

## On the Eastern Front

### Various activities carried out by the Eastern Region Centre of LWF Nepal

#### MAY 2007

Under the community service programme, LWF Nepal is planning to conduct various types of skill training for refugees. The training will be useful for them if they decide to opt for third country resettlement, and if they are accepted for the same. English language training, driving training, food catering training and house keeping training, among others, are on roster under the grant of LWF Nepal/DanChurchAid.

Members of four Santhal farmer groups are continuously engaged in vegetable farming at Duwagadi and Garamani of Jhapa and Morang districts, and are reaping dividends from their produce. They are now eager to take additional land on lease and produce vegetables. The Santhal and Jhagad groups, who started to produce vegetables through agriculture school, are now selling them in market.

In May, four episodes of "Pariwartan Ka Pailaharu," a radio program for empowerment, went on air. The radio programme covered inclusive democracy, constituent assembly and indigenous community, effectiveness of skillful training, and importance of awareness about disaster.

Altogether 211 group members participated in five issue-based interactions organized in five Village Development Committees (VDCs). Among them, 88 were female and 123 male. Constitution and constituent assembly were the subjects opened for interaction.

The Women Development Association (WDA) Salakpur in cooperation with the District Development Committee, Morang organized a 5-day basic journalism training. The training was participated in by 14 female and 4 male.

After completing a 9-month-long SEEP classes, 69 girl and 47 boy children were enrolled in school this year.

The Community-based Organisations (CBOs) of Kechana and Pathamari formulated a policy on saving and credit. The policy is being implemented in 36 groups. The CBO of Kechana received Rs 50,000 from the VDC and purchased a plot of land to construct office building.

Similarly, a CBO of Pathamari received Rs 15,000 for office building construction.

#### June 2007

WDA Garamani, WDA Salakpur, Sahara Nepal, DEPROSC, SADG and SIUAN are the partners of LWF Nepal for development programme, Disaster Management Committees (DMCs), users groups and other local NGOs are for the Refugee Host Community Support Programme (RHCSPP).



Pot gardening programme for refugees

They are implementing various activities satisfactorily. Monitoring and supervision is continued. As per the decision of LWF Nepal, the partnership with WDAs will discontinue from June 30, 2007 and new plan has been developed directly with five CBOs, effective from July.

Two street dramas were performed by SOVAA, a partner of LWF Nepal, in Jhapa and Morang districts. The objective of the street drama was to make people aware about the risks of HIV & AIDS, TB, STI, sanitation and nutrition. Both dramas were performed in the community mostly inhabited by illiterate people with the view of enabling them to protect themselves from falling into the risk of infection. Three video shows were organised in Jhapa and Morang. SARATHI and SOVAA volunteers actively took part in logistic arrangement. The objective of the show was to impart information about the threat of HIV & AIDS and STI through visual. Three visual aids named "Tike Ko Tin Mantra", "Triveni" and "Asha/Sheha" were shown which gave general concept about the mode of transmission and preventive measures about HIV & AIDS.

A district-level conference was held at Damak Kirat Bhawan. Nineteen indigenous communities of Nepal participated in the conference. The conference discussed constituent assembly, constitution and restructuring of state, and indigenous communities. Ninety-eight people participated in the conference, among which 30 were female and 68 male.

CBOs of three VDCs in cooperation with the Center for Micro Finance organized a series of consultations with group members in order to discuss the establishment of a cooperative.

Altogether 190 female members and 75 male from 49 groups took part in those discussions.

#### July 2007

The Bhutanese refugee care and maintenance programme has been running smoothly. However, during the second half of the month of July, all refugee camps, especially Goldhap, were affected badly due to heavy downpour. In the Goldhap camp alone, 45 families were displaced. This impelled the people to take refuge at schools and their neighbours' houses. LWF Nepal gave emergency response. Black plastics, tarpaulin sheets, and ration were provided to the affected families. Camp

access roads to Goldhap and Khudunabari were damaged. The heavy and long rainfall also affected some of the VDCs of Jhapa.

