



Annual Report 2021

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>

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Cover Photo: Sharmila Timalina (24) of Nijgadh, Bara, as seen in the sales counter of her dairy shop supported by InElam for value-addition of dairy products (Photo credit: Simon Opladen/Helvetas)

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List of Abbreviations

CHF	Swiss Franc
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
ENSSURE	Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment
EVENT	Enhanced Vocational Education and Training Project
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LG	Local Government
MRC	Migration Resource Centre
MITO	Strengthening Walnut Value-chain in Nepal Project
NMA	Nutrition-Sensitive Mountain Agriculture
NPR	Nepali Rupees
PTAP	Provincial Technical Assistance Provider
SaMi	Safer Migration Project
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TA	Technical Assistance
TBSU	Trail Bridge Support Unit
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Message from the Country Director

For the presentation of this Annual Report 2021, I would like to thank the communities who are at the heart of our work, and Nepal Government, SDC, local implementing partners, contributing donors and the Helvetas Nepal staff. I am confident that we are making a difference in the lives of the women, poor and disadvantaged groups, as well as contributing to the federal state-building process. A lot has happened in 2021 including the COVID-19 pandemic, political uncertainty, and leadership transition. COVID-19 has magnified disparities in the country. Poor and disadvantaged groups from women and children to daily wage labours, to urban poor and to returnee migrants have been disproportionately affected. We have learned that human connection is essential, and the use of technology provides alternative ways for learning and remote management during the COVID-19 crisis. Likewise, federalism has opened new political spaces for socially and economically excluded groups, and youths, and it is a catalyst for urban engagement.



Helvetas Nepal is moving from a direct project implementation approach to thematic advice and policy advocacy to advance critical reform. In this regard, Helvetas Nepal will focus on quality programming, systems and compliances, and HR management in the days ahead. Helvetas Nepal will increase engagement in rural-urban linkages, strengthen work with youth significantly, improve the humanitarian-development nexus and leverage the digital transformation in line with its global strategy. The organization will further strengthen its partnership with SDC, explore consortium with the private sector, build local capacities and reinforce advisory support and policy advocacy.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Bharat Pokharel, former Country Director, for his leadership and contribution as I embark on a new journey. I expect the year 2022 to be more interesting with new ideas, new programmes, and new opportunities within and beyond Nepal. I look forward to working with the team in Nepal and the Head Office, the government, SDC, local implementing partners and contributing donors to realize our vision and values.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Prabin Manandhar'.

Dr. Prabin Manandhar
Country Director

Country Context Update

Nepal has been undergoing a significant shift from unitary to federal system of governance. The distribution of power and resources among the federal, provincial and local governments has been a recurring challenge. The federal government still holds huge power and resources while the provincial and local governments are struggling with a lack of capacity, resources and related laws. Nevertheless, federalism is seen as an opportunity to further inclusion and democracy in the country. The country has been recently divided over the Millennium Challenge Corporation's links with the US Indo-Pacific Strategy and provisions that the agreement might prevail over Nepal's laws in case of conflicts. The geo-political factors and external actors will likely have an impact on Nepal's domestic political and development landscape.

Nepal has been hit hard by COVID-19, although the situation has improved more recently. There are widespread impacts of the pandemic on jobs and incomes, with more than two out of every five economically active workers reporting an incidence of job loss or prolonged work absence. Women, young workers, and those engaged in non-agricultural activities have been the most severely affected. Nepal needs to mobilize its own productive resources, improve the legal and policy environment for civil society and the private sectors and create employment opportunities. Meanwhile, the United Nations General Assembly has endorsed the proposal to graduate Nepal to the status of a middle-income country from the category of Least Developed Country by 2026.

Gender equality and social inclusion remains one of the most persistent challenges facing Nepal. A number of initiatives have been taken by the government and non-government organizations toward women and men facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination due to caste, class, ethnicity, disability, or religion. Nepal is rapidly urbanizing with a projected annual urbanization rate of 1.9 percent. It offers an opportunity to work in the growing small towns for markets, e-governance and employment.

Helvetas Nepal Country Strategy

The Country Strategy (2019-22) is aligned with the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Plans of the Government of Nepal with the vision of achieving equality and sustainability by facilitating people's access to capital and skills, minimum wages, and social security arrangements. It is guided by the Helvetas Global Strategies (2018-20 and 2021-24). It is further aligned with the Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Nepal (2018-22) which has three integrated domains of interventions - Federal State building, Employment and Income, and Migration. The overall development goal of the strategy is: All women and men in Nepal, especially those who are economically poor and socially marginalized, have dignified lives.

The goal has been pursued through eight working fields under three working areas in the forms of programme implementation (people), advisory support (partnerships) and policy advocacy (frame conditions). Helvetas Nepal has integrated gender equality and social inclusion into the projects to increase the access of women and the marginalized to education and employment and reduced discriminatory and harmful practices including child marriage, caste-based discrimination, dowry witchcraft accusation and menstrual restriction. Advocacy has been integrated in the projects to improve the legal and policy environment for opening space for citizens, civil society and the private sector. In addition, target communities and networks have been empowered as right holders for their voice and participation in local governance.

Helvetas Nepal largely focussed its activities in Karnali and Madhesh Provinces but remained open for other provinces or municipalities for donor-funded mandates in Province 1, Bagmati and Lumbini Provinces. Helvetas Nepal has been contributing to Federal State Building and responding to the COVID-19 in the project areas.

Working Area: Water, Food and Climate

Through the Working Area “Water, Food and Climate”, Helvetas aims to enable people to gain sustainable access to natural resources, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, nutritious and healthy food, and technical and financial support services for improved and climate-resilient living conditions in rural and urban areas. There are four working fields under this working area and Helvetas Nepal has been involved in all these working fields as described below:

Working Field: WASH and Water Governance

Securing water resources and improving access to safe water and sanitation facilities are core elements of Helvetas’ work. Helvetas aims to enhance the competencies of public, civic and private actors to contribute to sustainable, equitable, accountable WASH and irrigation services, as well as to sustainable water resources management, benefitting especially disadvantaged women and men, ensuring that their voices are heard. The projects under this working field are given in the table below:

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
<i>Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Programme*</i>	Public donations	2017 – Jun 2021	Project management
Rural Village Water Resource Management Project (RVWRMP) Dailekh	Finnish Aid	2016 – Feb 2021	Advisory
Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage (HWTS) Project	Public donations	2018 – Jun 2021	Project management
Increasing Access to WASH - 20-21	charity: water	2020 – Sep 2021	Project management
Increasing Access to WASH - 21-22	charity: water	2021 – Sep 2022	Project management
<i>Swiss Climate V4W*</i>	Public donations	2018 – Dec 2021	Project management

(* *Italicized projects straddle two or more working fields*)

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Programme contributes to WASH and Water Governance field under Water, Food and Climate Working Area of Helvetas global strategy. The Programme is aligned to Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Drinking water and sanitation are fundamental rights of the citizen as per the Constitution of Nepal 2015. The Programme supported the construction of 48 drinking water supply schemes in its 14 working municipalities in Karnali and Sudurpaschim Provinces in 2021 to ensure that citizens enjoy this constitutional right. The completed schemes have provided direct access to safe drinking water to 25,457 people (49% women) of 3982 households. The schemes also supplied drinking water in 28 schools, serving additional 5684 students. Moreover, the Programme implemented a “blue school” approach in three schools, facilitating environmentally-friendly technologies and practices specifically related to WASH that can be replicated in the local communities through the students. A total of 1480 students benefited from this approach; they got improved WASH facilities in their schools and realized the concept of the blue school.

The Female Community Health Volunteers trained by the Programme outreached to 67,680 people with hygiene and sanitation promotion through door-to-door visits and hygiene literacy classes they conducted in the local communities. The Programme supported 277 households to upgrade their temporary toilets constructed during the open defecation-free campaign. The Programme interventions on sanitation and hygiene promotion motivated community people to adopt the total sanitation indicators including Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage (HWTS). As a result of these interventions, 3914 households used water filters in their households for safe drinking water; 4491 households managed handwashing facilities (handwashing bucket with attached tap/handwashing platform) in their yards; 4452 households each built a dry rack to dry kitchen utensils after washing; and 3842 households managed garbage pits for safe disposal of household solid waste. Two wards in two working municipalities were declared as total sanitation areas. The Programme also supported the promotion of dignified mensural hygiene in blue schools by providing training to teachers and technical assistance for managing necessary infrastructures.

The Programme developed five Multiple Water Use System (MUS) schemes, providing irrigation facilities to about 3.7 hectares of land owned by 296 households. It implemented source conservation initiatives in six drinking water supply schemes covering 2026 people. The initiatives are expected to support conserving the water sources and even increase the water discharge from them in the long run. Moreover, protection of and fencing work around the intake was carried out in all the schemes completed during the period.

Further, the capacity-building activities have contributed to improving WASH governance through deepening Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) practices in the WASH scheme planning and implementation process. Most of the Water Users and Sanitation Committees (WUSCs) regularly held their meetings as per their bylaws, collected operation and maintenance funds and undertook timely repairs and maintenance of the schemes when required. All the schemes organized public hearings, public reviews and public audits, disclosing detailed technical and financial information about them.

This year, WASH and Water Governance projects represented 17.59% of the total country programme budget and 21.06% of the total country programme expenditure.

Case Story 1: Water Supply Scheme Helped Improve Learning Environment in School

Kabde Balde is a small village in Naraharinath Rural Municipality-8, Kalikot District of Karnali Province. It had a scarcity of water, and the people would stay there temporarily just during the farming seasons. It has not been a long time since people started settling there permanently.

With a permanent settlement, Shree Saraswoti Basic School was established there in the year 2005. The school has now 175 students: 102 girls and 73 boys. There was no water supply system in the entire village, including the school. People would drink water mostly from unsafe sources. The school



Students using the water tap stands constructed in the school

did not have a proper building and the students were taught in the open field. It constructed a toilet after six years of its establishment, but that became unserviceable shortly for lack of water. As the toilets always used to be dirty and without water, the students would go to nearby bushes or their own houses. An office assistant was specifically assigned to fetch drinking water to the school from far-away . The water he fetched was merely enough for teachers and staff and the students were compelled to go to the far-away water tap to quench their thirst. It took them about 20 minutes one way to reach the water tap located in a nearby village. As the tap was always crowded with the villagers, the students would

have to wait for a long time to get their turn. This sometimes made them miss their classes. The girl students of menstruating age suffered the most due to the lack of water and toilets. Most of the time they would, therefore, stay at home and skip school during their menstruation. They would, thus, miss school for 4–5 days almost every month. This adversely impacted their study.

