e., LIFT's Phase - I, which was officially launched in January 2011, and expected to be end by December 2013, for this Phase. The MTE is to assess what the project has done and what kinds of effects and impacts it has had on the life and livelihoods of the communities living in the project areas. Therefore, the project's experiences would not only be useful to SAHAS-Nepal and BfdW/EED to justify their technical assistance and funding, but also for designing the future projects. But beyond this, the findings of this MTE will also be useful to other donors, government agencies, non-government organisations and stakeholders who have both interests in the socio-economic development of Nepal. In addition, the findings of this MTE will also be useful to other parts of Nepal, which have similar socio-economic conditions as that of the project districts.

2.2 Objectives of the MTE

The main objective of the assignment is to assess the achievements of LIFT project over the past three years, from its inception in January 2011 to December 2013. The MTE focuses on the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the project plans. The specific objectives of the MTE are as follows:

- i. To conduct evaluation of the results achieved by the projects in districts, and provide their performance status and quality and quantity of results thus far, and
- ii. To examine the gaps in their performance and reasons for gaps, and suggest the areas to improve their performance, and conclusions based on the findings of the evaluation

2.3 Scope of the MTE

- The evaluation (field-work) shall consider all the three project districts, namely, Okhaldhunga, Udaypur and Lalitpur
- The evaluation shall be focused on the major objectives of the project in general, and in particular, shall be based on the project's 8 Outputs and agreed upon indicators (as mentioned in the project documents).
- The evaluation work shall have 17 days that includes: preparation for evaluation work, field work (6 days excluding the travel days) and draft report production.

3 Methodology

3.1 Mid-term Evaluation Methodology

The project has been assessed in accordance with the given TOR (See Annex I). This study used entirely qualitative methodology and focused on the context, inputs, process, and product. The quantitative data, whatsoever available, were drawn from the project reports and documents and field visits.

The methodological procedures employed for undertaking this assignment basically comprised of three components: (i) Desk work (Pre-fieldwork consultation study) (ii) Field reconnaissance and (iii) Data consolidation and analysis. Wherever deemed necessary and appropriate, the Consultant also sought the help of SAHAS-Nepal/LIFT field staffs to jointly conduct the evaluation. The MTE followed the participatory evaluation procedure involving the target beneficiaries, Project's staffs, members of the Network Organisations (See Annex II). The necessary information was obtained through observation, interviews, meetings, focus group discussions, etc. Before leaving each project site being visited and the respondents (project beneficiaries and personnel working for various organisation and institutions in the project districts), a brief synthesis of the information gathered was briefed to them for cross checking and validating the data and information obtained from them.

3.2 Pre-fieldwork Consultation

Prior to proceeding to the project districts for field study, the basic preparations were done in Kathmandu by reviewing the documents related to the project, and in consultation with the Executive Director of SAHAS-Nepal and personnel involved in the LIFT project. The desk study provided the MTE consultant with an opportunity to understand the project the context, in which it has been implemented. The project documents reviewed included the Semi-annual project progress report, Project plans and other project related documents. It must be mentioned here that the consultant did not repeat the investigation of the matters, the consultant triangulated the information during field visit and focus group discussion on which the secondary information are already available, but has considered and utilized them wherever relevant and appropriate in the report.

3.3 Field Reconnaissance

The field reconnaissance for the assessment included focus group discussions, direct observation of the project sites, and key informant interviews, and interaction with the local partner organizations and the stakeholders (representatives of district based line agencies).

3.3.1 Focus Group Discussion:

During the field visits, discussions were conducted with the project target groups/beneficiaries in order to collect relevant information in line with the assignment objectives. Additionally, information (especially related to project management: implementation, supervision, monitoring, etc.) was also sought from the LIFT project staffs working in the project districts. At the end of discussion with each group, the conclusions (results) of the discussions were also presented to them in order to confirm that the information gathered is valid and meaningful.

The consultant gathered the information on what the project has done and achieved thus far, and also attempted to gather the effects, wherever possible of the project thus far produced in the communities. The discussions were enthusiastically participated by both men and women beneficiary communities. It is pertinent to mention here that the MTE purposively selected some of the beneficiaries' groups in order to ensure that the field study would cover the representative of various categories of project's beneficiaries and their organizations.

3.3.2 Key Informant Interview:

Interviews were carried out with the representatives from the district based line agencies, and the stakeholders, and representatives from partner organizations and the beneficiary communities who have better understanding about the project's functioning and the overall situation of the project areas.

3.3.3 Direct observation:

Direct observation included the Consultant's ocular visits to some of the project sites of all the three project districts. This activity particularly helped the evaluation process in terms of validating the already available data, and gathering of additional information from the beneficiaries through their expression and reactions with regard to the project activities being undertaken in the field situation. The primary information collected through direct field observation was taken as an important process to gather evidences, opinions and

information for this evaluation. The direct field observation was supplemented with formal and informal interactions and interviews with key informants and concerned beneficiaries during the field study.

3.4 Data Consolidation and Analysis

After completing information gathering, they were analyzed to prepare the report. The draft report was discussed with key the Executive Director and senior level project staffs of SAHAS-Nepal. The comments and suggestions received from them have been duly incorporated in this report. The precision of the MTE results reflects to a large extent on the qualitative and quantitative information. Efforts were also taken to verify and triangulate the information gathered from various sources.

4 Findings

4.1 The MTE Findings

The results of the analysis have been presented in the form project's performance, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. Besides, the analysis also came out with the gaps in the performance and the areas for improving the performance.

4.2 Overall Project Performance

The performance has been assessed in line with the eight outputs and the corresponding indicators envisaged by the project. The MTE basically looked at the qualitative and quantitative results achieved by the projects in districts. A useful means of carrying out this assessment was to review all activities of the project and their implement process. Therefore, the activities were examined to determine the extent of progress made in attaining the objectives/outputs. The MTE found that, over the last three years period, the project has been able to carry out all the planned activities to a satisfactory level using the available resources.

The MTE assessed the changes that had occurred in the lives of the communities concerned and attitudes of partners resulting from the interventions of the project. Since its inception in January 2011 till this time (December 2013), the project has been able to achieve substantial progress. As it appeared, the activities designed are being carried out as per the plan, and the progresses achieved thus far have been well documented (see Project's Semi-annual Reports). SAHAS-Nepal has recorded and maintained the fuller details on the targets being made against each the project activities, outputs and the corresponding indicators in the form of Semi-Annual Progress Reports, being submitted to the funding agency.

The stakeholders including the communities viewed their involvement in the project activities as a positive investment, which would benefit them at present as well as their future generations in the long run. During the discussion sessions held with the beneficiaries and partner organizations (See Annex II), they expressed that various infrastructures (such as irrigation systems, drinking water schemes, dams, etc. created by the project) and the social and economic capacities (they have developed through their participation in various training, income generating and livelihood activities) have provided them with the opportunities to transform their lives for the better.

4.3 Effectiveness

As stated above, the project has eight major Objectives (outputs) to be achieved. The effectiveness of the project has been assessed in terms of the extent of meeting these Objectives (outputs), taking each of the agreed upon indicators into consideration as mentioned in the project document (e.g., Semi-annual Reports). For the secondary data related to project's effectiveness, the MTE endorses the Project's Progress Reports of all the three project districts, namely, Okhaldhunga, Udaypur and Lalitpur.

The MTE mission found that the project has been able to achieve almost all of the objectives. SAHAS has able to fulfil and achieve success in all targeted 8 indicators however few activities on school program is still going on by SAHAS to attain the full fledged indicators. Further, the effectiveness of the project is explained in line with 8 major objectives and respective indicators. They are as follows.

4.3.1 Increased Production and consumption of healthy and nutritious food for family members

Indicator: "23 groups produce quality vegetable and cereal crops seeds".

