



A Case Study

On

Impact of Cash for Work

Safety Nets Supporting Agricultural Productivity (SNAP)
(Alital and Kaipalmandu VDCs, Dadeldhura)

**Mercy Corps
Nepal**

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List of Abbreviations

CFW	Cash For Asset
CFW	Cash For Work
DSCO	District Soil Conservation Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HHs	Households
KII	Key Informant Interview
NPR	Nepalese Rupee
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PIA	Participatory Impact Assessment
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
SNAP	Safety Nets supporting Agricultural Productivity
UCs	User Committees
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
VDC	Village Development Committee
WFP	World Food Programme

PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Mercy Corps is an international, non-governmental humanitarian relief and development agency with headquarters in the USA and UK. Founded in 1979, the agency has worked in over 100 countries with program in the areas of agriculture and food security; market development; emergency response; disaster risk reduction; climate change; health and nutrition; conflict management; and, community mobilization/ governance. Mercy Corps currently works in 40 countries, including Nepal, where the agency is focusing on agriculture and food security, microfinance, disaster risk reduction, and youth engagement initiatives.

In the area of food security, the global rise in food prices has increased the level of vulnerability and suffering in many already food insecure communities of rural Nepal, exacerbating a chronic and deteriorating food security situation caused mainly by faltering agricultural productivity and reduced agricultural investment. In 2008 and 2009, this vulnerability was also punctuated by acute natural disasters in Far Western Nepal, including flooding, landslides, and drought.

Safety Nets Supporting Agricultural Productivity (SNAP): Mercy Corps Nepal, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), is implementing a two-year project targeting Cash For Work (CFW) safety nets for vulnerable households (HHs) while improving agricultural productivity and nutritional awareness in Far Western Nepal. The project, Safety Nets supporting Agricultural Productivity (SNAP), is being implemented in 25 highly food insecure VDCs identified on the basis of WFP's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) ranking, in the 3 districts of Baitadi, Dadeldhura and Doti. Project activities have been designed to address three dimensions of food security: increase food accessibility through a CFW approach; increase food availability and accessibility through the promotion of high impact cropping patterns, which ultimately increases food production and income; and, improve food utilization through improved nutrition awareness.

1.1 Overall Project Goal

To provide immediate relief for food insecure HHs, while expanding agricultural productivity and nutritional awareness for food insecure communities.

1.2 Specific Objectives

- To transfer cash in the form of daily wages to food insecure HHs.
- To build/ rehabilitate community infrastructures critical for improving agricultural productivity and household food security
- To improve agriculture productivity for in the project VDCs
- To improve the nutrition awareness of HHs in the project VDCs

1.3 CFW

In this activity area, the project primarily focuses on creating or rehabilitating infrastructure schemes by mobilizing the community to implement the work through cash incentive. The project has created 292 User Committees (UCs) to mobilize over 13,000 HHs for the physical work on the schemes. To date, CFW days under the first year, or first phase, have been concluded and over 500 infrastructures have been built or rehabilitated. Each UC has its own Operation and Maintenance (O&M) fund for the repair and maintenance of the schemes as required in the future.

1.4 Agricultural Improvement

In this activity area, the project primarily focused on strengthening existing cropping systems with the introduction of high value marketable crops. To date, improved wheat seed varieties have been distributed to about 1,000 farmers; farmers have been trained on new agricultural techniques; exposure visits have been organized for farmers to India; vegetable promotion has been conducted; and poly houses constructed in some project areas.

1.5 Nutritional Awareness

At the time of cash distribution, the women in the community who were the ones receiving the CFW funds, were targeted for nutrition health awareness campaigns. Visual flip charts were developed containing basic nutritional and hygiene/ sanitation messages for the effective delivery of the messages.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

Given that community infrastructure schemes and agriculture technical capacity building activities were only recently complemented under SNAP, the intended impact on improving agriculture productivity has not yet been fully realized. Taking this into consideration, the study focused on assessing: 1) Functionality, utilization and benefit of community assets created through CFW intervention, 2) Change in market dynamics due to cash injection, and 3) Involvement of women in decision-making process of CFW interventions.

1.7 Scope of Work

The study was qualitative and conducted through participatory methods during primary field research. To assess functionality, utilization and benefits, a survey tool was used to guide qualitative information obtained from focus group discussion. Questions included, but were not necessarily limited to the following:

- Assessment of community assets: The study focused on the functionality, utilization and benefit of the community assets created through cash for assets intervention. It also looked at relevance and effectiveness of assets.
- Assessment of market dynamics: With regard to market dynamics, the study focused on fluctuation of food availability in the market, demand of food items, change in price of food items, and credit buying trend in the community as a result of cash injection.
- Assessment of women's involvement in decision making process: In this aspect, the study explored the general trend of decision making at household and community level, and any changes CFW interventions have had on enhancing women's role in decision making.
- Assessment on training impact: The project included distribution of improved seed and training on cultivation practices; the study assessed whether these activities enhanced agriculture productivity.

PART II: STUDY METHODOLOGY

Primary data was collected from the 1st of July through the 5th of July 2011. The study was carried out in three phases: preparatory, data collection and data analysis and reporting. The study principally used qualitative data collection methods followed by reviewing monthly reports to document disaggregated data of assets created through CFW and secondary data on transactions of major commodities and pricing to triangulate data obtained from the primary source with regard to market dynamics.