Helvetas Nepal implemented the Kabde Balde drinking water and sanitation scheme in the village under the charity: water 350 grant in 2020. HURENDEC, a local NGO, provided technical and social facilitation in the implementation of this scheme which was completed in August 2021. The scheme has supplied water to the entire village and the public institutions like schools, health posts, municipality ward offices and community organizations.

The scheme has provided a water supply connection to the school and constructed two child-friendly tap stands in the school premises. Now the school has enough water for drinking and sanitation purposes. There is enough water in the toilets; they are clean and in regular use. This has eased the

life of menstruating girls while at school. They now do not fear coming to school during their menstruation and they do not miss their classes any more during their menstruation.

Appreciating the changes brought in by the scheme, Janak Bishwokarma, the school principal remarked, *“This scheme has helped improve the learning environment in our school. Now we have enough water in our school premises. There is enough water in the toilets, and they are in use. Students have developed the habit of washing hands with soap after going toilet. All the students are happy now and so are the teachers and the staff. I would like to thank Helvetas Nepal”*.

Working Field: Food and Nutrition

Helvetas attempts to build partnerships among public, civic and private actors to enhance their competencies to secure access to land, sustainable agriculture practices, food systems, services, and markets and advocate for enabling policy frameworks to increase the availability of affordable, nutritious and healthy food for disadvantaged people. The projects under this field are as follows:

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
Riverbed Farming (RbF) Project	Public donations	2019 – Dec 2022	Project management
Nutrition-Sensitive Mountain Agriculture (NMA)	SDC (global)	2018 – Sep 2021 (Phase II)	Project management
<i>MITO (Strengthening Walnut Value Chain in Nepal) *</i>	Public donations, Happel Foundation	2021 – Dec 2025 (Phase II)	Project management
<i>Early Response to COVID-19 Affected Vulnerable People*</i>	Swiss Solidarity	Jun 2021 – Nov 2021	Project management

(* *Italicized projects straddle two or more working fields*)

These projects continued collaboration with devolved agricultural extension services under local governments. These projects emphasized improving localized extension services, building systems and capacities to provide advice and inputs on climate-smart agricultural practices and modern agricultural technologies. The projects further focused on linkages to business services by improving market understanding. Consequently, projects were also engaged in behavioural change for food and nutrition security, the use of information and communication technology and evidence-based advocacy. Most importantly, they considered the agricultural innovations, promotion of comprehensive local agricultural advisory services system and market systems development as elements of this core working area. Moreover, the projects continuously engaged in exploration, and innovative approaches, by collaborating with both the public and private sectors to promote inclusive economic growth.

In 2021, our projects collaborated with 26 municipalities of Madhesh Province and Karnali Province, thereby reaching 18,444 farming households (56% women and 79% disadvantaged groups) through sustainable agriculture activities and 7193 farming households (55% women and 78% disadvantaged groups) by market orientation, system development and market linkages activities. In total 10,937 farmers (51% women and 78% disadvantaged groups) were capacitated on improved agriculture technologies, cultivation practices, sustainable harvesting and nutrition-sensitivity requirement. In total 3385 (62% women) farmers were trained in agriculture technology and nutrition-sensitive agriculture of which 1565 (44% women) farmers were trained in enhancing business skills and value chain strengthening. A total of 6803 farmers have received additional income by receiving marketing services for their products. Moreover, 5286 farmers have improved their consumption of nutritious food groups.

In brief, the projects under this Working Field have contributed towards making agriculture that meets the needs of the people, nutritionally and economically. Riverbed Farming (RbF) Project, in close collaboration with the local government, supported 6172 farming households for the adoption of riverbed-farming technology, and these households cultivated 905.3 hectares of dry riverbed land. MITO walnut project, Phase II, has been started aiming to strengthen the walnut value chain. Nutrition in Mountain Agroecosystems (NMA) has accomplished its 2nd phase by making a commendable contribution to sensitizing nutrition-sensitive behaviour changes, nutrition-sensitive school curriculum development, nutrition-sensitive strategy and plan development in federal, provincial, and local government.

In 2021, the projects under Food and Nutrition shared 1.96% of the total country programme budget and 2.52% of the total expenditure.

Case Story 2: Chhatakala believes in the wholeness of organic farming

Chhatakala Bishwokarma, 44, is a resident of Fukot in Raskot Municipality-2, Kalikot District, Karnali Province. She lives with her family of nine. Her household's source of income is farming and her husband's engagement as a wage labourer in India. The produce of her farm, every year, had been rice and wheat, which was hardly enough to meet the family's needs for 3 months.

Though Chhatakala has been a member of Chautara Krishak Samuha for a while, she was unaware of the proper techniques of farming and the importance of diverse diet for nutrition and health. In early 2020, she participated in a home garden management training called Scaling Up Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Intervention (SUNSAI) provided by Pachaljarna Society for National Development (PSND). This training gave her knowledge and skills in home gardening and also the importance of integrating diverse crops such as vegetables and fruits for nutritional benefits and holistic well-being. As a part of the training package, she received a composite kit with a variety of seasonal vegetable seeds.

Chhatakala utilized her learning by cultivating a variety of vegetables such as radish, mustard and spinach in the land where she grew rice and wheat in the past. She set up a plastic tunnel house with the help of her farmers' group to grow and protect the crops. Her first harvest of radish, mustard and



Chhatakala working in her plastic house

spinach was consumed at home, and the surplus was sold in the nearby market. From the first batch, she was able to make NPR 8800. She has realized the value of nutrition for her family and ways to make a good income by diversified production of local crops. She has high aspirations and has set up a nursery for cucumber, pumpkin and tomatoes to preserve the local seeds.

She is inclined towards semi-commercial farming using organic methods. With the SUNSAI's assistance, she has recently constructed a vermin-composting pit for producing organic compost manure. While she waits for her compost to be ready, she is working to expand her farming.

She also became an active member of PSND which has supported her flourish her vegetable business in many ways. She says, "I appreciate PSND's support in helping me transform my life as a diverse vegetable producer. This has not only given me income but has also contributed to my family's health and nutrition needs. Organic farming seems beneficial in many ways because as producers we are helping ourselves and the community savour the local and healthy taste filled with nutritional values".

Working Field: Climate and Disaster Resilience

Helvetas attempts to foster partnership among public, civic and private actors to enhance their competencies to strengthen the resilience of disadvantaged people to climate change and disaster risks in rural and urban areas by supporting long-term planning, sustainable ecosystems management, and risk-informed decision-making and improved access to climate finance. The projects under this working field are as follows:

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
Swiss Climate V4W*	Public donations	2018 – Dec 2021	Project management
Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Programme*	Public donations	2017 – Jun 2021	Project management

<i>MITO (Strengthening Walnut Value Chain in Nepal) *</i>	Public donations, Happel Foundation	2021 – Dec 2025 (Phase II)	Project management
<i>Relief to Helambu Flood Victims*</i>	Public donations, SDC	Sep 21 – Dec 2021	Project management

(* *Italicized projects straddle two or more working fields*)

Nepal is the 4th most vulnerability country in the world in terms of climate change. Impacts are already visible in agriculture, water resources, biodiversity and rural-access infrastructures in Nepal, and are likely to intensify further in the future. Water sources that previously had enough water are gradually drying. Soil erosion, landslides and flooding are common water-induced disasters whereas other disasters, e.g., earthquakes, fire, etc. are recurrent. Helvetas Nepal does not have a dedicated project on climate and disaster resilience; however, these elements are duly considered while supporting resilient livelihoods, and for this, Helvetas Nepal works in a participatory manner. Four approaches of Helvetas in improving climate resilience are: a) Climate Risk Assessment, b) Climate Sensitive Design/s, c) Climate Smart Technology and d) Local Adaptation Capacity. For instance, in 2021, the IWRM Programme continued facilitating the municipal Water Use Master Plan (WUMP) which considers the climate risks and their impacts while assessing the water sources and their potential uses, thereby making the WASH sector climate-resilient. The IWRM Programme, under its Swiss Climate V4W project, implemented source conservation and 3R (recharge, retention, and reuse of water) technology in six drinking water supply schemes. The 3R model aims at augmenting the water retention and recharge capacity of spring sources, thereby lessening the water stress due to gradually drying sources. The MITO walnut project implemented all four approaches as mentioned above. Some examples are drought-tolerant and disease-resistant seed, mulching, sustainable harvesting of wild walnuts, compost manure and botanical pesticides. MITO implemented innovative snow-harvesting pits to improve the soil moisture in the walnut orchard.

Apart from a short-term project “Relief to Helambu Flood Victims”, Helvetas Nepal’s engagement is relatively less in disaster resilience. It has realized the importance and need of risk assessment in all projects and the design of risk-informed interventions. Projects like Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU) and IWRM consider disaster risk in the design of trail bridges and drinking water infrastructures, which was continued in 2021 as well. Helvetas Nepal intends to support the municipalities in developing climate and disaster resilience local plans and facilitate them implementing those, but due to constrained resources (dedicated project, staff, funds), this has remained ‘untouched’ in 2021 as well.

This year, Climate and Disaster Resilience projects represented 6.65% of the total country programme budget and 8.30% of the total country programme expenditure.

Case Story 3: Dil Bahadur Kammar and his family feel safer and more secure in the shelter

The couple had a four-room house in Simkhet, next to the road to Kiul from Chanaute, in Sindhupalchowk District of Bagmati Province. The house was destroyed by the earthquake in 2015. Then, they constructed a two-roomed house in the same location with much difficulty. The flood on 15 June 2021 destroyed their house; fortunately, they all – two sons, two daughters and the couple – could vacate the house safely. Then they moved to a camp at Churetar where they got a tent from the municipality.



Dil Bahadur Kammar and his family in their transitional shelter

They rented a piece of land nearby their old house in Simkhet to construct a transitional shelter. They were about to excavate for the foundation, the flood on 1 August 2021 washed away that land as well. Then, they decided to move

to the location where their transitional shelter is constructed now. This was their barren field that was uncultivated for quite some years; thus, it was densely covered with trees. They cleared the land and some trees to construct the transitional shelter. Dil Bahadur's father and elder brother also constructed a house nearby.

They stayed in the tent for 4 months and, on the ninth day of Dashain, moved to the transitional shelter. While in the tent, Dil's wife Tika Kumari was ill for 18 days, and fortunately, it was not COVID-19.