A total of 238 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) farmer groups from three districts engaged themselves in production of quality vegetables and cereal crops like maize, potato, millet, rapeseed, rayo, swiss chard, peas, local cauliflower, radish, bean, pumpkin etc. Of 238 groups, 40 groups have produced quality vegetable seeds and cereal crop seeds. With the support from the project 9 resource home gardens have been established. The MTE endorses the LIFT Project's Progress Report, which states that the members associated with some groups earned NRs. 20,000 to Rs. 100,000 from the sale of surplus vegetables. Similarly, with the adoption of improved maize seed, they were able to obtain three times more yield than they used to get from the local seeds, thus enabling them to fetch as much as Rs. 65,000 from the sale of surplus maize.

The implementation of the project contributed to increase in production and consumption of healthy and nutritious food, mainly through the promotion of home garden. The beneficiary farmers in all the three project districts reported that they produced high value vegetables and cereal crops like maize, potato, millet, leaf-mustard (*rayo*), rapeseed, Swiss Chad, peas, cauliflower, radish, bean, pumpkin etc. by replacing traditional low-yielding crop varieties like (millet, rice, maize), which, contributed to their family food and nutrition security. With the increase in production (especially vegetables), some families now have surplus produce, which also fetched some income for them.

The farmers have also initiated conserving the local varieties of crops (vegetables, spices, ornamental and engendered other species) with the aim of maintaining the agricultural diversity in their home garden. Because of maintenance of agricultural diversity has resulted in livelihoods enhancement of farmers, besides protecting the farmers against uncertainty in production and impacts from climate change. Similarly, the food diversity resulting from agricultural diversity, there has been change in the food habits of the farmers by replacing dry and snacks food with homemade nutritious food. The Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Vegetable farming as a source of income generation

Mrs. Parbati KC, one of the active member of Janasewa Saving and Credit Group of Nallu 1 in Lalitpur. She, though has crossed 50, energetic and hard working, and utilises her time in creative activities.

In the past, she used to do subsistence farming; with the production of some amount of vegetable hardly enough even for her family consumption. After receiving training from SAHAS-Nepal, she has enhanced her skill and knowledge and motivated towards commercial farming. To support her positive



determination, SAHAS-Nepal provided her with 2 plastic sheet, drip sets, sprinkler set and seeds to add extra enthusiasm to her for vegetable farming. With this support, she constructed a plastic house for tomato cultivation. From the vegetable farming, she was able to earn about NRs. 20,000; Rs. 5,000 from cucumber, NRs. 5,000 from pumpkin and chayote, NRs. 3,000 from mushroom in one season. In total, she earned NRs. 33,000 in one season. She is also careful about the brokers, hence sold all the items herself in the nearby market of Lagankhel. She still has seasonal vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, rayo, onion, tomato in her farm, which become ready to sale after some months. From the income of her farming, she has been able to manage her 6-member family. Commercial vegetable farming has upgraded the quality of life of her family. Seeing this fact, other members of her group also motivated towards commercial farming.

training provided to the farmers has attracted them to organic farming and use of organic manure, bio-pesticides in place of chemical fertilizer pesticides. One of the significant impacts is that some farmers, who were earning from the sale of alcohol, have given up this business and switched to vegetable farming as a source of livelihoods option. Group members have now shown much concern over organic farming. More than 1,174 households (670 HHs in Okhaldhunga, 170 HHs in Lalitpur and 334 HHs in Udyapur) have been practicing organic farming in the project working districts.

Increased group income from shed improvement

SAHAS-Nepal supported for shed improvement programme in one of the groups (that comprised 17 households of Lekbensi community keeping 38 livestock) of Dalchoki 5 in Lalitpur, with the view of developing as a model organic group. The project used all the local materials being collected by the members themselves. SAHAS provided them with the outside(non-local) materials as well as technical guidance.

After completing the sheds, they have been able to keep their livestock in a healthy environment. They also collect the urine and manure in the tank, which after decomposition used as manure for the vegetable farming. The shed improvement has resulted in increased production of milk and as well as vegetable production in each individual. With such a support, the group members have earned an annual income varying from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 2,20,000, and the group income of this year is Rs. 18,25,000. The income earned by them has brought positive changes in their socio-economic status. The successful implementation of this piece of the project has tremendously attracted the attention of the livestock keeping farmers in the community.



4.3.2 Increased eco-friendly small and medium enterprises based on agriculture, forest and local knowledge and practices

Indicator: "23 eco-friendly micro-business are active."

The project launched several activities related to eco-friendly micro-business such as bee-farming, pig raising, goat farming, poultry farming, pickle making, tomato cultivation, mushroom cultivation, fish farming, community shop, small-shop, black smith, musical instrument team and veterinary shop focusing on women and socially excluded groups.

The MTE endorses the Progress Report of the project, which mentions that a total of 27 Eco-friendly micro business, against the target of forming 23 such groups, are operating in the project districts. These micro-enterprises includes bee-farming, pig raising, goat farming, poultry farming, pickle making, tomato cultivation, mushroom cultivation, fish farming, community shop, small-shop, bamboo making, khadi making, musical instrument team, candle making, veterinary shop, mill, black smith, dalmoth and doughnut production. In order for the target communities to enable to undertake the businesses, they were given trainings on capacity building and skill enhancement. Similarly, farmers were also supported with off-farm activities like Tailoring, Shop-Keeping, Bamboo product preparation, black smith and Motorcycle repairing etc.

The Life-journey of Mr. Guman Singh Magar

Mr. Guman Sigh Magar, 53, is a member of a poor family residing in Tallo Richuwa of Thakle VDC – 3 in Okhaldhunga. He had been supporting his family composed of 8 members; 3 sons, 3 daughters and his wife and himself from the earnings he used to make by working as a porter on the Ghurmi-Katari area, as he did not have any other sources of income. His farm could support his family's food need only for two months, hence there is no question of supporting for his children's education. Displaced from the job of porter with the opening of motorable road, Mr. Magar went to knock on the door of SAHAS-Nepal, which provided three persons with NRs. 5000 as revolving fund under the Porter Support activity of LIFT project by forming a group. In his turn to get the amount, Mr. Magar bought a fishing-net and started fishing and selling the fishes. Besides, he also learned masonry skills. He invested his earning for his son to send abroad for job. With the income earned, he has bought some farm-land that supports his family's food need for 6 months, and for the remaining 6 months is managed from the money being sent by his son. He has been supporting his children for their education. "These days I am happy in social and financial terms, and thanks to SAHAS-Nepal for helping me to bring changes in my lifestyle" says Mr. Magar.

The project also supported the community with livestock, fingerlings, seedlings, which rendered them earning members of their families. Similarly, 10 different bamboo tools were supported to motivate and promote traditional local skills. From the business of bamboo tool making 13 group members from Dalit group have been able to earn NRs. 40,000 to 50,000 per year.

Further, the project support for Khadi making resulted in initiation of a business in Okhaldhunga. Besides, farmers have also started business on a small scale through value addition of agricultural products after receiving the support and training. At the initiation of a group, a mill was set up for grinding turmeric in Udayapur, and started selling the turmeric powder produced from the mill. Similarly, 21 private and 4 community fish farms have been established in Ilaka 10 and 11 of Okhaldhunga district. From the support of fingerlings, the group members have been able to earn NRs. 2000-5000 as an income. The Consultant also observed the ever flourishing commercial pig farming in Okhaldhunga.

Lakpa Sherpa: An Exemplary Home-garden Farmer

Mr. Lakpa Sherpa is one of the energetic and labourious farmers belonging to Machhedanda Group of Chaughare - 6. Coming from a small family, composed of his daughter, son and his wife, Sherpa has actively engaged in SAHAS-Nepal supported activities such as chicken rearing, pig rearing, cow and buffalo farming, bee keeping and so on. SAHAS also supported him for participation in home garden management training, off season vegetable cultivation training, seed management training, orientation on climate change, etc., which rendered him as a resource home garden farmer.

