



## ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT 2020

Country Programme Name: **Nepal**

Reporting Period: **January to December 2020**

Author: **Helvetas Nepal**

Helvetas Nepal has been operating in Nepal under an agreement with the Government of Nepal since 1956. It is the largest country programme of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, which is active in some 30 countries around the world. Helvetas Nepal is currently implementing programmes and projects throughout the country, cooperating with many technical and social organizations. Through its work at both local and national levels, Helvetas Nepal supports activities leading to sustainable development and poverty reduction. It aims to create environments in which people have new choices and become equipped with new skills and abilities to improve their livelihoods.

Helvetas Nepal partners with local and national non-governmental organizations, private sector entities, and local and national government bodies. It promotes the principles of decentralization and subsidiarity in decision-making, implementation and accountability for development.

Detailed information on Helvetas Nepal can be accessed at <https://nepal.helvetas.org>

**Published by**

Helvetas Nepal  
Dhobighat, Lalitpur,  
GPO Box 688, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Telephone: +977 1 5424926, +977 1 5424925  
E-mail: [co.np@helvetas.org](mailto:co.np@helvetas.org)

Photos: Helvetas Nepal

Maps, Graphics and Compilation: Om Khadka  
Language Editor: Khem Shreesh

Cover Photo: An IWRMP-supported handwashing station in operation in the premise of the Provincial Chief Minister's Office in Surkhet

---

## Contents

---

Message from the Country Director .....	1
Country Context.....	3
Helvetas Nepal Country Strategy .....	3
Governance and Peace (GOP).....	4
Sustainable and Inclusive Economy (SIE).....	6
Skill Development and Education (SDE) .....	8
Water and Infrastructure (WIN).....	10
Migration and Remittances (MRE) .....	12
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI).....	14
Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management .....	15
Humanitarian - Development response to the earthquake.....	16
Geographical Coverage.....	19
Human Resources.....	20
Personal Story .....	21
Budget and Investment.....	22
Investment by Working Areas .....	23
Audit Report.....	24
Way Forward .....	27
Portfolio.....	29
Thanks .....	30

---

## List of abbreviations

---

CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CHF	Swiss Franc
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EF-SR	Employment Fund – Skills for Reconstruction
ENSSURE	Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment
EU	European Union
EVENT	Enhanced Vocational Education and Training
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
GOP	Governance and Peace
HuRENDEC	Human Rights and Environment Development Centre
ICSFP	Interim Capacity Support for Federalism Project
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IWRMP	Integrated Water Resources Management Programme
LSP	Local Service Provider
MITO	Strengthening Walnut Value Chain in Nepal Project
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoICS	Ministry of Industries, Commerce and Supplies
MoLESS	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security
MRC	Migration Resources Centre
MRE	Migration and Remittances
NASDP	Nepal Agricultural Services Development Programme
NMA	Nutrition-Sensitive Mountain Agriculture
NPR	Nepali Rupees
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RVWRMP	Rural Village Water Resource Management Project
SaMi	Safer Migration Project
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDE	Skills Development and Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIE	Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
TA	Technical Assistance
TBSU	Trail Bridge Support Unit
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WIN	Water and Infrastructure
WUMP	Water Use Master Plan

---

## Message from the Country Director

---

This time, you will recognize my key messages centred around a few elements, notably the context of COVID-19 and virtual tools used as part of adaptive management and digitalization, adjustment of our work through various project portfolios in the new federal setup, humanitarian-development nexus, our decentralized project management approach that worked well during the pandemic and our recognized niche to contribute to a robust local governance system as a viable delivery agency for local development.



To begin with, COVID-19 brought brutal setbacks for global challenges and hit Nepal the most in its effort to accelerate development and the pace of the progress of its national goal of prosperity. Implementation of the newly established federal setup was taking momentum and the figures for poverty and malnutrition were decreasing, supply chains had started to operate well, all started breaking down. Closure of schools, hotels, restaurants, industries and travel restrictions and long and ineffective lockdowns jeopardized future opportunities. Similar to other countries, the economic consequences of COVID-19 and the ill-preparedness of the public health system were obvious. The most painful and terrifying experience for Nepal and Nepali society was the collapse of the social health support system and the non-existence of social-protection measures for those who had no means to survive such as the wage-labouring class. As a result, urban poor and migrant Nepali workers suffered the most.

To respond to the pandemic, together with our partners, mainly local governments, we tried to offer our help for food security, water supply, disaster relief, medical equipment and counselling. Thanks to our head office, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), charity: water, foundations in Switzerland and donors which mandated us to target the poorest and the most vulnerable who were pushed out of job and into food crisis, we could expand our reach to ensure that those who have been most affected by the COVID-19 crises can benefit from our ongoing development projects. We are happy to have successfully helped lessen the pain of some of the most vulnerable families in Provinces 2 and Karnali Province who were the victims of the COVID-19.

Despite the difficult time, progress has been made both on the economic and social empowerment front. Human capital and employment dimensions of development and safety have been fully considered. In addition to our full engagement with local governments and other levels of government and non-government partners, we continue maintaining our focus on the safety and health of our staff and their families. The scenario planning, a tool that we have been practicing, helped us to react better to the new normal and strengthened our digitalization capacity to better serve our partners and beneficiary population. Despite difficulties, with the decentralized management and community-based approach, major activities could run reasonably well that can be found in this annual report in respective chapters.

Together with our partners, we have been able to contribute to having increased access to clean water, food, vocational education, decent employment, access to services and livelihood opportunities through an accountable local governance mechanism in both rural and urban settings. Our contribution to vocational training programmes is typically paired with enterprises that ensure labour-market orientation and employability. Our technical assistance (TA) support through both mandated and own funded projects have supported municipalities as well as disadvantaged populations. Based on the wide interest and overwhelming positive reactions received so far, I am confident that the financial contribution of federal, provincial governments, private-sector investors and municipalities to the initiatives that we have promoted will increase significantly in the coming months. This trend is a major shift in breaking down traditional “silos” in development cooperation and contributing to the wider organizational objectives of sustainability and local ownership of our initiatives.

The year 2020 has been a difficult year for all of us, but this has also become the most innovative and efficient year I should say. We can proudly look back at an unprecedented transformative process internally on digitalization and a widely recognized role of ours externally during the pandemic. Many things that we felt we needed to change during past years in a new political setup have been changed and are reflected. And we have managed to achieve our ambition. Let me express my gratitude for the strong support to me personally and to the organization over the last 12 months. Our achievements would not have been possible without the engagement of our donors, government agencies and partners. Our relationship with existing donors, especially SDC, is something to cherish and be happy about. We learned things together based on mutual trust and support.

Looking back, we are grateful, but also feel a sense of profound responsibility. Looking ahead, we are aware of the unresolved and urgent challenges that await us. With a committed and motivated team of staff, proven technical expertise, our agile approach and reporting lines and credibility, I am confident that we can complete the unfinished task. I am confident that we can continue to build on our mandate and outlook for new activities and actions.

As in the past, every day I see the continuity of the commitment of our team to effectively implement our plan, policies and processes. Finally, I wish to profusely thank our current donors, notably SDC, Swiss Solidarity, Happel Foundation, the European Union (EU), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), charity: water, Government of Finland and collaborators – Finish Consulting Group (FCG) and International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and foundations supporting for women economic empowerment initiatives, our local partners, my HELVETAS Nepal family, our head-office for the overwhelming support extended to me. I am truly blessed.

Thank you.

---

## Country Context

---

The country's political context is an evolving and challenging one. Helvetas interventions remain highly pertinent to the needs of Nepalese people – especially those who are underprivileged socially and economically. In principle, the implementation of the constitution is ongoing. Local, provincial and federal-level governments are in operation. The legal and institutional framework is set up and, until recently, were in the right direction; a two-third majority government was expected to complete its full tenure and periodic elections were likely to be held on time. It seemed that Nepal was slowly transitioning towards a federal, inclusive state and is expected to graduate from a least developed to a middle-income country. All of a sudden, Nepal's political situation took a U-turn due to internal conflict, ongoing feuds, and disagreements within the ruling party as a result of constant power struggle. The parliament was dissolved in December and a new parliamentary election was announced to be held in May. This had pushed the two-third majority government at high risk and divided the ruling party into three factions. This dramatic political situation took another turn again in February when the Supreme Court reinstated the parliament and opened the door for a possible coalition government, and if this failed, the general election. Inevitably, the political instability will increase as political leaders become busy forming and toppling the government. As history is being repeated, the policy-enabling environment from stable governments at all three levels of governments has become uncertain. Shrinking development space may face further challenges for international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) as donors are nervous to make commitments for the extension of the phase and the new projects. Scenario planning, based on the possible risks and opportunities, is therefore very much needed, and flexibility and adjustment in project-cycle management are further required. Helvetas Nepal is still welcomed by governments and a wide range of stakeholders.

State revenues and development budget were steadily increasing. The economy had grown mainly due to higher productivity based on increasing investment in infrastructure, investments from the private sector, and the productive use of remittances. Due to the pandemic, the country hardly saw a growth of 1.5%. Although there is no more lockdown and the vaccination campaign has started, the effect of the pandemic in mobility and economic activities is still there.

Our long relationship with Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) also sets the context in which the Nepal country programme operates. Historically, the collaboration with SDC has been cordial and largely exemplary in terms of shared principles and Swiss values. On a positive note, unlike many other donors, SDC shows great interest in the project-cycle management and management decisions to ensure quality outcomes. There is common ownership of the projects. In recent years, however, the dynamics have changed, and we have faced many challenges. Until the previous year, we had six SDC mandates, there are only three now. Most of our efforts should go not only to respond to the new tenders of SDC but also to look for more opportunities for mandates from other donors such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UK's Department for International Development (DFID), Government of Finland, the European Union (EU), and international development banks.

---

## Helvetas Nepal Country Strategy

---

The strategy is fully coherent with the periodic national development plans, the SDGs, and the organisational strategies of Helvetas and SDC-Nepal. As a medium-term strategic planning and management tool, we have been constantly monitoring the implementation status of our country strategy. Our critical reflection shows that we are in the right direction to achieve our overall goal, i.e., all women and men in Nepal, especially those who are economically poor and socially marginalized, have dignified lives.

Despite a difficult pandemic year, we have been able to perform in our role of technical assistance (TA) and significantly contribute to Nepal's development in supporting the process of federalisation mainly in the areas of local governance, technical and vocational skills development leading to safe and decent employment, economic growth related to agriculture, rural infrastructure development, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for universal access to water and sanitation, trail bridges, and, more importantly, safer and more beneficial migration. Recognizing the vulnerability of Nepal to disaster and climate

change, our nexus approach is working on the ground to mobilize our development projects also for humanitarian action, empower farmers for climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRM) measures.

With our pro-active approach to gender equity and social inclusion, we have continued to work with the local governments and communities to reach out to the most economically poor and socially disadvantaged households. To that end, we have put our continuous effort to strengthen national institutions so that they operate in a transparent, accountable, socially inclusive, efficient and effective manner and provide space for civil society to have an effective voice, and for the private sector to operate in a market-responsive manner.

As the reporting in the following pages shows, our approach is focused on working with and through local governments, whilst ensuring strong relationships with provincial and federal governments, civil society and private sector partners as appropriate. We will continue this way of our working for the moment, and we will possibly review it at the end of 2021 if adjustment is needed in the current strategy.

## Governance and Peace (GOP)

**Outcome 1: Local governments are effective, transparent and accountable to women and men citizens, who are empowered to demand better services**



**Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.**

### Projects under this Outcome

Project name	Funding source	Phase until	Helvetas role
SAJAG: Active Citizens for Accountable Local Governments	European Union	Jan 2018 – Feb 2021	Project Management
Good Governance Project (GGP)	Public donations	Jan 2017 – Dec 2020	Project Management
Interim Capacity Support for Federalism Project (ICSFP)	SDC	Jul 2018 – Jan 2020	Advisory

Helvetas' country strategy recognizes Governance and Peace (GOP) not only as its first outcome, but also as a transversal theme across all its projects, thereby aiming to make a substantial contribution to Nepal's federalization through supporting selected local governments to strengthen their whole system of governance. Most projects (including all SDC projects) have either been designed or have adjusted their working approach to engaging formally with local governments in project implementation. A few dedicated projects are listed above. Many sectoral projects (e.g., Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU), Safer Migration Project (SaMI), Nepal Agricultural Services Development Programme (NASDP), Rural Village Water Resource Management Project (RVWRMP), Integrated Water Resources Management Project (IWRMP), Elam, Riverbed Farming (RbF) Project, etc.) also contributed to this outcome but are reported under their specific working areas.

