

Nepal Country Strategy

2019 - 2022



Helvetas strives for a fairer world in which every person can fulfil his or her basic needs. We support women and men in taking charge of improving their own lives in a sustainable manner - working together as partners. Rooted in Switzerland, Helvetas is active in over 30 countries around the world. Nepal is one of the very first partner countries in which Helvetas began operations, under a 1956 agreement with the Government of Nepal.

This Country Strategy 2019 – 2022 was developed in response to Nepal's federalisation, under which seven States and 753 municipalities have been created, overseen by the federal government. Our strategy sets out how Helvetas seeks to support the federalisation process - working with the people of Nepal, particularly the poorest and disadvantaged, in improving rural infrastructure, economic growth related to agriculture, universal

Detailed information about the work of Helvetas in Nepal can be found at
<https://www.helvetas.org/en/nepal>

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Our Organisational Vision and Values

Vision

Our vision is of a just world in which all men and women determine the course of their lives in dignity and security,

Our Fundamental Values

In all the countries in which we work, our engagement is based on solidarity and partnership. We work towards achieving human rights and upholding the principle of self-determined development. We are committed to social equity and strive for equal opportunities for men and women regardless of age, origin, language, religion, culture or political convictions. Our collaboration with our partners is based on mutual respect for cultural values and principles. We stand for development that balances economic viability, environmental appropriateness and social benefits.



How Change Happens

Our theory of change in Nepal's current context may be summarized as follows.

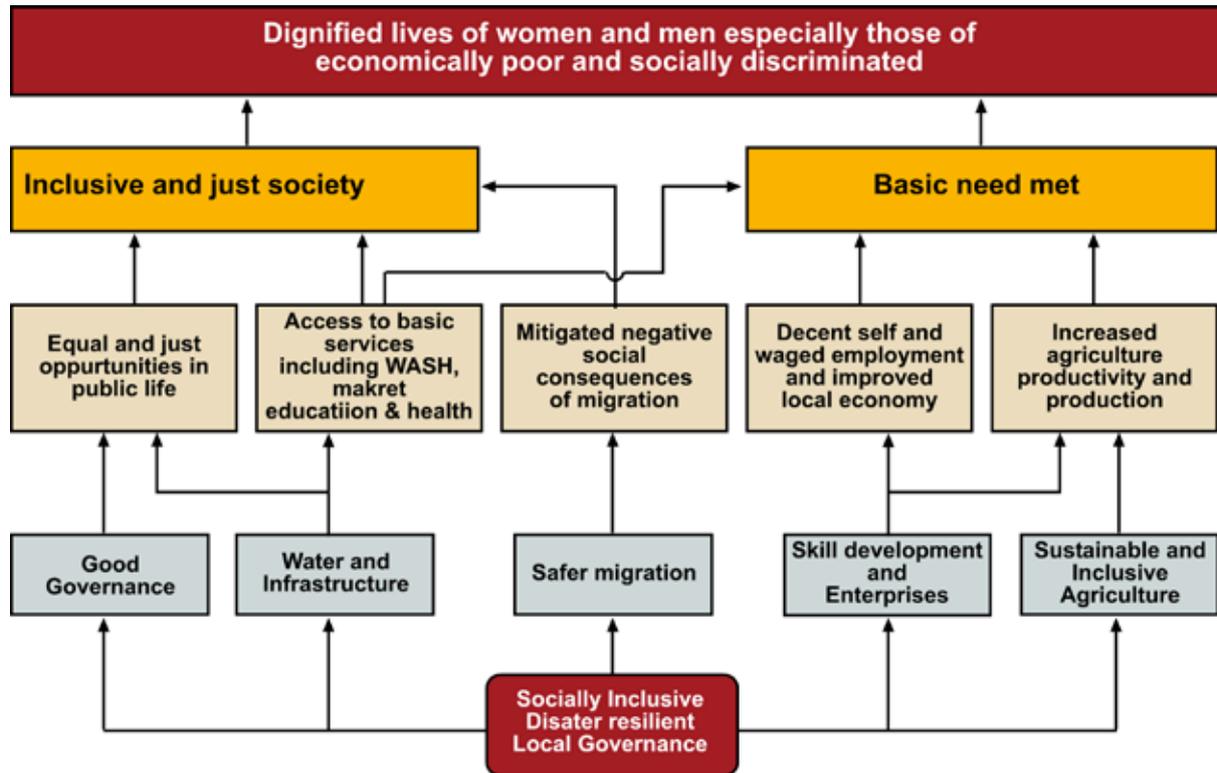
If the appropriate governance systems under Nepal's federal system are strengthened and operate in a transparent, accountable, socially inclusive, efficient and effective manner, then Nepalese women and men, especially those who are economically poor and socially marginalised, will be able to claim and exercise their rights to access resources and services, and lead dignified lives.



