



Transforming Society Through Post Earthquake Socio-Economic Reconstruction



A member of





Transforming Society Through Post Earthquake Socio-Economic Reconstruction

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Foreword

Dear Readers,

We are happy to introduce “Transforming Society through Post Earthquake Socio-economic Reconstruction” highlighting the rationale behind the quality, accountability and impact of post-earthquake response linking relief and recovery to sustainable development. The document highlights efforts made by LWF Nepal to respond to earthquake affected communities in remote areas of Gorkha, Lalitpur and Rasuwa in partnerships with United Nation, World Food Programme (UN WFP), Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, Canada (PWRDF), and Canadian Food Grain Bank (CFGB). I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all organizations and their staff members who have contributed in reaching out the most marginalized and vulnerable communities affected by the earthquake.



There have been strong coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders such as the government agencies, local government, community based organizations and the affected communities. This has resulted synergy and greater impact. The efforts made by all these stakeholders’ contributed to quality of reconstruction of vital infrastructure and reviving of household economy in transforming the society. My sincere thanks goes to all of these institutions and their Heads for providing us your valuable supports in delivering the results. LWF Nepal hopes the same level of trust and engagement in the future.

LWF Nepal always stands with the high quality services in an accountable manner. It always abides with national and international standards of operation such as Core Humanitarian Standard, SPHERE, complaint handling mechanism; GESI, child protection policy and local capacity building, and operation of these standards are also depicted in the documents. Building back better, environmental consideration, climate justice and climate smart technology transfer are the thrust of its strategy. This document explains the procedure of executing programs/projects considering these guideline and lessons learned while mainstreaming these components.

LWF Nepal believes that these experiences and learning developed in this endeavor be transformed and replicated other areas contributing to people unreached and underserved.

I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Keshab Poudel, Editor of New Spotlight and his team for collecting and analyzing case stories. Further, I would like to thank Dr Subash Gurung, Sustainable Livelihood Development Coordinator and Kritagya Regmi, Communication Officer, LWF Nepal for their contribution.

I am particularly grateful to the earthquake affected communities who have been part of the projects entitled Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation in Gorkha, Livelihood Improvement of People Affected by Earthquake in Lalitpur and Food Assistance for earthquake Affected People in Rasuwa District.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Prabin Manandhar". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Prabin Manandhar
Country Director
LWF Nepal

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Transforming Society

At a time when there is a growing debate over how to implement programs/projects with good coordination and collaboration with the local community, civil society, administration, and locally elected body; Lutheran World Federation (LWF Nepal) in partnership with UNWFP and Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), Canada in Gorkha; Canadian Food Grain Bank (CFGB) and PWRDF in Rasuwa; and PWRDF in Lalitpur, have shown a way out on how to effectively implement programs/project and better coordination with local bodies and local civil society organizations. UNWFP and PWRDF are the long-standing partners of LWF Nepal and joined hands in emergency, relief, recovery and longer-term development of earthquake affected areas in Nepal. LWF's local partners are Goreto-Gorkha in Gorkha, Manekor Society Nepal (MSN) in Rasuwa and Integrated Community Development Organization (ICDO) in Lalitpur.

As many earthquake-related programs/projects are facing difficulties to adjust in the communities, the projects/programs implemented by LWF Nepal in Rasuwa, Gorkha and Lalitpur have been a big success in transforming the rural life and is also adjusting in the communities.

The project in Rasuwa entitled "Food Assistance to Earthquake Affected People in Rasuwa District of Nepal" had contributed to 950 food insecure households of three VDCs namely Chilime, Gatlang and Golgunj of Rasuwa district through food for work interventions. Altogether 17 community productive assets destroyed by the earthquake were reconstructed by the project in Rasuwa. Although the project was implemented for three months, it laid an impactful result in the lives and livelihoods of the people affected says Dr. Subash Gurung, Sustainable Livelihood Development Coordinator (SLDC) of LWF Nepal.