2. Data Collection Methods

2.1 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

In total, 9 KIIs were conducted in the proposed areas using a discussion checklist. Five KIIs were conducted with traders in various central market outlets where beneficiaries buy food items and conduct a large volume of sales transactions. The remaining 4 KIIs were conducted with UC members on functionality, utilization and benefit of CFW interventions and women's role in decision-making processes. This information was further explored in FGDs. *Please refer to Annex 1: Discussion Checklist.*

2.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

In total, 7 FGDs were conducted in the study areas using a discussion checklist. Three FGDs were conducted with UC members only, 2 were conducted with community members (outside of UC members) who were involved in the project, and 2 were conducted with women only. FGDs were carried out using a participatory approach called proportional piling to facilitate discussions and elucidate the benefits of Schemes and overall impact of CFW interventions on women in particular. *Please refer to Annex 1: Discussion Checklist*

2.3 Household Survey

A total of 82 respondents (including 26 UC members) were interviewed in Alital and Kaipalmandu VDCs to assess availability, functionality and utilization of assets using an Asset Information checklist. *Please refer to Annex 2: Asset Information in attached file.*

2.4 Direct Observation

Some of the schemes such as proper compost making at the HH level and irrigation canals were observed in the field to assess functionality and utilization.

2.5 Secondary data review

Monthly reports were reviewed to supplement study findings.

2.6 Sampling and Study Sites

The study was conducted in two VDCs Alital and Kaipalmandu of Dadeldhura district. For the assessment of CFW interventions, three assets were selected, Irrigation, Compost Pits and Community Ponds. The study included, 9 KII (traders-5, UC members-4), 7 FGDs (UCs-3, community members-2, women-2) and 82 household surveys. *Please refer to Table 1 below for further details and Annex 3: List of Participants.*

Table 1: Description of sampling

Description	Number	Locations
KII with traders	5	Budar, Godam and Gharelu in Alital VDC, Sakyal and Jaisara in Kaipalmandu VDC
KII with UC member	3	Humtad and Chaud in Alital, Gaad in Kaipalmandu
FGD with UC	3	Humtad and Chaud in Alital, Gaad in Kaipalmandu
FGD with community members	2	Chiran and Humtad in Alital, Meddi in Kaipalmandu
FGD with women	2	Chaud in Alital, Gaad in Kaipalmandu
Survey	82	17 clusters of Alital and Kaipalmandu VDCs

2.7 Team Composition and Participation

The study was carried out by an internal team of staff members comprising of Mercy Corps DM&E and SNAP project staff.

2.8 Data Compilation and Analysis

The information collected through FGDs, KIIs and survey was analysed using simple descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency and percentage, where applicable. The views expressed by the FGDs participants and KIIs have been used to dichotomize and/or complement the responses on key issues documented in the study.

2.9 Limitation of the Study

The study is primarily based on the qualitative information collected through FGDs and KIIs with the traders and beneficiaries. The report is also based on the observation of physical infrastructures and review of secondary data, as well as household survey data to substantiate findings obtained from FGDs and KIIs with regard to functionality and utilization of the assets. The study is limited to only two VDCs, Alital and Kaipalmandu out of the 25 VDC project areas in Doti, Baitadi and Dadeldhura Districts; hence the findings illustrated in this report may not necessarily be representative of all working Districts. Similarly, the study is only limited to three infrastructures, irrigation canal, compost pits and community ponds.

PART III: FINDINGS

3.1 Market Dynamics

The study explored transactions between the traders, farmers and consumers to assess market dynamic and the potential impact cash injection had on food availability and demand, price fluctuations of major food items, and credit borrowing and money lending trend in the CFW communities.

3.1.1 Food Availability and Demand

Interaction with traders and beneficiaries in all study sites shows that food availability in the market has improved over time showing no food deficit in the market. Study participants attributed this availability of food items in the market to easy transportation access as a result of improved road and increased number of sales outlets over time. Traders from Sakyal and Jaisara reported that in geographically remote areas, food items are transported using animals or porters to carry food from the fields to markets. The main food items available in the study market are rice, pulse, wheat, maize, oil, and salt. Traders bring rice, pulse, oil and salt from Dhangadhi, a central market in Terai that connects to hilly regions in the far-west of Nepal, and buy maize and wheat from local farmers. Food items most in demand in the study areas are rice, pulse, wheat, salt, and oil. The demand of food items has been increasing steadily over time due to population growth, decreased production of crops at the farmer household level, and increased income sources contributed in large part to migrant workers sending remittances.

With regards to SNAP programming, local traders reported that beneficiaries participating in CFW purchased mainly rice, pulse, wheat, oil, and salt. On average, CFW recipients in the sample study sites shared that with the money from CFW, they purchased 100 Kilograms (1 Quintal) of rice, which lasts for at least 2 months for an average-sized household of 6 members. Traders from all study sites noted that the injection of cash under CFW programming did not have an impact on creating an increased demand of food items.

3.1.2 Agricultural Inputs

Study findings reveal that no traders in the study area are selling agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. There are very few local agro-vet agents and cooperatives that sell these types of agricultural inputs to the farmers. The majority of traders reported that

availability of agricultural inputs is very low compared to demand. Due to population growth and limited landholding, farmers are under pressure to increase production and this needs utilization of agricultural inputs in the farmer's fields. As a result of limited availability and accessibility of such inputs in local market, farmers are harvesting low yields or spending HH income on bringing these inputs from distant markets. Mercy Corps introduced the importance of improved varieties of wheat and maize seeds in terms of yield through a series of trainings and demonstrations in the field for farmers, cooperatives and agro-vets. The project distributed improved seeds to farmers and set up seed banking mechanism so that farmers can have continued access to these seed varieties. As a result of plantation of improved seed varieties together with training and field demonstrations, primary data collected from action research reveals an increase in wheat production by at least 17% compared to the average production of the previous year.

3.1.3 Price Rates of Major Food Commodities

Findings from various study shows that when there is an influx of cash within a short period of time, there is a parallel increase in demand of food against limited supplies resulting in an increase in food prices. In the case of this study, there was no direct relation found between cash injection and rise in price of commodities. However, participants shared that there has been a gradual increment of price of major food items such as rice and wheat each year. According to them, the main reason for this is due to lower production in the farmer's field compounded with population growth, which has resulted in increased demand in the market. Interactions with traders and beneficiaries show that the price of rice has increased from 5.5 to 8.5% per quintal over the past year and same with the pulse and wheat. There has been minimal increase in the price rate of other commodities such as oil and salt.