With the onset of the COVID-19 crisis and the consequent imposition of protracted lockdown, all local governments were on the frontline as they are uniquely positioned to design and deliver a holistic response to the crisis. Although they were mostly occupied by the pandemic responses, they also continued delivering all public services despite the lack of resources and experience.

Amidst this crisis, all local governments, which are 753 in number, had a collaboration with one or several Helvetas projects. But we could support only 40 local governments to formulate their plans in 2020. The plans, most of which were initiated in 2019, include periodic development plans, Water Use Master Plans (WUMP), and revenue improvement plans. This represents a 36% reduction over last year's achievement, mainly because of the completion of plan formulation in RVWRMP, ICSFP and IWRMP municipalities. Similarly, only two events (one by IWRMP and another by SAJAG) of orientation on local governance-related topics could be organized amongst the local government officials of which only 58 individuals attended. This figure is a huge 98% reduction compared to last year, mainly because



of the restriction on field movement and in-person gatherings as well as the prioritized engagement of these officials on the COVID responses.

Although the number of civil society organizations supported by different projects reached 242 in the reporting year, no such organizations and networks could be supported in their advocacy activities. Nonetheless, we could organize some alternative activities such as collection and publication of local governments' good practices, virtual panel discussions among representatives from the three levels of government, horizontal learning workshop, etc. Additionally, we, through our SAJAG project, supported some local governments in the use of three social accountability tools, namely annual budget tracking survey, public expenditure tracking survey, and citizen satisfaction survey. The public audit practice, which includes a public hearing, public review and public audit, has become a common norm among all infrastructure-related projects. To this end, 21 out of 27 different projects under Helvetas Nepal have put some form of local accountability mechanism into practice.

Two important dedicated projects ICSFP and Good Governance Project were closed in 2020 while another dedicated project SAJAG has got a two-month no-cost extension. A project incorporating good governance, gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and digitalization aspects is under design process. As in the past, acquisition opportunities with diverse donors that recognize the value of INGO services in supporting the federalization process will be pursued.

This year, GOP projects represented 1.29% of the total country programme budget and 1.47% of the expenditure.

### Case story: Horizontal Learning Workshop for identification and recognition of the good practices of the local governments

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 allocates 22 exclusive and 15 concurrent jurisdictions to the local governments to establish them as the main public-service delivery centres. Amidst many inherent challenges in the early days, the elected representatives have gained more confidence in their new roles and responsibilities over time with increased experience, exposure, familiarity, and capacity enhancement. Many municipalities have taken positive and innovative initiatives. Many are extremely creative in finding solutions in all shapes and sizes that respond to their challenges. These positive and innovative solutions are to be understood as “good practices”. If such practices are systematically identified, analysed, documented, and shared, relevant actors can adapt/adopt, replicate and upscale them. A horizontal learning workshop is organized to identify and recognize such practices. It is also a process of promoting peer-learning and exploring means to replicate/upscale such practices. For Nepal, the process is particularly relevant for organizations working towards strengthening local governments to use the peer-to-peer learning model to promote not only good practices but also a culture of mutual learning and exchange across local governments.



The Mayor/Dullu Municipality, Dailekh, presenting his municipality's good practice in Horizontal Learning Workshop

SAJAG hosted two events of horizontal learning workshops, the first one in February 2020 in Dailekh participated by representatives from seven local governments and the second one in February 2021 in Surkhet participated by representatives from 11 local governments of Karnali Province. Before the workshop, each local government was requested to identify its three most-favoured good practices and prepare a presentation in a standard format. After all the presentations in the workshops, open voting was done to identify the best ones. Below is a list of the five most-voted practices in two horizontal learning workshops; the practices are arranged according to the votes count.

First workshop held in Dailekh		Second workshop held in Surkhet		
	Title of good practice	Name of municipality	Title of good practice	Name of municipality
1	Youth Labour Employment Bank	Bhagawatimai Rural Municipality, Dailekh	Entrepreneurship School (Learn and Earn School)	Dullu Municipality, Dailekh
2	Integrated Livelihood Promotion Programme	Raskot Municipality, Kalikot	Citizen Compulsory Saving Fund	Raskot Municipality, Kalikot
3	Youth Farmers Promotion Programme	Shuvakalika Rural Municipality, Kalikot	Simta for Promotion of Safe Drinking Water	Simta Rural Municipality, Surkhet
4	Community Repair and Maintenance Fund	Shivalaya Rural Municipality, Jajarkot	Nutrition Friendly Municipality Programme	Shuvakalika Rural Municipality, Kalikot
5	Ambulance Service	Dungeshwor Rural Municipality, Dailekh	A Moment in Farmers' Field Programme	Shivalaya Rural Municipality, Jajarkot

## Sustainable and Inclusive Economy (SIE)

**Outcome 2: Women and men farmers implement sustainable and resilient food production and benefit from advisory services and marketing systems that foster increased productivity and production**



**End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture**

### Projects under this Outcome

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
Nepal Agricultural Services Development Project (NASDP/Prayas)	SDC	2016 – Nov 2020	Advisory
Riverbed Farming (RbF) Project	Public donations	2019 – Dec 2022	Project Management
Elam	Public donations, Happel Foundation	2017 – Dec 2020	Project Management
Strengthening Walnut Value Chain in Nepal Project (MiTO)	Public donations, Happel Foundation	2018 – Dec 2020	Project Management
Nutrition-Sensitive Mountain Agriculture (NMA)	SDC (global)	2018 – Sept 2021 (phase II)	Project Management

Under the federal system, agricultural extension services are devolved to local governments. So Helvetas Nepal works with them in improving their services, building systems and capacities to provide advice and inputs on climate-smart agricultural practices and modern agricultural technologies as well as making linkages to business services and improving market understanding. Behaviour change communication for food and nutrition security, the use of information and communication technology, and evidence-based advocacy are other areas of our engagement. Agricultural innovations, promoting a comprehensive local agricultural advisory services system, and market systems development are core elements of this working area. Our projects explore and use innovative approaches, collaborating with both the public and private sectors to promote inclusive economic growth.

In 2020, our projects worked in altogether 65 municipalities of Province 1, Province 2 and Karnali Province, thereby reaching 108,616 farming households (15.96% women and 64.61% from disadvantaged groups) on using sustainable agriculture activities and 14,473 farming households (45.29% women and 77.37% from disadvantaged groups) on market system development activities. Almost 19,644 farmers (51.47% women and 64.91% from disadvantaged groups) gained knowledge of improved technologies and practices, sustainable harvesting, and nutritional requirements, whilst only 856 received training in value-chain activities. Thanks to the project intervention in promoting sustainable agriculture practices, 10,502 farmers have reported an increase in their agricultural productivity and income. Similarly, 7481 farmers reported earning additional income due to support for marketing their produce. Overall, this has led to the creation of additional employment for 2705 individuals, 30.16% of them women and 54.97% belonging to disadvantaged groups. Likewise, 29,734 farmers of whom 15,164 women and 23,904 from disadvantaged groups are reported to have improved their consumption of nutritious food.

Under Prayas, an SDC project, 56 municipalities have been able to formulate and endorse at least one legal instrument and implement standard norms required for sectoral management. All of them developed their consolidated annual agriculture plans, some formulated agriculture strategic plan, and more than half of them formed Palika Agriculture Development Committees to facilitate local policy-making processes. Under Riverbed Farming Project, 5652 farming households were supported in the adoption of riverbed-farming technology in 801 hectares of dry riverbed land. Furthermore, with the support of Elam, around 3400 jobs have been created in different value chains such as banana, herbs, turmeric, vegetables, citrus fruits, shoemaking etc. with an increase of 55% additional income.

In the unprecedented COVID-19 situation, all projects adapted their Yearly Operation Plan to integrate COVID-19 response activities. Facilitating the engagement of returnee migrants in agriculture and enterprise became one of the key thrusts in the working areas. Despite its excellent joint review and the recommendation for continuation, Prayas got closed in November 2020 after having a five-month no-cost extension. For Elam, 2020 was the last year of the current phase, but a follow-on project Green Elam will start in 2021 with the integration of circular economy and strengthening of private sector engagement. Likewise, MITO phase II will start in early 2021.

This year, SIE projects represented 20.49% of the total country programme budget and 26.43% of the expenditure.

### Case story: Local government facilitates a returnee migrant to become a commercial farmer

In early 2018, Min Kumar Dhakal (40), from Tallo Kuntadevi of Molung Rural Municipality-1, Okhaldhunga returned to his village after spending 10 years in Qatar and UAE. Upon returning, Min started growing vegetables. But he could not produce on a commercial scale due to financial constraints and lack of technical know-how. While Min was pursuing his farming occupation on his own, Prayas signed a collaboration agreement with the municipality in mid-2018 to help in the formulation of its agricultural sectoral planning, also focusing on returnee migrants. Within the returnee-focused programme, the municipality conducted an assessment to enlist the returnee migrants and called for a proposal. Min, along with 50 other applicants, was selected. Together with different trainings on improved farming technologies, Min also received a grant of NPR 50,000, which he invested in the construction of a 22,000-litre plastic pond and a compost pit. However, he later sensed that the pond was not sufficient. After sharing his concerns with the municipality, he received another NPR 50,000 from the Youth Self-Employment Fund. He invested the additional money to increase the capacity of his plastic pond to 85,000 litres. At the same time, Min received a provincial-level training organized by the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives.



Min Kumar Dhakal in his cauliflower farm, post farm expansion after receiving loan from the bank. Pic: Dhruba Adhikari

Min, along with 50 other applicants, was selected. Together with different trainings on improved farming technologies, Min also received a grant of NPR 50,000, which he invested in the construction of a 22,000-litre plastic pond and a compost pit. However, he later sensed that the pond was not sufficient. After sharing his concerns with the municipality, he received another NPR 50,000 from the Youth Self-Employment Fund. He invested the additional money to increase the capacity of his plastic pond to 85,000 litres. At the same time, Min received a provincial-level training organized by the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives.

In a quest for further commercialization, he approached the municipality again seeking additional support. This time, the municipality reacted to his request by organizing a field visit in early 2019. The visiting team consisted of the municipal officials, a representative from the Sunrise Bank and Prayas team members. Within two weeks of the field visit, Min was approved for a subsidized agriculture loan of NPR 10 lakhs (one million). Then, he invested NPR 5 lakhs in expanding his farm by adding a plastic tunnel to produce seeds and saplings, digging a larger compost pit, buying seeds of various crops and hiring seasonal labourers. As Min was aware of the provincial-level programme that provides a grant of up to NPR. 10 lakhs to support commercial farmers if the farmers match NPR 5 lakhs. With the necessary facilitation support provided by the municipality and Prayas, Min was successful in getting the provincial grant as well. He invested the money in the construction of a storage house.

Nowadays, Min is recognized as a model commercial farmer. Ever since he received support from the municipality, he has continued producing fresh vegetables such as chilies, tomatoes, cauliflower, cucumbers, brinjal, radish, carrots, etc., listed as cash crops, for two years. After harvest, Min hires a truck and takes his fresh products to the market. The municipality has a provision of paying one-way

transportation costs for commercial farmers as a subsidy for promoting agro-product marketing. Min was eligible for this subsidy. In the first year (February 2019 – January 2020), he made a profit of NPR 7 lakhs. In the first half of the second year, he already made a profit of NPR 4 lakhs even amidst the COVID-19 crisis. He has a target of making a total profit of NPR 13 lakhs in 2020. But he suspects that the pandemic might obstruct his market access. Yet Min is satisfied with his new venture from which he has been able to maintain household income, invest in his farms and his children’s education.

## Skill Development and Education (SDE)

**Outcome 3: Adequately skilled women and men are in decent waged or self-employment**  
**Private sector entities of varied sizes provide opportunities for decent wage and self-employment to adequately skilled women and men**



**Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

### Projects under this Outcome

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment (ENSSURE)	SDC and Government of Nepal	2017 – July 2021	Advisory
Samriddhi	IFAD	2018 – June 2022	Advisory
Employment Fund – Skills for Reconstruction (EF-SR)	SDC (Humanitarian)	2015 – June 2020	Project Management
Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT)	SDC contribution to World Bank project	2020 – 15 July 2021	Advisory (M&E)

Vocational skills development for employment has been one of the flagship activities of Helvetas, which continued providing technical assistance to the government of Nepal – Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS), and Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEV) – for formal apprentice and non-formal vocational training in various occupations through SDC and other projects. The major occupational focus areas were construction, electrical, mechanical, hospitality, textile, automobile, etc. In June 2020, we successfully concluded an SDC project ‘Employment Fund-Skills for Reconstruction’, which supported 11,598 households in the earthquake-affected areas to construct earthquake-resilient houses.