Similarly, “Livelihood Recovery of People Affected by Earthquake (LIRE) project” has recovered and enhanced services of the local social and economic institutions in achieving sustainable livelihoods of the earthquake affected smallholder farmers. It has also strengthened and capacitated local institutions such as cooperatives and linking them with resources and services centers. Innovative and adaptive technology transfer to the rural communities affected by the earthquake is another stepping-stone laid by the project. This indicates that innovation and development can go in any phases of disaster responses i.e. emergency, relief, recovery, and development. Achieving benefits from Climate field school, innovation lab, and adoption of new farming systems by the smallholder farmers are significant evidence of the project.



During the period, the project has capacitated and empowered 156 members, which include 57 Male and 99 females of earthquake-affected households of three wards of Bagmati Rural Municipality to access services and resources from the government agencies, private sectors, and micro-finance institutions for diversified livelihood options.

With the fund, the project help to revitalize three cooperatives and communities based social institutions benefiting 600 poor and marginalized households. These cooperatives and community-based organizations are linked with the private sectors and government institutions accessing the resources and services required.

In Gorkha, PRRO also served a large number of earthquake-affected households through improving livelihood and reconstructing the critical community assets and infrastructures. Under this project, 2,772 households of 5 northern villages of Darche and Chumnubri Rural Municipality received benefits. 108 community assets destroyed by the earthquake were rehabilitated. Similarly, 750 households benefited from institutional development. More than 1,700 people were capacitated for different income generation activities to improve their livelihoods.



Broader Ownership

The reason behind the success is wide and broader consultations with stakeholders and accountability and transparency in selection, design, and implementation. From the selection and design to implementation, LWF Nepal and its local partners consulted with all stakeholders and implemented the project according to the wishes of the community. As there is involvement of local communities in all the decision-making levels, there is a high sense of ownership.



Chief District Officer of Gorkha District Narayan Prasad Bhattarai holds the view that the food for assets and cash for assets contributed immensely in remote parts of Gorkha to reconstruct the community buildings, roads, and bridges. “A good part of the program is that the programs are owned by the community,” said Bhattarai.

Ashok Kumar Gurung, Chairperson of District Coordination Committee, thinks that the project has made tangible contributions. Similarly, the statements of elected representatives including ward chairs, ward members and local community members are a testimony to success.



Benefiting from LWF Nepal and UNWFP’s projects in Gorkha, community members want to continue the programs for some more time. As DCC Gorkha has shown interest to replicate it, local people are expecting to see the continuation of the projects. “We are considering replicating the projects in some rural municipalities.”

In Bagmati Rural Municipality, LWF’s statements given by leaders of local cooperative and elected Vice Chairperson of Bagmati Rural Municipality Ms. Ranjana Ghimire Timilsina and ward chairs of the program-implemented village in Lalitpur to narrate the success of the project.



Similarly, statements of beneficiaries and visible contribution to their livelihood and economic status illustrate the implications of the projects in the life of people affected by the earthquake.

As in Gorkha where the District Coordination Committee Chair is planning to replicate cash for work program in reconstruction to uplift the lives

of people, Ward 1, 2 and 3 of Bagmati Rural Municipality, Lalitpur has already decided to extend some of the programs like Tunnel, Bhakaro Sudhar (Dung reform) in other areas.

With its long-term objective to support and make earthquake victims self-reliant with their own institutions on the way to recovery, LWF Nepal has implemented programs and projects in collaboration with international partner organizations, local community, local NGOs and elected representatives in Gorkha, Rasuwa and Lalitpur districts.

All the projects implemented are guided by LWF's core commitments i.e. human rights, impartiality, inclusion and participation, accountability, gender justice and climate justice and environmental sustainability.

As accountability and transparency are keys to the projects implemented by LWF Nepal, they follow the feedback process giving direct access to community and stakeholders to file complaints through their own complaint boxes placed in the project areas.