Now they have cleared the trees around their house and also started cultivating the land. The main source of income for the family is daily wage labour and farming on others' land. Tika Kumari is worried about their livelihood, but she is also hopeful as their land is closer to the proposed site for the municipal office. If the municipal office is constructed on that site in the future, Tika Kumari plans to use that piece of land for vegetable farming and sell them around.

Working Field: Bridges and Roads

Improving access to economic opportunities and public services by building trail bridges and rural roads is a core component of Helvetas' strategy. Helvetas aims that the population, in particular disadvantaged women and men, has increased access to markets, schools, health centres and other public services as a result of the newly built and well-maintained trail bridges, rural roads and tracks. The projects under this working field are as follows:

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU); Trail Bridge Sub-Sector Programme	SDC and GoN	2019 – Jul 2023	Advisory
South–South Cooperation Unit (SSCU)	Various	2016 – Dec 2021	Project management

A record-high number of new trail bridges – 456 bridges – were completed, along the rehabilitation of 13 bridges, during the reporting period with the Technical Assistance (TA) of the Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU) to the government-led Trail Bridge Sub-Sector Programme (TBSSP). This was a major achievement considering the challenging working environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The programme was able to achieve such high outputs due to the continual adaptation of working procedures such as “distance monitoring” by TBSU/Provincial Technical Assistance Providers (PTAPs) by maximizing the mobilization of local NGOs and using virtual means to communicate with them and use photographic evidence, mandatory enforcement of safety precautions based on GoN (Government of Nepal), SDC and Helvetas Nepal's guidelines, close coordination with local and provincial governments for planning and implementation, and the institutionalisation of trail bridge programme within the government agencies.

In the reporting period, 720,000 additional people (50% disadvantaged groups, 52% women) benefited directly from the safer access and time saved by the bridges. This is in line with the targets and is contributing to the Country Strategy's 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. Most bridges (29%) were built to facilitate household chores (such as gathering firewood and fodder). Most schools were closed during the reporting period due to the pandemic, but NGO reports recorded that in a few cases, where classes were started, students were reliant on the bridges to reach schools. Similarly, reports also noted that not only were the bridges essential to access health facilities (at 13% of bridge sites), but that trail bridges also played a vital role in transporting vaccines to rural villages in a timely manner. On average 2.4 hours were saved by the trail bridges for a two-way journey.

The strengthening of provincial governments was also prioritized by anchoring steering mechanisms (i.e., Trail Bridge Coordination Committee Meetings) in the provinces, along with support provided to the Transport Infrastructure Directorate/Ministry of Physical Infrastructure Development to successfully procure the services and mobilize PTAPs in all provinces.

Helvetas Nepal, through SSCU, facilitated the Burundi Roads Authority (ARB) to provide access to 23,745 people (50.9% women) rural people in Burundi through the construction of five trail bridges. These bridges facilitated improved access to markets, health services, schools, farmland/pasture, or

the road heads as well as a national park. These bridges save on average 78 minutes per trip for the bridge users and provide a safe river-crossing facility round the year.

A key lesson learnt includes the need to continue the COVID-19 precautionary measures with close coordination with provinces and municipalities to lessen the impact of the pandemic on programme activities. Meanwhile, enhancing the capacities of the newly procured PTAPs and supporting provinces to effectively operationalize them is the main priority for the future, along with increasing coordination/cooperation between provinces and municipalities through technical assistance provision by capacitated PTAPs.

In 2021, the projects under Bridges and Roads shared 27.48% of the total country programme budget and 28.92% of the total expenditure.

Case Story 4: Changed Livelihood: Case Study of Kumkuntha Trail Bridge

“I would probably be an unskilled worker in India if the trail bridge had not been constructed over here,” says Mr. Dan Bahadur Balayar, 45 years old, who has been running a small fancy and retail shop alongside the Kumkuntha trail bridge since 2018. The Kumkuntha bridge is the lifeline for six villages of Sikkhar Municipality of Doti District, Sudurpaschim Province, which benefits about 480 households (3628 population), out of which, 50% of the beneficiaries are Dalits.



Locals crossing the Kumkuntha trail bridge

Most households are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, due to the lack of a river-crossing facility, they faced challenges to sell their products as there were no local markets and people would have to walk for over 2 hours to reach the nearest one. In many cases, surplus products (after home consumption) would rot in the field, or households would distribute them for free or feed it to their livestock. Traditionally, most men used to go to India for employment opportunities, leaving women, senior citizens, and children in the villages.



Mr. Dan Bahadur Balayar, who is running a fancy/retail shop nearby the Kumkuntha trail

During fiscal year 2018/19, Sikkhar Municipality was able to access federal grants, through the Department of Local Infrastructure (DoLI), for the construction of the 175-metres span Kumkuntha trail bridge over the Seti River. Technical assistance was provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) through Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU)/Helvetas Nepal and SEBAC Nepal, the PTAPs for Sudurpaschim Province.

For Mr. Balayar, who used to go to India to earn cash as a seasonal migrant, the location of the Kumkuntha trail bridge has become not only the source of his family's income but also the reason for him to stay with his family. He chose to open a small business near the bridge site, instead of going to work in India. Starting with an initial NPR 500,000 investment, Mr. Balayar's business has now nearly doubled to NPR 900,000. *"My son and daughter have already pursued engineering and nursing courses whereas a younger son is studying in grade 8. This is all possible due to my small business after the bridge was built over here,"* says Mr. Balayar.

Similarly, the bridge has also facilitated the transportation of local produce (vegetables and livestock) and allowed farmers from across the river to gain year-around access to the local market. According to Mr. Bir Singh Balayar, a local aged 55 years, *"The trail bridge is not only for safer crossings and saving time, but it has also become the means for small farmers to generate income"*. He notes that approximately 600 kg of vegetables, 1200 litres of milk and around 4-5 goats per month are sold from ward 11 of Sikhhar Municipality to the local markets in Kumkuntha and even beyond to other areas of Doti and Dadelhdhura.

Working Area: Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion

Engaging in the Working Area "Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion", Helvetas attempts to promote partnership with public and private actors to amplify the voices of local communities and to enhance the space for civil society and private sector actors to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes while developing capacities of public institutions to deliver socially inclusive and gender-responsive services and articulate transformative policies. This is expected to reduce inequalities, enhance social cohesion, promote human rights and promote safe and productive migration. Helvetas Nepal has been involved in this Working Area as described below:

Working Field: Governance and Civic Space

While engaging in the working field "Governance and Civic Space", Helvetas embraces an approach that communities are empowered to engage in political decision-making and claim access to quality public services, while government and civil society partners have increased capacity and mutual trust to articulate policies that improve frame conditions and civic space. The projects under this working field are as follows:

Project name	Funding source	Phase until	Helvetas role
SAJAG	European Union	Jan 2018 – Feb 2021	Project management
Good Governance and GESI	Public donations	Apr 2021 – Dec 2024	Project management
<i>Relief to Helambu Flood Victims*</i>	Public donations, SDC	Sep 2021 – Dec 2021	Project management

(* *Italicized projects straddle two or more working fields*)

Almost all projects of Helvetas Nepal have either been designed or have adjusted their working approach to engaging formally with sub-national governments, both local and provincial ones, in project implementation. Apart from a few dedicated projects, many sectoral projects (e.g., TBSU, SaMI, IWRMP, RbF, etc.) also contributed to this working field but are reported under their specific sections.

Despite the COVID crisis, all local governments had a collaboration with one or several Helvetas Nepal projects. But only 13 local governments could be supported to formulate their plans in the year 2021. The plans include periodic development plans, water use master plans and revenue improvement plans. Similarly, a few events of orientation on local governance-related topics could be organized amongst the local governments' officials, which only 358 individuals (31% women, 25% disadvantaged groups) attended. Throughout the year, collaboration and links with local governments and concerned stakeholders have been smooth despite the absence of face-to-face communication. Many local governments and civil society organization partners were able to capacitate themselves on the use of virtual platforms (e.g., Zoom, Teams, etc.) for communication.

Although the number of civil society organisations supported by different projects reached 241, no such organizations could be supported in their advocacy activities. Nonetheless, some alternative activities such as the organization of horizontal learning workshops, practice of social accountability tools, mobilisation of local media, etc. could be organized. The public audit practice, which includes a public hearing, public review and public audit, has become a common norm among all infrastructure-related projects. As such, 18 different projects have put some form of accountability mechanism including the public audit practice into practice.

Apart from a short-term project “Relief to Helambu flood victims”, a dedicated project SAJAG (Active Citizens for Accountable Local Governments) was closed in end of February of 2021 after a two-month no-cost extension. A new project entitled “Good Governance and GESI Project”, incorporating good governance, GESI and digitalisation aspects, has been designed and initiated its implementation from September 2021. As a preparatory activity, a digitalisation need assessment of Barahathawa Municipality in Sarlahi District of Madhesh Province was carried out. As in the past, acquisition opportunities with diverse donors were pursued. These efforts paid off with success in an EU tender entitled “Youth at the centre of COVID recovery in Nepal”. This new project, known as the PROYEL (Promotion of Youth Engagement in Local Governance Process) Project, will promote the engagement of youth in the democratic and governance process and the protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights. It is to be implemented in eight selected municipalities of Karnali Province and Madhesh Province for three years. Because of the financial contribution requirement in PROYEL, the above-mentioned “Good Governance and GESI Project” is to be embedded in the former from the beginning of 2022.

This year Governance and Civic Space projects represented 1.58% of the total country programme budget and 1.55% of the expenditure.

Case Story 5: Local government’s collaboration with civil society organizations and the private sector in responding to the COVID-19 impacts on vulnerable communities

In early April 2021, as the COVID-19 cases increased and mandatory lockdowns were imposed in India, many Nepali daily-wage workers who had gone there for employment were forced to return home. By the end of April, almost all the districts of Nepal also went into lockdown considering the spike in growing COVID-19 infections. An inevitable economic crisis followed and informal workers who depend on daily-wage labour and other vulnerable population whose livelihoods were already hit hard by the first lockdown were further pushed into poverty.

