

HOPE AND RESILIENCE

The story from rubble to recovery



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Cover picture: Community members participating in repair and restoration of the Bhalma-Sota irrigation canal in Aathbiskot Municipality-13

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July 2026



From
the People of Japan





Aerial view of Bheri River below Khalanga, Bheri Municipality, Jajarkot, formed by the confluence of Sanibheri and Thulibheri rivers, with Chaurjahari, Rukum West, visible across the river

Foreword

On the evening of 3 November 2023, a devastating 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck western Nepal, causing immense loss and disruption across Jajarkot, Rukum West, and neighbouring districts. Homes were destroyed, livelihoods were interrupted, and critical infrastructures were damaged, leaving thousands of families facing an uncertain future.

Yet, amid this tragedy, I witnessed extraordinary resilience and determination. During visits to affected communities, I met women, farmers, artisans, local leaders, and community members who, despite significant challenges, remained committed to rebuilding their lives and supporting one another. Their strength reinforced an important lesson: recovery is not only about reconstructing buildings, but also about restoring dignity, livelihood, and hope.

The Livelihoods Improvement and Disaster Resilience Enhancement in the Areas Affected by the Jajarkot Earthquake (LIDRE) project was designed to support this recovery process. With the support of the People of Japan and through the collaboration of UNDP, UN-Habitat, Chay-Ya Nepal, Community Impact Nepal (CIN), and in partnership with the local governments, and communities, the project has contributed to restoring livelihoods, improving local infrastructure, and strengthening resilience in earthquake-affected areas. I am thankful to Fixit Engineering Pvt. Ltd. for the construction of 10 prefabricated buildings and Scott Wilson Nepal Pvt. Ltd. for their contribution to the preparation of the Environmental and Social Safeguard Screening reports (ESSS), the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for the 10 prefabricated buildings, and the baseline assessment of all 45 infrastructures.

This publication captures inspiring stories behind these achievements. It highlights the journeys of individuals and communities who transformed adversity into opportunity and worked together to create a stronger future. Each restored irrigation canal, improved public facility, and livelihood initiative represents more than a physical achievement—it reflects renewed confidence, opportunity, and hope.

Above all, this publication is a tribute to the people of Jajarkot, Rukum West, and surrounding districts. Their perseverance, collective spirit, and determination have been the driving force behind every success documented in these pages.

As you read these stories, I invite you to look beyond the infrastructure and statistics and recognize the human resilience they represent. May these experiences inspire continued investment in people and communities, ensuring that recovery not only restores what was lost but also creates pathways toward a safer, more resilient, and prosperous future.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the People of Japan for their generous financial support and to UNDP Nepal for their leadership in overall project implementation and collaborating with UN-Habitat Nepal in advancing livelihood recovery, governance, and resilient infrastructure reconstruction. I heartily acknowledge the dedicated UNDP team in Kathmandu and the municipalities, and the UNDP Senior Management for their support and flexibility to tailor approaches based on the needs. Special appreciation goes to Chay-Ya Nepal in Jajarkot and CIN in Rukum West for their invaluable support in community mobilization, coordination with local governments, and facilitation of project activities.

My appreciation goes to Punam Khadka, Social and Livelihood Associate for penning this book and Hari Jang Thapa and Sadhana Poudel for photographs, layout, and graphic design. I would like to thank Milan Bagale, Project Coordinator; Birendra Shrestha, Project Engineer; Gehendra Maharjan, Quality Assurance Expert; and Prabal Dahal, Urban Planner, for their review and inputs to this publication. The achievements captured in this publication reflect the shared commitment of all the partners and demonstrate that recovery is not only about restoring infrastructure, but also about strengthening communities and building resilience for the future.



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Chaukhe irrigation canal, Sanibheri Rural Municipality-3, after the completion of repair and restoration

Executive summary

On 3 November 2023, a devastating earthquake struck western Nepal, causing widespread destruction across Jajarkot, Rukum West, and neighbouring districts. Homes, livelihoods, public infrastructure, and essential services were severely affected, leaving thousands of families facing uncertainty. Yet, alongside the destruction, remarkable stories of resilience, solidarity, and hope emerged.

The Livelihoods Improvement and Disaster Resilience Enhancement in the Areas Affected by the Jajarkot Earthquake (LIDRE) project was implemented through the joint efforts of UNDP, UN-Habitat, Chay-Ya Nepal, CIN, local governments, communities, and with the generous support from the People of Japan. The project focused on restoring livelihoods, rehabilitating community infrastructure, strengthening public services, and enhancing disaster resilience.

Recovery efforts demonstrated that rebuilding is more than physical structures. Rehabilitated irrigation systems restored agricultural productivity, Common Facility Centres created opportunities for artisans and entrepreneurs, and improved public facilities ensured the continuity of essential services. These interventions helped communities regain confidence, dignity, and economic opportunities.

This publication highlights the inspiring journeys of individuals and communities who transformed adversity into opportunity. Their stories reflect the power of collective action, perseverance, and community-led recovery. More than a record of achievements, this book is a tribute to the resilience of the people of Jajarkot and Rukum West and their determination to build a stronger, safer, and more resilient future.

