

"Able and Effective SAHAS-Nepal
Advancement of the Poor and the Marginalised"

ANNUAL REPORT

2007/08



SAHAS-NEPAL

1. Introduction of SAHAS-Nepal

1.1 Organisation

The Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS) – Nepal is a non-governmental social development organisation. Since its inception in 1996 it has been working for community development in rural areas of Nepal, extensively in Okhaldhunga district. Building on the successes and learning from the United Mission to Nepal's (UMN) Okhaldhunga Rural Development Project's (ORDP) previous work, SAHAS-Nepal has been implementing various community development projects. Of late, we have directed our 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.

Our major development thematic areas include: community development, advocacy and action-research. The thematic activities under community development are: (i) livelihoods - agriculture, livestock, and income generation activities, (ii) education and training – civic and human rights education, training on education, community awareness, (iii) institutional development - leadership development, networking and alliance building, group facilitation, documentation, etc. (iv) disaster and relief activities, (v) infrastructure development – irrigation system, micro-hydro-power scheme, suspension bridge, drinking water scheme, and (vi) health and sanitation- hygiene, women's health and nutritional education. Similarly, the advocacy activities include: enhancement of capacity, lobbying together with communities for their pertinent issues/agendas (e.g. human rights, food sovereignty) addressing respective stakeholders, and support to communities for strategic planning and documentation of campaigns. The research activity undertaken focused on 'Hill Maize Research Project' and bio-fuel by conducting various trials with the involvement of the local farmers.

1.2 Vision

The vision of the organisation is an inclusive society that respects human rights, sustains the growth of life of all citizens in general, and the poor, marginalised and excluded in particular, and fosters their own initiatives in a just and equitable manner.

Motto

"Able and Effective SAHAS-Nepal, Advancement of the Poor and the Marginalised".

1. 3 Mission

The organisation is committed towards creating an enabling environment for development by empowering the poor, marginalised and excluded people to improve and sustain their quality of life, and advocating for their human rights and contributing to the national level.

1. 4 Strategy

SAHAS-Nepal, adopts the rights-based and participatory approaches by sensitising the people that they have a right to development and live a life without fear. For planning and implementing development programmes, be it community empowerment or advocacy or research, SAHAS-Nepal puts the people right in the centre of development with a special focus on inclusion of the already excluded.

SAHAS-Nepal implements the programmes based on the experiences learned from the previous programmes and carries forward the approaches and activities that have proven to be effective in reaching the poor and marginalised communities by fostering strategic partnership with like minded organisations.

1. 5 Objectives

The objective of SAHAS-Nepal is to strengthen the capacities of the poor and excluded people and their organisations in the social, economic and political spheres through its development, research and advocacy activities at all levels.

- To render the poor, marginalised and excluded people self-reliant through the process of empowerment,
- To bring together potential partners for collective action for community based development activities, pro-people research and advocacy activities, and
- To contribute to achieving national, regional and international development goals.

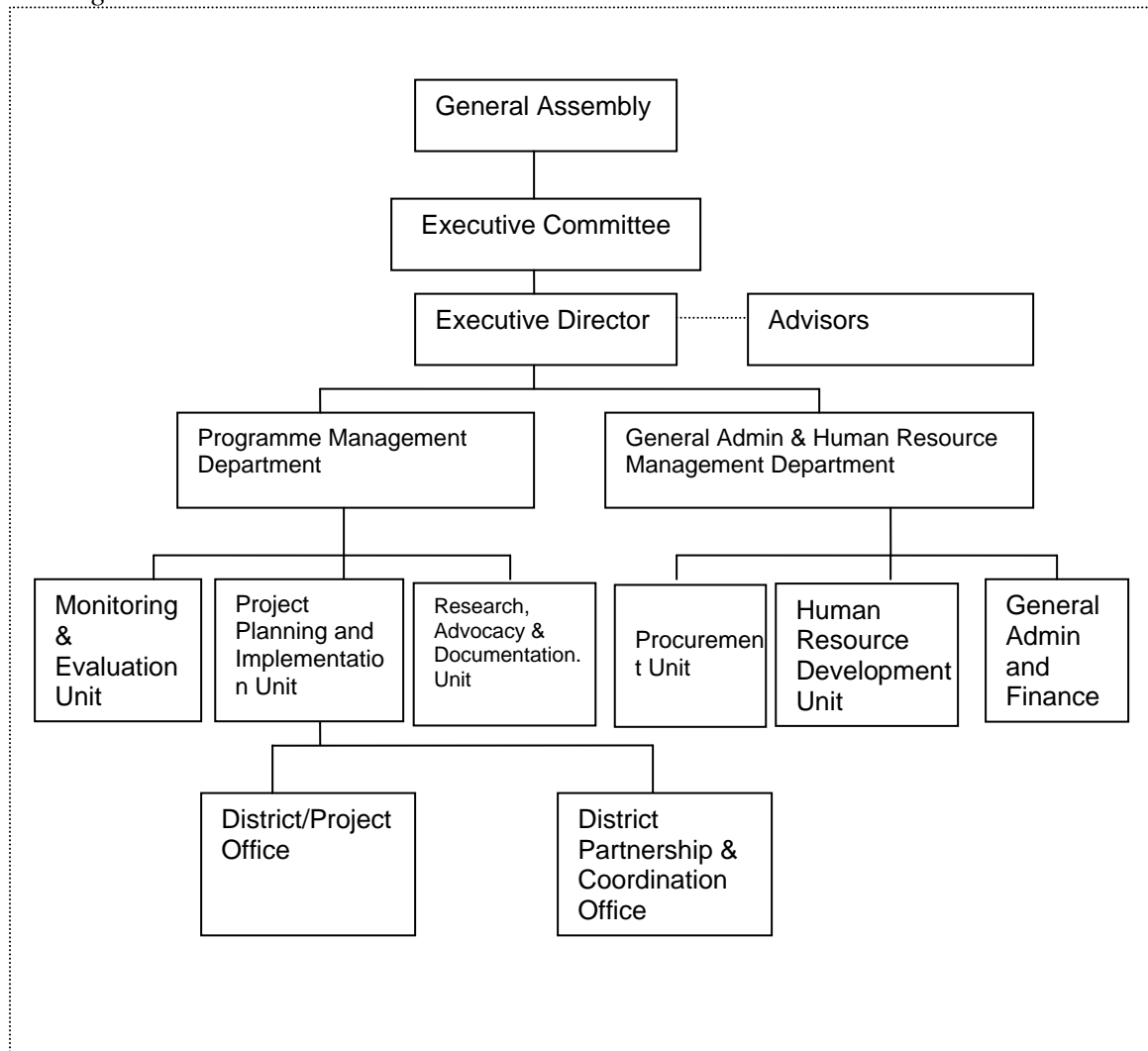
1.6 Organisational Structure

The General Assembly is the highest body in the hierarchy of the organisation. Currently the organisation is comprised of 48 members representing diverse ethnicity, gender, geographical regions and walks of life. The General Assembly elects the Executive Committee, which consists of nine members (5 women and 4 men) at present. The Executive Committee is responsible for the overall policy, strategy, and management and functioning of the organisation's administrative, financial and programmes/projects. The advisor(s) assist the Executive Director in policy related matters and linkage with the donor communities, while they also provide necessary inputs to the senior level staff for planning, implementation and monitoring of the organisation's development programmes and projects. The organisational structure is given below.

The Programme Management Department (PMD) looks after the planning, implementation and monitoring of the development programmes and projects, and research and advocacy activities of the organisation. The PMD also provides necessary guidance and supervision to the district level offices, namely, District/Project Office and District Partnership & Coordination Office. The General Administrative and Human Resource Management Department on the other hand, oversees the responsibility of management of general administration and financial transaction, including human resource development of the organisation.

The District/Project Office is responsible for implementation of the development programmes/projects at the district level in accordance with the programme/project documents. Similarly, District Partnership & Coordination Office takes the responsibility of establishing and strengthening the relationships with the partner organisations and other relevant stakeholders at the district level.

1.6 Organisational Structure



1.7 Programmes and Projects

SAHAS-Nepal has been implementing various programmes and projects related to community development, research and advocacy. The on going programmes and projects of the year 2007/08 are presented below.