As usual, vegetable, kerosene and briquette were given to the Bhutanese refugees. Renovation of 3,000 shelters under LWF/DCA grant were completed. LWF Nepal distributed some black plastics to repair huts. It distributed chimneys, produced by the Bhutanese Refugee Women Forum, among 15,038 refugee families.

LWF Nepal has been carrying out the Refugee Host Community Support Program (RHCSPP) with the support from DanChurchAid. It has contributed well to fostering harmonious relationship between the refugees and the locals of the surrounding areas of the camps.

Commercial vegetable production is one of the main programmes. The objective of this programme is to provide the people of the host community with basic knowledge on the latest techniques and technologies of farming vegetable by organizing training and giving input/technical support to economically disadvantaged people of the refugee-affected VDCs to make them improve their economic condition. Consumption of fresh vegetables, for instance, can improve the health/nutritional status of the vulnerable.

SARATHI and SOVAA Groups, partners of LWF Nepal, organized interaction programmes to spread the message of HIV & AIDS and inform the people about the risk of HIV, and to encourage them to adopt safer practices.



Bhutanese refugee women making candles inside a camp

The CBOs of Kechana and Pathamari amended their statutes and took approval from the District Administration Office for the same.

The Gramin Bikash Samudayak Sanstha, supported by LWF Nepal, organized an awareness campaign in 14 groups in order to generate awareness about Japanese Encephalitis.

#### August 2007

With a view to encouraging the physically challenged to take up cloth painting as a profession to uplift their living standards, a three-month-long cloth painting training is being organized with support from LWF Nepal and the Mechi Association of the Deaf at Charpane for 12 people. Likewise, a bag-making training has been designed to uplift the economic condition of 10 socially excluded people.



## Rights-Based Approach

Development objectives are also human rights objectives. An emphasis on human rights in the context of development helps focus attention on the structural inequities that cause and maintain impoverishment and exclusion. Conscious reference to human rights standards and objectives helps ensure that the root causes of poverty and exclusion receive proper attention in the formulation and implementation of development programme and to guard against narrow technical objectives becoming the reference point for development activities. This approach also reduces the risk that the poor are seen as needy objects of charity.

The rights-based approach of the The Department for World Service, the internationally recognized humanitarian and development arm of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), involves building up rights awareness on all levels, both among the powerless and the powerful.

LWF Nepal, one of the country programmes of the World Service, seeks to work by, with and for the displaced, the disadvantaged and the marginalized to assert their rights. It considers advocacy a key field of activity that its partners should engage in. Strengthening of local community efforts to advocate for their rights is its strategic goal.

To amplify the voices of local partners through greater participation in advocacy networks and by influencing public policy debates, and to advance the struggles of the displaced and marginalized people for human rights, peace building and reconciliation at the local, national and international levels are the organization's strategic priorities.

LWF Nepal sees poverty eradication not only as a process of improving people's income but also as a process of expanding the fundamental choices and freedom of people. Poverty should be understood from the rights perspective.

Promotion of freedom is possible by enhancing people's capacity and expanding opportunities. Personal rights (by virtue of which individuals can determine the way society behaves) and solidarity rights (whose realization requires collective action on the part of society) should not be excluded from poverty eradication policies and actions.

Economic poverty and human poverty should be linked so that development programmes can widen their focus—from access to participation and from representation to non-discrimination.

The primary responsibility for poverty eradication rests with the national government without whose initiative and commitment to rights-based programmes, the right to poverty-free life will remain a mere pledge.

A transparent form of governance that is accountable to the people is a precondition for a rights-based approach to poverty eradication.

## Achievements of disaster risk reduction project

With the support from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department, DanChurchAid (DCA) and LWF Nepal, a project from February 2006 to July 2007, was implemented.

The project "Community Preparedness for Disaster Risk Reduction (CPDRR) in Central and Eastern Nepal" was implemented in 52 vulnerable communities of Jhapa and Rautahat districts, and the Kathmandu Valley.