In the last week of May 2021, Helvetas Nepal and its local partner Community Development and Advocacy Forum (CDAF) Nepal conducted a rapid needs assessment in Kshireshwornath Municipality in Dhanusha District of Madhesh Province to get an overview of the impact of the COVID-19. The rapid needs assessment showed that members of Chamar, Dom, and Musahar communities who are classified as belonging to the lowest rung of the Dalit caste were affected by the pandemic to an extent



Representatives from Civil Bank, CDAF Nepal, Helvetas Nepal and the Municipality after signing the agreement

that they were cutting down on their daily meals and had further fallen into debt trap. This assessment was conducted in consultation with the local and provincial government officials, hospitals, members of the community and Dalit alliances in the area. Based on the assessment, a short-term project was designed aiming to provide cash-based assistance to members of the Chamar, Dom, and Musahar communities to support them in meeting their essential needs, spread awareness in the local language to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection and support provincial COVID-19 hospital to become better resourced.

Out of 1255 households, only 12% of them previously had a bank account, so to promote financial inclusion of the unbanked households and to improve their access to financial services, deposit to beneficiaries' bank account was chosen as the modality of cash-based assistance. Then a joint agreement among the municipality, CDAF Nepal, Civil Bank and Helvetas Nepal was signed and the project was implemented under the leadership of the municipality. By the end of the project, 1180 beneficiaries had opened a bank account and a total of 1223 households received multipurpose cash-based assistance to meet their needs. Furthermore, the project sought to enhance the financial decision-making of women within the household by ensuring that women from beneficiary households are the recipient of the cash. As a result, 944 (80% of 1180) women now have a bank account.

The end-line survey shows that this has positively contributed to women's role in decision-making to some extent as 87% of the households indicated husband and wife jointly made decisions regarding the expenditure of the cash. The municipality has performed exemplary tasks in collaboration with civil societies and the private sector in responding to the COVID-19 impacts on vulnerable groups.

Working Field: Migration

Making labour migration an informed choice and a fraud/exploitation-free venture is a core component of Helvetas' strategy. Helvetas aims that migrants are empowered to migrate safely while multistakeholder dialogue and partnerships with government, private sector and civil society are supported to set up effective migration governance systems that safeguard the rights and well-being of migrants. The projects under this working field are as follows:

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
Safer Migration (SaMi) Project	SDC and GoN	2018 – Jul 2022	Advisory
<i>Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment (ENSSURE)*</i>	SDC and GoN	2016 – Jul 2022	Advisory
<i>Samridhhi*</i>	IFAD	2018 – Dec 2022	Advisory
<i>InElam*</i>	Public donations	2017 – Dec 2020	Advisory

(* *Italicized projects straddle two or more working fields*)

In 2021, SaMi reached a total of 171,628 individuals (42,964 women) through Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs). An MRC serves both as a point of information and for linking migrants and their families to the necessary support services prior to migration and throughout the migration cycle. The physical operation of the MRCs was disrupted in the first half of the reporting period due to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's lockdown measures. SaMi, however, ensured the continuity of services through virtual means. Although the mobility of people for employment was affected, the number of MRC visitors looks encouraging. The vocational skills training component was particularly affected due to the closure of training management institutes and lower job demands in destination countries. Only 22% of men and 7% of women who received vocational skills training provided by SaMi were gainfully employed. Psychosocial counselling emerged as a crucial component to facilitate migrants' families and returnees to cope with the COVID-19 situation. SaMi provided counselling services to 2029 individuals (1854 women), out of which, 61% showed improvement in their psychosocial well-being. Similarly, legal aid, legal counselling and paralegal support in different countries of destinations and the foreign employment-related complaints were resolved through formal/informal mechanisms at the national as well as local levels.

SaMi also continued its regular coordination and collaboration activities to prioritize migration-related issues at the local level. As a result, 109 local governments (LGs) allocated budgets to carry out migration-related activities. Similarly, four LGs have established and continued sub-MRCs with their own financial resources. These achievements indicate a growing interest, involvement, and ownership of the LGs to ensure safer migration and the well-being of migrant workers and their families.

The project supports federalization and particularly the LGs to effectively exercise their responsibilities on foreign employment in line with the Constitution of Nepal 2015 and Local Government Operation Act 2017. The project facilitates the LGs to develop plans, policies, budgets and relevant administrative structures by incorporating the issues of foreign employment. SaMi works for the protection of migrant workers and their families, with particular emphasis on women and disadvantaged groups who are more vulnerable throughout the migration process. All the project components of SaMi, including vocational skills trainings, give priority to women beneficiaries and people from the Dalit communities.

The skills component of SaMi aims to equip the aspiring migrants with basic knowledge and skills which enables them to get better wages and work in a safer manner after their migration. Similarly, the financial literacy component of SaMi supports the members of migrant households, particularly left-behind women, to increase their knowledge about savings and proper management of remittances.

The role division and change in the structure of provincial ministries affected coordination activities at the province level over the reporting period. In order to mitigate this, SaMi increased coordination meetings with the newly formed ministries responsible for labour and employment and informed the relevant officials about the SaMi project. Similarly, the changing political context and the general conventions of the major political parties of Nepal had implications for the elected representatives at the local level, which caused difficulty while conducting local-level coordination meetings and organizing some of the project activities. In the coming days, local and national elections are expected to disrupt project activities at the local level, as the political leaders are likely to engage in preparatory activities related to the elections. SaMi will remain in close collaboration with the LGs and prioritize project activities that might be affected by the elections. The project will also initiate discussions about cost-sharing modalities with the LGs to sustain foreign employment services and promote effective labour migration governance.

This year, Migration project represented 19.12% of the total country programme budget and 18.42% of the expenditure.

Case Story 6: Lessons about the poverty cycle changed Hira's living situation

Hira Thapa's life was not the same after her 14-year-old son died. While the pain of losing her son itself was unbearable, poverty and solitude further affected Hira and she lacked the motivation to live. Her husband was working in Qatar and the family completely depended on his income for their livelihood. *"Asking him to return home was unimaginable as his income helped to meet our ends,"* Hira said. She only had her younger son, who was 10 years old at the time, to share her plight with. *"I gradually got addicted to tobacco after the death of my son. Whenever I got emotional or anxious, I turned to tobacco to relieve my stress."*

Life took a different turn for 47-year-old Hira, a resident of Kathekhola Rural Municipality in Baglung



Hira feeding the pigs

District of Gandaki Province after she joined the financial literacy classes run by the Safer Migration (SaMi) project. *"I had never imagined making an income on my own,"* she said. *"It was the lessons from the financial literacy classes that opened new possibilities for me."* Hira joined the classes in March 2020. Soon after attending the second session, she gave up the habit of consuming tobacco. The second session of the financial literacy classes explains the poverty cycle through pictorial demonstration. It teaches about behaviour and practices that can lead a person from poverty to prosperity.

Health-related consequences were not of much concern to Hira. However, the realization that she could save a lot on her daily expenses by quitting tobacco motivated her in doing so. She regularly attended the classes and was further inspired to start an income-generating activity. *"It was the only way to make my husband return home,"* she realized.

She took a loan of NPR 30,000 from a local cooperative in April 2021. With that money, she constructed a shed and bought two piglets. She now has six piglets and three pigs, and the capital of her enterprise is worth NPR 100,000 (USD 841). She has already paid the loan back. She was able to save NPR 9000 (USD 80) by cutting down on her daily tobacco consumption. Besides being able to save the remittances sent by her husband, Hira actively contributes to the daily household needs

and education of her younger son studying in 12th grade. “I make an income of around 50,000 rupees in a year,” she shares.

Hira now plans to expand her business and call her husband home within a year for a better life within the country. She said that she no longer believes that women should only depend on their husband’s earnings. “Instead, we can work together to make our lives better,” she shared.

Working Area: Skills, Jobs and Income

As the access to basic education, vocational training and income-generating opportunities is essential to lift communities out of poverty, Helvetas Nepal has long been engaging in the Working Area to create gainful employment and income opportunities for the poor. Helvetas Nepal is active in this Working Area as described below:

Working Field: Vocational Skills

Aiming that youth and adults have acquired relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, gainful jobs and entrepreneurship, Helvetas Nepal has been implementing several projects in this working field as described below:

Project name	Funding source	Duration	Helvetas role
<i>Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment (ENSSURE)</i>	SDC and GoN	2016 – Jul 2022	Advisory
Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment (ENSSURE) Phase II	SDC and GoN	2021 – Jul 2025	Advisory
<i>Samriddhi</i>	IFAD	2018 – Dec 2022	Advisory
Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT) Phase II	SDC contribution to World Bank project	2020 – Jul 2022	Advisory (M&E)
<i>Safer Migration (SaMi)</i>	SDC and GoN	2018 – Jul 2022	Advisory
<i>InElam*</i>	Public donations	2017 – Dec 2020	Advisory

(* *Italicized projects straddle two or more working fields*)

Vocational skills development initiatives are a priority for the Government of Nepal and development partners in Nepal, including SDC. Helvetas Nepal has been collaborating with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST); the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies; the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security; the social development/education-related ministries in the provinces, and the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) through various projects. Based on the requirements of young people, the projects support government agencies to implement training courses leading to National Skills Testing Board (NSTB/CTEVT) Level-I, Level-II, and Pre-Diploma level Dual VET programme, which is a new approach to technical and vocational education and training programme consisting of both classroom-based education and workplace-based training. Collaboration with employers/business industries has been at the core of the process. The major occupational focus areas were construction, electrical, mechanical, hospitality, automobiles, information technology, early childhood development, textiles, etc. In 2021, ENSSURE, an SDC project, entered its second phase, in line with the federal spirit.

In 2021, a total of 11,120 students, trainees, apprentices and existing workers received different kinds of skills development training, of which 43% were women and 76% were from disadvantaged groups. Additionally, 127 apprentices completed the Dual VET Apprenticeship. Out of 98 Dual VET-Apprenticeship graduates, 59% were found employment with a monthly average income of NPR 15,528.00. In 2021, a total of 1158 migrants, both aspirants and returnees, graduated from vocational skills development training of SaMi. Besides this, 18% of 635 trainees were gainfully employed. Similarly, in 2021, a total of 10,255 students, trainees, apprentices and existing workers received different kinds of skills development training under Samriddhi.

Through the SDC project ENSSURE, Helvetas Nepal 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. More than 39,256 young people received vocational training this year under this project.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continued into the year 2021 as well. During this time, even though the training was stopped because of government directives, projects utilized virtual platforms to train career-guidance teachers, in-company trainers, orientation and enhance capacity development of various stakeholders, including private sector industries.