Current Programme and Project and District

S.No.	Programme/projects	Project working area
1.	Institutional Development	Okahldhunga District
2.	Food Security Programme through Local Efforts	Okahldhunga District
3.	Food Security Programme	Okhaldhunga District
4.	Food Security Programme	Udaypur District
5.	Trail Bridge Sub-sector Support Programme	Okhaldhunga District
6.	Civic Education Project	Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga and Udaypur Districts
7.	Animal Nutrition Project	Okhaldhunga District
8.	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board (Fund Board)	Okhaldhunga District
9.	Bio-fuel Project	Okhaldhunga District
10.	Hill Maize Research Project	Okhaldhunga District

2 Institutional Developments

Since its inception, SAHAS-Nepal has been involving in community development activities in the remote areas mainly focusing on the disadvantaged communities of the country. While these community development activities have contributed to familiarisation the organisation as a development actor at the community level, these activities have also been providing support to the communities in undertaking their own development activities as per their own plans by partnering with the GO and NGOs in accordance with the policies of the government. Under the institutional development, the activities undertaken by the organisation in the year 2007/08 are as follows.

2.1 General Assembly Meeting

In accordance with the constitution of SAHAS-Nepal, it has been organising general assembly meeting each year. Through this meeting the organisation prepares its plans based on the assessment of its activities in the past. By giving continuity to the process, SAHAS-Nepal successfully convened its 12th general assembly meeting at Nagarkot in the month of August 25-27, 2007. In this meeting, the review of the budget of the last year was done. The meeting also discussed and endorsed the action-plan and budget for the coming year. Since the tenure of the present executive committee has already been completed, the general assembly meeting, in accordance of the organisations' constitution, nominated a new executive committee consisting of nine members. The meeting was presided over by the organisation's chair Dr. Surendra Kumar Shrestha.



Chair of SAHAS-Nepal addressing its 12th GA

2.2 Institutional Linkage/Networking

SAHAS-Nepal's chair, Dr. Surendra Kumar Shrestha, had participated in the meeting in Bonn, German organised by EED for the INGOs working in Nepal and. Dr. Shrestha had presented a working-paper on Inclusion of disadvantaged communities in the social and political justice in the Germany parliament. In this meeting, while Ms. Durga Sob presented a working paper on the current political situation of Nepal and Ms. Mandira Sharma did on 'Human Rights Violation'.



Chair of SAHAS-Nepal presenting paper in Germany Parliament

2.3 Coordination and Partnership

With the objective of advancing SAHAS-Nepal's institutional activities in a sustainable manner, it has been coordinating the development activities in partnership with various other organisations. In this process, the organisation has had an opportunity to work with in partnership Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board (RWSSDFB) to implement a drinking water programme. Similarly, the organisation has also submitted a project proposal related to providing solution to Reproductive Health problems to the Australian Embassy. A project proposal for undertaking research on hill maize crop submitted to International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) was approved and the research work is going on in Okhaldhunga district. In response to the announcements made by the Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) and International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), the organisation submitted the proposals. With the submission of such proposals SAHAS-Nepal has felt as being contributed to establishment of its relationships with other organisations.

SAHAS-Nepal's national and international partners

National partners

- Community Support Programme
- Agriculture Perspective Plan Support Project
- Trial Bridge Sub-sector Support Programme
- Animal Health Training and Consultation Service
- Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board
- People Energy and Environment Development Association
- District Development Committee (Okhaldunga District)
- Community Mental Counselling
- Central for Community Development-Nepal
- LI-BIRD (strategic partner)
- Gramin Mahila Jagaran Samuha
- Kotgadhi Shikhar Samaj-Nepal
- Likhudemba Community Development Forum

International

- German Church Development Service, Germany
- Misereor, Germany
- International Maize and Wheat Development
- Finnish Evangelic Lutheran Mission

Affiliate Organisation

- Food first International Action Network
- Nepal Participatory Action Network
- Right to Food Network Group
- NGO Federation

2.4 Board Meeting, Programme Monitoring and Documentation

The organisation has been holding its executive committee meetings regularly in order to advance the organisation's activities on a regular basis and to provide regular necessary suggestions and cooperation to various programmes and projects on a continuous basis. In general, such meetings are being held once in every three months, but as it was deemed necessary the organisation had to hold even up to five times.

SAHAS-Nepal has also been extending assistance to its programmes and projects by coordinating with various other organisations from time to time. In this process, the organisation had made necessary arrangements for the mid-term evaluation of the 'Food Security Programme'. Similarly, in order to make the food security programme being implemented under this organisation in Udaypur district effective, the Vice-chairperson of the organisation, Mr. Brahma Dhoj Gurung met with the project staffs working in the project areas, discussed and provided necessary suggestions to them. Similarly, Ms. Sati Shrestha, Joint-secretary, was involved in Project Management Committee of 'Civic Education Project', while Mr. Sunil Shakya, Treasurer, carried-out internal auditing in every four months and coached the finance staffs for systematic book keeping and budgeting. The other members made equally important contribution in developing policy, plans and decision making process. Ms. Petra Shakya, Adviser of SAHAS-Nepal, has been instrumental for promoting networking with the donors and strengthening the documentation of the organisation.

2.5 Annual Review Workshop and Documentation

SAHAS-Nepal has been regularly undertaking the activities of reviewing its various development programmes and projects half-yearly and annually for developing future plans. The annual review of the year 2007 (2063/064) was conducted in the month of August with the participation of the executive committee members, advisors and the staff working under various projects. While this annual review workshop discussed the reviews and lessons learned as per the plan, it also prepared the plans for the coming days.

In this review workshop necessary suggestions were provided by reviewing the programmes and projects (scholarships, food security, suspension bridge, animal nutrition, civic education and other institutional activities) undertaken by the organisation in a holistic way. The workshop also came out with the action-plans being prepared based on the detailed review of the annual strategic plans and past performance of the organisational activities. The action plan being prepared has contributed to the overall institutional development of SAHAS-Nepal, while it also has also helped in effective implementation of the programs as this kind of gathering provided an opportunity to the executive committee members and other staff for a direct interaction.



SAHAS-Nepal family including the adviser in Annual Review Workshop

In accordance with its strategic plan SAHAS-Nepal has been reviewing and documenting its past activities and written documents regularly in view of the future programmes and projects to be undertaken. The organisation has published a booklet on SAHAS-Nepal's ten years of journey in the development front. The organisation has also reviewed and developed its policies related to human resource and gender. In the process of publication and documentation, the organisation has been regularly publishing its annual reports, and has brought out various publications related to its development, research and advocacy activities. The documentation of such publications has contributed to advancement of the organisation's regular activities

2.6 Meeting with Donor Representatives

A meeting was held with the representative of EED Ms. Kristin Gate with a view to share the experiences about the ongoing food security programme, and to discuss the achievements, lessons learned and recommendations received from the mid-term evaluation of the project. The meeting also discussed about the implementation modality of the project being approved for Ilaka No. 9, 10 and Terai, besides sharing the ideas. It has been felt that such a meeting with the donor representative has provided additional energy to the organisation for advancing its programmes.



Meeting with the representative of EED Ms. Kirsten Gade.

Human Resource Development Activities (Organisation's Executive Committee and Programme/Project Staffs)

SN	Activities	No. of Participants	Female	Male	Achievement
1.	Study tour (Hyderabad, India)	10	3	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helpful in building linkage ▪ Experienced directly about the new activities ▪ Learned new lessons from direct observation of new activities
2.	Food sovereignty workshop (5-day)	1	-	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to understand about food sovereignty ▪ Development of linkage among various organizations
3.	Water and democracy seminar (1-day)	2	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to understand about water rights
4.	Documentation workshop (2-day)	14	8	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organization of various committees for documenting organization's various activities ▪ Gained knowledge about documentation process
5.	Food rights workshop (2-day)	1	--	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understood about the concept of food rights in the current context of Nepal ▪ Understood about advancing the food rights at the community level
6.	Education for peace	1	--	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to gain various knowledge and skills by participating in 1-month long training program in Bangalore, India
7.	Kosi river management workshop (2-day)	1	--	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understood about World Wildlife Fund (WWF) program in Solukhumbu district by being participant of the workshop organized by WWF. ▪ Plan to extend the program area in Okhaldhunga district
8.	Workshop on preparation of log-frame for food security project	20	6	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepared a log-frame containing activities mentioned in the proposal for 3 years. ▪ Prepared 3 year detailed plan for food security project based on log-frame

SAHAS-Nepal has involved in various aspects of the district development activities in the district it has been working, besides implementing various projects by itself. The committees/forums to which SAHAS-Nepal contributed in the last fiscal year are as follows:

- Member – Okhaldhunga Community Hospital Advisory Committee
- Member – District Reproductive Health Coordination Committee
- Member – Local Development Fund, DDC Okhaldhunga
- Member – District Child Welfare Committee
- Member – District Dots Coordination Committee
- Member – Employee Meeting Centre, Okhaldhunga
- Member – NGO Federation, Lalitpur
- Chair – National Election Observation Committee, Okhaldhunga
- Member – NEPAN, Kathmandu.