The project aimed to reduce community vulnerability to disasters by increasing the capacity in responding effectively to disaster events and by improving people's livelihoods.

An evaluation of the DIPECHO-Community Preparedness for Disaster Risk reduction in Central and East Nepal (CPDRR) was completed by the end of July 2007. Dhruva Raj Gautam, an external evaluator hired by LWF Nepal, submitted a report in early August 2007.



Displaced people living in a temporary shelter in Bhajani village, Kailali district. Humanitarian agencies, including ACT/LWF Nepal, are distributing relief materials to them.

### Highlights of the Findings

- A total of 52 Disaster Management Teams (DMTs) and 364 Task Forces (TFs) with their clear roles and responsibilities contributed to the overall process of project implementation in coordination with multiple stakeholders at the local level. Local resource tapping and sustainable strategies to continue the project provided further space for local actions towards disaster preparedness.

The capacity building measures for DMTs, TFs, communities and government and other agencies are expected to contribute to preparing and putting effective measures in place for reducing disaster risks, and for coping with such risks in the future.

- Understanding of different phases of disaster management resulted in clear planning for DMTs, which have already started effective implementation of their plan. The project saw students and teachers as the key agents of change in society for disaster preparedness, and thus they built their capacities to develop and implement safety plans. Fair acceptance of the masons trained in earthquake resistant buildings provided space for other such training.

- Most of the activities were found to have replicable prospects within them because they included those with little investment, but that required community ownership and collective effort. While conducting disaster-related activities, the space to work in harmony and trust has also improved. There were

behavioural changes too. Communication and sharing was found useful to protect the lives and property during floods.

- Establishment of functional linkages and sharing of best practices made the project work visible and helped others to learn and replicate. Local government started to share resources for the common purpose bringing the changes in current practices of escaping disaster management.

- Sharing of knowledge was visible among the participants of various training. In Arjunthara-4, Parbati Bhattarai, a member of a first aid TF, organized one orientation class for the members of the Chetana Women Development Group. In Bhadrapur-2, Jhapa, people reported that they were able to learn new ideas for search and rescue operations, and were engaged in making rescue apparatus from bottles and banana stems. They could identify the difference between the cases of poisonous and non-poisonous snake bites and use the first aid skills to cure them.



Flood-affected area of Kailali, August 2007

- Earthquake-related training for teachers and masons was found exemplary in the project. A total of 150 school teachers have been trained in School Earthquake Preparedness. The trained teachers are sharing the knowledge with their students. Likewise, 734 masons/technicians and self-builders were trained in earthquake safety construction. The trained masons formed an Earthquake Resistant Building Construction Workers Group in municipalities to strengthen earthquake safety construction practices and to disseminate their skill and learning. The trained masons have obtained opportunities to work in various places.

- Disaster Management Teams (DMTs) developed small-scale replicable mitigation practices. In Rajdevi-7, Rautahat, 130 tree plantations, along with fencing, were carried out. The Janajagriti DMT of Ghailadubba-1 managed 150 saplings. In Ghailadubba-7 and Kohabhara-2, construction of culverts eased the mobility of the people.

- The project brought about local-level changes in policy and practice. Satisfied with the project deliverables, the District development Committee decided to spend 25% of the revenue generated from a project of a Village Development Committee on disaster preparedness activities, in Jhapa.

- Promotion of greenery, adoption of agro-forestry, improvement in sanitation practices, water source protection and solid waste management were the positive environmental outcomes.

- The involvement of women, elderly, Dalits and other marginalised section of the society was found to be over 68% in the project; 39% women were in the committees.

## News Brief

### Media Mobilisation

The Dalit Welfare Association has been fighting for the rights of Dalits for many years. For the past 12 years, it has been broadcasting Dalit Janajagan Radio Programme on the state-owned Radio Nepal.



On 4 May 2007, the Association felicitated LWF Nepal for its continuous support for running the Dalit Janajagan Radio Programme.