PRRO Gorkha

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) is one of the major earthquake operations of LWF Nepal in Gorkha in partnership with UN WFP and PWRDF. It covers five remotely located northern wards of two Gaupalikas namely Laprak, Gumda, Kashigaun, Uhiya, and Sirdibas.

Cash-based interventions and food for assets (FfA/CfA) were the modalities for operating the project for food insecure households where they will get employment and contributes to their food security. It also aimed to rehabilitate

communities' productive assets destroyed by the earthquake. LWF Nepal in partnership with UNWFP has implemented the first and second phase of FfA/CfA project in the target area.





As in the first phase, LWF and UNWFP designed the second phase creating employment opportunities for food insecure earthquake-affected households. Under the project, the 108 critical community productive assets such as foot trails, drainage, water source protection, riverbank protection and assisted to food insecure households whose food stocks have been severely affected, particularly in the northern mountainous villages.

Under this project, 2,772 households of 5 northern villages of Darche and Chumnuhari Rural Municipality received benefits. LWF Nepal has contracted Goretto Gorkha, a local NGO, as an implementing partner of the work in Gorkha District. Under the project, after the completion of the first 20 days, each household was entitled to 75 kilograms of rice and 13.5 kilograms of yellow split beans (YSP) or NRP 12,800 depending upon the project modality in the respective wards. Similar amounts of second entitlement were distributed after the completion of the remaining 20 days of assets creation activities.



LIRE in Lalitpur

With support from LWF Nepal in partnership with PWRDF, Canada, the life of poor people living in three wards of Bagmati Rural Municipality Bhattedanda, Ghusel, and Malta, has completely transformed with increased monthly income from the projects. With the Implementation of Project Livelihood Recovery of People Affected by Earthquake (LIRE), people have come to know the importance of improved agricultural technologies, diversification of crops, institutional support through cooperatives, market linkage and climate change. "The project is designed to help affected people recover from earthquake through climate-smart technological means that ensures resilient livelihoods of the people," says Sustainable Livelihood Development Coordinator at LWF Dr. Subash Gurung.



Under the program, 521 targeted farmers have been involved in the project. LWF Nepal in partnership with PWRDF, Canada has been continuously working in Nepal since the earthquake in Rasuwa and Lalitpur in all stages of earthquake responses from emergency, relief and recovery, reconstruction and development.



Although Lalitpur has a different modality, the project recovered and enhanced services of the local social and economic institutions in achieving livelihoods of the earthquake affected vulnerable smallholder farmers. It



has brought a drastic change in the livelihoods and behavior of communities. "Revival of the peoples' institutions that could be social or economic institutions is vital for long-term sustainability; therefore, PWRDF in partnership with LWF Nepal is helping people to revive their cooperatives, which can work as an economic vehicle thereby developing local economy" says Humanitarian Response Coordinator, Mr. Naba Gurung, PWRDF, Canada.

After almost two years, all the formal and informal groups, committees affiliated to the cooperatives are now functional, regularly organizing their meeting and saving credit activities.

The project also helped to increase the saving of 215 members through three cooperatives from Rs100 to Rs 200. The saving has not only creating the saving habits and business operation for the poor but also providing security and preparedness to future emergencies. With the enhanced capacities, these cooperatives have started their own business like vegetable seed selling and catering. They earned NRs 95,000. Now, these cooperatives have strengthened functional linkages and coordination with Bagmati Rural Municipality and ward offices.

Along with this, the project improved the food and nutritional security of earthquake affected smallholders farmers through an innovative integrated ecosystem-based farming system. With 33 male and 88 female members, 121 households involved in plastic tunnel vegetable farming have planted tomato, radish, coriander, and green leafy vegetables following organic technology.



Interestingly 60 households, supported in 2017, have earned Rs 3, 21,970 from plastic tunnel vegetables farming from 2018 Jan to till now and 37 households have improved their sheds with the support provided for Bhakaro Sudhar at Malta and Bhattedanda. With the program, earthquake-affected smallholders farmers have enhanced access to the market for their products.