3.1.4 Credit and Loan Borrowing Trends

In rural areas, purchasing on credit from the local traders is a common practice and largely depends on mutual trust and understanding between the buyer and the traders. KIIs with traders show that purchasing on credit has been steadily increasing over the past few years. This was also confirmed while interacting with the beneficiaries, who told us most purchase on credit to buy clothes and cosmetic items rather than food items. Those that are in need of purchasing food and do not have sufficient resources will do so on credit or borrow from local lenders. CFW programming has increased purchasing on credit as traders have assurance credit borrows have a reliable access to immediate cash. Based on feedback from KIIs, the injection of cash increased direct purchasing of food items temporarily.

The study attempted to determine whether cash injection from CFW reduces the frequency of money lending from informal money lenders and other financial institutions. In the project

areas covered under this study, HHs take loans from informal money lenders who they tend to know, such as traders, village leaders, landlords, relatives, friends or neighbors. The interest rate on these loans varies from 24 to 36% per annum. Based on KIIs, we were told that during CFW less HHs resort to using money-lenders. As financial services expand to remote areas of Nepal and people become increasingly aware of the financial services provided by cooperatives, groups and institutions at lower interest rates of 12%-18% per annum, there has been an increase in formal money lending. No correlation was found between CFW and formal money lending.

3.2 Women and CFW

In Nepal, gender disparity largely remains intact due to discrimination, ignorance, and exclusion dictated by strict socio-cultural norms and practices. Gender roles remain centered around traditional norms with women and girls largely responsible for taking care of household chores, collecting water and animal fodder, and farming while male heads earn income outside the home. Malnutrition and poverty hit women hardest as they have limited control over HH financial resources limiting their access to services such as education, health care, and markets. At the time of food shortages, girls are typically the ones who are fed less than the boys in the family. The economic contribution of women is substantial, but largely unnoticed because their traditional role is taken for granted. When employed, their wage is normally 25 percent less than that of men for similar nature of work. In most rural areas, women's employment outside the house is generally limited to planting, weeding, and harvesting.

Under SNAP, female household members were enrolled as CFW laborers, females were the sole recipients of CFW cash disbursements for their HH, females were part of the UCs and scheme decision making processes and lastly, females were the primary target group for hygiene and nutrition awareness campaigns. This study explores the level of women's involvement in the project and the impact it had on traditional roles and empowerment.

3.2.1 Women's Roles Before and After CFW

Female FGD participants told us that their primary responsibilities include HH related work such as cooking, washing, feeding and taking care of children and the elders, preparing food, and HH-level farming. Only a few female participants from Gaad in Kaipalmandu stated that they had worked outside the home, as a porter to carry goods from their village to nearby local market. The majority of women we spoke to were the head of the HH, with their husbands

having migrated outside of Nepal in search of labor opportunities in India and the Gulf countries. In their husband's absence, women are shouldering all HH and farming responsibilities. During CFW programming, none of the males who participated in CFW migrated outside of Nepal for work.

Female participants from both Chaud and Gaad reported that CFW has led to creating an enabling environment within the family for women to work outside the home. Participants shared that their family members, especially husbands and elderly members were supportive during the 40 days of work the women undertook. Female participants reported an increased sense of confidence in their role as active contributors to the development of their community through participating in decision-making and physical labor.

3.2.2 Women's Participation in Schemes and Users Committees

Study findings show that 98% of women in Chaud, Alital and over 77% women in Gaad, Kaipalmandu were involved in 40 days of CFW. All female FGD groups stated that they worked on constructing irrigation canals, community ponds, roads and compost pits for 40 days of work. Of the two UCs in the study, 33% were female members in Chaud whereas 78% were female members in Gaad. Females held leadership positions, Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, in the Gaad UC and Co-Secretary in the Chaud UC. FGDs with women in Gaad revealed that female UC members participated in decision-making around mobilizing laborers, procurement, transportation and storage of construction materials and distributing cash to the laborers. In comparison, FGDs with females in Chaud revealed that women had less of a role in decision-making processes. This is also reflected when we compare the ratio of female to male UC members and their positions in the UC. In Gaad 7 out of 9 UC members are female and all are in leadership positions whereas in Chaud, 3 out of 11 are females are in the positions of co-secretary and as general UC members.

General UC members, community members and women we spoke with stated that the construction or rehabilitation of schemes would not have been possible without the involvement of women. The majority of female FGD participants from both Chaud and Gaad shared that CFW has created a greater bond and sense of empowerment. Women stated that they were proud of the work they did under this project and their contribution to the community. As members of the UCs, they felt a sense of responsibility and accountability for the community schemes. This sense of responsibility and level of decision-making has

contributed to a sense of self-empowerment for the women, as well as creating a team spirit and enhanced mutual trust amongst them.

3.2.3 Women and Decision Making

3.2.3.1 At Household Level

With regard to the decision-making role of women at the HH level, there was a mixed reaction in both Chaud and Gaad areas. Some participants stated that HH decisions are typically made by both males and females but with males having a more influential role. Others reported that primarily the elders in the HH make HH decisions, be it male or female. As women were the cash recipients of the program, in some instances this gave them the responsibility to utilize the money for the HH thereby increasing their decision-making role in the HH. The women's involvement in the UCs further added to increasing women's participation in decision-making.

3.2.3.2 At Community Level

As members of UCs and laborers in CFW schemes, the project created a space for women to work outside the home and participate in community level decision-making process. However, participants of FGDs stated that they had a limited role in the decision-making at the community level. FGD participants stated that this is due to deeply rooted patriarchal norms held by both men and women regarding a women's role in the HH and community. Public audit findings provide further insight on the low level of women's participation in the UCs, which was attributed to difficulty women faced accessing UC meeting locations due to distance, women's commitments to household related tasks hindering time that could be allocated to attending the meetings, and low level of literacy rates among women. See Public Audit report for further additional information.