Congratulation!!!



We would like to extend hearty congratulation to Dr. Surendra Kumar Shrestha, chairperson of this organisation for receiving Nepal Bidhyabhusan “Ka” by honourable President of Nepal on successful completion of PhD from the University of East Anglia, UK. We wish Dr. Surendra Kumar Shrestha all the success for his future career.

SAHAS-Nepal Family

3. Food Security Programme through Local Efforts, Okahldhunga District

The Food Security Programme is in operation in 5 VDCs (Balakhu, Sisneri, Mulkharka, Chyanam and Katunje) of Ilaka 9 since 2003 with the active initiatives of the poor community for improving the status of their life. A total of 123 various groups composed of Dalit, women, Janajatis and mixed from all the five VDCs of Ilaka 9 are actively participating in the programme. For the sustainability of the groups a VDC level Main Committee containing one representative from each of these groups has been formed. As per the programme phases, while the first phase (2003 -2007 December) of the programme has been completed together with the mid-term evaluation, the second phase has also been commenced by taking into account the suggestions and recommendations given by the first phase. The programme has contributed to improvement in the food security status of the communities as its effects. So far, about 3100 people have received direct benefits from the programme, while about 19000 community members have been indirectly benefited.

So far, about 3100 members associated with various groups have received direct benefits from the programme and about 15000 communities have been indirectly benefited. The activities under this programme that have been completed from July 2007 to June 2008 are as follows.

3.1 Right-based literacy (adult and child) class

With the active participation of the groups 26 adult literacy classes and 15 child literacy classes were conducted last year in the month of September-October. While 60 percent of the adult literacy class participants became literate, 95 percent participants of the child literacy classes have been enrolled in the formal schools. In the closing programme of these literacy classes, the participants had presented various cultural items such as dance, songs, poem and drama. The programme was organised with the participation of the leaders VDCs and groups and school teachers. The programme was initiated by the leader and representatives of the main committee. On this occasion, each of the resource persons of the classes was awarded with Rs. 6300 in the form prize for their contribution to the successful completion of the classes. The activity of motivating the non-school going children from Dalit community to send them to the formal schools regularly is going on. In this closing programme, most of the speakers highlighted the effectiveness and successful completion of the non-formal classes being conducted with the support of SAHAS-Nepal.

It was interesting to note that some of the female participants of the literacy class have even conducted such adult literacy classes with their own initiatives with the skills they have developed from the earlier classes they had attended. These classes in turn provided other members in the community to become literate.

With these activities they have come to set an example for other women in the community.



Child literacy class

3.2 Mid-term evaluation

After the completion of the first phase of the Food Security Programme, a mid-term evaluation was carried out with the objectives of assessing the extent of completion and achievements made so far with the assistance of the external consultant in the month of September-October. The mid term-evaluation was undertaken by the independent consultants Dr. Jagannath Adhikari and Mr. Sarad Ghimire.

In the beginning, the tool for monitoring was prepared with the involvement of the concerned VDC personnel, and the information was collected from 3 groups, i.e., the active, medium and less active groups with the representation of female, janajati and other persons (mixed) being selected from each VDC. The recommendations (suggestions) received from the mid-term evaluation are being adopted for the effective implementation and sustainability of the programme activities of the second phase. The detailed description of the mid-term evaluation is available in the mid-term report.



Participatory mid-term evaluation of the programme

3.2 Physical infrastructure support

The survey work of the activities included in the action-plan prioritised by the groups as well as the schemes being demanded has been completed. The survey work of 2 drinking water schemes in Balakhu, 2 schemes in Sisneri, 1 scheme in Mulkharka, 2 schemes in Chyanam and 1 scheme in Katunje has been completed.

With the infrastructure being constructed, the communities in the programme area have been receiving adequate supply of better quality drinking water through the water taps installed in their own localities. Since fetching water for household purposes lies with the women family members, these women have expressed special happiness over the completion of the scheme. Earlier they used to have a very frustrating situation as they had to fetch water for the household activities from very distant places and compelling them to spend long hours. But now with the time saved from fetching water and removal of drudgery, they are in a better position to pay much needed attention to their children, and involve themselves in income generating activities and other social and community activities. The construction of infrastructure has also contributed to breaking the long-persisted cultural barriers by allowing the dalits have access to the water from the same sources. The community people now expect to reduce the incidence of water borne diseases.

Similarly, with the rehabilitation and construction of the old class-rooms and school buildings which were in very bad condition, the parents have been able to send their children to the school without any panic. Earlier on, these schools were not able to run the classes whenever there used to be heavy rainfall or storm. The teachers and the school management committees articulated that the rehabilitation and construction works have brought substantial changes in their schools. The parents also seemed happy as their children would not have holidays during the heavy rainfall and stormy days.

As per the norms of the programme, the schemes could be implemented under the upcoming plan if the groups are prepared to undertake the already surveyed schemes. The project has been raising the awareness level by encouraging the poor, *Dalit*, people living with disabilities, women and *Janajati* for joint planning and resource sharing in development activities, keeping in view the objectives and capacity of the organisation for improving their living standard. The organisation has been providing support to the infrastructure schemes by reviewing the applications for implementation of the schemes being selected based on prioritisation by the groups of various communities through the VDC level main committee. The communities have been regularly receiving the clean drinking water from the schemes being completed in the previous fiscal year. In order to implement and complete the construction activities, the SAHAS-Nepal has been partnering with other organisations at the local level. This kind of activities has contributed to building relationship and coordination among the organisations involved in development process. Similarly, the infrastructure

development activities have helped to develop 'we' feeling among the communities.



School building before (left) and after (right) the programme

Community's Drinking Water Project and Resources Sharing

S.N	Activities	Qty	No. of receiving benefits						Remarks
			Dalit		Janajati		BCN		
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
1.	Setidevi Prim. schools Balakhu 4 building construction	4 Rooms							Support for roof, and timber for window/ doorway SAHAS Rs. 59,159.00 Community Rs. 47,190.00 VDC Rs. 40,000.00 Fund Rs. 18,000.00 <u>School Rs. 32,050.00</u> Total Rs. 1,96,399.00
2.	Kushadevi Pre. Prim. school	4 rooms, 2 storied							Male students: 141 Female students: 139 Support for roof SAHAS Rs. 59,685.00 Community Rs. 38,000.00 VDC Rs. 50,000.00 <u>Community buldg Rs. 18,815.00</u> Total Rs. 1,66,500.00
3.	Pakhe Khola Muhan drinking water scheme repair	-	97	94	30	20	201	211	Estimated Rs. SAHAS Rs. 1,19,305.75 <u>Group Rs. 64,277.25</u> Total Rs. 1,83,683.00
4.	Tumuk drinking water scheme Sisneri 8, construction	-			37	31			Estimated Rs. SAHAS Rs. 83,145.73 Community Rs. 56,718.00 Total Rs. 1,39,863.73
5.	Mulkharka 3 Dhule drinking water	-	7	6	26	25			Estimated Rs. SAHAS Rs. 76,611.70 <u>Community Rs. 37,495.00</u> Total Rs. 1,14,106.70

	scheme construction								
6.	Deurali drinking water scheme Balakhu construction (food for work)				41	56			Estimated Rs. SAHAS Rs. 84,583.29 Community Rs. 56,510.00 Total Rs. 1,41,093.29



Washing dishes with dirty water (before programme)



Women in long queue to collect water (before programme)



A water tap-stand right in the village brings happiness to the communities (after programme)

3.3 Nutrition trial

As per the objective of the programme, the children under 5 years of age living in the target areas of each VDCs were weighed and their arms measured in order to know the nutritional situation of these children. Based on the results of these activities, the parents and guardians of malnourished children were provided with nutritional education. With this, demonstration on how to make a food item called 'Sarbottom Pitho' (porridge flour; composed of various types of cereals and grain legumes) and its distribution were also done, besides performing the regular monitoring activity. This year too, the examination of the children who were identified as being malnourished last year and imparting nutritional education were completed. It appeared that of the total children being identified as malnourished last year, there has been improvement in 149 of such children, and four children were referred to the Okhaldhunga mission hospital for necessary treatment. This kind of activity has contributed to improvement in the health

status of the children. Moreover, such activities also helped remove the parents' anxieties of suffering their children from malnutrition and other health problems, besides ensuring the children's rights to live.