In 2020, a total of 7473 individuals, of which 42% were women and 74% were from disadvantaged groups<sup>1</sup>, attended apprenticeship and vocational courses. In addition, 856 individuals (42% women and 69% from disadvantaged groups) received training in value-chain activities. The apprenticeship and vocational courses were completed by 4845 individuals (26% women and 76% from disadvantaged groups). In the same period, 15,677 (33% women and 77% from disadvantaged groups) found employment, either wage or self-employment. These figures are derived from the ELAM, ENSSURE, SaMi, EFSR and Samriddhi projects.

Through the SDC project ENSSURE, Helvetas also provides technical assistance to the World Bank project Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT). Specifically, this technical assistance is provided to the Project Secretariat of the MoEST for monitoring and evaluation. Under this project, more than 25,800 young people received vocational training this year.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted this outcome as training, both centre- and industry-based training, was stopped for a significant period of the year, so were the training monitoring and employment verification. Helvetas developed an innovative virtual verification method which proved to be useful in reaching out the training graduates and verifying their employment and income for financial disbursement to the training providers.

<sup>1</sup> Poverty is self-declared and there is no official reference to triangulate it.

We continued our engagement with provincial and local governments regarding the evolution of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) under federalization. Besides, we have strengthened collaboration with business/industry associations and the association of training providers by the systematic use of digital means and platforms for reaching out to the project stakeholders during the lockdown. Educating them for a safer learning environment amidst COVID-19 risks was another successful intervention in the year. As a result, training could safely resume following the ending of the lockdown by the government.

This year, SDE projects represented 18.93% of the total country programme budget and 17.90% of the expenditure.

**Case story: New house has brought a sense of security**

In a beautiful village located amidst the hills, a small one-room house was situated. The house owner Bir Bahadur Thapa Magar welcomes us with his warm smile. Bir Bahadur is a person with a physical disability. His upper body functions well. However, his hands are not formed properly. Similarly, his lower body does not work at all, as his legs are also not formed well. He was born in Daante, Dolakha. After his father's death, Bir Bahadur became alone and helpless. Considering his condition, his brother-in-law brought him to his place in Doramba of Ramechhap. Then, Bir Bahadur's new residence address became Ward No. 8 of Doramba Rural Municipality. When asked about his age, Bir Bahadur says all he knows is that he is above 60 years.



Old house of Bir Bahadur Thapa Magar

But misfortune continued to follow him. He lost almost all of his near and dear ones. Now, he is taken care of by his nephew. Before the 2015 earthquake, he used to live in a house built with a corrugated galvanised iron (CGI) sheet and wood. The house was badly damaged in the earthquake.



Newly constructed earthquake resilient house of Bir Bahadur Thapa

The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) had enlisted him on the vulnerable list. However, no one contacted him. When the EFSR team visited the area for a survey, they came to know about Bir Bahadur and his situation. The project staff coordinated with the ward officials. As a result, Bir Bahadur's house was selected for a 50-day mason training site and a one-story earthquake-resilient house was built within two months. Bir Bahadur used to get scared whenever there were thunderstorms or heavy rains. He happily says, "Now, I have no such fears, every day I can live with contentment". He remembers his days at the old house and recalls the way people used to treat him. As he is a person with a disability, people often ignored him. He said, "My relatives did provide me with some food; however, no one cared about my shelter. But I am not the type to give up. Today, my hopes and dreams have been fulfilled by Helvetas Nepal. I feel lucky as I am now

living in an earthquake-resilient house".

Initially, when there were talks about the construction of his house, he was not quite sure that it would happen. He felt it was like a dream. Bir Bahadur remarks, "With the completion of this house, I feel safe and secure".

## Water and Infrastructure (WIN)

**Outcome 4: Women and men in rural and urban settlements have access to markets and services through trail bridges, and sustained access to adequate drinking water, sanitation and hygiene**



**Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

### Projects under this Outcome

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
Integrated Water Resources Management Programme (IWRMP)	Public donations, charity: water	2017 – Jun 2021	Project Management
Rural Village Water Resource Management Project (RVWRMP), Dailekh	Finnish Aid	2016 – Feb 2021	Advisory
Trail Bridge Support Unit (TSBU); Trail Bridge Sub-Sector Programme	SDC and GoN	2019 – Jul 2023	Advisory
South-South Cooperation Unit (SSCU)	Various	2016 – Dec 2021	Project Management

**WASH:** Helvetas' WASH programme supports Nepali people – women and men – from the remote villages of the Karnali Province to realize their human rights to water and sanitation. The programme is supported by Charity : water, Solaqua Foundation, Swiss Climate, Embassy of Finland/Kathmandu, and Helvetas' own contribution.

In 2020, a total of 28,634 individuals of which 49% women and 57% belonging to the disadvantaged groups – from 4628 households – gained direct access to improved drinking water from 62 newly built water systems with household water connections. This achievement is more than a threefold increase from last year. This achievement is quite remarkable given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and extended lockdown. These figures are derived from the IWRMP and RVWRMP projects. It has saved significant time, especially for women, which is now being used in childcare, rest, cleaning the household, participation in social events, and income-generating activity.

A total of 256 households upgraded their toilets, thereby improving sanitation facilities for 1514 individuals – 49% women and 57% belonging to disadvantaged groups. Besides, 29,210 individuals were reached through sanitation and hygiene promotion activities. While 5506 households constructed handwashing stations, another 5310 households installed household water treatment and safe storage systems. Likewise, 11,591 students benefitted from improved access to drinking water whilst 2303 students from five schools benefitted from improved sanitation. Hygiene awareness and the availability of sufficient water is promoting hygiene behaviour change among people. As a result, 37 drinking water scheme areas and four wards have met all the indicators of total sanitation and have been declared as total sanitation areas.

We continued promoting the Water Use Master Plan (WUMP) as an effective water governance tool and five municipal WUMPs were developed. In 2020, a total of 301 service providers, 695 user committee members, and 26 local-government members were trained on various aspects of WASH.

The programme also meaningfully responded to the COVID-19 with its own fund and support from other collaborators. It extended support mainly through the local governments and was assisted by Helvetas' local partners. A total of 38,069 people from 6978 households were supported with hygiene gear – soap, reusable cotton masks, and handwashing buckets with a tap. Pedal-operated handwashing stations were provided to 192 schools that benefitted 35,520 students, 72 health centres, 34 municipal office units, and 20 provincial-level ministries. Personal protective equipment – gown, mask, glove, hand sanitiser and disinfectant – were supported to 890 WASH/healthcare frontline workers. Also, public service announcements (PSAs) were broadcasted through local FM stations about COVID-19 awareness and its prevention measures.

**Infrastructure:** Helvetas continues to provide technical assistance to the government of Nepal through the SDC project – the Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU) – for the implementation of the Trail Bridge Sub-Sector Programme in all provinces and municipalities. In 2020, 613,633 individuals, of which 52% are women and disadvantaged groups, got a round-the-year safe river-crossing facility leading to enhanced access to basic services and economic activities from 411 bridges. On average, these bridges save three hours of the time of the users in making round trips. Local employment for 1,282,386 individuals was generated of which 33% were women and 69% belonged to disadvantaged groups. Because of the enhanced access, school attendance has increased by 16% and patients seeking services from health facilities have increased by 26%. In both cases, women tend to benefit more in enhancement of access to education and health service, the proportion being 28% and 46%, respectively. Trail bridges also triggered the emergence of shops in the vicinity; new shops were established in 20% of the newly constructed bridge sites.

Capacity-building of the provincial and local governments continued to be a priority in 2020 as well. We supported the Gandaki Province to adopt the National Trail Bridge Strategy in the provincial context, which was approved by the Council of Ministers of the province. It has also been supporting other provinces to adopt the National Trail Bridge Strategy, norms, standards and modalities. In 2020, we collaborated with 583 municipalities for various trail bridge-related activities. A total of 140 technicians – engineers, sub-engineers and assistant sub engineers – from provincial and local governments were imparted some trainings on construction of trail bridges. In addition, training on the design of long-span trail bridges for 52 engineers from the private sector was also provided. The existing trail bridges related Programme Monitoring Information System (PMIS) was updated for municipal monitoring and reporting features.

Until now, the coverage includes Bhutan, Burundi, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mozambique, Tanzania, Laos, Vietnam and Indonesia. The construction of bridges initiated in 2019 in Burundi were severely impacted by the COVID-19. The construction work was stopped in March 2020 and could resume only in November. Once completed, these bridges will benefit 33,132 people, of which 57% women and 82% poor will have enhanced access to services and the market. Besides, an agreement has been reached with the Islamic Development Bank for initiating a Trail Bridge Project in Indonesia, the inception phase of which has started in January 2021.

This year, WIN projects represented 38.22% of the total country programme budget and 32.20% of the expenditure.

### Case story: Private tap connection – saving time of women

Bharukala Shahi is a resident of Dewaldanda village, Subhakalika Rural Municipality-8 in Kalikot district. With seven members – her husband, two sons and three daughters, her family is poor. There was no water-supply system in the village before, and the villagers had to fetch water from a spring source located far away. It took them about 30 minutes on foot just to reach the source with a low flow rate. She used to wait her turn for hours in long queues to fill her vessel. The water she carried was mainly for drinking and cooking; it was obviously not enough for personal hygiene, flushing toilets or kitchen gardening. The household and village sanitation conditions were, therefore, poor and her family members would fall sick with diarrhoeal diseases. Each family used to spend about NPR 10,000 each year for medical treatment. Even the kids had to go to fetch water and arrive late or even miss school on some days. This adversely affected their studies, and some eventually dropped out.

Supported by Charity : water, Helvetas Nepal and its local partner, Human Rights and Environment Development Centre (HuRENDEC) mobilized the community to realize the Ligude Drinking Water and Sanitation Scheme in 2020. In addition to



Bharukala fetching water from her tap stand in her yard.

the water scheme, villagers now use water-supply taps, *chang* (erected wooden platforms to dry kitchen utensils), garbage pits, water filters and handwashing stations in every household. Bharukala too has a tap-stand in her yard. Her children no longer miss school, and they have enough time for homework. This has helped improve their studies. Sanitation conditions in her home are far better now, which has significantly decreased her medical expenses. She enjoys various social activities and meetings in her village thanks to the time saved from not having to fetch water. As there is plenty of water in her home now, she has a kitchen garden with a variety of vegetables. Her family consumes the vegetables and sells the surplus in the local market, earning NPR 2000-3000 per month. This income has been a good support to manage her household expenditures: buying notebooks, pens and pencils for her children and clothes, medicines, and other essentials for the entire family. Bharukala delightfully remarks, “The project has not only met the water needs in the village, but it has also supported women’s empowerment here. The project activities have enhanced our confidence to speak in front of people. We now take part in various public events and share our views on issues related to us without any hesitation. I thank Helvetas Nepal and HuRENDEC for all this and for the many other good things they have taught us”.

## Migration and Remittances (MRE)

**Outcome 5: Women and men migrants and their families have increased benefits from remittances and have mitigated the negative social consequences of migration**



**Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies**

### Projects under this Outcome

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
Safer Migration Project (SaMi)	SDC and GoN	2018 – Jul 2022	Advisory
Elam	Public donations, Happel Foundation	2017 – Dec 2020	Advisory

The Helvetas and SDC Nepal country strategies emphasize protecting the rights of labour migrants and promoting the development potential of migration. Supporting migrants and their families throughout the whole cycle of migration is the thrust of their interventions, which are aligned with Nepal’s federalization process. We support all three levels of government for effective delivery of quality services for safer and beneficial labour migration. With the economic slowdown brought about by the COVID-19, many businesses in countries of destination are struggling to continue operations with the manufacturing and service sector being the most impacted. Migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to both the infection and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has constrained both their ability to access their places of work in the countries of destination as well as their ability to return to their countries of origin.

SaMi, an SDC project, has been collaborating with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS) and the related agencies at the federal and provincial level as well as local governments for the institutionalization of safe labour migration policies and services. As key responsibilities related to foreign employment rest with local governments, the focus of support is for the establishment of Migration Resources Centres (MRCs) – generally established for a cluster of municipalities. MRCs are envisaged as a hub for information and awareness-raising on migration and the provision of key services related to reduce the social costs of migration. The local governments have started project implementation by directly hiring staff or through the local service providers (LSPs). The procurement process of both the staff and LSPs has been successfully concluded in almost all the local levels, and they have started to speed up their project activities and ensure access to safe migration services to people.

In 2020, we supported a total of 162 local governments and 46 civil society organizations in integrating migration into their development plans, policies, and activities. In this way, 138,049 migrants and their family members (38.59% women and 67.78% from disadvantaged groups) received direct support through different interventions on migration and development whereas around 3.2 million have indirectly been benefitted by Helvetas-supported local governments’ and civil society organizations’ development plans/activities consisting of migration-related interventions. All five components of the project – pre-



departure information and MRCs, psychosocial support, legal support, skills training, and financial literacy – have contributed towards changing the perception and practices of potential and aspiring migrants in terms of their decisions related to foreign employment. However, there is a difference in the number of people reached through each component, and the analysed outcome indicators reveal a mixed result. The local governments are increasingly taking ownership of the project and initiating activities on their own. There has also been an increase in the number of local governments allocating budgets for safer migration-related activities.