3.2.4 Impact of CFW on Women

Study findings reveal that participating in CFW schemes has had positive benefits for the women. Of the total FGD participants in Chaud, 23% reported that CFW has built a sense of team spirit whereas 22% reported that their self-confidence has increased. At the HH level, 20% of participants stated that they were able to purchase food with the cash injection, which they might otherwise have had to take out a loan. Furthermore, 18% of participants reported that CFW wages allowed them to save money for future use.

In Gaad, 23% participants viewed the program as a platform to show that women can and should work outside the home and 22% of participants reported that the program has increased the respect for women in the community. Interaction with women during the FGDs revealed that community perception towards women’s earning power has shifted. Due to women’s participation in CFW activities, they now receive support from their family to work outside the home and are appreciated as a potential vital contributor to household income. *Please refer to Table 2 below for further details.*

Table 2: Impacts of CFW on women

Locations	Overall impact of CFW on women	%
Chaud	Built team spirit for work	23
	Increased self confidence on work	22
	Purchased food items	20
	Supported to save money	18
	Created enabling environment for women to work outside home	17
	Total	100
Gaad	Women can earn	23
	Built social respect	22
	Increased self confidence on work	21
	Utilized cash appropriately	21
	Increased unity	13
	Total	100

3.3 Schemes Selection Process and Community Involvement

Prior to the implementation of CFW schemes, 292 UCs were created in the project areas in a transparent, democratic and inclusive manner that included leadership positions held by females. Interactions with FGD participants revealed that UCs called a meeting to discuss schemes recommended by the communities within their particular cluster. The communities selected schemes, such as irrigation canals, community ponds, compost pits and roads, deemed as necessary interventions by the community themselves. In Humtad, Chaud, Meddi, and Gaad, communities were in need of irrigation facilities since agriculture productivity is solely reliant on rainfall. In Chiran and Chaud, access to local markets and schools was noted as a major problem, as such, the community prioritized road schemes. Mercy Corps also assessed the schemes prioritized by the communities to determine technical and financial feasibility.

In Humtad and Chaud and Chiran of Alital VDC, 133 HHs (48 and 44 HHs) participated in the construction or rehabilitation of schemes. In Gaad and Meddi of Kaipalmandu VDC, 18 and 79 HHs participated in the construction or rehabilitation of schemes.

Interaction with the beneficiaries in all sites revealed that they were involved in 40 days of work to complete the proposed schemes. Although 40 day CFW days were pre-determined based on the nature of the schemes, number of HHs participating in CFW, and number of schemes to be completed, in some instances communities had to work beyond this set duration. The communities at Humtad and Gaad worked an additional 5 to 6 days to complete the schemes, days deemed as a voluntary contribution from the communities.

3.4 Disaster Risk Mitigation Measures

Due to geographical complexities of the region, compounded by the onset of frequent natural disasters, some schemes constructed or rehabilitated were complimented by mitigation measures applied during construction to avoid potential damages due to disasters. Participants from Humtad reported that they constructed a gabion wall to mitigate the risk of flooding due to heavy rainfall. For this measure, the District Soil Conservation Office Dadeldhura contributed the aluminum wire needed for the gabion structures. Participants from Gaad and Meddi reported that they constructed a stone wall to mitigate potential destruction to agriculture land due to landslides caused by heavy rains.

3.5 Functionality and Utilization of the Schemes

A HH survey was conducted in both Alital and Kaipalmandu VDCs to determine the type of scheme constructed or rehabilitated, level of functionality, usage and benefits of these schemes for the communities. The survey included 82 respondents of which 38% were female and 62% male, from 17 UCs in Kaipalmandu (13 UCs) and Alital (4 UCs).

Of the total HH survey respondents, 32% were members of UCs and 68% were project participants outside of UCs groups. Survey results show that the schemes constructed/rehabilitated in the survey sites were agricultural land improvement, community pond, foot trail, improved cattle shed, irrigation canal, proper compost making pits, river bank protection and water harvesting tanks. All respondents (100%) reported that the schemes

constructed/rehabilitated in their respective communities are functional and all (100%) respondents noted that over 50% of HHs have benefitted from these schemes. This was also verified from group interaction and found that more than 70% of HH are utilizing the schemes. Only 4% of respondents could not use the schemes because their land is located far away from the scheme sites. *Please refer to Table 3 below for further details.*

Table 3: Survey respondents

Location	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Alital	39	17	56
Kaipalmandu	12	14	26
Total	51	31	82

3.6 Sustainability of the Schemes

Sustainability is a central issue that was taken into consideration for these types of community-based schemes. Ensuring sustainability requires commitment and coordination between the implementing agency and the community, with the community ultimately taking ownership of the scheme. Community based Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funds, to be used to maintain the functionality of the schemes, were put in place to ensure sustainability. In Humtad, HHs have begun collecting a service charge of NPR 15 per ropani land annually from those HH benefitting from the irrigation scheme.

As mentioned above, in some instances schemes constructed or rehabilitated were complimented by mitigation measures applied during construction to avoid damage in the future. In cases where the budget did not allow for this, community members in Meddi acknowledging mitigation would increase the sustainability of the schemes and have initiated coordination with the District Soil Conservation Office in Dadeldhura to request gabion wire-net to minimize potential risk to the community canal due to flooding and landslides. Participants in this study also stressed the importance of coordinating community based development initiatives to ensure they are implemented in an integrated manner with the potential for larger scale impact.