A child being weighed to examine the nutritional status

Communities of Kakani constructed school building

There is a settlement of Sunuwar and Tamang communities in ward No. 4 of Katunje VDC. As this settlement is situated in a geographically isolated place of this VDC, the Champa Devi Primary School which was initiated with great difficulty tumbled down and remained in useless condition for a long time. The communities tried their best to repair and maintain the school by approaching many institutions and individuals including the local VDC for possible assistance. But as they were not able to manage resources, the school continued to remain in useless condition. In the year 2005, a committee was formed with the active participation of the communities and with the help of SAHAS-Nepal. The same committee has been operating various development activities. Similarly, the committee initiated coordination and relationships with various development organisations by putting the school repair/maintenance work as the priority of the action-plan. As they received cooperation and commitments from various community development programmes including SAHAS-Nepal, they became ready to make contribution to start the reconstruction work. As a result of all these efforts, a 6-room school building has been constructed. For the school building construction, SAHAS-Nepal and other community development programmes contributed Rs. 1, 51,000 and Rs. 12, 00,000 respectively, besides the contribution of the communities themselves. Presently, 152 students are studying in this school and the communities have been contributing to create a favourable condition for education by managing the school system in a decent way. This evidence the communities of this area have demonstrated the fact that even the greater tasks could be accomplished in partnership if there is commitment and active participation from the communities.

3.4 Small farmers' income generation

In order to improve the socio-economic condition of the poor farmers, the goats and pigs were distributed to the poor farmers of the group as per the plan made by them and at the recommendation of their group. From this activity, 69 poor farmers have been benefited. With this kind of activity, the groups have been able to increase the number of group members, while they have been able to earn at least Rs. 3000 per year and also meeting their family expenses. Additionally, as it was felt, this programme has contributed to improving the food security situation of the poor communities.

With the financial benefits received from income generation activities such goat-keeping and piggery, the poor farmers have even purchased cattle and buffaloes and they have been running small scale dairy business. The income generated from the sale of milk has contributed to their food security situation besides improvement in the health status of the family members.

Dil Bahadur stays in the village for work

Mr. Dil Bahadur a resident of Binase of Ward No. 7 of Sisneri VDC was associated with the group since the year 2005. Due to weak financial condition, he was compelled to go out of the village for earning his livelihood despite being one of the active workers of the group. Although financially weak, because of his hard-working nature, the group nominated him to obtain one mother-pig from the project. Prior to this, he had been keeping the pigs on 50/50 share holding basis. The pigs, he has been keeping, have already reproduced the piglets for the third time. The piglets are sold at the rate of Rs. 600 to 1000 (for one). From the sale of piglets he earns Rs. 25000 per year. He has been supporting his 7-member family with the good income received from this piggery enterprise. With this level of income he prefers to stay in the village itself, and advises others not go out of the village for work.

3.5 Porters Support

With the objective of enhancing the income of the people who have been sustaining their lives by working as porters within the programme area of Balkhu, Sisneri VDCs, micro-finance project was initiated in order to increase their earnings by exploring alternative means. The poor porters have increased their incomes by procuring the locally available food items such as ghee, pulse grains and fruits, and selling these items in the nearby market. The group's income increased even up to Rs. 15,000/year/porter and profit earned has greatly contributed to sustaining their daily life by meeting the needs.

From Porter to Shopkeeper

After the construction of the Katari-Okhaldhunga motorable road, the problem of unemployment appeared among the people who had been sustaining their lives as porters by carrying the backloads for others. Among these porters, SAHAS-Nepal has been helping the poorer porters since last year. Ms. Suchana Rai, a resident of Dimful of Balakhu VDC 1 is one of those who had been supporting her family from the incomes being earned by sustaining the life as a porter. As she became unemployed from working as a porter after the construction of the road she had been facing financial hardship to support the family. Meanwhile, a group named 'Trishakti' was formed at the locality of Suchana Rai with the help of SAHAS-Nepal and their own initiatives. The group borrowed Rs. 5000 from SAHAS-Nepal and started investing the money in the locally feasible enterprises. Utilising the amount received from SAHAS-Nepal in the form of loan, the group started their business by buying locally available pulses (Dal) and fruits and selling them at the local weekly-market and in other villages. With the income earned from this business, they opened up a retail shop by bringing the items worth about Rs. 7000 from Ghurmi Bazar. She has already repaid the principal amount (Rs. 5000) to the group and she has now been running her shop on her own. She has also been receiving help from her husband in procuring the items for the shop. This year, she has been able to earn Rs. 7000 as profit. She expresses that she plans to continue this business so that she could sustain her life more comfortably.

3.6 Main Committee meeting

The VDC level main committee has been formed in each of the VDCs by nominating the representatives from the committees being formed in 5 VDCs of Ilaka 9. The main committee formed in this manner has made its own constitution and has been performing its duties in accordance with the constitution. The main committee holds meeting at least one time in two months. The committee in its meeting reviews the groups' activities. The main committee has been implementing the activities that have been prioritised and forwarded by the groups, on priority basis. The main committee has been helping in school building repair and maintenance work by obtaining resources from the VDC. The committee has been providing suggestion to the groups for regular monitoring of their activities. While the committee has initiated necessary discussion on the network organisation to be formed in future, it has also been helping the groups in submitting their plans to the village council and getting the resources approved from the village council.

3.7 Branch office handover

As per the objectives of the programme, after the programme under the first phase has been completed, with the aim of advancing the group activities the branch office was handed over to the main committee. With this, the materials required operating the office such as the tables and chairs, owned by the branch offices in 4 VDCs out of 5 VDCs, were handed over to the main committee. While this process provided additional responsibility to the main committee, it has also helped in feeling an ownership. Each main committee has started its work of linkage and coordination by operating the offices in their own VDCs.

3.8 Micro hydro-power

As per the objectives of providing assistance to the action-plan prepared by the groups, an assistance of Rs. 120,000 was provided, on resource-sharing basis, to the two schemes of Chyanam VDC for purchasing cement and pole. From this scheme a total of 500 households have been benefited, while the scheme has also contributed to establishment of SAHAS-Nepal's coordination and linkage with the governmental and non-governmental organisations.

With the availability of the power being generated the communities have now got rid-off the traditional oil-lamp (Tuki), which required use of expensive kerosene-oil. The communities also expect their health status to be improved with the illumination of their houses and premises through the electric power, as they will not be inhaling the air polluted with the soot emanating from the oil-lamp. The school-going children have also expressed their ecstasy as they now have more bright lights for their study at home. The communities have been very much encouraged and started dreaming of possible hydro-power based individual as well as collective small-scale enterprises such as grain-mills, furniture making, bakery, etc. in their own localities.

3.9 Maize crop production

With the aim of improving the status of life of the poor farmers, the seed of maize varieties such as Manakamana 1, Arun and Deuti were distributed to the farmers from high altitude, mid-hills and lower-valleys. Plans have been made to distribute the seeds being produced from the cultivation of these maize varieties to other farmers as well. With the adoption these new maize varieties, the yield has also increased substantially as compared to traditional and age-old one.

3.10 Irrigation canal rehabilitation

The Magar communities of Ward No. 9 Mulkharka VDC were facing problems related to operating the irrigation scheme due to occurrence of the landslide thus rendering the land barren for the last several years. With the technical and material assistance of SAHAS-Nepal, these local people rehabilitated three irrigation canals. With the availability of irrigation water all-round the year, their problem has been solved. The land that was lying barren has been brought

under cultivation and the farmers have been harvesting three crops a year. The farmers are getting adequate and equitable supply of water.

As a result of the canal rehabilitation, the productivity of the farm has almost doubled. The farmers also started growing many kinds of crops, especially seasonal vegetables for both home consumption and for sale in the local market. With this intervention, the project not only solved the food problem but also contributed to control of the landslide.

3.11 Group meeting facilitation and planning

SAHAS-Nepal has been regularly performing the job of facilitation of group meetings by analysing the groups' problems and developing their action-plans for sustainable development. During such meetings, new action-plans are being developed by analysing and reviewing the past experiences and activities undertaken by the groups. The groups have completed the action-plans by coordinating with the VDCs for resource sharing and partnership. The projects being implemented in this manner have contributed to enhance the access and promote the rights of the poor in development.

In the beginning, the groups were in need of facilitation for conducting their meetings. But now they have become not only capable of conducting their meetings in a participatory way but also implementing community development activities by designing development programmes and plans on their own. In this way, all the groups in the project area have begun to develop institutionally. It is expected that the institutional development of these groups would contribute to formation of 'network organisation' to be formed in future. The groups have developed the capacities of identifying analysing their own problems and planning programmes. Thus the groups now have started experiencing the ownership by presuming responsibilities of performing various activities. The groups have also started deposition of saving-funds through the saving programme being mobilised by the groups with their own participation. The group members have been borrowing the money at a cheaper rate for solving their problems and for undertaking other income-generation activities.