Minister for Physical Planning and Works Hisila Yami, the chief guest of the programme, presented a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Association to Marceline P. Rozario, country representative of LWF Nepal. The felicitation programme was organized on the eighth Memorial Day of Matyr Meena Swarnakar.

Rights and social activists say the radio programme has played a significant role in raising awareness among the Dalits and the non-Dalits. More importantly, it has provided the Dalits and their issues with a valuable communication platform.

In 2006, the radio broadcasts, supported by LWF Nepal, covered themes related to caste-based violence, Dalit school enrolment, scholarship programme, and reservation of seats for Dalits in various institutions and constituent assembly.

### Change of Guards

This year, there were some major changes in management at LWF Nepal. Some staff members resigned, while some were promoted.

Dhruva Raj Pandit took office of Project Coordinator in the Eastern Region Centre (ERC) of LWF Nepal on 01 June, 2007. He had worked for the Dalit Empowerment Programme of LWF Nepal for nearly two years before getting the promotion. His predecessor D B Sunuwar resigned from LWF Nepal.

Yadu Lal Shrestha leads the human rights and advocacy activities as Coordinator. Shrestha, who has worked with LWF Nepal for over two decades, was in charge of the Western Region Centre of LWF Nepal for several years. Rajan Raj Timilsina, programme officer, heads the Centre as Manager.

LWF Nepal has found its Human Resource Development Manager in Bhuban Raj Joshi who has considerable experience in the field of management. He was appointed earlier this year.

Roopshree Joshi, who worked as finance officer for LWF Nepal, was appointed Manager for the project Tibetan New Arrivals in Nepal. Her predecessor Sunita Shrestha resigned recently.

Meghnath Devkota was elected unopposed as Chairperson of the National Staff Council in June this year. He works as vehicle supervisor for the organisation. He has more than two decades of working experience with LWF Nepal.

Shashi Rijal, Organization Development/Advocacy Coordinator, resigned from her position effective from June 1. Badri Maharjan, project manager for Relief and Rehabilitation, resigned from his position in June.

### First Steering Committee Meeting held

This year's first steering committee meeting of Nepal Development Programme (NDP) was held on 14 June at LWF Nepal office in Kathmandu. The meeting is held twice a year.

Representatives from the Social Welfare Council, the National Dalit Commission, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Finance and LWF Nepal are the members of the committee. Dr R. P. Gartaula, member secretary of the Social Welfare Council, chaired the meeting.

Programme Planning and Monitoring Coordinator of LWF Nepal Krishna Bahadur Rawal presented the highlights of LWF Nepal 2006 Programme, and 2007 Plan. He also presented the progress report of NDP Programme 2006.

During a discussion, Dr Gartaula opined that the term "Gender Sensitivity" used in the context of HIV/AIDS/STD should be removed. He argued that since there would be involvement of male and female in such cases, it would not be fair to consider it a gender issue alone.



Laxmi Sharan Ghimire from the National Dalit Commission suggested that the Haliya issue be dealt with in a practical manner. He said the abolition ("unmulan") of bonded labour—Haliya Pratha—would not be a major achievement. Instead plans should be made and action taken for the betterment of the Haliyas. He added that instead of changing the job they are currently doing, it would be good to eliminate the existing exploitation of their effort and hard work.

Dr Gartaula said while selecting working areas, LWF Nepal should not think locally because there is not any STD-free zone in Nepal. Therefore, the programme should be a national one.

The committee members forwarded various suggestions. LWF Nepal should give priority to the national priorities determined by the National Planning Commission. While evaluating/monitoring any project or programme, the system of social auditing should also be adopted. Representatives from the Social Welfare Council, ministries concerned and the District Development Committee should also be involved while selecting a VDC for programme implementation. While working with Dalit groups, competency of human resources should also be taken into consideration. The NGOs formed only from the Dalit community need not necessarily be chosen as partner organisations of LWF Nepal. However, the Dalits should be given more emphasis, and the efforts should be directed to make the Dalits trained so that they can take up different responsibilities.