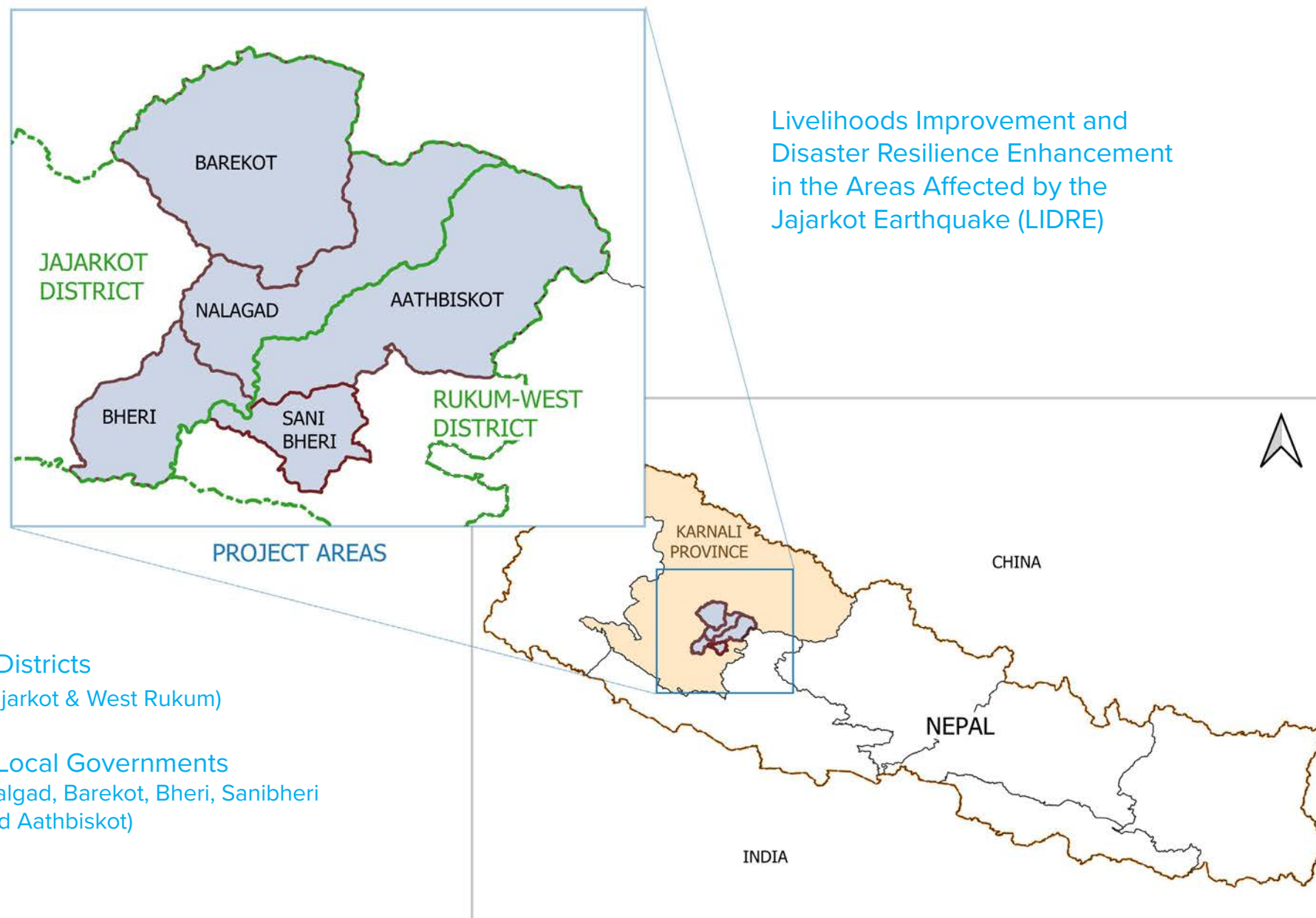
Project at a glance

LIDRE project is a recovery and resilience-building initiative funded by the People of Japan and jointly implemented by UNDP Nepal as the lead and in UN-Habitat Nepal the local organizations, Chay-Ya Nepal and CIN. The project is implemented in five earthquake-affected local governments: Bheri Municipality, Nalgad Municipality, and Barekot Rural Municipality in Jajarkot District, and Sanibheri Rural Municipality and Aathbiskot Municipality in Rukum West district.

The project was launched in response to the devastating 6.4 magnitude Jajarkot earthquake of November 2023, which caused significant loss of life and widespread damage to homes, public infrastructure, and livelihoods. The initiative aims to restore essential public services, rebuild community infrastructure, strengthen disaster preparedness, and support livelihood recovery among earthquake-affected communities.

Through the construction of earthquake-resilient prefabricated public service buildings, establishment of Common Facility Centres and Market Centres, rehabilitation of irrigation systems and community infrastructure, provision of livelihood trainings and entrepreneurship support, and promotion of inclusive community participation, the project supported affected families move from recovery toward long-term resilience.