The change that occurred after group formation

The place considered as Humla Jumla (two remotest and least developed districts in Nepal) in Ward No. 4 of Balakhu VDC is no more what it was before. The local people who earlier on were not convinced of the importance of forming groups have now been organised into groups with the facilitation provided by SAHAS-Nepal. After the formation of groups, the communities have come to identify such problems as illiteracy, access to drinking water and schools in their village.

In the village, traditionally most men household members are forced to go out of the country in quest of employment opportunities. But as most of the women

family members are illiterate, they have no choice other than asking some one else to read letters whenever they receive from their dear ones. Presently having been literate as a result of attending the adult literacy classes being conducted in their own village with the assistance of SAHAS-Nepal, they have become able to read and write letters.

Similarly, a village called Deurali was facing the problems related to drinking water. But after the communities organised themselves into groups, they have become active and proposed to construct a drinking water scheme. In the mean time, SAHAS-Nepal came to provide necessary assistance to this scheme. It is now that with the completion of the scheme the communities have been able to get clear drinking water. They are no longer required to travel long distance and spend hours to fetch water. SAHAS-Nepal provided assistance to the group through the programme called 'Food for Work' to enable them to transport the construction materials such as polyphone pipe, cement, iron-rods, galvanised iron-pipe, sand, etc. from distant places. Such assistance had encouraged the communities to accomplish the scheme.

In this village, a 4-room school building has also been constructed with the tripartite cooperation of the local people, SAHAS-Nepal and the VDC. The newly built school building has eased the children to go to the school even when there is rainfall. Now the communities are very happy. They are also convinced of the fact that 'organised means empowered' and 'groups can act as vehicles for bringing about positive changes'.

3.12 Relief support

SAHAS-Nepal has been providing relief support to the victims of the natural calamities with a view to overcome the short-term problem of food insecurity. The support in kind (rice) of worth Rs. 1,000 was provided to Mr. Durga Hari Rai, the blaze-victims of Ward No. 1 of Balakhu VDC. Similarly, the support in kind (millet) worth Rs. 1,040 was also given to Mr. Bhal Bahadur Bhujel of Ward No. 6 of Katunje VDC. The victims duo expressed that they have experienced the relief for the time being from the support they have received. They also acknowledged the SAHAS-Nepal with due appreciation for the support provided to them at the difficult moment.

3.13 Main Committee strengthening training

A 2-day VDC level training related to Main Committee strengthening was conducted with the objective of making the 5 main committees being formed in Ilaka 9 more effective to perform the tasks. The training was actively participated by the main committee members and officials. As effects of the training the main committee, its members and officials have been working effectively by presuming their responsibilities and duties for conducting regular meetings, considering various demands coming to the groups from various organisations, expressing collective commitments, etc. The main committees have been strengthened not

only through the efforts of SAHAS-Nepal but also by developing a common understanding among the main committees. Similarly, with the view of reaching the development opportunities to very poor and excluded communities (women, Dalit and Janjatis) in an equitable and democratic manner, the criteria of selecting development projects have also been prepared. The main committees will be certainly able gain a momentum if the criteria that have been developed collectively are adopted and implemented.



Small group discussion during the training

Training participants by gender and caste

VDC	Training duration	No. of participants	Beneficiaries					
			BCN		Janajati		Dalit	
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Katunje	2-day	27	9	10	5	3	-	-
Chyanam		23	4	14	2	-	3	-
Mulkhark		13	-	1	1	10	-	1
Sisneri		29	1	18	2	7	1	-
Balakhu		17	2	4	5	5	4	1

3. 14 Home gardening/Vegetable cultivation training

The participants and group members of the last year's training programme were provided with the vegetable seeds as per their interest and need. The seeds distributed include: mustard, radish, cabbage, carrot, chilly, tomato and onion. The group members produced vegetables in the kitchen garden for their home consumption and they have established vegetable production as their regular practice. On the other hand, these farmers earned income even up to Rs. 500 per year from the sale of the surplus at the local market. A 2-day VDC level training on vegetable cultivation was conducted for the group members associated with the 5 main committees being formed in Ilaka 9. The training programme was participated by 84 female and 79 male members. The training programme was conducted with the objective of motivating the farmers to promote the system of vegetable cultivation using modern methods so that it also contributes to the food security to some extent from the sale of the surplus production. Following the training, the participants were provided with nine different kinds of vegetable seeds. The farmer participants also suggested

organising agriculture exhibition in order to take their agricultural products right up to the communities.



Participants of home gardening training

Training participants by gender and caste

VDC	Training duration	No. of participants	Beneficiaries					
			BCN		Janajati		Dalit	
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Katunje	2-day	28	12	8	5	3	-	-
Chyanam		27	4	18	1	1	2	1
Mulkhark		18	-	3	3	10	1	1
Sisneri		36	7	16	3	7	1	2
Balakhu		28	3	2	16	7	-	-

4. Food Security Programme, Okhaldhunga District

SAHAS-Nepal has been extending assistance to the marginalised communities of Okhaldhunga district of Nepal with various community development activities since last 10 years. Along with the process of extending the services, SAHAS-Nepal has also been expanding its working areas. In this process, it has initiated food security programme since January 2008 in 4 VDCs (Harkapur, Thakle, Madhavpur and Manebhanjyang) of Ilaka 10. From this programme, about 5000 targeted communities associated with various groups under the programme have been benefited directly, and an estimated 15000 people have been benefited indirectly in terms of their food security.

4.1 Office setup and Staff management

In order to facilitate the programme implementation process in the new area, a programme office has been set up in Manebhanjyang VDC for Ilaka 10. With the establishment of this office, there is an increased level of the mutual trust among the communities that the programme is going to be implemented at the local level. Similarly, the recruitment of the local employees from 4 VDCs of Ilaka 10 has also been completed so as to facilitate the project implementation and to provide service to the poor communities.

4.2 Rapport building with local organisations and Institutions

After SAHAS-Nepal has expanded its working area in Ilaka 10 of Okhaldhunga district, it has been building its rapport by meeting with the local governmental and non-governmental organisations (VDC, Health posts, Agricultural and livestock offices, schools, cooperatives, etc.) in order to inform them about the nature and objectives of the programmes to be implemented in this area. While this activity has helped in establishing relationship with the local level organisations, it has also created an understanding that the SAHAS-Nepal will be exchanging the information about the programme activities to be implemented.

4.3 VDC level orientation workshop

SAHAS-Nepal has organised a VDC level 1-day seminar in each VDC with the objectives of giving orientation regarding what the programme is all about and for how long. In this workshop the community participants enthusiastically paid their attention to understand the programme and raised various questions about the nature of the programme, time line, approaches and activities. The workshop also came out with the action-plans prepared for Ward level meeting.



Participants of VDC level orientation workshop

Participants by gender and caste in VDC level workshop

S N	VDC	BCN		Janajati		Dalit		Total		Remarks
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
1	Toksel	6	23	5	5	-	6	11	34	
2	Thakle	3	15	5	10	-	2	8	26	
3	Manebhanjyang	5	15	12	16	-	2	17	33	Madhesi 3
4	Madhavpur	5	5	12	11	1	3	18	19	

4.4 Ward level workshop

With the objectives of providing information about the nature of the SAHAS-Nepal programme and activities, identify the programme locality and selecting clusters (*Tols*), 36 Ward level conventions were organised in 4 VDCs. The participants of these gatherings were very curious to know about the nature of programme, its modality of implementation and the duration of the programme. Hence they raised various pertinent questions about the programme. This gathering also identified four clusters of the VDCs besides identifying the focus group and selecting the contact persons to help in the cluster survey.



Participatory situation analysis by the focus group

4.5 Organisational interaction meeting

SAHAS-Nepal has been participating in meetings and gathering programmes being organised by governmental and non-governmental organisations at Ilaka level. This kind of gathering and meeting has helped SAHAS-Nepal to introduce itself besides establishing relationships with various organisations.

5. Food Security Programme, Udaypur District

SAHAS-Nepal is an organisation that has been helping the communities by implementing community development programmes. This organisation has been undertaking community development programme activities in Okhaldhunga district since last 12 years. Under the strategy of the organisation and as per the plan of expanding its working areas in other districts as well, it has also submitted proposals prepared by doing Participatory Rural Appraisal for selecting Udaypur and Saptari districts for implementing development programmes. Based on the report of the study team for selecting the programme areas and as well as the organisations resources and strategy, Katari and Risku VDCs of Udaypur district have been considered as the programme areas. Based on the information received from the interaction and discussion held among the local community, DDC, VDC and other organisations, the programme activities have been initiated in Katari and Risku VDCs by setting up an office in Katari VDC, as per the approval obtained from the DDC and VDC.