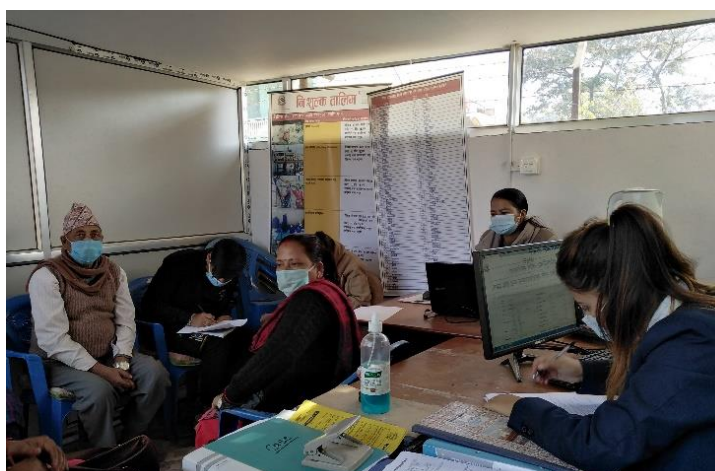
Concerning the reintegration of returnee migrants and the productive use of their remittances, the work of SaMi has been meaningfully complemented by the SDC project Prayas and by the Helvetas project Elam. Prayas facilitates the establishment of municipal programmes encouraging returnee migrants to invest in agricultural enterprises. Elam, as a project working on market-systems development, supports entrepreneurship and business creation in a variety of value chains based on local resources and returnee migrants are their major clients. The project works through a programme of incubation, training, advice and linkages to business services. Trained Enterprise Service Providers (ESPs) play an important role in the project's approach.

This year, MRE represented 17.56% of the total country programme budget and 16.49% of the expenditure.

**Case story: Migrant Resource Centre facilitates recovering money from an illegal agent**

Despite owning a gold silver ornaments shop in Ghorahi Sub-metropolitan City in Dang, Dinesh GM always wanted to go to Japan in search of a better life. because of the allure of job in Japan, Dinesh and his friend Suman Dangi paid NPR 300,000 (USD 2500) each to the local agent Prakash Chapagain. But instead of reaching Japan, they landed in Indonesia. Besides the money paid to the agent, they were asked to carry USD 1000 for food and accommodation, which was later tricked and snatched by an Indian agent upon reaching Indonesia.

“Despite all the hassles, I could never go to Japan. I rather had to spend six months in Indonesia”, Dinesh said adding, “My long wait did not pay back, and instead I started having health problems and returned home.” His friend Suman decided to wait in Indonesia. However, for Suman too, the wait did not bear any fruit. After a year-long stay in Indonesia, Suman too had no option but to return home. Stressed with the waste of time and money, Dinesh and Suman both approached the local agent to get their money back. They failed. Upon hearing about the Migration Resources Centre, established in the premise of the District Administration Office, Dang, they approached the office with little hope.



MRC counselling room in the premise of District Administration Office, Dang

They registered their case along with the payment receipt as a shred of evidence. After regular follow-up from the MRC counsellor, the agent returned the money they had initially paid. “When we came to MRC, we had very little hope as several of our attempts had gone in vain”, they echoed each other. “We have realized that no one should ever attempt to go for foreign employment without proper information and skill in hand”, they opined. They said that they are not only thankful for the support received from MRC but are committed to recommending potential migrants to visit MRC so that others are not cheated as they were.

---

## Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

---

### Outcome 6: Women, Dalits and minorities access equal and just opportunities in political, economic and public life



#### Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

The predominant inequalities in Nepali society are structural, and the product of entrenched social, cultural, and religious discrimination. Recognizing this, the Helvetas Nepal Country Strategy not only places gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) as a cross-cutting theme in all its interventions but also identifies the achievement of equal and just opportunities for women and Dalits in political, economic and public life as a specific strategic outcome despite an absence of a standalone GESI project.

In 2020, we continued our interventions that directly/indirectly contribute to our outcome on GESI, through our own funded projects. Our work in establishing household drinking-water systems continues to contribute to reducing the workload of women, who otherwise would spend a considerable amount of time and energy fetching water from the distant water sources. We have completed 62 drinking water-supply schemes in the Karnali Province benefitting 28,634 people of whom 49% are women. With water taps by their house, women are educated on hygiene and sanitation. So far, 61,673 people including school students, of which around 50% are girls, have been reached by the sanitation campaign and the promotion of the household water treatment system. The 47% representation of the women in the water users committee was found to be almost in proportion to the population served by drinking water schemes. Our WASH activities also target school children, and we have reached schoolgirls. In secondary schools, our emphasis lies on menstrual hygiene management. Both girls, boys and teachers become part of the education on menstrual health and hygiene. We continue to advocate against women's ostracization during menstruation (*Chhaupadi*), as it remains common in Karnali and Sudurpaschim Provinces. We continue to campaign for the cessation of this degrading and dehumanizing practice.

Through our project Elam, we provide entrepreneurship skills for women who are interested in setting up small businesses. The project has been successful in targeting and empowering women, youth and excluded communities while adopting the market-system development approach. About 38% of beneficiaries are women in Elam-promoted value chains such as banana, herbs, turmeric, bio-floc fish farming, etc. Elam has challenged patriarchal norms, values and attitudes to promote entrepreneurship among women. Our engagement with the land-poor and landless communities through riverbed-farming continued in 2020. In close partnership with nine selected local governments in Province 2, we have formed groups of landless and land-poor households. A total of 5652 households have been engaged in the riverbed-farming programme and 56% of them are women and 10% Dalit. Riverbed-farming not only ensures nutrition for the households but also is a good source of income.

Nepal's move towards federalism has created space for women's leadership, with 92% of Deputy Mayors/Vice-chairs' posts being filled by women. Helvetas is committed to strengthening the leadership of women across the municipalities and hence have placed a strong emphasis on their capacity-building. We have extended different supports to strengthen skills, knowledge, confidence through a series of training and other initiatives to effectively undertake their roles and contribute to inclusive governance at the local level. As local governments are deputed with the community-level pandemic response, the role of Deputy Mayors/Vice-Chairs is even more pertinent to ensure gender-sensitive and inclusive response and interventions. We have been in regular communication and consultations with them to understand their needs, responses and challenges. We have followed up on the condition of quarantine centres and provided specific supports/recommendations to make them safe for women and children as it has often been reported that the quarantine centres do not adequately cater to the safety and dignity of women. Alongside WASH materials and protective gear to the municipalities, we also supported several municipalities in the Karnali Province to distribute sanitary pads in quarantine centres. The local governments have also been requested to pay special attention and plan a specific budget for providing targeted support for women, particularly the vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, single women and women with disabilities.

In the last quarter of the year, a virtual session on “Challenging Unconscious Bias”, covering such topics as inclusive language, human psyche and unconscious biases, was organized for Helvetas staff.

We foresee continuing our GESI-mainstreaming efforts across our projects under the new Governance and GESI project. At the same time, we will also look for a new dedicated GESI project through a mandate.

This year, GESI represented a nominal 0.23% of the total country programme budget and 0.20% of the expenditure.

### Case story: Financial literacy class participant plans on bringing back her husband from abroad to start a family business

No matter how engaged she is with her household chores, Bina Shrestha, a 24-year-old from Bhojpur Municipality, never misses her financial literacy classes. “My husband encourages me from abroad and that adds to my enthusiasm”, says Bina. She further adds, “Through the class, I have started conceiving of a better future”. She also explains that she shares the knowledge and tools gained through the class with her husband as well as with her in-laws.



This financial literacy class in which Bina is enrolled started on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. It was organized by the Safer Migration Project (SaMi). SaMi is a bilateral initiative of the Governments of Nepal and Switzerland, implemented with the technical assistance of Helvetas Nepal. The project is implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS) and 156 participating local governments from 39 districts. The class primarily targets remittance-receiving households and women family members.

“In a few months, I have not only gained knowledge and tools necessary to plan a family budget and keep records of my income and expenditures, but I have also started applying and practicing this new knowledge”, says Bina. She adds that she has opened an account in a nearby cooperative and already saved NPR 15,000 (USD 128). Similarly, she has started maintaining a weekly ledger of her incomes and expenditures and has also learned many family-managements tricks during the class. Besides, she has started poultry-farming based on the analysis of the high demand for local breeds of chickens within her community. She bought 23 of these chickens after two months of joining the class. She started poultry-farming in mid-March 2020 and now has already started making money out of it. She sells each of the chickens at the rate of NPR 1000. “It is giving good profit”, she says.

She regularly discusses ideas to develop her business with her husband, and they together have analysed that there is an increasing demand for pork meat in the nearby market. Based on this assessment, she is hoping that her husband will soon come back for the expansion of the family business and starts pig farming. “I always tried to save money and make our life better, but I had no clue how to start. The financial literacy class turned out to be the first step to reach my goal”, she concludes.

## Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (CCA/DRM)



### Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Helvetas Nepal has a long and rich history of promoting climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk management (DRM). Building back better after the 2015 earthquake brought many DRM aspects to the fore, the key being the promotion of social/community resilience as well as the physical resilience of infrastructures. Although Helvetas Nepal had no projects in 2020 categorically dedicated to CCA, it was incorporated into many aspects of our work as a cross-cutting theme. Some of the key CCA activities in 2020 were a) promoting the “3Rs” in watersheds – that is, the recharge, retention and reuse of scarce water resources in our WASH activities, as well as Multiple Use Systems (MUS) and rainwater harvesting; b) training teachers and introducing climate change-related aspects into school curricula as part of our “blue schools” WASH programme and in some of our activities under the NMA (Nutrition-

Sensitive Mountain Agriculture) project; c) promoting the use of climate-sensitive technologies in our agricultural interventions under Elam, the Riverbed Farming project, and the SDC and Government of Nepal project NASDP/Prayas; d) informing farmers about climate change aspects as part of our Farmer Business Schools training package used by Elam; and f) bioengineering of riverbanks to avoid erosion around bridges, as promoted through the SDC and Government of Nepal Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU). In 2020, we also documented Helvetas Nepal's experiences in promoting the carbon-efficient bio-charcoal value chain.

As an environmentally responsible organization, we keep a track of our carbon footprint, attempting to reduce it as far as possible. We also aim to recycle waste and to be as plastic-free as possible.

---

## Humanitarian Aid – COVID-19 Response

---

2020 was punctuated by many natural and human-induced hazards in Nepal. With its diverse topography, complex geology and diverse climates, Nepal remains vulnerable to these hazards. Although not a humanitarian aid organization, Helvetas Nepal works to support the affected families to protect their well-being in whatever way possible.

The Tarai, especially the districts in Province 2, were hit hard by a cold wave in January-February 2020. With the support of SDC, Helvetas distributed 12,000 warm blankets to the people severely affected by the cold wave – poor Dalit families, poor and single women and men, people living with disabilities, pregnant and breastfeeding women, older persons, unaccompanied and separated children. The distribution was made under the leadership of the Local Disaster Management Committee of municipalities and in coordination with the District Disaster Management Committee. Helvetas reached out to 9073 households of 26 municipalities (106 wards) of 8 districts in just 20 days.

This year, humanitarian aid represented a nominal 0.11% of the total country programme budget and 2.06% of the expenditure.



Despite the government's multiple preventive measures and specifically the local governments' commendable job in attempting to prevent the spread of the coronavirus at the community level, COVID-19 and seasonal natural calamities increased the vulnerability of poor and disadvantaged people, our target beneficiaries. The long nationwide lockdown for almost six months and subsequent restrictions in travel and mobility led to limited services and support to the local population. This period also saw social stigmatization towards health workers, returnee migrants and infected people and increased cases of suicide. Economic activities have been heavily impacted, depriving farmers and agriculture workers, small businesses, domestic wage labourers and potential migrant workers of a source of income as the issuing of labour permits was also stopped by the government. For those in countries of destination at the time of the outbreak, a significant number lost their job; non-payment of salaries is common in the Gulf and India, and for those returning (especially from India), poor quarantine conditions represented a threat to health. COVID-19 is now spreading at the community level with Kathmandu valley becoming a hot spot. As far as Helvetas staff are concerned, almost all have worked virtually ("home office") since March 2020, with only a few exceptional office visits.