Guided by the principle of “Leaving no one behind,” the project placed special emphasis on supporting women, persons with disabilities, marginalized occupational groups, farmers, artisans, and vulnerable households to restore livelihoods, rebuild confidence, and create stronger, safer, and more resilient communities.





Masons engaged in RCC footing reinforcement of the prefab building

Restoring essential services with prefabricated government buildings

In the aftermath of the 2023 Jajarkot earthquake, many local government offices, health facilities, and service centres were either destroyed or declared unsafe, severely disrupting the delivery of essential public services. Communities were forced to seek services from temporary and often unsafe locations, while local government staff continued working under difficult conditions. Recognizing the urgent need to restore service continuity, the LIDRE project supported the construction of 10 earthquake-resistant prefabricated buildings as a rapid, cost-effective, and practical solution. Designed with technical support from Scott Wilson Nepal and implemented through close collaboration with local governments, these structures provided safe, functional, and dignified workspaces while permanent reconstruction plans are being developed.

The prefabricated buildings were strategically established in earthquake-affected local governments to house critical services including ward offices, agriculture and livestock service centres, immunization centres, ward offices and infrastructure units, and security offices. Beyond simply replacing damaged structures, the initiative ensured that communities could continue accessing essential services without interruption. The buildings incorporated improved safety standards, accessibility features, adequate ventilation, storage facilities, and working spaces that enhanced both staff productivity and service delivery. By investing in resilient and people-centred infrastructure, the project not only restored government functions but also strengthened public confidence, demonstrating that recovery is not only about rebuilding structures, but about restoring hope, trust, and the connection between communities and the services they rely upon every day.



From community consultation to completion: community engagement, technical support, and construction of the prefab building for ward office in Aathbiskot Municipality-12



Story 1

Restoring access to safer - essential government services

Rebuilding the ward office for safer service delivery in Aathbiskot

“Every day, we came to work not knowing whether the building would withstand another aftershock. The fear was always there- not only for us as staff but also for every community member who entered the office. Now the building is safe and more accessible, including for persons with disabilities.”

-Khambu Kusari

Mr. Khambu Kusari, ward chairperson Aathbiskot municipality-12, says the ward office is often the first-place people turn to when they need help. Whether it is registering a birth, accessing social security benefits, obtaining official recommendations, or seeking support during emergencies, the ward office serves as a vital lifeline for nearly 900 households.

When the devastating Jajarkot earthquake struck in November 2023, the rented building being used as the ward office suffered severe structural damage. Cracks spread across the walls, parts of the structure became unstable, and the building was no longer considered safe. Yet suspending public services was not an option. Despite the risks and increasing fear due to continued aftershocks, ward staff continued to work from the damaged premises to ensure that citizens could still access essential services. For many residents living in remote settlements, travelling elsewhere to receive services was costly and time-consuming, making the ward office an indispensable resource.

Recognizing the urgent need to restore safe service delivery, the Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery Project supported the construction of a prefabricated ward office building. The impact of this construction goes far beyond physical structure.



Completed ward office extension and immunisation center providing improved public service infrastructure at Tallo Aamdada Sanibheri Rural Municipality-8



Ms. Kaushila Oli discussing the challenges faced by health workers in providing essential health services before the new immunisation center was built in Sanibheri Rural Municipality-8

Story 2

Protecting children, supporting mothers

Bringing safer immunisation services closer to mothers in Sanibheri

For nearly three decades, female community health volunteer Ms. Kaushila Oli has dedicated her life to supporting mothers and children in her community. She has witnessed countless births, guided families through health challenges, and helped ensure that children receive life-saving vaccinations. But after the 2023 Jajarkot earthquake, access to health services became even more difficult for many families after the immunization centre became unsafe. Mothers often had to walk long distances, often through forests and steep trails, carrying newborn babies to reach vaccination services available in temporary school buildings.

The new prefabricated immunisation centre constructed at Amdanda, Sanibheri Rural Municipality-8, has transformed these experiences, for the better. Today, mothers and children can access vaccination, nutrition, and maternal health services in a safe, clean, and comfortable environment much closer to home.

For mothers like Deepa Bista, whose husband works abroad, the change has been particularly significant. The new facility has reduced her travel time, and improved access to essential healthcare services for her child, while also participating in nutrition and health awareness sessions.



Completed prefab structure of the agriculture development section at Dalli, Nalgad Municipality-7

Story 3

Strengthening services, securing livelihoods A new agriculture development section office in Nalgad

"After the earthquake, we continued working despite the risks because farmers depended on us. Today, we have a safe, accessible, and organized space to serve them more efficiently. This centre is helping us support the recovery of agriculture and the livelihoods of our farming communities."

-Amrit Adhikari

For Amrit Adhikari, Head of Agriculture Development Section of Nalgad Municipality-7 in Jajarkot, the months following the 2023 Jajarkot earthquake were filled with uncertainty. The agriculture development section - which thousands of farmers depended on for technical support, agricultural inputs, seeds, and extension services-was operating from a building that had developed visible cracks.