As lack of entrepreneur skill is a major hindrance to the development, 121 smallholders' farmers have increased knowledge on entrepreneurship skill like a business plan, record keeping, and market management. Interestingly, they have started to keep records of incomes and expenses.

What one can see is gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels. In all levels of organizational structures of cooperatives and project activities, at least 50% women's participation and the proportionate representation of all other excluded groups (ethnic minorities and Dalits, PwDs.) have been ensured.

Rasuwa's Success

Rasuwa has also many beneficiaries with similar stories of the revival of sustained livelihood and reconstruction of rural infrastructures to tell. Supported by Canadian Food Grand Bank (CFGB) and Primate's World Relief and Development Fund and LWF Nepal, Food Assistance to Earthquake Affected People in Rasuwa contributed to support food insecure households of the remotely located villages. It had contributed to 950 food insecure households of three VDCs namely Chilime, Gatlang, and Golgunj of Rasuwa district. Under the food for the work project, 17 critical community productive assets destroyed by the earthquake were reconstructed.

LWF Nepal and MSN had established complaints handling mechanisms at the district level and had set up the complaint boxes in each targeted VDCs and each distribution sites to oversee and inspect defaults and inconsistencies during project operation period. Giving equal voice to each beneficiary, MSN staff collected feedbacks on whether work is being implemented without compromising its quality. It also played a significant role to learn about the people's acceptance toward the project and ensured downward accountability of the project. The final feedbacks collected through complaint handling boxes were opened in LWF Kathmandu Office in presence of project's complaint handling committee. Only three complaints/responses were registered. All the three complaints were feedbacks collected from Pajung, Chilime and Gre village in the form of appreciations along with the request for an extension of the project to rehabilitate irrigation canal in the villages.



Similarly, social audit is found to be one of the keys to downward accountability. Three social audits were conducted on Goljung and Gatlang and Chilime immediately after the final food distribution. It was conducted in presence of community beneficiaries, Users' Committee (UCs), local volunteers, Village Development Committee (VDC) officials, field staffs, MSN representatives, and Country office staffs. The purpose was to evaluate the overall impact of the FfW project.

Build Back Better in Livelihood

Even after three and half years, regions devastated by the earthquake of 2015 are yet to recover fully. Project areas of Lalitpur, Gorkha, and Rasuwa are almost back to normal with resilient community infrastructure and livelihood under Build Back Better (BBB) approach. In all three districts, strengthening and institutionalization of cooperatives and supporting farmers for offseason and seasonal vegetable through the tunnel, other improvements in using organic pesticides and cow dung and collection of uterine of cattle and finally linking farmers with the market are some of the important BBB components applied to livelihood program.



With the construction of and the rehabilitation of infrastructures like drainage, drinking water and livelihood support such as on and off-farm, the trauma and pain of earthquake devastation have now become issues of the past for a majority of the residents, who had received support for recovery. Establishing of Soil Testing lab, Marketing Monitoring Mechanism and Climate Farm School are another important components of BBB in Livelihood. Similarly, strengthening local cooperatives is instrumental in helping the local population in the future to seek a loan in fair terms whenever they require and make saving for the future.

Under on-farm and off-farm support, the victims learned how to generate sustained incomes and continue the profession they could choose. Similarly, the restoration and construction of infrastructure, meeting the criteria for disaster and earthquake resilience under BBB program approved by NRA, the communities have now earthquake resilient infrastructures.

What one sees now is that people are better prepared for disasters and living with safe and inclusive shelters and infrastructures with resilient livelihood options. Some people have even started to grow climate change resilient crops.



In all program and projects, priorities were given to single women, children, and people with disability. Working closely with the community, government agencies and locally elected representatives, the projects ensure all the work is done in complete collaboration with stakeholders.

As the projects were selected, designed and implemented with the contribution of local community and elected bodies, people have a strong sense of ownership of the work. Even for the livelihood programs, the local community set the criteria and decided on the beneficiaries and individuals for training and grant. LWF has strong teams of technical staffs including engineers who regularly monitored and visited the project sites to ensure quality work.