This theory of change places the development of democratic governance systems at the centre of our work. It recognises that to develop strong relationships and foster mutual understanding with all concerned in the new working context (local government representatives and administrative staff, civil society, service providers, the media and other private sector actors), a focus on a limited number of municipalities and States is necessary.

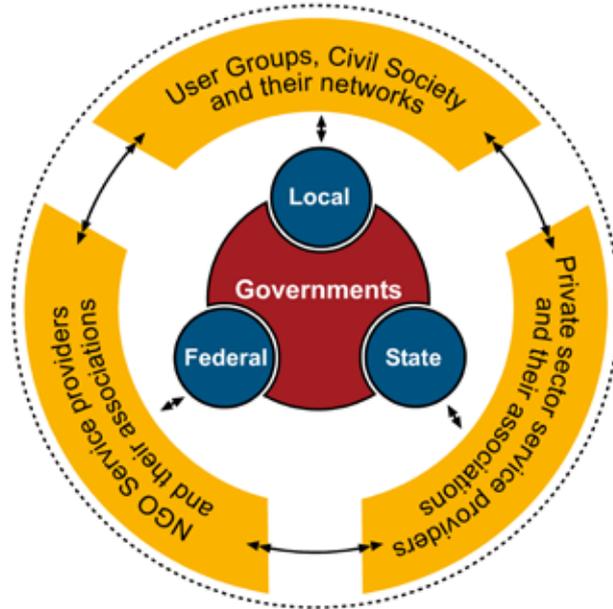
The theory of change also requires that good local governance allows civil society to have an effective voice, and the private sector to operate in a transparent and market-responsive manner.

Theory of Change



With Whom we work

It follows from our theory of change that we work primarily with local governments, as well as the local actors necessary for them to function effectively – both in the private and non-government sectors. We also maintain a constructive engagement with State and Federal government bodies.



Where we Work

Helvetas Nepal will continue to address economic poverty and social exclusion in both the mid-hills and the Terai. Considering wide-spread poverty, geographical remoteness, low Human Development Index and Helvetas' long-term past engagements, we will continue our work in Karnali (State 6). We will also focus increasingly in State 2, considering the high social inequality and deep-rooted exclusion. Our SDC-supported activities will move progressively Eastwards, focusing in State 1.

While Helvetas Nepal will continue to work in rural areas, in recognition of growing urbanisation and rural-urban linkages, we will increasingly engage in peri-urban and urban areas. We will also continue to work at federal level wherever appropriate.



On What we Work

Our Country Strategy 2019-2022 is aligned with the government of Nepal's long-term vision of a prosperous Nepal with a self-dependent, progressive and socialist-oriented national economy. It is further aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to which the government of Nepal is fully committed.

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**



Good Local Governance

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Aligned with SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

We are supporting selected municipalities in developing their strategic vision, sectorial plans and budgets in a participatory manner. Working with elected representatives, especially women and Dalit members, as well as administrative staff;

we are building capacity to implement these plans, and supporting transparent monitoring using tools for social accountability. At the same time, we are raising awareness amongst citizens, especially women and other marginalised groups so that they can realise their rights and responsibilities.



Sustainable and Inclusive Agriculture

2 ZERO HUNGER



Aligned with SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Agriculture remains an important sector of Nepal's economy, with increasing commercialisation in addition to subsistence farming. Since, under the federal system, agricultural extension services are devolved to municipalities, we focus our activities at

this level. We are working with selected municipalities to improve their services, building systems and capacities to provide advice and inputs on climate smart agricultural practices and modern agricultural technologies. Through this we aim to attract youth and returnee migrants. Our support for commercial agriculture takes a Market Systems Approach and includes coffee, bananas, sweet orange, essential oils, and dairy products. We also continue to promote access to land for the land-poor and landless through riverbed farming, and greater awareness of the nutritional value of food crops.



Skills Development and Education

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Aligned with SDG 8: promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Helvetas Nepal has long-standing experience in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) covering a variety of sectors including agriculture, construction, electronics, and hospitality. The system of results-based payment that we spearheaded is now widely used, as are various practices encouraging women trainees. We continue to work with both the private sector and the government in



conducting labour market studies and tailoring training to needs, especially through apprenticeship and on-the-job training models. We are also collaborating with the government in upgrading curricula and training materials, career orientation, and developing appropriate policies, strategies and guidelines.