This programmes has been involving about 8000 local people in various activities. The activities that have been undertaken and accomplished so far are as follows:

- Office setup
- Endorsement from local government
- VDC level orientation meeting
- Ward level convention

5.1 Office setup

The activity of setting up office in Ward N. 4 of Katari VDC for implementing the programme in Risku and Katari VDCs and management of necessary supplies and material has been accomplished. This has facilitated for operating the office's activities regularly. Similarly, the responsibility has also been given to the office by recruiting the local staff. It has been felt that this activity has helped to build rapport and mingle with the local community for advancing the process of implementing programme activities.

5.2 Endorsement from local government

In order to provide assistance in undertaking the programme activities by establishing coordination with the governmental and non-governmental organisations, the agreement letter has been obtained from DDC and VDC. Such an approval will help SAHAS-Nepal in undertaking programme activities in coordination and cooperation with these organisations.

5.3 VDC level orientation meeting

A VDC level 1-day orientation programme has been accomplished in each of Risku and Katari VDCs. The purpose of the orientation activity was to clarify the programme objectives and implementation modality, besides establishing and extending the organisations' relationships with various local level governmental and non-governmental organisations. The programme was participated by the representatives from various offices and major political parties, teachers, women and Dalit leaders. Of 25 participants in the programme in Risku VDC, 10 participants were women, and of 32 participants in Katari VDC program 18 were women. These orientation programmes also prepared the action-plan for the Ward level convention.



Women participation in the VDC level orientation meeting

5.4 Ward level convention and focus group selection

As per the action-plan being prepared from the VDC level orientation programme, the Ward level conventions were organised in Risku and Katari VDCs. The programme also took the opportunity of explaining the objectives of the programme, working modality and the focus groups. The main criteria determined in the ward convention for selecting the cluster included: (a) the communities excluded from the development opportunities and services, (b) community with food insecurity, (c) community with lack of access to health and education, (d) lack of involvement in organisations and associations, (e) settlements with dalit, Janajati and Madhesi communities. The activities holding of meetings and information gathering about the clusters being selected are going on. A total of 25 and 15 focus groups have been selected in Risku and Katari VDCs respectively.



Focus group members designing their action-plan

6. Trail Bridge Sub-sector Support Programme

With the tri-partite agreement among SAHAS-Nepal, Local suspension bridge programme Dharan and District Development Committee Okhaldhunga, the construction work of the suspension bridge programme in Okhaldhunga district has been in operation since the year 2004. It was articulated that this programme has eased for the communities to commute, besides preventing the occurrence of major accidents. This suspension bridge programme has also contributed to development of networks between and among various governmental and non-governmental organisations in and outside the district. Of 5 bridges to be constructed in the year 2006 in Okhaldhunga district, the construction work of 4 bridges has been completed. In the current year only, the construction work of 5 bridges has been commenced. The bridges whose construction work has been completed include: Tutuwa River Bhadaure and Mamkha, Bange river, Pokhare and Kuibhir, Main Sangu Rumjatar and Mamkha, and Katunje and Mandre of Kuntadevi. With the construction of these bridges, several thousand people of Okhaldhunga and Ramechhap districts have been benefited in terms of commuting and preventing from possible accidents while crossing the river especially during the rainy season. More specifically, the connection between these two districts through the bridges has been a boon to the school going children, who were at the high level of risks.

Similarly, as per the responsibility held to produce reports by undertaking pre-feasibility studies regarding the demand for construction of bridges across Okhaldhunga district, the report of the detailed study of a total of 83 bridges has been submitted to the Local Suspension Bridge Programme at Dharan.

6.1 Training for bridge-workers

A training programme for the bridge-workers was conducted from 18 - 25 December 2007 in Ghurmi of Udaypur district. Of 15 training participants, one was female and 10 were dalits. The training was organised with the objective of providing assistance at the local level to complete the construction of new bridges by working as skilled-workers. The training sessions also provided practical exercises to the participants. Such practical exercises also helped develop commitment, willpower and capabilities in the training participants. Consequently, the trained participants have been continuously helping in the bridge construction work. Their involvement in the bridge construction work has also greatly contributed to their income status as well as skill development. The participants who received training have started earning incomes by utilising their skills in the construction of bridges elsewhere in and outside the district.

Income generation opportunity for Bishnu Suvedi

The Mandre suspension bridge completed in the fiscal year 2007 lies between Kuntadevi and Katunje VDCs. In the process of construction of the bridge, one woman even sacrificed her life. Mr. Kaushal Ghimire is the chairperson of the bridge users committee. The vice-chairperson of the committee Mr. Bishnu Lal Giri and Mr. Bishnu Subedi and played important role in getting the work accomplished as well as contributed by involving during the construction work.

For a while, the construction work which was obstructed due to the process of transportation of the pillars. But Bishnu Suvedi took the responsibility of transporting the pillars from Ohkaldhunga to the construction site. He also took the responsibility of the casting (cement-concrete) work and transportation of the pillars. If he had not advanced the work by resuming the responsibility, it would have been difficult to complete the construction work.

It is now that the same Bishnu Suvedi has started a tea-stall in a thatched house near the pillar of the bridge. While this small scale enterprise has been serving the people's need during the journey, it has also contributed to his income generation activity. With the income made from this enterprise, he has constructed a resting place (Chautara) for the porters to take rest. Bishnu Suvedi says that he makes an income of Rs. 1500 – 2000 per day.

6.2 Review workshop

With the objective of skill enhancement of various organisations involved in the bridge construction in partnership with the Trail Bridge Sub-sector Support Programme (TBSSP) the Local Suspension Bridge Programme at Dharan, a 4-day review workshop was organised in Biratnagar. The workshop discussed and interacted in detail about the supporting role in the implementation of suspension bridge programme and the reporting format. The workshop also provided an opportunity for clarification of the subjects that were not clear earlier; besides discussing the possible solutions to the problems are being faced.

6.3 Bridge construction

Of the bridge programmes being operated in this fiscal year, the construction work of Chaman suspension bridge has been completed, while the construction of other bridges are going on in a continuous manner. Similarly, the construction work of Jukedobhan suspension bridge that was due to be done in this very fiscal year (2006) has also been completed.

Before the construction of the bridge, there were evidence of sweeping away of the human beings and life of livestock by the river while crossing the river, and cases of drowning used to be heard. With the completion of this bridge construction work, the pedestrian now have the privilege of commuting without any fear even during the raining season. Similarly, the farmers have also been

able to comfortably perform the agricultural task in the farms across the river. This has also eased the tension of the school-going children and their parents, as they do not have to face these problems. The suspension bridge construction programme also provided employment opportunity though for a short period, consequently helping, to some extent, in sustaining their lives and livelihoods.

Another construction photo



A suspension bridge constructed by the programme

7. Civic Education Project

The issue of constituent assembly election remained in the Nepal's history since last 6 decades. With the success of the great historical people's movement of 2006 (2062-63) in Nepal, the task of constituent assembly election has been successfully completed for institutionalising this success. In this election process, that took place for the first time in the history of Nepal, the huge mass of Nepalese people had participated with great enthusiasm to obtain the opportunity of writing their own constitution by themselves.

It is our obligation to create an environment where we could include all the communities such as women, Dalit, Janajati, Madhesi, etc, which have been excluded by the state in all aspects, including all those who are in minority in the democratic process. By internalising this obligation, with the objective of creating an enabling environment for ensuring meaningful participation of these communities a 1-year civic education project was implemented by SAHAS-Nepal in partnership with various other organisations in 10 each VDCs (totalling 30 VDCs) of Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga and Udaypur districts. The major activities carried out in the year 2007 under this project are as follows.

7.1 Civic educational material production and distribution

With objective of enhancing the awareness and knowledge level of the local communities through the civic education project, SAHAS-Nepal produced various information, education and communication (IEC) materials such as brochures, civic education calendar, flex print, civic education training facilitation manual etc. were prepared. The contents of these materials included Constituent Assembly election and its process, human rights, social inclusion, restructuring of the state and advocacy. Besides these materials, the relevant materials were also collected from various governmental, non-governmental organisations, international non-governmental organisations including the book-shops. While some of these materials were retained at the project's regional resource centre in Okhaldhunga, the remaining materials, together with 1500 civic education calendar being produced by the project, were distributed to project's field staff of all the three districts (Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga and Udaypur), the training participants of the project VDCs, representatives of various governmental and non-governmental organisations and political parties.