With the COVID-19 crisis intensifying each day, we put in place a series of measures to address the situation, to support scaling up of preventive efforts to limit the spread of the virus and to mitigate its socioeconomic impacts. The measures taken are as follows:

a. **Mass awareness and media mobilization:** Our projects like IWRM, Elam were massively engaged in media mobilizations, and local FM stations were supported to air the COVID-19-related awareness-raising jingles, PSAs and radio episodes in local languages. Similarly, SaMi, witnessing cases of stigmatization of returnee migrants and discrimination in accessing services, collaborated with Ujyaalo Network (a network of 70 local FM stations) and broadcast different PSAs. These PSAs aim both at raising awareness against stigmatization and its negative consequences as well as at informing the audience about the existing support measures.

**b. Social protection and relief measures:** Innovative social protection and relief measures were applied to support poor and vulnerable households. Together with the local governments, Prayas developed a system to apply a food voucher scheme as a part of its emergency-relief initiatives, mobilizing local traders and using local procurement processes. Special vouchers were designed, certified and handed over to the beneficiaries for them to exchange with the allocated rations through vendors selected by the municipality or ward offices. Based on the learning of food distribution, some municipalities used the voucher scheme for distributing agriculture inputs among 2488 farming households. Another project MITO brought cash-for-work approach to respond to the negative impact of the COVID-19 on the walnut producers. We continued our support through local partners and municipalities for the reintegration of returnees and developed virtual tools to continue skills training and orientation to industries for workplace safety, mobilised local partners to continue bridge-building and drinking water projects and encouraged small entrepreneurs to continue their agro-business and small household-based enterprises with safety measures.

**c. Healthcare and WASH material supports:** Our projects such as IWRMP, Elam, RbF, etc. extended different supports by providing healthcare and WASH materials. IWRMP was largely engaged in this measure through its fund and support from other collaborators like Charity : water, Swiss Climate, Solaqua Foundation, etc. Around 43,000 people were benefitted from the wider distribution of WASH materials, which included facemasks, soaps, handwashing drums, sanitary pads, etc. Likewise; 190 schools, 71 health posts and 61 public offices, including those of provincial and local governments, received pedal-operated handwashing stations. Around 890 WASH frontline workers and healthcare workers were supported with protective materials (sanitizers, N95 mask, gloves, soap, PPE, thermal guns, disinfectants, etc.). ENSSURE collaborated with National Innovation Centre to produce 400 safety gowns. Similarly, the project organized webinars by mobilizing occupational health and safety experts and reached 270 business owners. The project has supported the preparation and roll-out of the “Guidelines for Safety at the Workplace to Prevent Transmission of the COVID-19”, developed in coordination with the business/industry associations. Reportedly 1000 industries/schools adopted most provisions of the model guidelines. Likewise, Elam-promoted garment industries were mobilized to manufacture and distribute cotton facemasks.

**d. Psychosocial support:** The COVID-19 crisis led to an increase in demand for psychosocial counselling. Accordingly, our project SaMi adapted its intervention modalities and provided psychosocial counselling to service-seekers. A total of 1537 people (1363 women) received individual counselling, and 10,554 people (10,373 women) received group counselling during their financial literacy classes. SaMi continued to provide key services to the migrant workers and the members of their families through tele-counselling. Psychosocial first-aid services were provided at the quarantine centres to the prospective and returnee migrant as well as to their family members. A total of 3477 individuals (1732 women) were reached via tele-counselling and 10,740 individuals (1854 women) were supported through psychosocial first aid at the quarantine facilities.

**e. Quarantine centre support:** We also supported provisional quarantine centres set up for the returning migrant workers. IWRM programme supported 1223 people in different quarantine centres by providing WASH materials (soap, toothpaste, masks, sanitizers, etc.). In addition, around 1500 women were provided with sanitary pads. As mentioned above in this report, SaMI mobilized counsellors to provide psychosocial first aid to returnee migrants in quarantine centres while some were supported to stay in hotel quarantine centres.

Continued support from the side of donors by allowing Helvetas to divert some of the unspent funds to offer support to local governments and local partners in the fight against the pandemic was very much appreciated by all stakeholders. Helvetas management in Zurich, Bern and the US was extremely helpful in raising funds and granting flexibility to divert some of the allocated budget to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

### Case story: COVID-19 response: relief to the daily wage labourers

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected people’s lives throughout the world. Some of the worst affected are the people surviving on daily wages in developing countries like Nepal. Lockdown and sluggish economic activities caused by the pandemic have deprived them of their employment (opportunities) and earning power and consequently to daily hardships. Lost earnings mean they cannot afford to buy safety materials to protect themselves from getting infected by the virus. The COVID-19

responses carried out by Helvetas Nepal with the support of charity: water has provided relief to such people – one of whom, Birkha Bahadur Shahi, recently shared his story.

Birkha is a beneficiary of the Dopkekhola Drinking Water and Sanitation Scheme implemented under the 2020 charity: water grant in Palipat, Chhedagad Municipality in Jajarkot. His family of five members survives solely on his earnings from daily wages. He is a mason and works mainly



Birkha Bahadur Shahi with handwashing bucket provided by IWRM Programme

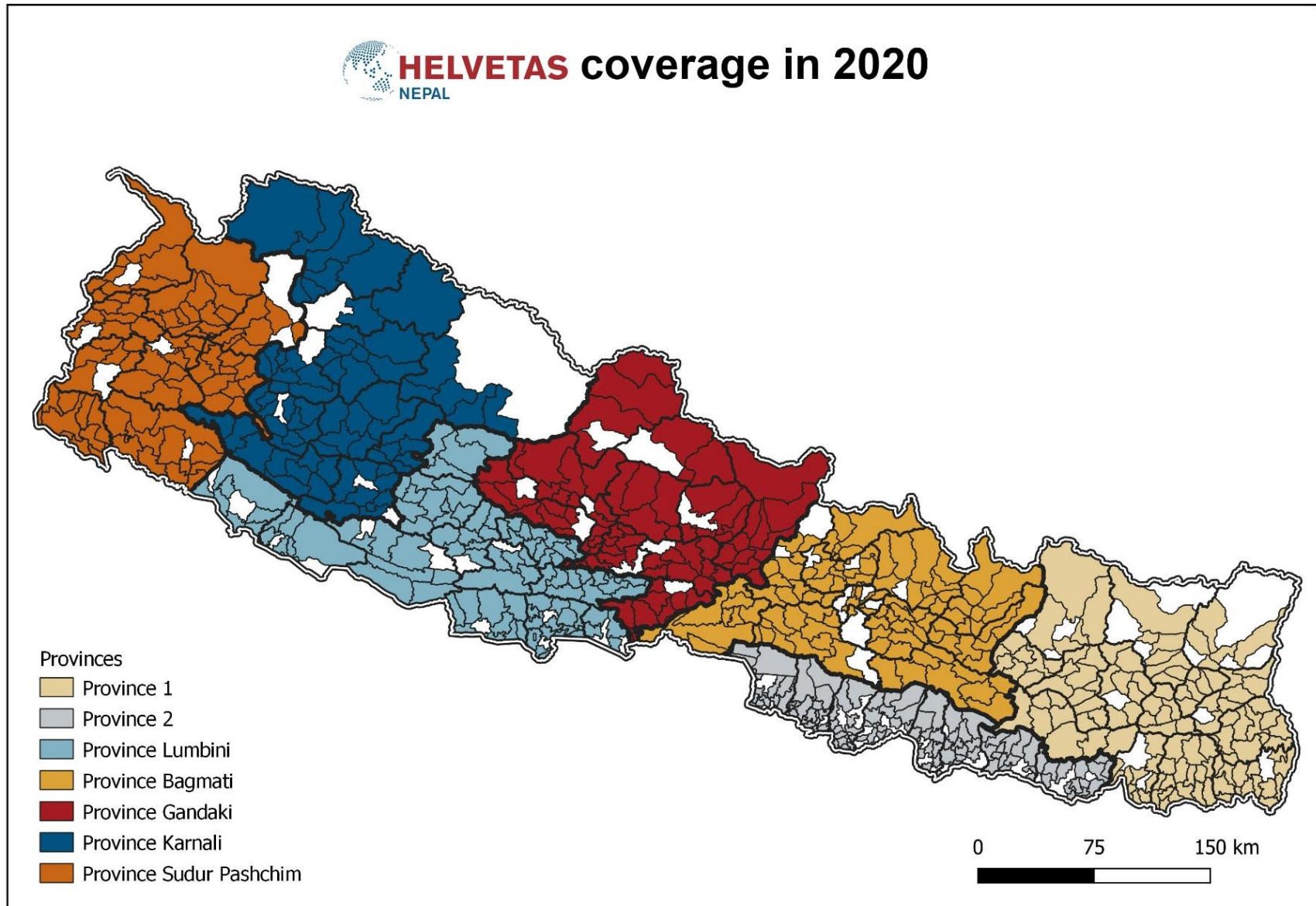
in drinking water-supply projects in his village and nearby areas. He is thus a frontline WASH worker. But the lockdown halted his employment. The construction works were stopped for almost a month during the lockdown. Without wages, he could not afford to buy masks and handwashing aids to protect his family from the pandemic. "I was so worried about losing my employment and more so for not being able to buy the safety materials like masks, sanitizer or handwashing soaps for my family", says Birkha.

Helvetas Nepal distributed reusable masks, water buckets with attached taps and soaps for handwashing to all 50 households (including that of Birkha) in the Dopkekhola Drinking Water and Sanitation Scheme area. He thanks Helvetas Nepal for this genuine support and says, "The sanitation and safety materials provided by Helvetas were a great relief for us. We now frequently wash our hands and wear masks and the other people in the village do the same. I think this has substantially contributed to contain the spread of the disease in our village. We are now more confident of our safety from the COVID-19. I have started to work again. How can a daily wage labourer survive without working?"



Birkha Bahadur Shahi

## Geographical Coverage



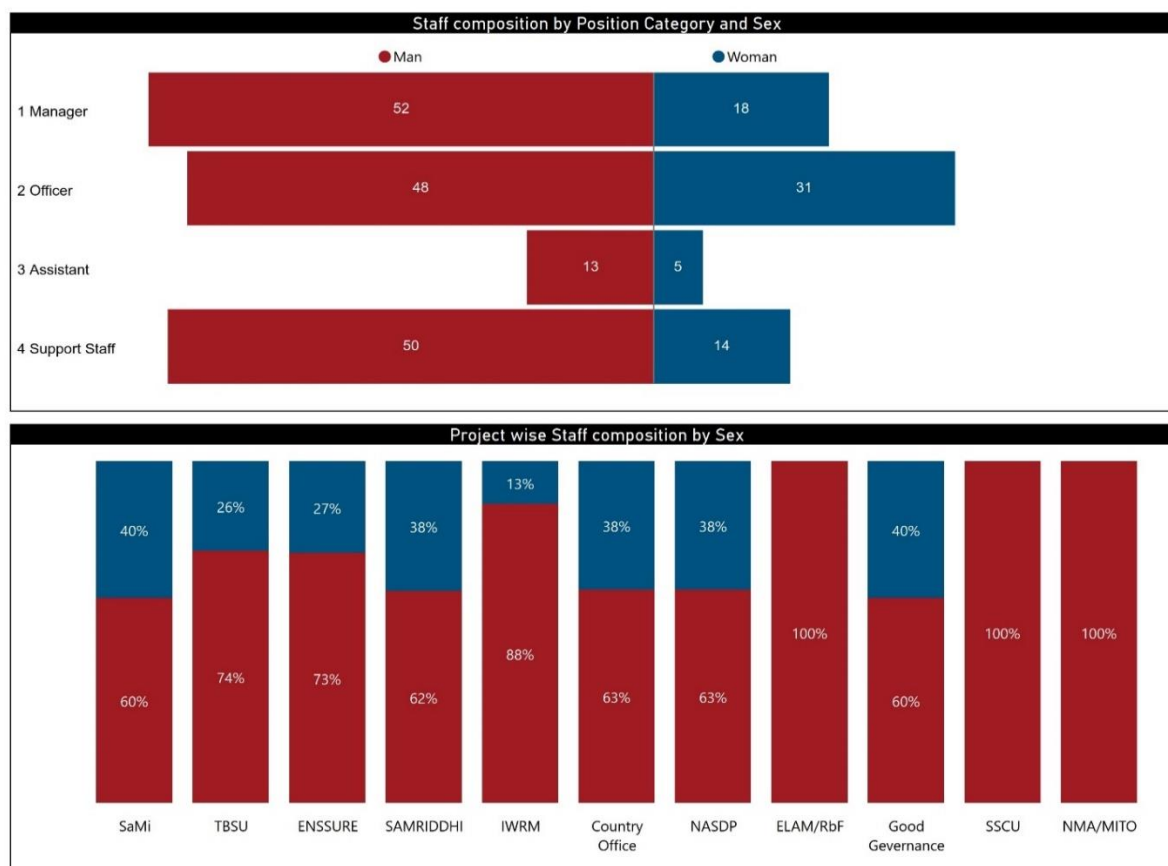
## Human Resources

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges for staff to work in an uncertain environment, manage their stress and maintain a work-life balance. To help the staff cope with the situation, some key measures taken by Helvetas Nepal in 2020 were: maintaining regular communication with all staff, connecting employees, engaging them, flexibility to work with the changing environment, working from home, digitalization, virtual meetings and capacity-building of the employees. To cope with the stress due to the COVID-19 crisis, psychosocial first-aid sessions were provided to all staff by a professional psychologist.