Water and Infrastructure

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Aligned with SDG 6: Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The participatory approach of Water Use Master Planning championed by Helvetas is now widely used and recognised. We continue to support this approach in selected municipalities, integrating hygiene awareness that includes household water treatment and safe storage. We emphasise the needs of women regarding menstrual hygiene management and the demands of unpaid care work – aiming to transform their traditional

roles in water management towards active engagement and leadership. In adapting to climate change, we use the “3 Rs” technologies for the retention, recharge and reuse of water. Trail bridges were the very first development intervention of Helvetas Nepal and have evolved into a comprehensive government programme with strong guidelines for local participation in decision-making. Although there are now over 7,500 trail bridges in the country, they remain a highly demanded development intervention – in the Terai as well as the hills, linking growing urban areas as well as remote rural settlements. We continue to support trail bridge construction and maintenance during this strategy period, working with local governments as well as the federal authorities, as appropriate.



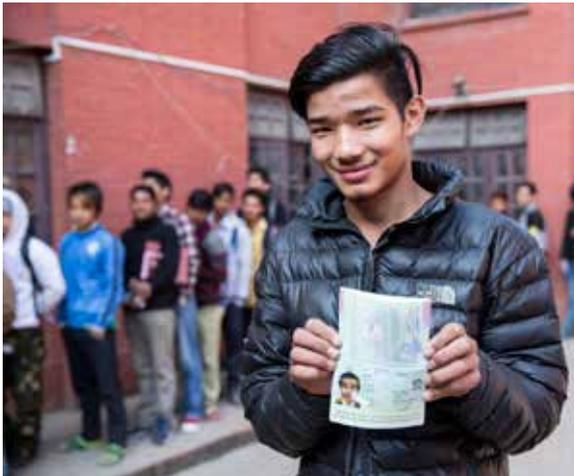
Migration and the Productive Use of Remittances

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Aligned with SDG Target 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Helvetas Nepal neither encourages nor discourages migration, recognizing it as a matter of individual choice. We nevertheless aim to ensure that this is an informed choice - providing advice to would-be overseas migrants, offering legal/ paralegal support, and organizing training and skills certification for some of



the most disadvantaged and potentially vulnerable amongst them, especially women. At the same time, we work with left-behind family members. Through financial literacy classes we build their capacities to use wisely any money sent home; for those traumatised by migration experiences, we offer psycho-social counselling. In encouraging the productive use of remittances, we also provide training in entrepreneurial activities, and linkages to business services and affordable credit.

Women's Empowerment and Opportunities for All

5 GENDER EQUALITY



Aligned with SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and SDG 11, Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Helvetas Nepal takes care that all its interventions consider the needs of the disadvantaged, even if they are not specifically targeted. Specific activities include raising awareness of legal provisions, administrative systems and structures amongst women and Dalit representatives, supporting them to perform to their full capacities. We also support

initiatives to redistribute and reduce the burden of women's unpaid care work, and campaign against discriminatory practices such as chhaupadi (the perception that women are ritually polluting, and are thus banned from the home, during menstruation).



Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Management

When the 2015 earthquake struck, Helvetas Nepal was amongst the first to respond with relief supplies and will be the last to leave the affected communities with whom we work. We have trained many local men and women in earthquake-resilient construction techniques and contributed to the development of national guidelines on the topic, using a 50-day practice-based system. We have also supported a variety of interventions to restore livelihoods – all with a strong emphasis on community participation and decision-making.

Through our experiences following the earthquake, we are now well prepared for other emergencies. We have practical competencies and expertise in Disaster Risk Management, and now provide advice to municipalities on this matter – coupled with adaptation to climate change.