In 2021, a Skill Development Unit was established within the business industry association, Chamber of Industries Morang (CIM), which has the mandate to facilitate institution-industry collaboration, collect skills demand from the industry, encourage and suggest member companies to benefit from Dual VET and act as the focal point for skills- and employment-related issues.

According to the mandate of ENSSURE Phase II, the project facilitated the formation of various committees, including Project Steering and Project Implementation Committees at the provincial level, a Project Coordination Committee at the federal level, and established its Project Support Unit offices in provinces. All of these are required for second phase implementation, thereby making them instrumental in helping the province and local governments exercise their constitutional mandates.

This year, Vocational Skills projects represented 21.49% of the total country programme budget and 14.26% of the expenditure.

Case Story 7: Manju Dahit shows the way forward for women and lead in an area of work dominated by men

Manju Dahit from Rajapur Municipality, Bardiya District, Lumbini Province received 24 months of Dual VET-Apprenticeship training in Mechanical Engineering from Bheri Technical School, Nepalgunj, where she got institution-based learning for three and half months, followed by additional 19.5 months of workplace-based training with one day per week of institution-based learning. She did her apprenticeship at SH Steel Udhyog. When she joined, women were hired in the factory only for sewing jobs. She is now the leader in the bending-machine section, leading fellow male workers whom she has taught how to do their work also.

She is among 337 apprentices enrolled in Dual VET Apprenticeship in Mechanical Engineering, run by the ENSSURE Project since 2018/19 in three batches. Manju and her fellow apprentices were the first to do the mechanical job, otherwise deemed as a job for men only. She used to feel awkward and scared initially but got on well with other colleagues soon after. The in-company trainer also helped them learn and feel comfortable with such work. She started with the easy paint job and slowly graduated to doing more strenuous work like welding and drilling.

She has recently completed her skill test, after which, she was offered a job in the same company. When she joined as an apprentice, she was paid NPR 6000 per month, which gradually increased to NPR 8000 and NPR 15,000 now. Now that she has been hired as a staff, she gets a basic salary of NPR 18,500 plus benefits including food.

Manju comes from a family of farmers. Her elder brother also works as a labourer in welding. She finds a difference in how her brother learned by watching others and must look for a job here and there whereas she has a strong knowledge base and a recognized certificate, and she has a job in a place where she does not have to wander to find work.



Manju Dahit working in a bending machine

Initially, her parents and community had opposed her going for this training since no other females had ventured out for such a job. Her parents are happy now that she has got a good job. Even her younger brother is now taking the same training. Other girls from her community also want to become

like her and take similar training. Her earnings have helped her family financially, covering debts and regular household payments. At the same time, she is saving NPR 5000 per month. She aspires to start her own factory in her community in the future.

Working Field: Private Sector Development

Helvetas attempts to create multiple partnerships and promotes policies that build sustainable business environments and foster inclusive economies that support decent job creation and entrepreneurship in micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, in farm and non-farm sectors. The projects under this working field are as described below:

Project name	Funding source	Phase until	Helvetas role
<i>InElam*</i>	Public donations	2017 – Dec 2020	Advisory
Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment (ENSSURE) Phase II	SDC and GoN	2021 – Jul 2025	Advisory
Samriddhi	IFAD	2018 – Dec 2022	Advisory

(*Italics indicate projects straddling two or more working fields)

For sustainable market-led enterprise development, the role of the private sector is crucial. InElam Project has been closely working with the private sector and local/provincial government to enhance the investment of the private sector by creating enabling business environment for entrepreneurship development and decent-job creation. Business opportunity exploration, business plan development, facilitation for market linkage, partnership with financial institutions, product development and testing, market-led business model development, business service localization through private service providers are major activities of the project. In 2021, 334 businesses (188 in Karnali Province and 146 in Madhesh Province) were started by the private sector with the project's facilitation support. For InElam's investment (including technical assistance) of NPR 21,112,652, it has been able to leverage an amount of NPR 26,109,300 from the private sector and NPR 8,100,000 from the local government for enterprise development. One policy on Banana Farming Insurance (local level) was revised for the formation of the national-level Banana Producers Federation which submitted a memorandum paper to the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture for revision of policies on the import of bananas and better regulatory environment of banana farming and sales in Nepal. Likewise, seven different innovative business ideas were piloted by the private sector in the reporting period.

The private sector has been increasingly involved in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system, which is also evident from the relevant business/industry associations' recent involvement in the development of the course contents for Workers' Further Training. The TVET system, which includes a selection of occupation, course development, trainees and apprentice selection, monitoring of the training programmes and most importantly facilitating the collaboration between training institutes and the member companies for effective on-the-job training (OJT) and apprentices, is expanding with the involvement of private sector. The system is further expanded to include re-skilling and up-skilling for existing workers, workers who lost their jobs during the COVID-19 and returnee migrants in collaboration with the Hotel Association Nepal, Auto-mechanics Association of Nepal and Nawalpur Electrician Association

The ENSSURE Project continued to facilitate formal collaborations between CTEVT and business industry associations and employers for industry placement for OJT and apprentices for their work-based learning component. Similarly, Samriddhi Project partnered with Training & Employment (T&Es) Service Providers or imparting training to youths under Vocational Skills Training and the Leading to Apprenticeship Model in 2021.

Continuous engagement with/orientation to the private entities like product associations, business member organisations, associations of business service providers, training and employment providers, chambers of commerce and industries make it successful to create enabling business environment to enhance private sector investment and their roles for enterprise development.

In 2021, the projects under Private Sector Development shared 4.13% of the total country programme budget and 4.97% of the total expenditure.

Case Story 8: Tackling ingrained stereotypes through youth entrepreneurship: A young female graduate's journey to becoming an entrepreneur and changemaker

Birgunj Public College is one of the academic institutions that has embraced a course on entrepreneurship development and entrepreneurial education to maximize entrepreneurial spirit amongst its students. The college is a strategic partner of Helvetas Nepal's InElam Project which seeks to promote employment opportunities through enterprise development. InElam has been supporting the college to strengthen its role in developing youth entrepreneurs. For instance, as a part of this course, students are required to work in teams, come up with a business idea, assess its market potential and technical feasibility, develop a business plan, and then "sell" it to an examiner.



Young graduate turned entrepreneur Simran Chaurasiya.
Photo Credit: Simran Chaurasiya.

Like many young graduates, after Simran Chaurasiya graduated with a Bachelor's in Business Administration from the college, she faced difficulties in finding a job of her choice but says that she settled for a part-time accounting job despite feeling unfulfilled and unsatisfied with it and she began to think of her own venture.

Twenty-four-year-old Simran says that she started facing difficulties from the point she began to look for a business partner to start this venture with. She states, "Even my closest friends expressed reluctance to co-start a business with me. They were all inclined towards the security that a job offered and said that they did not want to take this path of risk and uncertainty". After a long search, Simran came across a software engineering graduate who shared the same vision as her. Together, they decided to start Ezze Eats, an online food delivery company. The duo made a total investment of NPR 1,000,000, most of which was spent on the development of their mobile phone application, packaging materials, and setting up an office. Simran partly managed the amount from the savings she had been making from her part-time jobs and her mother supported her with the remaining amount.

As Ezze Eats was set to launch in April 2021, Simran faced yet another difficulty when the country was hit by the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the government announced lockdown restrictions right on the same month of her planned launch. Even with the then-ongoing lockdown restrictions, they decided to launch it on 17th June 2021. With not much competition in the market, their app quickly gained popularity. "We knew what our customers wanted, and we focused on providing timely delivery and excellent customer service". Unfortunately, their growing popularity did not sit right with other business owners in the city and the young duo started receiving several threats for forced collaboration. When they did not agree, multiple attempts to hack their server were also made. However, they remained positive as they continued getting people's growing support and it was a motivation for them to keep trying.

In a very short time, Simran proudly shares how their app has been downloaded by more than 5000 users and has partnered with more than 50 restaurants in Birgunj. At present, Ezze Eats delivers more than 100 orders in a day, and with customer requests, they have even collaborated with grocery stores to deliver groceries to people's doorsteps. They currently have ten employees. Recently, they also conducted a research study to understand the potentiality of the market in Hetauda and have already started making plans to expand their food delivery business there. Besides, seeing the success of their business, they have also been approached by businesses from Nepalgunj for franchise opportunities.

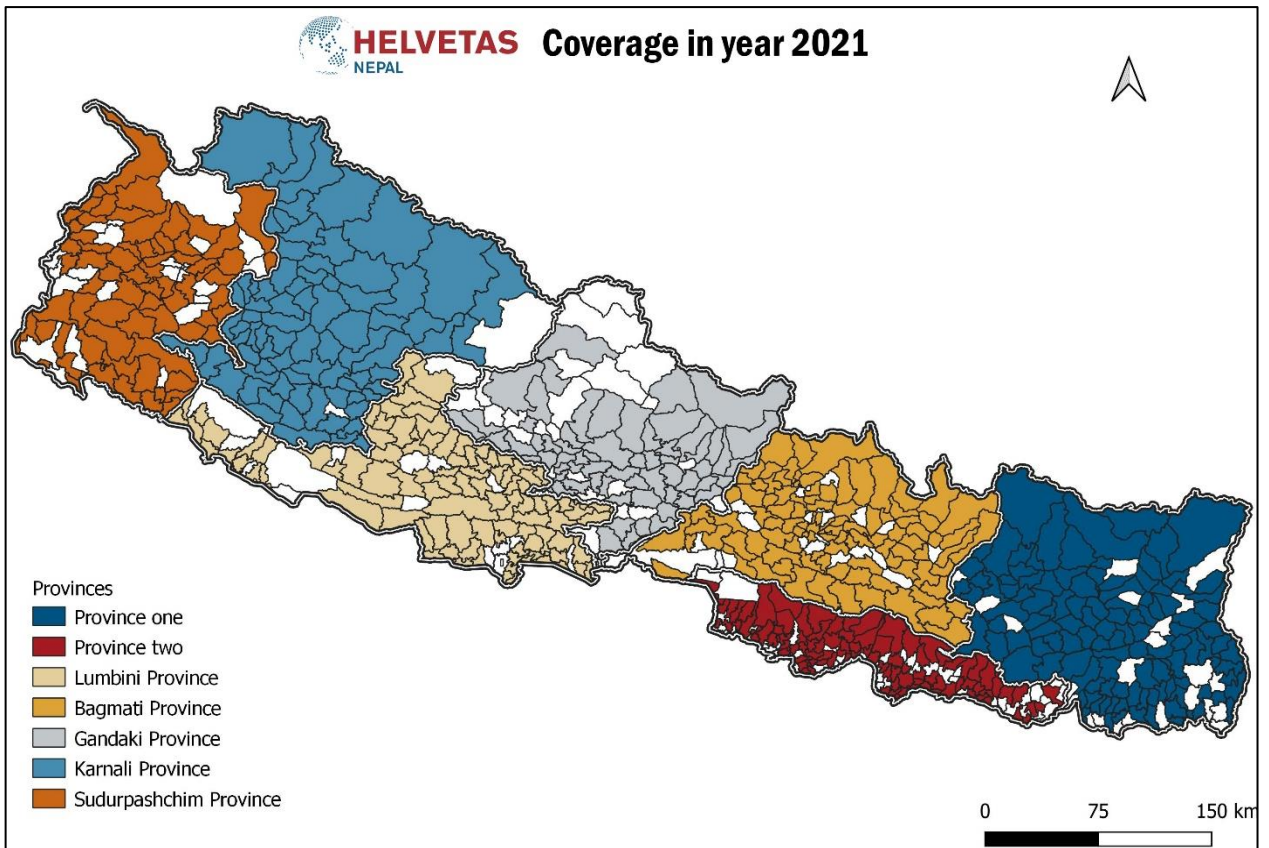


Delivery drivers of Ezze Eats get ready to deliver food in the city of Birgunj. Photo Credit: Simran Chaurasiya