3.7 Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Fund

Study shows that all communities in Humtad, Chaud, Chiran, Gaad and Meddi have created an O&M fund. In all communities, each HH who worked for 40 days has contributed NPR 400 towards the O&M fund that is kept in the UC bank account. In Humtad, communities have already used NPR 30,000 of their O&M fund to pay for the transportation costs of gabion wire-net donated by District Soil Conservation Office to construct gabion boxes on either side of the irrigation canal constructed under SNAP. Communities in Humtad also collected NPR 1,500 from HHs benefiting from the irrigation canal at the rate of Rs 15 per ropani per annum for future maintenance purposes under the O&M fund. Communities from Chaud, Chiran, Gaad and Meddi have not yet used their O&M funds which are currently being saved for future purposes. *Please refer to Table 4 below for further details.*

Table 4: Status of operation and maintenance fund

Location	HHs	Total Amount Collected (NPR)	Used Amount (NPR)	Remaining Balance (NPR*)
Humtad	133 x 400	53,200	30,000	23,200
Chaud	48 x 400	19,200	-	19,200
ChiranKalakot	44 x 400	17,600	-	17,600
Gaad	18 x 400	7,200	-	7,200
Meddi	79 x 400	31,600	-	31,600

*Excluding bank interest

Interactions with UC members also revealed that communities involved in CFW have saved NPR 28,800 in their UCs accounts with a provision that they can withdraw funds in time of need.

3.8 Cash Utilization Pattern and Decision Making

Project participants were asked about how they spent money from CFW. About 95% of participants reported that they primarily spent the cash on purchasing food items (mainly rice, pulse, salt, oil), followed by education related expenses, such as school uniforms for their children, and clothes for family members. Some participants from Meddi have used the money to purchase wheat seeds and some participants from Chaud and Gaad have purchased goats,

thereby utilizing the cash for income generating purposes. *Please refer to Table 5 for further details.*

Table 5: Cash utilization

Location	First Priority	Second Priority
Humtad	Food (Rice, pulse, oil, salt)	
Chaud	Food (Rice, pulse)	Education materials, Goat
Chiran	Food (Rice, pulse, Salt, oil)	
Gaad	Food (Rice, pulse)	Clothes including school uniforms, education material, Goat
Meddi	Food (Rice, pulse)	Clothes including school uniforms, agricultural inputs such as seeds

The majority of participants in all sites reported that women decided on how to utilize CFW money. However, participants from Chaud and Meddi reported that both the husband and wives made decisions around cash utilization, with the women playing an influential role since they are more familiar with the needs of the HH.

3.9 Food Consumption Pattern

The project included nutrition awareness campaigns for community members, focusing on key messages on dietary diversity, locally available nutritious foods and consumption choices and role of macronutrient and micronutrient for good health. To assess the impact of these key messages, participants were asked about their food habits. All FGDs participants are aware of the importance of consuming a variety of food items such as cereals, vegetables, meat, and milk products; however, the majority of the participants commented that they need a regular source of income to be able to routinely purchase a variety of food items. Participants also reported that it is difficult for all HH members to change food consumption habits in the short term. Participants from Chaud and Gaad stated that with the knowledge gained through nutritional awareness campaigns, they started kitchen gardening for planting vegetables and pulses and started consuming these items along with cereal foods. Participants from Humtad and Chiran shared that they consume wheat flour Chapatis and vegetables in the morning, rice, pulse and vegetable in the afternoon and Chapatis and vegetables in the evening, whilst eating meat at least once in a week. In regard to food consumption frequency, the majority of

participants reported that they consume meals thrice a day either through direct purchase of food or purchasing food on credit.

In addition to food consumption and nutrition, participants are aware of sanitation and hygiene practices. During field visits, HHs were observed disposing waste material into the compost pit, and encouraging family members wash hands before and after meals and after using the toilet.

3.10 Benefit of the Schemes

To identify benefits the schemes had on the communities, five FGDs using proportional piling were conducted with UCs and community group members. Study findings in the project sites surveyed indicate that access to irrigation scored the highest in regards to benefiting the community. Participants in Humtad and Meddi ranked irrigation facilities high since it supported them in the timely plantation of paddy, extending plantation even during the dry season, and provided enough water to increase the amount of the land they were able to use for planting paddy.

In Chaud, Gaad and Meddi, participants reported access to quality fertilizer for agriculture productivity as a benefit. Participants in Gaad and Meddi also reported knowledge and skills gained on composting techniques and preparation as a benefit. Likewise, participants from Gaad and Meddi reported that they started cultivating vegetables after learning about composting techniques at household level.

Participants from Chaud and Chiran and Humtad reported the ability to use CFW wages to purchase food as a substantial benefit. In Chiran, the construction of an access road to markets was noted as beneficial as it increased the community's access to productive services such as market, education, and health.

Participants from Chaud, and Chiran and Humtad also reported the benefit of working together on schemes having increased a sense of team spirit for community members. Another benefit shared by participants from Humtad was building social harmony among community members who cooperated during implementation. *Please refer Table 6 below for further details.*

Table 6: Benefit of the constructed/rehabilitated schemes

Locations	Benefits of the Schemes	%
Humtad (User Committee members only)	Got sufficient irrigation facility	37
	Built social harmony	17
	Increased team-sprit in work	17

Chaud (User Committee members only)	Skills on compost making	15
	Got sufficient quantity of fodders due to irrigation facility	14
	Total	100
	Got good quantity of fertilizer	23
	Increase team spirit in work	22
	By working on schemes, we were able to get cash to buy food immediately	18
	Easy transportation through improved road	16
	Visitors saw development in our village	13
	Access to irrigation facility	8
Total	100	
Chiran&Humtad (Community members)	On time plantation of paddy due to irrigation facility	26
	Improved transportation	22
	By working on the schemes, bought food items	19
	Got fertilizer	17
	Got opportunity to unite together	16
	Total	100
Gaad (User Committee members only)	Got opportunity to plant paddy through irrigation	44
	Gained knowledge and skills on proper compost making	35
	Started to cultivate vegetables for household consumption	21
	Total	100
Meddi (Community members)	Got opportunity to irrigate cropland in dry season	39
	Supported to increase the size of plantation land	24
	Got opportunity to cultivate vegetables	23
	Gained knowledge and skills on proper compost making	14
	Total	100

3.11 Food Security Status of the Community

Interaction with the participants showed that cash from CFW labor supported communities to purchase food items that lasted for a 2 to 3 month period for one HH with approximate 6 members. On average, one HH was producing enough food to support a family of 4-6 members for 6-9 months. Without this injection of cash, HHs would have struggled to secure access to food during the lean season. The majority of FGD participants stated that although they have yet to harvest paddy and wheat, the growth status of both crops is healthy and they are

expecting to harvest more this year. As a result of increased production, HHs are expecting to increase their ability to purchase food items compared to that of previous years. Some participants added that their food security status could steadily improve if project activities continued over a two year period in their community.