Limited storage space made it difficult to safely keep agricultural equipment, seeds, and essential supplies. Staff frequently had to move between different buildings to access records, materials, and administrative services, losing valuable time that could otherwise be spent supporting farmers.

Recognising the importance of uninterrupted agricultural services, the project supported the construction of a prefabricated agriculture development section office for better service delivery.



Community members engaged in paddy farming after the restoration of Bhalma-Sota irrigation canal in Aathbiskot Municipality-13



Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH) orientation and demonstration on the use of safety gear for user committee members of Bhalma-Sota irrigation canal in Aathbiskot Municipality-13

Small infrastructure, big impact: restoring community assets

For communities affected by the earthquake, recovery meant more than rebuilding damaged structures. It meant restoring the systems that support daily life, livelihoods, and access to essential services.

Through the restoration 25 community infrastructure like irrigation canals, ponds, gabion walls, foot trails, road drain and causeways, communities regained access to water, markets, farms, schools, and health facilities. Farmers were able to cultivate their land once again, households could move more safely, and local economies gradually began to recover. Improved connectivity reduced isolation, while strengthened infrastructure helped protect communities from future risks such as earthquake, erosion, flooding, and landslides. An estimated 1,400 families have benefited from the restoration of irrigation facilities.

Though often modest on scale, these investments have had a profound impact on people's lives. A restored canal brings water to crops, a repaired trail connects farmers to markets, and a reinforced causeway, strengthened with simple roadside drain ensures year-round access to essential services and opportunities.

Across Jajarkot and Rukum West, the restoration of community infrastructure demonstrates a simple but powerful truth: recovery is not only about rebuilding what was damaged—it is also about restoring the systems that enable people to work, produce, earn, and thrive. Through these community-led efforts, water flows again, access is restored, and communities are moving forward with renewed hope, resilience, and opportunity.



Women actively engaged in the repair and restoration of Bankejyula irrigation canal in Aathbiskot Municipality-14



Story 1

Breaking barriers, building resilience

Women led rebuilding of Bankejyula irrigation canal

“People were not always confident in our ability to lead such a technical work,” Khimala recalls. “But through this process, we showed that women can successfully manage and deliver results.”

-Khimala Budhathoki

For Khimala Budhathoki, secretary of the Bankejyula irrigation canal user committee in Aathbiskot Municipality-14, restoring an irrigation canal became much more than a construction project—it became a showcase of what women can achieve when given the opportunity to lead.

The canal had long been the lifeline of nearly 100 households, irrigating 180–200 ropanis of farmland and supporting the cultivation of rice, wheat, maize, and vegetables. It also powered a local water mill that served as both an income source and a gathering place for the community.

After the 2023 Jajarkot earthquake and subsequent floods, the canal suffered severe damage. Water could no longer reach the fields, agricultural production declined, and families began losing an important source of income. The water mill stopped operating, and many feared the future of their livelihoods.

What made the recovery unique was that all key positions in the irrigation canal user committee were held by women. In a community where infrastructure projects were traditionally managed by men, the women took responsibility for leading the restoration process. Working closely with engineers and community members, they learned about canal construction, monitored the quality of work, and helped mobilize local participation.



Women actively engaged in repair and restoration of Bankejyula irrigation canal in Aathbiskot Municipality-14

Story 2

From doubt to determination

All woman led Silanekhola–Gitthakot irrigation canal

“For years, women worked in the fields but rarely participated in decisions,” Gita claims. “This project gave us the confidence to lead and showed that women are equally capable of managing technical and community projects. Today, farmers are returning to vegetable cultivation, household incomes are improving, and conflicts over water have disappeared.”

-Gita Budha

For Gita Budha, president of Silanekhola–Gitthakot irrigation canal user committee in Sanibheri Rural Municipality-2, restoring the irrigation canal became a journey of rebuilding both livelihoods and confidence.

The canal has long been the lifeline of nearly 55 households, irrigating around 200 ropanis of farmland and supporting the area’s reputation as a vegetable and seed production pocket. Farmers relied on it to grow rice, wheat, lentils, and vegetables that supplied local markets, Simli bazar, and even Musikot.

After the 2023 Jajarkot earthquake, the canal suffered severe damage. Cracks, landslides, and water leakage disrupted irrigation led to disagreements among farmers as families struggled to secure enough water for their fields.

Hope returned when the Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery Project supported the restoration of the canal. Gita, alongside other women leaders, worked closely with engineers, community members, and construction teams to oversee the rehabilitation process - ensuring community voices were heard.



Community participation in the restoration of Holi Pipal Rukh-Benneta irrigation canal in Aathbiskot Municipality-6





Story 3

Water returned, farms flourished

The story of Holi Pipal irrigation canal

For nearly ten years, a vital section of Holi Pipal irrigation canal in Aathbiskot Municipality-6 suffered from damage caused during road construction. While communities tried to manage with temporary solutions, the 2023 Jajarkot earthquake disrupted the connection, cutting off water to large areas of productive farmland across the hill, directly impacting livelihood of the community.