As an effect of the training conducted in the communities and distribution of the IEC materials, the knowledge of the local communities were found to be enhanced. The local communities who have been educated on civic education were even found to be sharing their learning with their fellow villagers wherever they met, for example, at the local weekly market, in the field, in the community meetings, at the tea-stalls, etc.

7.2 District level coordination workshop

In order to implement the project activities effectively by exchanging the information as well as in appropriate coordination with the district level stakeholders, two district level 1-day coordination workshops in Solukhumbu and one in Udaypur district were conducted. The workshops participants included: the representatives of various governmental and non-governmental organizations and political parties, the representatives of SAHAS-Nepal involved awareness campaign about the Constituent Assembly as well as the media/press. The intention of the workshop was also to discuss among the stakeholder for a better coordination in all VDCs of the project district so that they could avoid the likely duplications and overlaps among the project activities implemented for achievement of the same single objective. This kind of workshop has resulted in building up of appropriate coordination among the stakeholders thus contributing to the effective implementation of the projects.

7.3 VDC level workshop

With the objective of enhancing the knowledge level of the communities about the Constituent Assembly election and its process, human rights, social inclusion, restructuring of the state, advocacy, etc., a total of 30 two-day VDC level workshops, i.e., 10 each in Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga and Udaypur districts were organised by targeting the communities. These workshops were participated by the representatives of the communities of the concerned VDCs, various governmental and non-governmental organisations and political parties.

In these workshops, the participants exchanged the information on the Constituent Assembly and its process, human rights, social inclusion, restructuring of the state and advocacy. At the end of the workshop, the organisers distributed civic education calendar to each of the participants, who were also requested to discuss with their fellow villagers and others in the neighbourhood about what they learned. Similarly, the participants also made commitments to conduct similar discussions. At this stage of the workshop, the participants expressed that they have already built up the necessary capacity about the civic education. During the days following the workshop, the participants were found to be discussing and interacting about the civic education in their groups. As a consequence, more and more number of local communities availed the opportunity of acquiring information and learning about civic education.

7.4 VDC level refresher workshops

The VDC level 1-day refreshing workshops; 2 in Solukhubmu and 6 in Udaypur districts were organised in order to discuss on the subject matters that were considered not so clearly explained in the previously conducted 2-day VDC level workshop. Most the participants in this workshop were those who were also the participants in the previously organised 2-day VDC level workshop. These workshops provided the participants with the opportunities to clarify the subject

matters, which were not clear to them in the workshops organised earlier on. In these workshops, the participants also had an opportunity to be still clearer about the problems and questions raised during the earlier group discussions. At the same time, the participants also shared the information about where and how they conducted discussions.

Participants by gender and caste

S.N	Communities	No. of participants	Remarks
1.	Dalit	500 (52%)	Men and women included
2.	Indigenous janajati	141 (15 %)	Men and women included
3.	Madhesi	2 (0.21 %)	Men and women included
4.	Others	313 (33 %)	Men and women included
5.	Total	956 (~100 %)	Women (53%) and men (47%)

7.5 Voters' education training

The district team leaders of Solukhumbu and Okhaldhunga districts participated in 2-day voters' orientation (education) training organized by District Election Office of Solukhumbu and Okhaldhunga in their respective districts. In particular, this training programme provided education to the local communities on how put the stamp (symbol) on the ballot paper to be used in the Constituent Assembly election in a correct manner. The content of the training included the following major aspects such as: types (colours) of ballot paper, vote casting method, polling duration, etc. The training sessions also discussed on the importance of the Constituent Assembly, citizens' role and responsibilities for holding free and fair election.

7.6 Project mid-term review and planning workshop

The civic education project mid-term review and planning workshop were held in the month of December 2007 in the training room of South Asia Partnership, Sauraha, Chitwan. The workshop was participated by a total of 20 participants which included the staff of the project joint action committee, district level team leaders from 12 districts and the regional coordinators from 4 development regions.

The workshop provided an opportunity for the project staffs and project management committee members to exchange their experiences, ideas, learning, challenges and problems. This kind of learning from one-another in turn helped develop new projects and their implementation. This workshop concluded with the preparation of new action-plan, The workshop also did the mid-term assessment and reviews of the civic education project keeping in view the changed political context.

7.7 SAHAS-Nepal nominated of as chair of NEOC Okhaldhunga

The great convention held on 19 September 2007 formed a district level 11-member committee under the chair of the Regional Coordinator of SAHAS-Nepal's Civic Education Project, by dissolving the *ad hoc* committee of National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) Okhaldhunga. In this great convention the representatives of 27 non-governmental organizations working in Okhaldhunga district were present. This committee was formed with the objective of observing and holding the forthcoming Constituent Assembly election process in a free and fair manner in Okhaldhunga district. The nomination of SAHAS-Nepal to chair the committee provided it with the opportunity of establishing its relationships and linkage with other national, regional and international organisations.

7.8 International Human Rights Day

On the occasion of the International Human Rights Day, the civic education project organised a 1-day debate competition on the topic 'Human rights and its importance' with the participation of the secondary school level students of the project VDCs of Solukhumbu, Okhaldhung and Udaypur districts. The debate competition was participated by a total of 28 (14 male and 14 female) students belonging to dalit, Madhesi and janajati communities. This programme provided the students with the significance of human rights. With the learning they had, the students even initiated discussions with their peers, and in the neighborhoods for raising awareness about human rights.

7.9 Regional staff refresher training

A 3-day regional level training on civic education was organised by Civic Education Project Office of Okhaldhunga from February 10-12, 2007 at SAHAS-Nepal's training hall in Okhaldhunga with the objective of providing orientation to the project field staff about the project activities review and development of action-plan, collection of the key concerns of the communities for the forthcoming Constituent Assembly election and Nepal's Interim Constitution 2007 (3rd Amendment), Constituent Assembly election Acts and Constituent Assembly election manual. A total of 19 (11 male and 8 female) participants had participated in the training programme.

While this training had reviewed the project activities, developed new action-plan, and designed the process of collection of key concerns, it also contributed to the capacity enhancement of the project staff with regard to the subjects of common concerns. This training programme was facilitated by 6 resource persons representing various regions.

7.10 VDC level agenda collection workshop

With the view of providing help to the district level orientation workshop on collection of the issues/agenda of the target communities, 1-day VDC level agenda collection workshops were organised in 30 VDCs of Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga and Udaypur districts with 989 participants, after the 2-day VDC

level training and 1-day VDC level refresher training were organised. For collecting the issues and agenda in an effective manner, the participants were divided into various groups for the purpose group discussions. The VDC level issues and agendas were collected from the group discussions. The project staff members (team leader, local trainer and regional coordinator), who were to work as facilitators for the agenda collection workshop, were also present in this seminar.

Participants by gender and caste in workshop

S N	Communities	No. of participants	Remarks
1.	Dalit	239 (20 %)	Dalit, men and women included
2.	Indigenous janajati	476 (39 %)	Indigenous janajati, men and women included
3.	Madhesi	250 (21 %)	Madhesi men and women included
4.	Bahun	107 (9 %)	Men and women included
5.	Chhetri	142 (12 %)	Men and women included
6.	Sanyasi	23 (2 %)	Men and women from all communities included
	Total	1237 (100%)	Women (68%) and men (32%)

7.11 District level orientation workshop

A 1-day district level convention orientation workshop was organised in each direct for the preparation of the district level convention. There were a total of 140 VDC level participants in this workshop. After the orientation session, the entire participants were divided into various groups such as women, dalit, indigenous and janajati, and highly marginalised by the training resource persons for the purpose of group works during the seminar. The exercise in groups immensely helped in collecting the communities' issues and agendas, which are to be later on raised before the representatives of the political parties and the candidates of the Constituent Assembly election later during the district level seminar.

7.12 District level convention

With the objectives of making the representatives of the political parties and the candidates of the Constituent Assembly election express their commitments on the issues to be raised in the future Constituent Assembly on behalf of the communities, three 1-day district level seminars on collection of issues and agendas were organised.

In these conventions the representative of the target communities had presented the issues and agendas of their respective communities. Discussions and interactions were held in much detail on the issues and agendas collected. At the end of the session, the representatives of the political parties and the candidates of the Constituent Assembly election strongly expressed their commitments to raise these issues and agendas later in the Constituent Assembly.