3.12 Training Impact

The majority of FGD participants in Humtad, Chaud, and Gaad reported that they participated in proper compost making and farmyard management trainings. Participants stated that both of these trainings provided new knowledge for them as farming methods in these communities are solely based on traditional knowledge inherited from their ancestors. Having attended series of trainings, community members learnt about compost techniques at the household level, field preparation, plantation, disease management and application of water, and use of manure and pesticides. Participants shared that these trainings have reinforced their knowledge and skills and have applied this new knowledge in their farming practices. Participants also reported that they are now aware of improved varieties of seeds that produce a better yield of crops. They are optimistic that having applied new techniques and improved varieties of seeds, their production will gradually increase and generate additional income. All participants reported that they received an orientation session on nutrition, health and sanitation during cash distributions. As a result of this, they are aware of the importance of consumption of nutritious foods, importance of hand washing, safe water consumption, and preventing water borne diseases. Some participants from Gaad reported that they are passing this information to family members including children on how to follow good hygiene practices, which is an encouraging sign.

PART IV: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Conclusion

The availability of food in the project areas is reliant in part on road network, sufficient number of sales outlets, income sources of HHs, and availability of pack-animal and porters to carry stuffs to remote areas. The majority of local traders bring food items from Dhangadhi, a central market in Terai that connects to entire far-western hilly part. Food items most in demand are rice, pulse, wheat, followed by salt, oil. The demand of food items has increased over time due to population growth, lower productivity, and increased purchasing power. Traders from all

study sites stated that the injection of cash under CFW programming did not have an impact on creating an increased demand of food items.

The trend of purchasing on credit from traders for household goods has been on a steady increase. However, during the injection of cash, there is a temporary decrease in purchasing on credit or loan borrowing. Study findings show that there are no formal money lenders in the project areas, HHs borrow money from personal contacts or formal financial institutions such as cooperatives and micro-finance institutions that offer of loans at reasonable interest rates.

In the project areas, the women's role is largely confined to household and farming responsibilities, with women take overall household responsibilities when their husbands migrate for work. Study findings show that 98% women in Chaud, Alital and 77% women in Gaad, Kaipalmandu were involved in CFW labor. In Gaad, 78% of women were members of UCs with the majority of women holding leadership positions. Women in Gaad played a significant role in decision making of project activities, such as mobilizing labor, managing construction materials, and distributing cash. However, this was not the case in every study area where women's level of participation was hindered due to deeply rooted patriarchal norms, difficulty women faced accessing UC meeting locations due to distance, women's commitments to household related tasks hindering time that could be allocated to attending the meetings, and low level of literacy rates among women.

As a result of participating in CFW labor and as members of UCs, the project created a more enabling environment for women to work outside the home. This will potentially decrease the barrier for women to work in similar activities contributing to livelihood and community development in the future. Study findings show that women gained confidence and sense of responsibility having been actively engaged in the project. The project also empowered women to manage household expenditures. Overall, the majority of women reported that the project built team spirit, increased confidence to work outside home and manage cash for the household, and allowed them to save money. The women reported that they are now recognized by society as significant contributors in community development.

HH level surveys were also conducted to deepen the understanding of functionality, usage and benefits of the schemes constructed/rehabilitated. The three schemes constructed or rehabilitated in the project study areas - irrigation canal, compost pits and community ponds, were all functional with the exception of Gaad where there was minor damage to the irrigational canal due to flooding. It is noteworthy that all (100%) HHs from Chaud and Chiran are utilizing the schemes, whereas 90 and 80% HHs from Humtad and Gaad and 70% participants from Meddi are utilizing the schemes.

All respondents surveyed (100%) reported the existence of an O&M fund in their UCs. This O&M fund serves as a sustainability mechanism now owned by the community. In Humtad, communities have already used NPR 30,000 of their O&M fund to pay for the transportation costs of gabion wire donated by the District Soil Conservation Office to construct gabion boxes on either side of the irrigation canal constructed under SNAP.

Study findings reveal that the majority of participants have spent CFW funds to purchase foods such as rice, pulse, oil, and salt. Secondary to food, money was spent on buying education related materials. Some participants purchased goats for income generation. Interactions reveal that the majority of the participants were able to purchase enough food to last for 2-3 months for the HH. This shows that CFW cash injection is relevant in fulfilling the immediate but short term needs for food insecure HHs. To benefit the community in the longer term, the project included identifying schemes that would increase agriculture productivity over time. Interaction with participants shows that introduction of new varieties seeds together armed with improved farming techniques, the current status of wheat and paddy plants is healthy and promises a good harvest.

The majority of the participants in the study sites reported that as a result of irrigation canals and community ponds constructed under SNAP, they were able to irrigate their cropland even in the dry season, resulting in the timely plantation of paddy, increased size of land for plantation and increased availability of fodders for feeding cattle. Thus, irrigation facilities are regarded as the topmost benefit among project participants. Next to this, participants shared that composting techniques provided them with good quality fertilizer, increased knowledge and skills on new composting techniques, and facilitated the cultivation of vegetables by using good quality fertilizer in their field.

Study findings show that the majority of participants have knowledge on the importance of consuming nutrient rich foods such as cereals, pulses, vegetables, meat and dairy products, gained through nutritional campaigns conducted as part of SNAP. With new knowledge and skills gained through awareness and training, HHs have started kitchen gardening for cultivating vegetables and have started to consume vegetables along with cereals food. This is a significant impact of SNAP nutrition related initiative.