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Gender and Social Equity

Helvetas strives to address unequal power relations and reduce biases by promoting actions as well as policies favouring women and other disadvantaged groups who tend to suffer most from exclusion. In 2021, Helvetas Nepal continued to put in its effort to facilitate creating an enabling environment where women and disadvantaged groups can take charge of their lives, support their active participation in decision-making as leaders and rightsholders and facilitate income opportunities. Efforts were continued to mainstream gender and social equity across all its activities from planning and implementation to monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Empowering right holders to know, claim, access and realize their rights is one of the working approaches. All Helvetas Nepal projects systematically considered gender and social equity in their interventions and collaborated with the public, civic and private sector partners for women, Dalits and ethnic minority groups to be represented, their voices heard in decision-making and adequate resources allocated.

All projects continued to focus their efforts to anchor gender equality and social inclusion, as a cross-cutting priority, at all levels of their interventions. In 2021, around 2.3 million (39% women, 65% disadvantaged groups) people could be reached by different project activities or involved in the projects. The highest proportion of the people reached is by the working field Bridges and Roads, followed by Migration, WASH and Water Governance, Food and Nutrition and Vocational Skills. Despite the COVID-19 and its negative impacts, the proportions of women and disadvantaged groups in users' committees and beneficiaries have increased. For example, in TBSU, 95% of the Users' Committee have been established with members proportionally representative of the beneficiary population and with 48% of the users' committee having at least 50% of women. From the bridge construction, 302,063 person-days of employment were generated at the local level (63% belonged to disadvantaged groups and 30% belonged to women). In SaMi, the project reached a total of 119,853 beneficiaries, out of which 81% belonged to the disadvantaged groups and 34% were women. In IWRMP, 49% of its beneficiaries were women and 51% were from disadvantaged groups. The users' committees formed this year were inclusive with 44% of women members and 30% of the members from Dalit and Janajati groups. Likewise, ENSSURE and Samriddhhi had 72% of trainees from the women and disadvantaged groups. The cases are similar in other projects as well.

Initiatives to address unpaid care work continued through the provision of household drinking water systems, reducing women's drudgery and saving their time. Efforts on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in WASH initiatives continued reaching girls and boys in schools through education, awareness and access to products and services. Relevant social and economic empowerment activities are ongoing mainly through technical and vocational education and training programmes. For example, through Helvetas Nepal's projects, women have been directly benefitted from the services offered by Migration Resources Centres (MRCs), psychosocial counselling, financial literacy session, Dual VET Apprenticeship and on-the-job training programmes. In 2021, the October session of the Country Programme Management Meeting was dedicated to reflecting on the achievements and challenges of mainstreaming gender and social equity in the projects. Accordingly, a new Good Governance and GESI Project has been designed.

In 2022, the gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming efforts across the projects as well as exploration for a new dedicated GESI project will be pursued.

Humanitarian and COVID-19 response

In addition to the hardships brought about by ongoing COVID-19, Nepal continued to suffer from various natural disasters during 2021. One of such many incidents that occurred was the flood of the Melamchi river that washed away many private houses, thereby forcing people to live under tents or take shelter in relatives' houses. In addition, many public infrastructures including roads and bridges were destroyed, completely disconnecting Helambu Rural Municipality from the rest of the world for a few weeks. With its historical engagement during the post-earthquake reconstruction, Helvetas Nepal supported the construction of 67 temporary shelters for those families who had their houses washed away by the flood. Out of 67 temporary shelters constructed, SDC supported 20 shelters and the rest were through Helvetas' own funds, supported through various foundations and charities.

Continuing its engagement in supporting the families hard hit by COVID-19, Helvetas Nepal, with support from Swiss Solidarity, provided the Chamar, Dom and Musahar communities in Kshireswornath Municipality in Madhesh Province with multipurpose cash support. The said communities are already highly vulnerable due to low human development indicators such as low literacy rates, lack of land, assets, or access to resources and overall lack of access to sustainable livelihood and COVID-19 and resultant lockdown/restrictions in Nepal and India resulted in a loss of income source of these groups. During the second phase of the COVID-19-induced lockdown, a total of 1220 households from Dom, Chamar and Musahar communities were provided with a cash transfer of NPR 20,000 (approximately CHF 166) per household through a bank account system. Based on the prevailing needs of the provincial COVID-19 hospital in Janakpur, the project also helped to strengthen the health services provided by the hospital through the support of two ventilators and 500 PPE sets.

Helvetas Nepal supported Barahathawa Municipality, Madhesh Province with 3 units of oxygen concentrators, 2 units of suction machines, 2735 PPE kits and other small tools (oximeter, thermometer, etc.) Similarly, 4700 people (health workers, COVID-19 patients, frontline workers) received personal hygiene material (PPE, face shield, gloves, hand sanitizer, hygiene kit, N95 mask, surgical mask, etc.) and got the services of medical equipment and sanitation solutions (oxygen concentrator, thermometer, sodium hypochlorite, etc.) through support to Karnali Province Hospital.

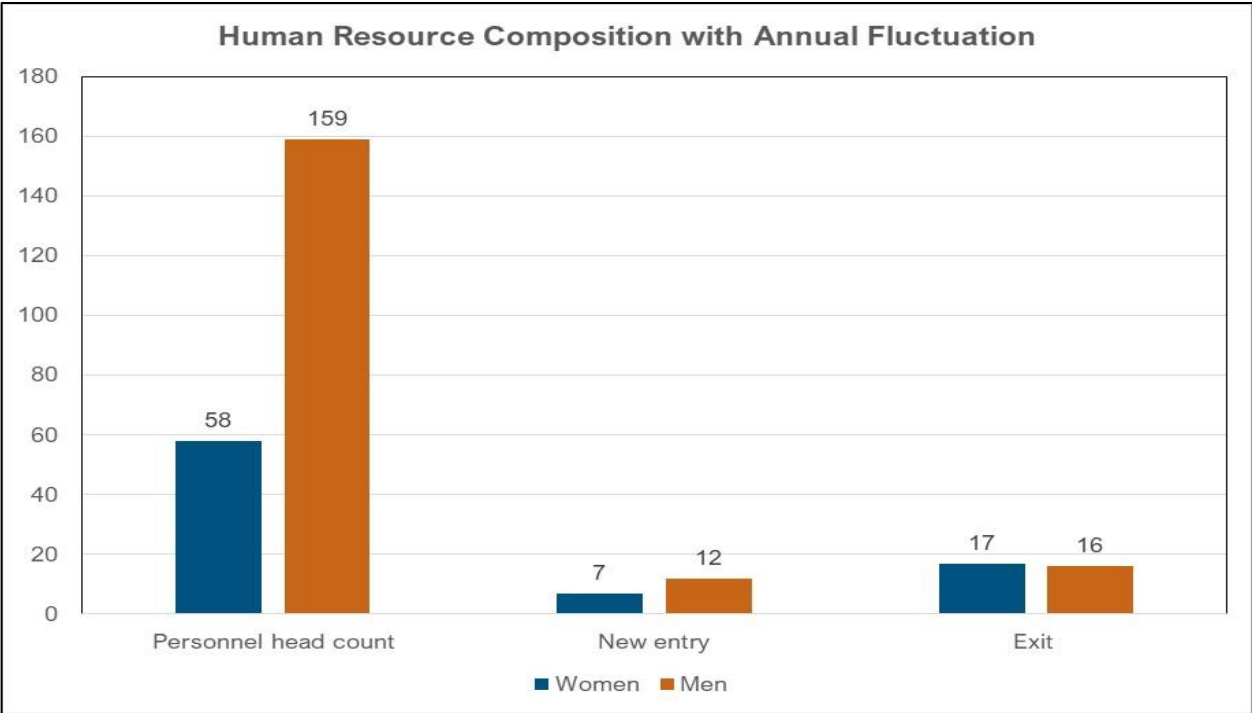
With these humanitarian projects successfully implemented in 2021, the following learnings were generated:

- Role of the decentralized decision-making process – particularly owned and led by local government during various stages, from beneficiary identification to handling complaints and feedback, monitoring and quick adaptation is effective.
- The leadership of the local government in standardizing the support package in post-disaster situations and coordinating among the support agencies is possible and should be the way for future.
- The proximity of service providers is much crucial in terms of beneficiaries' immediate access, monitoring, gaining trust and receiving complaints/feedback and acting immediately.
- Networks established through engagement in the development sector provides a base for organization to support in case of a humanitarian crisis, no matter the scale. In addition to

carrying out regular planned activities, Helvetas Nepal could carry out massive COVID-19 responses in its working areas during the pandemic using the humanitarian-development nexus approach.