The convention was concluded with the participation of the representatives of the local communities, representatives of various political parties, the candidates of the Constituent Assembly election, representatives of the civil society, human rights defenders, press/media, security sector personnel and the representatives of international non-governmental organisations and the employees of the project.



Constituent Assembly election candidates expressing their commitments

7.13 Voters' orientation training

Forty three 1-day voters' orientation training were organised in the project areas of three districts in order to teach the target communities about the constituent assembly election process, its technical and legal aspects, and election related code-of-conduct. Of 3156 participants, 1944 were women. For conducting the training programme, the brochures of the election commission and flip-charts on voters' education were used. The participants of the training included those aged from 16 to 68 years old people.



An orientation session for voters of Constituent Assembly election

7.14 Constituent Assembly election observation

The observation work of the historical constitution assembly election was performed by mobilising 35 observers in the VDCs where the projects have been implemented. For the purpose of systematic observation, the observers to be mobilised were provided with the training and necessary materials by coordinating with the national level observer-organisations like National Election Observation Committee (NEOC), National Election Monitoring Alliance (NEMA) and Democracy Election Alliance Nepal (DEAN).

Except for the few days prior to the election, by and large, the whole election process was observed to be conducted in a free and fair manner. While some polling stations were found to be ill-managed, some voters were found to be unknown about the proportionate election system. A systematic process was followed before opening and at the time of closing the packet of ballot papers and ballot-boxes in the presence of the observers and polling agents. Official arrangements had also been made for the observers and polling agents to return to the district headquarters along with the ballot-boxes.

8. Animal Nutrition Project

The animal nutrition project being implemented by SAHAS-Nepal in partnership with Animal Health Training and Consultancy Service (AHTCS) at Tekanpur of Baruneswar VDC of Okhaldhunga district has been completed in the month of December. The project, which was implemented for one year as per the agreement, provided an opportunity for the livestock farmers to learn about how the animal feed that is available locally could contribute to increased livestock and milk production. The implementation of the project also helped to establish and expand the relationship and future coordination between SAHAS-Nepal and Animal Health Consultancy Service.

9. Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board (The Fund Board)

An agreement has been made between the Fund Board and SAHAS-Nepal to implement a drinking water and sanitation project commencing July 2007 and accomplishing the project within the stipulated development plan period in Sisneri VDC 2 and Chaynam VDC 1 of Okhaldhunga district. After this agreement has been made, the formation of groups such as construction committee, water users' groups, children's and mothers' clubs etc. at the community level has been completed. Similarly, the opening of bank accounts for all the three users' committee at the Rastriya Banijya Bank of Okhaldhunga Branch and registration of the water source with the District Water Resources Committee have also been completed. In this way, the phase-wise planning of development activities has been undertaken and the proposal for implementation phase has been submitted to the Fund Board.

10. Bio-fuel Project

As per the objective of producing oil as alternative energy from Jatropha seeds especially for the benefit of the poor community, an agreement has been made by the People Energy and Environment Development Organisation (PEEDA) to work in 7 VDCs of Okhaldhunga district in partnership with SAHAS-Nepal. The objectives of the project, which has been agreed to be implemented with effect from the year 2008, are as follows.

- To introduce the fact that oil in the form of alternative energy could be produced from Jatropha seeds
- Community mobilization and awareness creation
- To sell and distribute the oil by establishing cooperative for sustainability

- To establish and expand relationship with other organisations

10.1 Orientation workshop

A 2-day orientation workshop was organised for the farmers to be involved in the alternative energy programme to be implemented in 7 VDCs of Okhaldhunga district. The objective of the workshop was to impart knowledge and information on how the Jatropha trees could be managed in the waste land in their localities and about the advantaged that could be obtained in future from its use. The participants seemed to be very excited as how could they take advantage from the cultivation of Jatropha trees to be planted in the waste lands and fence ridges.



A project staff and volunteers discussing about the bio-fuel

10. 2 VDC level volunteers' selection

One volunteer from each VDC totalling 7 volunteers have been selected for effective implementation of the project and its monitoring and evaluation in the working areas of Okhaldhunga. These volunteers have been providing suggestions to the communities in their respective working areas and making them understand about Jatropha related subjects.

10. 3 Raising community awareness

The social workers who have been working as volunteers have been not only motivating at the community level about Jatropha plantation, but also motivating other communities about the same. Presently, more and more communities have shown their interest because the people have been contacting the office to explore about Jatropha cultivation.

10. 4 Improved Jatropha plants distribution

A total of 6000 improved variety Jatropha cuttings brought from Butwal nursery were distributed to the farmers of 7 VDCs of Okhaldhunga district. The cuttings were distributed in order to make the farmers feel that they could be more benefited by using the oil produced from Jatropha in the form of alternative energy. After the distribution of the cuttings the farmers felt as being encouraged, and their level of confidence has been increased in the sense that even those jatropha that have gone waste could be utilised properly.

11. Hill Maize Research Project

SAHAS-Nepal has made an agreement with Hill Maize Research Programme in March 2007 to undertake one-year research project on maize for the farmers of 5 VDCs (Balakhu, Chyanam, Mulkhark and Katunje) of Ilaka 9 and 4 VDCs (Harkapur, Thakle, Madhavpur and Manebhanjyang) of Ilaka 10 of Okhaldhung district. The activities are being implemented for the promotion of maize as a major crop of the hilly area and with the objective of contributing to food security by increasing its production level. The major activities of the program include implementation of four trials, i.e., IRD trial, Diamond trial, Mother and baby trial at different altitudes and field conditions of the project VDCs. In this research project, agronomist Dr. Thakur Prasad Tiwari from Nepal's Maize Research Station, Crop Director Mr. Sachet Bahadur Nepal from Department of Agriculture and Chief of Okhaldhunga District Agriculture Office are also involved in the observation and monitoring activities. The types of trials under the research project are as follows.

11.1 Informal research and development (IRD trial)

For this research trial, seeds were distributed to 655 farmers even if the target was for 600 farmers of 5 VDCs of Ilaka 9. For the purpose of the trial, seeds of improved variety of maize were distributed at the rate of 1 kg. per farmer, the same quantity of local variety maize seeds were also distributed and farmers were asked to plant in separate plots. The main purpose of this kind of trial is to compare the performance between the improved and local variety being planted in similar soil, climatic conditions, and to encourage the farmers to adopt the variety that give better performance. The names of the seed variety used for trial are: Manakamana 3, Ganesh 1, Deuti and Shitala.



A standing maize crop trial

11. 2 Diamond trial

Diamond trials have been conducted at 10 each fields of the farmers in Sisneri and Manebhanjyang VDCs of Ilaka 10. The seed varieties being planted are Manakamana 3, Deuti and Shitala. For conducting trials, the large plot was divided into four smaller plots of the same size. While the two plots were planted with improved and local varieties with chemical fertilizers, the remaining two plots were planted without fertilizer. For this kind of trial, one kg of seed was provided to each farmer. The trial is intended to compare the performance of seed varieties planted with and without chemical fertilizer and organic matter.



A women farmer observing the trail plot

11.3 Baby trial

This kind of trials was conducted in 30 farmers each in Manebhanjyang and Balakhu VDCs. The seed varieties used for this trial are Shitala, Pop 45, Manakamana 3, Manakamana 1, Deuti and Arun1. For this trail, each farmer was provided with 0.5 kg of seed and same quality of local variety for planting in the plots being uniformly prepared with the application of fertilizer, irrigation and management practices and soil conditions. The purpose of this trial is to make comparison of production performance between improved and local varieties, and to use the better and successful variety for the purpose of extension programmes.

11.4 Mother trial

Two trials were conducted in the fields of farmers; one in Balakhu VDC and another in Manebhanjyang VDC. For the purpose of the trial, seven varieties, i.e., 5 varieties being used for Baby trail and two farmers' local seed varieties were planted in pair at a prescribed distance. Of the two mother trials, a recommended dose of chemical fertilizer was applied in one trial, while only the organic matter was applied in the other trial plots.

11.5 Monitoring

In most cases the farmers also participated in monitoring of the trial plots. As much information as possible regarding the performance of the varieties under trial was obtained through visits to the farmers and organising meetings, seminar, etc. Based on the information gathered so far through observation, monitoring and enquiries about the trials, the results are as follows:

- Lesser extent of disease and pest incidence in the improved variety as compared to local variety

- Better germination capacity of improved varieties
- Better outlook of the plants of improved varieties with chemical fertilizers
- Manakamana 3 variety producing relatively larger and double sized cobs, but with stunted growth



Participatory monitoring by scientists (left) and farmers and project staff (right)