When the earthquake struck, they were living in unsafe infrastructures. Now people have earthquake resilient infrastructures like irrigation, trails, drinking water and toilets built through BBB approach and even means for sustained and climate change resilient livelihood. Since, the projects were implemented under a close coordination and involvement of local community, elected local level and district level government offices, linkages have been established between government service delivery institutions like Livestock, District Agriculture Development Office, and District Cottage Industry Office. This ultimately helps the beneficiaries.

As the projects are coming closer to end, diversified and resilient livelihood options of targeted households and people have improved, along with equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.



Gender Mainstreaming

Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) is one of the key components that made successful implementations of the projects in all three districts. The community sensitizations through trained staffs contributed to engendering the projects. Proportionate representation in UCs and other local institutions developed shows the higher sense of mainstreaming gender. In all three projects, most of the beneficiaries are women, which include 66% in Gorkha, 58% in Rasuwa and 53% in Lalitpur. Nearly 35% of the women participants are found engaged in decision-making position of the institutions developed.



Mainstreaming BBB

One can easily see the mainstreaming of the BBB approach and the best practices adopted in all projects in Gorkha, Rasuwa, and Lalitpur. They included Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), community recovery and effective implementation. All infrastructure and livelihood programs were designed looking at the DRR.

The projects ensured the BBB approach in each of the sectoral response during the implementation of projects. Unlike other disaster projects, this project incorporated all the elements of the BBB approach beyond infrastructure construction.

In the construction of community assets, the project studied the multi-hazard land use model as well. Doing this, the project avoided landslide-prone areas. Even in those areas where they could not avoid such places, proper mitigation efforts were taken. Rob Finlay, Senior Program Officer of CFGB says, "Through the implementation of the food for work the hillside communities have decided on building gabion structures, which are stone structures that help prevent erosion and stabilizes the hillsides. This along with the reconstruction of the foot trail, future mobility between communities and that market are secured."



Under the economic livelihood recovery on the farm, the projects implemented poultry and vegetable farming. They provided knowledge and skill related to the program and made linkages with the district level government institutions.

Now farmers were given exposure to the entire process of production including the market chain and investment. As farmers were given proper training and people knew where to get the technical support when there were problems. As the entire process was developed by following the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability, all the programs and projects were planned, designed and implemented through a participatory approach.

What has been done by the project from the climate adaptive recovery responses?

Nepal is one of the most climate vulnerable countries; where a high number of climate induced disasters occur every year. The fluctuation of temperature has already started to affect the traditional agriculture products, which is likely to create severe problems of food security in the future. Under the climate adaptive recovery response, the project has already started to establish Climate Field School and Innovation Lab in Bhattedanda. In consultation with experts from DADO and local ward, the project supported to establish the Climate Field School for climate adaptive crops.



The project also provided farmers necessary training. To prevent soil erosion, the project also encouraged farmers to go for multiple farming and provided multiple agro training. The project provided seeds and fertilizers. Doing this, they adhered to the needed responses to climate change and adaptation. "The innovation lab together with climate field school is fundamental to climate smart technology transfer," says Dr. Gurung, SLDC, LWF Nepal.

Child Protection

LWF Nepal has established child protection policy and has mainstreamed in all projects/programs. All projects operated in these three districts Rasuwa, Gorkha and Lalitpur have well designed considering the child protection. There are no project activities directly related to the children, however, all the project staffs have properly signed code of conduct and oriented on complaint handling and child protection issues.

Implementing partners ICDO in Lalitpur, Goretto Gorkha in Gorkha, and MSN in Rasuwa have developed Child Protection Policy and are going to endorse it from the upcoming annual general assembly. Rasuwa and Gorkha too have such mechanisms. The child labor and their issues have well been communicated and informed to communities in FfA/CfA under PRRO project in Gorkha. Including People with Disabilities Project has also focused on and emphasized the participation of people with disability in project activities.