He maintains a farm-land of 0.25 hectare for commercial vegetable production. He collects most of the fruits and vegetables in his farm. He has been able to earn a huge amount (NRs. 2,50,000 in a year) from a small patch of land. He has invested his earning for his children's education.



The MTE learned that, as a result of the support (including revolving funds) to the communities, the group members have been able to earn some income, and they utilized this income for meeting their basic needs, such as food clothes, health care and children education. Encouraged from the successful operation of these enterprises, farmers are now motivated to adopt these enterprises as alternative sources of income.

4.3.3 Enhanced Climate change resiliency of local farming communities

Indicator: "3,000 farmers received training on identification and utilization of plant varieties and animal breeds with traits useful for adaptation to climate change impacts."

The project launched numerous of activities aimed at creating awareness and finding out effective measures for adaptation in order to lessen the adverse impact of climate change on agriculture and rural livelihoods. The project provided trainings to 1167 local farming communities of 3 project districts regarding the plant varieties and animal breeds for developing their resiliency to combat climate change impacts through conservation and protection of Environment and Biodiversity.

The project introduced a total of 1895 Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) in Okhaldhunga and Udayapur districts. The community beneficiaries, with whom the MTE Consultant interacted, expressed that the use of ICS has reduced the amount of fuel-wood and the time required for cooking, while also reducing the trouble (e.g., respiratory disease, indoor-pollution, etc.) to be faced due to emanation of volumes of smoke. The women household-members in Okhaldhunga expressed that the use of ICS has also eased their drudgeries (e.g., long-distance walk to fetch the scarce firewood).

Similarly, the plantation of broom plants (*Amriso*) in sloppy land appeared to have contributed in controlling the land-slides and soil erosion, while also improving the soil fertility. The project's expectation is that with the development of resiliency, the communities will be able to enhance the productivity and strengthen their socio-economy.

The project also organized workshop for community awareness on Bio-diversity conservation. Consequently, some of the farmer group members have established nursery that have varieties of medicinal and Ornamental plants such as olive, kapoor, amalam, asparagus, and Rudrakshya, thus conserving the bio-diversity. Further, some 23 farmer groups have initiated urine collection and compost manure management for utilizing these in the production of organic vegetables. With the promotion of these organic practices for producing organic vegetables, the farmers have been able to minimize the use of chemical fertilizers. The farmers, who were interviewed during the field work of this MTE, expressed delighted with the opportunity of having organic vegetables in their daily diets.

4.3.4 Enhanced health and sanitation conditions and facilities at household and community level

Indicator: "23 drinking water schemes and 3,000 pit-latrines are used, and that the health condition of 150 mal-nourished children has been improved."

The MTE learned that before the implementation of the project many people lived in poor hygienic conditions. This had happened mainly due to the lack of awareness on the part of the communities about the use of safe water and sanitation facilities, and good hygiene practices. Considering these problems, the project launched various awareness activities such as training and discussion. The project also supported the communities for building toilets. With this, the community members have the habit of using toilets. Similarly, the increase in the awareness level of the communities about sanitation has brought about significant changes in the behavior of the group members, thus resulting in the cleanliness at home and around surrounding areas of the community. Further, their learning about basic sanitation and hygiene contributed, to some level, maintaining a healthy and productive life.

During the project period, a total of 3661 latrines, which is more than the target of 3000 pit-latrines, were constructed and used by the group members in all the 3 project districts. Besides, one institutional toilet was also constructed in Okhaldhunga district. With the construction of latrines, the communities stopped open defecation and started using latrines. The most significant aspect is that as the construction of latrines contributed to defecation of Sirise VDC in Okhaldhunga and Katari VDC in Udaypur as Open Defecation Free zones.

Stretcher Support: An Ambulance Service in the Hills and Mountain

Most of the project's working areas include physiographically remote with difficult sloping mountains and rugged hill terrain, and scattered human settlements. Lack of health facilities, coupled with long distance to get normal health services have often resulted in loss of lives of many people in the past; most prominent being the delivery cases of pregnant women. Carrying the sick people on the back of person or by using bamboo-baskets called doko. In considering this long-prevailing agony, SAHAS-Nepal supported 4 stretchers to four groups including ward no. 1, 6, 8 & 9 of Bukhel VDC.

The group members, especially women, have the feeling that such a support has not only eased the problem of carrying the sick-people as a backload to the health centres for treatment, but also would help in saving their life.



The project's intervention of Solid Waste Management activity resulted in maintaining sanitation around the premises of the communities, by collecting rubbish in bamboo baskets. In Okhaldhunga, the communities had made 341 bamboo-baskets for collecting wastes, and installed 100 Stages (locally called as *Chang*) for drying the utensils immediately after washing. Some of the house-hold members have started to utilize biodegradable waste for making compost (fertilizer).

Nutrition program save Rajaram Life

Healthy children are the future of healthy society. Mr. Purna bahadur magar, a resident of Sirise VDC-5, Udayapur district is a member of Dhunge mixed group. He has 8 members in his family. His son named Rajaram is 5 years old. When Rajaram is 3 years, his weight is only 5.8 kg. He has almost lost his son Rajaram due to malnutrition, inadequate diet and lack of knowledge on nurturing children. After the intervention of SAHAS program in the Sirise VDC, his family also participated in the training program. He acquired knowledge on how to make super flour and started inclusion of locally available nutritious vegetables in their daily intake. Less than a year, a dramatic change has been observed in Rajaram health. Now Rajaram weighs 11.5 kg and already enrolled in the school. Mr. Purna acknowledge SAHAS activities and thankful for saving his son life.



Similarly, the with the support of the project, the maintenance work of 5 drinking water systems in Okhaldhunga, 4 well renovations in Udayapur district and construction 4 drinking water schemes in Lalitpur district was completed, thus directly benefiting a total of 374 members of 72 households. The accomplishment and creation of these facilities has improved the access to safe drinking water, while also dramatically reducing the women's workload and drudgery related to household chores (especially long distance walk and more time required in fetching water). The beneficiary communities are also of the view that they will be prevented from water borne diseases like cholera, dysentery, diarrhea, skin diseases.

In considering the fact that malnutrition affects the growth of children, and about 60 percent of the children's death in Nepal is associated with malnutrition problem, the project provided various training on nutrition management and making of nourished food *Sarbottam Pitho* (Super flour) was provided to mothers. Besides, around 600 children were examined for nutrition. The project document mentions that as the community people became aware of the nutritive value of locally available food, and the nutrition management training, of 295 children who underwent nutrition test in the last year, has resulted in improvement in health of 292 children.

4.3.5 Improved school environment and participation of youth in biodiversity conservation, ecological farming and sustainable management of natural resources

Indicator: "Students plant fodder and fruit trees in 50 schools."

The project motivated the students of 49 schools (18 in Okahaldhunga, 17 in Udaypur and 14 in Lalitpur districts), and one Child Development Centre in Udaypur district for plantation activities in the barren farms lands and areas around their schools. Consequently, the students of these educational institutions have planted 600 fencing trees, 200 flower plants and 4,000 citrus plants, besides others (Ahoka, lapsi, rittha, bottle brush, eucaliptus, thuja, pinetrees, etc). With the plantation of various types of trees and fruits, the environment of the school has been enhanced, which in turn has contributed to increased enrollment in these schools.

30 eco-clubs comprised of the students were formed to engage them in different activities such as quiz context, debate, art competition and articles related to environment issues, including the follow-up activities. These students have placed baskets for collecting rubbish around the schools as well as near the pathways. These activities are creating awareness at schools and in community for overall development of the students.

Further, these eco-clubs have been undertaking the follow-up activities of the plantation and biodiversity conservation. Also, the students organized and participated in different extracurricular activities related to environment issues through quiz context, debate, art competition and articles in their schools by Eco-club members. They have learned from each other through the review of activities done by each eco-club. Nowadays, the school notice-boards have special 'space' for poetry, essays, articles, and proverbs related to environment. Sanitation is improved in school peripheries through disposal of rubbish in basket. An interesting aspect of the eco-clubs is that these clubs have become the platform for the students to discuss the issues related to environment and other development activities.