Nearly 200 households were affected. Rice fields that once produced food for families and generated income became barren. Opportunities to earn income from farming became increasingly limited. Many young people travelled to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and India in search of work.

Working together with the municipality and local communities, the earthquake recovery project rehabilitated the damaged section of the canal and re-established the critical connection through engineering solution of canal bridge that allows water to reach the entire command area.

For farmers, the return of water represents much more than improved irrigation. It symbolises the return of possibilities. Rice cultivation is gradually resuming in fields that had remained dry for years. Farmers are expanding the production of garlic, potatoes, vegetables, and oranges, creating new opportunities for income generation, and strengthening household food security, while reducing dependence on foreign employment for their livelihood.



Transformation from the pre-construction stage to the completed Bhedekharka irrigation pond in Bheri Municipality-6



Story 4

Turning wasted water into opportunity

The story of Bhedekharka irrigation pond

For years, thousands of litres of water overflowed daily from the drinking water system in Bhedekharka. The excess water flowed downhill and disappeared unused, while nearby farmers struggled with water shortages that limited agricultural production and income opportunities.

The construction of Bhedekharka irrigation pond has changed this reality. Rather than allowing overflow water to go to waste, the new pond captures, and stores water for productive use, providing irrigation support to approximately 100 ropanis of agricultural land and transforming what was once an unused resource into a source of livelihood and resilience for the community.

For farmers like Ratna Bahadur Pun, reliable irrigation has transformed seasonal cultivation into year-round production, enabling multiple cropping cycles, increased productivity, and better market access. The benefits extend beyond individual farmers. For people like Ratna, improved water access has strengthened food security, supported healthier diets, and created new income opportunities through diversified crop production.



Before and after transformation of Bhalma-Sota irrigation canal through community participation in repair and restoration works in Aathbiskot Municipality-13



Story 5

Restoring dignity through irrigation canal

The story of Bhalma-Sota irrigation canal

For generations, Bhalma-Sota irrigation canal was the lifeline of farming communities in Aathbiskot Municipality-13, supplying water to nearly 200 ropanis of agricultural land - enabling families to cultivate rice, vegetables, and crops that sustained their livelihoods and food security. Over time, however, repeated floods and natural disasters weakened the irrigation system. The 2023 Jajarkot earthquake further damaged critical sections of the canal and the flow reaching fields declined significantly.

For farmers like Ms. Rabi Babal Magar the damaged infrastructure and increased reliance on rain-fed farming and lower-yield crops threatened the ability to produce food, earn income, and provide a better future for children.

Through the Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery Project, Bhalma-Sota irrigation canal has been rehabilitated and strengthened. Damaged intake structures have been repaired, canal sections have been restored, and measures have been introduced to continue uninterrupted service system by constructing reinforced cement concrete overhead canal bridge. Sophisticated engineering solution ensured reliable irrigation, families today have greater confidence to invest in farming and diversifying their crops.

The water flowing through the canal carries renewed hope, resilience, and the promise of a more secure future for the people of Bhalma-Sota, Aathbiskot.



Mr. Kali Bahadur Malla at his water mill after the repair and restoration of Jhinichaur irrigation canal in Aathbiskot Municipality-10



Story 6

Reconnecting water with livelihoods

Story of Jhinichaur irrigation canal

“The sound of the mill has returned,” Kali Bahadur says with a smile. “It means life has returned to our village.”

-Kali Bahadur Malla

For sixteen years, Kali Bahadur Malla from Jhinichaur, Aathbiskot Municipality-10, earned his living by operating a small water mill. The mill also provided an essential community service, enabling families to grind grain at an affordable cost. The same water that powered his mill also irrigated nearly 250 ropanis of farmland, supporting crops such as rice, maize, vegetables, and lentils. But after repeated flooding and impacts of the earthquake, the intake structure was damaged - irrigation became unreliable.

For Kali Bahadur, the impact was immediate. “When the water stopped, my mill stopped,” he recalls. “For almost a year, I had no income and did not know how to support my family.”

Through the recovery project, the community worked together to repair the damaged sections and rebuilt the system - restoring the flow of water. Today, farmers have returned to growing rice, vegetables, and other crops.



Mr. Ganesh BK working on his kiwi farm, benefiting from improved irrigation access through the restoration and extension of Sinakot irrigation canal in Barekot Rural Municipality-1



Story 7

Choosing to stay, choosing a future

Story of Sinakot irrigation canal

"When water returned to our fields, hope returned to our family. We realized that our future did not have to be somewhere else - it could be built right here at home."

-Ganesh BK

After losing their father at a young age, Ganesh BK and his brother were raised by their mother, who worked tirelessly on their small farm to support the family. Over the years, they gradually improved their lives through agriculture and began cultivating kiwi, earning a reliable income.

The 2023 earthquake threatened that future. Sinakot irrigation canal in Barekot Rural Municipality-1, that used to supply water to their fields was damaged. Water shortages led to decline of fruit and vegetable production. Moreover, the area is well known for its kiwi production, which serves as an important source of income for local communities. Uncertainty grew and like many young people in the area, Ganesh started considering labor migration abroad.

