



SAHAS NEWSLETTER

6th Issue, July, 2011



Message from the Executive Director.....

Namaste,

In our earlier issues, SAHAS-Nepal had presented the views, experiences and activities of its staff, members and people from the community in the form of news. After a break in between for a few years owing to various reasons, we have come up with the 6th issue of "SAHAS newsletter" in order to build upon the creativity of its staff as well as to provide information about the activities of SAHAS-Nepal. We hope that this newsletter will help to foster the relationship among our staff, members, stakeholders and people from the community.

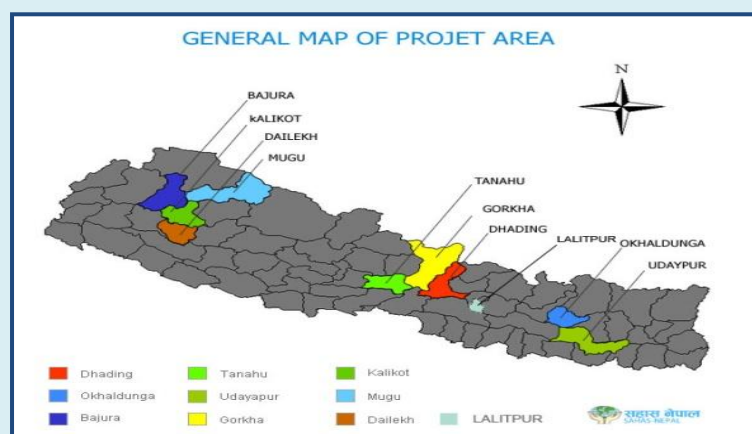
SAHAS-Nepal, which began its development activities in the remote Okhaldhunga district 15 years ago, today works in 10 districts of the country. It has been successfully implementing various projects and programmes in these districts which would not have been possible without the continuous support of the rural communities, our partner organisations and various government and non government organisations. We would like to thank them all.

We believe that "we feeling" among community members is imperative for a sustainable development of the community and this can be achieved only by a meaningful participation of the community in development process. We have therefore brought forth success stories from the community along with other informative articles in this issue. We are pleased to be able to bring forward the experience and lessons learnt from the community through this newsletter. However, there are still plenty of rooms for improvement and we would be grateful to receive your constructive criticism regarding the newsletter. We hope that your comments and feedbacks would help us to come up with better issues in the following days.

Surendra Kumar Shrestha, PhD
Executive Director
SAHAS-Nepal

Contents

- Message from the ED
- Special report : Right to food and its situation in Nepal
- SAHAS news
- Women's role in food security : Success stories



Group of Helping Hands, SAHAS-Nepal is a non profit making non government organisation. Since its inception in 1996, it has been working continuously for integrated rural community development in the rural areas of the country in partnership with various government and non government organisation. By the end of 2010, more than 15000 households belonging to 760 community based organisations have directly benefitted from the projects and programmes of this organisation.



SAHAS NEWSLETTER

6th Issue, July, 2011



Special Report

The Right to Food

To be able to live in dignity is the basic right of every human being. The right to food is a human right that protects the rights of all human beings to live in dignity, free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

The right to food is protected under international human rights and humanitarian law and the correlative state obligations are equally established under international law. The right to food is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966, as well as a plethora of other instruments. The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. The right to adequate food will have to be realized progressively. However, States have a core obligation to take the necessary action to mitigate and alleviate hunger as provided for in paragraph 2 of article 11, even in times of natural or other disaster. Adequacy, availability, accessibility and sustainability are the basic elements of right to food. The Interim Constitution of Nepal adopted in January 2007 incorporates the right to food and some of its aspects in several of its provisions. Despite the provisions in the constitution, the right to food has not been fully implemented.

Like other rights, in case of right to food as well the state has 3 main obligations: to respect, to protect and to fulfil. The obligation to respect requires the government not to take any measures that arbitrarily deprive people of their right to food, for example by measures preventing people from having access to food. The obligation to respect means that the state should enforce appropriate laws and take other relevant measures to prevent third parties, including individuals and corporations, from violating the right to food of others. The obligation to fulfil (facilitate and provide entails that government must proactively engage in activities intended to strengthen people's access to and utilisation of resources so as to facilitate their ability to feed themselves.

Human Right to Food in Nepal

Food insecurity is a major challenge in Nepal. Of the total population of Nepal (28.8 Lakh) about 41 % of the population, 50% of the total children and 31% of the people in rural Nepal are bearing the brunt of food insecurity and are

fighting hunger and malnutrition. 40 districts of the country were listed as food insecure districts in 2009 (FIAN Nepal 2007 BS; World Bank 2009; Agriculture and Cooperative Ministry 2009). Agriculture is the major source of livelihood of more than 65% of the population of Nepal. Ironically, these poor farmers are the most vulnerable to food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition. 47% of poor farmers have access to only 15% arable land while only 5% rich farmers have occupied about 37% of arable land. More than 70 % of the population have a land holding of less than 1 hectare (FIAN Nepal 2007 BS).