4.3.6 Improved Community infrastructure facilities providing basic services for local communities

Indicator: "24 small to medium portable drinking water schemes constructed and reduced water borne-diseases (diarrhoea, typhoid, etc.)"

As it appeared, the project supported for the construction of various physical infrastructures. These includes: micro-hydro, irrigation pond (plastic ponds), drinking water schemes – new and rehabilitation of old ones (hand pumps, wells, source conservation, etc.), irrigation canals, extension of rural electrification, school toilets, child development centre, construction of furniture for three schools, roof material, dam construction, road constructed (about 13.5 km road and 300m long unpaved road), construction of waiting, etc. The number of infrastructures (pieces of physical works) seems to be more than what was targeted.

The construction of micro-hydro (in Okhaldhunga district) provided 44 households with an access to electricity. The project implementing organization claimed that it has also contributed to reduction of carbon emission, as the power being generated served as substitute to the traditional fuel woods and oil-based energy in the community. The extension of rural electrification in Sirise VDC of Udayapur directly benefitted 588 persons belonging to 95 households.

Similarly, with the construction of various types of irrigation facilities, the farmers' dependency on rainfall for irrigation has been reduced, while providing the farmers with irrigation in a timely manner. This has made cultivation of various vegetable crops all around the year. The provision of irrigation canals has also increased the cropping intensity, thus helping to resolve the food security issues caused by untimely rainfall and drought.

Similarly, the construction and maintenance of various drinking water schemes (new construction and rehabilitation, conservation of sources) such as handpumps, wells benefitted a number of households, with having the access to clean drinking water for them. With the availability of surplus drinking water, the women appeared to be more happy as they could save both time and energy to be spent in fetching water. It was also reported that the availability of clean drinking water has helped in minimization of occurrence of water borne disease such as diarrhoea, dysentery and cholera in the project districts.

The Changing Face of Jili

A locality named as Jili, situated in Ward No. 1 of Moli VDC in Okhaldhunga district, did not have any groups formed or support from any organization. This locality lacked drinking water facilities, because of which people had to walk about one hour to fetch water, while there was no practice of growing vegetables for home consumption. In order to buy vegetables, people used to go walking 4 hours to the market at the district headquarters thus increasing their cost of living as well as hardship. As they did not know about the significance of being associated with groups nor did they have the skills of collective action, there used to be very little collective work. These are the types of problems the groups had been facing.

With the formation of their group at the initiation of SAHAS-Nepal in 2012, the LIFT project came into being in this locality with the local efforts. After this, with the support of SAHAS-Nepal and keeping in view their need, the group also launched their prioritized project of drinking water. This project has benefited 12 households of the group for drinking water. By utilizing the waste-water, the group has also



constructed plastic-pond for the purpose of irrigation, which resulted in growing of seasonal and off-season vegetables by them. While they have earned some income, about 5-7 members of the group have been motivated towards commercial vegetable as their vocation. They use the income also for their children's education. "With the advent of irrigation facilities in the village, they have been able to increase their farm production, besides increment in the production of food- and cash-crops" says Mr. Sher Bahadur Magar, a group member. The provision of clean water also positively contributed to their health. As there is diversity in vegetable crops and improvement in the nutrition, there has been decrease in the incidence of diseases and frequency of going to hospitals. They have been able to utilize the time, to be spent for fetching water, in household activities. They have started collective fish farming in the plastic-pond, and the group has earned NRs. 9000 from this business. They have been utilizing this income as a group saving, which has been mobilized by the group at a nominal interest rate for investing in other income generating activities.

The physical infrastructure support for schools such as roof construction, proper furniture and toilet construction has contributed to increase in enrolment and retention rates. Besides, the infrastructure support also provided comforts to the school teachers and students in the teaching and learning process. The toilets being constructed in the schools created a hygienic environment in the school and it also made the girls students more happy. The creation of a child development centre provided an opportunity for those who do not go to schools.

Similarly, the dam construction in one VDC of Udayapur district benefitted 56 households with the protection of their 26.5 hectares of farm land near the river-bank, by minimizing the damage caused by flood and landslides. With such protection measures created the communities are able to irrigate their farm land done throughout the year, thus making it possible to grow seasonal and off-seasonal vegetable and other crops. This has made the community people able to produce more food, thus increasing their food security by additional 2-3 months.

4.3.7 Enhanced gender equality and equity in participation, decision making and access to resources mobilization and benefit sharing

Indicator: "400 men and women receive gender training and teach to their groups. 50 per cent women in all committee and decision-making process."

The project conducted various activities (e.g., interaction and discussions for raising awareness on gender issues (women's rights, legal rights, etc.). The launching of these activities also helped to find out the problems of the marginalised groups, and find out solutions to these problems. The MTE endorses the data provided by the Semi-annual Progress Report to show that, over all, 58 percent and 56 per cent of women members are occupying leadership positions in their groups and main committees respectively. This proportion is little more than the target of 50 percent.

Among 778 female members, 122 female members received gender concept training in Lalitpur. As a result of participation in such training, the participants became aware of basic legal rights and remedies provided under various women related laws. They also became aware about violence against women, which they shared other group members as well. Having undergone such training they feel that they are now able to combat domestic violence and violence against women.

As a result of women empowerment, of 201 groups under the project in three districts, 98 groups are headed by women. In Okhldhunga alone, 56 women are holding the position of chairperson, 73 as vice-chairperson, 59 as secretary, 71 as vice-secretary and 59 as

treasurer. Similarly, with regard to main committee, 5 women are holding the position of chairperson, 5 women are holding the position of vice-chairperson, 4 as secretary, 6 as vice secretary and 7 as treasurer.

Surya Kumari Changed her Vocation

Ms. Surya Kumari Rai, who had been adopting alcohol-making as her livelihood since last few years in the absence of other alternative solution to income generating activities, has abruptly given up this business. She was able to support her family's food need only for three months from the income of her farm. Ms. Rai had very hard time in meeting the family expenses. Even for making alcohol, she had to go very far away to fetch fire-wood. She was not able earn the income she expected as the food-grain required for making alcohol has become very expensive. Moreover, her experience of suffering from eye-problem and coughs due to the smoke emanating while making alcohol are still fresh.

Since the year 2011, after having been associated with Bamdyal Women's Group formed with the cooperation of SAHAS-Nepal, she has been getting various training on income generation and support. At the recommendation of the group and support of SAHAS-Nepal, she received a Home-garden package, which includes seeds of various kinds of seasonal and off-seasonal vegetables (cauliflower, cabbage, chilly, beans, tomato, etc.) and spice crops. She has also initiated a small fish-pond with the support of SAHAS-Nepal. With such supports, Ms. Rai has been able to conserve a total of 38 species of vegetables, spices and fruits in her home-garden. She has been able earn a monthly income of up to NRs. 13000 from the sale of the seasonal and off-season vegetables and spices of her home-garden. As she started getting good harvest from the sale of produces her farm, which could hardly support her food need for three month, she changed her vocation from alcohol-making to commercial vegetable. It is now that Ms. Rai has been able to meet her food needs, pay back her loan, buy household amenities and items of daily need, besides supporting the expenses for her children's education. With this vocation, while she has been able to learn the fact that hard-work brings financial prosperity; it has also prevented her from being looked upon negatively by the society.

Women are actively participating in various social activities and they do participate actively in decision making process. With the holding of leadership positions, women feel highly motivated to come forward and be a part of the decision making process. Because of such a status in their groups, women are also given respects at all levels (household , groups and communities).

4.3.8 Increased capacity of community institutions for increased social mobilization, resource utilization, access to services and self-governance

Indicator: "360 community based organizations have been formed, worked transparently and that approximately 30000 Euros have been mobilized for community development activities, that they have been implemented in order to support the poor."