However, leaving was not an easy choice. His mother had already endured years of hardship, and the family did not want to leave her behind. At a time when hope seemed to be fading, the restoration of the irrigation canal through the Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery Project brought new possibilities. With water flowing again, the family was able to revive their farm, protect their kiwi orchard, and expand into herb cultivation for additional income.



Mr. Lalbir Chanara, a local farmer, smiles while irrigating his farmland, after the restoration of Gede Khola–Ranikhet irrigation canal in Nalgad Municipality-5

Story 8

Water restored, hope returned

Story of Rani Khet irrigation canal

“When the water stopped coming regularly, our farming changed,” Kamala recalls. “We could no longer grow crops as we used to.”

-Kamala BK

For Kamala BK, a farmer from Ranikhet in Nalgad Municipality-5, the irrigation canal was the foundation of her family’s livelihood. For years, Gade Khola–Ranikhet irrigation canal supplied water to their fields, allowing families to grow rice, wheat, maize, garlic, and vegetables throughout the year.

After the 2023 Jajarkot earthquake and subsequent flooding in 2024, a critical section of the canal was damaged. Water became scarce, harvests declined, and many families struggled to maintain their farms.

The restoration of the canal through the project has brought new hope to the community. Reliable irrigation is gradually returning to nearly 200 ropanis of farmland, helping families restore agricultural production, improve food security, and rebuild their incomes.

For Kamala and more than 160 households that depend on the canal, the project is not just restoring water-it is restoring confidence, livelihoods, and hope for a better future.



Completed construction of the Common Facility Centre at Dalli, Nalgad Municipality-7



Initial phase of construction of the Common Facility Centre in Barekot Rural Municipality-2

From skills to livelihoods: advancing inclusion through common facility and market centres

Recovery from an earthquake is not only about rebuilding infrastructure, it is equally about rebuilding people's confidence, skills, and opportunities. Therefore, through the Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery Project, livelihood recovery was supported through a combination of trainings for enterprise development and construction of Common Facility Centres, and Market Centres that provide a safe space for vulnerable community businesses largely impacted due to the earthquake.

The project prioritised women, persons with disabilities, marginalised occupational groups, and vulnerable households, ensuring that no one was left behind in the recovery process. Through skill-based and entrepreneurship training, participants gained practical knowledge in business planning, bookkeeping, financial management, marketing, and enterprise development. For many beneficiaries, this was their first opportunity to understand how to manage a business sustainably and work collectively with others to access larger market opportunities.

The establishment of Common Facility Centres created safe and inclusive spaces where entrepreneurs could access shared equipment, continue production, improve product quality, and learn from one another. At the same time, Market Centres helped connect producers with customers, creating opportunities for local products to reach wider markets and generate income. These interventions enabled communities to recover lost livelihoods while building more resilient and sustainable local economies.

From tailors and blacksmiths to bamboo artisans and women-led enterprises, many individuals who lost opportunities after the earthquake are now rebuilding their futures with renewed confidence. By combining skills development, market access, enterprise support, and community ownership, the project helped transform recovery into long-term economic resilience and hope.



Mr. Hari Bahadur Damai and his wife experiencing a safer and more supportive working environment through the newly constructed Common Facility Centre in Nalgad Municipality





Mr. Hari Bahadur Damai working in his sewing machine in Nalgad Municipality-7

Story 1

When determination speaks louder than words

Hari Damai's journey to build a future beyond his multiple disabilities

For Hari Bahadur Damai, who is deaf, tailoring is more than a profession - it is his way of communicating with the world. Hari expresses through craftsmanship, building a small tailoring business that became the foundation of his family's livelihood. Kalpana, his wife, is by his side throughout this journey as his interpreter, helping him connect with customers and the wider community. Together, they work tirelessly to provide for their family and support their children's education.

The 2023 Jajarkot earthquake severely damaged the small, rented house where they lived and operated their tailoring service in Nalgad Municipality-7. Relocating to a safer place was beyond their means, while closing the shop was not an option, as it remained their only source of income. The family was in despair.

Hope returned when the couple participated in enterprise development training supported through the Common Facility Centre. For the first time, they learned book-keeping, business planning, financial management, and the benefits of working collectively with other entrepreneurs.

The opportunity to access a safer working environment through the Common Facility Centre has opened doors to new knowledge, stronger networks, and greater economic security for the family of Hari Bahadur.



Story 2

For the first time, I have a place where I belong

Lale Kami's journey from survival to sustainability through iron-smithery

Lale shares with pride, "For the first time, I feel like I can build something permanent."

-Lale Kami

Lale Kami, an ironsmith with a physical disability, is well known in his village for excellent craft in forging traditional khukuris, sickles, spades, and other agricultural tools. Despite his talent and reputation, earning a stable income remained challenging as he spent years moving between places without a permanent workspace-following opportunities wherever they arose. The earthquake made life even harder, as customers turned their focus to rebuilding their homes and demand for his services declined, leaving Lale's future uncertain.