Study results show that proper compost making and farmyard management training increased the knowledge and skills of participants on improved agricultural practices such as field preparation, plantation, disease management, application of manure, water and pesticides and improved varieties of seeds. This knowledge has already been applied in the participant's farm fields, which is an encouraging sign. Nutrition, health and sanitation related awareness campaigns have led to increase in knowledge about dietary foods like cereals, vegetables, pulses, meat and dairy products, vitamins and minerals and its importance for human health.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made for further improvement in future programming or in replicating similar project in other areas.

- There is a high demand for improved seed varieties among farmers, the supply system for improved seed varieties needs to be intensified further through local agro-vet agents and cooperatives. A coordinated approach is needed to identify seed supplying agencies and strengthen seed supply networks.
- Since formal loan borrowing is increasing, effective loan product packages can be integrated as a component of programming; farmers should be capacitated on proper investment of loans, taking into consideration market demands.
- Finding shows that in the UCs of Humtad and Chaud, women were not heavily represented nor put in lead roles such as Chairperson and Vice-Chair. In the effort to increase gender representation, highlighting the role of women in community development should be mainstreamed during the creation of UCs.
- Ensuring sustainability of community based schemes remains one of the most daunting challenges of this type of programming. In Humtad, the community initiated collecting funds from each HH benefitting from the irrigation facility to go towards sustaining the scheme. This initiative could be scaled up and replicated in other project sites where a user fee for the schemes could be pegged to the economic status of the HH - pertaining to land holding size, income source, and employment - to facilitate community contribution to sustaining the scheme.
- Findings show that there is an increased level of knowledge on consumption of nutritious food items but in practice, there is a mixed result. The majority of the participants stated that in order to consume nutritious foods they need a reliable income source, good production, and availability of these items round the year. It is therefore relevant to enhance agricultural productivity, beyond consumption to increase HH income, by facilitating to access improved agriculture inputs while increasing good agriculture practices.

Annex 1: Discussion Checklist

Market Dynamics

1. Major markets (location specific) in the area
2. Food availability in market; is there any fluctuation in food availability post cash injection? If yes, Why?
3. Demand of commodities (especially food items); is there any fluctuation in demand post cash injection? If yes, Why?
4. Demand of agricultural inputs (improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc); is there any fluctuation in demand post cash injection? If yes, Why?
5. Major crop price rates before, during and after cash injection?
6. Credit buying trend, is there any fluctuation before, during and after cash injection?
7. Loan borrowing trend from local lenders, trend during CFW season
8. Is there any fluctuation in loan interest rate over the period? If yes why?

Women Involvement

1. What is the general trend of women's involvement in work outside the home?
2. How many of women worked for the scheme?
3. Out of the total executive members of the User's Committee, how many of them are women?
4. Did women actively participate in scheme selection and labor contribution?
5. How influential are they for decision making in UC and for scheme implementation?
6. Was it possible to implement scheme without their involvement? Why?
7. Is there any change in the trend of women's involvement in household work as well as work outside the home after CfW?
8. Has there been any change in women's participation in decision making on community works after the project?
9. How they feel being a part of community work (probe whether they feel work loaded or empowered)?
10. How are HHs decisions typically made? (Equally between men and women?)
11. Has there been any change in how HH decisions are made before and after the project?
12. What was the overall impact of CfW on women in particular? (Use proportional piling method)
13. What did these impacts change in women's lives?

Functionality, Utilization and Benefits of Scheme

1. How the scheme was selected? Why this scheme was selected?
2. Did any other organizations contribute to build the scheme? If yes, which organization? How much?

3. How many days did it take to complete the scheme? Was it completed within the planned period? If not, why?
4. Is there any disaster risk mitigation measures applied while building the scheme? If yes, please explain.
5. Is this asset functional?
6. How many of HHs member participated in the scheme?
7. Do you think that people who are not considered poor/food insecure also participated in the scheme? If yes, how many?
8. How many of HHs of the community utilize the scheme?
9. What is the mechanism to operate the schemes in a long run?
10. Does the user's committee have maintenance fund?
11. How much amount collected so far for maintenance purpose?
12. Have the committee utilized maintenance fund? How much? Why?
13. Was there any issue that had impeded or advanced the implementation of the project?
14. On what, the cash received from CfW was spent?
15. Who in your household mainly decides to spend cash?
16. Is there any change in your food habits after CfW? If yes, what are that additional food items do you eat? Why? Where did you learn?
17. What are the benefits of these schemes?
18. How did these benefits affect in agricultural productivity?
19. What is the food security status of community?
20. Are there any changes in food security status after CfW? If yes, please explain.
21. Are there any changes in wealth status of community after CfW? If yes, please explain.

Training Impact

1. Which training did you participate in?
2. How was the training?
3. Did you learn anything from the training? If yes, please explain.
4. Did you apply those learning in your farming practices? If yes, is there any difference in cultivation practices after the training? If not, why not?
5. Are there inputs available in community to adopt the practices learnt in the training?
6. Did you see/realize any advantages of this training to increase agriculture productivity? If yes, please explain?
7. Did you see/find any disadvantages of the cultivation practices learnt in the training? If yes, please explain?