At the end of December 2020, Helvetas Nepal had a total of 231 employees, 29% were women. Despite the pandemic, in 2020, Helvetas recruited 21 new employees (48% women) whereas 80 employees (39% women) left the organization. Around 60 staff members stepped down due to successful completion of projects such as ICSFP, EF-SR, Prayas, Research for Community Access Partnership (ReCAP) and Good Governance Project (GGP). There were substantial challenges for smooth closure of the projects, handover and staff movement during the COVID-19 situation. However, with close coordination and cooperation from the government stakeholders, donors and other stakeholders, these issues were handled efficiently. Resignation of employees towards the end of the project period, managing their role by short-term employees and job enlargement of other employees was a challenge due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Aligning with the government and donor’s guidelines, the Safety and Security Guidance Note (SSAGUN) was issued, thereby advising staff from time to time to manage the difficult situation of the COVID-19. Some policies like leave, use of office vehicle, travel, staff mobilization was redefined to address the situation.

We have realized the need for the digitalization of our systems and to build a strong and agile team to work in a digitalized environment.





---

## Personal Story

---

### Jane Carter, International Programme Advisor (Director, Programme Development)

Sitting in my home office in Bienne and recalling the past 3.5 years in Nepal, I now marvel at what was possible. The places visited, the workshops held, the field activities observed; above all, the interactions with so many people.... I remember times of fun and laughter – but also of hard work and commitment. The COVID-19 pandemic has shrunk horizons. Temporarily, I hope. More importantly, it has again widened the gap that had been closing between the well-off and those who are struggling to get by. We must hope that this growing divide is also temporary.



As most of those reading this text will know, I was no stranger to Nepal when I arrived at the Country Office in May 2017 to take up the post of International Programme Advisor (Director, Programme Development for purposes of external communication). I had also lived in Nepal in the late 1980s, conducting doctoral fieldwork in the village of Suri. Life in rural Nepal was very basic then: no toilets, no safe drinking water, no electricity, poor health facilities, very limited schooling opportunities, and strong social hierarchies. Nepal has changed massively since that time, and it has been a privilege to see this development. The villagers of Suri whom I visited, and who visited me, whilst I was living in Kathmandu are well-nourished, well-clothed and well-informed individuals. Their vision of the world is altogether different, broader, and far less bounded by the rigidities of social discrimination than used to be the case. Social hierarchies of caste, ethnicity and gender of course remain, but there is more opportunity to challenge them.

My thoughts always tend to return to Suri as a metaphor for the rest of Nepal. This is dangerous, given the country's rich diversity of people and terrain; our work in Karnali and in the Tarai provided a regular reminder of this fact. Nepal can also surprise. In May 2017, the first in the series of municipal, provincial and federal elections were underway. Few had predicted that voting would take place so soon after the painful period of promulgating the new constitution; even fewer that the elections would pass off free and fairly. Yet it did – with the added surprise of the merger of the UML and Maoists into the single Communist Party of Nepal, which swept the board. This was an ill-fated merger, as it turns out. However, in early 2018, we saw the establishment of a federal system of governance in practice, and huge hope for a new page in Nepal's history. With the backing of Lionel Giron, Regional Coordinator for the Himalayas, the Helvetas Nepal Management Team took the decision to revise the Helvetas Nepal Country Strategy. The result was a new strategy that focused all activities on supporting federalism, especially at the local level. If there is one overriding theme of my IPA tenure, it is this: seeing how the elected representatives and administrative staff of municipalities seized the moment and generally sought to do the best they could for local development. Supporting this process required a huge mindset change amongst our staff: from implementor to facilitator. Staff rose to the challenge, while questioning voices faded rapidly. We can look back on excellent collaboration with municipalities on agriculture, migration, technical and vocational education, trail bridges, WASH and of course governance itself. I trust this will continue. Similarly, I was able to visit our earthquake-response activities and meet with enthusiastic municipal authorities as well as many women and men who were, however painfully, rebuilding their homes and livelihoods. Working on a capitalization of the above-mentioned experiences allowed me to see the overlap between humanitarian response and development activities at their best.

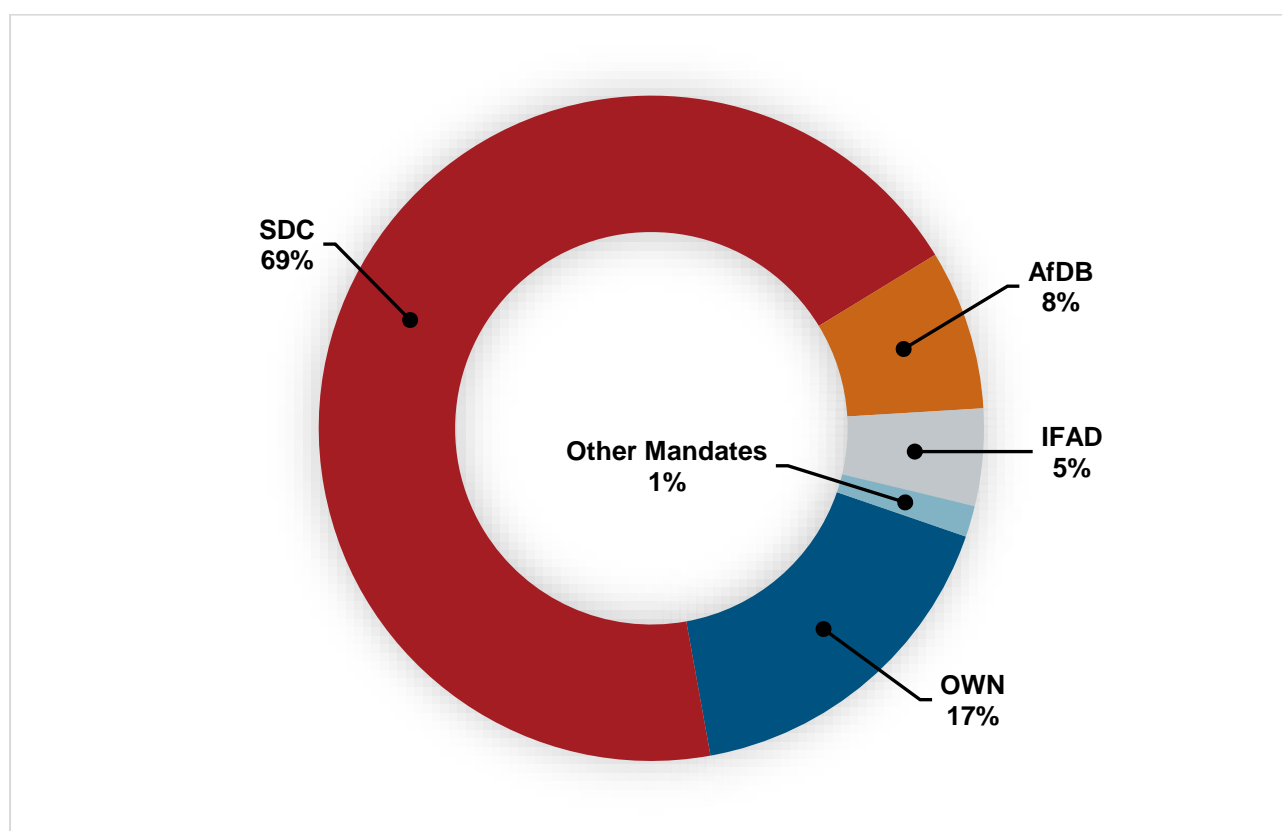
The COVID-19 pandemic put an end to field visits, and indeed to work in the Country Office building. From March to July 2020, we were busy just keeping things going by virtual means – trying to support what activities were possible during the lockdown and to maintain everyone's morale. Gradually the situation eased a little, and by early October, I could at least meet a few members of my immediate team to say goodbye. The entire Helvetas team organized an amazing virtual send-off for me, but it was a sad farewell. I do hope to see you again in person rather than on a screen! *Pheri Bhetaula!*

## Budget and Investment

The approved budget for 2020 was CHF 16.28 million, a slight decline from the approved budget of 2019 of CHF 17.19 million. The utilization of the budget was on the lower side, with just over 64% of the total budget being utilized. Restriction in mobility for a few months due to government-imposed COVID-19 lockdowns as well as organization-imposed restrictions for staff, partner and community safety resulted in a stoppage of activities. Although restrictions were relaxed and the activities started picking up pace as the year-end approached, the activities and spending gaps could not be covered.

### Sources of Funds (%)

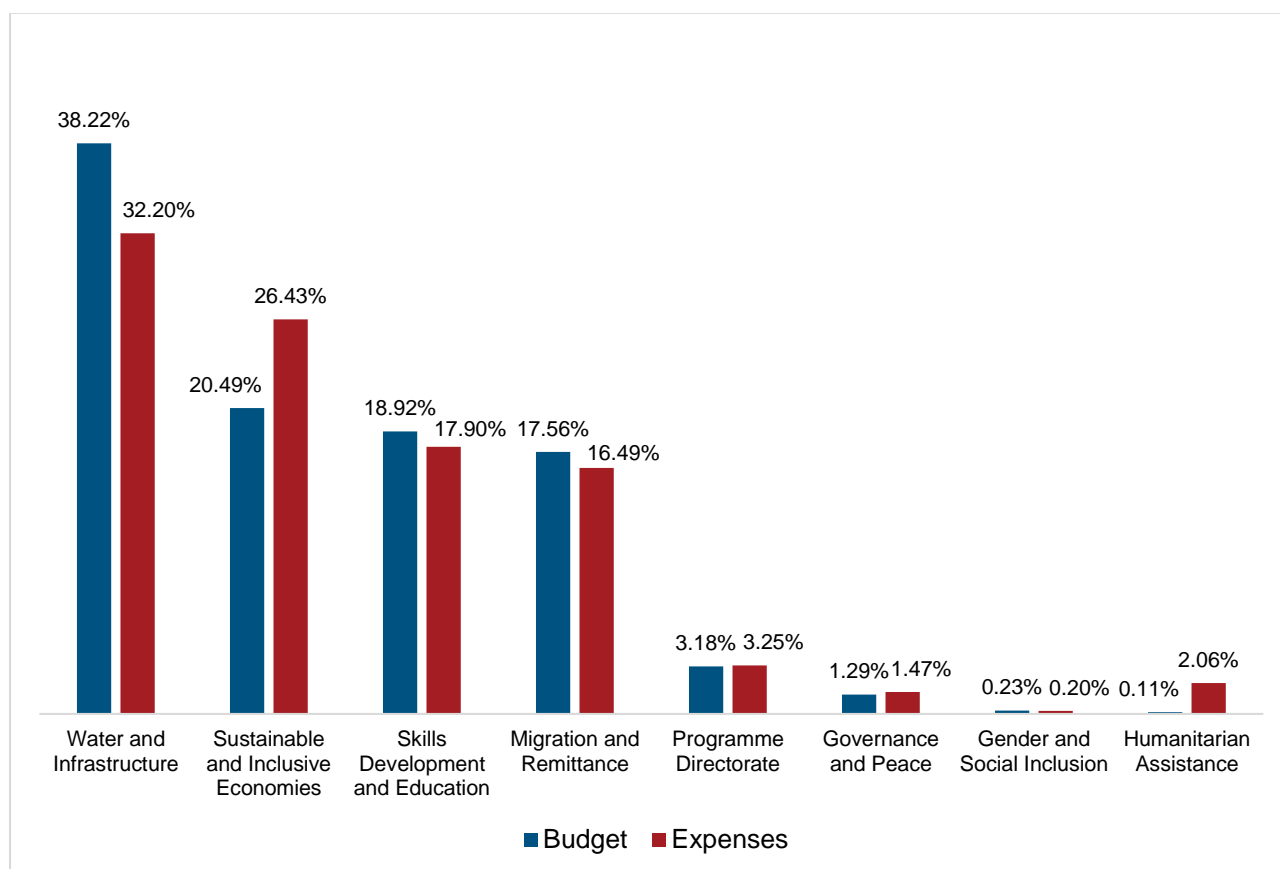
Of the total approved budget of CHF 16.28 million, as in the previous years, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) continued to be the biggest source of funds with a share of 69% of the total funding. 17% of committed funds were from the organization's own fundraising and programme contribution. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) contributed around 5% and the African Development Bank's share was 8% of the approved budget. 1% of funds were contributed through various other donors, mostly for innovative/piloting initiatives.