In an effort to form community based organizations, the project implemented avarious activities, trainings and workshops and organized various kinds of meetings at different levels. The MTE takes the refernce of the project's Semi-annual Progress Report to state that a total of 158Community Based Organisationshave been formed in 3 districts (49 CBOs in Okhldhunga, 54in Lalitpur and 55 in Udayapur). Similarly,9 main committees have been formed in Ilaka 10 and Ilaka 11 of Okhaldhunga. The MTE also learned that in Ilaka 10 of Okhaldhunga, the 4 main committees have already evolved to one community based network organization, namely, (PRAYAS Nepal). Further, district level Network organization called Sustainable Rural Empowerment Network (SUREN) Nepalthat bond all five network organizations in Okhaldhunga has been formed. In addition, 4 main Committes and 1 network organization have been formed in Udayapur as well. These groups formed are working meticulously for the development of their communities. The communities have now experienced the importance of working in groups as well as forming community based organization.

It is interesting to note that the poor and marginalised communities, who could barely speak up for themselves in the past, have now become able to voice their opinion and claim their rights.The groups being formed have been able to work on resource sharing basis with various line agencies and development organisations operating at the district level. The conduction of regular meetings and saving in groups have ensured timely commencement of group action plans prepared by/and for themselves and take loan at low interest rate. Such meetings have also helped to increase unity, collective action, transparency in the groups, and monitoring of the project activities. Further to the progress, the First General Assembly of the Network organization, Self- reliant Society for Development, has also been conducted in Udayapur District.

Development achieved through Group Effort: Wooden Bridge constructed

Korwal Mahankal Group, formed in 2068 B.S. in Nallu VDC - 4, with the facilitation of SAHAS-Nepal, consists of 13 members. The group members, who had almost no idea about their group's objectives and future plan in the beginning, have begun to be active, as a result of the capacity building training (which also included vegetable cultivation, livestock management, etc.) provided by SAHAS-Nepal. Gradually, they started small scale vegetable farming with a great success. Encouraged from this activity, most of the members have given up their traditional business of alcohol making, instead they engaged in healthy income generation activities. Nallu River is a continuous running river any channel to cross it thus making it difficult for the communities of Nallu - 4 and other people coming from Vardeu, Chaughare VDCs. They requested different stakeholders for assistance, but they could not get any support. Later, the group members decided to construct a small wooden-bridge over the river with their own efforts. With this determination, they collected NRs. 200 per Household. After seven days of their hard work, the community members completed the bridge, which benefits the group members and the outsiders during monsoon. At least 150 people travel through the bridge per day. The President of the group says "if there is unity among the members, the group can do any developmental work easily and effectively".

4.4 Efficiency

The efficiency of the project has been assessed to reflect the output achieved as a result of inputs during the implementation. The activities of the project, implemented during the last three years, were reviewed to analyze the extent to which their outcomes are fulfilling planned targets. The project, by and large, appeared to be efficient. The MTE during its field visit also ascertained the efficiency of the project through the responses received from the project beneficiaries, personnel of their groups and the local stakeholders. The communities and local stakeholders have expressed quite positive impression on how the project has been managed to successfully produce the results envisaged by the project. The project's approach of working with and through the Community-based Organizations (local partners) and district based stakeholders on resource sharing basis appeared to be the very effective in an effort to achieve higher results with higher impact. This, therefore, implies that the approaches chosen by the SAHAS-Nepal/LIFT Project are appropriate for implementation of the project at the community level.

In order for producing Outputs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, the project carried out various activities, in accordance with the plan. The implementing organization has recorded and maintained the fuller details on the targets being made against each the project activities in the form of Semi-annual Progress Reports for each project year, submitted to EED. The review of these documents revealed that almost all the targets under each Output till the period of this MTE have been achieved within the stipulated time. As a result of efficient implementation of the project activities and training, the communities have been able to enhance their technical capacities to undertake various development activities and operation and management of their organizations with a substantial level of confidence. The positive results of the project implementation are evident in the various project sites visited and in the knowledge being expressed by the beneficiary communities. From these responses, the MTE feels that the project has undertaken the activities by optimally utilizing the resources that were available for implementation of the project. However, the beneficiaries and their organizations still demand for furthering strengthening of their technical and institutional capacities to enhance their level of confidence. The major activities launched under each of the Output in three project districts are as follows.

Output 1: Production and consumption of healthy and nutritious food for family members increased

- Vegetable Seed Distribution
- Nursery Establishment
- Mushroom Spawn Support
- Training on training and pruning of Fruit Trees
- Basic Vegetable Farming Training
- Mushroom Cultivation Training
- Cash Crop and Market Management Training
- Fruit Orchard Management Training
- Plastic House Construction Training
- Workshop on Sloppy Agriculture Land Technology
- Small Farmer Support
- Fruit Saplings Distribution and Afforestation
- Burdizzo Castrator Support

- Seed Management Training
- Livestock Management Training
- Ginger Seed Support
- Off-season Vegetable Cultivation Training
- Shed Improvement Program

Output 2: Eco-friendly small and medium enterprises based on agriculture, forest and local knowledge and practices

- Fingerlings Support and Monitoring
- Revolving Fund Support and Monitoring
- Construction of Improved Cooking Stove
- Training on Pickle Making and its Marketing
- Turmeric Grinding Machine Support
- Bee Keeping Refresher Training
- Musical Instrument Support

Output 3: Climate change resiliency of local farming communities enhanced

- Monitoring and Follow-up activities of Improved Stoves
- Village Animal Health Workers Workshop
- Open Defecation Free Support Program
- Improved Cooking Stove Training
- Participatory Variety Selection (PVS) in Maize
- Climate Change Orientation Training

Output 4: Health and sanitation conditions and facilities at household and community level enhanced

- Construction and Maintenance of Drinking Water System
- Latrine Construction
- School Teaching on Health and Hygiene
- Protection of Water Sources

- First-Aid Orientation Training and Stretcher Support
- Nutrition Management Orientation Training
- Support to Community Health and Sanitation Programme
- Sanitation Training
- Health Education Orientation
- School Dental Camp
- Nutrition Test
- Health Post Material Support

Output 5: School environment and participation of youth in biodiversity conservation, ecological farming and sustainable management of natural resources improved

- Workshop on Bio-Diversity Conservation
- Shed and Fodder Management Training
- Maize Seed Distribution
- Eco Club Support
- Scholarship Distribution

Output 6: Community infrastructure facilities providing basic services for local communities improved

- Plastic Pond Support (for irrigation)
- School Furniture Support
- Survey of Drinking Water Source
- Construction of Tank
- Dam Construction
- Support to construct Namuna Child Development Center
- Intake Construction and Pipe Support
- Drinking Water Construction
- Roof Support in School
- Infrastructure Activities

Output 7: Gender equality and equity in participation, decision making and access to resources mobilization and benefit sharing enhanced

- Group Meeting Facilitation
- Facilitation of Main Committee Meeting and Monitoring of Activities
- Facilitation of PRAYAS-Nepal (a CBO) Meeting
- Women Day Celebration
- Establishment of Hoarding Board for Public Awareness
- Local Peace Building Training
- Gender Awareness Training

Output 8: Capacity of community institutions for increased social mobilization, resource utilization, access to services and self-governance increased

- Organisational Capacity Development Training
- Professional Group Meeting
- Performance Review
- Resource Sharing
- Relief Support for Fire Victims
- District Level Network Organization *Ad hoc* Committee Formation
- First General Assembly of Network Organization
- Account Keeping Training
- Community involvement/contribution
- Expert Team Visit
- Line Agency Visit
- Visit of ED and MCC
- Concept training on Networking
- Main committee (MC) concept training
- Main committee formation meeting
- Main committee formation
- Main committee and Network meeting

- Main committee strengthening training
- Materials support to main committee
- Staff meeting
- Staff Capacity Building
- Proposal writing training
- Stakeholder visit
- Monitoring
- Workshop on Review and Planning of LIFT Project

4.5 Relevance

The project's objectives and approaches remained highly relevant to the priorities for improving the social and economic sector at local and national levels, besides being relevant to the achievement of several of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The project is relevant to the dire needs of the local people and the strategic priorities of the VDC. The project activities have been appropriately designed to fit to the local social, economic and physiographic situation (remote hilly area) of the project districts. Additionally, the project, which is integrated and multi-sectoral in its approach to address the genuine socio-economic problems of the poor, marginalized and excluded, is very much appropriate in considering their immediate needs and the problems of the beneficiary communities.