Environmental Considerations

Environmental consideration is a prerequisite to any project/program in LWF Nepal. Environmental considerations have been integrated into all stages of project from identification and design of projects to implementations in the areas of promoting agriculture technologies and practices for increasing agricultural production in the context of climate change like; land use management; soil conservation; minimized chemical pesticides, promotion of integrated pest management (IPM) technology (inter-crop, use of local seed, use of bio-pesticide), promotion of organic farming techniques, reuse (use of thrown plastic bottles for spraying bio-pesticides, sack for vegetable plantation and plastic glass for vegetable seed germination) and recycling (Serbs and unused scarps for compost making).



The coordination and partnership with other development actors (governmental and non-governmental) during this period was good. Especially in agriculture-related activities (training/orientation on Bhakaro Sudhar, Farming in Tunnel, SIFS model farming) etc. effective coordination with agriculture and livestock service centers, Nepal Agriculture Research Centre (NARC) was made. During this period, the joint coordination meeting was organized with SOLVE Nepal and FWEAN for avoiding duplication as both of the organization is also working at Bhattedanda with similar project activities. Likewise, regular coordination with respective ward offices was made for the HHS selection, program implementation and progress, and plan sharing.



Institution Building

Working with peoples' organizations and their federations is key in all interventions of LWF Nepal and these organization developed has become an engine for long-term socio-economic development of the people. Community-based organizations participated by the targeted beneficiaries are developed and capacitated through different approaches. The community-based organizations are supported leveraging resources and advocacy for right and entitlements through devising policies. At the same time, the cooperatives developed are found to be instrumental in the economic development of the targeted communities linking private sectors, micro-finance institutions, market actors together and other actors.



Similarly, different sector-specific institutions are developed in the project areas together with the above-mentioned institutions. Although the government has already developed guidelines for the establishment of such committees, the officials at rural municipalities do not know about them. Cooperatives supported by LWF Nepal could able to establish local levels of climate change and disaster management in partnership with the local government. With LWF Nepal support, rural municipalities in Rasuwa, Lalitpur, and Gorkha have now established the Disaster Management Committee.



All the projects implemented in Rasuwa, Gorkha and Lalitpur have strong mechanisms for complaints and feedback. The project staffs always encourage program participants to raise their dissatisfaction in the form of complaints, feedbacks, and suggestions and treat them positively as an opportunity for continuous learning and improvement. During this period two operational complaints were received, recorded and responded. So far as the complaints were concerned, all the projects welcomed all kinds of complaints, of verbal, written, phone, post or other media. The projects addressed all of them through complaints handling mechanisms established. There was also the accountability mechanism in place. The projects developed a system of a public audit involving different stakeholders in various stages.

Funding Instrument

Funding modality of all three districts has been different but there are certain similarities as the cooperatives are mobilized to distribute the kind. However, in Gorkha cash is directly handed over to the beneficiary. In Lalitpur, three cooperatives are mobilized to distribute support to the farmers. The funding is very effective and properly utilized as per the needs of the farmer and maximized the investment. The institutional mechanism is more effective and dependable. Although the support was very small, the fund motivated the farmers. The fund has been utilised as triggering money which leverages resources from different stakeholders including local government and communities.

Lessons learned

The projects have shown that capacity building of community and their involvement in the relief and recovery is key to success. The community needs to be involved in participatory planning, monitoring, and implementation. Similarly, there is the need to have coordination among the government institutions, including Rural Municipality. There is the need to increase access of local community to the rural municipality and district offices. If this idea is materialized, it will bring major changes in reconstruction and recovery. Four enterprises were established as part of the projects. Given the present experience, all the enterprises are running successfully. The village level disaster management committees developed in partnership with Rural Municipalities are well functioning supporting the affected communities. Therefore, multi-stakeholder collaboration is vital to cope with all forms of uncertainties.