Human Resources

In 2021, the challenges in the working environment were higher than in 2020, as the second wave of the COVID-19 in May 2021 was critical and affected almost all households in Nepal, and Helvetas Nepal employees were no exception. Similarly, the COVID-19 third wave due to Omicron in December 2021 again affected almost all families in Nepal, including Helvetas Nepal employees and their families. In such a situation, the biggest challenge for the organization was the duty of care to its employees. Consequently, the focus remained on ensuring the protection of its employees, providing flexible working norms, enforcing minimum presence and rotation of employees in the office to maintain the social distancing at work during the critical phases of COVID-19 pandemic. The office maintained COVID-19 safety protocols – masks, handwashing, social distancing and virtual meetings were encouraged. The COVID-19 taught the organization to be equipped with new technologies and to build a digital working environment. It also brought some positive behaviour changes in human resources like – trust-building, willingness to be flexible and adaptable and willingness to learn and upgrade skills in technology.



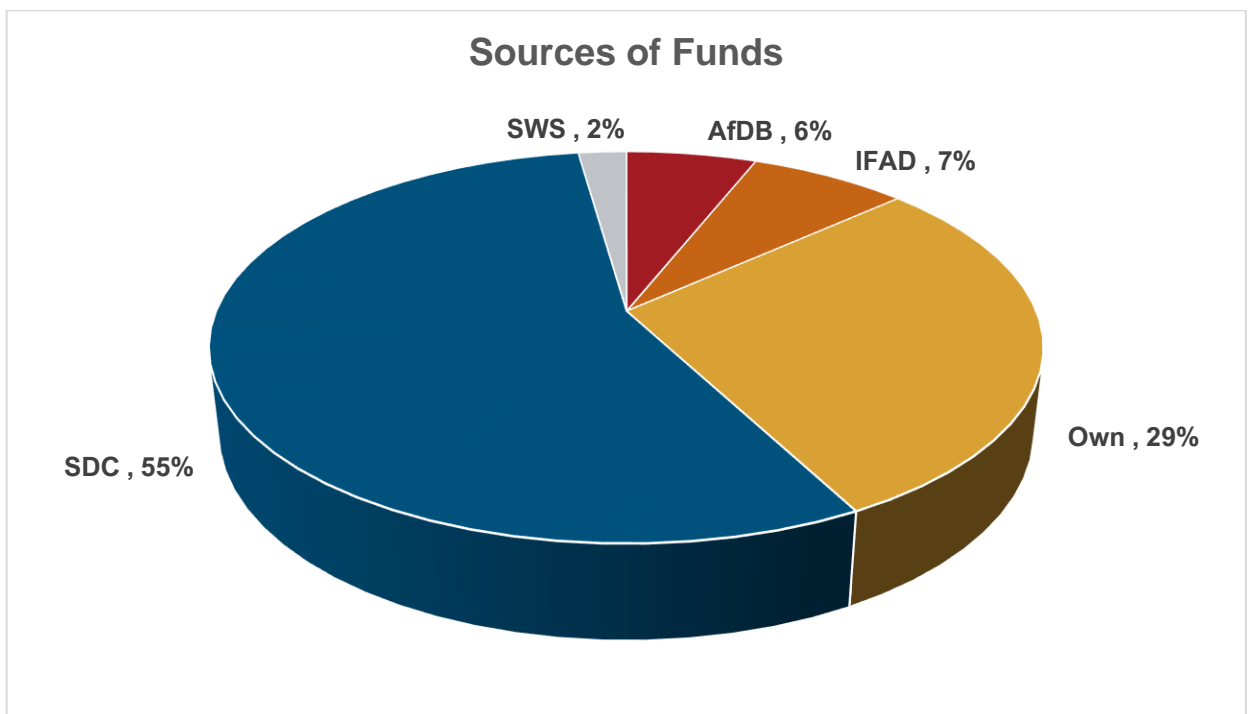
Despite the challenging environment, Helvetas Nepal welcomed its new Country Director in October 2021. The leadership transition went smoothly. As in the previous years, there were recruits, internal staff adjustments and staff separations in 2021. By the end of 2021, Helvetas Nepal had a total of 217 employees, 27% were women employees. In 2021, 19 new employees (37% women) joined Helvetas Nepal whereas a total of 33 employees (52% women) separated from the organization due to project completion, other opportunities and resignations. Despite the organizational effort, the percentage of woman employees declined in 2021 by 2% compared to 2020. This was due to a higher percentage of women employees separating than were recruited in 2021. Helvetas Nepal needs to put a conscious effort to bring gender balance to our workforce in 2022.

Budget and Investment

The approved budget for 2021 was CHF 11.88 million, a slight increase from the approved budget of 2020 of CHF 10.20 million. The utilization of the budget continued to be on a lower side, with 75% of the total budget being utilized. Restriction in mobility due to COVID-19, its impact on the staff as well as the rise of infection at community level affected the implementation of activities. Although the situation started improving during the last months of the year, the activities and spending gaps could not be covered.

Sources of Funds (%)

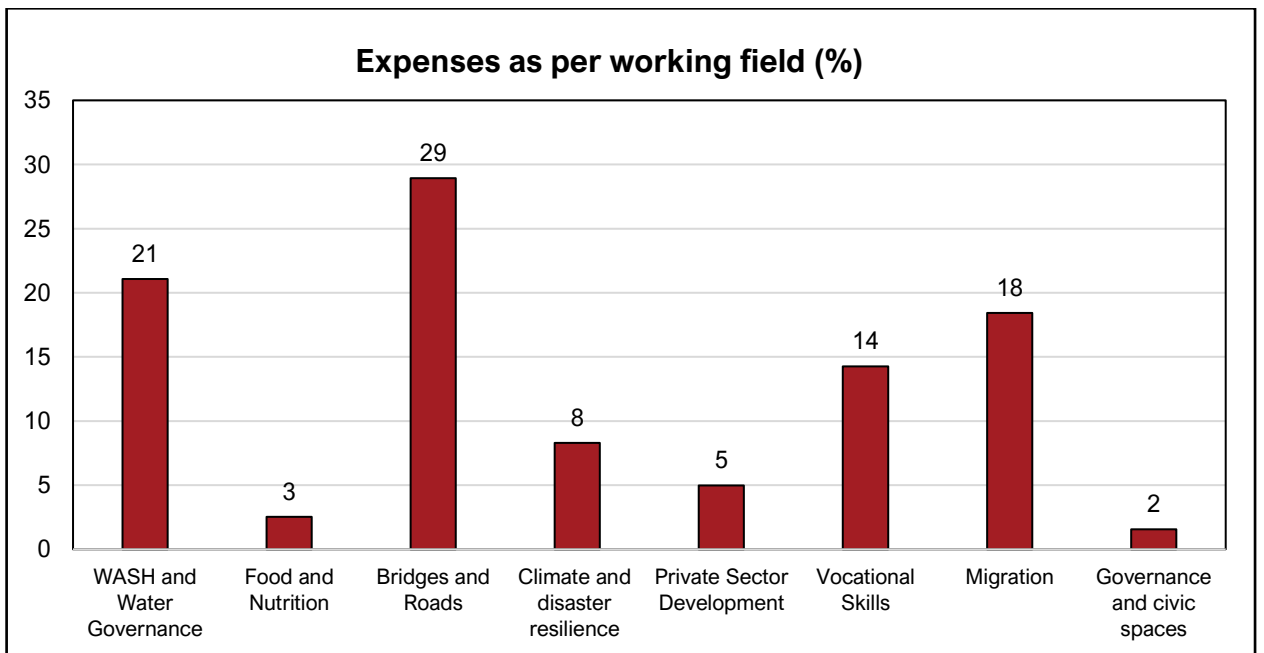
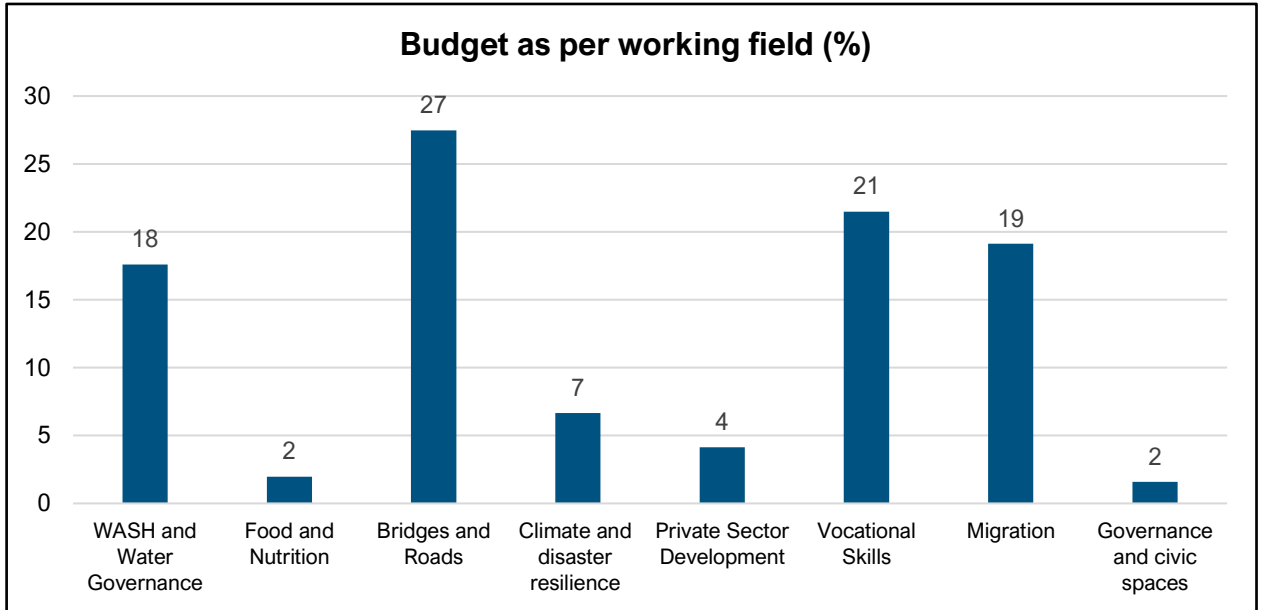
Of the total approved budget of CHF 11.88 million, as in the previous years, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) continued to be the biggest source of funds with a share of 55% of the total funding. Around 29% of committed funds were from the organization’s own fundraising and programme contribution. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) contributed around 7% and the African Development Bank’s share was 6% of the approved budget. Swiss Solidarity (SwS) contributed around 2%.



Investment by Working Fields

The budget and investment for the year 2021 are reported by the working fields of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. Of the eight working fields, Bridges and Roads was the biggest field in terms of investment volume utilizing 29% of total funds spent, followed by WASH and Water Governance at 21%. Migration and Vocations Skills were other working fields with significant investment at 18.5% and 14.5% respectively. Climate and Disaster Resilience absorbed 8% of total funds, followed by Private Sector Development at 5%. Food and Nutrition and Governance and Civic Spaces were the smallest portfolio at 2.5% and 1.5% respectively.