Annex 2: Assets Information

सर्वेक्षकको नाम : _____
 जिल्लाको नाम : _____
 गाँसको नाम : _____
 गाउँको नाम : _____
 उपभोक्ता समितिको नाम : _____
 घरधुरी संख्या : _____
 उपभोक्ता समितिमा भावद्वता : छ छैन
 लिंग : पुरुष महिला

सम्पतिको विवरणहरू	के यो समुदायमा यी सम्पति पाइन्छ?	के यो सम्पति सुचारु छ? (सम्पति अण्डा मात्र सोध्ने)	के यो सार्वजनिक सम्पतिबाट आधाजसो समुदायको उपभोक्ताहरूले उपभोग अथवा फाइदा लिनसक्नु भएको छ? (सम्पति सुचारु अण्डा मात्र सोध्ने)	तपाइको घर परिवारले यी सार्वजनिक सम्पतिको उपयोग गर्नु अर्को छ?	यदि छैन भने किन?*	के यी योजनाहरूमा उपभोक्ता/सम्भार समिति छ?
	(छ=1 / छैन=0)	(छ=1 / छैन=0)	(छ=1 / छैन=0)	(छ=1 / छैन=0)		(छ=1 / छैन=0)
ग्रामपंच सचक						
पोस्टा/वार्डो बाटा						
निर्वाह नहर						
निर्वाह पोखरी						
सामुदायिक/खेती						
भूमि पुनर्स्थापना						
खानपानी						
पालीको मुहान संरक्षण						
हरिन बूट						
पाली संकलन/खेती						
सुधारिएको कम्पास्ट फलसक/खेती						
सुधारिएको सौर/खेती						
सांस्कृतिक भवन						
नदी किनारको संरक्षण						
मछली सिबन्धण						
अन्य						

- *
 1 = सम्पतिको आवश्यकता नभएको
 2 = घरबाट धेरै टाढा
 3 = पुर्णतः नसकिने/धेरै महङ्गो
 4 = विशेष
 5 = उचित व्यवस्था नभएको
 6 = क्लाहा छैन
 7 = अन्य

Annex 3: List of Participants

KIIs with Traders

S. No.	Name	Location
1	PremBista	ShitalKhola, Mastamandu
2	Chandra Malla	Chitan, Budor
3	SurajBahadurSaut	Godham, Alital VDC-5
4	Ganesh Bohara	Gharelu, Alital VDC-7
5	KhemBahadur Saud	Jaisara, Kaipalmandu-5

KIIs with UC members

S. No.	Name	Location
1	Nawa Raj Panta (Member)	Humtad, Alital VDC-5
2	KarnaBahadurRaut (Vice-Chair person)	Chaud, Alital VDC-4
3	Dambari Devi Paneru (Secretary)	Gaad, Ghairibhuwa, Kaipalmandu-5

FGDs with Women Groups

FGD 1

S. No.	Name	Location	Name of User's Committee
1	IswariNath	Chaud, Alital VDC-4	Pragatishil UCs
2	ManmatiiBhatta		
3	HiraBohara		
4	Kalpana Devi Dhami		
5	RadhaBhatta		
6	ParwatiRokaya		
7	NirmalaBohora		
8	Ganga Bhatta		

FGD 2

S. No.	Name	Location	Name of User's Committee
1	LaxmiPaneru	Kailpalmandu-5, Gaad	Shreejanshil UCs, Gaad

2	Radha Devi Paneru	Lata UC, Rumail
3	Khima Devi Paneru	
4	Krishna Devi Paneru	
5	Tara Devi Paneru	
6	Pabitra Devi Paneru	
7	Devaki Devi Paneru	
8	Jamuna Devi Hamal	
9	Nanda Devi Paneru	
10	Repati Devi Damai	
11	Haru Devi Bhul	
12	Naru Devi Kami	
13	Dhauri Devi Kami	
14	Gauri Devi Tamata	

FGDs with User Committee Members

FGD 1

S. No.	Name	Location	Name of User's Committee
1	ParmandaBhatta (Chairperson)	Humtad, Alital VDC	BibekiHumtad UC
2	Bandana Bista		
3	LalBahadurSarki		
4	Kamala Karki		
5	Ganesh Deuba		
6	Bhawana Devi		
7	Dal BahadurDhami		
8	LokBahadurDhami		

FGD 2

S. No.	Name	Location	Name of User's Committee
1	Ramesh Kunwar (Chairperson)	Chaud, Alital VDC	Pragatishil UC
2	Ram BahadurRaut		
3	KarnaBahaurRawal		
4	Chandra Singh Thaguna		
5	Padam Raj Bhatta		
6	Kaushe Devi Thaguna		
7	IswariNath		
8	PremBahadurDhami		

9	ParwatiRokaya
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FGD 3

S. No.	Name	Location	Name of User's Committee
1	Kalapati Devi Paneru (Chair-person)	Gaad, Kailpalmandu	Shreejanshil UC
2	Devi Paneru		
3	HariPriyaPaneru		
4	Khema Devi Paneru		
5	Prem Raj Paneru		
6	Bishnu Raj Paneru		
7	Dambari Devi Paneru		
8	LalitaHamal		
9	HemantiPaneru		

FGDs with Community Members

FGD 1

S. No.	Name	Location	Name of User's Committee
1	Parwati Devi Kunwar	Humtad and ChiranKalakot	BibekiHumtad UC and ChiranKalakot UC
2	Gopal Singh Dhama		
3	Suna Devi Bista		
4	SurajBogati		
5	BhagratiMohara		
6	Devi Kunwar		
7	DhanBahadurMohara		
8	BasantiBogati		

FGD 2

S. No.	Name	Location	Name of User's Committee
1	Man BahadurDhanuk	Kailpalmandu-6, Meddi	Daupal UC
2	KarnaBahadurDhanuk		
3	RanjeetDhanuk		
4	Hark BahadurDhanuk		
5	Dhana Devi Airi		
6	Dhana Devi Dhanuk		
7	Dambar Singh Dhanuk		
8	Kalu Singh Dhanuk		
9	Ram BahadurDhanuk		
10	KeshavDhanuk		
11	Ishwori Devi Bohara		
12	Bhavisara Devi Bohara		

Annex 4: Photographs



FGD with women members in Gaad



FGD with UC members in Humtad



KII with UC member in Chaud



KII with UC member in Gaad



Composting technique in Chiran



Irrigation canal in Humtad



Woman participating in proportional piling in Gaad



UC member in PIA in Chaud