Before



During



After



Before



During



After



Before



During



After



Before

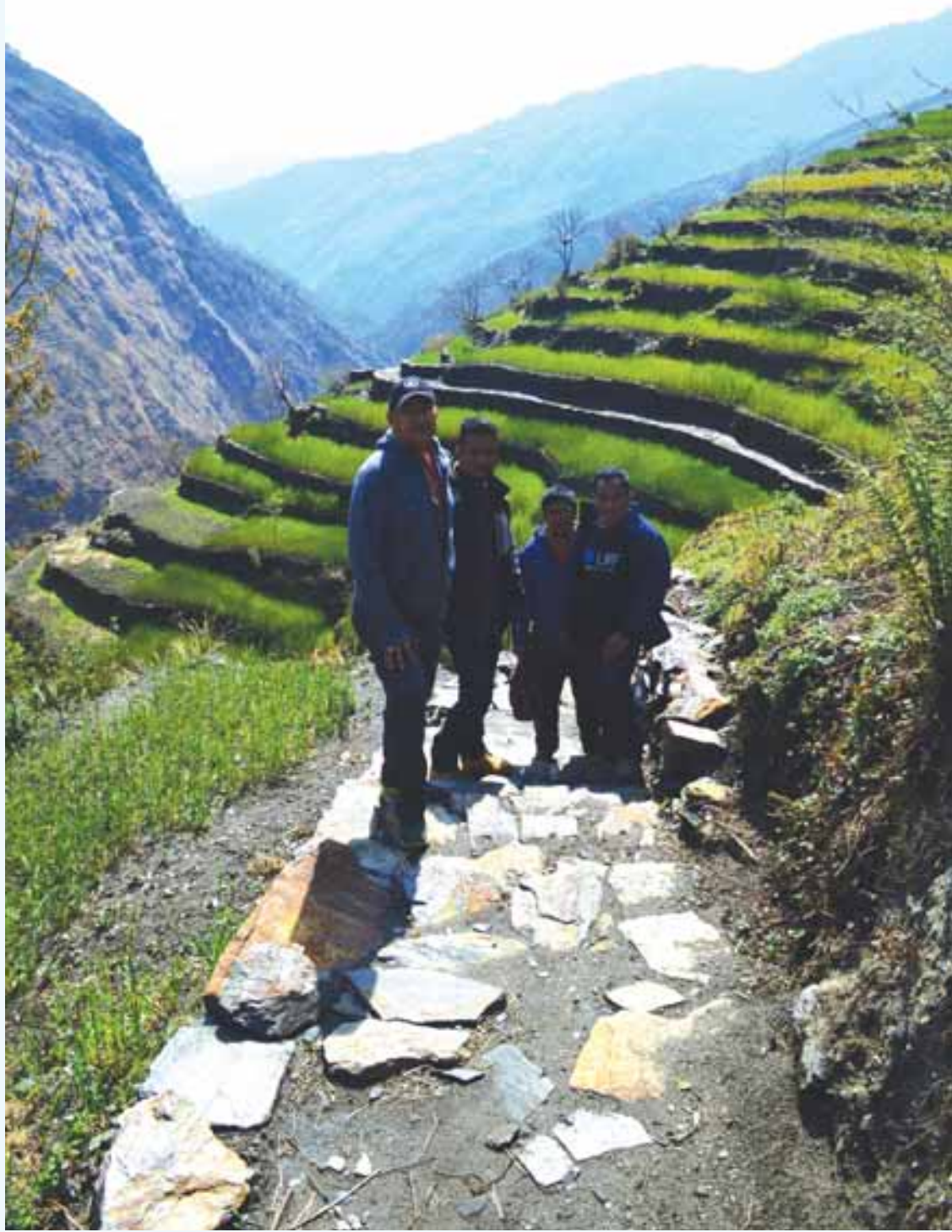


During



After





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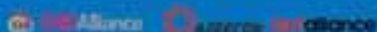
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