The main objectives of the Government of Nepal's Three Year Plan (2010/11-2012/13) is to enable people to change in their livelihood and quality of life by supporting poverty alleviation and establishment of sustainable peace through employment centric, inclusive and equitable economic growth. Within the overall development objective, one of the objectives of agriculture sector is to enhance the food and nutritional security by increasing production and productivity of agriculture and livestock commodities in line with the requirements of the farmers. Given this context, the implementation of LIFT project has immense relevance. The project has contributed to uplift the socio-economic status of the rural people by increasing production and productivity of agriculture and enhancing their livelihoods.

One of the significant aspects of the project is that it focuses mainly on the smallholders and poor and marginalized people, who are often excluded by the mainstream development programs. In this sense, the project intervention has responded to the dire needs of the resource-poor and un-reached segment of the rural society, when they are expecting some

kind of benefits of development in the changed political context of the country. The targeting of women, smallholders and near landless farmers, who are often excluded, is in line with the government's commitment to bring them in the mainstream development.

The project is contributing to achieving Millennium Development Goals, in particular, Goal No. 1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), Goal No. 2 (Achieve universal primary education), No. 3 (Promote gender equality and empower women), Goal No. 4 (Reduce child mortality) and Goal No. 7 (Ensure environmental sustainability).

As the MTE found, the project has been very useful in terms of fulfilling not only the development needs of the poor communities, but also paved a path by supporting them for sustainability of their livelihoods to a considerable extent. As it appeared, the project has addressed the problems and needs of beneficiary communities through various developmental activities. From the analysis, overall, the project has been relevant not only from the micro perspectives, but also from the macro perspectives. The project has also been rated as relevant, to supplement the development programs at the district level, by the District Development Committees (DDCs), District Livestock Service Offices (DLSOs), District Agriculture Development Offices (DADO), and political parties etc.

4.6 Sustainability

The project's sustainability implies the likelihood that project-derived outcomes and impacts will continue even after the project funds have been exhausted. This will be influenced by a number of factors. The design of the project has some of the main aspects that will ensure sustainability. However, certain factors, which have the potential to affect and contribute to sustainability, have been reviewed during this evaluation.

4.6.1 Financial factor

Financial resource is a major constraint for the beneficiary communities, given their low economic status and limited sources of income. Therefore, it is no wonder that they requested for financial support for them to enable to manage farm related activities such as irrigation facilities and their improvement, and other income generating activities. These imply a need for identification of internal financing support mechanisms that will enable the beneficiary communities to carry out their activities even after the project has been completed. One of the ways to tackle this constraint could be that the communities borrow from their own groups or the local cooperative. For this, however, there is a need of further strengthening of these institutions financially before the project is phased out.

4.6.2 Institutional factor

It was very encouraging to note that the LIFT project has been able to create a number of community groups and CBO Networks at the community, VDC and Ilaka levels. For example, as mentioned above, 158 Community Based Organisation formed in 3 districts, 9 main committees each in Ilaka 10 and ilaka 11 of Okhaldhunga, with 4 main committees in Ilaka 10 evolved to one community based network organization, namely, (PRAYAS Nepal). Besides that with the same working approaches 5 CBO network organisations have been evolved with the SAHAS Nepal facilitation in Okhaldhunga only and a district level Network organization called Sustainable Rural Empowerment Network Nepal (SUREN) that bond all five network organizations in Okhaldhunga, besides formation of 5 main Committees and 1 network organization in Udayapur. The formation of such organizations and their active involvement in the project are, no doubt, the positive signs of moving the project towards its sustainability. However, the MTE noted the beneficiary communities expressing their concerns over the long-term sustainability of their own groups. Therefore, strengthening their capabilities, to the extent that they feel proficient for operating on their own organization, becomes an important activity for the project. Equally important aspect is coordination among their own organizations for project success, besides linking them with at least their own VDC and other local bodies and development agencies (Government as well as Non-government) operating at the VDC and district levels, before the project is phased out.

4.6.3 Technical sustainability

Simply creating and improving basic infrastructure may not suffice for enhancing the overall quality of life and livelihood status of the communities. This is to say that the success of the project also depends on the technical competencies of the beneficiary communities to undertake activities such as improved farming system, nursery management, operation and maintenance of the physical infrastructures (irrigation systems, maintenance of drinking water schemes, dams, road-maintenance, etc.). For these reasons, strengthening of their technical capacities on the part of the communities also constitutes a prerequisite for ensuring the project's sustainability.

4.7 Gaps and Challenges

Despite the fact that the project has been able to produce enormous positive results, as are evident in the various project sites visited and in the knowledge being expressed by the communities, the MTE also observed some gaps and challenges related to project

implementation and long term sustainability of the project. The major gaps and challenges that require the project's genuine attention are as follows.

- **Lack of access to irrigation facilities:** Since the project has 'agriculture' as one of the major components, there appears inadequacy of the access to irrigation water for sustaining the project's agricultural activities in the long run, particularly during dry season. Most beneficiary farmers put 'inadequacy of irrigation water' as the most serious challenge.
- **Inadequate institutional and technical capacity:** While the project provided necessary support to all community groups under the project, it is yet to be adequate to operate and manage their organization in an effective manner. Similarly, the beneficiaries expressed the concern about their low level of technical capability for scaling up of agriculture-based livelihood activities. These are some of the reasons why most beneficiary groups strongly demanded that the LIFT project should continue to support them for strengthening their institutional and technical capacity for an extended period, which would eventually lead to financial sustainability.
- **Difficult working environment:** The project VDCs/sites are characterized by the harsh physiographic terrain and scattered settlements coupled with a general lack of transportation network. Besides, the communities possess low level of education and skills required to undertake development activities. Difficulties are often faced during the implementation of project activities and their supervision and monitoring.
- **Subsidy mentality of the communities:** On the one hand, the communities expect too much from the project in terms of financial and material support to carry out their activities such as farming of various vegetable crops, irrigation and their management. On the other hand provision of such supports is not possible again and again from the project side.
- **Inadequate focus on market linkage component:** Efforts directed by the project to link the agricultural production and other outputs of income generating activities with the market were found to be inadequate. The MTE found a relatively weak link between the farmers produce with the market.

4.8 Project Modality and Management

The project adopted a systematic approach for implementing the activities, which involved consultation and collaboration with the beneficiary communities, local stakeholders including district-based development organizations, building the capacity of project staffs and the beneficiaries (through training) and regular supervision & monitoring of the field-based project activities. The review of project documents, and interaction with the communities and stakeholders during the field visit revealed that the project followed a bottom up approach for implementing the activities. Therefore, the implementation modalities are based on the real needs of the beneficiary communities.

In general, the MTE is satisfied with the present way of project implementation and monitoring. However, it was felt that Monitoring system (especially monitoring of field activities and reporting) should be further improved for more systematic monitoring of the progress and feedback generation.