Country Representative of LWF Nepal Marceline P. Rozario presented the summary of LWF Nepal Strategy 2008-13. He briefed the committee on LWF Nepal's strategic plan process, backgrounds, comparative advantages and justification for continuation of development interventions. He also shared the vision, mission, values and priorities, focus groups, modes of operation, strategic approaches and cross-cutting themes, programme priority, and organizational strategy of LWF Nepal. He also informed about the general projection of risks and resources.

### Senior Staff Meeting

A Senior Staff Meeting was held from 25 to 26 June in Kathmandu. During the meeting various issues, ranging from current programmes and future partnership to welfare of staff members, were discussed.

The meeting served as a guiding light for the senior staff to carry out their tasks in the days ahead. Altogether 20 staff members, who are heading or working in various sectors, attended the meeting. The next meeting will be held in February 2008 in Jhapa.

Meghnath Devkota, the newly elected chairperson of the National Staff Council, presented the recommendations on employment policy forwarded by LWF Nepal staff, both within and outside the Kathmandu Valley.

### Partners phased out, New ones welcomed

**Phased-out Partners in far- and mid-west Nepal (Effective from 2007)**

- Conscious Society for Social Development (CSSD), Kailali (June end)
- Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNSDWO), Kailali (June end)
- Sahakarmi Samaj, Banke (15 July)
- Youths in Empowerment Sector (YES) Nepal, Kailali (June end)

#### New partners

- Upekchhit Samudaya Sashaktikaran Tatha Bikash Manch, Doti
- CBO Development Centre, Kailali
- Digo Bikash Samaj, Kailali
- Jana Ekta Samaj, Banke
- Jana Jagaran Samaj, Banke
- Treveni Bikash Samaj, Banke
- Rastriya Haliya Mukti Samaj

#### Phased-out Partners in far-east Nepal

- Women Development Association, Salakpur (Effective from June end 2007)
- Women Development Association, Garamani (Effective from June end 2007)

#### New Partners

- Community-based Organisation (CBO) Keroun
- Community-based Organisation (CBO) Yangshila
- Community-based Organisation (CBO) Pathamari
- Community-based Organisation (CBO) Patharia
- Community-based Organisation (CBO) Kechana
- SIUN



## Features

### The worst of the rains not yet over

By Saguni Devi B.K.

*(As told to Gopal Dahal, Project Manager, LWF Nepal, on 18 August 2007. He visited some villages of Kailali, a far-western district of Nepal. Saguni Devi is among 350 families who received ACT/LWF Nepal food assistance recently.)*

**BHAJANI, KAILALI:** I have not seen such an intensity of flood in the past two decades or so. My husband died many years ago. I am 45 years old and live with my six-year-old niece. I have no other family members. I am a resident of Kusum Dhar.



A widow, Saguni Devi B.K. is one of those displaced by flood. She says the recent spate of floods is the worst in two decades. She belongs to the Dalit community.

The rainy season is not yet over in our region. The recent downpour is only a beginning. More rain will come. This means more pain and hardship for us.

The overflowing Kanara, Mohana, Kadha and Pathraiya Rivers started inundating our village. As the water level rose and reached our shoulders at around 11 pm, we left the house for a nearby higher land to spend the night. The next day we took the boat to take shelter at Bhajani School. We have been living in Bhajani since then.

Except for some food grain, clothes and utensils, which were fortunately stored in a slightly higher place, everything was swept away. We have 18 households in our village. The flood washed away our livestock such as hens and lambs. The animals that survived the floods have now fallen sick because of cold. Sand has buried paddy cultivation, which was completed recently. Some of the villagers' lands have also vanished under the water. The only public tap used by 18 houses has also perished. Four of the houses have collapsed; the condition of the remaining ones is unpredictable. They might come down any time.

I have also suffered losses. My paddy field sprawling over 0.84 acres is under the sand. My hope for paddy harvest has gone down the drain. I will have to wait for months for winter cultivation. The situation is likely to impel me to consume seeds preserved for winter cultivation. For livelihood, I see no other option but to go to India and sell my labour. Here, one gets NRs 80 [1\$=Rs66] for a day's labour. That is meager. How can one stay alive on such income?