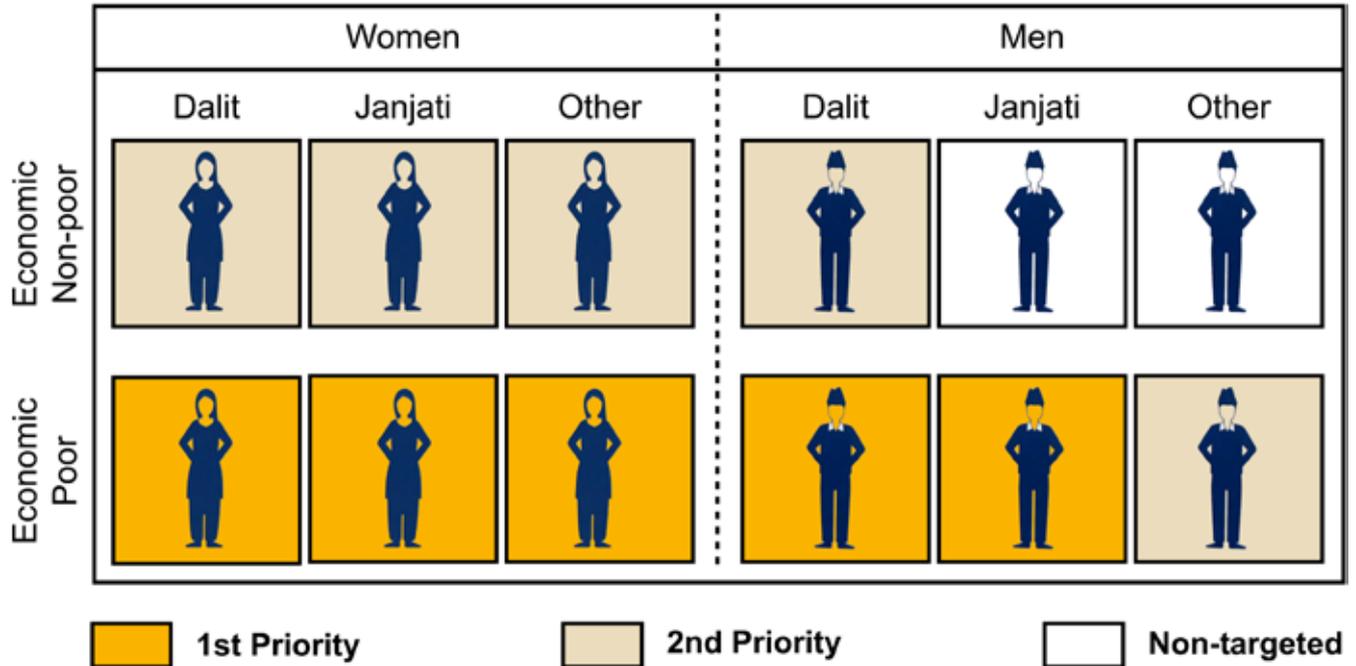
Who we Target

In times of disaster, Helvetas Nepal targets its immediate relief support to all affected individuals, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or caste. Nevertheless, we are committed to working towards an equal and just Nepali society. Addressing poverty entails addressing unequal access to social, cultural, political and economic opportunities. Thus, in the normal development context (and during recovery following a disaster), we adopt a

targeted approach - whilst also engaging with other members of society to ensure their acceptance. We define those whom we seek to target in our development interventions, our primary stakeholders, as women and men who are economically poor and socially marginalised in terms of gender, ethnicity and caste