Budget vs. Actual Expenditure



Audit Report

CSC & Co

Chartered Accountants

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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 2021 and the income statement for the year ended 31 December 2021, 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 2021 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 and accounting policies. 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: 18 March 2022

UDIN No: 220318CA00264EK06j




HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal				
BALANCE SHEET				
As At December 31, 2021				
				Currency (NPR)
Account Group	Description	Reference/ Schedule Numbers	2021	2020
	ASSETS			
1000	Cash in hand	1	102,015	118,696
1100	Cash at Bank	2	209,039,279	138,612,541
1400	Advances	3	41,157,406	161,104,522
1500	Deposits	4	146,789	459,580
	Total Assets		250,445,489	300,295,339
	CAPITAL & LIABILITIES			
2000	Current Liabilities	5	30,009,418	43,808,065
2010	Statutory Liabilities		1,177,527	1,426,472
2020	Staff Liabilities		26,006,773	25,466,421
2030	Other Current Liabilities		2,613,732	4,629,040
2040	Program Creditors		211,386	12,286,132
	Fund Balance			
2100	CAPITAL HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Head Office, Switzerland		220,436,071	256,487,274
	Total Liabilities		250,445,489	300,295,339
The annexed notes form an integral part of this Balance Sheet				
			As per our report of the even date	
				
Pragya Adhikari Head of Finance and Administration		Dr. Prabin Manandhar Country Director		Jitendra Kumar Mishra Partner CSC & Co. Chartered Accountants
Place: Dhobighat, Lalitpur Date: 18 March 2022				

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal				
Statement of Income and Expenditure				
For the Year 2021: 1st January to 31st December 2021				
				Currency (NPR)
Account Group	Description	Reference/ Schedule Numbers	2021	2020
	Income:			
9000	Remittances / Grant receipts			
	Remittances from Head Office	6	989,999,319	1,021,334,315
	Remittances from local donors	7	41,520,320	78,797,343
	Total Receipts		1,031,519,639	1,100,131,658
	EXPENDITURE			
51	Personnel costs Expatriates		339,914	121,110
5130	Expatriates Recruitment costs		113,833	-
5140	Expatriates HRD costs		-	-
5150	Expatriate Travelling and Representation costs		221,563	101,974
5151	Expatriate Homeleave & Transfer Costs		-	-
5160	Expatriate Foreign residence costs		-	-
5169	Other Expatriation costs		4,518	19,136
52	Personnel costs Nationals		389,851,009	452,399,446
5200	Personnel Cost Nationals		367,565,801	431,669,664
5250	Travel & Representation costs National Staff		22,285,208	20,729,782
54	Local Consultants		9,236,897	19,242,163
5400	National Consultants fees		7,772,029	18,864,494
5450	National Consultants Travel & Repr. Costs		1,464,868	377,669
71	Operating Cost		63,316,978	51,318,704
7110	Vehicles		15,823,219	8,587,992
7120	Office costs		44,266,798	39,664,784
7150	Other operating costs		3,226,961	3,065,928
72	Project Costs International		599,728,314	605,136,464
7210	Education and Training costs		56,467,002	62,893,815
7220	Investment and Equipment costs		1,593,910	1,434,997
7231	Contribution to NGO		113,151,648	93,468,852
7232	Contribution to Govt Authorities		19,055,968	224,895,446
7233	Contribution to Private Sector		77,459,794	79,549,497
7234	Contribution to Beneficiaries		314,991,396	108,563,925
7239	Various contribution to Partners		17,008,596	34,329,932
	Total Expenditure	8	1,062,473,112	1,128,217,887
	Other Receipts:			
8200	Bank Interest		-	-
			(30,953,473)	(28,086,229)

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

As per our report of the even date


Pragya Adhikari
Head of Finance and Administration


Dr. Prabin Manandhar
Country Director



Jitendra Kumar Mishra
Partner
CSC & Co.
Chartered Accountants


Place: Dhobighat, Lalitpur
Date: 18 March 2022

Personal Story by Dr. Bharat Pokharel, former Country Director

When I decided to quit Nepal Forest Service in 2002, which was just three years away from the maturity of my government pension, everyone, including my family members, was shocked. For outsiders, there were no reasons that I had to quit my highly rewarding job, the District Forest Officer that every Nepali would pursue then. I held a Ph.D. degree, was promoted recently to a prestigious senior position of Under Secretary in the Planning Division in the Ministry of Forests, a charismatic and a well-liked person and had all the prospects to become the Secretary and so on. Despite all these situations, I wanted to quit my government service simply because it was extremely low paid, had to be engaged in a routine job, and not interesting enough for me to utilize the professional degree that I received from a reputed university in England. The other motivating factor was that I could be the first Nepali to replace an expatriate Team Leader in a Swiss organization, and the job was interesting in terms of its focus to translate the concept of community forestry into practice. Four years later, I had another opportunity to be the first Country Representative for Helvetas Nepal which to everyone's surprise, merged globally with Helvetas in 2011. I was also fortunate enough to win a race for the position of Country Director of Helvetas Nepal which has been in continuous operation in Nepal for the last 66 years. My seven years of tenure as County Director were enjoyable as well as challenging amidst the earthquake of 2015 and the reformulation of the country strategy and restructuring of the organization required to align it with the new federal setup of the country.



It is not an easy task to reflect on my 20 years of experience in a Swiss organization that has contributed so much, and I had the privilege to be a leader of an organization that would raise and administer funds up to USD 20 million annually, led a team of 300-plus employees, collaborated with 150 NGO partners, more than six federal ministries, seven provincial governments and 600-plus municipalities. During my tenure in various capacities, I always advocated for a more self-reliant, self-sustained and locally-owned development approach in Nepal and elsewhere. In fact, my work experience in the government system was an asset to Helvetas and vice versa. When I joined the organization, I was trained as a forestry professional; over time, my worldviews, the knowledge horizon and the management culture and style began to change and I was a transformed person from a forester to a leader, a manager, a facilitator, a negotiator, a mentor, a motivator, a coach, an adviser, an instructor, a counsellor, an enabler and more importantly a good strategic thinker that contributed to the organization and the individual to change and adapt to the new political context and circumstances. In that sense, I was learning and transforming myself all the time and I have now begun to realize that the whole process of transformation built my capacity, and I became a change agent not only in Helvetas but also for the whole nation particularly in a difficult time of transition, be it at the time of conflict or disaster or political transition of federalism. For me, forestry was a small part of the whole and I developed my competencies in the new areas of rural infrastructure, urbanization, migration and mobility, technical education, vocational training and skill development, agriculture, water resource management, gender equality, social inclusion, climate change, disaster risk management and recently local governance and federalism. The most fascinating part of my carrier was my proactive engagement together with Swiss and Nepali colleagues on two fronts – first, to raise funds through government-to-government collaboration, and second, to raise funds through people-to-people solidarity to engage Swiss citizens to help the Nepali population as part of the development and humanitarian response, be it during the time of earthquake or flood or landslides or annual cold waves in Tarai or helping the victims of foreign employment and unsafe migration, etc.

I have also learned and at the same time was able to contribute to Nepal's efforts at development as a trendsetter and a personality with an alternative perspective. I have had the privilege, for example, to become one of the very few champions among forestry officials in the forest service to

wholeheartedly promote community forestry, one of the very few successful initiatives of the Nepal government in terms of the devolution of power to local communities. At that time, many forestry officials were either reluctant or opposed to the community forestry approach.

Such circumstances gave me an opportunity to practically understand the political economy of development, power relations, and even now championship is required to develop tools, techniques, and alliances to translate federalism which is still in its infancy. The greatest pleasure that I have had for the last two decades was to be a part of Nepalese' attempt to do development in a new way. Being a leader in a Swiss organization, it also gave me a pleasure to be a part of the Swiss journey in Nepal 'from cheese to peace', as the first cheese factories of Nepal were introduced in Langtang and Jiri in the late 1950s by the Swiss, and now the important thrust of development is to make federalism a successful political system for permanent peace and harmony among empowered Nepalese who deserve to be governed well by themselves with aspirations of prosperity and happiness.

Ways Forward

The political situation remained volatile throughout the year due to the weak governance, inter-party conflict and changes in the political equation. Nepal is going to see political turbulence with the elections of the local, provincial, and federal governments in 2022. The country has a huge task to overcome the socio-economic consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The projects are largely on track under all three working areas positively impacting the target populations. The projects are contributing to strengthening the Federal State Building by anchoring the projects and establishing institutional and implementation setup for decision-making with the respective spheres as per the constitution. Helvetas Nepal recognizes the need for multistakeholder consultation during planning, collaborative consortium for successful acquisition, and pragmatic coordination and synergy during implementation. Helvetas Nepal will focus its activities on Karnali and Madhesh Provinces but will remain open to other provinces or municipalities for donor-funded mandates. It will apply an inclusive system approach while working with its partners – both state and non-state actors – to attain systemic change. Socially- and economically-discriminated Nepali citizens are its priority primary stakeholders; the higher the discrimination the greater will be the priority.

As Helvetas Nepal moves forward, we will increase our engagement in rural-urban linkages, strengthen our work with youth significantly, improve the humanitarian-development nexus, and leverage the digital transformation in line with the Helvetas global strategy. Helvetas Nepal will further strengthen its partnership with SDC, explore consortium with the private sector, build local capacities and reinforce advisory support and policy advocacy.

Considering the opportunities, challenges and priorities, Helvetas Nepal will focus on the following three areas:

1. Quality Programming
 - Promote project contributions to federal state building
 - Strengthen cross-learning and synergy between Helvetas projects
 - Improve monitoring (programme and finance), critical reflections and quality reporting
 - Enhance donor intelligence and increase acquisition
 - Leverage the digital transformation
 - Development of new country strategy (2023-26)
2. Systems and Compliances
 - Robust budget tracking and forecast
 - Functional procurement plan
 - Functional grievance handling
 - Security and risk response
3. Human Resources Management
 - Improve teamwork within and between the country office and project teams (programme, finance and human resources)
 - Provide encouragement, constructive feedback, and coaching to team members

Thanks

A lot of government agencies, donors and international implementation partners and national non-governmental partners and local implementation partners make it possible for us to carry out our shared mission. We would like to sincerely thank all who continue to support in achieving the desired outcomes and outputs. 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.