*(LWF Nepal Feature Service)*

### Life in relief camp: Truly temporary

By Gopal Dahal

**KAILALI, 18 August:** Dhansara Dhungana has been living in a temporary camp in Bhajani Village Development Committee-3 since the flood displaced her in late July. She is a resident of Krishnanagar, which is also located in Bhajani.

Her family was compelled to leave for a safer place when the swelling Kadha River submerged her house. Well, they had left their house in search of a safer pasture only to find that they were not so safe here. They took refuge in this temporary camp, which itself is precarious. Her father, mother, sister and brothers are huddled inside a ramshackle hut that cannot even protect them from rain and wind.

"Seeing the rising water level in our village, we set off for a safer place. My parents carried my brothers. It took us three hours by boat

to reach this place. We could not take anything from our house. Food grain, clothes and utensils are all lying there," she says with a tinge of regret.

Dhansara does not know her age. She looks like a ten-year-old. Her brother, who is accompanying her in the hut, is around three years old. He is playing with an empty plate. His legs are polio-stricken.



Dhansara Dhungana is seen in the picture with her three-year-old brother. The displaced are living in a makeshift shelter in Kailali.

An acute food crisis rules the camp. ACT/LWF Nepal and other humanitarian agencies have supplied food to sustain them only for a few days.

LWF Nepal, with support from the ACT International, distributed food items to 350 families in Kailali in August, a far-western district of Nepal.

What will happen to them after the relief agencies retreat? The flood survivors are without proper clothes, not to mention bedding. Children who are supposed to eat four or five times a day are relying on plain beaten rice and cooked rice—that too only twice a day. They are without clean drinking water and toilet. Their well-being and health condition can easily be imagined.

This is not an exclusive story of the Dhungana family. People of all ages—altogether 350 families—who are taking shelter in the temporary camp of Bhajani-3 are living the same fate.

*(LWF Nepal Feature Service)*

## New Publications

LWF Nepal's Country Strategy (2008-2013) is now available in hard copies. Its soft copy is posted on <http://www.azeecon-lwf.org/lwf/Publications/publications.html>. Both the executive summary and full text are printed in a booklet. The executive summary will be translated in Nepali and distributed among CBOs and stakeholders within a month.



Annual Report 2006 summarises the challenges faced and achievements made by LWF Nepal in various projects and programmes. Pictures in the report recapture the activities the organisation carried out last year. It also contains interesting and inspiring feature stories of beneficiaries. The report, which was published early this year, is now uploaded on: <http://www.azeecon-lwf.org/lwf/Reports/report.html>.

In order to save valuable resources, LWF Nepal's communication team have decided to come up with an e-Newsletter in English, and in order to reach the community level and stakeholders better, the Nepali version of

the newsletter will be published. The first issue of the Nepali newsletter was printed in May 2007. Two issues of the English newsletter had already been printed. The newsletters have seen the light of the day after a gap of several years. The newsletters will come out four times a year.



## Kalikot Documentary

An 18-minute-long video documentary entitled "Kalikot Humanitarian Assistance for Drought & Hailstorm Victims" was released recently at LWF Nepal office. The documentary, which is in

English language, is produced by The Lutheran World Federation Nepal and Om Creations.

In April 2006, the Karnali Zone, one of the most remote areas of Nepal, came under the spell of incessant rain and hailstones. This caused a great loss to the community of this region. Food crops and fruits perished. In order to survive, people sold their livestock, utensils and even ornaments to buy food.

Given the humanitarian crisis, LWF Nepal in coordination with the ACT International provided humanitarian aid to the people of Kalikot.

Despite the remoteness of Kalikot, lack of communication facilities and road links, the distribution of relief aid was done in an effective way in nearly two months' time.

In the process, people—the rights holders—learnt how to get access to their rights. For the two implementing organisations, it was an important opportunity to do justice to their mission and vision.