## Investment by Working Areas

The budget and investment for the year 2020 are reported by the working areas of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. Of the five working areas, Water and Infrastructure including drinking water, sanitation and water for food, rural roads, and bridges was the biggest working area in terms of investment volume, absorbing 32.2% of the total funds spent. Sustainable and Inclusive Economies followed as the working area with the next highest investment at 26%, followed by Skills Development and Education at 17.9%. Migration and Remittance was also a sizeable working area, with 16.49% of total budget expended. Co-funding for a project with Swiss Solidarity resulted in a share of expenses of 2.06% for Humanitarian Assistance. Governance and Peace and Gender and Social Inclusion, considered separate interventions, occupied the lowest shares of total funding; however, these thematic anchors were a sizeable part of spending in other working areas.

## Budget vs. Actual Expenditure



## Audit Report

### CSC & Co

Chartered Accountants

Mahamati Bhawan  
175, Gairidhara Marg, Gairidhara  
PO Box: 4861, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: +977-1-4004580, 4004581, 4004582  
Fax: +977-1-4004578  
E-mail: csc@cscnepal.com  
Web: www.cscnepal.com

#### Independent Auditor's Report

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation,  
Maulbeerstrasse 10, 3001 Berne, Switzerland

#### Opinion

On the FDFA Standard Terms of Reference, we have audited the financial information of the Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Nepal which comprises the balance sheet as at 31 December 2020 and the income statement for the year ended 31 December 2020, and the notes to the financial information including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial information on Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Nepal for the year ended 31 December 2020 are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the accounting policies described in the notes and comply with the requirements of the FDFA Standard Terms of reference – Version 2018.

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the "Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the financial information" section of our report.

We are independent of the entity in accordance with the requirements of the IESBA Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Emphasis of matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 3 to the financial information, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial statement is prepared to provide information in connection with the audit of consolidated financial statements of the HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Switzerland. As a result, the statement may not be suitable for another purpose. Our audit opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

#### Management's Responsibility for the Financial Information

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial information. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial information that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

#### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial information

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial information as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial information.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by Management.

Jitendra Kumar Mishra  
Partner

Place: Kathmandu

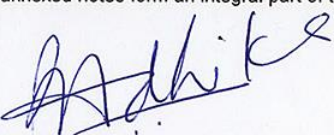
Date: 31 March, 2021

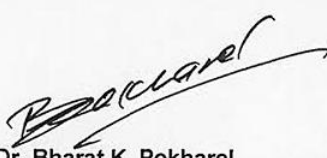
UDIN No: 210331CA00264jYF0C

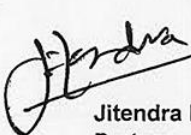


HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal				
BALANCE SHEET				
As At December 31, 2020				
				Currency ( NPR)
Account Group	Description	Reference/ Schedule Numbers	2020	2019
<b>ASSETS</b>				
1000	Cash in hand	1	118,696	266,378
1100	Cash at Bank	2	138,612,541	143,786,408
1400	Advances	3	161,104,522	152,087,856
1500	Deposits	4	459,580	20,825,582
	<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>300,295,339</b>	<b>316,966,224</b>
<b>CAPITAL &amp; LIABILITIES</b>				
2000	<b>Current Liabilities</b>	5	<b>43,808,065</b>	<b>30,532,505</b>
2010	Statutory Liabilities		1,426,472	1,019,004
2020	Staff Liabilities		25,466,421	26,429,693
2030	Other Current Liabilities		4,629,040	2,755,488
2040	Program Creditors		12,286,132	328,320
	<b>Fund Balance</b>			
2100	CAPITAL HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Head Office, Switzerland		256,487,274	286,433,719
	<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>300,295,339</b>	<b>316,966,224</b>


The annexed notes form an integral part of this Balance Sheet


  
**Pragya Adhikari**  
 Head of Finance and Administration

  
**Dr. Bharat K. Pokharel**  
 Country Director

As per our report of the even date  
  
**Jitendra Kumar Mishra**  
 Partner  
 CSC & Co.  
 Chartered Accountants

Place: Dhobighat, Lalitpur  
 Date: 31 March 2021





<b>HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal</b> <b>Statement of Income and Expenditure</b> <b>For the Year 2020 : 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020</b>				
				Currency (NPR)
Account Group	Description	Reference/ Schedule Numbers	2020	2019
	<b>Income:</b>			
9000	<u>Remittances / Grant receipts</u>			
	Remittances from Head Office	6	1,021,334,315	1,262,997,672
	Remittances from local donors	7	78,797,343	38,596,062
	<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>1,100,131,658</b>	<b>1,301,593,734</b>
	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
51	<u>Personnel costs Expatriates</u>		121,110	1,158,908
5130	Expatriates Recruitment costs		-	-
5140	Expatriates HRD costs		-	-
5150	Expatriate Travelling and Representation costs		101,974	1,139,197
5151	Expatriate Homeleave & Transfer Costs		-	-
5160	Expatriate Foreign residence costs		-	-
5169	Other Expatriation costs		19,136	19,711
52	<u>Personnel costs Nationals</u>		452,399,446	584,116,907
5200	Personnel Cost Nationals		431,669,664	530,778,624
5250	Travel & Representation costs National Staff		20,729,782	53,338,283
54	<u>Local Consultants</u>		19,242,163	21,299,958
5400	National Consultants fees		18,864,494	20,641,982
5450	National Consultants Travel & Repr. Costs		377,669	657,976
71	<u>Operating Cost</u>		51,318,704	93,994,922
7110	Vehicles		8,587,992	25,546,607
7120	Office costs		39,664,784	60,521,257
7150	Other operating costs		3,065,928	7,927,058
72	<u>Project Costs International</u>		605,136,464	646,411,780
7210	Education and Training costs		62,893,815	62,416,875
7220	Investment and Equipment costs		1,434,997	27,772,467
7231	Contribution to NGO		93,468,852	145,049,213
7232	Contribution to Govt Authorities		224,895,446	155,982,081
7233	Contribution to Private Sector		79,549,497	126,927,473
7234	Contribution to Beneficiaries		108,563,925	107,786,070
7239	Various contribution to Partners		34,329,932	20,477,601
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	8	<b>1,128,217,887</b>	<b>1,346,982,475</b>
	<b>Other Receipts:</b>			
8200	Bank Interest		-	-
			(28,086,229)	(45,388,741)

The annexed notes form an integral part of this Statement of Income and Expenditure.

*Pragya Adhikari*

Pragya Adhikari  
Head of Finance



*Dr. Bharat K. Pokharel*

Dr. Bharat K. Pokharel  
Country Director

As per our report of the even date  
Kathmandu  
*Jitendra Kumar Mishra*  
Jitendra Kumar Mishra  
Partner  
CSC & Co.  
Chartered Accountants

Place: Dhobighat, Lalitpur  
Date: 31 March 2021

---

## Way Forward

---

We will continue working with governments, specifically local governments, to make them effective, transparent and accountable to women and men citizens, who are empowered to demand better services in access to water, bridges, skill, employment, safer migration and efficient disaster management. Many positive relationships with local governments and synergies built among different Helvetas projects operating in the same municipality will be maintained. We will build links between our work on migration and agriculture and value chains, encouraging municipalities to support returnee migrants in investing their remittances in promising local enterprises. Similarly, we will link our work with municipalities on water supplies with awareness-raising on hygiene, food security and nutrition. A user-friendly virtual communication platform will be created to keep the connection among staff working in field offices, project management, country office and partners so that the institutionalized face-to-face meetings will also be continued where possible.

Digitalization will be the focus area of the organization. We will continue to demonstrate that many of the activities can be accomplished virtually. We show that we are a committed organization in bringing innovative approaches to development, particularly digital transformation. We are walking the talk when it comes to integrating innovative approaches and digital technologies in our core business. The organization has shown an extraordinary capacity to move to the new working modalities during difficult times, thereby accelerating the transformation into digital Helvetas. Today, we are proud to say that Helvetas Nepal's virtual and digital workplace is a reality and thanks are due to all our donors, collaborators, commercial banks, financial institutions and local partners for cooperating with us. We have complete virtual working environment, and it is in use through a new direct and secure virtual Helvetas access. We are continuing to spearhead the holistic concept of a digital organization within the Helvetas global family, being well ahead of the curve. We have established the Digital Service Portfolio, a cloud-based platform that offers information and advisory messages to all the staff in the project field offices and selected government partners to enable them to offer services digitally to the public. Hundreds of meetings, conferences, training, interaction programmes, including field verification, were held in virtual format, which is a historic first for Helvetas Nepal and Helvetas Nepal is grateful to the service providers and all the staff for trying out to hold such events virtually. The virtual modality allowed for more interaction (not less than that could have been in person!) and elevated levels of discussion. For the first time, we opened the door to the private sector to engage in such discussions. We could convene a number of interaction programmes and training events with government and non-government partners to ensure municipalities designate local development work as essential services during lockdowns. We have been able to make a wealth of information and technical expertise freely accessible on our website, which is updated regularly. We have designed dashboards to monitor staff work from home and duty stations provide transparency, accountability and improved coordination support to our partners through our projects and field staff.

It is not only the urban population but also these days rural people who have access to mobile phones, which is an opportunity for our development work that makes our delivery more efficient and effective. In 2021, a new phase of a pilot project dedicated to strengthening municipalities' digital governance system will be started. We started to deliver training programme through an IT-based platform. Prospect Nepali migrant labour has access to an online system for the processing of their employment permit, which has improved the efficiency and quality of government services. During the COVID-19 crisis, digital tools have helped our vocational skills-related projects to design digitalized systems for not only orientation courses for safety measures but also for the verification of employment records in those remote areas as travel was not possible due to travel restrictions imposed by the government.

Next year will see the termination of both NMA and Samridhhi projects. Closing the projects in a timely and constructive manner will be a challenge. Nevertheless, this will be managed without any major issues as all partners and staff are well informed. The inception of the next phase of the SDC's project Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment (ENSSURE) is expected without a major delay. We will continue to seek new mandates from the EU in our areas of expertise where our services are recognized and demanded, especially in governance. An important change towards the end of next year will be the recruitment of the new Country Director.

We will continue our main role of technical assistance to support government and non-government agencies. We will enhance our services as knowledge-brokers rather than implementers. We will be supporting and strengthening our local partners rather than engaging in direct service delivery and project execution. Once the federal setup is functional with a strong presence of provincial and local governments, which are mandated to coordinate projects at provincial and local levels respectively, we will even hand over our responsibility of TA to these government agencies and TBSU will be the first to pilot and begin such process of handover of TA responsibility to national organizations, which will be outsourced by the provincial governments. Through our both mandated and own funded projects, we aim to continue our assistance to provincial and local governments for their evolution into strong well-governed institutions that deliver and enable non-governmental, private sector investors and agencies, and more importantly local communities and citizens, who are in the true sense the change agents of development. To achieve this, we have demonstrated our role in strengthening local institutions in terms of not only their technical competencies but also in system-building of their procurement, recruitment, financial management and organizational policies, guidelines and matters related to all kinds of institutional infrastructure.

We are no more only a rural development organization; we have our engagement both in rural, semi-urban and urban areas through our projects and programmes ranging from governance, water and sanitation, suspension bridge, market-systems development, large-scale irrigation schemes, vocational education, food security and nutrition, migration, and humanitarian response. Through these projects, we will continue our efforts to learn the challenges and opportunities posed by urbanization and the new dynamics of urban poverty.

We have gained practical experience in the area of humanitarian-development nexus. The nexus approach has given us a new identity of not only a development organization but also a humanitarian as well as a development organization. We have further professionalized and increased our outreach in responding to disaster and humanitarian crises. By working with our Bangladesh-based regional backstopper for emergency preparedness, we will strengthen our institutional infrastructure related to our preparedness and response plan and in supporting resilience to our local municipalities.

The successful positioning of Helvetas Nepal as a trusted partner and source of technical expertise is reflected in the extra-budgetary funding and phase extension that we have received from SDC, Happel Foundation, charity: water and IFAD, and for which we are very grateful. These phase extensions build on existing programmes, projects and partnerships across the organization and will harness the selected expressions of interest that we feel is our competency areas.