In Nepal food insecurity is pervasive in both food surplus and food deficit districts and affects primarily women and children, adivasi janajatis (Indigenous nationalities), dalits, Kamaiyas, Haliyas and Haruwas (bonded labours) and people living with HIV/AIDS. Obstacles to the realisation of the right to food include:

- Gender and caste based discrimination
- Insufficient and insecure access to land and other productive resources, landlessness and evictions
 - Lack of legal framework and comprehensive strategy on part of the government to address hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity
 - Inability to implement genuine land reform
 - Programmes to address the problem of food insecurity are relief based rather than right based
 - Food distribution does not reach the most vulnerable and there is a need for greater transparency, accountability and effective monitoring
- Lack of identification and mobilisation of sustainable local resources
- Traditional agricultural system
- Climate change

To sum up, to ensure the right to food to all, the government must not take actions that result in increasing levels of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. Also, the government must protect people from the actions of powerful others that might violate the right to food. State must also, to the maximum of available resources, invest in the eradication of hunger. In a developing country like Nepal, the right to food can be realised only through lobby and advocacy with meaningful participation of the marginalised group in the society.

SAHAS-Nepal is a member of the National Network on Right to Food, Nepal (RtFN)





SAHAS NEWSLETTER

6th Issue, July, 2011



SAHAS News

- Group of Helping Hands, SAHAS-Nepal extended its working area in January 2010 to 5 additional VDCs (Ketuke, Unbu, Moly, Betini and Waksa) of Okhaldhunga district and 7 VDCs (Nallu, Ikudol, Sankhu, Chaugharey, Dalchoki, Bhardhwa and Bhukhel) in Lalitpur district through the Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation (LIFT) project.
- SAHAS-Nepal has been implementing the Improving Food Security through Community Organising project (IFCO) since 2010 in 1 municipality and 4 VDCs of Dailekh district. This project is supported by the Nepalteam, Germany. In order to directly observe the activities and working of this project in the district, a 5 member team from Nepalteam had visited the district for 15 days. Many interaction programmes with the community provided the visitors an opportunity to see the effect of the project activities on their livelihood. The visiting team expressed that they were able to learn about the social, cultural, economic and geographical condition of rural Nepal. On their return to Germany, they did some promotion work through writing articles, making presentations and interacting



- with Christian groups for providing information about the rural situation of Nepal.
- The Civic Education Project (CEP) has been successfully implemented in 15 districts (Okhaldhunga, Udaypur, Gorkha, Dhading, Tanahun, Kaski, Rupandehi, Baglung, Nawalparasi, Bara, Banke, Surkhet, Morang, Ramechhap and Kailali) of the country. The project is jointly implemented by SAHAS-Nepal, Shtrii Shakti and Sansthaagat Bikas Sanjal under the leadership of SAHAS-Nepal in these districts. A proposal for the 3rd phase of the project has been submitted to EED for approval.
- The Trail Bridge Programme jointly implemented by SAHAS-Nepal, DDC Okhaldhunga and Helvetas Nepal since 2004 has prepared design estimate for the construction of 7 bridges for the fiscal year 2011/2012. A contract with the DDC has already been signed.
- Hill Maize Research Programme implemented in Okhaldhunga since 2008 currently works in 11 VDCs and the contract for the 4th phase of the project has been signed.
- Home Garden Project in Okhaldhunga has been working in 4 VDCs and the contract for the 2nd year of the 3rd phase of the project has been signed with LI-BIRD, Pokhara.
- The chairperson of SAHAS Nepal, Mr. Brahma Dhoj Gurung, participated in the "Dialogue on Humanity" workshop held in Lyon, France, from 1st July 2011 to 10th July 2011.