The personnel involved in managing the project are competent; and they are well qualified and have experiences relevant to the nature of the project. Additionally, interaction with the field staffs suggests that they have a good grasp of farmers' needs and preoccupations, and the skills to interact with the wide range of partners. The project management has not experienced any difficulties related to project implementation. The field activities are carried out under the supervision of the field-based staffs. Regular reports of visits, studies, and other activities are prepared and kept in electronic form and in hard copy. However, given the nature of the project, the evaluator feels that the team composition should be broadened to include expertise in such aspects as gender, environment/forestry, monitoring, etc., which appears to be inadequate in the project team.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The project appears to be moving effectively towards achieving its objectives and sustainability. Several activities have been carried out to achieve the Outputs. The project has been effective in developing positive perceptions among the beneficiaries and the stakeholders. There are evidence of changes that have been brought about under each of the eight Outputs, and there are several examples of effects and impact of the project at community level. In order to ensure that the project achieves its major objective (i.e., improve food security, income, health, education, organizational capacity and environment conditions of the poor and socially excluded) more efficiently and effectively, concerted efforts need to be made for implementing the project in other areas focusing on the gaps and challenges identified through this MTE.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the project performance, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact and taking into account the suggestions offered by the target communities, the stakeholders during the course of the study, the following recommendations are put forward for implementing the project elsewhere in future, and for its long term sustainability.

- In view of the fact that the project VDCs/areas are physio-graphically remote, hence low affordability on the part of the communities, the project should take initiatives to develop the project area as preferred 'Community Resource Centre' by further strengthening the technical, financial and institutional capacities the local partner organizations that would provide basic services (social and technical such as agriculture, veterinary, repair and maintenance of physical infrastructures, etc.) to the communities and other NGO projects, while also assuming the responsible for undertaking the activities like production, multiplication and distribution/marketing at the VDC level. Establishment of such Resource Centres would also greatly contribute to 'Community Ownership' and long-term sustainability of the project.
- As many farmers in the project area have begun to harvest agricultural produce (especially tomatoes grown under plastic houses) in bulk, efforts should be made to establish linkages with market and related organizations such as cooperatives, vegetable traders' organization and local traders to promote the agriculture activities

as an increasingly commercialised and profitable sector. Also, the project should take 'value-chain dimension' into consideration adequately in future undertaking of the project.

- The M&E approach and procedures should be revisited and systematized and mainstreamed in line with the information need for the project reports to be prepared. For this, the monitoring capability of the district-based project staffs should also be strengthened, if the project is not recruiting additional staff for undertaking monitoring activity.
- The project is found to be consulting and involving various stakeholders, as mentioned above, through soliciting their cooperation and establishing formal relationships with them. However, most of the project activities seemed to be carried out by the project alone. As such, valuable collaboration with other potential organization operating locally will benefit the project and the beneficiaries. There is inadequate contact and communication between the SAHAS/LIFT and the potential stakeholders. Therefore, LIFT project should make efforts to forge closer linkages with these institutions for possible future collaborations.
- SAHAS has facilitated numerous of community groups, CBOs and Networks at VDC and district level, However, further strengthening the capabilities of these organizations (based on their capacity assessment at this stage) for them to operate on their own still seems to be an important activity, before the project is phased out. Such efforts would contribute to long-term sustainability of the partner CBOs, Project's Network Organisations and beneficiary groups, institutionally and technically.
- One of the major objectives of the project is to improve of the income of the poor and socially excluded communities in the project districts. However, as it appeared, there was a relatively weak link between the farmers produce with the market. Therefore, the project should also give emphasis to the market linkage and market development in the project areas.

Annex I: Terms of Reference for Mid-term Evaluation

**Short-term contract for Midterm Evaluation of the project entitled
Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation, between
SAHAS-Nepal and Dr. Neeraj Narayan Joshi**

(TECHNICAL ToR)

This agreement has been entered into force between Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS) Nepal, here after referred to as SAHAS-Nepal and Dr. Neeraj Narayan Joshi, hereinafter referred to as Consultant for the Mid-term Evaluation of the project entitled Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation Project implemented by SAHAS-Nepal in Okhaldhunga, Udaypur and Lalitpur districts of Nepal, with support of former EED, currently known as BfdW

1. Background of the SAHAS Nepal

The Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS) – Nepal, established in 1996, is a non-profit making and non-governmental social development organisation registered with the District Administration Office, Lalitpur, Nepal and associated with the Social Welfare Council of the Government of Nepal. The organisation was founded by a group of professional development workers, who for many years were engaged in the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) supported Okhaldhunga Rural Development Programme. Presently, it is one of the fast growing non-government organisations in Nepal in terms of programme diversification, geographic area coverage and organisational growth.

Building on the successes and learning from the UMN supported Okhaldhunga Rural Development Programme's previous work; SAHAS-Nepal has been implementing various community development projects. Of late, it has directed its development efforts towards strengthening the capacities of the communities and local development partner organisations to build a culture of peace and creating an enabling environment for sustaining the development activities by the communities themselves.

2. Background of the project

Project entitled: Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation

Project objectives:

- a. Production and consumption of healthy and nutritious food for family members increased.

- b. Eco-friendly small and medium enterprises (SMEs) based on agriculture, forest and local knowledge and practices with especial focus to women and socially excluded groups increased.
- c. Climate change resiliency of local farming communities enhanced.
- d. Health and sanitation conditions and facilities at household and community level enhanced.
- e. School environment and participation of youth in bio-diversity conservation, ecological farming and sustainable management of natural resources improved.
- f. Community infrastructure facilities providing basic services for local communities improved.
- g. Gender equality and equity in participation, decision making and access to resources mobilization and benefit sharing enhanced.
- h. Capacity of community institutions for increased social mobilization, resource utilization, access to services and self-governance increased.

Indicators to measure the degree of achievement of the project objectives:

Refers to **a**: 23 groups produce quality of vegetable and cereal crops seeds.

Refers to **b**: Reports show that 23 eco-friendly micro businesses are active.

Refers to **c**: 3,000 farmers received training and support on identity and utilize plant varieties and animal breeds with traits for adaptation to climate change impacts.

Refers to **d**: Reports show that 23 drinking water schemes and 3,000 pit latrines are used and that the health condition of 150 mal-nourished children have been improved.

Refers to **e**: Students plant fodder, fruit trees in 50 schools.

Refers to **f**: 24 small to medium portable drinking water schemes will be constructed and reduced water born diseases (diarrhea, typhoid, etc.)

Refers to **g**: - 400 men and women receive gender training and teach to their groups.

- 50% women in all committee and decision making process.

Refers to **h**: Reports show that 360 community based organisations have been formed, work transparently and that approximately €30,000 have been mobilised for community development activities that have been implemented in order to support the poor.

3. Objectives of the Assignment

The main objective of the assignment is to “Participatory Mid-Term Evaluation” of the Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation Projects being implemented in Okhaldhunga,

Udyapur and Lalitpur districts. In the evaluation process, all stakeholders (target communities, VDCs and VDCs officials and selected line agency head) will be involved and interview by the consultant. The specific objectives of the mid-term evaluation are:

- iii. To conduct evaluation of the results achieved by the projects in districts, and provide their performance status and quality and quantity of results thus far,
- iv. To provide gaps in their performance and reasons for gaps, and suggest the areas to improve their performance, and conclusions based on the findings of the evaluation

4. Evaluation Methodology

The Consultant and field evaluators shall complete the following activities and other activities if required for fulfilling the objectives of this assignment:

a) Desk work

Review the relevant documents of SAHAS and the project for the evaluation procedure and identifying suitable tools/techniques. The final evaluation procedure should be simple, reader-friendly and with an appropriate questionnaire and checklist.

b) Orientation to field evaluators

The consultant will orient the field evaluators and the project staffs on the procedure and make them confident on method how to get required data/information from questionnaire and checklist. The consultant will lead and conduct evaluation with the field evaluators.

c) Field work by consultant and his team member

The field consultant should follow the evaluation procedure and obtain information through observation, interviews, meetings, discussions, etc. If he/she comes up with some confusion, they should immediately take suggestions from the evaluation consultant. They should cross check and triangulate for validating the data and information obtained.

d) Data/information analysis, interpretation and report writing

The consultant shall analyse and interpret data/information, and prepare a report addressing the objectives of this assignment (as listed above).

e) Presentation and finalisation of district reports

Brief presentation of the reports to the SAHAS team and finalise the reports based on the comments and suggestions received.