We have a strong Country Programme Management Team which is a sounding body for major decisions. We have also established Personnel Representation Group as an engine for solidarity and inclusiveness. Both mechanisms have played an instrumental role in developing a culture of collective decision-making and in strengthening solidarity and team spirit among the employees. Helvetas Nepa is happy to confirm that relations continue to improve between management and the staff representatives, based on mutual trust, understanding and common aspiration. Our appreciation goes to all who made the participatory and inclusive process institutionalized as organizational culture. There is an institutionalized system of decentralized authority and staff meetings. Learning-and-sharing events are held on a regular basis in the spirit of cooperation and dialogue, and while we may not always agree, our commitment is that all will continue to be heard, and their points of view considered. We will continue this practice as one of the important parts of the organizational culture.



## Portfolio

Working area	Working Rural/Municipalities
Governance and Peace (GOP)	Bheri, Chisankhugadhi, Diprung, Halesi Tuwachung, Kankai, Khadadevi, Khandachakra, Molung, Naraharinath, Siddhicharan, Sunapati and Sunkoshi
Sustainable and Inclusive Economy (SIE)	Aathbiskot, Ainselukhark, Bagchaur, Baijanath, Balwa, Bangad Kupinde, Barahapokhari, Barahathawa, Barahtal, Belaka, Bhadrapur, Bhagawatimai, Bhajani, Bhangaha, Bheri, Bheriganga, Birendranagar, Birgunj, Buddhabhumi, Champadevi, Chamunda Bindrasaini, Chandannath, Chaudandigadhi, Chaurjahari, Chhayanath Rara, Chhedagad, Chhireshwornath, Chisankhugadhi, Dhangadhi, Diktel Rupakot Majhuwadgadi, Diprung, Duduwa, Dungeshwor, Gaushala, Godaita, Gramthan, Gulariya, Gurans, Gurbhakot, Halesi Tuwachung, Hariwan, Jahada, Jantedhunga, Kailari, Kankai, Katari, Kaudena, Kepilasagadhi, Khandachakra, Khijidemba, Khotehang, Kotahimai, Krishnapur, Kumakhmalika, Lahan, Laljhadi, Lekbeshi, Likhu, Lumbini Sanskritik, Madhyabindu, Madi, Maharajgunj, Mayadevi, Molung, Musikot, Naraharinath, Narayan, Nijgadh, Patrasi, Punarbas, Rajdevi, Rangeli, Rapti Sonari, Raskot, Ratuwamai, Rautamai, Rohini, Sakela, Sani Bheri, Sharada, Shiwalaya, Siddhicharan, Simta, Sunkoshi, Surunga, Tapli, Tatopani, Tila, Tilagufa, Tribeni, Tribeni Nalagad, Triyuga, Udayapurgadhi and Yashodhara
Skill Development and Education (SDE)	Arun, Aurahi, Bagmati, Balwa, Banepa, Barahathawa, Bardibas, Belaka, Belbari, Bhangaha, Bharatpur, Bheriganga, Bhimdatta, Bhojpur, Biratnagar, Birendranagar, Birgunj, Buddhabhumi, Budhanilakantha, Butwal, Champadevi, Chandrapur, Chaudandigadhi, Chhathar Jorpati, Chhireshwornath, Dhangadhi, Dhankuta, Dhanusadham, Dharan, Diktel Rupakot Majhuwadgadi, Doramba, Duhabi, Gauriganga, Gaushala, Ghorahi, Godawari, Gokarneshwor, Golbazar, Gujara, Halesi Tuwachung, Haripur, Hariwan, Hetauda, Inaruwa, Ishworpur, Itahari, Jaleswor, Janaki, Janakpur, Jitpur Simara, Kageshwori Manahora, Kalaiya, Kalika, Kamalamai, Kankai, Karjanha, Kathmandu, Kawasoti, Khadadevi, Khairahani, Khijidemba, Khotehang, Kirtipur, Kohalpur, Kolhabi, Lahan, Lalbandi, Laligurans, Lalitpur, Letang, Likhu, Loharpatti, Madhuwan, Mahagadhimai, Mahalaxmi, Manebhanjyang, Manthali, Mirchaiya, Mithila, Myanglung, Nepalgunj, Nijgadh, Pakhribas, Panauti, Patahrishanishchare, Pauwadungma, Pokhara Lekhnath, Rajbiraj, Ramechhap, Rapti, Ratnanagar, Ratuwamai, Rawabesi Haramtar, Sakhuwanankarkatti, Saptakoshi, Shadananda, Shambhunath, Shankharapur, Shuklaphanta, Siddharthanagar, Siddhicharan, Sukhipur, Sunapati, Sundarharaicha, Sunkoshi, Sunwal, Surunga, Tansen, Tokha, Triyuga, Tulsipur and Uralabari
Water and Infrastructure (WIN)*	Bhagawatimai, Bhairabi, Chhedagad, Dhankuta, Dullu, Dungeshwor, Gurans, Kalika, Kamalbazar, Khalsa Chhintang Shahidbhumi, Lekbeshi, Naraharinath, Naumule, Pakhribas, Shiwalaya, Simta and Thantikandh
Migration and remittance (M&R)	Annapurna, Arnama, Babai, Bagchaur, Baglung, Baijanath, Bakaiya, Bangad Kupinde, Banganga, Baragadhi, Barahathawa, Bardaghat, Bardibas, Barhabise, Barpak Sulikot, Belhi Chapena, Belkotgadhi, Bhadrapur, Bhanu, Bharatpur, Bhojpur, Bhokraha, Bhumlu, Bidur, Binayee, Biratnagar, Birgunj, Butwal, Byas, Chandranagar, Chandrapur, Chatrakot, Chaudandigadhi, Chautara SangachokGadhi, Chhatreshwori, Damak, Deumai, Dhanauji, Dhangadhi, Dharan, Dhulikhel, Dhunibesi, Diktel Rupakot Majhuwadgadi, Doramba, Dudhouli, Durga Bhagwati, Falelung, Falgunanda, Gaidakot, Galkot, Galyang, Ganesman Charnath, Gangajamuna, Garuda, Gaur, Gauriganj, Gaushala, Ghodaghodi, Ghorahi, Godaita, Gorkha, Gurans, Halesi Tuwachung, Hariharpurgadhi, Harinas, Hariwan, Hatuwadgadi, Helambu, Hetauda, Ichchhyakamana, Illam, Inaruwa, Isma, Itahari, Jaimuni, Jaleswor, Janaki, Janakpur, Jitpur Simara, Kalaiya, Kamalamai, Kanchan, Kanchanrup, Kanepokhari, Kanthekhol, Kapilbastu, Katari, Kaudena, Kawasoti, Kepilasagadhi, Khajura, Khotehang, Kohalpur, Lahan, Lamahi, Likhu, Machhapuchchhre, Madhyabindu, Madi, Madi, Malangawa, Manahari, Mandandeupur, Mangsebung, Manthali, Mayadevi, Mechinagar, Miklajung, Musikot, Myagde, Nepalgunj, Nijgadh, Nilakantha, Palungtar, Panchpokhari Thangpal, Pariwartan, Parsagadhi, Phidim, Pipra, Pokhara Lekhnath, Pratappur, Putalibazar, Rajbiraj, Ramgram, Rangeli, Ratnanagar, Rautamai, Resunga, Rolpa, Roshi, Runtigadi, Sahid Lakhana, Sahidnagar, SakhuwaPrasauni, Shadananda, Shambhunath, Sharada, Shivapuri, Shivaraj, Shuklagandaki, Siddharthanagar, Simraungadh, Siraha, Sukhipur, Sunapati, Sunil Smriti, Sunwal, Suryodaya, Thaha, Thakre, Tikapur, Tillotama, Tinpatan, Tulsipur, Umakunda, Uralabari and Waling
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)	All programme area
Humanitarian Assistance	Arnama, Balwa, Baragadhi, Bardibas, Behli, Bhangaha, Chapena, Chhipaharmai, Chhinnamasta, Dhanusadham, Dhobini, Gaur, Gausala, Janakpur, Jitpur-Simara, Kanchanpur, Karmaiya, Kaudena, Malangawa, Pokhariya, Rajdevi, Sabaila, Sahid Nagar, Sakhuwa Prasauni, Siraha, Sukhipur

\*Trail Bridge Programme under WIN is a Nationwide programme

---

## Thanks

---

Helvetas Nepal would like to sincerely thank all its partners who continue to support in achieving the desired outcomes and outputs:

### **Government Agencies and Projects**

Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT)

Department of Agriculture

Department of Local Infrastructure

Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security

Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport

National Planning Commission

Nepal Agriculture Research Council

Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI)

### **Donor and International Implementation Partners:**

CARITAS Switzerland

Charity: water

Solaqua Foundation

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

European Union

Water Integrity Network

Viva Con Agua

### **Non-Governmental National and Local Implementation Partners**

Action for Development Pvt. Ltd. (AFD)

Alliance for Social Mobilization Pvt. Ltd. (AN)

ANTARANG

Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)

Asian Forum

Associates' Nepal Synergy (ANS)

Awaj Abhiyan Nepal

Bahuudashaya Capital Training Centre

Bal Sewa Samaj

Byabasaya Talim Bikas Tatha Paramarsha Kendra Pvt. Ltd. (BDCC)

Centre for Mental Health and Counselling Nepal (CMC-Nepal)

Chamber of Commerce and Industries Birgunj, Parsa

Chandarjyoti Ekikrit Gramin Bikash Samaj  
Charghare Sewa Samiti  
Civil Society Alliance for Nutrition, Nepal (CSANN)  
Community Human Resource Development Programme  
Community Development and Environment Conservation Forum, Sindhupalchok  
Community for Social Development Centre  
Cooperation For Development (CFD)-Jajarkot  
Creative Skills Private Limited (CMES)  
Everest club  
Fine Smart International Consultancy Pvt. Ltd.-Banke  
Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB)  
FORWARD Nepal  
F-Skill Pvt Ltd. ( F-SKILL)  
Genius Multi Technical Institute Pvt. Ltd. (GMTI)  
Good Governance Club, Jajarkot  
Growth Sellers Pvt. Ltd  
Himalaya Social Development Centre (HSDC)-Jajarkot  
Himalayan Community Development Forum  
Hotel Association of Nepal  
Human Rights, and Environmental Development Centre (HuREnDeC)  
Indreni Social Development Forum  
Jana Chetana Abhiyan Nepal (PACN)  
Jayan Technical College of Technology Pvt. Ltd. (JAYAN)  
Junar Cooperative Association of Nepal, Sindhuli  
Kantipur Bahu Prabidhik Shikshalaya (KBPS)  
Kathmandu University (KU)  
Kohalpur Institute of Technical Education Pvt Ltd (KITE)  
Mahila Aatmanirbhar Kendra (MANK), Sindhupalchok  
Mitra Dhanusha  
Multi-Skill & Environment Development (MSED)  
National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN)  
National Network for Safe Migration (NNSM)  
National Reconstruction Authority  
Nawa Kiran Sewa Samaj Nepal  
Nepal Biotech Private Ltd, Bhaisepati Kathmandu  
Nepal Engineering and Technical Science Academy (NETSA)  
Nepal Federation of Saving and Credit Cooperative Unions Ltd. (NEFSCUN)  
Nepal Herbs and Herbal Association of Nepal

North Star and Miteri

Panchakanya Training Institute (PTI)

Pathibhara Himalayan Polytechnic Institute (PHPI)

People Forum for Human Rights (PF)

Pourakhi Nepal

Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee (PNCC)

Rastriya Rojgar Prabardhan Kendra

Reconstruction Development Centre (RRDC)

REMREC and SITARA

Rural Development Centre

Rural Development Nepal

Rural Infrastructure & management Consultant Pvt. Ltd. (RIMC)

Rural Society Development Center

Rural Women Upliftment Association

Sabal Nepal

Sahayogi Samaj Nepal

Sana Byabasaya Paramarsha tatha Talim Kendra Pvt. Ltd. (BCC)

Saptari Samudahik Bikash Kendra

Scott Wilson Nepal Pvt. Ltd

SEBAC-Nepal

Shangri-La Association

Shreeram Niketan Biotech Pvt. Ltd

Social Awareness Development Academy (SADA)

Social Development Centre (SODEC) Pvt. Ltd.

Srijansil Samaj ko Srijana

Subarna Multiple Training Centre

Surya Samajik Sewa Sangh (4S)-Jumla

Sustainable Agriculture and Environment and Water Conservation Centre (SAEWCC)

Sustainable Technology Adaptive Research and Implementation Centre, Nepal (STARIC/N),

Trade Link

Training and Consultancy Centre for Employment (TRACE)

Training Centre Nepal (TCN)

Underprivileged Children's Educational Programmes Nepal (UCEP Nepal)

Women Development Forum (WDF)

Women Empowerment Action Forum

Women Upliftment and Awareness Centre (WUAC)

We would also like to extend our sincere gratitude and thanks to all individual local resource persons, cooperatives, users' committees, experienced leader farmers and consultants for their valuable support and services extended by them.