The enterprise development training at the Common Facility Centre in Aathbiskot Municipality helped turn a new chapter in life for Lale who gained new perspective about his craft. The training and equipment support by the project helped him realise the potential to grow and create lasting opportunities. The training helped him understand business planning, customer relations, and the value of working collectively to access larger markets.

Today, the sound of hammer striking iron is no longer just the sound of earning a daily wage - it is the sound of rebuilding a livelihood, preserving a traditional craft, and creating a more secure future.



Completed Common Facility Centre in Bheri Municipality-13



Dedicated workers preparing reinforcement steel for the pillar of Holi Pipal Irrigation Canal, Aathbiskot Municipality-6



Common Facility Centre and Market Centre in Barekot Rural Municipality-2



Man Bahadur crafting bamboo products in Barekot Rural Municipality-2

Story 3

A living tradition for a changing future Man Bahadur Giri's story of renewal through local bamboo handicraft

For years, bamboo artisan Man Bahadur Giri earned his livelihood through the craft passed down across generations. From baskets and storage containers to household items, his work reflected both skill and tradition - a part of his community's identity.

When the 2023 earthquake struck his workshop, Man Bahadur lost the space where he created, taught, and carried forward a traditional craft that connected the past with the present. With limited resources and an uncertain future, continuing his business became increasingly difficult.

Through the earthquake recovery project, Man Bahadur found new hope at the Common Facility Centres in Limsa, Barekot Rural Municipality-2. Located close to markets and transportation networks, the centre provides a safe and accessible workspace, improved visibility for local products, and opportunities to connect with customers and fellow entrepreneurs. Today, Man Bahadur creates bamboo products with confidence, inspiring future generations to continue and preserve this traditional craft while building a livelihood from it.



Tara Devi with her friend using machinery to prepare leaf plates at the newly established Common Facility Centre, with improved workspace and equipment in Dalli, Nalgad Municipality-7

Story 4

Women working together to build businesses

Tara Devi's journey of growth in sustainable enterprise through biodegradable leaf plates (Duna Tapari)

"The rented room helped us survive, but the Common Facility Centre will help us grow, innovate, and dream bigger."

-Tara Devi Pun

President of a local small cooperative, Tara Devi Pun, along with her four female friends, started producing biodegradable leaf plates with limited resources. Yet, their enterprise offered a promising source of income despite operating from a small, rented room that was crowded, poorly ventilated, and lacked adequate storage. While the challenge to maintain quality and increase production remained, the women were dedicated to run the business - creating opportunities for other women in the community.

Their noble commitment was strengthened through the earthquake recovery project, which provided business development training, bookkeeping skills, digital marketing orientation, and improved equipment, including hydraulic machinery that significantly increased production efficiency.

Similarly, the Common Facility Centres constructed at Dalli, Nalgad Municipality-7, provided them with access to a dedicated space designed to support production, storage, training, and collaboration while offering greater visibility and stronger connections to markets - helping the women transform a small community enterprise into a sustainable business.



Newly built Market Centre providing improved market infrastructure and business opportunities in Dalli, Nalgad Municipality-7

Story 5

Connecting communities with opportunities

Establishing market centres to support economic recovery



A local farmer of Aathbiskot Municipality-13 preparing rice seedlings for paddy transplantation

In the local markets of Jajarkot and Rukum West, farmers and small traders previously did not have a guaranteed space to sell their produce or goods. They had to arrive early in the morning in hopes of finding a suitable spot for business. Oftentimes, without proper display or storage area, they had to operate their makeshift selling spot- standing exposed to harsh sun, heavy rain, and seasonal cold. This not only affected their comfort but also impacted the quality of perishable goods and reduced their chances of earning a fair price. For women, this created additional barriers, for they had to manage responsibilities at home while also enduring long hours in unsafe or uncomfortable environments.

The establishment of market centres in the earthquake affected districts has helped address these challenges by providing designated, organized spaces where producers can sit, display, and sell their goods with dignity. Instead of competing for space in overcrowded and informal settings, they now have access to structured market infrastructure that supports regular and predictable trading.

For farmers, these centres open up direct opportunities to sell fresh vegetables, fruits, and other agricultural produce without relying heavily on middlemen. This improves income stability, reduces post-harvest losses, and ensures better price transparency. For artisans, market centres provide visibility that is often missing in remote settings. Handmade goods that would otherwise remain within local boundaries are showcased to wider audiences, allowing traditional skills and craftsmanship to gain recognition and value. Women entrepreneurs benefit significantly as this becomes their first real entry point into structured economic participation.

Combined with enterprise development training and common facility centres, these market centres have become part of a larger ecosystem for livelihood recovery through the Jajarkot Earthquake Recovery Project. They have helped the beneficiaries recover from their previous losses and gradually build long-term resilience in livelihood.



Community members and project team interact during an environment, social, safety standards monitoring visit to the Holi Pipal–Benneta irrigation canal restoration site in Aathbishkot Municipality-6

Lessons learnt

Community ownership creates sustainability

Communities were not just passive recipients of infrastructure. They actively participated in planning, implementation, and management, ensuring that their needs and priorities shaped the outcomes. This involvement created a strong sense of ownership.