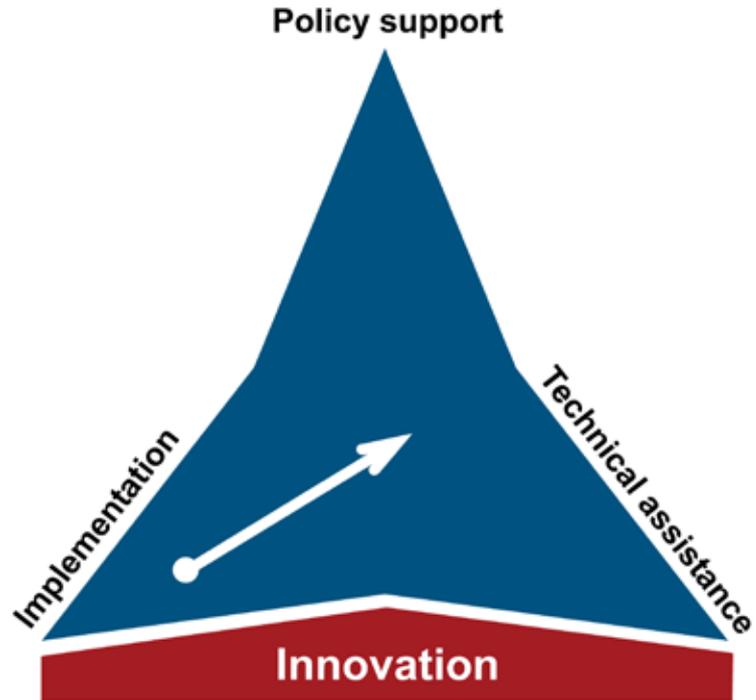


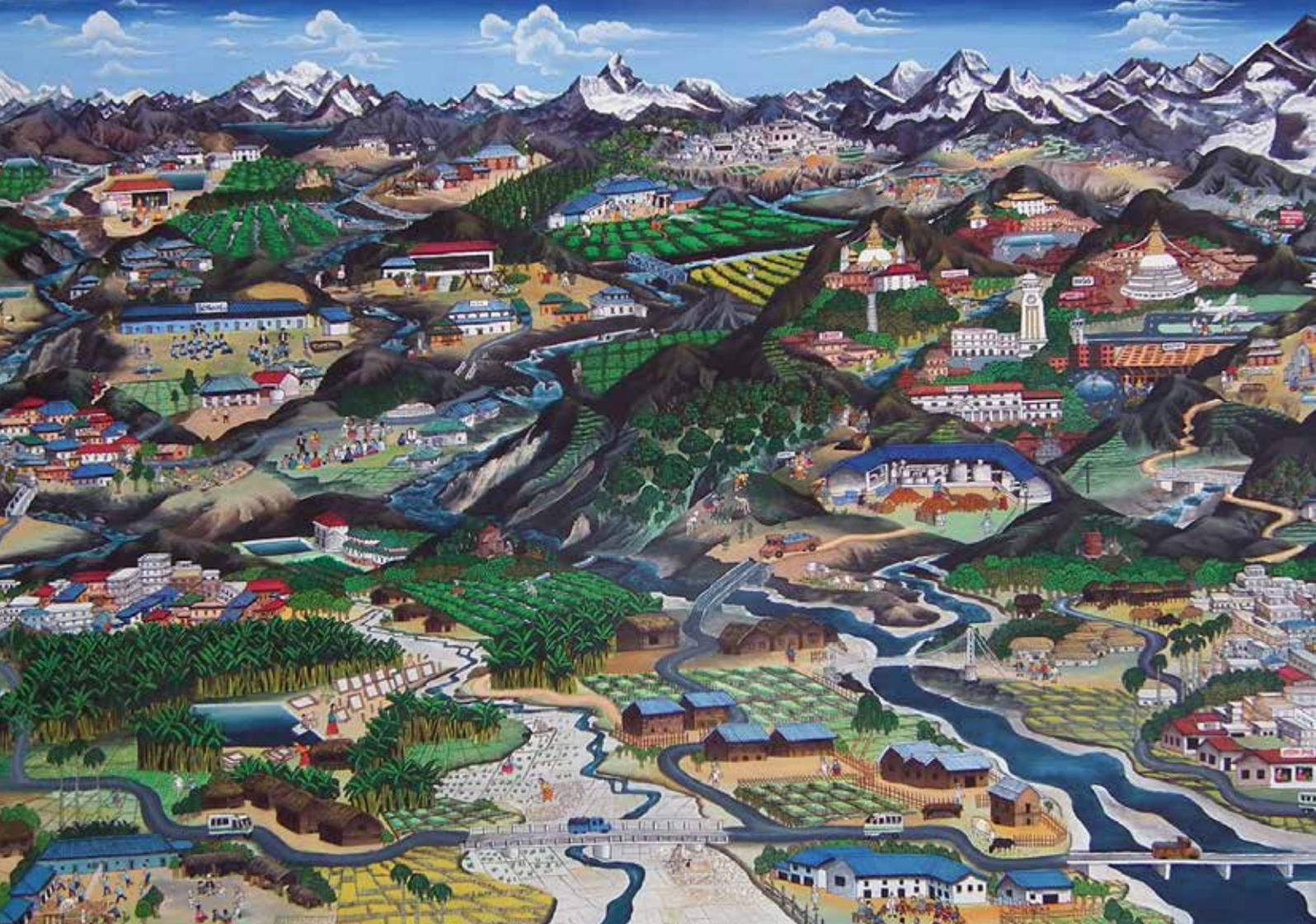
Primary Stakeholders



How we work

Helvetas has a long history of testing innovative approaches and implementing development projects. Our field-based experiences have often been used by the government in the elaboration of policies and guidelines. In the current context of federalization, we anticipate a reduction in direct implementation activities, and an increasing demand for our technical assistance. We remain available for supporting policy development in our areas of expertise within all three spheres of government: municipal, State and federal.







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