Projects and Programmes currently being implemented along with partner organisations

S.N.	Working Area	Programmes and Projects	Partner Organisations
1	Okhaldhunga	➤ Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation Project (LIFT)	EED Germany
		➤ Poverty Alleviation Fund Programme (PAF Programme)	PAF Nepal
		➤ Bio Fuel Project	PEEDA
		➤ Home Garden Project	LI-BIRD
		➤ Hill Maize Research Project (HMRP)	CIMMYT
		➤ Trail Bridge Programme	DDC and DRILLP/TBSU
		➤ Civic Education Project (CEP)	EED Germany
		➤ Community Based Network Organisation's Capacity Building Programme	SAHAS-Nepal
		➤ Scholarship Programme	SAHAS-Nepal's internal fund
2	Udaypur	➤ Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation Project (LIFT)	EED Germany and FELM-Finland
		➤ Civic Education Project (CEP)	EED Germany
		➤ Scholarship Programme	SAHAS-Nepal's internal fund
3	Dhading, Gorkha, Tanahun	➤ Enhancing Livelihood through Local Effort Project	FELM Finland
		➤ Civic Education Project (CEP)	EED Germany
4	Mugu, Bajura, Kalikot	➤ Community Empowerment for Food Security and Livelihood Project (CEFALS)	EED Germany, FELM-Finland
5	Dailekh	➤ Improving Food Security by Community Organising Project	Sanjal/ MCC and Nepal Team
6	Lalitpur	➤ Local Initiative for Food Security Transformation Project (LIFT)	EED Germany



SAHAS NEWSLETTER

6th Issue, July, 2011



Women's Role in Food Security

Food insecurity has become a major problem in today's world. Ironically, Nepal which happens to be an agricultural country with about 70% of its population engaged in agriculture, can barely feed the remaining 30% of the country. In order to improve the food security situation in a sustainable manner, it is imperative to work at the local level through active participation of the target communities in coordination and linkage with various organisations.

There might be curiosity among many of us about the role of women with regard to a highly sensitive issue like food security. Women; who have always taken the back seat in a male dominated society like in Nepal; can they actually bring even the slightest of difference in the food security scenario of the country? Today let's have a look at few instances of transformations brought about by these women in our country.

The farmers of Katari-3 of Udaypur district suffered from the flooding of Kakur river in the monsoon season every year. The flooding caused great unrest among the village people and put them at risk of food insecurity.

As a result, Chintaghari Women's Group after assessing their needs identified the Kakur river flooding as a major problem and prioritised the construction of dam over the river. Under the leadership of women in the community, the dam construction committee and users' committee discussed and came up with plans for the work. The problem identified was common to all in the community and therefore there were commitments from everybody for working together on the construction of dam. For the construction purpose, SAHAS-Nepal contributed Rs. 50,000 ; the community raised Rs. 96,000 and Rs. 5,76,000 was collected from various other organisations. A total of Rs. 6,72,500 had been invested for the purpose.

After the construction of dam, the land earlier converted into infertile river bank was reclaimed into arable land through various soil management techniques. The chairperson of the Integrated Development Main Committee in Katari and secretary of Chintaghari Women's Group, Jyoti Rai, delightedly exclaims, "A clear and effective plan combined with courage, patience, and hard work can lead to its success. Therefore, we went ahead with the timely commencement of the plan keeping in view the qualitative aspect of the work. If the real problem is identified and plans are made with the involvement of the community, it is easy to achieve the desired result in a short span of time."

The achievement from this plan has encouraged fellow group members to engage themselves in various income generation activities like animal husbandry, vegetable farming, mushroom cultivation etc. Also, the members have been actively involved in conducting adult literacy centre, community library centre, infrastructure construction, community retail shop and many other social development activities. In this way, construction of dam under the active participation of women's group has not only changed the fate of the villagers, but has also contributed immensely in improving the food security situation.



"I bought a buffalo by selling vegetables"

Chhutakala BK from Fukot-2 of Kalikot district is the treasurer of Shree Chautara community group. Farmers in her village only grew cereal crops and vegetables like chamsur and spinach were sometimes grown in their kitchen



garden. It was only after taking the one day training on kitchen garden, she realised the value of vegetables.

When others in the group hesitated about replacing the traditionally grown cereal crops by vegetables, Chhatakala dared to raise nursery in her land and grew vegetables instead. She has earned more than Rs. 17000 by selling vegetables like cabbage, tomato, spinach, onion, carrot, raddish etc in the local market and still has vegetables worth Rs. 7000 ready for sale in the market. From her income, she has even bought a buffalo worth Rs. 10000. Her achievement has inspired others in her village to grow vegetables for commercial purpose.

She is happy that she can now provide quality education to her children. This has filled her with enthusiasm and she has even taken a 3 month tailoring course. She hopes to set example to others in the village by putting her skills into practise and making most out of it. Through her determination, hard work and skill she has played an inspirational role to lessen the problem of food insecurity in her home and community.

Our Address

Group of Helping Hands, (SAHAS) Nepal
Lalitpur

P.O.Box: 8975, EPC: 1590

Phone: 01-5523776, Fax: 01-5523303

Email: sahasnepal@wlink.com.np

Web site: www.sahasnepal.org.np