5. Scope of the Evaluation Work

- The evaluation shall be conducted following the above mentioned methodology
- The evaluation (field-work) shall consider all the three project districts
- The evaluation shall be focused on the Major objectives of the project in general, and in particular, shall be based on **the project's 8 Outputs** and **Agreed upon Indicators** (as mentioned in the project documents).
- The evaluation work shall have 17 days that includes: preparation for evaluation work, field work and draft report production. The consultant shall start the work from 27 December, 2013

6. Inputs from SAHAS- Nepal

The Consultant shall be contracted by SAHAS shall work under the direct supervision of SAHAS/Executive Director. The consultants shall coordinate with Project Coordinator, district based Project Officers and staffs whenever needed for the assignment.

7. Expected Outputs

The consultants shall submit the 'Mid-term Evaluation Procedure and Evaluation Reports', based on the Scope of the Evaluation (mentioned above). These should also comprise of:

- a) The evaluation procedure should specifically include:
 - (i) data and information required to verify results indicators,
 - (ii) quality and quantity of results,
 - (iii) gaps in their performance and reasons for gaps,
 - (iv) the areas to improve the performance, and (v) conclusion/recommendation

8. Time Frame and Deliverables

Deliverables	Deadline
Preparation (Desk study)	2 days
Detail work plan (Field visits and staff meeting)	12 days (27.12.2013 -09.01.2014)
Report write up	5 days
Draft of evaluation reports	17.01.2014
Final report	25.01.2014
Total working days	19

These assignments shall be completed by 25 January, 2014, and the consultant shall submit the documents as per the overall Agreement and the deliverables mentioned above.

Signature:

Name: Dr. Neeraj Narayan Joshi
Designation: Consultant
VAT No. 100444713

Date:

Signature:

On behalf of SAHAS Nepal
Name: Dr. Surendra K. Shrestha
Designation: Executive Director

Date:

Annex II: List of Individuals and Organizations Involved and Contacted for Information Gathering

List 1: Community Beneficiaries in Okhaldhunga

Name	Group's/Organization	VDC and Ilaka	Position
Bhawana Chamling Rai	RAPYAS Nepal	Manebhanjyang	Chairperson
Dhan Bahadur Magar	PRAYAS Nepal	Madhavpur	Treasurer
Gadul Dhoj Thapa	Barbot Mahila Samuha	Waxsha	Member
Jay Kumari Rai	Wamdyaal Mahila Samuha	Uboo	Treasurer
Amina Rai	Wamdyaal Mahila Samuha	Uboo	Member
Surya Sari Rai	Wamdyaal Mahila Samuha	Uboo	Chairperson
Krishna Rai	Dhamdyalu Mahila Samuha	Waxsha	Chairperson
Kiran Rai	Sangharsil Mishrit samuha	Uboo	Member
Sabita Rai	Wamdyaal Mahila Samuha	Uboo	Member
Govinda Dhamala	Sansari sikhari basti mishrit samuha	Betini	Member
Shanta Dhamala	Sansari sikhari basti mishrit samuha	Betini	Member
Prem Kumar Rai	Dhyapti Mahila Samuha	Uboo	Member
Rabin Rai	Dhyapti Mahila Samuha	Uboo	Member
Indra B.K	PRAYAS Nepal	Madhavpur	Secretary
Iman Singh Rai	Sikhari Mishrit Samuha	Uboo	Secretary
Bhabi Ale Magar	Jhurumtol Mishrit Samuha	Moli	Secretary
Musasen Rai	Humlu Mishrit Samuha	Moli	Chairperson
Purna B.K	Srijansil Dalit Samuha	Uboo	Chairperson

Note: PRAYAS – Nepal is a Network Organization

List 2: Officials in Okhaldhunga

Name	Organization	Position
Mr. Ganesh Bahadur Katwal	District Development Committee (Okhaldhunga)	Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Officer
Mr. Shankar Prasad Upadhyaya	District Agriculture Development Office, Okhaldhunga	Agriculture Technician
Mr. Ram Chandra Pudasaini	District Livestock Service Office, Okhaldhunga	Livestock Development Officer

List 3: SAHAS Nepal (Project) Staff in Okhaldhunga

Name	Position
Mr. Tanka Gautam	Project Coordinator
Ms. Binita Shrestha	Project Officer
Mr. Meghjit Rai	Team Leader
Mr. Deshindra Bading	Team Leader
Mr. Tej Kumar Rai	Team Leader
Mr. Rabina Shrestha	Finance and Admin. Assistant
Mr. Champak Sunuwar	Junior Technical Assistant
Ms. Sita Biswakarma	C.D.W
Ms. Nirmla Pariyar	C.D.W
Mr. Nawa Raj Dhamala	C.D.W
Mr. Mina Rai	A. N. M.
Ms. Pema Sherpa	Junior Technical Assistant
Ms. Sirjana Wagle	Construction Technician

List 4: SAHAS Nepal (Project) Staff in Katari

Name	Position
Mr. Ananta Devkota	Project Officer
Ms. Bandi Rai	Admin. & Finance Assistant
Ms. Geeta Khadka	A. Na. Mi.
Ms. Mana Maya Shrestha	Social Mobilizer
Mr. Hom Bahadu BiswaKarma	Social Mobilizer

List 5: Community Beneficiaries in Udaypur

Name	Organization	VDC
Ms. Ramita Magar	Lami Duwali Samuha	Risku - 9
Ms. Dev Maya Pulami	Lami Duwali Samuha	Risku - 9
Mr, Raghu Rai	Jaljale Samuha	Jaljale - 7
Mr. Prem Bhandari	Milijuli Misrit Samuha	Sirise - 6
Mr. Kedar man Romkah	Dalit mahila Samuha	Tabashree - 6
Mr. Krishna Bahadur Tamang	Chyanga Misrit Samuha	Katari -2

Mr. Yog Bahadur Romkah	Hatti Kharka Dalit Mahila Samuha	Tabashree - 4
Mr. Santosh Bahadur Magar	Siruwani Misrit Samuha	Siruwani - 3
Ms. Pamfa Magar	Siruwani Misrit Samuha	Siruwani - 3
Mr. Dil Maya Jarga Magar	Kawase mahila Samuha	Sirise – 7
Ms. Gita Dhungana	Barmajhiya Samuha	Katari - 8
Ms. Jyoti Rai	Chimtaghari Samuha	Katari – 3
Mr. Hem Prasad	Makure Misrit Samuha	Risku – 4
Ms. Sarmila Khatri	Kawase Mahila Samuha	Sirise - 7
Mr. Dal bahadur Khatri	Tintale Mahila Samuha	Katari – 8

List 6: Community Beneficiaries in Lalitpur

Name	Organization	VDC	Position
Ms. Durga Tamang	Nawa Jyoti Mul Samati Samuha	Nallu	Secretary
Mr. Shyam Krishna Chaulagai	Jana Ekata Mul Samiti	Sankhu	Chairperson
Mr. Man Bahadur Tamang	Kali Seti Devi Samudayik Samuha	Dalchowki	Secretary
Mr. Ram Saran Khawas	Chisa Pani Samudayik Samuha	Dalchowki	Treasurer
Mr. Sarada K.C.	Sangini Mahila Bachat Samuha	Nallu	Chairperson
Mr. Manju K.C.	Sangini Mahila Bachat Samuha	Nallu	Member

List 7: SAHAS Nepal (Project) Staff in Dalchowki, Lalitpur

Name	Position
Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa	Project Officer
Mr. Jitbal Rai	Agriculture Technician
Mr. Mohan Bahadur Hamal	Agriculture Technician

List 8: SAHAS Nepal Staff at Central Office

Name	Position
Dr. Surendra Kumar Shrestha	Executive Director
Mr. Saban Shrestha	Project Coordinator
Mr. Tanka Gautam	Project Coordinator



सहास नेपाल

Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS) Nepal

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