At the same time, orientation on prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and awareness on safeguarding helped create a safer and more respectful environment for everyone involved. Inclusive approaches ensured that women, men, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups could participate meaningfully without fear or barriers. Clear information on expected behavior, protection standards, and safe engagement made the process more transparent and accountable.

Grievance handling mechanisms further strengthened trust. Community members had accessible ways to raise concerns, share feedback, and report issues, knowing their voices would be heard and addressed in a timely manner.

Local government leadership significant for effective results

Local government leadership mattered significantly in shaping effective recovery outcomes. From the very beginning, infrastructure priorities were not designed in isolation. They were collaboratively discussed through Nagar (municipal) meetings ensuring that community needs and municipal priorities were aligned from the outset.

Regular orientation sessions and briefings helped build a clear and shared understanding of what the project aimed to achieve, what approaches would be used, and how responsibilities would be shared. These continuous and timely engagements strengthened coordination and reduced misunderstandings during implementation. Time and again, joint meetings between local governments, project teams, and communities provided space to review progress, resolve challenges, and make timely decisions.

A key strength of this collaboration was the shared investment approach that demonstrated strong ownership and commitment from the local governments. Municipalities contributed through budget matching in several activities, including high cost interventions such as excavator use. In the case of the Bhalma-Sota irrigation canal scheme, where the site conditions were complex and required heavy machinery, the municipality contributed more than 80 percent of the excavation cost.

Inclusion at the core of all interventions results in equitable and effective recovery

Women, elderly people, persons with disabilities, and marginalised communities were not treated as passive beneficiaries. They were active partners in the recovery process, with their voices shaping decisions and priorities from the very beginning.

Inclusion was not treated as an add-on or as something symbolic. It was a central principle guiding the recovery process, embedded from the earliest stages of planning to implementation.

At least 33 percent representation of women was ensured in user committees across all types of construction activities. This helped strengthen women's voice in decision-making and ensured that their needs were reflected in infrastructure design and management. In addition, trade identification and livelihood support activities were guided by a deliberate focus on selecting options that are accessible and friendly to women and persons with disabilities, enabling more equitable participation in economic recovery. Their involvement helped ensure that recovery was not only about rebuilding structures, but also about rebuilding fairness, opportunity, and dignity for all.

Rebuilding lives requires skills development alongside infrastructure

Recovery is not achieved through infrastructure alone. While buildings, canals, and community facilities are essential, they cannot by themselves rebuild lives or ensure lasting resilience. Sustainable recovery requires a stronger component that influences how people use, manage, and sustain these investments.

Skill development and trainings were integrated into the recovery process through clear operational guidelines, codes of conduct, and standard procedures helping communities understand expected practices and responsibilities.

This included promoting environmental responsibility, safe construction practices, and social safeguards such as the elimination of child labour, proper waste management, and prevention of plastic and environmental hazards. Communities were continuously engaged to understand not only what was being built, but also how to protect and sustain it.

At the same time, infrastructure investments were linked with livelihood and enterprise development initiatives, ensuring that people had the skills and opportunities to use these assets productively. Agreements between municipalities and beneficiaries, particularly around common facility centres, helped define clear roles, promote responsible use, and strengthen local ownership.



Community members and project team interact during the development of sustainability plans for project-supported infrastructure at the sustainability planning workshop in Bheri Municipality-4

Sustainability

Sustainability and transparency were central to ensuring that recovery interventions continued to deliver benefits beyond the project period. A structured handover process was conducted with municipalities and relevant stakeholders to formally transfer completed assets, systems, and responsibilities.

During the handover meetings, each category of work was carefully reviewed and analysed, including infrastructure construction, irrigation systems, common facility centres, and livelihood related support activities. This process ensured that both technical and social dimensions of the work were clearly documented and understood by all parties.

Special attention was given to safeguarding against and as prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment during the transition. Community members and local authorities were oriented on protection principles, safe practices, and accountability mechanisms to ensure that services and infrastructure continue to operate in a safe and responsible manner.

Public and external meetings played an important role in strengthening transparency. These forums provided space for sharing progress, clarifying processes, and ensuring that communities understood what had been implemented, how decisions were made, and how resources were utilised. This open dialogue helped build trust and reduce misunderstandings.

Further accountability was formally transferred to municipalities through clear documentation, agreements, and management responsibilities. The handover process strengthened ownership, reinforced transparency, and ensured that sustainability was embedded in local systems. It marked a transition from project-led implementation to locally led management, supporting long-term accountability and resilience.



Community members, federal government and project team during a field visit at Bhedekharka, Bheri Municipality-6



Handover of the prefabricated building of the agriculture development section to Mr. Dammar Bahadur Rawat, Mayor of Nalgad Municipality by Mr. Yasuharu Shinto, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Japan in Nepal and Ms. Kyoko Yokosuka, Resident Representative of UNDP Nepal

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